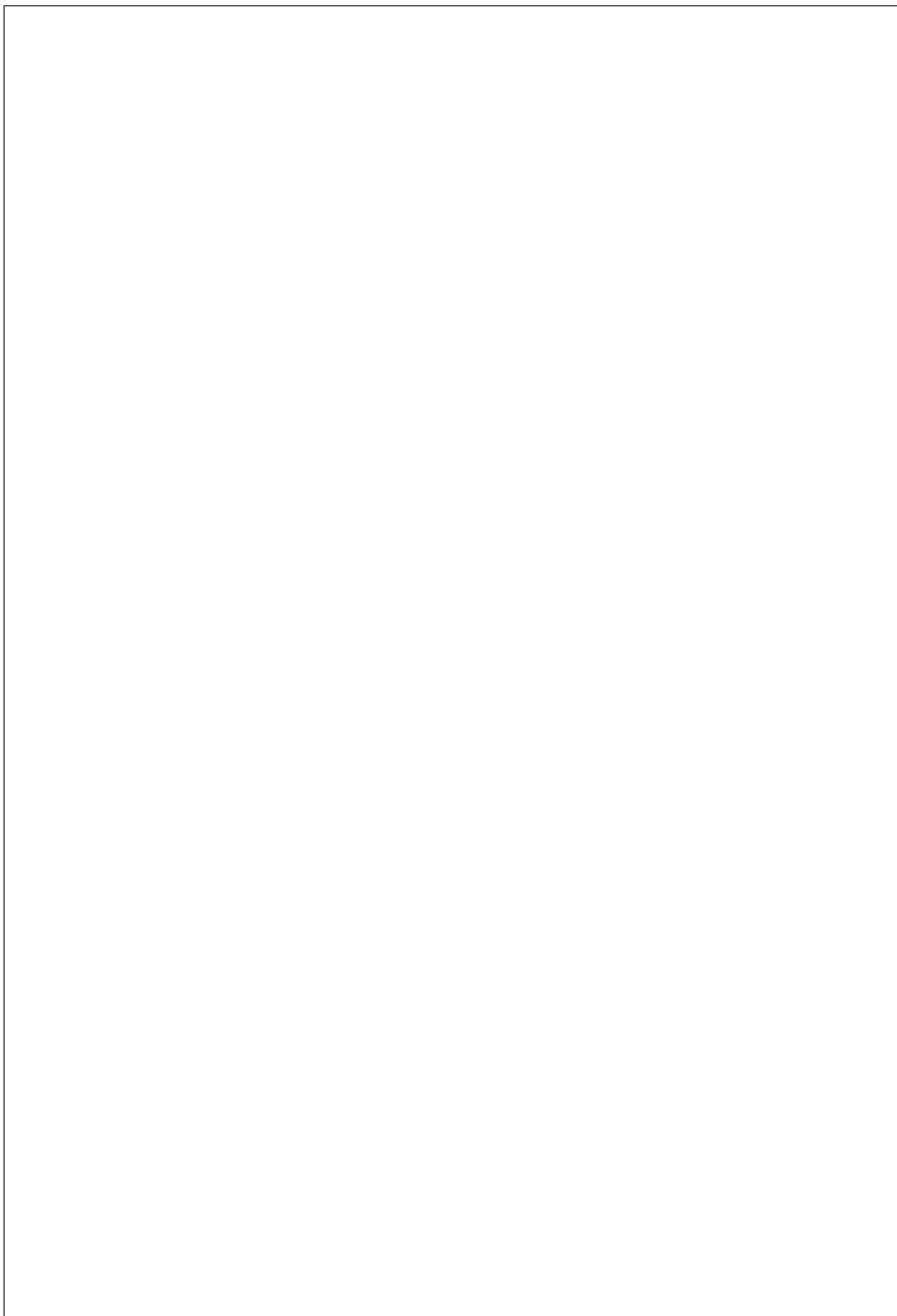








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ABOUT

PLVS VLTRA endeavours to publish exceptional papers that promote research and scholarship in all areas of Hispanic and Italian Studies at the University of Victoria.

SUBMISSIONS

A maximum page length of 12 double-spaced pages is preferred by the Journal. Papers may be written in English, Italian, or Spanish. After each issue's submission deadline, *PLVS VLTRA* will submit the papers to an intensive selection process, including peer-review by undergraduates from both the Hispanic and Italian sections of the Department.

Each paper will be reviewed by at least two undergraduate students. Reviewers will address areas including clarity of writing, presentation, relevance to the theme of Hispanic and Italian Studies, originality, interdisciplinary relevance, and contribution to research in the area.

Should a number of submissions pertain to the same topic, the selection process may become competitive. Papers not selected for publication may be considered for a following issue, as declared by the Editorial Team, and with permission from the author at the time of submission.

PUBLISHING INFORMATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Notes on <i>PLVS VLTRA</i> by Kyle McCreanor	i
Forward by the Chair	ii
Introduction from the Editor-in-Chief	iii
Light and Dark in <i>La Commedia</i>	
Kyle McCreanor (University of Victoria)	1
A Lifetime of Mourning: Francesco Petrarca as a Melancholic Griever	
Meghan Casey (University of Kent, Brussels)	13
La imperfección de la poesía: una interpretación del poema <i>El golem</i> de Jorge Luis Borges	
Kristi Leigh Meredith (University of Victoria)	27
The Art of Self-Protection: Interview with Los Tlaxolulokos	
Kay Gallivan (University of Victoria)	33
Navegación en el siglo XVIII - Los españoles en el Pacífico noroeste	
Carys Pinches (University of Oxford)	45

NOTES ON *PLVS VLTRA*

Today, Spain's coat of arms is flanked by two pillars, which together read *PLVS VLTRA*. This motto can be directly traced to the year 1516. Holy Roman Emperor Charles V adopted the Pillars of Hercules and the inscription "*PLVS VLTRA*" as his emblem. However, this motto was not created by Charles himself—it was his Italian physician, Luigi Marliano, who suggested it. *PLVS VLTRA*, meaning "further beyond" in Latin, was in reference to the Age of Exploration—going beyond the Pillars of Hercules, expanding the empire both westward and eastward. Going "further beyond" is very much an objective of the Hispanic and Italian Studies undergraduate journal, *PLVS VLTRA*. Both Italian and Hispanic cultures were immensely shaped by those who dared to go beyond the known world. In a similar sense, students here are encouraged to explore new things, make discoveries, and advance the state of knowledge.

Kyle McCreanor

FORWARD

Plus Ultra, an annual, peer-reviewed showcase of extraordinary research papers, sees its second number come to light. This effort attests to the commitment of the students of the Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies at the University of Victoria to go beyond what is expected of them at an institution of higher education. The Latin motto *plus ultra*, “further beyond,” was suggested by the Milanese humanist, Luigi Marliano, to Charles V of Castile as his personal motto, who adopted it as an expression of the dynamism of the Spanish Monarchy’s imperial project as its presence expanded beyond Europe to the Americas; much later, the left-leaning Second Spanish Republic chose the phrase as its official slogan. *Plus ultra* aptly captures the aspirations of the editorial team and authors of this research journal founded by our students. The journal accepts papers written in English, Italian, or Spanish on any topic pertaining to the Hispanic and Italian world and from a wide range of interpretative perspectives, including literature, history, politics, and cultural studies. The contributions to this second number testify to this breadth of vision, comprising studies of major cultural figures such as Dante, Petrarch, and Borges, to eighteenth-century Spanish explorations of the Pacific Northwest and present-day politically engaged art collectives in Oaxaca, México.

Many persons have been involved in this project. The editor in chief, Adam Barron, and the team of editors, are to be commended for their commitment to this endeavor. I would also like to acknowledge the guidance and support that Professors Silvia Colás Cardona, Lloyd Howard, Pablo Restrepo-Gautier, and Dan Russek provided to their students whose research appear in these pages. The members of the department are proud of this demonstration of the linguistic skills and cultural competencies of our students.

Beatriz de Alba-Koch, Chair

INTRODUCTION FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

After months of advertising in classes, on social media, and through emails; coordinating peer reviewers, editors, and authors in six different countries; and organizing meetings and editing sessions in person and online, I am very proud to present to you the second volume of *PLVS VLTRA*. As I predicted, being the Editor-in-Chief of this large project has been a challenging task for me; nonetheless, it has been a pleasure to reignite the dedication to the journal held by the editorial board and authors within the Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies.

Volume 2 of *PLVS VLTRA* showcases the work of five exceptional authors whose papers have been constructed through field work, literary analyses, and archival research. I hope that the diversity of content in the following pages works well to attract some new readers from around the world.

This year we have begun to see *PLVS VLTRA* receiving international attention, with papers submitted from authors in Mexico, Italy, Belgium, and England. Furthermore, all eight of our peer reviewers are either students or alumni of the University of Victoria, and our nine editors are from Victoria, Caracas, Brussels, and Mexico City. The rapid globalization of *PLVS VLTRA* is exciting for all of us working together on this project. With good planning, editing can progress much more efficiently. For example, one evening before going to bed I finished reviewing the first wave of edits being completed in real time by a student in Mexico City, and when I woke up, I was greeted by a second wave of edits being completed by another student in Brussels. More notable than the advantages of editing with people nine hours ahead are the invaluable relationships being built and the ideas being shared between the University of Victoria, the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México, the University of Kent in Brussels, and the University of Oxford. These exchanges of ideas are what really make undergraduate journals a vital part of modern day academia.

I want to give a very special thanks to Vaughan Lewis, Meghan Casey, and Kyle McCreanor for offering to help at every stage of putting this volume together. Kyle also deserves all of our thanks for being the coordinator representing *PLVS VLTRA* in the organization of the launch party. I want to express my deepest

gratitude to Dr. Loyd Howard and Dr. Beatriz de Alba-Koch for always managing to fit us into their schedules; they have been essential to the success of this journal. I want to thank Inba Kehoe for all of her technical assistance. I would like to give a special thanks to the departmental secretary, Donna Fleming, whose help with disseminating information about the journal and booking our meeting rooms has been very important at every step. I would also like to thank the Hispanic and Italian Studies Course Union and the Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies for their funding, without which we would have no physical copies of the journal.

To everyone who submitted to the journal and to all of the authors selected to be published, I want to thank you for entrusting us with your work. To our editors, the fruition of this journal would not have been possible without your dedication and painstakingly meticulous feedback. Thank you so much for contributing to the journal. You should know that Volume 2 will be indexed online through the LOCKSS Program based at Stanford University and a physical copy of the journal will be archived in Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa.

I look forward to seeing the publication of future volumes of *PLVS VLTRA*, guided always by the renowned scholarly community at the Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies at the University of Victoria, and contributed to by a diverse handful of sharp minds from around the world.

Adam Barron, B.A. (Hons., Victoria), Editor-in-Chief

Light and Dark in *La Commedia*

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In Dante Alighieri's crowning work, *La Commedia*, the author narrates his divinely ordained journey through Inferno, Purgatory, and Paradise in poetic detail. As Dante's pilgrimage advances, his environment becomes increasingly brilliant—from the total darkness of Hell to the unbearable brightness of God's eternal light in Paradise. For Dante, light is a powerful means of establishing ambience; however, it can also represent goodness, divinity, wisdom, and truth. Conversely, darkness commonly represents evil, impiety, ignorance, and heresy in literature. This essay examines the various manifestations of light and dark throughout *La Commedia*, giving attention to Dante's physical journey from darkness to light and the symbolic meanings of these elements in the text.

Keywords: Dante Alighieri; La Commedia; Divine Comedy; light; dark

1 Introduction

In the opening tercet of Dante Alighieri's magnum opus, *La Commedia*,¹ Dante finds himself in a dark wood, a consequence of having strayed from the correct path, which he refers to as the "*diritta via*" or the "*verace via*" (*Inf.* I, 3, 12).² In the final canto of his grand trilogy, Dante is in the white rose of Empyrean. He is so blinded by the light of God that he struggles to make sense of what he sees. The first and final cantos of *La Commedia* frame Dante's journey as one of progression into the light from complete darkness. For Dante, light represents God and all things divine. Thus, Dante uses darkness to represent the lack of light, and therefore the absence of God. In every instance of *La Commedia*, the literal presence of light, or lack thereof, corresponds to the relative divinity of a place: Inferno is entirely devoid of light (beyond that of fire), Purgatory experiences states of both light and dark, and Paradise is completely illuminated. In Dante's text, light is also used to symbolize wisdom and truth, whereas darkness is representative of ignorance and heresy. This essay analyzes the manifold symbolic meanings of light and dark and examines the ways in which Dante uses these elements throughout *La Commedia*.

2 Light and Dark as Ambience

Light and dark serve as useful elements in establishing the ambience of Dante's journey in *La Commedia*. *Inferno* is rife with descriptive phrases relating to the darkness of hell. In the text, Dante partakes on a downward journey into Inferno. As he descends, he encounters sins of increasing gravity and such sins are accompanied by environments of blackness. In particular, the atmosphere itself is quoted as "*l'aere bruno*," "*l'aera senza stelle*," "*l'aura nera*," "*aere grosso e scuro*," and "*aura fosca*" (*Inf.* II, 1; *Inf.* III, 23; *Inf.*

¹ The citations for *La Commedia* employed herein are abbreviated; the Mandelbaum translation was consulted in every instance. A full citation can be seen in the works cited. To reference the annotations provided for each canto, Mandelbaum is cited. Each quote in Italian includes Mandelbaum's English translation as a footnote.

² "the path that does not stray," "the true path."

V, 51; *Inf.* XVI, 130; *Inf.* XXIII, 78).³ At times, it is difficult for Dante to see through the dark and nebulous air (*Inf.* IV, 10-13). The infernal bodies of water are equally devoid of light, having descriptions such as “*l’onda bruna*,” “*l’acqua era buia assai più che persa*,” “*l’onde bige*,” and “*acqua tinta*” (*Inf.* III, 118; *Inf.* VII, 103; *Inf.* VII, 104; *Inf.* XVI, 104).⁴ The blackened waters can be understood as having been stained by the darkness of sin—Mandelbaum comments that the runoff of the River Lethe “descends from Purgatory and carries down to Hell the sins that have been washed away” (Mandelbaum 319).

As he enters “*Purgatorio*,” Dante encounters the light of the sun for the first time since his decent into “*Inferno*.” Early on, he comes across a light too bright for his eyes to bear; a recurring theme albeit mostly confined to “*Paradiso*.” The light approaching Dante is that of a heavenly angel whose presence is too divine for him to look upon (*Purg.* II, 19-42). Despite the early introduction of bright light in this canticle, it is made clear that Mount Purgatory experiences as much darkness as it does brightness. When the shadow of night falls upon the mountain, no souls are permitted to continue the upward trek. Sordello explains: “non però ch’altra cosa desse briga, / che la notturna tenebra, ad ir suso; / quella col nonpoder la voglia intriga” (*Purg.* VII, 55-57).⁵ On the third terrace, Dante is overcome by a thick black smoke; this is the terrace of the wrathful, where the condemned live in dark clouds so thick that they are unable to see. Dante the poet recounts in detail how he emerged from that smoke:

*Ricorditi, lettore, se mai ne l’alpe
ti colse nebbia per la qual vedessi
non altrimenti che per pelle talpe,
come, quando i vapori umidi e spessi
a diradar cominciarsi, la spera
del sol debilmente entra per essi;*

³ “the dark air,” “the starless air,” “dark air,” “the dense and darkened air,” “darkened air.”

⁴ “the darkened waters,” “that stream was even darker than deep purple,” “shadowed waves,” “blackened water.”

⁵ “And not that anything except the dark of night prevents your climbing up; it is the night itself that implicates your will.”

*a fia la tua imagine leggera
in giugnere a veder com'io rividi
lo sole in pria, che già nel corcar era.
Sì, pareggiando i miei co' passi fidi
del mio maestro, uscì fuor di tal nube
ai raggi morti già ne' bassi lidi (Purg. XVII, 1-12).⁶*

This transition from dark to light accurately captures the essence of Purgatory. Although Mount Purgatory possesses many beauties to behold, it is also a place of penitence and punishment. Above all, Purgatory is a place of rebirth; each soul undertakes its own journey from the darkness of sin toward the light of God.

In Paradise, light is ubiquitous and of a luminosity too great for mortal human senses. Therefore, those in Paradise are granted extra power to perceive such light (*Par.* I, 55-57). The individual occurrences of light in this canticle are too great to enumerate. Dante's entire journey through the realm of Paradise is frequented with the encountering of souls, each of which possessing their own light of varying degrees of luminosity. Dante's odyssey is marked by the brightness of stars, shining gold, rubies, emeralds, diamonds, and the full force of God's divine light. It is clear that the use of light and dark as ambient markers across *La Commedia* as a whole progresses from the depiction of an atmosphere of total darkness to one of total light as Dante journeys from Inferno to Purgatory and finally, to Paradise.

3 Light and Vision

To understand light in *La Commedia*, one must understand the concept of sight. In Dante's work there is a developed parallel between two philosophers, namely Plato and Augustine, which

⁶ "Remember, reader, if you've ever been caught in the mountains by a mist through which you only saw as moles see through their skin, how, when the thick, damp vapors once begin to thin, the sun's sphere passes feebly through them, then your imagination will be quick to reach the point where it can see how I first came to see the sun again—when it was almost at the point at which it sets. So, my steps matched my master's trusty steps; out of that cloud I came, reaching the rays that, on the shores below, were now spent."

informs the reader of such a concept. Plato interprets vision as a process involving the eyes, light, and the object. Augustine conceptualizes a theological principle with which one may draw parallel with Plato: the intellect perceives the truth through “the Good”. In *La Commedia*, the eyes and the intellect are intimately related; light represents goodness, and the truth is the object of spiritual enlightenment.

The implication in Dante’s text is that one who is able to see is one who is able to comprehend God and the divine truth. The relationship is made explicit in “*Paradiso*.”

*e dei saper che tutti hanno diletto
quanto la sua veduta si profonda
nel vero in che si queta ogni intelletto.
Quinci si può veder come si fonda
l'esser beato ne l'atto che vede,
non in quel ch'ama, che poscia seconda;
e del vedere è misura mercede,
che grazia partorisce e buona voglia
così di grado in grado si procede.
(Par. XXVIII, 106-114)⁷*

By extension, one who can grasp the divine truth is one with knowledge. Further, the spiritual light of God is a necessary component of such knowledge (Mazzeo 247). Light is frequently used to refer to knowledge, and most strikingly seen throughout “*Purgatorio*”. Dante makes direct reference to the intellectual light of Virgil, when he says: “Maestro, il mio veder s’avviva / sì nel tuo lume, ch’io discerno chiaro / quanto la tua ragion parta o descriva” (*Purg.* XVIII, 10-12).⁸ Shortly thereafter Statius likens Virgil to one walking in the dark carrying a lamp behind him; it is of little personal utility, but he illuminates a path for those that follow. There

⁷ “and know that all delight to the degree to which their vision sees—more or less deeply—that truth in which all intellects find rest. From this you see that blessedness depends upon the act of vision, not upon the act of love—which is a consequence; the measure of their vision lies in merit, produced by grace and then by will to goodness: and this is the progression, step by step.”

⁸ “Master, my sight is so illuminated by your light—I recognize all that your words declare or analyze.”

are two important aspects of Statius' comment. Firstly, there is the obvious implication that Virgil is wandering in the dark; as Virgil was a Pagan; even with his own intellectual light he could not escape the darkness. Secondly, it can be interpreted that Virgil unwittingly and posthumously guided many souls to Christianity, via teachings which are supposedly largely in accordance with the Christian moral framework. However, as Virgil's intellect lacked the light of God, he was condemned to live forever in ignorance, in Limbo. To say that Virgil wandered in the dark is not necessarily an accusation that he lived a sinful life, although it is an educated accusation that he never experienced or knew the one true Christian God. After this episode, Virgil is visibly saddened and filled with doubt. Thereafter, Statius is the one serving as Dante's light. This is evident when he tells him: "Se le parole mie, / figlio, la mente tua guarda e riceve, / lume ti fiero al come che tu die" (*Purg.* XXV, 34-36).⁹

There are several other manifestations of the notion of light as wisdom that occur in *La Commedia*. In a speech by Saint Thomas in Paradise, he discusses how God directly created only two human beings: Adam and Jesus Christ. Therefore, since these two men were directly infused with God's light, they are the wisest and without intellectual parallel (*Par.* XIII, 37-45; Mandelbaum 356). The heavenly Eagle in Canto XIX tells Dante that his intelligence is but a single ray of God's light and he can never hope to fully understand divine justice (*Par.* XIX, 52-66). Beatrice realizes that Dante struggles to grasp her convoluted speech, and fears that her teachings will not be accurately preserved when Dante returns to Earth from his pilgrimage. She voices her concerns to Dante in Purgatory: "Ma perch'io veggio te ne lo 'ntelletto / fatto di pietra e, impenetrato, tinto, / sì che t'abbaglia il lume del mio detto" (*Purg.* XXXIII, 73-75).¹⁰

⁹ "If, son, your mind receives and keeps my words, then what I say will serve as light upon the *how* that you have asked."

¹⁰ "But since I see your intellect is made of stone and, petrified, grown so opaque—the light of what I say has left you dazed"

4 The Darkness of Blindness

Blindness—conceptually linked to vision—is also frequent in *La Commedia*. Naturally, blindness is a form of darkness as both indicate the absence of light. Virgil warns Dante of blindness in Limbo: “Or discendiam qua giù nel cieco mondo” (*Inf.* IV, 13).¹¹ The blind world of Hell is one untouched by God’s light; the infernal sinners are forever blind since they lack Light. Canto X of *Inferno* provides several illustrations of the significance of blindness. Here Dante enters the Sixth Circle, wherein heretics are punished with an inability to see the present. Cavalcanti calls it a “cieco carcere,”¹² and to ask whether his son is still alive he questions: “non fiere li occhi suoi lo dolce lume?” (*Inf.* X, 58-69).¹³ To contrast the underworld and the over world, as Dante departs Hell he says “intrammo a ritornar nel chiaro mondo” (*Inf.* XXXIV, 134).

Even beyond Hell Dante encounters blindness. On the Second Terrace of Purgatory, the Envious are cloaked in haircloth, which Dante describes as “come a li orbi non approda il sole, / così a l’ombre quivi, ond’io parlo ora, / luce del ciel di sé largir non vole” (*Purg.* XIII, 67-69).¹⁴ There is further mention of the “cieco mondo”, but not in reference to “*Inferno*.” A penitent soul on the Third Terrace criticizes how humans speculate about God’s intentions; he tells Dante how ignorant the world truly is: “Io mondo è cieco, e tu vien ben da lui” (*Purg.* XVI, 66).¹⁵ This is a surprising assertion, as heretofore the “blind world” referred to Hell, yet here it is applied to the human world. There is perhaps an implication that the state of affairs in Dante’s world is so abysmal that it may be likened to the sinful realm of “*Inferno*.” Moreover, the accusation targets Dante himself—he is unquestionably the product of a blind world.¹⁶ Beatrice speaks of the human world blinded by sin (specifically

¹¹ “Let us descend into the blind world now”

¹² “blind prison”

¹³ “The sweet light does not strike against his eyes?”

¹⁴ “And just as, to the blind, no sun appears, so to the shades—of whom I now speak—here, the light of heaven would not give itself.”

¹⁵ “the world is blind, and you come from the world.”

¹⁶ Oddly, Mandelbaum does not translate the emphatic *ben* in line 66 in the English rendition.

Italy), telling Dante: “La cieca cupidigia che vi ammalia / simili fatti v’ha al fantolino / che muore per fame e caccia via la balia” (*Par.* XXX, 139-141).¹⁷

In a similar manner, Dante finds himself unable to see multiple times throughout *La Commedia*. Faced several times with spiritual light of unprecedented magnitude, the Tuscan pilgrim is often forced to avert his gaze. Such difficulties occur with increasing frequency throughout Purgatory and Paradise as Dante approaches the spiritual terminus of Empyrean. Dante’s inability to cope with bright spiritual light is not only an indication of his spiritual unpreparedness (which is unsurprising considering he is an earthly traveller), but it is also a process of conditioning him for his journey (di Scipio 153). As he continually comes across unbearable luminosities, Dante’s vision is increasingly augmented in preparation for his arrival in the final heaven. In Purgatory, Virgil tells Dante that his vision will soon improve: “Non ti maravigliar s’ancor t’abbaglia la famiglia del cielo, [...] / messo è che viene ad invitar ch’om saglia. / Tosto sarà ch’a veder queste cose / non ti fia grave [...]” (*Purg.* XV, 28-32).¹⁸ Ultimately, Dante may have indeed been able to look upon the face of God, although it is an evanescent memory that he struggles to recall.

There is a notable setback in the latter part of his journey in Paradise in which Dante, after staring fixedly at Saint John, is completely blinded (*Par.* XXV-XXVI). In following prior discussion on blindness, Dante’s inability to see (which spans a whole canto) carries a certain symbolic importance. All things associated with light are now unavailable to Dante and thus, he is confined to his own ‘cieco carcere’; the goodness of God’s light required to perceive ‘the truth’ is absent. Saint John assures Dante that the blindness is only temporary and that in the meantime he should speak about his feelings of love. Having now lost his sight, Dante is commanded by Saint John: “di ove s’appunta l’anima tua” (*Par.* XXVI, 7-8).¹⁹ By some interpretations, blindness is a

¹⁷ “The blind greediness bewitching you, has made you like the child who dies of hunger and drives off the nurse.”

¹⁸ “Don’t wonder if you are still dazzled by the family of Heaven: a messenger has come, and he invites us to ascend. Soon, in the light of such things, there will be no difficulty for you.”

¹⁹ “declare the aim on which your soul is set.”

“symbolically appropriate condition” for love (Gaffney 106). Dante is forced to speak only from his soul, with the potential for lusty fixation now excluded. Rather than look at Beatrice and find inspiration from her outward beauty, Dante is compelled to look within himself and to define his inner emotions (Gaffney 106).

5 The Light of the Sun

Light is frequently communicated through two different suns in *La Commedia*. There is the sensible sun, the visible and material sun of the earthly world and there is the spiritual sun, the divine light of truth and all things good (Mazzeo 243-245). These two suns follow the aforementioned parallel between the Platonic and Augustinian concepts of light, the former being the connection between the eyes and the object and the latter being the connection between the intellect and the truth. Beatrice confirms this in Paradise when Dante is overwhelmed by the spiritual sun and she tells him: “Quivi è la sapienza e la possanza / ch’apri le strade tra ‘l cielo e la terra / onde fu già sì lunga disianza” (*Par.* XXIII, 37-39).²⁰ The sensible sun is a substitution for the divine light, though significantly less powerful. The earthly sun is blocked by physical materials, as seen in Purgatory when Dante casts a shadow; however, the pure light of God cannot be blocked and passes through everything (*Par.* XXXI, 22-24).

In some cases in *La Commedia*, the sun refers to God. In explaining his placement in Limbo, Virgil tells Sordello: “Non per far, ma per non far ho perduto / a veder l’alto Sol che tu disiri / e che fu tardi per me conosciuto” (*Purg.* VII, 25-27).²¹ Further on, Virgil directly addresses the sun: “O dolce lume a cui fidanza i’ entro / per lo novo cammin” (*Purg.* XIII, 16-17).²² In the Eighth Heaven, Jesus appears as a brilliant sun, and Beatrice encourages Dante to look upon him. Dante is overwhelmed by the “viva luce,”²³ but through

²⁰ “This is the Wisdom and the Potency that opened roads between the earth and Heaven, the paths for which desire had long waited.”

²¹ “Not for the having—but not having—done, I lost the sight that you desire, the Sun—that high Sun I was late in recognizing.”

²² “O gentle light, through trust in which I enter on this new path.”

²³ “living light”

this sight his vision is improved, and thereafter he can look upon the luminous smile of Beatrice (*Par.* XXIII, 40-47). Nonetheless, Dante's usage of the word "sun" is not limited to God; saints, angels, and Beatrice are among those worthy of the title 'sun' in *La Commedia* (*Par.* XI, 50; *Par.* X, 76; *Par.* XXXIII, 115). Evidently, the term is also applied to luminary figures who fill the role of the intermediary between the eyes and intellect and the object and truth (Mazzeo 247). It is this intermediary that Virgil has in mind when he asks Statius: "qual sole quai candele ti stenebraron?" (*Purg.* XXII, 61-62).²⁴ Above all, it was God who enlightened Statius; however, Virgil played a role in his conversion to Christianity as well. Although it must be noted that the light of Virgil was likened to that of a lamp, not a sun (*Purg.* XXII, 67-69).

6 The Darkness of Sin

An examination of certain other contexts in which light and dark appear elucidates underlying notions of good and bad. Beyond the less subtle usage of light and dark as ambient markers to represent the distance to God in each canticle, there are individual occurrences telling of positive and negative qualities. Dante is known for how easily distracted he becomes during his journey. Light functions as a compelling force to guide him by gaining his attention. Dante curses his tendency to fantasize, crying: "O imaginativa che ne rube / talvolta sì di fuor, ch'om non s'accorge / perché dintorno suonin mille tube" (*Purg.* XVII, 13-15).²⁵ Even on his epic journey ordained by God, Dante at times fails to be fully aware of his surroundings as he is occupied with dreams and pensive internal dialogue. In one instance of dreaming, he is abruptly brought to outward consciousness by the unbearable light of an angel (*Purg.* XVII, 40-45).

On Mount Purgatory, Dante meets a group of souls lagging in their journey up the mountain. They rest in the shade of a boulder, untouched by the sun's light. Dante makes note of their

²⁴ "what sun or what candles drew you from darkness?"

²⁵ "O fantasy, you that at times would snatch us so from outward things—we notice nothing although a thousand trumpets sound around us."

“negghienza”²⁶ in a profoundly negative way, and one is compelled to draw a connection between the act of lying in the shade, the absence of light, and the sin of “pigrizia”²⁷ (*Purg.* IV, 103-111).

7 Emotional Symbolism of Light and Dark

Certain emotions are integrally linked to brightness or darkness in *La Commedia*. This becomes particularly evident when in Paradise in which joy is not indicated by a mere smile, but through uncontrollable luminescence (*Par.* IX, 67-72). Similarly, love seems to emit a certain radiance, evidenced in Beatrice’s explanation to Dante: “S’ io ti fiammeggio nel caldo d’amore / di là dal modo che ‘n terra si vede / sì che del viso tuo vinco il valore” (*Par.* V, 1-3).²⁸ Furthermore, Beatrice is able to see within Dante a brightness that she attributes to the eternally burning flame of love (*Par.* V, 7-9). In regards to sadness and shame, Dante speaks of these in terms of how they darken the soul (*Par.* IX, 71-72; *Par.* XVII, 124-125).

8 Conclusion

As Dante describes the pure Eternal Light of the Empyrean in which the Good exists in its perfect form, he compares his perspective to that of one trying to recall a dream (*Par.* XXXIII, 58-60). One is reminded of Dante’s beginning in the dark wood, having reached it in a state “pien di sonno”²⁹ with the inability to recall how he ended up there (*Inf.* I, 11-12). These two peripheral cantos are linked by a journey from the darkness of sin to the Eternal Light of God. The importance of light and dark is manifested through various means throughout *La Commedia*. To perceive light is to see the divine truth, which God reveals through the light of wisdom. People can also be sources of light in the sense that they help others see the

²⁶ “listlessness”

²⁷ “laziness”

²⁸ “If in the fire of love I seem to flame beyond the measure visible on earth, so that I overcome your vision’s force”

²⁹ “full of sleep”

divine truth. Those who do not perceive such light are blind, and thus are unable to see the enlightening rays of divinity. On his divinely ordained pilgrimage, Dante traverses Inferno, scales Mount Purgatory, and reaches the Empyrean to witness the Eternal Light at its source, no longer represented merely in part by intermediary forces—a brilliance so powerful that there can exist no darkness in its presence—Dante’s soul has been purified.

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A Lifetime of Mourning: Francesco Petrarca as a Melancholic Griever

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Using Kubler-Ross' grief paradigm, this paper works to understand Francesco Petrarca's *Il canzoniere* as a work of grief. Petrarca's narcissistic tendencies and melancholia regarding love characterize the poet as a melancholic griever, as described by Freud. Drawing on the five stages (Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance), this work demonstrates how Petrarca was a melancholic griever who did not find solace before his death. In short, this paper works to better understand the psychology of grief behind the Italian poet's great collection.

Keywords: Francesco Petrarca; Il canzoniere; Freud; grief; Kubler-Ross

1 Introduction

In 1347, the Black Death reached Europe by way of the sea. Trading ships bound for Messina, Sicily, brought with them a “siege of pestilence,” as Petrarca describes in a letter to his close friend Giovanni Boccaccio (“On Boccaccio’s *Decameron* and the sort of Griselda” 185). The bubonic plague devastated much of Italy’s population as it swept through the country. The death toll in Parma and Reggio alone reached 40,000 by the end of that year (Wojciehowski 276). For poet Francesco Petrarca, this meant the loss of many of his good friends; his lifelong love, Laura de Noves; and his son, Giovanni. The resulting sorrow of these deaths is prevalent in many of his literary creations.

In this paper, I explore the manners in which Petrarca faces this anguish and counters his grief through writing. To do this, I use Freud’s grief paradigm, which differentiates between two types of griever: *melancholics* and *mourners*. According to Freud, Petrarca’s melancholia, which results from ruminating on his sadness, hinders his ability to find absolution. In comparing Petrarca’s grieving methods with Kubler-Ross’ method, which outlines the five steps of grief (Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance), it is evident that Petrarca does not reach the final stage of acceptance. This paper will examine the characteristics that classify Petrarca as a melancholic griever, as outlined by Freud, as well as the steps of grieving evident in his writing.

2 Freud’s Melancholic

In Freud’s essay “Mourning the melancholia,” he distinguishes between two ways of grieving. The first, “mourning,” suggests a typical, linear process of dealing with loss, while the second, “melancholia,” is a type of “pathological grief,” which results in an

unhealthy attachment and obsession (Cole 190). As a man with a natural disposition towards melancholia, Petrarca instinctively grieves as a melancholic does. In his writing, Petrarca wallows in his denial of Laura's death, his pent up sadness over the loss of his companion and literary subject, and his anger and transference of these events. Not only did the poet lose the object of his admiration and prose but also a number of close friends. Petrarca deals with his own imminent death much the same. These traits all point to a melancholic disposition.

Firstly, it is important to outline the parameters in which grief will be examined in this paper. Green defines grief as "a particularly sharp, acute feeling of loss that we experience in relation to the loss of a significant person in our lives" (76). For Petrarca, the object of his admiration was Laura. Her death was abrupt and unexpected in terms of his literary and life plans. With her passing came an intensified feeling of loss and detachment.

Green also suggests that grief is not solely derived from one's relationship with another, but also with oneself. Petrarca was an extremely narcissistic man. As such, his love for Laura was self-directed and self-motivated. In losing Laura, he also lost a certain connection to his writing and self. This egotistical nature is not just seen in Petrarca's grief for Laura, but also in how he grieves for himself in his old age. This is supported in the regret and retrospection Petrarca exhibits in Poems 363–365. Freud suggests a correlation between a melancholic disposition and a "predominance of a narcissistic vulnerability" (Cole 188). These narcissistic tendencies will be evaluated further throughout this paper.

Kubler-Ross' understanding of grief further categorizes Petrarca's melancholia. Kubler-Ross suggests that a mourner progresses through the stages – Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance – linearly, and that they are necessary for the mourner to let go of the lost "object". Petrarca's melancholia, however, does not allow him to process grief this way. Instead, his

emotions oscillate between the stages of Denial, Anger, and Depression, and he never truly finds solace.

3 Kubler-Ross' Stages of Grief

In the following section, I will focus on the three stages of Kubler-Ross' grief paradigm in which Petrarca finds himself unable to escape: Denial, Anger, and Depression. These stages are particularly important for the way in which Petrarca mourns, as they are surmounted. Thus, Petrarca dies never having found absolution from grief, and we the audience are left with a deeply solemn body of work, *Il canzoniere*.

3.1 Denial

Petrarca employs denial as a favoured method to avoid properly mourning. Rather than face the deaths of his loved ones head on, he uses a series of creative tactics to avoid reality. Some of these include: refusing to accept Laura's pending death, despite its certainty; escaping into the literary world in which Laura still exists; and resorting to humour as a distraction before his own death.

Petrarca begins the second part of *Il canzoniere* unsure about Laura's wellbeing. He can surmise that she is nearing her death, but it is the uncertainty that fuels his anxiety in Poems 264–266. Even the literal distancing that Petrarca describes in Poem 249 between him and Laura, when he leaves Avignon, foreshadows their eternal separation. Petrarca begins this poem with an expression of fright: “Qual paura ò, quando mi torna a mente/ quell giorno ch’i’ lasciai grave et pensosa” (*Il canzoniere* 1–2). Here Petrarca still clings to the possibility that Laura might still be alive. In his heart he knows she is gone, but it is not until he hears news of her passing that he acknowledges her death directly in Poem 267. Her death is final, but still Petrarca denies this. Rather than accept that he will

not see her again, and that news of her death is just slow arriving, he chooses to hold onto those last few moments of her alive in the flesh.

Laura's death was abrupt and unexpected in terms of Petrarca's future expectations and aspirations. Unable to fully reconcile this loss, Petrarca chose to keep Laura alive in his *Canzoniere*. His feelings towards her, however, somewhat transform after her death. He recreates her former self as an idealized version. Where she was once an impediment for his journey to God, she is now recreated as his mentor and guide. In the second part of *Il canzoniere*, she sits in heaven, awaiting Petrarca's arrival. At the end of Poem 346, Petrarca imagines that Laura has been taken into heaven by angels and trusts that she is waiting for him:

mirando s'io la seguo, et par ch'aspecti:
ond'io voglie et pensier' tutti al ciel ergo
perch'I' l'ondo pregar pur ch'I' m'affretti.
(*Il canzoniere* 12–14)

Petrarca chooses here to treat Laura's death as a temporary distance between them. He is unable to come to terms with the fact that he will not see her again and creates another universe in which they will eventually be together. This refusal to acknowledge Laura's death is consistent with Kubler-Ross' stage of denial.

Additionally, the tension Petrarca feels towards Laura in earlier poems subsides in the latter part of *Il canzoniere*. This is evident in Poem 351, when Petrarca comes to realize that her unwillingness to give him his desired pity was in fact for his benefit. He admits in lines 13–14 that “questo bel variar fu la radice/ di mia salute, ch'altramente era ita.” (*Il canzoniere* Poem 351). Only after her death can he accept the choices she made when she was alive. A series of poems just as far removed from reality as this one follows Petrarca's realization of Laura's death. They each have in common an altered state of reality in which Laura still exists in some way.

Though these actions may seem to be directed towards Kubler-Ross' final stage of acceptance, sadly Petrarca never finds peace outside of his literary world.

By the end of his life, Petrarca is witness to a lifetime of death. He has grieved for many close friends and acquaintances, but in his old age he is sickly and must also grieve for himself. Though he is conscious of his own imminent death, he at times fails to acknowledge this. His tone throughout the latter part of *Il canzoniere* is quite solemn, until Poem 360. Here Petrarca interrupts his previous string of dream-like poems with an uncharacteristically long-imagined court trial between Love and himself. The back and forth dialogue between Love and Petrarca in the courtroom sums up an opportunity for the two warring sides to express their positions. Much like Petrarca and Love's relationship, the ending of this poem is also left unresolved. Petrarca concludes the poem with the judge's words: "Piacemi aver vostre questioni udite,/ ma piú tempo bisogna a tanta lite." (*Il canzoniere* 161–162).

This poem is characteristically humorous, and some might debate about its position in *Il canzoniere*. How is it that a man nearing his death, who spends his waking hours at his desk writing, would chose to include such a haphazard aside as his seventh-last poem? Conversely, this poem is a way for Petrarca to remove himself from his approaching death. Rather than deal with his emotions about death in this position in *Il canzoniere*, he instead chooses to revisit a topic that is never actually put to rest. Avoidance, such as exhibited in this poem, is extremely characteristic of a melancholic. Freud might suggest that in order for Petrarca to healthily process his own death, he must first acknowledge its inevitability. This, however, is not the case. He instead chooses to distract himself, and his reader for that matter, from the truth of his own death.

3.2 *Anger*

Anger is another one of Kubler-Ross's five stages that Petrarca expresses in his writing as a way to grieve. Petrarca has a tendency to transfer his anger and emotions to personified archetypes. In giving Death and Love identities in his writing, he also makes them intentional scapegoats onto which he can expel his toiling emotions. This is exemplified in Poem 322, where a grief-stricken Petrarca blames Death for cutting off his connection to Laura too soon. Petrarca writes:

die mie tenere frondi altro lavoro
cerdea mostrare; et qual fero pianeta
ne 'nvidiò insemi, o mio nobil Tesoro?
(*Il canzoniere* 9–11)

This transference allows Petrarca to believe that Laura's death could have been prevented. He implies in this poem that Death made a choice. To him, Laura could still be with him today had circumstances been different. Petrarca's blatant disregard for the natural cycle of life in this poem, and other poems like it, supports his grievous state.

Petrarca portrays himself as a powerless man again in Poem 360. In this poem, Petrarca refers to Love as "quel'antiquo mio dolce empio signore", suggesting that his actions in the name of Love are not his own (*Il canzoniere* 1). He continues with the idea that he is outside of his own agency by referring to Love's world as "nel costui regno" (*Il canzoniere* 10). Much of Petrarca's argument here is focused on the pain he has felt, which he believes to be at the hand of Love. In his lashing out, he paints himself as the victim. The poem is lengthy in comparison to his others and reiterates the feelings of lovesickness that are evident throughout the first half of *Il canzoniere*. As previously discussed, Petrarca concludes this poem by availing his own sentence in the courtroom. He is the voice

of both Love and himself, and to pass judgment would be to condemn his own actions. He knows that blame falls on him in the end, so he refuses to integrate a sense of responsibility into his literary work.

As much as Petrarca's melancholic disposition is rooted in narcissism, so is his expression of anger, which stems from personal assessment. He tends to evaluate his own situation and then lash out at his plans gone awry. In Poem 359, Petrarca acknowledges his egotistical motivations when he writes, "Io non piango altro che me stesso" (*Il canzoniere* 22). He is distraught in the fourth stanza when he describes his love for Laura:

Ma io che debbo altro che pianger sempre,
misero et sol, che senza te son nulla?
Ch'or fuss/io spento al latte et a la culla,
per non provar de l'amorose temper! (*Il canzoniere* 34–37)

In this stanza, Petrarca's longing for Laura is so overwhelming that he suggests that if he had not been born, he would not have had to go through this pain that he now feels. His anger here is justifiable, but again it is rooted in the hypothetical.

Petrarca's self-descriptions are consistent with the definition of a melancholic griever. He is not angry for Laura but rather for himself. Imagining life without her only becomes a factor when it directly affects Petrarca. Because Laura is such a dominating presence in Petrarca's real life and the one he created on paper, it is understandable that her absence would have such an effect on him.

3.3 *Depression*

Depression is the third stage of Kubler-Ross' model that a melancholic experiences. In his letter entitled "On the Deaths of Socrates and Giovanni," Petrarca condemns Fate's choosing to take

his son and two of his closest friends. Though Petrarca wavers between assigning blame and refraining from doing so, the sadness he feels for these losses remains consistent. In the first paragraph, he expresses a feeling of despondency after having been left behind: “Meanwhile here I linger, harder than adamant, slower moving than the tortoise, more tenacious of life than the phoenix” (Bishop 224). Here Petrarca is frustrated that only time’s passing will reunite him with his companions. However, there is also the indication that Petrarca feels lost. He continuously shifts his focus in this letter, beginning with his disapproval of fate’s decision, then an expression of his emotion, then to reminding Francesco Nelli of his son’s death, and finally with dispelling blame altogether and suggesting that he and Francesco follow their loved ones into death. Wojciehowski’s proposal that Petrarca’s thoughts on “solitude, community, and friendship” change after 1348 supports these desultory actions (277). However transparent this letter’s expression of grief might be, it still ardently supports Petrarca’s sadness fuelled by death.

When evaluating Petrarca’s behavior after Laura’s death, we find traits characteristic of sadness and depression. Petrarca was emotionally lost when Laura died. He based his entire literary career around her as his main subject. He anticipated a lifetime of writing about her. Though he did achieve this in the end, albeit through a different avenue, her absence profoundly affected his spirit. This change in perception surfaces when Petrarca reflects on his travels.

In a letter entitled “Pleasure of travel,” Petrarca tries to explain to Francesco Bruni what motivates him to travel. In the first paragraph, he addresses the question outright: “If I should be asked why then I do not stand still, I can only respond with my opening words: I don’t know” (Bishop 260). There is a change in tone here from when Petrarca wrote about travel in his younger years. In a letter to Dionigi da Borgo, Petrarca describes his summit of Mount Ventoux. His description of the journey focuses on achievement, curiosity, and personal betterment: “Incredibly such meditation brought new strength to my mind and to my body and made me

willing to face whatever remained” (Bernardo 175). There is a certain excitement in this letter that Petrarca feels after having climbed the mountain, enough so that he decides to share it with his friend.

In his younger years, Petrarca also used travel for solace. Once having summited the mountain, Petrarca writes in this same letter to Dionigi da Borgo the peace he felt in seeing Italy: “I then directed my sight toward Italy where my heart always inclines” (Bernardo 176). In his paper, Wilkins suggests that Petrarca saw travel as “a tranquil retreat in an unsatisfactory world” (203). It is possible that at this stage in his life he was more concerned with filling a certain void than he was with improving his intellectual state.

In “Pleasures of Travel,” however, this craving has nearly dissolved. Instead, Petrarca references his youth and the passing of time that cannot be recovered. At the age of sixty-four, when this letter was purportedly written, Petrarca expresses a tone of retrospection. Though he acknowledges the adventures that accompanied his travels, he counters them by suggesting his intellectual state still suffered. Had he not been traveling, he could have been home reading. In paragraph two he writes, “What did frighten me was the loss of time and dissipation of my mind” (Bishop 261). Retrospection is commonly attributed to those suffering from depression. Hobbies and interests that were once at the forefront of a person’s mind are questioned and often forgotten. This holds true for Petrarca as he revisits a once cherished pastime.

Not only are Petrarca’s hobbies and interests affected by the sadness he feels towards Laura’s death but also his writing. At times his words feel bland, lacking the passion and emotion that they once had in the first part of *Il canzoniere*. Martinez supports this notion when he references the second half of *Il canzoniere*, which he argues is “‘monotonous’ formally, acoustically, rhetorically, and generically: it displays a lack of metrical variety, of variety of topics, of interlocutors” (40). Poem 292 is an excellent

example of this; Petrarca's language in stanza three is somewhat flat and weak:

Et io pur vivo, onde mi doglio et sdegno,
rimaso senza 'l lume ch'amai tanto,
in gran fortuna, e 'n disarmato legno.
(*Il canzoniere* 9–11)

Earlier in *Il canzoniere*, Petrarca's use of nautical imagery was bold and colourful. In Poem 189, he opens with: "Passa la nave mia colma d'oblio/ per aspro mare, a mezza notte il verno" (*Il canzoniere* 1–2). However, in Poem 292 his choice of diction seems to be more of an afterthought. His use of figurative language has been subdued by his grief. Laura was the source of his inspiration and motivation; she instilled in him a spectrum of emotions that carried through into his written work. Now that she is gone, he struggles to find words that carry the same inspiration.

4 Creating Acceptance

Though Petrarca's inability to cope with the death of his friends, his love, and himself is evident throughout *Il canzoniere* and his other works, he does attempt several times to deal with his grief. The final stage of Kubler-Ross' paradigm is acceptance. Though he never truly accepts death in his life, Petrarca does create a world in which this happens. Petrarca used the "Trionfo della morte" shortly after Laura's death as a medium to "deal" with her passing. In this Trionfo, he recreates her death and her beauty, but does so in a completely unrealistic way. Petrarca describes Laura as modest in her acceptance of her death, her death as a gift from God to avoid ageing, and her death as painless. These descriptions of Laura's death are all fabricated to adhere to most ideal way in which Petrarca believes Laura could have died. His attempt at dealing with

his many losses never does transfer to his real self from his imagined reality.

Another way in which Petrarca seeks solace from his grief is by strengthening his relationship with God. Up until the last four poems of *Il canzoniere*, he accepts Laura as his way to God. He convinces himself that she is alive in spirit and that she has marked a seat in heaven for him. In Poem 363, however, he turns his attention to God. This last attempt at penance can be seen as one of desperation, a last-minute amends to ensure his salvation. Wilkins argues that “self-reform was an aspect of his response to grief and uncertainty” (202). It is possible that in his last breaths, Petrarca felt that only God could console him. He may have come to some sort of realization that motivated him to repent. A more likely possibility is that Petrarca’s sudden commitment to God was just another illusion. By this point he had spent twenty-six years anticipating Death’s arrival, which he envisioned to be the end of his suffering and the path to his reunion with Laura. His sudden rejection of Laura here is overtly contradictory and feels somewhat forced. The last stanza of his final poem of *Il canzoniere* reads:

Il dí s'appressa, et non pòte esser lunge,
sí corre il tempo et vola,
Vergine unia et sola,
e 'l cor or coscientia or morte punge.
Raccomandami al tuo figliuol, verace
homo et verace Dio,
ch'accolga 'l mio spirit ultimo in pace.
(*Il canzoniere* Poem 366, 126–132)

Whether Petrarca’s “pace” is truly what he claims it to be is debatable (*Il canzoniere* Poem 266, 132). Because his entire life has been a steady warring of reality and unreality, this final calming of the waters feels insincere. Perhaps Petrarca is merely playing the part of a man consoled on his deathbed than actually living that role.

5 Conclusion

As we have already seen, death is the provocateur for how Petrarca portrays himself in his written work. Parry defines death as “the *terminus ad quem* for the renunciation as well as the relinquishment of mortal desires” (35). For Petrarca, this onerous gloom is never relieved. Instead, burdened emotionally and creatively by his companions’ deaths, Petrarca battles his grief in his “work of mourning,” *Il canzoniere*, and uses his selected letters as a cry for aid (Martinez 5). Petrarca carries this languid sadness throughout much of his life, resulting in a supreme longing for peace. Having never found this sought-after contentment in life, it is hoped that Petrarca at least found an equivalent refuge in death.

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La imperfección de la poesía: una interpretación del poema *El golem* de Jorge Luis Borges

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El narrador y el ensayista argentino Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986) es uno de los autores fundamentales de la literatura del siglo XX (Myers, 2014) y es conocido por la literatura filosófica y el género fantástico. En su poema *El golem*, Borges enfatiza la religión y la filosofía, principalmente aspectos del platonismo, cristianismo y judaísmo. A lo largo del poema, Borges se refiere a sus principios fundamentales y amalgama aspectos de las tres filosofías para sacar a la luz la imperfección de la creación. Más a fondo, con el principio fundamental del platonismo y el argumento de que existen imperfecciones en cada filosofía de la creación, Borges muestra la imperfección de los nombres y por lo tanto, la imperfección universal del lenguaje. Por consiguiente, la técnica de lenguaje que Borges usa para expresar la imperfección de la creación, la poesía, es irónicamente imperfecta en sí misma.

Keywords: Jorge Luis Borges, religión, filosofía, platonismo, cristianismo, judaísmo, imperfección, poesía, creación, golem

1 Introducción

En el poema *El golem*, Jorge Luis Borges expresa la inexistencia de alguna creación perfecta. Borges explora los principios filosóficos del platonismo, cristianismo y judaísmo para mostrar no solamente que la creación es imperfecta, sino también que la poesía es imperfecta. Se refiere al *Cratilo* y a la importancia de los nombres para analizar el platonismo con respecto a la creación del lenguaje. Menciona a Adán y el pecado original para referirse a la filosofía cristiana. Además, usa el símbolo del golem y la leyenda de Judá León para expresar la creación judía como imperfecta. Sin embargo, no sólo se refiere a las varias filosofías individualmente, Borges también amalgama aspectos de todas para crear un argumento contundente de dicha imperfecta.

En una entrevista para *The New York Times*, Borges definió el agnosticismo y se declaró un agnóstico: “Being an agnostic means all things are possible, even God, even the Holy Trinity. Being an agnostic makes me live in a more fantastic kind of world...” (Shenker, 1971). Es el pensamiento agnóstico el que permite a Borges explorar la idea de la creación sin preferencia, y por eso, introduce el poema como una cláusula condicional con la palabra “si” (1) para expresar la posibilidad de diversas filosofías.

2 El platonismo

Las primeras estrofas del poema introducen el platonismo con la mención del *Cratilo* –“Si (como afirma el griego en el *Cratilo*)” (1) – que es un diálogo platónico centrado en lo apropiado de los nombres (Sedley). Por eso, Borges se refiere a la importancia de los nombres en el poema: “el nombre es arquetipo de la cosa / en las letras de ‘rosa’ está la rosa / y todo el Nilo en la palabra ‘Nilo’” (2-4). Según Platón, todos los nombres son de un objeto específico y nacen de un origen divino (Sedley), una filosofía que Borges pone en el centro del poema y, después, amalgama con las otras filosofías:

Y, hecho de consonantes y vocales,
habrá un terrible Nombre, que la esencia
cifre de Dios y que la Omnipotencia
guarde en letras y sílabas cabales (5-8).

3 El platonismo y el cristianismo

Borges fusiona el platonismo y el cristianismo en la tercera estrofa con la mención de Adán y el nombre de Dios:

*‘Adán y las estrellas lo supieron
en el Jardín. La herrumbre del pecado
... lo ha borrado
y las generaciones lo perdieron’ (9-12).*

En ella, Borges expresa que el nombre divino de Dios, el nombre que “la esencia cifre de Dios” (7), era conocido por Adán. El Génesis 2:19-20 dice: “Y puso Adán nombre a toda bestia y ave de los cielos y a todo ganado del campo” (RV). Para nombrar a todos los animales, Adán debió haber sido capaz de hablar, debió haber tenido un lenguaje, el lenguaje de Dios, desde el principio de su existencia. Sin embargo, Adán pecó, se convirtió en lo imperfecto, y perdió el conocimiento divino para toda la humanidad: “La herrumbre del pecado /... lo ha borrado / y las generaciones lo perdieron” (10-12). Sin el conocimiento divino, ¿cómo puede la humanidad producir un lenguaje perfecto si, de acuerdo con Platón, los nombres nacen de un origen divino?

4 El cristianismo y el judaísmo

Las historias de la creación original del cristianismo y del judaísmo son casi iguales. Por eso, Borges juega con las dos para enfatizar la imperfección de la creación. Con respecto a la creación de Adán, el Génesis 2:7 menciona: “Entonces Jehová Dios formó al hombre del polvo de la tierra, y sopló en su nariz aliento de vida, y fue el hombre un ser viviente” (RV). Esto es, se puede interpretarse que Adán es un golem, una figura de barro a la que se le da vida (“golem”

601). De manera similar en el folclore judío, un golem es una persona hecha de barro y daba vida (Nocks). Sin embargo, no era Dios quién daba vida al golem, sino un hombre santo en el momento de la unión con Dios; esto es el misticismo judío (Nocks). Borges usa la leyenda de Judá León y el símbolo del golem para asociar la imperfección de Adán y la creación cristiana con la judía: “aún está verde y viva la memoria / de Judá León, que era rabino en Praga” (19-20). Como Adán decepciona a Dios por el pecado original, el golem, la creación judía, es considerado imperfecto cuando barrió mal la sinagoga: “y logró, al cabo de años, que el perverso / barriera bien o mal la sinagoga” (43-44).

5 El judaísmo y el platonismo

Borges usa el símbolo del golem para asociar no solamente el cristianismo y el judaísmo, sino también el judaísmo y el platonismo. En los primeros cuentos del golem, el rabino presiona un papel de pergamino con el nombre de Dios sobre la frente del golem para darle vida (Nocks). Sin embargo, sin el conocimiento divino y el nombre de Dios que fueron perdidos por Adán, el rabino en el poema no puede dar una vida perfecta; el Golem no aprende a hablar:

Tal vez hubo un error en la grafía,
o en la articulación del Sacro Nombre;
a pesar de tan alta hechicería,
no aprendió a hablar el aprendiz de hombre (45-49).

Aunque la creación del golem ocurrió en un momento divino en el que un hombre santo se unió con Dios, en el misticismo judío (Nocks) todavía la creación es imperfecta.

6 El platonismo y la imperfección de la poesía

A lo largo del poema, Borges hace hincapié en la imperfección de la creación en todas las filosofías del platonismo, cristianismo y judaísmo. Sin embargo, Borges pone la filosofía del platonismo en el centro del poema para enfatizar la importancia de los nombres;

según Sedley, todos los nombres nacen de un origen divino. Los nombres que se refieren de manera imperfecta a su referente provienen de un lenguaje imperfecto (Trivigno, 35). Sin el conocimiento o lenguaje divino, no es posible expresarse perfectamente con palabras. Sobre este aspecto y para amalgamar todo lo que dice el poema sobre la creación, Borges expresa que el golem es al rabino que lo creó, lo que Adán y el hombre son a Dios; y por la imperfección del lenguaje, lo que el poema es al poeta. Con un lenguaje imperfecto, la poesía es una creación o una expresión de sentimientos imperfecta.

7 Conclusión

En el poema *El golem*, Jorge Luis Borges expresa con pensamiento agnóstico que a pesar del creador, no existe ninguna creación perfecta. Borges explora las filosofías del platonismo, cristianismo y judaísmo para mostrar no solamente que la creación es imperfecta, sino también que la poesía es imperfecta. Usa el símbolo del *Cratilo* para referirse al diálogo de Platón y para expresar la importancia de los nombres. Menciona a Adán y el pecado original para referirse a la filosofía cristiana. Finalmente, usa el golem como un símbolo para relacionar las tres filosofías. Sin embargo, Borges pone la filosofía del platonismo y la importancia de los nombres en el centro del poema para enfatizar la imperfección de la poesía.

Como dice Borges en el poema *El golem*: “¿Quién nos dirá las cosas que sentía / Dios, al mirar a su rabino en Praga?” (72-73), se debe preguntar: ¿Quién nos dirá las cosas que sentía Borges, al mirar a su poema *El golem*?

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The Art of Self-Protection: Interview with Los Tlakolulokos

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Translated by Elise Cote Velazquez

This dialogue with Darío Canul and Cosijoesa Cernas explores the ideals, artistic practices, and political contexts that characterize their Oaxacan art collective, the Tlakolulokos. The Tlakolulokos began during the 2006 Oaxaca Uprising, one of many periods of political upheaval in twentieth century Mexico that catalyzed the development of political graphic and mural art. While the Tlakolulokos draw influence from their contemporaries and predecessors in the Mexican art world, their participation in the unique political atmosphere of Southern Rural Mexico differentiates them from other Mexican political art collectives.

Keywords: Tlakolulokos, graffiti, street art, graphic art, Mexico, Oaxaca



Cosijoesa Cernas and Darío Canul sit for an interview with Kay Gallivan in their Tlacolula art studio.

In December 2014, I conducted a research project in which I interviewed a cross-section of political art collectives in Mexico. In my research, I explored how periods of political unrest in Mexico have influenced the development of art collectives that primarily use the mediums of printmaking and muralism as a means of political activism. The Mexican Revolution that began in 1910 acted as a catalyst for a wave of political art by muralists such as Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and Rufino Tamayo, as well as the printmaking collective, the Taller de Gráfica Popular (People's Graphic Workshop) (Theresa Avila, Warren Carter). Protests leading up to the massacre before the 1968 Olympic Games, the 2006 Oaxaca Uprisings, and the 2014 disappearance of forty-three students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers' College triggered similar waves of political art (Héctor Espinosa). My project investigated the ways in which contemporary political artists working in Mexico employ mediums, collective organizing structures, and political messages that are similar to artists that had been active earlier in the twentieth century. One of the collectives I had the opportunity to interview was the Tlacolulokos. Longtime collective members Darío Canul and

Cosijoesa Cernas sat with me in their studio in rural Oaxaca and we had a conversation about politics and art in Mexico.

*In the interview, Canul and Cernas discussed the notion of communicating collective political ideals within street art rather than focusing on individual tags. They stated that the group formed during the 2006 Oaxaca Uprising based on shared political outlooks that became apparent at the time. During my interviews, I heard many stories about a large number of political art collectives that began during the 2006 Oaxaca Uprising. The uprising mainly consisted of the occupation of Oaxaca City and various surrounding townships. This was undertaken by protesters led by the La Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca (APPO) (The Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca), which demanded the resignation of state governor, Ulises Ruiz Ortiz. According to Lynn Stephen, author of *We Are the Face of Oaxaca: Testimony and Social Movements*, internal tension emerged among protesters after the movement began to root itself in neighborhood barricades (Stephen 245). The vertical organizational structure of APPO, which was led by teachers' union representatives, was challenged by other, primarily younger, protesters. From these discussions, several collectives formed related to media, art, urban ecology, and alternative development. Stephen observes that these new collectives valued mutual aid, consensus decision-making, horizontal organizing, self-sufficiency, "and the belief that how something is achieved is as important or more important than what is achieved" (Stephen 245). According to Stephen, many collectives established during this time period remained active far after the protests ended. All of the Oaxacan collectives and artists I interviewed, including los Tlakolulokos, Arte Jaguar, Francisco Toledo, and Demián Flores, developed organizations during this time period that continue to exist today.*



Tlakolulokos member Darío Canul puts the finishing touches on a mural that says “vivos nos queremos” (“we want ourselves alive”), a play on the protest slogan, “vivos los queremos” (“we want them alive”), which became popular in the wake of the Ayotzinapa kidnappings.

While the origin story of los Tlakolulokos is shared by many other Oaxacan art collectives, and their horizontal structure, print studio, and penchant for murals is influenced by their contemporaries and predecessors, los Tlakolulokos are also outsiders in the Mexican art world in many regards. Their murals utilize a strict black and white colour scheme that intentionally contrasts with Oaxaca’s internationally renowned colourful palette. Textile researcher and artist Yosi Anaya describes how the use of colour and textile pattern motifs within contemporary Mexican art, and particularly Oaxacan art, is an expression of indigeneity that survived repression during the conquest period. Natural colorants developed in prehispanic Oaxaca that were used in murals, temples, ceramics, textiles, and other areas of indigenous Oaxacan life have influenced contemporary artistic expressions including mural art (Yosi Anaya, 400). In contrast, the art of los Tlakolulokos has a dark mono-tonal aesthetic, drawing inspiration from eclectic influences such as rap and punk music. Speaking to me at his studio, Canul

explained that this sombre break from their bright surroundings is meant to elicit the violence rural areas of Southern Mexico currently experience. The 2014 kidnapping of 43 students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers' College, which occurred as the students were on their way to a protest, is part of the violent repression of a culture of resistance led by rural teachers that César Navarro Gallegos describes as "normalismo rural" (rural normalism). According to Gallegos, Normalistas are concerned with the rights of rural farmers and indigenous people, with a particular focus on education (César Navarro Gallegos, 95). Los Tlakolulokos have exhibited art in La Curtiduría in Oaxaca as well as the esteemed Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo in Mexico City. They continue to set themselves apart in the art world by insisting on staying in their village to participate in political organizing even as their art gains national recognition.

What follows is a transcript of our interview, which was translated from Spanish by myself and Elise Cote Velazquez.

Kay Gallivan: To start off, tell me a bit about the Tlakolulokos.

Darío Canul: The Tlakolulokos seek to create a generational, regional, and rational register, but with the global also in sight. A very particular point of view which includes contempt for authority and a lot of love for the people and for different ways of life and hope for society.

Cosijoesa Cernas: Being together and sharing ideas.

Gallivan: How did you get started?

Canul: We started, like a lot of guys, in the streets getting drunk, fighting, and little by little we realized that we could do something that would actually have an influence on our society.

Gallivan: When was that?

Canul: There was a long gestation. We met in 2004/2005 but it was in 2006 that we really got started and the ranks of who could really work with us were closed based on the political stances that we took.

Gallivan: What are you doing right now? What kinds of topics are you addressing?

Canul: We are trying to project all of the contradictions between tradition and modernity. We try to mix our identities, the way that we see ourselves and our people, with contemporary forms of creating. This is a behavioral code that we adopt based on our context, without forgetting where we come from and that we require a bit of everyone's resistance. We try to elevate that.

Gallivan: You started your careers as graffiti artists, how have things changed since then? Or, have things changed?

Canul: Yes, a lot of things have changed. From the technical side to the way of thinking, things have changed. Graffiti is really about the you, elevating your tag, your name, your group. We try to elevate an idea, collective ideas that we can all understand, whether superficially or on a deeper level.

Gallivan: Which techniques do you use?

Canul: We use murals, street art, easel art, street projections, ephemeral public projects (ephemeral in that we don't do any sort of advertising, we just show up and do the project), and social networking. It is important for us to use mediums that have free access so the product doesn't become an object of desire...

Cernas: ...or part of a collection.

Canul: That they be things that circulate in a general circuit



Gallivan: Tell me about your photo with the wood cut outs of the guns and police officers.

Canul: That piece is a sort of exaltation of the narco culture, the military, and the way that it is presented here. There is an exaltation of that persona. It's a part of the culture: because you want to be that fucking badass, you don't care what you do. People accept all of the delinquency and violence in exchange for a role and a role for your family in narco culture. Everyone is anxious for a moment of fame, even if it is within this context. They want to see themselves like that, because the classic representations of El Chapo with lots of weapons is a position of superiority above everything including the authorities, if you present yourself that way. It is the construction of an image that will be preserved by you.

Gallivan: Where are you situated geographically in Mexico?

Canul: [Oaxaca is] the Mexican southeast, by Veracruz, Guerrero, and Chiapas, which is the border to South America. It's a state in which equality, education, and healthcare are horrible. We are cataloged as the poorest state in Mexico. There is also a very important tradition of social struggle, us Oaxacans are always confronting the government, always making demands, and that has probably been what has marked us historically as state. It is also the birthplace of many pre-Columbian cultures: the Mixtec culture, the

Zapotec culture, and other groups that were totally exterminated. The tradition of social struggles comes from the many First Peoples. All the First Peoples make Oaxaca what it is and have always struggled against the devastating development. Right now we have more mining and oil projects than anyone else. Our land is really rich in resources, so it is in their best interest to have us like this, uneducated and poor, so that we are easier to push around. That's what we are, the Mexican Southeast. That's why we say that the south never dies, and we include Oaxaca because we are the gateway to, well, all of South America. Despite the government's efforts to squash us and silence us, there are still people here struggling.

Gallivan: What does the phrase "do it yourself" mean to you?

Canul: Do it yourself means, very tangibly, self-management and autonomy. We do everything for ourselves. Not so much in the sense of making money, but rather generating ideas in people. To give people a legacy of ideas about the government, the police, to really understand that we are capable of doing everything and don't need anyone from the government to give us permission. To simply explode, by ourselves, our imaginarium, to have a fulfilled and dignified life, without the need for anyone else.

Cernas: It means we don't need patronage because we can sustain ourselves. In terms of art, one does it because they want to, because it is necessary. Simply because we want to, without anyone telling you that you have to do it. So, that's the attitude that we are based on. Do it yourself is what we want to do.

Gallivan: There was a movement in rural Oaxaca in the 1980's, how did that change the way that people think about social movements?

Canul: What was achieved in the 1980's was very contradictory because the people were very disappointed with their government. A president was instated, and then another was elected, but as we say, just because things go right or left doesn't mean that it will be better. The situation didn't change and that caused the people to be very disappointed and lead to the social protests in Oaxaca. Confidence was lost. Confidence in people, society...in collectivity, because we

realized in that moment that collectivity had not achieved anything. All of those human vices and the contradictions of seeking personal gain, that “me before you” mentality, won out. Unfortunately, I think that everyone everywhere still thinks like that. That “me before you” mentality, and it is disguised as development or personal development, and people don’t think about the community or collective anymore, in order to only think about their own property. Anyways, that’s what happened. Ranks were broken. Each person saved themselves by whatever means. There were deaths and disappearances and the people never believed again. The social fabric was broken and twenty years later it was, to a certain extent, reestablished. Obviously with the same old consequences, but the social fabric has been reestablished, but trust, unfortunately, is lacking. Distrust in politicians and in organizations because unfortunately the organizations work for their own benefit, without thinking of the good of society in a generalized way.

Gallivan: Tell me a bit about the political action that people you know carry out now? Direct action? Or?

Canul: Direct action has always been undervalued based on non-violent and passivist discourse, and we can’t talk about that when the state uses violence to uphold itself. Unfortunately, violence does enter the discourse. The violence of self-protection. We often have to use it, not to do harm, well, yes to do harm to he who is doing you harm, because we also can’t let them beat us and humiliate us, I don’t think that anyone allows that. Based on the passivist discourses, direct action has been devalued and people see it as a problem because the powers that be have made us believe that if you don’t shout, no one will hit you. So if you shout, they will hit you, so nobody wants to shout or be hit, because they are afraid. And when someone shouts out, people turn them in because they are afraid to be hit, and then that is used to justify the repression. They say, “you have already vandalized everything, so now it is my turn to vandalize you.” But if the people vandalized everything all at once, well they wouldn’t be able to vandalize all of us because there would be a true union. Nonetheless, the passivist discourses have not fallen out of us and they are used to make the people do the government’s

dirty work and turn in people whose actions probably could have real consequences in the political context.

Gallivan: You say “hit,” but what, specifically, are they afraid of?

Canul: Well, in Mexico you are afraid of everything because once you are identified you are persecuted, accosted, detained; so many people prefer to remain silent. And the people who shout out, who go out, who organize, who question are accused, persecuted, jailed, or killed. I don’t think that anyone wants that to happen to them, so I think that the fear is enormous and the fear is, in some ways, what governs. What makes us do or not do. It’s like with a child, if it misbehaves it will be hit, so it doesn’t misbehave, but who says that “misbehaving” is what the mom considers “misbehaving.” Maybe it seems bad to her but it is good for the child’s learning process. Analyzing all of these things isn’t to say that we are good or bad. It is really about self-defence.

Gallivan: Why, if you think there is a risk, do you keep doing what you are doing?

Canul: Because life is a risk (laughs). No, but really, these are things that have to be done. If you protect yourself, even if they beat you, you create a barrier in that you *do* defend yourself and you aren’t easy prey. You could die trying, but you will prove a lot more than by staying hidden.

Gallivan: What is your thought process while you are creating art?

Canul: It is, more than anything, the exaltation, self-exaltation as a sort of security for the self, but also the contradictions that one has within his thoughts. The contradiction of fighting against someone, but in many ways also being their ally. For example, in Mexico, we say we hate the government or whatever, but we love drugs and alcohol and that is a big part of the system and has us really tied in, so we can be against something but from a different point of view be contributing and probably without even noticing. Art is a legitimization of power so based on my art we legitimize power. Based on my works, the discourse that they have about us, that we glorify violence and that violence will always be there, could be

legitimized. So those are the contradictions that we have, but how do those contradictions help us to get through the context that we live in. And we can do a lot of things, but it is about becoming aware little by little and understanding everything in order to have a real opinion. So, you can think that you are really rebellious, always getting drunk and high, but you are actually contributing to the narco-violence that comes hand in hand with the system. We contribute to our own destruction, the destruction of our society or the youth. But we also have discourses against that. We often have to confront the contradictions in order to cleanse ourselves of them. So, it's those two things: exaltation, and the thing with contradictions which we can use to our advantage, but we have to learn how.

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Navegación en el siglo XVIII - Los españoles en el Pacífico noroeste

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Las técnicas empleadas por los exploradores españoles del siglo XVIII han aportado mucho en el amplio campo del conocimiento de navegación: los cuadernos de bitácora contenían información sobre el viento, el rumbo, las brasas, la velocidad, y observaciones de las condiciones climatológicas. A partir de evidencias encontradas en el Museo de Columbia Británica y el análisis de ciertas bitácoras, se informa sobre los métodos de navegación, como la navegación costera y la navegación de altura. Asimismo, se concluye que hay muchas implicaciones de estos registros hoy en día. Por ejemplo, las observaciones que los capitanes hicieron en sus cuadernos de bitácora dan mucha información que los científicos pueden extrapolar para estudiar el cambio climático ahora.

Keywords: Nutka; Navegación; Pacífico noroeste

1 Introducción

La exploración europea al continente americano, ocurrida entre los siglos XV y XIX, impactó significativamente la tierra, el mar y la población indígena: la nomenclatura de ciertos lugares, como el Estrecho de Juan de Fuca o la Isla Quadra, la extinción de especies animales y vegetales, como la nutria marina, son algunos casos que ejemplifican las consecuencias de la exploración y la colonización. Las herramientas disponibles para los exploradores en esta época son distintas a las usadas en la actualidad; sin embargo, hay mucho que podemos aprender sobre ellas, pues estas han desarrollado a las herramientas de navegación actuales. Mediante una investigación histórica-contextual, se introducirá brevemente sobre la exploración española el Pacífico noreste; y con un análisis de las bitácoras se describirán las herramientas de navegación.

2 Sobre la exploración española del Pacífico noroeste en el Siglo XVIII

A finales del siglo XVI, las primeras expediciones europeas al océano Pacífico del noroeste tenían por objetivo el explorar el Estrecho de Anián (o el Paso del Noroeste). Tradicionalmente, se ha creído que dos marineros al servicio de la Corona Española, Lorenzo Ferrer Maldonado y Juan de Fuca, recorrieron el pasaje mas no hay evidencia sobre estas afirmaciones (Cepeda, 2011; Ruiz, 1998). La búsqueda del Paso del Noroeste fue mayormente hecha por los ingleses, ya que las otras rutas que van de Europa hacia Asia estaban bajo el dominio español y portugués durante esa época; sin embargo, las expediciones entre ambos países fracasaban continuamente (Cepeda, 2011).

En 1493, la Iglesia Católica publicó la bula *Inter Caetera* que delimitó la expansión española y portuguesa en el Nuevo Mundo (Sánchez Bella, 1993). Los españoles trataban de usar esa bula para justificar sus reclamaciones en el Pacífico noroeste, pero el Reino Unido y Rusia, fuertes competidores que buscaban controlar esa

zona, eran anglicanos y ortodoxos respectivamente (Cepeda, 2011; Sánchez Bella, 1993). Por consiguiente, ambos descartaron la autoridad del Papa y no consideraron el documento como válido. Dado que las tierras del Pacífico noroeste no habían sido exploradas extensivamente por los europeos antes del siglo XVIII, el rechazo de la bula no tuvo consecuencias significativas, pero los tres países continuaban con sus intentos de ejercer su influencia sobre la región en los siglos siguientes (Cepeda, 2011).

Con el éxito obtenido por España tras la colonización de Centroamérica y Sudamérica, ella no tenía planes para colonizar el Pacífico noroeste, debido a las distintas dificultades que implicaba el colonizar regiones más septentrionales y del Pacífico noreste (University of Washington, n.d.). Sin embargo, entre los años 1542 y 1800, los exploradores españoles frecuentaban las costas norteamericanas para hacerse de pasajes y estrechos, como el Estrecho de Juan de Fuca, con fines políticos y defensivos (University of Washington, n.d.).

Bajo el mandato del zar Pedro el Grande (1682-1725), los rusos habían anexados distintas regiones que permitían el acceso al Pacífico. Debido a estos avances rusos, el virrey José de Gálvez puso en marcha los planes para mantener la influencia española en las regiones del norte (Cepeda, 2011; Weber, 1994). Pronto, los españoles fundaron el puerto de San Blas, que se convirtió en el punto de partida para los viajes al Pacífico noroeste, e inventaron el cargo de gobernador de Alta California, una posición que el virrey le dio a Gaspar de Portolá. Por casi un siglo después, hubo expediciones sucesivas en esta parte del mundo (Cepeda, 2011; Weber, 1994).

En 1774, Juan Pérez hizo una expedición al Pacífico noroeste con instrucciones del virrey novohispano, Juan Antonio Bucareli. Sus barcos viajaron hasta el punto más norte de la isla de la Reina Carlota y hasta lo que hoy en día es la frontera entre Colombia Británica y Alaska antes de regresar a San Blas. Durante el viaje, Pérez descubrió la Bahía de Nootka y la isla de Vancouver; creyeron que esta isla formaba parte del continente (Cepeda, 2011; Weber, 1994).

El capitán Bruno de Heceta y el segundo de abordaje Juan de la Bodega y Quadra (Cepeda, 2011; Moziño, 1991), a bordo de dos buques, el “Santiago” y la goleta “Sonora”, exploraron en 1775 la

costa del Pacífico noroeste para cartografiar, desembarcar y reclamar la zona en nombre de la Corona española y fundar el Reino de la Nueva Galicia (Cepeda, 2011). Sin embargo, durante el viaje un grupo indígena asesinó a siete marineros. Heceta tomó la decisión de regresar a San Blas debido a las bajas, pero no sin antes de descubrir el Río Columbia. La goleta “Sonora”, sin embargo, continuó su viaje hasta Sitka bajo el control de Quadra. Llegaron a Sitka, un lugar muy importante para Rusia, y se desembarcaron para reclamar la tierra para España (Cepeda, 2011).

Cuatro años después de esas exploraciones, Ignacio de Arteaga y Bodega y Quadra nuevamente embarcaron para ir al norte en las fragatas “Princesa” y “Favorita”. Querían cartografiar más de la costa y encontrar el Paso del Noroeste. Llegaron a los 58 grados, 30 minutos y reclamaron toda la costa noroeste hasta los 61 grados de latitud para España (Cepeda, 2011). Además, mapearon las costas del sur de Alaska y visitaron la Bahía de Nootka. A causa de la guerra entre España e Inglaterra, la próxima expedición no ocurrió hasta 1787, cuando los españoles descubrieron que los ingleses también tenían interés en la misma bahía (Cepeda, 2011).

En 1789, Esteban José Martínez capitaneó los barcos “San Carlos” y “Princesa” hasta Nootka para asegurar los derechos de España en la zona. En cuanto los españoles llegaron en Nootka el 5 de mayo, encontraron dos barcos estadounidenses y uno portugués, pero con tripulación inglesa (Cepeda, 2011; Moziño, 1991). En respuesta, Martínez ordenó la construcción de edificios en Nootka, pero dentro de dos meses, llegó otro barco inglés, el “Argonaut” que contuvo la tripulación, la material de construcción y unos obreros chinos (Cepeda, 2011). Después de una disputa entre Martínez y el capitán inglés, Colnett, quien tenía autoridad sobre la bahía, Martínez tomó control de los dos barcos ingleses, además de una otra fragata inglesa que llegó el 12 de julio. Los barcos confiscados de los británicos se fueron a México mientras que Martínez permaneció en Nootka (Cepeda, 2011; Moziño, 1991).

Unos meses después, Martínez también regresó a San Blas para explicar la confiscación de los dos barcos ingleses durante un tiempo de paz y para convencer al virrey que la presencia española debía ser permanente (Cepeda, 2011). Al año siguiente, en 1790, tres buques españoles llegaron a Nootka bajo el mando de Pedro de Alberni para crear un fuerte, barracones y una villa para los

oficiales. Al mismo tiempo, un gran conflicto político estaba ocurriendo en Europa entre Gran Bretaña y España a causa de lo que había sucedido en Nootka (Cepeda, 2011; Moziño, 1991). Después de una posible guerra entre los dos países, se firmó la Primera Convención de Nootka el 28 de agosto de 1790. “Este acuerdo establecía que para evitar incidentes los navíos ingleses no pescarían ni navegarían a menos de diez leguas de las costas ocupadas por los españoles” (Cepeda, 2011, p.24). Sin embargo, no aplicaba a las tierras que no habían reclamadas por otros países europeos. La sexta cláusula también estableció que ni Gran Bretaña ni España podía colonizar más tierras en América del Sur. Juan de la Bodega y Quadra y Georges Vancouver fueron los encargados de establecer los límites de cada nación; sin embargo, no cumplieron el objetivo porque fue hubo complicaciones en la delimitación de las áreas las áreas (Cepeda, 2011). En 1793 se estableció la Segunda Convención de Nootka y en 1794 se firmó la Tercera, en la que se estableció “ambas naciones podían comerciar en el área de la bahía de Nootka, pero ninguna podía poseer edificaciones permanentes en ella” (Peñas, 2011, p.60).

3 Las herramientas de la navegación

En el tiempo entre los primeros viajes europeos al Nuevo Mundo hasta el Siglo XVIII, hubo muchos avances en la tecnología que los marineros usaban para navegar el mar. Era muy importante que los navegantes supieran a dónde estaban viajando y cómo podían regresar. En el tiempo estipulado en este artículo, en mayor parte, los españoles probablemente usaban la navegación costera para viajar desde el Puerto de San Blas, hasta la Isla de Vancouver y Alaska. Sin embargo, si viajaban fuera de la vista de la costa, empleaban la navegación de altura. Las tres herramientas más importante para la navegación costera y la navegación de altura eran la brújula, la zaga, y el cuadrante. Antes de explicar los dos métodos de navegación, es importante explorar el uso de estos instrumentos que forman la base de todas las observaciones para navegar.

3.1 *La brújula*

En los barcos del Siglo XVIII, el timón estaba situado directamente detrás de la bitácora de la brújula. Las bitácoras estaban hechas de madera de roble y contenían una brújula en cada lado - al tener dos brújulas, se podía asegurar que el timonel siempre pudo ver una de las dos (Reaveley, 2010). La brújula consta de una aguja imantada de acero que se sitúa en una esfera dividida en 360 grados. A causa de la propiedad imantada de la aguja, siempre apuntaba al norte magnético, no el norte verdadero, pero con unos cálculos sencillos, el capitán podía superar este problema. La brújula siempre tenía que estar horizontal porque la aguja tiene que moverse con libertad para dar el rumbo correcto. Por eso, los buques ponían la brújula en una caja de madera con cardanes para mantenerla en una posición horizontal, aunque podía oscilar de lado a lado y de proa a popa. Los timoneles siempre trataban de navegar dentro de un punto del rumbo (Reaveley, 2010).



Una brújula náutica del Siglo XVIII.

Fuente: <http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/42659.html>

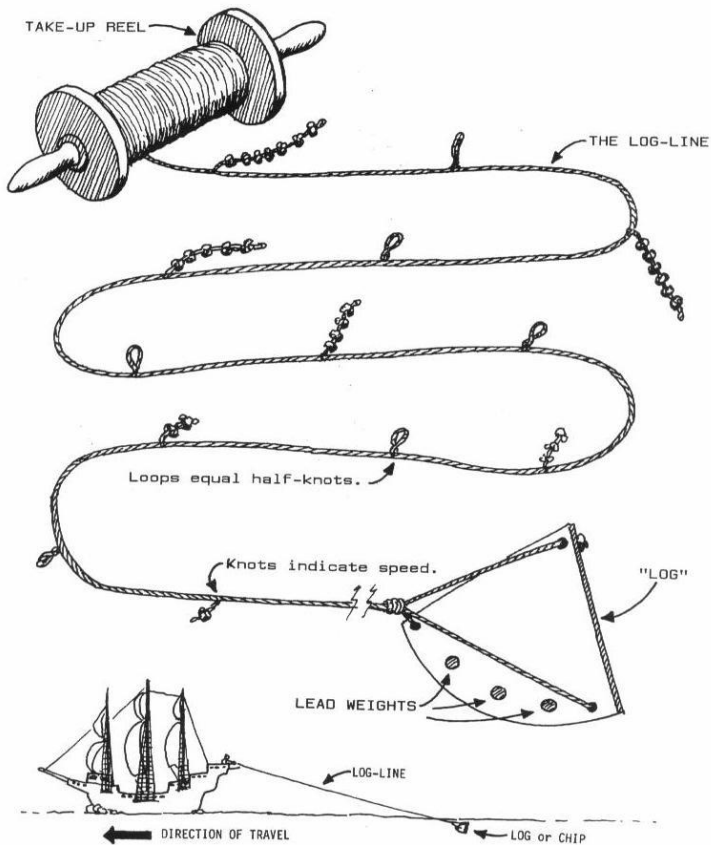
3.2 *La zaga*

Otra observación que fue muy importante para la navegación fue la de la velocidad, o avance (Lamelland, 2010). Se usaba la unidad de “nudos” para esa medida. El término se deriva de los nudos en la cuerda que los navegantes usaban para medir la velocidad cada hora (Reaveley, 2010). La zaga medía la distancia que el buque había recorrido desde un punto fijo en el mar dentro de un tiempo fijo (Reaveley, 2010; Lamelland, 2010).

Usaban una lasca de madera que tenía dos lados rectos y un lado curvado para el punto fijo en el agua. El lado curvado tenía más peso que los otros dos lados y por eso se puede ver la punta de la lasca cuando era quieta (Reaveley, 2010). Se abrochaba una cuerda de 150 brazas a la lasca y un navegante la dejaba caer en el agua una vez cada hora. La cuerda corría y después de algún tiempo, una bandera roja aparecía. Eso significaba que la lasca estaba a una distancia más que el largo del barco atrás. Después de esa primera bandera, habían nudos en la cuerda cada 50 pies (Reaveley, 2010; Carranza, 2013). Cuando veían la bandera roja, un marinero giraba un reloj de arena para 30 segundos y contaba el número de nudos que aparecieron dentro de ese período de tiempo. El número de nudos que contaban era igual a la velocidad del barco (Reaveley, 2010; Carranza, 2013).

Era un método que no era completamente certero, debido a que la lasca nunca estaba completamente estacionaria y había mucha posibilidad de error humano. Sin embargo, se contaba con la anulación de estos errores a lo largo del día y durante los viajes muy largos (Reaveley, 2010; Carranza, 2013).

The Log-line



Un ejemplo del uso de la zaga.

Fuente: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mosmd/logln.jpg>

3.3 *El cuadrante*

El cuadrante, que se inventó a los finales del Siglo XVIII, fue muy importante para los oficiales porque lo usaron para tomar la observación del sol a mediodía. El cuadrante, “simula el movimiento de la esfera celeste con relación a la esfera terrestre de referencia, y su propósito es solucionar problemas de astronomía esférica combinando la geometría y la trigonometría” (USAL, n.d., n.p.). Los oficiales usaban esa observación para calcular la latitud, la longitud, la altitud y la hora del día o de la noche. Fue especialmente importante cuando el capitán necesitaba verificar si la latitud observada fue precisa. Si encontraba una diferencia, el capitán podía cambiar la información en su cuaderno de bitácora (USAL, n.d.; Reaveley, 2010).



El uso de un cuadrante.

Fuente:

<http://animacionesastronomicas.bligoo.es/media/users/24/1233472/images/public/364074/cuadrante.png?v=1360515537885>

4 El uso de los cuadernos de bitácora

En esa época, los navegadores usaban cuadernos de bitácora para saber de dónde venían, a dónde navegaban, y para documentar una variedad de elementos de su viaje. Dentro de estos cuadernos, se puede encontrar tablas de casi cada día de su viaje, pero, aunque a primera vista veían iguales, cada país tenía diferentes métodos de recordar. Para esta investigación, comparé una tabla de los ingleses a una tabla de los españoles dado que ambos países estaban en el Pacífico noroeste al mismo tiempo y por eso llegué a aprender su uso.

4.1 Una explicación de las tablas y sus componentes

Los cuadernos de bitácora recordaron los rumbos, la velocidad y cualquier otro evento de importancia durante un día marino. Normalmente, el cuaderno era 11" x 17", de tapa dura y tenía una tabla de columnas verticales en cada página. El cuaderno fue muy importante tanto para la navegación costera como la navegación de altura ya que el capitán lo usaba para calcular la situación del buque a mediodía cada día (Reaveley, 2010; Durán, 2002). Un día para los navegantes constaba de veinticuatro horas, desde las 12 (mediodía) del primer día hasta las 12 (mediodía) del próximo día. Existían varios tratados y compendios de navegación que explicaron el uso correcto del cuaderno de bitácora, por ejemplo el *Compendio de Navegación para el uso de los Caballeros Guardia-Marinas*, de Jorge Juan (1757, pp.194), en el cual dice:

El Diario en la Navegación es un cuaderno o libro, en que se lleva la cuenta y razón del camino que hace la Nave; esto es, empezando desde su salida del Puerto, ú desde que se quieren empezar a levar las Anclas, se apunta diariamente por donde ha caminado, donde se halla a una hora dada, próximo a que parajes se pasa, y muchas veces el camino que falta hacer para ir a un punto dado... También suele apuntarse el viento que ha corrido, y las tempestades acaecidas, y esto con no poco fruto; pues como en muchas partes del Mundo suelen reynar siempre unos propios

vientos y tempestades, á lo menos en ciertos tiempos del año, pueden servir estos apuntes para que tomen sus medidas los que después hubieren de navegar en los mismos Mares (Durán, 2002, p.92).

Así que, por la mayor parte, incluían las mismas observaciones, pero cada capitán tenía su propio estilo. Abajo es un ejemplo de un cuaderno de bitácora de un buque inglés:

Bound on Discoveries towards the South Pole.

No.	Course	Wind	R.	Bar.	Remarks
1	West	N.W.	4	29.5	Remains in anchorage, February 4 & 5, 1840.
2	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
3	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
4	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
5	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
6	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
7	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
8	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
9	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
10	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
11	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
12	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
13	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
14	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
15	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
16	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
17	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
18	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
19	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
20	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
21	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
22	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
23	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
24	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
25	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
26	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
27	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
28	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
29	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
30	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
31	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
32	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
33	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
34	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
35	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
36	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
37	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
38	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
39	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
40	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
41	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
42	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
43	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
44	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
45	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
46	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
47	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
48	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
49	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
50	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
51	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
52	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
53	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
54	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
55	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
56	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
57	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
58	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
59	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
60	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
61	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
62	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
63	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
64	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
65	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
66	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
67	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
68	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
69	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
70	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
71	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
72	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
73	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
74	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
75	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
76	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
77	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
78	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
79	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
80	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
81	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
82	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
83	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
84	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
85	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
86	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
87	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
88	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
89	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
90	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
91	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
92	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
93	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
94	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
95	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
96	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
97	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
98	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
99	West	N.W.	4	29.5	
100	West	N.W.	4	29.5	

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Título: *Bound on Discoveries towards the South Pole*
Fuente: Cambridge University Library
(<http://193.60.88.193/content/images/MSRGO-00014-00058-000-00057.jpg>)

Los cuadernos de bitácora de los españoles que encontré en los archivos de Columbia Británica tuvieron tablas muy parecidas a la de arriba. No es posible hacer copias de ellos, pero abajo es un ejemplo de cómo se veían las columnas:

H	M	M	B	Rumbo	Vientos	A

Para interpretar esa tabla, consulté algunas explicaciones de tablas ingleses y españolas, porque aunque tienen un orden diferente, las observaciones eran estandarizadas y recordaron la misma información.

- La columna “H” se refiere a cada hora del día marítimo. Las primeras doce horas son del mediodía hasta medianoche en el primer día y las próximas doce horas son de medianoche hasta el mediodía del próximo día. Aunque en la primera tabla (la de los ingleses) las horas van de 1 a 24, las horas en las tablas españoles van de 1-12 y 1-12 para separar los dos días calendarios.
- La primera columna “M” se refiere a los minutos de la hora cuando el capitán tomó la observación.
- La segunda columna “M” se refiere a la las millas por hora que el barco recorría, usualmente usaban la unidad de velocidad, “nudo”, que es equivalente a una milla náutica por hora.
- La columna “B” refiere a las brazas, que los navegantes usaron para medir la profundidad del mar. Una braza es equivalente a 2 varas o 1,6718 metros. Los navegantes usaban la plomada para medir el número de brazas.

- La columna “Rumbo” muestra el rumbo de la brújula que el timonel conducía durante cada hora. Siempre recordaron la dirección en relación al norte de la brújula, no del norte verdadero. A mediodía del día segundo, el capitán corrigió los rumbos al norte verdadero.
- La columna “Vientos” muestra la dirección de los vientos en relación al norte de la brújula.
- La columna final “A” se refiere al abatimiento del barco (Durán, 2002).

Aunque la tabla inglesa tiene una columna para “remarks” en la cual los navegantes recordaron la fuerza del viento, el tiempo o cualquier otra observación sobre el viaje, los españoles escribieron sus comentarios en un párrafo al final de la página. Algunos de los Archivos de Columbia Británica, por ejemplo, fueron:

Según la latitud observada y la resulta de la diferencia de ayer así hallé el complemento del viento lo navegado de estar 24 horas al sur ángulo de 75 grados.

Según la latitud observada hallé el complemento del rumbo navegado estar 21 horas al sur de 36 grados a lo corregido.

Según la latitud observada hallé el rumbo navegado estar 21 horas al norte.

5 **La diferencia entre la navegación costera y la navegación de altura**

Durante el Siglo XVIII existían dos métodos principales de navegación en el mar. La primera era la *navegación costera* y la segunda *navegación de altura*. Cuando los buques viajaban desde Europa hasta las Américas, usaban la navegación de altura; sin embargo, cuando estaban involucrados en comercio o estaban explorando la costa, usaban navegación costera. Usualmente, los capitanes empleaban navegación costera cuando el buque estaba a

20-30 millas de la costa (Reaveley, 2010). Así que, durante la primera y la última parte de una travesía transatlántica, también empleaban la navegación costera. Las secciones próximas explorarán estos métodos en más detalle.

5.1 *La navegación costera*

Cuando un buque navegaba cerca de la costa, el capitán aseguraba que estaban a menos de 20 millas de la costa para no varar en agua poco profunda. Para preparar el rumbo, los navegantes no perdían la vista de diferentes puntos de referencia, por ejemplo los cabos, las bahías o los bosques. Estas características estaban recordadas en mapas o en otras gráficas producidas a bordo; usaban esas referencias para asegurar la distancia de la costa para anclar (Reaveley, 2010).

Durante el viaje, el primer oficial tomaba el rumbo a menudo con una brújula y el capitán lo recordaba con la hora y el punto de referencia. Después, el capitán aplicaba la variación magnética para derivar el rumbo verdadero del punto de referencia con respecto al norte geográfico. El capitán dibujaba una línea desde el punto hasta el mar para saber donde se situaba el buque (Reaveley, 2010).

Otro método que usaban para calcular su situación fue la fórmula: el horizonte del observador en millas náuticas es igual a la raíz cuadrada de la altura del observador en pies encima del nivel del mar multiplicado por 1.2 (Reaveley, 2010).

Ejemplo: El capitán está 20 pies encima del nivel del mar.

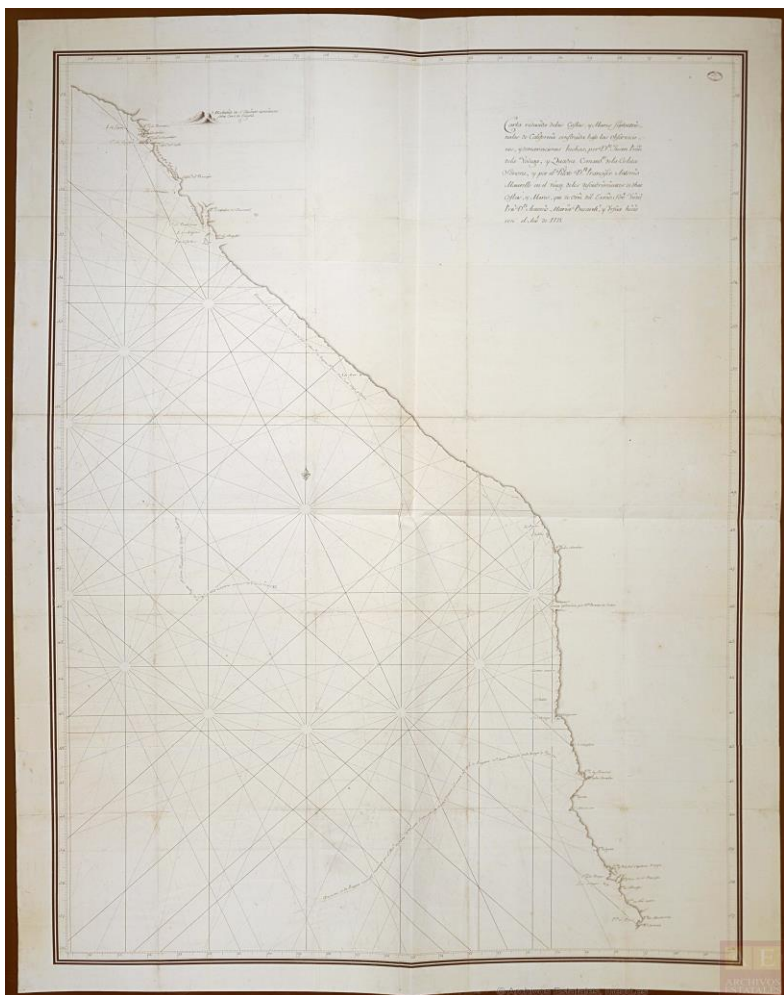
Su horizonte = $\sqrt{20 \times 1.2} = 4.9$ millas.

Los navegantes usaban estos cálculos y las brújulas para dibujar las costas de lo que hoy en día son los Estados Unidos y Canadá. Esas cartas náuticas, también conocidas como portulanos, y después como cartas planas, se basaron en la latitud geográfica, porque fue la observación más usada para derivar la situación (UCL, n.d.; George, 1991). Hubo muchos cambios a esas cartas con los años, ya que se encontraron varios problemas asociados con el

cálculo de los rumbos, pero con tiempo se logró la exactitud (Fernández, 2012).

En 1569, Gerhard Mercator, un geógrafo belga, inventó su proyección que es todavía conocida como la proyección Mercator. Esa proyección fue mucho más precisa que las otras porque los ejes del globo y del cilindro coinciden. Por eso, esa mapa representa las líneas del rumbo constante como segmentos rectos que conservan los ángulos con los meridianos. Esa proyección se convirtió en la proyección más popular para la navegación náutica aunque exagera la superficie de las tierras cerca de los polos (UNAM, n.d.).

En el siglo XVIII, los mapas empezaron a ser mucho más exactos al nivel científico. Fue muy importante para los marinos tener mapas precisos para navegar con exactitud. La introducción de instrumentos como la brújula, el compás, la lámina y el sextante hizo el proceso mucho más fácil (UNAM, n.d.). Además, el invento de algunos aparatos de relojería, como el astrolabio, estableció cálculos de latitud y longitud más exactos. El astrolabio reproduce los movimientos del sol y de las estrellas y por eso los navegantes lo usaron para saber la hora del día o de la noche y todavía usaban los portulanos, que “limitaban a delinear costas, puertos, islas, profundidades marinas” (UNAM, n.d., n.p.). Aunque no incluyeron información sobre los territorios, fueron necesarios para la navegación costera. Abajo es un ejemplo de un especie de portulano dibujado en la goleta Sonora:



Título: Carta reducida de las costas y Mares Septentrionales de California, construida bajo las observaciones y demarcaciones hechas por Don Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra Comandante de la goleta Sonora y por el Piloto Don Francisco Antonio Maurelle en el viaje de los descubrimientos de dichas costas y Mares que de orden del Excmo. Señor Virrey Frei Don Antonio Maria Bucarely y Ursua hicieron el año de 1775.

Código de Referencia: ES.41091.AGI/27.17//MP-MEXICO,309 (Archivo General de Indias)

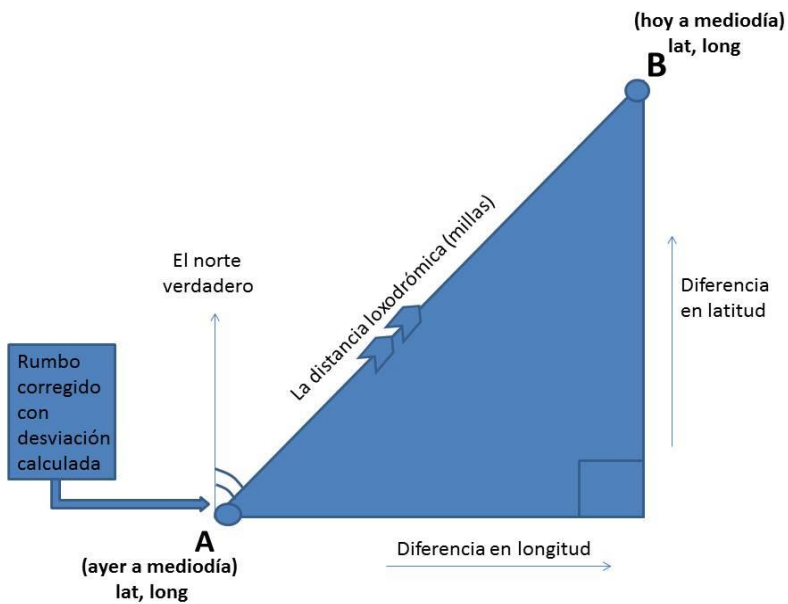
5.2 *La navegación de altura*

Los navegantes usaban la navegación de altura cuando no podían ver la costa. Se usaba la brújula para recordar el rumbo, se medía la velocidad con la zaga y se escribía sobre cualquier cambio en los vientos que podía afectar el abatimiento del barco cada hora. Al mediodía cada día, el capitán revisaba todas las observaciones recordadas en el cuaderno de bitácora (Reaveley, 2010).

Durante mi investigación, descubrí algunos triángulos en copias de microfilm de los cuadernos de bitácora. Lo que me interesaba fue que solo hubo aproximadamente tres ejemplos de esos triángulos y yo quería saber el uso y la razón de por qué no hubo más. Lo que descubrí es que los navegantes solo usaron triángulos cuando estaban en las zonas de alta mar y aguas profundas porque no habían puntos en la costa hasta donde podían dirigir el barco (Reaveley, 2010). Usaban los triángulos para calcular de dónde venían, su rumbo, su latitud y longitud. Esa técnica se llama “la navegación por estima” (en inglés, “Dead Reckoning”), y en esta sección se ve en más detalle (Reaveley, 2010). No hubo muchos triángulos porque durante la mayoría de sus viajes al norte, los españoles seguían la costa desde San Blas.

Al mediodía cada día, el capitán usaba una tabla de las latitudes y longitudes (en inglés, un *Traverse Table*), para sumar todos los rumbos y las velocidades corridas cada hora para derivar el “Rumbo corregido” y “Distancia corrida” (Reaveley, 2010). Después, el capitán tenía que corregir el “Rumbo corregido” a causa de la variación magnética. Para derivar la variación, el capitán avistaba Polaris con la brújula y derivaba la diferencia entre el norte verdadero y el norte de la brújula. También, los capitanes tomaban el ángulo de la salida del sol y la puesta del sol y los comparaban con las tablas en la almanaque náutica, que dieron los rumbos verdaderos de la salida y la puesta del sol para aquel día (Reaveley, 2010).

Cuando corregía el rumbo por la variación magnética, resultaba el verdadero “Rumbo corregido con desviación calculada”. Este verdadero “rumbo corregido” y la “distancia loxodrómica” formaron dos lados de un triángulo de ángulo recto (Reaveley, 2010; Lamelland, 2010). El eje del sur al norte era la diferencia de las latitudes en millas y el eje del este al oeste era la diferencia de las longitudes en millas, por ejemplo:



Dado que el capitán tuvo la latitud y la longitud del día previo, convertía las millas corridas del norte al sur y del oeste al este en grados y minutos de latitud y longitud para calcular las coordenadas de aquel día (Reaveley, 2010). Es muy fácil calcular la latitud, como se ve abajo:

$$\begin{aligned} 1 \text{ milla náutica} &= 1 \text{ minuto de latitud} \\ 60 \text{ millas náuticas} &= 1 \text{ grado de latitud} \end{aligned}$$

$\therefore$ la diferencia en millas = la diferencia en latitud

Por ejemplo:

$$93 \text{ millas de latitud} = 93 \text{ minutos de latitud} = 1 \text{ grado y } 33 \text{ minutos de latitud}$$

Sin embargo, habían muchos problemas asociados con el cálculo de la longitud. Por muchos siglos la longitud se consideró como “el límite puesto por Dios a la inteligencia humana” (Férrandez, 2012, p. 210). Solo fue en el final del siglo XVIII que derivaron cálculos para esas coordenadas. Los meridianos de longitud se unen hacia los polos, así que 1 grado de longitud es igual a 60 millas al ecuador, pero es igual a solo 47 millas más norte (Reaveley, 2010). Así que, el capitán tenía que usar una fórmula de trigonometría para calcular la longitud, con la suposición que el rumbo y la distancia del barco resultaron en la hipotenusa del triángulo dibujado arriba (Reaveley, 2010). Se calcula la diferencia en millas desde el oeste al este con una tabla náutica de senos, cosenos y tangentes así:

La diferencia en millas del este al oeste / coseno de la media-latitud

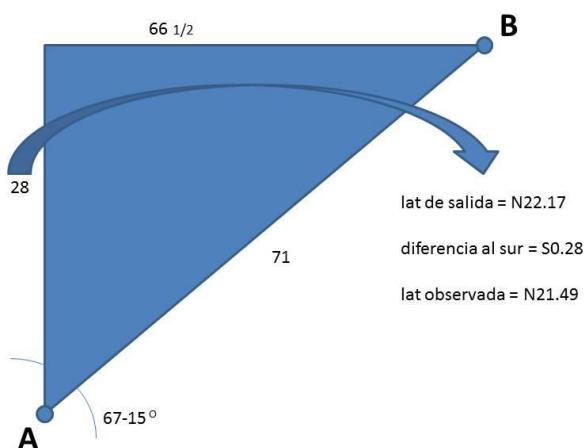
Por ejemplo:

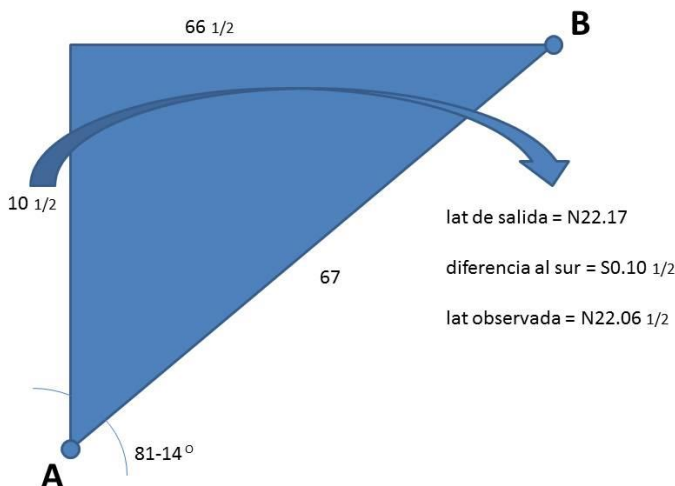
A 39 grados de longitud

$$93 \text{ millas} / \cos(39) (0.70772) = 120' = 2 \text{ grados de longitud}$$

Con todos estos cálculos, el capitán se quedaba con la diferencia en latitud y la diferencia en longitud para derivar la posición de aquel día al mediodía - a esto se le llama la “situación estimada” (Reaveley, 2010; Lamelland, 2010). Para asegurarse del resultado, el capitán también observaba el sol a su zénit porque su altitud en ese tiempo se relaciona con la latitud del observador. Para hacerlo, se consultaba el almanaque náutico para saber a qué hora tendrá que observar y para tomar en cuenta los factores de corrección para ese día. Usaba el cuadrante para esa observación y comparaba su latitud por estima con su latitud observada para ver si tenía que corregirla (Reaveley, 2010; USAL, n.d.). Por otro lado, los cálculos para derivar la longitud observada eran considerados complejos para la época y por eso usualmente no se calculaba la longitud observada en el siglo XVIII.

Aquí dos ejemplos de triángulos que encontré en los archivos:





En primera vista los triángulos parecen un poco diferentes del primer ejemplo que mostré, pero es porque los barcos estaban viajando del norte hacia el sur, no del sur hacia el norte. Se puede ver en sus cálculos que lo más probable es que usaban las millas corridas desde el norte hacia el sur y las convirtió en grados de latitud para derivar la latitud llegada (u observada), como describí arriba. Lo más probable es que el capitán usaba esa diferencia y la sustrae de la latitud salida (del día anterior) para derivar la latitud llegada. El primer triángulo sugiere que viajaban 28 millas hacia el sur, y 28 millas es lo mismo que 28 minutos de latitud. Así que $N22.17 - 0.28 = N21.49$. Lo mismo pasa con el segundo triángulo. El cálculo sugiere que viajaban 10.5 millas hacia el sur. Dado que 10.5 millas es lo mismo que 10.5 minutos de latitud, $N22.17 - 0.10 \frac{1}{2} = N22.06 \frac{1}{2}$. No hubo cálculos para el longitud, entonces podemos suponer que fue una estimación a causa de los problemas asociados con su cálculo.

Aquí están ejemplos de los variables que se asocian con los cálculos de navegación de altura. Las vi en los microfilmes de Freeman Tovell en los archivos de Columbia Británica. Había listas al lado de las tablas de navegación para los cálculos, y se puede ver que contienen la misma información que describí arriba, como la distancia, y como se la usaba para estimar la diferencia de latitud, los dos valores para latitud (estimada y observada, la que se deriva del uso del cuadrante), y solo un valor para la longitud. Desafortunadamente, eran de calidad muy pobre y no se podían distinguir los números, pero esas listas nos dan una idea de sus cálculos:

Distancia

Diferencia de latitud

Latitud por estima

Latitud observada

Distancia al mar

Longitud hecha

Longitud de San Blas

Rumbo al sur

Distancia total

Diferencia de latitud

Latitud observada

Latitud por estima

Distancia al mar

Longitud hecha

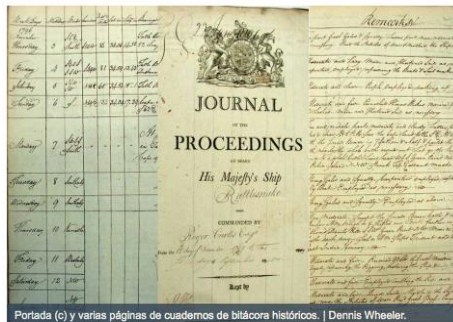
Longitud de San Blas

6 Las implicaciones de los cuadernos de bitácora hoy en día

Es muy evidente porque los cuadernos de bitácora eran tan importantes durante la era de exploración; sin embargo, lo que a veces fallamos es reconocer que todavía tienen mucha importancia. No solamente formaron la base de todo lo que sabemos hoy de la navegación, de la ciencia astronómica, y la cartografía, pero también investigaciones nuevas sugieren que podemos aprender mucho sobre el cambio climático gracias a esos cuadernos. Esa idea ha generado

mucho entusiasmo y ha sido recalcado por las noticias. Como se puede ver, ambos El Mundo y la BBC ha tenido titulares sobre estas investigaciones dentro de los cinco años anteriores:

Cuadernos de bitácora del siglo XVIII para estudiar el creciente deshielo del Ártico



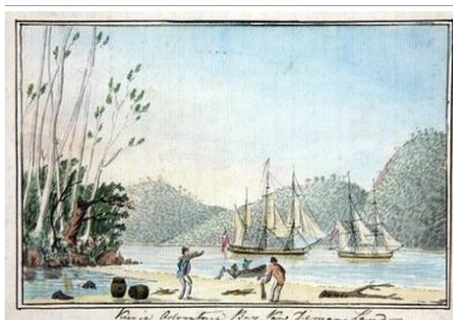
Portada (c) y varias páginas de cuadernos de bitácora históricos. | Derrnia Wheeler.

- Un proyecto estudiará los libros escritos en expediciones entre 1750 y 1850
- Serán utilizados para investigar los cambios en el clima del Ártico
- Las mediciones de la capa de hielo con satélites se realizan desde 1979

Logbooks may yield climate bounty

By Judith Burns

Science and environment reporter, BBC News



Whytootackay Island by Lieutenant G Tobin aboard HMS Providence in 1792

Scientists hope weather data from 18th Century ships' logbooks will throw new light on how the climate has changed in the past 200 years.

Investigadores de la Universidad de Sunderland están estudiando una multitud de cuadernos de bitácora para ver si hay alguna pista sobre el cambio climático. Específicamente, están analizando cuadernos de bitácora de barcos de comerciantes, balleneros, exploradores y de la armada que viajaban cerca del ártico entre 1750 y 1850. Estos cuadernos eran los principales recursos usados para recordar el tiempo en el mar. Como vimos antes, los capitanes tomaron observaciones cada hora sobre las condiciones del clima y por eso, hoy en día, podemos tener un idea del tiempo en cualquier parte del mundo en un día definido (Wheeler, 2011).

En este tiempo, no existía el uso extendido de los combustibles fósiles que ahora afectan el clima mundial, así que las observaciones cualitativas sobre el clima tienen mucho valor. Además, es la única fuente de información histórica que los investigadores pueden encontrar sobre este tema porque normalmente consultan otro tipo de información representante como anillos de árboles y núcleos de hielo (Radford, 2014). Navegantes de los barcos que viajaban cerca del polo norte hicieron observaciones sobre la profundidad de icebergs y capas de hielo. Se puede comparar estas estimaciones con la información que tenemos hoy en día sobre la cobertura de hielo en el ártico - un tema de gran relevancia entre tanto la comunidad científica como para la población mundial en general. La mayoría de esa información es de los barcos ingleses que buscaron el Paso del Noroeste o de comerciantes de la Compañía de la Bahía de Hudson (Radford, 2014).

Durante el siglo XVIII no existían aparatos para medir la temperatura y la presión atmosférica; sin embargo, el elemento meteorológico más importante fue el parámetro del viento que aparecía en todos los cuadernos de bitácora del siglo XVIII; eso puede ser muy útil para reconstruir los campos de viento y la circulación sinóptica durante esa época (Durán, 2002). Por ejemplo, un estudio dirigido por Marc J. Prohom Durán de la Universitat de Barcelona, analizó la dirección y fuerza de los vientos en un barco llamado el *Araucana* desde el Golfo de Cádiz hasta Cuba en el Siglo XIX. Se dio cuenta que sobre un área cerca del golfo de Cádiz, el capitán observó chubascos y un flujo del SSW. Después el flujo giró al NNW que nos muestra que estaban viajando en un área de

presiones bajas. Observó algo similar cuando el barco navegó al oeste de las Islas Canarias. La presencia de vientos del oeste y lluvia y vientos del noroeste muestra un sistema depresionario (Durán, 2002).

Ya que toda la navegación de esa época fue por vela, los vientos eran muy importantes para el viaje entre Europa y las Américas. Se puede ver en los cuadernos de bitácora que existían vientos moderados del este que mantenían su fuerza hasta el centro del Atlántico hasta las Antillas (Durán, 2002). Estos vientos son conocidos como los vientos tropicales y van en sentido este-noreste en el hemisferio norte. Son nacidos cerca de las células subtropicales de altas presiones y ahora se sabe mucho de su velocidad y dirección constante gracias a los récords de estos navegantes (Durán, 2002).

La mayoría de las investigaciones en la literatura ahora sobre el uso de cuadernos de bitácora es para estudiar el cambio climático han sido sobre viajes en el Atlántico, y sobre todo los viajes de los barcos ingleses. Es una oportunidad para climatólogos españoles de usar la información de los navegantes en el Pacífico noroeste del Siglo XVIII. Podemos deducir mucho de sus observaciones, aún así están hechas con instrumentos menos avanzados de los que existen hoy en día. Hay una variedad de glaciares a través de esa costa, especialmente en Alaska, y sería interesante investigar si hay observaciones sobre éstas y si hay, ver como las describieron porque seguro eran mucho más profundas que hoy en día comparado con hoy, porque algunos climatólogos dicen que hay más tormentas ahora a causa del calentamiento global. Como Durán (2002) señala, hay entonces cuatro elementos positivos que podemos tomar de estos documentos:

- (1) la existencia de un buen conocimiento de la metadata gracias a la conservación de diversos tratados y compendios de navegación;
- (2) las anotaciones en los diarios de navegación proporcionan información sobre las condiciones meteorológicas en áreas del planeta con escasa información, como los océanos;
- (3) la presencia de continuas medidas latitudinales y longitudinales hacen posible la precisa localización de la nave y, en consecuencia, de la meteorología ligada a ese punto, y
- (4) se trata posiblemente del registro no instrumental con

mayor resolución temporal, la horaria (Durán, 2002, p. 101).

7 Conclusión

Hay una larga historia de exploración de la costa del Pacífico noreste, tanto por los españoles como por los ingleses, los americanos, y los rusos. Aunque las anécdotas y diarios personales de los navegantes pueden parecer más interesantes a primera vista, es importante no olvidarse de la importancia de sus métodos de navegación y de sus observaciones. No solo formaron la base de cómo viajamos hoy en día, pero tienen implicaciones científicas muy importantes sobre temas contemporáneos, como el cambio climático.

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