





PLVS VLTRA

University of Victoria

Undergraduate Journal of
Hispanic and Italian Studies

Volume 3, No. 1

Spring 2017

Copyright © 2017

ISSN 2369-0585 (Online)

Authors contributing to *PLVS VLTRA* agree to release their articles under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 Unported license. This license allows anyone to share their work (copy, distribute, transmit) and to adapt it for non-commercial purposes provided that appropriate attribution is given, and that in the event of reuse or distribution, the terms of this license are made clear.

Authors retain copyright of their work and grant the journal right of first publication. Authors are able to enter into separate, additional contractual arrangements for the non-exclusive distribution of the journal's published version of the work (e.g. post it to an institutional repository or publish it in a book), with an acknowledgement of its initial publication in this journal.

The opinions expressed in *PLVS VLTRA* are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Editors of the Hispanic and Italian Department. *PLVS VLTRA* is a peer-reviewed journal. While every effort is made by the Editorial Board to ensure that *PLVS VLTRA* contains no inaccurate or misleading citations, opinions or statements, the information and opinions contained within are the sole responsibility of the authors. Accordingly, the Publisher, the Editorial Board, the Editors and their respective employees and volunteers accept no responsibility or liability for the consequences of any inaccurate or misleading information, opinion, or statement.

EDITORIAL TEAM

Academic Advisor

Dr. Beatriz de Alba-Koch

Editor-in-Chief

Adam Barron, B.A. Hons. (Victoria); B.Ed. Candidate

Assistant Editor

Kyle McCreanor, B.A. Hons. Candidate (Victoria)

Editors

Stephen Bagan, B.A. Candidate (Victoria)

Meghan Casey, LL.M. (Kent, Brussels)

Adso E. Gutiérrez Espinoza, M.H. Candidate (UAEMéx)

Kathryn Houston, B.A. Hons. Candidate (Victoria)

Vaughan Lewis, M.A. (Victoria)

Sandra Maldonado, B.A. (U. Cuenca); M.A. Candidate (U. Loja)

Kristi Meredith, B.A. (Victoria)

Nicole Nairismagi, B.A. (Victoria)

Jenny Osorio, M.A. (Alberta)

Carys Pinches, B.A. Hons. (Victoria) ; M.Sc. (Oxford)

E. Dane Rogers, B.A. Candidate (Victoria)

Irene Vitale, B.Com. Candidate (Victoria)

Design Manager

Oriana Varas, B.A. (Victoria)

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.

PLVS VLTRA is indexed online through the LOCKSS Program based at Stanford University and a physical copy of the journal is archived in Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa.

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

Volume 3 of *PLVS VLTRA* was published with the assistance of the University of Victoria Student Union Publishing Grant at Print Three in Nanaimo, British Columbia.

Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies
University of Victoria
PO Box 1700, STN CSC
Victoria, B.C., Canada, V8W 2Y2
hisptaljournal@uvic.ca

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Notes on <i>PLVS VLTRA</i>	i
Foreword from the Chair	ii
Message from the Editor-in-Chief	iii
Bernini's Beloved Sculpture: Gian Lorenzo Bernini's Portrait Bust of Costanza Piccolomini	
Sandra Wheeler (University of Victoria)	1
Native Speakers' Attitudes towards Conversations in Language Textbooks	
Jenny Osorio (University of Alberta)	19
La disidencia por la música: Viridiana de Buñuel y <i>Peppermint Frappé</i> de Saura	
Nicole Nairismagi (University of Victoria)	37
La creatividad de Carlos Saura bajo la censura franquista	
Kathryn Houston (University of Victoria)	43
Tigres azules: la obra de Jorge Luis Borges y la búsqueda del infinito	
E. Dane Rogers (University of Victoria)	50

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

FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR

Plus Ultra, an annual, peer-reviewed showcase of extraordinary research papers, sees its third 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.

Many persons have been involved in this project. The editor in chief, Adam Barron, and the team of editors, Stephen Bagan, Meghan Casey, Adso E. Gutiérrez Espinoza, Kathryn Houston, Vaughan Lewis, Sandra Maldonado, Kyle McCreanor, Kristi Meredith, Nicole Nairismagi, Jenny Osorio, Carys Pinches, E. Dane Rogers, and Irene Vitale, 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

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I would like to express my gratitude to the following people who had major roles in the creation of Volume 3 of *PLVS VLTRA*: Dr. Dan Russek for providing us with the cover photo; Cormac O'Brien for assisting in securing the University of Victoria Students' Society publication funding; Kyle McCreanor for being the journal's representative in organizing the annual Faculty of Humanities undergraduate journal launch party and for playing a significant role throughout all three volumes; Meghan Casey, Founder of *PLVS VLTRA*, for being a voice of encouragement; Donna Fleming, Departmental Secretary, for being a vital part of each of the three volumes; Inba Kehoe, Scholarly Communication Librarian, for her technical assistance; and Dr. Beatriz de Alba-Koch for providing ongoing support to the journal.

To everyone who submitted to Volume 3 of *PLVS VLTRA* and to all of the authors selected to be published, I want to thank you for entrusting us with your work. It has been a pleasure to lead this journal over the past two years and I sincerely wish that this publication never loses the indelible support that it has received from the talented students of the Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies at the University of Victoria.

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

Bernini's Beloved Sculpture: Gian Lorenzo Bernini's Portrait Bust of Costanza Piccolomini

Sandra Wheeler
University of Victoria
swheeler@uvic.ca

The portrait bust of Costanza Piccolomini by Gian Lorenzo Bernini holds a special place in Baroque art history. Art historians have referred to the singular sculpture as “Bernini’s Beloved” because he applied his virtuoso style to achieve a lifelike intimate portrait of his young lover. But the background story of his relationship with Costanza does not favour a romance when examining the realities of a women’s lives in seventeenth-century Italian society. Costanza is Bernini’s beloved only in that she reflects the thing he most loved, his art.

Keywords: Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Costanza Piccolomini, Italian Baroque sculpture, women in seventeenth-century Italy

1 Introduction

When studying the portrait bust of Costanza Buonarelli Piccolomini (1637) (See Appendix A, 1) by Italian Baroque artist Gian Lorenzo Bernini, it is obvious that the sculptor was intimately acquainted with his subject. He has frozen her for eternity in what appears to be a brief moment of time. Her thick hair is loosely drawn back in a twisted braid with a large untamed curl on her forehead and another at the nape of her neck. Her face is young and beautiful. Her lips are full. He has

arrested her just as she is preparing to speak, with her shoulders turning ever so slightly. Was she about to respond to a question? Her chemise is slipping off her shoulders and falls open to reveal her right breast. How could this be anything but lovingly carved to express his deepest devotion to the woman? Art historians have romanticized Bernini and Costanza's relationship claiming her portrait represents "a fierce and sensual woman who is shown in the grip of passion..." (Desmas et al., 20). This viewpoint is biased, and as suggested in this essay, this perspective does not take full account of the subordinate role of women in the stratified society of Rome during the Baroque era.

There is no doubt that passion produced this beautiful work of sculpted marble. But in seventeenth-century Rome, the story of Bernini and Costanza is far from a romantic one, as this paper demonstrates. Bernini created sculpture in marble and bronze with an original virtuoso style, forging a new direction in portrait sculpture. His realistic style used naturalistic effects to heighten the drama of movement and the delicacy of details. His carving also took full advantage of natural light and shadow to define his subject. Costanza's bust shows off his infinite talent. It was this talent and passion for portraiture that created this work of art, and not his love of the subject.

2 Bernini, Virtuoso Artist and Architect

Bernini was born in 1598, the precocious son of sculptor Pietro Bernini who is best remembered for his work, the *Fontana della Baraccaccia* at the foot of the Spanish Steps in Rome. At a young age Bernini began carving in his father's studio and at sixteen came to the attention of important patrons like Scipione Borghese and his uncle Pope Paul V Borghese. Commissioned by the Borghese family, he became famous for the classical sculptures *Apollo and Daphne*,

(Appendix A, 2) *the Rape of Proserpina* and *David*. These pieces established a new style of work in marble. Highly realistic, often capturing the figures in a fleeting moment in time they were a complete re-imagining of the subject matter and executed with exquisite detail and skill. Dramatic and dynamic, they freeze a moment of narrative tension in the stories they depict. Bernini masterfully chose not just any moment, but *the* moment that defines the very essence of each story.

Bernini had access to both ancient and Renaissance sculpture for study. The ancient sculpture entitled the *Laocoon*, (Appendix A, 3) is thought to have been carved in the second century BCE. It was unearthed in Rome in 1506 and displayed at the Vatican. It had been a profound influence on Italian artists from the Renaissance onward to the Baroque. This sculpture depicts a story recounted in Virgil's *Aeneid*. The very dramatic scene shows the bodies of *Laocoon* (a Trojan priest) and his two sons captured in the grip of a snake-like monster. They are twisting and writhing in agony and despair, unable to free themselves. Michelangelo is said to have modeled some of the *Ignudi* male figures on the Sistine Chapel ceiling on the figures in the *Laocoon* sculpture (Barkin, 15). Bernini would have been familiar with this sculpture as well as Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling and these works could have influenced his desire to capture a dramatic moment in time. When viewing Bernini's work, it seems he has distilled the essence of the inner emotional drama into a single image.

By the time Bernini carved Costanza's bust he was "the architect to St. Peter's" (Wittkower, 120) appointed by Pope Urban VIII and in charge of the decoration of the new St. Peter's Basilica. At this time in history, religious art was being created in the service of the Counter-Reformation. The theatrical and dramatic style of art created during this period by Bernini and other painters and sculptors was specifically

designed to attract and retain followers of the Roman Catholic Church. The Church was keen to provide experiences in their buildings that would inspire devotion to God (Dixon, 198). Personal friend to the Pope and other Roman elite, Bernini was dashing, charming and “master of the world,” although it should be noted that this description was attributed to him by his own mother! (McPhee, 48) By the time Bernini carved his bust of Costanza, he was often lauded as a genius. He had been made a “cavaliere” or knight, a rare and honoured designation. He was already recognized as an incomparable expert in carving marble. He was also 39 years old and unmarried (Mormando, 55). The increase in his social standing and his growing notoriety would have put Costanza and her husband at a disadvantage. In Roman society, they were of a lesser rank and viewed to be much lower on the social stratum.

3 The Plight of Women in Baroque Italy

It is important to examine what society was like in Rome in the early 1600s. Much of our knowledge of this time period is gleaned through public court records, public documents recording legal transactions between people, as well as general vital statistic records. It is our good fortune that Romans were civic-minded and good record keepers. We can follow Costanza through her life by looking at these records. We know that she was born to Leonardo Piccolomini of Viterbo. While her father was descended from the noble Piccolomini clan (Popes Pius II and Pius III), he was from a branch of the family without the wealth and means to afford a dowry for his daughter to marry. She petitioned and was granted a dowry of 45 scudi from the Confraternity of San Rocco (McPhee, 24). Two years later she was granted a second dowry from the Confraternity of the Gonfalone, which had very strict requirements and granted dowries only to

young women of unquestionable virtue. Confraternities were religious organizations run by laypeople. They were formed to minister to the poor, sick, and vulnerable in urban societies, and they provided dowries for young women found to be of sound character. Granting access to dowry funds meant that the selected women gained the chance to marry more favourably (Black, 178).

The security of marriage allowed these women to become socially acceptable members of society. Young women without a dowry from their father or a confraternity to support them had few options. They could be sent to nunneries and resigned to religious life, but convents usually also required a dowry. Young women left alone without support would often become servants and were then subject to the dangers of sexual abuse (Black, 179). The fact that Costanza was awarded the dowries and was then able to marry, points to a virtuous start to her life.

Matteo Buonarelli of Lucca married Costanza Piccolomini in 1632. Matteo was also a sculptor by trade and worked steadily on the decoration of the new St. Peter's Basilica directly under the supervision of Bernini. Matteo was modestly successful as a sculptor, able to obtain commissions by himself as well as having steady work at St. Peter's. How Costanza came to the attention of the Cavaliere Bernini is unknown. It is not inconceivable that Costanza was renowned for her beauty, but it is also notable that in seventeenth-century Rome, where names and heritage were so valued, her maiden name of Piccolomini could have drawn his attention. Indeed, it was her misfortune to be chosen by the Cavaliere because the events that followed had tragic consequences for Costanza.

4 Costanza's Fate

Men did not look at women as equal partners in seventeenth-century Rome. The dowry system was in full force and seen as a pressing social problem distressing to poor families with daughters (Black 177). Wives were deemed an expense, therefore necessitating the existence of dowries to cushion the transition. In patriarchal and Catholic Rome, a woman's virtue was something to be protected and defended (Black, 178). Under normal circumstances, a husband would fight to defend and retain his wife, someone who, regardless of affections, was viewed as his property. What weight could the protestations of a minor sculptor have against the Cavaliere, a man of much higher social standing and notoriety? Bernini was also the man responsible for providing an income to Matteo and Costanza by way of a paycheck for work in St. Peter's. In choosing Costanza, a married woman, it would seem Bernini could not have had anything but selfish intentions of exploitation. What other reason could an unmarried man of 39, reported to be extremely devout, have in choosing a married woman of 22 from a lower class as his consort, even if she had a noble heritage? It is plausible that Matteo would have been powerless to prevent Bernini from doing as he pleased with Costanza.

Bernini began an intimate affair with Costanza sometime before 1636. He created his portrait bust of her, something well-known and much-talked-about in Rome. One night, he caught his younger brother Luigi leaving her house in the early morning hours. (Luigi was also a sculptor and he also worked in St. Peter's. As the Cavaliere's brother, Costanza's husband Matteo would also have been subordinate to him.) Bernini found out about the tryst and chased Luigi until he caught him and beat him, breaking Luigi's ribs in rage. For revenge against Costanza he enlisted the help of a servant. The servant arrived at her house with a cask of wine,

and when she opened the door, he drew a blade and slashed her face. This horrible practice was not a unique occurrence. It was something men often did to prostitutes either as punishment if they displeased them or to prevent them from seeing other clients (Mormando, 56).

These women were permanently marked as “fallen” women and their options in society became very limited. For her affair Costanza was sentenced to imprisonment for adultery, a serious crime at the time. She was removed to the Monasterio di Casa Pia, a reforming social institution created to provide refuge for “Convertite”. “Convertite, (the converted) was the name given to prostitutes converted from a life of sin. There, in 1638 Costanza spent 4 months until her husband Matteo was allowed to retrieve her and return her to their home (McPhee, 51). The fact that her husband immediately went to retrieve her when her sentence ended speaks volumes about his anguished role in the drama. He not only took her back but they would work together for the rest of his life, building his reputation as a sculptor (now no longer working for Bernini). The couple became an integral part of the artist community in Rome and they functioned as both creators and dealers of paintings and sculpture (McPhee, 137).

We know a bit about the rights of women from the court case that follows Costanza’s disfigurement (McPhee, 2). But the case study of another Baroque artist, Artemesia Gentileschi, provides an additional perspective. As a young girl, Artemesia was raped by the artist Agostino Tassi. Tassi was in a position of authority as her painting master when he assaulted the seventeen-year-old Artemesia. The trial that follows documents how difficult it was for women to be believed in court if they were brave enough to protest. Artemesia, for example, was tortured with *sibille*, the use of metal rings slowly tightened around her fingers to establish that she was being truthful in her accusations (Garrard, 21). No such methods were used on Tassi. Artemesia was able to

display the scars of her experience very eloquently with her choice of subject matter in her later paintings (Appendix A, 4). Unfortunately for Costanza, her scars were prominently displayed on her face.

5 A Singular Work of Art

What makes this bust a work of Baroque art? Why is it unique, new, fresh, and different? Indeed, why is it special? Firstly, it is unusual in that it depicts a woman. Very few portrait busts were made with women as the subject. The busts that do exist are of noble women, usually in clothing that is decorous and elaborate (Appendix A, 5). They were made to provide a likeness but also to establish that the sitter was wealthy, as marble was a very expensive medium. Second, it depicts a woman in the style Bernini perfected – that is, it captures a brief moment in time in addition to capturing the natural essence of the subject, the personality. It is a “speaking likeness” (Wittkower, 88) following the early Greek tradition, possibly referred to in the Odes of Anacreon, written in the sixth century BCE, in which the poet addresses the painter of his beloved: “It is all I ask: it glows, it lives, it soon will speak” (Anacreon). It also captures some of the emotional vivacity that one finds in the Laocoon.

With the turn of her head and the tilt of her shoulders, Costanza appears to be in motion, perhaps she is just about to address the viewer. Bernini sculpts her in motion to provoke the expectation that Costanza will soon speak to us. Her eyes are wide and actively engaged with her audience. From this we infer a lively personality, she appears to be a woman with wit and spirit. Her hair is carved to give the appearance of depth and texture. His use of the chisel to define her hair as coarse, wavy and natural leaves one with the impression that she was earthy and robust, in the prime of her life. The play of light and shadow on her hair contributes to the realism. Her

chemise, in contrast, is weightless and soft, gently-gathered, and falling open to reveal her right breast. Bernini chose a warm cream-coloured marble. Her face glows. Her lips are full with the slightest upturn at the corners. She has a small cleft in her chin. With these details one would definitely recognize her if one encountered her in the street. Lastly, and most importantly, this is a very intimate look at a lovely woman. She is not depicted as a saint or mythological character, but as herself. Costanza's likeness is unique because other portrait busts in marble of non-noblewomen in ordinary clothing simply are not known to exist prior to this imagining (McPhee, 4).

6 For the Love of Art

Why was this piece of art created? We cannot answer this question with certainty because to date no documents have been found in Bernini's hand attesting to his intentions. However, Bernini was commissioned to do portrait sculpture frequently during this time period (Desmas, 125). He almost certainly made this piece for himself, but he did not hide it away in a closet. It was well-known in artistic circles. He created the sculpture in an expensive medium usually reserved for commissions by Popes and wealthy clients. He chose marble because he intended the bust to last. This leads me to conclude that he chose to sculpt her because she was available to him and he knew her intimately. Therefore, it would be easier for him to successfully capture her in stone.

It was his goal to capture the essence of the person he sculpted and he may have sculpted this piece in his endeavour to perfect his technique. A subsequent sculpture of King Louis XIV is a brilliant example of his success in this same technique. He has captured the regal, sweeping majesty of the king with the same effective use of fabric, motion and light (Appendix A, 6). But it doesn't reveal the same intimacy. He

was intimately acquainted with Costanza, and we know he felt passionate and possessive of her as evidenced by the results of his brother's incursion. But was she the "beloved" one in his life?

No, I don't think there is a plausible case for this assumption. I think he was passionate about his art, and very egotistical. After the incident with his brother, he disfigures her and casts her aside. No remorse or recompense is recorded. For all of the trauma he wrought the only consequence he may have suffered was a wound to his ego. The Pope imposed a fine of 3000 scudi, not an insignificant amount, however; he was never forced to pay it and eventually the Pope withdrew the decree. He was also sentenced by the Pope to marry, which he did in 1639 and then went on to father 11 children (McPhee, 48).

7 Conclusion

Bernini's likeness of Costanza endures as one of the finest examples of his virtuoso technique. It is an important contribution to sculpture in the Baroque style, a style that he pioneered, and an even more important contribution to the history of sculpture as a singular portrait of a woman. But is it a reflection of the romantic ideal? Yes, it is definitely that – a reflection of an ideal likeness of a beautiful woman, portrayed in an intimate manner. Unfortunately, after closer examination, I do not believe romance was part of the reality. Costanza is Bernini's beloved only in that she reflects the thing he most loved, his art.

Appendix A



Figure 1

Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Bust of Costanza Piccolomini, 1637
Museo Bargello, Firenze. Image from ARTstor: www.artstor.org



Figure 2

Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Apollo and Daphne, 1622
Galleria Borghese, Roma



Figure 3

Ancient Greek circa. second century BCE, The Laocöon Group,
I Musei Vaticani, Roma

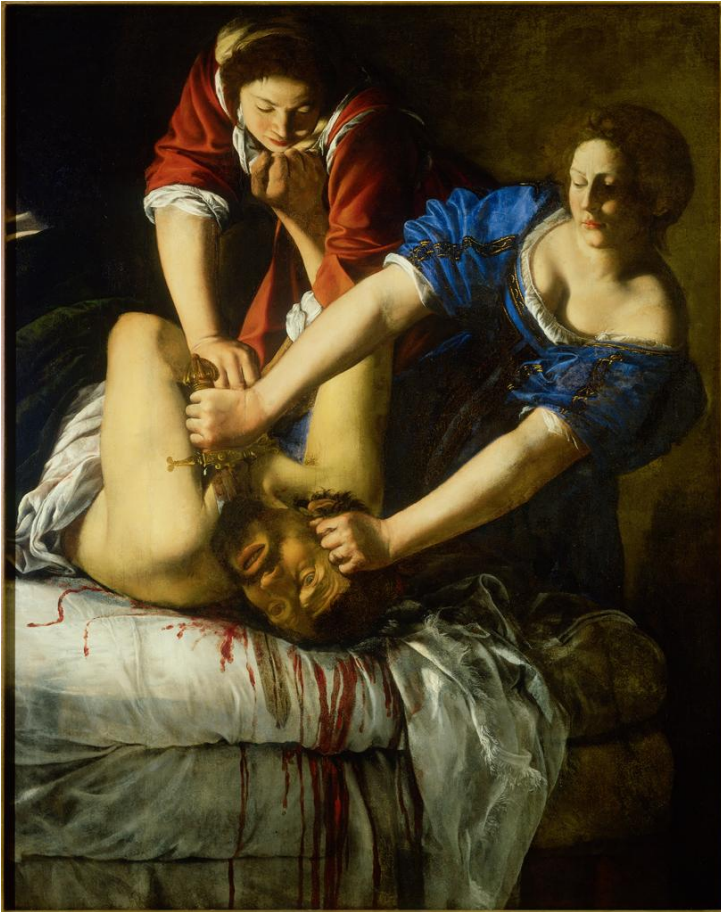


Figure 4

Artemesia Gentileschi, Judith Beheading Holofernes, 1611-12
Museo di Capodimonti, Napoli

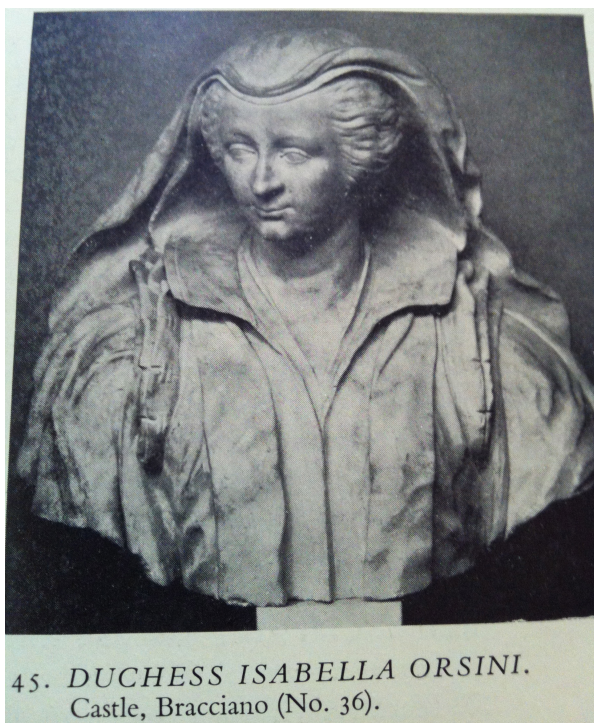


Figure 5

Gian Lorenzo Bernini, The Duchess Isabella Orsini, (circa 1635). Image from Wittkower, pg. 257



Figure 6

Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Portrait Bust of Louis XIV, 1665

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Jamie Kemp for having inspired me to do my best work. Her guidance and feedback always made me see things in a new light. I would also like to thank Dr. Catherine Harding for her continuing counsel and direction in my art historical writing.

Works Cited

- Anacreon, Thomas Moore, Thomas Nugent, John Stockdale, and Thomas Gillet. *Odes of Anacreon*. London: Printed for John Stockdale, Piccadilly, 1800. Print.
- Barkan, Leonard. *Michelangelo: A Life on Paper*. New Jersey: Princeton, 2011. Print.
- Bell, Janis Callen, and Thomas Willette. *Art History in the Age of Bellori: Scholarship and Cultural Politics in Seventeenth-Century Rome*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. Print.
- Black, Christopher F. *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003. Print.
- Desmas, Anne-Lise, Andrea Bacchi, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Catherine Hess, and Jennifer Montagu. *Bernini and the Birth of Baroque Portrait Sculpture*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2008. Print.
- Dixon, Susan M. *Italian Baroque Art*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008. Print.
- Garrard, Mary D. *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1989. Print.
- McPhee, Sarah, and Gian Lorenzo Bernini. *Bernini's Beloved: A Portrait of Costanza Piccolomini*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2012. Print.

Mormando, Franco. *Bernini: His Life and His Rome*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2013. Print.
Wittkower, Rudolf, *Gian Lorenzo Bernini, the Sculptor of the Roman Baroque*. London: Phaidon Press, 1966. Print.
Images: ARTstor: www.artstor.org

Native Speakers' Attitudes towards Conversations in Language Textbooks

Jenny Osorio
University of Alberta
josorio@ualberta.ca

This paper examines the structure of conversations in Spanish textbooks compared to conversations in real life context. According to Scotton, a conventionalized exchange is an interaction for which there is a general sense of “script” (1988). The sequences presented in textbooks are usually well-structured and grammatically accurate, but they often lack pragmatic appropriateness. The current study focuses on three aspects: how dialogues are presented in Spanish textbooks, the perceptions of native speakers towards these dialogues, and their attitudes when listening to them. Four different recordings (two from textbooks, one from a Spanish speaking soap opera and one from a Spanish movie) were listened to by 10 native speakers of Spanish from different countries and backgrounds. The recordings presented three types of situations: introductions, invitations, and casual conversations between friends. After listening, the participants were asked to express their perceptions of the naturalness of the conversations using a Likert scale and open and closed-ended questions. The results showed that participants perceived some unnatural features in the conversations from the textbooks with regards to speech rate, conversation sequence, and grammatical structure. It is argued that teaching material developers and teachers should consider

the differences between the linguistic and pragmatic aspects of a language, in order to provide students with the pragmatic competence for successful communication in the target language.

Keywords: authentic material; authentic-sounding material; textbook evaluation; dialogues; Spanish as a foreign language; second language

1 Introduction and Previous Research

One of the main goals of language education is that students be able to communicate efficiently in the target language. This means that both oral comprehension and communication skills play an important role during the language acquisition process. As stated by Huth and Taleghani-Nikazm (2006), language education should “enable students to anticipate, interpret and produce the target language [...] so that they may act socio-pragmatically appropriately when engaged in real-time talk-in-interaction in the target-language culture” (65).

Language input is a necessary condition for learning any language, and the student should be ideally surrounded with the target language as much and as often as possible during their learning process. The language instructor should provide different types of language input in order to attain the communication goal. Unfortunately, having access to didactic material is not always easy.

Language textbooks are usually the principal source of target language exposure within the classroom. In countries like Canada or United States, where the population is multicultural, it is comparatively easy to find someone who speaks a second language to provide students with a different source of language; On the other hand, places where the studied language is a foreign language, textbooks are often the

“only” opportunity students have to encounter the target language besides the instructor.

Language textbooks are usually divided into skills: writing, reading, speaking and listening; they also have a grammar section to explain the structure of the language and its specificities. Within the listening skill, the dialogues presented in textbooks aim to help students to improve their oral communication skills in the target language; here is where most of them fail.

Previous studies have shown that language textbooks do not give a fair model of actual and real language use as they lack a sense of natural interaction (Scotton and Bernstein, 1988; Wong, 2002). Yu (1994) states that some of the aspects in which language materials differ from authentic discourse are conversational structures, opening and closing sequences, use of lexis, and the use of grammatical structures (57). A study conducted by Scotton and Bernstein (1988) showed that natural direction-giving of native speakers of American English contains more turns and parts than typical textbooks. Moreover, language textbooks try to teach oral interaction patterns using elements usually found in written language (Rivers, 1981, cited in Yu, 1994, 1). This results in a linguistic clash and in a probable communication breakdown when language learners encounter native speakers and use complex structures rarely used by the latter.

1.1 Use of Authentic Material

Authentic material has been defined as the language produced by native speakers in a real situation, not produced for didactic purposes (Jordan, 1997 in Kilickaya, 2004). It has been increasingly claimed that the use of authentic material is essential in a language classroom as a source of input in the target language, and that it should be used as a model for textbook dialogues (Scotton and Bernstein 1988). Moreover, it

has been suggested that material from Conversation Analysis should be used in teaching languages (Huth and Taleghani-Nikazm, 2006). The “exposure to unplanned discourse (repetitions, hesitations, rephrasing, interruptions, false starts, meaningless additions, contractions, less complex syntactical patterns, etc.)” prepares students for the language they will be more likely to encounter in a real-life context. (Yu, 1994, 45).

One of the problems of working with authentic material or natural speech is their reduced availability. The “observer’s paradox,” coined by Labov (1972), posits the difficulty to gather and use authentic conversations. This is why some scholars have given to authentic-sounding material the credits to be taken as a didactic tool in language teaching.

1.2 Use of Authentic-Sounding Material in the Language Classroom

Conversations from TV-shows and movies are increasingly being used in second language classrooms as a tool to teach pragmatics and oral communication skills. As explained by McCarthy and Carter, “dramatized data such as plays and soap operas not written with any intention of displaying or teaching language forms are often an excellent source of data considered by consumers to be natural” (1994). Although these materials are not entirely “authentic,” they involve spontaneous questions, responses, and comments (Scotton and Bernstein, 1988; Han, 1992; Wong, 2002).

2 Research Questions

As we have seen from the previous studies, the sequences presented in language textbooks are usually well-structured and grammatically accurate but lack pragmatic appropriateness. Most of the studies have focused on the comparison between dialogues in textbooks and real-life or

real-like contexts (TV shows, soap operas, recordings from conversation analysis, among others) following a linguistic approach, but none of them have gathered the opinion of a native speaker regarding the naturalness of the features taught in language classes. The current study aims to analyze the perceptions of native Spanish speakers when listening to dialogues from different sources (soap operas, movies and textbooks). The following questions will be studied:

- Do the dialogues (presented in the selected Spanish textbooks) sound natural according to a native speaker?
- What is the native speaker's attitude when listening to these dialogues?
- What are the elements that native speakers consider to be important when judging the naturalness of a conversation?

3 Methodology

Conversation analysis was used to analyse the data for this project. Previous studies have used this methodology to compare and identify sociolinguistic aspects in oral interactions. Research carried out by Grant and Starks (2001) used conversation analysis to compare conversation closings from ESL/EFL textbooks and soap operas. They found that soap operas' conversations presented more "natural" and appropriate closings than textbooks, and had the advantage of body language to reinforce the communication (48). A later study by Wong (2002), in which he analysed telephone dialogues in ESL textbooks and compared them with real telephone conversations, revealed that pragmatic elements related to sequence were absent in the textbook dialogues. These elements included differences in greetings, (self)-identification and "how are you" sequences (40). For the present study, the phonetic, pragmatic and syntactic aspects of

the four dialogues were analysed using conversation analysis following the interviews.

3.1 Participants

Ten native Spanish speakers (five men, five women), from different Spanish speaking countries were asked to listen to four different conversations in Spanish and to share their opinions answering a short questionnaire after each dialogue.

Country	Age-range	Number of participants
Colombia	24-29	4
Cuba	30-35	1
Ecuador	18-23	1
Mexico	18-23	2
Nicaragua	18-23	1
Spain	30-35	1

3.2 Materials

Four recordings of conversations were used in this study: two of them from Spanish textbooks, one from a soap opera and the last from a movie. Although two of the recordings had video available, the participants only listened to the audio. The recordings were played in the following manner:

3.2.1 *Gente 3* (2005) (track 13). Spanish textbook dialogue, intermediate level (2.15 min.)

This is a foreign language textbook from Spain. The level of the intended students is B2 according to the European Framework of Reference for Languages. It focuses on cultural aspects of the language. Each chapter contains a short Spanish-speaking movie or a story by a Spanish speaking author as a reference for the chapter. Chapter four explores

travelling and the different destinations and activities in the Spanish speaking countries. The dialogue was chosen because of its linguistic features with respect to the accents of the speakers.

The dialogue is between two friends, an Argentinian woman and a Chilean man (as indicated by their accents). The woman tries to convince her friend to go on vacation to Antarctica. She explains the itinerary and answers her friend's questions.

3.2.2 *Con una pistola en cada mano* (2012). Spanish movie, first scene. (2.15 min.)

This movie showcases the typical situations men find themselves in within a given society. It portrays the weaknesses of what is typically seen as the “stronger” gender, making a critique to their “machismo” and their role in a contemporary egalitarian society.

This first scene is between two male friends that meet by coincidence after a long time without seeing each other. One of them comes out from a session with his therapist and is crying. They talk about their families, their lives, and how they ended up on different tracks. The choice of this dialogue is to showcase the use of idioms and interruptions usually found in natural conversations. Additionally, the Spanish accent gives the characteristics of a European culture, as opposed to Latin American.

3.2.3 *Nuevo ven 1* (2003) (track 8). Spanish textbook dialogue, beginner level (40 sec.)

This is a level A1 Spanish foreign language textbook, level A1. It uses a task-based methodology allowing students to scaffold their learning as they process linguistic concepts and practice the language. This short dialogue is between three

people in a plane or in an airport (it is not specified). They introduce themselves, stating their names and the country they come from (Spain, as they mention). The choice of this dialogue was made because of the evident artificiality of the language. The objective is to contrast this dialogue with the others that seem more natural and authentic-sounding.

3.2.4 *Alguien más* (2013). Mexican soap opera, episode seven, middle scene (1 min.)

This soap-opera tells the story of two friends that work together in a company. They start having problems as they both fall in love with the same man. The dialogues presented are lexically rich and the performance is almost dramatic.

The last dialogue is between two (Mexican) female friends. The first speaker invites her interlocutor to a meeting, but she refuses, saying that she has to go a birthday party. The woman continues talking about the birthday guy. This dialogue was chosen for its musicality and the use of idioms by the speakers. Moreover, the close relationship between the characters is easily perceivable, even though the participants only listened to the audio.

3.2.5 *Questionnaire*

The questionnaire that follows the listening task asks the participants their perceptions about how natural the conversations sound. They answer the same questions for each conversation immediately after listening to it. The questionnaire includes both open and closed-ended questions. At the end of the session, the participants were asked to add any further comments about their perceptions.

4 Analysis and results

In the first question, the participants were asked to say if they liked or did not like the dialogue heard, based on their personal opinions. The following table shows their responses.

Criteria		Dialogue 1	Dialogue 2	Dialogue 3	Dialogue 4
Did you like the dialogue?	Yes	6	4	0	3
	No	1	1	8	1
	-	1	3	0	4

Respecting dialogue one, most of the participants said they liked it because of its topic: vacation time and travel. On the other hand, the participants agreed in disliking dialogue three, expressing that the speakers talked too slowly and that the topic was not interesting. With respect to the other two dialogues (two and four) the participants did not express any further opinion besides stating that it was a conversation commonly found among women.

The second question asked the participants to rate how natural or artificial the dialogue sounded using a Likert scale from one to five. The following table shows their perceptions:

Criteria		Dialogue 1	Dialogue 2	Dialogue 3	Dialogue 4
Artificial	1	0	0	5	0
	2	2	0	2	0
	3	4	0	0	0
	4	1	4	1	4
Natural	5	1	4	0	4

The opinions were largely common when evaluating the dialogues two and four (from the movie and the soap-opera). The participants agreed that they sounded natural

based on what they would normally hear in a conversation between friends. With respect to dialogue one, most of the participants were not sure about the naturalness of the conversation; although two of them rated it natural based mostly on the accents. Three participants perceived it as artificial, arguing that the accents seemed exaggerated. For the third dialogue, the participants noted that the conversation was artificial mainly because of the rate of speech.

When asked about what aspects seemed to give an artificial air to the dialogues, participants mentioned elements that are not used in natural conversations. These features were divided in phonetic, pragmatic and syntactic aspects.

4.1 Phonetic Aspects

4.1.1 Exaggeration

Within this category, for dialogue one, the participants recognized the speakers' accents (Argentinian and Chilean) but noted that there was an exaggeration in the accents used, especially the Chilean accent.

Another aspect, this time with respect to dialogue three, is pronunciation. Three participants noted that one of the speakers over-vocalized what he said:

1 Alvaro *yo ViVo y trabajo aquí*
 'I live and work here'

The /v/ usually pronounced softly between vowels in Spanish, is over-pronounced here, sounding almost as a /b/. Although the phonetic difference is almost imperceptible in Spanish, the participants (all native speakers) were able to notice this feature. Furthermore, some participants mentioned that the speakers "pronounced all the letters of the words."

4.1.2 Lack of Emotion

Respecting dialogue three, the participants expressed their opinion stating that the speakers seemed to read the lines as if it were a “script.” Some of them mentioned that it sounded “robotic,” making it “artificial.” Moreover, in contrast with dialogue four, in which the participants noticed the musicality of the language, dialogue three was described as having a flat tone and lacking emotion.

It is interesting to see that even though all the dialogues had a guiding script, given their origin (textbooks, movies and soap-operas), this aspect was noticed only with dialogue one and three (the latter being more obvious). This gives a hint about the use of authentic-sounding material in the language classroom. It seems that the origin of the dialogues is not as important, as long as it has the natural conversations’ musicality and shows emotion.

4.1.3 Speech Rate

The silences and the speech rate were also mentioned by the participants as features that show the lack of naturalness in the dialogues. In dialogue two, in which two Spanish friends meet and talk about their lives, the participants noted that the speakers talked too fast and that because of their accent, at some point, it was difficult to follow their conversation. In contrast, participants said that dialogue three was “too slow” and “lacked fluidity.”

4.2 Pragmatic Aspects

4.2.1 Lack or Misuse of Linguistic Fillers and Idioms

One of the aspects mentioned by the participants with respect to the pragmatic features was the lack or misuse of idioms and

linguistic fillers. The participants agreed that dialogue two and four sounded more natural because of the linguistic fillers and the “unfinished sentences” used by the speakers. From dialogue 4:

- 2 Speaker *pues si amiga, así va la cosa*
 ‘well, yeah, that’s how life goes’

An important fact is that although dialogue one is the dialogue that contains most idioms, the participants surprisingly mentioned that one unnatural aspect was the lack of idioms.

- 3 Javier *tai loca*
 ‘you’re crazy’

- 4 Javier *me da un poco de lata*
 ‘I don’t know if I want to go’

This suggests that the idioms and the linguistic fillers alone are not sufficient elements to make a conversation seem more natural. The participants might not have noticed them because of their lack of musicality or their flat tone.

Not only did some dialogues lack idioms, but in others they were misused. When listening to dialogue one, two participants mentioned that one of the expressions used by the female speaker was “not characteristic of the accent she [was] performing” (Argentinian) but rather Spanish, from Madrid.

- 5 Lola *¡Hombre!*
 ‘Come on!’

This might look unimportant when seeing the dialogue as a whole, but if we think of the pedagogical implications of presenting the linguistic features of a specific place or group,

the idioms play an important role in defining the identity and uniqueness of the group.

4.2.2 Conversation Sequence. Q-A-Q-A

The conversation sequence was a feature that most of the participants noticed when identifying the unnatural aspects of the dialogues. They said that dialogue three seemed to be an “interrogatory” rather than a natural conversation that they would have when meeting someone. Some mentioned that “it [did] not allow the speakers to have a “real”¹ conversation.”

- 6 Alvaro *¡Hola! Vosotros sois los nuevos compañeros de viaje, ¿no?*
 ‘Hi! you are the tourists, aren’t you?’
 Fernando *Sí, Sí. ¡Hola! ¿Qué tal?*
 ‘Yes, yes. Hi! How is it going?’
 Alvaro *¡Hola! Sois españoles, ¿verdad?*
 ‘Hi! You’re Spanish, right?’
 Victoria *Sí. ¿Cómo los sabes? ¿Tú eres español?*
 ‘Yes. How do you know? Are you Spanish?’
 Alvaro *Sí.*
 ‘Yes.’

As we can see, the dialogue three is interactionally inadequate, as it follows a question-answer-question-answer sequence. In contrast, the sequence in dialogue four is more natural, allowing side comments and interruptions.

- 7 Jas *Si quieres podemos caerle a ver cómo va*
 ‘if you want, we can go today and see how it goes’
 Speaker *¿Hoy?*
 ‘today?’
 Ahj, no puedo.
 ‘ahh, I can’t’

¹ Emphasis added by the participant.

- Cumple años Arturo, un amigo de
 Martin y nos invitaron a una fiesta guey.
 ‘it is Arturo’s birthday, a Martin’s friend
 and they invited us to a party, man’
- Jas *Orale Arturo...*
 ‘aham, Arturo...’
- Speaker *Exacto Arturo*
 ‘exactly, Arturo’
- Jas *¿Y qué? ¿Cuántos años cumple?*
 ‘so, tell me! How old is he?’

4.2.3 Non-register Correlation

Unlike dialogue four, where participants noticed the “complicity” between the female friends when talking about their birthday friend, in dialogue one they mentioned the lack of closeness between the speakers.

- 8 Lola *dale Javier, animate, ¿por qué no venís con nosotros?*
 ‘come on, Javier, let’s go, why don’t you come with us?’
 cuantos más seamos, más barato nos saldrá el viaje
 ‘the more we are, the cheaper we’ll pay’
 y la vamos a pasar muy bien, dale...
 ‘and we’re going to have fun, come on...’
- Javier *a mí me da un poco de lata, la verdad no sé*
 ‘well, I don’t know if I want to go’
 porque está súper lejos y hace un frio allí que no verás
 ‘cause it’s so far and it’s cold down there,
 you can’t imagine’
- Lola *mira... mira*
 ‘listen... listen’
- Javier *¿Cuándo vas?*
 ‘when are you going?’

In this dialogue (one), the speakers are supposedly close friends, planning to go on vacation together. Although they use the Spanish informal pronoun “tú” for “you” and its

corresponding conjugation (*tutear*), the participants agreed that the dialogue did not sound as intimate as it should be, given the elements of closeness.

4.3 Syntactic Aspects

4.3.1 Grammatical structure

The participants perceived that the structures used in some dialogues were not characteristic of the oral expression, making the conversation grammatically dense. In dialogue one, the speakers use the simple future tense “will” instead of the near future “going to”, the latter mostly used in spoken interaction.

- | | | |
|----|------|--|
| 9 | Lola | <i>Nos iremos de escalada.</i>
'We will go climbing' |
| 10 | Lola | <i>Dormiremos en unos refugios</i>
'We will sleep in a shelter' |

Another aspect mentioned by one participant about dialogue one was the amount of information shared, stating that “the list of places was too long”. Respecting this last aspect, there are differences between the written and spoken discourse. As stated by Brown and Yule (1983, cited in Yu, 1994), the density of information is one of them. The participants seemed aware of this difference, as they mentioned that the large amount of information given by Lola makes the conversation unnatural.

5 Discussion and further research

The results of this study show the perceptions of Spanish native speakers when listening to dialogues from different

sources. Features noticed as unnatural were grouped in phonetic, pragmatic and syntactic aspects. Among the phonetic aspects, features like pronunciation, speech rate and silences were noted. In the pragmatic group, the lack or misuse of linguistic fillers and idioms, inadequate conversation sequence and non-register correlation were observed. Additionally, the misuse of grammatical structures was detected with respect to the syntactic aspects.

It is clear that according to the participants, the four dialogues show different features, making some of them sound natural or artificial. These same factors could be seen as important in a dialogue to determine its naturalness or artificiality. However, as this paper is a pilot project, the sample of data analysed is not enough to make generalizations on the naturalness/artificiality of textbook dialogues. Another factor playing a role is the number of participants: with a larger group and a larger set of data (having more dialogues per group: textbook/movie/soap opera) results could be more conclusive.

Now, as mentioned in the introduction, if target language input is important during the language acquisition process, what kind of language input should be provided to students? As pointed out by the participants, elements such as linguistic fillers and responders (oh, mm, yeah, etc.) give a conversation a more natural air. Additionally, language instructors should focus on spoken grammar (Ochs, Elinor et al, 1996) to some extent, as this is a feature that native speakers consider important when judging a conversation as natural or artificial.

We can conclude as well that the use of authentic material is not the only option when providing input to the students. As pointed out by the participants, authentic-sounding materials fill the requirements of naturalness; thus, these could be perfectly used in language teaching. This leads to major pedagogical implications, as Spanish language

textbooks should adapt their dialogues' design and their grammar lessons to include more spoken aspects of the language. In the meantime, Spanish language instructors should be aware of the lack of natural features in textbooks and adapt the oral activities in order to get as much authentic-sounding input as possible. All this should be done for the sake of the students, as they are future users of the language. If students are provided with quality input, they will not only develop better communicative skills but also strengthen their motivation to continue studying the language and its culture.

Finally, further research could study if language students exposed to authentic-sounding material within a formal instruction frame are more likely to acquire the pragmatic features of Spanish than those who are not. Further studies could also focus on the instruction of understanding the use of body language during interactions as an important factor in successful communication.

Works Cited

- Alguien más*. Enriqueta Cabrera y Cuaron. Canal Once, 2013, Film.
- Grant, Lynn and Donna Starks. "Screening appropriate teaching materials: Closing from textbooks and television soap operas" IRAL, International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching, 39. 1 (2001): 39-50. Web.
- Huth, Thorsten and Carmen Taleghani-Nikazm. "How Can Insights from Conversation Analysis Be Directly Applied to Teaching L2 Pragmatics." Language Teaching Research, 10. 53 (2006): 53-79. Web.
- Han, Chung-hye. "A comparative study of compliment responses: Korean females in Korean interactions and

- in English interactions” Working Papers in Educational Linguistics, 8.2 (1992): 17-31. Web.
- Kiliçkaya, Ferit. "Authentic Materials and Cultural Content in EFL classrooms." *The Internet TESL Journal*, 10.7 (2004). Web.
- Labov, William. *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972.
- Marin, Fernando et al. *Nuevo ven 1*, Madrid: Edelsa Grupo Didascalía, 2004.
- McCarthy, Michael and Ronald Carter. *Language as Discourse: Perspectives for Language Teaching*. London; New York: Longman, 1994.
- Ochs, Elinor, et al. *Interaction and Grammar*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Peris, Ernesto et al. *Gente 3*, Barcelona: Difusion, 2005.
- Scotton, Carol Myers and Janice Bernsten. "Natural Conversations as a Model for Textbook Dialogue." *Applied Linguistics*, 9.4 (1988): 372-384. Web.
- Una pistola en cada mano*. Cesc Gay. Impossible Films, 2012, Film.
- Wong, Jean. "Applying Conversation Analysis in Applied Linguistics: Evaluating Dialogue in English as a Second Language Textbooks" *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 40 (2002): 37-60. Web.
- Yu, Je-Myoung. "A Comparison of Grammatical Structures in Utterances of Native Speakers of American English and Those in EFL Textbook Dialogues." Diss. The Ohio State University, 1994. Web.

La disidencia por la música: *Viridiana* de Buñuel y *Peppermint Frappé* de Saura

Nicole Nairismagi
University of Victoria
nicolen@uvic.ca

Durante la dictadura en España el sector creativo fue censurado fuertemente. Aunque esa censura fue “total”, los directores y artistas emplearon técnicas para seguir produciendo bajo la censura. Dos figuras emblemáticas de esa subversión son Luis Buñuel y Carlos Saura. Este breve ensayo explorará los escándalos cinematográficos de los dos directores. Se discutirá el ambiente cultural y represivo en el que las películas fueron dirigidas, y cómo los dos directores usaron la música particularmente para comentar sobre y luchar contra el franquismo. Específicamente, se explorarán las películas *Viridiana* y *Peppermint Frappé* y cómo el rocanrol fue empleado por Bunuel y Saura para rechazar al franquismo. *Palabras claves: franquismo; cine español; Luis Buñuel; Carlos Saura; surrealismo*

La dictadura española tuvo repercusiones en varios sectores culturales y el cine español sufrió mucho bajo la censura. A partir de 1959 y durante los años sesenta, el gobierno español trataba de aparecer como un país más liberal y abierto bajo el Plan de Estabilización (Salvador 12). A través de la apertura, el régimen trató de mostrar cómo "el Estado estimulaba la creatividad de los artistas jóvenes" (Gubern et al. 297). Aunque el gobierno tenía el propósito de

aparecer como un país moderno y menos tradicional, la censura y la opresión siguieron impidiendo la producción de cine. Fue durante esta época de la censura "abierta" en la que Buñuel dirigió *Viridiana*, con resultados escandalosos. *Peppermint Frappé* también fue dirigido en 1967 bajo esta misma idea de una España liberal, pero en realidad censurada (Higginbotham 122). Por esta razón, los dos directores usaron métodos creativos para mostrar la realidad de vivir en la España franquista. Este ensayo examinará las maneras en que Buñuel y Saura usaron la música en particular para hacer un comentario social. También se discutirá como la obra de Buñuel inspira a Saura, tanto *Viridiana* como sus obras más anteriores. Es evidente que esta forma de disidencia creativa surgió a pesar de los límites de la censura y a veces fue capaz de superarlos.

Luis Buñuel es uno de los directores más destacados del cine español. Durante la dictadura, por razones de ideología política, él trabajaba la mayoría del tiempo en Francia y México. Regresó a España para producir *Viridiana* en 1960, aunque fuera un "republicano en el exilio" (Salvador 14). Para muchos artistas, su regreso parecía como una traición. La película tuvo algunos problemas de censura antes de su proyección en Cannes. A los censores les molestó que el suicidio, el sexo, y algunas imágenes carnales aparecieran en el film. A pesar de estas cuestiones morales, García Escudero opinó que él "no [veía] motivo para prohibirlo," aparte de la escena final (Escudero en Salvador 15).

En 1961, *Viridiana* se estrenó en Cannes. *Viridiana* fue una coproducción mexicano-española, pero no -se estrenó en ningún país antes del festival (Salvador 13). La película ganó el premio más prestigioso del festival, la Palma de Oro; pero al mismo tiempo, produjo un escándalo en España y el Vaticano. *Viridiana* fue condenado por *L'osservatore Romano*, la revista oficial del Vaticano, por su contenido blasfemo (Schwartz). En España, fue prohibido completamente y perdió

la nacionalidad. El gobierno reaccionó al film con una censura total, y aunque ellos “no podrán físicamente destruirla... pretenderán hacerlo virtualmente” (Salvador 22). La película no se estrenó en España hasta el 9 de abril de 1977, dos años después de la muerte de Franco. *Viridiana* tuvo problemas de proyección en otros países también, incluso México en donde se estrenó en octubre de 1963 (Salvador 35). El ejemplo de *Viridiana* muestra plenamente que la apertura era limitada y que la consecuencia de traspasar estas limitaciones era la censura total.

La película fue polémica por muchas razones, pero el problema principal fue el comentario sobre la religión. Hay una crítica hacia la iglesia católica, particularmente a la caridad cristiana. La escena más emblemática de esta crítica es la de los picaros y la *Última Cena*. En esta escena Buñuel usa la música para acentuar el comportamiento inmoral de los pobres. Los pordioseros han irrumpido en la casa principal y beben y comen la comida de Jaime. El acto de allanamiento de morada junto al comportamiento obsceno contrastan con la música clásica de Hendel que suena de fondo (Schwartz). Cuando la audiencia escucha el coro "aleluya", se ve el sexo, el abuso de alcohol, y la violencia. Es claramente un comentario sobre cómo parece la religión versus cómo es en la realidad: excesiva y corrupta. Demuestra también la ineficacia de la caridad cristiana porque los alumnos de Viridiana la traicionan completamente.

En otras escenas Buñuel usa la música para criticar. Por ejemplo, mientras el tío de Viridiana acaricia el vestido de boda, se escucha "Et Incarnatus Est" de Bach (Proyecto Viridiana). Su comportamiento es casi obsesivo y fetichista, lo que contrasta mucho con la música clásica y refinada. El uso de la música como herramienta social culmina al final de la película, cuando suena "Shimmy Doll" de Ashley Beaumont (Proyecto Viridiana). La música de rocanrol indica la novedad; el hecho de que Jorge escuche esta canción enfatiza

la sensación de modernidad porque él es un símbolo de la renovación. La escena indica que va a haber un *ménage a trois* entre Viridiana, Ramona, y Jorge, y que la vida religiosa de Viridiana ya está terminada (Schwartz). Esta canción contrasta con el género clásico que domina en toda la película: es un rechazo total a la tradición y la religión, que son también los valores principales del régimen. De esta manera Buñuel usa críticamente la banda sonora para hacer un comentario fuerte.

El director español Carlos Saura también usa la música en la película *Peppermint Frappé* para hablar sobre la sociedad española. Saura habla en particular de las relaciones entre las mujeres y hombres y critica la represión sexual durante la dictadura. Aunque esa película no fue tan escandalosa como *Viridiana*, Saura usa la música de una manera muy similar para criticar el régimen y los valores del franquismo.

A Carlos Saura le impactò la obra de Buñuel y por eso "él es el heredero más directo del estilo cinematográfico de Buñuel y de sus percepciones culturales" (Higginbotham 77).² Se ve la inspiración de Buñuel durante toda la película. Por ejemplo, la primera escena en la que Julián está cortando las imágenes de mujeres, hay un cuadro que parece mucho al corte del ojo de *Un Chien Andalou* (Buñuel, acceso en Youtube). La manipulación de las mujeres es un tema central de *Peppermint Frappé* que quizás tiene origen en esta película icónica. Los elementos de choque y malestar en las dos películas están claramente inspirados por el surrealismo y por consecuencia, en el caso de *Peppermint Frappé*, de Buñuel mismo.

Saura usa el personaje Elena junto a la música para comentar sobre la represión sexual. Cuando Julián conoce a

² Traducido del inglés: "Saura is the most direct heir of Bunuel's film style and cultural perceptions."

Elena, se acuerda de una mujer misteriosa que toca el tambor en el festival de Calanda. El festival de Calanda representa la tradición, pero Saura presenta el acto de tocar el tambor como algo sexual. Saura mezcla el sexo con la tradición para ofender y romper las reglas del régimen. Otro ejemplo emblemático que usa la música para mostrar la represión sexual es cuando Elena baila de "The Incredible Miss Perryman" de Los canarios (Higginbotham 74). Ella está en una locura; baila al ritmo de la música, gira, y lanza las hojas en el aire. La canción es rocanrol y claramente simboliza la modernidad. Por eso, en esta escena Elena representa toda lo que España ya no es: libre y moderna. Al mismo tiempo en esta escena vemos la represión sexual de Julián. Mientras que Elena baila, Julián toma las fotografías y la mira por la cámara; es claro que él es un voyeur que no puede expresar sus pasiones sexuales. Este es un comentario de Saura sobre la castidad sexual forzada por el régimen. De una manera muy parecida, Saura y Buñuel usan la música para criticar y reprochar el régimen de Franco.

Tanto *Viridiana* como *Peppermint Frappé*, usan la música para comentar y criticar a la sociedad española bajo la dictadura. *Viridiana* critica fuertemente a la iglesia católica y *Peppermint Frappé* a la represión sexual y social. Las películas usan el rocanrol como un símbolo de la modernidad para enfatizar cómo la España franquista fue totalmente retrógrada. Es indudable que aunque la dictadura trató de limitar la producción creativa usando la censura, en realidad florecieron los métodos creativos a pesar de las restricciones.

Obras Citadas

- Gubern, Román et al. *Historia del cine español*. Madrid: Cátedra, 2015.
- Higginbotham, Virginia. *Spanish Film Under Franco*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988.
- Proyecto Viridiana*. El director como orquestado, 2010, <https://3300viridiana.wordpress.com/bunuel-y-su-uso-de-la-musica>. Fecha de acceso: el 8 de abril 2016.
- Salvador, Alicia. “El ‘Caso’ Viridiana.” *Archivos de la Filmoteca*, Junio 2004, pp 10-48.
- Schwartz, Ronald. *Great Spanish Films Since 1950*. Plymouth: Scarecrow Press Inc, 2008.
- “Un Chien Andalou.” *Youtube*. Dirigido por Luis Buñuel, 1929, Paris, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIKYF07Y4kA>.

La creatividad de Carlos Saura bajo la censura franquista

Kathryn Houston
University of Victoria
kat6h@uvic.ca

Durante la dictadura franquista en España, los sectores artísticas, incluyendo el cine, fueron marcadamente censuradas. A pesar de que eso delimitó lo que los artistas podían decir y comentar sobre el país—su historia y su régimen actual—estas limitaciones les forzaron de aumentar su creatividad para sortear los cortes de los censores. Este ensayo investiga cómo el director de cine, Carlos Saura, en dos de sus películas *El jardín de las delicias* y *Peppermint Frappé*, ha utilizado su creatividad y uso de metáfora para comentar sobre el régimen, la guerra civil y el estado del país bajo Francisco Franco. Simplemente, investiga cómo la censura franquista promovía la creatividad en el cine de Carlos Saura.

Palabras claves: Carlos Saura, cine español, censura, Franco.

Carlos Saura es un director de cine prolífico cuyos orígenes provienen del régimen franquista, pero que continúa produciendo obras hoy en día. Aunque su carrera empezó bajo la censura franquista, ha adoptado un nuevo lenguaje y una retórica cinematográfica para criticar el régimen y el estado del país. Por lo tanto, para Saura, los límites de la censura promovieron su creatividad no solo en el

sentido metafórico sino también en las convenciones cinematográficas.

En su primera película, Carlos Saura tomó el enfoque de que España tenía una: “cultural underdevelopment that he had to endure given the country’s social, intellectual, and artistic backwardness” (D’Lugo 12). Saura comentó que España había comenzado a hacer películas antes de su época, después de haberle sido negada la oportunidad de entender su propia historia cinematográfica o el cine de otros países. A causa de la censura franquista, la gente no tenía la oportunidad de ver lo que producían de otros países; es decir, todo lo que él veía de los otros países era seleccionado por el régimen. Por eso, después de viajar a Francia y ver lo que faltaba en España, Saura afirmó que su generación era autodidacta (D’Lugo 12). “Saura’s personal lament was easily read as a coded denunciation of the restrictive cultural policies of the dictatorship that had marginalized Spain and Spaniards in the world” (D’Lugo 12). Ya que los españoles no tuvieron acceso a las fuentes de cultura del resto del mundo, para Saura, sería necesario buscar en el exterior, en los medios de cultura.

Saura nació en 1932, justo antes del inicio de la Guerra Civil y de este modo, todo lo que había conocido fue la versión oprimida del país donde se creció. Por lo tanto, tuvo que salir de su propio país e historia en busca de inspiración. A pesar de esto, Saura tenía una conexión inextricable de la comprensión de la vida durante el régimen de Franco. Es decir, buscaba formas artísticas desde afuera, para describir su propia realidad española. Estudió en la Escuela Nacional de Cine, que aunque fue fundada por el gobierno, se convirtió en un “hotbed of dissent against the government’s official policies on control of the film industry”, gracias a dos de sus estudiantes: Juan Antonio Bardem y Luis García Berlanga (D’Lugo 15). En consecuencia, Berlanga se convirtió en una de las mayores fuentes de inspiración para Saura.

En una entrevista en 1988, Saura habló de la importancia de la memoria diciendo: "One is morally obliged to forget nothing" (Willem 103). La memoria se convirtió en una gran parte de su trabajo, a pesar del hecho de que vivía en una sociedad que estaba tratando de olvidar. Saura trabajó bajo las limitaciones de la censura franquista, que estaba tratando de asegurarse de que nadie vea las fallas en su modo de vida. Ochoa afirmó:

En Este Periodo (1959-1979) se desarrolla lo esencial de su apuesta filmica, que no debería de ser valorada simplemente como una manifestación de la realidad sociológica española sino más bien como una materialización singular de la modernidad artística y cinematográfica (Ochoa 357).

Sin embargo, Ochoa está en desacuerdo con lo que dijo Saura en la entrevista, y planteó la idea de que la manifestación de una realidad no podía coincidir con las convenciones artísticas del cine. No obstante, se podría argumentar que Saura utilizaba las convenciones artísticas modernas con el fin de ser capaz de retratar la realidad social de España. Trabajando alrededor de las leyes de censura franquista, Saura utilizaba características artísticas y retóricas como metáforas y símbolos, para capturar los aspectos de la realidad que no podía confrontar abiertamente.

Como cineasta, Saura comenzó a producir películas en los 50s, ganando su primer éxito crítico con *La Caza* en 1958. D' Lugo describió la película como una "unsubtle rewriting of Spanish history" (D'Lugo 18); sin embargo, Ochoa comentó que Saura comenzó a transgredir el exterior y entrar en el terreno de los monólogos interiores, analizando objetos y personajes y ofreciendo una dimensión abstracta de la realidad (Ochoa 361). A pesar de que la película puede reflejar una realidad española, Saura sigue utilizando las

convenciones cinematográficas más artísticas y representativas para ilustrar esa realidad en una manera que no es tan visible. Usó la metateatralidad como un lenguaje alegórico para subvertir la censura franquista, empleando códigos visuales que tienen ciertos valores simbólicos (Colmeiro 278). Hay que tener en cuenta que Saura estaba integrando convenciones artísticas asociadas con otros países, con el fin de mostrar lo que sucedía en su propio país. Al hacerlo, se reactivó la esfera artística de España, en gran medida censurada y oprimida, mientras que conseguía alredero de las restricciones de la libertad de expresión. Un ejemplo de referencias externas, fue la formación del “nuevo cine español”, un movimiento inspirado por el cine francés, inglés, y alemán, pero específicamente de la “nouvelle vague” de Francia. También, sus películas recibieron atención por sus influencias del neorrealismo italiano, a pesar de que los aspectos de la realidad actual estaban más escondidos (Rubio 130).

Ochoa explica que los personajes de Saura, presentan personajes con los que el público español puede identificarse: “En definitiva, los tres (autor, personajes, espectador) pertenecen a una misma realidad sociológica: España” (Ochoa 359). Bajo esta suposición, este ensayo examinará dos de las obras de Saura, *Peppermint Frappé* y *El jardín de las delicias* para identificar las intersecciones entre el uso de las convenciones artísticas y la presentación de la realidad española. El uso de convenciones abstractas o metafóricas permitió al director decir más sobre el régimen.

A pesar de que el contenido de *Peppermint Frappé* puede ser mucho más subversivo—ya que representa el asesinato, la fetichización y un abuso grave de poder—desde el punto de vista de la censura franquista es menos subversivo porque no contiene ninguna referencia directa a la Guerra Civil, ni al régimen. En un nivel más profundo, sin embargo, la película contiene referencias a una enfermedad interna,

homóloga a la de España. El personaje de Antonio que ha sido protegido y nunca ha salido de España es la representación de la España aislada e internamente corrupta. Por otra parte, expresa el deseo de dejar entrar más aspectos occidentales o estadounidenses en la vida, con el uso de la música rock, pero también muestra una incapacidad de aceptar esas nuevas realidades. Sin embargo, esta película demuestra aspectos de la enfermedad que puede aplicarse con cualquier país, y que no están directamente relacionados con la historia de España.

El jardín de las delicias, por otro lado, contiene referencias directas a la Guerra Civil y es dirigido de una manera mucho más abstracta y metafórica. Fue la primera película de Saura que mencionaba directamente la Guerra Civil y por eso, tuvo problemas con la censura. Fue prohibida por más de seis meses, y sufrió muchos cortes (Pilado-Miller 139). Parecía que entre más explícitos eran los temas, más artístico debía ser el director, con el fin de disimular los aspectos subversivos de su mensaje. Las angustias por el estado de la familia y de lo que España haría después de la muerte de Franco son mucho más crípticos en esta película. El espectador necesita trabajar para entender la situación de la familia, y cómo se relaciona con el estado del país. Ochoa lo define como: “*El jardín de las delicias* es una alegoría sobre la decadencia de la oligarquía financiera franquista, pero también sobre el deterioro de la familia como sólido pilar ideológico, que encuentra las principales características que la definen en dos referentes textuales anteriores” (Ochoa 362). Dicho esto, la familia y la interacción entre sus miembros, es críptica. Usan varias tácticas para recuperar la memoria de Antonio, a pesar de que raramente son cariñosos o familiares entre ellos. Por lo tanto, aunque el contenido de *Peppermint Frappé* es más subversivo desde un punto de vista internacional, *El jardín de las delicias* se aplica directamente a España, lo que la hace una película tan disidente.

Ya hemos visto que las limitaciones de la censura franquista promovían elementos artísticos en el cine español. Saura usó convenciones artísticas, influido por otros países, para revelar la realidad española. Puesto que no podía decir o presentar la realidad abiertamente, usó metáforas y simbolismo para comentar sobre los sentimientos y la vida española bajo Franco. Por eso, aunque la dictadura fue un momento de opresión social y cultural, Saura usó dichas limitaciones para extender su creatividad.

Obras Citadas

- Colmeiro, José F. “Metateatralidad y psicodrama: los escenarios de la memoria en el cine de Carlos Saura: *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*, 26.1 (2001): 277-298. Web.
- D’Lugo, Marvin. *The Films of Carlos Saura: The Practice of Seeing*. Princeton University Press, 1991. Print.
- El jardín de las delicias*. Directed by Carlos Saura, performance by José Luis López Vázquez, Elías Querejeta Producciones Cinematográficas, 1970.
- La caza*. Directed by Carlos Saura, performance by Ismael Mayo, Elías Querejeta Producciones Cinematográficas, 1966.
- Ochoa, Santiago García. “Automóvil y cine en la España desarrollista: Peppermint frappé (Carlos Saura, 1967). *Hispanic Research Journal*, 13.2 (2012): 111-130. Web.
- Ochoa, Santiago García. “‘Mirarse en la pantalla’: el cine de Carlos Saura” *Hispanic Research Journal*, 10.4 (2009): 357-369. Web.
- Peppermint Frappé*. Directed by Carlos Saura, performance by Ismael Mayo, Elías Querejeta Producciones Cinematográficas, 1967.

Pillado-Miller, Margarita. "Síntomas de la Guerra Civil en tres películas de Carlos Saura. *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies*, vol. 1, (1997): 129-140. Web.

Rubio, Carlos Aragüez. "Intelectuales y cine en el segundo franquismo: de las Conversaciones de Salamanca al nuevo cine español." *Historia del presente*, vol. 5, (2005): 121-138. Web.

Willem, Linda M. *Carlos Saura: Interviews*. University Press of Mississippi, 2003. Print.

Tigres azules: la obra de Jorge Luis Borges y la búsqueda del infinito

E. Dane Rogers
University of Victoria
edrogers@uvic.ca

En este artículo, se explora el concepto de infinito en *Tigres Azules* del argentino Jorge Luis Borges. Se estudia algunas características atribuidas al infinito—simple, atrapante, replicable, no contable. Finalmente, se define el comportamiento del infinito (que aparece a veces tener la capacidad de efectuarse a si mismo).

Palabras claves: infinito; realidad; religión; universo; escondido; tigre

Borges creyó que el infinito representaba el mal y, por lo tanto, lo trató en varias ocasiones. En su ensayo *Avatares de la tortuga*, el argentino escribe: “Hay un concepto que es el corruptor y el desatinador de los otros. No hablo del mal cuyo limitado imperio es la ética; hablo del infinito (A Reader, 1981, 105).” En este artículo, se plantea analizar el concepto de infinito, la posible aberración a éste por el escritor y cómo aparece en varios de sus cuentos: sus características inmutables, físicas, heréticas, e inolvidables. Parece que Borges empleó su obra para explorar las posibilidades del infinito, específicamente la incapacidad de enumerarlo o definirlo, y que tenía de multiplicar lo que detesta de él. Entre todas las preguntas planteadas por él, una de ellas es la necesidad de liberarse del objeto que representa o contiene el infinito. Antes de analizar los efectos aparentes

del infinito, es pertinente clarificar las características fijadas del infinito en la obra de Borges, su circularidad, humildad, multiplicación.

La circularidad y la humildad del infinito

La característica más constante es la forma física del objeto que representa el infinito. *Tigres azules* llega al clímax cuando Alexander Craigie, el escocés que viene a Punjab para atrapar un tigre azul, sube una colina mística, contra el deseo de las indígenas de la tribu. En busca del tigre azul, encuentra “piedritas, todas iguales, circulares, muy lisas y de pocos centímetros de diámetro. Su regularidad les prestaba algo artificial, como si fueran fichas (2015, 525).” Aquí tenemos una representación inolvidable de los objetos que representan el infinito: Borges siempre los representa en forma circular — desde el *Zahir* hasta el *Aleph*, e incluso en *Las ruinas circulares*. Es decir, el autor suele representar al infinito con objetos circulares —la posibilidad de que el soñador sea lo soñado—, evitando así usar una característica concreta y lógica. Hay diversas razones para circularidad del infinito: “A circle seems to comprehend all things, seems to enclose all things. I will take a small, luminous circle...and in that circle I will find the whole of space, everything” (Borges cit. en Leone, 214). Por lo tanto, el círculo sirve como la única forma que puede contener el infinito porque, al igual que el círculo contiene todos los puntos en su circunferencia, el infinito contiene todos los puntos en el universo.³

Además, el objeto nunca es lujoso. De esta manera, Borges lo viste humildemente para no distraer de su real construcción, lo invisible. En *Tigres azules*, el protagonista se confunde con la uniformidad del objeto, ya que esperaba un

³ Una idea adaptada del ensayo *La esfera de Pascal* (Borges, 1981, 241-242).

hecho extraordinario, un tigre azul. Sin embargo, él, cautivado con la humildad del objeto, entiende que el infinito suele presentarse sin majestuosidad ni parafernalia. La humildad del objeto permite que el poder real del infinito retenga su majestad. De igual modo, *el Zahir* demuestra la capacidad, mejor dicho, la necesidad de vigilar la atención de cualquiera que lo encuentre. En *el Zahir*, una moneda insignificante, pero inolvidable, sirve para arrastrar la atención de Borges (la protagonista) lejos de la muerte de una mujer que Borges amaba para fijarse solo en la ficha pequeña.

El orden del infinito

De igual manera, las piedras pequeñas le cautivan en un *frenesí* de catalogar su cantidad. En el cuento *El libro de arena*, Borges le presenta al lector una historia semejante al frenesí de *Tigres azules*. Cuando la protagonista cambia su *black letter* Wiclif por un libro misterioso del oriente, los números de cada página le llaman la atención. Los números pares e impares no corresponden, es decir que una página puede ser la página 9, y la próxima sería 30, o 5,960 sin razón aparente. Esta forma de no poder contar ni organizar el infinito es el hilo que enlace estos cuentos, aunque existe en otras formas en otros cuentos también. El cuento *El congreso* comunica la idea de que el universo es un congreso, y por eso no se puede eliminar ninguna persona, y ningún libro. Esta realización viene de la intención y del fracaso de formar un congreso representando el universo, sin faltar ningún aspecto.

Aunque no sería posible contar el infinito, Borges parece creer que el infinito contiene patrones que siguen reglas. En *El libro de arena*, cada dosmilésima página tiene un símbolo específico que se puede catalogar, pero las páginas desaparecen y se reemplazan por otras páginas. En *Tigres azules*, las piedras marcadas reaparecen, pero no están siempre presentes. Estas reglas son construcciones del infinito

de Borges y aparecen en diversos cuentos. Luis Kancyper comenta de tales reglas imaginadas por Borges. “[S]on gobernadas por leyes indefinibles que establecen un orden al contrario de la posibilidad de cambiarse. Estas leyes responden a la suerte, y son caracterizadas por su excentricidad y extravagancia fuerte (2).”⁴

Sin embargo, las leyes de oportunidad no son perfectamente contables porque hay siempre una parte oculta de la realidad. En *Tigres azules*, la cantidad de las piedras fluctúa; las piedras marcadas por Alexander no son constantes. Son visibles, a veces, aunque no desaparecen permanentemente. A veces las mismas piedras regresan a la realidad del espectador, pero se esconden por la mayor parte. Este aspecto de la creación del infinito de Borges podría ser lo más poderoso. Si Borges nos dejara ver *dónde están* o *de dónde vienen* las piedras, no nos cautivaría al igual que la protagonista. De este modo, nos regala un cuento que esconde y cautiva tales cosas como sus piedras, su libro de arena, o su zahir. En cambio, Borges nos muestra lo que pasaría si viéramos la parte oculta del infinito en *El aleph*, Borges (de nuevo el protagonista) ve todo: todo el universo, todo el mundo, todo el aleph, y aun por dentro del aleph. Él persiste en olvidar, o creer que ha olvidado lo que había visto, mientras que los infinitos que se esconden en el misterio ocultado son inolvidables.

La multiplicación dentro del infinito

La imagen del espejo aparece muchas veces en la obra de Borges y presenta un aspecto horroroso del infinito; la capacidad de multiplicar y, además, crear un mundo parecido a la realidad, pero distinto. Si no se da cuenta que la replicación sea un horror, Borges le explica: “Los espejos y la

⁴ La traducción es mía.

copulación son abominables porque multiplican el número de hombres (1998, 68).”⁵ Según él, la infinidad dentro el espejo es lo gran mal de los espejos, su infinidad incontable que se esconde del espectador. Borges continua este hilo por su poema, *Los espejos*:

Infinitos los veo, elementales
ejecutores de un antiguo pacto,
multiplicar el mundo como el acto
generativo, insomnes y fatales (1981, 278).

Tal cual, el aspecto infinito de los espejos, en conjunción con la multiplicación, da un mal incompatible al universo. El infinito contiene todo, y si el espejo esconde parte del todo, es posible que haya una realidad dentro del espejo porque el primero existe en el último. Por ejemplo, hay un capítulo en *El libro de los seres imaginarios*, un fabuloso bestiario, que alerta contra los habitantes de los espejos. “Gradualmente diferirán de nosotros, gradualmente no nos imitarán. Romperán las barreras de vidrio o de metal y esta vez no serán vencidas” (1978, 18).”

Se creyó, por mucho tiempo, que los mundos humanos y de los espejos no eran distintos y era posible transitar del uno al otro. Un día, la gente de los espejos atacó a la de este mundo. Después de su derrota, la gente de los espejos debía imitar a sus conquistadores. El capítulo termina con el horror de horrores: un día, la vencida no seguirá imitándonos (17-18). Pero, es esta idea de la rotura de la realidad que es posible (según él) en los espejos que usa Borges en su propia obra cuando escribe historias (reflexiones) no reales en su *Historia universal de la infamia* (Crusat, 511). De tal manera, Borges imagina un horror del

⁵ Idea adaptada del Cuento *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*.

infinito escondido en los espejos y, en su forma, juega con el concepto para crear historias incómodas.

Con estos aspectos constantes del infinito es posible seguir analizando el uso del infinito en *Tigres azules* y porque le fascinaba a Borges a contemplarlo.

Tigres azules

Mientras que el infinito permanece constante en la obra borgiana, las diferentes maneras de examinarlo dejan al lector con un sentido de lo místico y religioso escondido, apoyado por las referencias incluidas. No obstante, Borges no era un hombre religioso, jugaba con las creencias religiosas de sus personajes y más específicamente con las herejías de lo religioso. Es algo común entre los escritores argentinos llenar sus escritos con herejías e irreverencias (Kafala, 345). Tales herejías influyen en la obra borgiana con frecuencia. En *Tigres azules*, se contrastan las religiones islámica e hindú. Al principio del cuento, su protagonista lamenta que la tribu en Punjab sea hindú porque “siempre [se ha] llevado mejor con los musulmanes” (2015, 522). La yuxtaposición de la religión monoteísta islámica y la religión politeísta hindú se juntan para abrir al lector la mente de la protagonista—quien está más cómoda con la gente de un único dios que miles dioses—que cuando encuentra la infinitud en las piedras, ya tiene el lector una idea de *por qué* no está cómodo con las propiedades infinitas de las piedras. A la protagonista le gusta poder enumerar su realidad. Sin duda, el aspecto religioso sirve más para apoyar la forma del infinito que para mostrar las preferencias teológicas y matemáticas de la protagonista en el cuento de los tigres azules. Demuestra una secta del mundo real que cada persona ha conocido y, a menudo, que le ha dado la incomodidad. Esta secta es lo religioso y su característica inextricable de lo escondido. Cuando el infinito y la religión encuentran las supersticiones de la tribu, la gente

de la tribu tiene miedo de los objetos que representan y demuestran las propiedades del infinito. En la historia, Borges emplea esas supersticiones para darle a la protagonista la razón para salir de la tribu y regresar a su país, Escocia. Cuando llega a Escocia, continúa a fijar toda su atención en el infinito. Marca las piedras, las separa, y toma notas prudentes de todo lo que descubre del infinito (527). Igualmente, en *El libro de arenas* Borges cambia un símbolo de una religión por otra—la biblia para el libro de arena—y pasa mucho tiempo contemplándolo. No pone mucha atención ni en lo que contiene el libro, ni el significado de las piedras. Mientras que la gente religiosa estudia lo que significa el *objeto* religioso, Borges se interesa a la *forma* del infinito.

Esconder el infinito en Tigres azules

De todas formas, Borges enlaza el tema religioso con el tema del infinito. En el contraste que resulta, Borges demuestra al lector que no se puede encontrar a dios *por medio de* los objetos del infinito, sino *en* los objetos del infinito (Leone, 213). Entonces, si Borges cree que el infinito contiene a dios, o al universo, o una gran verdad, ¿por qué nos presenta el infinito como algo malo? Es decir, algo que se debe perder, olvidar, o de lo que se tiene que estar salvado.

El término “escondido en luz” es un dicho para explicar la práctica religiosa. Aquí se encuentra lo gran malo del infinito de Borges. La obra de Borges contiene miles de ideas que, a veces, parecen desconectadas. No obstante, un hilo existe en la obra de Borges que sirve para conectar los cuentos diversos. Este hilo es la búsqueda de lo real. Por las influencias de los filósofos que le encantaban—Kant, Hume, Schopenhauer, Bertrand Russell etc. (Borges & di Giovanni, 37)—Borges creía que, para decodificar la realidad, había que identificar las reglas. El problema con decodificar la realidad existe en el infinito que insista en esconderse. De tal manera,

el infinito contiene la clave que se necesita para entender la realidad, y a la vez la esconde. En *El libro de arena*, la protagonista no puede aislar la tapa: siempre remanen unas páginas entre la tapa y sus dedos. ¿Es posible que la clave del infinito exista en la primera página? En efecto, Borges pasaba su vida haciendo lo que cuenta en sus cuentos—buscando las reglas del infinito—y siempre llegaba a la misma conclusión. Se encuentran las razones de esta conclusión en el cuento *La biblioteca de Babel* (Borges, 2015, 137-145). Borges contempla el infinito en forma de biblioteca en la que existe todo. Cada libro que apenas existía como idea y que aún no está escrito, ya existe, solo hay que encontrarlo. La fracción uno-sobre-infinito, entonces, representa las posibilidades de las permutaciones de libros. Esa fracción es la más pequeña posible, tal cual, la posibilidad de encontrar el libro que contiene el secreto del infinito (que debe existir) es *cero*⁶. Sandra Bettencourt reconoce las propiedades de la biblioteca de Babel como “las posibilidades infinitas [que dan] expansión siempre posible, que es el universo” (Bettencourt, 71)⁷. Borges, como sus protagonistas, ponía mucha atención en descubrir el secreto escondido del infinito, mientras sabía que el infinito no le permitía a nadie a saber su secreto. Por eso, creo, le gustaba jugar con las creencias religiosas, por la gente que dice que entiende el infinito. A la vez, le fascinaba las religiones del judaísmo, cristianismo, islam, hindú etc. (Steiner, 120-121) Sin embargo, al final de cada historia, la protagonista deja su búsqueda para *tratar* a regresar a la *realidad* de este mundo.

En *Tigres azules*, se refinan algunas características de su concepto del infinito. Sin embargo, el autor argentino sabía que ya había dicho mucho sobre el tema. No obstante, una

⁶ Idea adaptada del cuento *La biblioteca de Babel*, Borges, 2015, 137-145).

⁷ La traducción es mía.

parte todavía le molestaba—la búsqueda por la parte escondida del infinito. Termina su cuento, no según sus creencias propias, sino con una posible explicación de *porqué* mucha gente elige seguir una religión. La única cosa que puede borrar la curiosidad insaciable del infinito y la realidad es la religión.

Para perderse en Dios, los sufíes repiten su propio nombre o los noventa y nueve nombres divinos hasta que éstos ya nada quieren decir. Yo anhele recorrer esa senda. Quizá yo acabe por gastar el Zahir a fuerza de pensarlo y de repensarlo, quizá detrás de la moneda esté Dios (Borges, 1981, 202).

Consecuentemente, para llegar al escondido, es necesario perderse. Al igual, “Durante unos días [le] impus[ó] el íntimo deber de pensar en las piedras, porque sabía que el olvido sólo podía ser momentáneo y que redescubrir [su] tormento sería intolerable (Borges, 1998, 502).” El protagonista de *Tigres azules* prefirió la religión de los musulmanes más que la de los hindúes porque no confunden el infinito con la religión, la dejan pura y separada del infinito. De este modo, Borges nos señala cuán malo es el infinito. Es una clave escondida—una clave que necesita una clave—que es más una mofa que una puerta a la realidad. Pero, la atracción de saber lo oculto siempre permanece. Es la lucha de la protagonista, y de Borges, en *Tigres azules* y en la mayor parte de las obras de Borges. Al final de *Tigres azules*, la protagonista hace algo interesante que señala al resuelto del escritor. “Dej[ó] caer todas las piedras en la cóncava mano. Cayeron como en el fondo del mar, sin el ruido más leve” (1998, 503). Borges deja caer las piedras—la representación del infinito—en la mano de un musulmán, en frente de una mezquita. Es decir, Borges deja lo oculto del infinito, la parte que se tortura, en manos de los religiosos.

El infinito de Borges sigue leyes, pero no le permite a nadie descubrir todas las reglas. Como un espejo en donde no se puede ver lo que aparece cuando no se ve, y el libro de arena que vigila su primera página, el infinito se esconde. Se veste en humildad para captivar la transfixión del espectador, pero contiene todo lo que no es humilde. De esa manera, el infinito es incognoscible. Por eso, propuesto, Borges alinea el infinito con un dios, por sus aspectos incognoscibles. Creyó que el infinito representaba el mal porque no se permite conocerlo, o entenderlo.

Agradecimientos

Quiero expresar mi gratitud al Dr. Dan Russek por compartir su interés en Jorge Luis Borges y también haberme proporcionado la información relevante para entender a este escritor argentino. Asimismo, agradezco a Sandra Maldonado, quien me ayudó mucho con mi adquisición del español como segunda lengua.

Obras Citadas

- Bettencourt, S. (2015). O arquivo de Babel: Os espaços infinitos do livro em Fernando Pessoa e Jorge Luis Borges. *Variaciones Borges*, 65-83.
- Borges, J. L. (1978). *El libro de seres imaginarios*. Buenos Aires: Emecé.
- Borges, J. L. (1981). *A Reader*. New York: E. P. Dutton.
- Borges, J. L. (1998). *Collected Fictions*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Borges, J. L. (2015). *Cuentos Completos*. Barcelona: Liberdùplex.

- Borges, J. L., & di Giovanni, N. T. (1987). An Autobiographical Essay. Em J. Alazraki, *Critical Essays on Jorge Luis Borges* (21-55). Boston: G. K. Hall & Co.
- Crusat, C. (2016). Humorístico oprobio: el destino irónico de las 'vidas imaginarias' de Jorge Luis Borges, Juan Rodolfo Wilcock, y Roberto Bolaño. *Hispanic Research Journal*, 504-521.
- Kafala, E. (2007). The Dialectics of Heresy and Authority in Borges and Carpentier. *Project Muse*, 342-349.
- Kancyper, L. (2016). Four kinds of memories in the works of Jorge Luis Borges. *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 1-8.
- Leone, L. (2015). A Chain of Endless Tigers: Borges at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, April 9, 1976. Em L. Leone (Ed.), *Variaciones Borges 40* (205-224). Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.
- Steiner, G. (1987). Tigers in the Mirror. Em J. Alazraki, *Critical Essays on Jorge Borges* (116-124). Boston: G. K. Hall & Co.