



¡Bienvenidos!

Welcome to the autumn 2022 edition of the Bulletin, with the Spanish-speaking world a relative oasis of calm compared to the turbulence elsewhere.

Time therefore for a good read. With *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* now featuring on ever-more exam syllabuses, we identify key themes and extracts that will impress an examiner as well as increasing your own appreciation of the text. We also look at García Márquez's fellow *boom* novelist Carlos Fuentes (in Spanish), focusing on Pre-U set-text *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*. Closer to home, William Chislett reviews his correspondence with Javier Marías, the much admired Spanish author who died in September.



Literature was also the focus of the winning entry in the Bulletin's first-ever Essay Competition, about Emilia Bazán's short story *El revólver*. In a separate article, we hear the Judge's verdict on the competition.

The verdict on the A-level Independent Research Project, as it applies to Spanish, is favourable. We offer two perspectives: that of the teacher, the other of the A-level student (with special reference to the classic Mexican film *Roma*).



Chile is perhaps the main exception to the impression of calm in the Spanish-speaking world. Clara Riveros looks at why a society hungry for change nonetheless rejected its new draft Constitution (in Spanish).

J B Trend played a key role in making Spain accessible to British students in the 20th century. We look at his eventful life story. Though even Trend might have had difficulty answering the question in our language-focussed article of this edition: why do Spaniards shout ¡Venga! at each other?

Since 2017 the Bulletin of Advanced Spanish has been a free resource, read on every continent, written by and for enthusiasts at all stages of their exploration of the language and culture of the Spanish-speaking world. Please see the Guidelines tab if you would like to write for us. The deadline for the next edition is the end of January.

Autumn is too early to break out the José Feliciano, but when the time comes, we wish our readers *Feliz Navidad*.

The BAS editorial team



Essay Competition: the judge's verdict

Nathanial Gardner, BAS editor

In this edition we are pleased to announce the winner of the Bulletin's first ever essay competition: Year 13 student Thomas Hilditch. He duly wins a £50 Amazon voucher kindly donated by the University of Glasgow's School of Modern Languages and Cultures. His winning entry is published on a separate page of this edition.



Ventures like these are always a voyage into the unknown. Will students submit? What will the essays be like? Is it providing the students with the right opportunity?

Now that the essays have been submitted, read, judged and the winner declared, I can share a few of my reflections on the process and results. Hopefully, students can use

them to think about how they can tackle these and other types of writing assignments.

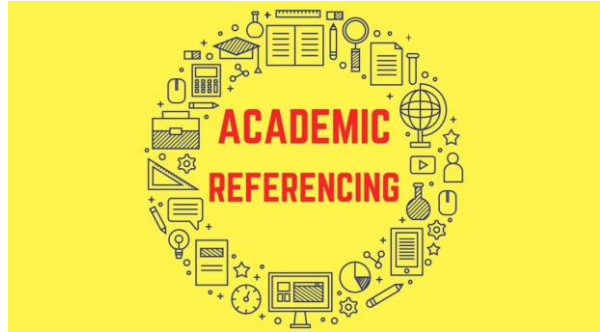
Style

I was pleased to see that most entries were submitted in a clear and direct style. This makes your writing accessible and, more importantly, your ideas are more

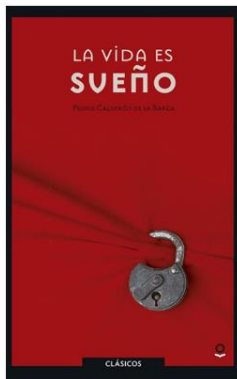
easily perceived. There is always a temptation to write in an obscurantist way that hides your meaning. Do not fall for that trap. It is much better to express your ideas in the clearest way possible. You do risk exposing your ideas to debate more easily, but such discussions almost invariably lead to making them stronger.

Referencing

This was an area that needed improvement. Almost without exception the essays referred to thoughts, ideas, and sometimes quotes that were not referenced. In some cases, these were just thoughts and notions that were being leaned upon to build an argument. That is great because it shows engagement with outside ideas, which is what you want as you build your thesis. In other cases, quotes were used, but with only a vague indication as to where they might be found. Avoid both scenarios. Referencing is a bit like showing your work in mathematics. The more you show, the more credit you can receive.



Classic or unfamiliar?



You will notice that the winner of the competition focuses on a lesser-known short story, while the runner-up, Kim Le, wrote on a Lorca classic. Is it better to write on lesser-known publications? The short answer is no. You should write on what inspires you. There is nothing like personal engagement with something that really gets your intellect going. The classics are important for

many reasons, but unfamiliar works provide fresh insights. Excellent essays can be written on either area.

Show, don't tell

There is a tendency in essays to want to retell the story. I am not sure if this is because our teachers often do this as they prepare to study a film or novel, or if it is because we do not trust our reader to have read or watch we are analysing.

Resist this urge. Trust your reader to know the basics. Lay out your plan of critical attack to your readers as you begin and launch yourself into it. Not only does this free up essential word count in many cases, it leaves your reader to review the text of study if they are not familiar. And, let's be honest, the author told the story better anyway, didn't they?

Analyse

At this level it's important to address the question 'why?' In other words, not just to say that an author does XYZ, but also to explore why he does so and what effect this produces for us, the readers.

Keep writing. "Practice makes perfect" is a timeless adage for a reason.





Bulletin of Advanced Spanish: Sixth Form Essay Competition 2022

We are pleased to offer below the winning entry in the 2022 Bulletin of Advanced Spanish Sixth Form Essay Competition, written by Thomas Hilditch, a Year 13 student who hopes to study French and Spanish at University. Thomas writes:

'I was drawn to Bazán's 'El Revólver' whilst reading a collection of Spanish short stories. I was particularly struck by its sympathetic depiction of Flora (the protagonist) and its twist ending, which reminded me of one of my favourite authors – Maupassant. I had not previously explored the depiction of mental abuse in my study of literature, and so I was keen to explore a new theme.'

The Physical Consequences of Mental Abuse in Emilia Bazán's 'El Revólver'

Emilia Bazán's short story *El Revólver* is an unforgiving examination of marital abuse. Set in a spa town, the narrative follows a widow – Flora – describing the cruelty of her former husband, who threatened to shoot her if he ever suspected her of infidelity. These threats left Flora in constant fear and powerless to the 'whim of her husband'^[1] – Reinaldo. Nevertheless, Flora had always loved her husband and it transpires after Reinaldo's death that the gun had never, in truth, been loaded. Through both the observations of the



narrator and Flora's own recollections, this poignant short story analyses the impact of mental abuse, highlighting the debilitating physical consequences which arise from this form of maltreatment. Bazán uses the narrator's perception of Flora's physical weakness to demonstrate the permanent damage of Reinaldo's 'mental torture.'^[2]

This unnamed narrator notes that physical illnesses '*no bastan para producir*' Flora's '*marasmo*' and '*radical abatimiento*': mental illness is depicted as more severe than its physical counterpart – causing Flora to become '*estropeada por el padecimiento*.' The reference to '*estropeada*' suggests that Flora has lost her youth and vitality as a result of the '*celos violentos (e) irrazonados*' of Reinaldo. Her '*humor de chiquilla*' has been dampened by the unfounded suspicions of her husband: Reinaldo's torment has 'aged' his wife. Indeed, the narrator observes that Flora '*habría sido hermosa*' – the conditional perfect emphasising the influence of Reinaldo in causing this loss of Flora's beauty. Similarly, the reference to '*hermosa*,' whilst an obvious link to her appearance, may also be indicative of her character: her virtue and child-like innocence shattered by the insatiable jealousy of her husband. Not only has Reinaldo's mental torment damaged the physical appearance of his wife, but it has also defiled her character. Whereas previously she was '*alegre, animadísimo*,' now she is said to '*relucir de locura*.' There is a certain irony in that the victim of another's insanity is now described as 'mad' herself, perhaps suggesting the ongoing influence of Reinaldo on Flora even after his death. Clearly, some part of the character of the abuser lives on in the abused, reinforcing for the reader the long-lasting effect of mental abuse.

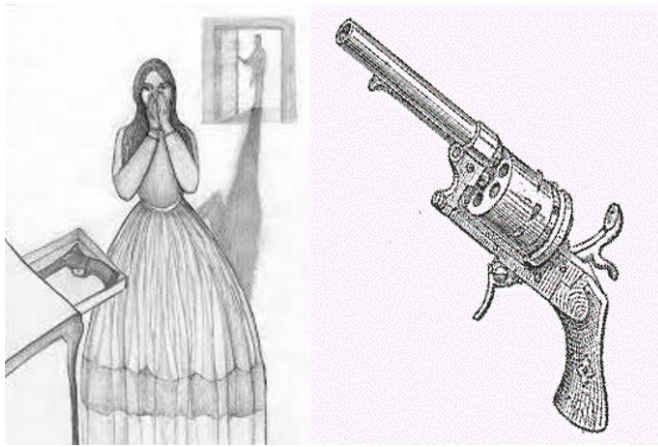


Nor is this depiction of the link between physical suffering and mental abuse limited to the revelations of the narrator. Flora herself recognises the continuing effects of Reinaldo's mistreatment. She regularly bemoans the '*palpitaciones*' experienced ever since Reinaldo had first threatened her. By the time that she discusses her problem with the anonymous narrator, they have become '*violentas*.' The death of Reinaldo caused Flora's illness to grow

even worse.

Similarly, whereas her friends previously '*envidiaban*' her, she quickly finds herself '*separada*' from these same '*amigas*.' She is socially isolated as a consequence of Reinaldo's jealousy. It is noticeable, and perhaps ironic, that the only person with whom she spent any meaningful length of time during her

marriage was a husband supposedly intending to kill her. The pathetic nature of her situation is clear. Indeed, Reinaldo's suspicions have a continually debilitating impact upon Flora's quality of life, even when the abuse stops. She cannot sleep, but instead '*despertaba sobresaltada*:' the imperfect tense suggesting the repetitive nature of this issue. Reinaldo's unfounded suspicions have robbed his wife of the ability to rest and function.[3] Merely talking about this mental abuse causes Flora to '*asfixiarse*' – she cannot breathe. Reinaldo's mental abuse has a disruptive, enduring and physical influence on Flora's life, consigning her to seeking respite in spa towns and lamenting her plight to strangers. She cannot escape the legacy of Reinaldo's abuse.



El Revólver is an unforgiving short story and emotionally challenging to read. The protagonist is so maligned and mistreated that the reader inevitably sympathises with her unenviable predicament. By exposing the reader to such themes, Bazán draws attention to the plight of such women – abused by their husbands and unable to escape – a problem which tragically continues

to this day. Even after Reinaldo dies and Flora's torture ends, the mental and physical scars linger. However hard she tries to cleanse herself of her husband's mistreatment, it can never be forgotten.

Bibliography

- Cuentos Españoles, Edited by Angel Flores, Dover Publications, 1987
- Abuse, Exposure and Female Agency in the Short Stories of Emilia Pardo Bazán, Kathryn Lee, 2014, Baylor University

[1] Abuse, Exposure and Female Agency in the Short Stories of Emilia Pardo Bazán, Kathryn Lee, 2014, Baylor University, p.34

[2] Ibid., p.33

[3] Ibid., p.33



The IRP in Spanish A-level: the teacher's perspective

BAS editor Helen Laurenson

In July 2014 the A-level Advisory Board (ALCAB) published the findings of its panel on the provision of both Modern and Classical languages at A-level.

Amongst a broad raft of recommendations and guiding principles for reform, the panel set out its stall regarding skills acquisition, commenting, 'the panel believes that critical thinking should be developed alongside the linguistic skills'. It recommended that an Individual Research Project (IRP)



form an integral part of the new specification: 'an individually chosen and researched project should be required for A-level...sharply focused and related to a country where the language of study is an official or national language'. In addition, the recommendations state that 'the subject matter should be challenging enough to allow for at least two sources to be studied and to allow a serious discussion to take place'. So, in summary, a need for a 'grown-up' and

decidedly nuanced approach to both research skills, higher-order thinking and sophisticated expression in the spoken language.



All A-level Spanish examination boards now require candidates to identify a key question or subject of interest on which to conduct individual research from a range of authentic sources, including the internet. The proportion of marks allocated to the IRP across all boards – Edexcel, AQA, Eduqas and OCR – is in the region of 15% of the total examination. All boards are clear in their objectives for this component, namely the development of

students' capacity for critical thinking. The aim is to equip them with 'transferable skills such as autonomy, resourcefulness, creativity and linguistic, cultural and cognitive flexibility that will enable them to proceed to further study or to employment'. In addition, a pivotal function of the IRP within the speaking examination is to provide an opportunity for pupils to showcase language learning skills, 'including communication strategies such as adjusting the message, circumlocution, self-correction and repair strategies'.

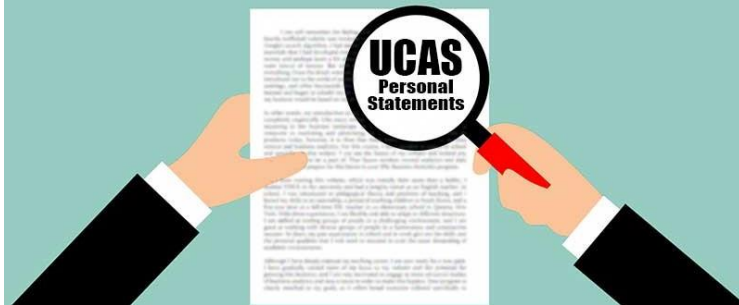
Examination boards coincide in their approach and guidance regarding teacher input and any potential overlap with texts or films studied for the Cultural Topic component. Teachers may advise on titles and, in some cases, on sources, but should avoid 'giving advice on language or correcting any work students may have written



down'. Teachers are encouraged to liaise with the examination board and the subject officers to ensure that titles are suitable. A variety of administrative approaches are used to ensure that the independent nature of the project is ensured; *no* written or oral feedback is permitted during any mock examinations, and a pro-forma is submitted with bullet-point details for possible discussion and a number of sources.

Teachers can aim for a variety of innovative approaches to the preparation and practice of the IRP. These include 'mini-IRP' practice, involving a practice 'try-out' on another topic, with comments from peers, or an IRP carousel powerpoint presentation to Year 11 pupils as part of an Autumn Term Modern Languages

promotion ahead of A-level choices being made. The IRP section of the speaking examination covers all (or almost all) of the Assessment Objectives, with a focus on the quality of language, presentation, critical and analytical response, along with general accuracy.



There are no hard and fast rules issued by examination boards as to the timing of the inputting, monitoring and preparation of the IRP, but many schools opt to have this in place ahead of the summer break at the end of Year 12. Whilst it is the

intention of the examination boards that the syllabus subject topics act as a springboard for inspiration, many pupils choose a topic which dovetails with another of their A-level subjects or a degree programme to which they intend to apply. For example, an applicant for Medical School focused on Cuban medical internationalist missions, whilst an Economics pupil explored the reasons for inflation in Venezuela. Indeed, the Summer Term is an ideal juncture at which to explore such possibilities, as the research skills gained over the summer, along with a broadening of knowledge base in the pupil's chosen field for Higher Education, can be included in the all-important UCAS personal statement.

The Individual Research Project is a really enjoyable part of the A-level Spanish suite of papers and skills. A successful execution of its intended objectives elicits a positive and dynamic approach on the part of pupils, teachers and foreign-language assistants. Here are some approaches which may be useful:

- Explore and embed cultural inserts from the outset of Spanish teaching at GCSE and below, using the Summer Term to inculcate the skills of presentation and research.
- Be explicit about higher-order thinking skills and how these might look within the context of IRP research.
- Use your school library and librarians where available to access online resources, such as JStor. Oxbridge candidates may also want to look at *Polyglot* (Oxford) and *Polyglossia* (Cambridge) for some inspirational ideas and research methodology.
- Provide some authentic supplementary material prompted by the topics at A-level; for example, in aspects of political life, instead of Franco, explore the Argentine *guerra sucia*. (Increasingly contracted timetables

are an issue here but provide opportunities for independent reading and research over holiday periods.)

- Make cross-curricular connections, liaising with colleagues in Art, Geography, History and Economics; if the Cuban Revolution is on the SoW, use some authentic materials in the target language to explore further.
- Encourage pupils to set up current affairs clubs or film clubs to foster broader, supra-curricular interests.
- Use Year 12 Languages Ambassadors to deliver mini-IRP presentations to the GCSE cohort.
- Take a bespoke approach to the IRP of each individual pupil, considering their HE profile, employing FLAs too (where available) to explore areas of interest.
- Finally, facilitate visits and talks by former pupils who went on to study languages.



The IRP in Spanish A-level: the student's perspective

By Alexander Evers, new undergraduate at Trinity College, Oxford, reading Spanish and Portuguese.

The Independent Research Project, or IRP for short, is an exciting opportunity for Year 13 (school-leaving) students such as myself to further their interests in Hispanic culture and develop independent research skills – something that I found hugely rewarding.

Early on in the research process I decided that I wanted to explore an aspect of Latin American culture, as this had been my primary focus in my Oxford application which I was working on in tandem with my IRP. Soon after, I decided that researching a film would be of most interest, as I had already enjoyed studying Pedro Almodóvar's *Volver* as part of my A-level course and wanted to develop the film analysis skills that I had picked up in class.

After watching a few films, I was immediately captivated by Alfonso Cuarón's semi-autobiographical 2018 Netflix film *Roma*, and began to explore it in greater depth.



Before choosing an exact title for my project I found it useful to read online articles and film reviews in order to better grasp *Roma*'s key concepts and themes, so that I could then choose a balanced and well evidenced question that I also found interesting.

The most striking element of the film for me was Cuarón's social commentary on 1970s Mexico, which led me to settle on the final question: "To what extent can it be considered that *Roma* accurately portrays social inequality in Mexican society?" There was a vast amount of information online about this facet of the film, with some praising Cuarón's exploration of the class divide in Mexico, while others felt that he had looked at it through a 'white saviour' lens, and did not do the Mexican indigenous community justice. For this reason, I wanted to delve deeper into the two opposing arguments and draw my own conclusions.

In the end, I concluded that Cuarón sensitively and accurately depicted the class divide in Mexico in the 1970s, and offered a bold political statement about the Mexican government at the time – the most eye-opening moment for me being his detailed portrayal of the 1971 Corpus Christi Massacre – a clear act of unjust political suppression that Cuarón highlights in this film that many of the audience, including myself, had not heard of before.



However, Cuarón's portrayal of the indigenous community struck me as underdeveloped in places. Although the film centred around an indigenous woman named Cleo, it featured relatively little dialogue from indigenous characters, which unfortunately meant that their role in the film was lessened, as their opinions regarding the social climate of 1970s Mexico were not particularly addressed.

The next step was preparing a spoken presentation for the examiner to last no longer than 2 minutes. This was a harder task than expected, as this 2-minute presentation formed the basis for 10 minutes of spontaneous questions from the examiner. Therefore, I had to include enough information about my chosen question, without making it too broad. After this was completed, it was essential to memorise the presentation. I would highly recommend doing this early on in the process, as the pressure of the exam environment can make it harder to remember the presentation, so knowing it by heart is a huge help.

The experience of the speaking exam was in some ways very different to any other A-level exam due to the fast-paced and spontaneous nature of the questions. Despite this, it was possible to prepare for many of the questions, as while the wording was not the same as the ones I had planned for, the themes that they dealt with were similar. This allowed me to draw upon knowledge from answers that I had previously planned and made the exam less intimidating than I had expected.



Another challenge of the speaking exam is using enough high-register language and complex grammatical structures, as these are essential for reaching the top marks, yet are often tricky to think of on the spot. What I found particularly helpful was pre-preparing a set of transferable phrases about the film that I would likely be able to use in the exam without too much effort, as I was confident knowing when and where it would be appropriate to use these structures as a result of trial and error from speaking practice.

On reflection, the IRP is an element of the A-level course that I am very grateful for – the research skills and additional knowledge that I gained were invaluable and are some of the many benefits of choosing to study languages at A level!

Further analysis of 'Roma' features on p14 of our February 2021 edition – available via the Past Editions tab above.



¿Por qué Chile rechazó la propuesta de una nueva Constitución?

By Clara Riveros

Chile, un país situado al sur de las Américas y con más de 19 millones de habitantes, finalmente se decantó por el rechazo contundente a la nueva Constitución. El 62 % votó por el “rechazo” mientras que el 38 % votó el “apruebo”. ¿Por qué?

El joven presidente de Chile, Gabriel Boric, de 36 años, dijo en las horas previas a la jornada del plebiscito que las decisiones de los chilenos determinarían la historia futura del país. Su advertencia daba cuenta de la preocupación por los resultados y por las consecuencias que el “rechazo” tendría sobre su gobernabilidad. No era para menos. Lo que estaba fuera de todos sus cálculos es que la derrota sería de tal magnitud.



Las encuestas previas a la jornada de votación del domingo 4 de septiembre, siguiendo [El Post](#), el podcast de [The Washington Post](#), indicaron que la opción “rechazo” se impondría con un 48 %, superando en 10 puntos al “apruebo” que

podría alcanzar apenas un 38 %. El presidente Boric, situado a la izquierda del espectro político ideológico, gobierna rodeado de autodenominados progresistas, antisistema y radicales, lleva menos de seis meses al frente del poder y ya enfrenta una elevada impopularidad superior al 50 %.

En los días previos a la votación, analistas y expertos chilenos explicaron las razones que cristalizarían el rechazo al texto constitucional vigente desde 1980 y legado por el régimen dictatorial de Augusto Pinochet. [Robert Funk](#), académico de la Universidad de Chile, observó que el probable rechazo tendría que ver con aspectos de forma en el texto elaborado durante casi un año por la Convención Constitucional, pero también de contenido. Tanto las cuestiones propias del desarrollo que tuvo el proceso constituyente, el texto en sí mismo y el contexto nacional e internacional, la coyuntura del país (inflación, economía, impopularidad del gobierno, etc.) y hasta los efectos globales que arrastra la post-pandemia.



[Funk](#) se refirió a unos 400 artículos que dieron cuerpo a la propuesta constitucional, con un fuerte énfasis en temas identitarios, indígenas y en abstracciones que carecen de interés y exceden la comprensión de muchos ciudadanos. Todo ello cuando las preocupaciones centrales, tangibles y materiales del estallido social de hace tres años aún no se han visto resueltas.

La elaboración del nuevo texto constitucional habría tomado un camino que no necesariamente se correspondió con las demandas originales del grueso de la sociedad chilena (mejoras en temas de salud, transporte, educación, desempleo, inseguridad, inmigración, criminalidad, etc), incluso se estima que la clase política promotora del cambio o que impulsó la redacción de la nueva Constitución desvió el contenido de las propuestas iniciales que debían responder a las reclamaciones y demandas concretas de los ciudadanos. La consecuencia de las malas decisiones

y la valoración de la gestión gubernamental se hicieron manifiestas con el resultado en las urnas.



Si bien la nueva carta constitucional “incorporaba importantes avances, como el Estado de Derecho y la paridad entre hombres y mujeres, dejaba abiertas numerosas aristas relativas al alcance de lo plurinacional, del derecho de los mal llamados pueblos originarios, del poder de las cámaras de diputados y senadores (vaciando de contenido a esta última), de la independencia del Poder Judicial o del alcance de una potencial intervención de las Fuerzas Armadas en circunstancias de crisis”, analizó desde Madrid el académico argentino [Carlos Malamud](#), investigador principal para América Latina del Real Instituto Elcano, tras la derrota del “apruebo”.

Los votos evidenciaron el rechazo rotundo de los chilenos a la nueva Constitución, posiblemente advirtieron que el nuevo texto iba a fracturar demasiadas cuestiones fundamentales para la convivencia política y social y que generaría divisiones muy profundas en el país. De ahí que un alto porcentaje de electores, el 62 %, haya rechazado la nueva Carta política, mientras que el 38 % la aprobó.

Tras la derrota, el presidente Boric afirmó que recibía la decisión del pueblo chileno con humildad y que era evidente que el malestar social sigue latente, irresuelto. [Funk](#) analizó que los chilenos, desde el primer momento, vieron con malos ojos a la Convención Constitucional (por un excesivo simbolismo que incluyó a miembros de la convención disfrazados, así como ceremonias y rituales indígenas, peleas internas y hasta el episodio inicial de rechazo a cantar el Himno Nacional). Los ciudadanos también rechazaron el texto en sí mismo, por su inviabilidad, abstracción y extensión, incidió también la baja popularidad del gobierno, inferior al 40 %. [Malamud](#) coincidió con la mirada de [Funk](#) y explicó que: “El texto no solo era largo, farragoso y contradictorio, sino más que la nueva Constitución que el país necesitaba parecía el programa político de un grupo de fuerzas antisistema. Era como si el mundo acabara mañana y previamente hubiera que cancelar las cuentas pendientes de reivindicaciones perpetuas”.



El “rechazo” debilita al gobierno mientras que la derecha, promotora de esta opción, sale fortalecida, observó [Claudia Heiss](#), académica de la Universidad de Chile. Boric “[ha perdido abundante capital político por su apoyo al apruebo](#)”. Está claro que la contundente derrota empujó al mandatario a renovar y a reformar su gabinete en aras de incorporar posiciones más conciliadoras y con capacidad de gestión para adquirir gobernabilidad, en un gobierno que se percibe como demasiado inexperto.

Tampoco hay que perder de vista que las agrupaciones de derecha tienen relevancia capital en el Legislativo. “Contrariamente a los intereses del oficialismo, en ambas cámaras el peso de los partidos de derecha es fundamental, obligándolo a negociar desde una postura de cierta debilidad. Ahora bien, los más lúcidos representantes de la derecha saben que ni de lejos su caudal electoral supera el 50% y, por tanto, no deben cometer los mismos errores de la izquierda al redactar una Constitución desequilibrada y solo para sus propios seguidores”, destacó [Malamud](#).

Los resultados del plebiscito mantendrán vigente la Constitución de 1980, pero lo cierto es que esta ha tenido, desde su entrada en vigor, más de 50 reformas. Hay gran incertidumbre respecto al proceso institucional a seguir, no obstante, tal y como lo avaló un 78 % de la ciudadanía en 2020, el requerimiento del cambio constitucional continúa irresuelto, aunque ahora no esté claro el camino a seguir, precisó [Heiss](#).



[Malamud](#) añadió que los eventos acaecidos en octubre de 2019, origen del actual proceso constitucional, “mostraron que el país anhelaba un cambio profundo. Sin embargo, los encargados de llevarlo a cabo erraron en su diagnóstico y eligieron herramientas inadecuadas para

solucionar los problemas del país. Lo que ha mostrado este proceso es que Chile necesita una nueva Constitución, que sea de todos. Y para ello es necesario diálogo y un amplio consenso entre todos los actores políticos y sociales implicados”.

El [experto argentino](#) infiere algunas cuestiones lógicas y las claves para entender el impacto de los resultados en la política doméstica de Chile, resultados que también acarrearán consecuencias para la región. El resultado del plebiscito “ha dejado claro que la posición de Boric se ha debilitado de forma considerable. Erróneamente, aunque tampoco tenía mucho margen de maniobra para otra cosa, vinculó su futuro político al resultado del plebiscito”. Y, por otra parte, “el triunfo

del rechazo tendrá importantes consecuencias en América Latina. En primer lugar, al cuestionar la idea del giro a la izquierda, de la omnipresencia de gobiernos ‘progresistas’ y de las ‘virtudes populistas’. En segundo lugar, porque hará que aquellos líderes interesados en impulsar reformas constitucionales en sus propios países se lo piensen dos veces, sobre todo si quieren hacerlo con estándares medianamente democráticos. Para comenzar, es el caso de Perú, de Honduras e incluso, aunque con muy escasas opciones, de Colombia”.

Dos días después del rechazo al plebiscito, el presidente Boric, cuya gestión es valorada favorablemente por un 39 % de la ciudadanía, hizo cambios en su gabinete, “pensando en nuestro país”, dijo. Un Boric apesadumbrado declaró que esa decisión le resultaba dolorosa pero que era necesaria.

De todas formas, el cambio de gabinete era un asunto pendiente desde hace varios meses, notó [Christopher Martínez](#), académico de la Universidad de Concepción, al considerar el pragmatismo asumido por el presidente. Este finalmente optó por la experiencia y la experticia, sacrificando la afinidad, la juventud y la amistad de algunos de sus fieles escuderos —convencidos de una presunta ‘superioridad moral’ respecto de la generación de la Concertación— y a quienes mantenía en sus cargos, pese a sus posiciones radicales. En consecuencia, les han llevado a cometer graves y costosos errores y acciones mal calculadas para la popularidad y la credibilidad de la gestión gubernamental.

Los cambios ministeriales y la composición del nuevo gabinete dan cuenta del acercamiento de Boric al centro-izquierda y con este de una forzada, conveniente y necesaria inclinación hacia la generación denostada constantemente por él y por los suyos en desmedro de ciertas posiciones más radicales que integraban su equipo de gobierno.



Por último, no está de más dejar constancia de una de las reacciones que más llamó la atención en el Hemisferio tras la derrota del plebiscito chileno. Esta fue la del líder populista y flamante presidente colombiano [Gustavo Petro](#) quien, tras conocer los resultados, trinó: “revivió Pinochet”. Su tuit —por demás está decir que fue muy desafortunado— desconoce ya no solo las formas que debe mantener un jefe de Estado, sino que ilumina una cuestión de fondo, es decir, la concepción meramente instrumental que los populistas mantienen de la democracia: esta sirve cuando los resultados les gustan, pero cuando la ciudadanía se decanta por

otra opción no tienen reparo en pasar a cuestionar la validez y la capacidad de decisión (mayoritaria) de los electores, la legalidad del proceso y/o la legitimidad misma de las urnas. Semejante aseveración emitida por Petro desconoce que en ese importante 62% de rechazo a la nueva Constitución no solo hubo votantes afines al dictador, también electores de derecha, liberales, votantes de centro y de izquierda que se pronunciaron en contra de lo que se redactó y de cómo se llevó a cabo el proceso constituyente.

Clara Riveros, Colombia, 1984. Politóloga, analista política y [autora](#). Ha vivido entre América Latina y el Norte de África. Sus [libros](#) abordan aspectos relacionados con populismos, totalitarismos, revoluciones, dictaduras, estados confesionales, regímenes autoritarios y la cuestión de las libertades a lado y lado del Atlántico.

En Twitter: @CLARARIVEROS

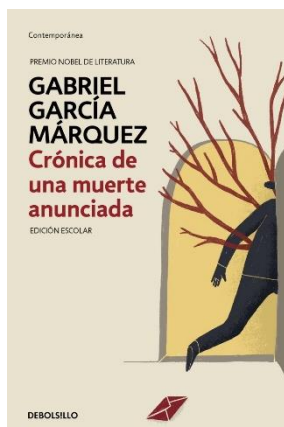


***Crónica de una muerte anunciada*: key points for exam success**

BAS Senior Editor Robin Wallis

*Our Summer 2021 Edition carried an article identifying key points for exam success when answering on *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*. The novel has since appeared on some additional syllabuses, and the Bulletin's readership has expanded. We are therefore re-publishing below an updated version of the 2021 article. ¡Que aproveche!*

Gabriel García Márquez (GM) regarded *Crónica* as the work in which he most fully achieved his authorial intentions. Its publication in 1981 nudged the Nobel Committee into awarding him their Prize for Literature the following year.



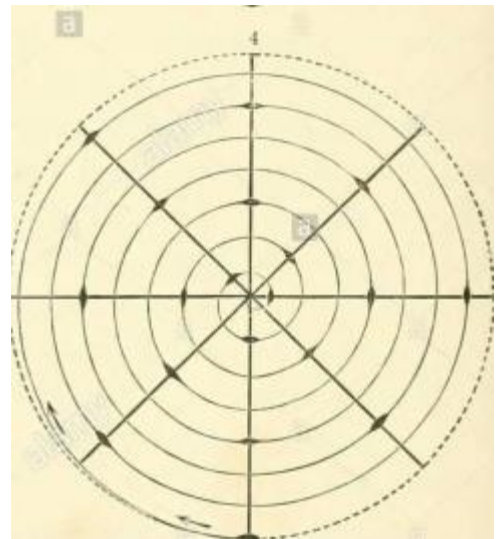
The unnamed town of *Crónica* is banjaxed by its geography and lack of social cohesion. GM's insights into its shortcomings complement his 1967 masterpiece *Cien Años de Soledad* – a fantastical allegory of the history of Spanish America on a biblical scale. By contrast, *Crónica* is based on a real-life crime which distills GM's vision of Spanish America.

One subtlety of *Crónica* is that, on first reading, it is possible to miss that the novel's protagonist is (in my view, at least) the unnamed narrator. Although the action is apparently divided between an inexplicable murder and an ill-starred marriage, the story is only being told because something has impelled the narrator, after 27 years, to return to *este pueblo olvidado tratando de recomponer con tantas astillas dispersas el espejo roto de la memoria* [this forgotten town, trying to piece back together the broken mirror of memory from so many scattered shards].

On the novel's fortieth anniversary I have in turn pieced together ten passages that help to identify and illustrate its key themes, with my own square-bracketed translations for non-Spanish speakers. The selection ends with my hypothesis about the core mystery of the narrative: who was Ángela's lover?

1. Structure of first chapter

The first chapter flows in non-linear fashion from the opening *El día en que lo iban a matar* [the day they were going to kill him] to the closing *Ya lo mataron* [they just killed him]. It is as though the chapter were structured as a spiral, from the centre of which various spokes reach out to the edge. These spokes represent recurring images and phrases, eg the bishop's boat, the cockerels' crowing, Santiago Nasar (SN) grabbing Divina Flor, etc, that give the chapter its haunting atmosphere and sense of inevitability. As the chapter gathers pace our spiral spins in towards the centre, heading to the fatal moment when Luisa Santiaga rushes towards the *plaza* only for news of the tragedy to resound back at her through the anonymous voice of doom. In this way the first chapter sets the tone for the rest of the novel.



2. Time

This *crónica* is anything but chronological. Some of the characters seem to live outside linear time. Thus Luisa Santiaga, who can foretell the ending of any story that anyone starts to tell her, refers to SN as *el muerto* [the dead man] even before his death. The narrator finds SN's mother Plácida Linero trapped in time, marooned in the same position in the same hammock as when she last saw SN 27

years earlier. The implication: a society in which time is not linear will continue to commit the errors of the past.

3. Predestination



The narrative is a battleground between predestination and free will. Many of the characters overtly consider themselves predestined, eg *Divina Flor se sabía destinada a la cama furtiva de SN* [Divina Flor knew herself destined for SN's furtive bed], or the brothers contemplating their inescapable duty to murder SN: *Es como si ya nos hubiera sucedido* [It's as though it had already happened to

us]. When Ángela names SN, the narrator likens him to a butterfly pinned to the wall, *sin albedrío cuya sentencia estaba escrita desde siempre* [with no free will, whose fate has been written for all time]. A belief in predestination saps the will to take responsibility and shape a better future. Moreover, those who are predestined lose the capacity to choose between right and wrong.

4. Town and authority:

GM allows readers to draw their own conclusions about the nature of authority in this society. The mayor's bumbling response to the crisis is one illustration of this, but perhaps the best example is in the first chapter, when the bishop's boat can't be bothered to stop to collect the people's offerings or hold mass. Instead, *el silbato del buque soltó un chorro de vapor a presión al pasar frente al puerto, y dejó ensopados a los que estaban más cerca de la orilla...: el obispo empezó a hacer la señal de la cruz en el aire frente a la muchedumbre del muelle, después siguió haciéndola de memoria, sin malicia ni inspiración, hasta que el buque se perdió de vista y sólo quedó el alboroto de los gallos*. [The boat's horn blew out a pressurised jet of steam as it passed in front of the port, soaking those closest to the shore...: the bishop began making the sign of the cross in the direction of the jetty, continuing to do so automatically, with neither ill will nor inspiration, until the boat disappeared from sight, leaving only the crowing of the cockerels.]. The hierarchy is alienated from and indifferent to the people over whom it holds sway.

5. Communal responsibility

The narrator reflects, 27 years later, that SN's was a death *cuyos culpables podíamos ser todos* [of which we could all be considered guilty]. The townspeople's inability to assume responsibility for averting the tragedy contrasts with their keenness to declare to the judge *su propia importancia en el drama* [their own importance in the drama]. Excuses given range from the admission of a



lack of nerve (*se me aflojó la pasta*) to the belief that matters of honour are *estancos sagrados a los cuales sólo tienen acceso los dueños del drama* [sacred pools accessible only to the main players in the drama]. Fate and poor governance play a part, but individual responsibility also comes under scrutiny in the *Crónica* world.

6. Rationality

The visiting judge is the only hope for a rational assessment of events, but he is a whimsical figure with a penchant for popular fiction, philosophical musings and doodling. The archive of the provincial capital is *un estanque de causas perdidas* [a sink of lost causes] which floods regularly and has *más de un siglo de expedientes amontonados en el suelo* [more than a century of paperwork in heaps all over the floor]. The implication is that the state cannot rise to the challenge of the issues addressed in the novel.

7. Communication

The townspeople's inability to forewarn SN is the dominant example of the breakdown of communication. In addition, Bayardo San Román's *manera de hablar que más bien le servía para ocultar que para decir* [way of speaking that was better at allowing him to hide things rather than state them clearly] is a telling description of how communication becomes subverted in the society of the novel. Without clear communication, rational action is undermined.



8. Loneliness

Crónica abounds in striking and evocative images that, while not essential to the narrative, deeply enrich it. One such is the depiction of the bride's father at the wedding reception: Poncio Vicario, the blind goldsmith, *sentado solo en un taburete en el centro del patio, respondiendo saludos fugaces que nadie le hacía, feliz en su cerco de olvido* [sitting alone on a stool in the middle of the patio, happily forgotten, responding to fleeting salutations not addressed to him] – a poignant image of individual solitude that complements the collective isolation of *Cien Años de Soledad*.

9. Ángela fights back

Ángela transforms herself into the *dueña de su destino* [master of her own destiny] after her exile from the town. Her love for Bayardo asserts itself as she *volvió a ser virgen para él* [became once again a virgin for him] – a phrase that subverts the terminology of oppression. Conversely, her esteem for her mother plummets: as her mother wipes her mouth on her sleeve and grins at her through her new glasses, *por primera vez desde su nacimiento Angela Vicario la vio tal como era: una pobre mujer consagrada al culto de sus defectos* [for the first time in her life Ángela Vicario saw her for what she really was: an unfortunate woman dedicated to the cult of her defects]. For the reader it is ever so satisfying to see such a withering assessment of Pura Vicario after her abusive treatment of her daughter, and to cheer on Ángela as she outwits the system and champions free will over fatalism.

10. Whodunnit?



The narrator repeatedly asserts the improbability of SN being responsible for Ángela's loss of virginity. At the same time, we know that even 27 years on from the event the narrator remains transfixed by SN's death – hence his narration of the novel. We also glimpse that, 23 years after the murder, the narrator found himself *en una época incierta en que trataba de entender algo de mí mismo* [in an uncertain phase of trying to understand something

about myself], about which no further details are offered.

Against this background we find a telling passage at the mid-point of the text that describes SN's consuming passion for María Alejandrina Cervantes (MAC). In mundane terms, MAC is the madame of the town brothel, but the narrator depicts her as much more than this: *una bestia de amor* [beast of love] whose animal magnetism strips the male townfolk of their reason and their virginity. The long paragraph setting out her powers concludes with a description of her hold over SN. The closing sentence sets out how, in the small hours after the wedding, MAC sent everyone home while quietly leaving her door unbolted for the return



of.... The reader has been primed to expect the returning male to be SN, and is therefore brought up with a jolt to read that the returning male is in fact... the narrator himself (*para que yo volviera a entrar en secreto* – my underlining).

This thunderbolt is immediately followed by a surreal passage describing SN's 'almost magical talent' for disguising people so that they can no longer even recognise themselves: *su diversión predilecta era trastocar la identidad de las mulatas. Saqueaba los roperos de unas para disfrazar a las otras, de modo que todas terminaban por sentirse distintas de sí mismas e iguales a las que no eran.* [his favourite pursuit was muddling up the identities of the girls [in the brothel]. He would ransack some girls' wardrobes to dress up other girls, so that each one

ended up feeling different from the person she truly was and identical to someone she was not.]

This revelation of SN's *artificios de transformista* [transformational skills] sits alongside the recurrent testimony during the novel that (i) SN had neither the opportunity nor inclination to be intimate with Ángela, and (ii) the narrator remains obsessed with SN's death.

The alignment of these passages offers a plausible hypothesis to resolve the core mystery of the novel: to wit, that Ángela may have had sexual relations with the narrator at a moment while he was 'magically' disguised to look like SN, leading Ángela in all sincerity to regard SN as her *autor* [first lover] and the narrator to suffer life-long remorse that his friend SN died in his place.

The Critical Guide to Crónica... can be downloaded from pages 38 -9 of our June 2022 edition, available via the Past Editions tab.



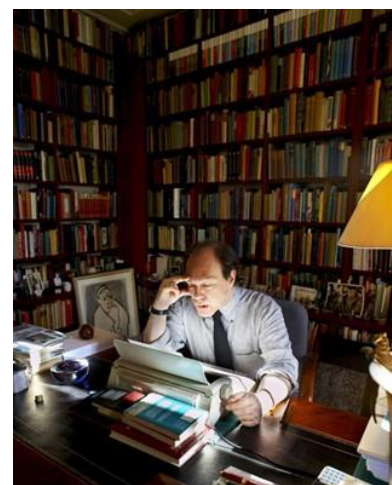
Javier Marías: Messages from the master

When the novelist Javier Marías died in September, he was hailed in the press as a key figure in Spanish literature of the past 50 years. Tipped to win the Nobel Prize, his many novels were translated into more than 40 languages and sold millions of copies.

BAS Editor William Chislett recalls their correspondence

I first met Javier Marías in 2008, when he invited me to his induction into the Real Academia Española. We had initially been put in contact with each other by the Oxford don Eric Southworth, Javier's closest English friend to whom he dedicated two novels (he appears as a character in three others). Our paths crossed again later in Soria, where Javier would go from his home in Madrid to shut himself away and write uninterrupted. Over 13 years, we established an epistolary relationship; I received 14 postcards and 12 letters or notes, which, on his untimely death at the age of 70, I dug out and re-read.

My first postcard from him, in 2010, was in response to me asking whether he would like to contribute to

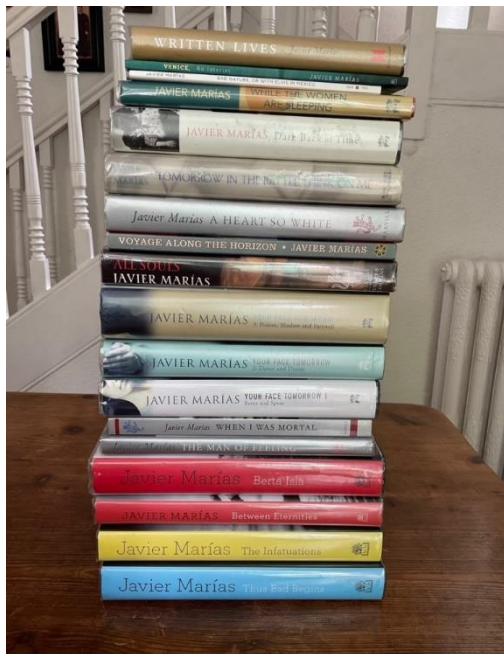


Javier Marías and his "famous" electric typewriter. He did not have a computer and only in his last years email and a mobile phone. Getty Images.

restoring the commemorative stone of the emigré writer Arturo Barea (1897-1957), best known as the author of the trilogy *La forja de un rebelde*, who died in Faringdon, Oxfordshire. He responded with a cheque for £100, which was far more than I needed, and I returned most of it. In his message, he noted that he shared the same birthday as Barea (and Barea’s wife Ilsa), also writing: “He is unhappily and badly known in Spain, except, of course, by those who take advantage of that and steal from his trilogy.”

In another postcard, which showed the tomb of Lawrence Sterne in North Yorkshire, Javier asked me to give Barea “*un respetuoso saludo de mi parte*” at the unveiling of the restored stone. Javier had translated Sterne’s novel *Tristram Shandy*, for which he was awarded the Premio Nacional de Traducción in 1979.

In 2011, while visiting my mother in Oxford, Eric gave me a splendid watch chain to give to Javier, as he did not want to mail it. I left it with his *portero*. Javier responded generously, as he often did, by mailing me a copy of one of his books in English or Spanish, usually the former as I had told him I preferred to read him in English, thanks to the wonderful translations of Margaret Jull Costa. Far from being offended at my preference for his English editions, he passed on my comment to his long-time translator. His own work as a translator, a subject he taught at Oxford University in the early 1980s, played a formative part in him becoming a novelist, and was the subject of an excellent book by Gareth Wood (a pupil of Eric), *Javier Marias’s debt to translation: Sterne, Browne, Nabokov*, published by Oxford University Press in 2012.



William Chislett’s complete collection of Javier Marias’s books in English,

Javier also sent me several of the 41 books published by Reino de Redonda, the publishing house he founded. It is named after the tiny Caribbean island of Redonda, uninhabited except for boobies. He was the island’s monarch, ruling as King Xavier I. The kingdom’s peers, ennobled by him, include AS Byatt, Duchess of Morpho Convexo and William Boyd, Duke of Brazzaville.

Javier knew I was an obsessive fellow bibliophile (he left a library of some 30,000 books). Sometimes I would leave first editions with his *portero* for him to sign, including the very scarce *All Souls*, set in Oxford and published in English in 1992, which I had bought for £10. He congratulated me on my

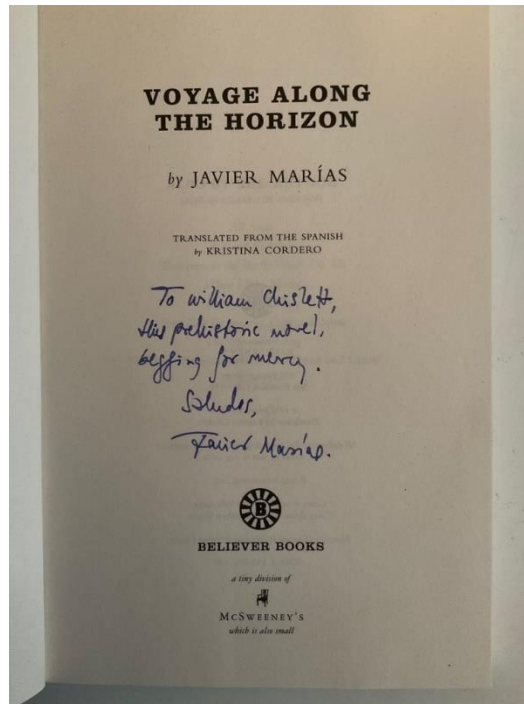
find, telling me only 600 copies had been printed. He had sought an extra copy but it was far too expensive.

Sometimes in my correspondence – always in English, which Javier spoke fluently – I would comment on his weekly columns in *El País*. In one published in 2011 and titled “*El lento y rápido viaje de los abrigos*”, he used the death of a fellow member of the Real Academia Española to comment on mortality. RAE members have a designated coat rack with their name, and when a member dies everyone moves up one space. “*Ese avance en el perchero es un tácito recordatorio de nuestra mortalidad*,” he wrote in his column. In his postcard to me, Javier hoped his coat rack would stay in the same place “for a long while, even if, given *la media de edad de los académicos*, that seems a difficult thing to happen.”

Although these traits were not something I ever personally experienced, Javier was viewed in some circles as *antipático* and a bit of a curmudgeon, perhaps due to his weekly column in *El País*, where he took issue with everything from smoking bans (he was an ardent smoker) to the sorry state of Spanish politics. Despite (or perhaps because of) this, he was incredibly well respected: *El País* put the news of his death on the front page and ran 10 pages about him over two days.

In a 2012 column for *El País*, “*Piel de rinoceronte o desdén*”, Javier expressed his displeasure at a former Popular Party minister and diplomat, whom he detested and had featured in the 2004 article, “*¿Pero quiénes son estos patanes?*”. The unnamed diplomat had spotted Javier and two friends in a restaurant. At the end of the night he approached his table and invited everyone to a drink. “*Que sepas que se te lee y admira*,” the diplomat said to Javier, who declined the invitation. Asked whether he was going to the country where the diplomat was posted, Javier replied in the affirmative. “*Te llamaré antes de tu venida*,” said the diplomat. “*El tuteo*,” wrote Javier in the column, “*jamás lo había visto con anterioridad y, ya digo, lo había tildado de patán como mínimo, en el pasado. ¿No se enteran los políticos de lo que se dice de ellos?*”.

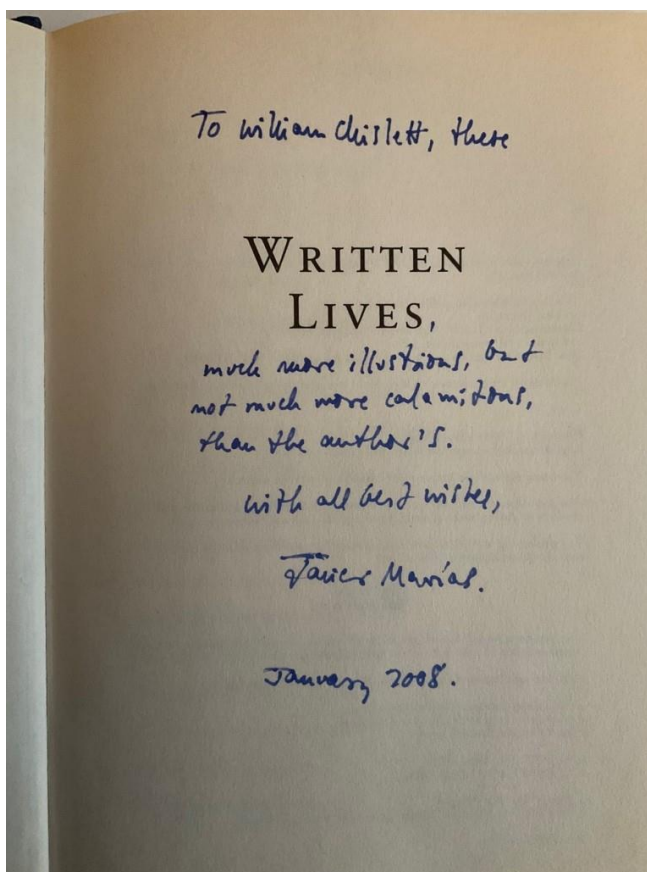




Javier Marias's second novel, Travesía del horizonte, published in 1973 when he was 21, and in English in 2006

I wrote to Javier identifying the diplomat as Federico Trillo, the ambassador to London, which was easy to do. “As for *tuteo*, it is so extended in Spain it doesn’t bother me if it comes from a reader or a friend’s friend,” he replied. “I am not so stiff. But it does when it comes from an ambassador I had never been introduced to, and I dislike too. So you can *tutearme*. My pleasure.”

In our last exchange, in October 2021, I sent him an email saying how much I was belatedly enjoying *Understanding Spain* (1992) written by his father, Julián Mariás. The philosopher was briefly imprisoned following the Spain’s Civil War for his republican activities, after he was denounced by a colleague, an episode his son drew on in his trilogy, *Your Face Tomorrow*.



Published in Spanish in 2000 as Vidas Escritas and in English in 2006, Mariás delves into the lives of 20 writers and treats them as if they were fictional characters.

When I asked Javier why the book was not better known, he replied: “The answer is simple. My father was badly seen, first by the Francoists, then by the left. Something similar is happening to me (*salvadas las distancias*), or I am badly seen by both right and false left.”

I will miss our correspondence.



John Brande Trend

By William Chislett

The *Concurso de Cante Jonde*, a seminal music competition held in Granada, which celebrated its centenary in June, attracted many people, but none as interesting as the English musicologist and Hispanist John Brande Trend (1887-1958), who was personally invited by the organizer and great composer, Manuel de Falla. (1887-1958).

Trend studied Natural Sciences at Cambridge University, but his real passion was music. After the horrors of the First World War (Trend fought at Ypres in France), and as a result of the recommendation of his friend the Cambridge musicologist Edward Dent, Trend went to Spain in 1919 instead of Italy, as he had planned. (Gerald Brenan, Trend's compatriot and author of *The Spanish Labyrinth*, who had also fought at Ypres, fled England that same year and moved permanently to Yegen in Las Alpujarras with 2,000 books.)





JB Trend in 1923

Dent convinced Trend that there was a vast and fertile field of music to be explored in Spain, unknown to most of the world. The first performance of Falla's *El sombrero de tres picos* was given in London in July 1919, a couple of months before Trend's first visit to Spain. That visit changed his life. As Trend later explained:

"In 1919, after four and a half years in uniform, Spanish ways seemed not only natural but friendly and delightful; for even the 1914-18 war was a crescendo of horrors and the fearful casualties among one's friends made Spain seem not a country of war and lechery, but of a new Age of Reason.^[1]"

Linguistically gifted, Trend learned Spanish and plunged into the country's culture, music and politics, later recounted in his many books. His *don de gentes*, not a particularly English trait, endeared him to Spaniards and made him many friends. In 1933 he became Cambridge's first Professor of Spanish.

Trend met Falla and the young Lorca in Granada. Falla took Trend to see the Alhambra by moonlight and to hear the guitarist Ángel Barrios and his singer father. His first meeting with Falla left a lasting impression. "It has remained with me as one of the most vivid and beautiful which I can ever hope to have^[2]."

SPANISH FOLK-SONG A MUSICAL FESTIVAL AT GRASANO.

MANUEL DE FALLA AND HIS WORK.

Spain is a country of music. It is a country where the people sing and dance to the accompaniment of the guitar and the castanets. The music of Spain is a mixture of the folk-songs of the various provinces, and it is this folk-song which has been the basis of the work of the great Spanish composers. Manuel de Falla is one of the most important of these composers. His work is a synthesis of the folk-song and the modern music of the day. He has written a number of operas, and his music is full of life and energy. His work is a tribute to the folk-song of Spain, and it is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world.

TWO SHORT OPERAS.

The production of the two short operas, "The Doves" and "The Song of the Lark," is a work of great interest. These operas are written by Manuel de Falla, and they are a synthesis of the folk-song and the modern music of the day. They are works which have brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world, and they are a tribute to the folk-song of Spain.

A FILM WITHOUT ACTORS.

The film "The Four Seasons" is a work of great interest. It is a film which is without actors, and it is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world. It is a film which is a tribute to the folk-song of Spain, and it is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world.

THE FOUR SEASONS.

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REAPPROVED BY THE ENTIRE TRADE AND PRESS.

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Dr. BARNARD'S HOMES

Annual 2/6 Appeal. Dr. Barnard's Homes is a work of great interest. It is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world. It is a work which is a tribute to the folk-song of Spain, and it is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world.

A FAMINE RELIEF FILM.

POETRY OF GREEK AND MODERN GREEK.

The film "Poetry of Greek and Modern Greek" is a work of great interest. It is a film which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world. It is a film which is a tribute to the folk-song of Spain, and it is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world.

CONCERTS.

The concert is a work of great interest. It is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world. It is a work which is a tribute to the folk-song of Spain, and it is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world.

PERFORMANCES BY ETC.

The performance is a work of great interest. It is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world. It is a work which is a tribute to the folk-song of Spain, and it is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world.

USE OF SHOUTING FORM FOR SETTING.

The use of shouting form for setting is a work of great interest. It is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world. It is a work which is a tribute to the folk-song of Spain, and it is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world.

NEW BROTHER ASSOCIATION.

The new brother association is a work of great interest. It is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world. It is a work which is a tribute to the folk-song of Spain, and it is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world.

WELLESLEY GYMNASIUM MARKET.

The Wellesley gymnasium market is a work of great interest. It is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world. It is a work which is a tribute to the folk-song of Spain, and it is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world.

EXHIBITIONS.

The exhibition is a work of great interest. It is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world. It is a work which is a tribute to the folk-song of Spain, and it is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world.

OPERA.

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE.

The Royal Opera House is a work of great interest. It is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world. It is a work which is a tribute to the folk-song of Spain, and it is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world.

THEATRE.

The theatre is a work of great interest. It is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world. It is a work which is a tribute to the folk-song of Spain, and it is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world.

THEATRE (continued).

The theatre (continued) is a work of great interest. It is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world. It is a work which is a tribute to the folk-song of Spain, and it is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world.

PICTURE THEATRES.

The picture theatres are a work of great interest. It is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world. It is a work which is a tribute to the folk-song of Spain, and it is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world.

PICTURE THEATRES (continued).

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PICTURE THEATRES.

PICTURE THEATRES (continued).

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ART EXHIBITIONS.

The art exhibitions are a work of great interest. It is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world. It is a work which is a tribute to the folk-song of Spain, and it is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world.

ENTERTAINMENTS.

The entertainments are a work of great interest. It is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world. It is a work which is a tribute to the folk-song of Spain, and it is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world.

FESTIVALS AND PAGEANTS.

The festivals and pageants are a work of great interest. It is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world. It is a work which is a tribute to the folk-song of Spain, and it is a work which has brought the music of Spain to the attention of the world.

PICTURE THEATRES.

PICTURE THEATRES (continued).

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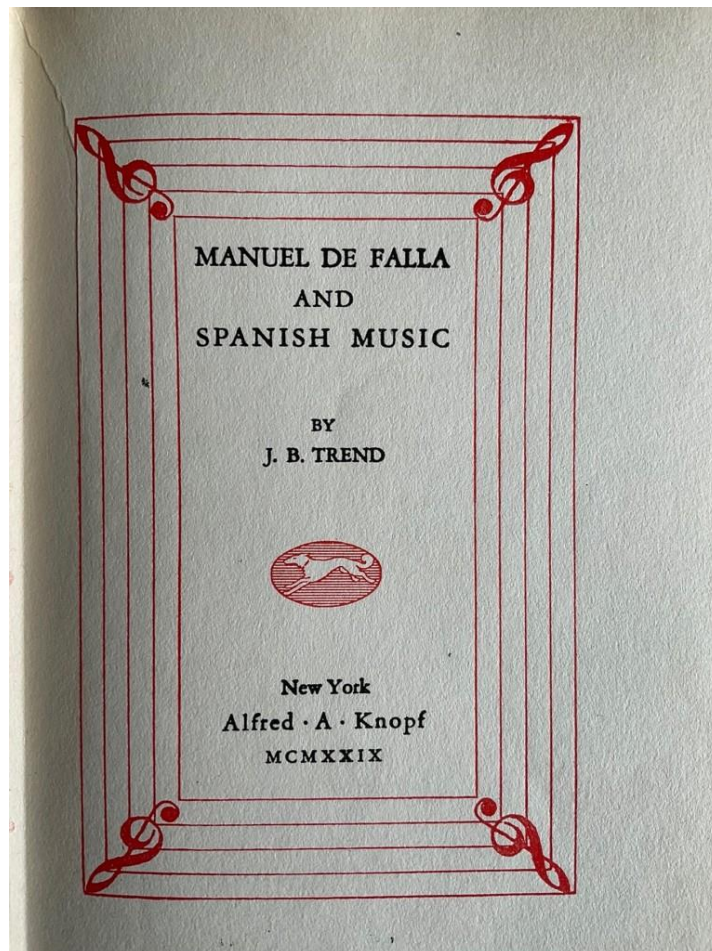
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JB Trend's article in The Times of 24 June, 1922 (Archive of The Times)

In a letter to Trend in February 1922, part of a correspondence that lasted 16 years, Falla said the aim of the *concurso* was "to purify and revive the wonderful *Cante Jondo*, which is not to be confused with *Cante Flamenco*, which is a degeneration and almost a caricature of it". Trend covered it for *The Times* and other prestigious publications, including *The Nation* and *Athenaeum*. "*Jondo* is a provincialism of *hondo*, deep or profound, the song of the tragic sense of life," he wrote in *The Times*. "*Flamenco* signifies gypsy or gypsified - if such a word may be used - an affectation of gypsy manners, or what are supposed to be gypsy manners. The object of the competition was to attract all those singers who could sing the real, primitive melodies, so that they should be heard before all memory of them was

lost under the additions and distortions of the flamenco manner – to show, in fact, native Andaluz song in its classical purity^[31].”

Trend spent the rest of his life writing books and articles about Spain, including in *The Criterion*, edited by TS Eliot, who won the Nobel Prize in 1948, and, in particular, promoting performances of Falla’s music in England. On his visits to Spain he would go in search of manuscripts, and would often transcribe them and send them to Falla. Trend’s investigations produced two pioneering books: *The Music of Spanish History to 1600* (1926) and *Manuel de Falla and Spanish Music* (1929).



Published in 1929. Library of William Chislett

Not only did Trend accompany Falla when he visited England and act as the intermediary between the composer and the organisers of concerts, but he also represented him when he could not go, attending rehearsals and making sure that Falla’s instructions were carried out. This was the case with the first performance of *El retablo de maese Pedro* in Bristol in 1924, with English texts by Trend. He also translated the *Siete canciones populares españolas*, adapted for voice and piano by

Falla, and the *cançons* of the Catalan composer Roberto Gerhard (1896-1970). Trend helped Gerhard find a job at King's College, Cambridge after he went into exile as a result of the Spanish Civil War.

Few if any English writers in the first half of the 20th century have explained the 'real' nature of Spain and its culture better than Trend: "the conventional view of Spain [...] is no truer than a fairy story"^[4], he said. He was in a privileged position to write about the "real" Spain, as a result of his extensive travelling around the country and his wide range of friends and acquaintances among the literary and intellectual elite, including Miguel de Unamuno, Juan Ramón Jiménez, Antonio Machado, Américo Castro, Jorge Guillén and Alberto Jiménez Fraud, the first director of the *Residencia de Estudiantes* in Madrid, where Trend often stayed and which he regarded as "my college Madrid", in the sense of a British university institution along the lines of Oxford and Cambridge. (Trend's college in Cambridge was Christ's – he had the room once occupied by Charles Darwin.)

The *Residencia*, the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* and the *Junta de Ampliación de Estudios*, enlightened institutions, were very important for Trend, as he explained in *A Picture of Modern Spain*, his first book published in 1921. Trend identified with their modernising impulse, particularly the education reforms proposed by Francisco Giner de los Ríos (1839-1915), who, Trend said, saw the need for Spain to "shed the military and clerical weight which throughout its history has prevented it from progressing"^[5].

In 1937, following the bombing of Guernica on 26 April, Trend helped organise the evacuation from the Basque Country to England of 3,840 children on the steamship *Habana*, including a friend of mine, Herminio Martínez, who never returned to live in Spain and died in Cambridge in 2019.

Trend's last visit to Spain was in July 1937, by which time a large part of the country was in Franco's hands. In protest at Franco's victory, and out of respect for his many Republican friends, Trend never returned to Spain. The nearest he came to Spain was Portugal, from where he would gaze nostalgically across the border. He turned his attention to Latin America, writing books on South America, Mexico and Simón Bolívar. On his first visit to Mexico, the first place he went to, almost as an act of homage, was the *Casa de España* in order to renew contact with exiled friends and "his" Spain.

"What was lost in the Civil War was not just a government but a modern culture," he wrote in *The Civilisation of Spain*, sadly the only book of his translated into Spanish (in 1955 by Editorial Losada in Argentina, founded by Spanish exiles, but never in Spain, something that I am trying to remedy^[6]). This jewel of a book is ideal for students of Spanish, as is Trend's *The Language and History of*

Spain (1953), which is dedicated to Alberto Jiménez Fraud, for whom Trend found a job when he went into exile in England.



Trend's only book published in Spanish in 1955 (Left). Published in 1953 (Right). Library of William Chislett

When Trend learned that the Great Spanish poet Antonio Machado had crossed the border from Catalonia into France on 28 January 1939 along with his 86-year-old mother and brother José, he wrote to offer him a job in the Spanish Department at Cambridge. But by the time the letter arrived at the hotel in Collioure where Machado was staying, he had died. José responded in a letter: “Usted, señor Trend, que tan alta cumbre representa en la intelectualidad en ese país, reciba la profunda gratitud por sus bondades para con mi hermano, de este antiguo alumno de La Institución Libre de Enseñanza.”

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^[1] *Lorca and the Spanish Poetic Tradition* (1956), pp 5-6.

^[2] *Ibid*, p. 135.

^[3] A Musical festival at Granada. Manuel de Falla and his work". *The Times*, 24 June, 1922

^[4] *Alfonso the Sage and Other Spanish Essays* (1926), p. 200.

^[5] *A Picture of Modern Spain* (1934), p. 7.

^[6] *The Civilization of Spain* (1944).



¡Venga! Add spice to your Spanish...

BAS editor Robin Wallis

Are Spaniards shouting *¡venga!* at each other more than they used to? This is the question I ask myself as a waft of *vengas* float in through my hotel room window from the *plaza* below. Or is it that, after a lifetime of engaging with the Spanish language, my brain has simply reached a point where it feels ready to tackle this final frontier of the language: how to exclaim *¡Venga!* at appropriate moments?

This latest scattering of *vengas* has come to me while lodging in Medina Sidonia, in Andalusia, but I noticed it also recently in Salamanca. So it seems as though it's not necessarily a regional thing.

For years I spoke Spanish in Latin America rather than Spain, and I don't recall much 'vengando' taking place there. The same was true of that other peninsula standard, 'vale': I had to make a conscious effort to restore *vale* to my active vocabulary after returning to Spain from the Latin American lands of *chévere*, *macanudo* and *está bien*.

It was worth the effort. Such utterances add pedigree to the non-native speaker's output by imbuing it with a whiff of the Spanish street. Subconsciously it registers with our Spanish interlocutors that we are channelling a more authentic version of their language than can be found in a phrase book.

¡Venga!, though, seems to express something more esoteric than the more functional *vale*. If *vale* plays well, how much more viscerally might we hispanists engage our Spanish interlocutors by barking *¡Venga!* at them?

¡Venga! is such a multi-faceted term that we need to harness a range of English equivalents to cover all its uses. As a greeting shouted across a public space (*¡Venga!* is never muttered...) it seems to occupy an intermediate zone where hello or goodbye would be too punctilious. *¡Venga!*, from the verb *venir* (to come), carries with it a sense of motion through the continuum of time, rather than marking a definitive moment of encounter or farewell. We greet, but we have no need for goodbye, for in this *plaza* life goes on and, *¡venga!*, we shall meet again.



¡Venga! certainly packs a more affirming punch than the rather dismal ‘Alright?’ sometimes exchanged as a greeting on the rainy English high street. There’s a ‘let’s get on with it’ subtext to *¡Venga!* that puts a fire in the belly. It can also convey a sense of ‘how about that?!’ – a celebration of the unpredictability of life.



For the sake of completeness, we should also note the *¡Venga!* that is short for *¡Venga ya!*, meaning something along the lines of ‘you must be joking’.

What, though, of the grammar? Our text books tell us that *venga* is either the first or third person singular of the present subjunctive, or the formal singular of the imperative, ie ‘come over here’. I suspect, though, that our *¡Venga!* requires a subtler interpretation.

I offer two choices: firstly, that it is indeed the third person singular of the present subjunctive, equivalent to (but not as archaic-sounding as) ‘let it come (to pass)’. A less stilted version of that might be ‘let’s see what’s happens / let’s see what’s going on’ – an invitation to an exchange of views.

The second possibility is that *¡Venga!* is being used as a third person imperative: ie not the you (formal) ‘come over here’, but rather ‘let it come’, similar perhaps to the English colloquialism ‘bring it on’ – i.e. ‘let’s see what life is throwing at us’.

Let us conclude that *¡Venga!* is what the experts call a ‘polysemic’ expression, ie one that can change its meaning depending on context and intonation. If you are a scholarly sort of reader, perhaps with an interest in linguistics, you might at this point trawl the internet in search of forensic analysis of *¡Venga!*’s origins. If, however, the smell of the Spanish street appeals to you more, you will perhaps prefer to buckle your shoes and fling open the door to the outside world, striding out with a cry of *¡Venga!* on your lips.



Have you had any strange or memorable encounters with ¡Venga!? Let us know via the ‘Contact Us’ button above.