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The Text as Body / The Body as Text: An Approach to Reading Aleixandre's *Espadas como labios* and *La destrucción o el amor*

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Throughout his career Vicente Aleixandre has consistently discussed his early poetry in physiological terms. In various poetic pronouncements he refers to texts such as *Espadas como labios* and *La destrucción o el amor* as undifferentiated interior or carnal states, chaotic yet interconnected flows of sound, pulse, rhythm steadily gaining clarity and communicative power by engaging world and reader in a tumultuous yet productive dialogue. In the poet's words these texts showcase "poesía en estado naciente . . . manando con hervor caliente del fondo entrañable del poeta" (II: 523). Aleixandre also notes that in his early poetry,

> ... no hay más que el hombre y el bullente materia de la Creación ... sangre quería el poeta, una masa en ebullición se ofrecía ... un mundo de movimientos casi subterráneos, donde elementos físicos y subconsientes servían a la visión del caos original allí contemplado. (II: 541)

Despite the fact that the poet's own declarations clearly establish a vital tension between poetic language and the physical being from which it is born and with whom it interconnects, little has been written regarding correspondences between Aleixandre's expressed artistic aims and his exploration of the body as a model for the linguistic play and textual structures that characterize his early surrealist verse. Seminal critical studies by Bousoño, Ilie, Puccini, Morelli and Villaverde have directed some attention to this area by addressing Aleixandre's "visionary" imagery and its ties to a larger poetic vision of reality in which the body serves primarily as impediment rather than

model for a new form of communication. In more recent studies, Silver, Harris, Mayhew, and Riva have explored Aleixandre's struggle with the limits of poetic language as an adequate means through which to convey his longing for solidarity through love and dialogue with the universe. In general, these studies respond to or refute in some way Silver's claim that Aleixandre is essentially naïve as a poetic thinker, that he lacks the theoretical or linguistic self-consciousness essential to the modern poet. Other critics such as Murphy, Ortega and Daydí-Tolson have analyzed Aleixandre's early surrealist verse in light of its intertextual ties or responses to the poetics of Bécquer, Darío, Neruda and Paz.[1] While indebted to these studies and the insights they offer into Aleixandre's complex communicative code and his overall quest to capture, reveal and know the real, the present essay links Aleixandre's use of poetic language more directly to his views on artistic expression itself, and in particular to the body's pivotal, structuring role within it. While in his early surrealist verse the poet often laments the inadequacy of words, it is evident that Aleixandre is equally and necessarily fascinated by the sheer material presence, potency and malleability of language. This, I will argue in *Espadas como labios* and *La destrucción o el amor*, translates into a celebration of language, and in particular surrealistic, poetic language as a vivid, unmediated expression of the inner life of the body so central to Aleixandre's early work.[2]

Certainly, Aleixandre's creation of poetic texts that emulate basic physiological processes is in keeping with the various avant-garde influences that ground and inform his verse throughout the late 1920s and 30s. Like other avant-garde projects of this period these texts aim to produce what Nicholls refers to as "a language which does not so much represent as present, which does not yearn for the absent body, . . . but, strives instead to become one body with the material universe" (97).[3] These carnal underpinnings of the avant-garde aesthetic have also been recognized by theorist and literary critic Julia Kristeva. She, like Aleixandre, identifies the artistic enterprise as one able to reveal, capture or translate the internal rhythms of the body. In her breakthrough study *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva argues that through artistry, and in particular, poetic language, one hears and bears witness to rebellious physical discharges that work toward imploding, reshaping and ultimately carnalizing the discursive process. This is true, Kristeva believes, because language and linguistic structures are built around an amorphous, biological flow, "the semiotic chora,"

which promotes disruptive yet connective outputs as well as intense dialectical tensions within the signifying process (16). Kristeva also insists that it is this underlying physical energy always at odds with the restrictive ordering or "symbolic" principles of language that shapes and gives rise to poetry, for her, a form of expression that reveals, "one's own constitutive processes" (67). In this connection Kristeva writes,

> If there exists a 'discourse' which is not a mere depository of thin linguistic layers, an archive of structures, or the testimony of a withdrawn body, and is instead, the essential element of a practice involving the sum of unconscious, subjective and social relations in gestures of confrontation and appropriation, destruction and construction—productive violence, in short—it is 'literature' or more specifically, the poetic text. (16)

Thus, given its upset of ordering principles, its rhythmic dissonance and frequently unorthodox pairings, Kristeva holds that aesthetic activity, namely that associated with the avant-garde, is indeed a means to redeem the creative value of the body.

In Aleixandre's *Espadas como labios* and *La destrucción o el amor* there is much evidence of an artistic attempt to reconstruct or reveal internal physical reality through poetic structures and language. First, one detects in the very layout of the texts a tendency toward contraction and expansion, deflation and inflation, both reminiscent of breath, a physical unfolding or branching out. With respect to *Espadas* for instance, we have a text divided into four parts, each one composed of short or long poems and at times a combination of both. The first section of the book contains seven short poems and three longer poems; the second section, nine long poems, the third, thirteen short and long poems, and the fourth, nine long poems. Most critics of Aleixandre's work view this sequencing as evidence of the transitional character of the text, with the long poems standing as a holdover from the prose poems of Aleixandre's previous text, *Pasión de la tierra*, and the short poems representing efforts to impose artistic control on that earlier stream of consciousness style writing.[4] To these observations I would also add that such sequencing corresponds to ways in which Aleixandre conceives of and represents the body throughout the text, particularly concerning its role within the artistic process or the generation of the poetic voice.

In *La destrucción o el amor*, the textual layout continues to reflect rupture and fragmentation, although here there is a noticeable effort to connect poems under a common unifying theme: the individual's connection through love to the erotic forces of the earth.[5] Divided into six sections containing anywhere from four to eleven poems, most of which are more than four stanzas in length, this text is identified by Aleixandre as a movement toward clarity and enhanced stability. In fact, he further describes it as an outgrowth or embodiment of *Espadas* given that its purpose is to relate the inner turmoil presented in that text to a surrounding natural world alive with sensuality and violence (II: 523). This suggests that *La destrucción* presents a repackaging of the chaotic physiological drives and impulses of *Espadas*.[6]

Still, despite Aleixandre's use of a more controlled thematic format in *La destrucción,* one continues to note fractures in the overall structure. For instance, in this work there is more variation on the number of poems per section and one section is titled "poemas eligíacos" while the others are not titled. This, in addition to a more sustained use of free verse and the introduction of several short poems between the lengthy ones, shows that even within this more identifiable structure there remains latent dissonance, tensions and ruptures. Indeed, if this text is fashioned after the body taking on a more definitive shape as it reaches into and connects with the outside, then we must also note that as with a carnal entity, this definition is short lived, for there are always hidden breaks in the established order. In *La destrucción,* as in *Espadas*, these breaks play themselves out through the injection of asymmetries into the structural order of the text, a dynamic that closely resembles the internal upheavals and dialectical tensions that fracture and revitalize the poetic language that Aleixandre employs.

The linguistic play or basic semantic and syntactic disorder that characterizes *Espadas* and *La destrucción* is another key component to Aleixandre's expressed desire to celebrate the ordered chaos of bodies in his early work. Evidence of this can be found by examining the poet's striking surrealistic metaphors, similes and synaesthesias, as well as his use of repitition, alliteration and other syntactical ruptures.

In both *Espadas* and *La destrucción* Aleixandre consistently employs metaphor, simile and synaesthesia as a means of injecting illogic or interference into the signifying process. Let us consider, for instance, the following examples. With respect to metaphor, one reads,

> El mar era un latido
> el hueco de una mano una medalla tibia. (*ECL* 247)
>
> la esperanza es la tierra, es la mejilla,
> es un inmenso párpado. (*ECL* 272)
>
> El mar o una serpiente
> el mar o ese ladrón que roba los pechos. (*DOA* 328)

Among the numerous similes that appear in the texts, we note,

> Ese decir palabras sin sentido
> que ruedan como oídos, caracoles,
> como un lóbulo abierto que amanece. (*ECL* 247)
>
> Las lágrimas rodaban como besos. (*ECL* 264)
>
> Leones como un corazón hirsuto,
> Sangre como la tristeza aplacada. (*DOA* 323)

In terms of synaesthesia we find,

> Ese *dolor de la vista*
> Que mira el poniente. (*ECL* 293)
>
> Ese azul postrero hecho de *lágrimas oídas*, (*ECL* 295)
>
> [...] que silencio
> que remoto *gemir de inoíbles tañidos*
> que fuga *de flautas blancas* como el hueso. (*DOA* 330)

With these imaginative combinations the poet works toward breaking up any smooth pairing between signifier and signified. In fact, artists and critics agree that the very purpose of metaphor is to subvert the order of language by either integrating antithetical elements so as to attach new meanings to each, or by exposing an absent intuitive bond that links seemingly oppositional terms.[7] The same is also true of simile, while synaesthesia not only merges signs, but also sense perceptions and in so doing once again inserts an air of illogic into the referential code. In either case, Aleixandre's sustained use of such jarring linguistic measures culminates in the introduction of crisis and

ambiguity into the linguistic process. That is, words no longer hold true to our expectations of them for they now convey multiple meanings and defy strict semantic or perceptual categories. Thus, they stand as a source of internal tension or disturbance within what on the surface appear to be somewhat orderly structured arrangements: poem and text. This dynamic wherein an internal mechanism or modality (metaphor, simile, synaesthesia) disturbs yet at the same time animates the functioning of the whole (language, poem, text) by making possible a host of new interactions attaches a kind of biological vitality to the works in question.[8] In effect, it likens poem and ultimately text to a physical being similarly composed of disruptive yet essentially productive or life-sponsoring cells. As is the case with bodies, these cells or metaphoric bonds multiply, expand and divide throughout the work for Aleixandre consistently threads, interconnects and redistributes them in various poems in the texts.

Another way in which Aleixandre's poetic language conveys the dynamism of internal carnal processes relates to his frequent use of repetition, long uninterrupted chains of signifiers and parenthetical or disjunctive asides. First, with respect to repetition, one notes its presence in a variety of forms, including alliteration, anaphora and various parallelisms woven throughout his texts. Examples of the sheer variety of these repetitive constructions include the following excerpts. As regards alliteration, consider verses such as,

> *S*us fuerza*s c*asi *có*smica*s c*omo leche de estrella*s*. (*ECL* 266)
>
> *R*ompe telillas de a*r*añas mient*r*as el *r*ayo
> bus*ca ca*bello*s* lúcido*s* po*r* lo*s* que desc*a*rgar de *sí* mismo. (*ECL* 293)
>
> Un *pá*jaro de *pape*l en el *pe*cho (*DOA* 345)

With respect to anaphora and parallelism we find,

> *unas* faldas largas hechas de *colas de cocodrilos*;
> *unas* lenguas o *unas* sonrisas hechas con *caparazones de cangrejos* (*ECL* 261)
>
> Vienes y vas *como el* manto sútil,
> *como el* recuerdo *de la noche que escapa,*
> *como el* rumor *del día que ahora nace.* (*DOA* 363)

> Nostalgia *de la mar.*
> Sirenas *de la mar. . .* (*ECL* 252)
>
> Luna *de mármol*, rígido calor
> noche *de estío* cuando el perro es mudo. (*DOA* 431)

By virtue of these techniques individual signs and verses appear stretched out or elongated as the underlying phonemic or structural qualities carry over into the other terms and verses that follow. This not only adds a more dynamic musicality or rhythmic pulse to the language, but also highlights once more its raw internal urgency. In essence, through such measures language appears to take on a life of its own; it blossoms, contracts and spreads itself out across the page irregardless of logic but instead spurred on by the play and intersections of its inner parts.[9] Like a body, poem and text are ultimately constituted by basic reproductive, linking parts or mechanisms that crisscross its interior surface. Moreover, these alliterative phonemes and parallelistic structures, like so many threads of DNA, continually expand and rebuild themselves providing vital rhythmic outlays to the overall poetic structure. In this way, alliteration, anaphora and parallelism again allow Aleixandre to reflect a powerful carnal-like drive or dynamism operating within language.

Further evidence of how Aleixandre's poetic language resembles and reveals a fundamental semiotic tension characteristic of corporeality can be found by examining his characteristic use of chaotic enumerations or instances in which the poet pours out strings of seemingly unrelated nouns, verb phrases and adjectives upon the page. Among many examples we find:

> Delgadas lenguas, cabelleras rubias,
> ninfas o peces, ríos y la aurora. (*ECL* 256)
>
> Una mano de acero sobre el césped,
> un corazón, un juguete olvidado,
> un resorte, una lima, un beso, un vidrio. (*ECL* 265)
>
> Cuerdas, dientes, temblando en las ramas;
> una ciudad, la rueda, su perfume; (*DOA* 343)

With respect to these flowing strings of signifiers, one certainly notices how they increase the pace of the reading by leaving little or no room for pause or contemplation. This, I would argue, ties their function not only to a slowing down of logical processing on the part of the reader, but also to a steady increase in his or her sheer physical sensation or stimulation. As arranged, Aleixandre forces the reader to pass automatically from one term to another, thus thwarting any attempt to value or attach permanent significance to individual terms in isolation. Instead, it is the overall grouping that matters, the basic rhythmic impression made by the sound, shape and growing material presence of words on the page.[10] In this way, poetic language again becomes a tool designed to break readers of rigid expectations, to shake them out of a mode of thinking that would value absent referents over the carnally-charged vitality of the signs that produce them. One appreciates this motivation more readily by noting how the flood of interconnected terms leads to increased stimulation of the eyes as they flow much more freely and rapidly about verses or stanzas unfettered by breaks in pace, or changes in structure. The sheer physical impact of the word chains is also attested to by increases in pulse or heart rate as readers reciting verses aloud hold back or compress their breathing until arriving at a clear end or pause point in the stanza. Clearly, this means of expression is far removed from reproducing a structured external reality and much more about stimulating, freeing or otherwise recreating an internal one.

Thus, faced with this somewhat stable instability or interconnected chaos that dethrones rationality and instead stimulates us physically, it is apparent that we have before us a mirror image of ourselves, a fluid mass or chaotic series of signs, energies, cells all encased within a structured yet essentially flexible and ever-expanding form. As Kristeva aptly remarks, it is not without merit that some contend that in the basic syntactic arrangements of avant-garde style poetry we find a primordial biologic tension, something like a direct transcription of the genetic code (50). At this point, let us also recollect Aleixandre's own telling comments that in poetry we necessarily confront the vital pulse and incessant play of material that makes it possible in the first place (II: 539); poetry, he insists, is a radical zone which presents readers with essential material flows and arrangements from which they are no different (II: 530). In sum, the ultimate effect of Aleixandre's style is clearly the merger of form and content; indeed, his poetic structures

and language provide us a second look at the destructive yet constructive, ambiguous yet essentially creative inner life of the body.

Given the carnal underpinnings of the textual layout and poetic language of *Espadas* and *La destrucción*, it is appropriate to close with a discussion of particular poems that directly treat the body's role in generating poetic language or giving birth to the poetic voice.

In poems such as "Mi voz," from *Espadas*, and "Palabras," from *La destrucción*, language and body appear inextricably linked as the poet contemplates how his words issue forth from dark uncharted carnal dimensions or how he as poet continually struggles to maintain their physiological urgency.[11] In addition, in these compositions the poet offers numerous images that merge the textual and the corporeal, suggesting that both are spaces where vital rhythms, connective arteries and voluptuous shapes become sound, word or verse producing tools. In effect, they become not just extensions but also embodiments of the life-force itself.

Many of these ideas are present in "Mi voz," which is, coincidentally, the first poem of *Espadas*. By commencing with this homage to the surge of inner impulses that culminate in poetic discourse Aleixandre draws direct attention to his stated goal for this book: to reveal the inherently creative hidden potencies or inner workings of an undifferentiated carnal state. In this poem, one is immediately struck by the wide variety of references to obscure pulsating spaces as well as to flowing currents of natural and physical energies. For instance, Aleixandre begins with a reference to birth and nightfall, "He nacido una noche de verano," then later mentions rays of moonlight, "si vieras qué agonía representa la luna sin esfuerzo," and finally the pulse of a carnalized sea, "Llegar, llegar el mar era un latido, / el hueco de una mano." Considering the images of darkness and light, (noche-verano; luna-sin esfuerzo), in combination with the birth register (he nacido-agonía-esfuerzo-llegar-mar (agua)-latido-mano) it is clear that the voice described by the poet is one born of both earth and body. Indeed, in his words, it is a voice born "entre dos pausas," yet capable of unifying or dialoguing with them both. The poet affirms this directly by addressing the burgeoning voice within him, calling out to it in line two, "Háblame: te escucho," then later revealing in line nine that through it, "son posibles ya las luces, las caricias, la piel, el horizonte."

Hence, what Aleixandre conveys here is that moment when all the productive or rhythmic power of earth and body collide and threaten to

break free in some new melodic yet innately chaotic form; one akin to the rushing sound of the sea, the automatic splintered rays of the moon or the impulsive frenzy of caresses on skin. In either case the poet describes a form of expression from which neither earth nor body has been removed. So, Aleixandre concludes that in this highly charged creative state, with the poetry of earth and body poised to speak to or through him, he too will give birth to a carnalized poetic entity aptly described as

> ese decir palabras sin sentido
> que ruedan como oídos, caracoles
> como un lóbulo abierto que amanece
> (escucha, escucha) entre la luz pisada. (*ECL* 247)

With these final verses the poet reiterates his point regarding a vital new form of expression born of the dialogue between earth and body. He does this by clearly merging textual, earthen and carnal terms. For instance, he likens the shape of his words to rounded, rolling earlobes or snails and suggests that their senselessness is balanced by their bright dawning natural or physical presence, by the almost inaudible sound or pulse ("escucha, escucha," he repeats) emanating from beneath or within them. Certainly, this poem reads as a ringing endorsement of the avant-garde approach to poetry in that it reflects upon aesthetic practice as one in need of an injection of non-rational impulses or carnal / earthen rhythms. What's more, by doing so the poet clearly calls upon both artists and readers to let go of strict logical sensors that would not only prohibit the pairing of earlobes and snails, but also keep us all from hearing and paying tribute to the dark unruly yet productive inner forces that beckon beneath the light of reason. In essence, the poem asks us to return with Aleixandre to the dark night of earth and body, to hear and embrace the pre-linguistic flows of the gestating body or "semiotic chora" for in them we are free, reborn, released from stifling representational or "symbolic" models if only for the briefest moment between two pauses.[12]

While "Mi voz" announces the birth of a new poetry more in tune with the life of earth and body, another composition entitled "Palabras" relays a similar message by lamenting tendencies to structure or categorize language. From the outset, the poet sets up an intriguing tension within the poem by speaking, it appears, on two different subjects, the pristine

beauty of a naked girl and the lifelessness of the word. The poem commences:

> Pero no importa que todo esté tranquilo.
> (La palabra, esa lana marchita.)
> Flor tú, muchacha casi desnuda, viva, viva
> (la palabra, esa arena machacada).
> Muchacha, con tu sombra qué dulce lucha
> como una miel fugaz que casi muestra bordes.
> (La palabra, la palabra, la palabra, qué torpe vientre hinchado.)
> Muchacha te has manchado de espuma delicada. (*DOA* 372)

By reading this dialectical setup as an opposition between physical life and the function of language, one gains access to underlying meanings behind the poem's language and structures. We note, for instance, that the reference to the almost naked girl is tellingly accentuated by commentary on her vivacity, her sweet struggle with a shadow and foam that encase and stain her, or in other words impose a fragile border around her. This vision, in combination with the poet's continual lamentations on the powerlessness of the word, neatly contained by flimsy parentheses, clearly connects the two. This connection is also born out by the fact that the adjective "machacada" used to characterize the word is easily confused with or built upon "muchacha," while the terms "torpe vientre hinchado" applied to words also gives them an overtly feminine, carnal feel.

So, it appears that the girl of the poem symbolizes language. Judging by the terms that describe her, "flor, desnuda, viva, sombra, lucha, miel, bordes, espuma," I would say that she represents the fluid, underside of language, the unruly, irrepressible, almost invisible flows that challenge form and stability. By so identifying the girl, Aleixandre's insistence on the inadequacy of the words fashioned from her takes on new meaning for it now seems to speak to the very constitution and functioning of language itself. Indeed, the poem suggests that in fashioning words from the biological matter that composes us, and then forcing them into semantic categories, boxes or parenthesis we always risk losing something. That is, we risk words becoming lifeless tools, "lana marchita," "arena machacada."

Given Aleixandre's comments, his carnally-charged language, themes and images, it appears that for him, language and, in particular, poetic language is missing the sheer intensity, the disruptive drives of the

body. So in the poem's concluding verses he laments on the page or text that contains "una lengua de luto . . . / palabras contra el vientre o muslos sucios / . . . o luto, borde o vientre, / palabra que se pierde como arena." With this, one senses the poem's overall theme: the struggle of a poet to maintain the vitality of his verse. For Aleixandre then, this struggle leads to increased experimentation with sound, form, order, structure; it leads to attempts to delve beneath the surface of logic and once again encounter the word at its physiological origin (Soufas 97).

Based on what has been presented here, Aleixandre clearly envisions language, poem and text as appropriate spaces within which to explore, unmask and transcribe the true inner workings of the body. By merging textual layouts with carnal pulse, by insisting on connective disturbances through innovative metaphors, rhythmic upheavals and syntactic or pronominal variations, he impels readers to abandon solely rational approaches to his work. Indeed, he, like so many avant-garde artists, makes readers focus more sharply on the raw genetic-like materiality of the poetic text, enabling them to experience it as a reflection of their own internal cross connections, ruptures and divisions. In this way, the body is not just a model or structuring principle for the two texts studied here. It is also an active participant in them, for as poet and reader sense their intimate connection to these works the texts become reflections or physical extensions of them.

Thus, in Aleixandre's work we see what Kristeva would later define as a revolution in poetic language. That is, we see an embrace of innovative poetic structures and language as a means or pathway leading back to the body. By commenting on and experimenting with signifying arrangements and practices that effectively challenge representational systems designed to obscure the inner world of the body, Aleixandre presents his poetry as that which aims to redeem what is truly revolutionary within us. For him, as for Kristeva, poetry's essential embrace of the non-rational, the unconscious and the corporeal permits us to become both architects of and vital participants in the birth of a new communicative discourse; one that no longer silences or constrains the body, but instead embraces and celebrates its aesthetic potential.

NOTES

[1] Particular related references to the critics named in this section appear in subsequent notes with the exceptions of Paul Ilie, Daniel Murphy and Philip Silver. For their assessments, see Paul Ilie's *The Surrealist Mode in Spanish Literature*, Daniel Murphy's *Vicente Aleixandre's Stream of Lyric Consciousness* and Philip Silver's *La casa de Anteo*.

[2] Aleixandre's preoccupation with the carnal vitality of the poetic word and its translation into an eroticized, surrealistic vision of the universe cedes to a more communicative or "realist" phase in texts he composed after 1936, most notably *Historia del corazón* (1954) and *En un vasto dominio* (1962). Still, as noted by Santiago Daydí-Tolson and Jonathan Mayhew, the presence of surrealism and with it a renewed interest in the tension between poetic language and the life of the body reemerges in the poetry Aleixandre wrote just before his death in 1984, *Poemas de la consumación* (1968) and *Diálogos del conocomiento* (1974). See Daydí-Tolson's "Light in the Eyes: Visionary Poetry in Vicente Aleixandre," 28 and Mayhew 309. While a thorough treatment of the text / body paradigm as it relates to the work of the older poet is beyond the scope of the present study, this is certainly an intriguing avenue for further research. What this study offers then is a first step in the analysis of the role and purpose of destabilizing linguistic and structural techniques in Aleixandre's earlier surrealist texts, establishing how they mirror an internal physical realm that the poet deems essential to his poetic voice and vision from this period.

[3] Andrew Debicki describes the avant-garde poetry of this period as a preference for images mounted as "pure process, play, an expression of experiences resistant to closure, to organization, to logical definition" (30).

[4] See Yolanda Novo Villaverde, *Vicente Aleixandre: Poeta surrealista*, Chapter III. While little has been written regarding the structure of *La destrucción o el amor*, Julio Ortega notes that this text "construye un espacio proprio y autosuficiente a partir de una práctica que podemos llamar generativa" (35). For additional commentary on linguistic techniques in Aleixandre's early verse, consult Gabrielle Morelli, *Linguaggio poetico del primo Aleixandre* and Dario Puccini, *La palabra poética de Vicente Aleixandre*.

[5] According to Carlos Bousoño in *La poesía de Vicente Aleixandre*, "el poeta similar al amante aleixandrino se ve en comunicación directa con la tierra . . . un ser no manchado por el desnaturalizado vivir oye la urgente llamada cósmica o telúrica y traduce la mágica audición en palabras" (65).

[6] Jonathan Mayhew notes the consistency with which Aleixandre returns to and repackages various themes, ideas and techniques throughout his career, thereby making his overall artistic expression particularly dynamic, vital and metapoetic in nature (309). This idea complements the text / body paradigm

studied here and, as noted, merits further study as it relates to Aleixandre's latest works.

[7] See Bousoño's definition of metaphor as a productive relationship of similarity, albeit subjective or objective, between two terms, upon which is added a superimposition of beings or qualities *(Teoría de la expresión poética* 25). Novo Villaverde also notes that for Aleixandre, "el lenguaje metafórico esconde una latencia por su posibilidad combinatoria infinita, así la imagen no se maneja como un "adorno" sino como generadora de una nueva vivencia y/o realidad" (114).

[8] Anthony L. Geist describes this as "A kind of post-structuralist slippage of signifiers that makes the fixing of identity impossible, disseminating meaning throughout the text. Just as the body is constantly transformed, so meaning is deferred, the material world reduced to language" (187).

[9] Morelli states, "scopriamo che il nesso ripetitivo, oltre a realizzare quell'importante processo di giunzione tra i vari stati asemantici, tende ad allargare la portata del suo valore fonico attraendo entro la sua orbita un movimento di suoni similari e affermando in tal modo un linguaggio sprovvisto di smanticità ed aperto alle più svariate combinazioni stilstiche, derirvanti dal gioco delle parole" (32).

[10] Sabrina Riva notes that these techniques related to "la gradación repecto de la construcción de las ideas del texto y el comienzo del poema crean el efecto de extrañamiento proprio de la vanguardia" (5). Aleixandre's caotic enumerations are also treated by Yolanda Novo Villaverde 137.

[11] See Santiago Daydí-Tolson's *Vicente Aleixandre: A Critical Appraisal* 9. For more on poetry and the world of the inner self see also José Pablo Ducis Roth's "La construcción de la sujetividad en *Espadas como labios* de Vicente Aleixandre" and Gustavo García's "(Anti)platonismo en *La destrucción o el amor*."

[12] For alternate readings of this poem consult Derek Harris's "Prophet, Medium, Babbler: Voice and Identity in Vicente Aleixandre's Surrealist Poetry," particularly his view of this poem as an example of a speech act that in the end fails to complete the process of communication (239). See also Sabrina Riva's analysis, which treats Aleixandre's doubt and frustration with language as a means through which to configure poetic reality (5).

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Sátira y alucinación en *Concierto para sordos* y *Parto en el cosmos* de Matías Montes Huidobro

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Matías Montes Huidobro (1931)[1] pertenece a esa promoción de escritores cubanos cuya formación y debut en el mundo de las letras tienen lugar en Cuba antes de que muchos de ellos dejaran la Isla durante los primeros años después del triunfo de la revolución. Acabados de salir de una situación adversa, y afectados por las peripecias de la vida fuera de la cultura natal, mucha de la producción literaria de estos escritores refleja las injusticias relacionadas con los cambios socio-políticos en la tierra dejada, el recuerdo de lo abandonado, la nostalgia por lo perdido, y los desconciertos de la vida exílica. Con la posible excepción de *Parto en el cosmos*, el resto de la novelística del autor se ubica dentro de estas coordenadas y, aun en el mundo ficticio alucinante de *Parto*, se distinguen ciertos sistemas metafóricos que aluden a la tierra natal del autor.[2] Sus novelas se distinguen por una complejidad textual de matices joycianos, y por su tratamiento kafkiano de la angustia humana ante las absurdidades de la existencia. En efecto, las novelas de Matías Montes Huidobro han sido calificadas de "espectrales" por Carmelo Gariano (191); de tener un "innegable sabor esquitzofrénico" por Julio Hernández Miyares (178); de poseer una estructuración basada en ". . . la concepción de un mundo insólito y desordenado", según Luis F. González Cruz (79); y de ofrecerle a los lectores "una suerte de nexo pesadillesco . . . entre espacios particulares . . . y entre una gama de pasados, presentes y futuros" por Jorge Febles (Contraportada). Estas certeras observaciones sobre los textos narrativos de Montes Huidobro identifican la acostumbrada complejidad textual que caracteriza gran parte de su obra en prosa: mundos ficticios que se resuelven en conceptos que aluden a preocupaciones universales, pero que frecuente-mente tienen como trasfondo referencial el devenir histórico cubano. A continuación, se examinarán *Concierto para sordos* y *Parto en el*