

Es teatro vuestra oración: Santa Teresa's performed confession in Juan Mayorga's La lengua en pedazos

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The celebrations surrounding the 2015 centenary of the birth of Santa Teresa de Jesús reveal an impulse to create 'contact' with the saint which appears undimmed by the passing of the centuries. Certainly her presence is in the air once again; Olga Olivier's suggestion in 2014 that Teresa would have thoroughly embraced new forms of communication, including social media, seems to almost have been born out this year.¹ The hashtag #FelicidadesTeresa encouraging 'selfies' with her image has been enthusiastically embraced on Twitter, revealing the ease, familiarity and affection which characterises popular devotion to the saint. Concha Velasco has recently expressed her desire to inhabit the role she assumed in the acclaimed 1983 televisual adaptation once again for a theatrical performance also directed by Josefina Molina, whilst Blanca Portillo launched the festival de Semana Santa in El Escorial reading selections from Teresa's writings.² Against a recent theatrical tendency to present the saint in monologue, Juan Mayorga's *La lengua en pedazos*, first performed in 2012, offered an imagined sixteenth-century dialogue between Teresa and a figure named only as 'Inquisidor.' In Mayorga's play Teresa's eloquence is nonetheless foregrounded through a sensitive appropriation of the saint's language, employing stillness and composure against a rapture deferred and revealed only reluctantly, ultimately silencing her opponent. The catalyst for the Inquisitor's visit is the perceived schism Teresa has created within her order in her first foundation, which becomes the pretext for his demand for self-exploration. Starring Clara Sanchís in the role of Teresa, *La lengua en pedazos* was awarded Spain's Premio Nacional de Literatura Dramática in 2013 and represented Mayorga's directorial debut with his own company 'La loca de la casa,' the name signposting the playwright's on-going fascination with the saint.³

In the present article I propose to explore the relationship between Mayorga's playtext and Teresa's *Libro de la Vida*, to suggest that Mayorga's inclusion of an interlocutor, the device that permits Teresa's enunciation, evokes the silent presences on the margins of the sixteenth-century text. Mayorga creates an imagined dialogue replete with the tensions the saint adeptly negotiated in her autobiography. The play reflects ongoing lines of inquiry in our evolving understanding of Teresa and other holy women of the Early Modern period. Grace M. Jantzen, in inviting us to consider the category of mystic as social construction as well as individual exploration has pointed to the need to view the mystic as housed, embedded in and, to some extent, created by the community. Mayorga's play-text, then, strikes at the heart of the compositional circumstances of Teresa's text – staging, and arguably heightening the origins

1 Olga Olivier's paper "El estilo teresiano de comunicación vivido hoy en el Carmelo" was presented at the V Congreso Internacional Teresiano (2014), and featured in an article by ABC.es.

2 "Concha Velasco quiere llevar al teatro un monólogo sobre Santa Teresa", *www.abc.es*, 27 Septiembre de 2015.

3 *La lengua en pedazos* was first published in *Religión y laicismo* (2010) and first performed on the 24th of February 2012 in Los Canapés theatre, Avilés. The full text is also available within the recently published collected volume of Mayorga's theatre (2014 547-72). This year has also seen further productions in Chile (Compañía La Calderona) and London (The Spanish Theatre Company).

of her rhetorical strategies, the sense of awareness of readership and potential censure we encounter within the *Libro de la Vida*.⁴

Of course, Mayorga's play is not an isolated example of the saint depicted in conversation or under interrogation in recent years. Framing the published screenplay of his *Teresa Teresa* (2003), which featured Teresa as a guest on a televised talkshow, the director Rafael Gordon noted that: "Santa Teresa de Ávila solía decir que 'ningún hombre tiene la audacia de una hormiga'. De esta audacia me he servido para recuperar su voz. *Hacer hablar* a Santa Teresa en los comienzos del siglo XXI..." (17-18). Gordon's introduction, founded on an appropriation of the saint's own words, carries an echo of the coercive genesis of Teresa's *Libro de la vida*, a text authored, at least in part, to account for the saint's visionary experience. Despite the location of the saint within a twenty-first century context, Gordon's use of the televisual device lends a somewhat spectral quality to the interaction. In contrast, Daniel Albaladejo, who played the role of the Inquisitor in *La Lengua en pedazos* labelled it "todo lo que quisiste preguntarle a Teresa y nunca pudiste" on the radio show 'El ojo crítico', signalling the play's adoption of an interrogative mode coupled with a sense of a saint approachable, real, contemporary, in a staging devoid of the visual cues associated with sanctity, including her habit.⁵ Like Gordon, Mayorga's playtext similarly announces its debt to Teresa's own writings, in particular *Libro de la Vida*; indeed in this theatrical vision the Inquisitor becomes the very impetus for the authorship of the text. Such creative adaptation of literary texts abounds within Mayorga's corpus, and the playwright has spoken of his desire to become intimately acquainted with the texts he recasts in his drama: "tener una relación íntima con textos mayores te permite entrar en la cocina de los grandes y uno espera que algo se le pegue de todo eso" (Abizanda Losada 4).⁶ The kitchen is precisely where the play situates Teresa, acknowledging the mundane domestic setting as the site for a charged encounter.

Attempts to recreate the discourse of Santa Teresa de Jesús began soon after her death, with the nuns of the convent of the Incarnation attempting to recapture the gracious and deferential tone with which she assumed the role of Prioress in 1571. Accounts affirming the sanctity of Santa Teresa de Jesús such as that of María de San Jerónimo speak of the transformative effect of conversations with the saint on the most recalcitrant or afflicted individuals, providing abundant examples of the fervour the spirited reformer inspired on her travels, and the value attributed to her written word within her own lifetime.⁷ However, the earliest examples of theatrical representations of the saint's life (attributed to Lope de Vega) do not attempt to engage with the complexities of Teresa's writings, as Barbara Mujica has noted. Indeed there is "no evidence that Lope (or his co-authors) actually read the saint's own writings", nor were they interested in portraying the saint's insecurities (184).⁸

Mayorga's theatre (particularly plays such as *El cartógrafo* and *Himmelweg*) has been associated with a "dramaturgia de lo irrepresentable". He has also spoken of his affinity for

⁴ Mayorga's text may be read as a dramatization of the inquisitorial response to the *Vida*. The first version of the *Vida* was completed by 1562, with passages excised by the Inquisition. In 1574 a thorough review of the *Vida* was undertaken and the manuscript was never returned to the saint.

⁵ Romanos, interview for "El ojo crítico" (15.04.2014). Commenting elsewhere on the recreation of the convent space in rehearsals, Mayorga wryly observes that El convento de San José "acabó siendo una mesa de Ikea y dos sillas" (Blanco and Talián n.p.)

⁶ Although her own focus lies elsewhere, Carmen Abizanda Losada's 2013 doctoral thesis (4) notes the abundance of creative adaptations of literary texts within Mayorga's corpus, including *Sonámbulo* from *Sobre los ángeles* by Rafael Alberti, *Job* (from the biblical source), and *Catástrofe*, based on the writings of Bartolomé de las Casas. His *Palabra de perro* is also inspired by Cervantes' *El coloquio de los perros*.

⁷ Both texts are included in E. Allison Peers' translation of the Complete works of Santa Teresa

⁸ On the divisive potential of theatrical representations of St Teresa, see also Jesús M^a Sanchidrián Gallego, who documents the response in Ávila to the 1906 production 'La Vierge d'Avila: Sainte Thérèse', starring Sarah Bernhardt, which led some to take to the streets in protest.

‘teatro pobre’, which gestures towards a sense of the limits of language, envisaging that with successful execution words will have the importance for the spectator that they have in dreams: “El lenguaje de esa nueva poesía estará en algún lugar entre el gesto y el pensamiento, donde las palabras tendrán – ni más ni menos – la importancia que tienen en los sueños” (Mayorga 2001, 43).⁹ *La lengua en pedazos* reveals anxieties which surface elsewhere in the Mayorgan corpus; wherein language itself is repeatedly scrutinised. In *Hamelin*, for example, the figure of the ‘Acotador’ interprets events on stage, narrating and mediating, insistent that the audience note language as subject and object of the drama: “Ésta es una obra sobre el lenguaje. Sobre cómo se forma y cómo enferma el lenguaje” (Mayorga 2014, 412).¹⁰ For Mayorga, Teresa’s text becomes emblematic of the dual challenge, firstly of the translation of ineffable experience into language, and secondly of the inadequacy of the translator, or playwright faced with the idiosyncrasies of Teresian style:

¿cómo se traduce al inglés la expresión *teresiana* “Mi vida son trabajos del alma”?
¿Cómo se traduce ahí “trabajos”? Es aquello intraducible lo que obliga a la lengua de llegada a abrirse, a extenderse desafiada por las exigencias de la lengua de partida.
(Blanco and Talián n.p.)

The annihilating potential of truth spoken aloud in the theatrical space, encapsulated in the play’s title, also surfaces elsewhere in Mayorga’s work, perhaps most overtly in *El crítico* (also from 2012): “Nuestro tiempo es de una falsedad tan abismal que, si alguien pusiese un poco de verdad en el escenario, la gente saldría del teatro a quemar el mundo” (Mayorga 2014, 595). Mayorga exploits the full potential of Teresa’s conversant style to explore these concerns, by aligning her words with the embodiment of a contemporary respondent, insistent upon revelation even as the veracity or authenticity of experience is dismissed. In re-framing Teresa’s autobiographical text as inquisitorial document, Mayorga suggests an authorial reluctance that goes beyond the mere humility topos, the familiar passages from the saint’s text here generated under duress:

INQUISIDOR: Fracasaréis. Al examinar vuestros pasos, los juzgaréis como yo los juzgo. Y como yo juzgaréis que no puede ser de Dios esta casa, pues mala casa se ha de fundar sobre tal vida. (550)

The Inquisitor’s statement –“mala casa se ha de fundar sobre tal vida”- points to the interdependency of Teresa’s inner life (and its documentation) and her actions as reformer. The unnamed inquisitor evokes aspects of a number of potential historical authority figures; Mayorga’s creation may be understood as a composite of individuals associated with the saint, embodying the unease around Teresa’s prominence as reformer, her defence of mental prayer and her visionary theology.

The play is dependent for its impact upon the multifaceted nature of Teresian style; dialogical, conversational, soaring and silencing. The immediacy, the apparent guileless quality of Teresa’s discourse has long been noted as a primary facet of the appeal of her narrative. Its perceived spontaneity, the enraptured unguarded familiarity of the exclamations to Christ which irrupt into the saint’s account often drew contrasts with the work of Cervantes, generally deemed a more deliberate literary craftsman as Denise Du Pont has recently indicated (2012 2-3). In 1909, Blanca de los Ríos referred to Cervantes’ prose as “exquisita”, “rectificada cien veces con anhelo de perfección” and to Teresa’s as flowing ‘con el ímpetu con que surte de la

⁹ Article cited by Spooner (15).

¹⁰ For an insightful overview of Mayorga’s exploration of the limits of the *logos* see Spooner (19-21).

sierra el golpe de aguas vivas” (54-55). This suggestion of an unmediated transference of the spoken word to the page would soon be replaced with an awareness of Teresa’s own conscious crafting. Early in the twentieth century Menendez Pidal changed his own position - having first suggested that Teresa simply spoke in written form, he would later propose the theory of Teresa’s “positiva voluntad de degradación lingüística de clase,” influencing later commentators, including García de la Concha, who drew upon Fray Luis’ reading of Teresa to stress her literary vocation (11).¹¹ Elena Carrera highlighted the self-awareness inherent in Teresa’s declaration of the ‘unplanned’ nature of her writings, as necessary proof of their divine origin (19), while Alison Weber, who proposed a ‘rhetoric of femininity’ in the saint’s corpus (1990), suggested that Teresa in fact wrote as she believed women were perceived to speak.

The lack of formal education underpinning the first person accounts of Early Modern women has recently been framed as both impediment and opportunity by Baranda Leturio and Marín Pina: “la carencia de una práctica en los usos cultos se suple con fórmulas de cuño popular oral, que la crítica tiende a minusvalorar, aunque pueden ser igualmente eficaces y válidas en su expresividad” (Baranda Leturio 13).¹² Dramatic language is, of course itself a carefully crafted representation of the spoken word realised in performance, as Mayorga acknowledged in a recent interview regarding his re-reading of the *Libro de la Vida*:

Sentí que esa palabra merecía ser escuchada en un escenario. La palabra teatral tiene un carácter dual, por un lado es literatura y por otro es palabra pronunciada, tiene un cuerpo, es una palabra en el espacio y en el tiempo, y sentí que dar espacio y tiempo a esa palabra podía tener un valor muy especial. (Murillo 59)

A confessional text such as the *Libro de la Vida*, which explicitly apostrophises an imagined reader, carries within it a self-consciously performative dimension, consistently invoking the reader or receptor who has called it into being, oscillating between reticence and revelation:¹³

Otras cosas muchas quisiera decir, sino que he miedo diré vuestra merced que para qué me meto en esto [...]. El Señor me perdone lo que en este caso le he ofendido, y vuestra merced, que le canso sin propósito. (122-23)

Carole Slade points to an astute play of genres in Teresa’s prologue, which, she argues, shifts between genres such as judicial confessional, auto-hagiography, and penitential confession. Writing on the power relationship inherent within confessional discourse, Carroll B. Johnson cites Foucault:

¹¹ Du Pont offers a succinct overview of the shifting responses to Teresa’s literary style (2-3, especially note 11). Fray Luis’ early reconciliation of both spiritual and stylistic choices is echoed in the harmony of inquiry which Du Pont (17) identifies in an earlier commemoration, that of 1914. A contributor to the 1914 *Homenaje*, Noberto Torcal rejoiced in the breaking down of divisions between ‘wordly’ and ‘cloistered’ writers: “No es de las calladas soledades del claustro, de las celdas y de los presbiterios, sino de los gabinetes de los hombres del mundo, de los liceos, de las Universidades y de los famosos cenáculos literarios, de donde salen hoy las más exquisitas páginas dedicadas a estudiar las vidas y hazañas de los grandes héroes de la virtud cristiana” (55). For the reception of Teresa’s work in this period see also Kathy Bacon (2007).

¹² Josephine Donovan, exploring the appeal of Bakhtinian theories of the novel for feminist critics, cites the resistance to subordination that can reside within such stylistic choices for women writers: “Women’s political location in the unofficial margins, in short, was the context that determined the epistemic choices early modern women novelists made in their writing. The use of the ‘plain style’ in prose, the ‘dashaway’ epistolary mode, and paratactic syntax, reflected a political resistance to hierarchical subordination” (87).

¹³ James Fernández has suggested that Teresa’s autobiographical discourse moves between the mode of apostrophe, which invokes a higher authority, and apology, wherein she submits to the human authority embodied by the confessor.

Foucault has observed that confessional discourse “unfolds within a power relationship, for one does not confess without the presence (or virtual presence) of a partner who is [...] the authority who requires the confession... the agency of domination does not reside in the one who speaks but in the one who listens and says nothing”. (165)

In Mayorga’s play, however, Teresa’s confession is staged as an action (the foundation of the convent) impelled by an authority beyond the understanding of those dominant agents who could mount wordly objections (“se hizo esta casa porque el Señor lo mandó”; 2014 550).

In a recent analysis which encompasses multiple female-authored Early Modern texts, Jodi Bilinkoff has framed the role of the male confessor within authorship more positively. While acknowledging that confessors certainly sought to establish orthodoxy, Bilinkoff cautions against an over-emphasis on the element of control or co-optation, pointing out that many texts reveal the male advisor’s desire to facilitate a process of self-knowledge and introspection, and indeed create a space for self-expression. Bilinkoff’s remarks are revelatory regarding the aspirations of both holy women and their clerical promoters, acknowledging a profound spiritual connection between female visionaries and male confessors (89).¹⁴ Pérez-Romero has pointed out that posthumous critics of Santa Teresa’s published works cite generously from her texts –mentioning individuals including Alonso de la Fuente, who sent several reports to the Inquisition from 1589 onwards (197). Taking issue with the assertion from Teresa that the text is written at the command of her confessor, Alonso de la Fuente was arguably one of the first to delve into the subtleties of the humility topos, enacted on stage in Mayorga’s drama:

TERESA: No veo en ella (mi vida) nada que merezca recordarse.

INQUISIDOR: Comenzad y yo diré si merece olvidarse. Y pensad que os doy palabra no para conoceros, *sino para que os conozcáis*. (2014 550)

Finding the saint resolute in the face of opposition to the first foundation, the inquisitor accuses her of a lack of self-knowledge, an unstable self that might be fixed through interrogation. Fuente also charged Teresa with the stylistic violations of deception (*engaño*) and contrivance (*artificio*) and this type of combative reading of the autobiographical text fuels Mayorga’s drama.¹⁵ Gillian Ahlgren has documented further historical examples of the type of encounter dramatized here, including Teresa’s involvement with Bartolomé de Medina (1527-1580), who had serious doubts about Teresa’s visions and their validity. Teresa visited him regularly to talk about his reservations and to convince him of her sincerity and orthodoxy (114).¹⁶ The implied tension between obligation and opportunity evident in these historical and

¹⁴ Bilinkoff acknowledges Teresa’s own account of her resolution to obey Jerónimo Gracián as the Lord’s representative on earth, which was followed by a powerful vision endorsing her decision (89).

¹⁵ Alonso de la Fuente (1533-1594) submitted five memorials to the Consejo between 1589 and 1591 (AHN, INq., leg. 4442, no. 43, and 2076). See Enrique Llamas Martínez (395-48; also 470 and 476). Ahlgren points out that Alonso de la Fuente sought any phrase that might resonate with his understanding of the alumbrado ‘doctrine’, in an effort to demonstrate that Teresa’s behaviour fitted an alumbrado pattern he had detected elsewhere. As Ahlgren notes, Teresa’s defence of mental prayer and her visionary theology left her open to such accusations.

¹⁶ Juan de Lorenza, who knew Teresa personally, and recounts disagreements with her, offers a further historical example of the type of objections voiced by Mayorga’s inquisitor figure. He also argued that Teresa learned much of her doctrine of mystical union from the works of Louis de Blois (1506-1566). Francisco de Ribera, who published the popular *Vida* in 1590, one of several biographies composed by her former confessors, should also be acknowledged.

fictional accounts, and within the spiritual writings of early modern women is further underscored by Baranda Leturio and Marin Pina:

El mandato de escritura fue a la vez realidad y coartada simbólica, impulso y freno, porque si por un lado abría la extensión del papel en blanco, por otro estrechaba sus márgenes con la necesidad de restringirse a las expectativas que había tras esa orden y que conducían inexorablemente al control de lo escrito. (13)

The presence, or virtual presence of a confessor, to paraphrase Foucault, may be said to quicken expression, giving rise to Teresa's ingenious rhetorical strategies. On-stage the inquisitor emerges as her unlikely guide for the recounting of an arduous journey, reminiscent of Took's description of the Dantean *Commedia*: "the *Commedia*, as an account of the soul's journey into God, is at the same time a journey of the soul into self, into the fullness of its own humanity, there to discover the power of self both to self-annihilation and to self-affirmation on the plane of properly human being" (74). Dopico Black points to Teresa's confrontation of the incongruity of God's choice of her as sinner, deftly deployed in the service of the authenticity of her claims:

Rather than relinquishing authority in the hands of those mediators, however, Teresa enlists them as witnesses in her defense who *see* that her experience is God-given. It is important to note that Teresa does not try to gloss over the disparity they also see (her receiving divine gifts despite being unworthy), but incorporates the fullness of their gaze into her narrative, thereby increasing its truth value. (113-14)

The audience is invited to share the somewhat forensic gaze of the Inquisitor into the narrative of the *Libro de la Vida*. The first words spoken on stage are Teresa's, ventriloquized by the Inquisitor –the Teresa of the *frase hecha*: 'Entre pucheros anda Dios', restated here to point to the vulnerability of oral discourse, memorable sayings attributed to Teresa now thickened into platitudes, are stripped back and interrogated at their moment of origin. Mayorga has noted the instability of the word in theatrical space: "el escritor del teatro [...] tiene el privilegio de que su palabra va a ser desplazada a lugares imprevistos por el director, el escenógrafo, el iluminador y, sobre todo, por los actores" (Vilar and Artesero 1).

In her defiant marrying of word and deed, and the privileging of divine over human authority, Teresa recalls another towering female figure of the western literary canon, namely Antigone. Antigone's defiance has been read by Butler as an incomplete confession, the verbal duel between Antigone and Creon founded upon his inability to coax a fully performed confession from her (33). Teresa's aberration is the foundation of the monasterio de San José and the fragmentation of her former order, the play's encounter between Teresa and her fictional adversary taking place across the faultline of orthodoxy and spiritual autonomy. Sophocles' tragic heroine is a reference point readily acknowledged by Juan Mayorga for his drama:

Siempre tengo en la cabeza como ejemplo extraordinario Antígona, donde el gran maestro Sófocles consigue presentarnos un dilema filosófico en torno a qué ser leal: a la tradición o al estado, a la familia y a la sangre o a la ley de la ciudad. Yo intento advertirme acerca de esto: que es fundamental arraigar, que el dilema filosófico, si se da, ha de depositarse sobre sangre y sobre carne. (Vilar and Artesero 4)

As female visionary and ecstatic Teresa effectively incarnates the tension between corporeality and transcendence aptly referenced in the play's title. The unforgettable image from the *Libro*

de la Vida –‘la lengua hecha pedazos *de mordida*’– speaks of a moment of extreme bodily frailty, a moment where Teresa hovered close to death, recalling the tradition of female piety inscribed and experienced on the body.¹⁷ Following her death, the unearthing and examination of the incorrupt body would be of crucial importance in securing Teresa's canonization as Carole Slade has noted: ‘Efficacious as Teresa's writing was for her protection and advancement, the text that finally convinced her contemporaries of her special relationship with God was not verbal but carnal’ (127). Indeed each successive disinterment would see a new part of the body claimed as a relic, dismemberment and dispersal the by-product of sanctity in the Early Modern context. In Mayorga’s staging, the inquisitor’s successive slicing of the onion into halves and their subsequent scrutiny underscores his selective interpretation, the troubled boundary that Teresa skirts between *virtud* and *pecado*. The precarious liminality of the figure of the holy woman in the Early Modern period has been considered by critics including Haliczer and Weber (1993), who locate her between ‘exaltation and infamy’ and between ‘ecstasy and exorcism’ respectively. Similarly, seeking to anchor her transgression in the unknowable Antigone, claims authority from a realm inaccessible to mortals:

It was not Zeus who made that proclamation
To me; nor was it Justice, who resides
In the same house with the gods below the earth,
Who put in place for men such laws as yours.
Nor did I think your proclamation so strong
That you, a mortal, could overrule the laws
Of the gods, that are unwritten and unfailing.
(vv. 495-501; Sophocles, Gibbons & Segal 73)

Timothy Gould notes that Antigone’s claim of access to the laws governing the celestial realms renders her “something of an unearthly character –a mode of being between realms” (35-36). Butler questions the nature of language that emerges on that “vacillating boundary”, reading Antigone as a figure who speaks “for the unintelligible as it emerges within the intelligible” (78). Likewise Teresa’s account of her repeated encounters with Christ see her recount a move towards an experience beyond language, the progression indicated by the moment in which language is no longer necessary –an unidentified word from the Lord (never shared here) banishes her fear:

TERESA: Al principio no hacía sino llorar hasta que, diciéndome él una palabra, quedaba sin temor. Ahora no necesito palabra para no temerlo. (Mayorga 2014, 558)

Teresa recounts her own tearful obedience to earthly authority in the presence of the divine. God’s representatives on earth demanded that she reject the veracity of her visions, repelling Christ with an image of Christ:

TERESA: Mi confesor teme confesarme. Me mandó que, cuando el Señor se me representase, le mostrase la cruz, porque siendo demonio con esto se iría. (559)

¹⁷ “Sólo el Señor puede saber los incomfortables tormentos que sentía en mí: la lengua hecha pedazos de mordida; la garganta de no haber pasado nada y de la gran flaqueza que me ahogaba” (Capítulo 6; 40). The points of contact between Teresa’s textual and physical corpus have also been considered by Georgina Dopico-Black (2011).

The staging harnesses the emotive power of Teresa's dilemma: adding a further layer of performance to her account, she relives the encounter brandishing her knife as if it were the cross.

In the *Libro de la Vida*, Teresa's self-awareness of the link between clarity, a lack of artifice and a perceived sincerity and authenticity is evident when she depicts herself in dialogue:

[...] en diversos tiempos le comuniqué mucho. Como le di cuenta en suma de mi vida y manera de proceder de oración, con la mayor claridad que yo supe, que esto he tenido siempre, tratar con toda claridad y verdad con los que comunico mi alma [...]. (132)

The playtext thematises the risk inherent in such 'unmediated' communication – together with its potential to enclose more daring content:

INQUISIDOR- ¿No os enseñaron a medir las palabras antes de llevarlas a la boca?

A short time later, the same individual criticises her for speaking in paradoxes – evoking the composite nature of Teresa's style:

INQUISIDOR- “Todo se gana en perderlo todo por él”. Sois amiga de paradojas, como suelen serlo los de hablar torcido. (Mayorga 2014, 568)

Paradoxes are in fact at the heart of Teresa's ingenious authorial strategies as Dopico-Black has convincingly shown (114-15). Mayorga deftly dramatizes Teresa's own depiction of her shifting relationship with her confessors, and these confessors as analysts of her speech – in chapter 28 of the *Vida* Teresa elliptically refers to episodes in which she encountered criticism for speaking carelessly, without reflection, or with a lack of humility. Within the same chapter we find the calm, assured and unforgettable description of celestial light, which avoids tipping over into the rhapsodic, and yet Teresa later dismisses her own descriptive and analytical prowess: “No digo que declararé de que manera puede ser poner esta luz tan fuerte en el sentido interior, y en el entendimiento tan clara, que parece verdaderamente está allí, *porque esto es de letrados*” (124). The appropriation of Teresa's self-abasing statements, here attributed to the fictional Inquisitor, could result in a pedestrian adaptation technique, merely fashioning dialogue from Teresa's self-censure. In fact it successfully stages the drive for self-scrutiny we find within Teresa's own text, and facilitates a recreation of the conversational tone of her discourse. Bakhtin's understanding of dialogism suggests that:

The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word: it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction. Forming itself in an atmosphere of the already spoken, the word is at the same time determined by that which has not yet been said but which is needed and in fact anticipated by the answering word. (280)

In chapter 28 of the *Libro de la Vida*, anticipating an external uncertainty as to why Jesus revealed himself to her little by little in her visions, Teresa addresses her reader directly:

Parecerá a vuestra merced que no era menester mucho esfuerzo para ver unas manos y rostro tan hermoso. (123)

Teresa's own text, replicating living conversation, is poised towards the question Mayorga frames in his drama:

INQUISIDOR: Se os mostró poco a poco. ¿Por qué no entero y de una vez? (Mayorga 2014, 558)

The familiar self-abasing statements regarding the wasted opportunities of Teresa's early life are uttered on stage as questions from the Inquisitor:

INQUISIDOR: ¿Y no os duele acordaros de aquella inclinación que el Señor os dio y cuán mal supisteis luego aprovecharla? (552)

In Chapter 30 of the *Vida* Teresa recounts episodes wherein she repeated the harsh criticism she was expected to endure from her confessors back to them, a written record of her own dialogical exploration of the limits of permissible language:

Pues ir al confesor, esto es cierto que muchas veces me acaecía lo que diré, que, con ser tan santos como lo son los que en este tiempo he tratado y trato, me decían palabras y me reñían con una aspereza, que después que se las decía yo ellos mismos se espantaban y me decían que no era más en su mano. (134)

Butler has shown that Antigone "absorbs the very language of the state against which she rebels"; in a similar vein, a fluid transference and appropriation occurs in this play founded upon a text divided and appropriated to differing ends:

INQUISIDOR: A menudo se llama espíritu a lo que es desorden.
TERESA: A veces se llama desorden a lo que es espíritu. (Mayorga 2014, 568)

Antigone "transmits words in aberrant form, transmitting them loyally and betraying them by sending them in directions they were never intended to travel" (Butler 58). The Inquisitor's own treacherous creativity resurfaces within the interrogation, when he appears to recount a private and hellish vision in what is almost a parodic performance of Teresa's account. The exchange seeks to demonstrate how easily literary sources, and indeed the confessional mode of address and the validation this grants the confidante, can be manipulated:

INQUISIDOR: Palabras. Cuanto acabáis de escuchar no es sino palabras. He sumado tres sueños y un par de fantasías como se juntan cebollas, lentejas y dos puntas de tocino. Lo hare mejor la vez próxima, preparando más mi cuento. Me ayudaré de libros donde se pintan las penas infernales. También vos conocéis esos libros. (562)

The Inquisitor's counterfeit script, formed from readings and perfected in performance effectively, undermines the force of Teresa's utterances—especially when we consider the basis for this text is itself a text with its own underlying performative dimension. This on-stage audience member refuses to be complicit in the tacit agreement that the word spoken in the theatrical space can conjure new realities—insistent on underscoring the textual origin of the visions painfully and partially offered up for his and our scrutiny. Teresa's protests regarding the limitations of language are turned against her by the Inquisitor: "De lo que no se puede hablar, más vale callar. Las palabras ni siquiera son sombra de aquellas cosas. Si la lengua dijera verdad sobre el cielo o el infierno, se rompería en pedazos" (562). Nonetheless, in this

forced confrontation with doubt and the articulation of the pain of the absence of the divine the fictional Teresa's eloquence emerges most fully:

Dudo, sí, dudo cada instante.
 Pero siempre podrá el ángel bueno más que el malo.
 Siempre acaba venciendo el ángel del Señor. Lo veo a mi izquierda,
 pequeño, el rostro encendido que parece abrasarse. Tiene en las manos
 un dardo de fuego que hunde en mi corazón. Es tan grande el dolor que
 me hace dar quejidos. Dolor del espíritu, aunque participa todo el
 cuerpo. Dolor tan fuerte que corta el cuerpo.
 Y la lengua, en pedazos, se niega a dar palabras.
 Sólo da gemidos, porque más no puede.
 [...]

 Ni puede la palabra recoger tanto amor, pues, como fuego que arde
 demasiado, no cabe a la palabra contener la llama.
 La lengua está en pedazos y es sólo el amor el que habla.
 Pero nadie puede hablar de ello.
 Es mejor no decir más.

Silencio. Teresa corta cebolla. El Inquisidor sale. (571-72)

Dopico-Black has shown that one of Teresa's most ingenious rhetorical strategies within the *Vida* is in the conflation of doubt itself with the demonic:

Doubt, not rapture, is revealed as the symptom whose etiology is demonic. Any reading (not excepting her own) that misrecognizes the divine, construing it as diabolical, is reduced to a mere deceit of the devil. [...] The devil, while ultimately rendered powerless, cannot be dispensed with. *Doubt needs a place at the table; truth cannot be produced in its absence.* (My italics, 119-21)

Doubt is embodied at Mayorga's table, and the inquisitor's presence produces a performance of the intensity of counter-reformation devotion reminiscent of Caroline Walker Bynum's memorable definition: "a spirituality whose goal is a pressing of self into God and God into self that both surges beyond the bounds of language and threatens to break out in the adherent's very flesh" (172).

The reclaiming of the image of "la lengua en pedazos," drawn from a moment of bodily disintegration and previously used against Teresa to disavow the authenticity of her experience is reclaimed to tell of the untellable here. The conflation signalled in its redeployment also locates Mayorga's play within a tradition of theatrical representation of the saint; Lope de Vega also collapses the vision of transverberation and Teresa's near fatal illness. (Mujica 192) To return to Foucault, who would have us believe that the agency of domination in the confessional context lies in "the one who listens and says nothing", by the close of this play the spectator may judge that the very quality of the silence has shifted, towards a reluctant acquiescence. However the persistent undertow towards a meta-commentary on the unmaking and remaking of the autobiographical text ("es teatro vuestra oración y teatro el silencio en que os dejáis caer tras la oración"; 560) creates an unresolved tension between Teresa's eloquent ability to take the spectator to a place beyond language, and the awareness that we are in the presence of a consummate performer, the textual source for the script itself produced with a supreme awareness of audience scrutiny. At the risk of returning to the old dichotomy, Azorin's observed of Teresa's appeal: "En Cervantes tenemos el estilo 'hecho' y en Teresa vemos como

se va hacienda” (63-64). In inviting us to imagine how an interrogative, dialogical approach may have underpinned the text’s composition, Mayorga’s theatrical interlude revisits a text, to appropriate Bakhtin’s observation: “Forming itself (once again) in an atmosphere of the already spoken” (280).

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