



¡Bienvenidos!

Our Spring 2022 Bulletin salutes Rafael Nadal, whose Australian Open triumph may be the greatest Spanish comeback since Columbus reappeared over the horizon in 1493.



Another Spanish world-beater returns this month. We review Pedro Almodóvar's Oscar-nominated *Madres paralelas* and assess where it stands alongside *Todo sobre mi madre* and *Volver*. When you've seen the film, take our Almodóvar quiz.

As with Almodóvar, so too with Lorca: women take centre stage in his best works. We explore the playwright's enduring appeal.

Gender is also central to García Márquez's *Crónica...* [*Chronicle of a death foretold*]. Would Ángela, the non-virgin bride, be returned to her family in today's Colombia? In *Sex, Shame and Power* Clara Riveros provides an answer by comparing Latin America's sexual revolution with pre-modern North Africa, while also looking at crime, corruption and Covid in Colombia today.

Our Latin American coverage also features the rise of the political left (in Spanish) and William Chislett's impressions of Mexico today as he returns after four decades to the land where he worked as a foreign correspondent.

Shifting from politics to economics, we investigate the secret of Spain's new-found prosperity in the second half of the 20th century.

Translation in the classroom can be a delight of language study: in the last of our recent series, we look at how to enthuse and educate students in this subtle art.

Our *plato fuerte* is A-Level reform.

We are now at the closing stage of the research project spearheaded by this publication in partnership with UCL and the Cervantes Institute. In this edition four leading academics put forward detailed proposals for including S & T, Business and Film-making in a reformed Modern Languages curriculum. Please read these and then rank them in the accompanying survey, encouraging as many ML students, teachers, examiners and lecturers as possible to take part. Results and recommendations will be sent to the UK education authorities. Please complete this by 1 March: it will shape the future!



In addition to our Almodóvar quiz, we are launching an essay competition for Sixth Formers. Poster attached. We look forward to receiving entries.

The Bulletin of Advanced Spanish is 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 summer edition deadline is the end of May.

We wish our readers a fulfilling and variant-free exam season.

The BAS editorial team



Vote for Modern Languages!

BAS editor Stephen Hart

Modern Languages need a more attractive exam syllabus than the one that is offered by the current A-level curriculum.

That is the key finding of the project co-ordinated between the Bulletin of Advanced Spanish, University College London, the University of Glasgow, the Cervantes Institute, University College School, Canford School, Westminster School, and City of London School, “Developing a Partnership Between Universities and Schools in Order to Enhance the Student Experience of the Spanish A-level” (Project name: C72 KEI2021-01-32 SHart; Project No. 564452, Award No. 156780), funded by HEIF at University College London (15/03/2021-14/02/2022).

Our research involved a number of workshops and webinars and an Opinio (sic) web survey. Now, in the project’s final stage, we will be making recommendations about how to address the challenges that we are facing in Modern Languages.^[1]

On 14 January the UK Government published its proposal to reform Modern Languages.^[2] Some of its suggestions – particularly the focus on vocabulary-building ahead of a number of other linguistic skills – are seen in some quarters as controversial or even counter-productive. The debate about the best way to improve the GCSE Modern Language curriculum has important implications for Modern Languages A-level too.^[3]



In this issue of the Bulletin of Advanced Spanish, we include three short descriptions of options that we would like to propose for inclusion in a future and better version of the Spanish A-level curriculum. These are as follows:

- [Business and Economics in Spanish](#)
- [Science and Technology in Spanish](#)
- [Film-making in Spanish](#)



We would like to include them in the curriculum of the Spanish A-level in order to attract students who want careers as medics, scientists, business leaders or economists. Proficiency in a foreign language can be an enormous plus for those who want to excel in such careers, eg as a scientist working with a team in a Spanish laboratory,

or as a medic working with hospital specialists in Mexico City.

The proposed new options in Business/Economics, Science/Technology and Film-making are not meant to replace film and literature in the curriculum, which are likely to remain a much-studied component of the Spanish A-level.

Put simply, our aim in this project is to open up the Spanish A-level language options for those students who want to carry on studying a language but would prefer a curriculum that reflects their future career interests more closely. Our aim is not to prescribe the use of these options for all schools. Syllabus choices will depend on the interest of the school and the preferences of Spanish A-level teachers.



However, we have evidence that offering options of this kind can help to increase the Modern Language cohort (see the 'Business and Economics' link above).

If you like the sound of these options, please let us know. Whether you are a Year 11 GCSE student considering an A-level in Modern Languages or an A-level teacher or university lecturer specialising in Modern Languages, please fill in the survey, which follows this article. There are just 5 questions, and boxes for your comments: it can be done in a couple of minutes.



To fill in the survey, click here:

<https://opinio.ucl.ac.uk/s?s=76490>

University College London will be holding an Open Day designed for Modern Languages A-level students in French, Spanish, German, and Italian, as well as those students interested in Comparative Literature, on the afternoon of 22 March 2022, featuring special sessions devoted to the analysis of language, literature and film in these four languages. All welcome! For more information email Stephen.malcolm.hart@ucl.ac.uk

[1] For more information on the project, see research project 17 on the following list:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/european-languages-culture/research/research-projects>

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/reforms-to-encourage-more-students-to-take-up-language-gcses>

[3] See, for example, the following articles which comment on the Ofqual recommendations: <https://www.hmc.org.uk/blog/hmc-comment-on-ofqual-decision-on-reform-of-modern-foreign-languages/>; and <https://www.fenews.co.uk/education/ascl-media-release-ascl-comment-on-ofqual-decision-on-reform-of-modern-foreign-languages-gcses/>



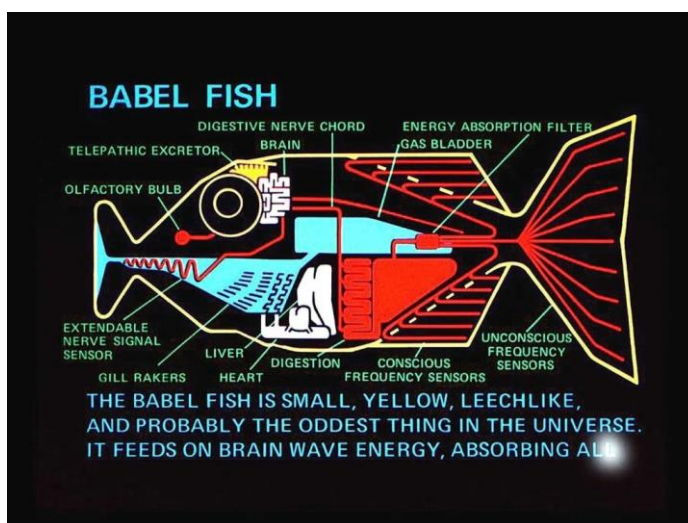
Translation in the Classroom

BAS editor Sander Berg

In the autumn edition of The Bulletin I wrote about the challenges and rewards of translation in general. In this article I want to focus on translation as a tool for teaching & learning.

GOOGLE TRANSLATE — A CURSE?

It never takes long for translation to come up in my lessons. Almost inevitably, the conversation is triggered by my strong suspicion that a pupil has fed an essay to Google Translate and copied and pasted the result. Back in the day, when online translation was reliably rubbish, I would use Babel Fish to show, with some judiciously chosen examples, how nonsensical some computer-generated translations could be. That is no longer possible; Google Translate is simply too good.



You can even use the camera on your phone and point at a text – any text – and get a decent translation. Handy if you want to make beef bulgogi but cannot read the instructions on the jar because they are in Korean, as happened to me not so long ago. (It came out fine, although a little on the salty side, but I shan't blame Google for that.)

Of course, it is still possible to find instances where Google Translate gets it wrong, usually because it lacks context. If you are translating from English to Spanish and just type in 'bank', Google will opt for the statistically most likely translation: *banco* (financial institution). This will lead to confusion if you actually mean *orilla* (riverbank). But type in 'riverbank' and you will get the right answer. The conversation to have with pupils, then, is not to dismiss Google Translate out of hand, much less pretend that it only produces gibberish, but to show them its limitations and encourage them to use proper (online) dictionaries that have sub-entries and give example sentences. This will help them get a better contextual understanding of words and their uses. And obviously you need to remind them that they are not honing their linguistic skills if they rely unthinkingly on Google Translate. It's like thinking you could get really good at football by spending a lot of time on your sofa watching *Match of the Day* or by playing *Champions League* on your phone.

IDIOMS ≠ IDIOMATIC

IDIOMS

Using body parts in Spanish

Spanish To Mind



SER LA MANO DERECHA

It means to be a very useful and trustworthy person for someone else, for example:

"Mi secretaria es mi mano derecha en el trabajo"

IRSE DE NARICES CONTRA ALGO

To hit your face against something, for example:

"Juan estaba en su bicicleta y se fue de narices contra un carro"





ECHARLE EL OJO

To look at someone or something with interest, for example:

"Jason le echó el ojo a la chica rubia"

TENER LA CABEZA EN SU SITIO

A person who knows what he or she wants, someone who thinks clearly and realistically.

"Necesito un consejo de alguien que tenga la cabeza en su sitio."





NO TENER PELOS EN LA LENGUA

Someone who talks directly and clearly. Someone who is not afraid of exposing his or her opinion.

"Luis no tiene pelos en la lengua para hablar con su jefe."

www.spanishtomind.com

The conversation about online translation is one I have with pupils of all ages and levels. Right from the start, too, I emphasise the need to produce idiomatic English when they are translating texts from Spanish. And by idiomatic I don't mean using idioms like 'when pigs fly' but saying things the way you would in normal English. In other words, to use an idiom is not the same as using idiomatic English. One of our textbooks contains the phrase 'el pueblo atrae bastante al turismo'. A stilted, unnatural translation would be 'the village attracts tourism quite a lot'. In English you would say it attracts quite a lot of *tourists*.

It works the other way around as well, and using idiomatic Spanish is a key marker for having achieved a high degree of fluency. If what you produce sounds like something a Spanish-speaking person would say instead of stiff, translated English, then you are getting there. It sounds simple, doesn't it? But we all know it is one of the hardest things.

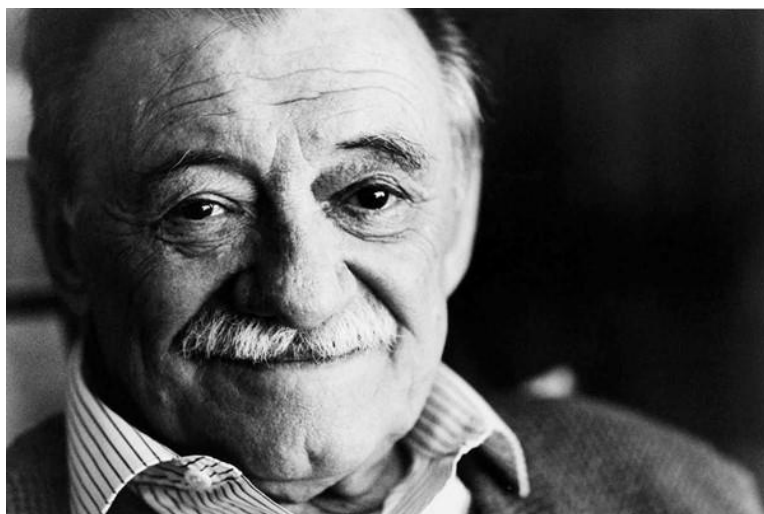
A TRANSLATION COMPETITION

In the Sixth Form I take translation to the next level. After the end-of-years exams, I usually run a literary translation competition. The pupils are given a literary text, either a very short story or a chapter from a novel and get two weeks to translate it. They

can use any tools they want: dictionaries, both monolingual and Spanish to English,

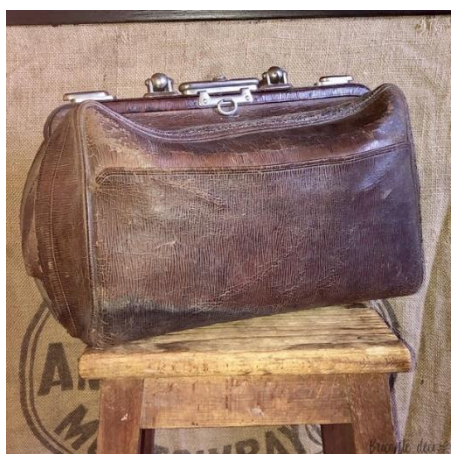
both online and printed, as well as Google, other websites, or even a friend who is a native speaker – anything. The trick is to find a text of which there is no published translation available. Otherwise, the temptation would be too strong to consult it.

Last year I selected a short story by Mario Benedetti called 'Bolso de viajes cortos' (624 words). This worked really well. I didn't tell them anything about the content or the author because I wanted to see who among them would think about doing some research. (None, as it turned out.) The story is about a man who leaves his country, which is in turmoil. He takes with him a bag stuffed with memorabilia.



During his absence, which lasts for many years, he discards one object after the other until he comes across a scarf his lover used to wear around her neck and decides to keep it. It is quite possible to get through the task of translating the story without knowing anything at all about Benedetti, but it becomes a much more meaningful text, and therefore easier to translate, if you realise that he is from Uruguay and spent twelve years of his life in exile when a right-wing military junta ruled his native country.

The results of the competition were very pleasing. All pupils made a considerable effort and were proud of what they had achieved. They happily shared, debated and defended their versions during a class discussion on Zoom. The greatest difficulties they encountered were not lexical in the strict sense, but rather coming across expressions that don't make sense if you translate them word for word. And the assumption with any text, unless you are dealing with a Dadaist or Surrealist work or something of that ilk, must always be that the original makes perfect sense. Figuring out precisely *what* it is saying, though, is not always easy.



The first hurdle was the title. The pupils came up with: My Bag of Little Journeys, Bag for Short Journeys, The Small Old Suitcase, My Little Travel Bag, Overnight Bag and a few other translations. Once you have read the story, it becomes clear that the title refers to a small bag, normally used for short trips, that ends up being used on the very long journey of the narrator's exile. I reckon therefore that 'Overnight Bag' is probably the best rendition here.

Other challenges were: 'árboles cabeceadores', which probably refers to trees gently swaying rather than nodding off. A shady 'glorieta' is

unlikely to be a roundabout but in all likelihood refers to a gazebo or arbour, although I might personally be tempted to call it a little park just because the other translations attract too much attention to themselves by being unusual in a way that the word isn't in the original. A 'libro que fue de cabecera' is a book that the narrator used to keep by the headboard of his bed. We would say 'on his bedside table'. That explains why he later says he had read it twenty times or more.

At some point, there is a mention of friends who are confronted with 'una muerte con charreteras'. Once you've looked up the last word, you realise it translates as 'death with epaulettes'. But what does that mean? This is where contextual knowledge becomes crucial. We are dealing with people who met their death at the hands of men wearing military uniforms; they were arrested, tortured and murdered by soldiers of the regime. But that would be too descriptive for a translation. A better translation would be to keep the image but add a verb: 'death *wearing* epaulettes'.



Even more difficult was the description of 'atardeceres sin ángelus y con tableteos'. Leaving aside the question of whether many pupils know what the Angelus is (the ringing of church bells in the late afternoon, a Catholic call for prayers), most Spanish to English dictionaries will tell you that 'tableteo' means 'clack, rattling, clickety-clack', which does not get you very far. The dictionary of the Real Academia defines the word as 'sonar algún ruido a manera de tableteo, como los truenos'. Since we know the narrator is fleeing a dictatorship in which people are murdered all the time, the most reasonable assumption is that 'tableteo' is the rattle *of guns*, which is contrasted with the quotidian tranquility evoked by Church bells ringing the Angelus.

I could mention other examples, but the point has been made. The aim of the exercise is to raise awareness, make pupils reflect upon the finer points of language in general and hopefully create some enthusiasm for literary translations.

Translation requires a range of skills: perseverance and linguistic sleuthing as well as a good command of English and a sensitivity to register. Some things may be untranslatable, for sure, but that is all the more reason to engage pupils in a conversation that is as rewarding as it is enriching.

SOURCE OF SHORT STORY

The short story 'Bolso de viajes cortos' can be found by clicking in the following link:
<https://buenfindesemana.wordpress.com/2013/06/04/bolso-de-viajes-cortos-mario-benedetti/>



Almodóvar's 'Madres paralelas': new tactic, same strategy

Almodóvar examiner Robin Wallis reviews the maestro's new feature film (avoiding spoilers...).

Until 2021 Almodóvar took pride in making films 'as if Franco never existed'. "Esa era mi venganza [That was my revenge]", he recently explained - a way of showing that the dictator's oppressive, intolerant nationalism had left no enduring mark on Spain.

His new film takes a different tack. Younger generations in Spain are growing up ignorant about the 1939-1975 dictatorship, Almodóvar told a recent interviewer. Hence the emergence of neo-franquista party Vox: "Me pareció que era más necesario que nunca recordar de dónde venimos y contrarrestar el revisionismo de la extrema derecha [I felt it more necessary than ever to remind people where we've come from and to push back against the extreme Right's re-working of history]."



Almodóvar had in fact long pondered making a film that would address Spain's 'historical memory' (ie the tragic legacy of the Franco era, involving torture, murder and disappearances on a massive scale). The 2018 documentary *El silencio de otros*, which he co-produced, seemed to fulfil that ambition, with its intimate stories of those abused or bereaved by Franco's regime and their quest for restorative justice in the modern era. Its critique of the compromises of the Transition, such as the *pacto del olvido*, seemed to settle Almodóvar's score with *el franquismo*.

Not so. *Madres paralelas*, which opened in the UK in late January 2022, reveals that Almodóvar and the dictator have unfinished business.

The spark that ignited the production came when Almodóvar found a way to intertwine two narratives about truth and secrecy, one at a personal level and the other centred on Spain's historical memory.

Almodóvar devotees are long familiar with the importance of deception - *engaño* - in his story-telling. In addition to its dramatic potential, Almodóvar has shown how deceit can be a force for good as well as ill: for example, Raimunda concealing Paco's death in *Volver* in order to protect her daughter. *Engaño* resurfaces in *Madres paralelas*, in which the two characters most committed to revealing the truth about Spain's past prove to be less than truthful in their own personal lives.



Most of *Madres paralelas* plays out as an *engaño*-induced maternal melodrama. “Esta es una película que habla de maternidades distintas [This film looks at different types of motherhood]”, Almodóvar told an interviewer. For him, the protagonist Janis (Penélope Cruz) is “la madre absoluta. Ella sola conforma una unidad familiar, ni siquiera necesita a un hombre a su lado [the epitome of motherhood. She, by herself, alone, constitutes a family unit, with no need for a man alongside her]”.

This theme of strong single-motherhood harks back to Almodóvar's breakout film *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios*, and was further developed in *Todo sobre mi madre* and *Volver*. If you enjoy the director's trademark portrayal of unconventional family structures, you will not be disappointed by *Madres paralelas*.

It is therefore unsurprising that the *Madres paralelas* maternity unit is a man-free zone, where women help each other through the ordeal of labour. The males responsible for the ‘parallel mother’ pregnancies are too problematic to enter this

universo femenino. Not that Almodóvar idealises women characters: as in *Todo sobre mi madre*, relationships between women present challenges that they must dig deep to overcome.



Typically for Almodóvar's female protagonists, Janis combines both strength and fragility. Her friend Ana's mother places her career before the needs of her daughter and duly struggles with a sense of guilt. Almodóvar treats both with his customary empathy. As the critic Marcela Valdés notes, "Nunca castiga a sus protagonistas

femeninas por pecar, sino que celebra su resistencia [He never punishes his female characters for doing wrong; rather, he celebrates their fortitude]". Forgiveness is always an option.

Once the characters' personal crises are resolved, the melodrama segues into a moral coda focused on *la memoria histórica* and the quest for what the director calls "la mínima dignidad que cualquier ser humano merece [the most basic sort of dignity that any human being deserves]".

Almodóvar treads sensitively here: his film is a *cri de coeur* for the victims and their relatives in their search for closure, but not for retribution. Nonetheless, Janis speaks from the heart about the need to acknowledge Spain's past ("hasta que no se honre a esos muertos la guerra española sigue ahí [the Civil War continues until the dead are honoured]"); the Rajoy government's funding-cut for the investigation of mass graves is criticised; and the film closes with novelist Eduardo Galeano's maxim "Por mucho que se la intente silenciar, la historia humana se niega a callarse la boca [History will not be silenced, however much some may try]".

Cinematically, the film spins on the symbiotic axis of its director and leading lady. As Janis, Cruz is even more centre-stage in *Madres paralelas* than she was in *Volver*. Admirers of the Almodóvar-Cruz nexus will be enchanted: she has never performed better, and if the Oscar goes her way it will be well deserved.

Connoisseurs of Almodóvar's back catalogue will enjoy being reacquainted with signature elements of his cinema, such as the casting of Cruz and Rossy de Palma. Another such element is his trademark loitering over exuberant Spanish dishes indulgently prepared in a kitchen which,



according to Elsa Fernández-Santos of *El País*, “funciona como el corazón de sus personajes, de largos diálogos, y de mujeres y maternidades heridas [is the heart of the characters' lives, a place for long discussions and for damaged women and motherhoods]”.

An evocative soundtrack is always a key component of the Almodóvar mix, channelling his audience's response to events on screen. In *Madres paralelas* the typically lush cello-based score compensates for the relatively house-bound narrative, imbuing events in Janis' flat with depths of drama and suspense that they might not otherwise evoke. (The score becomes suitably restrained during the 'historical memory' coda.)

Almodóvar comes up with some novel touches too. One such is the way he bonds characters. Thus, the film opens with a daring juxtaposition of male and female protagonists earnestly discussing the grim topic of mass graves while simultaneously conveying sexual desire for each other. Later, when the 'parallel mothers' are in the maternity ward, the intimacy of their shared experience suggests their incipient merger into a single consciousness.



Photography is an intriguing leitmotiv in the narrative, and inspires the design of the credits. Janis is a photographer through whose lens deceptive images of celebrities, fashion and even her baby reach a wide audience. By contrast, the excavator's photographs of mass graves reveal a truth hidden from the world.

The film was warmly welcomed by Almodóvar aficionados as further evidence of his resurgence in recent years. However, it received relatively few nominations for Spain's annual Goya awards and was passed over as Spain's Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Film. “Lo vivo como una decepción [I'm disappointed],” Almodóvar told the New York

Times. He has reason to be: *Madres paralelas* was particularly warmly received by US critics - not the first time his work has been better received outside Spain than within. “Presentía que habría una frialdad respecto a la película por parte de la mitad del país, y la atribuyo al tema del que trato: [la memoria histórica](#). A toda una parte de la derecha, la película no le hace ninguna gracia [I suspected that half my country would cold-shoulder the film because of its ‘historical memory’ subject matter. Many on the political right don’t like it at all]”.

Some may argue on cinematic grounds that this film falls short of Almodóvar’s best work. Characters accept rather readily the hyperrealist upheavals that beset them. Filming in lockdown meant concentrating the action in Janis’ flat: the interiors are enlivened by juxtapositions of characters against portraits on the walls, or the use of shadow to generate suspense, but inevitably this does not pack the same visual punch as the range of striking locations used in such classics as *Todo sobre mi madre*, *Hable con ella* or *Volver*.

Nonetheless, *Madres paralelas* is a captivating new insight into human relationships as seen from Almodóvar’s unique perspective. Professor Carla Marcantonio points out that his characters are always “dotados de un sentido de humanidad [imbued with a sense of humanity]” and his melodramas built on “dilemas éticos que tienen que ver con nuestras relaciones con los demás [ethical dilemmas about our relationships with others]”. To Almodóvar’s credit, his female-centred narratives deliver a coherent and imaginative vision of a world where the decent side of the human psyche overcomes the bad.



For *El silencio de otros*: see <https://bulletinofadvancedspanish.com/can-a-film-change-spain/>

For our Almodóvar quiz: use link in menu bar.



The Enduring Appeal of Federico García Lorca

By BAS editor Helen Laurenson

Federico García Lorca is one of the most widely translated, studied and performed dramatists of the twentieth century. His drama has become the portal through which generations of aspiring hispanists have had their first glimpse into Spanish society and culture.

All examination boards (OCR, AQA, Edexcel, WJEC, Cambridge) feature Lorca in their syllabuses, and take-up remains high: *La casa de Bernarda Alba* year-on-year remains the most taught literary text for the Cultural Topic component at AQA, with Edexcel offering another of the rural tragedies, *Bodas de sangre*. Cambridge Pre-U, after years of purveying the rural trilogy, has turned in its final cycle to *La Zapatera Prodigiosa*.

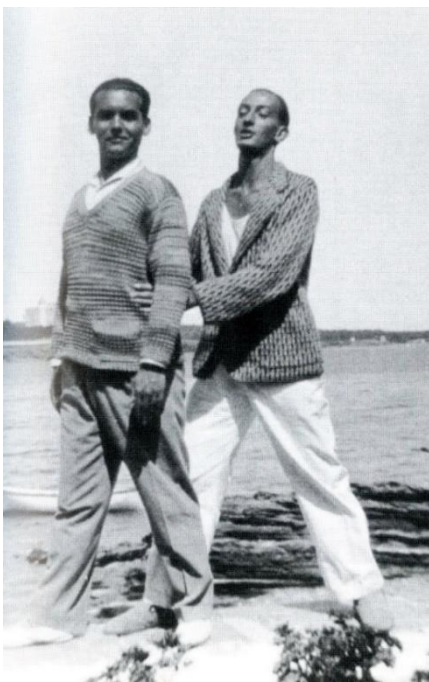


There are multiple reasons for this perennial Lorcan high tide. Plays such as *La casa de Bernarda Alba* and *Bodas de sangre* tap into a rich vein of teenage concerns - otherness, gender, freedom and, in the case of García Lorca, that indefinable 'Spanishness' which pupils often envision when choosing to study the language. The modernity and relative linguistic accessibility of the dramas and the continuing relevance of the gender themes exert a strong gravitational pull. Likewise, the plays afford *all* pupils the opportunity to engage at some level, whether historical, biographical, gendered or sociological, thus facilitating the desired 'full range of pupil outcomes' and making the texts distinctly manageable. There is scope for

sophisticated literary exegesis, within a wide range of literary frameworks (psychoanalytic, feminist, formal), as well as a more descriptive grasp of themes and historical context.

Arguably, another factor in the high take-up of Lorca is 'devil-you-know' conservatism in the selection of exam texts. Abundant critical guidebooks on Lorca for less confident teachers and learners reinforce this tendency. More positively, the creative continuity between Lorca and his contemporary incarnation, Pedro Almodóvar, gives an extra dimension to studying both. Lorca extracts are performed in both *Todo sobre mi madre* and *Madres paralelas* (reviewed in this edition of the Bulletin).

The historical context of Lorca's plays also adds to the interest, coinciding with the Second Spanish Republic and the advent of the Civil War. In addition, the focus on gender fluidity and the marginalised - women, gypsies and the gay and black communities (in *Poeta en Nueva York*) - has the potential to stimulate debate in the classroom which can be linked to both PHSE and to the topic areas of the broader exam syllabus. All these attractions are bolstered by the accommodating genre of drama, which can be read aloud in class, with plenty of opportunities for discussion, close linguistic analysis and intertextualisation.



Among the Generation of 1927, no other poet so consistently featured women as an intrinsic and powerful aspect of his literary ideology as did Lorca. The reasons for this may be located in Lorca's homosexuality: unlike Rafael Alberti, who constructs a poetic feminine to meet male heterosexual needs and criteria, Lorca, through a process of gender displacement, directly projects his inner socio-sexual conflict and frustration into the female figures. Whilst early critics such as Arturo Barea concede that much emphasis is placed on the female protagonists by Lorca, they tend to avoid the problematic issue of homosexuality, preferring veiled statements such as 'the same [religious] atmosphere helps to breed an astonishingly great number of sexual introverts, extroverts, and perverts, of sadists and masochists, and an even greater number of people who come near

to being one or the other'. Equally tentative, in 1944 Edwin Honig, whilst recognising that 'the strength of Lorca's folk drama lies precisely in his use of woman as bearer of all passion and earthly reality', makes no correlation between these 'martyrs of frustrated love' and the poet's private experience or sexual psyche.

Unsurprisingly, more recent critics have re-evaluated earlier views and established a correlation between private and poetic experience. In 1985 Paul Binding asserted:

'The homosexual writer, with singular qualification, can view women as autonomous beings; freed from the endowments of desire or acquisition, they can stand before him in all their complexity and their tragedy. Tragedy - because he, more than his heterosexual fellows perhaps, can understand just what cost to their psychic life their enforced surrender to convention so frequently entails'.

Similarly, in 1997 Beatriz Urrea stresses the parallel experiences, within a Lorcan Spanish context, between women and gay men, commenting that 'las heroínas de Lorca son mujeres enamoradas a quienes se les censura la expresión de su deseo y que con frecuencia pierden la vida al rebelarse contra las normas que pretenden inmovilizarlas y silenciarlas'.



A selection of ballads from *Romancero gitano* (1928) serve as a useful pedagogical precursor to the plays of the *trilogía lorquiana*. Over half the poems feature female protagonists. In addition, the defining characteristics of the *romance* - dialogue, tragedy, repetition and a palpable (if sometimes rather fragmented) narrative - serve as a palatable appetiser ahead of feasting on the full-length dramas. Many of the ballads explore the *honor/vergüenza* code, gendered spaces, transgressive women, desire thwarted by *el que dirán* and a punitive patriarchal presence.

Part of the charm of Lorca's work is the *abecedario de símbolos* that underpin his texts. Students using the ctrl + f function in a pdf version of the text yelp with delight as they discover the incidence of *sangre, pared, agua, viento* or *¡cállate!*. They also learn the essential transferable skill of textual analysis and deconstruction through the poetic vignettes of *Romancero gitano*, with their range of gender political issues - 'La monja gitana' (patriarchal religious structures), 'La casada infiel' (female 'othering'), 'Thamar y Amnón' (rape) and 'Martirio de Santa Olalla' (torture).

The continuing relevance of these issues makes for lively debate in the classroom, encouraging thoughtful personal responses and the use of primary and secondary source materials. Why, for example, did Lorca, a cosmopolitan and well-travelled man, decide to explore the archaic and patriarchal structures of rural Spain in the mid-1930s, at the time of the forward-thinking Second Republic?

Let us leave the last word to the great poet and dramatist himself:

"El teatro es una escuela de llanto y de risa y una tribuna libre donde los hombres pueden poner en evidencia morales viejas o equívocas y explicar con ejemplos vivos normas eternas del corazón y del sentimiento del hombre"



Sex, shame and power: gender politics in machista societies

Clara Riveros is a Colombian political analyst and author whose publications have focused on populism, totalitarianism, revolution, dictatorship, religious states, authoritarian regimes and freedom on both sides of the Atlantic. Here she answers our questions about Colombia, García Márquez and attitudes to sex in Latin America and North Africa.

Clara, your new book is called *Sexo, pudor y poder. Debates del siglo XXI en el norte de África*: [Sex, shame and power: 21st century debates in North Africa]. What led you to research this topic?

A few years ago I came across the work of the Italian historian Loris Zanatta, who has a special interest in populism and religion in Latin America. I found myself applying his theories to my home country of Colombia, and also to North Africa - an area I was drawn to partly because we Latin Americans know so little about it. I first went there in 2015 to attend a seminar on populism. Since then I've been working as an independent consultant, dividing my time between the Americas, Spain and Morocco.

Sexo, pudor y poder looks at the way North African/Islamic societies deal with individual and sexual freedoms in the 21st century. These are countries where social pressures and state regulation limit individual autonomy, particularly with regard to women and their bodies. I draw on various academic disciplines to describe the power relationships behind this phenomenon. I



also look at Morocco's complex relations with the US, Spain, Algeria and Israel, among others.

What were your main findings?

Essentially, Islamic states are authoritarian, and will remain so unless and until there's an effective decoupling of state and religion. In Latin America we used to have a similar situation with the Catholic church, but in the past half century we have prioritised the rights of the individual and accepted secular values (albeit at a different rate and with differing degrees of resistance in each country). North African culture limits freedom of the press, religion and the individual. As for sexuality, both state and society regard it as their right to monitor what happens in people's bedrooms. Every year thousands of people go to prison because their private lives do not conform to the state's requirements. Treating people as though they need the state and society to set them guidelines for every aspect of their lives is damaging. It infantilises them.



Male superiority is hard-wired into North African public life. Women's rights are limited because of their sex. They can inherit less than men; they are scrutinised and monitored by those around them, including their families, and subjected to comments about their appearance, their behaviour in public, their virtue. Modesty is their obligation

and shame their punishment.

The basis of a woman's honour is her virginity. Male relatives boast about it. Husbands subject newlywed wives to demeaning medical examinations, while women furtively undergo procedures to 'recover' their lost virginity. Straight out of García Márquez's *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* [Chronicle of a death foretold], but taking place now, in the 2020s. It feeds hypocrisy and encourages a culture of lying and revenge, which then become part of everyday life - part of North African identity.

Is there any comparison between the situation you describe in North Africa and what happens these days in Latin America?

In 2010 I went to live in Buenos Aires. I found it liberal, modern, dazzling - a city whose residents were confident of their own worth, without the sense of servitude one can find in other parts of the continent. Sure, Argentina suffers from populism and a political and economic framework that's prevented it from living up to its potential for decades. However, it was a welcome change from Bogotá, where there

is still an obsession with appearances, family surnames, hierarchies, and other such hangovers from its Catholic colonial past.

My research into North Africa gave me a new understanding of how Latin America has changed. For example, its 1991 Constitution secularised even a conservative society like Colombia by separating Church and state. The country modernised, recognised individual rights, and protected minorities. This was Colombia's great achievement of the 20th century, even though a mafia culture still permeates much of society and politics.

Perhaps North Africa is just a few stages behind Latin America. When it comes to the realities of daily life, I don't see the two regions as so far apart: populism, nationalism, authoritarianism, phony patriotism and democracy, corruption, lack of transparency and accountability... People in the two regions have many of the same concerns, which offers scope for dialogue. The problem is that North Africa still awaits modernity in its values and outlook. There is huge resistance to change.

***Crónica de una muerte anunciada* by Gabriel García Márquez is based on a crime committed in Colombia in the 1950s. It portrays a bride being returned to her family on her wedding night because she is not a virgin. Her brothers are then expected to kill whichever man is responsible. Do those kind of rules still apply in Colombia, or do young people today have complete sexual freedom?**

Interesting you should ask: I'm currently researching the portrayal of Arab characters and culture in Colombian literature, including *Crónica* (a number of whose characters - including Santiago Nasar - are of Arab descent). García Márquez, by the way, had close connections to the Arab community: his wife, Mercedes Barcha, was of Egyptian descent.

In *Crónica* the private life of the central characters gives rise to a very public crime of honour. Indeed, the two brothers who commit the murder plead 'honour' as their defence. Virginity has great cultural significance both in the Hispanic and Arab traditions, with the potential to unleash



violent consequences, as the novel shows. In Latin America the religious dimension has faded, and attitudes have moved forward with the times. However, machismo carries weight in both cultures as part of the patriarchal value system.

In the present era sexuality is expressed freely and spontaneously in Latin America. This trend started in the 1960s and took root in the 1990s, when greater rights and freedoms were secured. This liberalisation cuts across all social and economic classes, as does the freedom for same-sex couples to display affection in public.

This is the biggest difference I find between Latin America and North Africa. When it comes to sexual freedom, crazy things happen in North Africa, some of which could be taken straight from the pages of García Márquez.

Turning to Colombia today: five years on from the signing of the Peace Accord, how are things now in your home country?

Society has changed in many ways, but it still struggles to uphold the rule of law. People like the idea of easy money and ostentatious living, and look up to the drug barons. They turn to violence and take justice into their own hands to settle scores. Equality before the law is more an aspiration than a reality. If you have a distinguished family name and lineage it sets you up very nicely.



FARC's demobilisation was crucial but didn't end the violence, nor even the problem of guerrilla activity. Drug gangs, FARC dissidents and other guerrilla groups like the ELN remain active: 145 human rights activists and social leaders were killed in 2021.

Despite all this, state institutions are reasonably strong. The country remains a great place to visit, with Cartagena, our most beautiful city,

drawing large numbers of tourists each year.

What's the COVID-19 situation there now?

In late 2020/early 2021 Colombia's response to COVID-19 was rated among the worst of anywhere in the world. That improved during 2021, so that in the second half of the year the vaccination effort outstripped the rest of Latin America. President Duque's goal of vaccinating 35 million (out of 50 million) Colombians during 2021 achieved 87% of that target. Over 30 million are now double-vaccinated, and a third dose is now available for all. Shared indoor spaces like restaurants, theatres and cinemas require masks and proof of double vaccination. Visitors need proof of vaccination or a negative test result to enter the

country. Infections and deaths were falling in late 2021, but picked up at the start of 2022 due to omicron.

The current estimate is that economic recovery will take until 2024. As in other countries, the pandemic has caused occasional shortages and increased inflation, but the OECD is forecasting that in 2022 Colombia will enjoy the highest growth rate in Latin America (5.5%).

Clara Riveros was in conversation with BAS Senior Editor Robin Wallis.

A Spanish-language version of this article is available on request via our Contact Us button.

Sexo, pudor y poder. Debates del siglo XXI en el norte de África hace parte de la Colección "Ensayos Saharianos" publicada en España en la [Editorial Alhulia](#). Disponible en librerías de España y próximamente en Amazon.



Clara Riveros

Sexo, pudor y poder

19,23€

En *Sexo, pudor y poder. Debates del siglo XXI en el norte de África*, la autora involucra disciplinas diversas para la aproximación de las sociedades magrebíes, ciudadanías emergentes, con especial atención a las limitaciones que enfrentan las mujeres para la igualdad de derechos efectiva y a las restricciones de las libertades individuales y sexuales en ... [Sigue leyendo](#)

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Editorial Alhulia





Gabriel Boric y el ascenso de la izquierda en Latinoamérica

BAS editor Fran Compán

Tras la victoria de Gabriel Boric en las pasadas elecciones chilenas, hay quien empieza a comparar el auge de los gobiernos progresistas en Latinoamérica con la *marea rosa* de la primera década del siglo XXI. En aquella época los gobiernos de corte más o menos izquierdista de Chávez (Venezuela), Lula (Brasil), Mújica (Uruguay), Néstor Kirchner y Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (Argentina), Correa (Ecuador) y Morales (Bolivia) lideraron el movimiento progresista en la región, y estos se les uniría años después el de Bachelet en Chile.



Con el paso de los años la habitual tendencia pendular de la política latinoamericana significó un cambio político radical en varios de estos mismos países llevando a Brasil, Argentina y Bolivia, entre otros, a gobiernos conservadores. No sería difícil argumentar que esta dinámica de cambios de gobierno hacia polos opuestos es un síntoma de buena salud democrática.

La victoria de Gabriel Boric Font sobre el derechista José Antonio Kast en las elecciones presidenciales del pasado 21 de noviembre fue celebrada por la izquierda latinoamericana en general y por los gobiernos de Venezuela, Cuba y Nicaragua en particular, pese a que el nuevo mandatario chileno no se alinea ideológicamente con ninguno de estos tres países.



Sin duda alguna, el perfil de Boric ha llamado la atención a nivel internacional al tratarse de un presidente electo que rompe moldes no solo en el contexto latinoamericano sino mundial. Antiguo activista estudiantil de tan solo 35 años, Boric ganó las elecciones de una manera arrolladora con la promesa de

incrementar los impuestos a los más pudientes para poder dar pensiones de mejor calidad al grueso de la ciudadanía. La formación de su gobierno ha sido una declaración de intenciones, con un gabinete formado por 14 mujeres y 10 hombres de orígenes diversos que contrasta con el anterior equipo endogámico de hombres de clase pudiente. Para muestra, y contra todo pronóstico, Boric ha elegido a un profesor para la cartera de Educación, Marco Antonio Ávila, que además se formó en la educación pública. A su vez, la doctora y expresidenta del Colegio Médico Izkia Siches, de 35 años también, se encargará del Ministerio del Interior y Seguridad Pública.

Uno de los desafíos más inmediatos para Chile es la aprobación de una nueva constitución que transforme el modelo chileno. En contraste con Piñera, el presidente saliente, Boric ha declarado que respetará la autonomía de la Convención Constituyente encargada de generar una nueva constitución para el país. La llegada de Boric al poder ha sido vista con buenos ojos por el órgano encargado de redactar la propuesta de texto para la nueva Constitución, que deberá ser aprobada por los chilenos en un referéndum con voto obligatorio.

Entre otros países gobernados por partidos de la izquierda tenemos a Honduras, donde la izquierdista Xiomara Castro se proclamó presidenta a finales de noviembre de 2021 reemplazando a Juan Orlando Hernández, cuya administración fue acusada de actos de corrupción y de vinculaciones con el narcotráfico. A su vez, en México, Andrés Manuel López Obrador arrolló en las elecciones de julio de 2018 para hacerse con



la presidencia de la tercera potencia económica del continente americano, después de Estados Unidos y Brasil.



Luis Arce salió victorioso en las elecciones presidenciales bolivianas en 2020, comprometiéndose a continuar el legado del izquierdista Evo Morales cuya destitución forzosa dejó al país en un limbo político de la mano de la ultraderechista Jeanine Añez. Entre tanto en el Perú, en abril de 2021, Pedro Castillo, un humilde maestro de escuela, dio la sorpresa al

imponerse contra las predicciones a la candidata derechista Keiko Fujimori.

Parece probable que esta nueva *marea rosa* se extienda a países como Colombia o Brasil en un futuro cercano. El expresidente brasileño Lula vuelve a la carga y está ganando enteros frente a un Bolsonaro cada vez menos popular. En el caso colombiano, Gustavo Petro, exalcalde de Bogotá y antiguo miembro de un grupo guerrillero urbano, tiene ventaja en la intención de voto para las elecciones de finales de mayo de este año.

Por otra parte, esta tendencia hacia la izquierda ha tenido excepciones en los últimos años en los casos de Ecuador, Uruguay y El Salvador, donde se han formado gobiernos de corte conservador. Además, tanto en México como en Argentina, dos de las mayores potencias económicas del continente, los partidos de centroizquierda han visto su ventaja en intención de voto reducida e incluso han perdido votantes en las elecciones legislativas más recientes.

En un intento de explicar esta tendencia, Jennifer Pribble, profesora de ciencias políticas de la Universidad de Richmond y especialista en Latinoamérica, explicó en una entrevista al New York Times que, en su opinión, la pandemia de la Covid-19 y su efecto en la región ha facilitado que las iniciativas de izquierda ganaran peso al favorecer programas de atención universal a la salud y de apoyo económico a los ciudadanos. Veremos lo que pasa.



Mexico revisited

BAS editor William Chislett

Late last year I travelled to Mexico to meet my granddaughter of 16 months. It was our first encounter, and indeed the first time that I had seen my son for 27 months. Such are the travel restrictions and health hazards in the crazy world of Covid.

The pungent smell of petrol from the exhausts of cars and buses, as my son drove us from Oaxaca's airport towards its colonial centre, threw me back to the time (1978-84) when I lived in Mexico City as the *Financial Times* correspondent.



The Mexico I found on my return is very different to the one I left. The population then was 74 million; now it's 129 million. The country was grappling with a major foreign debt crisis, having squandered its considerable oil wealth, and the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) had held uninterrupted power since 1929. What's more, 1985 brought a huge earthquake, destroying, among other things, an office block opposite our

apartment.

Oil from the state-owned Pemex is still a major source of revenue, but the reserves are dwindling. A litre of milk no longer costs four times less than a litre of petrol as it absurdly did in my day, because the petrol price is based more on production and other costs since the *gasolinazo* in 2017. Today, they cost about one euro each.

The PRI stopped being the world's longest-governing party in 2000 when the centre-right National Action Party (PAN) was allowed to win the presidential election, and the country became more democratic. The PRI returned to power in 2012 and in 2018 the leftist National Regeneration Movement (MORENA) won.

What follows are some impressions of my month in Oaxaca, a city whose colonial past is magnificently displayed in gorgeous churches, such as Santo Domingo (closed because of the pandemic) near the Zócalo and in street names like Calle de la Noche Triste, recalling the night of 30 June to 1 July 1520, when Hernán Cortés and his army of conquistadors and native allies were driven out of the Aztec capital in what is today the historic centre of Mexico City.

I had forgotten the constant howling of abandoned street dogs. Mexico is said to have the largest number of strays in Latin America: the National Institute of Statistics and Geography estimated in 2019 that 70% of the country's 18 million dogs were living on the street.



Photo: William Chislett

The flat we rented in the outskirts of the city came with a cacophony of howling dogs, myna birds, and occasionally, in the distance, braying donkeys. Added to this, the rubbish and butane gas lorries and the bread van all have their own particular ways of announcing their presence – respectively, the tingling of a bell, the mooing of a cow and a song. Spain, where I live, no longer seemed one of the world's noisiest countries, despite being ranked as such by the World Health Organisation.



it buy large bottles of water or fill up cisterns from water delivery lorries.

Oaxaca's wealthy continue to live in mansions behind high walls topped with broken glass or electrified wire. In some cases very tall cactuses act as a deterrent. The inequality for anyone coming from a developed country is as stark as it was 40 years ago, and basic services are still inadequate. It is still not advisable to drink tap water, which might be purified at source but can become contaminated en route to the tap. Those who can afford

When I lived in Mexico refuse workers, or indeed any worker, would not have got away with blocking the main streets of Oaxaca. Yet they did so with impunity during the four days before Christmas, in protest at the local government's failure to pay

their salaries and *aguinaldo* (bonus). The result was chaos, but the police did not intervene, perhaps out of fear of stoking violence. Blocking streets has become a favourite tactic in Oaxaca for any group with a grievance since 2006, when teachers protested. One morning we were travelling to the city centre when suddenly traffic began to back up because six taxis decided to stage a protest, thankfully not for long. Oaxacans stoically put up with the inconvenience.

During my visit rumours circulated that the local government could not pay the refuse workers because the mayor had fled to Texas with the money. The real reason, apparently, though never officially confirmed, was more straightforward: the city's MORENA mayor, fond of alcohol and holed up somewhere, had not signed the orders for the payments. The multi-party city council was reluctant to meet and replace him. In the end, the PRI governor of the state of Oaxaca stepped in and found a way to make the payments.



Photo: Sonia Chislett

This was not the only protest. Families of people who had 'disappeared' or been killed in disputes over illegal logging and denunciations of corruption in municipal governments, their names on crosses, demonstrated peacefully each day in front of the cathedral. According to the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearance, which made its first visit to Mexico last November, more than 95,000 people have been officially registered as disappeared in the country.



Photo: William Chislett

On a brighter note, Oaxaca has strengthened its reputation as one of Mexico's most culturally vibrant and colourful cities (buildings are rarely higher than a few floors because of the frequency of earthquakes, and are often painted red, blue or orange). The same has happened with its renowned cuisine, which includes seven types of *mole* sauces (they generally contain fruits, nuts, chili peppers and spices like black pepper, cinnamon or cumin), the speciality of *chapulines* (deep-fried grasshoppers - see photo) and mescal, the local alcohol. The influx of US citizens, either as tourists or residents, is said to have led to the creation of fish tacos, much more delicious than the crunchy, rather tasteless bugs (in my view) which were not my favourite

food. Oaxaca city, like Madrid, is not on the coast, but, like the Spanish capital, it is well supplied by fresh fish. The Pacific coast is only 250km away, but it takes six hours to reach Puerto Escondido because of poor roads.

Our temperature was taken on entering almost every restaurant and our clothes sprayed. Virtually everyone wore masks in the street, although this was not obligatory. We felt safe.

The Oaxacan handicraft industry, highly specialised by community, is flourishing. It ranges from the black clay pottery of San Bartolo Coyotepec and the green glazed pottery of Santa María Atzompa to the wool textiles of Teotitlán del Valle and the *alebrijes* (animal figures carved from wood - see photo below) made in San Martín Tilcajete.



Photo: William Chislett



Photo: William Chislett

The philanthropist Alfredo Harp Helú has done much to restore old buildings and create museums in Oaxaca. Harp made his fortune from acquiring Banamex in 1991, when the bank was privatized (I reported on its nationalisation in 1982), and then selling it to Citibank in 2001. In 1994 he was kidnapped in Mexico City and held prisoner for 106 days. His family reportedly paid a ransom of \$30 million, and after he was freed he moved to the relatively safer Oaxaca. Among his museums is the largest one for stamps in Latin America. Oaxaca was

the last place where I expected to see a rare Penny Black.

Mexico is full of surprises. We hope to return, but next time without having to wear a mask during the 17-hour journey.



How Spain transitioned to high-income status

BAS editor William Chislett

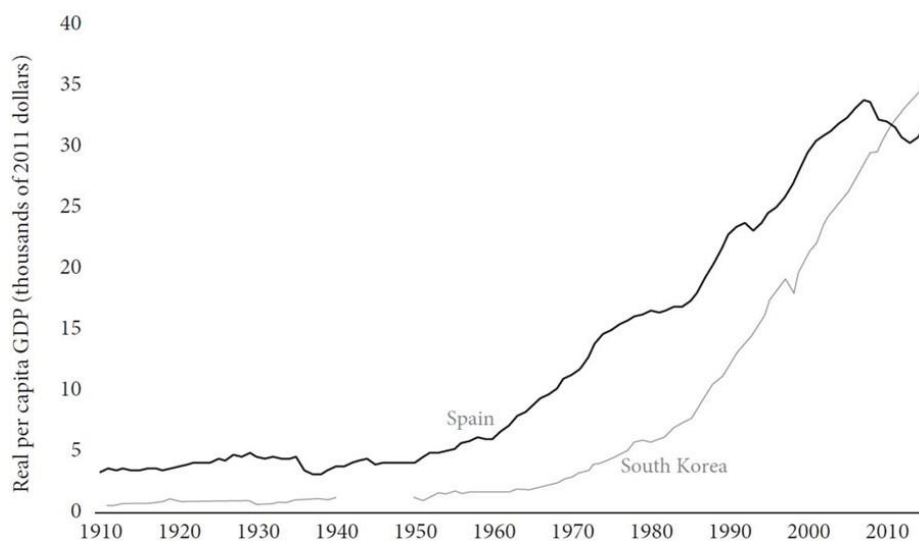
Anyone who has been following Spain over the last 50 years or so cannot but be amazed at how infinitely more prosperous the country has become.

When I bought a second home in Buendía, a Spanish village in Castilla La Mancha, in 1976, there was no running water (it had to be collected in large containers from a spring), the streets were unpaved, the primary school was rundown, phone calls were made in a cabin near the town hall via an operator who was the daughter of one of the bar owners, and almost every time there was a thunderstorm the electricity went off. Most of the impoverished villagers worked the land or were in construction. I will never forget walking in one of the streets and seeing a man plucking a sparrow, which I assumed he would cook.

For many years now there has been running water for the 408 residents, all the streets are paved, there is an automatic telephone exchange (fiber internet is being installed), a modern primary school and a health centre. Many of the villagers drive smart cars.

Spain is one of very few nations (South Korea being another example) that have successfully transitioned from middle-income (per capita GNI of \$1,036 to \$12,535) to high-income status (see Figure 1). The latest figure for Spain's per capita GNI is \$30,330 (2019).

Figure 1. Spain and South Korea's real per capita GDP

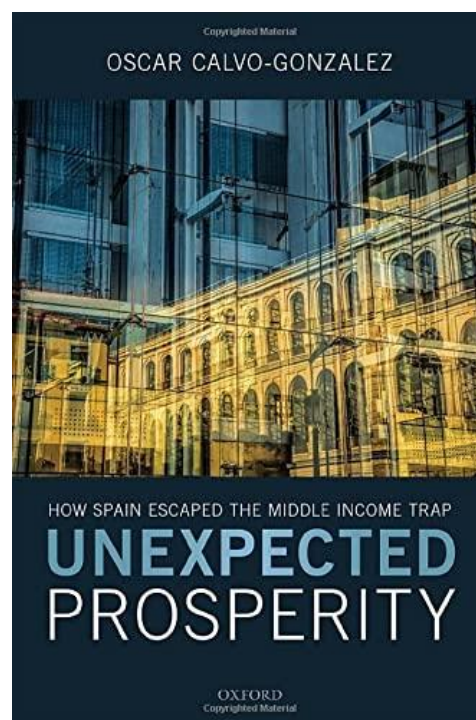


Source: Maddison Project Database (Bolt, Inklaar, de Jong, and van Zanden, 2018).

In 1960 there were over a hundred middle-income countries. By the end of the century only a dozen of them had attained high-income status. Most have remained stuck in the middle-income trap. How Spain managed not to do this, seemingly against all the odds, is well told by Oscar Calvo-González, a Spanish economist at the World Bank, in his enlightening book *Unexpected Prosperity* (OUP).

The path to prosperity began long before Spain joined the EEC in 1986, which brought the country bountiful structural and cohesion funds. It was also more than a bounce-back from the devastating 1936-39 Civil War. Spain did not recover its pre-War level of economic output until 1953. The 1940s were years of hunger, autarky and ostracism by the international community because Franco had taken the side of the Axis powers.

The brutally repressive dictatorship, consolidated by the US as of the 1953 military bases agreement, gave Spain stability. Washington's embrace of Franco during the Cold War was psychologically important, though it provided little financial assistance. The stability (a 'peace of the cemeteries' for the exiled political opposition) enabled long-term planning, encouraged gross capital formation to take off and made macroeconomic management predictable.



This is not a justification of that regime, but we should not forget that between 1812 and 1935 Spain suffered 53 coups, seven constitutions and three civil wars. By the time Franco consolidated his position as head of government in 1939, there had been 145 heads in the previous 100 years. Peace is one of the prerequisites for prosperity.

Between 1950 and 1980, when the foundations of prosperity were laid, Spain's real per capita income quadrupled. By comparison, it had taken the entire previous century to double. Per capita income went from 27% to 57% of that in the US during these 30 years. Spain caught up with both the US and the UK in infant mortality rates, and rapid urbanization was managed, largely without the by-product of the slums that are common in many middle-income countries today.

Economic development went so well that Sir Nicholas Henderson, the outgoing British ambassador to France, predicted in his controversial valedictory dispatch of March 1979 that if Britain's economic decline continued Spain would overtake the UK in GDP per head by the end of the 20th century. (It did not happen.)

Political stability alone does not explain Spain's take-off. An important factor was that both the public and private sectors drove investment, and not just the former, as in the case of communist countries. The rate at which new private companies were created, which had averaged around 1,400 a year in the first half of the 20th century, tripled to 4,500 in the 1960s. Taking into account the significant population growth, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, fuelled by the baby boom that followed the Second World War, the creation of new firms rose from six per 100,000 population to 14 during this period.



Benidorm beaches

Tourism, which has played such a key role in the economy, was largely private-sector led. The number of visitors skyrocketed, from less than half a million in 1950

to over 20 million a year by 1970 (83.5 million in 2019). Spain's share of the global tourism market rose from less than 2% to over 12% during those two decades.

The 1959 Stabilisation Plan was key. Multiple exchange rates were abolished, the peseta heavily devalued, wages frozen, and there was some liberalisation of trade. The peseta became convertible with major currencies. Restrictions on foreign direct investment were eased and economic policy became export-oriented. These and other reforms achieved a wrenching turnaround in economic policymaking, from 20 years of autarkic and statist orientation to a more open and market-friendly approach.

Calvo-González argues that these reforms were driven by political stability rather than economic instability. The growth dividend from better economic policies was large. According to Calvo-González, they accounted for much of the increase in per capita growth over the next 15 years. 'Spain proves the case that there can be high returns from getting policies right, or more precisely, from correcting bad policy mistakes.' Trade openness (exports+imports) more than tripled between the 1940s and the 1960s to 17% of GDP.

Unemployment, however, remained high in the 1960s, forcing people to emigrate. Fortunately this was a time when the rest of western Europe was expanding: some 1.5 million Spaniards sought work in Germany, France, Switzerland, and other countries. Buendía's population peaked at almost 1,900 in 1950, when villagers began to migrate both within Spain and further afield. By 1970, 3.3 million Spaniards were estimated to be living abroad, the equivalent of one-quarter of Spain's working population at that time.

One can only speculate what might have happened to the political stability much vaunted by Franco if this 'escape valve' had not existed.

Originally published by the Elcano Royal Institute.

Almodóvar Quiz!



As an *auteur* film director, Almodóvar deliberately weaves connections between his films. In what ways do the following aspects of *Madres paralelas* echo earlier Almodóvar films?

(Clue: the films in question are all mentioned in our accompanying review of *Madres paralelas*.)



1. The problem mother of an unhappily pregnant young woman
2. An absent hippy mother
3. A proactive mother busily walking down a Madrid street talking on her phone
4. The phrase '*como Dios manda*'
5. Reference to Janis' home being in the barrio, and to visiting her relatives in the pueblo
6. A phone number changed or unanswered to escape contact and evade responsibility
7. An older friend 'mothering' a younger friend
8. Evocative use of a shadow moving along a wall
9. A drinking/smoking actress rehearsing Lorca
10. Barquillos ('wafers')
11. A new baby given a significant name
12. The phrase '*tenemos que hablar*'



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