



## Language and fiction incarnate. A phenomenological approach to *Cuento amarillo*.

El lenguaje y la ficción encarnada. Un acercamiento fenomenológico a *Cuento amarillo*.

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### ABSTRACT

This article is a literary approach that seeks to answer the question about the phenomenological relationship between body-language and the storyteller *Cuento amarillo*. For this, he uses the Merleau-Ponty phenomenology as a theoretical base in two base works, *The Prose of the World* and *The Phenomenology of Perception*, from which he seeks to explore how the concepts of body, language and fiction are operating within the narrative with the purpose is to glimpse the textual guidelines that make up the characters of this literary work and within phenomenology itself and therefore create a new proposal towards the body with a view to a theoretical discussion with language.

**Keywords:** Phenomenology. Body. Language. Literature. Fiction. Story.

### RESUMEN

Este artículo es un acercamiento literario que busca dar respuesta a la pregunta sobre la relación fenomenológica entre cuerpo-lenguaje en el cuentario *Cuento amarillo*. Para ello utiliza como base teórico la fenomenología de Merleau-Ponty en dos obras base *La prosa del mundo* y *La fenomenología de la percepción* a partir de las cuales se busca explorar como los conceptos de cuerpo, lenguaje y ficción están operando dentro de la narrativa de esta obra



con la finalidad de vislucrar las directrices textuales que configuran a los personajes y así crear una propuesta nueva hacia el cuerpo con vistas a una discusión teórica con el lenguaje.

**Palabras Clave:** Fenomenología. Cuerpo. Lenguaje. Literatura. Ficción. Cuento.

The literary approach to the body involves a theoretical discussion with language. The tripartite relationship that these theoretical constructs propose is indissoluble. This implies opening the inquiry discussion towards the question of what is the body, what is language and how it is linked to the plane of the literary. The objective of this article lies in exploring these communicating vessels within the fictional space proposed by the text *Cuento amarillo*. For this, it is necessary to take as a starting point and theoretical basis the phenomenological proposal of Merleau-Ponty whose exploration involves questions about perception, the body-lived, the body-experienced and its interconnections to the field of the literary. In this tenor, it is possible to ask as a research question what is the phenomenological relationship between body-language and the teller *Cuento amarillo*?

### **The body of Adriana Conde and "Ácido"**

Merleau-Ponty proposes the body as a means by which the world is experienced, it is not a simple mechanical, biological expressionless constitution, but its quality is that through it the world is experienced and known. Now, for this it is necessary to understand the inherence of the body with respect to reality. That is, to know that the body is an experience embodied in consciousness. Experiencing reality is a conscious act whose possibility of being is by the body:

[..] the body is not a transparent object and is not given to us as the circle is to the geometer, by its law of constitution; if it is an expressive unity that one can only learn to know by assuming it, this structure will communicate to the sensible world. The theory of the corporeal scheme is implicitly a theory of perception. We have learned again to feel our body, we have rediscovered under the objective and distant knowledge of the body this other knowledge that we have of it, because it is always with us and because we are body. In the same way it will be necessary to awaken the experience of the world as it appears to us as soon as we are of the



world by our body, as soon as we perceive the world with our body. But by thus taking new contact with the body and the world, we will also find ourselves again, since, if we perceive with our body, the body is a natural self and as the subject of perception. (Merleau-Ponty, 1993).

The body for Merleau-Ponty is not an empty vessel, it is not just an entity, but a link to the world; in that sense, the body thus contains a cognitive and sensitive category. The relationship that is established between man and reality is determined by the body, it is space that is built by the senses. The experience of the world as it is known is by the body this allows to conclude two points: first the body is a "natural self" and two to understand "the subject as perception".

According to the above, it is also to think that the idea of the body is not clear, but that it mixes implicitly in a thought that is always something else than what it really is; that is, the concept of the body is built through the perception of itself, the way of conceiving the body comes from the experience of living it; notions of sexuality are known, freedom because it is experienced in the nature of the body and its perception. The subject-body union implicitly entails the impossibility of separating it as an object. The body is not another alien to the subject, but the subject is the body and this in turn creates a reality that is inserted or penetrates into the world.

In a sense, when beginning to explore the construction of the body in *Cuento amarillo* it is possible to glimpse that the projected fictional reality is only possible because the body is not alien to the subject of perception; that is, the protagonist who appears in the three stories Adriana Conde, builds worlds under the conception of subject-body is a totality of the reality of one of its many worlds and says the narrator:

With the appearance of the red notebook came a strange condition: I was only able to write the beginning of the stories. Then my fingers didn't want to move. There were times when I would just write down meaningless phrases that didn't get me anywhere. The prayers were dictated to me by the one who visited me in the woods. "Time will end," she scribbled possessed (Rendón, 2020).



Adriana Conde is a writer, as such her exercise of creation is constant, however, it is only possible if the body gives her permission. It begins in it the experience of its fictional space through the impossibility of writing. An artifact appears: a red notebook; object that in itself conditions the body, or, in other words, the perception of the subject, in this case Adriana Conde in relation to this red notebook is experienced by the body. In this case, the result of this relationship is the corporeal impossibility to write. In this way, the subject-body is glimpsed as a whole. Not only is it enough that Adriana Conde wants to create fictions, without the body she will not be able to do it, her scriptural work is a binomial with her own body.

This invites us to reflect that human experience builds meaning at the moment when the perceptions of rational thought are connected with that of the corporeal senses, which makes possible the apprehension of the world. From this frame of reference it is possible to say that thought and experience are made possible by the mediality of the body. In "Acid" the perception of the subject increases every time Adriana Conde begins to consume drugs, which range from marijuana, acid, cocaine or cigarettes. This exercise where this character constantly searches for altered states of consciousness also impacts the body. The sensations will grow and *therefore* it is possible that degrees of apprehension of the world will be established in various ways, as many as possible so that this writer is enabled to create multiple fictional universes, new spatialities and new temporalities and says Adriana Conde:

His assistant had the quality of blending in with space. At times I was sure that it was only him, Polvorilla and me. After hearing my literary aspirations he ordered me to take off my dress and lie on his desk, which was in a small room next to the living room. The red moon gave the situation an air of morbid sleep. "My desk has never looked more beautiful than with your presence," John said in the voice of his assistant. I blushed and had the feeling of completely walking away from the place. Hell ran through my viscera. Polvorilla climbed onto the desk and leaned back on the curve between my hip and my breasts and turned green. Everything was silent. I had the urgency of a streak of coca and I said to the mulatto "Pass me my bag." Juan nodded and the brunette approached me. I breathed in the dust from the curve my thumb was making. John swept through me with his eyes. "John wants to lick a nipple," said the moray



eel. I stayed silent for a long time. The coca was taking effect: a sexual heat began to invade me. (Rendon, 2020)

The contact and relationship that Adriana Conde establishes with García Ponce becomes, in addition to a rite of initiation to become a writer, together with this it is also an act where the construction of these worlds will only be possible, at least in the story of "Ácido", through otherness to the perception experienced only by the sensations of the body.

The play of these corporeal sensations motivated by drugs begins to link Adriana Conde's sexuality as a creative liberating act, on the one hand, but also, on the other, they allow this character a space-time mobility that modifies his world and his fiction and says the text again:

I started forging the marijuana cigarette to share with Alfonso. I realized later that his entire studio was upholstered in potholes. The atmosphere was tinged with sadness. I stared at him and he asked me to take off my clothes, I obeyed. Once naked I ingested an ecstasy. Arias did the same, stripped naked and stuck out his tongue to get the drug in. He ordered me into the pool. I didn't want to and he pushed me violently into the water: he started choking me while trying to cut my hand with the eye tattoo. Suddenly I found myself wandering through an alley in Coyoacán. Women and men walked around me possessed. Arias grabbed my hand and showed me a reddish building whose entrance read: Familia Macías Conde. "Julián Macías is the divorced writer I saw in The Faces," I thought. The water from the pool was about to fill my lungs, I closed my eyes and when I opened them I found myself on the sidewalk in front of the Mining Palace. A crowd of people was watching me. My T-shirt was covered in my own saliva. My wet crotch made me gag and the foul smell of my breeches flooded the environment. I fled the place (Rendón, 2020).

In a first image Adriana Conde, after her meeting with García Ponce, is in the Palacio de Minería trying to have a date with another writer Julián Macías, waiting to see him, she begins to smoke a marijuana cigar. Being with Julian the sexual act begins and the corporeal sensations are manifested by the effect of the mota cigarette, then she is thrown into the water, it seems that she drowns, the



perception of the body intensifies and at a peak moment she appears again in Coyoacán alone, what happened? In terms of Merleau-Ponty it would be:

Perception, as an incorporated phenomenon, is the realm where the senses connect and implies a broad notion about the conceptions of thought and knowledge that in the modern tradition corresponds to reason and objectivity. Therefore, reflective consciousness, the apprehension of the world through the idea does not enable the foundation of experience, but the bodily consciousness that encompasses knowing, feeling, thinking imagining (Merleau-Ponty, 1993)

The corporal perception in that it is apprehension of the world entails understanding the consciousness of the body because this is a totalizing entity that consumes and consolidates for itself acts of thought, imagination and knowledge and just these three elements are those that surround Adriana Conde in "Acid" when she consumes drugs and tries to write, it is thanks to them that she moves between realities and alters them, regardless of whether they are part of the "journey" or the hallucination caused by drugs, this otherness becomes real, which is why for Adriana Conde consuming these substances is fundamental, because when in contact with them, the body consciousness of Merleau-Ponty speech makes sense. The addictive substances that cause these altered states of consciousness in the body of Adriana Conde is nothing more than her own ability to create and for this reason is that she can move from one space to another, from being in a pool drowning to Coyoacán.

Adriana Conde's body is the creative axis and as evidence of these spatial movements are her saliva, the humidity in her crotch and the fetid aromas she imana from her underwear. That is, this image shows that the body is the creator of its own fiction. Therefore, it is possible to state that the body of this character is language.



## Body-language in *Cuento amarillo*

If it is assumed from the first story that it is "Acid" to Adriana Conde as a body creator of fictions, then when arriving at the final text *Cuento amarillo* this corporeity concretizes the notion of language; that is, the plot of this last narrative will introduce a character even more complex than Adriana herself, a man-story is created in this universe that will feed and detach from the same protagonist and whose complexity is linked to the body-language, but what does the latter imply? It implies thinking that "the body-language constitutes the ambiguous experience of human existence" (Pinzón, 2014).

Thinking about ambiguity involves the exercise of reflective around the subject, to the extent that he creates and builds from perception. Since perception is an individual exercise, the interpretation of the world varies from person to person. Thus, human existence is created by the polysemy of the body, which is constantly transformed. That is, nobody is the same, even if it is anchored to a single subject, it is configured and refiged by one's own experiences. So, if the ambiguity is a polysemy of the body and this is in turn language, the exercises of apprehension of the world are as multiple and changing as polysemy itself. Merleau-Ponty explains

Whether it is the body of the other or my own, I have no other means of knowing the human body than to live it, that is, to collect it on my own as the drama that crosses it and confuse me with it. So I am my body, at least to the extent that I have a capital of experience and, reciprocally, my body is like a natural subject, like a provisional sketch of my total being. (Merleau-Ponty, 1993).

With the consciousness of the body together with the capital of experience that comes from living, the perception of the world becomes a construction of multiple, broad and changing meanings and semanticities, which vary from subject to subject. Thus, the body is a sketch of the totality of being. The nature of ambiguity is one more form of creation, in this sense, the body becomes language since it is an expression of the ways of perceiving, and in this exercise, the world becomes an open unity, it is unfinished with a diverse sense.



If this reflection is taken to the field of fiction that Adriana Conde creates, the language-body comes to life with her character born of herself who is a man-tale and the perception of the world becomes even more ambiguous, open and polysemic. The fiction that is constructed in *Cuento amarillo* is not an objective reality or a system of finite, finished meanings; if they do not become the announcement of a new meaning, this is exemplified in the following fragment:

I already have skin on almost my whole body: the Count is working overtime, I'm almost finished. At the same time I expand my vocabulary and even have the impression of being smarter. Sexual whim is now my priority. I build a woman of the parts of many. It is the idea of a beautiful little girl, just one, with many faces. I live with her, and in the morning she has one face, and at night she has another; after bathing a different one. At the same time, parts of the body change; parts of the soul (Rendón, 2020)

From the world of Adriana Conde begins to grow a new creature, at first it is an axolotl, then it mutates and is an amorphous object of mental and finally undergoes a metamorphosis until it becomes a man, but this man does not an ordinary lover or an ornamental character of the world of stories of Adriana Conde, on the contrary, it is a story made man, but it is also the language turned into man, it illustrates the quote and just when the body is ending is that this character, this language-story-man will be able to create beyond the infinite worlds of Adriana and says again:

The story, in the end, invaded everything. I, after him, have nothing anymore. I have emptied all my notebooks to please him. To this story I have offered all my stories, those hidden for many years. I am glad, however, that I burned many of my texts. I also have under lock and key all the drafts of this story are three, one is lost. (Rendon, 2020)

The story grows because its body grows, it consolidates in an increasingly human form and this is only possible because it acquires language; so in a parallel and symbiotic way the greater the language, the greater the human form, the open perception of the world will be more and more diverse, the more expansive, what about the protagonist? It will be invaded and modified in the totality of the man-tale, because this character is nothing more than the language hidden in a human form, why?



Because only by the body is the perception of the real possible and the capital of experience needs in turn a vehicle to mediate it; this is the need for language. That is:

[...] the perception of the body and language as a phenomenon of reciprocal entanglement, both of instituted meanings and of meanings in the state of birth, of experiences of finished past events and of current experiences, which are part of our immediate present. (Gamboa, 2014).

Adriana Conde's "cueto-hombre" is devouring her worlds of herself because being a form of language inherently possesses thought and the word, this implies:

The word is. the realization of thought; but this realization occurs, because in the word there is another meaning which is justly the basis or foundation of conceptual significance. That is, the word contains a double meaning: a conceptual meaning and a meaning of the gesture. This meaning of the gesture is also called "existential significance" and is inseparable from words (Estévez, 1980).

To the extent that this man-tale becomes aware of his existence and his body and with it his ability to name, then thought becomes, which is prior to language; however, for thought to have a permanence it requires linguistic expression, the word is called because it is materiality of it. Adriana Conde's man-tale is not only enough to think, but it needs the word and when it possesses it, when it contains it and covers it; this entanglement with this character is so close that, by possessing her, she escapes from her body and invades everything and is therefore able to rewrite her creator. The word acquires an entity and a life of its own which is personified in the tale-man.

The story has me sitting here without being able to move. When he arrives everything will be solved. He will take away the red notebook from the story and I will finally be able to return to normal. For now, I make these mental notes. I will learn them by heart and repeat them over and over again, in case he doesn't come back. It is possible to get out of the prison of the story if after a while this situation becomes a memory. Fortunately the story frees me from static prison, but he does not return to the house. The story and I argued for several hours and



he agrees to write in the red notebook only things without effect on our privacy. In return I let him walk once among the other living. You can carry a notebook to write down your impressions, but you will erase everything when you are on the threshold of the house. It's extremely risky to let him out. Maybe I'll start to change everything. That is why I have decided to give him a mirror notebook, everything written in it will be immediately rewritten in another twin notebook that I have. (Rendon, 2020)

The man-story becomes language in an essential dimension for him because he is able to express his life and his relationship with the world in verbalized sets. Thus, this story appropriates the entire fictional world of *Cuento amarillo*, the writing also becomes living, spoken words and these affections symbolize reality and the world, create images to which it continues to build the story-man. Through the body, this character perceives and embodies it in other worlds, which are above Adriana herself, and says Merleau-Ponty:

I have given my knowledge of the language, I have contributed what I knew about the meaning of these words, of these forms, of these syntax (...). In favour of those signs on which the author and I have agreed, because we speak the same language, it has made me believe that we were on the common ground of the meanings acquired and available. It has settled into my world. And then, callously, he has diverted the signs from his ordinary sense, and here are snatching me like a whirlwind into that other sense that I am going to find. (Merleau-Ponty, 1971)

The tension that grows and increases between Adriana Conde and in the story-man is overwhelming because she has the ability to create new worlds. Both become writers of their own fictions; and where both are the same characters of these creations, therefore, these unfoldings are stressed. The two become continuity and extension of their own writings forced to co-exist and at the moment of intertricate begins a corporeal struggle to dominate the other by language. They are rewritten, they are open units that are co-created.



## Conclusions

In short, approaching *Cuento amarillo* from the phenomenological perspective of Merleau-Ponty implies deconstructing the conception of the body, it is an invitation to a theoretical reflection where the only way to understand these movements among the mini fictions that are combined throughout the three stories implies the evocation of the syesthesia of the senses and modifies the way in which the body of the characters are intertwined with the world. that cohabit.

The body seen as language, as Merleau-Ponty points out, allows within the narrative of *Cuento Amarillo* to theorize about the thought-word-fiction relationship since this triad is constantly personified by the story-man and Adriana Conde, the ambivalent control between one and the other is because scriptural categories compete. They demand transformations of rewrites that are only possible when the man-tale dominates Adriana Conde's body. Both are infinite subsets of language that are reflected in the totality of the three stories. Thus, the appeals of the senses are not reduced to the space of the text, but reach the reading. That is, *Cuento amarillo* is also the deconstruction of the body of its readers.

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