



## Juan Bosch, a persecuted politician. A glimpse into "The Man Who Cried".

Juan Bosch, un perseguido político. Un atisbo a "El hombre que lloró".

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this work is to highlight the transition between the fictional sphere and politics, under the method of Eagleton's theory of reception.

Juan Bosch, committed to the Dominican reality, as Núñez Polanco has pointed out, perhaps the social denunciation of his narrative was not enough and he had to take a step forward in the political arena to fight against the dictatorial enemy: Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. Hence the exile, hence the political persecution that did not end with the death of Trujillo, but rather continued with Joaquin Balaguer, the other face of the Trujillo dictatorship.

**Keywords:** Politics. Literature. Narrative. Society and injustice.

El objetivo de este trabajo es poner de manifiesto el tránsito entre la esfera ficcional y la política, bajo el método de la teoría de la recepción de Eagleton.

Juan Bosch, comprometido con la realidad dominicana, como puntualmente ha señalado Núñez Polanco, quizá no le bastó la denuncia social de su narrativa y tuvo que dar un paso al frente en la arena política para luchar contra el enemigo dictatorial: Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. De allí el exilio, de allí la persecución política que no terminó con la muerte de Trujillo, sino que más bien continuó con Joaquin Balaguer, el otro rostro de la dictadura trujillista.

**Palabras Clave:** Política. Literatura. Narrativa. Sociedad e injusticia.



[...] *When the goldfinch cannot sing,*  
*when the poet is a pilgrim*[...]

*Songs*

While it is true that from 1938 Juan Bosch would leave his Dominican homeland (voluntarily) for political reasons, this must have been because he was in frank disagreement with one of the bloodiest dictatorships that have been created in the history of our Latin America, that of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo (1930-1961) and that without any precedent, the Dominicans had to live under a triple yoke: military occupation, political and economic subjugation under the derision of the political theatricality of Trujillismo. However, beyond all unreason or the collective unconscious that characterizes dictatorial regimes, there is the deprivation of liberty, because "the excess of power disposes of the freedom of the individual." Thus, Juan Bosch would suffer an exile of 23 years in different countries of Latin America and Europe, where (before and in exile) his literary work, in a good dose, would denounce the Trujillo regime. But it would take more than two decades for Juan Bosch to return to his country (1961), thanks to the death and "fall" of Trujillismo. The author of<sup>1</sup> *La Mañosa*, subsequently, is to be inaugurated as president of his country on February 27, 1963. Seven months later, the illustrious narrator and master of the Dominican tale, would be overthrown after a coup d'état (supported by the US Navy), on September 25 of that same year, a situation that would lead him to live again in exile for defending the democracy of his country.<sup>2</sup>

Now, the scenario of the Revolution of April 1965 which proclaimed the return of Juan Bosch to power, had as a key piece the North American occupation that would end the Dominican civil war. The following year elections would be held in the Dominican Republic, and as a political ploy it would

<sup>1</sup> For María Zambrano, the collective unconscious "is like the residue of the state of delirium that would have existed before identity, before the *himself* when the law of genus and species prevailed" (Maillard, 1992, p.71). "Notes."

<sup>2</sup> "The people voted for the democratic revolution. The people wanted the democratic revolution, the revolution that makes this country progress in all orders" (Fernández, 2019, p. 208). "Notes."



not be Juan Bosch the elected president of his country, but Joaquín Balaguer:<sup>3</sup> "Balaguer wanted to remain in power all his life,<sup>4</sup> but always giving an image of democratic government and being re-elected every four years [...]". (Bosch, 2016, p.253).

For the rest, for the prolific Juan Bosch, politics and literature would be "two facets of the same movement" in the style of Octavio Paz, only that the first under political action lived the pilgrimage through the world, the dark days where often touches the absence not only of the lost homeland, distant, that sea of solitude, but also of the family. As an example we will illustrate the story "The Man Who Cried" (1953).

"The man who cried" is the story of Régulo Llamozas, a persecuted politician with a double or rather triple identity. Régulo Llamozas is the "distinguished" Juvenal Gómez who unfolds in Alirio Rodríguez. "The Man Who Cried" is a cyclical story that begins with the cry of intense pain of Régulo Llamozas and concludes in the same way. The police style characterizes this tale.

Régulo Llamozas after a clandestine mission hides for three months in Caracas and sees (discreetly), from his hiding place, a boy who plays in the street and pours his passion for his bicycle, and also has fun with his puppy. The freedom and joy of the child, paradoxically, is the confinement and melancholy of Régulo Llamozas, who lives in hiding (sometimes performing tasks of coordinator, others of instructor), deprived of his freedom in exchange for that of his homeland. Our protagonist feels a strange emotion for that child, but soon the sound of the phone returns him to his reality as a fugitive. He has to flee that place because Venezuela's National Security now knows where to find him. On the way to Maracay, Régulo Llamozas cherishes the remote idea of seeing his family, even

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<sup>3</sup>"On July 1, 1966, with only two candidates, Juan Bosch and Joaquín Balaguer, who was puppet president of Trujillo in May 1961 when the Dominican dictator was assassinated. But there was another pearl; the elections were held with U.S. soldiers on Dominican soil, campaigning politically in favor of Joaquín Balaguer."

Given the conditions and the electoral atmosphere of that day, the elections were won by Joaquín Balaguer, the candidate of Lindón B. Johnson [...] When Man read him Balaguer's resume, the president American le he said, "that's going to be the Dominican president" (Hernández, 2017, p.20). "Notes."

<sup>4</sup> [...] Dr. Balaguer will use all means, however monstrous, to stay in power for the rest of his life" (Franjul, 1998, p. 136). "Notes."



for a few moments, since it has already been<sup>5</sup> *seven months* (both of his internal and external exile) in which he has not had physical contact with her. It is through his friend and fellow fighter that he learns that his wife and son no longer reside in Valencia, but in Caracas, because Aurora's father, his wife, has fallen ill. The news to Regúlo Llamozas more than startling him, falls like a dagger to the heart, because the child he had seen playing was his son that he did not recognize despite his "sensitive eye of a fugitive". He had been so close to his family that he never knew. Hence the reason for the title of the story, hence the tears that run down the face "with such abundance and in such an impetuous way of the distinguished Juvenal Gómez" (Bosch, 1997, p. 115).

Undoubtedly, "The Man Who Cried" is a story in which our Dominican author outlines his intimacy, the deep pain of having been in exile for many years, an exile where not only the exile of the homeland is lived, and whose human figure is blurred in several personalities, but also the adversities of the soul, the deep pain of the family's absence. In this story, Juan Bosch masterfully qualifies the political with the lyrical.

In this regard, Núñez Polanco (2012) maintains that:

In "The Man Who Cried" identity is a relevant theme. It is expressed in the search for a formula that would allow Régulos Llamozas, the protagonist and revolutionary who flees from the National Security of Venezuela, to leave the country, after having spent three months in hiding carrying out tasks of coordination and direction of the internal resistance, against the dictatorship of Marcos Pérez Jiménez. (p.34)

Namely, "The Man Who Cried", in an internal intertextuality, is related to "La Noche Buena de Encarnación Mendoza" and, by the theme of identity, to "La mancha indelible". In the first story, the story takes place in Venezuela and, precisely, on June 24, 1960, the president of that country, Rómulo Betancourt, suffers an attack on the orders of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. Perhaps it is not a gratuitous

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<sup>5</sup> "The Venezuela of "The Man Who Cried" is that of the years in which Pérez Jiménez, thanks to the privileged production of oil and other export items, promoted large public and private investment projects, such as in the areas of housing, roads, bridges, tunnels, in short, infrastructure and social works in general. This impact on society is expressed in the pages of the story" (Núñez, 2012, pp. 36-37). "Notes."



coincidence that on June 24, our protagonist of "La Noche Buena de Encarnación Mendoza" had to flee and hide for having killed Corporal Pomares. In "The Man Who Cried", Régulo Llamozas, on his journey of persecution, is accompanied by "a lieutenant", even, in both stories the presence of the child and the puppy dog is perceived. Likewise, Encarnación Mendoza hides in the sugarcane field called "La Adela", and Régulo Llamozas, from his hiding place, remembers the name of his grandmother Adela. In both stories, the protagonists do not recognize their children. In a similar perspective, Diógenes Céspedes (Núñez, 2012) states that:

"The Man Who Cried" rubs shoulders with "The Indelible Stain", but the hierarchical gradation of meaning does not have the same orientation [...] the unique theme fact that guides the sense is the political [...] surprising end: to see the son and not recognize him. He splices, in an inverted form, with "La Noche Buena de Encarnación Mendoza", a text in which the son, who involuntarily leads his father's murderers to the place where he is hiding, cannot know, until the end, the identity of the dead. (p.35)

In the same vein, for Diógenes Valdez (2010):

"The Man Who Cried" is a melodramatic tale, with political edges that allows you to hide the melodrama a little.

Every political tale implies the presence of the person who wrote it, especially if that man or woman also exercises politics.

In no way does it mean that this text lacks the minimum conditions required to be a good story. Its striking ending puts it at the right limits of excellence. (p. 133)

Now, according to Balandier (1994), in totalitarian societies, the submission of everything and everyone to the State allows the unifying function of power to reach the highest stratum. Thus, Régulo Llamozas in the defense of his political ideology manifests rejection by the totalitarian regime, and instigated by the search for the conquest of his (individual) *self* (in a hostile society), has no other plan of evasion but to live the solitude of exile:



The order of societies differentiates, classifies, hierarchizes, draws limits defended by prohibitions. In this framework, and under such conditions, roles and role models are included. That order can be muddled, mocked, symbolically reversed, in the absence of always being able to overthrow it. Their supreme cunning is precisely to take advantage of such threats, making them an instrument with which to strengthen themselves; that is where to recognize the laws of a social thermodynamics in which the function assigned to disorder is manifested within the very bosom of order.

It is the latter who retains the initial advantage, since it has the subordination of consciences. Deviation can generate shame, guilt before oneself, censorship by others, all before the law even applies its force. These constrictions are in themselves strong enough to be able to impose a style, a distinctive way, on a civilization or a collectivity.

[...] socially devalued, his fate could no longer be other than loneliness or exile. (Balandier, 1994, pp. 45-46).

Juan Bosch, in the narrated textual universe, reserves, geographically, the place of exile of Régulo Llamozas, although we know that it is San Cristóbal, but no more data are given. It is through literary images such as, for example, that of the "enclosed" water (as a *leitmotiv*) that allows us to shuffle the hypothesis that his destination of exile is an island in the Caribbean, San Cristóbal. In the narrative corpus, there are textual marks such as the black one of *Barlovento* who is in the care of her son: "A maid left the Quinta Mercedes. For the color and for the print it had to be from Barlovento" (Bosch, 1997, p. 117); another feature is: "He heard more clearly the noise of the water falling into the service cup, the chicharras of the street, the playful barking of the puppy, who must still be running after the little cyclist." (Bosch, 1997, p.119):<sup>6</sup>

The breeze moved the leaves of a tree that was nearby, to his left, and from some key that he could not see water fell. Water, water like the one that sounded incessantly in the cup of the service, back in Caracas; yes, in Caracas, on the piece of street of Los Chaguaramos,

<sup>6</sup> [...] "The Windward Islands—if not all, almost all—were discovered by Columbus. Those found in St. Martin and Dominica were on their second voyage, that is, in November 1493" (Bosch, 2012, p.46). "Notes."



lonely as the street of an abandoned town; where the little cyclist pedaled endlessly, followed by the puppy. (Bosch, 1997, p.126).

In the second paragraph, the water that he does not see, but that he hears, is linked to the emotions of the protagonist. The "enclosed" water (from the service cup) evokes the emotions contracted by Régulo Llamaza by the child. The water of the toilet cistern as a mockery of freedom, will also be the other enclosure space of Régulo Llamazas, the hypothetical Caribbean island.

It is undeniable the soul removed from the protagonist to know that the child on the bicycle is his son. Régulo's tears not only manifest the suffering for his family, but, metaphorically, they translate into the pain of humanity, like that of Angela, a character in *La Mañosa*. Thus, from a phenomenological perspective, the tears of melancholy of Régulo Llamazas will converge with the maternal waters of a nostalgic Caribbean island.

On the hypothetical Caribbean island, Régulo Llamazas, in addition to living isolated from a society without rules, this will also be the protagonist's refuge and carrycot, even if it implies the deep feeling of loneliness. The images reveal in their dichotomous expression, confinement and freedom; scenarios that oscillate between the open space of the child and the closed space of Régulo Llamazas. Of its own the cyclical structure of this wonderful tale.

And well, from the political persecution of Juan Bosch, not only would his bitter enemy Rafael Leonidas Trujillo deprive him<sup>7</sup> of his freedom unjustly, but also, fiercely, he would be persecuted by Joaquín Balaguer,<sup>8</sup> both would accuse him (in daring perversity) of conspiring against the Government:

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<sup>7</sup> "At 25 years of age, he suffered. prison accused of conspiring against the dictatorial regime of Rafael L. Trujillo. And when he, in 1938, wanted to appoint him deputy, the young Bosch left his country and did not return for two and a half decades" (Franjul, 1998, p.9). "Notes."

<sup>8</sup> "Dr. Balaguer had asked two well-known politicians to make statements accusing two opposition leaders of plotting to overthrow the government [...] what Balaguer wanted was to have a justification for expelling those opposition leaders [...] They were the Secretary General and President of the Dominican Revolutionary Party" (Franjul, 1998, pp.135-136). "Notes."



In hiding, Bosch did not have many resources to defend himself from the government that persecuted him. First, there were him and the leaders of his Party, and the Party itself, virtually neutralized to perform in public. For that reason, he understood that the best way to make his positions known was through manuscripts of his own handwriting, sent to the newspapers. (Franjul, 1998, p.10)

Faced with the ruthless persecution of Juan Bosch: "-Professor, leave your house immediately, that within half an hour you will go to make him a prisoner" (Franjul, 1998, p.57), he would have as his only weapon of defense his prodigious pen, in this case, would be his manuscripts in the *Ninety Days of Clandestinity*<sup>9</sup>

Although the harsh clandestinity that Juan Bosch lived devoid (sometimes) of food care, and if we add to this the constant stress, poor health is to be expected. Bosch became ill three times, the last being serious. But their ideological resistance and high-morality *from Hostosa* was greater than the disease.

Juan Bosch, perhaps unintentionally, twenty years after having published his story "The man who cried", in a kind of *alter ego*, he like his fictional character Régulo Llamozas, shows off his detective skill, because he hides in various houses of friends and mocks National Security on Dominican soil, because this time he would not be trapped: "If I am discovered, I will not let myself be seized; they will have to kill me; I am willing to fight to the death" (Franjul, 1998, p.224). Nor was he willing to live again in exile or be unjustly imprisoned: "Balaguer is not going to dare to kill me,

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<sup>9</sup>"It was eight days before the murder of the president, according to calculations made by the Government's intelligence services.

The exact date would be February 10, 1973, which fell on Saturday, and the assassination was to be perpetrated by soldiers with easy access to the president. They planned to break his chest with gunfire, so that he could not perpetuate himself in power, as had happened with the dictator Trujillo, twelve years earlier" (Franjul, 1998, p.15). "Notes."

On the other hand, twenty-five years passed since the persecution of the former Dominican president, so that the book came to light. *Juan Bosch, Ninety days of clandestinity*. "Notes."





because he is not going to carry that; he's going to deport me and what worries me about everything is that I don't have a penny in my pocket." (Franjul, 1998, p.64)

Our vegan author was willing to remain in hiding as long as necessary, because his historical memory has evoked the most distant memory, because between the brave clandestinity and the dark cowardice, in the first victory is glimpsed, "as evidenced by the foundation of the Republic" (Franjul, 1998, p.137); and in the second, as José Martí said: "In the shadows of the night only crime works!"

## Conclusions

In *Juan Bosch, a persecuted politician. A glimpse of "The Man Who Cried"*, let's remember that in the story Régulo Llamozas hides for three *months* in Caracas and does not see his family for *seven months* (let's not forget that the Bosch government only lasted that time). "The man who cried" is the manifestation of both the internal and external exile of which our Dominican author lived. It is the metaphor of the feeling of loneliness and human pain.

And of the "political edges" of the story, the political metaphor backbones the fictional universe: politics and literature under the same step, "two facets of the same movement".

For the rest, Juan Bosch is the persecuted politician who walks the world and under the Dominican elegy sings the evils of social decomposition.

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