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**Narrativa Femenina
en América Latina:
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**Latin American Women's Narrative:
Practices and Theoretical
Perspectives**

Laura J. Beard

Texas Tech University

**DISCORDANT IDENTITIES AND DISJUNCTIVE AUTHORITY IN
A PERVERSE NARRATIVE:
JULIETA CAMPOS' *TIENE LOS CABELLOS ROJIZOS*
*Y SE LLAMA SABINA***

In *The Spanish American Regional Novel: Modernity and Autochthony*, Carlos Alonso argues that the movement away from modernity became discursively and politically institutionalized as a continual search for identity that provided the foundation for an intrinsically Spanish American cultural enterprise. His more recent book, *The Burden of Modernity: The Rhetoric of Cultural Discourse in Spanish America*, seeks to document:

[...] that moment in which the gesture of allegiance and obeisance toward the modern is eschewed —however ambiguously or paradoxically— by recourse to a given textual practice that renders that gesture problematic (Alonso 1998: v).

Conflating the two meanings of modernity —both a concept or aesthetic ideal and a socioeconomic reality or phase of Western historical development— he looks at the specifics of the Spanish American writer's relationship to modernity, arguing that the

[...] intrinsic discordances and disjunctions, which are characteristic of all writing, become more salient in the Spanish American text given the particular nature of the rhetorical situation in which it is inscribed (*ibid.*: 5).

Alonso's provocative discussion of modernity and postmodernity in the Spanish American context provides certain points of departure for a discussion of the problematics of identity and authority in Julieta Campos' *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina*, a postmodern novel whose intrinsic discordances and disjunctions are perhaps its most salient features.

Alonso's recent monograph forms part of the ongoing debate as to whether Latin American literature can be said to be postcolonial. With the quintessential postcolonial gesture one of recuperation of the indigenous group's interrupted historical existence, Alonso notes that in Latin America, the native population was either wiped out or marginalized while the criollos and mestizos who formed the new nations employed European language, religion, and cultural models. Alonso (*ibid.*: 15) argues that the

Creole and mestizo groups *willed* themselves narratively white and Western, and the denial of the autochthonous element issued from that, and not from being different from that element.

So that rather than a return to an idyllic past, Alonso sees Latin American literature as a "narrative of futurity":

[...] the contestatory plot in which America was identified with an ever postponed future, a tactic that inaugurated a discursive space in which alternative possibilities could be legitimately envisioned [...] (Alonso 1998: 10).

This description of a narrative of futurity, with ever-opening alternative possibilities, aptly describes Julieta Campos' novel.

In *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* (which won the Premio Villaurrutia in 1974), Campos creates a self-conscious text that multiplies the number of its narrators, mixes in countless intertexts, and continually questions the narrative process. Her novel is one that can be endlessly interpreted and one that specifically addresses questions of interpretation. In one 179-page paragraph, readers are presented with myriad fragments of text that resist being fashioned into a linear narrative.

Indeed, *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* fits Judith Roof's definition of a perverse narrative, "a narrative about narrative dissolution, a narrative that continually short-circuits, that both frustrates and winks at" (Roof 1996: xxiv) those expectations readers bring to the text. In Roof's terminology, the perversity of such a narrative lies not in its subject matter but in the way the narrative "enacts a perverse relation to narrative itself" (*ibid.*: xxiv). Just so does Campos' novel continually suggest and then deny the notions of plot and character, authority and identity.

The cardinal point of the kaleidoscopic novel¹, if it can be said to have one, is a redhead woman named Sabina who stands on the balcony of her hotel room in Acapulco, looking out to sea at four o'clock in the afternoon on May 8, 1971. She hopes to reexperience, and perhaps catch in a photograph, a moment of epiphany, when for once everything made sense. Just as in Alonso's discussion of the narrative of futurity, when he argues that "the present was significant mostly inasmuch as it constituted the anticipation of a final and always future epiphany" (Alonso 1998: 18), so too can all of *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* be read as the protracted description of a present moment which anticipates a final and always future epiphany.

¹ The front cover of the June 1978 Joaquín Mortiz edition of *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* features a still-life picture of various objects, including one that appears to be a kaleidoscope. Other objects include the book *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* itself (creating a *mise-en-abîme* effect), a lined notebook with words written in green ink (evoking one of the narrators of the novel), seashells, dead leaves, a yellow rose, a snow-globe, a black cat statuette, and a postcard of Venice —all elements that appear frequently in the narrative itself. Rivero-Potter (1990: 634) also uses this term when she writes of "a kaleidoscopic protagonist and plot".

In a text which is paradoxically both novel and critical essay on the process of constructing a novel, Campos wants to focus on the present moment, the moment of writing. Yet, the present moment of Campos' text is problematic, as indicated by the very first sentence of the novel "No estoy aquí" (Campos 1978: 11). As I have argued elsewhere², the first sentences of the text alert readers to ways in which Campos plays with time and space in a novel in which temporal and spatial references are always slippery.

In spite both of efforts to remain in the present moment and of repeated assurances that it is four o'clock in the afternoon of May 8, 1971, time slips free from its textual moorings. Even the use of the present progressive tense, which would seem to obligate fixity in the present moment, is no guarantee: "Pero no lo estoy pensando ahora, que han pasado siete días y creo saber algo de este lugar. Lo estoy pensando el segundo día [...]" (*ibid.*: 21). The first person narrator admits "que los tiempos de la novela son múltiples" and goes on to list two pages of times for her text (*ibid.*: 134-35)³. While occasionally the narrator places the present moment in different centuries, more frequent is the insistence that

[...] estoy escribiendo una novela sobre el minuto más largo que ha registrado la historia literaria y no podría decirles lo que ocurre en ese larguísimo minuto ficticioso que es sin embargo, lo aseguro, un minuto espléndidamente verdadero (*ibid.*: 124).

The incessant discussion of time is one of the perverse elements of Campos's text as it continually short-circuits conventional narrative distinctions between story-time and discourse-time⁴.

Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina is a challenging text in which various possible narrators discuss different narrative strategies for their potential novels. The writing of the novels is ever postponed, while alternatives are considered and dismissed. One of the narrators of *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* proposes a book which "[n]o sería la primera novela que describiera un instante ficticiamente abultado, sin relación alguna con el verdadero transcurrir del tiempo" (*ibid.*: 19). This narrator of

² *Vid.* my "Navigating the Metafictional Text: Julieta Campos' *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina*" in *Hispanófila* (forthcoming).

³ Page 85 also lists a variety of possible times for the novel.

⁴ Chatman (1978: 62) distinguishes between

[...] discourse-time —the time it takes to peruse the discourse— and story-time, the duration of the purported events of the narrative.

In Campos' narrative, the story-time would be just one moment while the time it takes readers to read the 179-page text would obviously be much longer.

Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina wants to write a novel about that one moment in which a woman stands on her balcony looking out to sea while her travel companions wait for her inside the hotel room, their bags packed at the end of the vacation. It is a marginal moment, marking off the boundaries between vacation time and non-vacation time, between the inside and the outside of the hotel, between land and sea. The moment that is to be the key moment of the novel is one that resonates with Alonso's description of the narrative of futurity in which

[...] the richness of possibilities seemingly available and the open-ended quality of the discursive realm hence inaugurated would also bring unexpected anxieties and difficulties [...] (Alonso 1998: 17).

In Campos' novel, we see a richness of possibilities in the multiple narrators and their multiple possible texts as well as unexpected difficulties and anxieties in determining any fixity of identity for those narrators and their indeterminate texts of suspended meaning.

That the various narrators might also be characters in the novels of other narrators and that the narrators and characters are all nameless confuse any desire for distinction between character and narrator in this postmodern novel. Their namelessness contests the concept of identity: "El personaje no tiene nombre porque no tiene identidad o, si quieres, porque en él, en ella se intercambian y coinciden muchas identidades latentes o posibles" (Campos 1978: 78-79). The giving of a name is the imposition of an identity and Campos wants to confuse, rather than impose, identities. The identities of the narrators and their characters blend:

La narradora y su personaje estarán ligadas como dos hermanas siamesas. Sus corazones latirán con la misma cadencia y una podrá adivinar lo que piensa o siente la otra, porque una y otra serán las dos caras de una misma, casi incestuosa, identidad (*ibid.*: 82).

Identities are always already entangled in *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* as the various narrators and characters question each other's existences. "Tú eres la mujer que mira la escenografía. Yo no soy yo. Yo no existe. No hay más que una ficción de personaje a la que ni siquiera he pensado en ponerle un nombre" (*ibid.*: 58). The third-person singular of the verb *existir*, rather than the first-person singular form that the *yo* would require, stresses that the *yo* is not a true first-person voice, but rather a subject pronoun being used almost arbitrarily as a marker of a character position. The *yo* is just the fiction of a character. The constant undecidability of subject and object position in Campos' narrative continually conflates the positions of narrator, author, even reader. The grammatical ambiguity also would seem to challenge the elusive discursive authority being sought in this narrative of futurity.

The first person narrator of *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* attempts to affirm her control over the identity of her character aggressively, proclaiming

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"conozco mejor que nadie el personaje porque lo he inventado, independientemente de los hechos y aun de su voluntad" (*ibid.*: 177). This control relies on an asserted authority as the creator, or author, of the character. The first person narrator further reminds the reader:

[...] no olvidemos que su destino depende de mí, que estoy escribiendo efectivamente esta novela y, en cierta medida, de otros dos narradores que a su vez dependen de mí porque yo los he inventado (Campos 1978: 139).

The lack of proper names, the paradoxical facelessness of the women —"su rostro sin facciones que encubre tantos rostros" (*ibid.*: 131)—, the confusion over identities, and the insistent discussion about who controls whom, are all part of the intrinsic discordances and disjunctions characteristic of Campos' text and of the concerns with authority it perpetually raises.

In a narrative that explicitly addresses questions of interpretation, the narrators of *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* frequently discuss the expected reaction of the hypothetical readers to their potential novels. One narrator recommends removing all signs of punctuation in order to "[d]arle un poco de trabajo al lector" (*ibid.*: 126) and while the novel does have punctuation, there are no paragraph breaks, a circumstance that does trouble many readers⁵. A later suggestion to leave "al capricho y al buen entender del lector" the decision as to whether the girl in the black sweater is "una aparición, un personaje simbólico, la portadora de un augurio o es nada más una muchacha que pasa" (*ibid.*: 136) affords Campos the opportunity to poke fun at literary critics (in whose ranks she can be counted as well).

The conventionally separate roles of reader and character are also blurred throughout the novel, as when a narrative voice shows concern for the reader whose level of confusion must surely surpass that of the character:

La confusión del lector deberá superar, en este punto de la novela, a la del personaje: tendrá que perderse entre la multiplicidad de las máscaras, los rostros y las voces para encontrar, si es que lo encuentra, un indicio caricaturesco de su propia imagen (*ibid.*: 121).

5 Bilbija (1993: 137) argues that

[...] el texto se ofrece como una entidad única, ya que no hay párrafos, capítulos, puntos y apartes, nada que rompería su uniformidad.

I would argue, however, that the interruption into the Spanish text of words and passages in English, French, and Latin, as well as the inclusion of a diagram and a drawing, break the uniformity for most readers more than would the division into conventional paragraphs and chapters.

Any readers who pick up the novel hoping to find some reflection of their own image, searching for mimesis, will be disappointed. When another narrative voice asserts that by this point the reader has undoubtedly given up reading the novel⁶, Campos' novel makes clear that any readers who have become so hypnotized by the words that they continue to read, do so at the risk of losing their own subjectivities, even their lives, teetering as they do on the edge of the balcony with a woman who "ni siquiera tiene nombre" (Campos 1978: 122). Entering the discursive realm is a dangerous activity that puts one at risk of losing one's identity in the confusion of identities that comprise the kaleidoscopic text.

Nor is teetering at the edge of the balcony the only danger facing the readers in this aquatic novel in which the identities of author, narrator, character, and reader ebb and flow like ocean waves. The possibility of drowning is a recurrent motif in the narrative and Campos purposefully plays with different forms of drowning: "No soy yo quien me ahogo sino tú, en un mar de palabras. Tú que me lees y que con mis ojos miras el mar y con mi deseo te dejas sumergir en el mar" (*ibid.*: 170). Readers of the text, caught up in narrative desire, are positively drowning in a sea of words, in a maritime mixture of discontinuous narrative voices.

The predominant "yo" of *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* is writing a novel about a person who, looking at the sea, imagines herself writing a novel that would permit her to put together all the pieces of an identity that is dispersed among the fragments of many identities⁷. The woman who writes in green ink in a lined notebook, the woman in the hotel room, and the characters of the novels they might be writing also share and fragment their identities:

La mujer que está en el cuaderno mientras yo pretendo que está en el mirador, hace como si estuviera en el mirador, hace como si fuera mi personaje. Y yo hago como si fuera el personaje que se imagina capaz de escribir una novela con un solo personaje: una mujer que, desde un mirador, mira el mar (*ibid.*: 52).

Each imagines the other, and imagines the other imagining her. Each acts as if an imagined situation were real. This passage full of *como si* clauses and past subjunctive verb tenses stresses the hypothetical nature of the sometimes contradictory sentences. The passage also reflects the subjunctive tense's lack of independent existence in grammar, the fact that it (like the various character/narrator positions in Campos' text) is always other-directed. Campos' frequent use of the subjunctive tense bears out Debra Castillo's

⁶ "Te equivocas. El lector, para entonces, habrá abandonado la lectura dejando de ser, en consecuencia, el lector" (Campos 1978: 121).

⁷ ¿Escribes, pues, si he entendido bien, una novela acerca de un personaje que, mirando el mar, se imagina escribiendo una novela que le permitiría recoger los pedazos de una identidad dispersa en los fragmentos de muchas identidades [...]? (Campos 1978: 134)

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definition of women's writing as "a life lived in the subjunctive mood" (Castillo 1992: 63) at the same time that it reminds us of the "subjunctification" of language Alonso (1998: 10) finds characteristic of the narrative of futurity.

In spite of its discontinuities and disjunctions, *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* sustains itself as narrative by its indirect and often direct appeals to narrative and narrative conventions. The various narrators make self-conscious references to their own and each other's narrative context:

Ella es únicamente una parte de ti a la que te empeñas en llamar tu personaje. Una parte de ti que rompería todos los lazos, para imaginarse ensimismada en la contemplación del mar. Es necesario dejarla sola. Sólo así podrá asumir plenamente su naturaleza de personaje de ficción (Campos 1978: 52).

While this first person narrator has taken a part of her own personality and made that isolated part into the character for a novel, the separation is never complete, as the subjectivities are continuously blurred.

The speaker who addresses the first person narrator as "tú" here asserts that characters must be left alone in order to assume their full natures as fictional characters. Again, authority and control are taken away from the author or narrator in an assertion of autonomy for the fictional character. Yet none of the authors or characters in Campo's novel can be said to be autonomous when each is, or might be, a character of someone else's fiction, problematizing distinctions between extradiegetic, heterodiegetic, and intradiegetic levels. Neither can the narrators and characters profess autonomy when they themselves are so confused about their identities.

Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina is a novel concerned with questions of identity and authority yet one that continually undercuts any possible authority being claimed. Authority, in all its forms and guises, is always already problematic in Campos' novel. In his discussion of modernity and postmodernity in Latin American narratives, Alonso (1998: 23) argues that

[...] the Spanish American text underscores that its authority is founded primarily on the citational operation that it encompasses, thereby turning what defines itself as a limited practice of authorization into the text's foundational strategy of legitimization.

Alonso explains that the Spanish American writer, traditionally perceiving himself as outside the metropolitan rhetorical collectivity that he needs to cite for authority, can claim any author from the metropolis as an authority figure (since authority is equated with provenance from that realm), but faces the difficulty of making a choice:

Hence, the Spanish American writer collectivizes and multiplies a category that in order to function effectively as a warrant of his authority has to be thoroughly identified with a particular individual instead. (*ibid.*: 22)

Alonso's concerns with the problematization of the writer's discursive authority are illuminating of Julieta Campos' work, as *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* has a rich citational, or intertextual, foundation that situates the novel in an oftentimes problematic relationship with not just the Latin American canon, but also the European and North American canons.

Campos' novel is prefaced by a quotation from Chateaubriand "Je reposerai donc au bord de la mer que j'ai tant aimée" (Campos 1978: 9), begins with a citation from Proust (*ibid.*: 11), and refers frequently to a host of canonical male European writers. Her preoccupations with canonical European cities like Paris and Venice would also seem to reflect an anxiety to draw upon the authorization of a metropolitan rhetorical collectivity.

The presence of previous texts is felt in the provisional setting for the novel, a hotel in Acapulco. Acapulco, as a city on the water, incorporates two crucial images around which the novel revolves, with the sea and the city both being terms that allow the narrative to shift in time and space. The sea is self-consciously questioned as a literary topos that carries a heavy load of literary precursors:

Habrá que describir el mar. ¿El mar de Ulises? ¿El mar de Ajab? ¿Acaso el mar de los Sargazos? Pienso en el Caribe, en el mar que rodea a Capri, en el mar de la costa Norte de Cuba (*ibid.*: 59).

The sea functions as a mirror that reflects back to the author all other literary descriptions of the sea⁸. In making explicit that point, the narrator refers first to two literary heavyweights, Homer and Melville, then alludes to a feminist work, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, in which Jean Rhys reinscribes *Jane Eyre*, rewriting the story of Rochester's first wife from her point of view. Thus, the last literary sea mentioned in the short list is one that inverts the usual position by privileging the female point of view over the male, one that tells the other side of the story (Hite 1989: 19-54).

Cities also carry a heavy intertextual burden. The evocation of one city immediately brings to mind another, so that Venice becomes Alexandria, Havanna, Acapulco, or Vancouver. Focusing on port cities reminds the reader that it is through those cities that new, or foreign, elements are introduced and further underscores the sea as the binding element in the text⁹. In comparing seventeenth-century Mexico City with Venice, the narrator is aware that these comparisons arise from "[m]i manía de encon-

⁸ An even longer list of literary images of the sea can be found on pages 168-69 as

[...] la narradora, que toma notas, sentada en uno de los escalones del promontorio, se propone en este momento hacer un catálogo de asociaciones marinias, símbolos, símiles, metáforas [...] (Campos 1978: 168).

⁹ On page 59, the text is interrupted with a figure that imitates a sort of chemical or mathematical equation showing the connections between the water and the port cities:

trar relaciones. Una escenografía que reúna en un paisaje todos los paisajes" (Campos 1978: 38). The sea is repeatedly evoked as a scene that includes all scenes.

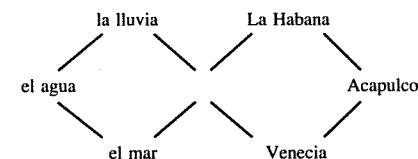
The hotel is also chosen for its ability to include all scenes. In an international hotel, people from all parts of the world, from various walks of life, come and go, leading the narrator of *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* to conclude that "[u]n hotel sería la mejor localización simbólica de la vida" (*ibid.*: 31). Having stated that a hotel is the best symbolic location, she later claims it is the best imaginary site:

El hotel es el espacio imaginario perfecto, destilado idealmente para la ficción, donde el tiempo se interioriza, reina una libertad absoluta y es factible romper y rehacer todos los lazos (*ibid.*: 51).

Campos may be making a play here on Lacan's three stages in the development of the subject, with the narrator having decided that the hotel is the best spot for the development of the elusive subject of this narrative of futurity.

Individual settings within the hotel are also rich in embedded meanings. The male narrator lives on the top floor of the hotel, in a room called "El laberinto". The labyrinth has been noted as "a metaphor for the search and destroy paradigm —the quintessential male adventure story, complete with hero, villain, suspense, action, blood and guts, and sex" (Bruce-Novoa 1984: 54). The male narrator is a combined Theseus/Minotaur, trapped in his own labyrinth of repeated images and texts, condemned to exploit women in order to move in any direction. His mystery/adventure novel displays such (commercially successful) exploitation.

The female narrator lives in "El mirador": a word that evokes both look-out point and looking glass or mirror, allowing the woman's orientation to be simultaneously outward and inward. "El mirador" is thus "a vantage point from which the woman explores her own image in the world, while seeing herself viewing herself in nature as a reflection of herself" (*ibid.*: 54). She looks out at the sea and, in the sea, sees herself. The sea is her mirror¹⁰. Her position on a balcony looking out to sea also recalls the traditional role for the woman who waits and watches for her man to return from the sea.



The port cities serve as foci of desire for the narrative voice of *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina*.

¹⁰ "Sólo he dicho que mira el mar y que, al mirarlo, se mira. El mar es su espejo" (Campos 1978: 127).

The labyrinth and the mirror metaphors merge into a metaphor of the novel itself:

Si yo pudiera dibujarte la novela como un puro esquema formal, les correspondería el laberinto y sería un laberinto de feria, tapizado de espejos deformadores, de esos que alargan las figuras o las inflan desmesuradamente (Campos 1978: 56).

A novel is a labyrinth constructed of distorting mirrors. Mimetic realism clearly is not possible in this perverse narrative.

The image of the novel as a labyrinth of distorting mirrors, a carnival trick, is reinvoked later in the novel when one of the narrative voices, in confusion or exasperation, asks:

[...] ¿existe esa novela o se trata también de un juego peligroso, un juego de espejos que confunde deliberadamente los puntos de vista, de modo que resulte imposible saber cuándo se está de uno o de otro lado del espejo, siendo además que los espejos son múltiples y que la dificultad para situarse en relación con ellos se hace cada vez más inquietante? (*ibid.*: 171).

Multiple mirrors are used to make something appear to be present when it actually is not. *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* itself does exist as a text that we, as flesh and blood readers, hold in our hands; but within Campos' novel, it is not clear whether any of the multiple narrators ever do write their novels into existence. The narrators, their characters, the hotel, the port cities, the existence of everything is put into question¹¹.

The labyrinth and the mirror are, of course, both images strongly associated with Borges and Borges is one of the authors most frequently reflected in the mirrored labyrinth of *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina*. When a phrase pops into the mind of one of the narrators, it is immediately followed by the thought "Debió decirlo Borges" (*ibid.*: 62), Borges being one of the few Spanish American authors conventionally considered part of that metropolitan rhetorical collectivity to be appropriately cited as an authority figure. This narrator who attributes a statement to Borges has her ruminations interrupted by another voice, one who addresses her in the second person singular form, *tú*. This second person voice often interrupts in order to contradict: "Te engañas" (Campos 1978: 46). The first person narrator calls attention to the interruptions, asking "¿Que quién habla en segunda persona?" (*ibid.*: 47), going on to wonder, in a self-conscious narrative mode: "¿Es un recurso artificioso y por lo mismo inútil o

11 In addition to the labyrinth of mirrors and the "rompecabezas" (Campos 1978: 39), other metaphors for the novel include a house ["¿Qué se pensaría de un arquitecto que mostrara en la casa terminada, al descubierto, todo lo que le hubiera servido para cimentarla y apuntalarla?" (*ibid.*: 38-39)], "un reloj de arena" (*ibid.*: 92), and a board game ["esta novela que es un juego donde yo creía mover las fichas a mi antojo" (*ibid.*: 175)]. Another proposition is for "[u]na novela calcada sobre el diseño de Venecia: el laberinto y la plaza" (*ibid.*: 35).

una necesidad consubstancial con ese personaje del que muy bien podría decirse que tiene una naturaleza escindida, desdoblada, casi esquizofrénica?" (*ibid.*). The first person narrator has "una memoria literaria que cada vez se distingue menos de la otra, la memoria de la realidad" (*ibid.*: 158-59) and thus, when feeling pursued by another voice, turns to literature:

Me obsesionan unas palabras dichas ya por Borges, un día en que le angustió de una manera demasiado punzante la duplicitud de sí mismo que todo escritor arrastra, como cada hombre lleva consigo el propio cadáver: *Al otro... es a quien le ocurren las cosas... yo vivo, yo me dejo vivir, para que Borges pueda tramar su literatura...* (*ibid.*: 47, Campos' ellipsis).

Campos quotes directly from "Borges y yo", embedding the Argentine's discourse into her own without citing it by title. Campos' method of incorporating Borges' work into her novel continues the struggle or opposition between the public and the private Borges presented in his essay. By not referring to his words as coming from a published piece, but rather by referring to them as some words *said* by Borges one day when he was feeling particularly bothered by his own split nature, Campos stresses the personal side of Borges over the public side, the oral over the written. As someone who speaks, someone who feels anguish, Borges is a person, not a distant writer. Because the words are presented as spoken rather than written, the possibility exists that those words were spoken to, or at least overheard by, the first person narrator of *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina*. That Borges and the first person narrator of *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* are then, in some way, in the same discursive realm is another way in which the claim of authority is being staked.

Having quoted from "Borges y yo", Campos goes on to reinscribe his thoughts as those of her first person narrator:

Yo, la que está, estoy, sentada en el muelle no he querido nunca escribir libros. Ha sido ella la que me ha obligado. Ella, la que habla en segunda persona, aunque a veces soy yo, yo misma, la que asumo esa segunda persona del singular, esa ambigüedad de mi personaje sin la cual la novela que yo podría escribir, que acaso estoy escribiendo, no habría podido, ni habría tenido, ni tendría que escribirse nunca (*ibid.*: 47-48).

In "Borges y yo", the 'yo' refers to "Borges" as the one who writes; here the "yo" claims that she never wanted to write books, that the "ella" is the one who made the "yo" do it. At the end of "Borges y yo", however, Borges' narrator is not sure "cuál de los dos escribe esta página" (*ibid.*: 51), blurring the distinction between the two. Campos' first person narrator also blurs the distinction between these two voices in her novel by admitting that she herself sometimes assumes the second person singular voice. If, at times in *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina*, the one who speaks as "I" is the same one who contradicts as "you", does that mean that, at other times, there is

another person (not the first person narrator) who speaks in the second person singular? The reader can never be sure who is speaking. But, then, neither is the one who is speaking: "No sé si soy, en este momento, el personaje que proyecta una novela, el personaje que la está escribiendo o un personaje fascinado por la luz de las cuatro de la tarde" (Campos 1978: 74). Any desire for a reliable narrator, or for a settled truth, must be frustrated.

In their dialogue, the one who speaks in the second person asks the first person narrator whether her character, "ese del que me hablas, ese que te obsesiona" (*ibid.*: 51), is a young girl, a middle-aged woman or an older woman, receiving the answer, "Es todo eso al mismo tiempo y no existe en ninguna parte" (*ibid.*). Her character is a woman of all ages, or is perhaps all women, but she does not exist anywhere. Her character has a complex, confused, multiple, ambiguous, scattered identity. She is capable of representing all the roles in any play¹². She is a fictional character self-consciously aware that her existence is limited to the imagination of the one who writes her and to the pages of the novel, should that novel ever get written.

Authority is also at issue in the discussion of a possible suicide. A narrator intimates that the female character who looks out to sea, "haciendo un abuso insospechado de su libertad personal", violated the rules of the game (whereby the person writing the novel gets to decide the fate of the characters) by deciding to become her own character and end her life by jumping to her death onto the promontory (*ibid.*: 176-77). The novel goes on to state that certain facts reported in the newspapers on the morning of Monday, May 9, 1971, seem to corroborate this version. After relaying the bits reported by the newspapers, the first person narrator goes on to state that "el único dato al que puede atenerse el lector, sin temor de ser engañado, el que constituye la única clave de este libro y, en consecuencia, de la identidad de dicho personaje" is that she has reddish hair and her name is Sabina (*ibid.*: 177). This is the only certitude; the rest is a dream or a trick done with mirrors¹³.

In his article on the intertextuality of *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina*, Juan Bruce-Novoa situates Campos' vision and prose in a narrative mode passing from Virginia Woolf to Nathalie Sarraute, compares her work with the French *nouveau romancier*, and points to Salvador Elizondo as her most similar colleague in Mexico. Elizondo's similarly self-reflexive text, *El hipogeo secreto*, focuses on the writer in the act of writing about characters who are imagining or watching a writer imagining char-

12 [...] mi personaje, como todos los seres que participan de ese delirio inexplicable que se manifiesta por una tendencia sin freno y sin límite a vertir el mundo en palabras, tiene una identidad compleja, confusa, múltiple, ambigua, desdoblada. Es, por así decirlo, un figurante capaz de representar todos los papeles [...] (Campos 1978: 130).

13 "Ésa es, sería en definitiva la única certidumbre y todo lo demás un espejismo o una ensñación" (Campos 1978: 177).

acters who imagine the writer¹⁴. Bruce-Novoa suggests that *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* is a feminist deconstruction of the male logocentrism exemplified in Elizondo's texts (*El hipogeo secreto* and *Farabeuf*).

Bruce-Novoa also ties the title of *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* to a character of Anaïs Nin. Sabina is a character in Nin's prose poem *House of Incest* as well as one of the three protagonists of Nin's pentalogy of novels¹⁵. Julieta Campos attests to her interest in Anaïs Nin by including two essays on Nin in her 1988 collection, *Un heroísmo secreto*. In "Anaïs Nin o la alquimia de la vida como obra de arte", Campos (1988: 17) proclaims that:

Anaïs es muchos personajes y participar en la aventura de su vida es reconocer que toda vida auténticamente vivida supone muchas vidas sucesivas y aun muchas vidas que se viven al mismo tiempo aunque con ritmos diversos, en tonos diversos, como los distintos instrumentos de una orquesta ejecutan los motivos de una melodía.

Campos finds Anaïs Nin seductive as an example of a self that is not self-identical, of a person who incorporates many identities. To appreciate Nin's life is to appreciate that one lives many lives in succession and at the same time: like the "I" in Campos' *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* who takes up various subject positions and simultaneously lives many different moments (in the hotel room, on the promontory, at the maple desk).

For Campos, Nin's *Diary* is the lucid, verbal condensation of Ariadne's thread, that which guarantees an exit from the labyrinth. The minotaur is her own image reflected in the mirror: "la parte escondida, enmascarada, de ella misma, que había regido realmente sus actos" (*ibid.*: 17)¹⁶. Nin is both Theseus and Ulysses, travelling incessantly in search of the world and of her own identity (*ibid.*). Campos' characterization of Nin's *Diario* as incorporating both the labyrinth and the mirror reflects back her definition of the novel.

Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina also seems to embody a theory of writing considered by Virginia Woolf in her diary entry of April 20, 1919. Woolf wrote that she would like her diary to resemble a deep old desk:

14 *El hipogeo secreto* appears in one of the many attempted erasures of any distinction between the authorial level and the narrative level of the text:

Julieta Campos, que soy y no soy yo, ha escrito un ensayo sobre una novela llamada *El hipogeo secreto* [...] (143).

15 *Ladders of Fire* (1959), *Children of the Albatross* (1959), *The Four-Chambered Heart* (1959), *A Spy in the House of Love* (1959), and *Seduction of the Minotaur* (1969).

16 The title of Campos' earlier work of critical essays, *La imagen en el espejo* is clearly reflected here.

[...] in which one flings a mass of odds and ends without looking them through [...] The main requisite [...] is not to play the part of censor, but to write as the mood comes or of anything whatever (qtd. in Benstock 1988: 17-18).

Certainly, Campos has not thrown in odds and ends without looking them through, but rather has constructed her novel quite carefully so that within *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* the narrative voice(s) can appear to have done so. The multiple female narrators do not play the part of censors, but refrain from shaping, sorting, or subordinating the material to their will. Each female narrator in *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina*, like Woolf in her diary, systematically cuts out from under herself the props that hold up her authority as author (*ibid.*: 18).

Campos' text, then, like Woolf's and Nin's diaries, could be read as falling into Roland Barthes' category of the text of bliss. In *The Pleasure of the Text*, he describes the text of bliss as one that is engendered by the narrative's edges and seams, by its seductive appearances and apertures. As Judith Roof (1996: xxiii) explains in her own work on sexuality and narrative:

[...] [e]roticism comes from a dynamic produced by a concatenation of edges, gaps, loss, and desire, but is structurally unfixed except as it coexists with and is produced and enjoyed despite cultural imperative.

Campos' narrative concatenation of edges (land/sea), gaps (pieces of the hotel and promontory not visible to the narrators), loss (of that sense of epiphany), and desire (for Venice, for Cuba, for the ocean) is carefully played out throughout the text of bliss.

The text of bliss, like the perverse text, is ultimately dependent on the readers' knowledge of narrative. As readers we only recognize the perversity because we are cognizant of the norms of narrative. Roof (*ibid.*: xxiv) argues that the text of bliss's dynamic "is textual rather than narrative, that is, is produced by properties of the text as text (language, image, rhetoric) as they play through and around narrative". In *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina*, Campos draws attention to her text as textual construct, introducing passages, phrases or words in French, English or Latin, and including a drawing of a steamship with a long English advertisement for "Ward's Line, between New York, Havana and Mexican Ports" (Campos 1978: 60), followed by a page which lingers on different translations for English words from the advertisement: "delightful: delicioso, ameno, agradable, delectable, grato, divertido, encantador, embellecedor, exquisito" (*ibid.*: 61). The drawn-out pleasure of the text delights in language itself and gets caught up in the shifting operations of the textual erotic.

Like *The Pleasure of the Text*, *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* "flirts, evades, reveals, and conceals its narrative of reading, suggesting, cajoling, and teasing with suggestions of something narrative and not" (Roof 1996: xxiv). Roof begins her study of the imbrication of narrative and sexuality noting that in Freud's narrative on sexuality, "perversions cut the story short, in a sense preventing a story at all by tarrying in its preparations"-(*ibid.*: xxi). *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* exem-

plifies a discourse whose perversions cut the story short; as the story of a novel that never gets written, it is a discourse that tarries in its preparations. But while the Freudian narrative shows that perversions prevent the presumed desirable union of male and female towards the goal of sexual reproduction, it also shows that "the aberrations are the foreplay necessary to ever getting to the end at all" (*ibid.*: xxi). Campos' perverse text gets caught up in the pleasure of the aberrant foreplay and never gets to the end product conventional readers might expect. It is a narrative of futurity that inaugurates a blissful discursive space in which perverse possibilities are ever ecstatically envisioned and never foreclosed.

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RELATOS DE FORMACIÓN DE PROTAGONISTA FEMENINA EN HISPANOAMÉRICA: DESDE *IFIGENIA* (1924) HASTA *HAGIOGRAFÍA DE NARCISA LA BELLA* (1985)

La novela de formación ha sido uno de los modos de expresión preferidos de las escritoras (Pratt 1981; Abel/Hirsch/Langland 1983; Felski 1989; Heller 1990). También en Hispanoamérica, sobre todo en la segunda mitad del siglo xx, se han publicado relatos que giran en torno al crecimiento de una niña. Este hecho no es casual ya que la novela de formación permite la confrontación de la protagonista ante los valores de su sociedad en un proceso en que se ponen en juego los deseos del individuo y sus posibilidades de cumplirlos. Aunque proporcionalmente las escritoras han mostrado una marcada preferencia por este tipo de novela, los escritores también han cultivado el género en este mismo período¹. Sin embargo, el subgénero novelístico llamado *Bildungsroman*, que cuenta con una establecida tradición crítica en varias literaturas, especialmente en la alemana, inglesa y francesa, no ha recibido atención crítica de manera sistemática en Hispanoamérica².

En tono mayor: relatos de formación de protagonista femenina en Hispanoamérica examina cómo las escritoras hispanoamericanas representan el proceso de aprendi-

¹ Algunos ejemplos son: *Hijo de ladrón* (1951) de Manuel Rojas; *Los ríos profundos* (1958) de José María Arguedas; *Las buenas conciencias* (1959) de Carlos Fuentes; *La ciudad y los perros* (1962) y *Los cachorros* (1967) de Mario Vargas Llosa; *La traición de Rita Hayworth* (1968) de Manuel Puig; *De perfil* (1966) de José Agustín; "Gaspard de la nuit" (1973) de José Donoso; y más recientemente *No pasó nada* (1980) de Antonio Skármeta; *Las batallas en el desierto* (1981) de José Emilio Pacheco; *La vida a plazos de don Jacobo Lerner* (1978) de Isaac Goldemberg; y *Mala onda* (1991) de Alberto Fuguet. Avellaneda (1994-95: 219-20) cita ejemplos de novelas argentinas que caracteriza como *Bildungsroman*.

² La bibliografía del MLA sobre el *Bildungsroman* en diversas literaturas incluye casi 350 estudios publicados desde 1963 en adelante; menos de una docena se refieren a narraciones hispanoamericanas. Entre los relatos de escritoras que se han examinado como *Bildungsroman* se cuentan *Ifigenia* (Aizenberg 1985), *Balún-Canán* (Lagos-Pope 1997), *La pájara pinta* (Mora 1984), y "La bella durmiente" (Rojo 1988, Apter-Cragolino 1991). Jörgensen