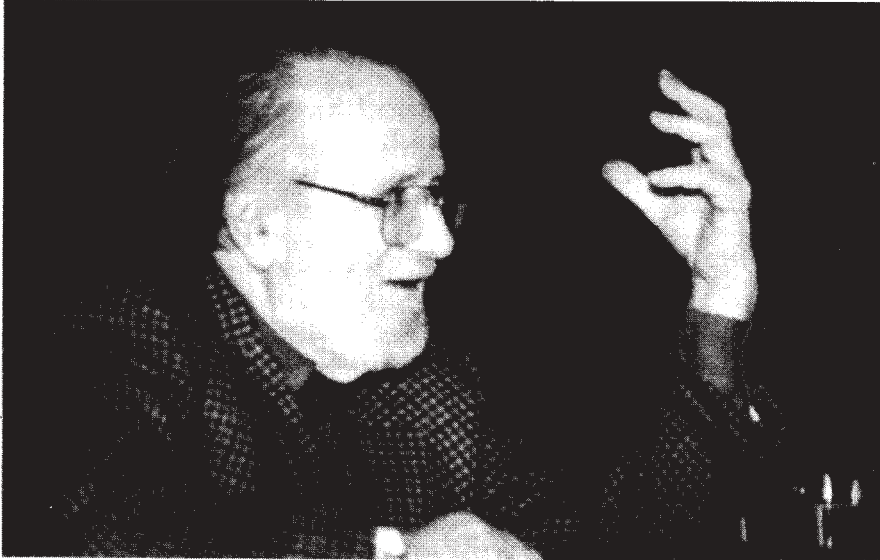


## ENCUENTROS



# *Houses, Voices and Language in Latin America*

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a dialogue with  
**José Donoso**

## **IDB CULTURAL CENTER**

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The Cultural Center of the Inter-American Development Bank, an international financial organization, was created in May 1992 at the Bank's headquarters in Washington, D.C., as a gallery for exhibitions and a permanent forum from which to showcase outstanding expressions of the artistic and intellectual life of the Bank's member countries in North, Central and South America, the Caribbean region, Western Europe, Israel and Japan. Through the IDB Cultural Center, the Bank contributes to the understanding of cultural expression as an integral element of the economic and social development of its member countries. The IDB Cultural Center program of art exhibitions, concerts and lectures stimulates dialogue and a greater knowledge of the culture of the Americas.

## HOUSES, VOICES AND LANGUAGE IN LATIN AMERICA

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*A Dialogue with José Donoso*

*I thought you might begin by elaborating on the title of this dialogue, Houses, Voices and Language in Latin America, and that it would be appropriate - since the house is one of the principal themes running through your work, the space from which it is possible to observe both the internal world and that which lies outside of its boundaries - to begin with the idea of the house in your work, with the house in Latin American narrative writing, and in a second moment go on to address voices and language. What does the house, the home, that center suggest to you?*

It is like the first experience with order, with hierarchy, it is the symbol of the family that is made, and of the family that is unmade. There is a physical thing about the house that can easily be apprehended metaphorically; it is not abstract, it's what's in my blood, those are the walls I know, the sites I've seen. Now, this house is not

essentially a portrait of my house, for I didn't have just one house in my childhood. During those years I had several houses in several places and also, as an adult, I have lived in many houses that I have loved very much, and that have defined much of what I have written. But the *house* has the gift of being able to transform itself, which takes us into another part of our discussion, language. Language can transform the original house of one's memory into a convent, a brothel, a country house, or an apartment in Madrid, but it's always about that stability of the house into which I am born. I am born into an order, within a house. So I would say that the dynamic in the novels I've written, or in many of them, is put into motion that moment when an outside actor penetrates the house or takes down its barriers. In the case of *Coronación (Coronation)*, the outside agent, for example, is the young woman from the countryside who comes to work as the house servant. In *Casa de Campo (The*

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*Houses, Voices and Language in Latin America* was presented in the Andrés Bello Auditorium of the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, D.C. on March 19, 1993 as part of the IDB Cultural Center's Lectures Program. The dialogue was conducted by Dr. Saúl Sosnowski, Director of the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Maryland at College Park.

*Country House*) it is the cannibals and the children who take out spears and make the outside and the inside of the house one and the same. In other words, they take down the barriers. So I believe that this presence of an outside actor is key in my novels, and brings out the importance of what a house is.

*You mentioned persons from outside who enter the house and begin to change the order. I immediately thought of Casa Tomada (The Overtaken House) by Julio Cortázar.*

I was thinking the same thing as you were saying it. *Casa Tomada* is very important to me, it is a story that I connect with very well, and why not say it, it is very fundamental to my work, in what I have seen, and what I have felt. This mysterious invasion of the house in *Casa Tomada* has an interesting turnabout in the Luis Buñuel film in which people are in a room at a party, and suddenly something happens that isn't mentioned, and then they cannot leave, they are trapped by the house. So a house can have a dual function: it can protect you, but it can also suffocate you, which is what one also finds with one's education, and in one's own interior world; both offer protection, as well as entrapment. I felt this keenly upon my return to Chile, for example, after eighteen years abroad. I returned in good spirits with a wonderful feeling of returning to my roots, and of course it was marvelous, but it also gradually began to suffocate me, and both things happened simultaneously, feeling protected and suffocating.

*It is curious that you're speaking of the*

*house in a restricted, familiar sense, and also of the house as a country. Is that how you see it in your work as well?*

In some respects, yes. Certainly in *Casa de Campo* the house is used metaphorically, and even allegorically, to mean the country.

*Do you think it is legitimate to consider the house as a key theme running through a large part of contemporary Latin American literature? You mentioned earlier the house of the family, you mentioned the brothel; I immediately thought of La casa verde (The Green House).*

Yes, I believe that *La casa verde* is very important in the literature of Mario Vargas Llosa, but I can't think of any other. I would say that in Argentina, perhaps in the works of Manuel Mujica Láinez, the house is of special interest. He wrote something called *Aquí vivieron (They Lived Here)* which comprises several stories that relate to a certain space. This spatial motif is one of the things that the novelist has to create; I believe that it is important to create such a space within a novel.

I have a special affinity for spaces; I even like to organize spaces physically. I recall when we were in Barcelona, I started feeling suffocated there too. My wife says that I have a lot of gypsy in me, because as soon as she puts up curtains in a house, I feel like it's time to go someplace else. Then she says that's why she never puts up curtains. We were in Barcelona, in a house with curtains, and I was feeling trapped, so we went out looking for houses. We went to a small town in the interior of Spain where my

French translator lived; I became enchanted with the town, and we bought a 17th-century house for five hundred dollars. It was an abandoned town, that had been left completely in God's hands. The house was precious, with walls built of a single stone that you could see connected the interior to the exterior at the window. Outside the stone was flat and inside it was worked into a curved form. Unfortunately we sold that house, its price had gone up a bit, but creating it was making it. Not in vain, let's say, my second choice as a profession was architecture, yet I didn't study it because I was very bad at math. They told me, don't study architecture because you're surely going to fail in the first year; but something of architecture stayed with me, that fondness for houses, seeing the country as a house, language as a home.

*What house doesn't suffocate you?*

The next one.

*In your novels it seems that there is another constant, which is that order and hierarchies come undone. On the one hand you seek the protection of the house, but the feeling of entrapment leads you to destroy them as much as possible. Is this a recurring theme since Este domingo (This Sunday) or is it simply a coincidence?*

No, it is not simply a coincidence, it is from *Coronación* forward, right? It is, for example, the case of *Paseo (A Walk)*, that story of mine that has been included in so many anthologies. It begins with a description of the house stuck like a book in

between two larger houses, and then, the house wants to devour the child, as it has already devoured the unmarried brothers and sister, until the single sister finds an outside agent to take her out of the house, and in this case, it's a stray dog. This is one of the many times that the dog appears in my books as the agent of this kind of penetration into the interior from the exterior.

*It was curious that you mentioned a work by Mujica Láinez as support for one of your ideas. It struck me that you would refer to him, because in his work as well, one finds an abundance of masks, disguises, monstrous things. Did you feel some special affinity for him?*

No, I never liked Mujica Láinez.

*Why did you refer to him?*

Because I remembered his book called *Aquí vivieron*, and how it relates to a place, a defined space; Mujica Láinez seeks, for example, defined spaces, but they are spaces that were already defined before he arrived on the scene. For example, in *El Gran Teatro (The Big Theater)* there is a certain realism that reminds you of the Teatro Colón. He doesn't create a *possible* theater, he is fundamentally a realist. What happens in his novel *Bomarzo*? The Bomarzo park is also a park that exists, it turns out it is monstrous, but it is a space that he evokes, not that he creates.

*Would that be the main difference?*

For me, yes.

*Would you accept that masks and disguises abound in your work?*

Yes, of course.

*What's behind the disguise?*

Myself, I suppose, don't you think? In other words, that's what I'd like to know. You don't write a book to say something that you know, but to look for something. In my work, I don't say, "I am this"; rather, I tell who I am.

*After fourteen books, who are you?*

I am those books. I am a man made of letters.

*Jorge Luis Borges said that one should leave a book as a legacy. Would you accept this as an exaltation of the art form?*

But the Shriners say the same thing, that one must leave a book, have a child, and plant a tree. I believe that Borges says it in a different way. Borges says *dejar un libro* (leave a book) in the sense of leaving language behind.

*Is that what you would like to leave behind, or pass on?*

Of course!

*There are games and disguises in your work that evoke childhood. We always go back to the autobiographical, and also to the disguised person and disguised languages. What is the word or verb, not*

*the image, but the word you are seeking behind the disguise?*

It would be easy to say that I am seeking my reality, or the historical reality of my country... but I ask myself whether the question is properly phrased, whether it is something I'm looking for, or something I'm trying to build.

*Ask the question that you would like to answer.*

What is this world that I'm trying to build? What language does it speak, what is its reach, to what end...? We all know that literature has a side that is useful and a side that is joy. Let's forget the side that is historical reality and stick with the joy. To what point is writing an aesthetic adventure? I believe too much emphasis has been placed on literature as something that has to be useful, and the popular literature today is mostly the useful sort, not the literature of joy and contemplation. I believe I would like to write something in which the utility of it was noted, in an underlying way, and conveyed to the reader unconsciously, but nonetheless the reader would be marked by the joy of it.

*Have you already written that work?*

No, no.

*Doesn't El obsceno pájaro de la noche (The Obscene Bird of Night) have that?*

*El obsceno pájaro...* in many ways is about delving into a generic Chilean past, of certain worlds that I knew, or sensed, or tried

to know. No, there is something else. Perhaps you are referring to the experimentation, but I think that novel was written at the high point of the experimental Latin American novel, which was more or less in the 1970s; everyone was trying major experiments with the novel form. I believe that this trend has subsided somewhat, and is no longer the model for Julio Cortázar, nor the *death kit* for Susan Sontag; I believe that the novel is heading elsewhere.

*Where?*

It's going where the good novelists are going. I don't believe that any truly interesting experimental novels have been written lately. It seems to me that the most interesting experimental novelists, at least that I have found, are a Frenchman named Georges Perec and an Italian named Italo Calvino. The latest novel by Calvino is a marvel of experimentation, but reads as if you are the adventurer; what Calvino does in this novel is so fascinating... *If on a winter's night a traveler...* That's how many novels begin that become increasingly entangled and never end. Perec's novel *Life: A User's Manual* is an incredible masterpiece, complete lunacy with an intelligence expressed not so much in the content or the discourse, but in the aroma of what is said... Beyond that I don't see very many good experimental novels being written; in contrast, the novel seems to be going towards the peripheral countries, the countries that have traditionally produced great novelists. For example, I find what is currently being produced in South Africa noteworthy. There is a writer there by the

name of J. M. Coetzee who I find to be superb. He has a novel called *Waiting for the Barbarians*, a beautiful novel that's not superficially experimental; and another organized around the idea of Robinson Crusoe. They are deeply penetrating novels, and very moving. Another who is not experimental is the young Kazuo Ishiguro, a Japanese writer who lived in England who writes about an English butler in a brilliant novel, *The Remains of the Day*. It's marvelous and I don't believe the novel falls within the realm of what I would call "architectural experimentation."

*Let's review history. It has been thirty years since the publication of Rayuela (Hopscotch) by Julio Cortázar, twenty-five since the publication of Betrayed by Rita Hayworth by Manuel Puig, which at the time appeared to be a literary alternative to Rayuela; I don't know how they would be received today. How would we read novels of that type today, in view of what you have done? I am thinking, for example, about what Rayuela meant with its tables of instructions on how to read the book, and explanations of how to play with it, and in light of this, what it means to play the children's game, "La marquesa salió a las cinco" (The marchioness went out at five) in Casa de Campo. What does it mean to have implicit the rules of the game in the book? Is it an alternative to experimentation?*

I think so. I believe that to employ this kind of ideology prior to the novel is no longer valid; it is interesting that some novelists are explaining the novel's rules

from inside the book, through a character, for example. The current fight is over who has the legitimate right to be the author of the novel, who does it seem is really writing it, what is the point of view. So that's one of the many debates, that search when the writer says "I do this or that." Then the novel ends, that's what happened, and that's what I saw happen: the novel inscribed in the consciousness of a narrator. But sometimes there is a character in the novel who explains who may have written that novel. It can no longer be like the *manuscrito encontrado en Zaragoza* (a manuscript found in Zaragoza) that we all know. But in one way or another that manuscript cannot be found in Zaragoza, there has to be a narrator within the novel, within the plot of the novel, who in the course of the novel, finds that manuscript for some reason.

*You mentioned a fight over who "really" writes a novel. Is that perchance a fight that interests you?*

It is interesting...

*Why does it interest you?*

Because I don't know if I am the one who has written my novels; some say my wife has written them.

*You put one in her voice, is that not so?*

Precisely because of that. The last one translated to English was in her voice. Right now there's something else we're working on together.

*Is that the only reason that you're*

*interested in that fight?*

No, I'm interested in continuing to discover who I am, what I'm like.... It's like the donkey's carrot, I follow it to keep me going.

*I'll keep you going, but backwards once again. In the 1960s, the "boom" years, a topic that interested you and led you to write Historia personal del "Boom," (Personal History of the "Boom") there was much talk of subversive literature, of revolutionary discourse with a rhetoric that today seems practically archaeological. What did that rhetoric mean to you at the time? What does it represent today?*

Well, I think that is evident to some extent in *Casa de campo*; I have made that point. I had not been back to Chile in over ten years, and I had a very young daughter. We were living in the house in Calaceite, that Spanish town, and I wanted very much to return to Chile, so I applied for a Guggenheim fellowship. Thinking I would get it, my wife and I traveled by train from Barcelona to Warsaw. In Warsaw the Chilean ambassador met me at the station with a telegram that said I had been awarded the Guggenheim. So, very happy I said, well at last I'll be able to return to Chile. My idea was to write a play about Rugendas, the painter, during the government of Salvador Allende. It was 1973. We spent one month in Poland, and the day we were to return, September 11, 1973, the ambassador was at the station and told me, you can't go back to Chile, Allende has died, they are hanging people from the light posts, you can't go



back. So in some way that whole world became closed to me without the possibility of return, and we went back to my house in Calaceite.

I remember that Vargas Llosa and his wife and children, who were the same age as my daughter, were spending the summer in our house. They went on a trip to the United States and left their kids with us. I had my ear glued to the radio listening to the news, or was on the telephone... We had a yard with a large expanse of foxtail over which one could see the blue mountains on the horizon, and I would hear the children playing at siesta time; I would hear the mysterious games of their cousins, the boys and girls, in the rooms upstairs, those which Pablo Neruda spoke of.... And this novel began to come together which was in a sense my version of returning to Chile. In other words, since I could not go back and see things for myself, I had to forge in my imagination and represent symbolically what was happening in Chile. All my passion and imagination came together to write *Casa de campo*, which is a novel with a clear political interpretation.

*And it was eventually to become a screenplay...*

Yes, it was going to be a screenplay for Antonioni; when he read *El obsceno pájaro de la noche*, he phoned me in Rome and said, come to see me. And he told me, I don't like the film I'm making, write a screenplay for me. Right away I went home to write a script for Antonioni. I wrote several that I didn't like, then I got hooked on the idea of Chile, the country house, and the

children.

*Those same years in which there was so much talk of the rhetoric you referred to a moment ago, there was also talk of the "total" novel. Some writers continue to talk about wanting to write the "total" novel. What does that mean for you?*

For me it doesn't really mean much. I have seen some "total" novels that I have liked a great deal, but I have also seen partial novels. For me, the essence of artistic creation is the limitation of the human being. A writer can't be a boundryless being, he or she must have his or her own sensitivity, through which reality is reflected and deformed. The existence of this somewhat opaque subject matter, which captures light, is writing.

*What is a partial novel?*

Let's see... Beginning with total novels, for example, *Ulysses* by James Joyce, and *Remembrance of Things Past* by Proust...

*And from this side of the world?*

From this side of the world, almost all the novels of my time, from the time I began to write; *Rayuela* by Cortázar seemed to be a total novel, *La casa verde* by Vargas Llosa, the novels of Carlos Fuentes, who continues to write total novels as if it were possible to make many total novels, without the last one invalidating the one before. As for partial novels, Borges is the master of the partial, of the fragmentary.

*What world emerges from the sum of the private worlds of José Donoso?*

Well, I think the public that has to decide that, no?

*As a reader of your own work?*

I curse the moment. Many times I have to read my originals for a translation, and then I review the translation into English, Italian, or French, and I have to revise and reread. It's very painful for me... I'd like to change everything.

*Have you had occasion to do so?*

Yes, yes...

*And then?*

It has turned out better. For example, in the case of the famous last chapter of *El jardín de al lado* (*The Garden Next Door*), I received the proofs ready to be printed and bound, then I reread it and corrected it, and I didn't like the way it turned out. In the next four or five days I wrote the last chapter, which wasn't supposed to be as it is. The same thing happened with *El obsceno pájaro de la noche*, that last chapter that people say explains and is the key to everything; it came to me as I reviewed the proofs, provoking the fury of Carlos Berral...

*Did you keep those chapters?*

Yes, they're at Princeton University.

*For many years now you've been interested in the work of Sir Richard F. Burton (no doubt you'll clarify that it's not the actor). Could you tell us about that interest? I've always been struck by the fact that you are fascinated by the eccentric, the off-beat. I ask myself whether that is what led you to Richard Burton?*

I am very interested in 19th-century England; I'm an avid reader of Dickens, Trollope, and Zachary, in particular. I like that world of leather and bronze, and the dark walls of the Victorian Age in England. I also like the whole facade that the Victorian Age represents because it is not much different from the Chilean facade; we Chileans are very Victorian in many ways, and it seems to me that with the Christian-Democratic governments there is a danger that things could get worse and even more masked. Unfortunately, novels can never be written like those of 19th-century England; the mask has another meaning. I have been an avid reader of Hardy and Meredith, and of all those eminent Victorians, I always found Sir Richard Burton to be one of the most remarkable.

Then I read Borges, and in Borges there is a literary passage in the translation of the *Arabian Nights* which speaks copiously of Burton, and that's where I got hooked. Then I read a book that I found fascinating, *The Blue Nile* by Alan Moorehead, which speaks of the English expeditions to the sources of the Nile, in which Burton appears as a character.

I was in New York, writing a movie screenplay for the U.S. film makers Leonard

and Paul Schrader, on the life of Rimbaud, who spent his last years in Abyssinia consumed by syphilis. It turns out that Burton really was in Abyssinia, in Harar, and in Somalia, and I came to collect things on him. Burton was probably one of the people on whom the largest number of biographies have been written; there must be some twenty or thirty biographies on him, even though his wife burned his papers when he died. He kept a life-long diary which she took and burned, along with his correspondence. Despite this, Burton survives as a personality and his history has been revealed through the letters that he wrote to his friends.

Two or three years ago a book came out by a gentleman named F. J. McLynn called *From the Sierras to the Pampas*, about Burton's travels to Salt Lake City, Utah to visit the Mormon community; it also deals with the years Burton spent as the British consul in Santos. There he became very bored with his wife, who was quite tedious, so he went to the War of the Triple Alliance in Paraguay, where he met Francisco Solano López and Madame Lynch. He later stayed at a house that was part of Urquiza's empire, and then went on to Buenos Aires. There he spent two weeks stone drunk and completely drugged; then he made friends with another guy and they decided to go to Chile. They took a horse, crossed the pampas and the mountains, and went to Chile. All of Burton's life is richly documented. What I would like to do is falsify the documents that describe Burton's life in Chile over those two months, because he didn't like Chile at all; indeed he went so far as to call it a "black

hole," even though what was happening in Chile at the time was quite fascinating. So I came here to Washington to do research on Burton's two months in Chile, and my wife has taken up the idea of writing a biography of Lady Burton; and we're now writing parallel biographies.

*When will we see the novel?*

It still has a bit to go. First I'm doing the historical research. It's turning out to be quite difficult to work the historical investigation into the novel format. I have always had the liberty of a wide imagination, but presently I can't seem to compress Burton's life - that enormous, very long, and very interesting life - into the two months when he was in Chile.

*Thank you. And now we would like to open it up to any questions from the audience.*

*Mr. Donoso, I am the cultural attaché from the Embassy of Venezuela. I was very moved to hear you refer to Rimbaud in Adén (Arabia) and Burton in Africa, because I myself tried to seek the phantom of Burton by the shores of Lake Victoria. Speaking of 19th-century English literature, I think you might have named another novelist whom you must be very familiar with, Joseph Conrad. Conrad is from that period of writers who sought to root his characters in those places called... it's an expression in English that refers to the white man's grave being precisely in Africa and Asia. How do you see Conrad's influence in that 19th-century context?*

I see Conrad as a bit more contemporary, I see him much closer to my generation. He speaks to me in a language much more ordinary, and has a much more contemporary concept of literary style. He is not like that overstuffed Victorian furniture; his language flows easily, and you can identify with it. He is much more involved than those other writers, and it seems to me that Conrad's moral passion and quest, which inform all of his novels, are rare in the Victorian writers. In Dickens, for example, there is a social inquiry, but never a moral confrontation. Nor can we say there is no morality in Trollope; he does treat it, albeit tangentially. In contrast, one finds in Conrad a very strong moral ambition, there is a concept of right and wrong which I find interesting, but it makes him very close in time to me, and it is hard to think of Conrad as a contemporary of Burton's. Conrad died in 1920, I believe, and Burton must have died around 1890.

*Yes, it may be that Burton still represents a certain Victorian optimism that is no longer represented by the uprooted characters of Conrad in those Asian and African settings.*

Of course, but that is something that many English authors did. There were a series of books that involved Asia. The English writers are essentially imperialist writers; one of the forms of British imperialism is English literature. The English do something that no one from any other country does: they go native. Since the 18th century, when someone like Lady Esther Stanhope went to establish herself in

the Middle East, she took the boat in London, passed through Malta, became the mistress of the Governor of Malta, went to Syria, bought a castle in Damascus, had a troop of soldiers at her command, and went out to rampage and lay waste to the cities... in the 18th century, with a white wig and all! There is a long tradition of this kind of behavior in England. But thinking of a part of Venezuela, there is an English writer, W. H. Hudson, who wrote *La tierra purpurea (The Purple Land)*, and *Green Mansions* which is set in Venezuela. This understanding, this passion that the British have for other countries, is also a method by which they assume control of them. Let's not discuss Somerset Maugham, which was a sub-literature that one read at a given moment. There is an English tradition of the writer as imperialist. And let's certainly not get into Kipling!

*Any other questions?*

*Mr. Donoso, I am an architect and I've always been struck by the spatial concept you use, as well as the distinction that you try to draw between the realists (you mentioned Mujica Láinez, for example), and certain spaces, be they urban or interior, that you describe in your novels. I'm struck because you seek to distinguish between those spaces and those which you invent. Nonetheless, as an architect, I find that your spaces are very real. Whether it's a small house, as in *El obsceno pájaro de la noche*, or the house in *Casa de campo*, which is a large house, both spaces are very real. What seems unreal to me - in the sense that it is contained as an element in the novel*

*itself - is what happens outside the house. So I would like you to explain the distinction you draw between invented space and the space that comes from a very real experience. Space is always the outcome of certain well-defined actions, and the conduct of the families in your novels has very clear, well-defined elements. I don't know how the space is so contrived, or whether what is invented is outside of it...*

What happens is that the space in Mujica Láinez is pre-existing space, and he makes an effort to portray it, and give essence to the space that it is. In contrast, I believe that in my novels, for example in *Casa de Campo*, the space is not one that ever existed in Chile. The setting is different, the people are different, the story is real, and there is a character in the novel that says, "in Chile this has never happened, you are deceiving us, this is not real, it's not true." There are certain essences that I have tried to make real, to give them a literary reality in language, more than a geographical reality. I believe that the essence of the difference lies in the fact that the earlier writers, the *criollistas*, the sociologists of the novel, tried to offer an objectively real space. In contrast, I am trying to make a subjectively real space; in other words, I enter a space of language, they enter a real, geographical space that can be located.

*One final question....*

*Don José, I came to ask you about Spain. I have heard many references to*

*Spain, to an apartment in Madrid, a stay in Barcelona, a manuscript in Zaragoza, a small house in a town in the south.... What does Spain represent to you? Is it part of that European world that has taken root elsewhere?*

Curiously, I don't feel very culturally bound to Spain. I have lived there for eighteen years, my publishers are Spaniards, my literary agent is a Spaniard, I use one of the many forms of the Spanish language and yet, culturally, the road does not begin there for me. I think what happened is that when we were growing up, we were reading other things; my generation had its sights firmly set on the French existentialists. It was the French existentialists who nourished us spiritually for a certain time.

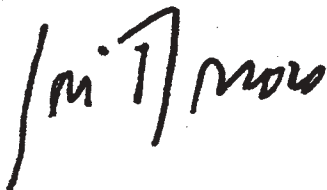
At the same time, while Spanish poetry was glorious and we all read it as glorious poetry at the time, from Juan Ramón Jiménez onward, it seems to me that the Spanish novel of that time did not have the relevance or resonance for us that the English, American, and French novel had. No doubt it was more interesting to read Proust than Pérez de Ayala, Virginia Woolf and Joyce than Azorín. There was nowhere to lose oneself. There was a wealth and universality of American literary production; it was Faulkner, Hemingway, and Fitzgerald who made up our world, and not the vision of Pérez de Ayala, Azorín, or Ruiz de Alarcón.

We in Latin America, without a literary tradition of our own, could somehow choose a tradition that excluded Spain because it did not seem very seductive compared to what

was happening elsewhere in Europe and in the United States. In the case of poetry, we all had García Lorca in mind, and all the poets of that time, but such was not the case with the novel.

I believe that each country and each period somehow finds its own language. I believe that my generation in Latin America found more enjoyment in the novel form than in poetry or essays, just as the Mexican painters of the 1930s found their enjoyment not in refined painting on canvas but in mural painting. With the Elizabethan English writers of the 1500s, when great lyric poetry was written, so were great novels and great essays. But what does one remember, what is it that keeps spinning about in the head? The idea continues to be bandied about that the Elizabethans wrote theater in verse. Elizabethan dramatic poetry is somehow that which is most essentially Elizabethan. I believe that in Spain it was the lyrical poetry of the 1920s and 1930s that was really the most authentic, like the novel that was being produced in England and the United States.

*And I think we'll end it here for today.  
Thank you very much.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "José Donoso". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. The first name "José" is written with a large, sweeping "J" and a dot over the "e". The last name "Donoso" is written in a more fluid, connected script.

**José Donoso** (Santiago, Chile, 1924-1996) studied at the Universidad de Chile and Princeton University. He was professor of English Literature at the Universidad Católica de Chile, director of the magazine *Ercilla*, and professor of the Writer's Workshop at the University of Iowa. He also taught at Princeton University and Dartmouth College. He has published the following works: *Veraneo y otros cuentos* (1955), a book of stories that won the Premio Municipal in Santiago, and *El Charlestón* (1960), which are collected in the volume *Cuentos* (1971); a book of testimonials and essays, *Historia personal del "Boom"* (1972); the novellas *Tres novelitas burguesas* (1973), published in the United States under the title *Tarantula and Still Life with Pipe*; and the novels *Coronación* (1958), *Este domingo* (1966), *El lugar sin límites* (1967), *El obscuro pájaro de la noche* (1970), *Casa de campo* (1978) which won the Critics' Award of Spain, *La misteriosa desaparición de la marquesita de Loria* (1980), *El jardín de al lado* (1981), and *La desesperanza* (1986). He won the National Literature Award in Chile in 1990. He was the recipient of two Guggenheim fellowships, and in 1992 received a Woodrow Wilson fellowship. His work has been translated into 23 languages, and four books have been published in the United States about his literary work.

**Saúl Sosnowski** (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1945) received a doctorate in Hispanic-American Literature from the University of Virginia. He is professor of Latin American Literature, and director of the Spanish and Portuguese Department at the Latin American Studies Center of the University of Maryland at College Park. He is the author of the books *Julio Cortázar: Una búsqueda mítica*; *Borges y la Cábala: La búsqueda del verbo*; and *La orilla inminente: Escritores judío-argentinos*. He is editor of the volumes *Augusto Roa Bastos y la producción cultural americana*; *Angel Rama: Crítica de la cultura americana*; *La cultura uruguaya: Represión, exilio y democracia*; and *Argentina: Represión y reconstrucción de la cultura*. In 1972 he founded and continues to direct *Hispanamérica*, a literary review.

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