

*Bolívar I am: Telenovela, Performance, and Colombian National Identity**

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Self-conscious narrative techniques in the Colombian film *Bolívar I am* (2002) position one of its protagonists, the *telenovela*, as a device that promotes debates about the institutional uses of heroic symbols, the social and political forces that compete to appropriate and imagine Simón Bolívar's project of unification, and the present state of the nation. If one takes into account filmmaker Jorge Alí Triana's success and experience directing historical *telenovelas* as well as the genre's commercial force, a film centering on the *telenovela*'s national impact was long due. By emphasizing self-reflexivity through the film-within-a-film meta-narrative tradition, or rather *telenovela*-within-a-film, as the Independence hero is newly created for popular audiences, *Bolívar I am* investigates aspects of filming and acting that can be studied in the light of performance studies. Through erasure of the thin division between fiction and reality, the film dramatizes performance as an act of interpretation, identification, and appropriation by turning all parties involved, including spectators, into active participants and creators of national identity.

Triana's film, not unlike some of the Colombian literary works devoted to Bolívar, including Gabriel García Márquez's novel *El general en su laberinto* and Álvaro Mutis's short-story "El último rostro" (*La mansión de Araucaíma*, 1978), delves into the last days of the life of the Liberator. This, however, should not be taken at face value, as the device of the *telenovela*-within-a-film that structures the narrative comes to play havoc on the seemingly historical plot. Actor Santiago Miranda (played by Robinson Díaz) who in the *telenovela* portrays the hero becomes anxious about the latter's scripted death and seems to be overtaken by the Bolívar character.¹ He then decides to retrace the Liberator's last steps and to rewrite the commercial ending of the *telenovela*, which in order to keep up the ratings, sought to portray a heroic death by firing squad instead of the lonesome and impoverished demise experienced by the historical figure. "The Liberator's Lovers," as the *telenovela* is called, is very popular in the country and, as Santiago leaves the set to return to Bogotá in his Bolívar attire, he is immediately recognized by television viewers who comment on the plot of the show or who request favors from him as if they were actually talking to the historical hero. Even the president of the country, seeing the popularity of the television drama and understanding Santiago's potential value for advancing political ideas of state power and unity, asks the actor to appear as the Liberator in a series of state events. This spectacularization of Bolívar, made even clearer in the film through the inscription of the Liberator's name and figure on the topography of

the capital city, seeks to serve as a display of splendor and orderly domination. Also, during Santiago's trip on the Magdalena River, after he has decided to take the Colombian president hostage in order to call for the formation of a new and united Great Colombia, a guerrilla group under the name of EPR (Ejército Popular Revolucionario) boards his ship to present him with Bolívar's sword.² Through this symbolic act the guerilla fighters affirm that they too embody the dreams of the Liberator. However, these symbolic uses are soon contested as Santiago and the spectators express discontent with their social reality.

Triana's film belongs to a long tradition devoted to the interpretation of the life and deeds of Simón Bolívar. One hundred and seventy six years after his death, Bolívar continues to have an extraordinary place in the Colombian and Latin American imagination as proved by his iconic status, the wide range of written and visual texts, and the numerous academic studies dealing with his life and representation.³ As of January 2007, the Internet Movie Database counted thirteen films, including animations, documentaries, long features, and shorts, made by filmmakers from countries as varied as Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, France, Italy, México, USA and Venezuela. According to many academics, the cultural and historic significance of Bolívar has been tied up with his prestige (Jorge Melo 90), his mysticism and vision (Slatta 240, 261), his cult standing (Murray 298), his iconic status (Hart 335), his charisma and engaging writing style (Bushnell 13-14), his ideas for a centralized state (Jaramillo, "Nación" 114), as well as his qualities as a modern hero in whom both writing and power coalesce (González Echevarría 195). These views contrast, however, with other poignant images in which the Liberator appears as allied with the military-clerical elites (Bushnell 16-17; Jaramillo, "Regiones" 205), as a dictator (Jaramillo, "Regiones" 204; Murray 294), as a victim of the fatherland (Piotrowski 39), and as a flawed humanized figure (Cowie 34; Mendez Ramírez 199). All of this without counting the radically conflicting views presented by personalities as close to him as generals Daniel Florencio O'Leary and H.L.V. Ducoudray Holstein in their respective memoirs (Archer). These sharp debates have not left cinema untouched. In his second film about Bolívar, *Bolívar, Sinfonía Tropikal*, 1979, Venezuelan director Diego Rísquez enacts some of the contradictions enunciated by the perspectives surveyed above. Through the use of two actors, Rísquez engages both traditional historical ideas about Bolívar as a romantic hero and emperor, and Bolívar's image as an idealistic revolutionary warrior, lover and man.

That Simón Bolívar is continuously being cited and performed publicly is best shown through two examples of contemporary experience. The first refers to Colombian historian Germán Arciniegas. During a speech in commemoration of Bolívar's death Arciniegas said: "Today on December 17, 1830, Simón Bolívar is dead. Long live the Liberator!" ["Hoy el 17 de diciembre de 1830, Simón Bolívar ha muerto. ¡Viva el libertador!"] (quoted in Piotrowski 35-36). The axiomatic, though modified, citation of "The King is dead, long live the King," as evoked by Arciniegas, seeks to appeal to an audience with the competence to recognize

and share the invoked values of power and historical continuity. If we understand performativity, following Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, in its relationship to the iterative construction of identities by means of complex citational processes, then speech and other acts of communication have performative force by a process of invocation. In particular, what is invoked is "the presumption [...] of a consensus between speaker and witnesses, and to some extent between all of them and the addressee" (2, 9).⁴ As a matter of fact, Arciniegas was speaking in a cathedral before an audience of Latin American presidents, the head of the Spanish government, and various academic, diplomatic, civil, and military personalities (Piotrowski 35). As architects of the national project, members of this audience have been actively engaged in the construction of Colombian identity through continuous citational processes that reiterate a specific vision of the nation as masculine, paternalistic, Catholic, and powerful. Arciniegas' "witnesses," through their presence and engagement in the ceremony, validate the presumption of a consensus about the importance of the Liberator and the significance of citation in the creation and maintenance of a Bolivarian identity for the Republic of Colombia. The constant recycling, which is a sort of affirmation, reformulates the model with the implied promise of making it better.⁵ This is further proved in the cultural and social arena where Colombians have also played the role of "addressees" of other citations such as the 1923 and 1930 gold coins bearing Bolívar's effigy, his numerous statues, the 2003 itinerant exhibit "Iconografía revisada de Simón Bolívar" organized by the National Museum in Bogotá, and institutions named after the Liberator, for instance Colombia's most prestigious award for investigative reporting, the Simón Bolívar National Prize for Journalism, and Sociedades Bolívar, a Colombian holding corporation controlling banks, as well as several important insurance and construction companies.

These citations can be taken as examples of what David Bushnell calls "the current vogue of an ultra-bolivarianismo" (12). This vogue signals the working and reworking of the concept of national identity through the promotion of some independence heroes. As defined here, national identity refers to the modification, proliferation, and intensification of habits and feelings which can be formed by technologies, such as television and cinema, and which can contribute to the projects of nation construction.⁶ In this sense, the practice of promoting some historical figures over others, implicitly and sometimes explicitly, has a bearing on how the nation is imagined and built. Such seems to be the case in the striking shift against Francisco de Paula Santander, one of the military and political leaders of the independence struggle who also acted as vice-president of the Gran Colombia. As Bushnell notes, lately Santander has gone in Colombia from "el Hombre de las leyes" to "head of a 'pandilla de próceres,' 'héroes nacionales,' y 'demás ladrones,'" being vilified both by hard-line conservatives and liberals (12). This means that Santander has gone from defender of the constitution to head of a gang of national "heroes" and other thieves. In contrast, Bolívar has come to occupy center stage in the intellectual and national imagination, as is clear from

texts by historian Indalecio Liévano Aguirre and other Colombian academics. In the cinematic establishment, Bolívar's continued magnetism is noted by his presence in Triana's movie, and in statements by Colombian filmmakers such as Sergio Cabrera, who in a personal interview revealed that if he were to make a historical film, he would choose the Liberator as his subject matter.⁷ Since there seems to be a confluence of interest within various fields to accentuate a privileged position for Bolívar, then it is valid to say that, for the Colombian context, national identity and its current project of nation construction gravitate around a Bolivarian axis. This is demonstrated in Triana's movie, especially through the use of the *telenovela* as a device that not only promotes habits and feelings, but also spurs and informs the debate about the uses of the iconic figure of Bolívar and its role in the formation of the Colombian nation.⁸

Moving beyond Arciniegas' and Colombian discursive citations, I would like to analyze now another type of performance that involves Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez. As a young man, Chávez is said to have memorized Bolívar's speeches, restaged Bolívar's Roman Oath, and re-enacted the Liberator's crossing of the Andes (Conway 152; Foer 96). He is also said to always have had a chair pulled up for meetings during his 1998 run for the presidency. This chair, where no one was allowed to sit, was, in a rather striking way, supposedly reserved for Bolívar (Foer 96). In addition, as Christopher Conway shows, in order to do away with the old Venezuelan constitution, which was changed in 1999, Chávez managed through his speeches to restage the present as a repetition of the Wars of Independence, with himself playing the role of Bolívar (158). Although Chávez is engaging in a citational practice, his differs from the one enacted by the Colombian historian Arciniegas. Following Richard Schechner and Joseph Roach, I will identify this sort of performance as "twice-behaved behavior" and "restored behavior" (Schechner, *Performance Studies* 29; *Over* 103-104; Roach, "Culture" 46). As Roach puts it, the set of behaviors, as articulated by the performer, is paradoxically understood to both repeat itself whilst at each occasion exist as a unique set of behaviors, in effect being recreated and reinvented constantly by a process called "surrogation" (*Cities* 2; "Culture" 46). Roach's model allows for a reading of Chavez's behaviour as an act of performance, especially given the fact that contexts of performance vary, including the social circumstances and even the bodies of performers (Schechner, *Over* 106). By self-fashioning himself as Bolívar, the Venezuelan president performs an evident maneuver of substitution or surrogation as an act of recycling and transforming. He does this, not as a Bolívar wannabe, as Franklin Foer, one of his critics, might suggest, but through a more complex process that, to quote Diana Taylor's analysis for the Argentine context, builds on prior material, replicating and transforming the received cultural codes ("DNA" 62). Chavez's performance seeks to fill the void left by the Liberator's death at the same time that it serves to create a vision of Bolívar in tune with the Venezuelan president's citational agenda of military pride and revolutionary achievements. While doing this, Chávez reinvents the Independence

hero, legitimizes his own power and, as some of his critics concede, purports to affect social change.⁹

From this perspective, performance becomes one of the tools for the construction, transmission, and resignification of national identity. This function, as seen in the two cases analyzed, is played out on the social arena with a clear political intention of strengthening views of the nation imposed from above. Both Arciniegas and Chávez execute acts of performance that invoke an institutional consensus while seeking to renovate the meanings of the Liberator. As appropriated by the state and Latin American historians and other intellectuals, Bolívar comes to personify ideas of unity, in spite of continued controversies about his alliances with military-clerical landed elites, his ethnic background, his religious faith and his downfall. Much in the manner of Bolívar's own rhetoric about the future, states and other institutions keep evoking his figure to create a dramatic sense of power and historical continuity in order to mask the fact that equal distribution of wealth, equivalent rights, and justice, have not come to fruition in Latin America, and especially not in war-ridden Colombia.

It is unquestionable that Triana's film engages in citational and surrogation processes that differ from those performed by Arciniegas and Chávez. Being a film, it highlights self-conscious narrative techniques, the actor's body, as well as physical space, to allow for the staging of performance in its relationship to national identity and the *telenovela* genre. The connection between *Bolívar I am* and the nation is underlined by the film's director himself. In an interview with Rafael Salcedo in 2002, Triana affirms that his film is about Bolívar's coming back to see what remains of his dream. He then states that: "At this moment I believe that we Colombians are grieving for the nation. I also believe we do not know where we are headed" ["Yo creo que los colombianos estamos hoy en un momento en que nos está doliendo mucho la Patria y en que no sabemos para dónde vamos"] (*El Tiempo*, Cultura 1).¹⁰ Triana's statement emphasizes the pain for the present and the confusion about the future that is hypothetically felt by Colombian citizens. Beyond referring simply to the country as a geographical institution, Triana seems to be talking about values, feelings and expectations that imply some sort of cohesion even through a negative sense of pain and ignorance of what the future holds. *Bolívar I am* then sets out to dramatize a reflexion on the nation that is tied up to the production of feelings. This maneuver is achieved by placing the *telenovela* as a protagonist. As is generally known, the genre enjoys an immense popularity in Latin America and since the 1980s its success has enthralled audiences throughout the world.¹¹ Also, renowned and respected *telenovela* writers such as Delia Fiallo explain the genre's success due to its association with the creation of emotions (quoted in Mato 157). In view of this, *Bolívar I am* uses the *telenovela*-within-a-film format to generate feelings that allow for Bolívar's return to present-day Colombia.

Many researchers recognize the link between technologies of reproduction, such as film and television, and the processes through which habits, values, and

feelings are disseminated and interiorized by spectators.¹² In the field of communication studies, Jesús Martín Barbero's idea of cultural memory offers a dynamic approach to the relationship between habits, cultural productions and their reception. For him, "cultural memory is articulated through experience and events. Instead of simply accumulating, it filters and weighs ... Cultural memory has nothing to do with nostalgia; its function in the community is ... to give continuity to the ongoing construction of collective identity" (*Communication* 184). This view goes well with the idea of performance as "twice-behaved behaviour" that I am exploring because it establishes a bond between events, experiences, and the memories that help people constitute themselves as subjects. Also, given that the *telenovela* featured in the film is seen by so many people, it is essential to study how it partakes in cultural processes not only by way of the social commentary that it provokes, but also through the manner in which all participants, including the actors and the intradiegetic spectators, react and interact with it.

Since Martín Barbero's work about cultural memory has been mainly devoted to collective memory, I would like to turn now to Alison Landsberg, who proposes a more personal model of interacting with events and experiences. According to this scholar, through contact with film, individuals find a way of getting to know and relive events from the past that they have not experienced first-hand. This type of interaction, called "prosthetic" memory, provides a more personal way of processing and introjecting information. Landsberg notes that: "because prosthetic memories are not natural, not the possession of a single individual, let alone a particular family or ethnic group, they conjure up a more public past, a past that is not at all privatised" (149). This means that in contrast to collective memory, which is usually circumscribed by a particular community or group and which serves to reinforce and naturalise a group's identity, prosthetic memories are available to individuals across racial and ethnic lines. According to Landsberg, prosthetic memories "open up the possibility for collective horizons of experience and pave the way for unexpected political alliances" (149). By emphasizing the abilities of film to generate feelings such as empathy, Landsberg's model offers a way of linking emotions to values and prosthetic memory to political action. Landsberg's hypothesis seems productive for the study of Bolívar and the *telenovela* as ways of bridging gaps between individuals. In fact, Landsberg's study echoes Jesús Martín Barbero's and Sergio Cabrera's call for taking seriously the various technologies of memory, including film (Landsberg 158).¹³ In the particular movie I am studying, the interaction with the *telenovela* gives rise to prosthetic memories that provide a conduit through which performance as "twice-behaved behaviour" is possible. Performance and prosthetic memory function in *Bolívar I am* as acts of replication and engaged renovation in order to discuss and transform the Independence hero and to express a political commentary about Colombia's ongoing project of nation formation.

If we recall Triana's words about Colombians' grief, we can establish how his statement transforms the nation into a body that is dying or is possibly dead.

By endowing the nation with a lost materiality about which Colombians can feel pain, Triana and his film demonstrate how, via the *telenovela* genre, Colombia can become what Sarah Ahmed calls a shared 'object of feeling.' An 'object of feeling' is one that circulates and can in turn shape different kinds of actions and orientations toward this same object (13). Ahmed's view on emotions revolves around the idea of contact. In her words, "the object with which I have contact is the object that I have a feeling 'about.'" (17). As the film shows, Bolívar as a symbol, or an object of feeling representative of the lost and desired nation, provides Santiago and the intradiegetic spectators, through their contact with it, a sensory way to know and to relive events from the past in order to comment on the present. In this sense, the image is presented as a thought-provoking encounter that produces affects and effects which, following Patricia Pisters, are set in motion by the interplay between body and brain, perception and memory (18). The mass-mediatic circulation of Bolívar and the nation as 'objects of feeling' triggers prosthetic memories that, being personal, account for conflicting emotions such as those experienced by Santiago and the *telenovela* viewers.

Bolívar's creation as an object of feeling with which spectators can identify occupies an important zone in the narrative and is emphasized through the meta-narrative techniques used. The most conspicuous of these have to do with performative citations as the film's visual and sound tracks deliberately stress the recycling of historical material, including the Napoleonic iconography of Bolívar's portraits, his writing, and his speeches. The Independence hero is also constructed through visual iconographic citations, such as his mustache, his sideburns, his sword, and his gala uniform, as well as the red eyes and feverish countenance, that according to historians, he is supposed to have had just before dying. Likewise, the film features persons, places, events, and objects that historically have been associated with the Liberator, for example, Independence revolutionary Manuela Sáenz (interpreted by Amparo Grisales), the Quinta de San Pedro Alejandrino in Santa Marta, the Quinta de Bolívar in Bogotá, and the Liberator's journey down the Magdalena River. In view of these associations, following Robert Stam and Ismail Xavier, self-reflexivity pertains here to discursive instances in which the film's intertext is foregrounded (16). Besides the visual signs and spacio-temporal locations used, this foregrounding is conveyed through an emotional example in the first segment of the movie when a passionate Bolívar addresses his last words to the firing squad. Through the expressive stance and tears of the soldiers who appear shaken as they prepare to shoot him, the film cites Bolívar's skill at moving his audience, as well as the *telenovela* genre's link to emotions. With respect to the first point, as Bushnell notes, Bolívar's public-speaking abilities made Francisco de Paula Santander plead "against an invitation to Bolívar to address the Convention of Ocaña on the ground that the Liberator was so persuasive in face-to-face encounters that he could cause almost anyone to abandon previous strongly-held opinions" (13). All of these elements set the audiovisual and emotional ground for the spectators' as well as for Santiago Miranda's identification with Bolívar

and his dream of a Great Colombia. What's important for this analysis, however, is how the film makes explicit that we are not just watching how a character is built. Although the film appeals to previous knowledge about Bolívar, at the same time it creates him anew through the actor's body in its own circumstances in a renewed context of performance.

In fact, recent theories of theater avoid a sharp distinction between actor and performer by attributing performance to the actor's body. David Graver comments that: "in performing, the actor displays an expressive body, a body involved in a communicative activity" (160). The actor's body functions as the "medium" to convey a message. As I have already mentioned with respect to Roach's and Schechner's theories of performance, this communicative function is shaped by a historical context. In other words, whilst the actor's body is engaged in the continuity of conventional behaviors and actions that convey certain signifiers, as seen through the visual iconographic signs present in the movie, performance emerges to constitute a unique interpretation and a commentary of these historical conventions. In this sense, one must consider again Roach's proposition that behaviors are never uniformly repeated but rather are paradoxically understood to both be repeated whilst at each occasion exist as a unique set of behaviors. Following Graver, what makes the performance unique, then, is the actor's interpretation of the mimetic and historic conventions alongside the commentating function of his body (162). As a consequence, the historical context from which the image of Bolívar emerges is as integral to Santiago's performance of the icon as is his own perception and interpretation of the hero. Before developing this last point, I would like to delve on the ways in which *Bolívar I Am* highlights the actor's body.

Frequently, cinema reveals the actors when at the end of the movies we see, generally for comic relief, the mistakes they made during filming. In *Bolívar I Am*, however, being revealed as an actor impels the action and serves as a most important self-conscious device, especially if we take into account that central to the film is the questioning of the distinction between fiction and reality. When at the end of the firing squad segment Santiago cuts off filming by protesting the inaccurate representation of Bolívar's death, the body of the actor is revealed. By walking over and placing his hand over the camera, Santiago becomes framed within the confines of this mechanical device. A zoom out with another camera promptly reveals his whole body, the set, the crew and a few spectators present in the location. Furthermore, we also learn through Alejandra, the actor playing Manuela Sáenz, that Santiago does not have much experience on television as he has worked mainly in the theater. Infuriated by Santiago's directorial intervention, Alejandra suggests radical modifications to the script by telling the director and the producer: "I suggest a change of actor. Why don't you bring one from Venezuela? There they have Bolívares by the hundreds and they are better-looking." ["Yo les sugiero que cambien de actor. Bueno, ¿por qué no traen uno de Venezuela? Allá hay Bolívares así (she makes a gesture with her hand to indicate quantity) y

mucho más guapos.”] Alejandra’s comment outlines internal rivalries especially as she states that the *telenovela*’s success is due to her own acting. Her comment validates presumptions about the genre’s participative force in creating a star system in countries that lack a film tradition (López 258). *Bolívar I am* exemplifies the connection between the *telenovela* and film, not only because of Triana’s work in both areas, but also because leading actors Robinson Díaz and Amparo Grisales are very popular *telenovela* stars. In fact, in the Colombian media space Grisales has attained the status of diva. Returning to the film, Alejandra thinks that Santiago can be easily replaceable with a more “authentic” Venezuelan Bolívar, in a move that promotes the physical type-casting typical of television. Moreover, by addressing the issue of the appearance and work experience of Santiago, Alejandra reveals the actor’s body not only in terms of its national origin, but, to borrow a phrase from Graver, also in its exterior build, behavior and position in the artistic community. In this sense, the physical presence of the actor would interact with cultural codes for a successful impersonation by signaling to what Barry King calls “the cultural economy of the human body as a sign” (127). But more than that, Alejandra’s words, in spite of the invocation of authenticity, also indicate the status of Bolívar as an object in circulation not only in Venezuela, as I have shown in relation to the performance executed by president Chávez, but also in Colombia. Santiago’s own performance positions his Bolívar, especially through the stardom that the actor achieves, within the specific confines of a Colombian media and artistic space.

The body of the actor then stops narrative fluidity within the *telenovela* when Santiago and Alejandra reveal its contextual and historical materiality, but at the same time it impels the action of the film and serves as a most important self-conscious device to disclose another narrative level. This level draws attention to issues of reception and interpretation within the filmic diegesis. Notwithstanding Alejandra’s opinion about his mediocrity, Santiago’s performance of Bolívar has made a star out of him. Santiago’s stardom is apparent in at least three instances, including his picture on a poster advertising the *telenovela*, the military parade which is broadcast live on national television, and the meeting of Bolivarian presidents to which he is invited. All of these events prominently feature his performance of Bolívar. In addition, people recognize him on the streets and ask for his autograph. Considering these circumstances, Santiago fulfills at least some of the criteria of the definition of a star given by John Ellis, particularly when this critic states that: “The basic definition of a star is that of a performer in a particular medium whose figure enters into subsidiary forms of circulation, and then feeds back into future performances” (303). Besides highlighting Santiago’s body, the poster, the parade, and the presidential meeting function as “subsidiary forms of circulation” which, as examples of extra-filmic discourse(s), condition audiences’ reaction towards Santiago. The enactment of these extra-filmic discourse(s) within the film serves to explain why Santiago is so famous and revered and also possibly why he is identified as Bolívar by intradiegetic viewers. Also, as particular forms of

circulation these discourses bring to light the use of Bolívar as a symbol and as an object of feeling that attracts all kinds of audiences, across age, gender, and region.

The communicative function of the actor's body necessitates a spacio-temporal environment as provided in *Bolívar I am* by the represented set of the film and the streets of Bogotá where Santiago is greeted as the Liberator. In this sense, the movie not only blurs the distinction between actor and performer, but also between performer and spectator. In a theatrical context, in order to define someone as a performer, a clearly delineated border must be recognized between the spectator and the performer, and between reality and the defined space removed from reality in which the performer exists. Furthermore, the performer must be aware of her/his state of being observed by the spectator, thus mutually concluding the existence of a separate theatrical context (Pavis 58). However, in *Bolívar I am*, as hinted at in the previous paragraph, the demarcation between spectator and performer is in constant contestation. As the self-identified spectators, the pilot who offers to fly Santiago to Caracas and who asks him about Santander's treachery, Santiago's mother, the neighbor, the psychologist, the school children, the Community Association representative, the museum security guard, the sex worker, and the townspeople who gather to salute Bolívar on the river bank all assume a participative role in the performance of Bolívar and contribute to the normalization of that which began as fiction in the form of a *telenovela*. Even the *vallenato* music form, in its role as a commentator of daily events finds its way into the movie. The song "Canto a Bolívar," composed and interpreted by well-known singer and song writer Iván Ovalle, calls for a return of Santiago Miranda as Simón Bolívar. Such an emotional investment from the part of the composer, the singers and the townspeople who gather to chant it supports the idea that most of the intradiegetic viewers of "The Liberator's Lovers" cannot seem to differentiate between Santiago and the independence hero. Furthermore, Santiago's interactions with the intradiegetic spectators of the television drama help him get a sense of the needs that present-day Colombians yearn to be fulfilled.

The idea of the spectator and performer existing and interacting in the same space is aptly conveyed in a survey conducted by a television network. The graphic shown by the host of the newscast confirms that 20 % of respondents think that Bolívar is crazy, 72% reply that he is sane or that he is right, and only 8% do not know or do not respond ["Bolívar está loco 20%, Bolívar tiene la razón 72%, no sabe o no responde 8%"].¹⁴ Judging by the high percentage of responses confusing Santiago with Bolívar, there is an increasingly self-reflexive connection between the "filmic" and "extrafilmic" realities as the *telenovela* character of Bolívar begins to exist in the extrafilmic reality. Beyond simply functioning as a self-conscious metacinematic device to highlight reception, the present body of the actor also allows a temporal confusion that leads spectators to request favours from a historical figure that existed in another time, thus contributing to erasing the distinction between fiction and reality.

The spatio-temporal dynamics that allows spectators and performers to ex-

ist and interact in the same space is what Schechner refers to as “environmental theatre.” These are centers where performances, goods, services, and ideologies are displayed and exchanged, as in get-togethers like the Amerindian powwow, theme parks or “restored villages” (*Over* 135-136). “Restored villages” are villages that specialize in restoring fantasies, either recreated from events taken from history, or, as Schechner states, played back from the movies. As such “they are reflexions, not reflections of ... experience” (*Over* 135, 145). In this scenario, the spectator willfully becomes a participant in the fictional world, albeit only temporarily, whilst maintaining a conscious connection to her/his reality (*Over* 150). As Schechner explains: “the performers are not on a stage, not rewarded by applause, and don’t strictly follow a word-by-word script called a drama. In some of the villages the actors interact with spectators, making the visitor enter into the world of the village, thereby further blurring the seam between performance and its nonacting surround” (*Over* 153). By focusing on spectators, Schechner complements Pavis’ view on the role of the performer and the existence of a separate theatrical context. Notwithstanding this separation the sort of time-space, or chronotope, created in a “restored village,” allows spectators and performers to function and interrelate at the same level. In the film, the series of interactions with the programs’ viewers precisely demonstrates to what extent the whole city of Bogotá and indeed the whole country have become a “restored village,” and to what degree the fictional world has transcended toward reality. The spectators’ participation functions to legitimize Santiago’s identity as Bolívar as well as his motives and subsequent actions. Such self-reflexive qualities and cinematic strategies emphasize the extent to which the *telenovela* is not only a popular medium of communication and entertainment, but also a potential means to instigate and shape national discourses as everybody discusses the types of Bolívar and, consequently, the type of nation that they desire.

Yet it is not only through the roles of the spectators that the notion of the “restored village” is salient in the film. Numerous cinematic conventions are incorporated throughout *Bolívar I am* in order to accentuate the reiterative performance of Bolívar and to communicate to the viewers a critical as well as a consensual commentary about society’s memory of the symbol of the hero. The physical environment in which the performance transpires contains symbolic references that assume communicative functions. A poignant example in the film refers to the boat granted to Bolívar upon abducting the President. Throughout the time aboard the craft, numerous scenes evoke notions of a historical time period, perhaps such as that of Bolívar. In response to the President’s question: “Why are we going up river?” [“¿Por qué estamos remontando el río?”] Santiago/Bolívar explains, “I am retracing my steps” [“Estoy desandando mis pasos.”] Representative of a pilgrimage, Bolívar and the President appear to relive a historic journey, whose account Santiago begins to rewrite in the form of a resurrected Bolívar aboard the ship. As is common with many pilgrimages, the devotees hope to experience similar conditions as did their predecessors, despite their being harsh and unforgiving, as

is implicated by the conditions on Santiago's/Bolívar's boat. In contrast with the film's contemporary setting, the boat is surprisingly antiquated, with rustic features and sparse furniture. The natural texture created by a lit candle evokes the idea that there is no electricity on board. Indeed, the only sign of any modern appliances is an old battery-run radio which late one evening accompanies Santiago's/Bolívar's thoughts as he lies awake and deep in contemplation. Although the appearance of this device would be anachronistic if one thinks of Bolívar's times, in the present it signals the lack of comforts that chroniclers identify as characteristic of the Liberator's harsh surroundings. Essential, then, to Santiago's performance is the idea of the recreation of a time and space that he builds out of the *telenovela* script and his prosthetic memories so as to replicate the Liberator's rough environment. In light of its contemporary setting, the boat might also be seen as symbolizing the present state of a nation that needs to be steered into justice and equality. In this way, the boat is an essential means by which the props of the "restored village" convey a critical reflexion on society.

What I have just described by referring to the craft as part of an architecture that sustains Santiago's performance, is also shown in the movie through the use of the Quinta de Bolívar in Bogotá. The home-turned-museum of the original Bolívar offers a further reworking of the idea of "restored village." It is here that Santiago/Bolívar attempts to unite all the Bolivarian presidents in order to rewrite the script of history and where the film makes its dramatic conclusion. The principal point of interest is the room where Bolívar insists on rewriting the finale. Because it belongs to a museum, the room is constructed as it was in the historic era and as such, every detail from the furniture to the portrait on the wall also functions an integral prop of the "restored village." This context does not pass unnoticed by Santiago/Bolívar as he makes an intentional effort to highlight its personal importance. When Alejandra questions him as to why he chose the Quinta Museo for a new meeting of the Bolivarian presidents, he responds with a certain degree of intimacy: "Because this is my house and here I feel safe" ["Porque esta es mi casa y aquí me siento más seguro"]. This and the other physical environments used are intended to construct a chronotope in which the performance of Bolívar, and his nation-building dream, is predominantly articulated.

Santiago's engagement in certain activities in specific physical environments further emphasizes the significance of the idea of "restored village." In this respect, the public events in which Santiago/Bolívar participates require detailed analysis. Subsequent to his departure from the film set in the city of Santa Marta, as was previously mentioned, Santiago is invited by the President to participate in a grandiose parade to celebrate Bolívar's anniversary. The parade functions as a memory discourse which uses and generates the image of Bolívar as a cultural product and an object of feeling for national consumption. In the parade, Santiago/Bolívar precedes the police and other military forces through the streets of Bogotá in order to convey a public sense of beauty, majesty, and order. In the manner of the anniversary that Arciniegas commemorated, this audience is composed of

dignitaries and other public figures, as well as of citizens and addressees who watch the parade through the television screen. Bolívar embodies the nation and as a symbol of the past seems to function as a means of cohesion, modernity and strength. The announcer in the film explicitly describes the purpose or intention of the display:

In a demonstration of strength, pride, glory, ability, and discipline, the infantry, the navy, the air force and its units of fast deployment, pay homage to his Excellency General Simón Bolívar, whose name and presence honor this military parade and contribute to show the power of Colombian national symbols.

[“En una demostración de poderío, orgullo, gloria, talento y disciplina, la infantería, la armada y la fuerza aérea, con las unidades de despliegue rápido, rinden honores al Excelentísimo General Simón Bolívar, cuya presencia engalana esta parada militar en su nombre, y contribuye a demostrar la fortaleza de los símbolos patrios.”]

Following Don Handelman, the intention to display pride and glory is the source of symbolic production and dissemination that functions as a basic feature of events such as rallies and public festivals (12, 42). As a result of appropriating the symbol of Bolívar, the parade as an event that displays, or what Handelman calls an “event-that-presents,” works to “publicly enunciate and index lineaments of statehood, nationhood, and civic collectivity” (Handelman 41, 42). The segment in which Santiago/Bolívar is shown riding his horse amidst the barrage of marching military groups is shortly followed by a formal ceremony in which Santiago/Bolívar and select political figures honor the Liberator. The parade and the ceremony, as versions of a “restored village” assembled by political motives as a public “event-that-presents,” encompass an organizational framework that affirms the ideal social order and evokes precise notions from which to construct national identity. These events conflate Bolívar with the nation and with the need for an enactment of memory as a narrative for exhibiting strength and might. Handelman succinctly discusses the incidence of self-reflexivity, which is used to convey these ideals with conviction:

The elites, who [...] embody the state, hold up a highly polished mirror of great clarity to the nation, and the nation sees an incisive vision of itself stand forth. This version of course is constructed, a fiction, but one that permits no intruders or competitors during its doing (44).

In the film, the catalyst for this fictitious account of national identity is the symbolism of Bolívar, which is underscored by the announcer’s enunciation and the marching military groups. It is as if the symbolic presence of Bolívar would allude to what Handelman defines as a larger “lived-in world,” that is, the wider world in which patriotic sentiments contribute to a determined ideal national identity

(12, 13). These banal but dangerous uses are summarized by Santiago/Bolívar when later on, in the Bolivarian meeting of presidents, he proclaims the following: "You do not know the true Bolívar because instead of engaging in politics, you do theater. After my death my name has been used for the worst reasons: to justify a coup d'état, to name mediocre high schools, hospitals that do not function, constitutions that are not applied, and even to legitimize the barbarity of armed struggle." ["Porque ustedes, Señores, ustedes no conocen al verdadero Bolívar. Porque ustedes no hacen política, ustedes hacen teatro. Después de mi muerte mi nombre ha sido utilizado para lo peor, para justificar un golpe de estado, para ponerle nombre a colegios mediocres, a hospitales que no sirven, a constituciones que no se aplican y ya hasta para legitimizar la barbaridad de la lucha armada"]. The government's interests and disconnect with public experience is thus contrasted with the *telenovela* spectators' needs and desires and with Santiago's own interpretation of Bolívar. This is why Santiago self-fashions himself as a Bolívar who must come back in order to right social wrongs.

The device of the *telenovela*-within-a-film purports to register and convey the ways in which contemporary modes of cultural production, as W.B. Worthen has shown for another context, participate in social life. Such an intervention is signaled in *Bolívar I am* through the multiple ways people use Bolívar in their daily life. Instances of adopting and adapting him to further political ideas, moments of questioning and commenting on his representation, but also the desire to imagine the possibility of the Bolivarian dream confront the national project with a reality that seems to be in the 21st century more chaotic than any film could ever imagine. *Bolívar I am* works to highlight the ways in which the symbol of Bolívar is constantly refuted, supported and transformed by way of performance. As Schechner states, "restored behaviour offers to both individuals and groups the chance to become someone else 'for the time being,' or the chance to become what they once were. Or even, and most often, to rebecome what they never were" (*Over* 103-104). In this sense, the images and memories "of which we are made," to quote Martín Barbero, are shaped by cultural histories and experiences. As I have shown the recycling of Bolívar as an object of feeling helps in the creation of prosthetic memory in its relation to national identity. Bolívar, and consequently the nation's massmediatic circulation, trigger memories that being personal can account for conflicting emotions, such as anger, discomfort, pleasure and hope. Following Ahmed (13), these feelings can in turn shape different kinds of actions and orientations toward the object, which in the case studied is Bolívar. In this respect, the national project envisioned by the film is based on an idea of a reformulation of Bolívar's dream with an emphasis on solidarity.

Taking into account the *telenovela* genre's popularity, it is not hard to understand why so many critics agree that, besides being a commercial force in transforming Latin American television and its infrastructure, *telenovelas* are major cultural participators by way of interpellating spectators and responding to audience desires. By occupying center stage the *telenovela* in *Bolívar I am*

stresses issues of reception across gender, social class, region, and age, further stressing the communicative and social function of performance. As a matter of fact, audiences of "The Liberator's Lovers," are not only composed of children, men, and women, but also of people from different professions and walks of life. Upon entering into a negotiated fictional contract, these people assume a participative role in Bolívar's performance. They not only validate the need for Bolívar's return, but also take the opportunity to react and comment on Bolívar's representation. Of the various perspectives presented, I would like to analyze Santiago's, as well as that of the sex worker and the museum keeper, because in addition to expressing their passion for the *telenovela*, these characters engage in a direct dialogue with its conventions. The way in which they give voice to their expectations and desires replicates the manner that commentators have described for *telenovela* audiences worldwide.

Although the time-space lived by Santiago does not coincide historically with Bolívar's time, the actor's identification with the Liberator's dream serves as a channel to explore his own interpretation of the hero and his political commitment to social change. As I have already commented, early in the film, there is a segment in which after becoming anxious about his character's impending death, Santiago, all flustered and seemingly disturbed, stops the shooting. At this moment, the director reminds the actor that before the filming of the *telenovela* he had no idea who Bolívar was. Beyond causing a comical effect, this statement reflects, on the one hand, on the permeability of memory and on its processes of filtering and weighing which allow for the forgetting or recovering of historical figures. On the other, it comments on the process of identity construction in which television and specifically the *telenovela* are involved. Santiago clearly states so when he tells the filmmaker: "You are no director. You are a make-up artist, and for him who applies makeup to history any corpse comes in handy" ["Usted no es ningún director. Usted es un maquillador, y para quien maquilla la historia, todo cadáver es exquisito"]. Through this remark, Santiago is making clear that it is not only the politicians and the *telenovela* viewers who participate in the continuity of the "restored village" in which Bolívar is a tangible entity. The interests of the television industry, as represented by the producer, director, and the on-site psychiatrist, are explicitly portrayed through a conniving ensemble that strives to control which Bolivarian image is portrayed to the public. Their media incentives linking higher ratings to higher profits are clearly articulated. Therefore, these executives desperately endeavor to control the Bolívar that Santiago feels compelled to embody by exerting the right to deny or validate his performance at their convenience. Alejandra herself points to these interests when, in reference to Santiago, she asks the director: "Why do you treat him as a puppet? [¿Por qué lo sigues tratando como una marioneta?"]". However, although Santiago acknowledges that he was not familiar with anything about Bolívar, his study of the script and of the character he is portraying allows him to appropriate Bolívar and, to paraphrase Landsberg, to get to know and relive events from the past that he has

not experienced first-hand. Santiago's identification with Bolívar authorizes him to react against the commercial rewriting of history that the production company privileges and lets him set out to find out and rewrite the ending that would satisfy his own idea of the Liberator. The motive of the journey is played out as a quixotic search and as a scrutiny of the present state of the nation.

As I have already said, inside and outside the television set, the actor's own perspective of a problematic and torn social body shapes his performance of the Liberator. In addition, his interactions with the intradiegetic viewers of the *telenovela* give him a sense of the needs faced by present-day Colombians. For example, the neighbor's pleading for Santiago's help in getting a scholarship suggests deficiencies in the education system. Similarly, the Community Association representative who requests a Health Center and the thousands of demonstrators who, towards the mid-section of the movie, gather to support Santiago's demands, including the writing off of the national external debt, reveal ruptures in the social fabric. As he encounters spectators, Santiago/ Bolívar becomes more and more aware of specific needs. These exchanges generate in Santiago strong feelings of empathy, as he feels morally obliged to get involved in the search for a solution to the perceived social chaos. This engagement provides the heightened sensory feeling through which his relationship with Bolívar becomes a prosthetic memory. Santiago's quixotic search allows for the performance of Bolívar within an actualized contemporary setting. Furthermore, by fighting for the Independence hero's dream through a call for the reunification of the Gran Colombia, Santiago criticizes the state, its institutions and the years of violence that have plagued the country. More than just rewriting an ending for the *telenovela*, Santiago embarks on a rewriting of history.

Of importance in this rewriting is the rapport that Santiago has with the *telenovela* viewers, in particular with the prostitute and the museum keeper. After the parade, escaping once again the television crew that wants him back on the set, Santiago/Bolívar takes a horse and gallops away through the busy Bogotá streets still wearing his Bolívar costume. As Patrice Pavis has noted, costume often constitutes a kind of traveling scenography (177). As an essential element in the construction of Bolívar as an object of feeling, the attire sets the visual ground for everybody's identification with Bolívar and his supposed dream. Also, since the costume is so colorful and majestic, it cites at least one consequence of the designed historical image, which, as Tashiro argues, is to make the past appealingly pretty (64). However, as a prop of the restored village, in this film the costume delineates a spatio-temporal fissure that blurs the lines between reason and madness, between an unstable past and a bloody present, and between fiction and reality.¹⁵

Both the prostitute and the museum keeper comment on the *telenovela*'s rapport to reality. Santiago's first stop is at a nightclub. After dancing for a short while he goes to a sex worker's room where Santiago eats and drinks. Although the woman seems to want to engage in sex, she soon turns the television on and

starts watching "The Liberator's Lovers." The episode features the assassination attempt against Bolívar when Manuela Sáenz saved him.¹⁶ The background music and Alejandra's exaggerated interpretation of Sáenz, intensified by the inflexions of her voice and her tight dress, create an association between eroticism and melodramatic intensity. Also, Santiago's on-screen lines, in which he calls Manuela: "La Libertadora del Libertador" [The Liberator's Liberator], contributes to express heightened emotions. Simultaneously, we see how the sex worker engages with the *telenovela* as she watches it intently even though she is in the middle of a business transaction. Once again reminded of the possibility of Bolívar's death, Santiago becomes anxious and turns the television off. The woman immediately complains and reiterates that she never misses the *telenovela*. When Santiago expresses his frustration about media business and especially about acting, the two characters start a short conversation.

The prostitute establishes a parallel between Santiago's acting and his view of satisfying a clientele of spectators with her own profession. She contextualizes the type of acting she does to please her clients as dominated by constraints that place her in a position in which if she enjoys what she does she is just a whore, and if she does not she is in her own personal hell. Prostitution is problematized by tying it up to deep economic and social difficulties that make this job the only chance the woman has to provide for her son. By focusing on her own body as the means to satisfy men's desires, the sex worker is implying that Santiago's role as a satisfier of spectators' desires is negotiated due to the contractual nature of the genre of the *telenovela*. According to generic convention, and to maintain high ratings, plots are easily changed and characters modified. In contrast, by commenting on the female body as an issue that the *telenovela* would not directly problematize, the prostitute is commenting on the cultural and historical place of women in the narrative of the nation. Such a stance is important since the character of Bolívar in the *telenovela* has many lovers. She also critically refers to a naïve performance of masculinity as, in her words, men cannot know if women are faking an orgasm. Upon presenting the Liberator as a womanizer, the *telenovela* is engaging in sexual politics in which gender and sexuality, vis-à-vis the sex worker's life experience and response as spectator, are portrayed as paradoxical sites of exclusion and idealization. Through her critical stance, the prostitute appropriates an active role in deciphering the discourses exploited by the *telenovela* and manages to implicate the genre in the construction of a gendered national imaginary. The sex worker's motivations function as an example of yet another local and personalized need for social protection that in spite of the state's rhetoric of grandeur and power remains to be fulfilled.

The prostitute is not the only character who is disturbed by the *telenovela*'s portrayal of Bolívar. After leaving her, Santiago/Bolívar, still in his full Bolívar attire, mounts his horse and goes to the Quinta Museo de Bolívar. There he is warmly received by the museum keeper, who addresses him as "Liberator." After looking at various rooms of this home-turned-museum, Santiago goes to

the garden to talk to the museum keeper. This man reflects on the lack of verisimilitude of the assassination attempt episode. Even when envying Bolívar for being "putísimo" [womanizer and whore lover] the museum guardian criticizes the focus on Bolívar's superficial acts of sexual prowess and demands a better representation of the hero in order for him to be an effective nation-constructing role model. Although the museum keeper is talking about Bolívar, one cannot but think of Santiago, about whom the sex worker says that he always comes back. Santiago's rewriting of history is implicated in a performance of gender as a contradiction in which he does not seem to question men's and women's traditional roles. The museum guardian's complaint about the episode is summarized when he utters: "one of the darkest pages of the history of this country is presented in the *telenovela* as a mere trifle. The true dream of the Liberator cannot be seen in this production" ["Una de las páginas más negras de la historia de este país, en esa telenovela parece como una pendejada. El verdadero sueño del Libertador no se ve por ninguna parte."] By suggesting that Santiago take into his own hands the completion of Bolívar's dream, Santiago's interlocutor vigorously participates in the rewriting of history and of the independence hero. His demand for the Bolívar who, in his words, set alight the fire of liberty and dreamt of peace and unification, is linked to the representation with which he would like his children to identify. The reference to the next generation, as in the case of the sex worker, brings to the fore the close connection between family and nation. Through their linking of cultural production with biological reproduction, both the sex worker and the museum keeper are stressing the role of the *telenovela* as a site of intervention for the construction and reconstruction of the nation. Their response shows an active participation along lines that frame the impact of the *telenovela* in connection to gender structures, including the performance of masculinity, in order to create spaces for the reconfiguration of national identity along solidarity lines. As opposed to views of the nation imposed from above, as seen in the film, and through the Arciniegas and Chávez examples, this perspective from "below" contests spectacularizing discourses for an interpretation of the nation in unison with common people's daily experience and needs.

Through their expression of how much they like or dislike certain episodes of the *telenovela*, these two characters stress the importance of intense feelings and emotions in its connection to the social body and the body politic. As a technology that generates feelings, the *telenovela* and Bolívar connect audiences to political debates and to prosthetic memories that may call for an engaged response. In the case of Santiago, anger gives rise to empathy and to solidarity as he feels compelled to be part of the solution to the perceived social deficiencies. Santiago, as if to prove Jorge Alí Triana right about how Colombians feel, sees the present as a continuation of past unfinished deeds and experiences it as pain. The television viewers, on their part, question the banal uses of the Independence hero. Their disgust at the commercial exploitation of the genre's conventions shows their understanding of the role of the *telenovela* genre in the formation of national

identity. By commenting on the context of production and consumption of the *telenovela*, the movie emphasizes the role of industrial mechanisms and spectators as participants and consumers of media-generated images of reality. In relation to this, as an instance of "twice-behaved behavior" and "restored behavior," the space-time-event of performance allows for people to voice their concerns and to participate in the process of discussing the nation as it is and imagining as it should be. Despite the well-known fact that the acclaimed and respected Bolívar of the *telenovela* is not the "actual" Bolívar, performance constructs an environment that provides the conditions necessary for the hero's return, as Santiago/Bolívar points out in a self-reflexive speech at the Bolivarian meeting when he interpellates the Latin American presidents by declaiming: "I rose from my grave because the continent deserves a second chance. I came back to call upon you to reunify the Great Colombia" ["Me levanté de la tumba porque el continente se merece una segunda oportunidad. Vine para convocarlos a la reintegración de la Gran Colombia"]. The *telenovela* transforms the role of Bolívar into a site of validity in a call for change and national unification in a country that has been divided by regional politics. The lack of unity represented at the end of the film through documentary clips and other footage, accounts for the national historical trauma and also for Santiago/Bolívar's new defeat as he lies agonizing and covered-in-blood after the army has raided the Quinta de Bolívar in Bogotá. In spite of this, *Bolívar I am* suggests that in order to succeed, the Bolivarian dream needs to be rethought and rewritten. The film shows the numerous ways in which cultural productions do shape national identity through reiteration and change. Performance as a series of interventions accentuating processes of surrogation and recycling can serve as a means to construct, reproduce and modify cultural meanings and concepts of engaged and felt citizenship for an active participation in the project of nation building.

Notes

- I would like to thank the Latin American Research Center at the University of Calgary, and specially its director, Christon Archer, for a fellowship that allowed time to research and write this paper; Maria Akrabova and Rachel Schmidt for their careful readings and insightful comments; research assistant Monique Greenwood for her help and for her contribution to parts of the section on "restored village"; and the anonymous readers of *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* for their time and helpful suggestions.
- 1. According to Triana, the script for *Bolívar I am* is based on the true story of Colombian actor Pedro Montoya. Having reached such a level of identification with the hero while playing him in Triana's television series *Bolívar, el hombre de las dificultades*, Montoya started to appear in public as the Liberator. See Garzón and Mora.
- 2. The territory of the short-lived Gran Colombia (1819-1831) corresponded more or less to the jurisdiction of the Viceroyalty of New Granada, the Captaincy General of Venezuela, and the Royal Audience of Quito. Triana sees his film as an amalgam of genres in which comedy is used to treat delicate national issues. See Mora.

3. To name a few, recent discussions on Bolívar include David Bushnell (2006), Stephen M. Hart (2005), Lancelot Cowie (2004), Rodolfo Guzmán (2003), Richard W. Slatta (2003), Carlos Humberto Parra (2002), Pamela S. Murray (2001) and María Antonia Zandanel de González (2000). Although the articles by Bushnell and Murray are devoted to Santander and Manuela Sáenz, respectively, both authors also comment on Bolívar.
4. The contemporary discourses surrounding performance studies are generally associated with J.L. Austin's *How to Do Things With Words*. Subsequent to Austin emerged the works of Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler, Joseph Roach, and Richard Schechner, among others. As Warden declares, performance studies now traces the horizon of an energetically expanding field characterized by a range of aims, methods and objects of inquiry (87-88). Although in Latin America the concepts of performance and performativity have been productive, so far this method of enquiry has only been used for the analysis of a select body of works, as well as performing bodies and cultural manifestations mainly representing Argentina (Salessi and O'Connor, Taylor ["DNA," The Archive, and "Performing Gender"]); Mexico (Franco, Nigro, Röttger, Steele, Unruh ["Las ágiles" and "Una equívoca"]), and more recently Bolivia (Goldstein), Cuba (Berenschot, Bettelheim) and Puerto Rico (Flores, La Fountain-Stokes). In her analysis of the Colombian telenovela *Yo soy Betty, la fea* [*Ugly Betty*] (Mario Ribero Ferreira, 1999), Yeidy Rivero concentrates on gender. My study adds to those mentioned above, specifically through its linkage of performance to the telenovela and to national identity.
5. Although the term parody has been used to describe the conscious imitation of a text, character, or motive, theoreticians also underscore its potential undermining criticism and ironic distancing. See Marchese and Forradellas (311). Also, as Steve Neale infers from Linda Hutcheon, parody seeks the subordination of the conventions of one genre to those of another (19). For these reasons, the term "parody" is not productive for the analysis I propose here. As Christine Gledhill has shown, cinema has heteroglossic and dialogic qualities that question such a hierarchization (234). At the same time, performance, as exemplified by Arciniegas, and as I will later show for president Chávez and Triana's film, seeks to affirm the validity of a Bolivarian model in spite of its hitherto failure to create a sense of unification. I would like to thank my colleague Rachel Schmidt for a question leading me to this clarification.
6. By adding the components of "feeling" and "cinema," I am refining Karl W. Deutsch's socio-communicative approach to nationalism. According to him, national consciousness and nationalism depend on the proliferation, intensification, and modification of the habits and communicative abilities resulting from growing social mobility and a progressive integration (cited by König 29). Contrary to the historical negative connotations of the term, nationalism, as Hans-Joachim König states, can be defined as an instrument to motivate political solidarity and engagement (28, 29). For a discussion about Colombian national identity and the nation from various perspectives, see Bagley and Silva; D'Allemand; González Ortega; Jaramillo; Martín Barbero (*Communication*); Jorge Melo; Múnera and Wade, among others. For a sociological standpoint, see Henao Escovar. A detailed discussion of nationalism and the nation in various cinemas is provided in Hjort and MacKenzie's *Cinema and Nation*.

7. *Bolívar I am* cites this ideological shift as one of the intradiegetic spectators asks Santiago if Santander is as evil as portrayed in the *telenovela*.
8. For a reading of the film as a critique of visual culture see Geoffrey Kantaris.
9. President Chávez has quite a following of his own resulting in the commodification of his image (Foer 94, 100) The Venezuelan president has also spurred a great deal of criticism. For interpretations concerning Chávez's use of Bolívar and other heroes, see Bernard, Conway, and Chumaceiro.
10. I have translated "Patria" as "nation" because historically the term "Patria," as König shows for the New Granada context, seems to be linked to values and meanings that have been helpful to create a sense of political solidarity and engagement, such as implied by Triana. See König 45.
11. The main Latin American producers of *telenovelas* are Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia, followed closely by Argentina, Venezuela, Perú and Chile (Tufté 57). The genre's high ratings are best exemplified by the fact that a minute of publicity during one of the most popular Colombian *telenovelas*, *Yo soy Betty, la fea* [*Ugly Betty*] was sold at US \$15,600 (Mato 144). After becoming highly successful in the local markets in the 1980s, Latin American *telenovelas* have been exported to more than 130 countries (Tufté 57; Mato 143). Also, in Latin America alone, according to a *Variety* magazine report, *Yo soy Betty, la fea* had 80 million viewers (quoted by Rivero 65).
 Since most of the studies on the *telenovela* genre concentrate on Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela, my study seeks to contribute to the debate by examining how *Bolívar I am* dialogues with the Colombian *telenovela*. Several authors have commented on this particular model of the genre with its treatment of contemporary issues, such as class, territory, sex, and age, among others. See Martín Barbero, "Memory" 280; López 261; and Lizaraburu. In my analysis I show the *telenovela*'s relevance to the proliferation, intensification, and modification of habits and feelings in their connection to performance and engaged responses to discourses on Colombian national identity and the nation.
12. For example Žižek and Deleuze offer a psychoanalytic and a rhizomatic model, respectively, to account for the way spectators interact with the film image. See Pisters, 16-17.
13. See Martín Barbero "Colombia," as well as the personal interview with Cabrera which appears in my book *Sujetos transnacionales*. For various perspectives on Colombian cinema, see Correa, Goldman, Gómez, Rueda and Shouse Taurino.
14. Marshall McLuhan has pointed out for the North American context that "leading players on television tend to be 'taken' in character by the public in face-to-face encounters" (quoted in King 150). Although I have not found any reference to the same phenomenon happening in Latin America, the film seems to be implying such dynamics.
15. Withalm offers interesting notes about the uses of costume in film.
16. Recent criticism has finally started to scrutinize Manuela Sáenz's role in the Independence campaigns providing a more nuanced understanding of her significance. See Murray. Slatta, for example, comments that Sáenz, as many other women, was part of the Patriot underground in Lima (229).

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