

Yo Cayetana: The Woman in Her Own Words

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Abstract

Much has been said and written about Cayetana de Alba, “Grandee of Spain” and a woman who took an important part in some of the historical moments of her lifetime. The images the media conveyed of her – that of a frivolous woman - is, yet, contradicted by her autobiography. The aim of this paper is, therefore, to investigate Cayetana’s discursive gendered positions from an interdisciplinary standpoint: based on a lexicometric approach of the data collected, the semio-linguistic interpretation highlights the possibilities and modalities of her Self represented in images and emotions involved in the real world and in a historical conjuncture in which the present and the past are articulated. Her words enable us to understand the strategies she uses to construct her identity and her own meanings in the representation of her lived experience in the interstices of the Self and of social relations (Probyn, 1993).

Keywords: Autobiography, discourse analysis, representation, *Yo Cayetana*: the Woman in her own Words

Before the labyrinth and proliferation of theories and definitions about autobiography and tangled in articulations of teleology and epistemologies, as well as in the tension between poetics and historiography, this research maps several questions.

In the belief that speakers or writers don’t subject each word to use to constant scrutiny – something that would be impossible in terms of interpersonal communication -, it is the discursive spontaneity that best defines them. Hence, the preference for some words and the non-selection of others results in a linguistic profile that may highlight some personality traits. Reading *Yo Cayetana*⁶¹, and above all ‘destroying’ her text, *i.e.*,

⁶¹ Fitz-James Stuart y Silva, Maria del Rosario Cayetana. (2011). *Yo, Cayetana*. Barcelona: Espasa Libros, S.L.U. The quotations and the references to the text indicated in parentheses are from this edition.

reducing it to a list of words to understand it better – a paradox -, one meets the true Cayetana. Indeed, the words she chose, which we analyse from the frequency lists generated by a hypertext programme (Hyperbase), allow us to discover the image she constructs of herself (Amossy, 1999, 2010).

The collection of the quantitative data thus obtained was the first step leading to the qualitative analysis of *Yo Cayetana*. In fact, not being our purpose to develop a lexical statistics study, some principles underlying quantitative calculus - here limited to indicators of frequency of occurrences - can support the semiolinguistic analysis (Charaudeau, 1992) of this autobiography, in which there are 62.132 occurrences of words. The general dictionary obtained from the abovementioned programme, constituted by the list of words of the text, was then lemmatized (Labbé, 1990), this giving origin to lists of lexical and functional words used by Cayetana.

From the data collected, and for the purpose of this article we considered the lexical words and Pronouns. We focused on family, domesticity and social circles, as well as on emotions, as they are telling examples of her eighty-five-year-long life.

Working within an interdisciplinary framework, where the study of autobiography and identity is underpinned by a lexicometric analysis, our essay starts by invoking Cayetana's words in the very last pages of her autobiography.

Dejo estos recuerdos en un momento feliz de mi vida: preparando mi boda con

Alfonso Díez Carabantes, que será mi tercer marido, el duque de Alba consorte de la XVIII duquesa de Alba, una mujer que peleó, vivió intensamente y espera que se la recuerde por sus obras, por el esfuerzo de mantener y aumentar el patrimonio de una casa, la de Alba, que forma parte de la historia de este país, aunque sea con un trocito pequeño. (p. 278).

To be reminded by her works and by her effort to magnify the House of Alba (freq. 117) are the two main objectives of the text, because Cayetana is only Cayetana.

Soy Cayetana, Cayetana de Alba. Tengo otra media docena de nombres y uns cuantos títulos. (...) De todos los nombres que mis padres eligieron para mí – ocho o nueve – el de Cayetana es el que más me gusta y el que siempre he usado. (p.9).

This assertive claiming of who Cayetana is can be observed along the text, namely when analysing the verbs *ser* and *tener*. The higher frequency of what she says she is (freq. 80), compared against what she says she is not (freq. 8) indicates a more positive image of herself, which is corroborated by the higher frequency of the present simple tense *yo soy* (freq. 54). For reasons of economy, we chose a small sample of positive and negative

statements illustrated in Fig.1.

SER Y NO SER	Pag.
lo que sí sé es que soy atractiva, interesante, diferente y original	55
Siempre he sido una adelantada al tiempo que me ha tocado vivir	55
yo he sido, soy y seré mui romántica	56
pero yo soy así, siempre que he podido he antepuesto el corazón a la razón, aunque lo primero fuera el deber	58-59
Lo que sí soy es monárquica al cien por cien - y católica, apostólica y romana	93
Yo no soy política, a mí me gustan las personas.	93
Y hay otro asunto que me preocupa, porque soy terriblemente española	94
No soy muy dada a las emotividades, pero a veces aún me pregunto qué hubiera sido de mí sin mi abuela	110
Soy una mujer libre	113
...yo soy una fortaleza a la que nadie puede asaltar sin que a mí me dé la gana	141
Lo que soy es orgullosa, como la mayoría de los españoles.	150
Yo era - y soy - una mujer cumplidora de mis deberes para la Casa	181
Soy algo supersticiosa por ese toque bohemio que tengo	182
No soy persona que se resigne fácilmente ante el fracaso	254
Soy mujer voluntariosa y peleona (...) aunque a mí nadie me derrota	274

Figure 1: What Cayetana says she is and she is not

We follow the same methodology referring to *tener* (Fig.2). While the negative forms are reduced to freq. 8, the positive ones have freq. 88.

TENER Y NO TENER	Pag.
he tenido una vida muy interesante que he vivido con pasión.	49
no tengo conciencia clara de haber sido una niña	18
desde pequeña he tenido una enorme seguridad en mí misma	55
tengo mucha dignidad (...) he tenido y tengo mucho genio	58
Tengo buena memoria	65
De los matrimonios de mis hijos, no he tenido suerte	92
Tengo alma de decoradora	133
Con la perspectiva del tiempo creo que tuve mérito en saber utilizar mi posición y convertirme así en una figura de relevancia internacional	150
Tenía suerte - en general, he tenido mucha suerte en mi vida	150
Se puede ser amiga de los hombres - de hecho, tengo y he tenido muchos y muy buenos amigos	155
Tengo una enorme fe en el Cristo de los Gitanos, en el Cristo del gran poder y en la Macarena	181
no tengo ninguna contradicción entre la religión y lo mágico	182
Ese toque bohemio que tengo	182
Tengo muchos amigos, tanto en la derecha como en la izquierda	212
Hoy tengo el corazón repleto y ocupado por un hombre estupendo, Alfonso Diez	269

Figure 2: What Cayetana says she has and she has not

Indeed, the image Cayetana wishes to build of herself is the one of a simple woman, who does not care about titles. The Duchess of Alba is Cayetana and *vice-versa*. Woman and title coalesce in one same person and identity.

[...] los Alba – primero mi padre y después yo – somos poco o nada partidarios de enumerar estas cuestiones de los dichos títulos. Es más, a lo largo, de mi vida he confesado en muchas ocasiones que lo de la nobleza y los títulos me tiene sin cuidado. (p. 15).

The Alba family has always found it more comfortable to socialize with the people of the streets, the ordinary and more “natural” (p.50) people, than with the well-to-do classes. Her father had always taught her to look from a distance questions of class and aristocracy and they have been friends of artists in general, painters, musicians, and writers (p.50). This might explain Cayetana’s popularity among the Spanish population, who considered her one of their own, but whose public image among the press she wishes to deconstruct (p. 146).

This deconstruction is revealed by the references made of her circle of domesticity, which includes, among others, servants, assistants, animals and the shepherd (Fig.3). Among these, we selected the 20 more frequent.

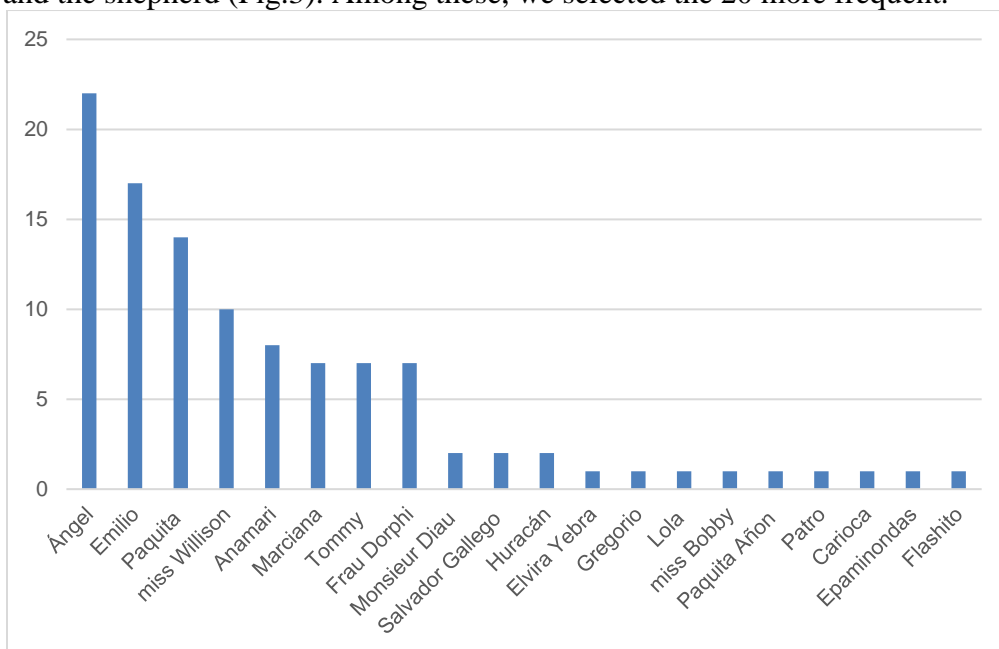


Figure 3: Domestic circle

Adopting a critical agenda which reads autobiography not as life itself, but rather as a text of life, or as a landscape of the Self, where the author selects how and what should be represented in the text, leaving to the reader the task of knowing and of discovering the identity of who knows oneself and of who is materialized through discourse.

In *Yo Cayetana*, the high frequency of first person personal pronouns subject and object, and of possessive determiners and pronouns (freq. 2956)

clearly illustrates this aspect (Fig.4). This high frequency increases to freq.7486 when the first persons of verbal forms are considered. Within these verbal morphemes of first persons, the use of past forms is much more common than present ones, which is not surprising in an autobiography.

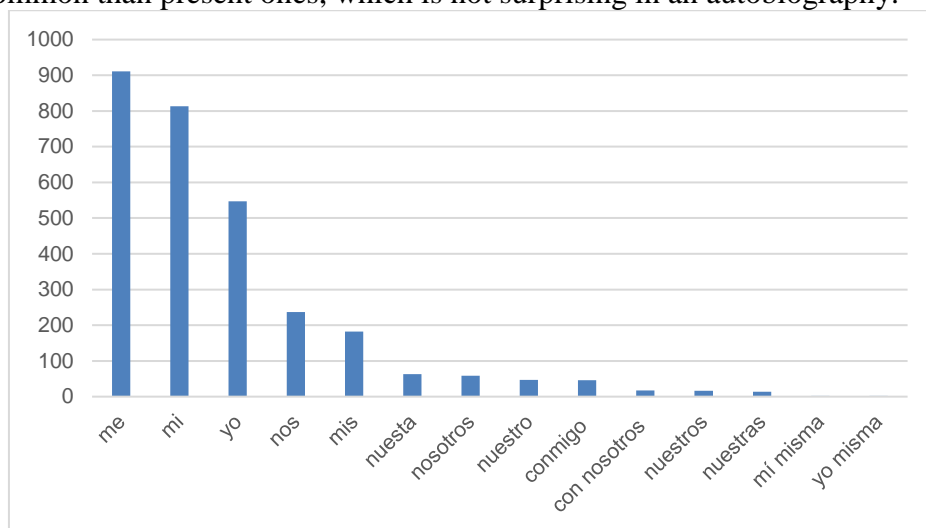


Figure 4: Personal pronouns, and possessive pronouns and determiners

One must consider that the Self is mediated by the lived experiences and memories, and, thus, that it may be spoken in different ways. Despite all the efforts of truthfulness and verisimilitude, the obstacles for a faultless reconstruction of the past highlight and turn inevitable the creation of a new past, recognizable and similar to it, but also different from what it hides in a new recreated coherence. Indeed, Cayetana converted the past and transformed it into a story, a story that does not exist outside the autobiographical text, because it was experienced only by herself, only she dominated her memories and converted them into discourse. Oftentimes, she states that she remembers what others have told her; other times, she remembers people and events, and other times she assertively admits that she does not remember, because she wants to forget, showing herself as a subject controlling the story of her life, as exemplified in Fig. 5.

RECORDAR Y NO RECORDAR	Pag.
[...] el rey Alfonso XIII, al que tuve muchísimo cariño y del que conservo tan buenos recuerdos	9-10
No recuerdo en qué momento asumí que era la XVIII duquesa de Alba [...] se nace con ello, no se registra, no figura entre mis recuerdos	12-13
Aunque los recuerdos de mi infancia tienen un matiz doloroso, no tengo conciencia clara de haber sido una niña alicaída, arrastrada por esa tristeza. No recuerdo nada del entierro de mi madre, ni lágrimas en casa ...	18
Alguien me contó luego - no sé en qué momento de mi vida - que mi padre, ese día de mi primera comunión, me cogió de la mano y me llevó al panteón de Loeches, donde están enterrados mi madre y nuestros antepasados. Yo no lo recuerdo. Jesús Aguirre, mi segundo marido, tenía la teoría de que había vivencias de mi infancia que se me habían borrado porque me habían hecho daño	30
Los dos cursos de París, entre las monjas y el hotel Prince de Galles, san de los peores recuerdos de mi vida.	29
Recuerdo perfectamente el día en que llamaron a papá al Claridge con una terrible noticia. Tengo grabada en la mente su cara de desaliento, de desazón, algo raro en él, que no acostumbraba a dejar que las emociones afloraran a su rostro. «Tanuquinet -me dijo-, nos hemos quedado sin casa. Han bombardeado Liria y todo está destruido por las llamas».	36
Me sentía tan protegida en Sevilla que las tragedias de la Guerra Civil ni siquiera las recuerdo como malas vivencias.	40
Tengo grabada en la memoria la belleza de Dueñas. Me había esforzado para que lo adornaran con las flores que más me gustaban	87
De lo que sí me acuerdo, como si fuera ayer, es de la multitud de personas que esperaban para dar la bienvenida a la reina	170
Me acuerdo de mi, siempre sola aunque estuviera rodeada de gente	174
No hay más que ver la serie de televisión que se hizo en 2010 o leer la novela sobre Jesús de ese señor del que no recuerdo el nombre. ¡ Tanta gente ha ganado tanto dinero a mi costa!	240
Por esos y otros muchos recuerdos me molestó tanto ese horrible libro sobre su vida, sea o no una novela. Jesús y yo nunca tuvimos ninguna discusión.	258
Como ahora soy tan feliz, me cuesta mucho pararme a recordar los últimos años, sobre todo la oposición de mis hijos a mi noviazgo y a mi matrimonio con Alfonso	266
Si tengo que recordar en estas memorias a todas las amigas que me han acompañado a lo largo de mi vida, creo que hasta puedo llegar tarde a la cita del 5 de octubre en la capilla de Dueñas con Alfonso	276

Figure 5: To Remember and not to remember

One of the reasons why Cayetana confesses that she does not remember some events has to do with less happy memories. Again, as the author of her own life, she chooses to forget, attributing to memory the power of agency (Foucault (1988). In *Yo Cayetana*, reviving memory is a task she set herself right at its beginning (p.10), acknowledging that only then was she aware of all the stories archived in her memory (p.32).

The recapitulation of a life only reveals an image of that same life, an image that is distant and incomplete, distorted by the fact that the Self that remembers is not the same as the person who lived in the past. Memory

produces a narrative subjectivity, working on consciousness, dissolving it and fragmenting it, blurring the frontiers between past and present, where memories are reminiscences and remembrances.

Oftentimes, Cayetana claims that she remembers what her father had told her. The remembered past loses its flesh and bone (Gusdorf, 1980). The process of self-understanding is reminiscent (Freeman 1993); it regathers all the dimensions of the Self that had been disarticulated, scattered or lost until the moment of writing. This reminiscence is an active critical process that combines emotions and moments of self-reflection that give access to the omitted experiences, allowing memory to see events of the past in a new way.

To communicate the lived experiences allowed Cayetana to elucidate the past and to perceive her structure as a Self throughout time, a structure that is implicit in the conditions of possibility (Sinfield, 1992) that she created for herself as subject and for the readers, claiming for herself the right to give her version of a life that had been converted by the tabloids and the celebrities press into “carne para picar y yo no estaba dispuesta a soportar más aquel acoso” (p. 240).

Bearing in mind that enunciation (Benveniste, 1966) is a dialogic act determined by who speaks to whom, by an enunciative subject and an addressee, a result of a reciprocal relation between a speaker and a reader, the autobiographical text expresses a relation of the Self with the Other. The Other that in *Yo Cayetana* is the common reader and the press which has pictured her as a frivolous and exuberant woman she deconstructs in her text (p.9).

Choosing the moments and the facts, Cayetana was not only representing her own experience, but also bringing to the space of communication what she wished to be known, thus creating a landscape of the Self, from where the past was revealed. Cayetana enlightens her life by seizing upon her own story, telling it in a direct and to some, perhaps, in a shocking way. Choices determine the kind of story we want to tell, and Cayetana determines her own character, her Self, through what she chooses to tell about her lived experiences in circles of proximity: family, domestic and social relations, as well as emotions. The automatic collection of high frequencies of the one hundred first words allow us to conclude that her family is the axis of her life: *padre* (freq.292), *casa* (freq. 144), *Luis* (freq. 144), *vida* (freq. 135), *Jesús* (freq. 129), [*hijo*] *Cayetano* (freq. 78), *hijos* (freq. 76), *matrimonio* (freq, 70) and [*hijo*] *Carlos* (freq.68).

The frequency with which she refers to her family circle is illustrated in Fig. 6. Among all the occurrences, only the 20 more frequent are considered.

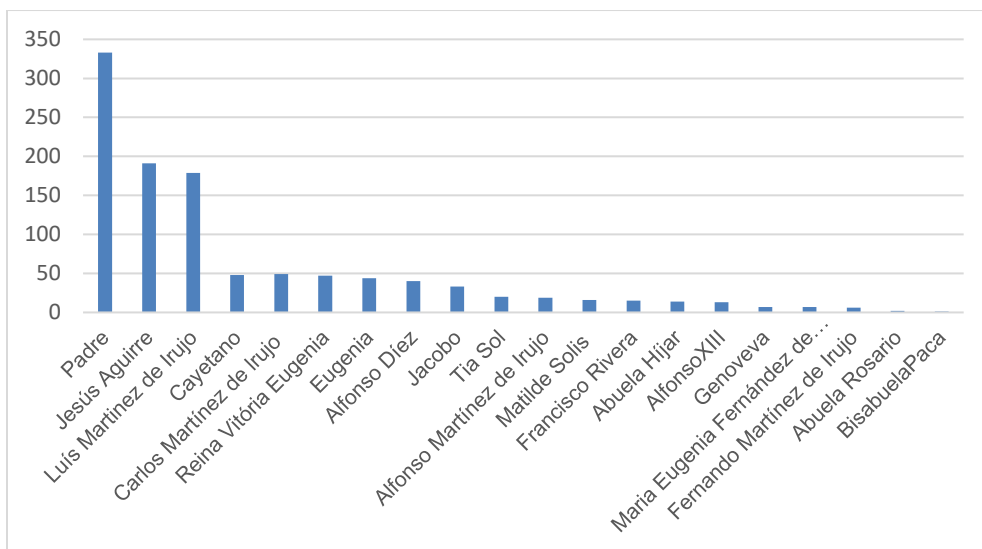


Figure 6: Family Circle

The most frequently cited figures in this circle are men, her father being the first, long lasting and always present pillar of her life (p.117), to whom she dedicates her autobiography. Despite being a busy man, once minister of Alfonso XIII, to be Prime Minister had the Republican regime not been imposed, profoundly British, severe as he seemed to the others' eyes, Cayetana knew that her father dedicated all his free time to her and to her education (p.22).

When she loses the three men of her life, her father, and her two husbands, Luis and Jesús, she feels alone, showing that her circle of intimacy is not so tight as one might expect. Indeed, and she states:

Entré en una época en mi vida negra, muy negra, y los acontecimientos familiares me dieron más disgustos que alegrías. Se no llega a ser por mis nietos, no sé qué habría sido de mí. Y también me ayudaron mucho mis amigas. Yo soy muy amiga de la amistad entre mujeres (p.260)

Amongst the feminine universe of her family, it is clear the role played by queen Victoria Eugenia (Ena), whom she deeply admired, as well as her daughter Eugenia, the child she had expected for so long, and to whom she dedicated much more time than she did to her five sons (p.173).

Regarding the social circle (Fig. 7) where she moved – aristocrats, politicians, bullfighters, artists, and jet-set personalities – Franco is the most frequent occurrence, undoubtedly due to the political circumstances that Spain underwent, and that she closely experienced, followed by Spanish and European royals.

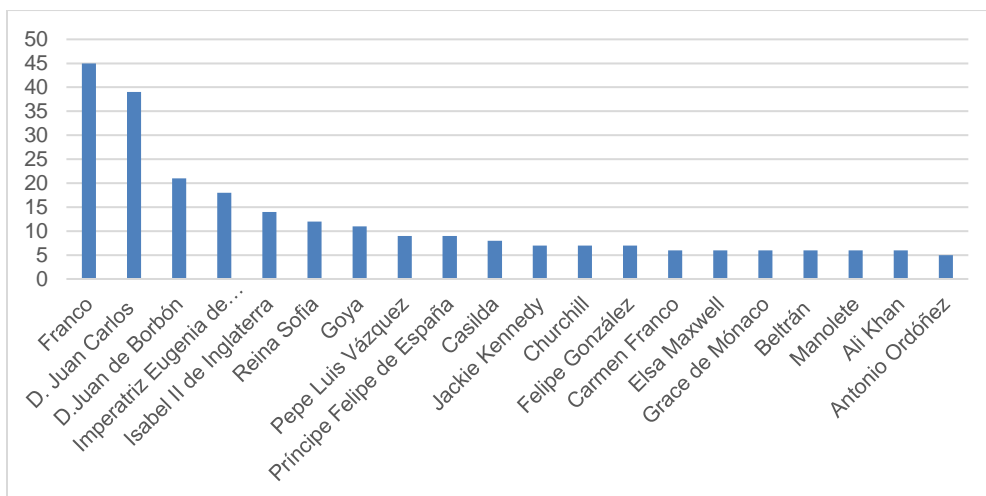


Figure 7: Social Circle

Despite being a Grandee and the relationship held with aristocracy, Cayetana does not cause the impression that her life differed from the life of common people, constructing herself not as a heroine, but simply as a special woman who expressed the experience of being a woman. Accused by some of being successful with men only because she was the duchess of Alba (p. 55), Cayetana emphasises above all her womanly condition, declaring that she had always liked to flirt, as a form of amusement, acknowledging that she, as a woman, had been a heartbreaker (p. 60)

Ya he dicho antes que yo nunca daba el primer paso, aunque es verdad que las mujeres tenemos otras armas: sabemos cómo mirar, cómo movernos, cómo sonreír. Los ingleses lo llaman *to flirt*, la traducción más aproximada en español sería “coquetear. (p. 57).

Benefactress of abandoned children, namely the ones under the protection of the Salesians, lover of sports, of animals, of bullfights, and of the Arts, her great passion was the flamenco and being a *Sevillana*, and all it meant, namely, wearing the *mantilla*. *Yo Cayetana* does not provide the reader with a singular image of the Self, but with a multiple one, constructed by means of different discourses, practices and positions, oftentimes interjective.

As a life testimony, *Yo Cayetana* turns visible the experiences and the order of affects (Fig. 8), becoming an ego document about the Self and the times, positioning versions of the Self in a time and in a place (Probyn 1993).

EMOCIONES	Pag.
Con estas experiencias, cada vez tengo más miedo a los aviones, o mejor dicho: más respeto.	104
Cuando tuve a mi hijo entre mis brazos, sentí una emoción enorme, diferente a todo lo que había sentido en mi vida. Fue un momento de absoluta plenitud	109
Llegamos a Lausana y nos hospedamos en la residencia de la reina durante los pocos días en los que papá agonizó en el hospital. Tras su muerte, el 24 de septiembre, prepararon todo para trasladar el cuerpo a España. Yo estaba anonadada. Todavía hoy me conmuevo al recordar aquellos horribles días. Mi consuelo fue el cariño de la reina, pendiente de todos los detalles, incluido mi estado de ánimo, y sus esfuerzos para reconfortarme.	116
El viaje de regreso a España, en avión desde Ginebra, con el féretro de papá fue horroroso. Había una gran tormenta, como si los aviones hubieran adivinado el miedo que me daban y me la volvieran a jugar.	117
El Flamenco, mi gran pasión (...) El flamenco fue más que una terapia. Si con el aria de una ópera me eleva del suelo, cuando bailo flamenco floto.	118
Me pesaba no tener éxito en la tarea de traer una hija al mundo. El 11 de julio de 1959 nació mi cuarto hijo. Fue una alegría tremenda	132-133
El 26 de noviembre de 1968 logré uno de los sueños de mi vida: tener una niña. Como ya no podía ponerle Cayetana, opté por otro nombre también de la familia: Eugenia, por la emperatriz y por la reina Victoria Eugenia. Era una hija queridísima y deseadísimas.	172
El oficio de madre es estupendo cuando son pequeños, como me sucede con algunos de mis nietos ahora. Los maleduco mucho, porque para enseñarles ya están sus padres.	183
Manolete no me daba miedo, me encantaba, tenía una personalidad cuan o entraba en la plaza... Manolete tenía aura, era único.	273
Que conste que a todos mis hijos los quiero muchísimo y, si ha habido algún momento malo, que me perdonen. Nunca ha sido mi deseo hacerles daño y siempre tuve una ilusión enorme cuando nacieron.	277

Figure 8: The expression of emotion.

Yo Cayetana offers the testimony of her emotions, which “are integral to the processes of meaning production” (Harding and Pribram, 2009), the dispute of a Self in dialogue with herself, the human conflicts and experiences of a woman she intentionally inscribes in her psychosocial representation (Charaudeau, 2000). It is also a political act, in the sense that, by choosing to write her autobiography, the Duchess of Alba, Cayetana, claimed the right of speaking and of self-representation instead of giving someone the privilege to speak for herself and to represent her.

As Dodd (2005) explains “social conditioning, heredity and temperament all determine what is recalled”. In Cayetana’s case, social condition, lineage and temperament are three key factors that become indelible marks of her discourse. Following what has traditionally been the paradigm of feminine autobiography, she is not concerned with writing her life from a chronological and progressive point of view, but rather with affirming her identity.

Yo Caetana is the narrative of a feminine, fluctuating self (Probyn, 1993) represented in several levels of meaning, in her own words, in a discursive arrangement that agglutinates in tension the different meanings of the Self, and which raises a fundamental epistemological question: to know how experience and the knowledge of the Self are organized in a narrative which constitutes a metaphor of life, a landscape of the Self. Identity constructed in representation by the feminine autobiographical discourse in the narrativization of the Self does not point to the stable nucleus of the Self who, living the vicissitudes of the story, does not know changes. It points, as Hall argues (1996), to a non-unified identity, constructed by means of discourses, practices and multiple positions, and defines the functions the subject occupies in the diversity of the discourse.

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