

ABOUT CITATION

To articulate some ideas on the power and contingency of the deferred word, conceived as a quotation that incarnates in the new temporality that we offer it in different writings, can make a lot of sense in a time that creates phenomena prone to its glorification or misappropriation, or to a no less symptomatic and worrying abstinence. The materials that constitute the apparatus of quotations and citations of an article, memoir or book, apart from other uses, are what we understand as the scientific *machinery* that must accompany research studies, capable of creating complex textual and visual architectures. Citation have the capacity to record perspectives, opinions, reasons, verifications, endorsements or confirmations, visual and documentary materials, written or oral, that make memory of the existence of the sources of information and involve and manage old or parallel research.

We agree that it is not logical to make a *tabula rasa* of the preceding points of view and, therefore, we accept that it is necessary to review the materials devoted to a specific topic in order to contribute something to it. However, it is not very reasonable to appear exhaustive when citing and it seems appropriate to be aware of the boundaries we will not cross in order to recognize the extent of the research we intend to undertake. The courage and daring, the empathy and ambition we put into our selections have boundaries and, by extension, so do the studies we consult or choose to consult. We cannot cite everything, nor is it necessary—obviously. Falling into hyperbole, the logic of exhaustiveness invites us to reproduce entire articles or books in order to embrace the whole thought of an author or not to fall into the dreaded de-contextualization, a dwelling place for interpretative problems and a cause of misunderstandings. With this burden on our backs, it would be difficult to move forward and we choose to select and extract what we consider most significant or what will be most useful to us.

In order to get the quotation right, beyond being clear about the scope and the reason for the mentions—generic quality and intensity—, it is essential to measure well the distance that separates a real finding from a commonplace. When an author is remembered for banal or already agreed-upon observations, as if it were something new and relevant, there is no doubt that we fall into a trap that goes beyond the misuse of the scientific apparatus, especially if this habit hides a fundamental contribution. The bibliographic citation places *a certain level of authorship* associated with a publication framework, but it also implies its supervised or revised admission within *a new context*. We usually cite documentary instruments or contents that we deem pertinent to recall and attribute, with the recognition that this implies a research task linked to specific ideas and opinions. Well-considered citations are a guarantee for us and for those who will read them, who can then analyze the logic applied, the before and after, from the organized proposal of the contents, but if misused they will contribute to the growth of cobwebs and confusion. It is advisable not to underestimate coincidences, especially when we are not absolutely sure about the origins and modes of propagation of some of the most stimulating ideas. Sometimes it would seem that they float in the air for decades until they mature and can be embraced by more than one researcher.

If we now think about how to present citations, beyond the literal quotes of a text that we will put in quotation marks, it is clear that stating or paraphrasing the sources, leaving out the exact words, word for word, is a well-accepted possibility. In this sense, if the bibliographical note is obligatory when we introduce quotations that literally reproduce the source, it is even more obligatory for the quotation described as a gloss or synthesis of the ideas of third parties. The procedural caution implied by the use of the quotation generates transparency, even if it is superfluous if we refer to a commonplace. It offers certainty, not on the veracity of what is said, which may be accurate or inaccurate, but as a formula or security mechanism that accompanies the applicability, the tangible dimension and the protection, the limits and the virtues of the quoted contribution. It grants us a first key on the accuracy of the resource alluded to from a published version, which can always have something fortuitous, but it is accessible. In this space the quotation takes on a drift that is basic to verify its prominence retroactively. Beyond authorship or acknowledgement of the source, it is important to establish the reconstruction of the research process. It makes it possible to go back to the beginning or to recapitulate.

Citations, or recollections of literal fragments of a text, can be used to frame, to support an idea or, alternatively, to open a debate. The echo of a position contrary to our own, or to that defended by other research, will

oppose different research currents. Often, the affection and the particular contingency also count, which seeks to highlight one's own contribution or to do something in its defense. Therefore, it is clear that the citation includes a series of intentions. There persists a will to exercise according to an objective that is permeable in the glossing of the contributions that have originated the study on a subject that interests us. It is rare in our field, but not entirely unusual, that someone wants to put an end to a topic or theme. In any case, whether to inaugurate a study, to give it continuity or to try to close a debate, we require new hypotheses to establish dialogues with the past of the subject, from them we look for motives and findings that will facilitate to remove some or some questions. The observations related to bibliographical quotations opportunely—in some cases also inopportunistically—feed a structure that presupposes comings and goings, encounters and misunderstandings, agreements and disputes. Neutrality tends to be more summary, cold or not very revealing, but it is allowed to show that the subject has been dealt with or that there is a substratum that allows us to expand on what we are saying. In fact, the quotation is a kind of loudspeaker that can lead to assent or indifference or even a lack of knowledge that provides a false sense of impartiality. In short, and although it is not always necessary to go to extremes, the contents of quotations are stretched or unfolded when we seek to incorporate everything, or almost everything, or they are narrowed when we wish to show off only what is supposed to be essential.

The current system of scientific quality assessment has long emphasized the importance of bibliometrics based on the choice of framework publications, whether periodicals or not. Sometimes there will be no record of why, how and when, and the effectiveness, specific relevance and exact content of each citation will not have been gauged—a task impossible if it has to be systematic in the humanities. The best-known platforms aggregate citations creating hierarchies of more or less cited academic works and even send congratulations to those integrated in the system when they detect or quantify new mentions of their productions.

I am not saying that this evaluation criterion has been applied universally and blindly, but it was introduced in a stealthy way to be claimed as an essential arbitration factor of an evaluation system that, despite being, as we know, quite uncertain, unsatisfactory and questionable, distinguishes between hyper, much, enough, little or not at all cited works. This assessment is numerical and, therefore, always too superficial, since it rarely stops to point out the depth of the real contributions, after an analysis of the character, objective value, difficulty and specificity of the subjects studied and the results obtained. Following this path, it has seemed essential to

judge the impact of studies according to criteria of impact, a concept often measured in terms of the total number of citations at a given time, which is quantified by adopting more or less well-established laws. In the face of these indicators, we can only claim the value of the verified, contrasted and argued citation, which is governed within the hierarchy of knowledge.

We must avoid defining it as a *like* which, unstable and ambiguous, implies selections that may be required, adequate or very little pertinent. We know that they are also often collateral or subaltern allusions. They are neither indispensable—which does not mean that we should always do without them—, nor are they universally linked to the ideas or topics discussed. The term impact in itself seemed to lead us to collide with something, to get hurt, since it finds synonyms in the blow, the collision or the onslaught. In any case, I do not want to dispense with the metaphorical part of a term, perhaps already too perfectly integrated, and I can understand the proportional success of the same, even though I still think it would have been more satisfactory to think first of a stimulus, or a dynamizing spirit of the studies, than of a violent onslaught that remains excessively centrifuged, even though quantification tries to concentrate it in an evanescent qualitative substantiality, which has been endorsed by a presumed majority. It can be argued that other words might not have expressed so clearly the eagerness for transcendence that urgently needed to be made clear, but sometimes nuances shape processes and there is no doubt that the conditions created are revealed in the words we hear. Impact should not prevail over consciousness, cognition, knowledge, meaning, argumentation, reasoning? The quantity can be measured or harmonized with that curious knocking that makes selective intelligence coefficients drum without omitting that chance or the laws of entropy have also played their cards.

Returning to citations, it is appropriate to stop and think about the weaknesses of some points of view that seek the logic of scientific evaluation based on quantifying indexes that, starting from lists, indicate the number of operative selections made by researchers within a system that is desired to be pre-established and remains fixed. Every system has unevenness and shortcomings and it is quite clear that not all citations are the same and do not have identical intentions. Moreover, the time, often parsimonious, required to reaching an acceptable threshold of recognized or efficient citations, leads to unfair, oscillating and unforeseen situations. This does not include cases involving advertising campaigns, large platforms or strictly peremptory needs such as those derived from certain scientific uses and applications that must solve many things for us in fields such as medicine, physics or chemistry, among others. Thresholds are not universal and discriminating them by using filters set by other sciences, as has been re-

peated so many times, ends up being harmful for humanities studies and for their research and inventive dynamics.

Referring to previous studies, as I warned, is consistent and necessary. The debt with previous works can be compensated by citing both the contributions that endorse substantive issues and those referring to more anecdotal questions. If citation can help us to avoid going down erroneous paths again, it also sets the horizon from which to rethink or corroborate our own ideas. The transparent flow of real contributions will, in the end, nourish the flow of general knowledge. At this apex, the recovery of previous discourses makes it possible to understand the evolution of thought on a subject and makes it possible to construct what is called the «state of the art». This concept, applied to art studies, is somewhat shocking, both because of the ambivalence of the term *art* and because of the broad meaning attributed to it. It is surprising that other disciplines appropriate the concept to delimit their «state of the art» on the basis of an expanded dimension of the concept, which evokes a general ability, know-how or competence, which reveals the condition or transitory circumstance of some of the knowledge from a series of quotations and references ordered and conveniently hierarchized. This justifies the universal application of the term that adopts ancient visions, referring to the thought of Aristotle, or reminds us that the so-called arts have a very generic meaning when they end up becoming assorted disciplinary frameworks that characterize the *liberal arts* as opposed to the *mechanical arts* in the Middle Age.

Beyond some initial suspicions, we could assume the convention—the broadened descriptor making it equivalent to a «state of the art», thinking that by referring to the state of the art we mean the history of the subject and the bulk of the contributions that have accumulated over time and that are susceptible of being discriminated, whether we decide that they are worthy of compulsory citation or of advisable oblivion. In the humanities, it is clear to us that old works are not systematically supplanted by new ones. They are not abandoned because, however old a contribution may be, it may be valuable in itself or contain the key we were looking for. It is not necessary to insist, then, that the «classics», or the classics of our specific fields, remain to a large extent those that remain illuminated by the spotlights lit by our interest. If we dig a little deeper into this expression, we discover that the reasoning we have just made does not quite fit its meaning. What we wish to make apparent from the expression state of the art generally delimits that which obeys the latest cry or the most advanced, which is consecrated by occupying the vanguard of a given area of research. An idea of progress and sustained advancement that, in the field of technology, implies state-of-the-art technologies, everything that will be appreciated for

being the most sophisticated and having characteristics applicable to a series of products that are likely to sell better because they are potentially superior to their predecessors, considered obsolete.

Fortunately, by thematic accidentality or by the forcefulness of some gramified argumentative criteria, we know that our scientific literature will not end up being discarded so easily. It does not mutate from avant-garde to obsolescence overnight. No matter how much a work may seem to be squeezed, there can always be a piece of information to be reviewed, an indication or an opinion that can be asserted. The same must be said when it comes to a documentary repertoire or a methodical deployment of contents that will have permanent value, I do not say immutable, because they have been mobilized to build a solid view on some great subject. Critical citation should also point out the mirage or fallacy in the latest published to ensure a reasoned and revisable balance between the old and the new, regardless of the temporality of the writing or, paradoxically, for the sake of contemplating it.

It is not necessary to underestimate the preceding studies to admit that in some cases the last one to be said can have its weight, clarified when examined with sufficient perspective. Some things are difficult to overcome no matter how much technology is applied to improve them. Depending on the use and function to be covered, there are also technologies that do not improve our lives, but rather disrupt, patent or control them. This is a different problem to the one we are dealing with now and which, on the slippery surface of programmed obsolescence, leaves us with a world that already laments and suffers from it all.

Our space to make discoveries moves on a fine and gelled sand, which requires mental equipment, some bases, and a work of elaboration calculated to achieve objectives that are there, but can move. We already know that some muds end up forming quicksand: phagocytic of everything they receive. Subject to our unstable and imperfect temporalities, it is essential to vindicate the literature on art as scientific literature at the same time that we discover certain levels of creativity that none of the active sciences have ever ceased to claim. Falling into naive historicism or accumulating information for the sake of accumulating it is not ideal, but let it be clear that I am not saying that it is, at the other extreme, to raise smokescreens or levitate without foundation, or to discredit the work of basic research, whether by the exploratory way of monuments or documents, or by the way of theoretical foundations. Ultimately, research and citation imply the linking of theory with practice, ideas with objects, and objects and manifestations of art, whether more material or more conceptual, with their temporality.

In these lines of presentation of a new volume of *Materia*, I know that I cannot embrace all the variables that fit the theme of the citation. The

local or universal components that hover over the study of an altarpiece or a virus will not go unnoticed and it seems obvious that they do not have to coincide at all costs. Quotations and more quotations would be required to appreciate where we really are. Unfortunately I cannot introduce them in this brief and introductory format that only intends to evoke the need for a debate that perhaps we still have pending both on the flank of the evaluations of our research materials and on others that perhaps have even greater transcendence and that are not indifferent to the former. The inertias that force us to renounce specificity have not done us any favor, nor do they do us any favor. Moreover, in order to take on research programs based on interdisciplinarity, we have to claim the distinction and the specific nature of the studies we carry out. This could be our main common ground in addition to some others. The quote has its diameter and its circumference. To qualify some of our works above others according to the frames that divulge or highlight them, be it according to the context, the dance partners or even the language used, qualifies or forces our trajectories, but does not discover the depth of our contributions. It is not uncommon for our curricula to marginalize research that should be considered as or much more important than others promoted for reasons that are exogenous to their objectives and real results. Logically, uncritical computer mechanisms or gears, which decide on the basis of supposedly objective data, do not always get it right.

On the other hand, the criterion of audience or what has been called the criterion of the majority within a convulsive and competitive panorama, often pressured by multiple factors that govern economies or, rather, an often exterminating economicism, cannot be a panacea or an ideal on which to mold art, culture or science, and even less serve to guarantee their horizons. If we think mathematically, it should make sense, after weighing the accumulation of mentions received, to also analyze the amount of citations generated and make a well-argued balance of scenarios, intentions and interests. In contrast to the old idea of erudition, there are those who speak of patterns of information consumption that are reflected in our citations. It is true that quotations, read correctly, can generate a lot of interesting data, but it does not make much sense to quantify them regardless of quality or regardless of interpretation. The specific value should not only be perceived on the basis of the continent, the journal or the type of publication in which the research appears. These are indications that add up; they are not determining aspects of the quality of a study. Indexing, periodicity, team composition and editorial criteria, the prestige of the editor or open or closed forms of dissemination do not level the scientific quality of all the papers published in a journal. Journal managers or peer reviewers may

apply similar criteria and act with similar desires, but we know that reviewers rarely exercise with identical levels of exigency. It is clear that it can be positive for an article to be highly cited, but lack of impact should not be an indication to deny its quality.

We know that audience need, such as the need to be mentioned, can engender perverse expectations and conditioned thematic choices. Not few mentions are accessory or not based on a radical need. Inertias are revealed that reveal a certain habit and reiteration, also pressured in search of guarantees that assure us of successes. It goes without saying that there are several factors and commitments to the matter that can condition us at the moment of choosing how much we quote. Without entering into debates on the hand of faith, negligence or ignorance that can weigh down all types of studies, those who think in minimalist terms, restricting citations to the maximum, those who only cite what has been useful to them, those who dress the citation with a publicity trail or those who, instead of striving for selective views, tend to be exhaustive if not excessive, will not do the same. Citing everything that is available is not the same as swimming in abundance, since each subject has its own bibliographical path. Supporting an argument based on a randomly consulted source has the danger of citing to describe a commonplace without realizing it. The desirable balance is difficult to achieve. Decisions about what to cite and how to do it—as show the avalanche of studies that are more available to us than ever before—are increasingly important.

It seems essential to me to distinguish very clearly the routine error and without any argument support that, generally and with no exceptions, I consider elusive as a regular matter of citation or allusion, from the hypotheses that can be disconcerting but that help us to delve into the heart of a problem and cause us to aspire to solve it with a new look, ideas, reasons or alternative documentation. On the contrary, there is no need to look for non-existent enemies to make innovative proposals. It is not necessary to conjecture about certainties and unspeakable intentions of the authors who make different proposals, based on subjective visions that are useless for the evolution of the subject and that, at most, turn whoever does it into an improvised psychologist. It doesn't take long to misrepresent the continuous nature of our conclusions in order to promote a point of view that leads us back to a previous state of affairs. The defect may be in the sender, but also in the receiver who misreads or reads between the lines, or adapts the rules of the game to his own game or routine. I do not want to delve too far into these swampy terrains, prudence is needed at all times to understand where we are and what we are looking for, because you never know what is worse, if they misquote you, manipulating your speech and distort-

ing their perspective, or not being quoted. In any case, it must be said that citations are records that create referents and it is not useless to insist that gratuitous or unnecessary citation, tolerated or justifiable for various reasons, does not legitimize or give scope for being negligent about the real contribution of a well-known work. Even so, an even worse situation can occur when the quote misrepresents the source or is not accurate enough and makes us say what we do not say. One quote leads to another quote and, as in the case of defamation, the problem can reach unexpected limits. We already know that recovering the original idea can entail a titanic effort, if not unsuccessful.

Beyond the plural and multiplier use that can be made of citations, full of advantages and not exempt from some dark points, far from wanting to now make an anthology about their genres or modes, it seems pertinent to appreciate them, not to ignore that they occur styles and typologies of textual and bibliographic citations in which, taking into account the long accumulated tradition, it is not easy to innovate really and consistently. A basic distinction exists between the note as a gloss or developed thesis, which appreciates or devalues what it mentions in great detail, or the note stripped of argument, which endorses with the citation what it hosts, not even for the fact of neutrally approaching a publication. Between the first and the second we can interpose a good number of steps and intentions.

Dialogue between texts exists and, whether we call it *intertextuality* or not, it should not be a way to homogenize, flatten or equalize our resources in prefabricated boxes or drawers. Not everything is based on generating pyramids of quotations anchored in bifurcations that lead to the genealogical cause that, from claim to claim, not always fully calculated, can derive in the game of nonsense. It is more interesting to evaluate and weigh because certain words associated with statements, verdicts or conclusions that we quote, and we want to quote with a certain enjoyment, are crucial to make us move forward and connect neurons. Thus, some sources make us move from one idea to another idea and extend new branches of analysis on the trunk of the pre-existing research.

This new volume of *Materia* aims to advance the development of our discipline with seven essays covering a wide range of subjects thanks to the contributions of Roberto Bartalini, Elena Muñoz Gómez, Josefina Planas Badenas, Víctor Ramírez Tur, Montserrat Torras Virgili, Antoni Gonzalo Carbó and Jaume Radigales. These authors cover a wide range of topics and contributions that I would not dare to say that I will review in a few lines, since the objective is only to briefly present the contents of this 20th issue of the journal, corresponding to the year 2022. First of all, 14th century Sienna becomes the focus of Roberto Bartalini's research, who offers

us a rigorous approach to one of the lost and, therefore, most unknown paintings by the brilliant Simone Martini. Now we can rediscover it in all its aspects, and recover it to a certain extent, thanks to the meticulous revision of the sources with which the author illuminates the study of a more than remarkable mural painting, which disappeared during the earthquake that affected the Tuscan city in 1798. Next, Elena Muñoz proposes a revision of the main altarpiece of the cathedral of Zamora based on the references provided by Hyeronimus Münzer in 1495. Exploring the work of Fernando Gallego's workshop and questioning the sources, beyond some apriorism or fixation that we wish to overcome, help us to understand the complexity of a large-scale displaced set that would have been made shortly before Münzer's visit to Zamora. Next, the inexhaustible world of the illuminated book of the low medieval period contextualizes the miniatures that Josefina Planas analyzes in her article. This article establishes the link between some attractive illustrations, corresponding to four scattered folios that are recognized as part of a Book of Hours made in Valencia. At the same time, the author relates these works to the painter and miniaturist Pedro Juan Ballester, who would have been the illustrator of a Dominical and other works preserved in the archives of the Valencian cathedral and in Toledo.

From the medieval period we move directly to the contemporary world and, even more specifically, to a series of four works that, all of them referring to 20th century creations, should lead us to discover artistic manifestations as opposed as those that take us to the sculptural work of Frederic Marès and to the world of performance represented by Jordi Benito. Montserrat Torras recovers and studies different aspects of a project executed in 1930, the Monument to Francesc Soler i Rovirosa, which Marès made for an emblematic place on Barcelonese Gran Vía with the effort and support of a part of that society that paid it by popular subscription. Víctor Ramírez Tur, in turn, calls attention to Jordi Benito's ritual actions at the Fundació Miró, with the intention of underlining the political contents of a mythical action in our context, which took place on June 13, 1979 and which the author links to the persistence of violence in the unstable context of the transition to Spanish democracy. Next, Antonio Gonzalo Carbó introduces us to an investigation on the «inaudible white» that he constructs from the works of outstanding creators. Belonging to different fields, all of them coincide in appreciating the white as a form of silence, as something that has lost sound content and that, therefore, can be seen or felt to swing between visual and musical thought, without underestimating its philosophical plane.

To close the tour Jaume Radigales decides to move us from literature to cinema, through the plural and inexhaustible creation of Pier Paolo Pa-

solini. His *Appunti per un'Orestide africana*, which was to be the basis of a film project based on the tragedy of Aeschylus, but which was never made, is the focus of attention of Radigales, who interprets the chosen genre as a singular fact and places us in 1970, at the beginning of a turbulent decade, when the multifaceted writer and film director dies.

Seven articles in which quotations can make us reflect on research that reveals skills, interests, contributions, interpretations or evaluations that can interest us and make us think, and at the same time situate us and describe different ways of understanding a universe of studies capable of evolving and projecting itself in order to propel ideas and provide us with new resources.

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