

# FROM PARIS TO ANGOSTURA: THE IMAGE OF THE LIBERATOR IN BETTY KAPLAN'S MINISERIES *BOLÍVAR* (1983)

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to explain the plot of the miniseries *Bolívar* (1983) by Venezuelan-American director, Betty Kaplan, from its beginning when Simón Bolívar is depicted in Paris, France in 1804, until the creation of Colombia in the Venezuelan city of Angostura in 1819. Fragmenting the scenes and the events related to the life and achievements of Simón Bolívar between 1804 and 1819, this article narrates all the matters proposed through the image of the Liberator and its context contrasting the plot with Bolivarian iconography, biography and literature in order to describe the events in which Bolívar is portrayed by Betty Kaplan. Furthermore, this article shares a series of original photographs from Betty Kaplan's personal archive in order to illustrate the reader in a visual way.

## KEYWORDS

Simón Bolívar | Betty Kaplan | Latin-America | Miniseries | Venezuela

## INTRODUCTION

In the year of 1983, Venezuelan-American film maker Betty Kaplan (1949) produced a miniseries entitled *Bolívar*, a 600-minute biographical, political, personal and melancholic story about the achievements of the Latin-American Liberator, Simón Bolívar. The documentary, a combination of a soap opera with a melodramatic representation of the life of Bolívar, was aired on national television in Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Perú during the celebration of the bicentenary of the birth of the Liberator (1783-1983), offering and incorporating for the first time a story about the life and accomplishments of Bolívar observed through the eyes of a woman that was deeply involved with the cinematographic perception of the era of the Latin-American emancipation. Interestingly, the image of Bolívar proposed by Betty Kaplan depicts an effusive and quite unique Liberator that starts the first scene of the miniseries in Paris, France in 1804, talking about Napoleón Bonaparte and his

coronation. The actor in charge of depicting Simón Bolívar was Mariano Álvarez, a famous Venezuelan artist with an experienced and well recognized acting and theatrical career. In fact, Mariano Álvarez later on depicted Bolívar again in the film *Manuela Saenz: La Libertadora del Libertador* (2000) by the Venezuelan film director, Diego Rísquez. The peculiarity of Kaplan's point of view about the image of Bolívar is that it shows him as a man battling against all the matters in which the Liberator is portrayed between 1804 and 1819 including a very interesting chronological plot that characterizes Bolívar during the first stage of his martial career. The scenes are indeed a representation of what the Bolivarian national history, literature, and iconography registered in the past, and this article intends to narrate this plot fragmenting all these events in order to explain what Betty Kaplan depicted and crystallized through the cameras.

## AN IMAGE OF SIMÓN BOLÍVAR FROM PARIS IN 1804 TO ANGOSTURA IN 1819

Betty Kaplan starts the story emphasizing several important topics that helped to shape the personality of Bolívar before becoming a leader in politics and a hero in the battle fields. Kaplan uses an image of a young Bolívar that was living a crucial moment in where he had to deal not only with the loss of his wife but also with the political confrontation that was happening between Venezuela and Spain. Bolívar, quite involved in Venezuelan politics as a member of the Patriotic Society in Caracas, was trying to figure out a way to declare emancipation from Spain while showing his frustration and anger trying to explain the reason why Napoleón Bonaparte decided to become an emperor, and later on discussing how Alexandre Von Humboldt mentioned to him that Latin-America only needed one man capable of leading a revolution against the Spanish colonies. This first scene allows the spectator to observe not only the way Bolívar looks physically, but also how he acts and reacts in front

of the guests that are about to have supper together. Using and contrasting iconography with biographic facts, Kaplan starts her miniseries portraying a very peculiar image of a revolutionary Bolívar using the facial expressions and poses registered in the past in some portraits painted by Venezuelan and international artists such as: Martín Tovar y Tovar; Tito Salas; Arturo Michelena; José María Espinoza; José Gil de Castro; Antonio Meucci; François Desiré Roulin, and many other portraits painted by unknown artists mostly discovered and later on compiled in the studies *Los retratos de Bolívar* (1964), *El rostro de Bolívar* (1982), and *Bolívar de Carabobo* (1992) of the Venezuelan collector and historian, Alfredo Boulton. These paintings and the story behind the images of Bolívar, helped Betty Kaplan to recreate and adapt her plot with the most relevant characteristics of the life of the Liberator.



Fig. 01· Simón Bolívar in París, France between 1804-1805 Unknown artist.



Fig. 02· Simón Bolívar. Portrait in Bogotá, Colombia by José María Espinoza.

The beginning of the miniseries starts with a panoramic view of the ocean, strong waves impacting the surf are shown inviting the viewer to be part of a Caribbean environment in where the image of Bolívar can be seen from far away riding a white horse in slow motion while approaching the shore and then going in the ocean with his horse. The music and the sound of the waves play together a tune that mixes a traditional Venezuelan type of rhythm known as *Joropo*, and the sound of a harp guides the rest of the instruments that accompany the scene. The music plays a fundamental role since it changes its melodies incorporating other traditional instruments from Latin-America such as the pan flute, the charango, maracas and other sounds that include the culture and traditions of different regions of the countries emancipated by Bolívar. Interestingly, while the music is playing the credits about the production of the miniseries start appearing on the screen showing the countries involved in the production and its dissemination. Venezuela with National Television Channel 8 in a coproduction between: Perú and the Pan-American Productions;

Ecuador with Chain Films of Ecuador, and Colombia's R.T.I. of Colombian Television. The name of the first episode is shown: *Vencer o Morir/To Defeat or To Die*, and the names of all the actors and actresses are progressively shown while Bolívar keeps on riding his horse against the waves. The scene finishes showing the name of Betty Kaplan as the general director of the miniseries.

In a region known as the Venezuelan Guyana, a new scene shows the Bolivarian troops and the arrival of General Bolívar in the year of 1817. The image of Bolívar looks exactly as the one painted by the Venezuelan artist, Martín Tovar y Tovar, depicting the battle of Carabobo (1821) in the ceiling of the *Salón Elíptico* (Elliptic Room) which is one of the buildings of the Venezuelan Congress. This scene and its scenario reflect an important matter included by Kaplan to show perhaps one of the most controversial moments in Bolívar's career, the trial and the decision to martially finish with the life of General Piar. [Fig.04]

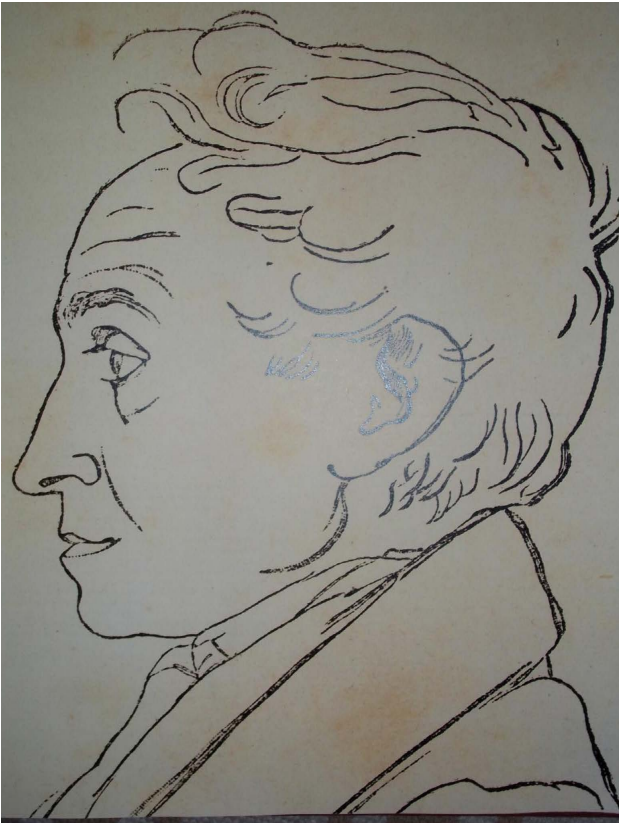


Fig. 03· Simón Bolívar by François Desiré Roulin

In fact, the scene shows a discussion between the Liberator Simón Bolívar and General Piar in where both speak about the disobedience and the consequences of betrayal. Piar was indeed trying to initiate a different type of revolution against Bolívar calling for insubordination while convincing the troops to fight against Bolívar using as a motive a confrontation between races and also for promoting anarchy. Kaplan uses this situation to recreate the trial to judge Piar, mixing different events showing the types of activities the Liberator had while preparing his troops for a battle and while planning his strategies with his army. Bolívar appears dictating letters, speaking about his decrees, taking care of the information given to him by different emissaries that interrupt him with bad news about what is happening in different regions of the country while other generals are fighting the Spaniards. Many matters and confrontations can be seen and suddenly Bolívar and his troops appear fighting against the Spanish troops which defeats the Bolivarian army. Bolívar ran away with some of his Generals and they arrive to the *Laguna de Casacoima* (Casacoima's Lagoon), a location in where Bolívar can be seen swinging on a hammock sharing a monologue in front of his Generals. Author Luis Alberto Villamarín Pulido refers to this affair in his book: *The Delirium*

*of the Liberator: Biography of General Simón Bolívar*, an includes this interesting passage in the words of Bolívar:

We will enter triumphantly to Angostura! We will free to La Nueva Granada. We will host the tricolor pavilion on El Chimborazo and we will complete the freedom of America. Perú will be free. The glory of La Gran Colombia will be infinite. (Villamarín Pulido, 2006: 89).

Betty Kaplan makes a similar scene in where a delirious Bolívar envisions the future of the Republic while professing all these different situations that will occur. While swinging on his hammock, Bolívar speaks loudly as if he is hallucinating about his own ideas. The event opens up the door to a new topic which focuses on a new series of events all related to what the Liberator is imagining. The arrival of a messenger that brings a letter to General Bolívar with information mentioning that the Spaniards have abandoned the fortress makes Bolívar celebrate his predictions previously shared by him during the time he spent on the hammock. Betty Kaplan also uses this important moment of glory to bring in a very important figure in the Liberator's life, Antonio José de Sucre,



Fig. 04. Fragment of the painting "The Battle of Carabobo" by Martín Tovar y Tovar [https://www.guao.org/efemerides/Fragmento\\_Batalla\\_de\\_Carabobo\\_de\\_Martin\\_Tovar\\_y\\_Tovar](https://www.guao.org/efemerides/Fragmento_Batalla_de_Carabobo_de_Martin_Tovar_y_Tovar)

a Colonel in charge of one of the Bolivarian legions fighting the Spaniards. Sucre will become one of the closest and most important Generals in Bolívar's life. [Fig.05]

An interesting situation is also shown during the conversation Bolívar is having with Colonel Sucre, two Generals interrupt them to tell Bolívar that General Piar has officially declared disobedience, leading his troops to anarchy and propagating a call for a racial confrontation. The Liberator gives an order to apprehend General Piar who is later on judged and executed for trying to initiate a civil war. Betty Kaplan includes this situation which is also a premonition of Bolívar while in his solitude recalls the most important moments of his military career while remembering the loss of the city of Ocumare and the apprehension of General Francisco de Miranda in the Port of La Guaira in 1812. These two moments are depicted by Kaplan emphasizing Bolívar's frustration in a melancholic fashion. The scene follows with the Liberator taking the decision to sentence General Piar with a trial, and the decision to execute him was taken after the deliberation of the judges. General Piar is

finally fusilladed with a scene that shows how Bolívar watches the event from a balcony while the bells from the church are ringing symbolizing a new beginning for the Bolivarian troops. [Fig.06]

Taking under consideration a biographical and an iconographic point of view, Betty Kaplan brings in another important figure that was in charge of leading the territory of Apure, the General José Antonio Páez. General Páez was in charge of leading all the plainsmen that later on united to Bolívar's army in order to fight against the Spaniards that were still under control of some regions in the central areas of Venezuela. Páez is portrayed as a blonde man from the plains with rustic modals, and without education, and this can be seen when he first appears drinking water and the spitting it out while talking about the presence of Bolívar. Using some of the most common characteristics of portraits and bibliographic descriptions about Páez, Kaplan recreates an image of Páez mostly taken from the investigation made by Alfredo Boulton in his compilation entitled: *20 Retratos Del General José Antonio Páez*. Here, descriptions about the physiognomy and the personality of



Fig. 05· Simón Bolívar (front) and Antonio José de Sucre (back). Original photograph from the miniseries *Bolívar* (1983) from Betty Kaplan's archive.



Fig. 06· The fusillade of General Piar. Original photograph from the miniseries *Bolívar* (1983) from Betty Kaplan's archive

General Páez gathered perhaps the most complete and unique selection of portraits, sketches and original photographs that were taken during General Páez's exile in New York. Kaplan includes a moment in where Bolívar and Páez embrace each other for the first time opening up a new chapter about the accomplishments and the importance of Páez as an strategic leader commanding his plainsmen and gaining and expanding the Venezuelan territory.

Betty Kaplan also incorporates a short reference to *El Rincón de los Toros* 1818 (the bulls' corner), in where a group of Spanish soldiers almost killed Bolívar while he was sleeping. The Liberator managed to scape with some of his men, and this scene initiates a new phase in where British troops can be seen arriving and being registered and later on deployed to specific locations. [Fig.07]

Among these depicted British men are: Colonel William Ferguson, sent to the City of Angostura; Colonel Ferriar, sent to Apure with General Páez; Colonel James Rook, sent to the British legion in Casanare under the command of General Santander; Captain Daniel Florencio O'Leary, stayed with the battalion assigned to the the Liberator. In the case of Daniel Florencio O'Leary, it is important to mention that he was Simón Bolívar's aide, and spent most of his time helping Bolívar with his correspondence and other important govermental and personal matters. O'Leary can be seen writing and even physically describing the Liberator as he did in his compilation of documents and epistles that belong to

Bolívar's personal archive. The physical description of the Liberator's visage given by O'leary shares peculiar details such as this portion quoted by John Lynch in his biography *Simón Bolívar: A Life*:

Gl B's forehead was very high, but not unusually broad. It had many wrinkles. His eyebrows were thick, but well shaped; his eyes were dark and keen; his nose rather long and handsome.... His cheek bones were salient, his cheeks sunken ever since I first knew him (May 1818). His mouth was ugly, his lips being thick, the upper one long. His teeth were regular, white and beautiful. He took particular care of them. His jaw bones and chin were long. His ears were large. His hair, which he wore long (until it began to turn gray, 1822), was extremely black and curly.... His skin was dark and rough, his hands and feet remarkably and pretty. (O'Leary e Boulton, 1964: 29-30).

Some of these characteristics are indeed noticeable when Bolívar appears on scene dictating one of his decrees better known as the Angostura Address written and presented in the City of Angostura in the year 1819. The anticipation and the preparation of the corpus of this document is included by Kaplan while showing a sequence of scenes in different scenarios showing how the Liberator went back and forth with his thoughts while dictating and rewriting parts of the first draft of this decree. The moment re-imagined by Betty Kaplan shows a common image of Bolívar dressed up as the Liberator with his red and blue suit and with his sword and medals of honor as registered



Fig. 07· Betty Kaplan (center) directing the scene of the arrival of the British troops in the city of Angostura (Ciudad Bolívar), Venezuela. Original photograph from the miniseries *Bolívar* (1983) from Betty Kaplan's archive.

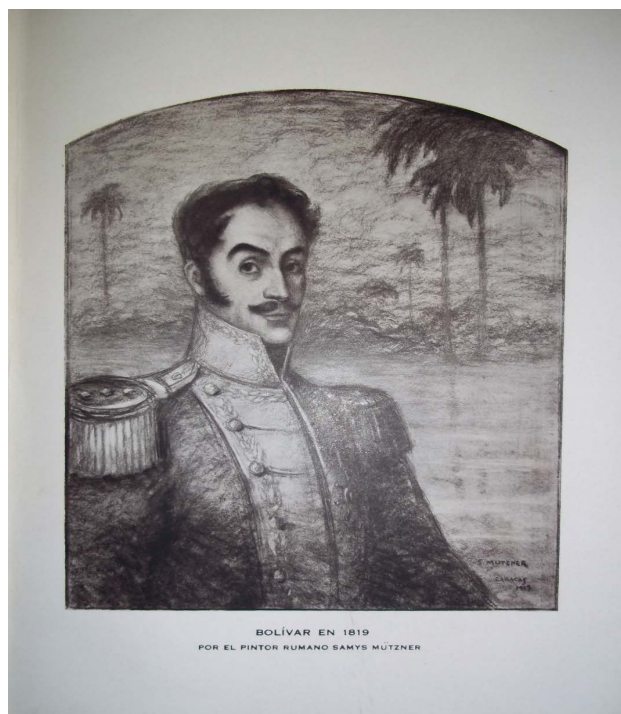


Fig. 08· Simón Bolívar in Angostura by the Romanian painter, Samys Mützner. *Bolívar, Simón. Discurso De Bolívar En El Congreso De Angostura* (15 De Febrero De 1819). Caracas, 1919.

in most of the portraits of the Liberator. Interestingly, Kaplan includes some extracts of the Angostura Address while the ceremony happens in front of the Congress that witnessed the Liberator exposing his ideas and proposing his project for a Constitution of the Republic of Venezuela:

Having demonstrated through this act my devotion to the freedom of Venezuela, and aspiring thereby to the glory of being counted among her most loyal patriots, allow me, Sir, to express with the frankness of a true member of the republic my respectful thoughts on this Project for a Constitution, which I take the liberty of offering to you as proof of the sincerity and candor of my sentiments. As it deals with the well-being of everyone, I dare to presume that I have the right to be heard by the representatives of the people. I know too that my project will perhaps seem ill-conceived, impracticable. Nonetheless, Sir, kindly, accept this effort which is not so much the effect of a presumptuous whim as it is the tribute of my sincere submission to this congress. In addition, as it is your function to create

a political body and, it could even be said, to create an entire society, beset by all the hazards inherent in this most difficult and singular circumstance, perhaps the plea of a citizen can alert you to the presence of a hidden or unanticipated danger (Bolívar, Fornoff, Bushnell, 2003:33).

Kaplan mixes an effusive and passionate Simón Bolívar for the scene in Angostura. Many aspects of the Liberator political skills can be seen while he speaks, while he reads out loud, and overall, while he emphasizes the need of a Constitution through his eloquent discourse. The scene and its scenario were prepared and recorded in the City of Angostura, in the same house in where Bolívar publicly pronounced his Angostura Address in 1819. An interesting detail of the physical characteristics of this image of Bolívar in Angostura proposed by Betty Kaplan, is that it resembles a sketch made by the Romanian painter Samys Mützner<sup>1</sup> [Fig.05] that was requested by the Venezuelan Government in 1919 for an international

1. For details about this image and the story behind it, see: Arreaza, Scrocchi R. "A Peculiar Image of the Latin American Liberator Simón Bolívar by the Romanian Artist Samys Mützner." *Brukenthal. Acta Musei*. 12.2 (2017): 431-433.



Fig. 08. A scene of the Bolivarian Army following Simón Bolívar across the Andes. Original photograph from the miniseries *Bolívar* (1983) from Betty Kaplan's archive.

publication that contained the story of the Angostura Address and a copy of the original document written by Bolívar that was disseminated through the *Correo del Orinoco*, the most important press established in Venezuela by the Liberator. Regarding the *Correo del Orinoco*, Betty Kaplan shows how Bolívar revises and notifies to the government printer, Mr. Andrés Roderick,<sup>2</sup> how to incorporate more news that are important and quite relevant to inform the people of Venezuela about the new Constitution and what is going on in some of the regions of the plains of Apure. [Fig.08]

The press played a fundamental role not only informing people but also allowing Bolívar to share his thoughts and the results of what was going on in all the regions that were fighting against the Spanish troops. Betty Kaplan pays detailed attention to this matter by not only including Mr. Rodrick in a scene with Bolívar, but also by showing how the Liberator makes the printer to stop the current issue making him start a new version incorporating recent news that arrived with information about new accomplishments and defeats in the plains of Apure.

2. For more information about Mr. Andrés Roderick and his influence in the dissemination of news and journalism from the era of the Venezuelan emancipation, see: Grases, Pedro, Pietri A. Uslar, Prisco R. Di, and Horacio J. Becco. *Escritos Selectos*. Caracas: Fundación Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1990.

A transition between scenes occur and Kaplan uses the melody of a harp to introduce a new topic about a situation that happened with the detention of two schooners that were confiscated by the Venezuelan government. These boats property of the United States of America, were caught with ammunitions, and the matters related to this diplomatic issue are discussed in a controversial conversation between Mr. Irwin, a diplomat representing the US, and Bolívar. The conversation among Mr. Irwin and Bolívar exposes the facts that happened when the schooners were apprehended. An exchange of thoughts and reasoning about why the Venezuelan government decided to stop these two boats (Tiger and Liberty) (Calderas, 1984:60) is depicted by Kaplan including a diplomatic altercation Bolívar has with Mr. Irwin. This situation happens in Angostura in 1818 the same year when General Santiago Mariño announces his unconditional support to Simón Bolívar. The Liberator receives the news from General Urdaneta and announces that now is the moment to go to Caracas. At the same time, Bolívar is shown in a melancholic scene in where he dictates a personal letter to his aide Mr. Martel. The epistle is for Josefina Machado, better known as *Pepita*<sup>3</sup>, a lover Bolívar had in Caracas. Kaplan shows how Bolívar dreams about *Pepita* receiving him in Caracas and suddenly the dream ends with a new phase including topics from the newspaper coming from the South, Perú and Argentina with news about General José de San Martín defeating an army of 7,000 men and being proclaimed the Liberator of the South and Perú. Newspapers from Great Britain are also read and the information shares the same news about General San Martín.

Simón Bolívar named General Francisco de Paula Santander to be in charge of all the matters in the region of Casanare in Nueva Granada, and Betty Kaplan depicts this moment of fraternity between Bolívar and Santander. The Liberator is also eager to control all possible territories and decides to send General José Antonio Páez to Caracas. An interesting scene shows how the Liberator paid tribute to his Generals and troops, and a medal was given to General Páez and his aide Pedro Camejo. Diversity is also shown in a panoramic angle including soldiers, Indians, slaves, black and white people, and followers of the Bolivarian army, while the Liberator tries to convince General Páez

to take his troops to Caracas, however, Páez does not seem to be too interested about going to the Capital without knowing what is going on with the other parts of the regions still battling against the Spanish General Morillo. An important correspondence is also given to Bolívar by General Lara with the news about the region of Nueva Granada controlled by General Santander and his troops. With support from General Santander, Bolívar organized and executed a military campaign with his troops going across the snowy mountains of the Andes and defeating the Spanish army winning the Battle of Boyacá on August 7, 1819.

Nueva Granada fell under control of the Bolivarian troops, as well as the City of Cartagena a couple of years later in October 1821. The Liberator was then declared president and Santander Vice President. Bolívar left Santander in charge of Nueva Granada and continued fighting in the South in Ecuador and Perú. All these moments are synthesized by Betty Kaplan in a chronological and precise way, following and including many of the national dates, events and descriptions that were previously registered in books such as the literary classic written in 1881 entitled: *Venezuela Heroica* by Venezuelan author Eduardo Blanco who in a poetic narration explained what happened in the most important battles fought in Venezuela. It is important to mention that Blanco's description about the Liberator during the beginning of the era of the emancipation emphasizes the personality of Bolívar in the battlefields:

Sólo Bolívar no se conmueve; superior á las veleidades de la fortuna, para su alma no hai contrariedad, ni sacrificio, ni prueba desastrosa que la avasalle ni la postre. Sin detenerse á deplorar los hechos consumados, alcanza con el relámpago del génio los horizontes de la patria (Blanco, 1881).

The crossing of the Páramo de Pisba in 1819 is portrayed by Kaplan in a bucolic way, taking under consideration several aspects shown in the paintings of the Venezuelan iconic images of this adventure planned by the Liberator. The scenery shows how Bolívar and his troops go across a difficult pathway fighting against the inclement weather that is affecting the soldiers and horses recreating the environment of the paintings of the Venezuelan artist, Tito Salas,<sup>4</sup> in where the Liberator

3. For a deeper study on Pepita see: Chávez, Peralta S. *Sueño Y Realidad De Simón Bolívar*. México: Ed. Renacimiento, S.A, 1960.

4. For these portraits of Simón Bolívar in the Andes see: Pineda, Rafael. *La Pintura De Tito Salas*. Caracas: E. Armitano, 1974.

can be seen wearing a dark cape while looking at his soldiers dying of hunger and hypothermia. The adventure across the Andes ends and Bolívar arrives with his troops to an area where a military camp is established and a long scene showing the organization and the formation of the Bolivarian army can be seen while the Liberator rides his horse with his aides exploring the territory for the next confrontation against the Spanish troops. General Barreiro, a Spanish commander of the Spanish camp is informed about the presence of Bolívar, nonetheless, Barreiro is skeptical about the news since he sees impossible that Bolívar and his troops can be approaching to Boyacá. The battle of Boyacá starts and the Spanish army attacks the Bolivarian troops. General Barreiro is defeated by Bolívar's soldiers, apprehended and sent to the Liberator. An interesting scene starts happening when Simón Bolívar recognizes one of the Generals that has been captured, his name is General Binoni, a Venezuelan traitor that help the Spaniards to take control over the Fort Bolívar was protecting in Puerto Cabello during the fall of *La Primera República* (the First Republic). A flashback begins to show the moment when the Liberator lost the Fort in Puerto Cabello. Kaplan re-imagined the event using Bolívar's words to narrate the story, Kaplan also uses a letter that was handled to General Francisco de Miranda who was having supper with another traitor, General Piar. The epistle read by Miranda mentions the reasons why Bolívar had to run away abandoning his position in the Fort and Betty Kaplan uses the same exact words written by the Liberator to interconnect a dual image of the Liberator that recalls the past in an introspective way:

I was presumptuous enough to believe that my desire to succeed and my ardent zeal for my country would supply the talents that I lacked as a commander. I therefore beg you either place me under the orders of your lowest ranking officer or grant me several days leave to compose myself and to recover the confidence that I lost in losing Puerto Cabello. On top of this there is the state of my physical health, for after thirteen sleepless nights and extremes of responsibility and anxiety, I find myself in a condition of virtual collapse.... I did my duty, General, and had but a single soldier stayed with me, I would have fought on, but they abandoned me through no fault of mine.<sup>5</sup>

This situation finalizes when Bolívar tells General Santander that Binoni the traitor must be hung, and the rest of the soldiers that were apprehended will be kept alive to exchange them with the Spanish troops. Kaplan also incorporates an interesting phrase mentioned by the Liberator while he watches Binoni's body hanging. Bolívar says that Binoni was the reason why Venezuela lost *La Primera República*, and the reason why General Francisco de Miranda was captured and sent to the Spanish prison known as *La Carraca* in where he died. General Santander is asked to only execute this man keeping the rest of the soldiers alive since they are war prisoners and deserve to be judged. Simón Bolívar can be seen riding his horse in Bogotá in 1819, and another important event is depicted when Bolívar and his Bolivarian army take over Nueva Granada. Bolívar celebrates and also names General Santander as the president of the United Provinces of Nueva Granada, at the same time, Bolívar speaks about his departure back to the City of Angostura in Venezuela to take care of a new conflict, a new division between Venezuelan Generals that are not following the rules established during the creation of Colombia and the agreements taken during the ceremony:

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of December, 1819, Congress decreed the creation of Colombia by the union of Venezuela, Nueva Granada and Quito into a single republic. Bolívar was then elected president. Don Antonio Zea was elected vice-president for Venezuela, and Santander for Nueva Granada (also called Cundinamarca). No vice-president was elected for Quito. The organization of Quito was deferred until the army of freedom should enter that city. The dream of Bolívar had come true again, and his prophecy made in Jamaica in 1815 had become a reality (Sherwell, 1921:130).

Bolívar, a man of unity, is depicted by Kaplan in a difficult situation dealing not only with the imminent fragmentation and disobedience of his close Generals and the troops he left in charge of the region in Angostura, but also, the Liberator can be seen deeply impacted when he is informed about the execution of many Spanish soldiers he left in Nueva Granada. General Santander decided to eliminate these men

5. Bolívar to Miranda, 12 July, 14 July, 1812, O'Leary, *Memorias*, XXIX, 11-13.

without a fair trial while Bolívar appears regretting that this unnecessary killing could be really happening. The Liberator mentions the impact this matter will have against the republic not only politically but also demographically, and reacts negatively with what General Santander has decided to do to these soldiers. It is important to mention that Venezuela lost more than one third (Dominguez, 1974: 247) of its population during the emancipation war, and these numbers had a very negative impact in the development of the new society and its new generation. Bolívar reacts with frustration and decides to ride his horse towards Angostura in order to help Francisco Zea to deal with the chaos and the divisions that are happening among the Bolivarian troops. Interestingly, Bolívar meets with General Antonio José de Sucre in the middle of a river. The moment shows how the Liberator embraces Sucre while telling him that destiny has something prepared for him. Bolívar invites Sucre to come with him to Angostura and a new relationship between these two men starts. The Liberator arrives to the City of Angostura, and Francisco Zea receives him and takes him to the podium in where Bolívar will speak in front of the congressmen and Betty Kaplan crystallizes the moment in a similar way as it was narrated in the book *Bolívar Hoy* by the Venezuelan writer Arturo Uslar Pietri:

El 17 de diciembre en la mañana, el Congreso, presidido por Zea, aprobó por unanimidad el Proyecto de Ley que creaba el Nuevo Estado. Es un modelo de concisión y de comprensión. Consta de tres considerandos y de catorce artículos. Allí cupo toda la grandeza del propósito. El Congreso de Venezuela toma la inmensa decisión para su propio país y asume con grandiosa sencillez la representación del viejo virreinato, al proclamar que a su 'autoridad han querido voluntariamente sujetarse los Pueblos de la Nueva Granada, recientemente libertados por las Armas de la República'. Las razones invocadas son las más inmediatas y evidentes. La unión elevará a los dos países 'al más alto grado de poder y prosperidad, la separación haría imposible aprovechar la suma de todas las ventajas y consolidar y hacer respetar la Soberanía', el propósito no era nuevo, sino que había sido adoptado con anterioridad y las vicisitudes de la guerra impidieron verificarlo (Uslar, 1990).

Finally, the Liberator brings back unity and peace with his words and presence, and the City of Angostura is again the protagonist of a very important moment in Latin-American and in Bolivarian history in general.

## CONCLUSION

It is important to mention that Betty Kaplan incorporates many peculiar aspects of the Bolivarian history that are quite rich in content paying detailed attention to unique events she portrayed as part of the transition that occurs during all the years covered from the scenes in Paris in 1804 until the Address of Angostura in 1819. Betty Kaplan's miniseries about the life of Bolívar also brings the spectator a vast use of sources of information primarily guided by original writings of Bolívar including epistles, literature, history, biographies and iconography. The originality of this miniseries, the plot, and its multicultural approach to the life and image of Simón Bolívar, includes a sophisticated representation of the scenarios and the people related to the Liberator. Betty Kaplan

captured and re-imagined the Latin-American diversity through the use of an adequate inclusion of cultures, accents of different regions, folkloric representations, and traditions related to the story and image of Bolívar. Moreover, Kaplan presented a quite sophisticated and global perception of her vision, covering aspects from the moment when Simón Bolívar met Alexander Von Humboldt in Paris in 1804, until the creation of his project for a constitution better known as the Address of Angostura in Venezuela in 1819. This article explores new venues within the audiovisual image of the Liberator, and opens the doors to a peculiar theme related to the figure of Simón Bolívar in Latin-American popular culture that has not been deeply explored or narrated.

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