

# *Epistolario* FRANCISCO AYALA

Carta de Emile Capouya a Francisco Ayala (25/05/1962)

May 25, 1962

Mr. Francisco Ayala

54 West 16th Street

New York, New York

Dear Mr. Ayala:

I enclose a copy of a letter just received from the British publisher of *Muertes de perro*, which quotes a letter from Mrs. Barea.

I note that she still has not committed herself to a date, and I shall try to get her to do so again. Messrs. Michael Joseph appear [sic] to be satisfied with her explanation, but I must confess that I am not.

Cordially,

Emile

Emile Capouya

Senior Editor

Trade Department

ec/ki

[Escrito a mano:] Dear Mr. Ayala:

This letter should have gone out to you on the 25<sup>th</sup>, and I assumed that it had. I have just found it, however. This may account for a small area of mutual incomprehension in our conversation yesterday.

E.

[Copia de carta dirigida a A.L. Hart por Michael Joseph Lt.]

4th May, 1962.

Mr. A. L. Hart, Jr.,

The Macmillan Company,

60, Fifth Avenue,

New York 11,

N.Y., U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Hart,

I asked Ilse Barea to explain how she came to give precedence to the Hortelano book. She has given me a detailed account of her health troubles over the last year (which I can confirm as I often see her and speak to her). I think I had better quote from her letter to me today.

"I read the Hortelano book for Weidenfeld in MS before it won the Fomentor, and was anything but impressed. I classified it as readable, but only just a good second-rate novel. However, I knew it was one of the easiest jobs for translation imaginable, the only one in my personal experience I could dictate straight on the tape. This was very important to me. As you know, I have had a double difficulty with my health for years: on the one side I cannot do much typing without greatly worsening the local arthritis in my two main typing fingers, up to a point when I simply cannot go on typing because of acute pain and swelling –on the other hand I have that wretched diabetes which will not respond quite as it ought to treatment, and produces baddish slumps each time I am under particular strain or worry, or overwork too grossly.

"Now, as a rule I do at least three versions of a translation. In the case of the Fomentor novel I only corrected the transcription from the tape; this is possible with dialogue of that sort, and the result appears not too bad, though I didn't like it and felt bad about it.

"*A Dog's Death* is an entirely different matter. I must have done about five versions by now at least of the two thirds for which the stylistic problems are extraordinarily great... I have had a beautifully typed version, and rejected. The more I have been working on the book, and this is by now a dreadfully long time, the more I have become convinced that it is an exceptionally good and exceptionally difficult novel entirely dependent on the rightness of style. It is by far the most difficult translation I ever did, and I have done many as you know, if I want to achieve the standard it needs and deserves. I started dictating on to tape, but it was a dismal failure. It just isn't a book one can do –or / can translate, rather– without constant checking by sight, in typing. I tried dictating to various "secretaries", and sometimes it worked, but more often I only retyped certain sections afterwards. Also, I had not one but two true-blue British friends going through version (3) and (4) with a fine comb. The amount of labour –and, incidentally, expense— I have invested may seem out of proportion, but anything less would be not quite good enough.

"Now I have another "fair copy" at home, and am going through it again. It must clearly be the last time, otherwise there will never be an end to it. And I know I'll never be satisfied anyway. But I do insist that the other translation did not steal time I would have used on Ayala; it filled time I physically or technically couldn't have used to any good effect on *A Dog's Death*.

"As I said, I shall force myself now to put a stop to my endless revisions, and perhaps this will leave me with a less strained and unhappy conscience that I have now".

I hope this will comfort the author and you as it does us.

I hope to see you when I come over to New York in October.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

AJ/JB

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**REMITENTE:** Capouya, Emile

**DESTINATARIO:** Ayala, Francisco

**DESTINO:** 54 West 16th Street. Apt. 4F. New York 11 N. Y.

**ORIGEN:** S.I.

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