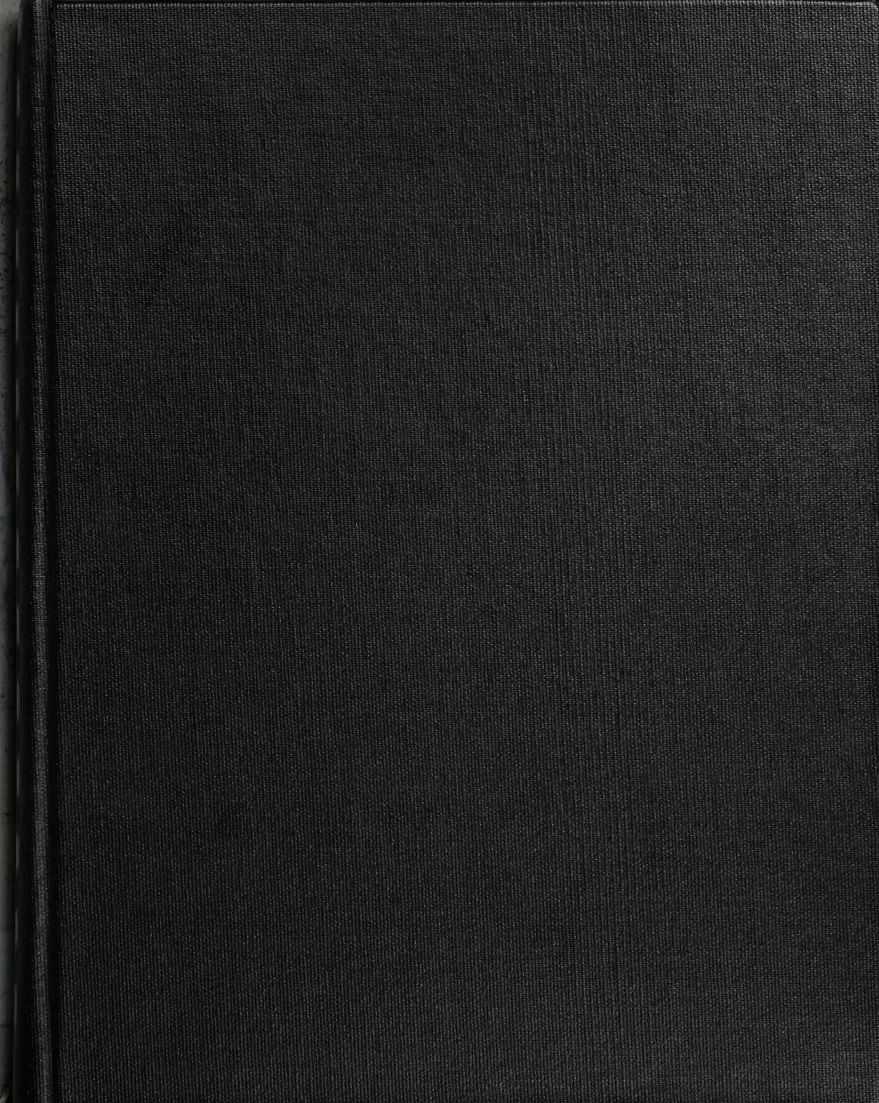






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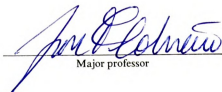
Social Crisis, Economic Development and the
Emergence of the "Novela Negra" in Mexico and Spain:
The case of Paco Ignacio Taibo II and Manuel
Vazquez Montalban

presented by

William John Nichols II

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SOCIAL CRISIS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE EMERGENCE OF
THE "NOVELA NEGRA" IN MEXICO AND SPAIN: THE CASE OF PACO
IGNACIO TAIBO II AND MANUEL VÁZQUEZ MONTALBÁN

by

William John Nichols II

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Romance and Classical Languages

1999

ABSTRACT

SOCIAL CRISIS, DEVELOPMENT AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE "NOVELA NEGRA" IN MEXICO AND SPAIN: THE CASE OF PACO IGNACIO TAIBO II AND MANUEL VÁZQUEZ MONTALBÁN

by

William John Nichols II

This project presents a comparative study that brings together two authors--Paco Ignacio Taibo II and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán--from two specific political contexts--post-1968 Mexico and post-Franco Spain--who both work in one specific genre--"noir" detective fiction. Although many scholars have addressed detective fiction in Latin America or Spain, the uniqueness of this project lies in its transatlantic study of "noir" detective fiction in Mexico and Spain by Paco Ignacio Taibo II and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán. By analyzing the motives and means by which these writers adopt and adapt the North American hard-boiled model of detective fiction, this study presents a global picture of the political, social, economic and aesthetic processes that foment the creation of a "noir" poetic.

This dissertation addresses the emergence of the hard-boiled detective in Mexico and in Spain as an archetype that arises in specific social, historical, economic and political circumstances. These archetypes

not only project a vision of a modern, urban society but also convey the lack of faith in the political, economic and social institutions inherent in the members of that society. Paco Ignacio Taibo II in Mexico and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán in Spain appropriate and adapt the established forms of hard-boiled detective fiction known in Spanish as "novela negra." They propel the sleuth through changing societies, specifically post-1968 Mexico and post-Franco Spain, struggling to reconcile a past of repression with the ideals of a democratic present. Both Taibo's detective, Hector Belascoarán Shayne and Vázquez Montalbán's detective, Pepe Carvalho simultaneously accept and resist the literary models set by such North American authors as Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler and Ross MacDonald. They embark, therefore, on a search for literary self-identity that coincides with their explorations of the identity of "modern" Mexico and Spain.

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WILLIAM JOHN NICHOLS II
1999

To my parents, Bill and Dace Nichols
my brother, John
and, of course, Silvia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Professor José F. Colmeiro for his excellent guidance, motivating encouragement and diligent patience. To Professor Javier Durán for his continued support and advice regarding, but not limited to, Mexican Literature after 1968. And to Professor George Mansour, a mentor who has influenced all facets of my professional formation.

I would also like to show my appreciation to the faculty, staff and graduate students at the Department of Romance and Classical Languages who have supported me throughout my studies at Michigan State. Finally, I would like to thank Professors María Rosa Olivera-Williams, Carlos Jerez-Farrán and Martin F. Murphy at the University of Notre Dame for sparking my passion for Hispanic literature and culture.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. The first part of the test is a reading comprehension section. You will be given a passage of text and asked to answer questions about it. Read the passage carefully and answer the questions to the best of your ability.

2. The second part of the test is a writing section. You will be given a topic and asked to write an essay. Choose a topic that interests you and write a well-organized and thoughtful essay.

3. The third part of the test is a math section. You will be given a series of math problems to solve. Use your knowledge of math to solve the problems and show your work.

4. The fourth part of the test is a science section. You will be given a series of science questions to answer. Use your knowledge of science to answer the questions.

5. The fifth part of the test is a social studies section. You will be given a series of social studies questions to answer. Use your knowledge of social studies to answer the questions.

6. The sixth part of the test is a language section. You will be given a series of language questions to answer. Use your knowledge of language to answer the questions.

7. The seventh part of the test is a logic section. You will be given a series of logic problems to solve. Use your knowledge of logic to solve the problems.

8. The eighth part of the test is a general knowledge section. You will be given a series of general knowledge questions to answer. Use your general knowledge to answer the questions.

9. The ninth part of the test is a critical thinking section. You will be given a series of critical thinking questions to answer. Use your critical thinking skills to answer the questions.

10. The tenth part of the test is a final review section. You will be given a series of questions to review the material you have learned.

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INTRODUCTION

This project presents a comparative study that brings together two authors--Paco Ignacio Taibo II and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán--from two specific political contexts--post-1968 Mexico and post-Franco Spain--who both work in one specific genre--"noir" detective fiction. Although many scholars have addressed detective fiction in Latin America or Spain, the uniqueness of this project lies in its transatlantic study of "noir" detective fiction in Mexico and Spain by Paco Ignacio Taibo II and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán. By analyzing the motives and means by which these writers adopt and adapt the North American hard-boiled model of detective fiction, this study presents a global picture of the political, social, economic and aesthetic processes that foment the creation of a "noir" poetic.

Much like a detective's investigation, this project began with a series of questions including:

What are the social, historical and political circumstances in which hard-boiled novels flourish? What is the vision of society, justice and morality conveyed by the hard-boiled private eye? What social conditions have inhibited the growth of these novels in Mexico and Spain in the past? What has allowed their recent



development in these countries? How do these authors issues of modernity and democracy as specifically Mexican or Spanish phenomena? How do these authors and their novels fit into discussions of "pop" literature, postmodernism and discussions of genre categorization? The answers to these questions reveal an intimate connection between Paco Ignacio Taibo II and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, both of whom intend to transcend "pop" literature and mystery fiction categories. Both authors manipulate the investigative nature of detective fiction in order to observe and criticize their societies, question the essence of a written text and doubt the validity of genre hierarchies.

With the short story "Murders on the Rue Morgue," Edgar Allan Poe began in 1841 a literary genre known as detective fiction that narrated the investigation and solution of a crime through a central figure's use of logic and ratiocination. Popularized by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and later by Agatha Christie, the genre known as the "whodunit" created logic puzzles that narrated the sleuth's accumulation of clues, discovery of the murderer and the inevitable delivery of the guilty party to the authorities. Evil, in these texts, exists as an external entity that disrupts the social order which is ultimately

restored by the discovery and expulsion of the villain. Nevertheless, in the 1920s and 1930s, such North American authors as Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler invented a new type of detective fiction that rejected the bourgeois tendencies of the "whodunit." Articulating a hard-edged realism, this model of detective fiction comes to be known as the North American School of Hard-Boiled Detective Fiction. Tough-guy loners like Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe walk the mean streets of San Francisco and Los Angeles favoring intuition over intellect and cynicism over cold logic. The central figure is no longer an aristocratic amateur sleuth but a professional private eye who maintains strict loyalty to his client and adheres to a personal code of morality. Often pitted against corrupt police, greedy politicians, dangerous gangsters and the decadent elite, hard-boiled detectives understand and manifest the social crisis of the Prohibition and Depression eras in the United States.

In both Mexico and Spain, many authors have adopted and adapted the realist tendencies of hard-boiled detective fiction to reflect the social crises of their respective countries in a genre known as "novela negra." "Negra," in this sense, refers to the "noir" vision that permeates hard-boiled fiction in post-1968 Mexico and

post-Franco Spain. Most prominently, Paco Ignacio Taibo II, in Mexico, and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, in Spain, appropriate the brutal realism of writers like Hammett and Chandler in order to create "social chronicles" that comment and criticize contemporary modernization and development within specifically Mexican and Spanish contexts. Through an investigative process, their detectives--Héctor Belascoarán Shayne and Pepe Carvalho, respectively--hunt for truth in societies where justice is constantly subverted in favor of the interests of the government, big business, and the ruling class. Whereas the police uphold the established order through repressive tactics, these detectives defend the poor, underclass and dispossessed from victimization, co-optation and deception.

Both Taibo and Vázquez Montalbán, however, "use and abuse" the generic conventions of hard-boiled fiction by infusing the essential structure of an investigation with self-referential irony, intertextuality, narrative fragmentation, and juxtaposition of narrative voices. Thus, while these texts portray contemporary social processes, they also deconstruct their own written nature, explore cultural codes, attack hierarchical differences between "high" and "low" literature and blur



genre categorizations. These authors, in other words, create novels that represent postmodern inquiries into the ephemeral and subjective essence of "truth." The detective's investigation, therefore, provides a means for Taibo and Vázquez Montalbán to explore the nature of their respective societies as well as examine the nature of "truth" through metafictional innovation. In the words of Marshall McLuhan, "The medium is the message" (23) where the text not only explores a crime but also questions itself, societal beliefs and literary categories.

Although he emigrated to Mexico at age nine, Taibo's own heritage links him to Gijón, Spain where he was born and where each July he holds the "Semana Negra" ("Noir Week") that celebrates detective and crime fiction, popular culture, politics and revolution. Vázquez Montalbán's political interests have likewise linked him to Mexico not only through his friendship with Taibo but also through his defense of sub-comandante Marcos and the EZLN¹. Both Taibo and Vázquez Montalbán view detective fiction as a political tool that signals society's problems through the detective's investigation yet, more

¹ Vázquez Montalbán recently published his interview with sub-comandante Marcos in the Lancandón jungle of Chiapas in a February, 1999 issue of El País.

importantly, utilizes the mass appeal of a popular genre to communicate with a wide audience. Studying the novels of Taibo and Vázquez Montalbán together, one notes that the notion they share of the "novela negra" genre only links their artistic vision and also establishes parallels between the political, economic and social processes that give way to a "noir" poetic.

Chapter 1 will outline the atmosphere of social, political and economic crises that plague Mexico and Spain and frame the development of "novela negra" in these countries. Within the socio-historical context established in Chapter 1, then Chapter 2 effectively deals with the emergence of the hard-boiled genre in the literary landscape of Mexico and Spain specifically addressing how Taibo and Vázquez Montalbán appropriate and violate its generic tenets of hard-boiled detective fiction while simultaneously upholding its realist tendencies. Chapter 3 focuses on the dystopic view of Mexico City, Barcelona and Madrid that conveys dissatisfaction with the modern urban identity of contemporary Mexico and Spain and it addresses issues of development and modernization in these countries. Finally, Chapter 4 examines the interplay among memory, history and truth on both individual and collective

levels as citizens struggle to reconcile a repressive
past with the ideals of a democratic present.



CHAPTER I

Social Crisis, Modernization and the Emergence of the "Novela Negra" in Mexico and Spain

The genre known as "noir" detective fiction arose in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s, an era dominated by chaos, uncertainty and doubt. "Noir" detective fiction, also referred to as "hard-boiled" detective fiction, utilized the figure of a morally ambiguous, cynical, "tough-guy" sleuth to depict the dark realism of a nation in crisis. Prohibition, gangsterism the Stock Market Crash and the Great Depression revealed a dark side to the project of modernity and instilled skepticism in the democratic ideals upon which the United States based itself. As a result, "noir" detective fiction, established by such authors as Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, portrays and criticizes a capitalistic, urban and industrial nation dominated by greed, corruption and lawlessness.

Similarly, over the last thirty years, "noir" detective fiction has emerged in Mexico and Spain as a means for social criticism in countries struggling to understand their modern identity. Most prominently, Paco Ignacio Taibo II and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán have

adopted the North American genre to address the crises of their respective countries. In their works, they question the definition of a "modern" identity and the political, cultural and economic development in post-1968 Mexico and post-Franco Spain. Therefore, in order to understand the reasons for the development of "noir" detective fiction in Mexico and Spain, it is necessary to analyze the crises that condition the historical moment and frame the cultivation of this literary genre.

Both Mexico and Spain embody changing societies laboring to reconcile a past of political repression, almost 70 years of PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) domination in Mexico and 40 years of Francoism in Spain, with the ideals of economic and political modernization, neo-liberal capitalism, a world market and a consumer culture. Over the course of the twentieth century, both countries have attempted to undergo a transition from closed, agrarian communities dominated by an oligarchy of conservative elites to open, urban and industrial nations characterized by democratic freedom. Nevertheless, the censorship, violence and political repression of the past have given way to corruption and government fraud, gang violence, drug

addiction, unemployment and terrorism despite, or maybe because of, the assimilation of the capitalist model.

It is important to note, however, that in spite of all the similarities there are important differences between Spain and Mexico. In the case of Spain, the project of modernity² has been intimately associated with the internal tensions between the "two Spains"—conservative versus liberal elements—and the incorporation of a new, democratic European identity. Mexico, on the other hand, has struggled to reconcile the First World model of the United States and a Third World Latin American reality. The clash between the "modern" and "pre-modern," often with bloody consequences, manifests the uncertainty and seeming incompatibility of a capitalist economic model with a history of political repression. Both Mexico and Spain, however, endeavor to cope with a modern identity characterized by corruption, violence, disorder and chaos in which a byproduct of development is the victimization of the working underclass, the dispossessed, the marginalized and, in Mexico, the indigenous.

² Modernity here corresponds to a project of political democratization, technological advancement and social secularization. The notion of modernity as a project is described in Marshall Berman's All That Is Solid Melts Into Air and Mateu Calinescu's Five Faces of Modernity.



In this way, the social, political and economic crises plaguing Mexico and Spain link directly to a disillusionment with a modernity that brings economic prosperity, though definitely not for all members of society, at the price of authoritarianism, marginalization and political repression. The trajectory of these two countries in recent history represents a quest for what both Raymond Carr, in Spain, and Enrique Krauze, in Mexico, call a "democracy without adjectives" (Carr 214) (Krauze, Por una democracia sin adjetivos). As will be seen in Chapter 2, both Paco Ignacio Taibo II and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán analyze this quest and confront the failures of the project of modernity in their respective countries through the realism and cynicism of "noir" detective fiction. The adventures of their respective detectives testify to the promises and failures of economic development in Mexico and Spain.

I. The Case of Mexico after 1968

Mexico's journey toward modernity adheres to an economic model that favors financial prosperity and social stability at the expense of authoritarianism and political repression. This model, evident in the years previous to the Mexican Revolution during the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, based itself on

"exclusionary politics" that marginalized the poor, landless peasants, working class and indigenous in favor of the interests of the social elite. In this way, the "Porfiriato," as the dictatorship came to be known, professed such liberal ideals as *Progreso* and *Libertad* yet masked the means by which these ideals were to be achieved. Díaz's slogan "Pan y Palo" manifested the dictator's attitude toward the underclass in which reward for hard work was tempered with physical violence—a ruthlessness noted by Ronald Atkin in Revolution! Mexico 1910-20, "Díaz had created a machine which he oiled with the blood of the underprivileged" (6).

Both Robert Quirk and Eric Wolf capture the contradictions and double morality of the Porfiriato that extol liberalism and economic development on one hand yet expose disparaging inequalities among classes on the other. In The Mexican Revolution: 1914-1915, Quirk notes that despite the façade of prosperity due to a balanced budget, dependence on the gold standard, and heavy foreign investments, pre-Revolution Mexican society advocated economic, racial and political subjugation of the poor,

A balanced budget meant little to an Indian agricultural worker whose standard of living plummeted while the national

income rose. Real wages were lower than they had been a century earlier under Spanish rule. [...] By 1910 less than five per cent of Mexico's population owned almost all of the arable land. [...] In the cities the industrial workers labored for little pay under hazardous and unsanitary conditions. Strikes were repressed by the army with extreme brutality.

There was no semblance of popular rule, as opposition parties had long been discouraged, and voting procedures were rigged to insure the election and re-election of Díaz, his legislators, and his state officials. [...] Among the members of the middle and upper classes, Mexico's politically effective population, the dictatorship found much support. The positivists taught that the masses—more than eighty per cent of the Mexicans were illiterate—were not, perhaps would never be capable of self-government. (2-3)

In much the same way, Eric Wolf notes the disparities of the Porfiriato in Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century,

Under the dictatorship of Díaz Mexico underwent profound change. During this period, foreign capital investment in Mexico greatly outpaced Mexican investment. Concentrating first on the construction of railroads and the mining of precious ores, it began to flow increasingly, after 1900, into the production of raw materials: oil, copper, tin, lead, rubber, coffee, and sisal. The economy came to be dominated by a small group of businessmen and financiers whose decisions affected the welfare of the entire country. Thus, in 1908, out of sixty-six corporations involved in finance and industry, thirty-six had common directorates drawn from a group of



thirteen men; nineteen of the corporations had more than one of the thirteen. During the final decade of the nineteenth century, the leaders of this new controlling group formed a clique which soon came to be known as the Científicos. Claiming to be scientific positivists, they saw the future of Mexico in the reduction and obliteration of the Indian element, which they regarded as inferior and hence incapable of development, and in the furtherance of "white" control, national or international. This was to be accomplished through tying Mexico more strongly to the "developed" industrial nations, principally France, Germany, the United States, and Britain. Development, in their eyes, would thus derive from abroad, either in the form of foreign settlers or in the form of foreign capital. (13-14)

Both Quirk's and Wolf's analysis of the economic, social and political views of the Porfiriato resonate, as will be seen, with the notions of development in Mexico begun in the 1950s, with the "Milagro Mexicano," and continued through the technocracies of both the Salinas de Gortari and Zedillo administrations. That is, throughout the twentieth century, Mexico's political and social elite pursue the ideals of a globalized, consumer economy while ignoring the elements that seem contrary to a modern identity, specifically, the peasantry, indigenous, and working class. The result is an uneven, inconsistent and unrepresentative modernity based on the exclusion of "pre-modern" sectors of society in order to

promote a development that benefits the upper classes.

Nestor García Canclini, in Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity, hints at the tension between the "pre-modern" and the "modern" ultimately leading to the marginalization of the former in a consumer society,

From nineteenth-century liberalism to developmentalism, modernizing ideologies accentuated this Manichaeian compartmentalization by imagining that modernization would end with traditional forms of production, beliefs, and goods. Myths would be replaced with scientific knowledge, handicrafts by the expansion of industry, books by audiovisual means of communication. [...] Modernity, then, is a mask. A simulacrum conjured up by the elites and the state apparatuses, above all those concerned with art and culture, but which for that very reason makes them unrepresentative and unrealistic. The liberal oligarchies of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries acted as if they constituted states, but they only ordered some areas of society in order to promote a subordinate and inconsistent development; they acted as if they formed national cultures, and they barely constructed elite cultures, leaving out enormous indigenous and peasant populations, who manifest their exclusion in a thousand revolts and in the migration that is bringing 'upheaval' to the cities.

(3-7)

Mexico's quest for modernity therefore has continually failed because of the inability to reconcile the "pre-modern" with the "modern." Mexico's internal

development has always been synonymous with the desire to purge the illiterate, impoverished peasant-indigenous element stereotypically dependent on pre-Columbian myths and superstition in order to forge an intellectual, First World, urban global economy based on secular, scientific rationalism. Nevertheless, the results of such a policy have inevitably been vast poverty, a fragile economy, government corruption, police violence and widespread disillusionment with Mexican politics.

The so-called "Milagro Mexicano" describes the economic prosperity derived from the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) economic agenda immediately after World War II. Begun under the 'sexenio' (six year presidential term) of Miguel Alemán (1946-52), Mexico sought to strengthen the infrastructure and increase job opportunities through such public works projects as the construction of dams, renovation of highways, and the improvement of communications networks. Growth of the middle class, increased oil production and high rates of profit encouraged both foreign and domestic investments which lead to improved trade relations and important diplomatic ties with the United States. Perhaps most indicative of Mexico's vision during this time was the construction of Ciudad Universitaria in 1952. Under the



guidance of Juan O'Gorman³, architects like Félix Candela and artists, like Diego Rivera and David Siquieros, created the home of the UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México) as a testament to Mexico's place among the intellectual, cultural elite (Meyer, The Course of Mexican History 640-650).

The projects of Alemán's *sexenio* continued in subsequent administrations seemingly leading Mexico to a modern, urban identity and entrance into the First World. Under Adolfo Ruiz Cortines (1952-58) U.S. foreign investments grew to include contributions from such corporations as General Motors, Dow Chemical, Pepsi-Cola, Coca-Cola, Colgate, Goodyear, John Deere, Ford, Proctor and Gamble, and Sears. Later, Adolfo López Mateos (1958-1964) prompted the expansion of welfare projects, the construction of low-cost housing projects and the development of rural school systems in order to combat illiteracy (Meyer 651-53). The internal renovation of Mexico thus appeared to stimulate economic growth and stability, link rural sectors with urban centers and educate and support the peasant population.

³ Juan O'Gorman was perhaps one of the most famous architects in Mexico, born in 1905 he studied painting under Diego Rivera and worked as a draughtsman and director of the Town Planning Administration. His masterpieces include the UNAM campus as well as his own home which was built into a cave of volcanic rock.



Nevertheless, as the Milagro Mexicano progressed certain problems arose that revealed the shortcomings of the PRI's economic vision and fomented a growing sense of discontent with Mexican politics that would eventually explode in 1968 with the student movement in Mexico City. Despite the modernizing projects of the 1950s and 1960s, the majority of the economic changes served the interests of a minor percentage of the Mexican population. In spite of high profits and increased foreign investments, wages for the working class and teachers' salaries continued to decrease, revealing a widening gap between the consumer class and the working class (Meyer 645). Also, a new, urbanized Mexico faced overcrowding and poverty, job shortages, health risks, sanitation issues, and pollution problems that had not been foreseen.

Contrary to the economic developments, the perpetuation of a one-party system, which was a major complaint of the Porfiriato, represented the essence of "exclusionary politics" in Mexico. Dominated by favoritism, "amiguismo," bribery and corruption, Mexican politics present a sharp contradiction to the supposed democratic ideals of modernization. Pablo González Casanova, in his 1965 book La democracia en México, reveals a power structure underlying Mexican politics



comprised of a few, integrated, mutually dependent institutions and sectors of society that included: "a) los caudillos y caciques regionales; b) el ejército, d) el clero, e) los latifundistas y los empresarios nacionales y extranjeros" (27).

Similar to the so-called 'poderes fácticos'⁴ in Spain, as will be seen, these institutions guide the direction of development in accordance with their self-interests and by means of marginalization in what González Casanova calls "el colonialismo interno" (62). He defines marginalization as a political as well as economic practice designed to deprive certain portions of the population from power. González Casanova continues:

El marginalismo, o la forma de estar al margen del desarrollo de país, el no participar en el desarrollo económico, social y cultural, el pertenecer al gran sector de los que no tienen nada es particularmente característico de las sociedades subdesarrolladas. No sólo guardan éstas una muy desigual distribución de la riqueza, del ingreso, de la cultura general y técnica, sino que con frecuencia—como es el caso de México—encierran dos o más conglomerados socio-culturales, uno super-participante y otro super-marginal, uno dominante—llámese español, criollo o ladino—y otro dominado—llámese nativo, indio o indígena. (62)

⁴ The term "poderes fácticos" will be discussed and defined on page 45.

Although the "Milagro Mexicano" projects the appearance of a modern, urbanized and developing Mexico, its accomplishments are based on political and economic policies that favor the agenda of an elite oligarchy. Mexican leaders espoused 'modern' economic philosophies designed to stabilize Mexico through public works projects and foreign investments yet their political ideals revealed 'pre-modern' attitudes. Judith Alder Hellman, in Mexico in Crisis, views Mexico's government as a totalitarian system under the guise of a liberal democracy,

If it is not totalitarian, Mexico's government is a far cry from what we understand to be a liberal democracy in spite of the rhetoric and the laws on the books. The Mexican Constitution provides for the separation of power among three branches of government, legal opposition parties, independent organized interest groups--in short, most of the features characteristic of a liberal democratic system. This appearance is utterly deceptive. (97)

Mexico, Gabriel Zaid states, presents a conflicting duality that advocates economic change and development, on one hand, yet upholds a centralist, pyramidist system based on political repression on the other (9). In La economía presidencial, he points out how Mexican political leaders throughout the twentieth century have

co-opted such notions as 'progress' in order to
legitimize their claim to power:

Paradójicamente, la sociedad moderna progresa a través del espíritu crítico, y así regresa a una especie de clerecía racional: la burocracia. El racionalismo seculariza la sociedad y destruye el mito legitimador del soberano por derecho divino, pero crea un nuevo mito legitimador: el soberano racional, que en vez de representar la voluntad del Logos divino, es el mandatario hipostático del Logos racional: el progreso, la historia, la voluntad popular. La razón que da derecho al soberano racional legitima el despotismo ilustrado, el ascenso de los universitarios al poder y la burocracia moderna: el despotismo impersonal del poder impune, cuyos dictados no son responsabilidad de nadie, no entienden de razones y nadie puede parar. Así, desaparece la arbitrariedad aplastante del soberano personal, pero se pone en marcha la aplanadora del organismo impersonal. Así aparecen los organisaurios del siglo XX: los nuevos monstruos leviatanes, dueños de vidas y haciendas, en nombre colectivo. (156)

This unquestionable authority of a centralized government led Mexican university students to seek new ways of conceiving and understanding politics in the late 1960s. The 1968 student movement in Mexico manifested the frustration and alienation of Mexican youths under a self-serving, self-perpetuating political system. Although it began with a dispute between two rival schools, the student movement united various sectors of



Mexican society--including women, the working class, and peasants as well as students--to defy the power structure's authority in Mexico. Influenced by the mass movements in France, Italy and the United States in 1968, Mexicans questioned the hegemony of the State and advocated democratic changes that recognized Mexico's social pluralism. The student movement defied the moral legitimacy as well as the political authority of the PRI by proposing a list of 'points' that sought to dissolve the repressive elements of the Mexican government and uphold democratic ideals (Ramírez 27).

After his imprisonment, José Revueltas revealed in a letter to Martín Dorzal the essence of the student movement that defies the institutions of repression in Mexico. The movement, he states, was not directed against individuals but rather denounced the mechanisms of power and violence,

Estamos en contra de esa esencia, esa institución física, legal, y moral que se llama policía, y que físicamente nos tortura y nos golpea, no por accidente, sino porque en golpear y torturar radica su esencia, su esencia moral y legal. [...] Estamos contra el Presidente, pero no contra ese señor de nombre Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, sino contra lo que representa como poder irresponsable, que no responde ante nadie de sus actos, que pasa por encima de los ordenamientos legales y que se rodea de un aparato de engaño social, de

sumisión y de lisonja con el que ha terminado por pervertir al pueblo entero. Éstos son apenas unos ejemplos de lo que encierra y presupone nuestro Movimiento (191-2).

Nevertheless, the call for a more representative, democratic government fell on the deaf ears of the Mexican establishment. The reaction of the Díaz Ordaz regime to the student movement would simultaneously uphold Mexico's tradition of anti-democratic repression as well as violently rip off the mask of Mexican politics. As Mexico City prepared for the Olympics, impatience with the student movement grew among the PRI leaders who wished to maintain the 'simulacrum' of democracy for an international audience. However, the resistance of the Díaz Ordaz administration culminated with the Massacre of the Plaza de Tlatelolco (also known as the Plaza de las Tres Culturas) on October 2, 1968. With the deaths of an estimated 800 people--despite official numbers ranging between 38 and 58--the student movement came to an abrupt end yet exposed the repressive nature of Mexican politics through this tragic climax (Parra 169). Although the student movement failed to achieve its short-term goals, the ramifications of 1968 produced rippling effects in the political, economic, social and literary realms of Mexican life. As both

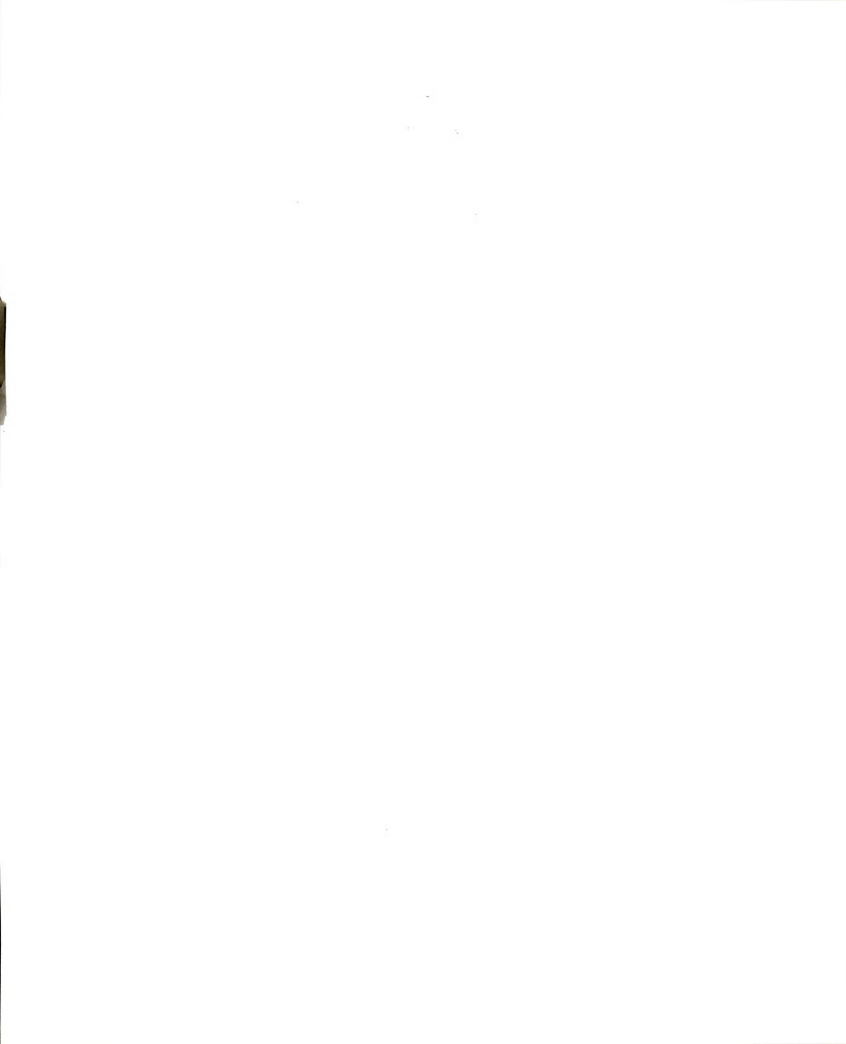


Gilabert and Guevara Niebla note, the student movement opened a space for the masses to intervene in political processes and forever tarnished the PRI's legitimacy.

In La democracia en la calle, Gilberto Guevara Niebla asserts that the utopian ideology of 1968 inserted into Mexico a new need to question authority. The student protests and their violent end brought a demythification of PRI power:

El movimiento estudiantil de 1968 cuestionó la absurda concentración de poder en la figura presidencial (el presidencialismo); criticó y ayudó a desmitificar la imagen del partido revolucionario institucional (PRI); desnudó al poder legislativo como una institución desnaturalizada y esclavizada a los dictados del ejecutivo; puso en evidencia al aspecto despótico y antidemocrático de un sistema político en donde las relaciones entre gobernantes y gobernados se hallaban mediadas por el principio de autoridad; reveló el contenido mistificador de consignas oficiales como la unidad nacional, la estabilidad, el progreso, etc. Con el solo hecho de la conquista de la calle o con la mera circunstancia de haber logrado cristalizar como un gran movimiento de masas, el movimiento de 1968 contribuyó a derribar el mito de la invulnerabilidad del poder y abrió cauces a nuevas formas políticas de oposición. (47)

As a result, the Massacre of the Plaza de Tlatelolco represents the beginning of the end of the 'Milagro Mexicano,' unleashing a downward spiral of economic,



political, social and even ecological crises. During the two subsequent administrations--Luis Echeverría (1970-76) and José López Portillo (1976-82)--the Mexican economy disintegrated under the pressure of a growing external debt, out of control inflation and constant capital flight due to repetitive devaluations of the peso. These twelve years became known as the "Decena trágica" ironically echoing the ten-day siege that virtually destroyed Mexico City in February 1913 known as the "Decena trágica." Mexico, however, depended on vast oil reserves discovered in Tabasco, Chiapas and the Gulf of Mexico to avert impending economic doom. Nevertheless, when petroleum prices collapsed in 1982, the value of the peso plunged as well creating widespread panic, leaving no means for Mexico to repay its foreign debt and officially signifying the onset of "La Crisis."

During the Miguel de la Madrid sexenio (1982-88), unemployment, inflation and debt compounded with such political corruption scandals as Jorge Díaz Serrano, former PEMEX director, and Arturo Durazno Moreno, former chief of Mexico City police, heightened the disillusionment and alienation among Mexico's population (Morris 93). Mexico, however, plummeted deeper into crisis on September 19, 1985 when an earthquake decimated

portions of Mexico City, killing an estimated 8000 people and leaving damages in excess of \$4 billion (Meyer, Michael 688).

Nevertheless, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, with his victory of the 1988 elections (amid widespread rumors of fraud), proposed a new economic strategy led by a series of technocrats educated in American universities. Graduates of such universities as MIT, Harvard, Yale and Princeton, Salinas and his cabinet members formed what Enrique Krauze calls the "Ivy League Administration" (Krauze, La presidencia imperial 419). Inspired by the expropriation enterprises of Spain's socialist government⁵ led by Felipe González, Mexico's leaders bought unproductive businesses and re-sold them to private interests. Enrique Krauze explains the precepts of these policies in La Presidencia Imperial, "La norma era comprar--con dinero que no pasaba por el presupuesto--empresas quebradas de la iniciativa privada. La solución no era invertir en ellas: la solución era quebrarlas o venderlas a la iniciativa privada" (426-7).

⁵ Perhaps the most infamous expropriation in Spain was that of the Grupo Rumasa, a large holding company bought, broken up and sold by the González Administration in 1983. For a complete history see Enrique Díaz González's Rumasa (Planeta 1983).



What is more, as part of this economic model, Salinas sought to revive the Mexican economy by integrating it with that of the United States in the trade agreement known as NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) in English and TLC (Tratado de Libre Comercio) in Spanish. Nevertheless, despite its neo-liberal economic ideals, Salinas's administration adhered strictly to the political practices that marginalized those who were unable to participate in a global economy. While seemingly faithful to modern economic practices, the Mexican government, once again, depends on authoritarian practices to serve the interests of the social elite. Lorenzo Meyer captures the contradiction between the 'modern' and 'pre-modern' ideologies of Mexico's system in the title of his book Liberalismo autoritario in which he states:

Los tecnócratas decidieron que el camino adecuado era una modernización selectiva: transformar la economía, pero preservar y usar a fondo los instrumentos políticos heredados: autoritarios, antidemocráticos y premodernos. [...] Este cambio afectó profundamente el tejido de la sociedad, pero el costo lo pagaron sobre todo aquellos que tenían menos instrumentos políticos para defender su posición y que no estaban en condiciones de resistir el embate directo de competencia externa: los marginados, los indígenas, el sector agrícola de temporal; los micros, pequeños y medianos empresarios e incluso algunos

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31 32 33

de los grandes; los sindicatos y una clase media consumista y muy dependiente de las actividades burocráticas. (30)

The effects of such policies, as Krauze had hinted at earlier, exacerbated rather than relieved the economic crisis of Mexico leading to higher unemployment, bankruptcies among banks and small businesses, skyrocketing inflation, a monstrous external debt, and, most importantly, an unequal distribution of wealth (Meyer, Lorenzo 32-5). The chasm between classes corresponds to what Lorenzo Meyer sarcastically calls the 'contramilagro,'

Hace treinta años era común la referencia al "milagro mexicano." El término se usaba para describir el notable ritmo de crecimiento de la economía y la tranquilidad política que lo prohiaba. Luego vino el 68, otras cosas y el término se olvidó. Sin embargo, hoy el concepto podría resurgir como el "milagro mexicano II." Esta vez se trata de la multiplicación de los megamillonarios en tiempos de crisis. Claro que este nuevo milagro viene acompañado de su contramilagro: la multiplicación-también millonaria-de los perdedores en el reparto de la riqueza social. Ambos hechos están ligados a la distribución tan desigual y autoritaria del poder político en nuestro país. (135)

The inconsistencies of Mexico's economy and inequality among Mexico's classes revealed the decomposition of the social structure and a system that

began to self-destruct in the 1990s. In general, urban violence, drug trafficking, kidnappings and government corruption plague Mexico like never before. Yet, Mexico's implosion was most evident in 1994 with the assassinations of Luis Donaldo Colosio--the PRI's presidential hopeful--and José Francisco Ruiz Massieu--the Attorney General--, the subsequent arrest of Raúl Salinas de Gortari--the President's brother--in connection with the latter murder, Carlos Salinas de Gortari's self-imposed exile, and, finally, the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas and the emergence of Sub-comandante Marcos⁶. Enrique Krauze sees these events as the logical trajectory of the experiences at the Plaza de Tlatelolco in 1968,

Visto desde la perspectiva de Tlatelolco, parecía la crónica de un desenlace anunciado: Díaz Ordaz había recurrido al asesinato en Tlatelolco; Echeverría había destruido la estabilidad económica; López Portillo había endeudado al país; De la Madrid había perdido oportunidades de oro; Salinas de Gortari, el mayor reformador económico del país desde tiempos de Calles, creyó que a fines del siglo XX, y en un mundo libre y democrático, los mexicanos podían seguir gobernados por un régimen de tutela colonial. Para colmo, Salinas intentó algo que ni el presidente empresarial Miguel Alemán se había propuesto: volverse el accionista

⁶ For more detailed information on the events of 1994, see Jorge Fernández Menéndez's De Chiapas a Colosio: El año que vivimos en peligro.

mayoritario de la empresa, su director tras bambalinas y, más tarde, su monarca definitivo. Sólo un acto faltaba en la obra: la muerte violenta del candidato presidencial (442).

The words of Krauze reiterate those of Daniel Cosío Villegas who, over forty years earlier, called attention to the unfulfilled promises of the Mexican Revolution pointing to the self-serving agendas of a dishonest government. In his 1947 essay "La crisis de México," Cosío bemoans a one-party government that sacrifices the interests of the agrarian and working sectors in favor of those of foreign investors and the social elite. He states,

Así, una corrupción administrativa general, ostentosa y agravante, cobijada siempre bajo un manto de impunidad al que sólo puede aspirar la más acrisolada virtud, ha dado al traste con todo el programa de la Revolución, con sus esfuerzos y con sus conquistas, al grado de que para el país ya importe poco saber cuál fue el programa inicial, qué esfuerzos hicieron para cumplirlo y si se consiguieron resultados. La aspiración única de México es la renovación tajante, la verdadera purificación, aspiración que sólo quedará satisfecha con el fuego que arrase hasta la tierra misma en que creció tanto mal. (González y González 47)

Cosío Villegas's commentary, as valid in the 1990s as it was in the 1940s, allows a general vision of the crisis that has plagued Mexico throughout the twentieth

century. His criticism of post-Revolutionary Mexico mirrors many of the criticisms of post-1968 Mexico that suffers from the duplicitous policies of its government. That is, while espousing liberal economic philosophies, Mexico's leaders systematically undermine political and social freedoms through a process of exclusion and marginalization.

II. The Case of Spain after Franco

The transformation of Spain actually began during the last half of the Franco regime in the 1960s and 1970s. During the 1940s and 1950s, Franco controlled virtually all facets of Spanish society through economic isolationism, manipulation of fear and violence, perpetuation of the social hierarchy, alliances with the Catholic church, strict censorship and the fabrication of historiography. In this way, Franco sought to supplant any sense of pluralism with a unified, homogeneous vision of Spanish culture, history and society. Jordi Solé Tura affirms the agenda of Franco's centralized state structure in his article, "The Spanish Transition to Democracy,"

One cannot seriously assert that the Franco state was really a new state. It was, more exactly, the continuation of the type of state forged in Spain during the nineteenth century and in the first years

of the twentieth. The Franco regime superimposed upon this state some specific elements but modified neither the structure nor its deep orientation. What it did do was take to their limits the authoritarian and centrist consequences already existent in the traits of the state. Thus, for example, it maintained centrism and reinforced its bureaucratic and exclusive character; destroyed political pluralism; carried out the greatest concentration in only one pair of hands, those of the chief of state; turned the army into a political and ideological protagonism of the Catholic church. (25)

Howard Wiarda describes the power structure of Francoist Spain as "corporatist" in that "several integral, natural, functional units" comprised the controlling sector of society (39-47). Through patrimonialism, patronage and personal favors the bureaucratic center--including the military and the government--maintained ties with the landed aristocracy and the Catholic Church. Power, then, is upheld under Franco's rule through social categories, ranks and classes. Wiarda asserts that this structure strictly defines Spanish society and power relations under Franco's rule.

First, we have a system of social categories, rank orderings and hierarchy--a system derived in part from history, political culture, and the writings of the Church fathers, but also created in part and certainly reinforced by an emerging structure of class relations. Second, we

have the system of family and clan relations, dominated by patronage considerations and patrimonialism—a system in which various elite families and their retainers and clientele may compete for power and political spoils, and that overlaps with the social and class structure in various ways. And third, we have the system of corporations—a vertical structure that is distinct from the horizontal class-based one, but that also overlaps with the social hierarchy in various ways. (47)

Franco's economic policies were a calculated step in upholding the strict discipline of the social order by isolating Spain from a world economy and concentrating on the cultivation and utilization of Spain's own natural resources. As Mike Richards states in " 'Terror and Progress': Industrialization, Modernity, and the Making of Francoism," the creation of a 'closed society' afforded the Franco regime a means for controlling Spain not only economically but politically and culturally as well.

Physical and economic repression in the wake of the Spanish civil war were used as a way of disciplining the lower orders of society and confirming their defeat. The political economy of the 'New State' was developed to maintain the basic features of existing social power while industrialization was taking place. In practice, the concept of autarky offered a potential way of achieving the essential aims of this brutal vision of modernity: repression, the concentration of economic power and industrialization. Indeed, in

the 1940s, the Francoist state was made through economic, political, and cultural autarky. [...] Social 'purification' could, it was calculated by regime ideologues, be most efficiently carried out within a closed society. [...] The 'moral force' represented by the ideology of the Catholic Church was seen by the regime as offering a way of disciplining the workforce by granting the possibility of 'redemption' through total obedience to authority. (176)

In coordination with the political and economic vision of the Franco regime, the dictatorship embarked on a cultural enterprise that would purge Spanish society of any 'liberal,' 'communist,' 'republican' sentiment. Thereby, through a systematic suppression of dissension, the cultural program of the regime sought to purify the vision of Spain under the slogan "Una España, una raza, una religión". The primary instruments to carry out this cultural control were the educational system, strict censorship and falsified historiography. In close relation with the Catholic Church, the Ministry of Education sought to legitimize the regime through a process of what Alicia Alted calls the "re-Spanishification" and "re-Catholicization" of society (197). She states,

Because of its origins in a military revolt against a constitutionally elected government, the New State needed to find a way of legitimizing itself; the

manipulation of culture offered itself as a tool: first, by controlling all cultural activities through advance censorship and the purging of cultural workers, and second, by creating a cultural model to shape the behaviour of Spanish citizens, thus guaranteeing the regime's stability and permanence. The basis of this model was the disqualification of those who had lost the war (the 'reds'), and the negation of everything the Republic has stood for (qualified with the prefix 'anti-'). The prime channel for instilling this model was, of course the educational system (196).

Censorship, under the control of the Oficina de Prensa y Propaganda, sought to mold Spanish culture not through the imposition of an educational model of "Spanish-ness" but rather via the exclusion of any perceived threat to Spain's cultural identity. Whereas the educational system reinforced a nationalist, Catholic notion of Spain, censorship sought to maintain the purity of that vision by banning expressions against it or the regime. This control extended to radio, public lectures, cinema, magazines, photos, novels and, most importantly, the press. Jo Libanyi, in her article "Censorship or the Fear of Mass Culture," reveals the nature of what might have been considered detrimental to the order of Spanish society,

No mention could be made of the following:
individuals associated with the Republic;
arrests, trials, executions; guerrilla

activity, strike action; the Royal Family; crimes, suicides, bankruptcies; stock exchange falls, devaluations; food and housing shortages, prices rises; industrial and traffic accidents; epidemics, droughts, flood or storm damage. [...] Most unprintable of all was mention of the existence of censorship.
(209)

Lastly, the Franco regime combined education with censorship by co-opting both history and memory to forge a vision of the dictatorship as a logical extension of Spain's glorious past. In such articles as "Social Realism and the Contingencies of History in the Contemporary Spanish Novel" and "Narrating the Past: History and the Novel of Memory in Postwar Spain", David Hertzberger has analyzed the perpetuation of power through Franco's control of collective memory and falsification of history. In Chapter 4, I will discuss the dilemma of memory in post-Franco Spain and specifically the manifestation of the conflict between memory and amnesia within Vázquez Montalbán's Carvalho series.

Nevertheless, despite the Franco regime's tight control throughout the first two decades of the dictatorship, Spain in the 1960s began to modernize, industrialize and urbanize. Jordi Solé Tura asserts that the regime needed to open the economy and participate in



the world market due to the problems of Franco's autarkic ideal,

The Franco regime was incapable of answering the new problems that emerged in Spanish society and of responding to the new aspirations of vast sectors of the population after the tumultuous economic development of the 1960s and the beginning of the crisis of the 1970s. In reality the Franco regime began to change in spite of itself and against the wishes of its leaders. (26)

Consequently, the 1960s brought to Spain an infiltration of consumer culture that began to change the country's internal composition. With wider access to foreign films, literature, music, philosophy and politics, Spaniards, especially students, began to question their traditional and orthodox customs. Howard Wiarda notes that the 1960s and early 1970s brought to Spain a new sense of mobilization and politicization that actually prepared the country for the vertiginous changes to come with Franco's death in 1975. During this time Spain became more urban, developed and with its economy dependent on industry rather than agriculture, saw the emergence of a true middle class (Wiarda 55-6). Also, under the slogan "Spain is different," tourism flourished, simultaneously creating an avenue for the

influx of foreign capital as well as access to ideas and cultures outside Spain.

As a result, the evolution of Francoist Spain from an isolated, self-sufficient economy to a more open, industrial capitalist society caused rifts within the power structure. Conflicts emerged between the conservative and reformist sectors. As Solé Tura acknowledges, "Because of this development, contradictions from within the regime began to emerge among different groups--between the Falange and the Opus Dei, for example--and the breach between the hard-liner and reformist sectors began opening slowly" (26). What is more, the effects of this evolution were noted among the attitudes and behavior of the mass population. With wider access to information and literature, Spaniards developed a greater understanding of democratic processes, doubted the authority of the Catholic Church and demanded political reforms. Riquer i Permanyer points to the movement toward democracy, its lasting effects and the impossibility of Francoism's continuation in the following terms,

The conjuncture with a period of unparalleled growth in the western world was the principal external factor, and to this should be added the pressure from and capacity of Spanish society to emerge from



the isolation and underdevelopment brought about by the Franco regime's autarkic fantasy. This made the growth of the Spanish economy incoherent to the point of chaos, prone to sharp imbalances, tensions, and deficits. And it was these tensions and inadequacies which created the conditions for the growth of new and significant mass movements, whose increasingly politicized action would undermine the regime's prestige and solidity, rendering its continuation inconceivable after Franco's death in 1975. (260)

After the death of Franco's prime minister Carrero Blanco in 1973 and the death of the dictator himself in 1975, the social, economic and political changes begun in the 1960s come to fruition during the period known as the "Transición" that culminates with the "Cambio"—the Socialist Party's ascension to the presidency⁷. The period immediately after Franco's death represents a time of rapid change and euphoria as Spain passes from a centralized, dictatorial and authoritarian government to a decentralized, representative and constitutional democracy. In less than five years, from 1975-1979, Spain experienced a transition to democracy that begins with the Law of Political Reform in 1976, includes free elections in 1977, establishes a new Constitution in 1978 and culminates with the first free elections under the

new Constitution in 1979. With the Constitution of 1978, Spanish society seemingly embraces a bourgeois bureaucracy based on rationality that endows Spaniards with new rights. Politically, Spanish citizens enjoy freedom from censorship, freedom of religion, the freedom to organize unions, and the freedom of association, among others. Also, Spain becomes more secular and less influenced by the Catholic Church as seen by the legalization of contraception, abortion and divorce (Arango 110). Lastly, the Spanish Constitution discourages the homogeneous vision of the Franco regime and recognizes the country's pluralism by establishing the "Autonomías"—self-governing, separate, autonomous, regional units within Spain.

In addition to the socio-political and economic changes, Spain became an immediate participant in a globalized world and a consumer culture experiencing a cultural boom in the arts, music, theatre, book publishing, architecture, education and film (Wiarda 25-6). For example, Such newspapers and magazines as "El País" and "Interviú" were founded in 1976, Picasso's "Guernica" returned to Spain in 1980 and José Luis

⁷ For a highly detailed account of the events of the Transición, see José Antonio González Casanova's El Cambio Inacabable (1975-1985) and, especially, Victoria Prego's Así se hizo la Transición.

Garcí's film "Volver a empezar" earned the Oscar for best foreign film in 1983 as did Fernando Trueba's "Belle Epoque" in 1992. Spain assimilated the markings of mass culture, consuming Big Macs and Coca-cola, purchasing Levi jeans, and listening to as well as producing rock music. On an international level, Spain hosted the World Cup soccer tournament in 1982, entered the European Community in 1986, and celebrated the Olympics and the 500th anniversary of Columbus's "discovery" of America in a renovated Barcelona as well as the Expo in Seville in 1992.

Nevertheless, the rapidity of these changes created an uneven development that revealed the fragility of the new democracy caught in the tension between a hope for modernity and a desire for continuity with the past. Raymond Carr notes this dual tendency in post-Franco Spain in his book Spain: Dictatorship to Democracy,

The new economy changed the social structure and, less dramatically, the social mores of Spain. With rapid industrialisation, with the increase in the numbers of skilled workers and the growth of the service sector where 'human capital' was more important than manual labour, the occupational structure of Spain changed more in two decades than it had in the previous hundred years. A process which had taken half a century in France or Britain was telescoped into two decades. The very suddenness of the onset



of modernisation meant that the older values of a pre-industrial society persisted in the era of capitalist growth... (79)

The divisions within Spain reveal a persistence of antidemocratic and antiliberal forces during the time of the "Transición". On one hand, two failed coup d'état attempts, the "Operación Galaxia" conspiracy in November 1978 and Tejero and Milans del Bosch's infamous 23-F in 1981, demonstrate the instability of the military's new role within the new democracy. On the other hand, terrorism by such extremist groups as GRAPO (Grupo Revolucionario Antifascista Primero de Octubre) and separatist factions like ETA (Eusaki Ta Askatasuna—*Basque Homeland and Freedom*) escalated and exposed the violence and insecurity of post-Franco Spain. As José Maravall states, "The subversive violence of the right-wing extremists and the terrorism of the GRAPO and the ETA presented a serious challenge to democracy after 1977" (43). In a similar way, the transition to democracy presented uncertainties regarding the newfound notion of freedom of speech and the role of the state proving that civil liberties were not fully developed. Maravall, in The Transition to Democracy in Spain, points to the trials of Juan Luis Cebrián (editor of *El País*), Miguel

Angel Aguilar (editor of *Diario 16*), Ricardo Cid (from *La Calle*) and Pilar Miró (film director) as proof of the persistence of censorship in Spain. Conversely, the suit brought jointly by the socialist party, PSOE, and the communist party, PCE, sought to break the state's monopoly of Radio Televisión Española in an effort to eliminate the temptation of censorship (57).

Yet, the major inconsistency of the new democracy lies in the "politics of compromise" that brought about the "Transición" and upheld the institutions and oligarchic power structure of the Franco regime. The "Pacts of Moncloa" in 1977 reveal what Robert Martínez calls a "ruptura pactada" (117) in which the president-elect Adolfo Suárez, of the UCD (Unión de Centro Democrático), negotiated with the Socialist and Communist parties the assimilation of democratic reforms within the existing capitalist structure. In this strategy of "reform from above" (Maravall 11), change was brought about by "consensual negotiation" (Arango 104). Clearly, the Pacts proposed important economic changes, including tax reform, unemployment insurance and social security as well as social reforms including the decriminalization of adultery, the legalization of contraceptives and the modification of rape status (Arango 104). Nevertheless,

as Manuel Redero San Román acknowledges in his conclusions to Transición a la democracia y poder político en la España postfranquista, the process of the Pacts of Moncloa sustained a 'continuismo' of Francoism by perpetuating the hierarchy of power that guides the direction of Spanish society.

En efecto, de alguna forma, la política de negociación entre élites, con las consiguientes limitaciones a las movilizaciones populares alejaba a las masas de la actividad política y favorecía el paulatino asentamiento de una perspectiva institucional de los asuntos públicos. Ello contribuía a fomentar el desinterés por la participación activa, al tiempo que los partidos políticos se iban convirtiendo en organizaciones cada vez más oligárquicas y burocratizadas con escaso debate interno, con frecuencia alejadas de las realidades cotidianas de la población. Por lo demás, en el peculiar proceso hacia la democracia en España, la liquidación del régimen franquista no supuso la desaparición, ni siquiera un cambio esencial de muchos de los aparatos e instituciones del antiguo Estado, lo que explica que toda la Administración Pública, el aparato judicial, el Ejército, la Policía y la empresa pública apenas sufrieran transformaciones en los decisivos años de la transición política, y escasamente reformados se incorporaran al nuevo régimen democrático. Al terminar la transición, el proceso de consolidación democrática tenía que contar necesariamente con todo lo que esta realidad significaba, con el telón de fondo de la crisis económica, de los problemas de vertebración social y política de sectores importantes de la

sociedad, y de la actividad terrorista.
(86-7)

The privileged groups of the Franco regime, which Martínez calls the '*poderes fácticos*'—the military, the Church and the business community—maintain their position of influence under the democratic system.

Wiarda supports this assertion stating,

Many Spanish and Portuguese institutions have hardly been touched, and certainly not purged or reformed, by the democratizing changes following the Portuguese revolution and Franco's death. These institutions include the armed forces (still wary of civilian politicians wanting to continue to play a 'moderating' role), the bureaucracy (where the same persons who served Franco and Salazar are still often in control), the Church (now more moderate but still with strong right-wing elements), and the elite business community (which is still not fully reconciled to democracy). (61)

The rapid industrialization, sudden assimilation of a democratic bureaucracy, unbridled modernization and the flood of consumer culture have created an atmosphere in Spain that Felix Ortega calls "*dinamismo y desplome*" (dynamism and downfall) (44). On one hand, the democratic changes have opened opportunities for gender equality, developed social programs, transformed the educational system and normalized international relations (Alfonso 7). Nevertheless, what has proven detrimental

to Spanish democracy's stability, as Raymond Carr notes, is the velocity with which these changes have occurred, "As with everything else in modern Spain, it was the rate of change that is important" (Carr 100). The metamorphosis of Spain from a closed, agrarian and traditional culture to an open, urban-industrial and modern (or even postmodern) in such a short period of time has brought a series of problems never before seen in Spanish society.

In a secularized Spain, abortion, drug addiction, divorce, pornography and prostitution reveal the difficulty of reconciling a sense of morality with a new modern identity. The diminished authority of the police and military combined with Spain's economic crises have likewise given way to juvenile delinquency, unemployment, urban violence and heightened terrorist threats. As Spanish citizens attempt to define themselves collectively and individually in the new society, the Spanish government itself strives to reconcile its past history of repression with democratic freedoms. Nevertheless, the post-Franco democratic government has revealed political corruption and financial scandals ranging from the clandestine, state-funded GAL (Grupos Anti-terroristas de Liberación) to the infamous



embezzlement scandal involving the ex-director of the Guardia Civil, Luis Roldán. Alfonso Guerra mentions the problems plaguing Spain after ten years of Socialist rule in "La década del cambio,"

Además, el desempleo, con una tasa de población activa aún baja, la droga, la vivienda, la admiración por el dinero y el consumo, las tendencias a la burocratización, el peligro corporativo, los posibles brotes de xenofobia, la preservación del medio ambiente, la defensa de la lengua, la necesidad de responsabilidad en la derecha política económica y de los medios de comunicación, la vertebración de la sociedad, con la participación activa de todos los agentes sociales, económicos, culturales, son problemas que habiéndose abordado, aún permanecen. (10)

With the disappearance of the strict control and rigid structure of the Franco regime, Spain has been propelled into the contradictions of a society struggling to define its modernity. In other words, Spain's crisis of "dinamismo y desplome," corresponds to Michael Berman's notion of modernity expressed in All That Is Solid Melts Into Air,

To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world--and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are. [...] It is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity: it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and

renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish. (15)

Contrasting with the Spain's euphoria in the early years of the post-Franco era, the uncertainty and skepticism have resulted in a sense of political apathy among the Spanish people commonly known as "desencanto". In other words, the unfulfilled promises of Spain's rapid modernization have created a feeling of powerlessness and disillusionment with democratic changes among the middle and lower classes. The sense of "desencanto" arose in Spain toward the end of the 1970s as the country entered economic crisis, then dissipated with the election of Felipe González in 1982, yet has re-emerged showing the frustration with Spain's democratic institutions. José Ramón Montero defines "desencanto" in his article, "Revisiting Democratic Success: Legitimacy and the Meanings of Democracy in Spain,"

Towards the end of the 1970s, the consolidation of democracy in Spain was marked by the so-called desencanto (disenchantment)--a stage of disillusionment which followed the frustration of expectations that had been aroused earlier in the transition from authoritarianism. [...] This desencanto was manifested in a variety of symptoms: most commonly, it was linked to demobilization and apathy, negative perceptions of democracy and of democratic institutions, perceived inefficacy and inefficiency of government, frustrated political and



economic expectations, a decline in voting turnout, and the growth of antidemocratic attitudes. (143)

Thus, the contradictions of this post-Franco identity create a sense of disillusionment with Spain's new modern, urban democracy as well as a sense of nostalgia among certain members of society for a past in which the problems of democracy did not exist.

III. 1968, La Transición and "Novela Negra"

Much like the Mexican Revolution inspired literary production that questioned the country's modern identity, 1968 and the Massacre of Tlatelolco represent a watershed that marked the literary conscience of a new generation. Certain novels after the Mexican Revolution, such as Azuela's Los de abajo (1915), Guzmán's El águila y la serpiente (1928), Yáñez's Al filo del agua (1947), and Rulfo's Pedro Páramo (1955) are decidedly historical yet artistically innovative. Whereas these authors combined narrative fragmentation with historical introspection, writers from the "Onda" generation of the mid-1960s, like José Agustín, Gustavo Sainz and Salvador Elizondo sought a release from history. For example, Agustín's De perfil (1965) and Inventando que sueño (1968), Sainz's Gazapo (1965) and Elizondo's Farabeuf (1965) explore the rebelliousness of a younger generation that embraces



counter-culture values of sex, drugs and rock'n'roll. Through the manipulation of language--slang, word games, neologisms--the youth in Mexico City differentiate themselves from older generations yet affirm their affiliations with their peers. By combining, in many cases, first person narrations with narrative fragmentation, these novels demonstrate the non-conformist and anti-establishment attitude of Mexico's youth yet also convey their sense of alienation and marginalization (D'Lugo 163-66).

Nevertheless, with the events of 1968, the weight of history was brought to bear on Mexican writers once again. Authors in Mexico after 1968 turn inward to examine the contradictions of modern Mexico. Essays, documentary texts, novels, short stories, poetry and even new genres, such as the 'testimonial' literature of Elena Poniatowska, all serve as vehicles for authors to "keep Tlatelolco within the Mexican consciousness" (Young 76). From Poniatowska's La noche de Tlatelolco (1971) and Luis Spota's La plaza (1971) to René Avilés Fabila's El gran solitario de palacio (1971) and Fernando del Paso's Palinurio de México (1980) put Mexican politics and history under a literary microscope. Sara Sefkovich, in México: País de ideas, país de novelas, sees literary



production after 1968 as a revival of the political tradition in the Mexican novel, stating, "Tlatelolco revivió la tradición crítica, política y totalizadora de la novela mexicana, porque obligó a replantearse las preguntas: ¿cómo pudimos ocultar la verdad? ¿en qué momento nos creímos la mentira del progreso y nos olvidamos de entender a México?" (217)⁸.

Paco Ignacio Taibo II, in a very specific and original way, captures the disillusionment of post-1968 Mexico through his development of "noir" detective fiction which he dubs the "novela neo-policíaca." Taibo, the founder of the "neo-policíaco" novel, leads a group of writers--such as Rafael Heredia, Sergio Pitol, Rolo Díez and Juan Hernández Luna--in projecting a dystopic view of Mexico City in the years since the Tlatelolco Massacre. By appropriating the North American genre, Taibo combines realism and cynicism with irony and politics to question the institutionalization of crime in Mexico. With Días de combate (1976), Paco Ignacio Taibo II introduces the detective Héctor Belascoarán Shayne

⁸ Tlatelolco sparked diverse interpretations of the literary production after 1968 as well. Such critics as Luis Leal see more socially aware literature whereas John Brushwood focuses on experimental tendencies. Theda M. Herz, in "Mexican Fiction in the 1970s and the Critical Controversy on Artistry versus Significance," gives a good overview of these critical tendencies.



who, through the process of the investigation, "hunts down" the truth amid the shadows and lies of Mexico City. Nevertheless, the investigation, doomed from its beginning, invariably links crime to the government, police, big business, and drug traffickers. Since those elements that hold power are also responsible for Mexico's crime—like the Plaza de Tlatelolco—"truth," also under their control, mutates and ultimately disappears, dissolving along with it the possibility for justice.

Throughout the Belascoarán Shayne series, including such novels as Cosa fácil (1977), No habrá final feliz (1981) and Regreso a la misma ciudad y bajo la lluvia (1989), Taibo establishes the "neo-policíaca" novel that simultaneously accepts and rejects the tenets of "noir" detective fiction. Viewing literature as a "subversive subversion," Taibo adheres to the revolutionary politics of 1968 to not only democratize novels in a combination of "serious" and "popular" tendencies or undermine the borders of genre distinction but also to articulate the social function of the writer (Stavans 146). In an interview with Vicente Francisco Torres, Taibo acknowledges that the disenchantment after the Tlatelolco tragedy directly influenced his decision to import the North American genre to Mexico. According to the Mexican

5. The fifth part of the document outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze financial data, including the use of statistical models and the application of modern accounting techniques. It highlights the importance of using reliable data sources and the need for regular audits to ensure the accuracy of the information.

6. The sixth part of the document focuses on the role of the accounting department in managing the company's financial resources. It discusses the importance of budgeting and the need for the accounting department to provide accurate forecasts and reports to management. It also emphasizes the importance of maintaining a strong relationship with the company's financial institutions.

8. The eighth part of the document outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze financial data, including the use of statistical models and the application of modern accounting techniques. It highlights the importance of using reliable data sources and the need for regular audits to ensure the accuracy of the information.

9. The ninth part of the document focuses on the role of the accounting department in managing the company's financial resources. It discusses the importance of budgeting and the need for the accounting department to provide accurate forecasts and reports to management. It also emphasizes the importance of maintaining a strong relationship with the company's financial institutions.

author, a genre based on crime fits perfectly into a society characterized by repression, violence and government fraude. Linking this literature to his experiences in 1968, Taibo states,

Cuando me planteaba la escritura de una novela policiaca, sabía que por su misma naturaleza, por el hecho de plantear un problema criminal, traerla a México era apasionante, porque la criminalidad estaba frente a nosotros todos los días. Yo quería hacer una novela social y contar mis experiencias como náufrago del 68; y lo que más se acercaba a mi punto de vista era la novela policiaca. (Torres 195)

The figure of a solitary, cynical detective working against a corrupt political machine within an investigation of "truth" offers Taibo a means to expose the double morality of the PRI as well as sustain the revolutionary attitudes of the student movement of 1968. Taibo's detective Belascoarán Shayne upholds the ideals of resistance espoused in 1968 by vindicating the utopian ideals of the student movement through his "curiosidad" (curiosity) and "terquedad" (stubbornness). A combination of revolution and utopian vision informs his detective fiction and stem from the effects of 1968 that Taibo understands "como elemento energético, la gasolina emocional e histórica de una generación que lucha por el barrio. [...] Mis personajes nunca se mueren del pesimismo

sino que después de la derrota retornan. Y creo que la clave es ésta. Yo escribo historias de derrotados pero de derrotados que no se rinden" (Nichols 221).

The radical changes in Spanish society also inspire new cultural, ideological and literary manifestations--much like the events of 1968 in the cultural scene of Mexico--that reflect and question the "Transición." As Spaniards progress from euphoria to "desencanto" in a democratic post-Franco Spain, another type of "transición" occurs simultaneously with the political and social changes. Such texts as Raymond Buckley's La doble transición: Política y literatura en la España de los años setenta, Samuel Amell's Literature, the Arts and Democracy: Spain in the Eighties, and Santos Alonso's La novela de la transición evaluate the effects of the "Transición" on the literary sensibilities of Spanish writers and artists. With the disappearance of censorship, Spanish authors abandoned the exhausted experimental, avant-garde novel, known as the "novela ensimismada," in favor of such new genres as the "novela femenina-feminista," "novela histórica," the "novela de la memoria," and the "novela negra."

The crisis, disillusion and uncertainty of the Transición contribute to the development of the North



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American model of detective fiction in Spain. The genre known as "novela negra" or "novela policíaca" offered authors a means to tell a story, establish a vision of Spanish society and question the roles of government, police and big business in the new democracy. In his article, "Novela criminal española de la transición," Juan Tébar points to the important role of detective fiction in a new, democratic Spain,

Cuando en España se sospechaba ya la democracia, algunos escritores comenzaron a poder contar historias de escándalos políticos y financieros, de turbias relaciones sexuales que conducían a la muerte, se hizo posible la figura literaria del policía corrupto o torpe [...] y la novela que en otros países se ha llamado "negra" o simplemente policíaca empezó a construir en castellano su propia tradición. (4)

José Colmeiro agrees that the pervasive sense of crisis during the Transición served as a determining factor in the emergence of the "novela negra" as a means for examination, evaluation and criticism of a democratic Spain. He states in La novela policíaca española: Teoría e historia crítica,

La situación de crisis social en el orden económico, político y cívico de los años de la transición, unida a la necesidad colectiva de airear una problemática anteriormente silenciada y ahora en cambio favorecida en los medios de comunicación tras la desaparición de la censura,

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originan un campo fértil para la aparición de una narrativa como el género policíaco negro, que se distingue por su presentación de los ambientes urbanos donde prevalecen la violencia, el crimen y el miedo, su testimonio crítico de la sociedad y su denuncia de los abusos y de la violencia del poder. (213)

In a similar vein, Paul Preston, in "Materialism and Serie Negra," links the emergence of a "noir" poetic with the incorporation of an unregulated capitalism rife with greed and corruption,

The transition was a transaction in smoke-filled rooms. Accordingly, with the coming of democracy in Spain, there arrived a world identifiably afflicted with the corruption which is the subject of much American fiction. Spanish writers began to turn to a genre which is popular and pays well, yet also permits them an oblique, deeply moralistic, albeit ultimately impotent, comment on the corruption and materialism of politics, a view no doubt confirmed by the evident materialism of the Socialist elite, with their Thatcherite economics, their beautiful people and the Juan Guerra episode. (13)

If the social circumstances after Franco's death fomented the development of a "noir" vision in Spain, then the revolutionary attitude of 1968 opened the door for new narrative strategies. Just as the movements in France, Prague and the United States questioned the hegemony of the established order, so to did writers, in Spain and around the world, begin to seek new avenues of



understanding language, writing, and discourse. In the preface to La doble transición, Ramón Buckley notes the ideological transition brought about by the various movements in 1968:

El Mayo francés, la primavera de Praga y las revueltas-estudiantiles y raciales-de Estados Unidos eran sólo la manifestación o epifanía de algo que se estaba produciendo a un nivel mucho más profundo, la revolución dentro de la revolución misma, la revolución que ponía fin a una "revolución" (la marxista) para iniciar una "nueva" revolución. Esta revolución fracasó a nivel político pero triunfó a nivel ideológico. (x)

Manuel Vázquez Montalbán exemplifies this break with the past when he abandons the exhausted techniques of the avant-garde novel in favor of a return, though with an ironic attitude, to seemingly traditional narrative strategies. In his "período subnormal," Vázquez Montalbán created experimental, iconoclastic, metafictional texts—such as Recordando a Dardé (1969), Manifiesto subnormal (1970) and Happy end (1974)—that attacked capitalism's abuse of mass media and its subsequent "subnormalization" of the population (Compitello 194). Nevertheless, facing a "callejón sin salida," the Spanish author abandons the avant-garde novel and opts for a combination of politics and communicability. In La literatura en la construcción de

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la ciudad democrática, Vázquez Montalbán asserts the social importance of writing that communicates with its public:

Hacia el futuro, la literatura que nosotros conocemos y practicamos escogerá probablemente dos grandes caminos: el del ensimismamiento y el de la comunicabilidad. Es decir, una literatura autojustificada, legitimada por un sujeto lector buscador de singularias (sic), sin el requerimiento de la sanción del público, y una literatura que entroncará con la función tradicional de lo literario: la relación escritor-lector. La función histórica de la literatura no tiene por qué ser cambiar el gusto o la historia, aunque puede intentarlo mediante la buena escritura. Pero si alguna función social tiene la literatura es la lectura, ese momento de la verdad en que el sujeto emisor se ve definitivamente realizado por el sujeto receptor. (176)

Thus, with Tatuaje (1974), Vázquez Montalbán imports the North American hard-boiled genre to Spain and establishes Pepe Carvalho as a Spanish private eye, a 'voyeur' who observes and analyzes the Spanish transition to democracy. The Spanish author adopts the realism and cynicism of the genre to create "social chronicles" that communicate with a reading public through the mass appeal and ludic nature of popular literature. Nevertheless, by endowing texts throughout the Carvalho series with irony, self-reflection, intertextuality, and fragmentation, Vázquez Montalbán's appropriation of detective fiction

questions cultural codes, defies genre categorization and confuses distinctions between "high" and "low" art. Such novels as Los mares del sur (1979), Asesinato en el comité central (1980), La rosa de Alejandría (1986), and, more recently El premio (1996) utilize the basic frame of a detective's investigative process to expose the mechanisms that generate meaning as well as portray the crisis of post-Franco Spain.

In conclusion, both contemporary Mexico and Spain suffer from a series of economic, political and social crises that stem from an uneven, inconsistent and unequal modernization. High unemployment, urban violence, government corruption, and drug trafficking plague both countries and compromise the legitimacy of their respective democracies. Within this context, such authors as Paco Ignacio Taibo II, in Mexico, and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, in Spain, import the "noir" detective fiction as a means for social criticism. Born during the crises of the 1920s and 30s in North America, this genre's dark realism provides these authors with a means to chronicle the disenchantment and disillusionment of their respective societies. In this way, both Taibo and Vázquez Montalbán explore the promises, failures and

crises of development in post-1968 Mexico and post-Franco
Spain.



CHAPTER II

Violation of a genre: Irony, Ideology and the Assimilation of Detective Fiction by Paco Ignacio Taibo II and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán

The Traditional Detective Story: The Genesis of a Genre

The genre known as the "classic" or "traditional" mystery was founded in the middle of the 19th century by Edgar Allan Poe, with such short stories as "The Murders at the Rue Morgue" and "The Purloined Letter." Later, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle perfected the art with the investigations of Sherlock Holmes. In the first part of the 20th century, Agatha Christie continued to popularize mysteries with the adventures of her Miss Marple and Hercule Poirot series. The classic detective story, also known as the "whodunit," developed in accordance with a bourgeois legal system and the positivist and rationalist attitude of the era which is reflected in the creation of stories that aim to delight the reader with the sleuth's ability to bring order to confusion. By proceeding from crime to solution by means of the intense scientific logic of the investigation, the detective reaffirms the morality, legality and legitimacy of the social order. This fiction is typically very straightforward beginning

with a crime, almost always a murder, and following the investigation of the sleuth whose primary function is to piece together "the truth", solve the crime and bring the guilty party to justice by relying on impeccable induction and reason. In other words, the primary narrative importance in the traditional mystery is the investigation and solution of the crime.

Structurally, the traditional mystery story depends on a backward construction of events which implies two separate narratives that Donna Bennet describes as "seen" and "unseen" (Bennet 240) and that Tsvetan Todorov calls the "first" and "second" story (Todorov 46). The "unseen" narrative corresponds to the actions of the crime that remain hidden from the reader whereas the "seen" narrative relates the process of reconstruction in which the detective moves from the discovery of the crime to the collection of clues and concludes with the solution to the crime and the revelation of the hidden narrative. The primary narration consists of the detective's investigation that treats the crime as a puzzle to be solved and ultimately ends with the disclosure of the "unseen" narration that exposes the murderer, his means and his motives. Dennis Porter maintains that the appeal of detective fiction centers on

the reader's desire to know the solution of the crime, yet the narrative itself creates suspense by simultaneously promoting and impeding the detective's investigation. In Porter's words, "The art of narrative is the art of misleading" (33). He enumerates five devices used in detective novels for the purpose of diverting the direction of the narration away from the final solution: 1) "peripeteia"--parallel investigations that rival the detective's inquiry; 2) the antidetective--blocking figures such as the criminal, uncooperative witnesses, and false suspects; 3) the "Taciturn Great Detective" whose thought processes are not revealed to the reader; 4) false clues mixed with true clues that confuse the path of investigation and 5) the narrator himself who is normally the detective's assistant yet lacks the mental acumen of the investigator and leads the reader down false paths because of his own misinterpretations. Such assistants as the archetypal Watson or the unnamed narrator in Poe's "The Murders at the Rue Morgue" possess a dual function in that they both outline the ratiocinative steps the detective follows yet manipulate and mislead the reader through their own inability to follow the scientific logic of the investigation. Their structural responsibility lies in

narrating the progress of the investigation yet postponing the solution.

Since the narrative structure hinges on the process of investigation, the obvious central figure is the detective. With the appearance of C. Auguste Dupin in "The Murders at the Rue Morgue," Edgar Allan Poe establishes the figure of the amateur sleuth who utilizes his high powers of reason to reconstruct a crime through a narration characterized by its backward motion. Utilizing an intense scientific approach, Dupin is able to glean profound details from the most casual facts in order to reconstruct not only actions but thoughts as well. Nevertheless, the detective's rational thought and scientific curiosity is combined with a gothic air of poetic intuition that allows him to both analyze and create in order to reach the solution. In "The Murders at the Rue Morgue," the detective derides the chief of police for his inability to exploit both reason and creativity in his investigative techniques,

The results attained by them are not unfrequently (sic) surprising, but, for the most part, are brought about by simple diligence and activity. When these qualities are unavailing, their schemes fail. Vidocq, for example, was a good guesser, and a persevering man. But, without educated thought, he erred continually by the very intensity of his



investigations. He impaired his vision by holding the object too close. He might see, perhaps, one or two points with unusual clearness, but in so doing he, necessarily lost sight of the matter as a whole. Thus there is such a thing as being too profound. Truth is not always in a well. In fact, as regards the more important knowledge, I do believe that she is invariably superficial. The depth lies in the valleys where we seek her, and not upon the mountain-tops where she is found.
(486)

The detective, therefore, approaches seemingly inexplicable circumstances that others have failed to understand and applies positivism, reason and deduction as well as genius, creativity and intuition to return the world from a state of disorder to one of order. This combination of traits continues in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's detective Sherlock Holmes, the archetypal amateur problem-solver. Holmes often refers to himself as a "consulting detective" to whom Scotland Yard comes when faced with a complex mystery that offers no foreseeable solution. Early in the first Holmes novel, A Study in Scarlet, the detective informs his new assistant Watson,

Well, I have a trade of my own. I suppose I am the only one in the world. I'm a consulting detective, if you can understand what that is. Here in London we have lots of government detectives and lots of private ones. When these fellows are at fault, they come to me, and I manage to put them on the right scent. They lay all the evidence before me, and I



am generally able, by the help of my knowledge of the history of crime, to set them straight (23).

During a metafictional moment in The Sign of Four Holmes denounces Poe's Dupin as too showy and superficial invoking instead a colder approach to criminal investigation, "Detection is, or ought to be, an exact science and should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner" (137). A few pages later he establishes his credo: "Eliminate all other factors, and the one which remains must be the truth" (139). By combining the ideals of Comte's positivism with Darwin's scientific vision, Holmes emerges as a super-sleuth whose mind absorbs clues and facts that, when woven into a logical tapestry, enunciate an interpretation leading to the solution of the mystery and ending with the guilty party's detainment by the authorities. The tradition of Dupin and Holmes is carried on in the classic detective story by other detectives such as Christie's Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple, Dorothy Sayer's Lord Peter Wimsey and the American S.S. Van Dine's Philo Vance. All of these detectives elaborate investigations that delve little into the social, political or economic circumstances surrounding the crime, focusing instead on the details and minutia of the murder to be solved.

Obviously, the presence of the detective is meaningless without the existence of a victim and a murderer both of whom represent a disruption in society's aristocratic class order. To avoid any emotional attachments with the reader and to create a number of suspects, normally the victim is endowed with some hidden secret that violates the social or ethical codes of British society. George Grella points to several possibilities for the victim such as a blocking character who opposes the natural joining of a young couple, the negative father or mother who makes an unfair will, the deceitful mate, a gentleman with a dark and unacceptable secret, or simply a character whose flaw lies in their un-English status as an outsider ("The Formal Detective Novel" 96-98). The victim, in other words, possesses a certain amount of guilt that demands their expulsion from society owing to some social or ethical violation. W.H. Auden affirms the ambiguous status of the victim stating, "The victim has to satisfy two contradictory requirements. He has to involve everyone in suspicion, which requires that he be a bad character; and he has to make everyone feel guilty, which requires that he be a good character" (18). Auden goes on to state that the murderer is a purely negative creation who is a "rebel



who claims the right to be omnipotent" (19). In this sense, the murderer, like the victim, is an outsider who, on one hand, has attempted to infiltrate the social order and has attempted to undermine and destroy its harmony. Grella, however, diverts from Auden's totalizing condemnation of the murderer stating,

The murderer, though technically a criminal, is more interesting than his victim and consequently occupies an ambivalent position. On the one hand, he has removed an obstacle, destroyed a rotter posing as a gentleman, or expelled a social evil. On the other hand, he has committed the gravest of human crime, an offense against both society and God, and has placed the other members of his group under suspicion. In short, he has created a complication which demands his own dismissal. Because he is intelligent enough to commit an ingenious crime and elude detection for most of the novel, he earns admiration. However, since 'good' (i.e. socially valuable) people cannot permanently suffer in comedy, the murderer must turn out somehow to be undesirable himself. Usually the culprit is a more acceptable person than his victim, because he comprehends the elaborate social ritual well enough to pose as an innocent. (98)

The presence and status of both murderer and victim underscore the disrupted harmony of society's order and the urgent need for the detective to re-establish the state of grace through his own affiliation with the status quo, morality and official justice. In this sense, the detective's progression from mystery to



solution corresponds to an effort to legitimize the moral superiority and correctness of the ruling bourgeois order. Herein lies the ideology of the traditional detective novel that reinforces the hegemony of the established order. Ideology, according to Roland Barthes in S/Z, begins with words and language that create the illusion of reality through their utterances:

Structurally, the existence of two supposedly different systems—denotation and connotation—enables the text to operate like a game, each system referring to the other according to the requirements of a certain *illusion*. [...] Doesn't a sentence, whatever meaning it releases, subsequent to its utterance, it would seem, appear to be telling us something simple, literal, primitive: something *true*? (9)

In Mythologies, Barthes refers to this "illusion" as myth, a symplified, purified vision of a world purged of its contradictions,

In passing from history to nature, myth acts economically: it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essences, it does away with all dialectics, with any going back beyond what is immediately visible, it organizes a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth, a world wide open and wallowing in the evident, it establishes a blissful clarity: things appear to mean something by themselves. (143)



Antonio Gramsci, however, politicizes the notion of ideology connecting it with hegemony. By controlling the arts, specifically popular arts, the elite classes can mold the collective consciousness and frame a sense of national identity. Nevertheless, key to Gramsci's understanding of hegemony is the means by which the established order secures the consent of the underclass,

Ultimately, it is always a question of 'rationalism' versus the individual will. Therefore, coercion is not the issue but whether we are dealing with an authentic rationalism, a real functionalism, or with an act of the will. This is all. Coercion is such only for those who reject it, not for those who accept it. If it goes hand in hand with the development of the social forces, it is not coercion but the 'revelation' of cultural truth obtained by an accelerated method.
(Selections from Cultural Writings 130)

Culture, therefore, becomes the means by which the bourgeois order imposes its ideology and, consequently, its hegemony. Subsequently, such cultural theorists as Louis Althusser have analyzed the means by which power is controlled and "identity" is fixed through culture. In the essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Althusser defines ideology as the "system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group" (158). These ideas, Althusser maintains, present the means for the State Apparatus to control the



collective consciousness through the interpenetration of illusion and allusion. Although they seem to convey "truths" about the world, ideologies are imaginary yet have an effect in reality,

While admitting that they do not correspond to reality, i.e. that they constitute an illusion, we admit that they do make an allusion to reality, and that they need only be 'interpreted' to discover the reality of the world beyond their imaginary representation of that world (ideology=illusion/allusion). (162)

Gary Hoppenstand, in In Search of the Paper Tiger, asserts that formula fiction, like the traditional mystery genre, acts prescriptively affecting socialization processes by fixing accepted human behavior through its strict narrative structure:

Formula fiction, then, is not fantasy or escapism, but an active and effective method for maintaining the mechanisms of social control. It is, in part, a process by which reality is imposed on members of society. Formula fiction is first and foremost a language system. Language is the product of human invention over time. Formulaic stories, as a specific development of the English language, possess an objective reality for their readers with prescribed texts for human action. These stories are vehicles for discourse and understanding of mores and norms, and of the natural world. They offer ready-made niches for the individual to inhabit. (20)



The "whodunit," therefore, projects an ideology that upholds the moral legitimacy and, consequently, hegemony of the established order. As Dennis Porter asserts,

The deep ideological constant of the genre, therefore, is built into the action of the investigation. The classic structuring question is always "Whodunit" and secondarily, how will justice be done. In the beginning of a detective story is a crime that implies both a villain and a victim of villainy, but the action itself always focuses on the acts of a hero who is summoned in order to pursue and punish the villain and, wherever possible, to rescue the victim and restore the status quo ante as well. [...] The point of view adopted is always that of the detective, which is to say, of the police, however much of an amateur the investigator may appear to be. In a detective story the moral legitimacy of the detective's role is never in doubt. (Porter 125)

Both the location of the murder as well as the identity of who committed the crime accentuate the ideological belief of an inherent goodness in society that is temporarily disrupted by the intrusion of outsiders. The 'locked room' that appears in Poe's "The Murders at the Rue Morgue" sets the basic spatial metaphor that enunciates the isolated haven into which some external evil has invaded. Similarly, in The Sign of Four, the murder occurs in a country home in a laboratory locked from the inside with no windows. Likewise, Agatha Christie posits the action of many



novels in isolated areas such as the Orient Express, a cruise ship on the Nile River or a remote island retreat. As John Cawelti affirms, the milieu of the murder reinforces the image of society as the "Great Good Place" by articulating the difference between order and chaos. The murders reveal that a "chaotic outer world has penetrated the quiet order and left behind those mysterious clues suggesting the presence of hidden guilt. By solving the secret of the locked room, the detective brings the threatening external world under control" (97).

The underlying ideology of the formula in the classic or traditional detective story seeks to reassure the dominant middle class of the late 19th century of the stability of the status quo. Both Auden, from a religious standpoint, and Cawelti, from the perspective of class, view guilt as a primary force in the ideology of a genre that emphasizes the absolute power of man's logic to tame chaos and assure the "natural" order of the world. In a religious sense, Auden associates a conscience of guilt to a "typical reader" of this fiction stating,

I suspect that the typical reader of detective stories is, like myself, a person who suffers from a sense of sin.

$$x_1 x_2^2 = x_2 x_1^2 = 1$$

$$x_1^2 x_2 = x_2^2 x_1 = 1$$

$$x_1$$

$$x_1^2$$

$$x_1^3$$

$$x_1^4$$

$$x_1^5$$

$$x_1^6$$

$$x_1^7$$

$$x_1^8$$

$$x_1^9$$

$$x_1^{10}$$

$$x_1^{11}$$

$$x_1^{12}$$

$$x_1^{13}$$

$$x_1^{14}$$

To have a sense of sin is to feel guilty at there being an ethical choice to make, a guilt which, however, 'good' I may become, remains unchanged. [. . .] The satisfaction [of detective stories] is the illusion of being dissociated from the murderer. The magic formula is an innocence which is discovered to contain guilt; then a suspicion of being the guilty other has been expelled, a cure effected, not by me or my neighbors, but by the miraculous intervention of a genius from the outside who removes guilt by giving knowledge of guilt. (23-24)

Cawelti, on the other hand, places the sense of guilt precisely on the bourgeois middle class who after rising up against the "ancien regime" at the end of the 18th century, feels threatened by the social movements of the working classes in the late 19th century. He states, "Readers of classical detective stories, we hypothesize, shared a need for a temporary release from doubt and guilt, generated at least in part by the decline of traditional moral and spiritual authorities, and the rise of new social and intellectual movements that emphasized the hypocrisy and guilt of respectable middle class" (104). In this way, for the reader's guilt to be assuaged and for society's state to return to its "natural order," the force of evil must represent an external threat to the society which manifests itself via a murderer who is an outsider himself, much like the



victim. By revealing the murderer as either a foreigner or as an individual outside the bourgeois social class (i.e. the now hackneyed figure of the "butler") whose motivations were purely personal and individual, the classic detective story emphasizes the presence of crime as an exception that can be easily remedied.

Hard-Boiled Detective Fiction: The Development of a Dark Vision

About the time the classic or traditional detective story entered what Howard Haycraft terms its "Golden Age" in the 1920s, a new type of detective story appeared in the pages of the American pulp magazine Black Mask. The authors contributing to Black Mask rejected the aristocratic amateur sleuth who relied on cold reason to solve mysteries and projected instead a 'hard-boiled' tough-guy hero who walked the mean streets armed with his physical force and his gut intuition. Begun in the spring of 1920, Black Mask served as a vehicle for such writers as Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, Carroll John Daly, Raoul Whitfield, Paul Cain, Horace McCoy, Dwight V. Babcock, and Norbert Davis. Rather than aestheticizing crime to create a logic puzzle, these authors "sought to create the 'illusion of reality'" by reflecting the lawlessness of the 1920s (Durham 53).

Whereas the traditional detective story reaffirms the order of a temporarily disrupted bourgeois society, chaos and disorder reign in the new type of detective fiction known as the Black Mask School of Detective Fiction or, more typically, the Hard-Boiled School⁹.

Prohibition, rampant political corruption, the birth of organized crime, the stock market crash, and the Great Depression fractured society's order and provoked a profound lack of faith in the democratic ideals of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence. As Bill Pronzini and Jack Adrian note in the introduction to their book Hard-Boiled: An Anthology of American Crime Stories (1995),

The 1920s were a lawless decade, for this was the era of the Volstead Act, the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which expressly forbade the brewing and distilling of all intoxicating alcohol. Prohibition, however lofty the motives and intentions behind it, was a staggering legislative and human blunder whose ramifications are still being felt three-quarters of a century later. The illicit manufacture of and trafficking in liquor was a winked-at commonplace, and illegality became an accepted norm. This nationwide amorality--crime almost as a way of life--allowed the underworld to organize and grow strong enough for its corruption to reach into the highest levels of government and society. Feud as

⁹ See William F. Nolan's The Black Mask Boys: Masters in the Hard-Boiled School of Detective Fiction for an anthology of short stories.



they might, kill one another as they did, Alphonse Capone and his gangster cohorts flourished in a climate of violence, brutality, and unconstrained social and commercial vice. (9)

Chaos and evil dominate a landscape of a disrupted social contract where no 'common good' exists and each individual lives alone and unprotected. Against this backdrop the American Hard-Boiled School projects an alienated world and manifests the disorder and disaffection of a changing society in which the poor and underclass are victims of capitalist greed and political self-interests. Whereas the traditional detective story presents the "locked room" where evil's external presence had invaded, the hard-boiled detective story views the existence of sin, vice and depravity as inherent in the nature of society. Thus, W.H. Auden's view of society as the "Great Good Place," an Eden-like community where murder is a contradiction, is replaced with the idea of the "Great Wrong Place," a community whose harmony is shattered from within (19).

In Dashiell Hammett's third novel, The Maltese Falcon (1930), the main character Sam Spade, an archetype for the image of a hard-boiled detective, relates a parable to the story's femme-fatale Brigid O'Shaughnessey that captures the vision of a world dominated by fate and



irony. Spade tells her of a previous case in which he was hired to track down a man named "Flitcraft" who had disappeared from his Tacoma real-estate office one day with no forewarning. Leaving his affairs in order and his family taken care of, Flitcraft disappeared, says Spade, "like a fist when you open your hand" (64). After five years, Spade finally locates the man living in Spokane under the name Charles Pierce running an automobile business and living in the suburbs with a new wife and a baby son. When confronted, Flitcraft relates his experience the day he disappeared five years earlier when he walked to a luncheon past an office building under construction. As he walked alongside the site, a beam or some type of equipment fell to the ground next to him and chipped a piece of sidewalk that brushed his face. Flitcraft states that he felt as if "somebody had taken the lid off life and let him look at the works" (66). In other words, the haphazard falling of a beam revealed the essential disorder of life and he discovered that, as Spade puts it, "in sensibly ordering his affairs he had got out of step, and not into step, with life" (66). In order to be more in tune with the randomness of the universe, Flitcraft left behind his ordered world to

begin anew.¹⁰ However, after five years when Spade finally finds him he had regressed back into the ordered existence he had abandoned before. Concluding his tale, Spade informs Brigid, "He adjusted himself to beams falling, and then no more of them fell, and he adjusted himself to them not falling" (67).

However, Spade, unlike Flitcraft, exhibits the essential trait of the hard-boiled detective in that he understands yet never loses sight of the irrational and ironic nature of reality. Whereas the Traditional detective dedicated himself to the scientific study of minute details, such as Sherlock Holmes's studies on cigar ashes, tattoos, the variability of the human ear, forms of the human hand and the technique of preserving footprints in plaster of paris, the essence of hard-boiled detective's knowledge lies in his understanding of the violent, Hobbesian essence of society. In a world of falling beams, the Hard-boiled detective is acutely aware of life's inconsistencies and derives his power from this awareness. As Robert Edenbaum states,

Hammett's reversal of the trap of naturalism gives his heroes a kind of absolute power over their own destiny, a daemonic power, in Angus Fletcher's useful

¹⁰ The essence of this microstory is retold in Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's Los mares del sur.



phrase. To stare into nothing and know it; to be dispassionate about death as about using others--Wilmer, Cairo, or Brigid--as fall-guy; all this means that Spade can rob a Gutman of his ultimate weapon, the threat of death. (85)

In what can be called the manifesto of hard-boiled detective fiction, "The Simple Art of Murder" (1934), Raymond Chandler articulates and praises the world vision founded by Hammett,

Hammett gave murder back to the kind of people that commit it for reasons, not just to provide a corpse; and with the means at hand, not hand-wrought dueling pistols, curare and tropical fish. He put these people down on paper as they were, and he made them talk and think in the language they customarily used for these purposes. [...] It is not a fragrant world, but it is the world you live in, and certain writers with tough minds and a cool spirit of detachment can make very interesting and even amusing patterns out of it. It is not funny that a man should be killed, but it is sometimes funny that he should be killed for so little, and that his death should be the coin of what we call civilization. (14-17)

Morally ambiguous characters, Spade, as well as Hammett's other detective the nameless Continental Op from Red Harvest (1929), The Dain Curse (1929) and other novels, control their circumstances by simultaneously mistrusting the stated intentions of others and realizing that the prime motivations for people's actions are greed and lust. Steven Marcus points to this asserting,



In Hammett, society and social relations are dominated by the principle of basic mistrust. The respectability of respectable American society is as much a fiction and a fraud as the phony respectable society fabricated by the criminals. Indeed, he unwaveringly represents the world of crime as a reproduction in both structure and detail of the modern capitalistic society that it depends on, preys off, and is part of.
(205)

This mistrust extends to the hard-boiled detective's relationship with the authorities. Whereas the traditional detective like Sherlock Holmes upholds the moral legitimacy of the authorities, the hard-boiled detective is portrayed as a social misfit and a loner. He is not an amateur sleuth but rather a professional who works outside the law abiding by a personal moral code that centers on his professional responsibility to his client. Although this type of detective seeks the truth, he realizes that in a lawless and immoral society where brutal police, corrupt politicians and influential millionaires victimize the weak, justice is but a mere fiction. George Grella explains the political unconscious revealed in this fiction,

Where the police of the classic whodunit are frequently stupid or incompetent, the American police are brutal and degraded. The detective must work outside the law since its representatives demonstrate the decay of order. He works alone because he



cannot compromise as the official detectives must; his faith lies in his own values. Criminals and policemen are not the only moral offenders; culpability often begins at the highest social levels. The affluent are so often responsible for social problems that a quasi-Marxist distrust of the wealthy becomes a minor motif; the rich are merely gangsters who have managed to escape punishment. (111)

The investigation of the hard-boiled detective does not resolve the inherent contradictions of society through the crime's solution but rather ironically widens the detective's, and consequently the reader's, understanding of America's status as a tainted, disrupted Eden. Since the beginning of the hard-boiled detective novel with Hammett's Red Harvest (1929), the private eye's investigation invariably begins with some incident he is hired to look into that later uncovers a network of crime that may implicate several sectors of society. For example, in Red Harvest, the Continental Op's original purpose is to explore the murder of newspaper reporter Donald Willsson in Personville (pronounced 'Poisonville') yet he finally uncovers an intricate web of power, deceit and violence that links organized crime, corrupt union bosses and the victim's own father. In the more famous novel, The Maltese Falcon, Sam Spade's investigation into his partner's murder leads him to a den of double-



crossers each seeking a small statuette thought to be worth millions.

Nevertheless, whereas Hammett's detectives must wade through the lies and deceit of gangsters, cheats and con-men, both Chandler and Ross MacDonald endowed the genre with a quasi-picaresque atmosphere in which the detective's initial investigation directs him to various sectors of society—from the most decadent to the most miserable—all of which are implicated with guilt to some degree. Dennis Porter compares the initial crime to a stain that spreads as the novel progresses,

After Dashiell Hammett, Chandler constructs a novel that has the obvious form of a hunt or chase insofar as it follow a trail of clues in an unbroken chain from person to person and from place to place through the urbanized landscape of Southern California. From its beginning in The Red Harvest, the form taken by the hard-boiled detective novel suggests the metaphor of a spreading stain. The initial crime often turns out to be a relatively superficial symptom of an evil whose magnitude and ubiquity are only progressively disclosed during the course of the investigation. (40)

John Cawelti also shows this preliminary investigation as a small hole that when scratched reveals an enormous hidden cavern,

[The] detective is called in to investigate a seemingly simple thing, like a disappearance; his investigation comes

up against a web of conspiracy that reflects the presence of a hidden criminal organization; finally, the track leads back to the rich and respectable levels of society and exposes the corrupt relationship between the pillars of the community and the criminal underground.
(148)

In other words, the investigation the detective conducts in a hard-boiled novel does not consist of piecing together clues to reconstruct a crime and encounter the murderer but rather takes on the form of a "chase" in which the private eye's explorations uncover not individual guilt but an underlying network of culpability that permeates society.

In Raymond Chandler's The Big Sleep (1939), Philip Marlowe begins by investigating a blackmail letter sent to a wealthy retired General only to uncover its connection to illicit gambling, pornography, murder and the involvement of the General's two psychopathic daughters. Similarly, in Chandler's Farewell, My Lovely (1940), Marlowe's experience with a violent ex-con sets him after a missing dancer named Velma Valento which, in turn, carries him into a world of mobsters, drug traffickers, police corruption and murder. Also, in The Long Goodbye (1954), a chance meeting between Marlowe and a badly scarred World War II veteran reveals ties between

gangsters and the war hero's nymphomaniac wife as well as an alcoholic writer and a doctor who distributes illicit drugs to members of high society. Whereas Hammett's novels reveal the violence and chaos of the Prohibition Era, Chandler's novels explore the decadence of Californian society both before and after World War II.

Ross MacDonald's novels reveal intricate webs of collective culpability through complex plots that emphasize society's disintegration in the 1950s and 1960s by unveiling families torn apart by lies, deception and murder. Like Hammett and Chandler, MacDonald's detective, Lew Archer, begins his investigation simply but is propelled into a chaotic world motivated by betrayal, greed and lust. In The Drowning Pool (1950), Archer is hired to investigate a blackmail letter only to encounter a highly dysfunctional family tied to murder and big business oil interests. When a wealthy man's daughter disappears in The Zebra-striped Hearse (1962), Archer exposes a family whose infidelities and disloyalties are connected to murder and stolen identities. In what many critics consider MacDonald's best novel, The Underground Man (1971), Archer tracks a kidnapped child as wildfire sweeps through an affluent section of Southern California. In the end, the



detective's investigation unearths a family marred by a suppressed past as well as guilt and murder.

In the traditional detective story the investigation is narrated by a Watson-figure; but, in the hard-boiled novel the detective acts alone, simultaneously enforcing his individuality within the urban wilderness and focusing his point of view as the structuring element of the narration. Through his strict sense of professional responsibility to his client, the hard-boiled detective abides by an individual code that endows him with a special position as an incorruptible force within a tainted society. Such detectives as Sam Spade, the Continental Op, Philip Marlowe and Lew Archer withstand a range of physical punishment from beatings and torture to being drugged and shot at. Nevertheless, as a presence that cannot be bought nor bribed these detectives, as the antithesis to the aristocratic amateur sleuth represented by Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot, hold no class prejudice but rather identify with the victims of injustice. In "The Simple Art of Murder," Raymond Chandler articulates the characteristics of the hard-boiled detective who, despite his moral ambiguity, clearly manifests the idea of a "good man" in a "bad world,"

1875 - 1876

1876 - 1877

1877 - 1878

1878

But down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid. The detective in this kind of a story must be such a man. He is the hero; he is everything. He must be a man of honor--by instinct, by inevitability, without thought of it, and certainly without saying it. He must be the best man in his world and a good man for any world. [...] He is a relatively poor man, or he would not be a detective at all. He is a common man or he would not go among the common people. He has a sense of character, or he would not know his job. He will take no man's money dishonestly and no man's insolence without a due and dispassionate revenge. He is a lonely man and his pride is that you will treat him as a proud man or be very sorry you ever saw him. He talks as a man of his age talks--that is, with rude wit, a lively sense of the grotesque, a disgust for sham, and a contempt for pettiness.

(18)

Marginalized from society because of his incorruptible nature, the hard-boiled detective possesses few material goods, works in a run-down office in a seedy part of town, and depends on "divorce" work trailing an unfaithful spouse to boost his perpetually low funds. Ironically, the detective's job as a "voyeur" provides the picaresque quality of the hard-boiled detective novel. The main character's point of view as both observer and participant allows him to not only show the reader the wide spectrum of social and economic strata in society but also uncover the political unconscious that



permeates society. What is more, his incorruptible nature, professional attitude, and "outsider" status let him assess guilt without fear of bribery, bias, favoritism or prejudice. Frederic Jameson confirms the detective's unique position stating,

Since there is no longer any privileged experience in which the whole of the social structure can be grasped, a figure must be invented who can be superimposed on the society as a whole, whose routine and life pattern serve somehow to tie separate and isolated parts together. Its equivalent is the picaresque novel, where a singular character moves from one background to another, links picturesque but not intrinsically related episodes together. In doing this the detective in a sense once again fulfills the demands of the function of knowledge rather than that of lived experience: through him we are able to see, to know the society as a whole, but he does not really stand for any genuine close-up experience of it.
(127)

Paco Ignacio Taibo II and the Birth of the "Novela Neopolicíaca"

Both Paco Ignacio Taibo II, in Mexico, and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, in Spain, appropriate the figure of the solitary, anti-heroic, hard-boiled detective creating texts that are simultaneously "social chronicles" and aesthetic violations of the tenets of the detective genre. Historically, in Mexico, the most common incarnation of the mystery novel has been the imitation



of the 'whodunit' by such authors as Antonio Helú, Pepe Martínez de la Vega, María Elvira Bermúdez, and Rafael Bernal (Revueltas, "La novela policíaca en México y en Cuba" 108; Planells, "El género policíaco" 149)¹¹.

Nevertheless, over the last thirty years, a wave of new writers has replaced the old practitioners of the traditional mystery novel, opting instead to appropriate and adapt the hard-boiled detective fiction to Mexico's political, social and economic circumstances¹². Led by Paco Ignacio Taibo II, such authors as Rafael Heredia, David Martín del Campo, Eugenio Aguirre, Hernán Lara Zavala, Mauricio Schwartz, Guillermo Zambrano, Orlando Ortiz, Federico Campbell, Gerardo de la Torre, Sergio Pitol, and Juan Hernández Luna have established a 'noir' vision of Mexico which exposes the crude urban reality of a society dominated by police corruption, government lies, and a conspicuous absence of justice. Reiterating the dark realism of these authors, María Paz Balibrea-Enríquez states, "Lo que les une es una misma visión 'negra,' esto es, descarnada de la realidad social y la

¹¹ For examples of classic detective fiction in Latin America see Donald Yates's Latin Blood and El cuento policial latinoamericano as well as María Elvira Bermúdez's Cuento policíaco mexicano: breve antología.

¹² Ilan Stavans's Antiheroes (Associated UP, 1997) gives several brief synopses on detective fiction authors from the periods before and after 1968 in Mexico.



reivindicación de la necesidad de una función social para el escritor" (40).

These authors reject the orthodox imitation of the English genre, whose ideology espouses logic and order, and reformulate the North American model, while still using violence and crude language, to project a Mexico dominated by more sinister elements than mere cosmic indifference. Revealing what Taibo often calls a "kafkaesque world of shadows and lies," these authors underscore the absence of logic, truth and justice in their society and reveal the incompatibility of the "whodunit" with Mexican reality. Seeing the imitation of the traditional detective novel in Mexico as forced and arbitrary, Carlos Monsiváis links the existence of a system of jurisprudence that victimizes the poor and the weak with the backward development of mystery fiction in Mexico,

Esta sería también una de las razones que explican la ausencia de la literatura policial latinoamericana: una policía juzgada corrupta de modo unánime no es susceptible de crédito alguno: si esta literatura aspirase al realismo, el personaje acusado casi nunca sería el criminal verdadero y al menos que fuese pobre, jamás recibiría castigo. Por lo demás: a) los crímenes entre pobres no le interesan al género. El ámbito predilecto de esta literatura suele ser el de la gran burguesía, mansiones donde el mal impera,



codicia entre magnates, chantaje alrededor de la piscina; b] el crimen, además, no posee una connotación expropiable: lo excepcional, lo desusado, no es que un latinoamericano resulte víctima, sino que pueda dejar de serlo ("Ustedes que jamás han sido asesinados" 2).

The words of Monsiváis echo Howard Haycraft's statements in his classic study of detective fiction, Murder for Pleasure: The Life and Times of the Detective Story (1941), in which he views the existence of democracy as a prerequisite for the development of the detective story. In a section titled "Dictators, Democrats, and Detectives," Haycraft states,

It is precisely this close affinity between detection and evidence which accounts for all the interrelation of the fictionized form and democracy. For, of all the democratic heritages, none has been more stubbornly defended by free peoples the world over than the right of fair trial--the credo that no man shall be convicted of crime in the absence of reasonable proof, safeguarded by known, just, and logical rules. The profession of detection thus owes its being directly to the fact that democracies require and scrutinize evidence; that they conscientiously attempt to punish the actual perpetrators of crime, not the first victims who come conveniently to hand [...] The significant thing to know and remember is that detection and the detective story definitely thrive in proportion to the strength of the democratic tradition and the essential decency of nations; while the closer governments approach legalized gangsterism and rule-by force, the less likely we are



to find conscientious criminal investigation or any body of competent detective literature (313-17).

The conclusion to Monsiváis's articles lays bare the thesis both he and Haycraft share, "¿A quién le importa quién mató a Roger Ackroyd si nadie sabe (oficialmente) quién fue el responsable de la matanza de Tlatelolco o quién ordenó el asalto de los Halcones el 10 de junio?" (Monsiváis 10).

Although North American hard-boiled detective fiction projects a random universe ruled by corruption and deceit, the core of its narrative structure presents the doomed journey of the private eye in search of truth and justice. What is more, Taibo recognizes the irony of adapting a genre concerned with issues of truth and justice in a society where such questions have long been repressed by the authorities. Nevertheless, by creating novels aware of their literary debt to such North American writers as Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler and Ross MacDonald as well as the underlying hermeneutic nature of the investigative process, Taibo accentuates the uniqueness of Mexican reality. As Amelia Simpson states,

Taibo thus introduces a self-conscious dimension to the narrative; parallel to the investigation of a crime is an



investigation of crime literature, of Mexican society, and of the self. The author draws attention to the distance between theoretical and empirical knowledge, between books and reality in his considerations of the detective novel and of the dilemma of the intellectual with working-class sympathies. (96)

From the North American hard-boiled detective fiction, Paco Ignacio Taibo II appropriates the ideology of disaffection and disorder to analyze the crisis of a post-1968 Mexico that seeks to reconcile a history of repression with the democratic ideals of a changing modern world. Combining the basic characteristics of the detective fiction of Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, and Ross MacDonald with the violence and terror of such crime novelists as Chester Himes, Jim Thompson and Horace McCoy, Taibo has forged a new genre that he has dubbed the "neo-policíaca" novel. Ironically, Taibo believes the overt political tone of the "neo-policíaca" derives more from such writers as Carlos Fuentes and John Dos Passos rather than from a desire to strictly adhere to the North American models,

Es curioso porque para ser literatura negra yo creo que el material generador de nuestra tradición estuvo en el Boom latinoamericano, en La región más transparente de Fuentes, en Manhattan Transfer y la Trilogía U.S.A. de Dos Passos. Estuvo en ese tipo de materiales y no en la continuidad del género. Creo

que pocos elementos alimentaron desde dentro del género neo-policíaco y fueron los elementos más heterodoxos como sería la visión esperpéntica en Chester Himes o el ultra-horror de Jim Thompson. El resto es material referencial de la estructura detectivesca del Chandler, Hammett, McCoy, Williams y paro de contar. (Nichols 229)

The "neo-policíaca" novel consists of a simultaneous assimilation and violation of the hard-boiled and "noir" genres in order to create a text that possesses the essential anecdotal, linear story telling of a "mystery" novel with such literary innovation as metafictional self-reflection and fragmentation of narrative voice. With a decidedly political tone, Taibo's texts articulate questions of truth, knowledge and justice by forcing the reader to reconstruct the texts in the same way Taibo's detectives reconstruct the crimes. Thus, Taibo explores and unveils a society of disorder and chaos victimized by the hypocrisy of the rich, the self-interest of corrupt government officials, the violence of the police, and the influence of drug traffickers. Essential themes that arise throughout Taibo's novels revolve around the legacy of the Tlatelolco Massacre in 1968 and the struggle of Mexico's citizens against a corrupt political system that co-opts history and in the process victimizes the marginalized sectors of Mexican society—the underclass,

the peasantry, and the indigenous population. Mexico City, as the backdrop and microcosm, emerges as a monster engulfed in shadows, doubts and half-truths whose inhabitants suffer politically, economically and socially as well as ecologically.

Attracted by the harsh social criticism of such authors as Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, Paco Ignacio Taibo II appropriated their vision of an unforgiving cosmos dominated by irony and the inherent presence of evil in society to create Mexico's first hard-boiled detective, Héctor Belascoarán Shayne in Días de combate (1976). Taibo explains the genesis of Belascoarán Shayne as part of his intent to import the hard-boiled genre as a means for analyzing Mexican reality from a Mexican point of view,

A partir de la nacionalización del género descubrí que los mecanismos de nacionalización tienen que ser internos y no externos. No se trataba del nombre o de apariencia. No tenías que narrar a partir del concepto de novela negra Chandler-Hammettiano sino tenías que narrar a partir del concepto de la realidad negra del Distrito Federal y eso era mi punto de partida y ésa fue la verdadera génesis del proyecto. De ahí fue creciendo a una manera de contar un tipo de personaje, una reflexión sobre la realidad mexicana y una estructura que reiteraré en nueve novelas. (Nichols 223-224)



Throughout the nine novels that compose the Belascoarán series, a constant, simultaneous acceptance and violation of the generic models established by Hammett and Chandler reveals Taibo's desire to appropriate and create a new "noir" vision yet expressed in terms of a national reality¹³.

Therefore, in Días de Combate, the reader encounters traits common to the North American hard-boiled texts including the figure of a marginalized detective who works out of a run-down office in a seedy part of town¹⁴, pursues the "truth" as a "hunter," suffers a wide range of physical abuse out of his loyalty to his client, captures the essence of urban reality through his dominance of slang and, most importantly, sentimentally identifies with the innocent victims of crime. What is more, his marginality is twofold. First, Belascoarán Shayne abandons his position as a member of the bourgeois order by quitting his job as an engineer, divorcing his wife and becoming a detective through correspondence school. Secondly, Belascoarán Shayne's unique position

¹³ This "use" and "abuse" of generic conventions, also common in Vázquez Montalbán's fiction, corresponds to Linda Hutcheon's idea of a postmodern demystification of borders.

¹⁴ Belascoarán Shayne's office is located in the center of Mexico City on Calle Artículo 123 a street named for the section of the 1917 Constitution calling for labor reform. Ironically, this also underscores the detective's working class sentiments.



within Mexican society as both observer and participant is heightened through his own cultural hybridity as the son of a Basque father and an Irish mother.

Nevertheless, though a marginal figure like Sam Spade, the Continental Op and Philip Marlowe, Héctor Belascoarán Shayne is not alone. Rather, he often relies on a network of family including his brother and sister, Carlos and Elisa, and friends, including the radio disc jockey el "Cuervo" Valdivia, throughout the course of his investigations. Also, the detective's officemates (a plumber, an upholsterer, and a civil engineer with an expertise in Mexico City's sewer system) underscore his rejection of bourgeois society and reinforce his working class sensibilities and his connection with the "real" Mexico. Lastly, Taibo never concludes his novels with a "wrap-up" or summation but rather diverts the emphasis of the tale away from a final solution in order to highlight Belascoarán Shayne's adventures that ultimately always reveal the inner workings of corruption in Mexico's political system.

In Días de Combate, Héctor Belascoarán Shayne stumbles across his newfound profession after seeing the film *El caso de Justin Playfair* and reading a newspaper article on a series of murders committed by the self



named "Cerevro." After separating from his wife three days later and receiving a diploma through correspondence school, Belascoarán Shayne shuns the title "Private Detective" and opts instead for the term "Independent Detective" which overtly disassociates him from the established authorities in Mexico. The detective begins his pursuit of the strangler mistakenly attributing to him the status of idealized villain and assuming for himself the role of hero mimicking the actions of Humphrey Bogart from such "film noir" classics as *The Big Sleep*, *The Maltese Falcon* and, most importantly, *Casablanca*. The detective dons the stereotypical trenchcoat associated with the Hard-boiled detective as the narrator states, "Con la gabardina tan arrugada, ya parecía Humphrey Bogart, pensó. Y salió de nuevo a propiciar el accidente" (64). In another scene, Belascoarán Shayne receives a telephone call from the killer and runs out of his office to the phone booth on the street only to find a young man. Shielding himself from embarrassment, the detective hides behind the tough image of Bogart, "Héctor sonrió embarazado, y, para disimular la metida de pata se puso a silbar el tema de Casablanca que Humphrey Bogart tocaba en el piano. Y silbe y silbe (sic) hizo un mutis, como Humphrey Bogart

al acabar de tocar. Se fue a colgar el teléfono" (69). Nevertheless, Belascoarán Shayne soon realizes his error and begins to see the incompatibility with Mexican reality of both the literary and film models he had adapted. The narrator shows the detective's self-deconstruction stating, "Desde su esquina, sentado en el suelo lánguido, languidecía el detective Belascoarán Shayne. El cigarrillo apagado en las comisuras de los labios era lo único que quedaba del original Humphrey Bogart que había sido estos días" (82).

The failure of Humphrey Bogart to serve as an adequate model for Belascoarán Shayne simultaneously dismantles the mythical ideals of "good guys" and "bad guys" and reveals the need for a detective who understands Mexico City's unique essence. In a society where the authorities are often the perpetrators of crimes, Taibo emphasizes the need for a detective who not only understands a world of cosmic indifference but, more importantly, can navigate a society dominated by police corruption, government abuse and illegal government ties with drug traffickers. A detective in Mexico, says Taibo, must be

surrealista, se mueve entre una doble
tensión. La tensión de la atroz
información que la realidad proporciona



todos los días sobre la violencia
policíaca y el abuso de poder y una
propuesta neorromántica de ajustar la
realidad a partir de crear justicia en el
acto individual colaborando con lo social.
(Ramírez 42)

This "reality" to which Taibo refers is hinted at by
Carlos, the detective's brother, when he warns Héctor
against importing idealized visions of "good" and "evil"
to Mexico where those lines are blurred,

Si te quieres matar, que quede claro.
Porque lo que está pasando, es que te
estás columpiando en el borde del sistema;
como patinar descalzo sobre un *gillite*.
Hasta da escalofrío. No te creas
demasiado lo del estrangulador, lo de
cacería. Estás rompiendo con todo lo que
había atrás. Estás jugando un juego en el
borde del sistema, y no pienses que es
otra cosa. Siento que esperas que el otro
juegue también en el borde. Y que de una
manera un tanto mágica has creado un
asesino idealizado como tú. Fuera de las
reglas del juego. Ten cuidado no te vayas
a encontrar a alguno de los artífices del
juego. Cuídate del Comandante de la
Judicial, que en sus horas libres, las
horas que le sobran de golpear estudiantes
o torturar campesinos, no se dedique a
estrangular mujeres. Cuídate del
Presidente de la República, del dueño de
la fábrica de enfrente. Quizá ellos estén
también jugando en el borde de su sistema,
del que han creado y sobre el que
permanecen como perros dogos, zopilotes
cuidando sus carroñas. (43)

Realizing that in Mexico anyone and everyone is a
suspect, Héctor Belascoarán Shayne finally understands

the essence of a city he had been blind to previously and ruptures completely with his past,

Había trabajado en las sombras, peleado contra sí mismo y contra la presencia invisible de un asesino; había elaborado códigos morales, contracódigos, respuestas y preguntas. ¿Había vivido intensamente? Aquellas noches en las que el sueño no llegaba, aquellas rondas interminables recorriendo una ciudad que por vez primera era suya, calles que se construían en la luz mercurial al mágico nombre de la venganza; rostros, lugares, gestos. Un mapa que se iba levantando de una ciudad vista por ojos alucinados. (207)

In a city where the detective's list of suspects include everyone from the "jefe de policía" to Héctor's own ex-wife Claudia, Belascoarán Shayne devises a means of investigation which rejects notions of logic, deduction, and the investigation of minute clues. After he receives a letter from the Academia Internacional de Detectives Argentinos offering him the opportunity to participate in a course about detection, logic and the art of studying fingerprints, Belascoarán Shayne writes a response that "informaba a la academia argentina que él se encontraba en la línea de los detectives inductivos, cuasimetafísicos, de carácter impresionista, al que le vale verga las huellas digitales" (114). Fighting for justice and searching for truth in a system where the police, the government and the military represent forces



to be feared, the 'nature' of Mexico City demands the detective adopt an attitude more appropriate to Mexican reality. With this, Belascoarán Shayne combines "curiosidad" (curiosity) with "terquedad" (stubbornness) as an effective means for investigating crimes in which his desire to know is coupled with his desire to fight the "status quo." Taibo, in an interview with Juan Ramírez, reflects the elusive nature of the pursuit of "truth" in Mexico,

Belascoarán Shayne cree en la terquedad y la tenacidad. Cree que no existe ciencia ninguna que pueda aproximar a un mexicano a descubrir la verdad, porque la verdad, por naturaleza en México, tiene una entropía hacia ocultarse, hay una entropía de la mentira en este país. Por lo tanto, todo lo que sucede tiende a distorsionarse o convertirse en falso, todo a enmascararse. (46)

Much like the detectives Sam Spade, the Continental Op, Philip Marlowe and Lew Archer, Belascoarán Shayne's acts as a 'hunter' who tracks down the criminals through an investigation that ultimately and inevitably reveals the perpetrators to be members of the police, government and the military connected with gangsters and drug traffickers. In the second installment of the Belascoarán Shayne series, Cosa fácil (1977), Taibo's detective simultaneously investigates the death of two

engineers while battling wealthy corporate tycoons connected to corrupt government officials, protects the daughter of a famous Mexican film starlet, and searches for Emiliano Zapata who is thought to still be alive. Developing a three-pronged plot, Taibo plays with the structures common to Ross MacDonald's Lew Archer series in which the detective is confronted with several mysteries that intertwine at the conclusion fabricating a complex web of collective culpability in society. Nevertheless, in Cosa fácil, although Taibo's detective awaits the moment in which these plots will intersect, ironically self-aware of his own Lew Archer-like status, Belascoarán Shayne realizes that such structure requires an order and logic which Mexican society's violent rhythms resist. As Taibo states, MacDonald's complex structure, so dependent on logic, betrays the essence of Mexico City,

No hay ningún desperdicio en el sentido de que todo está articulado en un rompecabezas. Yo viví bajo la experiencia de que la vida no es eso, y por lo tanto esa novela traicionaba la esencia de la vida, que es el rompecabezas imperfecto. Yo traía otra motivación: hacer una novela que acabara con la literatura policiaca de rompecabezas perfecto. (Torre 196)¹⁵

¹⁵ My emphasis

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to the study of the properties of the function $f(x)$ defined by the equation $f(x) = \int_0^x f(t) dt$. It is shown that $f(x)$ is a constant function, i.e., $f(x) = C$ for all x . This result is obtained by differentiating both sides of the equation with respect to x and using the fact that $f(0) = 0$.

2. In the second part, we consider the function $g(x) = \int_0^x g(t) dt$. It is shown that $g(x)$ is also a constant function, i.e., $g(x) = C$ for all x . This result is obtained by differentiating both sides of the equation with respect to x and using the fact that $g(0) = 0$.

3. The third part of the paper is devoted to the study of the function $h(x) = \int_0^x h(t) dt$. It is shown that $h(x)$ is also a constant function, i.e., $h(x) = C$ for all x . This result is obtained by differentiating both sides of the equation with respect to x and using the fact that $h(0) = 0$.

4. In the fourth part, we consider the function $k(x) = \int_0^x k(t) dt$. It is shown that $k(x)$ is also a constant function, i.e., $k(x) = C$ for all x . This result is obtained by differentiating both sides of the equation with respect to x and using the fact that $k(0) = 0$.

5. The fifth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the function $l(x) = \int_0^x l(t) dt$. It is shown that $l(x)$ is also a constant function, i.e., $l(x) = C$ for all x . This result is obtained by differentiating both sides of the equation with respect to x and using the fact that $l(0) = 0$.

6. In the sixth part, we consider the function $m(x) = \int_0^x m(t) dt$. It is shown that $m(x)$ is also a constant function, i.e., $m(x) = C$ for all x . This result is obtained by differentiating both sides of the equation with respect to x and using the fact that $m(0) = 0$.

7. The seventh part of the paper is devoted to the study of the function $n(x) = \int_0^x n(t) dt$. It is shown that $n(x)$ is also a constant function, i.e., $n(x) = C$ for all x . This result is obtained by differentiating both sides of the equation with respect to x and using the fact that $n(0) = 0$.

8. In the eighth part, we consider the function $o(x) = \int_0^x o(t) dt$. It is shown that $o(x)$ is also a constant function, i.e., $o(x) = C$ for all x . This result is obtained by differentiating both sides of the equation with respect to x and using the fact that $o(0) = 0$.

9. The ninth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the function $p(x) = \int_0^x p(t) dt$. It is shown that $p(x)$ is also a constant function, i.e., $p(x) = C$ for all x . This result is obtained by differentiating both sides of the equation with respect to x and using the fact that $p(0) = 0$.

10. In the tenth part, we consider the function $q(x) = \int_0^x q(t) dt$. It is shown that $q(x)$ is also a constant function, i.e., $q(x) = C$ for all x . This result is obtained by differentiating both sides of the equation with respect to x and using the fact that $q(0) = 0$.

11. The eleventh part of the paper is devoted to the study of the function $r(x) = \int_0^x r(t) dt$. It is shown that $r(x)$ is also a constant function, i.e., $r(x) = C$ for all x . This result is obtained by differentiating both sides of the equation with respect to x and using the fact that $r(0) = 0$.

12. In the twelfth part, we consider the function $s(x) = \int_0^x s(t) dt$. It is shown that $s(x)$ is also a constant function, i.e., $s(x) = C$ for all x . This result is obtained by differentiating both sides of the equation with respect to x and using the fact that $s(0) = 0$.

13. The thirteenth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the function $t(x) = \int_0^x t(t) dt$. It is shown that $t(x)$ is also a constant function, i.e., $t(x) = C$ for all x . This result is obtained by differentiating both sides of the equation with respect to x and using the fact that $t(0) = 0$.

14. In the fourteenth part, we consider the function $u(x) = \int_0^x u(t) dt$. It is shown that $u(x)$ is also a constant function, i.e., $u(x) = C$ for all x . This result is obtained by differentiating both sides of the equation with respect to x and using the fact that $u(0) = 0$.

15. The fifteenth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the function $v(x) = \int_0^x v(t) dt$. It is shown that $v(x)$ is also a constant function, i.e., $v(x) = C$ for all x . This result is obtained by differentiating both sides of the equation with respect to x and using the fact that $v(0) = 0$.

Taibo's detective constantly dismantles himself through an ironic twisting of his literary predecessors as well as questioning his own participation and need to investigate. In Ross MacDonald's The Drowning Pool, Lew Archer rejects any motivations dealing with lofty concepts of justice by embracing his participation as a need to know the 'truth.' "Truth interests me, though. Not general truth if there is any, but the truth of particular things. Who did what when why. Especially the why" (156). Nevertheless, Belascoarán Shayne adapts this phrase not to question other people's motives but to examine his own,

Lo que fastiaba a Belascoarán, era no el ritmo violento de aquellos días ni siquiera la inercia que se le imponía obligándolo a tomar decisiones, o más bien a que las tomaran por él los acontecimientos. Lo que le jodía, era no descubrir el por qué había aceptado un reto así. Qué parte de su oscura cabeza buscaba gloria en aquella carrera agotadora por las tres historias que corrían paralelas. (107)

In a different scene, Belascoarán Shayne experiences a moment of confusion and follows a line of action in accordance with the models set by other literary detectives only to reach the conclusion that they are incompatible with the reality he must face,

--Buenas noches--dijo Héctor.



El gordito quedó callado.

Héctor repasó de nuevo el decorado del cuarto, la sordidez ajena tenía la propiedad de sacudirle la sensiblería. ¿Ahora qué carajo hacía? Todo había parecido muy claro en los primeros instantes: sacar pistola, patear puerta, entrar cuarto. De acuerdo al guión escrito de esta historia ahora había que: o sacarle la caca al gordito a patadas para que dijera el nombre del hotel de la calzada Zaragoza, o envolverlo en una conversación en la que soltara la papa.

Héctor se sentía incapaz de ambas cosas. Por eso permaneció callado.

Estuvieron un par de minutos así. Trató de buscar opciones al callejón sin salida en que se encontraba. Si lo amarraba y luego esperaba que se soltase y lo seguía. Si hablaba por teléfono. Si interceptaba el teléfono. Al llegar a esa perspectiva se sonrió. ¿Y cómo mierdas se interceptaba un teléfono en este país?

(135)

The third novel of the series, No habrá final feliz (1981)¹⁶, ironically mocks the Hollywood notion of a "happy ending" by forewarning the reader of Belascoarán Shayne's inevitable demise at the conclusion of the text. Investigating the deaths of several people connected with a covert paramilitary group known as "Los Halcones," the detective confronts the most malevolent force in Mexico: the government itself. "Los Halcones," who were historically responsible for the massacre of protestors

¹⁶ Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's Happy End (1974), from his 'período subnormal' presents a similar deconstruction of the optimistic ideology that underlies traditional literary and cinematographic structures.



on June 10, 1971, pursue Belascoarán Shayne mistakenly assuming that one of the victims, before his death, had hired the detective to investigate "Los Halcones" and the massacre of 1971. In this lethal comedy of errors, Taibo's detective blindly pursues the criminals in his role as hunter yet is unable to discern the face or motive of his enemy. Pursuing the suspects after a shootout, Belascoarán Shayne distinguishes himself from other literary detectives, "Ahora necesitaba saber qué seguía. En las buenas novelas policíacas, los pasos eran claros; hasta cuando el detective se desconcertaba, su desconcierto era claro" (No habrá final feliz 84).

Belascoarán Shayne's confusion during his investigations derives less from a misunderstanding of facts and more from the incompatibility of logic in Mexican society. In Algunas nubes (1985), a sort of "pre-quel" to No habrá final feliz, the narrator indicates Belascoarán Shayne's technique of investigation which rejects ratiocination and applies to the specific context of Mexico,

Héctor no creía en el raciocinio, ni siquiera se llevó a la conferencia un cuaderno de notas. Sólo escuchaba, esperando una cosa, saber por dónde empezar, en qué calle, en qué esquina iniciar el recorrido por el que iba a meterse en la vida de otra gente. Viérase

como se viera, todo era un problema de calles, de avenidas y parques, de caminar, de picotear. Héctor solo conocía un método detectivesco. Meterse en la historia ajena, meterse físicamente, hasta que la historia se hacía propia. (24)

Thus, Belascoarán Shayne favors sentimentality over reason—combining it with “terquedad” and “curiosidad”—in order to become the “hero in white” who identifies with the weak and victimized in order to protect them. Understanding the danger of becoming a hero in a nation ruled by villains, the detective compares his position in Mexico to one of Ross MacDonald’s Lew Archer novels titled Moving Target¹⁷, “Una vez metido en la historia, tenía que romper sus rutinas, no convertirse en un pichón; si iba a ser un blanco, lo que era probable, sería como el personaje de la novela de Ross McDonald (sic) que alguna vez había leído, un blanco móvil, y tan erráticamente móvil como podía ser un ciudadano del D.F. con imaginación” (58). In other words, Belascoarán Shayne investigates crimes in Mexico understanding that he is simultaneously hunter and hunted.

Despite the detective’s death at the end of No habrá final feliz (1981), Taibo resuscitates the character in Regreso a la misma ciudad y bajo la lluvia (1989)

¹⁷ Like The Drowning Pool, Moving Target was later made into a movie starring Paul Newman titled Harper.



seemingly similar to the way in which Sir Arthur Conan Doyle brought his famous detective, Sherlock Holmes, back from the dead. Nevertheless, whereas the English sleuth never really perished but merely narrowly escaped death, Taibo's detective actually returns from the grave in a type of Mexican surrealist miracle¹⁸. This, the author states in the preface of the novel, can only happen in Mexico,

Su aparición por tanto en estas páginas es un acto de magia. Magia blanca, quizá, pero magia irracional e irrespetuosa hacia el oficio de hacer una serie de novelas policiacas.

La magia no es totalmente culpa mía. Apela a las tradiciones culturales de un país en cuya historia abundan los regresos. Aquí regresó el Vampiro, regresó el Santo (en versión cinematográfica), regresó incluso Demetrio Vallejo desde la cárcel, regresó Benito Juárez desde Paso del Norte...(9).

In such later novels of the Belascoarán Shayne series as Sueños de la frontera (1990), Desvanecidos difuntos (1991), and Adios, Madrid (1993), the detective's investigations lead him away from Mexico's capital to such places as Mexicali, Veracruz and Spain respectively. Ironically, the surreal, "kafkaesque"

¹⁸ This "surrealist miracle" and Taibo's own description of the detective's resurrection evoke the tradition in Latin American literature known as "magical realism" in which the supernatural and physical worlds seemingly interpenetrate each other.



atmosphere of Mexico City is not diminished as the detective distances himself from the megalopolis but, inversely, the detective encounters a world where the shadows are intensified by fraudulent elections, an empty Constitution, corrupt police and powerful drug lords.

Desvanecidos difuntos takes Taibo's detective to Southeast Mexico where rumors substitute truth and even Belascoarán Shayne's investigation is an inversion of the stereotypical role of the detective. Rather than track down the culprit of a murder, the independent detective is hired to exonerate Professor Medardo Rivera of a murder that in actuality never occurred.

The town of San Andrés, the narrator states, resembles Pedro Páramo's fictional setting Comala and, therefore, needs a hero who is completely irrational. The professor Medardo Rivera affirms this fact in a conversation with Belascoarán Shayne,

--¿Y tú eres de la escuela deductiva o inductiva?

--Soy de la teoría de la terquedad.

--Coño, ésa es nueva. ¿Habrás leído un cuento de Conan Doyle que se llama "El bote oculto," verdad? Uno de Sherlock Holmes.

--No--contestó Belascoarán con todo cinicismo, porque lo había leído, aunque hacía tiempo, un par de veces.

--De ahí es donde saco todas mis desconfianzas con el método deductivo. Por culpa de ese pinche cuento le dije a

remains of the body of the person who was killed.

The body of the person who was killed was found in the

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mi abogada que ni loco te contratara sin
antes estar seguro de que eras
absolutamente irracional, compadre. (42-
43)

The professor refers to the scene in which Sherlock Holmes correctly guesses several facts about a visitor through pure observation. The visitor is stunned when Holmes correctly asserts, of course, that the man is a journalist, married with a red-headed woman, had just quit the vice of tobacco, is left-handed, Catholic, a soldier just returned from the Anglo-Boer War, uses the watch of his late father and, before stopping by the detective's home, had stopped to eat cherries. In Mexico, however, appearances are not as they seem, making the English sleuth's method of detection invalid. Medardo Rivera debunks his ideas of deductive logic by stating that everything may have more than one meaning in Mexico,

--No, pues que al pobre tipo que le adivinaron la vida, podrían habérsela adivinado mal, y todo es truco literario: podría no estar casado con una pelirroja sino ser puto y el pelo de la melena roja pertenecer a su amante que es pintor, y las manchas de trementina o de amarillo de zinc o no sé qué pedo, y no ser periodista sino apostador en las carreras de galgos y el que se murió no fue su papá sino su padrote, y el que le cose los puños es el pintor que se le da muy bien la pinche costura, y no comió cerezas sino pinches ciruelas, y quién chigaos sabe cómo fue a



dar un huesito de cereza a la valenciana de su pantalón, y no es católico sino ateo pero le tiene miedo a los vampiros por eso trae la pinche crucecita y, de pinche soldado, nada, y menos que acaba de llegar de la guerra bóer, que la mera verdad es que está tostado del sol del lado izquierdo de la cara porque se sienta del mismo lado siempre en los galgódromos y la cojera obedece a que se rompió la pata estando bien pedo. (46)

Nevertheless, the professor does not reveal anything new to Belascoarán Shayne but reinforces what the detective already knew about Mexico all along,

Belascoarán se sumió en un silencio que quería parecer meditativo. Poco tenía que decir. Él ya sabía, mucho tiempo antes de estas extrañas revelaciones en una cárcel, que nada es lo que parece, que todo siempre es, más bien, lo que no parece; que toda explicación absurda se aproxima a la verdad más que otras, precisamente porque la verdad es absurda y se busca en un espejo de iguales. (47)

Within this context of shadows and mirrors, Belascoarán Shayne's role as 'superdetective' is downplayed, ironically underscoring the inexistence of justice in Mexico by constantly calling attention to his profession that seems out of place amidst widespread corruption. In Días de combate, along with the letter Belascoarán Shayne receives from the Academia de Detectives Argentinos, he also encounters a letter from "el Cerevro" in which the strangler admits his amazement



at the mere existence of a Mexican detective. The assassin describes his visit to the detective's office stating, "Un letrero en superposición informaba que Belascoarán Shayne es detective privado (el que escribe tenía entendido que no existían en este país, que no existían fuera de la ficción. Personajes de guardarropía de repertorio anticuado" (Días de combate 168). In Cosa fácil, the importance of the detective's profession is diminished further in a letter he receives from his lover travelling in Europe, "Quiero una foto tuya de carácter, no he podido convencer a los taxistas, a los dueños de los restaurantes, a los amigos que me voy haciendo y deshaciendo, de que estoy enamorada de un ser tangible, les parece una abstracción folklórica (perdóname viejo, ésa es la imagen que desata en el viejo mundo las palabras: 'detective mexicano')" (Cosa fácil 147). Then, in No habrá final feliz, when Belascoarán Shayne questions a woman working in a café about the death of her husband, her inability to grasp his occupation not only sets him apart from the police but also reinforces the skepticism among the working class toward the authorities,

--¿Eres periodista?
--Detective independiente.
--Y eso ¿qué es?



--No soy policía, no compro nada, no vendo nada. Ando solitario. (94)

Finally, in Sueños de frontera, the narrator describes the essence of a Mexican detective declaring, "Un detective mexicano era por definición un risueño accidente solitario" (22).

Understanding his own presence as an anomaly in Mexico, Belascoarán Shayne, in Cosa fácil, asserts,

Era una gran broma. Ser detective en México era una broma. No se podía equiparar a las imágenes creadas y recreadas. Ningún modelo operaba. Era una jodida broma [...] Incluso, cuando había logrado sobrevivir aquellos meses, y tomárselo todo tan en serio, y tan en broma, pero sobre todo, tan en serio porque entonces, y sólo entonces, la broma dejaba de ser un fenómeno particular y se integraba al país. (Cosa fácil 18)

By dismantling his position within society, Taibo's detective distinguishes himself from the North American detectives like Sam Spade, the Continental Op and Philip Marlowe who confronted localized instances of police and political corruption. Rather, the corruption Belascoarán Shayne faces represents an evil endemic at all levels of Mexico's political system.

If Taibo's Belascoarán Shayne series addresses corruption and injustice in Mexico by combining the social criticism of hard-boiled detective fiction with

the detective's own ironic self-awareness, then the novels outside the series dismantle the linear structure of detective fiction in order to articulate issues of reading, investigation, knowledge and truth. In such novels as Sombra de la sombra, La vida misma, La bicicleta de Leonardo, and Cuatro manos, Taibo abandons the "independent detective" as a fulcrum upon which to balance the narrative. Instead, he opts to replace Héctor Belascoarán Shayne with other types of investigators such as a group of friends who stumble into extraordinary circumstances (Sombra de la sombra), journalists seeking "the truth" (Cuatro manos) and, ironically, an author of detective fiction (La vida misma and La bicicleta de Leonardo). In this way, Taibo simultaneously liberates himself from both the generic expectations of an "independent detective" as well as the established idiosyncrasies of Belascoarán Shayne while breaching new narrative possibilities through the adventures of other protagonists. Taibo explains this shift by stating,

Para una novela policiaca o novela negra necesitas una estructura de personaje investigador. Me hartaba la idea de un detective independiente. Trabajé con Belascoarán mucho tiempo pero yo creo que estaba ya agotado. Entonces me pasé a otros espacios de la posibilidad



de investigación en una sociedad moderna. Encontré al periodista, al escritor, en La vida misma, o al grupo de amigos que accidentalmente se encuentran en medio de una historia. (Nichols 220-21)

What begins to interest Taibo is neither the relation of these characters to their literary predecessors nor their peculiar existence in a lawless Mexico, as he had explored in the Belascoarán Shayne series. Rather, he submits the orthodox linear narrative, which has dominated detective fiction since its inception, to heterodox technical innovation. The relation of the detective's investigation and reconstruction of the events leading to and including the crime--what Donna Bennet calls the "seen" narrative and Tsvetan Todorov refers to as the "second story"--is violently disrupted in Taibo's fiction through juxtaposition of time and space, disjunction of point of view and the incorporation of texts (such as letters, diaries, official documents, historical accounts, political pamphlets and even novels). Referring to classic detective fiction, Todorov asserts the status of the "second story" only as a means to reach the solution of the crime,

The status of the second story is, as we have seen, just as excessive; it is a story which has no importance in itself,

which serves only as a mediator between the reader and the story of the crime. Theoreticians of detective fiction have always agreed that style, in this type of literature, must be perfectly transparent, imperceptible; the only requirement it obeys is to be simple, clear, direct. (Todorov 46)

By fragmenting the narrative, Taibo imbues it with ironic self-awareness and, as a result, violates Todorov's notion of a transparent, imperceptible style. In traditional detective fiction the reader maintains the role of passive observer who assimilates facts filtered through a secondary Watson-figure, whereas in hard-boiled detective fiction, the reader accompanies Spade, Marlowe or Archer on their hunt. Nevertheless, the conspicuous and complex structure of Taibo's texts places the onus of understanding upon the reader.

Equating the act of detection with that of reading is not a new phenomenon as seen in Peter Hühn's article "The Detective as Reader: Narrativity and Reading Concepts in Detective Fiction (1987)," in which he asserts that the essential narrative structure of detective fiction is concerned with acts of reading and writing. According to Hühn, "The progress of the plot (that is, the second story) is then presented as a succession of attempts to ascribe meaning to the sign by



finding the missing links to the accepted patterns of reality" (453). The detective, as reader, in other words, must decipher the text written by the criminal, as author, and decode signs left at the scene of the crime. In this way, the crime authored by the murderer is rewritten by the detective whose investigation is simultaneously read and recorded through a Watson-figure. As a result, traditional detective fiction is entangled with different levels of writing and reading,

This simultaneous presentation of the two texts has a number of consequences. The text of the novel can be said to have two authors (at least): the criminal (who wrote the original mystery story) and the detective (who writes the reconstruction of the first story--chronicled in the process, for the most part uncomprehendingly, by yet another writer, as it were, his companion). As a result, the verbal structure of the text is ambiguous: the detective's progress and the criminal's story are concealed and decipherable, invisible and visible. And the two texts have different readers--the detective, the Dr. Watson-figure, and us, the readers. (458)

The American Hard-Boiled School, for Hühn, differs from this aspect in that the act of interpretation requires constant interaction between the reading subject (the detective) and the object (the text). Hühn acknowledges the consequence of this reading strategy stating, "One crucial consequence of the interactional



reading concept in hard-boiled novels is the detective's loss of power over the first story and its meaning. Although he is frequently still able to read the truth in the text, he can no longer extract it, as it were, and employ it to remedy injustice and disorder in society" (461).

Whereas Hühn's concept of writing, reading and interpretation emphasizes the hermeneutic process of the detective as reader, Taibo's fiction outside the Belascoarán Shayne series establishes the reader as detective who must decipher and interpret a fragmented text. In this way, Taibo not only dismantles the narrative structure of detective fiction but also forces the reader to actively reconstruct the "second story." The irony of the text, in other words, points to our own position as readers of reality that endow existence with signification. Through these texts, then, Taibo emphasizes the problematic nature of knowledge by making apparent the mechanisms of reading, writing and interpretation. Consequently, the core issue of these novels revolves around not only the disruption of the narrative but also the dissolution of Truth itself. The chaotic structure of these novels reflects the social

chaos represented by affirming the elusive nature of truth via a fragmented text.

In Sombra de la sombra (1986), Paco Ignacio Taibo II posits the novel's action in Mexico City in the 1920s after the Mexican Revolution, a period whose chaos and uncertainty mirror the crisis of a post-1968 Mexico in search of political legitimacy. In an atmosphere of anarchist movements and workers' strikes, four friends investigate the mysterious death of a trombone player in a military band. In the course of their investigation, however, they uncover a plot connecting high-ranking Mexican politicians and military officials with influential American businessmen whose plan is to incite another revolution in order to gain control of northern Mexico's oil supply. At the heart of the novel is a desire by the protagonists to know the truth although, as the plot progresses, they resign themselves with only uncovering a "version" of the truth:

--¿Sabe usted qué es lo más ingrato de este oficio mío de periodista?--y sin esperar respuesta prosiguió--Que le embota a uno los prejuicios en nombre de la curiosidad. Que le hace a uno olvidarse de todo a la busca de la verdad...

--Es difícil saber la verdad...

--De la verdad o de cualquier cosa que se le parezca; de las mejores apariencias, de lo que cada cual cree que pasó...En fin, acepto versiones...(114)

The dubious existence of truth, however, refers not to an ontological problem faced by the protagonists but strikes at the essence of Mexican politics in the post-Revolution era (and implicitly in the post-1968 era). As the four friends play domino, the journalist comments, "¿Dígame quién entiende algo en México? ¿Quién en este maravilloso país sabe qué está pasando? Se simula, se aparenta, se confunde a los demás mientras todo alrededor está en tinieblas" (127). The four protagonists—the journalist Manterola, the poet Fermín Valencia, the lawyer "el licenciado" Verdugo, and an anarchist carpenter Tomás Wong—confront the "tiniebla" by becoming the heroes who shadow the shadow:

--¿Se ha dado usted cuenta?, somos la
sombra de una sombra. Ellos, los
confabulados de la casa de la viuda, si es
que tal confabulación existe, son una
sombra, sin perfiles, sin propósitos
claros, por lo menos por lo que nosotros
sabemos, y nosotros, siguiéndolos a ratos,
erráticamente, como unos niños
descarriados que juegan y sufren
accidentes, somos la sombra de esa sombra.
(145)

With La vida misma (1987), Taibo transcends the borders of the detective genre by creating his alter-ego in the form of José Daniel Fierro, a writer of detective fiction. Hired because of his fame, familiarity with

Mexican politics, and understanding of investigative procedures, José Daniel Fierro becomes the chief of police in a small, fictional town in north central Mexico, named Santa Ana, whose municipal government is ruled by the Communist party. "El Jefe" Fierro serves as a vehicle through which Taibo simultaneously explores the efficiency of investigative procedures to reach some form of truth, reveals the subversion of Mexican politics by the PRI, and utilizes the self-reflexivity of Fierro to expose the limits of the detective fiction genre. Filled with illusion at the prospect of finding a practical application for his knowledge of police fiction and police procedures, Fierro employs models set forth in novel (Sam Spade, Philip Marlowe and Lew Archer) as well as film (Clint Eastwood, Humphrey Bogart, Robert Mitchum and Woody Allen) to investigate a series of murders within the context of growing tensions between the local leftist government and the PRI-dominated state government¹⁹.

Rejecting a traditional linear narration, Taibo divides the structure of the novel so that each chapter falls under one of the following—documentation of the

¹⁹ Even Vázquez Montalbán's novel Tatuaje is mentioned when the solution to the murders seemingly hinges on Fierro's interpretation of a victim's tattoo.

history of Santa Ana, letters José Daniel Fierro sends to his wife and the actual narration of the investigation. The sections titled "Notas para la historia del ayuntamiento rojo de Santa Ana--José Daniel Fierro" act, on one hand, to preserve, in the form of the written word, the past of a town threatened by the PRI as well as to understand the current political climate as an extension of the past. In letters he writes to his wife, el Jefe Fierro not only communicates his reflections upon the happenings of Santa Ana but also describes the plot of his next book which, inspired by his adventures in the small town, mirrors the events of Santa Ana. He tells her the essence of the plot which also communicates the motives of the murders he investigates, "Es una novela de crímenes muy jodidos, pero lo importante no son los crímenes sino (como en toda novela policiaca mexicana) el contexto" (144). He goes on to describe the central theme of his new novel as "el mexicanismo oficio mexicano de matar por órdenes" (144). In the end, the history of the ayuntamiento, the narration of the investigation and the letters to Fierro's wife, although separate forms of writing, simultaneously and mutually infiltrate each other combining social chronicle with investigation and self-reflection. The town of Santa Ana, fictional and



surreal like Rulfo's Comala, presents a fusion of murder and politics that the author José Daniel Fierro sees as ideal for a novel. Nevertheless, Fierro opts not to write the text claiming that the plot is too fantastic even for Mexico,

Fin de novela: El sherif del pueblo no entiende nada, aunque sin querer descubre todo. Los malos de la historia se matan unos a otros, y él se queda mirando el cementerio. Todo gira en torno a un cacique de pueblo que no tiene tatuaje, y que trae jodidos a otros que sí lo tienen. A uno lo ordena que pongan un automóvil rojo en una calle. Es como complicada la novela. No sé si me gustaría escribirla, creo que no, le falta gancho, le falta arquitectura dramática, los personajes negativos (como dirían mis amigos cubanos) están desdibujados. No creo que me gustaría escribirla. Más bien estoy seguro de que no me gustaría escribirla. (182)

The reader, however, is forced to reconcile this statement with the fact that the novel does exist in the form of Taibo's La vida misma. In this way, the text subverts its own existence through the progression of the investigation, the reflection on that investigation and how to convert it into a novel and, finally, the ultimate dismissal of the possibility of creating such a novel. Like a serpent eating its own tail, the text constantly reverts back upon itself impeding a closed, "happy" ending in favor of an open text that questions its own

existence. Fierro claims this would have been the novel's only triumph, "La gracia de la novela es que el sherif no descubre nada, sino que las cosas simplemente pasan. Eso es lo que me gusta de esta novela, que no tiene final, que no se cierra, que es, como te decía de mis días en Santa Ana, como la vida misma" (172).

Cuatro manos (1990) and La bicicleta de Leonardo (1993) represent Taibo's most complicated texts in which he breaks apart the detective genre by dispersing the action temporally and spatially as well as rupturing the narrative point of view. Cuatro manos, which Taibo considers his best novel, does not explicitly address the limits of detective fiction nor question the genre categorization but rather examines the means by which powerful governments can texture reality by controlling information. The plot follows two journalists, one American and one Mexican, who are pulled into a plot orchestrated by an unknown branch of the CIA to assassinate a high-ranking, respectable member of the Sandinista Army in Nicaragua. Through a campaign of disinformation, the government agents fabricate a "story" linking the Sandinista rebel, Machado, with drug-runners and implicating him as a CIA mole. The fragments of this "story" are seized by the journalists who then

reconstruct the story unwittingly creating a façade that masks the truth of Machado's death. Temporally, this novel explores such historical events as the Iran-Contra affair and the Spanish Civil War as well as incorporates such disparate historical figures as Stan Laurel, Pancho Villa, Leon Trotsky and Harry Houdini. Structurally, Cuatro manos articulates the problems of interpretation faced by the journalists by fragmenting the text which simultaneously hide, reveal and skew the truth.

La bicicleta de Leonardo recounts the investigation of José Daniel Fierro, the writer of detective novels that first appeared in La vida misma, into the disappearance of the star player of the University of Texas female basketball team. Similar to Cuatro manos, this text also fragments the narration by placing the action in various time periods including the American evacuation of Vietnam, the Anarchist movements of Barcelona in the 1920s, and the life of Leonardo da Vinci. Like La vida misma, this text exhibits a self-reflexive nature in which Fierro begins writing two novels as the reader follows him on his investigation. The plot of the first novel, Al encuentro de Karen, mirrors his adventure tracing the steps of the mysterious disappearance of the college basketball player Karen

Turner. The other novel, La balada de las stars, recounts the adventures of an anarchist named el Ángel Negro and a journalist with tuberculosis named Antonio Amador through the streets of Barcelona in the 1920s. La bicicleta de Leonardo presents the process in which reality and fiction simultaneously draw from each other as well as resist each other as Fierro writes. This problematic relationship is expressed when Fierro states, "Se me había perdido la investigación de los secuestradores de Karen, se habría hecho humo entre las manos. En cambio, la novela avanzaba. Quizá porque en la novela podían aparecer danzando fantasmas cuando uno los convocaba y en la realidad no había nada más irreal que los fantasmas" (225).

Throughout the Belascoarán Shayne series Paco Ignacio Taibo constantly assimilates elements of North American hard-boiled fiction and deconstructs the genre to reveal its incompatibility with Mexican reality. Truth, the quest of any detective's investigation, is manufactured and manipulated by the Mexican government, the conservative elite, influential businessmen, corrupt police and powerful drug traffickers. The detective's investigation, doomed from the outset, exposes Mexico's lawlessness and ironically unveils the fiction generated

by Mexico's established order: democracy itself. Novels outside the Belascoarán Shayne series highlight the fiction-making process through protagonists that are journalists and authors as well as narrative fragmentation. Thus, the problem of finding Truth is underscored by unmasking the means by which it is constructed.

Manuel Vázquez Montalbán: The Revitalization of Literature and Politics

Spain, like Mexico, has witnessed a boom over the past thirty years in the development of "novela negra" in which a wide assortment of writers approach the genre from different perspectives appropriating the North American model to the context of post-Franco Spanish society. Juan Madrid, in such novels as Un beso de amigo and others from the "Toni Romano" series, adheres to the tenets of the hard-boiled detective novel by portraying the urban realism and moral degradation of Madrid during the democratic renewal of the Transition. Andreu Martín, in Prótesis and other novels, explores physical and psychological violence set against the backdrop of a Barcelona dominated by repressive police and ruthless gangs. Yet other writers, such as Eduardo Mendoza and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, approach the "novela negra"

with postmodern skepticism fragmenting the linear narration typical of detective fiction while upholding the social criticism of the North American model. With La verdad sobre el caso Savolta, Mendoza creates new narrative possibilities by merging such genres as romance literature, detective investigation, adventure stories and police reports with modernist experimental techniques. Later, in El misterio de la cripta embrujada and its sequel El laberinto de las aceitunas, Eduardo Mendoza combines Cervantine parody with an urban context to dismantle the detective genre through the investigations of a man whose primary residence is an insane asylum. In addition to these authors, other writers have contributed to popularizing the 'noir' genre as well including, Antonio Muñoz Molina, Juan José Millás, Juan Benet, Juan Marsé, Jorge Martínez Reverte y Rosa Montero (Colmeiro, "The Spanish Connection" 154-161; Compitello, "Spain's *Nueva Novela Negra*" 182-87).

Somewhere between Madrid and Martín's adaptation of "novela negra" and Mendoza's reformulation of the genre, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's appropriation of North American hard-boiled detective fiction manipulates the aesthetic possibilities of dismantling the linear narrative while maintaining the realism of three-

dimensional characters and the cynical social criticism of the private detective. Associated with the "novísimos" poets of the late sixties, Vázquez Montalbán embraced an avant-garde perspective of the novel that advocated the death of the bourgeois, realist narrative. Such texts as Recordando a Dardé (1969), Manifiesto subnormal (1970), Happy end (1972), Yo maté a Kennedy (1972), Guillermota en el país de las guillermotas (1973), and Cuestiones marxistas (1974) resist classification and compose the experimental phase of Vázquez Montalbán's writing which he refers to as his "período subnormal." Rejecting linear narrative, these avant-garde texts advocate a highly metafictional, iconoclastic and skeptical attitude toward the possibilities of the "social-realist" novel. By creating confusing texts, Vázquez Montalbán and other avant-garde writers averted the powers of Francoist censorship while manufacturing texts with a strong political discourse.

In "La novela española entre el posfranquismo y el posmodernismo," Vázquez Montalbán articulates the ideology of the avant-garde novel in Spain stating,

En España la vanguardia al final de los años 50 y 60 asimila, por una parte técnicas narrativas del Nouveau Roman pero, por otra parte, está empeñada en una literatura vinculada a un discurso

político, por cuanto se piensa que la literatura es un elemento transformador de la conciencia y por tanto transformador de la realidad y que debe utilizarse para combatir el régimen para inculcar a través de la ficción, de los personajes, de la épica en la poesía o del costumbrismo en el teatro, unos mensajes críticos de la situación que lleguen al pueblo y que le ayuden a concienciarse en contra de la dictadura. (18)

Such avant-garde novels of the 1960s as Juan Benet's Una meditación and Juan Goytisolo's Señas de identidad reject the psychological character portraits, thematic development and linear narrative of such social realist novels of the 1950s as Sánchez Ferlosio's El Jarama and Fernández Santos's Los Bravos. Vázquez Montalbán and other writers sought to create a rupture within the genre that would destroy the ideals and techniques of the conventional novel. As the author states, "En aquella época yo lo que quería y entonces buscábamos todos, bueno los de mi promoción yo creo, un tipo de novela que implicase una ruptura del género, la ruptura convencional de las unidades básicas--el cartamamiento, el nudo, el desenlace, la concepción del personaje, la concepción del personaje" (Nichols 201). Rather, writers during this time incorporate elements of surrealism and the absurd, iconoclastic attitudes, ironic distance and metafiction, techniques common to plastic arts such as 'collage,'



infused with a militant ideological and political analysis of cultural codes, mass communication and collective consciousness (Colmeiro, "La narrativa policiaca posmodernista de Manuel Vázquez Montalbán" 12).

Nevertheless, the transition in Vázquez Montalbán's writing from metafictional, fragmented avant-garde texts to the detective novels of the Pepe Carvalho series arises as a response to the stagnation of the "novela ensimismada" of his "período subnormal." As José Colmeiro notes in Crónica del desencanto: La narrativa de Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, the author confronted the "callejón sin salida" seen in the exhausted possibilities of the "novela subnormal" not by returning to "social realism" but rather by creating novels aware and skeptical of their own construction. Colmeiro states,

...ya que el autor es consciente tanto del agotamiento de los experimentales planteamientos vanguardistas como la imposibilidad de recuperar una fe perdida hace mucho tiempo en los postulados del realismo social. Sin embargo, este escepticismo autodestructivo se va a ver contrarrestado en su nueva etapa narrativa por la necesidad de establecer una comunicación efectiva con un público lector. Esta determinación lleva a Vázquez Montalbán a construir un puente que le permita dar el salto de suspensión de su propia incredulidad, aún siendo consciente de la engañosa trampa que ello supone. (158)

For Vázquez Montalbán, the metafictional tendencies and the constant narrative experimentation led to the development of novels that were "pura pirueta tecnológica" (Nichols 201). Referring to the texts of the early 1970s in Spain, Vázquez Montalbán states, "Creo que desde que el hombre aprendió a juntar una palabra con otra, jamás se había conseguido llegar a un nivel de tedio superior al que inspiran muchas novelas españolas de comienzos de los años 70" ("La novela española" 19). Thus, Vázquez Montalbán sought, with the first Carvalho novel Tatuaje (1974), to revitalize the novel by fusing the realist tendencies and social criticism of the North American hard-boiled detective novel with the skeptical, iconoclastic and ironic techniques of the avant-garde.

By uniting a traditionally linear narrative that depends on three-dimensional characters, psychological analysis and basic anecdotal story-telling with the self-reflexive, metafictional techniques of the avant-garde, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán blurs the line between "popular" literature and "high" literature. By transgressing the boundary between "low-brow" and "high-brow" literatures, Vázquez Montalbán establishes a vehicle that breathes new life into the avant-garde novel by simultaneously questioning genre categories, analyzing cultural codes

and exploring the possibilities of the realist novel.

Malcolm Compitello refers to the desire to redefine the avant-garde asserting,

The move from metafiction to fiction, from experimental to the supposedly normative realism of the hard-boiled model he begins to emulate cannot be seen in the reductive manner in which some critics have viewed it. What Vázquez Montalbán has done has been to find a new medium for his political and aesthetic avant-garde message. [...] In Vázquez Montalbán's case it is simply a matter of rewriting the canon of the avant-garde so as to avoid being displaced from it. ("Spain's Nueva Novela Negra" 185)

In other words, through his appropriation of hard-boiled detective fiction, commonly stereotyped a 'sub-genre,' he combines its mass appeal and realism with political discourse and iconoclasm to create texts that simultaneously question and chronicle Spain's transformation from the last years of Franco dictatorship through the "Transición" and into democracy.

Manuel Vázquez Montalbán simultaneously accepts and rejects the models set forth by the North American hard-boiled school, adopting its poetic that espouses realism, social criticism and disillusion yet imbuing the Carvalho novels with self-reflection, irony and fragmentation that undermine genre categorization, attack cultural codes and blur distinctions between "high" and "low" art. Although

Pepe Carvalho first appeared in the "subnormal" Yo maté a Kennedy (1972) as a triple agent bodyguard that assassinates President Kennedy, his re-emergence as a private eye in Barcelona and Vázquez Montalbán's conscious development of "novela negra" occur with Tatuaje (1974). The Carvalho series includes over twenty novels set against the historical backdrop spanning from the death of Franco, the first democratic elections and the "Transición" to the urban renewal of the 1992 Olympics and is set to end with the final novel of the series, Milenio. These novels, therefore, incorporate essential elements of the North American model into a specifically Spanish context. Through the investigations of the Spanish detective, Pepe Carvalho, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán utilizes the form and the dark vision of the hard-boiled detective novel as a means to create a social chronicle that captures the transformation of Spanish society since the death of Franco.

Although the poetics of the hard-boiled detective novel arose within the context of the American experience between the 1920s and 1940s, Vázquez Montalbán recognizes its pertinence to the Spanish experience between the 1970s and 1990s:



Pero cuando quiero hacer una novela crónica del ciclo Carvalho no puedo acogerme a ninguna de estas pautas y, en cambio, veo que utilizando determinados instrumentos de la novela negra norteamericana, dispongo de elementos técnicos que me permiten afrontar la convención de un relato de carácter realista. ¿Por qué? Porque la novela negra norteamericana es una poética en sí misma hecha a la medida de la descripción de una sociedad que ya se parece mucho a lo que es la española en los años en los que realizo esta operación. Esta sociedad neocapitalista, hipercompetitiva, durísima, donde predomina la cultura urbana sobre la cultura agraria. [...] Es necesario considerar el marco de una cultura urbana en donde las relaciones de producción o las relaciones sociales obligan a la búsqueda de este especialista en la relación entre lo legal y lo ilegal, entre la política y el delito, en muchísimos casos. Yo utilizo estos elementos de la poética de la novela negra, para construir la poética de la serie Carvalho. ("La novela española" 26)

The essential mechanisms of the hard-boiled genre emerge with Carvalho as the marginalized antihero working out of a run-down office in the "Ramblas," a seedy section of Barcelona. Surrounded by a world of prostitutes, drug addicts and thieves, Carvalho, much like Spade, Marlowe and Archer, encounters gangsters, immoral rich and brutal police in his quest for truth. Inevitably, his investigations lead him beyond the initial crime to reveal a network of crime and immorality that permeate Spanish society revealing the underside of



Spain's new democracy. Through a strict professional attitude, the Spanish detective relies on cynicism, endures physical abuse and identifies with the "losers" of Spain's modernization: the working class, the poor, and the dispossessed. In other words, common street criminals like the thief, the prostitute and the drug addict are lost in the frenetic shuffle of capitalism dominated by powerful businessmen, corrupt government officials and ruthless police (Colmeiro, "Posmodernidad, posfranquismo y novela policíaca" 34).

Within a society of "víctimas" and "verdugos," Pepe Carvalho holds a privileged position as the private "eye" that sees, reveals and criticizes the invisible yet influential links between power and corruption. That is, Carvalho serves as a vehicle for Vázquez Montalbán to center the structure of the narration as well as endow the text with a critical voice. In La soledad del manager (1976), Carvalho identifies himself as a "charnego" (127), the son of parents originally from Galicia who emigrated to Cataluña, creating a critical distance from which he contemplates Barcelona. The detective inhabits an area between belonging and non-belonging occupying a dual status as participant and observer accentuated by the presence of his office in the

center of "las Ramblas" and his home, on the outskirts, high above Barcelona in Valvidrera. Essentially, Carvalho is a voyeur that not only deciphers mysteries but also unmasks the immorality and hypocrisy of society. Vázquez Montalbán affirms this stating,

Es un voyeur. Es un mirón como toda la novela es un acto de voyeurismo, es una contemplación de la realidad. Si lo hace directamente el autor entonces escribe en la primera persona. También delega esa función en un personaje. En el caso de Carvalho es una delegación para que no sea el punto de vista quien describe la realidad. Es un voyeur, su función es la de mirón y por eso es un personaje socialmente fronterizo porque no pertenece a ningún sector social concreto. Es un privado. Un detective privado es un personaje fronterizo porque no pertenece a ninguna parte social. Él puede contemplar la conducta y de hecho es la mirada del novelista. (Nichols 207)

In other words, the presence of Carvalho allows Vázquez Montalbán a means to comment on the social, political and economic processes through a voice that is distanced from his own. As Víctor Claudín asserts, Carvalho's distance and marginalization endow these novels with a sense of realism, "La clave para hacerlo dentro de una perspectiva convencional como es la novela realista en su fórmula de ficción policial, es ese personaje que representa todo tipo de exilio, que ha pasado por todo en su vida y es capaz de reírse de sí

mismo, observador crítico y objetivo de todo aquello que le toca, que le rodea" (Claudín 164). Narrated in third person, the novels of the Carvalho series create an atmosphere in which the reader accompanies the detective in his investigation, hears his comments and witnesses his incursion into the urban reality of Barcelona. Much like Spade in The Maltese Falcon, Carvalho lets the reader "look at the works" of life in Spain creating a mosaic with an informative dimension. Gonzalo Navajas asserts the ability of the novel to acquire and convey information via the detective's investigation, "La novela adquiere una dimensión informativa. Se le ofrece al lector una parcela del mundo que él desconoce o cuyo conocimiento es incompleto o incorrecto. El texto suple una insuficiencia" (Navajas 251).

If Pepe Carvalho is the vehicle through which Vázquez Montalbán presents a vision of post-Franco Spain, then the detective's investigation represents the process through which that vision is assembled. The structure of the investigation provides a means for Carvalho, through his status of non-belonging, to insert himself into every sector of society capturing not only voices but more importantly their social, economic, political and geographic milieux. Carvalho's investigation, therefore,

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weaves a tapestry of voices that exemplifies Frederic Jameson's idea of the picaresque element in hard-boiled detective novels. Carvalho's position within Spanish society mirrors that of Raymond Chandler's detective Philip Marlowe in that the reader is able "know society as a whole" through the investigation of an "involuntary explorer of society" (Jameson 127-8).

Throughout the Carvalho series, the detective's investigations follow the mold of the North American model in which the pursuit of the truth leads not necessarily to a final resolution but rather goes beyond simple puzzle-solving to implicate and indict all sectors of society. Yet, in such novels as La soledad del manager, Los mares del sur, Asesinato en el Comité Central, El balneario and El Premio, the narration presents itself as a mosaic of testimonies textured with the cultural, political, economic perspectives and, more importantly, motivations of the witnesses. In this way, Carvalho's quest carries him through a wide spectrum of social experiences, beliefs, and registers that endow the text with a sense of realism. Vázquez Montalbán emphasizes the essential investigatory characteristic of detective fiction as a key means to knowing society, "Es decir, una novela policíaca es una encuesta de sí misma.

Es una indagación a base de preguntas y respuestas y estableces un recorrido en el cual son cómplices el que escribe y el que lee. Y al final llega a desvelar el enigma pero a través de una encuesta. Es un método evidentemente de un carácter sociológico" (Nichols 217). As Yvan Lissourge asserts, Carvalho, through his special status and his investigation, is able to simultaneously observe and analyze society,

Es tal vez, en el nuevo realismo de Vázquez Montalbán donde se encuentra la distancia más cargada de significación con relación al mundo actual. Carvalho pasea sobre la sociedad en que vive, la muestra, una mirada siempre distanciada, pero diferente según la clase social. Cuando observa y analiza los mecanismos especulativos o cuando capta las mentalidades de la clase dominante, desenmascara las realidades bajo las apariencias y se otorga la superioridad de quien comprende y domina intelectualmente ese mundo. *Entonces la distancia es irónica.*²⁰ (Lissourge 36)

Vázquez Montalbán's Carvalho novels exhibit a range of experiences, emotions and ideologies that cover everyone from corrupt businessmen, violent gangsters, members of elite society, politicians, street thugs, brutal police, and even novelists each of whom add to an overall picture of post-Franco Spain. Vázquez Montalbán also incorporates a wide variety of generic registers

such as police reports, tourist accounts, political discourse, and even recipes, songs and poems creating texts with heterogeneous, multi-layered discourses. This 'sociological' aspect correlates with Bakhtin's notion of "heteroglossia" which he defines in The Dialogic

Imagination:

The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized. The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day, even of the hour (each day has its own slogan, its own vocabulary, its own emphases)--this internal stratification present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence is the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre. (263)

Once Carvalho has collected each account and has interviewed witnesses, then he must wade through multiple fictions armed with cynicism and mistrust to incisively arrive at the truth. By constantly questioning the information acquired through his interviews Carvalho becomes an active reader who interprets the individual

²⁰ My emphasis.

motivations of witnesses more than pieces together clues.
Vázquez Montalbán's detective correlates more with Steven
Marcus's understanding of Dashiell Hammett's Continental
Op:

What [the Continental Op] soon discovers is that the 'reality' that anyone involved will swear to is, in fact, itself a construction, a fabrication, a fiction, a faked and alternate reality--and that it has been gotten together before he ever arrived on the scene. And the Op's work, therefore, is to deconstruct, decompose, deplot and defictionalize that 'reality' and to construct or reconstruct out of it a true fiction, that is, an account of what really happened. (In Glenn Most, 201)

Carvalho, as a "charnego," constantly fluctuates from "participant" to "observer" providing descriptions of quotidian occurrences in Barcelona and contemplations of the city's reality from his distanced position. This "observer" status is indicated early in La soledad del manager (1977):

Un borracho calcula la distancia más corta entre la calzada y la acera. Un reguero de niños de algún colegio de entre suelo donde los urinarios perfuman la totalidad del ambiente y la fiebre del horizonte empieza y termina en un patio interior repartido entre el país de las basuras, los gatos y las ratas y algunas galerías de interior donde parece como si siempre colgara la misma ropa a secar. Macetas de geranios en balcones caedizos, alguna clavelilla, jaulas de periquitos delgados y nerviosos, bombonas de butano. Rótulos de comadronas y callistas. Partit



Socialista Unificat de Catalunya,
Federación Centro. Maite Peluquería.
Olorosa peste de aceite de refritos:
calamares a la romana, pescado frito,
patatas bravas, cabezas de cordero asadas,
mollejas, callos, capipota, corvas,
sobacos, mediastetas, pantorrillas
conejiles, ojerías hidrópicas, varices.
Pero Carvalho conoce estos caminos y estas
gentes. No los cambiaría como paisaje
necesario para sentirse vivo, aunque de
noche prefiera huir de la ciudad vencida,
en busca de las afueras empinadas desde
donde es posible contemplar la ciudad como
una extraña. (48)

In both El balneario (1988) and El premio (1996),
the narrator ironically signals Carvalho's 'invisible'
presence when the detective infiltrates two distinct
'communities' as part of his investigation: a group of
tourists at a health spa in El balneario and a collection
of novelists at an award ceremony in El premio.
Referring to his role within the 'balneario,' the
narrator establishes an overt connection with Carvalho's
role within the larger society, "Carvalho había
conseguido vivir entre ellos como si fuera el hombre
invisible, como un mirón que no requiere ser mirado,
salvo en contadas ocasiones, cuando algún personaje del
cuadro excesivamente amable quiere repartir el juego a
todo el mundo y se dirige incluso al que está más allá de
la tela" (159).

Yet, as 'voyeur,' Carvalho's function is not to restore order but rather to unmask the underlying disorder that penetrates all levels of society and to cynically indict corruption and immorality through his privileged position. In Los mares del sur (1979), Carvalho uncovers a savagely capitalistic society dominated by the interests of the rich who victimize the underclass. Addressing his assistant, Biscuter, the detective acknowledges his ability not only to 'see' reality but to measure it as well, "Los detectives privados somos los termómetros de la moral establecida, Biscuter. Yo te digo que esta sociedad está podrida. No cree en nada" (15). In the most recent Carvalho novel, Quinteto de Buenos Aires (1997), the detective clearly distinguishes himself from the police when his Argentine uncle implores him to search for his missing cousin in Buenos Aires, "La policía garantiza el orden. Yo me limito a descubrir el desorden" (11).

By distinguishing his function from that of the police, Carvalho asserts that he possesses no vested interest in maintaining the established order. Rather, his independence from the authorities allows him the freedom to search for truth and uncover rather than hide reality. Carvalho separates himself from any type of

repressive authority and declares his only responsibility is to his client, as when the millionaire Lázaro Conesal and his son Álvaro hire the detective in El premio,

--Ha sido idea mía, señor Carvalho. [...] Ha sido comunista, pero también agente de la CIA. No cree en el sistema pero lo sirve ayudando a eliminar a los que matan o roban.
--Un momento. Yo no ayudo a eliminar a nadie. Yo cumplo un servicio privado y detecto, si puedo, a quien mata o roba, pero a continuación entrego mis conclusiones al cliente, no al Estado, no a ninguna institución represiva.
(188)

Carvalho's cynicism and his role as 'voyeur' combine in the process of investigation by allowing the detective to wade through the fictions propagated by others to not only unveil the truth behind the mystery but, more importantly, to reveal truths about reality. Harkening back to Steven Marcus's comments on the Continental Op, Pepe Carvalho explains his investigative approach in El laberinto griego (1991),

--Yo tengo mi deontología profesional, señor Brando. Consulte used entre las gentes de mi oficio, incluso entre los policías, algunos me odian, y le dirán que soy fiel a mi cliente hasta el final aunque el cliente me parezca un miserable. En ese caso todo termina cuando le entrego mi informe y le dejo entender que me parece un miserable. Yo nunca abandono un caso. Mi oficio es desvelar el misterio y luego ya no me interesa qué hagan con el misterio de los almacenadores de misterios, los capadores de misterios, los vampiros de misterios...clientes, policías,

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem.

2. The second part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a single particle.

3. The third part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a system of particles.

4. The fourth part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a system of particles.

5. The fifth part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a system of particles.

6. The sixth part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a system of particles.

7. The seventh part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a system of particles.

8. The eighth part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a system of particles.

9. The ninth part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a system of particles.

10. The tenth part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a system of particles.

11. The eleventh part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a system of particles.

12. The twelfth part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a system of particles.

13. The thirteenth part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a system of particles.

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16. The sixteenth part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a system of particles.

17. The seventeenth part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a system of particles.

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20. The twentieth part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a system of particles.

21. The twenty-first part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a system of particles.

22. The twenty-second part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a system of particles.

23. The twenty-third part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a system of particles.

24. The twenty-fourth part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the case of a system of particles.

jueces...Ése no es mi trabajo. Hubo un tiempo en que estudié filosofía y me enseñaron que todo consiste en quitar los velos a la diosa y detrás del último velo está la verdad. Alezeia creo que se llama esta técnica, o quizá no sea una técnica, sino una manera como otra de creer en que aún quedan desnudos misteriosos. (125-6)

Carvalho's investigative process, cynicism, and ironic distance correspond with Vázquez Montalbán's "postmodern" questioning of narrative, genre, and even cultural codes. The author embraces the potential to create a "social chronicle" through such elements as plot and character development, essential in detective fiction, yet continues to demonstrate his skepticism toward the novel by undermining the narrative act with irony and iconoclasm as well as such fragmentary techniques as 'collage.' That is, Vázquez Montalbán integrates the objective, realist project of the Carvalho novels with literary techniques that characterized his experimentation during the "período subnormal" in order to establish a dialectic tone within the novel (Colmeiro, "La narrativa policíaca posmodernista" 13). Although Vázquez Montalbán accepts the realist 'poetics' of the hard-boiled novel, he parodies certain elements of both traditional detective fiction and Hard-boiled fiction through the cynical, self-reflexive attitude of Carvalho



as well as a metafictional narrative structure. In this way, the author establishes a dialogue between the protagonist and his literary predecessors as well as between the text and detective fiction as a genre in order to undermine genre categorization, attack cultural codes and question the validity of literature itself. In other words, Vázquez Montalbán utilizes Carvalho's cynicism to not only derive an account of 'what really happened' but also to address broader notions of 'unmasking reality' and uses Carvalho's mistrust to question the cultural codes that frame one's understanding of reality. The literary experimentation, for lack of a better word, of the Carvalho series corresponds to the political motivations of the author to reveal the falseness of ideological, moral and cultural ideals that support the 'status quo,' as José Colmeiro affirms,

El doble proceso de negación presenta una aparente contradicción básica en el sistemático intento de destrucción iconoclasta de los esquemas ideológicos, culturales, morales y literarios asociados con el orden establecido, independientemente de su signo (de la burguesía o de la progresía) y la reutilización de esos mismos esquemas con la intención de invertirlos irónicamente y poner al descubierto la falsedad de sus principios. ("La narrativa policíaca posmodernista" 13)



As Carvalho questions his own cultural inheritance from such literary predecessors as Spade, Marlowe and Archer, his ironic tendency toward self-reflection overtly recognizes the cultural codes that dominate the collective consciousness. Francie Cate-Arries claims Carvalho and his novels cannot escape the culture that enclose them, "Vázquez Montalbán's detective novels--predicated in pre-existing textual systems of both high and low culture--lay bare the postmodernist conviction that it is impossible to live outside the Law of Language, the codes of Symbolic Order. Vázquez Montalbán's characters are quite literally 'culturally bound,' locked in a tangled web of words" ("Lost in the Language of Culture" 49).

Pepe Carvalho proceeds through his investigations ironically aware of his debt to other literary detectives such as Sam Spade, Philip Marlowe and Lew Archer as well as detective incarnations in film embodied by such actors as Alan Ladd, Paul Newman, Gene Hackman, and Humphrey Bogart. Through a constant process of acceptance and rejection, the Spanish sleuth reveals the hold that both literature and film have had on his consciousness. In Tatuaje (1974), Carvalho resists the temptation to fall

into the mannerisms of a Raymond Chandler novel when the narrator states, "Carvalho no quería extremar la sorna, ni comportarse como un personaje de Chandler enfrentado a un policía de Los Ángeles tonto y brutal. Entre otras cosas porque el inspector no era un policía de Los Ángeles tonto y brutal y él no era un personaje de Raymond Chandler" (88). In Los pájaros de Bangkok (1986), he offers his services when a woman is violently murdered with a champagne bottle yet resists the stereotypical image of the hard-boiled private eye,

--A veces es conveniente tener información propia. No digo yo que usted busque al asesino, sí tener sus propios datos. Yo soy detective privado y me ofrezco a iniciar una investigación paralela a la de la policía.

--¿Por qué?

--Soy un profesional.

--Yo creí que los detectives privados esperaban en sus despachos a que llegasen los clientes.

--Eso es en las novelas y en las películas. (48)

In a highly metafictional moment in La soledad del manager, Carvalho not only embraces his literary and film predecessors searching for a model to emulate but also illustrates the regressive 'reading' of culture that condition one's identity and understanding of reality,

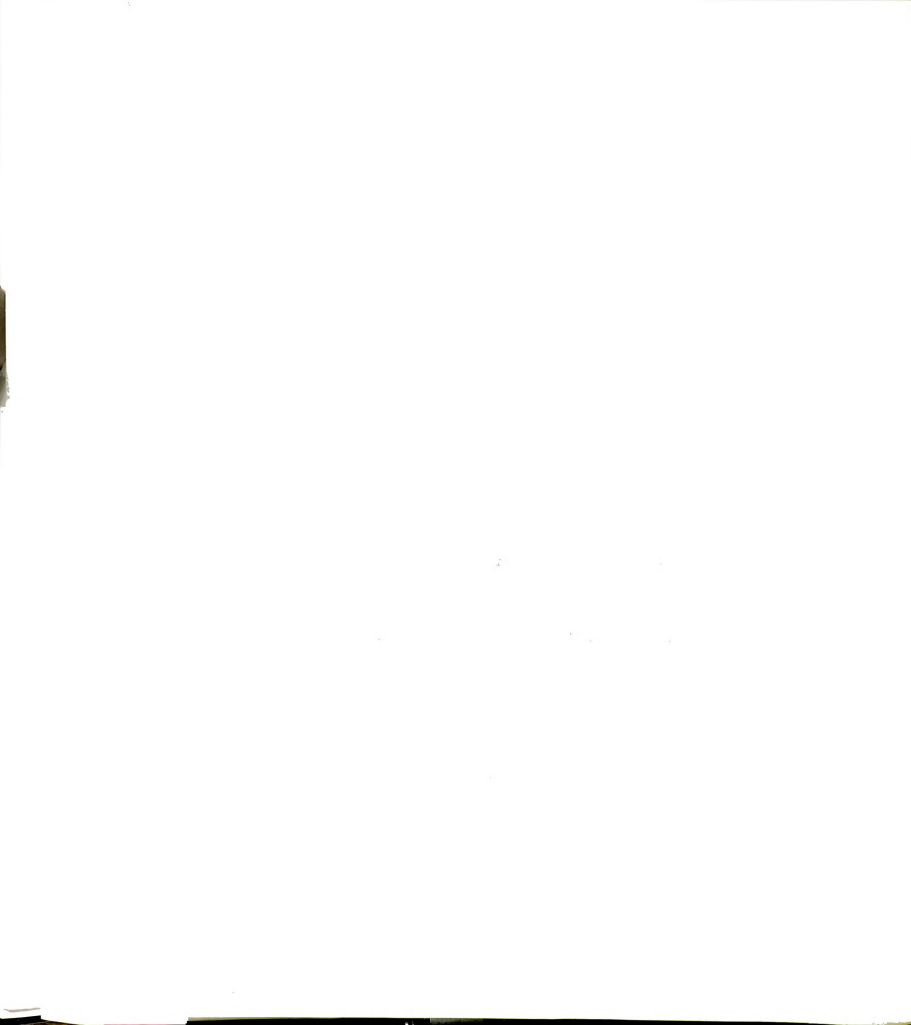
Le apetecía desintoxicarse de diálogo y de sí mismo y eligió el camino de un cine donde proyectaban "La noche se mueve"

["Night Moves"]. Después llegaría a casa con la suficiente relax como para guisarse algo trabajoso, lleno de estímulos y pequeñas dificultades. La película era una excelente muestra del cine negro americano con un Gene Hackman inmenso en el papel de un detective privado en la línea interiorizada de Marlowe o Spade. Además, Carvalho sentía una atracción especial por el erotismo grande y anguloso de Susan Clarke y recibió la propina de una rubia madura espléndida en su belleza espontánea de animal de fondo. Otro modelo de comportamiento a elegir. ¿A quién debo imitar? ¿A Bogart interpretando a Chandler? ¿A Alan Ladd en los personajes de Hammet? ¿Paul Newman en Harper? ¿Gene Hackman? En la soledad de su coche reptante por las laderas del Tibidabo, Carvalho asumía los tics de cada cual. La mirada húmeda de Bogart y el labio despectivo. La necesidad de Ladd de caminar lo más erguido posible para disimular su escasa estatura, de ahí esa cabecita rubia siempre punzante como tratando de tirar del cuello. El autoconvencimiento de la propia belleza de Newman. El cansancio vital de un hombre con cuernos y más de cien kilos de peso en el personaje de Hackman. (118)

Each 'reading' relies on a previous interpretative act in which Carvalho assumes the characteristics of Bogart who behaves according to his understanding of Chandler who, in turn, follows the models of hard-boiled detective fiction established by Hammett. In the short story "Aquel 23 de febrero," during a conversation with his girlfriend, Charo, Carvalho ironically comments on the intertextuality that permeates all books, "No te

conviene leer. Sólo tiene sentido que lean los que escriben libros, porque de hecho se escribe porque antes se han leído otros libros. Pero los demás no deberían leer. Los únicos lectores de los escritores deberían ser los mismos escritores" (Historias de política ficción 152). However, Charo outdoes Carvalho's irony by rejecting this notion and stating, "Pues vaya teoría. Es como si dijeras que los únicos clientes de los detectives privados deberían ser los detectives privados. Cuando te pones atravesado dices cada tontería." Nevertheless, the interpenetration of 'readings' that condition not only Carvalho's behavior but also the structure of the novels is evidenced through the parodic assimilation of conventions common to the traditional detective novel as well as self-reflection on the hard-boiled genre.

Such novels as Tatuaje (1974) and La Rosa de Alejandría (1986) present investigations dependent on clues found in popular song, "Tatuaje" in the former and "Morena salada" in the latter. José Colmeiro notes the element of parody as Vázquez Montalbán imitates techniques popularized by Agatha Christie and John LeCarré "parodiando cierta costumbre de encontrar pistas en canciones o rimas infantiles en autores como Agatha Christie (*Ten Little Niggers*) o John LeCarré (*Tinker*,



Tailor, Soldier, Spy)" ("La narrativa policíaca posmodernista" 20). In other novels, Vázquez Montalbán adapts the convention of the "closed" or "locked room" in which the penetration of external evil manifests itself through murder. By appropriating this technique, the author simultaneously establishes a means for self-referential irony as well as a forum for examining the political, economic and social motivations for each suspect. In Asesinato en el Comité Central (1981), Carvalho examines the intricate power relations of leftist politics in Spain when he investigates the death of Fernando Garrido, the secretary general of Spain's Communist Party, who was murdered during the group's private meeting. The "closed room" serves as a metaphor that reveals the claustrophobic atmosphere of the Spanish Communist Party during the Transition. In El balneario, private grounds of a health resort reflect the idea of Europe as a closed space unwelcoming to others. Yet, the narrator ironically subverts the image of the 'closed room' when several murders occur during Carvalho's stay at a private health spa,

Dada la situación en El Balneario, el caso se convertía en una variante del modelo del crimen dentro del cuarto cerrado y por lo tanto hasta que todos los pobladores de la casa no pudieron componer un cuadro



aproximado de la situación de cada uno de ellos y de su conjunto en el momento del crimen, lo lógico era que quedaran a disposición de las diligencias policiales. ¿Cuarto cerrado? ¿Desde cuándo El Balneario era un cuarto cerrado? Es un espacio alejado de centros habitados, pero al que se llega fácilmente por la carretera o por los caminos de montaña. Cualquiera puede llegar, entrar y matar a miss Simpson y luego esfumarse. El asesino podía estar ya a miles de kilómetros de distancia. (80)

Lastly, El premio (1996) combines the 'closed room' with Luis Buñuel's film "El ángel exterminador" to reveal yet another closed elitist society. Prestige and money become primary motives for the murder of millionaire Lázaro Conesal when authors and literary agents convene for the presentation of an award in Madrid.

Carvalho, as seen previously, establishes an ironic distance from which he comments not only on Spain's social, political and economic environment but also on his own identity and literary heritage. This exploration surpasses his personal relationship to his literary predecessors when Carvalho stumbles upon a conference on 'novela negra' in Los mares del sur (1979). As the "experts" and the public argue over the social *raison d'être* for hard-boiled texts, the political implications of the genre's ideology, its incorporation of linguistic conventions and the parameters of the detective fiction



canon, Carvalho silently mocks them from a privileged position as a hard-boiled detective, "Con un aplomo etílico, Carvalho se mezcló con los que esperaban el comienzo de uno de los actos. Se los sabía de memoria. Tenían ese aspecto de huevos cocidos que tienen los intelectuales en todas partes, pero en este caso adaptados a la española: parecían huevos duros con menos densidad que los huevos duros de otras latitudes" (70).

In El balneario (1988) with the introduction of Sánchez Bolín, a detective fiction writer, Vázquez Montalbán creates an alter-ego that allows him to expose the structure and evolution of detective fiction through the confrontation of protagonist and author. As the number of cadavers continues to increase in El balneario Sánchez Bolín establishes a point of view from which to simultaneously judge the 'verisimilitude' of the novel as well as demonstrate the separation of fiction and reality,

--Hay dos cadáveres.
--Intolerable. Ni siquiera las más estúpidas novelas policíacas se permiten hoy día sacar más de un cadáver. Ocurre como con las familias. Casi todas ya son de hijo único. Dos cadáveres sería literariamente inverosímil. Ahora bien, en la realidad pasa cada tontería. (88)

Later, while the police interrogate suspects, Carvalho and Sánchez Bolín discuss the possibility that some "outsider" may be the assassin and undermine a basic construction of traditional detective fiction,

--Eso ya no se utiliza ni en las novelas policíacas baratas. Es la primera explicación que se les ocurre a los personajes de Agatha Christie, pero en seguida la desechan.
--Pero un día u otro ocurrirá--opinó Sánchez Bolín, y anadió--: El día que el crimen lo haya cometido de verdad un vagabundo se habrán acabado las novelas policíacas. (106)

Finally, at the end of the novel, as Sánchez Bolín drives away, he comments on the overall inverisimilitude of the novel he and Carvalho had, ironically, just experienced, "Siete muertos. Inverosímil. Meto yo siete muertos en una novela y me la tira el editor por la cabeza" (240).

Sánchez Bolín resurfaces in El premio (1996) rekindling his comments on the structure of detective novels and the chasm between reality and fiction. When the body of Lázaro Conesal is discovered, the fictional author's comment reveals the controlling force of fictional worlds,

--Pues te persiguen los crímenes y todos te preguntarán, señor Sánchez Bolín, usted que es un novelista policíaco, ¿quién es el asesino?

1911. 1912. 1913. 1914. 1915. 1916. 1917. 1918. 1919. 1920.

1921. 1922. 1923. 1924. 1925. 1926. 1927. 1928. 1929. 1930.

1931. 1932. 1933. 1934. 1935. 1936. 1937. 1938. 1939. 1940.

1941. 1942. 1943. 1944. 1945. 1946. 1947. 1948. 1949. 1950.

1951. 1952. 1953. 1954. 1955. 1956. 1957. 1958. 1959. 1960.

1961. 1962. 1963. 1964. 1965. 1966. 1967. 1968. 1969. 1970.

1971. 1972. 1973. 1974. 1975. 1976. 1977. 1978. 1979. 1980.

1981. 1982. 1983. 1984. 1985. 1986. 1987. 1988. 1989. 1990.

1991. 1992. 1993. 1994. 1995. 1996. 1997. 1998. 1999. 2000.

2001. 2002. 2003. 2004. 2005. 2006. 2007. 2008. 2009. 2010.

2011. 2012. 2013. 2014. 2015. 2016. 2017. 2018. 2019. 2020.

2021. 2022. 2023. 2024. 2025. 2026. 2027. 2028. 2029. 2030.

2031. 2032. 2033. 2034. 2035. 2036. 2037. 2038. 2039. 2040.

2041. 2042. 2043. 2044. 2045. 2046. 2047. 2048. 2049. 2050.

2051. 2052. 2053. 2054. 2055. 2056. 2057. 2058. 2059. 2060.

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2062. 2063. 2064. 2065. 2066. 2067. 2068. 2069. 2070. 2071.

2072. 2073. 2074. 2075. 2076. 2077. 2078. 2079. 2080. 2081.

2082. 2083. 2084. 2085. 2086. 2087. 2088. 2089. 2090. 2091.

2092. 2093. 2094. 2095. 2096. 2097. 2098. 2099. 2100. 2101.

2102. 2103. 2104. 2105. 2106. 2107. 2108. 2109. 2110. 2111.

2112.

2113. 2114. 2115. 2116. 2117. 2118. 2119. 2120. 2121. 2122.

2123. 2124. 2125. 2126. 2127. 2128. 2129. 2130. 2131. 2132.

2133.

2134.

--En las novelas policíacas, Aguirre, el asesino siempre es el autor. (103)

The impact of fiction on reality manifests itself throughout the series as Carvalho overtly criticizes the effects of cultural media, especially film and literature, to create modern myths which condition human understanding of love, morality and even physical behavior. In Los mares del sur, Carvalho ponders, "¿Cómo amaríamos si no hubiéramos aprendido en los libros cómo se ama? ¿Cómo sufriríamos? Sin duda sufriríamos menos" (249). In La Rosa de Alejandría (1986), an eyewitness to a brutal murder of a young woman, describes the murderer's actions in cinematographic terms,

Finalmente se marchó muy
cinematográficamente, caminando hacia
atrás, con los ojos fijos en el cadáver,
los ojos desorbitados, en fin, ya sabe, y
él supongo que también, porque desde que
el cine es el cine los criminales
reaccionan como los criminales
cinematográficos y hasta yo creo que las
víctimas también. (200)

In El laberinto griego, Georges Lebrun, an executive for Radio Televisión Francesa recurs to film as an analogy for articulating Carvalho's search for Claire Delmas's missing Greek husband,

La literatura y el cine nos ayudan a
imaginar y suponer nuestra vida y nuestra
memoria. [...] ¿Se ha dado usted cuenta,
Carvalho, del cuarteto que representamos?



¿Qué actores podrían encarnarlo a la perfección? Ella, Ingrid Bergman, sin duda. El somelier podría ser Peter Lorre, aunque algo más delgado. Usted, Humphrey Bogart, se lo tiene muy merecido y muy estudiado. ¿Y yo? ¿Qué actor podría encarnar mi papel? Le pongo en un compromiso porque le obligo a darme su impresión física y moral sobre mí. (23)

Nevertheless, Carvalho's cynicism undermines the tendency to think of reality in cinematographic concepts disrupting the coherence Lebrun intended to apply to reality,

No tengo memoria cinematográfica. Para mí es igual John Wayne que Anita Ekberg o la perra Lassie que Elizabeth Taylor, incluso no sabría decirles si es la mismísima Elizabeth Taylor la que atraviesa toda Inglaterra a cuatro patas guiándose por el olfato en *La cadena invisible*. (23)

Finally, Carvalho's presence as 'mirón' is discovered in El premio (1996) when a guest at the literary award realizes his occupation because of her experiences with private detectives in film,

--¿Usted es un detective privado!
--¿En que lo ha notado?
--En la forma de dialogar. Dialoga como Chandler.
--Ni siquiera Marlowe dialogaba como Chandler. En la vida real los detectives privados dialogamos como vendedores de ganado. Usted ha visto demasiado cine.
(121)

Carvalho's unmasking of reality applies to culture, as well as his criminal investigation, and is best



articulated in the detective's two most striking idiosyncrasies: his passion for gourmet cooking and his 'penchant' for burning books. Through his ironic assimilation of gourmet cuisine and his iconoclastic crusade against the sentimentality of literature, Carvalho simultaneously deconstructs the cultural mechanisms that frame modern identity and attempts to liberate himself from their influence. On one hand, these unique habits parody the characteristic hobbies and intellectual practices of the traditional detective novels such as Holmes's scientific analyses or his love for the violin. Yet, on the other hand, the Spanish detective's tendencies reveal Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's intense questioning and indictment of cultural codes.

First, Carvalho recognizes the art of gourmet cuisine as an artifice that hides the essential savageness of humanity, "Ultimamente pienso en el horror del comer, relacionado con el horror de matar. La cocina es un artificio de ocultación de un salvaje asesinato, a veces perpetrado en condiciones de una crueldad salvaje, humana, porque el adjetivo supremos de la crueldad es el de humano. Esos pajaritos ahogados vivos en vino para que sepan mejor, por ejemplo" (La Rosa de Alejandría



217). Cuisine, then, acts as a cultural alibi that conceals the basic act of killing,

[El hombre] mata para alimentarse y luego llama a la cultura en su auxilio para que le brinde coartadas éticas y estéticas. El hombre primitivo comía carne cruda, plantas crudas. Mataba y comía. Era sincero. Luego se inventó el roux y la bechamel. Ahí entra la cultura. Enmascarar cadáveres para comérselos en la ética y la estética a salvo. (El delantero centro fue asesinado al atardecer 29)

In Quinteto de Buenos Aires (1996), he unmasks the culture of cooking as a fabrication of the art of cannibalism,

--La cultura no te enseña a vivir. Es sólo la máscara del miedo y la ignorancia. De la muerte. Tú ves una vaca en la Pampa...
--¿Tiene que ser en la Pampa?
--En cualquier parte. La matas. Te la comes cruda. Todos te señalarán: es un bárbaro, un salvaje. Ahora bien. Coges la vaca, la matas, la troceas con sabiduría, la asas, la aderezas con chimichurri. Eso es cultura. El disimulo del canibalismo. El artificio del canibalismo. (108)

In this way, Carvalho's quest for truth, as outlined in El laberinto griego (1991), acquires a double meaning in that the process of unveiling may refer to slicing through the layers of fictions people employ to hide the truth as well as the layers of 'sentimental education' and cultural understanding that mask reality. Carvalho's ritualistic book-burning illustrates his desire to break



free from the slavery of culture as the narrator explains in Asesinato en el Comité Central, "Su etapa de comprador-lector se había detenido a comienzos de los setenta, desde aquel día en que se sorprendió a sí mismo esclavo de una cultura que le había separado de la vida, que había falsificado su sentimentalidad como los antibióticos pueden destruir las defensas del organismo" (198).

In some novels of the Carvalho series, characters often end up victims of their own cultural miseducation, misled by the sentimentality of popular myths. For example, in Los mares del sur, Stuart Pedrell, like Gauguin's escape to Tahiti, relinquishes his bourgeoisie lifestyle fleeing to the mythical, utopian 'South'.²¹ Yet, when his escape leads to tragedy, Carvalho prompts, "Hay cosas que son contra natura. Tratar de huir de la propia condición social lleva a la tragedia. Piensen en eso cada vez que tengan la tentación de marcharse a los mares del Sur (273)." In La Rosa de Alejandría (1986), a sailor's desire for pure love leads to the brutal death of a young woman and impels him on a journey to the Bosphorus Sea, once again manifesting the desire to flee to utopia. Also, two young drug addicts with the desire



to change their destiny and begin their lives over become tragically implicated in the death of an old soccer player, Palacín, in El delantero centro fue asesinado al atardecer (1991). Carvalho reveals the imminent threat of 'culture' when he parodies the quick trigger fingers of hard-boiled private eyes. When Marcos Nuñez asks, in La soledad del manager, "¿Usted es de los que cuando oyen la palabra cultura sacan la pistola?" Carvaho responds, "No. Yo saco el mechero" (179). In his epilogue to the commemorative edition of El premio, Quim Aranda notes Carvalho's frustration with a medium that has led people to falsify reality with myths and sentimentality, "Carvalho quema libros porque no le han enseñado a vivir sino todo lo contrario, sólo a falsear la realidad" (351).

Quite often characters in Vázquez Montalbán's novels are literally inscribed with 'letters' in the form of tattoos, mysterious notes found on the victim's body and blackmail letters. Ironically, Carvalho becomes a reader and a decipherer by interpreting the written clues²². In Tatuaje (1974), Carvalho's investigation revolves around

²¹ Pedrell's desire to flee resembles, to a certain extent, Flitcraft's escape in Hammett's The Maltese Falcon.

²² Hühn's idea of the 'detective as reader' acquires a new dimension here in that the clues literally need to be read.

the tattoo of a dead blonde Spanish sailor, "He nacido para revolucionar el infierno" that leads the detective to the murder's intertextual relationship with a phrase by Rimbaud and, more importantly, Concha Piquer's song "Tatuaje" from the 1940s. In Los mares del sur, the mysterious note "più nessuno mi porterà nel sud" found on the body of Stuart Pedrell indicates intertextual references with T.S. Eliot, César Pavese and Salvatore Quasimodo as well as the dominant myth of the utopian 'South' that represents a desire to escape from modernization. In El delantero centro fue asesinado al atardecer, letters foretelling the murder of a soccer team's 'delantero centro' combine poetry with mimeticism. Finally, the circular, self-subverting aspect of El premio is acknowledged in the note found on the body of Lázaro Conesal with the single word "Ouroboros" referring to the symbol of a serpent that eats its own tail.

As Francie Cate-Arries notes, Carvalho's ability to solve these cases depends on his ability to read and correctly interpret each of these utterances, "Carvalho's success in unravelling the puzzle of each murder is directly dependent on his ability--like Poe's Dupin before him--to track the signifier, to follow the trail of the letter" (50). In Los mares del sur, the detective



turns to the resources of the well-known critic Sergio Beser to discern the relevance of the words. In El delantero centro, however, Carvalho's tone becomes more cynical when the police resort to a psycholinguist to understand the texts. In one scene, Lifante's jargon-filled analysis elicits a sarcastic response from the detective that parodies semiotic sciences:

--En todo mensaje hay un emisor y un receptor, a través de un canal. Pero a veces esa transmisión se interrumpe por un ruido. Pues bien, el delito es un ruido no total. Es un ruido transitorio que deja desviado el mensaje. Aquí nos anuncian una muerte. Nos la quieren comunicar, insisto en la palabra, comunicar. Remontándonos por ese canal podemos llegar al comunicador, al emisor, es decir, al presunto criminal, al que puede llegar a ser un criminal [...] Pues hay que coger los textos y aislar los ítems, los elementos semánticos fundamentales, y a partir de las reiteraciones ir desvelando las obsesiones del interfecto. Lo que ocurre es que estamos ante un mensaje evidentemente polisémico.

--¿Polinésico?--preguntó Carvalho. (59-60)

Much like Dashiell Hammett's Flitcraft "looks into the works," the highly self-reflexive nature of Vázquez Montalbán's Carvalho series allows the reader a look into the works of the novel. The author simultaneously adopts certain realist conventions of hard-boiled detective fiction while infusing them with the skepticism of his

"período subnormal" to create texts that serve both as social chronicles and postmodern investigations into literature and reality.

A Postmodern Conclusion: Transgression within the Boundaries

In his study of formula literature, John Cawelti claims that the importance of working within such a genre as mystery fiction, romance stories or westerns is the ability of an author to simultaneously uphold the conventions of the genre while also injecting innovations into its structure. He asserts this early in Adventure, Mystery and Romance (1976), "A successful formulaic work is unique when in addition to the pleasure inherent in the conventional structure, it brings a new element into the formula, or embodies the personal vision of the creator" (12). Clearly both Paco Ignacio Taibo II and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán apply to Cawelti's statement. Both authors are faithful to the poetic of the hard-boiled genre, adopting its dark vision of a violent society in crisis, the figure of a lone hero battling injustice, and investigation that 'hunts' down the truth and exposes corruption and immorality at all levels of society. Yet, both Taibo and Vázquez Montalbán "nationalize" the detective novel pitting the private



eye's investigation against the backdrop of post-1968 Mexico and post-Franco Spain in such a way to chronicle the essence of their respective societies.

Nevertheless, neither Taibo nor Vázquez Montalbán adapt the detective genre mimetically but rather approach the genre with irony. By creating self-reflexive detectives, fusing tendencies of both "high" and "low" literature and blurring genre distinctions they subvert the linear structure of the mystery novel through a combination of realism and innovation. Both authors work within the frame of "detective fiction" yet dismantle the genre by calling attention to its fiction-making process. By constantly "using" and "abusing" the generic models Taibo and Vázquez Montalbán work "*within* conventions in order to subvert them" (Hutcheon 5). This allows them to highlight and transcend the borders that frame meaning and problematizes the construction of "truth."

Taibo and Vázquez Montalbán share an attitude toward the detective genre that Umberto Eco captures in the postscript to The Name of the Rose (1984), "The postmodern reply to the modern consists of recognizing that the past, since it cannot be really destroyed, because its destruction leads to silence, must be revisited: but with irony, not innocently" (530). In

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What is Post-Modernism?, Charles Jencks conveys the sense of irony by describing postmodernism with the architectural term "double-coding" which implies a transgression of such opposite pairings as "elite/popular" and "new/old" (14) through "the continuation of Modernism and its transcendence" (14). Stefano Tani, in The Doomed Detective, views detective fiction as the perfect medium for double-coding with the effect of deconstructing and decentering the sense of order in the world. He states,

The detective novel, a reassuring "low" genre that is supposed to please the expectations of the reader, thus becomes the ideal medium of postmodernism in its inverted form, the anti-detective novel, which frustrates the expectations of the reader, transforms a mass-media genre into a sophisticated expression of avant-garde sensibility, and substitutes for the detective as a central and ordering character the decentering and chaotic admission of mystery, of nonsolution. [...] A new use of old techniques can lead not only to the renewal of a genre but also to the constitution of another genre, or, as I think the case is here, to a phenomenon that still maintains visible connections with the detective novel but has a basically new meaning. (40)²³

Nevertheless, although both Eco's and Jencks's descriptions capture the mood of Taibo and Vázquez

²³ Although Tani is referring to such authors as Borges, Robbe-Grillet and Nabokov his comments are equally useful for understanding Taibo and Vázquez Montalbán.



Montalbán's detective novels, they fail to address the essential political discourse that such irony creates within the text. However, in A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction, Linda Hutcheon, views ironic discourse as a means to "demystify our everyday processes of structuring chaos, of imparting or assigning meaning" (7). Irony is unavoidably political as she asserts, "What I want to call postmodernism is fundamentally contradictory, resolutely historical, and inescapably political" (4). Although Taibo cringes at any mention of postmodernism relating to his work and Vázquez Montalbán vehemently resists any pre-textual categorization, both ironically exploit the detective genre to uncover what Raymond Williams sees as the fundamental element of postmodernism: the crisis of truth. Williams views the postmodern novel as "the deligitimation (sic) of the old master narratives" and "the old discourse of truth" (The Postmodern Novel in Latin America: Politics, Culture and the Crisis of Truth 10-11)²⁴.

²⁴ In Vázquez Montalbán's case, his transition from the metafictional, avant-garde tendencies of his "período subnormal" to the realist yet ironic narratives of the Carvalho series coincide with John Barth's understanding of postmodernism described in his articles from Atlantic Monthly "The Literature of Exhaustion" (1967) and "The Literature of Replenishment" (1980).



The inter-relationship between irony, politics and the crisis of truth in both Taibo and Vázquez Montalbán becomes evident through Brian McHale's dialectic separation of Modernist and Postmodernist literature as epistemological and ontological, respectively. For McHale, Modernist literature essentially addresses issues of knowledge with such questions as

What is there to be known?; Who knows it?; How do they know it, and with what degree of certainty?; How is knowledge transmitted from one knower to another, and with what degree of reliability?; How does the object of knowledge change as it passes from knower to knower?; What are the limits of the knowable? (Postmodernist Fiction, 9)

Because of the essential hermeneutic quality of detective fiction he refers to it as "the epistemological genre *par excellence*" (9). Nevertheless, he goes on to state that postmodern fiction bears on ontological questions,

What is a world?; What kinds of worlds are there, how are they constituted, and how do they differ?; What happens when different kinds of worlds are placed in confrontation, or when boundaries between worlds are violated?; What is the mode of existence of a text, and what is the mode of existence of the world (or worlds) it projects?; How is a projected world structured? (10)

Although McHale calls science fiction the ontological genre *par excellence*, both Taibo and Vázquez Montalbán appropriate the epistemological nature of detective fiction to create texts that question the ontological nature of society. That is, through a hermeneutic process in which the detective seeks to 'know' the solution, his investigation reveals an understanding of the 'nature of reality' that defies the hegemonic harmony of the status quo. The Mexican detective Héctor Belascoarán Shayne and the Spanish detective Pepe Carvalho reveal repressive societies that marginalize the voices of the weak. By suppressing notions of pluralism in favor of homogeneous discourses of truth the conservative elite, the economically powerful and the politically dominant perpetuate their power. Ultimately, the solution to the mystery in these novels becomes secondary to what the investigation itself unveils about the political, social and economic reality of both Mexico and Spain.

Nevertheless, although the detective fiction genre allows both Taibo and Vázquez Montalbán a means to combine realism with innovation to construct political texts that unveil the hidden underside of Mexican and Spanish society, this only addresses half of the issue.



That is, by creating texts that depart from a genre considered "low-brow" or subliterary, both authors consciously adopt a vehicle that possesses mass appeal spanning across class and education boundaries. What Samuel Amell says about the 'novela negra' in Spain holds true for Mexico as well,

Todo lo anteriormente apuntado sobre el carácter de crítica político-social de la novela negra me lleva a proponer una razón que explica el auge del subgénero en la España actual. Dicha razón es doble: por una parte precisamente este valor que la novela negra tiene de vehículo de una ideología dada, y por otra la posibilidad que existe de alcanzar con ella a un nutrido grupo de lectores. ("Literatura e ideología" 194)

As well as revitalizing leftist political thought through their novels, Taibo and Vázquez Montalbán democratize literature making their political message accessible to everyone. What is more, both authors recognize the potential of 'popular literature' to affect the collective consciousness of society.

In the section titled "Questions of Culture," from his Cultural Writings, Gramsci addresses the possibility to raise class-consciousness through the development of 'culture':

Do elements for an art, philosophy and morality (standards) specific to the working class already exist? The question

must be raised and it must be answered. Together with the problem of gaining political and economic power, the proletariat must also face the problem of winning intellectual power. Just as it has thought to organize itself politically and economically, it must also think about organizing itself culturally. Although through such organizations it is not yet going to be possible (no more than in the economic and political sectors) to obtain positive creative results before the system of bourgeois domination has been broken up, it should still be possible to pose the fundamental questions and outline the most characteristic features of the development of the new civilization. (41)

In this way, Gramsci understands culture, and especially 'popular literature,' as a means for molding the ideology of society in a way that may either uphold the beliefs of the ruling class or that could possibly undermine the bourgeoisie. Roger Bromely's article "Natural Boundaries: The Social Function of Popular Fiction" follows Gramsci's ideas seeing the commodification of literature as a means to insert questions of class struggle rather than legitimize capitalistic ideals,

Popular literature is one among many of the material forms which ideology takes (or through which it is mediated) under capitalism, and is an instance of its social production through the medium of writing. If we as marxists hope to intervene in the class struggle at the level of cultural production then we have to concern ourselves with the specific

analysis of ideologies and their concrete mediations. (149)

Susan Sontag, however, articulates this view of popular fiction more simply and succinctly asserting in "One Culture and the New Sensibility" that art serves as a means for transforming ideology, "Art today is a new kind of instrument, an instrument for modifying consciousness and organizing new modes of sensibility. [...] It is first of all, an object modifying consciousness and sensibility, changing the composition, however slightly, of the humus that nourishes all the specific ideas and sentiments" (28-32). Actually, in Vázquez Montalbán's El Premio (1996), Lázaro Conesal, the doomed millionaire, acknowledges the political and moral power of culture when he states, "Los instrumentos para transformar la realidad son los terremotos, la iniciativa privada, las instituciones internacionales, el Estado, el Cine y la Literatura" (164). Taibo also upholds popular culture as a means for political consciousness each year in Gijón, Spain. The "Semana Negra" ("Noir Week") celebrates the mixture of politics, revolution and culture in all types of art from literature and film to photojournalism and such music as blues, jazz, folk and reggae. Taibo asserts the two driving components of the



Semana Negra, "Es el continuo de actividades que convierte al paseante en alguien que es arrojado como bola de ping-pong de uno a otro tipo de actividad donde continuamente están ofreciendo un doble juego: fiesta, reflexión, fiesta, reflexión...Y te están proponiendo que la cultura puede ser uno de los ejes de la vida" (Nichols 230).

In conclusion, both Taibo and Vázquez Montalbán acknowledge the combination of realism and literary experimentation that not only create a political message through the violation of the generic tenets of detective fiction but also use the vehicle of the detective novel to disseminate their political message to a mass audience. In the introduction to Cuentos policíacos mexicanos (1997), Paco Ignacio Taibo II, describes the evolution of 'novela negra' as a means to transcend literary boundaries and create something political,

Se trataba (y se trata) de asumir ciertas claves genéricas para violarlas, violentarlas, llevarlas al límite (como bien dijo Vázquez Montalbán, si algún sentido tiene adoptar una literatura de género es violar sus fronteras) y al mismo tiempo utilizar los recursos de la novela de aventuras (los elementos comunes a la literatura de acción: enigma, trama compleja, peripecia, fuerte carga anecdótica) y las inmensas posibilidades de calor, el surrealismo, las palmeras, la locura de nuestras tierras originales;

vinculadas a la furia y la rabia, las fuertes cargas de pasiones políticas y personales. (9)

The title of Vázquez Montalbán's article "Contra la novela policíaca" asserts that his novels transcend both the 'novela realista social' and 'novela ensimismada.' His ironic assimilation of North American hard-boiled detective fiction revitalized both literary and political analyses of Spanish society by questioning the constructions of literature as well as reality. Vázquez Montalbán states,

La mejor aportación de la novela negra a la novela española a secas y actual ha sido el injerto de poética realista superadora de todos los realismos viciados y agotados. Después del exagerado fracaso del llamado realismo social español (otra línea imaginaria que algún día habrá que analizar sin prejuicios y desde cerca) y de la sensación de nada merodeante que aportó el experimentalismo español o los simplemente lúdicos escritores de la minimalidad mediante la maximalidad verbal, la alternativa de un discurso realista revelador y distanciador, partidario de que la novela puede enseñar a mirar y por tanto conocer nuestra sociedad, es algo más que una excepción que confirma la regla. (9)

Finally, through the voyeuristic presence of the private eye, both Taibo and Vázquez Montalbán investigate, analyze and criticize the status quo of Mexico and Spain respectively. An ironic comment from



Sepúlveda Civit to Pepe Carvalho in Asesinato en el
Comité Central (1981), encapsulates the transformation of
the hard-boiled detective novel by Taibo and Vázquez
Montalbán when he states, "Esto no es una novela
policiaca. Es una novela política..." (196).



CHAPTER III

'Poisonville' Reincarnated: Modernization and Metropolis in Paco Ignacio Taibo II and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán

Since the birth of hard-boiled detective fiction by Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler the sleuth has been the moral guide for a changing society plagued by a lack of faith in justice and an absence of law. As solitary figures whose own personal morality can be ambiguous, private eyes such as Sam Spade, the Continental Op and Phillip Marlowe confront the uncertainties and cosmic indifference of modern, urban life in the United States since the 1920s. Surrounded by ruthless gangsters, greedy business tycoons and corrupt police officers, these private eyes maintain a strict sense of professional pride through which their compassion for the victims of modern society is shown. The adventures of these detectives take place in decidedly urban settings that reflect the growing modern society, capture the disillusionment of the era and manifest the lost ideals of the nation.

Whereas the traditional detective story portrayed the presence of evil as a foreign entity that sought to undermine the order of a bourgeois society, the American



hard-boiled detective fiction viewed the city as inherently evil, characterized by a lack of order. John Cawelti notes the different perspective toward the urban setting by stating,

The location of the gothic villain in an isolated castle or monastery and his connection with aristocracy or church suggests that evil lies outside of the ordinary patterns of society. Evil represents the threat of transcendent diabolical forces of our traditional aristocracy to an essentially harmonious and benevolent bourgeois society. In the hard-boiled detective story, however, evil has become endemic and pervasive; it has begun to crumble the very pillars of middle-class society, respectable citizens, the modern metropolis, and the institutions of law and order. (156)

Dashiell Hammett's novel Red Harvest (1929), an earlier version of which was titled "Nightmare Town," established the archetype of an unredeemable city overrun with political corruption, unregulated industrial capitalism and gangster violence (Porter 197). The ironic pronunciation of the metaphorical city's real name, "Personville," as "Poisonville" reveals a society of lost humanity tainted by greed, decadence and alienation. In the opening paragraph of Red Harvest the Continental Op introduces the reader to the ironic truth of the double pronunciation,



I first heard Personville called Poisonville by a red-haired mucker named Hickey Dewey in the Big Ship in Butte. He also called his shirt a shoit. I didn't think anything of what he had done to the city's name. Later I heard men who could manage their r's give it the same pronunciation. I still didn't see anything in it but the meaningless sort of humor that used to make richardsnary the thieves' word for dictionary. A few years later I went to Personville and learned better. (3)

The description the Continental Op provides of the physical town reveals its inner perversion and portrays the city as a wasteland of exhausted ideals,

The city wasn't pretty. Most of its buildings had gone in for gaudiness. Maybe they had been successful at first. Since then the smelters whose brick stacks stuck up tall against a gloomy mountain to the south had yellow-smoked everything into uniform dinginess. The result was an ugly city of forty thousand people, set in an ugly notch between two ugly mountains that had been all dirtied up by mining. Spread over this was a grimy sky that looked as if it had come out of the smelters' stacks. (3-4)

The Continental Op arrives at "Poisonville" to investigate the murder of his client, newspaper editor Donald Willson, yet encounters a town overrun by gangsters. As the investigation progresses, the detective discovers that Willson's father, Elihu Willson, had run the town before being challenged by the IWW (International Workers of the World). In order to break



the union, the elder Willson brought in a gang of thugs that accomplished this task and subsequently took over the city. The detective, therefore, not only investigates the murder of Donald Willson, but also decides to rid the city of its corruption through a process of purification by violence. Nevertheless, as the Continental Op begins his killing crusade, he finds himself slowly touched by the blood lust inherent in the city, "This damned burg's getting to me. If I don't get away soon I'll be going blood-simple like the natives [...] I've arranged a killing or two in my time, when they were necessary. But this is the first time I've ever got the fever. It's this damned burg" (154).

In other words, "Poisonville" is not named such only because it is a town tainted by corruption and greed but rather its inherent evil is contagious to any person who sets foot within its boundaries. At the end of the novel, despite having purged the town of its 'poison,' the detective's view of the future is anything but optimistic as he hands the city back over to Elihu Willson,

You're going to have the mayor, or the governor, whichever it comes under, suspend the whole Personville police department, and let the mail-order troops handle things till you can organize

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another. I'm told that the mayor and the governor are both pieces of your property. They'll do what you tell them. And that's what you're going to tell them. It can be done, and it's got to be done. Then you'll have your city back, all nice and clean and ready to go to the dogs again.
(203)

Although Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe expresses the possibility for redemption through the compassion of the detective and Ross Macdonald's Lew Archer encounters elaborate and complex plots that reinforce the complicity of all citizens in the corruption of its society, the essential view of the city in hard-boiled fiction continues to be the archetype of 'Poisonville' established by Hammett. In spite of the fact that some authors utilize the urban setting of such cities as New York and Miami²⁵, the originators of the genre felt California's opulence, decadence and corruption typified the disillusionment of the times. Hammett, Chandler and MacDonald present adventures that take place in California and contradict the mythic stature of the West as a place for hopes and dreams to flourish. Rather, as George Grella emphasizes, California becomes a deformation of the American dream,

²⁵ Most notably, Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer series occurs in New York whereas Brett Halliday's Michael Shayne series takes place in Miami.

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work of the Commission. It is a summary of the work done during the year and is intended to give a general impression of the progress of the work.

2. The second part of the report deals with the work of the Commission in the various fields of its activity. It is a detailed account of the work done in each of the fields and is intended to give a detailed impression of the progress of the work.

3. The third part of the report deals with the work of the Commission in the various fields of its activity. It is a detailed account of the work done in each of the fields and is intended to give a detailed impression of the progress of the work.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the work of the Commission in the various fields of its activity. It is a detailed account of the work done in each of the fields and is intended to give a detailed impression of the progress of the work.

5. The fifth part of the report deals with the work of the Commission in the various fields of its activity. It is a detailed account of the work done in each of the fields and is intended to give a detailed impression of the progress of the work.

6. The sixth part of the report deals with the work of the Commission in the various fields of its activity. It is a detailed account of the work done in each of the fields and is intended to give a detailed impression of the progress of the work.

7. The seventh part of the report deals with the work of the Commission in the various fields of its activity. It is a detailed account of the work done in each of the fields and is intended to give a detailed impression of the progress of the work.

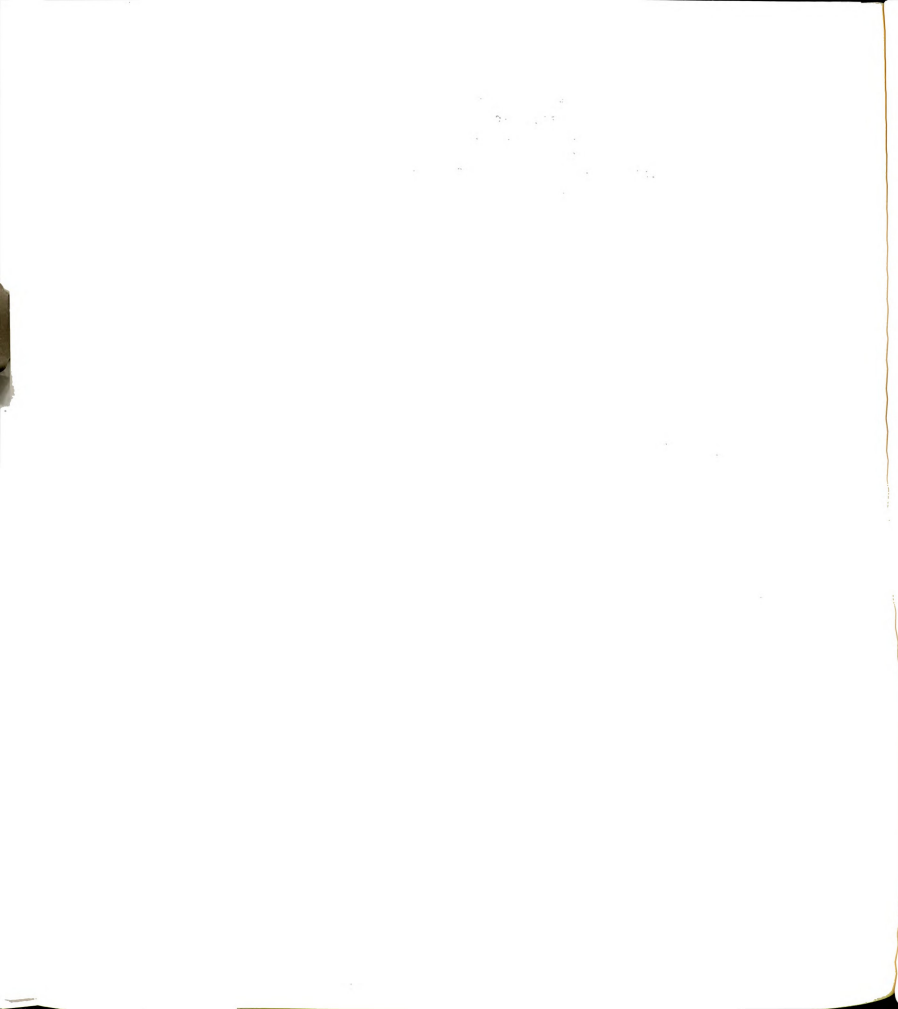
8. The eighth part of the report deals with the work of the Commission in the various fields of its activity. It is a detailed account of the work done in each of the fields and is intended to give a detailed impression of the progress of the work.

9. The ninth part of the report deals with the work of the Commission in the various fields of its activity. It is a detailed account of the work done in each of the fields and is intended to give a detailed impression of the progress of the work.

10. The tenth part of the report deals with the work of the Commission in the various fields of its activity. It is a detailed account of the work done in each of the fields and is intended to give a detailed impression of the progress of the work.

A man in the wilderness, he finds the wilderness destroyed, replaced by the urban jungle. The novels of Hammett, Chandler, and Macdonald all take place in California, where the frontier has disappeared. [...] Where he had expected to find innocence and love, he finds the pervasive blight of sin, a society fallen from grace, an endless struggle against evil. Instead of a fertile valley, he discovers a cesspool, containing the dregs of a neon-and-plastic civilization. He finds the American Dream metamorphosed into the American Nightmare. Its true capital is not the luminous city or the New Jerusalem, but Hollywood, a place devoted to illusions. (113)

In the novels of Paco Ignacio Taibo II and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán both Mexico City and Barcelona project a "poisonville" which reflects the failed project of modernity within a specifically Mexican and Spanish context. Both Taibo's Hector Belascoarán Shayne and Vázquez Montalbán's Pepe Carvalho observe and participate in societies struggling to cope with an urban identity characterized by corruption, violence, disorder and chaos in which a byproduct of development is the victimization and marginalization of the underclass. In the novels of these two authors, their detectives not only convey dissatisfaction with the modern urban identity of contemporary Mexico and Spain but also project a suggested way of economic, political and social development.



Contemporary Mexico and Spain both represent changing societies in crisis that are struggling to reconcile a past of political repression, government fraud and economic exploitation with democratic and liberal ideals in order to integrate themselves into a modernized world. In La Democracia Ausente, Roger Bartra acknowledges this transitory status by describing Mexico as simultaneously paradisiacal and infernal.

El paraíso está allí; se puede ver y se puede soñar; allí están los frutos de la Revolución mexicana, los héroes de la patria, la nación nacionalizada, los ejidos de la reforma agraria, la cultura popular, la expropiación del petróleo, la seguridad social, las tradiciones indígenas rescatadas, los murales de Diego Rivera. . . Por otro lado se sufren cotidianamente las inclemencias de un infierno de despotismo y autoritarismo, de corrupción y de miseria social, de represión y de violencia, de una vieja revolución institucionalizada por la burocracia política y acorralada por los monopolios y los banqueros. (35)

In other words, the political system of Mexico is one in which the principles of economic and political freedom are sacrificed in favor of "stability" which is achieved through the conservative agendas of business and the government. The "democracy" of Mexico does not present a variety of political parties which represent the various sectors of the society but rather has been

dominated by the authoritarian PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) for almost seventy years. The result of such a system is a society controlled by the economically and politically powerful that can be separated into two classes, the "exploited" and the "exploiters" (La Democracia Ausente 36).

The student movement of 1968 sought to revitalize the democratic ideals of the Mexican Revolution by defying the power and hegemony of the State in order create new forms of conceiving and understanding politics in Mexico. In an effort to erase the traditional dichotomy between the "haves" and the "have nots" that had existed in Mexico for years, the intellectuals of this movement sought a government that represented rather than repressed certain sectors of society. In El hábito de la utopía, César Gilabert notes that this basic belief of the student movement is also what would bring about its tragic end on October 2, 1968 in the Massacre of the Plaza de las Tres Culturas (also known as the Plaza de Tlatelolco):

Este tránsito de un tema a otro fue decisivo en el destino de los actores: una acción democratizadora que es aceptada por buena parte de la sociedad frente a una tradición que valora el Estado como agente de intervención en la realidad social, y no como representación. Así, de



diversas formas, diferentes grupos
sociales se integran a la lucha contra ese
agente y sus secuelas, aquellos que
quieren ver sus intereses y sus visiones
de la sociedad representadas en y no
reprimidas por el Estado. (158)

Ironically, although the Tlatelolco Massacre brought an abrupt end to the 1968 student movement in Mexico, it also destroyed the façade of democracy projected by the PRI by exposing the unseen elements that work subterraneously and clandestinely to control the direction of modernization and development. In his 68, a collection of memories about his experiences in the 1968 student movement, Paco Ignacio Taibo II reveals that the Tlatelolco Massacre molded an entire generation's vision of a Mexico City characterized by institutional violence and crimes of the state. For the participants of that movement, they came to know a Mexico that had previously been unfamiliar to them, "Después de todo, sólo había sido un movimiento estudiantil de 123 días de duración. Nada más. Nada menos. Pero nos había dado, a una generación completa de estudiantes, pasado y país, tierra debajo de los pies" (113).

The legacy of 1968 extends throughout Taibo's Belascoarán Shayne novels and conditions the portrayal of Mexico City as a coexistence of two cities: the illusory

1000
1000

1000

official city purported to be a bourgeois democracy and the unseen city populated by an underclass exploited by the government and the conservative elite. In Días de Combate (1976), the first of this series, Héctor Belascoarán Shayne renounces his role as part of the bourgeois order by quitting his job as an engineer and becoming a detective through a correspondence school in order to pursue the strangler known as "el Cerevro." Nevertheless, through his pursuit of the killer, Belascoarán Shayne comes into contact with the "other" Mexico which is reflected in his officemates: an upholsterer, a plumber and an "infamous" engineer who specializes in sewers and drainages and rents the plumber's portion of the office at night.

As Belascoarán Shayne investigates the crimes of "el Cerevro" he comes to realize that the villain he pursues is not the idealized criminal his mind had projected but rather he symbolizes the true villain in Mexico: the system itself. This realization occurs through the detective's confrontation with the criminal in which "el Cerevro" challenges him to question and identify who is the real strangler,

--Bien, he asesinado once veces y he
causado heridas menores. En ese mismo
intervalo de tiempo, El Estado ha

masacrado a cientos de campesinos, han muerto en accidentes decenas de mexicanos, han muerto en reyertas cientos de ellos, han muerto de hambre o frío decenas más, de enfermedades curables otros centenares, incluso, se han suicidado docenas...¿Dónde está el estrangulador? (221)

Belascoarán Shayne's response to this question establishes the fundamental vision of Mexico portrayed in Taibo's novels, "El Gran Estrangulador es el sistema" (221).

In the second novel of the series, Cosa fácil (1977), Taibo exposes the inner workings of the "sistema" through the metaphor of the sewer. The "cloacas del poder" not only reflect the hidden operations of the State but also project the possible effects these will have upon society. "El Gallo" Virreal, the sewer expert, acknowledges this in his ironic description of the sewer system of Mexico City:

--En el fondo, usted piensa que no hay pasión en mis mapas, ¿verdad?

Héctor afirmó.

--¿Usted vio de chiquito el Fantasma de la Opera?

Héctor asintió.

--Usted nunca pensó que la diferencia entre el medievo y la ciudad capitalista consiste básicamente en la red cloacal.

Héctor negó con la cabeza.

--Usted no se da cuenta que la mierda podría llegarnos a las orejas a los mexicanos del DF si alguien no se preocupara de que no sucediera lo contrario... (36)



Not only does the statement of "El Gallo" affirm the existence of an unseen city beneath Mexico City but it also establishes an alliance between Belascoarán Shayne and himself as colleagues whose job is to safeguard the vast underground sewer system which could potentially destroy the city. Héctor Belascoarán Shayne acknowledges his existence as protector of the city in No habrá final feliz (1981) in which he utilizes the idealized notions of "good" versus "evil" in order to define his unseen enemy,

Había aceptado que lo honesto era el caos,
el desconcierto, el miedo y la sorpresa.
Que bastaba de verdades claras, de
consejos de cocina para la vida. Pero
ahora, no sabía dónde y por qué, lo
cazaban. Fuerzas del mal lo agredían.
Puras pinchas fuerzas del mal sin rostro.
Se rió de las fuerzas del mal [...] Resumió,
cuando la rueda se detuvo dejándolo en el
punto más alto del giro, la idea clave de
todo el asunto: Si se iba a tratar de
buenos contra malos, él iba a ser el
bueno, tuerto y todo. (69)

Nevertheless, in Taibo's novels the face of these "fuerzas del mal" inevitably reveals a link between a corrupt police force, a fraudulent government, a violent military and powerful drug traffickers, all of whom conspire together hidden from and against the Mexican citizens. Héctor Escobar Rosas asserts the contradictory



status of the institutions meant to vigil over Mexico's public order,

Por un lado tenemos a los ciudadanos comunes de esta ciudad, indefensos ante los abusos y los atropellos del poder; por otro lado, a las fuerzas encargadas de mantener el orden público. Entre ambas, tenemos a la violencia promovida por las mismas instituciones encargadas de vigilar por la tranquilidad y la seguridad de la población. Ocultos a medidas tras el escenario que es la ciudad de México, encontramos a nuestros viejos conocidos: la corrupción, la impunidad, el abuso del poder, la transa; en fin, todo aquello en lo que pensamos cuando hacemos referencia a la ley de la selva. (6)

In Regreso a la misma ciudad y bajo la lluvia, Taibo's Belascoarán Shayne returns from the dead after being gunned down in No habrá final feliz, and reinforces the view of Mexico City as a wasteland poisoned by those with power,

La pizarra electrónica lo fascinó un par de minutos. Le faltaban un montón de lugares, había millares de viajes por hacer. Y millares de regresos a la ciudad de los milagros, a la ciudad de los horrores. Se había puesto de moda hablar del DF como 'el monstruo', pero el nombre ocultaba la mejor definición. Él prefería hablar de su ciudad como de la cueva de las mentiras, la caverna de los antropófagos, la pista de tartán para los 42 kilómetros en solitario, la ciudad de las putas en bicicleta o en coche negro de ministro, el cementerio de los televisores parlantes, la ciudad de los hombres que miraban sobre el hombro a sus perseguidores, la aldea ocupada por los



remarcadores de etiquetas, el paraíso de
las conferencias de prensa, la ciudad
derrumbada, temblorosa, amorosamente
derruida, hurgada en sus derrumbes por los
topos de dios. (45)

In this passage, Taibo creates an inversion of Plato's "cave." That is, the image of Mexico City as the capital of a democracy is an illusion that hides the reality of an underworld populated by "cannibals" that project and control the images of Mexico City. If Mexico City, then, is a place of multiple realities, it becomes a battleground for Belascoarán Shayne where he must not only wage war against the unseen enemy but also navigate the illusions, lies, and fabrications perpetuated by those invisible elements. Through a combination of intense love for Mexico City and a sense of "terquedad" the Mexican detective fights the "powers that be," refusing to submit to their lies with the hope of saving the city for himself and its citizens. In Algunas Nubes (1985), when asked why he continues to battle his powerful enemies, Belascoarán Shayne responds, "por terquedad. Uno ya no juega a ganar, juega a sobrevivir y a seguir chingando" (85). In this way, similar to the bloody outcome of Hammett's Red Harvest, Belascoarán Shayne declares that the citizens of Mexico City will



cease to be victims through their "terquedad" and their unwillingness to surrender to the "antropófagos":

Vivimos ciudades diferentes, hiladas por los abusos del poder y el miedo, la corrupción y la eterna amenaza del descenso a la selva, que oculta en los rostros del sistema, se asoma regularmente para recordarnos que somos frágiles, que estamos solos, que un día seremos pasto de los zopilotes. O que un día todo habrá de jugarse en un volado, a lo western, a lo duelo en la calle mayor: ellos o nosotros. (Regreso a la misma ciudad 27)

The dangers that threaten the existence of the capital as well as the livelihood of its citizens derive directly from the actions of those in power making Mexico City almost uninhabitable. Mexican citizens must contend with the most obvious results of the economic and political policies of those in power, most notably unchecked population growth, urbanization and massification that heighten the problems of pollution, poverty, alienation and violence. In La Capital: The Biography of Mexico City, Jonathon Kandell acknowledges the detrimental effects a confluence of factors have had on the development of Mexico City since 1968,

In the generation since 1968, Mexico City has turned into an urban planner's nightmare. Political, social, economic and ecological forces have conspired to make the capital increasingly unmanageable, overpopulated, unproductive, and insalubrious. With twenty million

cease to be victims through their "terquedad" and their unwillingness to surrender to the "antropófagos":

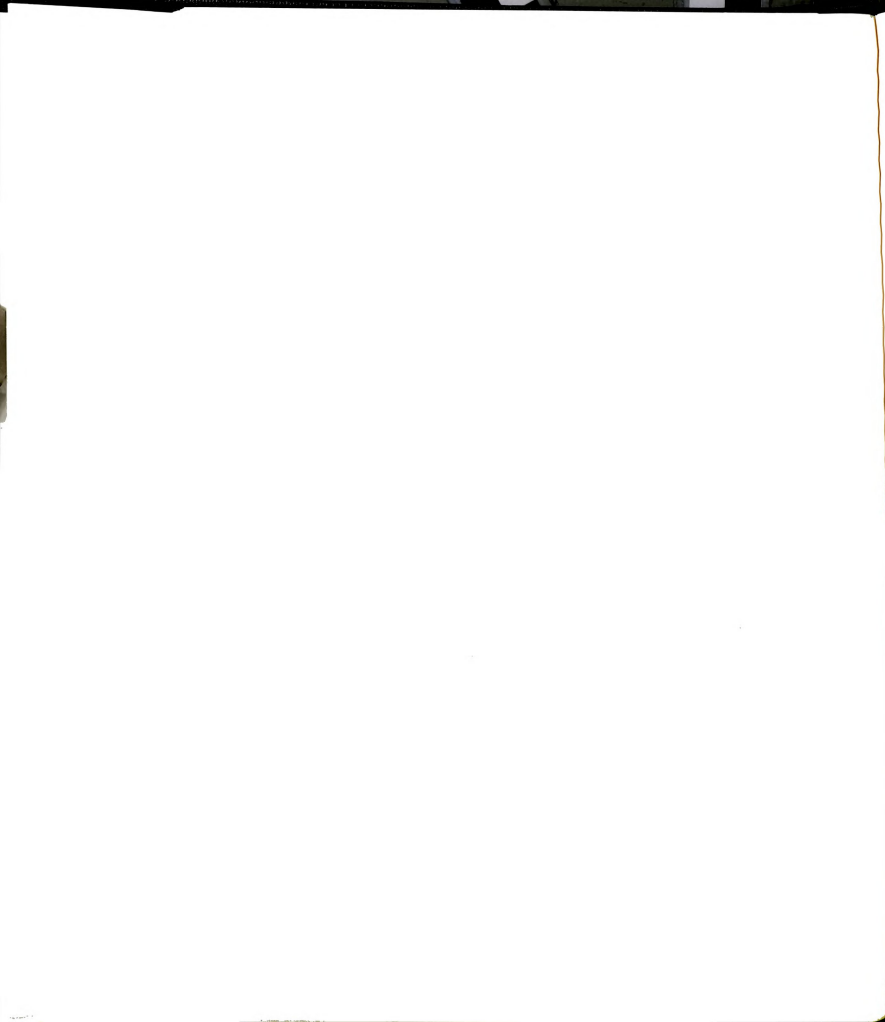
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people, Mexico City has become a true megalopolis, the greatest urban concentration in history. It sprawls over 950 square miles, about three times the area of New York City. More than three million motor vehicles slow traffic to the pace of horse-and-buggy era. Every day, automobile exhaust and industrial fumes spew 12,000 tons of pollutants into the atmosphere, provoking uncounted thousands of premature deaths and thickening the once azure skies to a yellow-gray opacity that veils both distant mountains and nearby skyscrapers. (528)

Facing the Mexican citizens, therefore, is a politically, economically, socially and ecologically hostile city which threatens their existence in numerous ways: the economic and political exploitation of the rich and powerful, the alienation and anonymity of an overwhelming demography, and the infections and illness due to the poisonous smog. Carlos Monsiváis explains in Los rituales del caos²⁶ what life in Mexico City means for the individual when he states, "Quedarse en la capital de la república es afrontar los riesgos de la contaminación, el ozono, la inversión térmica, el plomo en la sangre, la violencia, la carrera de ratas, la falta de significación individual" (20). Nevertheless, he goes on to enumerate why people stay in Mexico City and why people love Mexico City, "Irse es perder las ventajas formativas e



informativas de la extrema concentración, las sensaciones de modernidad (o de postmodernidad) que aportan el crecimiento y las zonas ingobernables de la masificación. A la mayoría así lo niegue con quejas y promesas de huida, le alegra quedarse atendida a las razones de esperanza" (20). These contradictions are what lead Héctor Belascoarán Shayne to declare his love for Mexico City as an "amor imposible" in No habrá final feliz, "Tomarse a broma, tomar en serio esa ciudad, ese puercoespín lleno de púas y suaves pliegues. Carajo, estaba enamorado del DF. Otro amor imposible a la lista. Una ciudad para querer, para querer locamente. En arrebatos" (22).

Belascoarán Shayne, in Algunas nubes (1985), calls the chaotic capital home, absorbing its essence by walking its streets and seeing its people, "La ciudad entra por los pies y los ojos y Héctor la caminaba y la miraba. Era la misma. No cabía duda. Quizá seguía deteriorándose, quebrándose, corrompiéndose, pero era la misma. [...] Caminó y vio hasta que los pies comenzaron a cocinarse dentro de los calcetines y el ojo bueno comenzó a llorar. No estaba claro si la ciudad podía

²⁶ Monsiváis discusses literary manifestations of Mexico City in his article "México: Ciudad del apocalipsis a plazos" (In Grobstadtliteratur 1992).



considerarse un hogar, pero si algún lugar podía llamarse casa, en ése estaba" (53). When the Mexican detective travels to Spain in Adios, Madrid (1993), he recalls Mexico City's essence through a combination of memory and nostalgia. Walking along the Castellana in Madrid, Belascoarán Shayne compares Spain's capital to his own D.F.:

¿Sentía su ciudad como un espacio de asfalto al borde de la desaparición? El caos de la red cloacal, los temblores, las inundaciones, el enloquecimiento de la tira, los aztecosos pelándose con los jarekrishnas por definir la fecha exacta del fin del mundo, el gran apagón y el descenso de los infiernos...Cualquier cosa. El DF vivía en estado precario, al borde de...

Madrid no tenía esas vibraciones, parecía una ciudad autocomplaciente, donde casi todos pensaban de sí mismos que eran muy listos y que pronto serían muy ricos; las conversaciones callejeras, las palabras que escuchaba al paso, le daban la impresión de encontrarse en una ciudad conservadora donde la gente reunía dinero desde los 23 años para la jubilación. (70)

If Héctor Belascoarán Shayne is the self-sworn protector of D.F., then the manifestation of the overwhelming megalopolis's conscience is the night-time radio announcer and friend of the detective, "el Cuervo" Valdivia. The purpose of "el Cuervo" in these novels is twofold in that as a representative of mass communication he is able to aid Belascoarán Shayne as well as others in



trouble in Mexico City by relaying messages over the airwaves between songs. Yet, more importantly, the figure of "el Cuervo" articulates a strategy for survival against alienation and anonymity in Mexico City by offering himself as a catalyst for "solidarity" among the citizens of D.F. Evoking images of Poe's "The Raven," "el Cuervo" calls out to the lifeless souls of the night that they may find solace with him, "El Cuervo está aquí para servir de puente entre todos nosotros. Para movilizar los recursos desperdiciados de la ciudad, para establecer un camino solidario entre los habitantes de la noche, entre los vampiros del DF... No le dé vergüenza. Todos tenemos problemas, y hay pocas soluciones fáciles" (Cosa Fácil 128).

Through his program, "Las Horas del Cuervo," the disc jockey seeks solidarity among "los perros noctívagos, vampiros, trabajadores de horas extras, estudiantes desvelados, choferes de turno nocturno, huelguistas que hacen guardia, prostitutas, ladrones sin suerte, detectives independientes, enamorados defraudados, solitarios empedernidos y otros bichos de la fauna nocturna" (132). In this way, Valdivia provides a voice and a refuge for the disenfranchised, lonely, unlucky and simply hard-working citizens of Mexico City



that are trying to maneuver through the "shadows" and the "cannibals." At the end of Cosa fácil, "el Cuervo" establishes the motto that expresses the only viable strategy for survival in Mexico City, "De manera que, aquí estoy de nuevo, compartiendo y aprendiendo con la noche. *Solidario en la soledad*" (224).²⁷

At the beginning of No habrá final feliz, Héctor Belascoarán Shayne defines the relationships that compose his personal "solidaridad" and ensure his survival in the chaos of Mexico City. On one hand, he feels his officemates ensure his connection with the "real" Mexico while, on the other hand, his brother, sister and "el Cuervo" constitute his family,

Estaban sus tres vecinos de despacho:
Gilberto, el plomero, Carlos Vargas el
tapicero y el Gallo Virreal, ingeniero
experto en drenaje profundo. En estos
tres últimos años habían creado una íntima
solidaridad basada en las diversas de sus
oficios y de sus actitudes ante la vida;
pero había más que solidaridad, había una
forma de tomar distancia sobre el país y
separarse de la parte más jodida de la
patria. Estaba el cuervo Valdivia,
locutor de radio, y estaban Elisa y
Carlos, sus hermanos, con los que había
creado un reducto mafioso de solidaridad
familiar. (29)

²⁷ My emphasis.

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the structure of the atom. It is shown that the structure of the atom is determined by the laws of quantum mechanics, which are based on the principle of the uncertainty of the position and momentum of the particles. The paper then proceeds to a detailed analysis of the structure of the atom, showing that the structure is determined by the laws of quantum mechanics, which are based on the principle of the uncertainty of the position and momentum of the particles.

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With the support of these relationships, Belascoarán Shayne carries on his battles with the "fuerzas del mal" and fights the chaos not expecting to win but merely hoping to survive.

Actually, Héctor's brother Carlos battles what Nestor García Canclini refers to as "deterritorialization" by fixing a physical space where he can affirm his identity through graffiti and criticize the imposed order. In The Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari view deterritorialization as a result of the battle between alienation and liberation in a capitalistic system:

Capitalism is inseparable from the movement of deterritorialization, but this movement is exorcised through the factitious and artificial reterritorializations. Capitalism is constructed on the ruins of the territorial and the despotic, the mythic and the tragic representations, but it re-establishes them in its own service and in another form, as images of capital. Marx summarizes the entire matter by saying that the subjective abstract essence is discovered by capitalism only to be put in chains all over again, to be subjugated and alienated—no longer is it true, in an exterior and independent element as objectivity, but in the element, itself subjective, of private property. (303)

Representation, therefore, offers Carlos a means to fix his identity and he confesses to Héctor that he is



waging a "guerra ideológica" directed toward a gang of juveniles. He paints over the gang's graffiti in order to steal back part of the city, "Es como meada de perro. De donde meo para acá es mi espacio, nadie puede meterse" (Regreso a la misma ciudad 19). When asked what he writes, Carlos responds, "*Punkis son fresas, ¡Viva Enver Hoxa! o El Che está vivo, es una fantasma que vuelve, cuidado putos, vive en Escandón o Los sex punkies son pirruris o Al perro caído en el agua patearlo hasta que muera*" (19). Nevertheless, Carlos reveals to his brother that even solidarity with a street gang is possible when the common enemy is the PRI, "Además, a veces coincido con los punkis y restablecemos la armonía universal. El otro día estaba pintando una que decía: *Si los priístas quieren gobernar, por qué no empiezan por ganar las elecciones* y llegaron los de la banda al rato y en lugar de destruirla le pusieron abajo un *Sí, es cierto* de dos metros de alto" (19). In other words, graffiti exists as a combination of politics, territoriality and disenchantment. It represents a means for opposition as well as a space of resistance to the status quo for those who have no access to modes of mass communication. García Canclini, in Hybrid Cultures, asserts that graffiti is "a territorial writing of the city designed to assert



presence in, and even possession of, a neighborhood. [...] Their sexual, political, or aesthetic references are ways of enunciating modes of life and thought for a group that does not have access to commercial, political, or mass-media circuits to express itself, but that affirms its style through graffiti" (249). Carlos himself acknowledges the political and subversive nature of graffiti when he states, "Tranquilo, no es locura, es sólo para mantenerme en forma mientras encuentro un huequito nuevo en la lucha de clases" (Regreso a la misma ciudad 19).

In the last pages of Regreso a la misma ciudad y bajo la lluvia, Héctor Belascoarán Shayne sits in his window and as an observer rather than participant or protector, he contemplates the infinite cities that pass by along the street. That is, with each person that walks by, Belascoarán Shayne realizes that an entire distinct metropolis walks with him and these inhabitants of the "real" Mexico City represent the possibility for the city to return to its citizens as a new, different capital that was totally theirs. The narrator relates what Héctor sees,

Abrió la ventana. Niños adormilados
buscaban las esquinas a la espera del
camión escolar. Sirvientas camino de la



leche. Borrachos regresando. Obreros industriales iniciando el azaroso camino de hora y media hasta la cadena de montaje. Adolescentes absolutamente pirados de amor, convencidos de que esta vez tampoco los amarían. Escritores mal dormidos que salían a dar un paseo antes de acostarse a soñar con los ojos abiertos en la novela que no salía. Magos de circo ensayando mentalmente el acto maravilloso que les había quitado el sueño. Campesinos sin tierra que venían de lejos para odiar a los burócratas de la Reforma Agraria mientras hacían cola. Suicidas arrepentidos. Madres embarazadas y madrugadoras, profesores que sacaban del sombrero geniales ecuaciones de álgebra; vendedores de seguros en los que no creían, conductores milagrosos del metro, físicos que no podían ser como Leonardo da Vinci, periodistas en retorno, vendedores de lotería que nunca tocaría, locutores de estaciones FM camino a la chamba, que sabían que otra vez leerían noticias falsas y que soñaban con colar un día de estos información que les era negada, ancianos orgullosos que ya no sabían dormir, enfermeras del alma, perros callejeros, poetas inéditos, directores de cine en lista negra, burócratas democráticos al borde del despido, bateristas de rock compulsivos lectores de Althusser; adolescentes que ondeaban retadoras a las seis de la mañana, su recién peinada trenza y que no podían dejar de creerse propietarias de una ciudad que las adoraba; albañiles cardenistas celosos conservadores del oficio de poner el ladrillo en vertical y sin plomada. (137-138)

Through fragmented sentences, the narrator emphasizes images that appear before the detective conveying the various social classes, occupations,



ideologies and individuals that contribute to Mexican society. Their difference, the narrator concludes, holds the hope for the city's survival, "Todos los fabricantes de metrópolis diferentes, de futuros aparentemente imposibles, camino a las rutinas que disimulaban que ellos serían los que un día harían que la ciudad se abriera como flor y fuera otra" (138). By embracing Mexico's pluralism, Belascoarán Shayne offers a means of resistance to the PRI's totalizing, homogenizing vision of modernity. Rather than advocate the illusion of uniformity, the detective celebrates the individual worlds that comprise Mexico.

The crisis in Spain, much like in Mexico, corresponds to the difficulty of transforming a society from a closed, repressed and highly agrarian country, in the first half of Franco's dictatorship (1940s and 1950s) into one that is open, liberal and highly industrialized in a very short amount of time. This transformation began in the second half of the Franco regime (1960s and 1970s) as the Spanish government felt pressures, both internal and external, to modernize the country and loosen the tight, repressive hold that for so many years had stifled the economic and cultural growth of the country. According to Borja de Riquer i Permanyer, many of the

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to the study of the

properties of the function

defined by the equation

where α is a real number, β is a complex number, and γ is a real number.

The function $f(z)$ is analytic in the domain $|z| < 1$ and satisfies the condition

where δ is a real number, ϵ is a complex number, and ζ is a real number.

The function $f(z)$ is also analytic in the domain $|z| < 1$ and satisfies the condition

where η is a real number, θ is a complex number, and ϕ is a real number.

The function $f(z)$ is also analytic in the domain $|z| < 1$ and satisfies the condition

where κ is a real number, λ is a complex number, and μ is a real number.

The function $f(z)$ is also analytic in the domain $|z| < 1$ and satisfies the condition

where ν is a real number, ω is a complex number, and ξ is a real number.

The function $f(z)$ is also analytic in the domain $|z| < 1$ and satisfies the condition

where π is a real number, ρ is a complex number, and σ is a real number.

The function $f(z)$ is also analytic in the domain $|z| < 1$ and satisfies the condition

where τ is a real number, υ is a complex number, and ϕ is a real number.

The function $f(z)$ is also analytic in the domain $|z| < 1$ and satisfies the condition

where χ is a real number, ψ is a complex number, and η is a real number.

The function $f(z)$ is also analytic in the domain $|z| < 1$ and satisfies the condition

where θ is a real number, κ is a complex number, and λ is a real number.

The function $f(z)$ is also analytic in the domain $|z| < 1$ and satisfies the condition

where μ is a real number, ν is a complex number, and ω is a real number.

The function $f(z)$ is also analytic in the domain $|z| < 1$ and satisfies the condition

where ξ is a real number, ζ is a complex number, and η is a real number.

democratic reforms of the Transition (referring to the period after Franco's death in 1975 until the rise to power of the Socialists in the 1982 elections) had actually begun in the 1960s. During this time, Spain witnessed a decrease in the number of agrarian workers and a rise in industrial and service-oriented workers, a movement of large sectors of the population to cities and, as a result, an increased demand for public services such as education, sanitation and medicine (260-63).

These changes toward a more urban population created demands that the Franco government had not anticipated, exposed inequalities and fomented new attitudes among the young about religion, politics and culture. Riquer i Permanyer points to the movement toward democracy and its lasting effects by stating,

The conjuncture with a period of unparalleled growth in the western world was the principal external factor, and to this should be added the pressure from and capacity of Spanish society to emerge from the isolation and underdevelopment brought about by the Franco regime's autarkic fantasy. This made the growth of the Spanish economy incoherent to the point of chaos, prone to sharp imbalances, tensions, and deficits. And it was these tensions and inadequacies which created the conditions for the growth of new and significant mass movements, whose increasingly politicized action would undermine the regime's prestige and solidity, rendering its continuation

inconceivable after Franco's death in
1975. (260)

Since the 1960s, Spain became absorbed into a consumer society in which the various sectors of the population, especially the youth, gained knowledge of the world principally through television, popular music and film. This was also accompanied by a boom in publishing in which Spaniards gained access to the highly politicized fiction of Latin America as well as Spanish texts and works of social commentary, history and philosophy. The effects of a new, open Spanish society took hold in the attitudes of the people who possessed a greater awareness of democratic procedures, questioned their faith in Catholicism and the authority of the Church and actively demanded information and political pluralism (Riquer i Permanyer 266).

Despite a new sense of democracy, however, the creation of an open society in such a short amount of time has forced Spaniards to confront issues and problems, such as abortion, divorce, crime and drug use, that had been unknown or repressed during the years of Franco's rule. E. Ramón Arango points out the "new" problems of a secularized Spain in Spain: From Repression to Renewal,



The issues of divorce, abortion, and the relationship between the sexes have shaken Spain to the core of its family and religious traditions, wedding for public debate Franco's two great taboos, sex and politics. The controversy surrounding educational reform has been even more traumatic, and coming to grips with the drug culture has made even those most committed to the democratic process realize just how self-destructive a free society can be. (212-13)

What becomes apparent in Spain's transition to democracy after Franco is a constant "tug-and-pull" between the past and the present in which the roles in society are still changing in order to accommodate a new function for security forces, adapt to a new Constitution and judicial system and conform to a decentralized State. This discontinuity between past and present can be seen in Robert Graham's Spain: Change of a Nation where he states,

The unique feature of Spain's return to democracy has been the way in which there has been no automatic break with the past. Those institutions most identified with the Franco regime--the armed forces and the Church--have been relegated to lesser roles but their reform has been gradual and deferential. The new institutions--an elected parliament, trade unions, and a free press--have been grafted on to the old order. This has caused frictions and resulted in a democratic system that is not yet complete. (251)



The results of these contradictions are a sense of "desencanto" or disillusionment with Spain's new modern, democratic, urban identity as well as a sense of nostalgia among certain members of society for a past in which the problems of democracy did not exist.

Barcelona, in Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's Carvalho series, reveals a city of contrasts in which the new democratic fervor of a post-Franco Spanish society has propelled wild speculation, unregulated urban expansion and unchecked development. Carvalho's Barcelona depicts a project of modernity that follows the desires of Big Business and Big Government resulting in a city that does not provide an equilibrium between classes but rather augments their differences. The result is a coexistence of contradictory cities in which one is a projection of the ideal modern, urban and developed city whereas the other reveals the hidden reality of an underclass exploited by the greed and desire of those in power.

In Vázquez Montalbán's Los mares del sur (1979), what he refers to as his "urban novel," the existence of San Magín, a failed urban planning project for the immigrant working classes, exposes the inequalities of a city and society pursuing, without conscience, the ideals of modernization. Pepe Carvalho traces the steps of

Stuart Pedrell, the building contractor of San Magín, in order to uncover his actions since his disappearance the previous year and track down his killer. The detective researches the history of the "city" and encounters the official version of the urbanization of San Magín,

Entre el camp de Sant Magí y los límites urbanos de Hospitalet quedaba una amplia zona de terreno libre con lo que se demuestra una vez más la tendencia anular de la especulación del suelo. Se compra terreno urbanizable situado bastante más allá de los límites urbanos para revaluar la zona que queda entre las nuevas urbanizaciones y el anterior límite urbano. Construcciones Iberisa construyó un barrio entero en Sant Magí y al mismo tiempo adquirió también a bajo precio los terrenos que quedaban entre el nuevo barrio y la ciudad de Hospitalet. En un segundo plan de construcciones, esa tierra de nadie también fue urbanizada y multiplicó por mil la inversión inicial de la Constructora...(139)

Nevertheless, despite the profit reaped by the founders of San Magín, the true "barrio" reveals the imperfections and impact of this urbanization on the local population as the narrator states:

San Magín fue mayoritariamente poblado por proletariado inmigrante. El alcantarillado no quedó totalmente instalado hasta cinco años después del funcionamiento del barrio. Falta total de servicios asistenciales. Reivindicación de un ambulatorio del seguro de enfermedad. De diez a ocho mil habitantes. Menuda pieza estabas hecho, Stuart Pedrell. ¿Iglesia? Sí. Se hizo

una iglesia moderna al lado de la antigua ermita de San Magín. Todo el barrio sufre inundaciones cuando se desbordan las canalizaciones del Llobregat. El criminal vuelve al lugar del crimen, Stuart Pedrell. (139)

For Carvalho, witnessing the poverty of San Magín not only exposes the negative effects of modernization but also evokes memories of poverty from his own childhood. Thus, the detective identifies with the victims of the new democracy by means of his own status as "vencido" in the years after the Spanish Civil War.

These memories acquire stronger meaning in El delantero centro fue asesinado al atardecer (1989) and El laberinto griego (1991) as Pepe Carvalho wades through a Barcelona that constantly destroys and rebuilds itself through an urban "facelift" in preparation for the 1992 Olympics. Evoking Italo Calvino's Invisible Cities, memories in these two novels constitute the foundation of Carvalho's Barcelona more than the physical space, the buildings or the streets. In El delantero centro fue asesinado al atardecer, the destruction of Centellas, a poor area of Barcelona designated to be demolished and reconstructed as part of the Olympic Village, signifies the destruction of memories as well as people's homes and neighborhood.

Centellas. Aún existía el Centellas. El recuerdo era una ruta seguida con su madre en los años cuarenta. Salían de la ciudad, unas veces hacia el sur, otras hacia el norte, en busca de casas de campo donde el mercado negro complementaba los rutinarios y escasos alimentos de la cartilla de racionamiento. Hacia el norte, entre huertos y barracas de agricultores de oficio de domingo, se alzaban los muros revocados con cemento y ultimados por una cresta de cristales rotos del Centellas Fútbol Club. Tanto por el nombre, como por todas las significaciones que se le ocurrieron, le pareció un club, un equipo del país de su infancia, y descubrir que aún existía, que el Centellas aún podía ganar por uno a cero y al Gramenet, le pareció como si de pronto hubiera encontrado en el fondo de un bolsillo del pantalón un mendrugo de pan negro de posguerra. (142)

Nevertheless, the current inhabitants of Centellas as well as the Centellas of the past are to disappear under the crush of bulldozers and according to the capitalist philosophy of businessmen such as Basté de Linyola. Linyola, in a conference titled "Crecimiento urbano y esperanza olímpica," reveals this philosophy as the following, "Rehacer lo mal hecho [...] Hay que aceptar la buena y la mala herencia del pasado y practicar un urbanismo y una arquitectura de dignificar lo dignificable y derruir sólo lo estrictamente destruible" (100). Vázquez Montalbán, in the English introduction to his Barcelonas (1992), acknowledges the effect this



approach toward urban reconstruction will have upon the memory and solidarity of Barcelona,

The whole city has been transformed and it won't be long before many of its inhabitants realize that a large chunk of their memory, half head, half heart, has been lopped off. [...] Has it not turned what might have been a model of democratic urban expansion into a speculative frenzy, determined by the 'city as market' model which posits urban development as a process tailor-made to benefit the wealthiest social classes? (7)

In other words, the project of modernization in post-Franco Spain consists of demolishing and rebuilding upon the ruins of the past and present. Yet, the question is posed as to who is ultimately responsible for the "losers" of modernity when the bulldozers roll through their neighborhoods,

Un gigantesco bulldozer con cabeza de insecto de pesadilla convertiría la arqueología de la miseria en definitiva arqueología de libro, pero aunque se derrumbaran las casas y los viejos, los drogadictos, los camellos, las putas pobres, los negros, los moros tuvieran que escapar empujados por la pala mecánica, a algún lugar llevarían su miseria, tal vez al extrarradio, donde la ciudad pierde su nombre y ya no se hace responsable de sus desastres. (48)

The metamorphosis of Carvalho's physical and personal Barcelona, which reinforce each other's



existence through the detective's memory, continues in El laberinto griego in which Carvalho searches for disappeared Greek Alekos among the ruins of the abandoned industrial sector of the city. The pre-Olympic Barcelona, in the fervor of urban renewal, has become a city in which "la vista era asaltada por la ambigüedad de un paisaje en el que no se sabía dónde empezaban las destrucciones y empezaban las construcciones" (76). The destruction and abandonment of certain areas of Barcelona create the industrial ruins that not only form the physical space in which Carvalho's adventure transpires but also become the only place to which the "losers" of modernity can flee. As Carvalho forges through the post-industrial "laberinto" looking for Alekos the narrator describes the obstacles confronting the detective,

Vagonetas oxidadas y varadas, cables colgantes desde donde no podía adivinarse, muebles de oficina rotos o desguazados bajo cobertizos de uralita, un Citroën pato Stromberg sin ruedas y sin motor, cajas de cartón amontadas según un orden arquitectónico, ablandadas por el tiempo convertidas en una montaña blanda y blanquecina y una música lejana de concierto de rock en sordina prometía un fin de fiesta después de un recorrido por aquellas cajas cerradas a las que conducían los raíles momificados y ennoblecidos por los jaramagos. Abría camino Carvalho y se introdujo en una de

2

E. coli O157:H7

las naves tras vencer la resistencia
chirriante de una portezuela de zinc. (88)

More an archeologist than a detective, Carvalho
discovers artifacts that reveal the past of this building
which has become a ruin and testimony to the underside of
modernity and the philosophy of progress,

Balas de tejidos sucios, de borras y de
cordeles, papeles de contabilidades ya
inútiles, calendarios de comienzos de los
años setenta, lámparas de metal sin
bombilla, cables eléctricos trenzados,
damajuanas destapadas y obscenas cubiertas
de polvo y telarañas, animales furtivos
corriendo hacia las más ocultas
oscuridades y el haz de luz como una pluma
estilográfica escribiendo un inventario de
ruina y naufragio. (102)

Forgotten like Centellas, this nameless area of
Barcelona unveils the loss of the past and memory that
characterizes the metamorphosis of Carvalho's physical
and personal city.

Coinciding with the urban projects of pre-Olympic
Barcelona in El delantero centro and El laberinto griego
are the death of Bromuro, Carvalho's "limpiabotas"
informant, and the decision of Charo, Carvalho's
prostitute girlfriend, to abandon her occupation and move
to Andorra. The disintegration of his "family" as well
as the destruction of his city force Carvalho to withdraw
from a Barcelona which is not his anymore and which he

1874

1875

1876

neither knows nor recognizes. Carvalho's growing passivity in the face of changing times is acknowledged in El delantero centro, "Pero allí estaba el tiempo, en sí mismo y en Biscuter y en Charo y en Bromuro, y en cada caso traicionaba a sus víctimas de diferente manera. A Charo macerándole un cuerpo que empezaba a ser algo fondón, a Bromuro pudriéndole por dentro, a Carvalho haciéndole cada vez más espectador pasivo del tiempo propio y ajeno" (42). With the disappearance of the relationships which ensured his survival in the urban setting, Carvalho acknowledges the slow death of his Barcelona,

Desde la muerte de Bromuro andaba a ciegas por el subsuelo de la ciudad. Todas las ratas pertenecían a nueva generación y Carvalho se negaba buscar nuevos informadores, como si sustituir a Bromuro fuera un acto de póstumo fidelidad, no sólo al limpiabotas, sino a sí mismo, a una ciudad que se le moría en la memoria y que ya no existía en sus deseos. Se muere una ciudad en la que era necesaria la compasión y nace una ciudad en la que ya sólo tendrá sentido la distancia más corta entre el comprarse y el venderse a sí misma. (El laberinto griego 131)

The loss of space in the Carvalho series connects the urban setting with personal memory, both of which suffer under the ideals of Spain's new democracy. This understanding of social space reiterates Henri Lefebvre's



understanding of the emergence of modernity, the commodification of space, and the loss of time in The Production of Space:

With the advent of modernity time has vanished from social space. It is recorded solely on measuring-instruments, on clocks, that are as isolated and functionally specialized as this time itself. Lived time loses its form and its social interest—with the exception, that is, of time spent working. Economic space subordinates time to itself; political space expels it as threatening and dangerous (to power). The primacy of the economic and above all of the political implies the supremacy of space over time. It is thus possible that the error concerning space that we have been discussing actually concerns time more directly, more intimately, than it does space, time being even closer to us, and more fundamental. Our time, then, this most essential part of lived experience, this greatest good of all goods, is no longer visible to us, no longer intelligible. It cannot be constructed. It is consumed, exhausted, and that is all. It leaves no traces. It is concealed in space, hidden under a pile of debris to be disposed of as soon as possible; after all, rubbish is a pollutant. (95-96)

The dual transformation of the physical spaces and personal relations of Carvalho's Barcelona in El delantero centro and El laberinto griego echoes the rapid urban change and personal loss in Los mares del sur. City and memory interact once again in El delantero centro when Carvalho dreams about the first victim in his



"family" of this new urban identity: the wolf pup²⁸ he found and named *Bleda*. Carvalho and Biscuter give the puppy the name *Bleda* evoking the innocence of the animal,

--Eres muy blanda.

--Una bleda--apostilló Biscuter saliendo de detrás de la cortina.

--Eso es. Te llamaremos *Bleda*, por lo blandengue que eres. (Los mares del sur 28)

Carvalho, however, at the end of Los mares del sur, is unable to protect *Bleda* from the violence of a new democratic and urban Barcelona. In the last pages he returns to his home in Vallvidrera to find *Bleda* dead with her throat slashed, obviously in retribution for the beating Carvalho gave to a gang of "navajeros" he confronted in San Magín. In this scene, the place that for Carvalho had been a refuge from the city has been infected by the violence of Spain's urban democracy. The victimization of the weak in this society has taken form in the murder of the defenseless *Bleda*. After burying the puppy, Carvalho contemplates and condemns the city responsible for the death of an innocent member of his "family," "Recubrió la tierra con la gravilla que había separado, tiró la pala, se sentó sobre la baranda del muro y se aferró con las manos a los bordes de ladrillo

²⁸ Although *Bleda* is often referred to only as a "perra," in El delantero centro, the narrator calls her a "lobita" (185).



para que el pecho no se le rompiera por los sollozos. Le ardían los ojos, pero sentía una súbita limpieza en la cabeza y en el pecho. Mirando hacia la ciudad iluminada dijo: --Hijos de puta, hijos de puta" (Los mares del sur 286).

The combination of the metamorphosis of the physical pre-Olympic Barcelona with the death of Bromuro in El delantero centro recall in Carvalho his first moment of personal loss as well as his experience with the architects of Spain's urban renewal in San Magín. After waking from a nightmare about Bleda, who had been slain ten years earlier, Carvalho realizes the illusion of the dream and the reality of loss, "Y no estaba. Sólo la realidad permanecía al lado de la cama, la obscena realidad imponiéndole continuamente el mismo programa de vida: pagar las deudas y enterrar a los muertos" (El delantero centro 185). Yet, the memory of Bleda elicits the memory of Stuart Pedrell and the urban projects of the late 1970s which Carvalho compares to the preparations for the Olympics,

En el decorado de su imaginación habían reaparecido situaciones y rostros de aquellos años: el caso del empresario declasado, los constructores de la ciudad para inmigrados, aquella sensación de que todo había cambiado para que muy poco cambiara. El propio Stuart Pedrell, el

rico con mala conciencia que en mil novecientos setenta y ocho había intentado viajar a la otra cara de la ciudad, a unos sarcásticos mares del sur, con diez años de perspectiva parecía un adolescente inmaduro e imbécil. La raza de los ricos con mala conciencia se había extinguido, acorralada quizá por la de los que tienen mala conciencia por no ser ricos. (185-86)

Whereas Barcelona is a city in constant destruction and renewal, Madrid, the bureaucratic center of Spain, reveals a duality similar to that of Mexico City in which the politics of democracy are actually controlled by the personal interests of the conservative elite, private businessmen and corrupt politicians. By ironically transforming Dámaso Alonso's description of the post-Civil War capital city "Madrid es una ciudad de un millón de cadáveres," Manuel Vázquez Montalbán identifies the essence of Spain's new democracy and what the narrator in Quinteto en Buenos Aires (1997) refers to as "la farsa de la modernidad" (17). Vázquez Montalbán first transforms Alonso's phrase in Asesinato en el Comité Central to describe the political atmosphere of the early 1980s and reiterates it in El Premio to capture the disillusionment of a nation exhausted by political scandals in the 1990s,

A Carvalho le pareció la ciudad de un millón de chalecos en aquella Transición dirigida por jóvenes ejecutivos de transiciones que se ponían chalecos para sentirse más vertebrados. Luego, los



socialistas se quitaron los chalecos y los que llegaron al poder descubrieron las camisas de marca. Ahora observó el regreso de algunos chalecos. Volverán pronto las derechas al poder. Madrid se había convertido en la ciudad del millón de dossiers, donde todo el mundo trafica con lo que sabe sobre las cloacas ajenas. (75)

Manuel Vázquez Montalbán introduces the theme of the "cloaca" in Roldán, ni vivo ni muerto, in which Pepe Carvalho searches for the corrupt director of the Guardia Civil Luis Roldán. Yet, although Carvalho fails to encounter the real disappeared Roldán he discovers that the hidden government groups that constitute the "cloacas" of Spain are filled with infinite manifestations of Roldán. Uncovering this unknown city within Madrid leads to another variation of Alonso's phrase,

Madrid fue una ciudad de un millón de cadáveres en los años cuarenta [...] Actualmente era la ciudad de un millón de cloacas por las que circulaban las bandas secretas de todos los reinos taifas del poder político, económico, militar, multinacional. Si el Diablo Cojuelo había destapado los techos de Madrid para sorprender la vida secreta de su humanidad barroca, más de tres siglos después habría que destapar las cloacas para entender el presente y predisponer el futuro de España. (61)

The image of Madrid, therefore, parallels that of Mexico City as an inversion of Plato's cave, "--Ahora es



exactamente al revés de como lo imaginó Platón. Ustedes arriba ven las sombras de la realidad y nosotros desde aquí abajo se las proyectamos" (166).

In conclusion, through the novels of Paco Ignacio Taibo II and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, the project of modernity in contemporary post-1968 Mexico and post-Franco Spain fails to reconcile a past of repression with democratic ideals. Rather, the portrayal of the urban milieu of the detective presents a coexistence of seen and unseen elements in which those democratic ideals are usurped in favor of the interests of Big Business, corrupt politicians, the conservative elite and violent police. As a result, Mexico City, Barcelona and Madrid evoke Hammett's "Poisonville" in which the underclass is victim of the project of modernization, development and urbanization.

CHAPTER IV

Memory versus Amnesia: Preservation of the past in the "Novela Negra" of Taibo and Vázquez Montalbán

In the detective novels of both Paco Ignacio Taibo II and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, truth extends beyond the solution of a crime. Their respective detectives, Héctor Belascoarán Shayne and Pepe Carvalho, unveil the underpinnings of power through the process of the investigation and the search for truth. The power structure—comprised of big business, police, military, government, and even drug traffickers—manipulate and suppress 'truth' in favor of their own interests. Nevertheless, the search for truth in Mexico and Spain corresponds to a crisis in historical truth as well as the victimization of the underclass. The past, in other words, is threatened by repressive tactics of 'official' historiography, co-optation of the past by the established order and the pervasion of cultural amnesia among the population. To resist the loss of history, Belascoarán Shayne and Carvalho rely on individual and collective memory in order to maintain the persistence of the past in the present.

Taibo's Belascoarán Shayne serves as a lone hero that vindicates the utopian vision of the past,



specifically the ideals of the 1968 student movement, through his "curiosidad" and "terquedad." Throughout his investigations, the Mexican detective encounters 'remnants' of the past that not only reveal the interpenetration of past and present but also illustrate his desire to reclaim the history. Student protestors, gangsters and military personnel from 1968 appear in Belascoarán Shayne's investigations in a way that demonstrates the persistence of crime over the past thirty years. At times, his investigation is literally a search for history, an exercise in historical recuperation that uncovers hidden actions of government repression as well as PRI co-optation of historical figures and events.

Pepe Carvalho, on the other hand, simultaneously fights to liberate himself from the weight of the past while defending the survival of history in a culture of amnesia. The dialectic between memory and amnesia constitutes one of the most important themes, on both an individual and collective level, in the Vázquez Montalbán's Carvalho series. In a time of political destabilization, drastic social changes and profound economic uncertainty, Carvalho understands both the danger and the temptation of forgetting in an age of

crisis. Nevertheless, the Spanish detective, in addition to protecting the victims of the present in Spain, vindicates the victims of the past through his own personal and subjective memories.

As a matter of fact, Vázquez Montalbán's Carvalho and Taibo's Belascoarán Shayne distinguish themselves from their hard-boiled literary predecessors through their strong tendency to remember. Although detectives like Hammett's Sam Spade and the Continental Op, Chandler's Philip Marlowe, and Archer's Ross MacDonald are immersed in their historical circumstances, they represent men of action that lend little importance to reflection, sentimentality, and nostalgia. Rather, they are characterized more by their ability to manipulate the immanent threats of a hostile world. Spade and the Continental Op battle gangsterism during the 1920s and 1930s, Marlowe confronts a decadent Californian society before and after World War II, and Archer becomes involved in complicated webs of collective culpability during the progressive instability of the 1950s and 1960s. Nevertheless, as Robert Edenbaum describes this type of detective, none of them exhibit the habit of evoking the past, be it individual or collective, "He is free of sentiment, fear of death, of the temptation of



money and sex. He is what Albert Camus calls 'a man without memory,' free of the burden of the past" (81).

Personal memory, for both Belascoarán Shayne and Pepe Carvalho, serves as a means for sustaining a collective understanding of the past as well as countering "official" historiographic accounts. According to Hayden White, historical writing does not describe the past objectively but rather depends on narrative techniques—such as emplotment, metaphor, and character development—to endow meaning to a sequence of events. To overcome the discontinuities and disparities of chronological events, a historical writer utilizes narrative techniques to represent the past as a coherent and integrated whole. Far from being an objective science, historiography conveys not what is "true" but what seems to be "real" by linking events in a way that could be meaningful to the reader. In the article "Historical Text as Literary Artifact," White asserts the fictive qualities of historical writing,

[Historical narratives] succeed in endowing sets of past events with meanings, over and above whatever comprehension they provide by appeal to putative causal laws, by exploiting the metaphorical similarities between sets of real events and the conventional structures of our fictions. By the very constitution of a set of events in such a



way as to make a comprehensible story out of them, the historian charges those events with the symbolic significance of a comprehensible plot structure. Historians may not like to think of their works as translations of fact into fictions; but this is one of the effects of their works. (91)

Paul Ricoeur sees "meaning" in historical accounts arise out of the confluence of the "what" and the "why" in which a historian depends on narrative techniques in an attempt to explain the events of the past. In Time and Narrative Vol. 1, Ricoeur states, "Yet the distinction between a narrative and its conceptual or documentary support does not come down to distinguishing two levels of composition. To explain why something happened and to describe what happened coincide. A narrative that fails to explain is less than a narrative. A narrative that does explain is a pure plain narrative" (148). Nevertheless, this effort to make sense of the past structures events as immanent trajectories and inserts an ideological vision into the account that conditions the portrayal of history²⁹. White affirms this in The Content of the Form:

²⁹ In his Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe (1973 Johns Hopkins UP), White explains how "modes of emplotment" combine with "modes of argument" to create "ideological implications" (29) that reveal the underlying purposes to the historian's "explanations."

2. 10. 1940
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If ever fully realized story, however we define that familiar but conceptually elusive entity, is a kind of allegory, points to a moral, or endows events, whether real or imaginary, with a significance that they do not possess as a mere sequence, then it seems possible to conclude that every historical narrative has as its latent or manifest purpose the desire to moralize the events of which it treats. [...] And this suggests that narrativity, certainly in factual storytelling and probably in fictional storytelling as well, is intimately related to, if not a function of, the impulse to moralize reality, that is, to identify it with the social system that is the source of any morality we can imagine.
(14)

The historian, therefore, creates a representation of the past that privileges certain elements deemed important yet suppresses others felt to be irrelevant to the overall coherence of the narrative. Thus, according to the ideology and perspective of the historian, any written history will possess unheard voices omitted due to the prerogatives and prejudices of the historian. Hayden White acknowledges the central role of the historian stating, "Histories, then, are not only about the events but also about the possible sets of relationships that those events can be demonstrated to figure. These sets of relationships are not, however, immanent in the events themselves; they exist only in the



mind of the historian reflecting on them" ("Historical Text as Literary Artifact" 94).

From Hayden White's theoretical foundation, Beatriz Pastor interprets the historian's subjectivity as a means for domination and subjugation. By analyzing the accounts of the New World, Pastor notes a unified vision of the Conquest and underscores its social, political, economic and moral legitimacy. As she notes in Discurso narrativo de la conquista de América, such writers as Columbus and Cortés not only validate the Conquest but also mythify the New World according to their respective visions: the divine authority of imperialism and the efficiency of Spain's military machine. By controlling the representation of reality, however, they necessarily marginalize the indigenous element and present a world of "colonizers" and "colonized." In "Silencio y escritura: La historia de la Conquista," Pastor states, "Anclada firmemente en una cosmovisión eurocéntrica, formulada de acuerdo con categorías de percepción, de análisis y de exposición europeas, la historia del descubrimiento y conquista de América se levanta sobre el silencio, la omisión y la ausencia" (131). By controlling the writing of history, one may control the perception of power. Edward Said, in Culture and Imperialism asserts that

colonialism extends beyond the accumulation of goods or the acquisition of lands and lies in the ability to mold ideological formation, "Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people *require* and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination" (9).

Personal memory, therefore, serves as a means to resist "silence, omission and absence" and to insert suppressed voices into the collective conscience. Whereas broad historical accounts at best homogenize, and at worst co-opt, visions of the past, individual memory can provide depth and room for understanding collective reactions to social, economic or political processes. John Lukacs, in Historical Consciousness, or the remembered past, emphasizes the importance of individual memory:

This understanding of the inevitability of personal character of our knowledge means not much more than a new, chastened, and deepening, version of the ancient *know thyself* through the recognition that *know thyself* must also mean *know thy history*. [...] History is the remembered—and not merely recorded—past. (31-2)



Outside the Héctor Belascoarán Shayne series, Paco Ignacio Taibo II has developed other literary projects that emphasize the importance of memory and resist the loss of history by advocating the recuperation of a radical revolutionary past. In such texts as Memoria roja: Luchas sindicales de los años 20 (1984), Los Bolsheviks: Historia narrativa de los orígenes del comunismo en México (1986), Arcángeles: Doce historias no muy ortodoxas de revolucionarios (1988), and Ernesto Guevara, también conocido como el Che (1996)³⁰, Taibo explores and reclaims the history of 20th century revolutionaries. Obscure figures such as Max Hoelz as well as more renowned names such as Malraux and Che Guevara resist "silence" and are inserted into the historical record through Taibo's writing.

Taibo, however, focuses on personal memory in two texts that embrace the subjectivity of individual conscience and vindicate the ideals of the 1968 student movement: Heroes convocados: Un manual para tomar el poder (1982) and 68 (1991). In the former, one year after the Massacre at the Plaza de Tlatelolco, the protagonist, a tabloid journalist named Néstor, recovers

³⁰ Considered to be perhaps the most complete biography on Che Guevara, Taibo won Italy's prestigious Bancarella Award in the summer of 1998.



in a hospital room after being stabbed by a "prostitute-killer" he had been investigating. As he convalesces, Néstor reflects on the failure of the student movement and, in a hallucinatory state, decides to "call all heroes," avenge the dead students, and complete the revolution. Both historical and fictional heroes come to Néstor's aid including Dumas's four musketeers, Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday, the Light Brigade, the Mau-Mau, Sandokan and the Tigers of Malaysia and even Sherlock Holmes and the Hounds of Baskerville. The ironic absence of any heroes from Mexican history signals the eviscerated democratic ideals of the 1968 student movement and the need to import foreign models of resistance. As Néstor recalls the events from the previous year and imagines a successful revolution, he struggles to reconstruct events yet resist the tendency to mythify the past through nostalgia. Nostalgia, states Néstor, buries the past with emotion whereas memory acts as a conscience:

Era una sensación. Una sensación que podía ser contada de muchas formas y un montón de recuerdos. Una sensación como de que algo estuvo a punto de tomarse en la mano y se escapó: agua, un velo, una sombra. Una sensación como de que el corazón va a estallar y repiquetea como campana y tú dentro de la multitud. Una sensación como de que todo era intenso.

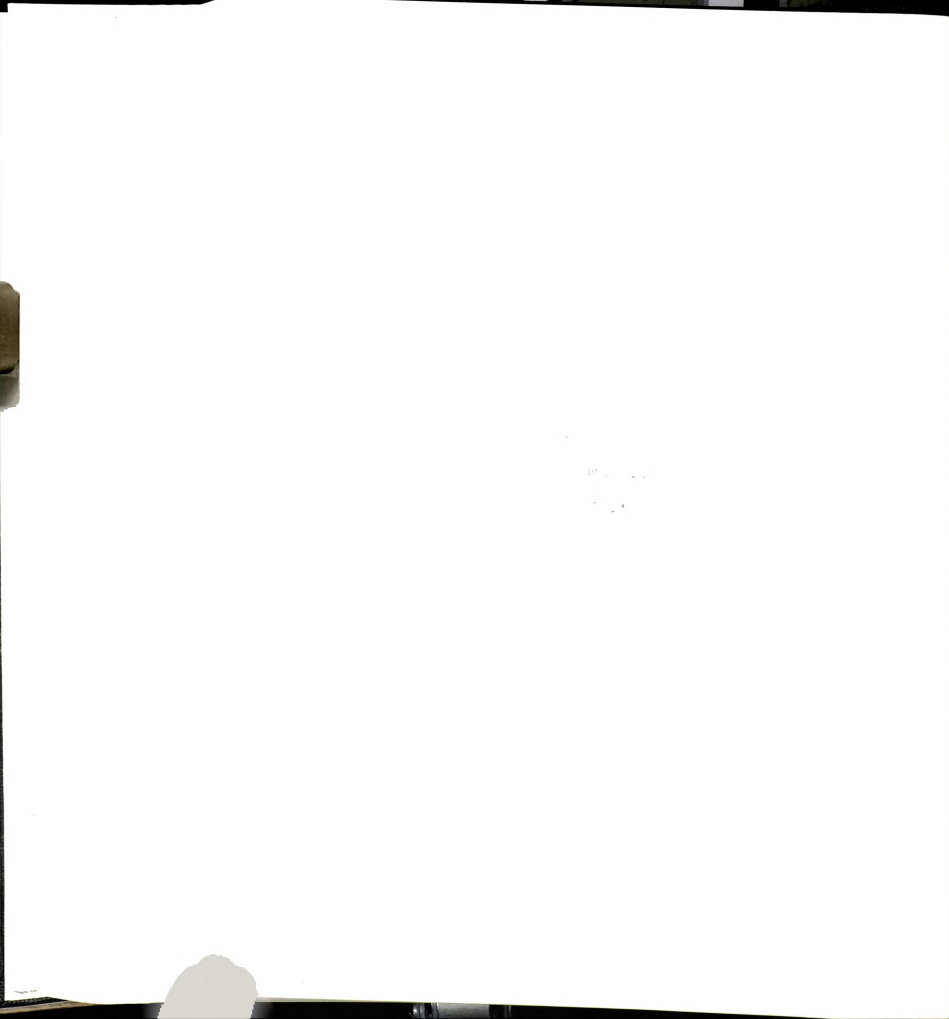


Put a madre, qué pinche forma de mitificar,
de añorar. Nostalgias en palas de
buldozer. ¿De veras era así? O ahora
resulta que el recuerdo del 68 visto en el
69 está reputa ultramistificado en el 70.
(101)

Despite the dangers of nostalgia, however, memory,
personal and collective, is the way that the population
of Mexico can reclaim their past and their city. As
Néstor reads Señales en el viento, a fictional book given
to him by his friend Paco Ignacio Taibo II, he focuses on
the importance of memory in the novel:

Y será inevitable, seremos guardianes,
cuidadores de nuestra memoria y de nuestra
ciudad. Terminaremos cargando un M1 y con
los dedos lamiendo constantemente el borde
afilado del gatillo, la conciencia
reposando en la mira, la mirada depositada
paternalmente en la bala única depositada
en la recámara. Listos a liarnos a tiros
con el primero que amerite; listos para
nuestra propia muerte en nombre de esta
nueva ciudad, ese nuevo país que
inventamos en un descuido que se fraguó en
todos estos años. (108)

Like Néstor in Heroes convocados, Taibo deconstructs
his own memory in 68 emphasizing the need not only to
question one's own recollection but also to doubt the
"official" yet falsified version of the Massacre at
Tlatelolco. Collective and individual memory interact to
reveal the complexity of understanding the past as Taibo
states,



Después de 20 años, y esto se presta para poner en juego al Dumas de los tres mosqueteros o al Gardel de 20 años no es nada, lo único que funciona es la memoria. La memoria colectiva. Incluso la más pequeña y triste memoria individual. Tengo la sospecha que difícilmente sobrevive una sin la otra... (9)

After 20 years, the Mexican author confronts the "fantasma mexicano," as he calls the student movement, in order to ensure its persistence in the collective conscience of the generation born since 1968. A list of questions, however, illustrate the ephemeral nature of the past, articulate ideals expressed during the movement, search his memory for details and ultimately lead to the only question yet to be answered,

¿Cómo fabrica una generación sus mitos?
[...] ¿Cuáles son los límites de la victoria y la derrota? ¿Quién colgó el cartel de barriodeGinzaenlanoche? ¿Cuándo reforma y no revolución? ¿Por qué el mejor café se tomaba en Voca 5? ¿Donde estuvo el punto de no regreso? [...] ¿Dónde arrojaron a nuestros muertos? ¿Dónde tiraron a nuestros muertos? ¿Dónde mierdas arrojaron a nuestros muertos? (12)

Yet, Taibo resists the tendency to simplify the past through nostalgia and fights the government's attempts to falsify history. The Mexican author conveys images and ideas about his experiences in 1968 through fragmented sentences and phrases that evoke memory's elusive nature:

El movimiento estudiantil fue muchas cosas al mismo tiempo: undesenmascaramiento del estado mexicano, rey desnudo ante los millares de estudiantes; fue escuelas tomadas y creación de un espacio comunal libertario basado en la asamblea; fue debate familiar en millares de hogares, fue crisis de las tradicionales formas de desinformar a la patria y encuentro del volante, la voz viva y el rumor salvador como alternativas a la prensa y la tele controladas; fe también violencia represión, miedo, cárcel, asesinatos. Pero sobre todo, más que nada ante todo, significó el relanzamiento de una generación de estudiantes sobre su propia sociedad, la retoma del barrio hasta ahora desconocido, la discusión en el autobús, la ruptura de fronteras, el descubrimiento de la solidaridad popular, la visión más cercana de otro montón de los "ellos," traspasando las bardas grises de la fábrica y llegando hasta los que estaban en su interior. (48)

The call for a hero who vindicates the ideals of the past and emphasizes memory over nostalgia coincide in the creation of Taibo's detective Héctor Belascoarán Shayne. Since the crimes that the Mexican detective attempts to solve directly relate to crimes of the State, the legacy of 1968 extends throughout every investigation Belascoarán Shayne undertakes. The past and present interpenetrate each other through the detective's search for truth that, most often, translates to a desire to uncover a historical truth suppressed or co-opted by the Mexican government. At times the past pursues Héctor



Belascoarán Shayne as he constantly encounters protestors, student gangsters and police he had known from 1968. At other times, however, Belascoarán Shayne pursues the past, struggling to reclaim events, missing persons, and artifacts that represent Mexico's "fantasmas."

In Días de combate (1976), the events of 1968 infiltrate Belascoarán Shayne's awareness through the presence of "la muchacha de la cola de caballo," who the reader finds out later is named Irene. Her individual experiences in the student movement represent a microcosm of the disillusionment after Tlatelolco and she embodies the turmoil and disenchantment of 1968. The chapter of the novel titled "La historia de la muchacha de la cola de caballo" describes Irene's past in the 2nd person "tú" seemingly creating a dialogue between the subject and her 'history.' The student movement awoke in her a new sensibility that broke with her traditional bourgeois values and created a generational rift between her and her parents:

En la Universidad descubriste a tu padre.
Diez años tarde. Descubriste su carrera
de líder sindical vendido, sus compromisos
con el gobierno, la venta de plazas, los
grandes negocios al actuar como
contratista usando fondos sindicales, la
huelga vendida, su carrera como banquero y

financiero. [...] El movimiento de 68 se rompió dentro de ti como un cajón de copas finas. Te acercaste a las manifestaciones; incluso, durante la represión guardaste un mimeógrafo en el garaje de tu casa. Compañeros anónimos y no por ello menos intensos en la relación, noches en vela discutiendo, trabajo de brigadas, a pie por las colonias populares, fogosas asambleas. Todo como una ola que atrapaba y arrastraba a un océano sin fin. (90)

After the defeat of the student movement and another massacre on June 10, 1971, "la muchacha" fled to India and the Egypt in an effort to escape her emptiness, disenchantment, and loneliness. She crosses paths with Belascoarán Shayne when she returns to Mexico and, overwhelmed by a sense of despair, searches for the strangler "el Cereviro" so that she might be his next victim and be freed from her pain. Nevertheless, rather than resign herself to failure, she joins the Mexican detective in his quest, helps him find the killer and becomes his lover in subsequent novels.

Whereas Irene evokes the ideals and frustrations of the student movement, other characters represent more sinister elements that arose in 1968 and came to fruition in the decades that followed. In Algunas Nubes (1985), Héctor Belascoarán Shayne uncovers a link between a powerful gangster and members of Mexico City's police

force who together rob banks and extort money from local business owners. When Héctor learns that the gangster involved is Arturo Melgar, more commonly known as "la Rata," he recalls the myopic university student who was rumored to traffic in marijuana, received money from the PRI, extorted money from "peseros" and always carried knives and pistols. The chapter titled "La historia de La Rata tal como Héctor la sabía y otras cosas que no sabía" not only conveys the subjectivity of the past but also communicates the gangster's rise to power. By allying himself with the PRI and the police, la Rata did dirty work such as "atacar elecciones estudiantiles, irrumpir en cineclubs creando el terror, quebrar huelgas, secuestrar a un maestro, vender información, estimular motines para apoyar a un grupo de funcionarios enfrentado a otro" (47). La Rata came to dominate the underworld of Mexico City by maintaining his links to the power structure, "En su cuenta habría que poner que estaba siempre dentro del sistema, pero siempre ligeramente fuera; quizá más lucrativo aunque un poco más riesgoso. Entonces, a mediados de los años 70, encontró su mina de oro. Y se puso a vaciarla" (49).

On the other hand, Belascoarán Shayne is often hired to actively seek out the past by tracking down missing

persons or recovering stolen artifacts. This pursuit of the past corresponds to an effort to resist the PRI's co-optation of history that began in 1946 when the party changed its title from PRM (Partido Revolucionario Mexicano) to Partido Revolucionario Institucional. With this paradoxical name the PRI symbolically announced the end of the Mexican Revolution and "institutionalized" the ideals of such leaders as Zapata, Madero and Villa. Once ruled by agrarian reformers, intellectuals and union leaders, the PRM transformed into the PRI, now led by economists and other representatives of the business community.

In Días de combate (1976), Belascoarán Shayne is asked to find a soldier of Spain's Civil Guard who, forty one years earlier in 1934, went to Asturias with a dual mission: to learn the whereabouts of fugitive socialists and anarchists as well as to recover the millions expropriated by the revolutionaries. Yet, Comandante Lisardo Doval Bravo, who came to be known as "El Orfeón," added a third mission which was "dirigir personalmente la tortura contra los revolucionarios detenidos, el resquebrajamiento de la resistencia moral de los que habíamos caído" (136). Although the scene remains unresolved, Belascoarán Shayne's potential client asserts

the need to vindicate the past by finding the 87 year old comandante, "Quiero saber dónde está y qué hace, cómo vive. ¿No siente en las noches los aullidos de los torturados? Necesito volver a verlo. Mirarlo de frente" (136).

Similarly, in Amorosos fantasmas (1990), the Mexican detective searches for "el Fantasma" Zamudio, an aged Mexican wrestler suspected in the murder of his partner, "el Ángel." Zamudio ironically becomes his nickname turning into a "fantasma" around the time of the student movements. Curiously, an old wrestler tells Belascoarán Shayne that "el Fantamsa" disappeared in 68 or 71, a time when many other Mexicans became "fantasmas" as well:

No, el Zamudio desapareció en el 68, o en el 71, cuando lo de los estudiantes. Un día salió de una pelea que había tenido de pareja con el Ángel. Ahí sí, ahí les decían "Los Fantasmas". Salió y le dijo al segundo, "ahorita vuelvo mano, voy a ver una de esas manifestaciones de los estudiantes, que me dan mucho calor". Y ya no volvió nunca. Ni aquí, ni a ningún lado. [...] Sepa su madre, se desvaneció, como las fantasmas. Vea usted, qué chistoso, se hizo fantasma el Zamudio.. (43-4)

Later, in Adios, Madrid (1993), the Museo Nacional de Antropología hires Belascoarán Shayne to travel to Spain and recover a pre-hispanic artifact stolen by the lover of an ex-Mexican president. Moctezuma's pectoral,



missing from the museum's collection, seemingly embodies Mexico's hijacked past. However, the stolen artifact is actually one of several, if not hundreds, fakes and Belascoarán Shayne as well as the "thief" were hired by the museum director to give the perception the piece was authentic. The museum director, then, manipulates truth and history as well as the detective to regain the artifact, a copy itself, along with 38 million pesetas gained through negotiation and blackmail with illegal art dealers in Spain. Ironically, the director, named Justo Vasco, asserts he is the last of the honest public servants in Mexico:

Yo soy el último de los funcionarios públicos honestos que quedan en México, amigo. El último de los mohicanos, la excepción de las reglas, el Benito Juárez de la arqueología, el llanero solitario de los museos transados. El dinero es para instalar un sistema de defensa contra incendios en el museo...Supongo que no tendrás ninguna objeción. (136)

Vasco concludes pondering the possibility of executing the same farce elsewhere, "A lo mejor se podía hacer la misma movida en Houston. El museo necesita mejorar la sección de investigación...Y por otro lado está la posibilidad de transarnos a los austriacos y tumbarles el verdadero penacho de Moctezuma" (138).

Belascoarán Shayne's recuperative efforts gain maximum expression in Cosa fácil (1977) when one of the Mexican detective's investigations entails locating Emiliano Zapata. Whereas official history asserts the revolutionary leader died in an ambush in Chinameca in 1919, Taibo's text stimulates doubt. As Scott Sherman³¹ notes, "An Easy Thing is an exercise in historical retrieval: Building upon popular traditions, it urges skepticism regarding the regime's appropriation of the figure of Zapata and opens up new lines of inquiry about the meaning of historical "truth" in 20th Century Mexico" (34). Zapata, much like the Mexican Revolution itself, has become frozen in time and "institutionalized" so their ideals may be adapted to the rhetoric of the PRI. Belascoarán Shayne articulates what Andreas Huyssen calls "cultural ossification:"

-¿Qué quiere de mí?—preguntó Belascoarán Shayne, de oficio detective, hijo de una ciudad en la que Zapata nunca había podido escapar del vacío de los monumentos, del helado metal de las estatuas. De una ciudad donde el sol de Morelos no había podido romper las lluvias de septiembre--
¿Qué quiere de mí?—preguntó Belascoarán deseando creer todo, deseando ver a aquel Zapata que tendría ahora noventa y siete años entrar galopando sobre un caballo

³¹ Sherman's article "Democratic Detective" from the Boston Review can also be found on the internet at <http://www-polisci.mit.edu/BostonReview/BR21.2/Sherman.html>

blanco por el Periférico, llenando de
balas el viento. (12)

Monuments and museums, according to Huyssen in
Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia
preserve time yet induce subjective visions of the past
because they "serve both as burial chamber for the past—
with all that entails in terms of decay, erosion,
forgetting—and as a site of possible resurrections,
however mediated and contaminated, in the eyes of the
beholder" (15)³². Even Belascoarán Shayne himself
illustrates the tendency to texture the past by imposing
his own vision onto Zapata. Yet, he realizes that
preconceptions cloud his judgement:

Se sentía como miembro de una secta
esotérica dedicada a la preservación de
los fantasmas. Quizá ése era el problema
de fondo: que le gustaba aproximarse al
pasado, persiguiendo a un mito más como
historiador o periodista que como
detective. Decidió dejar de lado
prejuicios y buscar a un tal Zapata, de
nombre don Emiliano, como si nunca se
hubieran vertido toneladas de papel sobre
su nombre, como si nunca hubieran sido
bautizadas avenidas ni levantado
monumentos. (159)

³² In Mexico City: The Production and Reproduction of an Urban Environment (Belhaven Press 1990), Peter Ward explores how urban forms—architecture, monuments, physical design—affect social relations, memory, and the collective conscience by creating an "imaginary coherence" (180).

Nevertheless, Belascoarán Shayne upholds the hope that finding the revolutionary still alive might also revive Zapata's ideals,

Quería ver los ojos de Emiliano Zapata de frente, quería ver si el país que el hombre había soñado era posible. Si el viejo le podía comunicar algo del ardor, de la fe que había animado su cruzada. Aunque nunca terminaba de creer la posibilidad de que estuviera vivo, el escarbar en el pasado en su busca lo acercaba a la vida. (108)

At the conclusion of the text, the Mexican detective finds a broken old man—whom Belascoarán Shayne believes is Zapata—living in a cave in Morelos whose words seemingly indict a nation that betrayed the beliefs of the Mexican Revolution, "No, Emiliano Zapata está muerto. [...] Está muerto, yo sé lo que le digo. Murió en Chinameca, en 1919 asesinado por traidores. Las mismas carabinas asomarían ahora... Los mismos darían la orden. El pueblo lloró entonces, para qué quiere que llore dos veces" (246).

Belascoarán Shayne, through the investigative process, not only uncovers 'truth' in post-1968 Mexico but also attempts to reclaim a past appropriated by the power structure. Through memory, then, the detective attempts to protect 'history' from the silence, omissions and absences described by Beatriz Pastor. As much as his

role is to protect the underclass, poor and dispossessed in the present, Belascoarán Shayne also attempts to keep alive the 'fantasmas' of Mexico's past. At the conclusion of Amorosos fantasmas (1990), Héctor contemplates these 'fantasmas' as he listens to *La hora de los solitarios* on the radio. Before the announcer plays a tape of a murdered teenage girl named Virginia, she ironically affirms the purpose of Belascoarán Shayne's effort to recuperate the past, "Cuidémonos de una ciudad que amenaza con tragarnos. El silencio es la peor forma de muerte" (126).

The Spanish detective Pepe Carvalho, like the Mexican Héctor Belascoarán Shayne, distinguishes himself from his North American literary predecessors because he is a "man of memory." He finds himself in a historical moment in Spain that views the past as a yoke and attempts to liberate itself from the burden of memory. Although the transformation of an agricultural, isolated, autarkic nation to an urban, industrialized, open nation began in the second half of the dictatorship, the rapid assimilation of democracy, modernization and mass culture after the death of Franco has created an atmosphere of crisis and destabilization in which the Spanish people attempt to reconcile a past of repression with the

democratic ideals of the present. Helen Graham and Antonio Sánchez signal the rapidity of the changes in Spain as well as the effects on the collective psychology in Spain:

Economic development in the 1960s was followed by the rapid political changes of the 1970s and the social transformation of the 1980s. It is scarcely surprising, then, that Spain's most recent history and contemporary national identity are defined as the products of hugely accelerated development. It is precisely the breathtaking speed of many of these changes which accounts for the uneven results and 'schizophrenic' tendencies in contemporary Spanish culture. (407)

With the development of a Spain that is economically capitalist and multinational, politically democratic and decentralized, and technologically postmodern, what has become evident is a discontinuity of time and what Frederic Jameson calls, in another context, "the loss of a sense of history" (Jameson 125). That is, a postmodern society in the stages of late capitalism, according to Jameson, loses the capacity and the desire to retain its past.

In an interview with Leonardo Padura Fuentes, Vázquez Montalbán notes several factors that contribute to the loss of memory and the development of a culture of amnesia in Spain after Franco:



Yo creo que ha habido varios factores actuando en este sentido. El primero es que la Guerra Civil en sí misma tuvo un carácter tan traumático que la gente prefirió olvidarse de ella. En segundo lugar que la salida del franquismo fue el resultado de un pacto entre caballeros postfranquistas y demócratas, un acuerdo que significaba que no debían echarse los trastos por la cabeza y volver con la lista de agravios y sacarse los colores a la cara [...] [Los socialistas y los Comunistas] eran gentes poco interesadas en reconstruir la memoria y consideraban que era un ruido, algo molesto para la formación de la democracia. Así fraguó una conspiración no escrita para que la gente olvidara y no reivindicara la memoria, y eso a mí me parece sencillamente terrible. Tan terrible que aún está por hacerse en España un análisis crítico y a fondo del franquismo, pues apenas se supone todavía que Franco estuvo mal, y poco más. (49)

Gregorio Morán supports Vázquez Montalbán's evaluation of post-Franco Spain in his book El precio de la Transición in which he asserts the cost for a "stable" democracy has been the sacrifice of memory:

Desde los primeros días de diciembre de 1975 se inicia un proceso de *desmemorización colectiva*. No de olvido, sino de algo más preciso y voluntario, la *capacidad de volverse desmemoriado*³³. Franco ha muerto. ¡Viva el Rey! Si sus promotores pretendían que fuera el monarca de todos los españoles no cabía otra posibilidad que iniciar el encubrimiento del pasado; primera etapa, antes del borrón y cuenta nueva. [...] Quienes debían, fueron conscientes de que la

³³ My emphasis

memoria era un elemento que dificultaba el camino hacia una democracia estable. (75)

In a society that seeks to purge itself of the ghosts of its past through the destruction of the collective memory, the detective Pepe Carvalho serves as an example of the desire to forget the past and surrender oneself to the temptation of cultural amnesia. In La soledad del manager (1977), Carvalho recalls his childhood among the "perdedores" of Spain's Civil War and reveals the past to be a weight that oppresses him:

A veces llegó a dudar de la realidad de aquel barrio. En el recuerdo le parecía como una ciudad pobre y sumergida en un almíbar agri dulce. Humillados y vencidos, en la cotidiana obligación de pedir perdón por haber nacido. La primera vez que Carvalho abandonó aquellas calles, por un cierto tiempo pensó que se había liberado para siempre de la condición de animal ahogado en la tristeza histórica. (112)

Carvalho expresses the unbearable weight of the past when he tells Biscuter in La rosa de Alejandría (1986), "Tengo demasiada memoria, Biscuter..." (16). Later, in El laberinto griego (1991), he repeats the appealing temptation to forget, "-Me gustaría aprender a vivir desnudo de mis memorias, de todas mis memorias, desde las más antiguas a las más inmediatas" (120). On a collective level, the amnesia and denial of the past become evident in the attempt to forget the history of

Franco's repressive institutions by painting the façade of the Jefatura Superior de Policía in "El hermano pequeño," "Habían blanqueado la fachada en un intento de deshistorificar el edificio, pero su historia de muerte y sangre seguía prendida de las paredes, como una patina fantasmal que ningún DDT conseguiría eliminar" (48). In this sense, the destruction of the past signifies the possibility to escape the suffering and the sense of guilt for the "losers" of the Civil War as well as the "victors" by forming a new, democratic and modern identity. José Carlos Mainer affirms that the tendency to accept and forget the past reveals the desire to stop suffering, "But in most cases the real reason for this condoning feeling toward the past—and thus toward oneself—is the honest desire to stop suffering from it as an open wound" (26).

Nevertheless, Carvalho himself also expresses the impossibility to forget in La soledad del manager and later repeats himself in the next novel, Los mares del Sur (1979), when he declares that memory "la llevaba encima como el caracol lleva su cáscara" (Soledad 112). Carvalho's individual memory and all his 'emotional baggage' will disappear only with the disappearance of the detective himself as he affirms, "Cuando me muera,



conmigo desaparecerá la memoria de aquellos tiempos y aquellas gentes que al parirme me situaban en la platea de su propia tragedia" (Soledad 113). Thus, despite his desire to embrace amnesia, the only means to liberate oneself from the past is through death. Similarly, Teresa Vilarós describes the past as an illness that one carries inside until death:

Lo queramos o no, cuando muramos todos aquellos que vivimos la etapa franquista, los gusanos encontrarán en nuestro cuerpo el sabor del pasado, este mismo pasado que se nos ha quedado incorporado ahora como cáncer destructor y como una deuda que hay que pagar. (223)

In this dialectic between memory and amnesia one also encounters a strong condemnation of the "culture of amnesia" and an attempt on the part of the protagonist to recuperate the country's memories through his own individual recollections. Reading the written memoirs of a murdered old man who had fought against Franco in the Civil War, Carvalho stumbles across Gonzalo Cespedes's impression of Spanish culture upon returning from his exile in Mexico:

Contemplo la nueva realidad española después de tan larga ausencia y creo vivir entre un pueblo de amnésicos. Nadie quiere recordar la guerra. Los unos porque tienen mala conciencia por cómo la ganaron y cómo administraron la victoria. Los otros porque aún llevan en la sangre

el miedo del vencido... ("La guerra civil no ha terminado," Historias de política ficción 84)

Supporting the conclusions of the old man, the narrator adds, "No razonaba mal el viejo" (84). Nevertheless, the strongest rejection of collective amnesia comes, ironically, from the paranoid, fascist shoeshine, Bromuro in El delantero centro fue asesinado al atardecer (1989):

La gente ha perdido la memoria y no quiere recuperarla. Es como si la considerara inútil. ¿Inútil? Si me quitas los recuerdos, ¿qué queda de mí? ¿No ves en todo esto una conspiración de estos niños socialistas? Les interesa que todo empiece con ellos. Y son como todos. Ya no reconozco nada. (33)

The words of Bromuro enunciate the central danger of a culture of amnesia in that suppressing memories erases one's "señas de identidad" creating a present and a future that lack meaning and nothing is recognizable.

In the first two decades of Franco's dictatorship, the regime employed strategies to suppress the past and formulate a notion of history that legitimized Franco as a continuity of Spain's glorious and heroic past. Affirming the homogeneous identity of Spain under the slogan "Una España, una raza, una religión," Francoism stifled any expression of pluralism in favor of a unified



albeit falsified identity. Following the theories of Hayden White and Hans-George Gadamer, David Herzberger points out the manner in which Franco's regime excluded memory in order to suppress diversity and insert itself into the myths of continuity and power:

Clearly the Franco regime co-opted history in order to circumvent the full diversity of the past, and in doing so it recast historiography into a single-voiced discourse in service of the State. [...] The historical present thus becomes an inevitable and noble consequence of the past, which serves to justify the posture (political, moral, religious, etc.) assumed by the State as it seeks to define its pertinence to tradition. ("Social Realism" 161)

Vázquez Montalbán, in his article "La literatura española en la construcción de la ciudad democrática," also indicates the Franco regime's desire to eliminate memory to mold the collective conscience, "Es cierto que el franquismo intentó detener el sol de la lógica histórica, secuestró la conciencia de una sociedad, falsificó la memoria, la historia, el lenguaje, toda expresión cultural..." (126).

Now that the Spanish population surrenders voluntarily to amnesia, it consequently legitimizes the falsifying historiography of the Franco regime. By purging their own individual and collective memory, they



encourage dependence on the fabricated written memory written by the "victors" of the Civil War. In the last novel of the Carvalho series, Quinteto de Buenos Aires (1997), Vázquez Montalbán establishes a link between the suppression of memory in a repressive past and Spain's amnesic present with the political situation in Argentina. Pepe Carvalho travels to Buenos Aires in search of his cousin who was one of thousands of "disappeareds" during the military junta in the 1970s. Carvalho declares that in a society of "víctimas" and "verdugos," the victims should never surrender their memory because they run the risk of losing it forever, "Los vencedores se aprovechan de la memoria del vencido, y cuando el vencido consigue recuperarla, la memoria ya no es lo que era" (74).

Thus, the survival of memory is not at risk but rather between the "víctimas" and the "verdugos" the question becomes, "Whose memory will endure?" Linda Hutcheon, in A Poetics of Postmodernism, underscores the connection between power and the persistence of history through writing,

Historiographic metafiction shows fiction to be historically conditioned and history to be discursively structured, and in the process manages to broaden the debate about the ideological implications of the

Foucauldian conjunction of power and knowledge. [...] The premise of postmodern fiction is the same as that articulated by Hayden White regarding history: "every representation of the past has specifiable ideological implications. (120)

In the short story "El hermano pequeño," the narrator describes Spain as a society of "caníbales" that not only victimize people but also marginalize their history. Describing Bromuro the narrator states,

Ni siquiera Bromuro había resistido los empujones de aquella sociedad de caníbales y se había muerto desde dentro, hasta que la muerte le salió a los ojos de pajarillo maltratado por una Historia en la que al menos había sido durante unos años vencedor de una guerra civil. *La Historia sólo la ganan los que tienen poder*³⁴, el que sea, y a él sólo le quedaba el poder de tirar al retrete una olla entera de caldo gallego. O de acostarse. Aunque el poder no le acompañó cuando convocó al sueño y durante horas coexistió con fantasmas que sólo él veía, músicas que sólo él oía, voces que subían de subsuelos terribles. (El hermano pequeño 45)

Outside the Carvalho series, Vázquez Montalbán's Galíndez (1990) questions the nature of "official" written history and explores the relationship between history and memory. Although not considered a "detective novel," Galíndez utilizes an atmosphere of mystery and investigation to undermine the mythic unity of written history and unveil the prejudices of the historian that

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the existence of solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β . It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

2. In the second part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

3. In the third part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

4. In the fourth part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

5. In the fifth part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

6. In the sixth part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

7. In the seventh part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

8. In the eighth part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

9. In the ninth part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

10. In the tenth part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

texture and condition the view of the past. Vázquez Montalbán examines the process of investigating and writing about the hidden past through the experiences of an American doctoral student named Muriel Colbert. As Muriel researches the mysterious disappearance and death in 1956 of Jesús de Galíndez, an exiled Basque representative, she encounters resistance from government agents (from the U.S. as well as Dominican Republic). Despite the desire to suppress the untold history, its persistence is ensured through the memory of those who investigate and seek it out. As Trujillo's guards torture him, Galíndez realizes that history will not forget him because there will always be someone to keep his memory alive:

No, no debe asustarte el invierno, aunque ahora sea verano, porque el presente permanece en el futuro, como una cadena quieta, y tampoco deben asustarte los futuros fríos, al amanecer, los campos encharcados, cuando todo parece una naturaleza sin vida, porque el corazón conserva la luz de los soles que se fueron y en los ojos permanecen los recuerdos del pasado, tampoco debe asustarte la muerte porque los sarmientos traerán el vino nuevo y nuestro presente asentará el mañana de los otros. (240)

Likewise, after the disappearance of Muriel Colbert, the question of memory and history resurfaces. The novel

³⁴ My emphasis.

presents an open ending in which Muriel's boyfriend begins an investigation to uncover a hidden past. Thus, the past is always linked to the present, like a "cadena," through the memories of others.

Similarly, Carvalho's anamnesis opens a space in the present for the continuity of the individual past. On one hand, the detective's memory combats the amnesic tendency of post-Franco Spain yet, on the other hand, also contradicts the mythical vision of the regime by opposing Franco's historiographic discourse with a subjective and diverse voice. In "Narrating the Past: History and the Novel of Memory in Postwar Spain," Herzberger asserts the subversive nature of individual memory in undermining the myths of the Franco regime:

The challenge for the novelist of memory, then is not only to recover the past by setting narrative over and against the historiographic myths of Franco, as the social realists do, but to undermine the myth-generating mechanisms that constitute the founding matrix of such writing. [...] In the novel of memory in postwar Spain, history does not stand outside individual consciousness as a form imposed but, rather, impinges on the consciousness of characters and forces its way into their consideration. History supervenes against the discourse of myth in these novels because it both shapes and is shaped by the private affairs of the self. (38)



Thus, Carvalho's memories focus on his experiences after the Spanish Civil War as a son of the war's losers, later as a communist in Spain in the 1950s, and then when he passes from "víctima" to "verdugo" by becoming a CIA agent in the United States. Carvalho finds himself in a constant "coming and going" between the past and the present that can be provoked by various factors such as food and popular songs. Yet, what impels these trips through his memory more than anything are the following:

- 1) the victims of Spain's present that make him recall his own experience as a victim of the post-Civil War and
- 2) the progressive destruction of Barcelona's urban landscape that signifies the disappearance of the city of his youth.

When it seems to Carvalho that the widow of Antonio Jaumá will terminate the detective's services, the protagonist continues his investigation by identifying with the orphaned son of the murdered Dieter Rhomberg, a German associate of the dead Jaumá, in La soledad del manager. Carvalho, contemplating whether he should continue or desist, thinks about the young boy:

La única motivación afectiva era el hijo de Rhomberg. La solidaridad con Jaumá era profesional, en cambio la solidaridad con el desconocido niño alemán la llevaba en la sangre, le salía del pozo de los



terrores infantiles hacia la orfandad, del espectáculo de los niños del barrio despadrados por la guerra o por las cárceles, fusilamientos, tuberculosis de la posguerra. La fragilidad de aquellos huérfanos que asomaban su cabeza rapada entre los geranios de balcones tan oxidados como el alma colectiva del barrio, le hacía nacer en el estómago la interesada congoja del animalito que descubre en la desgracia ajena la posibilidad de su propia desgracia. (166)

His solidarity with the marginalized population of post-Franco Spain intensifies when he sees in Los mares del Sur the dispossessed people of San Magín, victims of the wild speculation and uncontrolled constructions:

Recuperar el metro fue recuperar la sensación de joven fugitivo que contempla con menosprecio la ganadería vencida, mientras él utiliza el metro como instrumento para llegar al esplendor en la hierba y la promoción. Recordaba su cotidiana sorpresa joven ante tanta derrota recién amanecida. Recordaba la conciencia de su propia singularidad, y excelencia rechazando la náusea que parecía envolver la mediocre vida de los viajeros. Los veía como molestos compañeros de un viaje que para él era de ida y para ellos era de vuelta. Veinte o veinticinco años después sólo era capaz de sentir solidaridad y miedo. (142)

Carvalho's identification with the victims of the new democracy, therefore, allows him to identify the problems of Spain's new society while the detective battles the country's cultural amnesia and the suppression of memory. For Carvalho, the past is not

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only threatened by the tendency to forget but also by the destruction and regeneration of Barcelona's urban landscape in preparation for the Olympic games. In the novels, El delantero centro fue asesinado al atardecer and El laberinto griego, Carvalho navigates through a Barcelona in constant physical change where old streets, buildings and even people are replaced with a new city that has erased the spaces that evoked memories and personal relationships. Basté de Linyola-fictional businessman and ex-politician of the Transition-expresses the capitalist philosophy that captures the desire for urban renovation, "Rehacer lo mal hecho. Hay que aceptar la buena y la mala herencia del pasado y practicar un urbanismo y una arquitectura de dignificar lo dignificable y derruir sólo lo estrictamente derruible" (100). In El laberinto griego, Carvalho walks through a "paisaje en ruinas" in which memory and solidarity are sacrificed in accordance with the capitalist regeneration of the city. The narrator expresses the sadistic impulses that drive the renovation of Barcelona, "Y en la metamorphosis de su Barcelona había como un ejercicio de sadismo implacable para destruir los cementerios de su memoria, el espacio físico donde podrían residir los protagonistas de sus recuerdos" (132). Later, more and

more passive and introspective, Carvalho finds himself with the urge to leave the city that has destroyed his memories in Quinteto de Buenos Aires:

La destrucción de su paisaje y sus personajes era total. No se reconocía en la ciudad: Bromuro muerto. Charo en exilio voluntario, Biscuter como único nexo con lo que había sido el azaroso ecosistema de sus relaciones íntimas. Pero sobre todo la ciudad postolímpica, abierta al mar, surcada por vías rápidas, en plena destrucción el barrio Chino, las avionetas de lo políticamente correcto sobrevolando la ciudad, fumigándola para matar sus bacterias, sus virus históricos, las luchas sociales, el lumpen, ciudad de ingles extirpadas, convertida en un teatro profiláctico para interpretar la farsa de la modernidad. (16)

Facing an amnesic society that attempts to purge itself of the weight of a repressive past, the detective Pepe Carvalho finds himself in a battle between memory and silence that epitomizes post-Franco Spain. On one hand, memory oppresses Carvalho like a yoke from which he wishes to free himself, like many Spaniards, yet he will carry upon his back, like a snail carries its shell, until the day he dies. Nevertheless, the detective's anamnesis vindicates a past suppressed by the Franco regime and forgotten by the Spanish citizens, assuring the survival of memory and, consequently, Spanish identity. Ironically, the hypocritical words of Basté de



Linyola at the burial of the murdered football star Palacín emphasize the need to conserve memory, "—Un gran cantante catalán, Raimón, ha escrito, quien pierde sus orígenes pierde la identidad. Pues bien, parafraseándolo, podríamos llegar a la conclusión de que quien pierde su memoria también pierde su identidad" (El delantero centro 211). Through his constant evocation of the past tied with his personal experiences in the present, Carvalho attempts to preserve his individual memory as well as the collective identity of Spain.

In conclusion, both Taibo's Héctor Belascoarán Shayne and Vázquez Montalbán's Pepe Carvalho struggle to uphold the persistence of the past in their respective societies' collective conscience through their individual memory. Battling the omissions of official written history, both struggle to reclaim the marginalized, forgotten past. Despite government efforts to falsify the historical record, the Mexican detective attempts to vindicate the past through investigations that constantly revisit the turmoil of 1968. Similarly, Vázquez Montalbán's Pepe Carvalho utilizes his own personal and subjective memory to both combat Franco's co-optation of the past and resist the culture of amnesia characteristic of Spain's transition to democracy. Both detectives

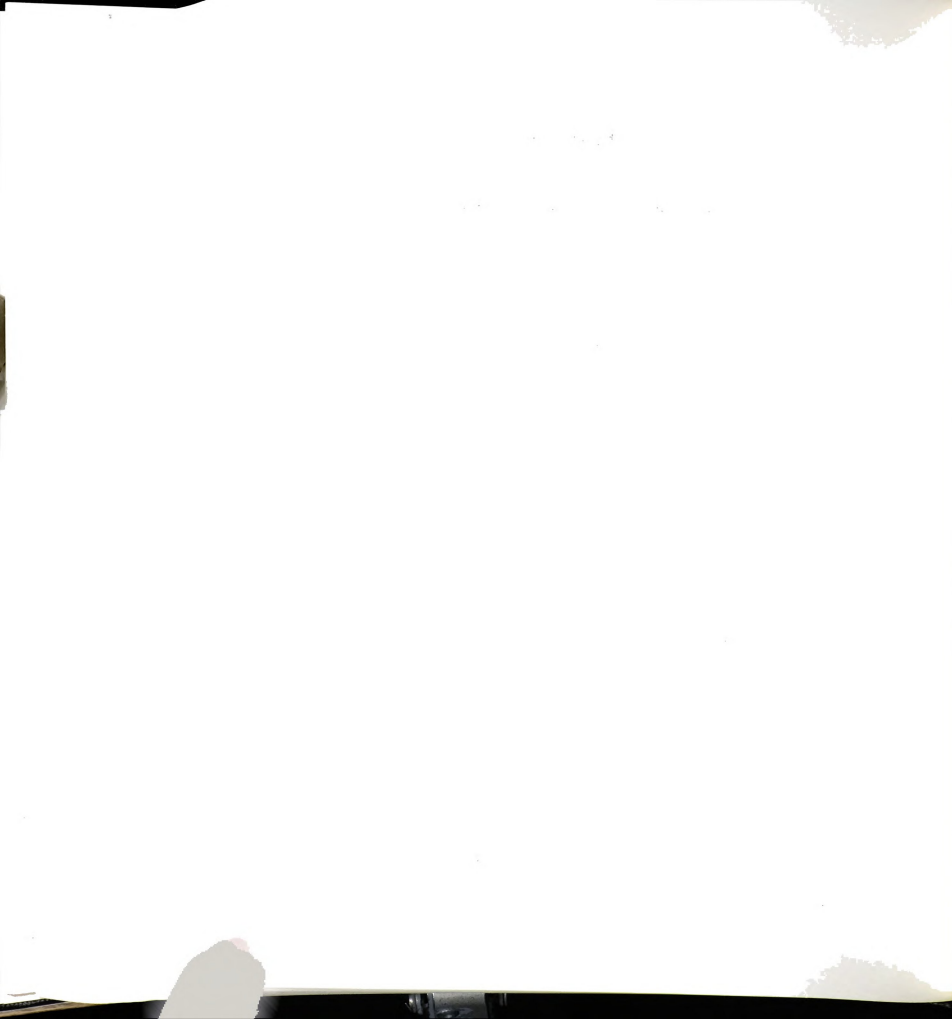
reclaim the "fantasmas" of the past in order to save them
from the silence of an untold history.



CONCLUSION

Born in the pages of Black Mask magazine, the hard-boiled detective came to embody the double morality of a United States dominated by corruption, gangsters, unlawfulness and disillusion. Depending on force and instinct, men like Sam Spade, the Continental Op, Philip Marlowe and Lew Archer wade through the decadence and degradation of the underside of a capitalist society. Their adventures attest to the existence of a world gone wrong where their search for the truth ultimately unveils a an unjust, random society dominated by crime and violence.

Ironically, just as the Mexican government began to import foreign capital in order to stabilize its economy, Paco Ignacio Taibo II introduced the North American hard-boiled genre into the Mexican literary landscape. In the aftermath of the October 2 massacre at Tlatelolco in 1968, Taibo's detective, Héctor Belascoarán Shayne, views himself as a "democratic detective" who, through "curiosidad" and "terquedad," not only links crime to Mexico's power structure but also vindicates the utopian ideals of the student movements from 1968. In a chaotic Mexico City, Belascoarán Shayne represents an anomaly that forsakes his bourgeois background and allies himself



with the poor and dispossessed. As Mexico struggles between a First and Third World identity, Taibo's detective battles fraudulent government officials, resists repressive military and police, and opposes drug traffickers as well as the conservative elite. From a position of resistance and revolution, Belascoarán Shayne combats the marginalization, socially as well as historically, of Mexico's underclass.

Similarly, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán appropriates the figure of the hard-boiled detective to create "social chronicles" that observe and criticize Spain's modernization and democratization in the years after Franco's death. Vázquez Montalbán's detective, Pepe Carvalho, acts as a "voyeur" who manifests the "desencanto" of Spain's new democratic European identity. From the first constitutional elections in 1979 to the Olympics in 1992, Carvalho walks the streets of Barcelona observing, commenting and criticizing the unfulfilled promises of Spain's "transición." Once dominated by Franco's repression, censorship and strict rule, the development of an open, secular and capitalist model has introduced new problems into Spanish society such as divorce, drug abuse, terrorism, political apathy and unemployment. Facing the rapid incorporation of

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capitalism characterized by unregulated land speculation, urban renewal and government expropriations, Carvalho defends the victims of modernization, identifies with the "perdedores" of capitalism and resists the loss of history.

Nevertheless, neither Paco Ignacio Taibo II nor Manuel Vázquez Montalbán approach the "novela negra" with a mimetic attitude but rather innovate the genre by simultaneously "using" and "abusing" its conventions. Within the frame of a detective's investigation, these authors incorporate self-referential irony, intertextuality and iconoclasm, fragment traditional linear narration and juxtapose narrative voices to articulate a crisis of truth. Both Taibo and Vázquez Montalbán demystify notions of "truth" and "meaning" through the detective's doomed search for those very things. As Belascoarán Shayne and Carvalho wade through the fictions and fabrications of clients and suspects alike, "truth" is discovered to be malleable. Whereas subjectivity and self-interest condition meaning, cultural codes and genre borders define understanding. Consequently, the solutions to the crimes in these texts ultimately cede their importance to what the investigations reveal about Mexican and Spanish society,



the connection between crime and the State and the
ephemeral nature of truth.



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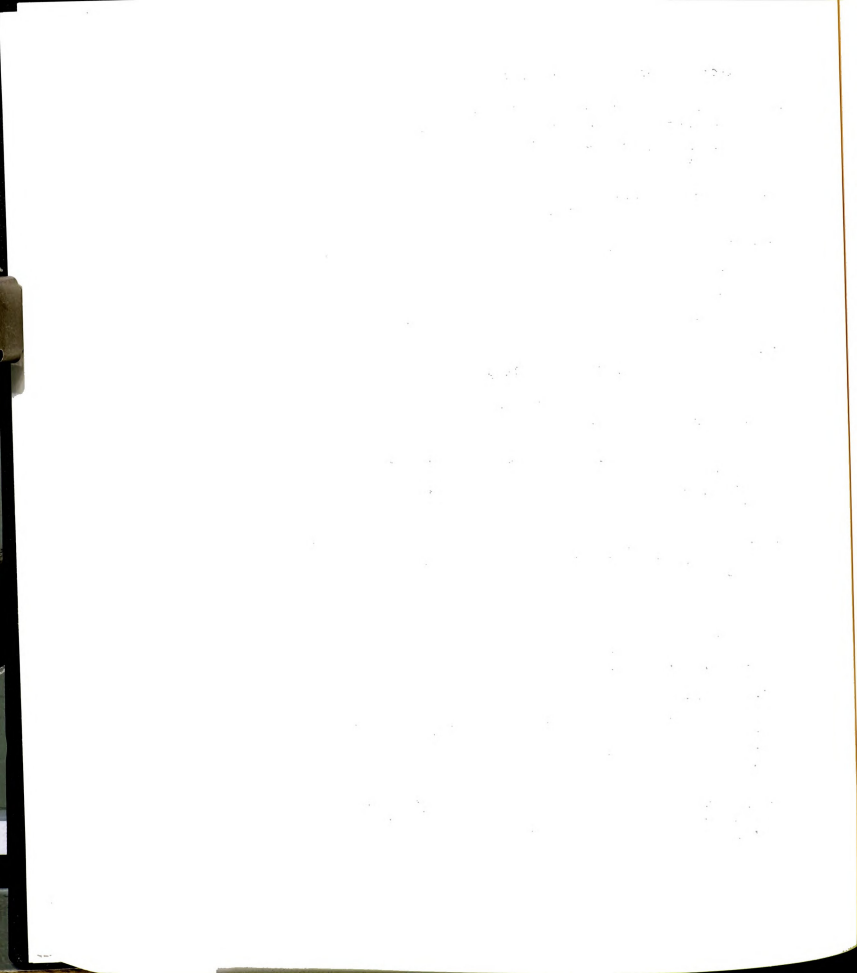
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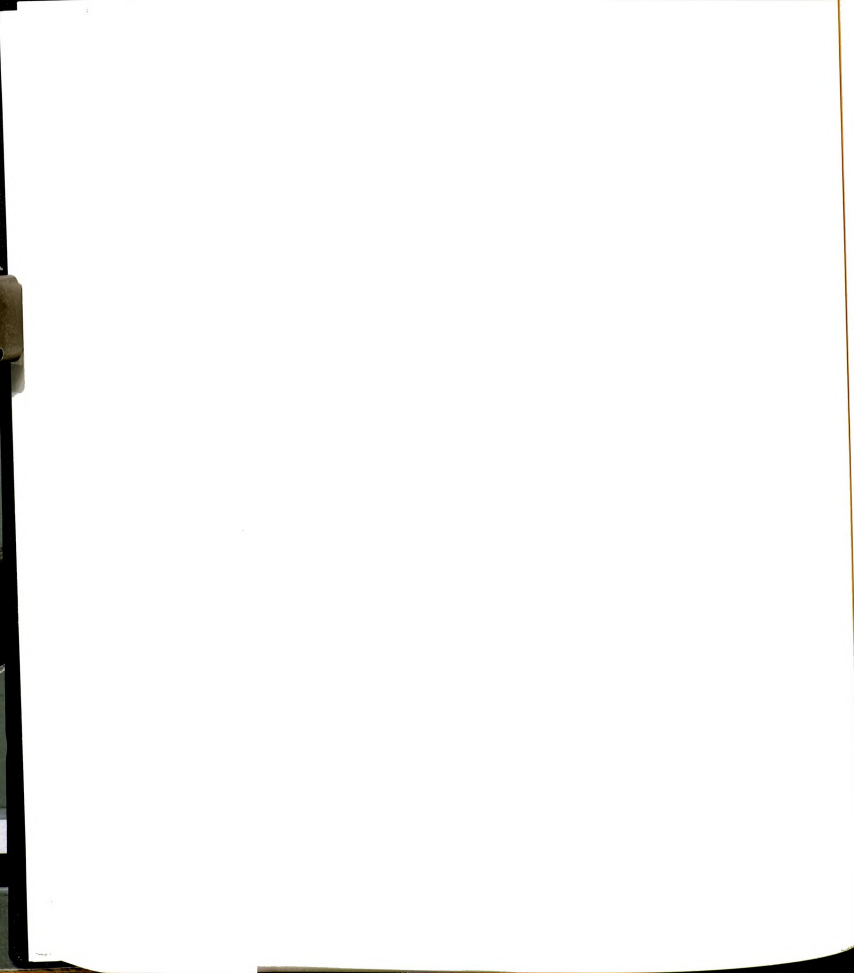
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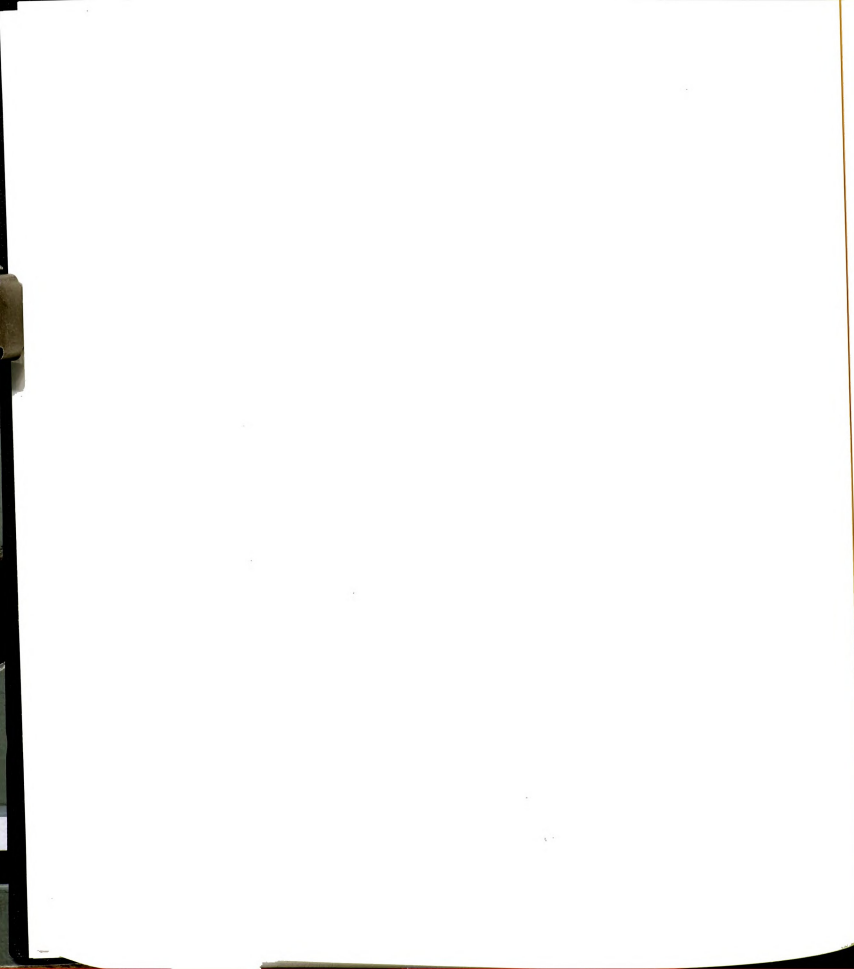
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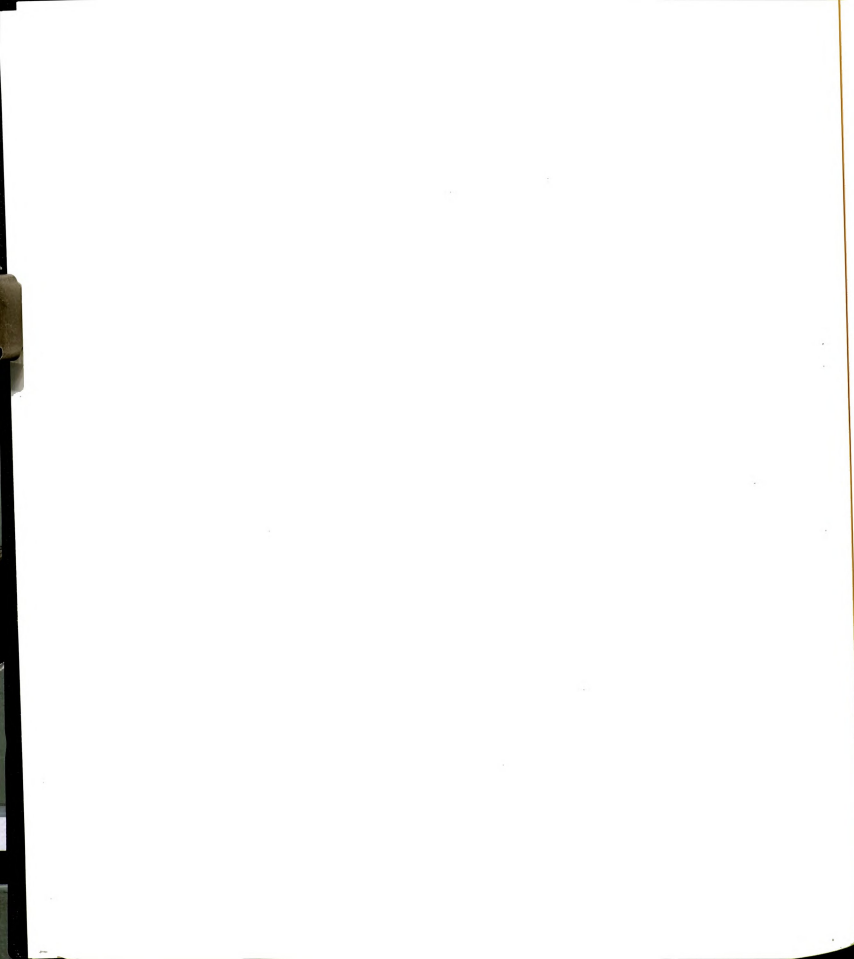
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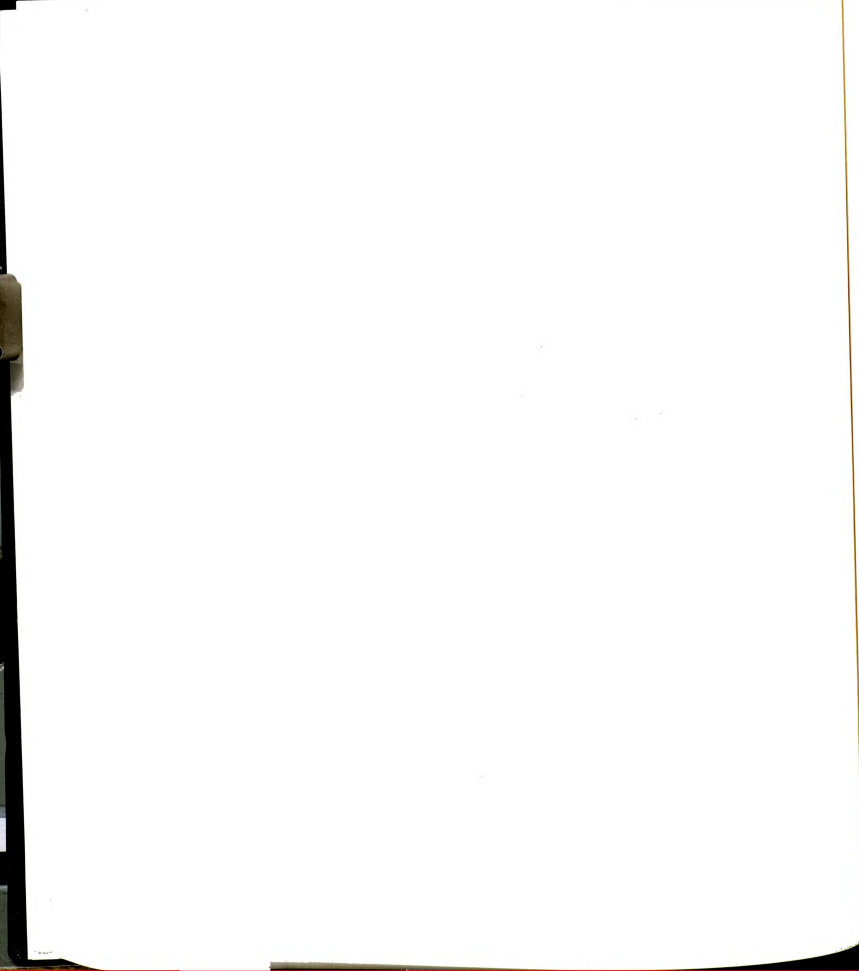
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