

Postmodern *Paletos*:
The City and the Country in the Narrative and Cinema
of International Spain

by

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Dissertation Abstract

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Tensions between rural arcadias and urban blight and between enlightened civilizations and primitive wastelands have informed the stories we have told each other from the beginning of time. In the last half-century, such tensions have come to the forefront of the Spanish narrative imagination. Writing novels and directing movies in a society torn by the contradictions of official policies promoting rural life in the midst of a lived reality of starvation and immigration, authors and directors turned often in the Franco years to themes of city/country contact. In the years of the democracy, traditional rural/urban tensions have subsided. They have given way, nevertheless, to equally powerful center/periphery tensions pitting Madrid versus Spain's various regions and globalizing impulses against renewed localist fervor. Authors and directors continue to recur to traditional city/country imagery to portray these tensions. This dissertation studies how the traditional struggle between urban and rural has inspired the artistic imagination in the last fifty years, and in turn, how this struggle has correspondingly been shaped by these very representations. The study is based on close readings of the following works: from the 1950s, José Nieves Conde's movie *Surcos* and Jesús Fernández Santos's novel *Los bravos*; from the 1960s, Pedro Lazaga's movie *La ciudad no es para mí* and Luis Martín Santos's *Tiempo de silencio*; from the 1970s, Carlos Saura's *La prima Angélica* and Carmen Martín Gaité's *El cuarto de atrás*; from the 1980s, Pedro Almodóvar's *¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto!!* and Luis Landero's novel *Juegos de la edad tardía*; and from the 1990s, Julio Medem's *Vacas* and Suso de Toro's *Calzados Lola*.

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Introduction

The anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space.

--Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces"

The power to narrate is the power to build nations.

--Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*

The Unconscious is outside, not hidden in any unfathomable depths.

--Slavoj Zizek, *The Plague of Fantasies*

When Francisco Franco and his nationalist forces emerged victorious from the Spanish civil war in 1939 they proudly proclaimed their mission to restore Spain to its Catholic, monarchic, and Castilian essence. To aid them in their "holy crusade" of cultural reentrenchment, Franco and his supporters turned to popular myths of hispanicity. By following the dictator the Spanish nation would recover the Castilian-guided grandeur achieved five-centuries earlier by the Catholic kings. In the process, Spanish men would rediscover the stoic strength of Seneca while women would come to embody the Christian virtue of Queen Isabel. Such anticipated character changes were themselves tied to the sustenance of a supposedly eternal link between Spaniards and their land. Appropriating traditional literary images of the stoic Castilian peasant, Franco linked national strength to the rugged native soil--in particular that of the Castilian *meseta*--from which countless generations of peasants had scratched out a living. In opposition to the sacred soil, Franco painted a picture of the city as a site of moral depravity and political corruption. Accordingly, if Spain was to achieve its promised greatness--if its citizens were to realize their mythic potential--the Spanish peasant would have to remain in the pueblo, no matter the hardship.

While censorship and ideological education may have kept such obviously manipulated figures as Isabel the Catholic, Seneca, El Cid, Don Quijote, and Saint

Teresa out of the hands of would-be critics, the idea of Spain as eternally tied to its rural, Castilian roots, could not be so easily protected. For all the official propaganda, when Franco declared in 1947 that Spaniards--subject to a kind of house-arrest since the end of the civil war--could finally move freely within their own country, the consequences to the hallowed countryside were devastating. First rural workers, and later their former employers, fled the hunger, hard labor, and subsistence lifestyles of the countryside for the growing industrial and service opportunities in the city. Between 1951 and 1970, nearly four million Spaniards immigrated, virtually shutting down hundreds of rural communities (Schubert 210). By the time of Franco's death in 1975 his sacred "rural" Spain was nearly 90% urban.

Curiously, at about the time this immigrant flood began arriving in the city, the previously intractable regime began softening its position on a host of formerly hard-line political, economic, and social stances. Within several years of the first migratory waves, Spain was to embrace American politics and culture, clamor for and finally achieve acceptance to the United Nations, and effect leadership changes that would facilitate the "economic miracle" of the 1960s. Such moves would produce, in turn, an irreversible social and cultural revolution that in hindsight seems to have guaranteed the democratic changes of the 1970s and 1980s. Concomitant with immigration and ideological shifts was a rebirth of national culture manifest in the theater instigated by the works of the "realist" generation, the poetry of the so-called

Generation of the 1950s, the narrative of the social realists, and the rise of neorealist-inspired cinema.

Whether or not direct causal relations can be found between immigration, ideological change, and the rebirth of a national culture, their interaction is indubitable. Certainly, it is possible to argue that the most significant symbolic or material challenge to early Francoist ideology did not come initially by way of disaffected writers, scheming politicians, or even the persistent guerrilla struggle of the *maquis*, but instead from the very move of starving peasants away from *symbolic* promise toward *material* possibilities. Through recourse to myths of the city and the country, Franco had infused the material with the symbolic. Hence, when material reality shifted, Franco's symbolic system faced a crisis point of collapse. In this light, the very keystone of Francoist ideology might be located in the mythified division between a sacred countryside and a corrupt city.

Even if such a direct connection cannot be satisfyingly argued, the links between immigration-induced collapse of the city/country division and national renewal are at least culturally evident. The very foundational works of the mid-century revival of Spanish culture--especially those in narrative and cinema--center on city/country issues. Social realist novels, from Sánchez Ferlosio's *El Jarama* to García Hortelano's *Nuevas amistades*, situate their "realistic" stories in spaces that repeat the city/country paradigm. The encounter between rural and urban culture in the movies of the era became so common that it inspired its own cinematic subgenre

of *paleto* movies. If the earliest works of the postwar cultural revival were to lay a foundation for an ideological dismantling of the regime, as critics suggest, the city/country theme seems to be key to this beginning.¹ It is as if writers and directors previously unable to locate stable footing from which to launch a serious critique of the dictatorship suddenly found a relatively safe foothold in city/country contradictions. In this juxtaposition they could effect a critique that could not be easily labeled as subversive because it was ultimately connected to the transparently material reality of immigration.

Despite the proliferation of works pitting city against country and notwithstanding the official concerns--and even censorship--that these works inspired, critics of postwar Spanish culture have largely ignored the city/country dynamic. Presumably, they have understood representations of the city, the country, and the interaction between the two as mere reflections of a straightforward contemporary extratextual reality. The few scholars who have considered the city/country encounter have done so primarily with political goals in mind, searching narratives and movies for what they see as univocal representations of exploitation, and ignoring the often complex aesthetics of the works. Such analyses--or lack thereof--must, in short, proceed from the dubious foundations of an acceptance of a straightforward pretextual reality to critique, and second, of a straightforward representation of this reality in the works studied. Both assumptions have recently come under critical fire. For example, David Herzberger in a recent study of the relations between historiography

and narrative in the Franco years has shown how manipulated historiographies functioned to produce an official history far removed from the supposed objectivity it espoused. At the same time, Herzberger shows how the struggle of supposedly straightforward social realist narratives with the same official histories and historiography resulted in a far from straightforward narrative style.

As of yet, however, spatial relationships have remained unexplored and unquestioned in studies of postwar and contemporary Spanish culture. As essential as historiographic manipulation may have been to the success of early Francoist ideology, such success was unattainable without the spatial divisions that assigned alternately sacred and corrupt spaces to winners and losers throughout history. In fact, it is perhaps ultimately impossible to separate the temporal from the spatial in a consideration of any Spanish history. From the medieval reconquest to contemporary regionalist struggles, Spaniards have not only contended over supposedly sacred spaces but have defined those spaces according to a city/country division, representing their homelands alternately as sacred civilizations threatened by primitive marauders or as peaceful rural idylls taxed by bullying metropolitan monsters. City and country have become much more than mere places where people live or work; they are symbolic sites in which events acquire the meanings requisite for their transformation into "history." History, in short, has not only recorded spatial tensions, but has been forged by them.

The rise and development of a national literature has been similarly connected to spatial divisions. The registration of city/country phenomena is of course not unique to Spanish literature, nor does its Spanish version derive univocally from wholly autochthonous rural/urban tensions. Indeed, the city/country dynamic in Spain is itself part of a larger Western tradition of urban versus rural literature that scholars such as Raymond Williams and Leo Marx trace back to classical writings. Spanish authors, perhaps as conscious of this tradition as of any lived city/country experience, established Spain's earliest literary tradition by tapping into the spatial thematic. In typical pastoral fashion, early Spanish works such as the thirteenth-century *cantigas de amigo* lamented rural loss and bemoaned the threat of a growing civilization. The Arcipreste's fourteenth-century *serranillas*; Antonio de Guevara's fifteenth-century *Menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea*; and the sixteenth-century pastoral novels established the most common version of the Spanish countryside as a sacred paradise, of a space that poet Fray Luis de León associated with the *descansada vida* under threat from the *mundanal ruido* of the city. At the same time that the pastoral novel triumphed in 1558 with Montemayor's *Diana*, the first novels of the city--and of its vices--appeared in the guise of *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) and the picaresque tradition.

At the same time, other works found opposite values in the distinctions between plaza and pasture. Spain's twelfth-century national epic, *El Cantar del mío Cid*, represents the city as a harbinger of order on the frontiers of a rural no-man's

land. Outside the city war and homelessness reign. Even the classical *locus amoenus* poses, in Spain's national epic, a threat to civilized Castilian virtue. Spain's other great national work, Cervantes's *Don Quijote* (1605, 1615), likewise challenges traditional city/country representations as it describes the wanderings of the would-be knight errant through a demythified rural Spain inhabited by idiocy, corruption, and hackneyed pastoral pretensions. In the second part of the novel, Cervantes's knight moves from this wasted wilderness toward an equally corrupt civilization of aristocratic palaces and urban industry.

The depictions of the city/country dynamic in the above works can always be derived from the broader Western tradition. Such a connection may provide some aesthetic insights into Spanish literature. But by considering the Western influence alone a study of city/country representations becomes merely an academic exercise in imitation of William's or Marx's seminal studies without the cultural insight that these provide. On closer examination, however, the city/country dynamic in Spanish literature does display unique socio-cultural connections that in turn reveal ties to a specifically Spanish politico-economic situation. Particularly Spanish uses of city/country divisions are historically identifiable from the beginnings of the idea of Spain as a unified kingdom. At the same time that medieval cities were encroaching upon pastoral paradises, monarchs of the day were plotting from their relatively civilized courts the extension of their kingdoms into what were often "less-civilized" regions. The consequent political version of the city/country division, what might be

called a *corte/campo* dynamic, commenced in earnest in 1212 when the Castilian king, Alfonso VIII, took a decisive step towards the unification of Christian Spain when he pacted with the kingdoms of Navarre and Aragon against the latest wave of Moorish invaders. Between that pact and the year 1512, when King Ferdinand added Navarre as the last piece of the Spanish jigsaw, the hegemony of the Castilian court over the peripheral Iberian kingdoms steadily grew.

No sooner had the Castilian court subsumed every Iberian kingdom except Portugal, than many of the newly subservient territories reacted. In 1520 both the Castilian *Comuneros* and the Valencian and Catalan *Germanías* revolted against an increasingly removed central government that rural and regional working classes felt had abandoned them. The *Comuneros* in particular understood their opposition to the crown symbolically in terms of an historic countryside that they “universally assumed . . . was being stripped bare” by the court’s foreign interests (Elliott 153). The revolutionaries associated rural values with local autonomy in a struggle against the hegemony of a comparatively cosmopolitan court. Indeed, as cities grew up around the medieval court and the ecclesiastical sites that so powerfully influenced it, the association of city with court in opposition to local, rural tradition was natural. This association would only increase after Phillip II permanently established the court in the centrally-located Castilian community of Madrid.

Not surprisingly, within the next century court/country connotations begin to appear in literary representations of the city/country dynamic. In Lope de Vega’s *El*

villano en su rincón (1615), for example, Juan Labrador (Labrador being literally translated as laborer) is a locally-powerful farmer who has never journeyed to the royal court, nor seen the king, nor wishes to do so. The king, informed of Labrador's resistance, leaves the urban court for the farmer's rural community where he masks himself as a peasant in order to enter into and upset this peripheral world of rural/political resistance. Other Lope comedies such as *Fuenteovejuna*, *Peribañez*, and *El mejor alcalde, el Rey*, ask similar questions of court powers and local freedoms through the interaction of cosmopolitan aristocracy and local villagers.

While Lope's plays may register the beginnings of the connection between political and literary city/country associations, they also invite rereadings of the paradigm in earlier works. Consequently, once seemingly innocent city/country representations acquire added political dimensions. Antonio de Guevara's political maneuvering in his *Menosprecio de corte*, typically seen as peripheral historical-biographical addenda to the more aesthetic pastoral spirit of his work,² now become central to the representation. El Cid's bitter exile from the city, Fray Luis's praises of the rural, and Don Quijote's unsettling encounters with both likewise become evidences of what Raymond Williams calls "the processes of a particular (Spanish) history" that the city/country paradigm always works through (*Country* 289). As Williams, perhaps the most important chronicler of the city/country paradigm in literature, has explained, the representations of city or country are never innocent in either their causes or effects (289), are never merely the monologic continuation of an

autonomous literary tradition, but always, “one of the major forms in which we become conscious of a central part of our experience and *the crisis of our society*” (289, *italics added*). From its beginnings, Spanish literary representations of the city and the country have been a combination of the recording of lived realities on the one hand and the continuation of autonomous aesthetic traditions on the other.

The connection between the literary and the contextual in city/country representations has perhaps never been more clear than in the proliferation of center/periphery discourse at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the years leading up to the encounter between Spain and the United States that was to be known respectively as the Disaster and the Spanish-American War, an unprecedented spirit of nationalism engulfed Spain. Songs, speeches, ceremonies, and cartoons gave value to national over local identities for the first time in history (Balfour 29). The nationalist fervor, however, lacked real centralist substance. Thus, when the Spanish fleet was quickly defeated, nationalist fervor, rather than dissipate, rechannelled into peripheral forms of nation-building. With the defeat by the United States navy, the Spanish nation lost the external colonies that for nearly four centuries had diverted attention from internal colonialism (Balfour 29). Hence, when Cuba and the Phillippines disappeared from the Spanish landscape, national attention turned to internal differences; the Basque country, Catalonia, and Galicia replaced Cuba and the Phillippines as the last remaining Castilian colonies (Balfour 30). Regional separatist movements, begun in the mid-nineteenth century, solidified not surprisingly around

the turn of the millennium. Finally, in the face of devastating international defeat and its local centripetal aftermath, further “colonial” struggles in Northern Africa in the early years of the twentieth century only exacerbated separatist energies.

The combination of national deception and regionalist separatism inspired spirited investigation of the idea of Spanish national identity on all sides of the political spectrum. Such studies, in turn, inspired unprecedented myth-making in the name of the various politico-geographic positions occupied by the investigating intellectuals. Regionalist movements, especially that of Basque nationalism, immediately appropriated the ancient juxtaposition of rural against urban as symbolic of their struggle against the colonizing federalist center (Ucelay da Cal 37). Centrists, perhaps recognizing the potency of the city/country binary, did the same. These federalist proponents made the rediscovery of “the ancestral Castile of the Reconquest,” a “model for a renewed Spain” (Balfour 29).

Though not politically-committed federalists, the writers of the so-called Generation of '98--traditionally grouped together precisely for their common reaction to post-Disaster attitudes--became by default the most potent advocates of rediscovery.³ Writers such as Miguel de Unamuno went forth with pen in hand to celebrate “la vida silenciosa de los millones de hombres sin historia que a todas horas del día . . . van a sus campos a proseguir la oscura y silenciosa labor cotidiana y eterna” that he described as the very substance of Spanish progress (3:185). The writers, while praising a variety of Spanish landscapes, most commonly found

Spanish strength in the earth of the dominant central region of Castile. Unamuno seems to proclaim such dominance as he declares: “¡Ancha es Castile! ¡Y qué hermosa la tristeza reposada de ese mar petrificado y lleno de cielo!” (3:211). Antonio Machado concurred, singing of “¡Castile varonil, adusta tierra . . . tierra inmortal” (157). Azorín wrote, “Castile ...¡Qué profundidad, sincera emoción experimentamos al escribir esta palabra!” (*El paisaje de España visto por los españoles* qtd. in Martínez, *Generación* 103). While the country was a source of strength, the city became more than ever a debilitating sight to be avoided. Azorín, Pío Baroja, and later Ramón Gómez de la Serna portrayed the city as a space of scarcity and waste, and as a center for crime and excess (Ugarte 108, 161). Azorín described Madrid as “este espectáculo de vanidades y miserias” (Ugarte 170). Baroja called it a “miseria orgánica” (Ugarte 67), while Gómez de la Serna captured in his writings the “frivolidad callejera,” of a “populacho” “solitario y abandonado” of the federal capital (Ugarte 110).⁴

Meanwhile, actual material developments suggested a nearly opposite city and country reality. While various ideological viewpoints uniformly mythologized an essential rural homeland and soundly condemned the artificial urb, the countryside was plagued by years of agricultural crisis and harsh working conditions while city workers were beginning to enjoy regulated work days, rising wages, and the widespread benefits of electricity (Tuñón de Lara 409-14). Not surprisingly, in the first three decades of the century, the populations of Madrid and Barcelona doubled

(Álvarez Junco 86). The number of Spanish cities with over 100,000 inhabitants rose from six to eleven (Álvarez Junco 86). Though Galicia remained a rural backwater, both the Basque country and Catalonia continued to see their economic and political clout increase as industrialization swept through their regions. In short, while the first decades of the twentieth century saw the most explicit and ideologically contradictory manipulations of the city/country paradigm in Spanish history, they also witnessed an unprecedented material contradiction of the paradigm. The celebrated rural peasant was at once a tool of the federalist hegemony, a harbinger of local revolutionary values, and a literally starving human being. City dwellers, on the other hand, though depraved imperialists, enjoyed their depravity with full stomachs, growing work opportunities, and perhaps even a new car.

Consequently, when Francisco Franco appropriated the city/country division as a central part of his myth-making program, he was latching onto a paradigm already fraught with ideological and material contradictions. My goal is to consider the consequences of these contradictions in the most recent history of Spanish society and culture, to discover the immediate results of what could be called Franco's "misappropriation" of the city/country division, and to trace the legacy of this overdetermined and polysemic paradigm. As this study will show, Franco's misstep with respect to the paradigm was enhanced by increasing changes in material realities: by the "economic miracle" of the 1960s, by the new international relations in which Spain entered in the second half of the regime, and by continued attempts to exploit

Spain's "colonized" regions. But as I will also demonstrate, none of these events occurred without the company of story-tellers who related--and thus, exacerbated--whether through narrative or film, the contradictions inherent in the manipulation of myths in these changing times.

My analysis will show that just as there is perhaps another angle to Antonio de Guevara's supposedly formulaic *Menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea*, so too such supposedly straightforward "social realist" novels as Jesús Fernández Santos's *Los bravos* or neorealist movies as José Nieves Condes's *Surcos*, my focal points of chapter 1, may likewise offer multiple approaches to the city/country dilemma in the 1950s. If spatial divisions are preconstructed by a whole history of cultural representations of the city/country division, and if a lived reality is forcing yet another questioning of the myths surrounding that division, then it is naive to assume that supposedly party-line urban/rural messages in movies such as *Surcos*, the focal point of chapter 1, would ever be received as such. Clearly, the cuts of Franco-era censors imply an awareness--however unconscious--of such a possibility. Lived realities of city/country divisions, especially the civilizing effects of Spain's rapid move toward modernity, similarly call into question the very polar division between metropolis and wilderness that critics have unquestionably accepted in novels such as *Los bravos*, and that, as a consequence, have led them to ignore the paradigm. A consideration of the multiple facets of the city/country division in 1950s Spain and of the basic

contradictions inherent in this division in a rapidly modernizing society comprises chapter 1 of this work.

If the city/country division appeared to be merely a reality to record in the 1950s, by the 1960s it had become a fact of life ripe for popular parody or elitist experimentation. The resulting high/low dichotomy in its treatment seems again to have dissuaded critical attention. As chapter 2 will show, low brow *paleto* cinema of the era such as Pedro Lazaga's *La ciudad no es para mí* seems, on the one hand, to be beneath critical analysis. On the other hand, high brow novels such as Luis Martín Santos's *Tiempo de silencio* have diverted attention toward issues popular in intellectual circles of the time, specifically the temporal experimentation and historical focus typical of 1960s marxist analysis and traditionally characteristic of the so called Spanish "New Novel" of the era. Henri Lefebvre, at about the same time that the Spanish New Novel was supposedly deconstructing Spanish history and historiography, was nevertheless arguing in relative isolation that the causes of exploitation that intellectuals were seeking to uncover through historical analysis were actually built upon a mystified spatiality (Soja 50). Michel Foucault soon joined him, arguing that it is space perhaps more than time that might provide the key to understanding contemporary anxieties ("Other" 23). More recently, Frederick Jameson has asserted that "our daily life, our psychic experience, our cultural languages are today dominated by categories of space rather than by categories of time" (*Postmodernism* 73). As chapter 2 will show, such a critically unpopular

understanding of space was in fact evident during the very decade of the “temporally” obsessed New Novel, registering the new socio-economic realities that Lefebvre and others were beginning to understand. Such an understanding redirects our attention from the historical to the spatial in novels such as *Tiempo de silencio*, the novel analyzed in chapter 2. The same approach likewise points back to the potentially fundamental insight that such *paleto* pablum as the box-office hit *La ciudad no es para mí*, the film scrutinized, might provide. Indeed, the *paleto* protagonist’s experiences in Lazaga’s movie seem to embody Foucault’s description of the present era as an epoch of space, of simultaneity and juxtaposition, characterized as less a line of development than as a network of interconnected points (“Other” 22).

The historical obsession that began critically in the 1960s became a full-fledged popular one in the 1970s. As Spaniards dealt with political change their attention focused on their own place in history and on the semi-repressed history that might explain their present condition. The end of immigration, the return of a mass foreign work force, and a temporary hiatus in tourist invasions during the decade further drew attention away from spatial relations. If the city/country dynamic goes unstudied in the 1950s for its obviousness, it remains wholly unrecognized in the 1970s. Nevertheless, its disappearance from the cultural surface does not mean that it was no longer present in the movies and novels of the era. As Edward Said has argued, “none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle of geography” (7). Novels and movies of the 1970s such as Carlos

Saura's *La prima Angélica* and Carmen Martín Gaité's *El cuarto de atrás*, the two works discussed in chapter 3, were certainly obsessed with understanding confusing, semi-repressed pasts. Still, their memories repeatedly carry with them the trace of spatial divisions. These divisions are often major factors in the complexity of those memories. Indeed, if any works of this study demonstrate the dialogic nature of narrative, its capacity to explore the complexities and subtleties of the city/country division, it would be these highly artistic works. Within such narratives, evidences of a political unconscious implicit in the city/country motif, reveal themselves. The exploration of the relations between history and space, of the uses of the city/country dichotomy to explore the complex relations of power that shaped Spain and that will mark it in the future will be the work of chapter 3.

If the city/country paradigm manifests a certain political unconscious, in the 1980s the paradigm itself moved into unconscious space. Spanish culture in general celebrated the breathtaking advent of democracy and the long-awaited break from the daily anxieties of life-and-death politics that it yielded; city/country conflicts were perhaps too reminiscent of a bygone era just as soon forgotten. Yet, as is wont to occur with any still potent force in the unconscious, city/country issues and images periodically found their way to the cultural surface. Indeed, on notable occasions directors such as Pedro Almodóvar in his breakthrough movie *¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto!!* and authors such as Luis Landero in a surprising first novel *Juegos de la edad tardía*, the focal points for chapter 4, registered the continuing power of the

city/country division in the national psyche. As the chapter will show, while such a division may have been in this era less a lived reality than a postmodern construct, such works captured the still material residual effects of past geographical realities. At the same time, while recording the spatial division as a postmodern simulacra of the likes of suddenly slippery sexual, ethnic, or class-based identities, these works captured the reemergence of the city/country paradigm as a register of geo-political conflicts that extended beyond the contrast of rural poverty to urban development.

In the 1990s the city/country paradigm has come back down from its pure simulacra high. In an era of simultaneous unifying globalization and disintegrating neo-nationalisms, city and country are once again being reappropriated by politicians, citizens, and artists alike as a tool of a nation-building process of blood-stained seriousness. As Spain's literary history displays, stories of cities and countries have regularly worked hand-in-hand with the processes of nation building as they have explored cultural and social motifs. Indeed, Edward Said has argued that the very rise of the novel (a process that can be seen as the triumph of artistically effected storytelling--a role shared by the novel in the current era with cinema) parallels the rise of empire (xii). Said has noted especially the particularly effective history of narrative for deciding who owns land, who has the right to settle it, and who has the right to plan its future (xiii). The analysis in chapter 5 of the Basque movie director Julio Medem's *Vacas* or the Galician novelist Suso de Toro's *Calzados Lola* will show that far from displaying the monologic agenda of committed neo-nationalist art, the

interplay of geographic representation, of nation formation, and of postmodern identity politics comes to the fore in them. Each foregrounds these issues again by employing city/country divisions for structure and theme. The final chapter then brings the interplay between cultural and material in the aesthetic representation of the city/country paradigm full circle. If the state's very manipulations of the paradigm initiated a deeper aesthetic appreciation of the city/country division, aesthetic motifs now draw us back to a new, vastly different Spanish state, parceled up as never before into varied and overlapping centers and peripheries.

In both cultural and material cases, the city/country paradigm plays a fundamental role in the production of the new global Spain. This is true whether the division between spaces stands as the most obvious tension in the text or lies buried beneath layers of meaning. More often than not, however, as the works I focus on in this study demonstrate, in the Spanish culture of the last fifty years the city/country paradigm has remained unmistakably on the surface. Rather than disuading critics, as this phenomenon has done so far, it should invite interest. As Slavoj Žižek has recently argued, meaning is most clearly found precisely on the surface (3). The keys to the cultures whose depths we so often sound in search of enlightenment await uncovered in the open. The motif of the city and the country--for all the potential blindness that its greatest advocate Raymond Williams recognizes in it--is an unexplored prism of insight, readily available for examination on the surface of

dozens of key Spanish works from the last half-century.⁵ I hope to provide a first tentative, and necessarily partial investigation of this surface.

¡Aquí Radio Monte-Carlo!: The Prospects of Change in a Foreign World

José Nieves Conde's *Surcos* and Jesús Fernández Santos's *Los bravos*

“Outside the *polis* no one is truly human.”--Aristotle

A regular advertisement in the popular Spanish cinema review *Fotogramas* of 1951 announces the immediate presence of a radio broadcast company through a variety of frequencies: “¡Aquí Radio Andorra!” “¡Aquí Radio Monte-Carlo!” “¡Aquí Radio Miramar!” announce the ad for the mother company, “Radinform” of Barcelona. Beneath each caption lies a photograph offering a view of the expansive Spanish countryside, punctuated by a generous swathe of sky. Cutting each of these vistas down the middle are a variety of vertical objects: a typical Spanish *cruceiro* (stone cross), the cuadrangular bell tower of one of the hundreds of Romanesque churches gracing the Spanish landscape, and the very Castilian “*genio y figura*” of a steel-girded radio tower. On closer inspection, one notices that each advertisement includes at least one radio tower and that this tower is never left alone to justify its presence on the Castilian landscape. Instead, *cruceiro* (or palm tree, turret, bell tower, etc.) always accompany it, either in the same photo or in a double-photo (in these the more typically “Spanish” photo always occupies the upper position).

Pasted on the same page in each magazine (in the heart of the section designated as *Novedades*--new releases, or literally “novelties” or “latest news”--), these ads signal to their readers the new times ahead as they enter into the second

decade of the “glorious movement.” During this decade the movement, still championing the values of old Spain and of the countryside in which this “true” version of Spain could be found, would infiltrate those traditional discourses with new meanings and new messages, messages of modernity, of industrialization, and of the cities that, in spite of their obvious “steel-girdings,” would posit themselves as mere continuations of the *cruceiro* and the castle. In an ideological sense, this continuation would be true. The power of media would continue (or at least seek to continue) the same ubiquitous patriarchal powers represented by the cross (Catholicism) and the castle (Monarchy), penetrating with the same phallogentric power into the public and private lives of every Spanish citizen (a reality captured in Saenz de Heredia’s popular 1955 comedy, *Historias de la radio*).

But in another sense, the smooth continuity from ancient to modern implied in the ad masked changes that new technological, economic, and ideological forms would bring about. These new forms would forge an unprecedented physical unification of Spain. They would bring together its traditional poles of old and new, of radicals and reactionaries, and especially of city-life with the traditions of the *campo*. But this physical unification would also reopen a plethora of residual wounds. In fact, the blanket that these new forms would cast over Spain, like the radio-wave net protruding from the tower of “Radio Miramar,” would produce new forms of these old divisions that for their ubiquity, would not be easily recognized.

For the time being, however, the eyes of Spanish culture focused on the disappearance of the countryside. As the decade of the 1950s began, a modern-day *reconquista* of “rural” Spain was indeed about to commence. Thanks to radio towers dotting the countryside like the ever-present crosses, castles, and belfries of the *meseta*, as well as to the financial capital and adaptive politics that would make such media growth possible, Spain would be blanketed in this decade by messages of a modern and changing world that would be always “¡Aquí!” already in the bars and bedrooms of Spanish citizens from Las Palmas to Las Hurdes. Depopulated and demoralized by the media voices and capitalist dollars of urban Spain, the eternal Spanish *campo* would soon cease to exist. Of course, the transition would not be as smooth as a disk jockey’s voice nor as quick as the flip of a transistor switch. Like the exclamation points of the radio announcement, the shock of the would-be beginnings of the end of geographic divisions, and the social and ideological divisions that these represented, would effect powerful material changes in the lives of those who would live them.

To appreciate the power of these changes one must return to the previous decade, to the political repression, international isolation, and perhaps most important, widespread hunger of the often cited “*años de hambre*.” During these years the Franco regime had vigorously championed the role of the countryside in the political stability and economic solvency of Spain. This position stemmed from an initially sincere belief in agriculture as the key to economic success, a stance

fundamental to the Falange doctrine of “agrarian revolution” (Harrison 127). Such a stance had seemed to work for Franco’s government during most of the Spanish civil war when the nationalists controlled Spain’s agricultural regions but not the hungry population centers of Barcelona, Madrid, and Valencia. Hence, the official policy of the Franco regime coming out of the war was to convert Spain into a country characterized by small Castilian landowners as the models (Biescas 28; Harrison 120).

When the nationalists defeated the urban hold-outs, however, the shortcomings of such an ill-imagined economic policy became immediately visible. Instead of abandoning ship, Franco chose to toss economy overboard in favor of political and social stability. In place of economic arguments, the regime turned to the idealizations of the Spanish countryside promoted after the disaster of ’98 to promote their policy.⁶ In addition to propagating these myths, the regime ideologically extended the war to a face-off of rural versus urban values. One official government statement explained, “el verdadero pueblo, el más numeroso, el más sufrido, el más trabajador, el más pacífico, estuvo desde el primer momento al lado del Movimiento Nacional; en cambio, la revolución marxista encontró su apoyo entre los trabajadores mejor pagados de la ciudad” (Biescas 28). Again pitting the country versus the city, Franco proclaimed in a speech in May 1951, “the seed of the race remains purer and people live their problems and they are not polluted with the city’s

depravity” (Sevilla-Guzman 109). Franco’s Agricultural Minister in the early 1950s likewise declared:

Before the picture of the victorious revolutions and its consequent devastation; before the sad proletarian procession dragging its chains of slavery, let us place the opposite, the picture of the peasant standing over his land with a house in the background with his children playing at the door and over all of this a modest but divine crucifix as the goal of all the ways of the spirit and to which our faith and our ambition as Spaniards carries us. (Cavestany y de Anduaga 94-95)

According to official voices, the God-fearing, hard-working, Castilian small-land holder would stand over and save *his* country from the selfish, plundering hordes of communist workers infesting the cities.

Notwithstanding this proliferation of pro-rural propaganda, the lived experiences of Spaniards was far different. From its inception Franco’s economic ministry recognized that true economic salvation could only be found through urban-centered industrialization (Esteban 91). As a result, agricultural reforms were half-hearted and always tempered by the greater goals of political stability.⁷ The results for the much celebrated countryside were devastating, causing one historian to remark, “the forties have, as far as agriculture is concerned, one single objective: to avoid starvation” (López de Sebastián 75).⁸

During these *años de hambre* the government's first pro-industry (i.e. pro-urban) legislation began to take material shape (Esteban 91). In 1947, Franco lifted his ban on permanent migration within Spain (Schubert 217). Not surprisingly, first landless, and later landed peasants, began packing their bags and heading for the relative prosperity of the cities. While the regime initially resisted this immigration (as manifest in the official anti-urban discourse previously cited), by 1955 the urban-bound wave had become unstoppable and the government actually began offering placement to peasants in what they called the "sister industries" of the city (Sevilla-Guzman 109). Though Spain had been slowly ruralizing as a country since the end of the previous century, the size alone of the new immigrations began to sound the death toll for rural Spain, a toll of significant resonance if only for the fact that Spain had never been anything if not rural. The sheer numbers of immigration caused what was once an interesting side issue to become one of the principal social concerns of the decade. The quality of immigration was also different from earlier periods thanks to technological and industrial changes. Transportation advances, such as the introduction in 1950 of the new *Talgo*, a high-speed train able to travel at speeds of up to 120 km/hour, made it possible for a potential *paleta* to leave the most premodern town of Old Castile and arrive that same day ready to work in an already postmodernizing metropolis. Perhaps more significant were the technological advances that allowed Spaniards to live and relive this phenomenon as a collective body even as it happened (again, as represented in *Historias de la radio*, in which

radio waves intertwine the lives of all walks of national life, from the poorest *aldea* to the most prosperous metropolis). The introduction of television to Spain in 1953 would further extend the breadth and depth of this process. For the first time ever, Spaniards simply could not escape the clash of country and city, or of the economic, ideological, and political clashes that accompanied it.

It should come as no surprise then, that the reawakening of Spanish culture during these years revolved around the rural/urban encounter. In the theater, Antonio Buero Vallejo shook the Spanish public from neo-Beneventian lyrical stupor to the comparative shock of a realistic contemporary theater with his stark representation of urban poor, *Historia de una escalera* (1949). The poet Claudio Rodríguez, the first critically acclaimed member of a generation that would dislodge lyrical verse from its post-war commitment to communication, initiated this change with *Don de la ebriedad* (1953) a collection of verse that like so many novels of the period, focused on the country in a way that evoked a proleptic nostalgia for a paradise soon to be lost. Narrative and film, however, were the two genres to record most thoroughly contemporary rural-to-urban problems. In the realm of the novel, the *opera prima* of each of the generation's future canonical figures focused on the miseries of rural life, the shock of the city, or some combination of both. Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio helped initiate what would be the dominant narrative tendency of the decade, social realism, with a tale of interaction between modernized urban youth and country locals in *El Jarama* (1954). Ana María Matute, Carmen Martín Gaité, and Juan Goytisolo

debuted with narratives of the countryside in *Fiesta al noroeste* (1953), *Entre visillos* (1954), and *Duelo en el paraíso* (1954) respectively, while Juan García Hortelano focused on the dubious morals of fast-paced city life in *Nuevas amistades* (1959). The premier generational author of short narrative, Ignacio Aldecoa, likewise established himself with stories of wandering peasant workers and hungry urban outcasts. Established novelists turned to similar subject matter as well, as evidenced by Miguel Delibes' *El camino* (1951) or Camilo José Cela's *La colmena* (1953).

The meeting of Spain's two worlds was just as apparent if not nearly as omnipresent in the decade's cinema. The influence of Italian neo-realism (and the quick reaction it elicited in many Spanish directors) assured that the material realities caused by the growing wave of immigration, however unpleasant they might seem, would be addressed, even if in a comic fashion. The first, and most serious, of movies to address the subject was Nieves Conde's *Surcos* (1951), one of the principal subjects of this chapter. Following the neorealist vein introduced by Nieves Conde, Ana Mariscal, the lone female director of the decade, traced the path of a *paleto* from Extremadura through the streets of Madrid accompanied by one of the city's many street urchins in *Segundo López, aventurero urbano* (1956). Juan Antonio Bardem and José Luis Berlanga contributed collectively and individually to the development of this topic with films such as *Bienvenido Mr. Marshall* (1952), *Muerte de un ciclista* (1955), and *Calle Mayor* (1956). Other directors, more eager to please the regime or at least less willing to suffer the censor's cuts, studied the rural/urban clash

through varying degrees of neorealist pastiche (see for instance the opening scene of Adolfo Marsillach's *Cerca de la ciudad* (1952) in which a neo-realist inspired film crew searches the streets of Madrid for a "typical" subject, or the use of a "tells-all" notepad recounting the urban adventures of its rural owner in Luis Lucía's 1956 movie *La vida en un bloc*). Finally, the decade boasts a number of rural and urban comedies that buy laughs by reinforcing stereotypes.

Of the novels and films of this era, two stand out in particular for their lucid treatment of the movement between city and country. José Antonio Nieves Conde's *Surcos*, as mentioned above, met the subject of urban immigration head on as no other film or novel of the generation did. On the other hand, novelist Jesús Fernández Santos, following a pattern established by well-known precursors such as Azorín and Pío Baroja, took his city protagonist to the country in *Los bravos*. In *Surcos*, innocent *ruralones* come face-to-face with the harsh facts of a fast-paced and mostly indifferent metropolitan lifestyle. In *Los bravos*, a city-born and -bred doctor is acquainted with the savage ways of one of Spain's many dying rural villages. In addition to these thematic similarities, both works have been celebrated by critics in their respective fields as signaling key technical innovations, specifically those of neo- or social realism. In a continuing attempt to show the innovation in either work, however, these critics have tended to accept uncritically the visions of the city and the country and of the contact between the two that these works project. In both cases, critical readings have neglected the effects of extra-textual urban/rural experience.

They ignore that audiences, critics, and authors lived both individually and collectively the issues that they simultaneously created and consumed.

In this chapter I will consider these lived experiences in relation to their representations in both works. The analysis of *Surcos* will focus specifically on the reception of the work, on how audiences positioned by pre-cinematic narratives might have responded to what appear to be straightforward messages regarding immigration and cosmopolitan life. With *Los bravos*, the focus will shift to a consideration of the writer's ability to create critical works when they and their audiences, as in the case of *Surcos*, are positioned so closely to the subject at hand. The contextualization of the novel and the film will finally point to the blind spots created by the focus on urban/rural relations. Like the juxtaposed objects in the Radinform ads, these urban/rural relations produce an illusion of closeness and continuity that masks more fundamental relations of power and potentials for change embedded within the works.

Surcos

José Antonio Nieves Conde's 1951 *Surcos* is generally considered the film that ushers in a more politically active, if never explicitly contestatory, cinema. It is also the first film of the Franco era to focus directly on contemporary social issues. Specifically, *Surcos* highlights the plight of rural immigrants in the city, a theme avoided in Spanish cinema since the infelicitous reception of Buñuel's *Las Hurdes* (1932) in the early days of the republic.⁹

The thawing of the official cold-shoulder toward social realist projects initiated by Nieves Conde's film has assured a general historical appreciation of *Surcos* as a work of a certain potential social disruptiveness. In *Historia del cine español*, José Enrique Monterde describes *Surcos* as a film "a años luz del cine inmediatamente anterior," explaining that it situated "los límites del decible filmico español del momento" (248). Spanish cinema critic Augusto M. Torres judges the regime's allowance of such a critical film as "insólito" (442). Jo Labanyi and Helen Graham in *Spanish Cultural Studies* locate "the beginnings of opposition cinema" with the release of *Surcos* (433). Finally, Spanish movie frequently attribute the first resignation of Spain's reform-minded General Director of Cinematography and Theater, José María García Escudero, to his decision not only to release *Surcos* but to award it the designation of "national interest" (Gubern 247; Higginbothom 9-10).

This common view of the film has recently been questioned by Marsha Kinder, the only contemporary critic to submit *Surcos* to sustained analysis. In *Blood Cinema*, Kinder brushes off the weight of consensus critique to offer an alternative reading of *Surcos* as a "Falangist film . . . with a clear ideological thesis" (49). While she acknowledges Nieves Conde's gesture toward a committed neorealist cinema, Kinder finds the sources of *Surcos* in Hollywood melodrama. The melodramatic, according to Kinder, allows *Surcos* to gloss over the ideological contradictions of Francoist Spain, to "interpellate its spectators as children who need the strong

guidance of a benevolent patriarch like Franco” (50), and ultimately assure the continuation of the fascist state (42).

But the fascist state, at least the kind that Kinder refers to in her analysis, did not continue, even if Franco did remain in power for another quarter-century. This, of course, could not be attributed solely to contestation in *Surcos*, just as the opposite could not be said to be true. Nevertheless, *Surcos*, as a widely recognized cultural product viewed during a time of significant political, economic, and social change, could not have presented so monolithic a message nor have been so univocally received as Kinder assumes. *Surcos* was experienced by the regime as a significant cultural gad-fly in a field that was beginning to buzz with relatively subversive activity. Whether intentional or not, *Surcos* participated in this activity and, at the very least can be studied as a register of this dynamic period.¹⁰ Thus, while historians ought to consider the text as they appraise the impact of the movie, it is likewise imperative that critics of *Surcos* appreciate the contextual elements that provided for that impact.

A more balanced appraisal of the movie is achieved by considering the context of city and country relations in which it participated. While Kinder sees the representation of urban/rural struggles as thwarting the discovery of more significant social contradictions, her analysis assumes an unproblematic reception of this representation. In other words, Kinder fails to consider the possibility of an audience ideologically pre-positioned by the same relations that they see projected on the

screen. This positioning, accomplished by means of what can be called “pre-cinematic narratives,” placed audience members in spectator positions that ensured non-univocal responses to otherwise traditional cinematic mechanisms of desire. Hence, the movie *Surcos*, no matter the intention of the filmic text, could certainly have had disruptive effects. At the same time, an appreciation of these pre-cinematic city/country narratives exposes a deeper process of positioning that, while challenging traditional forms of power, still seals the door on final liberation.

The bothersome nature of *Surcos* has always been attributed to its realistic story line. Censors reacted and film critics rejoiced at its “realismo cinematográfico más exacto,” “raras veces vista en nuestro cine” (Saenz Guerrero; Commentator). Both groups responded principally to the problem of urban migration, “un problema que hinca a todas horas sus comillos en nuestro contorno,” and that had led to the use of “desde hace muchos años ríos de tinta y raudales de oratoria” (Saenz Guerrero; Pascual). *Surcos* explored this problem by following the struggle of a family of rural immigrants in contemporary Madrid. The family, a prototypical Castilian household of father, mother, their two sons and a daughter, has left Salamanca to make their fortune in the city. Upon arrival in Madrid, the family traverses the city from train station, to metro stop, to tenement housing in a bewildered manner that would become the rule in later *paleto* films.¹¹ The story follows three main trajectories, pertaining to the three children. A fourth sub-plot, that of the father’s struggle with challenges to his patriarchal power, serves as a backdrop to the struggles of his three

children. The oldest son, Pepe, instigator of the family's urban adventure, finds work as a chouffer and then as a runner of contraband for the black marketer, don Roque, known as "El Chamberlain." The daughter, Tonia, seeks work as a house-servant. But like her brother, she discovers an alternative path to success, that of a cabaret singer, that likewise runs through "El Chamberlain." The second son, Manolo, is the only member of the family to remain in the realm of the legal. After mixed luck doing time in an employment line, lugging commerce, and delivering groceries, Manolo falls in with a benevolent puppeteer and subsequently falls in love with his angelic daughter, Rosario. After early successes, Pepe and Tonia both run into the dark side of the urban promise, ultimately sacrificing family honor, and in the case of Pepe, his life, to the quest for riches. Manolo, on the other hand, finds lasting happiness in the firm patriarchal order of the puppeteer's family. Ironically, in a film of purported anti-immigration sentiment, Manolo, the only family member to succeed, is also the only one to remain in the city. The story concludes with Pepe's grave side service, ending with a *mise en scène* composed of the tall figure of the family patriarch flanked by wife and daughter donned in the black robes of Church penitents. Sifting through his hand the dirt that will cover his son's grave, the father announces his family's imminent return to the land from whence it came. A final shot of lines of furrows (*surcos*) signals the film's end.

Reviews of *Surcos* from the time of its release indicate that the experience of the family in Madrid, was a familiar, if not universal, one for the audiences that

viewed the film. The popular culture weekly *Hola* describes the theme of urban/rural migration as one which every one of its readers has lived or seen at close-quarters (“Una” 21). *La prensa* refers to the infinite stories its readers know so well of rural-to-urban failure, lamenting the “ríos de tinta y raudales de oratoria” spent on such a tragedy. Indeed, statistics would indicate that like the *cristianos viejos* of Spain’s Golden Age, very few urbanites of Spain in the 1950s could make claims to a pure urban blood-line extending back more than one or two generations. Even before the post-1947 exodus, Madrid, Barcelona, and the nation’s other urban centers were composed principally of first or second generation immigrants.¹² This fact is underscored in a scene from *Surcos* in which a seasoned urbanite who heckles Manolo and his father for their foolhardy move to the city is reminded that he too was once an immigrant. Such would have been the state of a large percentage of the film’s audience. Hence, the potential spectator of *Surcos* was not just approaching the movie from a position of narrative experience, but in fact was in the very moment of viewing, living that experience.

The impact of this aesthetic involvement has been a key focus of recent film theory. Specifically, feminist theorists have explored the relationship of lived gender and sexual positionings to the mechanisms of desire by which film operates. In her now canonical essay, “Visual Pleasure in Narrative Cinema,” Laura Mulvey posits sexual difference, especially male heterosexual desire, as the driving force behind the process of escape that cinema provides for willing spectators. Mulvey argues that the

creation of such spectators (what is often referred to in film theory as the process of suture) works in classic Hollywood cinema by appealing to male spectators who identify with male protagonists and their sexual desire for female heroines.¹³ Hollywood cinema tends to place these heroines in situations that allow for their objectification as instigators of voyeuristic investigation and fetishistic scopophilia. Since “Visual Pleasure” Mulvey and others have revised and expanded the scope of the original analysis. Mulvey goes on to explore the possibilities and problems that occur in her model when spectatorship or protagonists are not male but female (“Afterthoughts”). Others extend this questioning to consider the problems that arise when audience and not just spectatorship is understood as sexually constructed (Doane 235; Stacey 245). Annette Kuhn explains, for example, that sociologists speak of spectators, be they male or female, as bringing a preexistent femaleness to their viewing of television soaps (306). Teresa de Lauretis argues that the complex sexual construction of audience and spectator is always determined by socio-historical context. She insists that desire should never be considered outside of the context in which it is produced, pointing out that spectators are always constituted by material practices that position the spectator according to what she terms “pre-cinematic narratives” (106). According to de Lauretis, spectators are able to identify with certain looks in a film or be attracted by specific desires thanks to prior identifications with similar desires in pre-cinematic narratives (144).

When the heterogeneous nature of desire and the sexuality it produces is taken into consideration, the notion of the production of a straightforward masculine heterosexual desire, such as that identified by Mulvey in classic Hollywood cinema, quickly crumbles. Without this unproblematized desire, spectators do not respond so neatly to what might appear as a straightforward, even mundane message, and the suturing process becomes vulnerable to subversion. It is likely that such a potentially disruptive suturing occurred with the original spectators of *Surcos*. As I will show, these living spectators, like the purely theoretical ones posited by de Lauretis, came to the cinema positioned by pre-cinematic narratives that in a sense “feminized” their viewing of a movie that depended on a masculine spectatorship. This is not to say that a heterosexual male audience would identify purely with female characters and female heterosexual desire. Instead, pre-cinematic experiences placed the potential audience of *Surcos* in a dubious relationship to the patriarchal values and desires championed in the film. Identification and desire would be far from straightforward.

While my theorization of the *Surcos* spectator does not depend on an explicitly sexual positioning of the spectator with relation to hegemonic patriarchy, it is interesting but perhaps not incidental that the Franco regime did in fact designate strength and weakness, orthodoxy and heterodoxy along a sexual axis. The regime took pains to promote ideal versions of womanhood, manhood, reproduction, and the patriarchal family as guarantors of social, economic, and ultimately political stability (Graham, “Gender” 182-84). This doctrine adhered to the overall fascist obsession

with sexual correctness and fetishization of virility to the extent that they showed “complete horror at the slightest suggestion of androgyny” (Payne 12-13). In the pre-*Surcos* Spanish cinema of the dictatorship a whole series of films from *Eugenia de Montijo* (1944) to *Catalina de Inglaterra* (1951) promoted correct images of femininity; proper masculinity was apparently a higher priority, as proper images were supplied much earlier through a series of war films including *Harka*, *Escuadrilla*, and Franco’s own *Raza* (all from 1941). In these war films in particular, masculinity was equated with victory, the first dedicated to “the splendid Hispanic/Moroccan brotherhood” while the latter according to Kinder fetishizes the ideal image of the fascist patriarchal family (Evans 216; Kinder 201).

If the war’s victors were celebrated as models of manhood, then the defeated were implicitly bereft of patriarchal power. A high school textbook of the era, for example, describes those outside the parameters of triumphant Spain as weak, soft, and lacking the firmness of vision to create a strong and unified Spain. Only the war’s victors possessed “dureza y fuerza” and the “valores militares” necessary to unite Spain (Fernández 68). Implied is the lack of these masculine attributes on the part of the softened and visionless (i.e. “gaze-less”) defeated. The feminization of the war’s defeated was materially sustained by the collapse of the patriarchal order in hundreds of thousands of formerly republican homes. With husbands and brothers in jail following the war, wives and daughters were forced to go to work as well as take control of the administration of the home (Graham, “Gender” 188). Thus a new

familial order was forged antithetical to Falangist visions of patriarchy. Furthermore, employment--legal or otherwise--was most readily found in the cities, where according to Manuel Tuñón de Lara, the ideological effects over the vanquished were that much more pronounced (Biescas 457). Finally, the war itself would have functioned as what Silverman calls a moment of social trauma, disrupting society's dominant patriarchal narratives and producing what she explains as "a force capable of unbinding the male ego, and exposing the abyss that it conceals" (121). If the effects of subsequent hunger, imprisonment, and fear can be appended to the social trauma of the war, it is likely that Spanish masculinity in 1951 was still very much "unbound."

Since the war became the organizing structure around which the regime justified and constructed its ideology, it makes sense that sexual divisions would carry over as a way of defining a multitude of social divisions, amongst these, that of rural versus urban Spain. The regime promoted small land-holding farmers as models of patriarchy. Recall for example, the patriarchal power manifest in Franco's portrait of the peasant, "standing over his land with a house in the background, with his children playing at the door and over all of this a modest but divine crucifix as the goal of all the ways of the spirit and to which our faith and our ambition as Spaniards carries us" (Sevilla-Guzman 94-95).

Upon immigrating, this ideal patriarch, once lord over family and land, is quickly reduced to softness and blindness by the seductions of the city. A review of

Surcos in *La Prensa* speaks of misguided peasants abandoning “la paz patriarcal del campo” for what *Primer Plano* critic, Gómez Tello, describes as “la seducción que la ciudad ejerce sobre el campesino, para desmoralizarlo, triturarlo y devolverle finalmente, convertido en un desecho, a los surcos de la tierra, si antes no le absorbió en el ‘maelstrom’ de cualquier catástrofe. . . .” (Tello). Not only is the former patriarch seduced by cosmopolitan temptations, but he is then absorbed, sucked down into the dark abyss of urban disaster. A reviewer in *Hola* seconds the suggestion of castration underlying Tello’s description, depicting the seducing city in terms of a devouring octopus (“Una” 21). But while confirming urban seduction as gynocentric, this tentacled image adds an important twist to the seduction. The picture of a multi-tentacled form lends the octopus a hyper-phallic power even as its nature as devourer constitutes it as gynocentric. Hence, the patriarchal immigrant is seduced by the feminine wiles of the city, but at the same time, feminized by the masculine powers inherent in this seducing force. Finally, recent theories of male sexuality introduce the possibility that the hyper-phallic image of the tentacled octopus awakens castration anxiety just as much if not more so than that anxiety awakened, according to Freud, by female genitalia (Silverman, *Acoustic* 1-2). In short, the stable image of the patriarchal *campesino* is completely rewritten through the process of urban immigration. The city dismantles stable sexuality, ironically constructing through its feminine seductions a new highly feminized--or at least de-patriarchized--urban worker. The reproduction of this new urban identity, this entry into what could be

called a new Lacanian symbolic, is aptly captured again by unwitting contemporary critics. In a conference of Church fathers on the problems of immigration, the keynote speaker employs the Freudian term of a “painful trauma” to describe the effects of urbanization on poor “blinded” peasants (Borregón Ribes 117). This traumatic forging of the urban worker takes place, according to Tello in *Primer Plano*, as the peasant family sees itself “deslumbrado por el espejismo de la ciudad” (Tello). The city is the distorting mirror that awakens the happy rural patriarch from his “imaginary” state into the confused “symbolic” of the metropolis, producing through its distortion, always only a (mis)recognition that precludes the pre-mirror ideal of a stable, whole patriarchy.

Finally, if the hegemonic discourses on defeat, migration, and urban living were not enough of a challenge to the spectator’s social masculinity, this gender identity was challenged yet again by the narrative inscribed on the act of cinema spectatorship itself. The initial post-war period saw the proliferation of guides to the cinema published principally by church-sponsored organizations warning audiences of the seductive dangers of the movies.¹⁴ To choose to go to the movies and succumb to the desires inspired therein would be, for the predominantly Catholic-educated and interpellated masses, a pre-cinematic acquiescence to their weak “feminine” side.

When theater lights went out, an audience of dubious social desire would face a film that treated the very narratives that had so dubiously positioned them. And if the play between pre-cinematic and cinematic positioning were not enough, *Surcos*

would foreground this play with a major sub-plot focused on the struggles of sexual desire and identity in the city. Indeed, migration and sexuality would be played out together, represented as integrally related flip sides to the same coin.

The forging of city/country and sexuality questions, and the suturing of spectators into a discourse in which their unity seems natural, began well before audiences entered the theater. This forging consisted of discourses that awoke sexually-motivated desires at the same time that it promised the recreation of the subject that film theorists have seen as so essential to successful suture. Serious film buffs, nearly a year before the release of *Surcos*, were aware of Nieves Conde's work on a movie that was variously titled *Cinco surcos* and then *Surcos en el asfalto*. They anticipated a film that would consider what Nieves Conde and *Primer Plano* reporters proclaimed the most pressing social issue facing contemporary Spain. *Surcos*, they were informed, would serve as a kind of mirror of their reality, the first such reflector they had been offered by the cinema of the dictatorship.¹⁵ Later, readers of *Primer Plano*, *Fotogramas*, and *Hola*, enjoyed the barrage of full-page ads that accompanied the premier of the movie. A majority of these ads underline what Laura Mulvey, borrowing Lacan's term, refers to as the gaze of masculine desire. In nearly every photograph selected for these ads, one character subjects another to a look that carries with it the power of the gaze.¹⁶ These ads, confirming Kinder's analysis, though celebrating neorealism in word, depict in fact the victimizing and victimized looks of Hollywood melodrama. Female characters dominate these ads to

a degree disproportionate to their roles in the movie. These ads would have awakened the spectator's gaze-driven masculine desires. Furthermore, the promise of a movie that would finally serve as a mirror of a potentially traumatic aspect of the spectator's reality would likely have awakened the desire for what Mulvey calls the reproduction of subject formation that occurs in classic cinema.

The ads then initially are designed to incite the traditional masculine scopophilic desires and their accompanying male identification. Mulvey points out that initial spectator identification with the masculine is natural in classic cinema, principally due to the illusion of control that male identification offers ("Afterthoughts" 29). It is likely that some form of control may be exactly what many of the *Surcos* spectators seek, and hence they would be expected to respond to the masculine desires incited by the movie's propaganda. However, Silverman points out that when "suture joins with female subjectivity," the "pleasure on offer" of the film may become problematized so as to awaken the female spectator from masculine identification (*Subjectivity* 236). This combination of initial masculine identification and its subsequent breaking is precisely what occurs in the opening scenes of *Surcos*.

The initial sequence is filmed as if from the front of a moving locomotive looking down along tracks that, by way of a series of temporal cuts, evidence a move from rural to urban landscapes. In a second sequence, the immigrant family emerges from this train, instantly incurring through their clumsiness the wrath of a station

worker, to whom the eldest son, Pepe, apologizes with the simple explanation, “Este (referring to his father) es del campo.” Pepe’s response sets in motion a hierarchy of power that will order the movie and challenge traditional patriarchy as much as ultimately justify it. Pepe, and not his father, is in control, as a subsequent scene in which the family wanders the streets and metro in search of their relatives’ flat reveals. This same scene also initiates the viewer into the principal play of desire in the film. Standing beneath a metro sign indicating the family’s arrival in the Madrid working-class neighborhood of Lavapiés, the members pause to question Pepe as to their whereabouts. Positioned squarely at the center of this *mise en scène*, and already displaying the cheeky, coquettish attitude that will lead to her downfall, stands Tonia, ready-framed as the object of the male gaze of the movie.

As the movie progresses uncomplicated identifications and straightforward desires grow problematic. Upon arrival at the relatives’ home, Pepe succumbs to the look of his cousin Pili. Masculine patriarchal identification is again displaced, this time from Pepe to a female, albeit a deep-voiced, cigarette-toting one. Pili in turn is only an extension of her equally domineering mother, Engracia, head of a home devoid of patriarchy. Pepe, his family, and the spectator receive a kind of symbolic baptism into the convoluted cosmopolitan orders of power by these aptly named figures. For Pepe this baptism is permanent. Try as he might to prove his machismo, Pepe never regains the upper hand from Pili, either in diegetic or cinematographic terms. In every *mise en scène* in which the two are portrayed together, Pili holds a

superior position. With her cigarette permanently in hand, her fetishized stockings, and her quick fists, Pili personifies the Medusa-role of the city, initially hardening, but ultimately petrifying and then crushing patriarchal power with her hyper-phallic femininity.

Pili's stockings also mark the beginning of complications of the film's mechanisms of desire. On Tonia's first night in the city, she watches as Pili (placed just off-screen in the position of the camera) undresses. In a textbook example of traditional cinematic suture, the spectator forgets the cinematic apparatus, joining with the camera's gaze on the wide-eyed Tonia lying face-up in bed. Immediately the gaze shifts with Tonia's eyes to a focus on Pili's blouse, slip, and finally, two silk stockings that land softly on the chair beside her. In partial identification with Tonia, the spectators likewise turn their desire toward these fetishized objects. Our desire *for* Tonia is displaced onto the stockings, and an identification *with* Tonia is effected. Subsequently, for Tonia the stockings become a metonymy for other urban desires. A pair of fine silk stockings like those worn by the doctor's daughter back in the pueblo will place her squarely in the prototypical position of female object of desire, making her as desirable as the doctor's daughter. Hence, the stockings--fetishized phallic symbols--guarantee her role as object of the male gaze. At the same time, however, these stockings serve as symbols of access to patriarchal power. As substitutions for the phallus they may temporarily freeze up male desire, but in so doing open a window for the identification of the female spectator, desirous for the power of the

phallus. The remainder of Tonia's story could be described as a movement toward possessing the stockings. This movement guarantees a continuation and complication of the contradictions inherent in the dubiously sexed spectator's simultaneous identification with and objectification of Tonia.

When Tonia first longs for the chance to wear the stockings she incites the masculine desire awakened by the sight of a fetishized object. Each step Tonia takes toward satisfying the fetish incites masculine desire. Her search initially lands her a job as a cleaning girl, singing as she scrubs floors in a house adorned by photographs of starlets, and succumbing to don Roque's gaze. When alone in the house, Tonia's desire for silk stockings produces the film's principal scene of scopophilia. As if alone in the house with Tonia, the camera situates the implicit male spectator as unseen voyeur while Tonia dons the complete silk ensemble of the cabaret girl. The pursuit of stockings next leads to Tonia's entry into the world of cabaret singing. As aspiring artist, "Toni" (as she is now called) inspires the excited calls of "guapa" from the neighborhood children, but also the wrath of her father, who, along with the surely much more amused spectator, witnesses a relatively sensual display of his daughter's dancing talent. Ultimately, Tonia earns the much desired stockings and then some, all gifts from "El Chamberlain," as he pushes her toward the climactic moment of her position as object of desire, the cabaret-like scene of Tonia's performance in the "Fiesta del Barrio," and its denouement that takes her from ballroom to bedroom, and

from the costume and bright lights of future stardom to the silk and soft light that identifies her as “El Chamberlain”’s newest lover.

While the stockings position Tonia as object of desire, they simultaneously incite the desires for identification of the feminized spectator. As mentioned above, when Tonia first sets eyes on Pili’s stockings, her thoughts turn to the doctor’s daughter back home. As Stanley Brandes has shown, the choice of the doctor’s daughter as object of envy, more than establishing class differences, creates a clear city/country division that a 1950s Spanish audience would recognize.¹⁷ Tonia’s desire for that which the doctor’s daughter possesses is a metaphor for her desire for that which the city possesses, for the new urban power that until now has submitted her to its gaze. These associations again reaffirm the close links between the sexual and the social. The spectator’s desire for the stockings, for what they represent, is enhanced by the social connections. In desiring the fetishized object, not only are masculine sexual desires incited, but so are the feminized social desires of the rural immigrant for urban power. Again, desire *for* Tonia is joined by a desire for identification *with* Tonia.

This desire for identification likewise grows with each subsequent “stockings” scene. When Tonia tries on the stockings of “El Chamberlain”’s lover she poses and performs as if a part of a private cabaret act, not only wearing but becoming a substitute for the phallus.¹⁸ When Tonia’s game of dress-up comes to an abrupt run-in with the weakness *of* the stockings, she defends her own weakness *for* the

stockings before “El Chamberlain,” arguing that all women have a right to wear them. More than defending the rights of women, Tonia’s argument serves as justification for a generation of immigrants. Why have they come to the city when they were fine in the country, so many of the film’s diegetic characters and extradiegetic critics ask. Tonia silences critics when she answers “El Chamberlain” rhetorically: “¿Es que uno no tiene piernas?” Tonia becomes the bearer of the immigrants’ desire, taking upon herself the role of the male protagonist of classic cinema, that is, the object of spectator identification and the carrier of their desires. It is no coincidence that just prior to her patriarchy inciting and challenging statement, Tonia has not only dressed herself in the full regalia of this Medusa-like garb, but has learned to smoke the long, elegant cigarettes of the metropolitan nouveau-riche, quickly mastering the arts of these patriarchal symbols. She becomes the spectator’s principal voice, positioned as indubitably feminine but adeptly wielding the very objects that would position her. Curiously, in inspiring Tonia’s greatest moment of power to the present, the fetishized object (that which represents the so desired power) has only displayed its weakness by developing a run. Is it reading too much into the image to suggest that the power that Tonia pursues enjoys a strength that is inherently composed of weakness and consequently, a form of power far different from the official patriarchy her father struggles to regain and official censors fight to maintain? Such an issue refers us to questions of urban patriarchal power that I shall save for later.

Meanwhile, as Tonia justifies her right to don the stockings, she becomes herself an object of obsession. Like the urban immigrants on whose “problem” urban politicians, religious authorities, and writers had spilt so many “rivers of ink,” Tonia, in appropriating the objects of urban power becomes the center of character and audience obsessions. The film’s narrative shifts from the early focus on Pepe’s black market career and the other male characters’ failures. Mother, father, Pepe, and even Pili turn their attention toward saving Tonia, each according to his or her particular moral visions. The mass obsession for Tonia, introduced in the shouts of “guapa” from neighborhood children, climaxes with the aforementioned “Fiesta del Barrio” scene. Tonia, on center stage in an attention-grabbing costume, stands in the dubious position of object and bearer of character and spectator desires and identifications. As she attempts to perform, a trio of hecklers interrupts her song, inciting the audience to riot. Unable to continue her number, a heartbroken Tonia flees the stage into the waiting arms of don Roque. At her moment of greatest perceived weakness, Tonia’s power reaches its height with the crowd’s growing chant of “Tonia, Tonia, Tonia.” Ironically but significantly, this power is realized only after she is gone.

Tonia’s position following this scene, and the spectator’s positioning with respect to this scene, are uncertain. Kinder has read it as the beginning of an airtight restoration of patriarchy in the movie. But identifications are not so clear. In a sense, Tonia has achieved what she came for. Although she has not triumphed on stage, she has gained a degree of notoriety, even power, previously unattainable. Her name

resounds long after she has disappeared, a power inherent in the always absent phallus. When the spectator next sees Tonia, she lies again in bed, adorned in the silk regalia symbolic of don Roque's lover, and expertly smokes the fetishized cigarette. She is again a stand-in for the phallus, objectified as desirable object. But she also wields the symbolic power of the phallus in her dress and action. The only clear failure attributable to Tonia is her acquiescence to the immoral lifestyle corresponding to a black marketer's lover. Nevertheless, while society officially condemns such behavior, *Surcos* never does, at least not unequivocally.

This equivocal censure is carried out through the apparent resurgence of rural patriarchal power embodied in the father. Following the "Fiesta del Barrio" disaster, and buoyed up by the return of the burgeoning young patriarch, Manolo, the father reestablishes himself as head of household, first firmly beating his wife and then setting out in search of his daughter. On finding Tonia, the father's patriarchal resurgence reaches its zenith. However, it is also at this point where the suturing of patriarchal desire comes head to head with spectator identifications. The father's pounding on the door interrupts a silk-adorned Tonia waltzing about her flat with cigarette pressed to her lips, a powerful scene of masculine desire combined with feminine identification. When Tonia answers the door, the father, in the position of the camera, fixes his look upon Tonia, who retreats in terror, maintaining the classic Hollywood pose of female object of the gaze. At this point, spectator identification is torn. The rural patriarch moves in, enjoying his moment of greatest power. Through

the shot-reverse-shot sequence, the spectator is invited to identify with this reestablishment of rural patriarchy. At the same time, the spectator remains with the frightened Tonia. In her terror evoked by the message of patriarchal power implicit in her father's approach, Tonia foregrounds the hollow, formulaic nature of this patriarchal affirmation. First, the beating the father inflicts on Tonia not only replicates that given to the mother, but in its overt repetition recalls an earlier puppet show beating performed by Rosario's father for Manolo. In the puppet show a husband beats his wife until her head flies off even though the short drama plainly states that it is the husband who has been irresponsible with family finances. The puppet show, which Kinder reads as confirming patriarchy, occurs at the heart of *Surcos* when the questioning of gender roles is at its height. The placement of such an explicit affirmation of unproblematic gender roles at such an obvious moment of gender ambivalence serves instead to call into question the "self-evident" propriety of the beating. In addition to the recollection of the puppet show, during the beating Tonia slowly back steps until she leans against a wall on which hangs a movie clip of a lightly-clad heroine in a stance nearly identical to Tonia's, thus foregrounding the nature of this position as a product of an artificially-produced male gaze. If the presence of the photograph alone is not enough to underline the hollowness of this patriarchal reaffirmation, the father, after beating his daughter into submission, leans weakly against the wall, more softened than strengthened by his self-affirming actions, and crumpled beneath the still victimized look--but now, perhaps ultimately

victimizing gaze--of the photograph. The spectator's identifications and desires are left undone and confused. The power of rural patriarchy, denied from the second scene of the film, comes back only to be reduced by that which it pretends to deny. And yet that which it denies exerts a power that allows only partial identification at best, inherently torn as it is by heterogeneous elements, bereft of any unifying identity.

At least in part, the complications in spectator identification and desire have resulted in a partial shift of narrative from what Mulvey calls a traditional Oedipal conquest (effected through identifications with a male protagonist) to that of an interior drama of a female caught between desires ("Afterthoughts" 35). Tonia's role as partial protagonist guarantees that in part, she corresponds to Mulvey's female protagonist who does not merely signify sexuality, but who makes the story overtly about sexuality ("Afterthoughts" 35). De Lauretis has described strong female characters as serving more as prisms than as mirrors, diffracting the double positionality of female Oedipal desire and sustaining an unresolvable oscillation between masculine and feminine (152-53). In other words, the spectator's partial identification with Tonia guarantees not that the film will present other clear options of power but that the struggle for power, manifest in the struggle for identification, will remain in flux. Desires and identifications remain unresolved. In terms of *Surcos*, this conflict means that its triumph of rural patriarchy is artificial, that its call

to return to the countryside is hollow, enunciated by a permanently castrated figure, whose lack has been irremediably exposed by the urban Medusa.

On the other hand, Tonia's actions, or those of other female or feminized characters hardly vindicate the urban experience. Urbanites (Pili, doña Engracia, Pepe's fellow contraband runners) are self-interested, unfeeling, hypocritical, and themselves slaves to higher, often illegal powers. As Kinder points out, the city is depicted most often in terms of mob mentalities. Neither the Spanish *campo* nor the growing metropolis offer attractive forms of power. Nevertheless, other forms not explicitly related to traditional representations of the city and the country, but integrally related nonetheless, do make themselves manifest in the movie. These alternative forms of power point to deeper city/country contradictions that engulf the movie's characters and that threaten the movie's resolution of superficial city/country conflicts.

One option, represented by Manolo, takes the form of a compromise between rural masculinity and urban feminization. Manolo, the story's weakest, most effeminate character (of men *and* women), following a descent that drags him through the depths of urban squalor, finds redemption in the form of a puppeteer's daughter. At the conclusion of the film the spectator must assume that he has remained with her in the city. The daughter, Rosario, bears the name of a rite that Pepe has forbidden his family to practice once established in the city. Like the formal order of prayers whose name she bares, Rosario performs the role of an Althusserian Ideological State

Apparatus, almost singlehandedly interpellating Manolo into the patriarchal role he is too weak to perform on his own. She does not hail him, however, by inciting traditional masculine desire. Instead she bears the gaze that levels Manolo, first figuratively, when his fascination with her look leads to the robbery of his parcel, and second literally, when he collapses upon arrival at her home. When Manolo awakes, Rosario encourages her father to teach Manolo the art of the puppeteer, an avocation apparently inseparable from that of manhood, judging by the wife-beating puppet show that ensues. Like Pili with Pepe, Rosario maintains her position of superiority over Manolo both in terms of story and shot arrangement throughout. Even when Manolo returns to his father and patriarchy begins to reestablish itself in earnest, it is only able to do so thanks to Rosario's active, instigating participation. If Rosario is the perfect woman in the Falangist sense, she is nevertheless little different from her antithesis Pili in the control she maintains over the men she interpellates. Consequently, the triumph of patriarchy that Manolo offers differs little in its structure from the form of power that leaves Pepe as fodder for speeding locomotives. The message sent to spectators would seem to indicate that what matters is not how one acts, but with whom one acts--that it is the appearance and not the structure that counts. Hence, a movie that appears to reconfirm patriarchy ultimately problematizes established differences between "winners" and "losers," the "masculine" and the "feminine." The straightforward Falangist interpellation that *Surcos* appears to offer collapses in ambiguity.

Not only is the structure of Manolo's patriarchy ambivalent but so is its site. While Manolo does not return to the country with his family, his new home is not exactly in the city proper. Rosario's home, where he ends up, lies instead in one of the many make-shift communities that lined the outskirts of Madrid in the 1950s. These peripheral communities, officially discouraged and frequently dismantled by the regime, served as rest stops for rural families on their way to urban success, but also as the more permanent resting places of the dreams of so many other failed immigrants. Oddly enough, in *Surcos*, Rosario's neighborhood is posited as a *locus amoenus* for modern times (a straight-faced version of Chaplin's *Modern Times* love shack?), a place of idyllic peace where children sing and play happily (in contrast to the mob-like ruckus in the Lavapies tenement), where Rosario's father erects a folkloric white-washed home, and where hard-earned cash is counted in abundance. It is in such a peripheral neighborhood, and not the city center, where Manolo finds the will and the means to triumph. The peripheral nature of this outlying neighborhood is foregrounded by a panning long shot that follows Manolo as he first re-enters Rosario's world. Standing as sentinel at the entrance to the slums, rising high above the horizontal expanse of speedily-erected homes, a tall factory smokestack juts vertically into the air, reminding the spectator of the combination of economic and patriarchal powers that maintain new forms of city/country relations even as the geographic ones seem to dissolve. If Manolo gains power in his urban adventure, if there is an authority in Manolo that attracts spectator identification, it is

power that carries with it a series of emerging city/country relations that problematize traditional hierarchies. Rural-to-urban integration in the case of Manolo is only realized through an urbanization that, instead of introducing the peasant plainly to the city, re-ruralizes him or her as bearer of what Labanyi and Graham call a “folkloric” rural culture that is in fact, the mark of the uncultured (“Introduction” 6).

The second option of power that *Surcos* offers its spectator comes in the form of don Roque. “El Chamberlain” is the only character whose power is never seriously challenged in the movie. He is also the only unquestioned bearer of the gaze, overpowering urbanites, *ruralones*, men, women, and even police with his confident look. Furthermore, don Roque is the common denominator of all but Manolo in each character’s quest for urban power. Nevertheless, the power don Roque offers is far from that which a Falange-sustaining film would want to offer.

First, don Roque is an outsider. As a black marketer he stands outside the law and outside the officially accepted morality of the era. As the film’s only bourgeois character he is beyond the class limits of character and positioned spectator. Most importantly, his title (“El Chamberlain”), his form of dress, and his actions suggest a foreign-ness with respect to that which is most essentially “Spanish.” This final positioning is perhaps of deepest significance both in terms of spectator identification and in terms of the meaning of the don Roque character. Foreigners in 1940s and 1950s Spain, as stated in an official communique following the 1952 Barcelona riots, were “perturbadores,” and following the message’s circular reasoning,

“perturbadores” always originated from “desde afuera de España” (Díaz-Plaja 255). Curiously, a review of *Surcos* in *Primer Plano* links the corruption of the city with the corruption of foreign, American cinema, linking both with “el gran tentador” that is “el nombre del demonio” (“Diez”). Officially, don Roque is the epitome of evil.

In addition to his outsider status, don Roque offers an openly and inherently lacking form of power. Instead of acting covertly, maintaining before his associates an appearance of invulnerability, don Roque welcomes challenges, showing that the power with which he operates is available to all. When both El Mellao and Pepe come to challenge him, don Roque flaunts the ephemeral nature of the power he wields, offering knives and inviting responses from his challengers. They recoil, terrified not by don Roque’s own force (though this is manifest in both cases), but by the overwhelming prospects of a system that suddenly offers them so much power (as in the case of Pepe, who does not know how to act when he realizes that he actually *can* challenge don Roque without recourse to formal systems of protocol). In addition, don Roque maintains authority over others not through his own activity, but by passively watching while others destroy each other. By playing off male against female, city-slicker against *paleto*, and parent against child, don Roque assures his sustenance while maintaining safe distance from the fray. This unusual, inherently hollow power is symbolically displayed in the long, thin umbrella that don Roque constantly totes around with him. When Tonia asks him about the umbrella, he replies that it is simply “para adornar.” For spectators searching for forms of power

resembling the official patriarchal models dismantled by the film, don Roque offers little.

Ultimately, *Surcos* may leave the spectator bereft of any viable options. Neither official nor purely contestatory powers emerge unscathed. Instead, the movie may leave its spectators, as Mulvey describes, struggling within an interior drama of the “feminized” caught between desires. But this does not mean that *Surcos*, and specifically, the character of don Roque, leaves the late twentieth-century critic without clues to the forms of power that ultimately create such problematic spectator positioning. Instead, through don Roque’s character the critic of today may discover what Raymond Williams has called “structures of feeling” of forthcoming changes in Spain of the 1950s that a 1951 production might have registered, but could not clearly represent. This structure of feeling, pointing away from the clear Manichean divisions between good and evil that still dominated post-war society in the early 1950s and toward a world of more diverse, diffuse, and always already lacking forms of power, can be intuited in specific residual and emergent forms of authority that don Roque’s actions incite.

By setting a criminal as the lone bourgeois character of the story, *Surcos* could be said to displace economic and social contradictions onto Manichean moral oppositions, glossing over issues of class conflict in favor of city/country and family/society strife.¹⁹ While don Roque’s character undoubtedly pays tribute to the corrupt Godfather figure of 1940s *film noir*, the nature of his success in a movie that

positions spectators with respect to lived social experiences has an impact that goes beyond that of mere stereotype. If Manolo suggests the emergence of a new space for the immigrant spectator, don Roque suggests the new structure of power through which they will operate.

This structure is tied again to a location. But while Manolo indicates the immigrant's position as re-ruralized urbanite, don Roque affirms the power that maintains that urban ruralization. Though his center of power is located literally in Madrid, the source of this authority comes from without, from the foreign connections that partially sustain the black market and the foreign appearances that keep him above the fray. As the lone bourgeois character in the movie, he could be said to represent the emerging hegemony of Western capitalism as colonizing city, an emergent city/country relation that would exercise increasing influence in Spain in the coming decade. Appropriately, the power that don Roque represents is, as shown above, more diffuse, appearance-based, and reminiscent of the structures of modernity and late capitalism.²⁰ At the same time, don Roque's exacerbations of family divisions and its simultaneous creation of family bonds, recalls a residual city/country-structured relationship, that of Spain's regional nationalisms versus its national center. If the family is the microcosm of the state, as Francoist doctrine maintained, then the breakup of the family witnessed in *Surcos* would recall the breakup of the state. The source of that breakup is still a patriarchal figure. It is not,

however, a figure in the Franco mold, but a patriarch whose power comes from without and comes in a new openly lacking, self-effacing form.

In a sense then, don Roque catalyzes residual and emergent city/country forms within a movie that seems on the surface to gloss over these issues in favor of a merely mimetic recounting of the move from a literal country to a literal city. Far from being representative of an attempt to dodge issues of class conflict, don Roque's foreign-influenced class position reminds the spectator that class issues are always complicated by race, culture, and the geographies that give these imagined communities some illusion of a material grounding.

These broader geographies were to have an increasing influence in representations of the urban/rural conflict in Spain of the 1950s as well as on the reception of these representations. It may have been precisely the effects of these as yet unrecognized city/country relationships that ultimately would have "feminized" the spectator of *Surcos* and also the regime that censored it. Consciously living the rural-to-urban shift while unbeknownst to them, the metropolitan hegemony of industrial modernization and late capitalism began to color the *Surcos* spectator's social fabric. Those who went seeking a mirror in which to make sense of themselves and their experiences ultimately encountered a mixture of identifications and desires that turned the superficial mirror into a diffracting prism. Such a prism produced the inevitable (mis)recognitions of censors who accurately felt the subversive potential of

Surcos, but who--also inevitably--could not see through to what those real subversions were.

Notwithstanding the inevitable blindness of audiences, the quips and cuts of official as well as self-appointed censors had lasting effects both on Nieves Conde's directing career and on García Escudero's place in the Ministry of Information and Tourism. After such a troubling saga, it is not surprising that the much celebrated arrival of neo-realism to Spain would bare so little cinematic fruit. In an art so tied to economics, directors could not afford to run the financial risks involved in producing films that might not meet official expectations. Thoughtful treatment of social issues, and specifically of city/country relations, had to revert back to the novelists from whose ranks the inspiration and story for *Surcos* had come.²¹ In the field of the novel where economics played a much lesser role, and where immediate popular impact was so hard to come by, contemporary social problems could be examined, critiqued, and even attacked without fear of significant economic loss or political reprisal. Hence, the novel, and not the cinema, became the site from which possible social change might be enacted. Consequently, it becomes the site to which my analysis of the city and the country in Spain in the 1950s will now turn.

Los bravos

Fernández Santos's first novel was, like so many first efforts of his contemporaries, a work focused on the changing face of rural Spain. While his novel

was not the first to treat this theme it was the first to do so using the hyper-objective narrative techniques of social or neorealism, a style influenced, again, by Italian neorealist cinema.²² Practically devoid of narrative commentary or of psychological internalization, neorealist narrative garnered the praise of critics in search of faithful representations of a social reality in need of change.

The contact between the urban and the rural, consequently, became one of the favorite, if not predominant, themes of a generation of novelists eager to change the world through their words. But if change was wrought by their novels, it was not the change they had anticipated. Within a decade, the generation had abandoned the social realist project and begun theorizing the reasons for its failure.²³

Among the possible reasons for the demise of social realism, critics have cited a naiveté with respect to this generation's assumed enemy and with respect to the complexity of the contradictions that upheld it. This group of writers reveals its ingenuosness by the contradictions in its representations of urban/rural conflicts. Using theories of performance I show that *Los bravos* not only offers simplistic representations of the conflict, as recent criticism has begun to argue, but misunderstands what those conflicts are.²⁴ This misunderstanding ultimately signals the blindness of a generation of writers to their own complicity in the deeper social contradictions that they could not--or would not--recognize.

Los bravos wrestles with the social contradictions in the urban/rural contact through the study of a city doctor newly arrived in what critics have called a typical

“pueblo perdido” of northern León. The story relates the doctor’s efforts to establish himself among a small group of reluctant peasants, short on funds, bereft of hope, and locked in their rural ways of being. While the doctor performs his medical duties with relative success, he remains excluded from the town’s social life. At the same time, he grows increasingly disgusted with the backward, filthy, and prejudiced habits of the people he encounters. Meanwhile, a stranger from the city, posing as a banker, arrives in the village and promptly swindles all but two of the villagers of their life-savings. The story reaches its climax when the doctor, returning from a three-day medical mission into the mountains of Asturias, finds himself responsible for the safe transport of the captured swindler to the civil guard in the city below. This charge places him in direct confrontation with the locals, who want to impose their own justice. By defying the local citizens the doctor denies them of their form of justice and finds himself blacklisted from community life. Notwithstanding this rejection--or perhaps because of it--, the physician decides to remain in the village, where he soon avails himself of the home and former mistress of the late *cacique*, don Prudencio.

The representations of city and country in the story tend to follow traditional lines. In an early review of the novel, Alberto Gil Novales describes the village as “el pueblo que todos hemos visto, en Aragón, Extremadura o Castile” and refers to it as one of many “pueblos míseros” (122). The initial description of the town, in the second fragment of the novel, emphasizes the ruin, stagnation, and isolation of the forgotten countryside. The narrator describes the town as “vacío,” and focuses on a

fire-gutted church, a permanently stopped clock, a seldom used campanile, and deserted bridges (12-13). Descriptions of the villagers compare them alternately as bloated (66), earthy (109), and animal-like (162). Despite the individual focalizations provided by the doctor as he makes his rounds, the villagers are often described *en masse*, and rarely act individually. The people themselves tend to support this negative portrayal of the country. They describe their town as an economic and social dead-end, and regularly question the doctor's reasons for being there. The villagers' few positive statements regarding the pueblo come in the form of defensive, knee-jerk reactions to outsiders' criticism (38, 76).

At the same time, the townsfolk celebrate the city in typical positive terms of progress, opportunity, and adventure. The youth have already moved there or are making plans to do so. The novel's lone urban scene describes a city of "calles lisas, bien pavimentadas, bares, teatros, gente bien vestida, automóviles y las macetas de albahaca luciendo en lo alto de las farolas, a lo largo de los paseos. . . . Nuevas tiendas, lujosas, para ricos; la gente vistiendo trajes frescos y elegantes" (129). As the focalizer of the scene, don Prudencio, considers the urban splendor, the narrator confirms the supremacy of the city: "No entendía de negocios, pero comprendía por qué los jóvenes luchaban por venir a la capital, por qué abandonaban la tierra y la familia para ir allí a establecerse" (130). Unlike *Surcos* where the predominating question centers around why anyone would choose the city over the country, *Los*

bravos presents the wisdom of urban-immigration as so self-evident that it requires nothing more than a brief view for its confirmation.

When the novel does advance opposing views of country or city, these also sustain stereotypes. The doctor, for example, obviously believes in the redemptive qualities of the country as a kind of paradise lost. Although never explicitly stated, presumably he has gone there seeking respite from the pressures of the modern metropolis. Villagers volunteer a sampling of these possible pressures, describing the city as engendering avarice--“ustedes, los de las capitales, se pasan la vida estudiando para, luego, venir a sacarnos el dinero a los pobres” (158)--, disease--“La gripe siempre viene de abajo”(158)--, and moral corruption--describing how the city transformed a village girl into a “sifilítica perdida” (128).

Critics have unanimously accepted this clear-cut separation of city and country. David K. Herzberger, for instance, concludes his brief review of the city/country division in *Los bravos* affirming, “Life in the city thus symbolizes progress, development, and activity and stands in direct contrast to small-town decadence and isolation” (14). Mere reiteration of the classic division in the novel is not enough for some critics, who feel compelled to affirm the extra-textual fidelity to the social polarization. Gil Novales, continuing with the passage in which he refers to the town as one of Spain’s typical “pueblos míseros,” celebrates the novel’s objective representation of it: “No hay aquí exageración, pesimismo o cualquiera de esos latiguillos que tan fácilmente se cuelgan sobre las sufridas espaldas de los que

pretenden ver claro” (122). Gonzalo Sobejano likewise describes the village as “ejemplo típico de la España campesina” (320).

Satisfied with the accuracy of unproblematic city and country divisions, a majority of critics have turned their focus toward a debate concerning the role of the urban doctor in relation to this rural wasteland.²⁵ They focus specifically on the moral position of the physician in relation to the villagers. If the country is “lost” as they agree, then does the doctor come to redeem it or to perpetuate that which has destroyed it? Do his urban experiences and supposedly enlightened morals offer the villagers hope or guarantee their continued repression? In the most common parlance of the debate, is the doctor a “good Samaritan” or another rural *cacique*?

The final scene of the novel, though little more than a static image, has become the point around which much of this debate has turned. In this description, the doctor walks out onto the balcony of the former *cacique*'s home and looks over the village at his feet: “El médico salió al balcón. Colocó en él una silla y sentándose, contempló el pueblo a sus pies: la iglesia hueca, la fragua y el río. Tres niños nadaban bajo el puente, en el postrer baño del verano” (236). The image of the doctor on the balcony recalls an earlier scene involving don Prudencio: “Don Prudencio vino de sus nabicoles con el cubo en la mano y, dejándole en la cocina, sacó una silla--la misma de siempre--al balcón. Desde la penumbra de la persiana veía el pueblo a sus pies, la doble hilera de casas a ambas márgenes del río, surgiendo de la tierra parda y seca” (83). This parallelism served as the principal evidence leading early critics to

accept Fernández Santos's own determinist vision of this particular "pueblo perdido" (Gil Novales 122). Pablo Gil Casado includes a dialogue between the customers of a bar in a neighboring town to support this doctor as *cacique* reading:

--Pues tiene agallas el médico para lo joven que es...

--Y luego dicen que no sabe lo que se hace--continuó Pedro--; ése en un par de años se hace dueño del pueblo.

--Y si no, al tiempo. Ahí le tenéis: se empeñó en que no le tocabais al otro un pelo de la ropa y ni presidente, ni secretario, ni nada. ¿Quién pudo con él?

César rió tan fuerte que el viajante del café volvió la cabeza.

--Lo que debió pensar: Para presidente, yo; para secretario, yo.

--¡Y para don Prudencio, yo!

--Eso es. Ya puede morir tranquilo el viejo. (217)

Herzberger likewise accepts the negative reading of the doctor's role, though the critic is not so much bent on proving social determinism as he is on maintaining the structural coherence he finds in the novel (19).

Sobejano, on the other hand, offers a persuasive defense of the physician. Confident in the camera-eye objectivity of social realism, Sobejano argues that in spite of the conversation in the bar or the symbolic evidence found on don Prudencio's balcony, the objective narrator--who cannot lie--presents the doctor as a sympathetic character, even a good Samaritan figure, who desires above all to break

out of the *cacique* mold in which the villagers--and Gil Casado--wish to place him. The championing of doctor as good Samaritan has been developed by Gregorio Martín and others. Most recently, Jean Alsina has read the doctor as an archetypal figure on a hero journey through which his good Samaritanism is again confirmed.

Notwithstanding their differing positions with respect to the debate or the variety of manners in which they arrive at these positions, each of these critics bases his opinions on the grounds of an unproblematic communicative relationship between the urban and the rural. While this may have been the design of social realists intent on wrestling with the problems of urban migration and rural poverty, a closer analysis of the doctor's experience reveals the impossibility of this simple two-way communication. Instead, a careful analysis of the representations of the doctor's experience, especially his journey into Asturias at the end of the novel, exposes systems of power that limit the impact of the relationship between doctor and pueblo. These systems of power point to deeper city/country contradictions, rendering the conventional urban/rural debate as only a superficial glossing over of these contradictions.

While debate over the doctor's emancipatory potential originally centered on simpler, deterministic readings of power, recent theories have allowed for more nuanced understandings of these issues. Specifically, Foucault's analysis of modern Western civilization as an ever more pervasive but invisible prison-house of power adds both strength and subtlety to earlier readings. This same system also refigures

power so as to cancel out or at least significantly complicate readings that would assign autonomy to any single individual or group. Certainly authority in *Los bravos* is available in varying forms and at different levels (the constant tragicomic struggle for trout-fishing rights between Alfredo and the game warden--and the officials whom he represents--is one clear manifestation of the ubiquity and hence universal availability of power). But while for some this sudden availability and the rethinking of authority as not an object but a position may only seal the deterministic door even tighter on the doctor, others have seen in Foucault's system a barely perceptible foothold by which to climb out of the insidious Foucauldian panopticon--or in the young doctor's case, a foothold by which to climb off of don Prudencio's balcony.

Judith Butler explores the evolutionary potential within Foucault's prison house of power in *Bodies that Matter*. She explains that though the Foucauldian system of power demands its continual reproduction, this reproduction by its nature exposes the produced character of the system. Therefore, the more a system is reproduced the brighter its nature as reproduction shines. Employing terms derived from performance theory, Butler explains that through its repeated performance the constructed, or performed, nature of that role is exposed. Hence, while the notion of stepping outside of a system of power is unthinkable, and while performing the roles it assigns is inevitable, this system can be broken down and transformed from within by means of the very performance it demands.

The doctor of *Los bravos* may be an ideal “performer,” seeking to transform the system from within. By seeing him as such, it would be possible to render a quick reworking of the traditional Samaritan/*cacique* debate. This new reading might combine postivist determinism with humanistic good Samaritanism, as city doctor performs the role which is rightfully--and unavoidably--his in this “pueblo perdido.” But, through this familiar performance--appropriately symbolized by the doctor’s performance on the stage that is the late-*cacique*’s balcony--the physician reiterates and thus refigures the constructs by which the village operates, showing that he is not the same old *cacique*. As Butler explains, though the necessity to perform and the foundations of performance are determined, the performance itself and especially its outcome are unpredictable. The doctor could be viewed as neither *cacique* nor liberator, but a more complex combination that takes part of, but ultimately cancels out, both roles.

To this Foucauldian/Butlerian emancipation I might dedicate an entire monograph. Nevertheless, the emancipation is always only partial, leaving us at the same polemical points from which we departed. Though the doctor is no longer considered as merely liberating hero or encarcerating villain, he continues to be the focus, and the text alone, accompanied by yet another abstract theory, continues to provide the critical fuel for an interpretive fire. Critics of Foucault and Butler shed light on the point where analyses of *Los bravos* fall short. These critics insist that subversive performance is only possible thanks to specific historical conditions, labor

divisions, and economic circumstances.²⁶ In a manner similar to critiques of Foucault's notion of truth, Butler's critics argue for the importance of considering the material practices that still make access to power, and to the agency it generates, a question of class, wealth, and ideology.²⁷ Without certain material conditions, some may argue that Butlerian performances of certain constructed roles would have a vastly different effect, perhaps most significant of which would be that they would fall on deaf ears. Performance must have a stage and the fact of the matter is that only certain stages allow for certain regimes of truth. Other stages cancel them out. To speak of struggle, imprisonment, or emancipation in *Los bravos* as if that struggle were occurring on one common stage is to ignore material realities that the novel in fact foregrounds. And as long as one ignores these realities, any supposed emancipatory or evolutionary reading produced will in fact be only a refortification of a dominant ideology to which all are blinded.

Using Butler's theory of performance as augmented by her more materialist proteges it is possible to study the doctor's activity in the village as that of a potentially agency-generating performer, with the intent of this study being to determine on what stage he acts. From his entry into the village, the doctor stands as if on a stage, performing a role for its inhabitants. They observe him from a distance and compare his performance with that of past physicians. The doctor's performance initially appears to be having the effects that Butler ascribes to reiteration: through repetition of the fixed role of city doctor in country village he exposes its constructed

nature. For example, instead of turning Alfredo over to the authorities for breaking the law, the doctor heals the renegade's wounds, then accompanies him fishing. The physician also gets under the hood of Pepe's car, and he surprises the villagers with his willingness to make distant house calls.

A constant lack of communication, nevertheless, suggests the physician's lack of an audience for these actions. In the first section of the novel, as the doctor considers the spectacle of a wounded boy, we read: "Podía haberle hablado una palabra, un ademán amable, pero se abstuvo" (11). Instead of expressing compassion for the youth, the doctor considers his own hunger and the tedium of treating yet another farming accident. This lack of communication and compassion is met in turn by the villagers who, though recognizing a difference in the doctor, fail to appreciate that difference in relation to their own way of life. For them the only measure of comparison is a previous city doctor. Though different from his predecessors, he remains an outsider, excluded from traditional village activities, including Sunday games, a town wedding, and significantly, the con man's scheme. The con man in particular would seem to be the least discriminating of subjects, desirous to get money from any and all he could. Nevertheless, when the narrator recounts which of the villagers did not participate in the scheme, he mentions only Pepe and don Prudencio. The doctor simply does not count. In short, no matter what the doctor does, his performance will not have the impact on his audience that Butler's theory seems to suggest.²⁸

This ineffectiveness is evident in a close reading of the doctor's journey into Asturias. Though elements of performance and the interplay of performance with the myth and reality of city and country exist throughout *Los bravos*, the importance of urban and rural factors to this performance comes to the fore in this section in which the doctor moves from village to the more rural wilderness. In fact, the further the doctor enters into rural Spain, the clearer the limits of his performativity become.

This section begins as the doctor is called one night to accompany a shepherd into one of the mountain passes between León and Asturias in order to attend to a sick patient. From the moment the doctor awakens, the extreme nature of this penetration into the rural is underlined: “nunca le habían venido a buscar de tan lejos” (177). The doctor compares the harshness of his rural surroundings to those he will encounter later: “Allá arriba ha de soplar más fuerte aun” (177). The doctor eventually finds himself thrice removed from civilization: “en un lugar a horas de camino de un pueblo que ni siquiera figuraba en los mapas” (180). Emphasizing the rural extremities of the Asturian shepherds' camp, Fernández Santos even plays a bit with the setting as a contemporary Arcadia, complete with mist-shrouded valleys, mysterious lakes, and ancient legends. Of the valley in which the shepherds dwell, we read: “Bajo su mirada se extendía un valle poco profundo, solitario y en sombra aún. Las estribaciones de los montes que lo flanqueaban lo cortaban desde ambos lados alternativamente, como las decoraciones de un teatro” (180). The reference to the theater foregrounds the doctor's performativity. The valleys of the Asturian

mountains, the most uncivilized setting available to a 1950s Spanish neorealist novelist, provide for the grandest stage on which the doctor's performance might meet its material limitations.

If there are indications at the beginning of *Los bravos* that the doctor is performing without an audience, the beginning of his entry into an even more extreme rural setting confirms this lack of public. Attempts to communicate meet with increasing silence. The morning of the departure Socorro awakens the doctor and he asks "¿Quién es?" but never receives an answer (176). He only recognizes "una voz masculina con acento extraño al pueblo" (176). He departs into darkness, blindly following his unknown guide. The doctor's few attempts to communicate with the man fail. When the physician asks if they must cross a river, communication problems come to the fore for both him and the reader. The rider answers, "Sí . . . Nosotros estamos en Bustiambre" (178). The answer does not help much: "El nombre no le dijo nada; lo recordaba de haberlo oído algunas veces; era uno de los puertos" (178). Following the reference to "los puertos" but more likely as a follow-up to the question concerning the river-crossing, the doctor asks, "¿Cuántos?" The shepherd then replies with an answer that does not satisfy either of the possible questions, answering, "Dos: Pascual y yo." The misunderstanding between the doctor and the shepherd is bested only by the reader's own confusion. Later questions further foreground this communication problem. With the first shepherd, the doctor finds he must switch from the "ustedes" to the "vosotros" form of a verb in order to

be understood (181). In conversation with the patient, the doctor adjusts his vocabulary from “espectoras” to “escupes” (184). Finally, the protagonist finds himself completely unable to decipher the words of the Asturian “vaquero” (the most rural of the novel’s characters) who accompanies him out of the valley at the end of his stay (195). Communication problems increase from mere semantic challenges, to grammatical confusions, to vocabulary differences and finally, to plain lack of understanding as the doctor faces increasing ruralization.

Unable to communicate effectively with his rural setting, the doctor finds himself turning to an alternative audience: that which he left behind in the city. “Pensó en sus compañeros ayudando en las consultas; con el tiempo, la clientela de sus patronos pasaría a ellos, podrán casar con sus hijas para perpetuar la estirpe, la buena raza” (179). Thinking of them he begins to question his decision to practice in the country, and wonders what his companions would think of him now: “Alfredo le había preguntado si se quedaría o si pensaba marchar como el otro. ¿Por qué habría marchado el otro? . . . pero, ¿quién pensaba en meterse en un pueblo? . . . qué pensarían de él unos y otros” (179-80). In addition to his former classmates, other adult mentors join the new audience of his performativity, sharing their opinions of practicing in the country as opposed to the city: “Desengáñate, chico, los buenos médicos se ven en los hospitales . . . Por lo menos vete a un pueblo rico, un pueblo grande donde haya dinero” (179). The most powerful of these juxtapositions between the physical stage of the wilderness and the mental stage of the city occurs when the

doctor arrives at the heart of this rural darkness, the shepherds' hut: "Le volvió a asaltar el recuerdo de sus antiguos compañeros . . . Hubiera querido en aquel momento saber qué género de vida habrían encontrado. ¿Dónde estarían? ¿qué clase de destino les estaría reservado?" (183). He cannot resist the city. Even when he attempts to meditate on Socorro he finds that thoughts of the city overwhelm even his animal attraction to the village girl. Alsina has recently read this journey into Asturias as a classical hero-journey where the young doctor is transformed into a good Samaritan figure. I would suggest instead that if a transformation occurs, it has more to do with a discovery of social impotence, a recognition of himself as an actor playing in an empty theater. Furthermore, the doctor's transformation results more from contact with a city audience than from any poetic return to nature.

Only while considering his former companions in the city does the doctor recognize his "desconocido prójimo" (180) and ultimately formulate the fully developed good Samaritan theory. Considering his country patients through the eyes of his city companions he decides: "El prójimo es odioso porque le odiamos; si amásemos a los demás los encontraríamos amables. Pero él no le odiaba, ¡era tan fácil amar!" (185). Such statements cause critics such as Sobejano and Martín to consider the doctor too noble a character to become merely another *cacique*.

The formation of this nobility, nevertheless, reveals its exclusionary sources in the very process of its formation. Standing before the dilapidated shepherd dwelling, the doctor contemplates his former classmates in terms of "género" and "clase" (183).

He wonders if “los otros *valían* más que él” (183, italics added). As the doctor considers questions of class, we recall earlier references to his own privileged background, references to travel around Spain in his father’s car and to his ignorance with respect to some of the most basic aspects of rural life (117;161). In light of these issues of class and privilege, his own anguished soul-searching acquires social connotations. His angst recalls that of the urban intellectual protagonists of existential novels written in the 1940s. The doctor is racked by “infinitas dudas y cavilaciones” (199) and recognizes himself as “extranjero, en cualquier lugar que se hallase” (193). But he has a choice of spaces, and his thoughts always lead him to the city: “en su propia casa, asomado a la ventana de su cuarto, sobre la calle que conocía desde niño” (193). “*Su cuarto*” remains in the city. It is only because of this position, and the choice that it offers him that he is able to undergo the transformation celebrated by Alsina, a transformation that, while offering the appearance of nobility, in fact causes him ultimately to differentiate himself from the rural mass: “no la vida no era tan sencilla como *la gente* suponía” (201, emphasis added). In short, his existential anguish, however real to himself or the reader, is a luxury that the villagers cannot even fathom. The doctor can choose whether to stay in the village. He comes from a class and a position that makes his move to the country seem only noble to himself and to those of his similar class and position. The doctor can choose whether to “odiar o amar aquel pueblo,” while the villagers must simply live there or risk all in an attempt to make it in the city (159). His is the choice to feel merely philosophical

about the swindler (“Dudó; ahora, sereno, sentía por él una vaga simpatía y nada más” 203) and to love the people who “think” that they hate him (“Aquella gente creía odiarle; pensaba que les había perjudicado, y sin embargo, nunca había estado su corazón más cerca de ellos” 212).

In the final scene of the doctor’s journey into Asturias, he descends from the pass, takes charge of the prisoner, and wards off the angry villagers. As the pueblo and the doctor confront each other the two distinct stages on which performance takes place come into focus. Within darkness similar to that in which this performance began, villagers and doctor act past each other. The locals’ performance has no impact on the physician. He hardly recognizes Anton’s voice. But while he does not recognize faces, he anticipates attitudes. He is totally unsurprised by Anton’s accusation, “Ud. no es nadie aquí” (200). The doctor knows how these people act. They have become a predictable mass for him. On the other hand the villagers find the doctor’s actions completely incomprehensible. When the protagonist first announces his charge over the prisoner, they simply do not understand: “Al momento no comprendieron; todo era muy confuso para ellos” (200). When he later fends them off we read, “y los hombres le miraban entre asombrados y confusos sin acabar de explicarse lo que sucedía” (201). This rather confusing encounter between doctor and villagers is repeated on the narrative level. Even the reader is unsure of what the doctor does--if he has done anything at all--to ward off the would-be mob. Later in the physician’s home, the prisoner clarifies this confusion for doctor and reader: “Ud.

no es como ellos. En los capitales hilan más fino" (202). The physician comes through unscathed because he is different.

This difference results from the doctor's metropolitan origins that place him in a position of non-communication, and move him beyond the limits of his desired performance. As much as he would like to communicate, as much as he intends to change the village, he has been socially and geographically positioned in such a way that his communication is always already rendered ineffective. Although arriving at this conclusion *via* another path and remaining locked in the debate over the doctor's moral position, Barry Jordan confirms the impossible task that the doctor may set for himself:

The doctor, as much as don Prudencio, is a victim of forces and conditions which are beyond his power to influence or control. The problem of economic and social backwardness in an agrarian community, with its related cultural codes and conventions, is simply too deeply-rooted for the doctor to confront successfully. This raises the wider question of the difficulties involved in social and political commitment." (*Writing* 161)

Jordan suggests that these difficulties are produced by an ever-growing chasm between socially and geographically divided groups that no effort by the doctor may bridge: "the social structure which creates the gulf between the doctor and the village, intellectual, and *pueblo*, may prove, in the end, to be too big and too entrenched to overcome" (*Writing* 161).

Jordan's argument concludes with the suggestion of an impossible difference between city and country. It is, however, possible to move beyond this suggestion and to envision what might create that gulf, hence, understanding why the social realist project, as posited in *Los bravos*, is doomed from the beginning. As the doctor's journey makes evident, the city/country division has reached a point of non-communication. Instead of standing on equal ground as two separate, but interrelated parts of one great whole (as the Spanish government continued to emphasize even after their official shift on the urban/rural question, and as social realist novelists and subsequent critics assumed), the city had already subsumed the country, but to such an extent that government, novelists, and critics could not perceive it. This is not to say that the rural ceased to exist in the hearts and minds of Spaniards. Indeed, as will be evident in later chapters, the idea of the rural would always remain, sustaining a whole gamut of ideologies significant to the future--or lack thereof--of the nation. Nevertheless, this rural would always already be a product of a cosmopolitan hegemony that clipped the proverbial wings of city/country debates before they could ever get off the ground. The debates, of course, proceeded because participants could not (or would not) see the more large-scale city/country relations that neutralized the urban/rural polemic. Indeed its participants were already a part of the supporting structure of this new hegemony. It was their reality and it was their sustenance. As is the case with *Surcos*, the urban/rural relationship, finally surfaced, was now only a superficial relationship that encouraged a false sense of having plumbed the depths of

contemporary social and cultural contradictions. The contradictions that *Surcos* and *Los bravos* reveal between the accepted wisdom and the material practices of the urban/rural relationship served as a smokescreen for more profoundly repressed city/country relationships. Hence, the representation of urban and rural in Spanish culture of the 1950s confirms Raymond Williams's argument that the paradigm city/country can often end up hiding more than it reveals (54).

At the same time that urban/rural relationships mask Spanish society's deeper contradictions, they also provide hints as to what these contradictions might be. Again, as with *Surcos*, urban/rural (non)communication signals a "structure of feeling" of a developing but not yet emergent city/country paradigm that arises out of the combination of residual local city/country relations and emergent global ones. In *Los bravos*, the principal impediment to effective face-to-face communication between the urban protagonist and what he believes to be his rural audience is the *a priori* knowledge that each one brings to this interaction. Instead of performing for one another, they perform past each other, their performance always being reduced to the other's expectations. While contact between the urban and the rural has perhaps always been determined by received knowledge, advances in technology and the subsequent growth of the media assured that by the 1950s this determination was entering a previously unfelt advanced stage. After Buñuel's *Las hurdes* no city doctor could be legitimately surprised by his rural experiences. Radio, cinema, and by the mid-1950s, television (and the subsequent advent of *cine-clubs* in rural villages

throughout Spain) guaranteed that the same would be true with the rural in the face of a growing number of city visitors and cosmopolitan tourists. In short, the doctor's implicit desire to be a humanizing influence is superseded by a more global, ubiquitous, and diffuse "city" of power relations.

But while his intentions are superseded, and ultimately canceled out, by a larger-scaled city/country system, he is, in carrying forward with those intentions, an agent of that very system. In seeking to promote a more humanized "urban" way in the village, he ends up promoting the actual dehumanizing program of the more ubiquitous "city." The doctor, as opposed to the village's former *cacique*, don Prudencio, makes sincere efforts at real interpersonal relations with the villagers. Jordan has argued that the doctor decides to stay in the town out of love and solidarity with the peasants (*Writing* 154). He concludes his argument affirming that the decision has little to do with power and control (*Writing* 160). While both statements may be true, they in fact do not agree in the manner in which Jordan sees them. The doctor's decision has nothing to do with power and control not because of the doctor's noble disregard for these qualities, but because he ultimately does not derive them from the peasants. His real power, as his journey into Asturias shows, comes from the face-to-face relations he maintains with the city. On the other hand, don Prudencio, while presenting a semblance of silence with respect to the villagers, actually derives his respect and recognition from them and not from the city, where he

is forgotten and practically ignored during his visit. The doctor's supposed face-to-face contacts then are ultimately more dehumanizing.

These contacts are also much more insidious, indicative of the ubiquitous, but diffuse, system of power that determines them. While don Prudencio offers the villagers an obvious enemy, the doctor is a much more elusive target. He promises one thing, but offers another, the reality of which the villagers can only intuit at best. This intuition does not help them much against the wiles of the urban con artist, again a determined product of a larger system. The con man, like the doctor, comes to the pueblo with a noble offer. He, like the doctor (and like the Spanish government of the time), would not have the peasants change their rural lifestyle, but offers a plan that will sustain them even in the face of great change. In order, however, for this to occur, they must submit their savings and their faith to an invisible and incomprehensible urban system. Finally, when they are swindled by the system, their rural customs have no power. Again, the urban law that he promised would protect them, only protects him. Though he is exterior to the law he claims to represent, he is, like the doctor, more inside the law of the "city" than he realizes.

Ultimately, the frustrations brought about by the hegemony of this more diffuse urban law point to additional factors in the failure of the social realist project. Historians and former members of the generation have long acknowledged the naivete with which they approached the increasingly complex power structure that they had hoped to challenge. Nevertheless, they have failed to understand the range or nature

of this power. Hence, they have failed to recognize their own complicity with it, trusting in their ability to escape it and attack it from an outside position. They failed to see that the structures they could see were inherently a subterfuge for more deeply embedded and elusive powers. A generation of novelists, like the doctor in *Los bravos*, acted past a deaf audience. And in acting past, they too may only have ended up supporting, in a more insidious manner, a far greater city-to-country hegemony.

Conclusion

By the mid-1950s the reality of new city/country relations, only loosely perceived as “structures of feeling” in the novels and films of the first part of the decade, would emerge within Spanish culture. The international cold-shoulder quickly turned to embrace as Spain reestablished diplomatic ties with neighbors, entered the United Nations in 1955, and perhaps most importantly, signed a treaty in 1953 with the United States initiating the years of plenty that would last through the next decade. Along with economic prosperity would come educational opportunity, cultural activity, and a form of political and social stability.

I use the words “form of” precisely because, although these changes meant the continuation of the Franco regime (the most obvious frustration to precipitate the demise of social realism), they also meant the adjustment of the entirety of the regime’s policies to deal with the emergent and re-emergent pressures that these changes produced. While some critics would suggest that nothing could really

change until Franco was gone, it is no coincidence that numerous Spanish historians of the Franco years conclude their memoirs in the early 1950s, agreeing that for all intents and purposes, the years of serious hardship had ended.²⁹

Spain in the next decade would embark on a great modernizing experience that would diversify and complicate the system of power that at the beginning of the 1950s had seemed to reside in one man. Like the urban doctor replacing don Prudencio, the new face of power offered itself as personal and humanizing, but like the modern power that Foucault traces as developing with the rise of the modern city, was ultimately much more insidious in its “panoptic” nature.

While this panopticism was experienced as a shock to the recent urban immigrants of *Surcos*-like experience, its gaze, like the radio waves emitting from the tower of Radinform’s Radio Montecarlo, turned every rural *aldea*, every urban slum, and every presidential palace into a potential *aquí*. And like the name of the station itself, this “here”-ness, this submission to the panoptic determinism of a new city/country relationship, came increasingly from outside. Autarky had failed. Franco’s power now originated from beyond national frontiers, visibly in the form of huge economic packages, but more significantly, in the cultural and ideological prosperity that these guaranteed.

In such a climate, the contradictions of earlier urban/rural relations no longer needed to be suppressed. In fact, their very expression guaranteed the continued repression of the new contradictions upon which the ideologies of power now

established their base. Indeed, as Eduardo Sevilla-Guzman has noted, the concept of a crisis of rural agriculture came to function by the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s as a key component of the regime's general ideology (114). Hence, the decade-long cultural critique of city/country relations aroused by *Surcos* and *Los bravos* in their respective fields might actually have served to sustain the evolving policies of the regime.

Whatever their end result, both these works undoubtedly established models for future representations of the city/country encounter. In the cinema, these representations became for the most part increasingly light-hearted, as the reality they represented grew each day more familiar, and therefore, less shocking. In *Segundo López, aventurero urbano*, while the protagonist again experiences bewilderment and frustration, this time, all is accepted glad-heartedly by a popular and wealthy peasant who has chosen to come to the city merely for purposes of adventure. Interestingly, when Segundo requires respite from urban excesses, like Manolo in *Surcos*, he ventures to Madrid's outskirts. These outskirts become the very subject of celebration in Marsillach's *Cerca de la ciudad*, buoying up the notion of these borderlands as a key to integration, an idea first proposed in *Surcos*. At the same time, the genre of rural-to-urban adventures turned toward the direction that would prove most popular in the 1960s, with movies like Saenz de Heredia's *Historias de la radio*, and Lucía's *La vida en un bloc*, in which rural innocence eventually triumphs

over urban cunning, only to return to rural hearth and home triumphant and relatively unscathed.

A smaller number of films, such as Bardem's *Calle Mayor*, followed the course of the social realist novel in their depictions of the contact between hamlet and metropolis. Like Martín Gaité's novel *Entre visillos*, Bardem's film focuses on the stagnation of life in provincial cities. While such works attempted to convey with gravity the contradictions abounding in Spain's rural areas, like *Los bravos* they perhaps ultimately sustain a concept of crisis useful to more significant hegemonies. Furthermore, in Bardem's film, as in Martín Gaité's novel, or Sánchez Ferlosio's *El Jarama*, the story supports the notion of meaningful face-to-face relations between regions and their denizens, eliding the deeper contradictions that precluded such possibilities.

As the decade drew to a close, the directions established by *Surcos* and *Los bravos* in their respective fields suffered very different fates. While *Surcos* had begun as a sober neorealist study of urban immigration, it spawned a trajectory of films that evolved from initial neorealist gestures, to clever neorealist quips, to purely comic appropriation of the critique. By the 1960s, the genre would serve almost purely comic ends. On the other hand, the social realist project initiated by Fernández Santos, Sánchez Ferlosio, and their Madrid-based associates would grow increasingly committed, ultimately driving itself into the ground, and producing prolonged literary silences on the part of most of its leading adherents.³⁰ The very different ends of the

two directions would be realized respectively in first, what has become the classic novel of the 1960s in Spain, Luis Martín Santos's *Tiempo de silencio* (1963), and second, what would become the decade's quickly forgotten cinema box-office champion, Pedro Lazaga's *La ciudad no es para mí* (1965). In these two works the wide diversity of forms and uses of the city/country dichotomy in a suddenly very modern and even cosmopolitan Spain would be manifest.

Escaping High and Low:

The Common Fate of the Spatial in a Decade of Prosperity

Pedro Lazaga's *La ciudad no es para mí* and Luis Martín Santos's *Tiempo de silencio*

To understand the vast economic, social, and cultural gulf separating the 1950s from the 1960s in Spain, one need only turn once again to the pages of the popular movie magazines of the time. While in 1951, ads in *Fotogramas* or *Primer Plano* announced the possibility of tuning to a variety of radio frequencies or of spending one's precious few extra *pesetas* on women's accessories, by the middle of the 1960s advertisements in the magazine *Film Ideal* promoted new car rentals and luxury hotels and even invited readers to sink their cash into beach front high-rise flats.

If in the decade of the 1950s Spain had begun to open its doors to the outside world, in the 1960s what seemed like the whole of the Spanish population escaped through those doors. On the other side of the threshold they discovered a world of consumer products, leisure opportunities, and previously anathema political philosophies unimaginable to the Spanish citizens only a few year earlier. In combination with the unprecedented economic prosperity of the decade, these discoveries produced a populace that, whether writing, directing, reading, or spectating from either the lofty realms of elitism or the lowest ranks of the popular, learned the pleasures of escape.

In 1950 many Spaniards had still been facing starvation in a country proudly separated from the rest of the world. Then practically overnight Spain was part of the United Nations, had United States military bases dotting its landscape, and dollars padding its coffers. By the late 1950s Franco began replacing hard-line ministers with so called “technocrats.” Among other differences from their predecessors, these young civil servants represented the first ministers of the Franco era to have direct ties to commercial ventures. More than single-handedly creating prosperity, the technocrats latched the Spanish nation onto the coattails of the global postwar economic boom through a series of “Stabilization Plans.” Among other things these plans introduced tourism to the previously isolated nation, relaxed censorship, and downplayed the state’s anachronistic politics in an effort to court economic opportunity.

The results of these changes were nothing less than extraordinary. From 1959 to 1973 Spaniards saw the most pronounced period of growth in their country’s history. In the early 1960s Spain was removed from the U.N. list of developing nations; by 1972 Spain had become a world leader in the production of energy, automobiles, and other industrial goods (Hooper 18-19). Foreign investment during the decade blossomed from \$40 to \$697 million (Schubert 208). Personal income skyrocketed from \$290 per capita in 1955 to \$497 in 1965 to \$2,486 a decade later (Schubert 258). Economic growth coincided with improvements in the overall quality of life. From the typhoid, malaria, and malnutrition of the 1940s, Spain

recovered to boast an infant mortality rate less than that of the United States or Britain by the early 1970s (Hooper 19). Universal education also became the norm with the number of university students quintupling from 1960 to 1975, marked by a steady increase in the numbers of female students (Riquer I Permanyer 264; Schubert 252).

Unprecedented prosperity produced a new consumer culture. In 1959 Spanish television began broadcasting; by 1963, 300,000 Spaniards had purchased their own television set; and only two years later, that number had quadrupled (Biescas 518). By early in the next decade seventy percent of Spanish homes boasted their own “tele” (Riquer I Permanyer 265). A similar consumer spirit brought washing machines, refrigerators, and telephones to an even higher percentage of homes (Hooper 19). Perhaps most indicative of the changes facing Spain was the growth in automobile ownership. In 1960 only one in fifty-five Spaniards owned a car; by 1974 one in nine drove their own (Riquer I Permanyer 265).

The introduction of excess commodities had startling effects in the personal lives of these new consumers. Personal changes in turn had political repercussions as new prosperity reshuffled the social structure of the nation. *Nouveaux riches* at every level infused fresh blood into--and in some cases engulfed--existing class structures, modifying traditional class politics, producing most significantly a much less politicized working-class. Manuel Vázquez Montalbán describes the resulting society as “una cultura popular artificial, ordenadamente anárquica, en el contexto de la espléndida confusión nacional de las superaciones” (187). A poll of Spanish women

of the era discovered the principal sign of success in life to be determined by one's monetary wealth, followed by the possession of a good job, with home ownership also receiving high marks (Biescas 519). Clearly, a radical change had occurred since the days when an entire nation took up arms against each other in the name of political liberties. Vázquez Montalbán has written that during these years Spaniards were led to believe that liberty could be measured in terms of skirt length, rock music, and promiscuity--that liberty was translated as "the vindication of the liberty of leisure" (176). A member of Franco's cabinet during this period describes this spirit even as he prescribes the antidote for an otherwise oppressed society: "Freedom begins as of the moment when the minimum earnings of each citizen reach \$800 per annum" (qtd. by Hooper 17).

Indeed, the government encouraged this attitude, downplaying the belligerent *caudillismo* of previous decades, promoting instead an apolitical, pragmatic approach to government (Biescas 501). Accordingly, they introduced the government slogan, "vivir en paz," a far cry from the Falange's proposed 1940s slogan, "la vida de servicio" (Biescas 500).

Spanish culture, in its own way, also registered the new escapist spirit. In the popular theater, bourgeois neo-benevolentism had never quite disappeared, but in the 1960s even the more artistic theater distanced itself from the political and socially-motivated theater of Alfonso Sastre, Lauro Olmo, and the early Buero Vallejo, embracing instead an experimental theater inspired in international aesthetic

innovations. The poetry of the era marked a similar trajectory culminating in the esoteric verse of the *novísimos*. In the novel, social realism ceded to what Gonzalo Sobejano has labeled the “structuralist” novel. Instead of aiming for a faithful representation of an external world, authors turned inward, exploring both the internal construction of character and the traditions on which the novel rested. Delibes, Cela, Juan Goytisolo, Juan Benet, and Juan Marsé among others expanded on the linguistic experimentation, structural innovations, and psychological analysis introduced in Luis Martín Santos’s *Tiempo de silencio* (1962). Cinema likewise abandoned politically motivated realism. Paralleling the aesthetic changes in narrative and seeking to renovate Spanish film along the lines of the French *auteur* tradition, a group of young directors and their promoter, the reinstated national film director, José María García Escudero, comprised the so-called New Spanish Cinema. At the same time a host of established directors such as Pedro Lazaga and Mariano Ozores worked in almost assembly-line fashion, churning out hundreds of “pop” offerings and creating what Caparrós Lera calls “un cine chabacano, listo para ser consumido por el gran público” (50).

But if the Spanish public had learned to escape, their destinations remained intimately tied to the polarity between city and country that held over from the previous decade. To return once again to the magazine advertisements of *Film Ideal*, it is significant to find that in spite of the vast changes in the commodities offered, the basic structure of the ads remains virtually the same from the previous decade. The

ad for a night in a luxury hotel juxtaposes photographs of an ultramodern high rise hotel with a renovated medieval castle. Both are set in the wilds of rural Spain. The vendors of beach-front flats include a photo of the town, including a view of its ancient medieval center. The automobile rental advertisement is most telling of all, displaying a photograph of a young adult male of a certain cosmopolitan appearance parked in a brand new car on the cobblestone street of an apparently rural village while two young boys look on in admiration.

Each ad continues to play on the powerful resonance of the rural in the minds and hearts of the Spanish populace. This resonance, however powerful it was in the 1950s, had grown even more powerful in the 1960s, when city/country tensions reached an all-time high. Indeed, if anything moved faster and in greater numbers than currency during the decade it was the millions of immigrants, tourists, diplomats, and foreign workers who forced to the surface a multiplicity of spatial tensions that had been only residual or barely emergent in the previous decade.

Immigration had the most immediate and obvious impact on the most literal of city/country relations. Goaded by technocratic pragmatism, the regime not only encouraged urban immigration throughout the decade but in 1964 actually wrote it into its policy (Schubert 210). Economic success--and consequently, political stability--was dependent on filling the cities with labor potential. Between 1960 and 1975 Madrid grew by two million inhabitants and Barcelona by only slightly less (Riquer I Permanyer 263). In the same period the number of cities with one hundred

thousand or more inhabitants doubled from twenty to forty. Regime encouragement, economic promise, and decreasing opportunity in rural Spain altered the quality and quantity of immigration. Prosperity rather than survival now inspired landed peasants, merchants, and other middle-class rural citizens to join their former employees in the city, leading to an unprecedented and as yet un-reversed urban expansion (Hooper 22). While cities grew, rural populations declined or disappeared. In 1966 one newspaper reported over one hundred abandoned villages for sale in Spain. By 1970 there were 547 fewer population centers than ten years previous (Schubert 219). From 1962 to 1972 over 319,000 agricultural enterprises disappeared, all under fifty hectares.

While Spain moved ever closer to complete and irreversible urbanization, it became itself a figurative *ruralón* through its increased participation in the postwar globalization of capitalism that Edward Soja has referred to as a replanting of old city/countryside relationships on an international scale (165). Three million Spaniards not only left their villages but also their nation between 1959 and 1974, half of them finding work in Germany, France, Switzerland, and other parts of Europe. Those who stayed behind did not escape foreign contact. While their neighbors, siblings, parents, and spouses worked abroad, those who remained entertained hordes of foreign tourists whose numbers soared throughout the decade from three million in 1959 to thirty-four million in 1973 (Hooper 21). Foreign

influence also entered the business world, introducing the foreign dress, schedule, and speak of American executives and their companies (Hooper 20).

The regime, still headstrong in its denial of regional variation, could not create a policy to treat these changes. The deficiency led to unchecked population decimation, ecological devastation, and economic, political, and social disparities between urban and rural regions (Riquer I Permanyer 262-63; Hooper 25). By the end of the decade these disparities would force a return to center stage of regionalist issues. Subsequently, yet another spatial tension would emerge to complicate the city/country tensions manifest in contemporary cultural products.

With so many city/country tensions being felt by Spanish society, it is natural that city/country issues would appear in the nation's contemporary narrative genres. For the most part narrative dealt with the two dominant city/country tensions of the era: the move from the rural to the urban, and the encounter between the global and the local. Juan Goytisolo in his semi-autobiographical novels *Señas de identidad* (1966) and *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* (1970) narrated the life of a Spanish ex-patriate who returns physically and then symbolically to his homeland and to its history. Juan Marsé established himself during the decade with *Últimas tardes con Teresa* (1966) in which issues of class mix with questions of immigration and spatial location in Barcelona. Juan Benet created a semi-fictional rural waste in *Volverás a Región* (1967). Miguel Delibes continued his tragic representations of rural Castile in *Las ratas* (1962) and *Cinco horas con Mario* (1966).

In cinema the move from country to city took a wide variety of forms. The attempts at an artistic cinema by the New Spanish Cinema directors treated the move from country to city in films such as Angelino Fons's *La busca* (1966) and Basilio Martín Pino's *Nueve cartas a Berta* (1965). The Barcelona School, the Catalan answer to the Madrid-based New Spanish Cinema, offers perhaps the most complete register of the multiple levels of city/country conflict in Josep María Forn's *La piel quemada* (1966), in which rural Andalucía comes into contact with cosmopolitan lifestyles, Catalan nationalism, and foreign tourists. But by far the most numerous, popular, and consequently, influential representations of the country and the city on the silver screen came in the form of a popular subgenre of *paleto* comedies that dominated the second half of the decade. Movies such as Ignacio Iquino's *De picos pardos a la ciudad* (1969) and Lazaga's *Hay que educar a papá* (1970) repeated again and again the resulting comedy of errors of country-bumpkin in the city.³¹ Another variant of this subgenre, Lazaga's *Vente a Alemania, Pepe* (1971) took the *paleto* with all of his stereotypical props and practices into the international metropolis.

In short, whether writing high cultural novels or mass producing pop cinema a variety of socio-spatial tensions embodied in the city/country paradigm pervaded Spanish culture. The blanketing nature of the relationship in the 1960s calls for what may seem a rather uneven comparison between the extremes of the cultural field: the cinema of the masses and the high culture novel. It would make sense in this case to

examine the universally-accepted initiators of these contrasting genres, Pedro Lazaga's *La ciudad no es para mí* (1966) and Luis Martín Santos's *Tiempo de silencio* (1961).

Coming at the beginning of the decade, Martín Santos's classic novel awoke the Spanish narrative community from neorealist lethargy, introducing a less direct, more experimental mode of story-telling. The spirit of experimentation affected spatial issues in the novel as well. Martín Santos's innovative portrayal of the multiplying significations of the city/country paradigm neatly register the spatial shifts of the decade. Pedro Lazaga's popular film, *La ciudad no es para mí*, does not so much register material changes as reflect cultural reappropriations of such change. Rather than providing insight into evolving city/country relations through creative aesthetic means, Lazaga's movie reveals the uses to which the by now familiar depiction of the city/country paradigm was put in a modernizing society. It illustrates how a key social tension was diffused of its power by mass-media appropriations, and how the division was used as a smokescreen for the production of a homogenous modernized consumer culture.

Lazaga's film and Martín Santos's novel stand at the opposite end of the high culture/low culture spectrum from each other. Other than representing the move between country and city, the two works appear to contain little that would merit any kind of artistic comparison. Martín Santos's novel, despite its wealth of aesthetic innovation and social significance, was relegated to veritable oblivion in its first year

of publication (Martín Gaité, “Nota” 7). Since then, however, *Tiempo de silencio* has epitomized Pierre Bourdieu’s analysis of the counter-intuitive logic of the field of cultural production, rising from its inauspicious beginnings to become one of the classics of twentieth-century Spanish narrative, in constant and increasing publication (Bourdieu 97)

Lazaga’s film has followed an entirely different trajectory. The product of an established director and writer, it starred a famous actor playing a role made familiar by the eponymously titled play. *La ciudad no es para mí* enjoyed immediate commercial success upon its release in 1966, continuing for several years as the biggest box-office draw in Spain (Casas in García de León 30; García de León 30). The movie’s surprising success inspired the earlier mentioned range of imitations that created singlehandedly the subgenre of *paleta* films. Lazaga’s movie, as opposed to Martín Santos’s somewhat hermetic novel, is a crowd-pleasing sentimental comedy that even, within the parameters of the comedic genre, seems rather simple if not simplistic. In accordance with Bourdieu’s theories, Lazaga’s commercially successful but aesthetically shallow film was soon forgotten. Ignored even in newspaper reviews on its release, today one is hard-pressed to find evidence of the very existence of *La ciudad no es para mí*.

Such critical oblivion might suggest a movie all-too superficial to be juxtaposed to a work as rich as *Tiempo de silencio*. An initial viewing of Lazaga’s movie suggests that such a comparison might be unfair to both works. While the

novel points its reader into a rich web of aesthetic and social issues, the movie seems to take pains to keep its spectator on the surface. Bourdieu's analysis of the fields of cultural production suggests that this impression of the two works as incompatible opposites is as much a product of the audience's own positioning within the field as that of the works in question. But even without stepping outside the field--or objectifying our own position within it as Bourdieu would suggest--we can make an interesting comparison by focusing on the experiences of reception within the field. By such a focus the value of the comparison of such disparate aesthetic artifacts becomes their very disparity.

While Martín Santos's novel appears several years prior to Pedro Lazaga's movie, in the spirit of the vindication of the spatial that this study seeks to accomplish I brave the weight of the historical tradition in this chapter and examine the chronologically younger work first. The vast gulf separating the two works, not only in terms of genre but also in terms of their respective places within the field of cultural production in Spain, after all, challenges a belief in a direct causal link between the two works. Instead, they ought to be studied side-by-side as representative of the two extremes of a range of approaches to common socio-spatial changes. With this in mind, the choice to consider *La ciudad no es para mí* seems propitious in that this popular film offers as clear an introduction as possible to the evolution of the figure of the *paleto* and of the concerns arising from the problems of the growing contact between city and country as Spain approached full-fledged

modernization. Lazaga's film lays a groundwork for an appreciation of the development and ultimate deconstruction of the popular perception of city/country relations that is effected in *Tiempo de silencio*. In addition, Lazaga's movie explicitly exemplifies the escapist spirit that pervaded Spanish culture in the 1960s. In the analysis of *La ciudad no es para mí* we can see how popular culture functioned to create a sense of transparency in the consideration of the city/country paradigm that tended to diminish the importance of this key issue even as it focused on it.

La ciudad no es para mí

While *Tiempo de silencio* will show the breadth and depth of the city/country paradigm in the 1960s, *La ciudad no es para mí* focuses on only the most superficial level of spatial divisions, exploring the traditional problem of immigration, with only a few light-hearted encounters with global-local tensions and very little if any concern for residual regionalist tensions. Consequently, the conflict between city and country in Lazaga's movie is ultimately less interesting as a key to the work than it is as a device that facilitates the interpellation of spectators as modernization-friendly consumers. In *La ciudad no es para mí* the representations of country and city serve as a superficial therapy on the one hand while on the other they induce the very pressures that in fact necessitate that therapy. Curiously, the cure that offered the consumer-spectator an escape was also precisely that which created in them the overwhelming sense that "the city was not for them." The Spanish immigrant

escaped into commodity capitalism when it was in fact this very commodification that originally produced the feeling of alienation that Lazaga's movie portrays.³² *La ciudad no es para mí* reproduces this process allowing the immigrant spectator to re-organize the experience of immigration, to commit patricide on the *paleto* within, and ultimately to find a sense of being in the post-traditional society of consumer capitalism. *La ciudad no es para mí* succeeds with the masses by aligning itself with the familiar discourse of consumer capitalism while appearing to attack it. While feigning criticism of the consumer-driven world of the city, Lazaga's film, in fact, slays the specter of the *paleto* and the ontology that he represents (an ontology that would challenge the reproduction of modern consumer culture) and embraces the new consuming Spaniard. In the process, the figure of the *paleto* becomes the ultimate commodity, to be reproduced, bought, and sold for years to come, thereby reconfirming the collective prosperity of those whom he would critique.

The basic plot of *La ciudad no es para mí* provides the spectator with an initial release of aggression toward a corrupting, commodifying, and alienating urban lifestyle. The film opens with an extensive introductory segment comparing the wild world of the modern metropolis to the rural idyll. This segment, incidental to the plot, serves to capture spectator interest (it is for the spectator--at least the uninitiated 1990s U.S. spectator--the most entertaining sequence of the movie) and to set up an unmistakable contrast between city and country. Its brief narrative of life in modern

day Madrid establishes the city as locus of frenzied workers identified more appropriately as numbers or mere images than as named individuals.

Following this opening sequence, the film breaks away to a shot of open sky, panning over and down to a view of the skyline of a stereotypical Spanish village. The rock beat of the city sequence cedes to a softer, folkloric tune. The narrator pauses and sighs, “Menos mal que todavía quedan sitios más tranquilos donde la gente no tiene tanta prisa.” He then introduces the spectator to the Zaragozaan pueblo of Calacierva, a town of familiar faces, laughing children, and pure country air. A brief scene of collective celebration for the birth of a child confirms the narrator’s idyllic description. The narration then moves forward with an introduction of the town’s principal figures, a device familiar to Spanish audiences *Bienvenido Mr. Marshall*, *La vida en un bloc*, and *¡Aquí hay petróleo!*

With the introduction to Calacierva completed, the real action of the movie gets underway. The final town-member whom the spectator meets is Tío Agustín, a kind-hearted *campesino* who acts as unofficial village philanthropist. A brief series of scenes reveals the protagonist’s good heart as well as reaffirms the noble values inculcated in the daily routines of village life. In the midst of one of his typical civic deeds, Tío Agustín announces his intentions of abandoning the town in order to spend the rest of his days with his son’s family in Madrid. On the day of departure, Tío Agustín bequeaths all he has to his fellow villagers and sets off for the city, leaving a parade of reluctant well-wishers in his dust. His arrival in the city by train carrying

an old wooden suitcase, a basket of two hens, and a portrait of his wife presents another familiar image, this time from *Surcos*. As in *Surcos*, Tío Agustín is also accosted on arrival at Atocha station by the stereotypical signs of urban chaos. Yet, unlike his filmic precursors, Tío Agustín, despite getting lost, emerges unscathed and in fact meets out some scathing of his own on a con man, a traffic cop, and a tour guide who mistake him for any average country bumpkin. His arrival at his son's luxurious high-rise flat follows along similar lines: initially rejected by son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter, Tío Agustín soon reveals their naiveté. The process provides plenty of opportunity for a gratuitous critique of contemporary urban lifestyles. His son works too much. His daughter-in-law seeks happiness in perpetual shopping, social-climbing, and illicit affairs. His granddaughter merely has her head in the proverbial clouds, speaking an incoherent cosmopolitan slang with friends, falling in love with older men, and above all, failing to appreciate her rural heritage. The family rarely eats together; when they do, dinner comes either canned or frozen. Lazaga's predilect symbol of this confusion is the family's prized Picasso, which they prefer to Tío Agustín's portrait of his late wife.

Tío Agustín is undaunted by his wayward posterity. He teaches his son to be more free with his money and his time. He helps his daughter-in-law find renewed appreciation for her husband and her rural origins. He shows his granddaughter the value of youth and of the country. The kindly *paleto* even finds time to rescue the family servant from moral depravity. With order reestablished, the end comes

quickly. It is realized in *deus ex machina* fashion when, on the very evening that he reestablishes order, Tío Agustín receives a letter from Calacierva inviting him to return for a ceremony in his honor. During the festivities, Tío Agustín acquiesces to the wishes of the townspeople and decides not to return to the city. The movie concludes with a celebration in front of the *paleto*-(re)turned-patriarch's home where a quintessentially rural musical ensemble sings the praises of Tío Agustín. The *paleto*'s smiling face confirms the impression of the exorcism of corrupting urban values on the immigrant-spectators and reaffirms the bliss of country living that these subjects believe they desire. María García de León, one of the few critics to have considered *La ciudad no es para mí* provides a summary list of the movie's apparent messages:

La modernidad es libertinaje.

La ciudad es desorden, caos.

El pueblo es lo recto, lo justo.

El hombre urbano es hombre errado.

El hombre rural es hombre sabio. (36)

García de León argues that this purportedly anti-city message is in fact only carried out through the detrimental stereotyping of the *paleto* figure and the peripheral regions from which he (or she as is the case in at least one film of the era, *Un día con Sergio* [1975]) comes.

But in fact, a closer look at the movie placed in its consumer-frenzied context suggests that this stereotyping of the *paleto* is a rather incidental product of a greater process whereby the distinctions that García de León identifies between city and country actually disappear or at least can be understood as superficial moral differences. If city is disorder while country is justice and so on and so forth, these reductive designations are only possible because city and country in Lazaga's films have been so completely totalized, presented as objects to be named and exchanged. In short, the city and the country in *La ciudad no es para mí* have been uniformly commodified. This commodification plays on the pre-cinematic narrative positioning of the movie audience as consumers who understand consumption as the key to happiness. If city/country shifts produce potential anxieties (as demonstrated in *Tiempo de silencio*), the presentation of these changes in terms of a reified relation between commodities masks the social exchanges and values that actually compose the city, the country, and their interaction, thereby creating the illusion that these spaces and the relations between them can be bought, sold, and handily controlled. Hence, Tío Agustín's triumph in *La ciudad no es para mí* is not so much the triumph of the *paleto* or the stereotyping of the same but is in fact the triumph of the modern capitalist. If the *paleto* figure is stereotyped as García de León insists, and if he is subsequently "murdered" in a collective act of psycho-social patricide, he is resurrected as a capitalist messiah bringing a message of easy felicity to his audience. He stands at movie's end as if bearing testimony to the spectator that though you as

ruralón may be wiped out by the modern metropolis, you can always shop your way out.

To appreciate the positioning of spectators as consumer-subjects, it is necessary to appreciate first their positioning by pre-cinematic narratives. While most audience members of Lazaga's film would have had very close, if not firsthand experience with the topic of immigration--as was the case with *Surcos*--their current socio-economic status positioned them far differently with respect to this subject matter than the *Surcos* spectator. The immigrant-audience of *La ciudad no es para mí* was as a whole enjoying the high years of Spain's "economic miracle." If not already well-established in the city, audience members at least saw the promise of a much-improved future. As the earlier comparison of magazine ads demonstrated, Spanish citizens enjoyed greater possibilities and had learned to consume these possibilities. By 1966 the Spanish audience had become a true modern consumers. In addition, not only could the average immigrant-spectator consider a vast array of previously unimaginable commodities, but many always had, a fact confirmed by statistics showing the majority of 1960s immigrants as coming from already relatively comfortable backgrounds. In short, the audience of Lazaga's film was not composed of the landless, the defeated, or the feminized of the late 1940s and early 1950s. So while the audience of *La ciudad no es para mí* was still responding to a film that told its own story, its response was no longer shaped by the effects of an emasculating pre-filmic narrative. An economically collaborative viewership replaced a politically-

subversive one. The 1960s public was ripe for a confirmation of their consumption lifestyle.

But while the spectators were looking for encouragement in their consumer lifestyles, they were also still full of *morriña* for their rural homes. A celebration of the new could not be a bald-faced denial of the old; these consumer-spectators could not openly turn their backs on their rural origins--even if the regime had. The countryside had to be at least superficially redeemed for the spectator while carrying out in a more underhanded manner the patricidal Oedipal longings that the would-be wholly urban consumer needed to satisfy. Hence, these double needs could only be realized by a movie that superficially idealized the country and vituperated the city, while doing so through a process of more profound commodification that ultimately redeemed only the value of urban-based exchange capital. *La ciudad no es para mí*, while outwardly criticizing city life and its consumer-driven lifestyles, in fact reproduces the subject-as-consumer on which commodity-capitalism relies for its sustenance. The final part of my analysis will consist of a rereading of the surface story previously related, showing how society is commodified and how spectators are converted into subjects-as-consumers in the very process of their critique.

The production of this consumer-subject begins with the film's opening credits and the above mentioned sequence of shots of fast-paced city life. From the first shot of the film the spectator is placed as if viewing the Madrid skyline from the surrounding countryside, understanding the city as a graspable "good." The credits

begin to roll as the camera cuts to a fast-paced montage of sped-up shots of typical and ultra-modern Madrid city-scapes accompanied by the heavy beat of 1960s-era rock music. At the completion of the credits, an even faster paced melody, set at an even higher pitch begins to accompany an also faster-paced montage of shots of speeding cars and neon signs, many of them foreign. Spectators next find themselves in the driver's seat of a highly revved automobile speeding along Madrid's newest roads at a break-neck pace. While shots change to fit the narration, a high-strung voice-in-off reports:

Madrid, Capital de España. 2,647,253 habitantes. Crecimiento vegetativo 129 personas cada día; población flotante, 360,580 personas. 472,527 vehículos; 110,853 baches y socavones. Un nacimiento cada 45 segundos. Dos bodas y media por hora. Y una difunción cada minuto y medio; Y bancos muchos bancos . . . Y supermercados, muchísimos supermercados. Y casas, casas en construcción, montañas de casas en construcción. Y farmacias, toneladas de farmacias. Y zona azul, kilómetros de zona azul; y multas, demasiadas multas. Esta es una ciudad donde todo hay que hacerlo muy de prisa.

At the conclusion of the monologue, the narrator stops a man on the street whom the camera has supposedly been following at random as he frantically and literally runs his errands. The narrator asks him why he is in such a hurry. The man, obviously pressed for time, explains that he has five jobs, all necessary in order to pay for the

television, the refrigerator, the summer vacation, his children's schooling, and his car, after which he speeds off in his SEAT 600. The narration on the one hand mocks the statistical nature of city-life. But on the other hand, the narration turns the city into a commodity, dividing and objectifying its parts as if a factory manual of Taylorist inspiration. It dissects an organic city into a conglomeration of commodities for the spectator to consume. This consumption is not only encouraged by the fast-paced montage of shots, but is foregrounded by the positioning of the spectator in the seat of the sports car speeding along as if consuming the city beneath it. The narration criticizes a society in which citizens rush out of the metro on their way to fulfilling their frenzied objectives, but in fact, the film itself is producing the same effect on the spectator. While criticizing, it is training its spectator in that which it criticizes. The scene with the frazzled consumer-patriarch relies on the laughter inherent in the comedic combination of the implausible with the plausible.³³ While comedy relies on the hegemony of the implausible, in this case the plausible hits very close to home; the consumer-patriarch may serve as a comedic whipping boy, but he also serves as a model for the spectator's own post-traditional consumerist-patriarchy. He may be frazzled, but he also comes across as well-mannered and quite likeable.

The following scene, in which the *campo* appears in such idyllic contrast, is in fact a further construction of the world as commodity. In contradistinction to the information-laden shots of the city, the sky appears clean and open. This openness, however, is deceiving; the camera, in fact, has focused on a set of powerlines. The

camera-pan across to the townscape is not arbitrary either but actually follows the same powerlines, implicitly connecting the town to its industrialized “sister city,” and within the move, to the modern metropolis from which we have just come. The town, it implies, is in fact not much different from the city.

And in fact it is not. Just as with the city, the narrator’s initial description of the rural town relies on statistics. Even the birth of the child is introduced through the humorous adjustment of town population statistics: “Tiene 926 habitantes”-- interrupted by the cries in-off of a newborn and the announcement of a birth-- “perdone, 927”. The narrator’s subsequent introduction of the town’s principal figures is more a *costumbrista*-inspired commodification of the “typical” *aldea*’s touristic types than a vision of the organic social relations of rural life: the mayor spends his days with ear to the ground hoping to discover oil (a behavior that recalls *¡Aquí hay petróleo!*); the postman takes his job more as a chance to ride a bike than as serious work; best of all, in spite of the necessary quips about rural poverty, everyone has time to play cards and sip wine. The first sustained narrative scene of the film, in which Tío Agustín plays poker in defense of the peasants’ hard-earned money, takes place in a typical rural bar that, like the original shot of the town, is implicitly linked to the modern metropolis through the all-seeing eye of the television set placed prominently in the upper right-hand corner of the shot. Beneath the gaze of modern technology Tío Agustín wins back the receipts of the townspeople from the tax collector as if the people’s labor were chips to be bought, sold, and gambled. Such a

reading might seem a stretch if this kind of representation of Tío Agustín's nobility were an isolated occurrence. Instead, the protagonist's virtue is inextricably linked throughout the movie to the representation of social relations in terms of hard cold cash.

In fact, the very next scene shows the philanthropist bestowing on the crippled Belén an odd looking gadget supposedly designed for weaving sweaters. The young child is delighted, identifying for the audience through her exclamation upon receipt (“¿Cuánto habrá costado?”) what really counts, just in case there were any doubt. Tío Agustín of course tells her to forget such matters, overtly establishing himself as beyond the tug of capital. Such a denial however is typical of the capitalist system that would and must efface the material relations upon which it is established, replacing human interaction with exchange values and then denying the eminence of these. The one character who does not appreciate this gift is the girl's grandmother. However, her deafness and the humor with which it is shown associates those who do not understand--or worse, cannot plainly see--the value of the commodity as old-fashioned or even spiritually inept (in their biblically-indexing lack of “ears to hear” the valuable ring of cash registers).

Tío Agustín's experiences in the city, however, serve as the true beginnings of the interpellation of the subject-as-consumer. Of course, because this is the key site for interpellation of this especially urban subject, Tío Agustín's experiences in the city signify that the most significant contradiction in the relations of power and the

material issues of consumer culture are hidden beneath a smokescreen of moral and aesthetic issues. Tío Agustín's principal mission appears to be the resolution of his son and daughter-in-law's waning romance and the threat of infidelity that hangs over it. Tío Agustín openly blames this moral failure on the city. The moral corruption of the city receives further attention in the letters that the protagonist sends to his friends in the village in which he emphasizes the remarkable "mujerío" of the city. The village priest consistently censors these parts, keeping the spectator keen to the corrupting influences in the city. Even the one significant subplot of the movie, the servant Filo's unplanned pregnancy, points to moral crisis as the most significant challenge of life in the metropolis.

This moral crisis is manifest symbolically in the aesthetic crisis of post-traditional modernity. The struggle between Tío Agustín's country morals and his family's urban depravity is symbolically manifest in the contest for wall space between the portrait of the father's "Agustinica" and the son's "Picasso." The protagonist and his rural side-kick, Filo, repeatedly emphasize the actual physical effects of dizziness and confusion induced by the latter, implying that the aesthetic, whether manifest in the family Picasso, Sara's rock music, or her friend Gogo's foreign-laced city-speak, is more than a mere symptom of any collective social psychosis. If these are the real problems, then the solutions according to the movie lie in a bit of old fashioned country drinking, tale telling, and luck--the methods

employed by the *paleta* to redeem his granddaughter, the servant, and his son's marriage respectively.

One final gratuitous but ultimately smoke-screening critique is leveled at the once sacred authority of patriarchy. The village mayor, a city traffic cop, and the doorman of the family's high-rise apartment all suffer a bit of light-hearted authority-bashing in the movie's opening scenes. While the humor poked at the mayor may seem merely a quotation from earlier comedic depictions of rural Spain (*Bienvenido Mr. Marshall* and *¡Aquí hay petróleo!*), the attacks on the officer and the doorman are, in spite of their humor, conspicuous because of the obvious connections to official authority that these offices hold. In the case of the doorman, dressed in full pseudo-military attire, with a face all-too-approximate in its resemblance to the very *Generalísimo* himself, and holding a job whose longevity was openly associated with the endurance of the regime, this connection is made explicit, underlined by Tío Agustín's quip, "¿Qué se habrá creído el general éste?"³⁴ Once the plot gets underway, ultimately it is Tío Agustín's physically-dominating son who as wayward patriarch stands in most need of correction. This apparent attack on patriarchy seems then to be yet another key critique in the film. Joan Barril has equated the common practice of telling *chistes de léperos* as equivalent to the Freudian act of patricide by which millions of *paletos* free themselves of systems of authority through humor (García de León 41). In their study of comedy, Frank Krutnick and Steve Neale explain that the reality in the butt of all humor is the threat of castration (75). Humor

allows for the release of aggression, the object of that humor typically being the subject of the aggression that the spectator may feel. Nevertheless, the humor directed at these authority figures may be perhaps a bit too obvious. Aggression against patriarchy is so explicit precisely because patriarchy has ceased to be such a vital part of the system of power. Like the aesthetic or moral critique, the literal system of the univocal patriarch is not so much the cause as a symptom of the social distress in 1960s Spain.

But while morality, aesthetics, and patriarchy suffer critique, commodity culture is being confirmed in the much less interesting, but ultimately more fundamental principal storyline. This involves the protagonist's struggle with his son's purse-strings. While Tío Agustín works to save his family from urban immorality, he is also squeezing money out of them to buy gifts for the people back in Calacierva. The movie implies that Tío Agustín is engaged in a moral conflict, one that implicitly critiques the consumer culture in which his family is enmeshed. But in fact, as a cut to life in Calacierva in the middle of the urban intrigue reveals, the protagonist affirms his nobility in the commodities he sends to the townspeople. And while the *campesinos* proclaim disinterested love for their former neighbor, they shower him with requests and even feel betrayed when the goods they have requested fail to arrive.

The central importance of capital and the commodities it makes available comes into focus in a watershed scene in which appropriately all members of the

high-rise homestead come together into one frame for the only time in the movie. The scene begins as Tío Agustín catches his son during one of his infrequent evenings at home. The father engages his son in conversation hoping to procure a few more *pesetas* for the folks back home. Luchi interrupts however, insisting that Filo has robbed her of 3,000 *pesetas*. The ensuing ruckus brings Sara and the accused to the study. Filo denies the charges. The already stingy son intervenes, reminding Filo of the “obvious”: “has visto los billetes encima y has pensado, con esto me compro un abrigo y un vestido y un bolso y unos zapatos y unos. . . .” The implication of this list (ended only by interruption) is that no one can resist the temptation of commodity culture. While his son enumerates, Tío Agustín, placed prominently to his son’s left facing the camera initially displays shock at the materialistic speech. But as his son continues--and as the value of the goods has time to sink in for both the characters and the spectators--Tío Agustín’s startled expression vanishes, his head begins to nod in affirmation, until finally he wears the face of a thoroughly-interpellated consumer-subject. Tío Agustín, the spectators’ principal model for their or his own actions is ultimately seduced by the thought of so many “things.”

Of course, in spite of the seduction--but not contrary to it--Tío Agustín interjects in defense of Filo. He claims that he has in fact stolen the money and offers his own bills as evidence. But before he can be scolded, Sara enters with the purportedly stolen cash, exonerating both Filo and her erstwhile defender. On the surface his actions suggest the *paleta*’s rejection of the material and offer another

lesson in noble rural values. But the real message of the film concerning the protection of the downtrodden, as well as the action that leads to the final resolution of the scene are still to come. Luchi and Filo leave the room and the father-son conversation recommences. This time Tío Agustín's benevolence has softened his son's heart and his grip on his wallet. The son offers his father "whatever he wants." Tío Agustín happily counts out several 1,000 *peseta* bills, displaying them prominently for the viewer while praising their attractive appearance. As he counts he wonders aloud at the luxuries of modern life: "Parece imposible que un hombre pueda llevarle dinero en el bolsillo así." With the fetishized bills sorted out, the world suddenly seems a better place. The once distant granddaughter Sara is now delighted with her grandfather, symbolically showing her redemption by finally willingly kissing his whiskered face, but materially proving that redemption by following her father's example in offering her own money to help the *paleta*'s cause. When Tío Agustín responds to these changes with the banal phrase, "Qué Dios te bendiga," his son clarifies that he already has. The connection between heavenly blessings and excess capital is unmistakable, confirming the common capitalist suspicion that somehow paper money is the most natural of heavenly gifts.

Resolution in *paleta* films, explains García de León, typically proceeds from the achievement of a certain equality based on physical comforts (38). Hence, with paper money now freely circulating between city and country, Lazaga can wrap things up. This requires the quick resolution of two remaining "moral" dilemmas. First,

Luchi's accusation of Filo leads Tío Agustín to discover the servant's unplanned pregnancy, to arrange her marriage with *el huevero*, and thereby resolve the problem of the unhappy country house servant. Since Tío Agustín's arrival in the city, the protagonist and Filo act as rural soul mates, reminiscing frequently about the "good life" back in the country. Salvation for Filo would seem to require her return to this idealized life. But as Tío Agustín's solution exposes, happiness is in fact to be found in the city. Tío Agustín saves Filo from the stigma of unwed motherhood by arranging her marriage. But Filo expresses true bliss only when her new husband determines to move his bride to their own flat, away from the family she serves as well as from his mother. Happiness, in other words, comes in making a complete break from a more self-sufficient home of extended relations that characterized the traditional domestic sphere, and establishing instead a model of the modern urban domestic sphere. Martyn Lee signals this switch in domestic orders, interestingly, as one of the crucial ingredients for the reproduction of commodity capitalism (93).

The second event that assures the movie's end comes in Tío Agustín's restoration of marital bliss between his son and daughter-in-law. Marriage enhancement also stems from the key scene of capital-exchange in the doctor's study whereby Tío Agustín finally gains the upper hand with his daughter-in-law. Thanks to a series of provident occurrences (interrupted house visits, eavesdropped phone conversations) marked by gratuitous references to the *paleta*'s country-bred health and a passionate speech in defense of the *paleta* as a human being, the protagonist

shames his daughter-in-law's pretender and helps his son to recognize the need for a touch of marriage enhancement. As soon as marital bliss is assured he receives his letter from Calacierva. The subsequent scene shows Tío Agustín together with a happily united family in Calacierva. The explicit message of this return is that the city was indeed "not for Tío Agustín." He has apparently chosen simple country-life over the moral chaos of the metropolis.

Yet the protagonist's return has all the markings of a tourist stop-over and shows few indications of a serious reestablishment of a rural life-style. Tío Agustín, unlike the family in *Surcos*, returns to the country triumphant. Like the driver in the car-rental ad in the previously mentioned issue of *Film Ideal*, Tío Agustín returns to his pueblo in luxury, displaying that luxury (in the form of his obviously wealthy family) on the cobbled streets of a rural village. Appropriately, the reason for the return of the prodigal is the renaming of "la antigua calle del Clavo." A historically typical Spanish street name yields to a new label that, while belonging to a long-time townsman, only attains stature by moving to the modern city. The spectator understands that power, no matter the setting of its action, ultimately resides in the metropolis. The movie's explicit message to the aspiring urban youth filling the theaters to experience Lazaga's filmic therapy is similar. When Sara--the principal object of desire and/or identification for these younger spectators--expresses her grief at the loss of Tío Agustín's companionship, her grandfather responds with a message that might as well have been written by the Ministry of Tourism (perhaps also in

collaboration with the official pro-industry encouragement of immigration): just come visit in the summer, do a little hunting, breathe the fresh air, soak in the flavor, and all will be well.

The movie concludes with a tasty dash of this fine rural flavor. Agustín, now alone in his country home, is shaken from thanatistic meditation by yet a second party in his honor. The party, interestingly, is kicked off when the town's principal figures enter Agustín's home, each returning the commodities that the honored prodigal had bequeathed to them on his departure. What results is a veritable tourist pitch of country commodities: cheese, wine, homespun wool, fresh livestock, and of course, genuine country hospitality. The film concludes as the homecoming empties into the street where a traditional Zaragozan group of musicians and a singer serenade the teary-eyed *paleto*: "Bien has hecho en regresar/ Baturrico, baturrico/ bien has hecho en regresar/ La ciudad pa quien le guste/ que como el pueblo ni hablar." Tío Agustín, tears welling up in his eyes, watches as youth fill the street performing local dances. The final frame freezes on Tío Agustín's emotion filled-face--a postcard of the commodified *paleto*--while the singer affirms, just in case the spectator was dozing, that "Toda la gente del pueblo feliz y contenta está."

As García de León argues, the spectator would likely experience this movie as a kind of "social therapy," even as "an exorcism" (41). But more importantly, while exorcizing the *paleto* within, and while allowing spectators to deal with the aggressions felt toward many of the suffocating aspects of their new life in the city,

the movie simultaneously interpellated former *paletos* as capitalist consumers. *La ciudad no es para mí* packaged the contradictions of a socially and spatially evolving society so that, in explicitly celebrating these contradictions, they could on the one hand be laughed at but ultimately ignored while they were embraced on the other.

Tiempo de silencio

While *La ciudad no es para mí* and the host of *paleta* pablum that came in its wake produced the very ex-*paleta* consumer spectators that would make these some of the most commercially successful movies of the era, novels such as *Tiempo de silencio* faced the city/country interchanges brought on by immigration in far less popular ways. Instead of producing consumers, Luis Martín-Santos's novel highlighted the contradictions inherent in the city/country interchange, especially underlining the endurance of these uneven relations in the Spain of the "economic miracle." And yet, as with its social realist precursors, these essential spatial divisions in the novel have been largely ignored by scholars perhaps a bit too eager to move beyond the "obvious." Since its publication in 1961, critics have regularly heralded *Tiempo de silencio* as an innovator and even savior of the Spanish novel, as marking an important step beyond social realist concerns and toward the experimental, structuralist, "New Novel" of the 1960s. Most critics have proven these points by focusing principally on Martín-Santos's stylistic innovations.³⁵ The

relatively few scholars that study the social aspect of the novel tend to do so through a traditional marxist focus on historical contradictions and class struggle.³⁶

While *Tiempo de silencio* was certainly innovative in the many respects the critics identify, one of its most fundamental innovations came in its manner of treating the city/country paradigm. While in *Surcos* and *Los bravos*, in *El jarama* or in *Calle Mayor* city/country tensions spoke principally of problems of immigration and of the ensuing contact between a literal country and city, Luis Martín-Santos's novel breaks ground by registering the multiple levels of meaning that the apparently simple city/country division was acquiring--as well as the multitude anxieties that this change was inspiring--in a rapidly modernizing nation. In *Tiempo de silencio* a new global/local division that was only starting to surface in the works of social realism joins the literal urban/rural division on the diegetic surface. The combination of the two in turn produces a third city/country tension, that which results from the re-ruralization of failed immigrants living in the modern city, what in this analysis I will refer to in terms of neo-urban and neo-rural. The proliferation of divisions and the anxieties they inspire produce, finally, a fourth spatial division, the soon-to-emerge tension between centralizing powers and regionalist sentiment. The interplay of these four city/country-structured divisions arises through an elementary but as yet unattempted structuralist reading of *Tiempo de silencio* along spatial lines. This rather straightforward reading reveals closer and more constant contacts between the "urban" and the "rural" in postwar Madrid. Through this reading every space--from

laboratory to tin shack, from bar to brothel, from reception to prison, and from theater to *verbena*--becomes a site loaded with social meaning that underscores the increasing importance of the city/country binary in Spanish letters of the 1960s.

Although *Tiempo de silencio* is arguably the most studied Spanish novel of the last fifty years, a review of the action, especially in order to establish the significance of space, seems in order.³⁷ *Tiempo de silencio* tells the story of a young country physician named Pedro, who in Madrid in 1949 researches cancer on a special breed of laboratory mice. The story is related through a relatively innovative style in which narrative voice is often not quite the same as, but never distant from the protagonist.³⁸ The death of Pedro's last mouse leads him to Madrid's outlying slums where an opportunistic immigrant, Muecas, who stole several of the rodents, is willing to sell them back to the scientist. Several night's after their initial meeting, Muecas comes to the physician's pension, begging Pedro to save his daughter from an abortion gone awry. When the girl dies, Pedro's intervention in the fiasco lands him in jail. He is soon acquitted but the mere appearance of complicity is enough to get him dismissed from his research position. When the last object tying him to the city, his fiancée Dorita, is murdered by one of the lumpen in a misguided attempt to avenge the death of Muecas's daughter, Pedro, now free of responsibilities, returns to the country in search of a simpler life.

Pedro's framing journey from country to city and back both parallels that of the family in *Surcos* and reverses (perhaps an intentional reverse-gloss) that of the

city doctor in *Los bravos*. Pursuing the novel's cultural genealogy still further, we can recognize parallels between Pedro's story and that of the young doctor, Andrés Hurtado in Pío Baroja's *El árbol de la ciencia* (1917). Like these novels, the most basic spatial division in *Tiempo de silencio* is represented by the movement between rural and urban Spain. In the last section of the novel, Pedro muses on his circular journey from country-to-city-to-country: "Llegué por Príncipe Pío, me voy por Príncipe Pío" (287). Earlier in the novel, the narrator recalls the protagonist's arrival in the city: "el día--ya lejano--en que llegó a la puerta de la pensión vestido según la incierta moda de la provincia y arrastrando un baúl de madera" (141). The wooden trunk that the narrator recalls in this scene is, according to María García de León, precisely one of the archetypal signs of the *paleta* and not surprisingly an image that figures prominently in the train arrivals in *Surcos* and later in *La ciudad no es para mí*. At this level *Tiempo de silencio* is yet another participant in the neorealist tradition of representing the woes of immigration, urban squalor, and cosmopolitan corruption.³⁹

Within the realm of the city, the locus of the vast majority of the novel, *Tiempo de silencio* evidences another kind of urban-to-rural back-and-forth consisting of a balanced shift from a cosmopolitan city-center to a peripheral urban slum. This structure comprises the aforementioned neo-urban/neo-rural spatial division. In a spirit appropriate to the novel that Sobejano identifies as introducing the structuralist novel in Spain, we can separate the sixty-two short sections of *Tiempo de silencio* into

eight principal parts divided along the axis of the neo-urban/neo-rural division. By combining this division with the structure provided by the literal rural-urban movement mostly external to the temporal diegesis of the novel, a clear structure unfolds:

RURAL PAST (external analepsis)

	City	Country
	1) Pedro in laboratory (Sections 1-4)	
		2) Chabolas (meeting Muecas) (5-11)
URBAN PRESENT (diegetic present)	3) Night on the town (12-23)	
		4) Chabolas (abortion) (24-28)
	5) High society (conference, etc.) (29-40)	
		6) Prison (or urban subterranean) (41-54)
	7) Laboratory/Boarding House (55-58)	
		8) Review/Verbena/Train (59-62)

RURAL FUTURE (external prolepsis)

In addition to this city/country division of the “urban” novel, a variety of social positions, often carrying their own city/country connotations, interact in each one of these spaces. Furthermore, the traditional urban/rural division never completely disappears from sections that explicitly represent the geographies of the neo-urban or neo-rural. This interference is deepened and broadened, finally, by the complete infection of these varied spaces by a constant tension between global and local that rather than inhabiting fixed spaces seems appropriately to cast its shadow over the entirety of modern metropolitan life.

In fact, the earliest manifestation of the city/country paradigm in the narrative comes in the form of the tension between the international and the local. As the novel opens, Pedro works in his lab anxiously considering the stigma of being a Spanish researcher in an international field. Working in an inadequate laboratory with a bumbling *ruralón* as his assistant, Pedro meditates on the advanced scientific system that brings him specially bred mice from “Illinois importado” by way of a “transporte cautrimotor o tal vez bimotor de reacción, con seguro especial y paga de prima y examen con certificado del servicio veterinario de fronteras de los EE.UU.” (11). While working in his lab he compares the technologically advanced origins of his research to its semi-developed present state. Instead of foreign aid, he relies now on the breeding talents of a sub-lumpen criminal, on transportation of his specimens in an empty egg carton, and on incubation induced by the bodies of malnourished teenage girls. To research in Spain is to play the role of a kind of international *paleta*. Such challenges might be merely humorous if not for Pedro’s own international aspirations. More than wanting to lick cancer for humanity’s sake, Pedro aspires to the international esteem of the Nobel prize. Overseeing his every action in the lab is a portrait of Spain’s only Nobel laureate in science, Ramón y Cajal. The portrait, while inspiring, also reminds the aspirant and the reader by way of its very novelty of the habitual failures of Spain in its international pursuits. Pedro’s concerns, in addition to establishing a new level of city/country tensions, mark *Tiempo de silencio* from the beginning as a novel that, despite its diegetic date of 1949, serves simultaneously as a

register of early 1960s Spain. Pedro's preoccupations register those of a nation that through its budding relationship with the international community found itself newly ruralized by what contemporary geographers have described as a kind of global urbanization (Soja 165). In the parlance of the day, late 1950s and early 1960s Spain continued to be designated as "under" or "semi-developed" while living in a neighborhood of "developed" nations.

The second section of the novel, one of the few non-essential to a rather linear plot, demonstrates the effect that the presence of global urbanization has on the vision of a recently-arrived *ruralón* with respect to the city. As opposed to don Prudencio's experience of the provincial capital in *Los bravos*, Pedro sees nothing but backwardness in Spain's flagship of urban modernity. The third-person narrator, as if seeing through Pedro's eyes, describes Madrid in a manner that belies an awareness of other major cities: "Hay ciudades tan descabalgadas, tan faltas de substancia histórica, tan traídas y llevadas por gobernantes arbitrarios, tan caprichosamente edificadas en desiertos, tan parcamente pobladas por una continuidad aprehensible de familias, tan lejanas de un mar o de un río" (15). After this introductory diatribe, the narrator turns to the rural in order to express the pitiful state of Spain's capital: "tan heroicas en ocasiones sin que se sepa a ciencia cierta por qué sino de un modo elemental y físico como el del campesino joven que de un salto cruce el río, tan embriagadas de sí mismas" (15). Continuing with the comparison the narrator refers repeatedly to Spain's history, a topic thoroughly considered by Jo Labanyi in her

temporally-focused social analysis of *Tiempo de silencio*, but also a topic inseparably connected with the spatial. The narrator mentions the lack of *madrileños* in comparison to their Basque countrymen and then the lack of a Jewish quarter in the capital city, recalling with both points earlier center/periphery tensions in Spanish history.

This linking of history to space persists throughout the novel. For example, in the fourth section (the last section of the first “urban” division) the narration of Pedro’s life in the pension leads to a focalization through the lady of the house that reveals a life that is molded by Spanish history. She is, in particular, affected by Spain’s last important local-global encounter, the loss of its final colonies in the Philippines, that shaped her marriage and her future world-view. Earlier in the novel, at the conclusion of the anti-Madrid diatribe in the first section of the novel, the narrator jumps to an apparent conversation between a Spanish lad and an English student. The conversation makes visible the Spaniard’s ignorance of even his own history in comparison to his British companion. The section appropriately concludes with a more metaphysical consideration of cities in general, an analysis with rich foreshadowings of Pedro’s own experience in a society where urbanization is beginning to proliferate on multiple levels:

que el hombre nunca está perdido porque para eso está la ciudad (para que el hombre no esté nunca perdido), que el hombre puede sufrir o morir pero no perderse en esta ciudad, cada uno de cuyos rincones es un recogerperdidos

perfeccionado, donde el hombre no puede perderse aunque lo quiera porque mil, diez mil, cine mil pares de ojos lo clasifican y disponen, lo reconocen y abrazan, lo identifican y salvan . . . que el hombre--aquí--ya no es de pueblo, que ya no pareces de pueblo, hombre, que cualquiera diría que eres de pueblo y que más valía que nunca hubieras venido del pueblo porque eres como de pueblo, hombre.” (19)

Pedro, recently arrived from the pueblo to do research that might propel him beyond even his new urban realm, must acknowledge that the same mechanisms that make this possible also situate him as doubly ruralized.

Pedro’s recognition of the two-edged sword of the new combination of spatial divisions, coming as it does at the conclusion of a blistering critique of Madrid, also resonates beyond Pedro’s personal experience. In the same section Pedro has seen that “un hombre es la imagen de una ciudad y una ciudad las vísceras puestas al revés del hombre” (18). Pedro’s experience from this point forward is a shadow of the experience of Spain in global society. The protagonist’s discoveries will register Spain’s own coming of age. His journey among multiple levels of city/country divisions will register the proliferation of these divisions within Spain. It is appropriate then that as Pedro becomes aware of the combining effects of the rural/urban and the local/global he discovers a new emerging spatial division that has resulted from the interaction of the dominant urban/rural paradigm and the newly emergent global/local: the aforementioned division of neo-urban and neo-rural.

This discovery begins when Pedro learns from his assistant Amador that if he hopes to continue his research he will need to purchase back some of the mice that have been stolen from him by Muecas. To do so, Amador and Pedro descend to one of the shanty towns that proliferated on the edges of Madrid throughout the Franco years. The journey that the two immigrants share towards the hut of yet another transplanted villager is especially significant for a novel celebrated as one of transition and innovation. The guide in the descent to the neo-rural is Amador, a prototype of the early postwar immigrant of the late 1940s and 1950s who in the throes of the rural poverty of the years of hunger cannot resist what he himself describes as the strong “pull” of Madrid (38). Pedro on the other hand is representative of the changing face of immigration in the late 1950s and early 1960s: educated, middle-class, and seeking opportunity rather than merely food (Hooper 22). In short, while the action of the novel occurs in 1949, the journey that Pedro and Amador share as they descend Atocha street toward the *chabola* community registers the shared plight of spatially and socially diverse Spaniards in the face of global urbanization.

Pedro’s initial discovery of the *chabolas* emphasizes this city-connected community as a kind of rural in opposition to the urban from which the researcher has just come. Pedro and Amador exit the city “por un trozo de carretera en que los apenas visibles restos de galipot encuadraban trozos de campo libre” (37). The actual *chabolas* begin when the paved road ends. Then “sobre un pequeño montículo” the

ramshackle neighborhood appears in a “vallizuelo escondido entre dos montañas altivas” (50). On the “limitada llanura” the immigrants have established a kind of frontier community. But while the narrator posits the shanty-town as a new kind of rural Spain, he clarifies that this rural space shares closer ties to the city than did, for example, the village of *Los bravos*. While the inhabitants of Fernández Santos’s *pueblo perdido* could not escape the discursive constructions that reached them by way of the radio waves of so many *Radio Monte Carlos* in the early 1950s, the constructions of the neo-ruralones in the city of *Tiempo de silencio* result through much more material means. Trash trucks rather than rumors, and sewer pipes rather than radio waves ensure the urban hegemony of this new spatial arrangement. The new rural is literally and figuratively a bi-product of the city’s waste.

The new rural is perhaps the most important illustration of what Dale Knickerbocker identifies as the “abject” in the novel (21). Interestingly, following his initial shock at such squalor so near the city, Pedro quickly learns to mentally transform the materially disturbing sites he sees into a much more distant metaphysical other. The narrative voice reveals Pedro’s posturing as a dispassionate scientific investigator who when faced with the momentarily ineffable regains control by reducing what he sees to an object of anthropological fascination: “¿Por qué ir a estudiar las costumbres humanas hasta la antipódica isla de Tasmania? Como si aquí no viéramos con mayor originalidad resolver los eternos problemas de nuestra misma habla . . . Como si el hombre no fuera el mismo, señor, el mismo en todas partes:

siempre tan inferior en la precisión de sus instintos a los más brutos animales (52-53). He objectifies the people he discovers in this abject realm as brutes whom he describes in terms even more de-humanizing than the doctor's verbal animalization of the *campesinos* in *Los bravos*. These sub-lumpen are mere fodder for the totalizing cosmopolitan eye: "un grupo achabolado como aquél no deja de ser al mismo tiempo recreo para el artista y campo de estudio para el sociólogo" (52).

But while Pedro quickly totalizes this new community as an abject "other," his experience of this other inevitably awakens him to a new social awareness that draws him out of his scientific obsessions. On observing the surrounding misery he wonders, "quizá no era sólo el cancer lo que podía hacer que los rostros se deformaran y llegaran a tomar el aspecto bestial e hinchado de los fantasmas que aparecen en nuestros sueños" (53-54). In the face of the *chabolas*, Pedro's focus on curing physical cancer broadens to include an awareness of social cancers. In parallel fashion, when Pedro meets Muecas's daughters he begins to consider an alternative scenario for cancer invasion. Pedro learns that Muecas's daughters have been incubating the coveted mice by carrying them in sacks placed between their breasts. To prove their work, the younger daughter, Florita, shows Pedro a series of bites received from the cancerous animals. Pedro entertains the possibility that in the squalor of the *chabolas* he may have found a link to identifying a viral cause of cancer. Hence, even as Pedro discovers a much more complicated relationship between foreign invasion and internal change at a socio-economic level, he readjusts

his investigation of a disease characterized as an enigmatic invasion of internal foreign agents to search for a more straightforward cause resulting from the easily understood concept of an external invasion of foreign agents.⁴⁰ The young doctor seeks to simplify the complex even as his previously simple world-view is shattered.

Appropriately, in Pedro's visit to Muecas's *chabola* and discovery of the neo-rural, the narrator offers the clearest picture of the social complexity resulting within the new socio-spatial sphere of the *chabola* community. For example, Pedro's host, Muecas displays absolutely animal-like qualities that betray his doubly ruralized status. At the same time, Muecas's very rudeness belies connections to nobility that however ironically described by the narration, nevertheless suggest certain connections to power. He displays "gestos cortesés heredados desde antiguos siglos por los campesinos de la campiña toledana" (58). Within his realm Muecas rules as a "patriarca bíblico" (66). He is the "Gentleman-farmer Muecasthone" visiting "sus criaderos por la mañana donde sus yeguas de vientre de raza selecta, refinada por sapientísimos cruces endogámicos, daban el codiciado fruto purasangre" (67). Muecas is foremost, yet another rural immigrant stigmatized by rural habits. But through the eyes of his neo-urban observer he becomes this neo-rural man able to transcend the rural and enter into the realm of the international. This is not to claim that Muecas perceives himself as such. The comparison between Muecas and an English aristocrat instead speaks more of the weight of local-global tensions on the urbanized mind of Pedro.

At the same time, the portrayal of Muecas as an aristocratic farmer also points to a small but significant power shift that Pedro perceives in his encounter with the turbulent socio-spatial composition of his contemporary Spain. The young medic's view of Muecas as noble, however weighted down in irony, suggests his awareness of a subtle form of power that this otherwise utterly abject creature wields over the urban that appears to control him. Muecas, after all, has the coveted mice. Pedro sees that through acquisition of such small and simple things as lab animals Muecas has come to exercise an "urban" power that until now Pedro has believed could only be achieved in a more traditional hierarchical climb from rural village, to city laboratory, to international ceremony. He learns through the "Gentleman-farmer Muecasthone" that power in this brave new spatially-unsettled world is not so straightforward, that power flows as much through the shack as through the laboratory, and that specifically, the key to successful research, completed dissertations, doctoral hoodings, and the cosmopolitan lifestyle that such imply may be held as much by Muecas as by any laboratory director or Swedish king. Interestingly, at the conclusion of the section of Pedro's first visit to the neo-rural, the narrator considers with irony the happy stability of the most "visible" global socio-spatial division, that between black civilization and white civilization, that which in the years when Martín-Santos was writing his novel was most often designated as the division between underdeveloped and developed nations, or the "third-" and the "first-world" (Buell 23; Soja 167) Interestingly, at the time *Tiempo de silencio* was published,

Spain was itself moving from underdeveloped to developed, and suffering the consequent stigma of “negros” in an economically racist world dominated by northern European “blancos.”⁴¹

Pedro leaves the *chabolas* as anxious concerning humankind’s spiritual and social infirmities as he is curious about their physical maladies. He is, in short, a very different man than he was when he first descended into the bowels of Madrid. From this point the anxiety-driven researcher embarks on the first in a series of escapes into the cosmopolitan heart of the city in an attempt to forget the troubling neo-rural. Several days after his visit to the *chabolas*, Pedro attempts his first escape by way of a night wandering the streets, cafes, bars, and brothels of Madrid’s city-center. Though the escapade occurs several days after Pedro’s visit to the *chabolas*, the diegetic juxtaposition of the two separate incidents lends a sense of causal immediacy to the event. Pedro’s enduring anxiety at the beginning of the scene further underscores the connection to his visit to the *chabolas*.

The scene begins as the researcher leaves his boarding house and begins wandering aimlessly the central streets of Madrid. While passing through the most decidedly pre-modern section of the city, his mind considers the psychology of Cervantes, a national precursor of Martín-Santos who likewise dealt with disconcerting historical and spatial changes in his narrative.⁴² Eventually, Pedro’s path leads him to the locus of that most cosmopolitan of Spanish traditions, the literary *tertulia*. Within the *tertulia* Pedro ascends again to the doubly “urban” space

of a global society. His own ruminations on the autochthonous Cervantes surrender to others' intoxicated evaluations of foreign literatures: first, of Spain's most consistent cosmopolitan big brother, France ("Vale la pena. Ha leído a Proust" [80]), and second, of the country's newest ruralizing big brother, the United States ("La novela americana es superior, influye sobre Europa" [81])

Following brief discussions of French and American literatures, the narrative focus shifts to the encounter of Pedro and his friend Matías with a Teutonic brother. Bored with café banter, the two accompany a German painter to his studio to view his neo-expressionist work. The narrative concentration on a specifically German painter in the most sustained sequence of the novel unessential to the plot points to symbolic associations with the multi-layered city/country paradigm. Gustavo Pérez Firmat suggests that the scene fits into the novel like a cancerous growth, underlining the contact between local and foreign that the scene depicts (195). The encounter with German culture is metonymic of the contemporary encounter between Spain and Germany, the parody of German speech and manners being an uncomfortable role reversal of the cultural encounters that resulted from the diaspora of the Spanish immigrant worker in 1960s Europe.

But more significantly, the Spanish-German encounter alludes to historical politico-philosophical ties between the two countries. The description of the painter's work, a neo-expressionist representation of a city gutted by the atomic bomb, recalls the unfortunate results of the two nation's common fascist heritage, a heritage that

continues to serve as the measuring stick for a civilization's inability to adapt to modernization and the socio-spatial adjustments it demands. The representation of utter disaster by way of neo-expressionism--the vanguard of artistic expression in 1949--may also recall for the reader the vision of the *chabolas* that, like the bombed out city, is an abject situated within and because of scientific (the bomb) and cultural (neo-expressionism) advances. The earthen colors of the German's urbanistic art, finally, recall the sense of the rural (or the abject as Pérez Firmat implies in his reading of the painting [96]) that inherently pervades the most modern of civilizations.

To the chagrin of the artist, Matías is not impressed by any of these or other potential meanings. He declares the painting a failure, explaining that it lacks what he calls "magma." When the artist demands a more rational explanation, Matías responds with still more pompous verbosity in the stead of rational explanation. Such romantic pride in ignorance underscores what some claim to be the typical position of Spain with respect to the global community. Matías's declarations recall the celebration of autochthonous ignorance, the retreat into immature romantic versions of foreign-born political systems, or even the rejection of these in favor of its own twisted--or at least easily twist-able--philosophies of Krausism, 1898 nationalism, and Falangism among others for which Spanish critics from Unamuno and Angel Ganivet to Americo Castro and Juan Goytisolo have attacked their native community.⁴³ It is

this same history of ignorance that hangs over Pedro in the first section of the novel, as well.

With repeated romantic remonstrances of the German's work still falling from their lips, Pedro and Matías abandon the foreign in favor of more national customs, continuing their drinking binge with shots of cheap Spanish coñac followed by an anticipated nightcap at a local brothel. The visit to the house of prostitution occurs at the conclusion of a night of failed escapism. Upon entering the brothel, Pedro, in spite of his literal intoxication, appears to be sobering up with respect to the possibility of escape. The brothel serves as the first of an increasing number of transitional spaces between urban and rural in the novel, standing as it were on the line between civilization and barbarism. If it is not a residual rural site, at least it is a residual premodern space within a modernizing city, a holdover from times long before contemporary mass urbanization. Within this anti-urban, urban space Pedro and Matías repeatedly find a temporary respite from the exhausting grip of the metropolis, establishing contacts with a more material and abject element. Appropriately, the narrator--with help from a loquacious Matías-- describes the brothel through a classical rhetoric inappropriate to its setting, thereby underscoring through irony the premodern nature of such an institution. The traditional brothel signals the irony of an urban site reaching toward international modernization while simultaneously shackled still by its own internal anti-metropolitan residual. The globalizing metropolis, as the narrator describes it during Pedro's initial foray into its

streets earlier in the evening, contains within itself its own repressed rural, a labyrinth of narrow winding streets described as a “cyst” within the modern city (74). The reference to a cyst in a story so concerned with cancer foregrounds the possibility of an unwanted but ultimately un-stoppable rural infection of the most modern metropolis from within--a cancer set off by the “viral” infection of foreign cultural invasion.

Pedro’s initial escape into the urban finally concludes with a curious juxtaposition of two forms of socio-economic exchange. Within the residual rural of the brothel, Pedro refuses to participate in the traditional form of economic exchange that is prostitution. But when he returns to the pension--the symbolic locus of the new urban middle class in the novel--Pedro accedes to a more subtle form of exchange, in a sense signing a contract with his body through a sexual encounter with the granddaughter of his landlady. Pedro refuses overt exchange but finds himself ill-equipped to resist a more subtle but ultimately more finalizing negotiation. Pedro’s conscious submission to Dorita’s contractual body underscores again the confusion he feels in a society in socio-spatial flux.

After his brief encounter with Dorita, Pedro returns to his room. Only moments after submitting to the neo-urban market-exchange introduced by Dorita’s body, the object of this neo-urban returns once more to disrupt the newest urban illusion of escape. Muecas enters the boarding house and begs Pedro to accompany him to the *chabolas* where his daughter lays dying. Pedro wants to believe that

through his reentry into the *chabola* sub-world he will experience a scientific epiphany. He imagines that the daughter's moribund state might somehow be connected to her intimacy with the cancerous mice. Instead, when he arrives he discovers the results of a much baser intimacy; Muecas's daughter, Florita, is dying as a result of an abortion-gone-awry. Ironically, instead of discovering a viral cause of cancer, Pedro ends up mopping up a clumsy operation necessitated because of an incestuous relationship between Muecas and his daughter, another kind of bodily invasion in which the foreign and the autochthonous are confusingly interlinked.

Instead of finding a straightforward external cause to the problem of "otherness" he faces again the depressing understanding that the problem of the "other" is inextricably linked to problems of the "same," that the external and the internal are inseparable. The events of his second visit to Muecas's shack take Pedro even deeper into the heart of the abject. Pedro enters the shack only to find Florita's body adorned with all manner of medicinal treatments more indebted to a backward spiritualism bordering on the voodoo than to any scientific understanding of the body. Pedro's recourse to scientific discourse underscores the primitive nature of the vigil of semi-hysterical *ruralones* around Florita's moribund body:

En contra de la opinión de los arquitectos sanitarios suecos que últimamente prefieren construir los quirófanos en forma exagonal o hasta redondeada (lo que facilita los desplazamientos del personal auxiliar y el transporte del material en cada instante requerido) aquel en que yacía la Florita era de forma

rectangular u oblongo, un tanto achatado por uno de sus polos y con el techo artificiosamente descendente a lo largo de una de sus dimensiones.” (129)

The comparison continues for several pages. The narration compares the witch-doctor who initiates the abortion to “cualquier médico famoso del siglo XVIII” (131), Florita to a “doncella” (132), and describes the *campesinos* that attend the vigil according to their “weltanschauung activist-empírica” (132). Finally, the narrator recounts Pedro’s own operation in the most dispassionate of scientific rhetoric, even though from the beginning the very exercise is clearly destined to failure and thus rendered absurd. In short, again the neo-rural is doubly abjected by a discourse that first signals its backwardness in comparison to the modern metropolis and then seconds this backwardness by comparison to a global urbanization quickly moving beyond the modern.

Despite the apparently overwhelming distance between rural and urban spaces at the end of this scene, Pedro’s return to the city-center after his failed intervention signals the beginning of the diegetic deconstruction of such a clear-cut binary. This is not to say that Pedro’s post-rural experiences in the city do not again contrast strongly to his adventures with the abject. On return from the *chabolas* Pedro escapes into sleep, then vomits in his bed, symbolically purging himself of his recent encounter with the abject. Later he escapes once again with Matías into an urban realm even more cosmopolitan than that of the previous night. First, Pedro accompanies Matías to his friend’s aristocratic home. Here the physician meets Matías’s mother and

meditates on an original work of Goya. Next, Pedro and Matías attend a philosophy lecture followed by a post-conference reception.

In these cosmopolitan spaces Pedro experiences what most critics consider the most transparent cases of class conflict within the novel. First, Matías's mother and then her upper-class associates despise the protagonist for his worn and ill-fitting attire. In the midst of the apparently class-focused scene, however, Pedro suddenly envisions the body of Florita placed as if in the middle of the reception salon: "pero el cadáver de Florita se presenta en medio del salón. Sobre la profunda, alta, mullida, frondosa alfombra reposa más cómoda que en su propio lecho. Obstinadamente desnuda deja que su sangre correetee caprichosamente entre los muebles y entre las piernas de los desmesurados contertulios" (173). The grotesque image collapses the distance between the lumpen vigil of the previous night and the present elitist gathering. With this fusion the descriptions of the witch-doctor as Enlightenment physician and of Florita as damsel lose some of their ironic sting; *curanderos* and philosophers, prostitutes and debutantes, lumpen and aristocracy mix in an impromptu gross anatomy lab organized around the lifeless body of the abject's abject, Florita.

The redemption of the abject, and the reworking of relations of power across the intertwined city/country relations grows as Pedro learns at the reception that he is wanted by the authorities for his part in the death of Florita. True to the pattern established in Pedro and Matías's first night of urban escape, the two flee from the

heights of cosmopolitan culture to the transitional space of the brothel. At the bordello Pedro is arrested and taken to prison, another space that, like the brothel, stands as a kind of residual rural within the modernized neo-urban. The labyrinthine, subterranean structure of the prison as well as its role as a place of forced retreat from civilization make the prison, like the brothel, a kind of ruralized space within the heart of the urban. Pedro's underground cell at the end of a long corridor is reminiscent of the subterranean rural in the heart of Madrid that Edgar Neville depicted in his classic film, *La torre de los siete jorobados* (1944). Appropriately, the prison is a far cry from the panoptic structure that characterizes modern prisons and cities alike. Pedro's experiences there seem in fact contrary to the disciplining function Foucault associates with panoptic structures. Indeed, it is within the solitude of his cell that Pedro is finally able to gain some degree of solitude, meditate unmolested, and finally enjoy human contact, however brief, with his wardens.

While Pedro seeks spiritual redemption through meditation within the residual rural edifice of the jail, abject neo-rural forces begin to affect his physical redemption outside of the prison. At the same time that neo-rural sites effect redemption, the neo-urban discovers its own impotence within the new socio-spatial order of modern Spain. With Pedro in jail, his friend Matías sets about trying to move the mechanisms of traditional hierarchical power so as to free the aspiring scientist. This dandy uses his family name to request the aid of lawyers and politicians on Pedro's behalf. In spite of his social position Matías fails to effect any change in his friend's situation.

Instead, freedom comes by way of the abject, specifically by the symbolical and literal movement of the earth. First, Florita's body is exhumed to determine the actual cause of death. The exhumation of her daughter's body and the prospects of an autopsy compel Florita's bereaved mother, a woman frequently described as a mere extension of the earth (61-63)--a characterization that interestingly recalls images of women and children in *Los bravos*--to turn to the police and to declare Pedro's innocence. Curiously, if it is the abject rural that has encarcerated Pedro, it is also the abject rural that now saves him.

This ironic salvation-by-the-abject coupled with the failure of traditional cosmopolitan power underlines shifts in the power structure that have occurred as city and country have come into contact on different levels. For while international urbanization has doubly and triply-ruralized the abject neo-rural *paletos*, the same international city/country relations have begun to rework the power structure within the city making power available to the same abject. While Madrid's most established urban class remains trapped in what Anthony Giddens calls pre-modern and pre-urban socialities, obsessed with vestments, titles, and positions, the marginalized demonstrate, in spite of their backward manner, a freedom from the binding traditions that Giddens associates with traditional rural societies (Giddens 92). Muecas brings his rural skills as a poacher to the new globalizing city and, as explained above, becomes an agent of significant power not in spite of but because of his backward nature. Muecas, his wife, his daughter, and her boyfriend, Cartucho, unlike the

hierarchically-directed Matías, understand and exercise power at the most local levels (with mice, lemonade, and knives), displaying a keenness to the changes in power relations that Foucault has identified as coinciding with the rise of the modern cosmopolitan society.

Pedro, still apparently grasping for some sense of stability in this disconcerting new world, attempts after his release from prison a last shot at escape into the metropolis. This final move, however, is brief and half-hearted at best. His overtures are quickly rebuffed through his dismissal from the laboratory and his abandonment by Matías. Pedro surrenders instead to yet another transitional state. He acquiesces to his lot as a member of the emerging urban middle class and to the consumer culture that has commodified his bride-to-be and would do the same to him. Like the spectators interpellated by *La ciudad no es para mí*, Pedro will merely persist and subsist as one of the faceless masses caught in the throes of spatial and historical contradictions.

The spaces that the erstwhile researcher occupies when with his betrothed and her family are neither of the city or of the country. From the boarding house, Pedro retreats with Dorita and her mother first to the review and then to the *verbena*. Although the review takes place in a Madrid theater, the narration identifies it as a locus for a residual backward culture much as was the brothel. The fair or *verbena* is also set within city limits but seems closer to its edges. The *verbena* is in fact a strongly anti-urban, nostalgic custom meant to recall the small *fiestas* of provincial

towns. In the reactionary rural space of the *verbena* the final blow to Pedro's urban dreams occurs--or the final key to Pedro's redemption is provided. Interestingly, this simultaneous condemnation/salvation comes about by the only character in the novel even more abject than Muecas's wife Ricarda. If the earth moved to save Pedro from literal prison, now it is the refuse of the earth that saves him from a figurative one--that is, his impending nuptials and the social positioning that they entail. The assassin, Cartucho, is the abject's abject, despised even by Muecas. This lowest of the lumpen saves Pedro when he stabs Dorita, the object of capitalist exchange, to death. In so doing, he rids the physician of the commodity that binds him to a society built upon materially-violent contradictions. In an allegorical reading of this scene, Cartucho represents the still very rural nature of Spain, a nature that serves a warning to a Spanish "metropolis" that would blindly embrace international capitalism without making space for its rural "other." Cartucho's actions might suggest dire consequences for Spain as it tempts the international marketplace with its attractive commodities. Spain may not be ready for such interaction. At the least, progress will not come without a price.

Pedro, however, would rather not be bothered by the thoughts of that price. In the face of his final loss of urban opportunity, the erstwhile researcher finds himself on a train bound for the country. In returning to his rural roots, Pedro abandons hopes of integration into the global relations that his work in Madrid promised. As he returns to his agrarian roots he maintains the last of his interior monologues. He

commences his meditation expressing the same escapist spirit that led him earlier to retreat into the debauchery and hypocrisy of the metropolitan world, and that later inspired the prison-house self-counsel to “No pensar. No pensar. No pensar” (217). As he travels he denies the pain experienced within the city, concentrating instead on the material benefits of country life, imagining the economic, gastronomic, and sexual luxuries that await him. He tries convincing himself that he will enjoy himself (“lo pasaré bien”), hunting, fishing, and diagnosing Castilian young women (287-90).

The thought of the “mozas castellanas” apparently awakes him from this escapist reverie, their flesh acting as a kind of metaphysical transitional space reminiscent of the physical one of the brothel. Pedro now confronts his situation: “¿Pero yo, por qué no estoy más desesperado? ¿Por qué me estoy dejando capar?” (291). The references to castration and the anxieties--or lack thereof--surrounding it signal Freudian associations and their larger social applications. Pedro’s despair at his lack of despair signals not an angst over a loss of power but instead over his indifference with respect to the loss of power. In abandoning the city, Pedro abandons the supposed power source. And yet he remains unconcerned. On the one hand, Pedro’s lack of concern recalls the common spirit of escapism that pervaded Spanish society during a decade when, as Vázquez Montalbán points out, the majority learned to cope with their lack of power by abandoning the struggle for it. On the other hand, Pedro’s nonchalance signals an intuitive understanding of the already-castrated nature of any figurative emasculation. He senses that his supposed

castration is ultimately not as deterministic as he has been led to believe. His experiences with the multiple levels of city/country tensions and the power-plays resulting from their interaction have infused him with a sense of the phallus as always already lost, or if still available, as much overrated. The interactions of multiple city/country relationships have diffused power, producing not ignorant escapism but an informed Foucauldian angst in the face of new disciplinary relations.

Within this new system of power the final level of city/country tensions emerges, that of national center versus regional peripheries. As Pedro prepares to board his train he notices a “mozo gallego.” He promptly stereotypes the Galician worker, and then proceeds to consider the skills of Asturians, Manchegos, and Andalucians according to traditional prejudice. A few moments later he contemplates the archetypal Castilian--the figure so celebrated by the dictatorship in its desire to deny regionalism: “este tipo de hombre de la meseta que hizo historia, que fabricó un mundo . . . Perdido hace tres siglos y medio” (290). Other than references to Muecas’s Manchegan origins, these musings comprise the first regionalist references in the novel. Appropriately, they appear precisely at a moment when centralized power is most openly questioned and when traditional authority, noises, and protests have been silenced: “Pero ahora no, estamos en el tiempo de la anestesia, estamos en el tiempo en que las cosas hacen poco ruido. La bomba no mata con el ruido sino con la radiación alfa que es (en sí) silenciosa . . . Es un tiempo de silencio. La mejor máquina eficaz es la que no hace ruido” (292). In the midst of this vacuum of

traditional power, micro-politics acquire uncommon significance. Consequently, what was merely a still residual city/country tension at the time of the publication of *Tiempo de silencio* would intensify during the decade, ultimately boiling to the surface with a series of end-of-the-decade assassinations, protests, and court cases that made groups like ETA and their cries for liberation household words.⁴⁴

Pedro decides that in the face of such a power vacuum, it is best to be quiet and lie still: “al principio porque, al moverse, puede rozarse la herida. Primero estar quieto” (293). Now determined to hold his peace before a chaotic world, he peers out the train window as it passes Spain’s landmark monastery, the sixteenth-century Escorial. While Jo Labanyi has identified this scene as a catalyst for the exploration of national history in the Spanish novel of the 1960s, it serves equally as a reaffirmation of the centrality of spatial relations in the novel. The Escorial is certainly one of Spain’s principal historical monuments, a reminder of the links between Spain’s past glory and the 1960s. But the Escorial is a major monument to the multi-layered and historically ambivalent spatial construction of Spain. The monastery recalls first Phillip II’s retreat from the pressures of the urban-based court to a relatively isolated religious life in the countryside. At the same time it is a symbol of the invasion of the countryside by the court and its urban properties, much as the invasion registered in *Los bravos*. Again, the Escorial, constructed about the time that Phillip II was turning his back on Enlightenment thought, betraying the nation’s Muslim population, and relinquishing much of his authority to the

Inquisition, recalls the cultural and spiritual withdrawal of Spain from Europe. It is, in short, a monument to xenophobia and isolationism. On the other hand, the Escorial recalls a time when in spite of such reactionary sentiment, Spain stood as the world's greatest imperial power, exercising its own "civilizing" hegemony over so many of its European neighbors. Finally, El Escorial, with its stark monumental architecture realized in enormous stone blocks, is perhaps the nation's most powerful symbol of the heavy-handed centralizing grip of a Castilian-centered authority. From Phillip II's seclusion within his monastic cell to Franco's construction of perhaps the only monument to best the Escorial in its call to centralist authority, the Valley of the Fallen--dedicated only two years previous to the publication of *Tiempo de silencio* and appropriately located only a few minutes from the Escorial--the pull of the center, as well as the resulting resistance of the periphery remained the most enduring and painful of all city/country relations in Spain. If the rural/urban and the local/global tensions lie on the surface throughout Martín-Santos's novel, the tensions between center and periphery at the work's conclusion invite a rereading of these tensions. Through such a rereading the existentially troubling surface tensions become a synecdoche for a much more materially troubling undercurrent of center/periphery struggle.

Finally, the view of the Escorial invites Pedro to reflect on his own present situation. He compares himself to Saint Lawrence, the martyr whose death on a grill served as inspiration for the design of the monastery itself. Pedro has attempted to

forget all so that he might begin anew, free of the memories of cosmopolitan posturing and neo-rural prostration that he has experienced. But ultimately he is not free. He has been urbanized, globalized, and then re-ruralized. He knows that any return to a neutral space has become impossible. Nevertheless, like San Lorenzo he prefers the denial and masochism of a martyr (“no gritaba, no gritaba, estaba en silencio mientras lo tostaban . . . y sólo dijo . . . dame la vuelta que por este lado ya estoy tostado” [295]) to the pains of coming to terms with the contradictions he has experienced. Like Spain throughout the 1960s, he prefers to continue to deny and to retreat into the double armor of intellectualism and consumer culture. At his new destination he will play chess, go through the motions of work, enjoy the praise of clearly inferior country-folk, and make money in the process. We might well imagine, nevertheless, that this escape might too come to an end and that ultimately, like Spain in the next decade, he would awaken too late to the pains of his thorough cooking.

The Ends of Escape

During the very years when *La ciudad no es para mí* and its progeny dominated the Spanish box offices, the rural charm of the Spanish countryside came to be recognized as Spain’s most important commodity. The return to the country for urban Spaniards became an overt manifestation of urban triumph, a confirmation of prosperity, and never an option that might make any real ethical or economic sense.

Meanwhile, the country would continue as an increasingly exploited periphery, producing the excess value upon which metropolitan prosperity would depend, while maintaining an appearance of an apolitical, economically neutral site of moral value.

In addition, the combination of prosperity, of rural to urban immigration, and of close contacts with the outside world produced a series of changes sparking a rise in regionalist sentiments that would have a lasting and potentially devastating impact on the Spanish nation as a whole. Population decimation of certain regions of Spain translated directly into economic decimation. By the end of the decade five provinces enjoyed forty-five percent of the nation's wealth. Meanwhile, the eleven least populated provinces at the time had populations per square kilometer equivalent to the most decimated of third world nations (Hooper 23). Land reform, at least given lip service in the first two decades of the dictatorship, had ceased to be an issue. Neglect led to large-scale land speculation and subsequent ecological devastation. Ideologically, government declarations subtly encouraged what agricultural historian Eduardo Sevilla-Guzman calls a "virtual assault" on the peasantry, encouraging the rise of anti-peasant ideologies where once there had been vigorous defense of "peasant sovereignty" (114-15).⁴⁵ The regime could not address the concerns of the suffering regions if only because to do so would be to acknowledge regional and provincial identities that the regime had taken pains to erase. Denial of disparity, however, only exacerbated latent regionalist sentiments among impoverished Andalucians, Galicians, and Extremadurans as they witnessed a centrist policy that

channeled wealth principally to Madrid and to the northeast sector of the country. And while poverty awakened regionalisms amongst the abandoned, prosperity only reminded Catalonia and the Basque provinces of the national burden to which the center had shackled them. Indeed, as Siamak Khatami points out in his study of the Basque Country, rather than assuaging ethnic and cultural differences, modernization in fact exacerbated them (49). This exacerbation would spell the beginnings of the end of the decade of escape when in early 1969, ETA commenced in earnest a still unfinished campaign of anti-government violence and the regime responded with the first state of exception in years.

Despite the relevance of the spatial, most social and cultural critics of the decade maintained their traditional focus fixed on the historically understood problems of class struggle. Perry Anderson explains that while social and economic relations of capitalism grew increasingly complex after Marx, marxist-based social analysis had instead of keeping up with changes, retreated into increasingly impotent theorization. Initially abandoning the economic-based analysis of the nineteenth century, marxist analysis passed through a political phase, and finally, by the 1960s entered into philosophical speculation. Hence, at a time when city/country relations became as much a part of the social dialectic as historical class-conflict, honest examinations of material realities ceded increasingly to efforts to make analysis match up with pure philosophy. Spanish cultural relations of the 1960s were no exception to the plight of social analysis described by Anderson.

Tuñón de Lara shows that by 1966 a full-fledged school of Spanish marxism existed that had been “enlightened”--but also potentially watered down--by the ideas of Althusser and Gramsci (Biescas 515). By 1971, another product of this “philosophical” marxism, Herbert Marcuse’s *Soviet Marxism*, was a best seller in Spain (Vázquez Montalbán 186). Numerous novels of the period (such as Juan Goytisolo’s *Señas de identidad* and Luis Goytisolo’s *Recuento* [1973]) bare witness to the heady days of philosophical marxism in the supposedly “politicized” university of the 1960s. Indeed, while the 1960s was a decade of student activism, this activist spirit centered more on theory than praxis. Not surprisingly, this politicized generation became the same that would soon abandon a battle-tested exiled opposition leadership in favor of a younger generation that, while speaking militancy, practiced compromise. It should be noted in addition, that while the *maquis* still fought in the forests of Spain in the 1950s and ETA began serious work in the late 1960s, the interim saw little in the way of serious political or social commitment. Certainly there was plenty of talk, but in a decade of rising consumer prices, talk remained cheap.

Just as it had become relatively safe to speak of the move from the countryside to the city by the time *Surcos* was released, a decade later, it had become relatively safe to speak of class struggle, both in narrative and in criticism. As with *Surcos*, the ability to do so gave the readers of *Tiempo de silencio* and other novels of the decade a sense of commitment. But again, as with *Surcos*, the insight gained through this

commitment served at the same time to blind them to the more pressing socio-spatial concerns that lay more deeply embedded--however obvious they may seem now--within the text. Hence, spatial contradictions proliferated unabated while politicians and philosophers practiced their own forms of consumer-culture escapism.

Manuel Vázquez Montalbán relates how in 1969, Spanish singer Massiel enacted one of the most important signs of Spain's international coming of age with her triumph at the Eurovision song competition. The anodyne lyrics of the song with which she won her award, "la, la, la," captures for Vázquez Montalbán much of the spirit of this decade of escape. But perhaps more than simply expressing escapism, "la, la, la" expresses the bewilderment, even the increasing psychic pressure of years of modernization, urbanization, and internationalization. Indeed, as the characters of Pedro and Tío Agustín demonstrate, escape and bewilderment went hand-in-hand during these years. Popular cinema and apparently committed philosophy both worked to obscure the value of the spatial, thus blinding critics and politicians to that which might have been a key to unlocking not only the products of culture but also the processes of the social. Political and economic changes in the coming decade would only exacerbate the feelings of bewilderment. For better or for worse, they would do so while simultaneously wiping out any hopes for escape. In the 1970s explicit representations of the spatial would all but disappear from Spain's cultural surface, embedded within a cinema and narrative tradition increasingly obsessed with the growing social and psychological anxieties that accompanied these changes. Two

artists who had regularly been producing works concerned with city and country issues since the 1950s, director Carlos Saura and novelist Carmen Martín Gaité, would mark the path toward a more metaphorical mixing of the spatial with the Spanish historical obsession of the coming decade.

Traversing Memory:

Discipline and Democracy on the Geo-Historical Line

Carlos Saura's *La prima Angélica* and Carmen Martín Gaité's *El cuarto de atrás*

“Human beings do ‘make their own geography’ as much as they ‘make their own history.’”--Anthony Giddens (qtd. in Soja 154)

A cartoon in the Spanish political review *Cuadernos para el diálogo* of December 1975, a month after the death of the dictator and on what most Spaniards considered the eve of change, depicts a tiny village nestled in the shadows of towering mountains. From the *pueblo perdido* a single voice cries out, “¡Qué se nos acaba la pacienciaaaa...!” (Layus 58). With Franco's death some change was immanent and the time may have indeed seemed ripe to demand recognition. But in 1970s Spain, renewed attention to the plight of the rural and to city/country relations in general was not to be an early result of those changes. Indeed the exact opposite was to occur.

Politics inspires historicism. More than economics or social change, political personalities, events, and the movements they inspire bring out the best in our historical imaginations. If the decade of the 1960s was one of economic change, and the 1980s of social reform, the 1970s provided high-stake politics at its most intriguing (Graham, “Politics” 407). Not surprisingly then, the years that saw the rise

of terrorism, the death of Franco, the transition to democracy, and the writing of a new Constitution awoke the historical imagination of Spaniards and foreign onlookers alike.

From the latter part of the 1960s Spaniards had begun to anticipate the death of a dictator who had been the only political authority a majority of them had ever known. The economic prosperity and the accompanying cultural and social liberalization led the vast majority of Spanish citizens to believe that the *caudillo's* death was inevitably the harbinger of transcendental change. Consequently, the Spanish historical consciousness was on alert from the beginning of the 1970s.

History itself did not disappoint this consciousness. For example, 1969 pointed to things to come. That year featured among other events the first widely publicized government scandal, the emergence of extreme Basque nationalist terrorism, unprecedented worker and student unrest, the swearing-in of prince Juan Carlos as successor to Franco, and the essential transfer of power on the part of Franco to Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco. The promotion of the hard-line Carrero Blanco in addition to the resignations resulting from the government scandal spelled an end to the relative liberties of the 1960s. Indeed, the new year brought with it not only a retrenchant prime minister but a return to a nationwide “state of exception.”

For the next decade practically every year seemed as significant as 1969. While a listing of every noteworthy event must be reserved for the history books, certain key moments must be noted.⁴⁶ In 1973 anti-regime terrorists finally struck at

the heart of the regime when ETA assassinated Franco's right hand man, Carrero Blanco. The death of Franco in 1975, though long anticipated must stand as the focal point of the decade. However, King Juan Carlos's declaration of democracy in 1976, the first democratic elections in nearly forty years in 1977, the ratification of a democratic constitution in 1978 were similarly momentous in the overall national history. This era of political intensity would eventually culminate in the attempted coup and later the rise to power of the socialists in the first year of the next decade.

In focusing Spaniards' attention on their own place in history, the seemingly endless deluge of watershed political events also concentrated the energies of writers, directors, and producers on their historical tradition. Of course, the end of an era inspired countless memoirs and histories of those years, as well as the recuperation of histories suppressed by the dictatorship. Few of these works, among them Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's *Crónica sentimental de la posguerra* (1970), Fernando Vizcaino Casas's *La España de la posguerra* (1975), Rafael Abellán's *Por el imperio hacia Dios* (1978), and Martín Gaité's *Usos amorosos de la posguerra* (begun during the same era though not published until 1987), have stood the test of time. Still, in the mid-1970s personal and natural histories dominated the shelves of Spanish bookstores with their sometimes humorous and often painful recollection of four decades of dictatorship.

Cinema and narrative literature were no exception to the historiographic and historical celebration. One particular filmography devoted to the cinema of the

transition lists more than one hundred films made between 1975 and 1985 recording the politics of those years (*El cine 57*). Of these, it identifies at least fifty-three as principally focused on contemporary politics (57). Historical films, though not as great in number, proved the biggest critical and popular successes of the decade. Films such as Víctor Erice's *El espíritu de la colmena* (1973) portrayed repressive provincial life in the immediate postwar. Other works such as Jaime Camino's *Las largas vacaciones del 36* (1975) recounted the story of those caught in the crossfire of the civil war. The biggest commercial success of the decade, and until the late 1980s the most successful Spanish film of all-time, Pilar Miró's *El crimen de Cuenca* (1979), reconsidered the role of the Spanish Civil Guard through a retelling of a true story from the early years of the century.

Narrative during this period, under the influence of the experimental French *nouveau roman* and Latin American magical realism, explored similar problems of national history and the nature of "history" in general with typically greater complexity than the cinema. Juan Goytisolo inaugurated a decade of complex approaches to history in *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* (1970) and later *Juan sin tierra* (1975), effecting in these works what has been called a "creative destruction" of Spanish culture by way of its textually generated history.⁴⁷ Gonzalo Torrente Ballester explores the mythical, constructed nature of history and society in an equally difficult novel, *La saga/fuga de J.B.* (1973). Eduardo Mendoza's more reader-friendly *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta* (1975), a story set in prewar

Barcelona, ends up mocking the tradition of positivist historical analysis that seems to be the foundation of the novel. For all their historical questioning, however, these works invariably commence from foundations that turn attention back to city/country issues.

Certainly, during these years urban/rural issues were no longer of such immediate concern to the average Spaniard. In 1967 immigration began to drop off dramatically and by the early 1970s city-directed immigration had come to a veritable halt. By this point, Spain had become a demographically urban nation even if socially they would remain *ruralones* for years to come. Rural Spain, on the other hand, had for all intents and purposes ceased to exist.⁴⁸ While some academics lamented the death of rural Spain, others openly celebrated it, even calling for its utter abolishment.⁴⁹ The government followed a less controversial approach--though perhaps an equally destructive one; it simply ignored the countryside.⁵⁰

At the same time, the intensity of the city/country relationship that Spain had entered into with the international community momentarily waned. The global recession of 1974 spelled an end to the massive outflux of Spanish workers to northern Europe and also resulted in a drastic decrease in European tourists on the Iberian coast.⁵¹ The socially and psychologically significant encounters between the Spanish *paleto* and the sophisticated European that had become the focus of later *paleto* cinema (e.g. *Vente a Alemania Pepe*, *El turismo es un gran invento* [1967]) were greatly curtailed. Finally, entrance into the European Community and the

anxieties produced through the encounter with global politics, economics, and culture took a back seat to anxieties surrounding internal political concerns. Not surprisingly, except for a few last-gasp offerings of early 1970s *paleta* cinema, Spanish culture pays scant attention to questions of immigration and of contact between the country and the city, either on a local or an international level.

It is unlikely, nevertheless, that an issue of such social and economic importance, as well as of such prolific cultural representation in the previous two decades, would simply disappear overnight. Now, however, instead of working on the surface, urban/rural tensions played less conspicuous but nevertheless essential structuring roles in novelistic and cinematic histories. Spatial tensions, like the class-struggle in the early modernist novel, moved underground in the 1970s, forming a kind of Jamesonian political unconscious to the works of this period.

In representing historical repression, for example, Spanish cinema during these years returns to familiar codes that associate ideology with space. *El espíritu de la colmena* emphasizes the repressions of postwar provincial life through familiar images of a wasted and semi-abandoned rural *meseta* as opposed to the mysteries of a foreign world embodied in Hollywood cinema. *El crimen de Cuenca* relies on audience familiarity with the brutishness that popularly characterized life on the *meseta*. The abandonment of the countryside and its subsequent existence in the minds of Spaniards as more myth than reality provides for the metaphorical rural Spain in works such as Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón's *Habla, mudita* (1973) and Carlos

Saura's *Ana y los lobos* (1972). In the former a successful urban writer and in the latter a young foreign nanny meet opposite fates in untamed, mythic settings. Other directors, such as José Luis Borau in *Furtivos* (1975) and Luis G. Berlanga in *La escopeta nacional* (1977), use the motif of the return to the wild to enact harsh critiques (however different the two films may seem) of the Spanish elite.

The novels of the decade, while likewise shunning explicit representations of city/country encounters, still employ familiar spatial metaphors in manners fundamental to their narrative strategies. Fiction, as mentioned above, takes its cue from French and Latin American experimentation, thereby interrogating space in a metaphorical and theoretical manner, along the lines of the cinema of Saura and Gutiérrez Aragón. *La saga/fuga de J.B.* epitomizes this interrogation, using the mythic Galician city of Castroforte del Baralla as a means for exploring the intertwined center/periphery tensions that shape the "realities" of Spaniards. Juan Goytisolo textually interrogates the space designated as "Spain" from a position of the abject in *Reivindicación del conde don Julián*. The interrogation of the role of the spatial in representation as well as the role of representation in the creation of space--in a sense a theoretical reckoning with the sweeping demographic changes that have taken place in Spain during the Franco years--is perhaps one of the water-marks of the novel of the decade.

In short, while the novel and the cinema of the 1970s was historically fixed as well as fixated on history, its fixity included a spatial element that distanced these

works from traditional historical narrative. While the works considered past events, interrogating the civil war, the Franco years, and the transcendence of the present, they did not recover history through a traditional focus on cause-and-effect connections occurring within a linear time-frame. As in Goytisolo's *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* or Saura's *Ana y los lobos*, these works interrogate time as much through a change of space and/or an exploration of that space as through a review of a chronological past.

By spatializing time the authors and directors of the decade disrupted traditional readings of power. For example, while Goytisolo's novels appear to attack unequivocally Spain's conservative tradition as fulfilled in Franco's National Movement, the spatial disruptions of time in *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* problematize the linear cause-and-effect links necessary for a direct attack on the regime's ideology, and indeed position the protagonist himself as target. In short, the interruptions of the historical by the geographical undo traditional notions of hierarchical power. The resulting authoritative system that the novels and cinema of the decade address is much more diffuse, ubiquitous, and seemingly oppressive. Hence, Oscar Terán's description of Latin American narrative in the 1970s as particularly Foucauldian might provide a similarly apt description for Spanish culture of the same era.⁵² Indeed, the migration of the masses to urban centers and the encounter of these populations with the discursive apparatus of the modern media encouraged a panoptic disciplinary structure in the lives of the national populace.

This panoptic discipline, effected within a city where everyone sees and can be seen and where, importantly, power is less clearly centralized, acquired further disciplinary effect with the waning health and subsequent death of Franco and the assassination of Carrero Blanco.⁵³ The disappearance of these last bastions of an old fashioned hierarchical power structure ceded to a new form of increasingly invisible control, first in the guise of the weak Francoist minister Arias Navarro (1973-76), followed by the ideology-void centralist government of Adolfo Suárez and especially his notorious back-room politics (1977-82). At the beginning of the decade Spaniards could still point to an ultimate source of power. Ten years later, power resided in an almost invisible prime minister who derived his authority from one of Europe's lengthiest constitutions (whose length was extended in large measure by its ambiguous division of power between a national government and potentially autonomous regions).⁵⁴ Finally, the more ideological old guard of the traditional political parties ceded to a younger generation of leaders more intent on figuring out the system than on changing it. In short, hierarchical power had given way to diffusion, anonymity, and ultimately, ubiquity.

Finally, and not surprisingly, the social reaction to these changes reflects what Terán locates in "Foucauldian" literature, that is, a sense of disenchantment, of helplessness before an indomitable and inescapable system. The period between the post-Constitution euphoria and the failed coup (from 1978 to 23 February 1981) is commonly known as the "desencanto," a period of general apathy toward politics,

characterized by the attitude of the *pasota*, a person who “passes” on difficult questions, who chooses not to get involved. During these years the ironic, bitter statement of “contra Franco vivíamos mejor” arose from the ranks of those who only several years earlier had had something against which to fight. Now, although little had really changed, the enemy had disappeared.

Of the novels and movies of the 1970s, two works in particular stand out for the similar manner in which they capture the spirit of this period as I have outlined it above. A year before Franco’s death Carlos Saura released a controversial, highly metaphorical recollection of the lost times of the civil war, *La prima Angélica* (1974). Several years later, in the midst of the anxieties of the transition and on the brink of the “desencanto,” Carmen Martín Gaité published her similarly metaphoric recollection of the Franco years, *El cuarto de atrás* (1978). The two works are perhaps the most obvious examples in their respective genres of the spirit of memoir and historical recuperation of these years. Both also structure their historical projects around basic city/country divisions that simultaneously compound and proliferate in their intimate relationship with the temporal. Finally, both embody in the stories they tell the problems of a paralyzing power that has invaded every discourse and every space that they explore. But while Saura’s movie and Martín Gaité’s novel capture similar spirits by way of similar structures, their historical location on either side of the mid-decade divide struck by Franco’s death seems to exercise a clear effect on the final attitude with which they treat their themes.

In *La prima Angélica* Saura employs the city/country division to investigate the use of space as a disciplinary apparatus. While his movie depends on apparent polar oppositions between socio-cultural regions and physical geographies, Saura ultimately exposes these spaces and the divisions upon which they rest as being overdetermined by discourses that for all their ideological differences, are equally fraught with a ubiquitous system of power. The constant contrasting of spaces exposed fissures in the most oppressive sites as well as discipline within supposedly liberating ones. Saura's movie captures the anxious but ultimately less than optimistic spirit in Spain in the years leading up to Franco's death. While it superficially challenges the status quo, in the end it leaves the spectator with no real hope for change, showing each and every space in late-Francoist Spain to be completely locked into a stifling hierarchical system.

Martín Gaité's *El cuarto de atrás* likewise captures the sense of a nation whose spaces are infused with the spirit of Franco and his power mechanisms. But on the other side of Franco's death, Martín Gaité's work seems to sense the micro-points of power that were in fact available during the Franco years and that were leading, at the time of the publication of the novel, to a kind of change within the limits of a still powerful disciplinary apparatus. Moreover, in addition to registering the emergent hopes of an anxious nation for new political spaces, Martín Gaité's novel itself serves as a metaphor for the rapidly changing Spanish society.

In short, the comparison of these two works will run the gamut of the Foucauldian philosophies of discipline and space. Through this process I hope to trace how the city/country division specifically and the concept of space in general was disciplined through its constant representations by politicians and the media during the previous decades to the point that it lost its distinction. But I also hope to show that this over-disciplining brought with it a certain discursive overdetermination of the significations of city and country that ultimately created new power for the division. This overdetermination in *El cuarto de atrás* of the spaces of Spain and of Spain as a space points toward future metaphoric uses of the city/country binary. It would become increasingly symbolic and serve as register of the anxieties of postmodernization and internal post-colonialism in the decades to come.

La prima Angélica

At the time of its release in 1974 *La prima Angélica* was generally viewed as an explicit attack on the regime.⁵⁵ Saura confirmed this popular reading when he publicly proclaimed *La prima Angélica* the first Spanish movie to his knowledge to treat the theme of the civil war from the side of those who lost (Montero “Carlos Saura” 6). It would seem natural to understand Saura’s movie then as not only unquestionably anti-Francoist, but also pro-republican.⁵⁶ The use of memory generally classifies the film as historical or at least historiographic.

In the following analysis, however, I would like to suggest an alternative reading of *La prima Angélica*, that if not necessarily contradictory, certainly qualifies Saura's statement. Instead of exploring history as an autonomous and unproblematic discipline, I would like to combine with it the geographical, arguing that Saura's recuperation of history cannot be properly understood without recourse to its use of space. By analyzing Saura's use of geographical juxtapositions, specifically, his use of a variety of conflicting representations of city and country, I propose to explore the ideological complexities of the past and the present. In particular, Saura juxtaposes a variety of internally heterogeneous spaces to explore the disciplinary apparatus that forms around and within space during the years of the dictatorship. Through *La prima Angélica* he examines the relationship of space to power, calling into question any simplistic solution to the ideological divisions in Spain that do not consider the various levels of relationships between city and country. Through his depiction of the overdetermined nature of geography and space in 1970s Spain, Saura registers the increasing complexities of the disciplinary apparatus that enveloped Spain on the eve of Franco's death and that would continue after it.

Saura captures the interplay of space and ideology in what he calls the simplest story he had told to date (Montero, "Película" 60). The story concerns a middle-aged member of the Barcelona publishing industry whose return to Segovia after a nearly forty-year absence sparks memories that lead to an overt Proustian "reliving" of his experiences there as a republican child living with his nationalist

relatives during the war. The story *would* be simple if not for the fact that first, the protagonist Luis does not recall his childhood in chronological order, and second, Saura films both past and present using the same actor (José Luís López Vázquez) to play both the child and adult Luis without ever physically distinguishing between the two. Finally, each member of the main supporting cast takes on double rolls, though playing different characters in past and present (for example, the actress who plays Luis's cousin Angélica in the war years plays Angélica's daughter--also named Angélica--in the present).

Saura's complication of the plot confronts the spectator from the opening scene of the film. As the opening credits begin to roll the spectator views a series of self-consciously staged shots of Catholic school boys and their cleric instructors reacting in slow-motion to an apparent bombing of their school. The series of shots begins with the figures frozen. Then, as if responding to the director's call, they begin to move at once, falling in positions of agony as the classroom crumbles around them. The schoolroom is reduced to ruins, dominated in their presentation by greys of dust and rubble with the occasional penetration of a bright, almost blinding light from the now connected outside world. All the while, a Catholic children's choir intones, "El Señor en mi corazón . . . Su amor me acompaña."

Saura provides the anecdotal significance of this scene at a later points in the movie. At this early part, its diegetic significance can only be surmised. Consequently, its symbolic, or as Saura might prefer its "parabolic" potential, is

unleashed.⁵⁷ Furthermore, because the temporal referents necessary for an historical location of the scene have not yet appeared, the opening scene draws attention more clearly to questions of space. The bombing occurs in a classroom, a space of learning, or according to Foucault, of examination, of discipline, and of the production of subjectivity. The only site more obvious for such activities, the church, is also present in the guise of the Catholic fathers and the song-in-off, thus making this enclosed space a metaphor for the intense disciplinary apparatus that Saura's movie will examine. But in this opening scene, this space is immediately reduced to rubble; it is made a ruin, that is, as Paul Zucker describes, a closed space suddenly opened, a space that draws attention at once to art and to nature (2-3), and as Daryll Lee explains, that plays with perceptions of inside and outside, that opens that perception, located from within a space, to the sky which is no more than an anti-space or a non-space (1). Finally, it should be noted that this scene of destruction commences in a rather artificial manner, with only partially frozen characters suddenly moving into action as if responding to an unseen but unmistakably present director. In short, prior to entrance into the diegetic ontology of the movie, Saura positions spectators first to focus on questions of space and the potential openness, or rather contradiction, inherent in the spaces that the film will explore, and second, to consider the artificiality of those spaces and the disciplinary power they produce.

From the symbolic space of the classroom, Saura cuts to the first geographically specific space of the story, the coast of Barcelona. Saura's camera

pans across the seashore, cuts down to an industrial zone adjacent to it, and then brings his viewers up to a hillside cemetery. Here, a well-dressed adult Luis places the casket holding his mother's remains in his trunk, while from the back seat of a second car an older man, partially hidden from view, looks on. Through this brief scene Saura presents a quick family portrait of Luis, his father, and his late mother.

Saura then cuts to a completely different space. Now Luis speeds down a highway over the open plains of the Castilian meseta. When he pulls over and exits his car, we see the skyline of a Castilian town, barely visible on the horizon. While the camera zooms for a closer shot that allows the spectator to recognize the town as Segovia, the sound of a creaking door returns Luis's attention to his car. In place of the 1970s model he left stands a vintage 1930s sedan. A man and woman dressed in period clothes approach Luis. The man scolds him, "Eso le pasa por ir en el asiento trasero; delante no se marea nadie." A conversation ensues that serves to identify the two adults as Luis's parents and to clarify the juxtaposition of the adult Luis with his parents as a flashback. The memory refers to a trip from the family home in Madrid to Segovia where Luis will unwillingly remain for a month of summer vacation with his mother's family.

The juxtaposition of these three scenes--the bombing, the Barcelona cemetery, and the Segovian meseta--establishes a series of clues that invite an analysis of space and, in turn, an understanding of its discourse of power. From the historically and geographically ambivalent space of the classroom--a location that in this abstraction

draws attention to the constructed and inherently open nature of the spaces that Saura's movie will explore--the film confronts its spectators with a variety of city/country relations. The journey from Barcelona to Segovia would seem to represent a pastoral-like move from civilization to nature. In this case, however, the move is more immediately negative than positive; Barcelona briefly appears as a sea-facing port town with functioning industry (opportunity) while Segovia stands like a lone *pueblo perdido* in the midst of a dry and dying meseta. Luis's move towards Segovia involves, moreover, the abandoning of the living (his father) for the sake of the dead (his mother). The move also adds a center/periphery tension to Luis's journey, the two cities symbolizing the poles of the regionalist debate. Finally, the temporal fusion of Luis's adult journey with that of his childhood introduces potentially problematizing spaces into traditional city/country relations. The historical fusion ensures a spatial fusion between Barcelona and Madrid. While the two are Spain's most cosmopolitan centers, their status in the regionalist/centralist tension in the 1970s are completely opposite. And yet the 1936 Madrid represents a libertine spirit that not even 1974 Barcelona can approach. Furthermore, the Madrid/Segovia juxtaposition challenges the Francoist propaganda of a united Castile. The support of centralist spirits is, in fact, a divided foundation. In short, the fusion in the film of Madrid and Barcelona foregrounds the construction rather than the documentation of space. Significantly, it is not Barcelona, Madrid, or Segovia

that makes Luis sick, but the move between spaces, that is, the position of liminality with which he confronts the spatial juxtapositions.

Also of note in these opening scenes is the role of the father. At the cemetery the father is faceless, more an ever-present specter in his son's life than a caring friend. On the meseta, the father seems good humored but at the same time rather gruff and unforgiving. The spectator understands both of Luis's parallel journeys as results of a disciplining father. In addition, Saura focuses spectators' attention in the cemetery on the position of the father in the backseat of his car. In the subsequent scene on the meseta, the father lectures his son, "Eso le pasa por ir en el asiento trasero; delante no se marea nadie." Hence, while critics and Saura himself have suggested that *La prima Angélica* is a movie sympathetic to the losers of the civil war, the term "losers" is not to be confused with the republic or with its contemporary legacy. Luis's father, an unmistakable synecdoche of the republic in the film, though not explicitly mocked as are the nationalists, is not a sympathetic figure. Saura's careful placement of the father "en el asiento trasero" suggests that the authority of the republic even at the present moment provides little in the way of encouragement for the future. In short, *La prima Angélica* is sympathetic not so much to the losing side as it is to the pain of loss. It is a film that works negatively rather than positively, that does not so much support one ideology or another, but instead explores the system of power in its variety. Its subversive potential lies then not so much in its support of any ideology as in its representation of this variety, and

specifically of its revelation of the disciplinary system that inevitably produces this variety.

In short, the opening three scenes establish space as a central issue in Saura's "historically" focused work. Specifically, these episodes make use of familiar city/country divisions but immediately call them into question; just as the Proustian recollections of Luis focus the spectator's attention on historiographic questions more than an historical ones, the spectator also considers space not as an abstract and passive entity but as a dynamic property intricately interwoven with the dynamics of power. With these three scenes in mind, it is possible to view Saura's film as structured around a series of spaces that manifest the various disciplinary functions of what we might term space/power. As Luis moves into Segovia and relives various city/country juxtapositions of his childhood. He invites the spectator in a sense on an exploration of a series of disciplinary spaces that introduce the problems of power but that also locate potential room for agency within their juxtaposition.

This exploration of various spaces begins with Luis's return to the maternal family home in Segovia. After a brief stay at a local hotel--just long enough to reaffirm through a scene before a mirror the constructed, participatory nature of spatial construction and differences--Luis goes to the principal *locus* of action in *La prima Angélica*, the apartment where he spent the years of the war nearly four decades earlier. Before entering this familiar space, Luis traverses the city, moving symbolically from an open air, sun-drenched plaza into the shadows of an alley. His

arrival at his aunt's home elicits the expected pleasantries. Spectators quickly understand the home, however, as a site of repression. When Luis and his aunt discuss whether or not he will stay in his old bedroom, it is clear that Luis would rather not. The hotel is, not surprisingly, one of the representative spaces of what Foucault calls heterotopias (an idea that will be elaborated upon in the analysis of *El cuarto de atrás*) that epitomize the transient, the dynamic, and the heterogeneous. In opposition stands the repressive dark bedroom in a house that recalls the immobilization of Luis by what Marvin D'Lugo describes as the grasp of familial bonds (118). Nevertheless, the aunt wins out and Luis agrees to stay. She opens a bedroom, swathed in protective plastic coverings that in their odor of camphor underline stagnation. Within the walls of this flat, Luis will experience his most brutal memories of familial and societal repression.

Luis's first memory, experienced only minutes after first entering, involves his grandmother reviewing Luis's mail and discovering the boy's displeasure with his relatives. Later in the movie, the apartment will be the site in which Luis will learn, on the night when Segovia is taken by the nationalists at the beginning of the civil war, of his indefinite separation from his family, and of the impending doom supposedly awaiting his father. It will also be the site of his bed-wetting nightmares involving the coming-to-life of a portrait of *La monja mortificada*; of his disciplinary chastisement by a priest who finds him with an illustration of female reproductive organs and insists on Luis acting like "a man"; finally of Luis's whipping by his uncle.

Yet while the home is the site where Luis is most evidently disciplined and initiated into subjectivity, the home also offers the disciplined subject small forms of agency. While the image of the *monja mortificada* dominates his room, his single aunt also sleeps there, thus allowing the boy-protagonist to discover the secrets of the opposite sex. Most significantly, the adult Luis explicitly identifies the space of the home as a space from which memories proceed, and from which the past might be reworked. Within the space of the repressive home, Luis recalls the “famosa magdalena de Proust,” whereupon he begins employing the power of memory to his benefit. Indeed, this “magdalena” seems to open the door for a recollection and reiteration of multiple and often contradictory discourses of power, or in other words, for the production of what Judith Butler terms agency (12).

The same contradictory interactions of power within disciplinary spaces results from the other overtly repressive space in the movie, the already mentioned classroom. After his initial visit with his aunt, Luis accompanies his brother-in-law, Anselmo, to arrange with a priest for the interment of his mother’s remains. The appointment returns him to his primary school where past and present again fuse. While in this obviously disciplinary site, Luis begins to hear the beating of drums that, like Proust’s *magdalena*, carry him back to a Catholic ceremony from his youth when, dressed as a Roman soldier, he kept vigil over the body of Christ as part of a ceremony connected to his cousin Angélica’s first communion. In this disciplinary space, the church exerts control specifically on the body, the priest instructing the

child Luis to maintain “inmovilidad absoluta, como si fueras de mármol” while keeping vigil. He does so while the eyes of the congregation stare him into static submission. Later in the movie discipline, or the function of power, occurs more on the level of truth and knowledge as Luis, returning to the school again, recalls the terrifying words of an instructor who, in a scene reminiscent of James Joyce’s recreation of a terrifying Catholic sermon in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, employs the diegetic possibilities inherent in a wartime climate to strike fear into his pupils. In another scene from the school, Luis recalls how he and his companions would eat lunch while two boys read to them from the Bible. Finally, the school is also the place where Luis sees *Los ojos de Londres*, a movie that has as paralyzing an impact on him as *la monja mortificada*.

But again, while the school is a site of discipline, the very intensity of the discipline produces the agency for response. While the priest’s sermon on the dangers and the immanence of hell produce a fearing subject, the sermon in turn fuels the imagination of that subject. Luis’s terror, instead of instilling discipline, inspires imagination and leads into a repetition of the bombardment-scene with which the movie began. Again, while the scene is potentially terrifying, it seems the one flashback in the movie that is merely a figment of Luis’s childhood imagination. Within this flashback, the sound of falling bombs interrupts an explicit moment of intense and all-encompassing subject formation in which students spoon physical nourishment into their hungry adolescent bodies even as two of their companions

offer spiritual nourishment from a Biblical passage. In short, the scene in the flashback serves as a double to the scene that has inspired it. Both confirm the “ruin” that is as imminent to discipline as “hell” is to the freedom of the schoolboy. Luis’s recollection of *Los ojos de Londres* some time later is yet a third confirmation of the dialogic nature of all repressive apparatus: the supposedly terrifying movie is set, again, among ruins and, in another move that foregrounds the constructed nature of the entire story the spectator views, offers what is in fact a rather comical cameo by Saura himself.

What could be called Saura’s deconstruction of traditional understandings of spaces continues in his representation of open, rural areas. Just as the closed spaces are located in the city, the open spaces all stand outside city limits. As explained earlier, from the beginning of the movie the open Castilian meseta is more a site of abandonment, sickness, and oppression than of any kind of freedom. After initial visits to his aunt’s home and to his adolescent classroom, Luis finds himself before the family pantheon in the open air of the town cemetery. Before the remains of his mother and surrounded by family and priest, Luis finds himself locked into the repressive bonds of church and family. Significantly, throughout this scene family and priest utter prayers that by their very nature as memorized and repeated formulae foreground the extension of disciplinary technique into the open air.

Even when Saura explicitly represents the countryside as a site of freedom, this freedom has its ironic side. Luis’s first dip of the “magdalena de Proust,”

following the family visit to the cemetery, induces a memory of Luis and Angélica playing hide-and-seek on the outskirts of town. What begins as a chance to escape the adult world, and specifically, as a chance for Luis to find a symbolically significant hiding space, ends with his cousin abandoning him. When he catches up to her she shares with her cousin her parents' opinions regarding his father, finally revealing that the evil republican will soon be shot. Angélica's statement induces yet another flashback, this time of an imaginary scene in which Luis's father is executed on the outskirts of Segovia.

The second and most significant scene of an apparently idyllic countryside involves a family picnic in the country following Luis's return. The scene begins with a panning shot of a sun-drenched meseta. Anselmo's voice in-off breaks the silence, parroting the popular view of the idyllic wilderness: "Qué silencio, qué aire se respira aquí." Almost immediately, however, the spell is broken. After a pause, Anselmo reports: "Yo, chico, cuando me lo propusieron, no lo dudé; Estaba uno harto del tráfico, de la polución; con los nervios hechos ciscos de la tensión de todos los días, uno lo que necesita es estar tranquilo." Popular wisdom is only part and parcel of modern economics and the commodification of nature. Anselmo quickly assures Luis that he has not purchased his land for real estate purposes, but then proceeds to offer the protagonist an opportunity to buy into the deal, "a precio de amigo," of course. The moral bankruptcy of urban talk of the wonders of the natural, uncivilized wild is completely exposed when Anselmo asks his brother-in-law "¿dónde pondrías

la piscina?” The urbanite’s desire for the country is, in fact, a desire to civilize it. When Luis fails to offer a suggestion, Anselmo takes the opportunity to describe their land. As the camera follows Anselmo’s explanation, spectators discover that Anselmo’s idyllic holding is located on an old civil war battlefield and boasts an ominous bunker at its edge. The sight foregrounds the countryside as a proverbial battleground where ideas and ideologies are fought out, where discipline and power exercise their functions as much as in the city. The looming presence of the bunker in 1974 Spain, furthermore, makes connections to the generally understood idea of the conservatives and reactionaries who sought to conserve the Francoist movement, a group popularly known as the “bunker.” In short, the scene shows that discipline is everywhere.

Yet again, in the midst of this conflicted vision of the countryside, possibilities of contestatory power come to life. When Anselmo lies down for his *siesta*, Luis and the adult Angélica finally have a chance to talk, permitting her to confess to her cousin her marital unhappiness. The young Angélica interrupts this conversation with an invitation to play frisbee. Viewing this scene allegorically, we might say that while the regime (Anselmo) sleeps, the younger generation reappropriates a space alternatively seen as naively liberating or as overtly oppressive, turning the arcadia/battleground into a playground where younger generations play, not blind to the bunker that overshadows them, but refusing to let it stop them. The attitude of the new generation with regards to space and the past is underscored when

Angélica begins this scene of play by fearlessly challenging her father's sleep with the car radio and tossing a frisbee at her uncle and mother, interrupting a rather sobering conversation regarding Anselmo's marital infidelity. Appropriately, the music emanating from the radio while the three then play frisbee is a song in English the lyrics of which talk of "changing all" and "rearranging all"--precisely what a more internationally focused younger generation proposes to do.

The song in this scene is not new to Saura's movie. Hence, its significance at the picnic points the spectator back to a previous scene in which Luis first received the invitation to accompany Anselmo's family to the countryside. The potential for liberty inherent in the final sequence of the picnic--arguably the most light-hearted scene in the movie--signals the space where the song was first played as another potentially liberational space. On the morning following Luis's second return to Segovia, he begins preparing for the day. On opening his bedroom window and stepping out from the enclosed space onto his balcony, Luis spies his cousin Angélica and her daughter in their respective rooms in the adjacent building. The daughter, standing in a room decorated in unmistakable 1970s fashion, listens to the peppy English tune about change. With the music in the background and from their respective windows, Luis and the two Angélicas engage across the open space of a city patio in what is perhaps the most light-hearted conversation of the movie. Their chat momentarily creates a communal space with a hint of hope. While the subsequent picnic in the country has ultimately dubious consequences, the invitation

and the conversation surrounding it provide the spectator with the first sense of optimism in the movie. This hope, again, is produced not within the closed confines of the city, nor in the open air of the country, but in a kind of liminal space between constructed barriers and the open air.

Saura confirms the significance of this liminal space in a later scene when Luis and his adult cousin enter the family attic to explore the trunks filled with old childhood notebooks. These documents act as paper “magdalenas,” now freeing both Luis and his cousin to remember and reappropriate the spaces that would confine them. Luis reads from one of his notebooks, “Yo vivo en una ciudad y mi parroquia es la de San Lorenzo. Mi casa da a una plaza donde podemos jugar muy bien. Hay en la ciudad varias iglesias y una catedral muy importante. Yo vivo con mi abuela y con mis tías porque mis padres aun no están.” Though the rereading revives bitter memories, the writing and later reading of the activity allows Luis to reappropriate the space that would subject him. Following the reading, Luis invites his cousin to accompany him onto the rooftop. Their subsequent position on the rooftop is strikingly similar to their situation earlier on the balconies, overlooking the plaza below and the homes in front. From the rooftop they can look out over the entire city. In this position they are at once in the city and yet beyond it and apart from it, as much in touch with the sky and the open meseta beyond as with the building from which they have recently emerged. Again they are in a space of liminality.

As the two sit, contemplating the view, they lean toward each other and kiss. Anselmo's voice-in off interrupts the moment demanding that they come inside immediately. When Luis reenters the attic, the voice of Anselmo belongs to Angélica's 1930s father. When Angélica reenters the attic, she has become the 1930s Angélica. The switch this time leaves the spectator as confused as at any moment in the movie: who in fact were doing the kissing? Was it between the two adult cousins, and if it was, was it real or imagined? Or was the kiss something that the two have merely relived, each in his and her individual memories, an experience that they shared as children? Later scenes confirm the new sense of confusion surrounding the adult Angélica. This time she may function just as the adult Luis does. She does not transform into her younger self in this scene because now, after the Proustian experience with the notebooks in the attic, she too is remembering things past. Of course, none of this is certain; the spectator remains in doubt, in a sense sharing the state of liminality that the back-and-forth of spaces and times has produced in Luis, and possibly in Angélica.

Following the scene in the attic, the adult Angélica seems to be drawn increasingly to her cousin, pleading for help in dealing with her present traumas. As the actress who plays the young Angélica explained in an early interview, the adult Angélica wants something specific from the present while Luis only wants to recover the past from the present (Montero, "Película" 60). Luis rejects the adult Angélica's advances, recognizing intuitively that a renewal of past experiences offers little

solution to his crisis. Just as Saura's movie offers no clear ideological choices but rather demonstrates a negative sympathy for those who lose in the face of disciplinary mechanisms, Luis intuits that the concrete solutions that appear within his reach at the present offer little in the way of solutions to his crisis. Perhaps only in the liminality produced by the disciplinary mechanisms of space can hope be maintained. Hence, when Luis bids a final farewell to his relatives he insists that Anselmo not visit him, explaining that he is in the process of changing apartments and has no idea where he will be.

After saying goodbye to his aunt, his cousin, and Anselmo, Luis leaves the flat for the last time. Instead of getting into his car and driving off, he spots the young Angélica on a bicycle. As if seeking one final "magdalena" to accompany him on his journey back to Barcelona, Luis asks the girl to join him on a bike ride. After riding behind a bush and out of the camera's view, they reemerge on a country road, the 1930s Angélica now accompanying Luis on the way to Madrid from Segovia to reunite with Luis's parents. Because Saura does not provide any additional scene of the adult Luis returning to Barcelona, this flashback to an attempted childhood escape doubles structurally as the adult Luis's journey. This temporal doubling then fuses multiple spaces and the city/country relations that they represent. Luis's circular journey from Barcelona to Segovia to Barcelona collapses into his aborted childhood round trip from Madrid. The multiple city/country meanings captured in each space and the journeys among the three produce a final deconstruction of any univocal

meanings that any single space or relationship of spaces might hold. It may be of further significance that Luis's final return journey is not effected in the enclosed comfort of an automobile, but on the more slow moving and physically demanding open-air mechanism of a bicycle. Space cannot be skipped over; Luis cannot close his door in Segovia and open it in Barcelona. Instead, Luis's final journey involves tangible, material contact with the realities of multiple spaces. Finally, the site to which Luis flees in this final scene, for all its contradictory political and social meanings, is in fact not a concrete reality at all. Instead of a final outpost of republican Spain or the heart of late Francoist federalism, the Madrid to which Luis escapes is a mythical city, a city constructed again on the negative principle of not being Segovia. In short, Luis's final journey offers no escape from the system of power and discipline that pervades all spaces.

But even the mythical Madrid is ultimately denied Luis. Nationalist soldiers stop the lad and his cousin and return them to Segovia. Luis cannot leave the provincial city nor can he enter the urban city. And he cannot be free in the country. Indeed, there are no unproblematically free spaces in contemporary or historic Spain. Back with the relatives, the movie ends with Luis being whipped by his uncle while Angélica, in the other room, stares indifferently into the camera while her mother braids her hair. While the spectator's initial reaction may be indignation at the contrasting treatment of the two children, both in fact are situated in the disciplinary space of the home. Each in his and her own way succumbs to "discipline." In fact,

according to Foucault's analysis of the history of discipline, it may be Angélica, whose suffering is less explicit and less corporeal, who endures the more intense version of it.

Ultimately, however, the spectator is left to contemplate the differing forms of discipline to which the children are subjected. The same is true with respect to the two Luises. The young Luis suffers physically, the site of discipline returning to the body in an anti-Foucauldian gesture. The adult Luis is ultimately chased out of Segovia by the pressures of a present reality that however different, nonetheless threatens as much repression as his past. In being chased out, he becomes an absent body; discipline is exercised through his absence. Perhaps it is in this ultimate contraposition that agency may finally be generated. Neither the child nor the adult Luis are free on their own. Neither Luis nor Angélica--either as child or adult--are autonomously free. No single space or time, nor any single character presents any problem-free possibility for agency. Any potentially liberating site or moment is ultimately canceled through the inevitable collapse of spaces and times that every site and moment elicits. If agency is to be found, it is only in the interstices of these combinations. Nevertheless, if *La prima Angélica* hints at these micro-sites, the overall mood remains rather disingenuous with regards to the possibilities.

In the contemporary Spain of the 1970s space, like history, has been worked over, worn out, and overdetermined. After nearly four decades of mythification by the official regime and two by the media, and now the intense reappropriation of

spaces for ideological purposes by burgeoning nationalist movements, no space in Spain, whether intensely populated or absolutely abandoned, was ideologically unadulterated. The evidence of disciplining ideology was everywhere. Escape did not seem imminent.

Still, Carlos Saura has said that *La prima Angélica* does not end either good or bad, but instead “como debe terminar” (qtd. in Montero “Película” 60). In the 1970s any residual notions of specific spaces as good or bad, of the country as paradise or *perdido*, of the city as chaos or cosmopolitan, could no longer survive scrutiny. Too much experience told the Spanish populace otherwise. But of course, this would not stop a newer, younger generation from “rearranging it all” yet again in coming years in the hopes of somehow stepping outside of the realms of power and producing a space where those erstwhile utopian dreams might somehow--and somewhere--be achieved.

El cuarto de atrás

In *La prima Angélica* Saura showed that stepping outside the bounds of power was highly unlikely, if inherently impossible. By 1978 when Destino published Carmen Martín Gaité’s *El cuarto de atrás*, the combination of backroom politics of the transition and the lack of the long-awaited post-Franco cultural and social transformation were already confirming that the more things changed, the more they stayed the same. And yet, in spite of the general feeling of continuity, some things

were indeed changing. The year 1978, in addition to marking the publication of Martín Gaité's fourth novel, also happened to see the ratification of a new Constitution that formalized the democratization of Spain. As such an event showed, the web of power, though ubiquitous, was not necessarily negative, nor even anathema to change. Within certain bounds--and indeed perhaps because of those bounds--agency and subsequent transformation might be found. Indeed, as Judith Butler points out in her reworking of the Foucauldian system, the more intense the disciplinary pressures, and the more frequently the re-iterations of power they induce, and the more likely contradictions and deviations within the system become (12).

El cuarto de atrás captures the paradoxical phenomenon of potential agency and the change it portends in an increasingly totalizing system of power. While numerous critics have investigated the liberating nature of discourse in Martín Gaité's novel--often using Foucauldian fuel to stoke their critical fires--in the following analysis I will consider structures of power and agency using a more atypical Foucauldian approach, one that concerns itself with space. While Saura revealed all space as ultimately already disciplined and disciplining, as absolutely infused with power, Martín Gaité explores through her novel the agency that may result from the intense juxtaposition of already overdetermined spaces. This spatial approach to agency, and specifically the exploration of the agency inherent in a nation/space where so many sites come together, brushing shoulders without ever combining, recalls yet another Foucauldian

term, that of the “heterotopia” that he describes in a brief essay entitled “Of Other Spaces.”⁵⁸ In the following analysis I will explore Martín Gaité’s novel in the light of this less familiar term, exploring how Spain, in its intense modernization and in the interactions of so many levels of city/country relations at once, becomes in the late 1970s and early 1980s a kind of heterotopia where, in the words of Foucault, “all the other real sites that can be found within a culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (24).

In “Of Other Spaces” Foucault explains “heterotopias” as a special variety of space, open and yet exclusionary, where cultures, classes, societies, and their histories intersect, interact, invert, and are inverted.⁵⁹ Foucault describes them as spaces that, while filled with other spaces, are themselves kinds of non-spaces, cut off from fast geographical (and subsequently ideological) moorings, floating in a no-man’s land that most of us would choose to ignore. He lists among concrete examples of heterotopias the tribal temple, the theater, the cemetery, the honeymoon hotel, and most archetypal of all, the passenger ship.

El cuarto de atrás, with its beginning in a mid sentence contradiction and its ending in a discovery that denies readers of any stable ontology, is itself a novel without mooring, a kind of narratological ship floating precariously on an ocean of possibilities. It is what Robert Spire has referred to as a product without clear grounding in process, a signifier cut off from the stability of a signified, a message without origins (*Metafictional* 107). The typical critical approach to this free-floating

nature is to examine how the novel represents history, memory, and the act of writing fiction.⁶⁰ But before Martín Gaité's novel refers to a protagonist's or a country's past or to the attempts of either to write their history, *El cuarto de atrás* refers to a space, and a certain type at that. This is the eponymous "back room," that as a metonym of the novel itself is a floating sites, a unique location in which diverse, even contradictory spaces come together without merging, and in which history, memory, and the act of writing happen. In its floating nature it is in a sense a kind of vessel, and as such what Michel Foucault has called "the heterotopia *par excellence*": a ship, a floating piece of space without place, self-enclosed and at the same time open to the infinity of the sea, and an area that is the greatest reserve of the imagination (27). Indeed, Foucault's statement that "in civilizations without boats, dreams dry up" (27) could be used as a summary statement for *El cuarto de atrás*.

While the title of the novel would invite an exploration of space, readings of *El cuarto de atrás* have more often focused on problems of a temporal nature. The space of the novel is, after all, apparently stable. The entirety of the novel occurs in the apartment of Martín Gaité's alter-ego protagonist, C., during a long night of insomnia. C. shares the bulk of this evening with a mysterious man dressed in black who apparently has come to interview her. Rather than run a typical interview, the man engages the author in a lengthy, informal conversation concerned more with C.'s memory than with her books; when her books are mentioned, they are often indistinguishable from her "real-life" memories. As in *La prima Angélica*, C.'s

recollections spill over the borders of time and space, causing epistemological questions to open immediately onto ontological ones. As C. explores her past, it fuses with her present; in turn, the otherwise incompatible spaces of her memories intermingle. Ultimately, a novel set only in the limited space of a city apartment becomes one that opens onto spatial and temporal infinity. By the end of the novel, the questioning of time and space even spills over the borders of the fictional, finally infecting even readers and drawing them as well into the experiences of the “back room” of the novel.

With the entirety of diegetic action occurring within the confines of C.’s room, clearly *El cuarto de atrás* is not a novel that focuses explicitly on a move from country to city. And yet, a significant degree of what C. remembers during her night in the flat is structured around earlier city/country tensions. In the 1970s C. no longer lives the tension; still, her memories fill to overflowing the restricted space that she now inhabits. C.’s principal self-image from the past is that of a “niña provinciana” and later of a “señorita soltera de provincias” (23, 49). Against her provincial origins, C. recalls the seduction of the city and the anxiety of childhood visits to a place where she could lose herself as much in expensive fabrics as in mysterious alleyways. C.’s memories of the city/country conflict also extend to tensions between the national and the international. Memories of her first passport, of her first trip to Portugal, and of song lyrics in a foreign language add a second level to city/country relations. In short, the static space of C.’s contemporary flat is in fact filled to

overflowing with the dynamics of other spaces. It is also worth noting that Martín Gaité foregrounds these dynamic relationships as more than merely the product of C.'s memory. A majority of her memories of city/country interaction forge intertextual bonds with Martín Gaité's earlier work, especially her short stories, *El balneario*, and her first novel *Entre visillos*, foregrounding the narrative nature of every spatial tension.⁶¹ As a result, while C.'s memories expand the spatial potential of her flat, the nature of these memories contests and inverts the alternative spaces, and eventually, even of the original flat itself.

But C. does not merely fill her home with memories. Instead, in *El cuarto de atrás* remembered spaces become material while material space becomes increasingly ethereal. As Foucault's description of heterotopias confirms, it is not merely where other spaces and their meanings simply are remembered, or cohabit, or even fuse. Heterotopias are locations where multiple spaces actually coexist and, without fusing, interact with, contradict, and invert one another. This interaction and expansion of spaces begins through an initial collapse of characters. As C. lies in bed in the first chapter trying to fall sleep, she envisions the "niña provinciana" studying her. The two stare at each other: "La estoy viendo igual que ella me ve" (23). As they stare, C. senses that her own existence depends on the hospitality of the girl who studies her. She insists that it is the beating of "aquel corazón impaciente e insomne" that seems to keep her alive. Then suddenly she appears to recant, clarifying that "aquel corazón" is in fact her own heart (24). Finally, she realizes that the two hearts, and

hence, the two beings, are one and the same: “es el mismo, me palpo el pecho, ahí está, sigue latiendo en el mismo sitio, sincronizado con los pulsos y las sienas” (24). As she recalls and then envisions her provincial childhood self, she in fact fuses with that self, discovering that the woman who spends the night within the confines of a downtown apartment is the same woman who travels to Galicia, who crosses international borders for the first time, who visits resorts, and who anticipates the next vacation to the capital. This unification should not be confused with the historicization of the self. It is instead a first, and still rather tentative, literal combination of all these beings and of all their varied spatial locations in the person of C.

At the same time that C.’s combined selves join with the spaces they occupy, the very apartment in which this unification seems to occur breaks from its ontological moorings. As part of C.’s insomniac ritual she shuts her eyes and imagines “una casa, luego un cuarto y luego una cama” (11). As she slides deeper into her imaginary space a back-and-forth movement between the two ontologies begins. C. declares, “ya no puedo saber si estoy acostada en esta cama o en aquella” (12). From the back-and-forth rhythm, C. penetrates ever deeper into the alternative ontology, perceiving the touch of fabrics that inspires her initial memory of a childhood “back room,” an image that will become the guiding metaphor for the novel. The room, as this and a series of recurring flashbacks and memories throughout the novel reveal, was originally a children’s playroom in C.’s childhood

home in Salamanca, a disorderly refuge from the oppressive order of a world of adult spaces. C. reveals in this initial “escape” to the back room that the idea for this alternative space originated from a magazine. This explanation, together with the earlier and still tentative collapse of spaces realized in this section, hints at the forthcoming foregrounding of the role of discourse in the construction of heterotopic spaces at every level. At this point, the collapse and subsequent expansion of space and time is still in an early state. After several pages of daydreams C. abandons her attempt to sleep and returns to her original ontological groundings.

While C. has apparently returned to the original diegetic ontology, she notices as if for the first time an incredible disorder in her room. Within this chaos C. makes note of numerous objects with which critics have entertained themselves over the years: a print of Luther with the Devil, Todorov’s book *Introducción a la literatura fantástica*, and a mysterious letter.⁶² All of these objects appear synecdochic to one degree or another. Of these, a sewing basket that spills at C.’s feet most effectively captures the spirit of C.’s back room, a place in which innumerable and even incompatible objects coincide. Beneath the basket C. discovers a mysterious love letter. This discovery leads to C.’s final severance of the moorings that tie her to a sense of a fixed ontological space and time. The letter lacks a date and causes C. to reflect on the loss of time. She wonders if reality and dreams might coincide. In the meantime, C.’s apartment floor begins to fill up with dolls, mixing with the spilled objects of the sewing basket, all tangling in the reams of thread that lay scattered on

the floor. As the objects mix, C. makes the curious comment that the tide has risen and dispersed all of the objects. Indeed, it seems that suddenly C. is no longer in a site of collapsing spaces but that this place has literally begun to float. In the midst of the current, C. gives herself up for lost. At this point, she and the provincial girl become one and C., now responding as the girl, finally falls asleep. Of course, the question remains as to who in fact has fallen asleep, and when, and where all of this has taken place. The opening section concludes as C. literally floats off to sleep. As the semi-stable apartment converts into a kind of heterotopic boat, the serious oneiric work of the novel commences.

The second chapter begins as a telephone call awakens a now sleeping C. On the other end of the line a male voice requests entry to C.'s home for an apparent interview. With this phone call a curious ritual-like interaction begins between C. and the unnamed interviewer that will endure throughout the novel. C. often silently considers ideas that the interviewer then responds to aloud, as if he has been reading her mind. The cause-and-effect logic of "normal" conversation breaks down, as if the two are participating in a kind of ritual or even that they, like C. and the provincial girl in the first chapter, are one in the same person. While the interviewer invites a plethora of definitions, his dress and actions suggest that he may be as much a fictional character from C.'s early readings or writings or the incarnation of the Devil represented in the painting on her wall as any of the characters he inspires C. to recall. Hence, just like the provincial girl in the first chapter, the interviewer is an occupant

of a different time and space than C. Furthermore, by the end of their evening together they too will begin to fuse and finally, as C. falls now under *his* spell she will again drift off to sleep. In short, although the interviewer seems to be a stranger and even a foreigner, he may be just another alter-ego of C. herself, another side of the provincial girl.

But before the fusion may be fulfilled, the ritual interaction between the two must begin. The rite commences with a kind of ritualistic dance between C. and what Julian Palley implies to be an alter-ego of the interviewer (and hence, of C. as well), a cockroach (112). En route to open the door for her visitor, C. explains:

Al llegar a la puerta que sale al pasillo, cubierta a medias con una cortina roja me detengo unos instantes, antes de dar la luz, con el presentimiento de que va a aparecer una cucaracha. Pulso con recelo el interruptor y a un metro escaso de mis pies aparece una cucaracha desmesurada y totalmente inmóvil, destacando en el centro de una de las baldosas blancas, como segura de ocupar el casillero que le pertenece en un gigantesco tablero de ajedrez. (28)

C. senses the appearance of the cockroach, and it indeed appears. She continues: “lo peor es que no se mueve, aunque es evidente que cuenta con mi presencia como yo con la suya, de ahí viene la fuerza” (28). Though C. has created the cockroach in her imagination, she cannot remove it. Both C. and the cockroach count on each other’s presence, as if each had created the other. Within this motionless drama, time stands still: “No sé el tiempo que nos mantenemos paralizadas una frente a otra, como

intentando descifrar nuestras respectivas intenciones” (28). As the cockroach and C. interact, the reader searches in vain for a clear cause-and-effect relationship. Time stops as the two try to figure each other out, as if deciding which will control the next move, or even if either have that power. Finally, C. flees and opens the door for the first time and there discovers, “un hombre vestido de negro . . . alto . . . la cabeza cubierta con un sombrero de grandes alas, negro también . . . pelo negro . . . ojos también muy negros y brillan como dos cucarachas” (29-30).

The combination of these three relationships lends a sense of order to what most critics have seen as an isolated oneiric interaction. This order combines with a sense of formalism that C. gives to the non-causal interaction between herself and the interviewer. As the interviewer attempts to gain entry and then acceptance into C.’s apartment, he stands at a kind of threshold, even positioned as if at a door and knocking--and later even at the veil-like curtain separating C.’s private back room from the rest of the house (30). He attempts to gain entry into these increasingly unique spaces by way of a lengthy series of questions and answers. It is as if he was repeating necessary phrases and giving key signs that C., the gatekeeper of this ritual game, recognizes from sources that lie more in her unconscious memory.⁶³ If Carmen Martín Gaité has established literature and history as a game in her novel, as Kathleen Glenn indicates in her article, “*El cuarto de atrás: Literatura as Juego and the Self-Reflexive Text*,” this game has acquired mythic power, taking on the form of ritual by way of an unconscious working of years of cultural sedimentation (149). This ritual

entrance into C.'s apartment, her back room, and finally, the back room of her memory, again proves a felicitous parallel with Foucault's writing on heterotopias. These space-filled non-spaces always presuppose a system of admittance and exclusion, of being accessible only through rites of purification and permission (26). While strict allegorical readings of *El cuarto de atrás* quickly unravel, it is momentarily possible to read the process of entrance into C.'s backroom as akin to entrance into the community of contemporary Spain, a place controlled by the same gatekeeper for four decades,⁶⁴ and which as a result was governed by a series of sedimented codes of conduct and even ritualistic behavior of which Martín Gaité has commented on elsewhere.⁶⁵ In a sense then, the backroom becomes through this ritual-like process a metonymy for Spanish society.

Once within this heterotopic space, the interviewer comments on the room in which they now sit. With this commentary, C. reiterates the association of the space of her room with the space of a ship: "Abro los ojos y siento que salgo a flote" (39). As she drifts C. sees the room around her again as if for the first time. Not only has the interviewer gained special access to the heterotopia of the back room, but through the very same ritual interaction, has admitted C. into what could be described as the "back room" of the back room.

Once within this archetypal heterotopia, C. and her interviewer spend the bulk of the novel exploring (literally or figuratively) a multiplicity of real spaces, in themselves incompatible, that are, within the space of the heterotopia, juxtaposed,

contested, and inverted. The late night conversation concerns among other places, Burgos, Salamanca, and Madrid, Galicia, Portugal, the fictional island of Bergai, the imaginary “Never, Never Land” of Cúnigan, and the liminal space of the *balneario*, all balancing precariously on the line between the material and the fictional.

The two conversants access these spaces again by way of memory. Each of them exists as much in another time as in another space. Each also marks key moments both in C.’s life as well as in Spanish history, prompting critics to consider these memories in terms of the historiographical and discursive messages of the novel.⁶⁶ But these key temporal moments, what Foucault calls *heterochronies*, are also an irreducible element of the production of heterotopic space. Indeed, Foucault explains that heterotopias are necessarily linked to key slices in time, that heterotopias only begin to function at their full capacity when the people who would inhabit them arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time (26).

Appropriately, from the earliest pages of the novel time is robbed of its linear principles. It is in a sense broken, sliced up, and made inseparable from the spatial. When she first began to fall asleep C. commented on her clock, “parado en las diez” (15) and having “un claro enigmático de luna muerta” (15). She also comments on the theories of the fantastic of Tzvetan Todorov whose work, like her novels, not only informs but infects her work, that recommend “la ruptura de límites entre tiempo y espacio” (19). Throughout the novel C. comments on numerous *deja vu* experiences that further underline time as out of joint. Later she describes time during the Franco

years as “paralyzed” (133) and as a homogeneous block. As I showed in the previous chapter, in the 1960s historically-focused political action lost its teeth throughout the Western world. The spatial took on increasing importance in any contestatory project. This seems to me to be what Martín Gaité’s novel captures. Within the heterotopia of the back room, travel through time is inseparable from and perhaps at times secondary to travel through space. Space provides the greatest restrictions, but it also provides the most significant possibilities. Indeed, it is ultimately space, not time, that frees C.

C.’s first memories recorded in the novel involve the provincial girl hiding in the private space of her back room (19). Later, C. recalls her mother’s memories of finding in her own back room a refuge from a repressive, chauvinistic society (92). The island of Bergai performs a similar function. C. describes it as an imaginary space in which she and a childhood friend sought refuge from the restrictions of a disciplining and monotonous adult world. But more than representing liberation, within the novel itself Bergai actually produces liberation. As C. attempts to describe Bergai to her interviewer she finds herself inevitably regressing to earlier memories, starting over again, and then discovering that yet another memory and yet another space are required to explain the curiosities of the island (183). Bergai, like every other space, cannot ultimately stand on its own; space produces space, just as the self always relies on another self that it seeks to abject. The most autonomous of sites (C.’s Bergai as well as Franco’s Spain or his championed Castilian countryside) is

ultimately one of a potential infinity of heterogeneous spaces that, like Derridean discourse, can only be understood as we follow them along the “*seminal* adventure of the trace” (“Structure” 93).

Not only do spaces point to other spaces, freeing others through their distance and difference, but spaces point inward as well to their own heterogeneity. C.’s other fictional creation, the land of Cúnigan, is prototypical of this type of space. Cúnigan is itself a product of a song that C. heard in her childhood that invited listeners to “come to Cúnigan.” Cúnigan becomes a metaphor for the endless interior possibilities of every new locale. When C. visits Madrid with her family, the memory of Cúnigan turns the tightly controlled spaces of a Franco-era city into a mysterious realm of endless possibilities that recalls Michel de Certeau’s discovery of heterogeneity in the most planned spaces of modernity.⁶⁷ This same excitement accompanies her on her childhood trip to Burgos, and even on her “present-tense” visit to her kitchen on the night of the interview. This latter adventure begins when C. is interrupted in her visit and “returned” from her exploration of these alternative places to the “backroom” of her kitchen by another phone call. As she speaks on the phone, she is first transported back to the ever recurring site of the *balneario*. Then, when she “returns” to the kitchen, she explains that this supposedly more concrete space has taken on the appearance of the office of the father of David Fuentes--the protagonist of Martín Gaité’s 1961 novel, *Ritmo lento* (169). The spirit of Cúnigan has, in a sense, taken possession of her own home. When her phone conversation

concludes and she returns to the room in which her interviewer waits, she notices that the scenery has again changed. This time she soberly decides that “the stage hand” must have been at work (175). The space of her home has become itself a theater.

In the final chapter of the interview, dedicated to C.’s descriptions of Bergai, the nature of the backroom heterotopia grows increasingly complex. Whereas it previously served as a site wherein other spaces could be juxtaposed and inverted, it now becomes itself inverted; it is not just a floating boat, but now perhaps a boat floating within an even larger vessel, an image appropriate to Elizabeth J. Ordoñez’s description of *El cuarto de atrás* as a series of Russian dolls (“Reading” 174). First, as just mentioned, C. describes her room as a stage being decorated by another source at another spatial level. It is here within the interspatial theater that C. explains the meaning of Bergai. The aforementioned trace that Bergai inspires leads then to the most complete description of C.’s own childhood back room:

Era muy grande y en él reinaban el desorden y la libertad, se permitía cantar a voz en cuello, cambiar de sitio los muebles, saltar encima de un sofá desvencijado y con los muelles rotos al que llamábamos el pobre sofá, tumbarse en la alfombra, mancharla de tinta, era un reino donde nada estaba prohibido . . . ni estaba sometida a unas leyes determinadas de aprovechamiento: el cuarto era nuestro y se acabó. (187)

When she finishes describing her childhood backroom she realizes that she must continue: “tengo que seguir contándole cuentos, si me callo, se irá” (193). C. has

spent most of the night resisting the interviewer's encouragement that she lose herself in the spaces that she describes. In this last chapter of the visit, C. finally succumbs to the seductions of her mysterious visitor--to his invitations to lose herself ever further into the recesses of her back rooms, to treat literature as a game, and not to fear the mystery of writing (196-97). But just as the two arrive at what might be considered a moment of narrative climax and when apparently they have discovered a successful theory of writing, a gust of wind blows the door to the balcony wide open, literally opening the back room to the night air while figuratively opening up the enclosed heterotopia to the outside world. For the last time in the novel, C. must deal with fear--specifically, the fear of exposing the private space she so jealously guards against the outside world.

This fear has close connotations to the present political and social anxieties of Spain at the time. As C.'s exploration of her past has progressed she finds herself reflecting evermore on the death of the dictator, who through her identification with Carmencita Franco becomes almost a father-figure (136). This reflection illuminates much of the possible anxiety that C. feels within her enclosed space. C. has, with the help of her interviewer, traversed the painful spaces that interact and intersect in her back room, much as Spain in 1978 was finding in its conjunction of conflicting and overdetermined spaces possible solutions to age-old problems. Spain, like C., has discovered within the enclosed back room, not the utopia of Francoist dreams, but a heterotopia, a plethora of possibilities within the interstices of intersecting spaces that

need not be feared. But just when Spain, like C., appears to have grown comfortable with its own back room heterotopia, it must now face the prospect that it is a boat that does not float alone. It must acknowledge instead that it is yet another space in a larger ritual-like process of spatial interaction. In short, at the point that Martín Gaité finally works the reader through a history of city/country conflicts in Spain and shows a path for dealing with the fears they might inspire, she captures, through the simple image of the open back door, the future realities of a national vessel that is in turn part of a larger heterotopia: the increasingly enclosed, ritualistic community that is the spaceship earth.

Significantly, the gust of air--the opening of the heterotopia--provides the final dispersion of the stack of pages that have slowly accumulated as the night has progressed. The oft-analyzed manuscript is of course a record of C.'s journey through the spaces of her personal heterotopia. It is at once a product and the process of the heterotopia. Hence, when the gust of wind disperses its pages, forcing what can only be an arbitrary reorganization of the narrative, the disruptive potential of Spain's allegorical city/country encounter with the outside world is foregrounded once more.

While the interviewer organizes the pages C. relaxes and drifts off to sleep. When C. awakens in the next chapter the interviewer has gone. C.'s first thought is that the experiences with the interviewer were merely a dream. The door to the back room appears to have closed and the reader appears to have arrived at the conclusion of a nicely arranged framed story. But before anyone can get too comfortable, the

floating sensation begins yet again. After a few moments C. discovers first a tea service used during the nocturnal interview and then a gold box left her by the interviewer. If the spirit of the back room rushed out into the night air at the conclusion of the previous chapter, it has now infused even the original pre-oneiric ontology of the story frame. Within this framing--but now also framed--space C. searches again for the cockroach that appeared at the beginning of her voyage on the heterotopic cruise ship of the night. This time she does not so much fear the cockroach as wonder at the myriad hiding spaces that it might occupy (209). That which she feared most has become yet another occupant of innumerable spaces that, even as they hide the terrifying, also open up endless possibilities of power.

This new awakening to the possibilities that have moved from C.'s "back room" now to her "front room," moves now in the last moments of the novel into the readers' own space. Already at home with the notion of the possibility of the reality of the midnight visitor, C. turns her attention to a stack of pages organized neatly beside her bed. As she begins to read the first page, readers recognize the words as those of the opening phrase of the novel. Spires points out that this recognition turns readers' attention to the novel in their own hands. Readers suddenly see the novel as a mere artifact, as the product of "discoursing in which we have been aesthetically participating" (114). Spires points out that this event allows the text to emerge independent of the written word of the novel and in turn makes readers what he calls

text-act readers, that is, participants in the very act of discourse rather than mere readers of a previously written story (114).

This final discovery of the manuscript pages then also makes readers aware of their own space, of their own “back rooms,” of what C. describes as our own “desván del cerebro” (91). Readers recognize their own position as more than just passive occupants of or victims of the spaces they inhabit and of the heterotopia that is their contemporary world. They confront their own role as text-act readers--or rather space-act builders--in the production of Spain’s and the world’s increasingly heterogeneous spaces. Like C. in the face of a kitchen that has become the office of David Fuentes’s padre, readers face the individual reality that “mientras yo viva, existe la habitación y me oriento por ella, aunque sea producto de mi fantasía, y ya hayan tirado la casa que vi con el perro ladrando, qué más da” (169).

Julian Palley has described *El cuarto de atrás* as a search for the self, for the “I” of the narrator-protagonist (114). Nevertheless, that “I” is certainly no single autonomous individual. It is an “I” inseparable from *niñas de provincia*, from large black cockroaches, from mysterious interviewers, and from the multiple spaces and times they occupy. It is an “I” that like C.’s back room, eventually opens onto and infects an entire society of “historians” and “architects.” *El cuarto de atrás*, in short, embodies the post-Franco search for the new self of democratic Spain.

Back in the first chapter of *El cuarto de atrás* C. recalls the “pleasurable impatience” that she experienced just prior to entering the circus. Her parents would

warn her not to get lost amidst the “barullo” (10). And yet the warning only incited her desire to explore, even if the ensuing exploration meant moments of fear. The anxiety was more than compensated for by the moments of “avidez y audacia y, sobre todo, un sacarle gusto a aquella espera, vivirla a sabiendas de que lo mejor está siempre a esperar” (10). Such is the sensation that Martín Gaité registers in *El cuarto de atrás*, the sensation of fear, trepidation, but also of desire, daring, and even pleasure at the possibilities that await the contemporary Spaniard in a country whose space is increasingly commodified and consolidated even as it is increasingly parcelled up.

For years, the spaces of Spain had been manipulated, exploited, and torn asunder by the utopian dreams of a misguided movement. Rather than producing a Castilian Utopia these dreams laid the foundations for a prototypical heterotopic space. Whole generations of *ruralones* had moved to the city and especially to Madrid and Barcelona, but at the same time those who remained in the provinces had begun to take upon themselves new politicized provincial identities. The regime had manipulated space to no avail. The result, however, was now inspiring a new group of reactionaries and radicals alike to manipulate just as well. Most Spaniards found themselves caught in the middle during the anxious years of waiting that constituted the second half of the decade of the 1970s. Only time would tell whether the resulting heterotopia would be a titanic disaster or a starship carrying Spain into a future of Euro-unity and international success.

Conclusion

Martín Gaité's novel registered the anxieties of a *pasota* society but it also sensed the answers to the spirit of disenchantment that the following decade would offer. Tracing the immediate legacy of Martín Gaité's novel and Saura's film is not easy. The instant effect of democratization was to open a floodgate of cultural pablum in the way of pornography and political diatribes. This brief period, known as the "destape" produced, according to cinema historian José María Caparrós Lera, a cultural shock that throws analysis of more enduring cultural trends off during the final years of the 1970s (33).

Still, while most attention was fixed on products of the new cultural freedom--with a wary eye still glued to the continuing clandestine political operations of the nation--some quality novels and films do mark a tentative line of development parting from the work of Saura and Martín Gaité. The cinema proves in this instance the more incisive marker of the trajectory of city/country relations during these years. In films, the mythification and discursive saturation of representations of the city and the country as seen in *La prima Angélica* and *El cuarto de atrás* intensified although along increasingly distanced trajectories that kept friction between the two spaces to a minimum. The late 1970s saw the birth of a genre that would come to be known as the "comedia urbana." Set strictly in the city, movies such as Fernando Colomo's *Tigres de papel* (1977) and Fernando Trueba's *Opera prima* (1980) offered the first look at a new generation that had never known as adults the dictatorship and that had

never known rural life. Interestingly, *Tigres de papel*, the pioneer work of the genre, opens with a brief scene in the country, now seen as a site of retreat where urban young adults go to get high. The rest of the film, and of the films that continued with the genre, remained glued to the cityscape, focusing on a metropolis saturated with fashion, culture, and stylish cultural politics. Young authors such as Juan José Millás with *Visión del ahogado* (1977) and Rosa Montero with *Crónica del desamor* (1979) provided the novelistic equivalent to the urban cinema. The increasingly culture-clouded view of the city that these works presented would pave the way for the more postmodern Madrid-based comedies of Pedro Almodóvar that would dominate the 1980s.

While directors and authors of the urban comedy portrayed an increasingly discourse-saturated postmodern city, other directors followed the course set by Gutiérrez Aragón's *Habla, mudita* and Borau's *Furtivos*, penetrating ever further into a mythical and mystical Spanish wilderness. Movies such as Mario Camus's *Los días del pasado* (1977), Borau's *La sabina* (1979) and Gutiérrez Aragón's *El corazón del bosque* (1978) went beyond the Spanish aldea to explore lonely, abandoned spaces that however realistic the stories they contained, ultimately served more as metaphors for explorations of Spanish character.

On first appearance, it would seem that the city and the country had again become two separate spaces in the Spanish mindset, that the ends of immigration had returned a certain degree of independence to the two. The contributions of Saura and

Martín Gaité, however, would suggest that the exact opposite was the case. Saura's movie indicated that the country had become inseparable from the city. A few years later Martín Gaité's novel compressed the city-saturated rural into the frame of an enclosed urban space. In short, rural Spain now existed as much if not more within the bounds of the city, than it did in the now-forgotten *pueblos perdidos*. Hence, in spite of the strong tradition of rural films that would continue throughout the next decade, it appears that the trajectory of city/country relations of *La prima Angélica* and *El cuarto de atrás* passes through *Tigres de papel* and into the urban comedy. While the movies of rural Spain would intensify the metaphorical examination of a geographically and historically distant spaces, the urban comedy would soon move beyond metaphor, exploring the party-like atmosphere of the 1980s through a representation of city and country as increasingly pure simulacra. In these latter works, and in the novels that established a similarly cosmopolitan though not exclusively urban-set tradition, the tensions inherent in a modernizing-postmodernizing and superficially urban but finally rural Spanish society would become most evident.

Postmodern Anachronisms:

The City and the Country in a Democratic Spain

Pedro Almodóvar's *¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto!!*

and Luis Landero's *Juegos de la edad tardía*

On the afternoon of February 23, 1981, a group of military officers stormed Spanish parliament and declared an end to the nascent democratic government. In the ensuing hours Spanish citizens kept an anxious vigil, wondering if the as yet unfulfilled promises of the democracy were once again quickly slipping out of reach. By early the next morning, however, the vigil had ended as the king mustered the vast majority of troops in defense of the democracy and arranged the peaceful surrender of the rebel group.⁶⁸

Not surprisingly, for the next several weeks talk of the *coup* itself and then analysis of its causes and repercussions dominated the national press. The discussion ranged from talk of the need to rein in a still renegade military and promote greater cooperation among opposition political parties, to the lack of visionary leadership and the simple need for cooler heads. But most analyses finally recognized that at the heart of the weakening of the democracy and the stirring up of rebellious sentiments were the problems of a nation hopelessly divided by regionalist sentiment, and especially torn asunder by the politics and terrorism of the "Basque problem."

Indeed, rapid separatism had followed on the heels of the ratification of the Constitution of 1978. The Basques had characteristically led the separatist charge,

taking advantage of Constitutional loopholes to declare autonomy before the procedure had become officially viable. Spain's two other historic regions, Catalonia and Galicia, had quickly followed suit. These three regions, gained quick political power and soon made it difficult for the majority centralist parties to govern, hence, leading to increased political gridlock. But what really disturbed the former Francoist "bunker" was the overall spirit of separatism, unimaginable only a few years earlier, that continued and even gained force in the wake of the early and expected move to autonomy. Only a few years after Franco's death, even regions such as Extremadura and Asturias--sites historically integral to the hegemonic center--were making cases, however tenuous, for cultural and linguistic difference. All of this regionalist sentiment was itself part and parcel of other centrifugal movements that captured an overall separatist spirit with respect to the formerly sacred religious, social, and cultural institutions that for so long had appeared to hold Spain together. In large measure, the attempted *coup* of February 23 was an unwanted but perhaps inevitable product of such rapid disintegration.

Again, this impending disintegration and the potential political and economic instabilities it forewarned were on the minds of journalists, intellectuals, and public during the first days following the *coup*. The return of serious political matters that the *coup* entailed, however, ultimately could not captivate a Spanish public, that despite centrifugal discomforts, clearly had other concerns on their minds. Javier Marías, one of the leading novelists of the decade, captured the attitude of the post-

coup Spaniards in a column he contributed to Spain's leading daily paper, the left-leaning *El País*, a few weeks following the attempted takeover. Writing as if democracy were more a party than any kind of serious undertaking, Marías announced: "Mientras no lo haya (un nuevo golpe de estado)(...) Mientras aun dure esta fiesta--carnavalada, claro está, como todas las fiestas--, ¿por qué desaprovecharla? ¿por qué no pensar con alegría (...) que el baile sigue" (qtd. by Subirats 13).

Eduardo Subirats, in a retrospective of the decade of the 1980s, refers to Marías's statement as typical of a generation of young Spaniards in the early 1980s who, still living the *pasotismo* of the late 1970s found renewed energy--not for politicking but for partying--in a cultural movement known as *la movida* (13). Centered in Madrid, the celebration of a jet-set younger generation obsessed with fashion, art, and post-punk pop eventually engulfed all of Spain. By the end of the decade, the *movida* would serve as one of the key words in defining the spirit of its times. But while Subirats points to Marías's *movida*-motivated and motivating remark as evidence of a serious superficiality in the "postmodern" culture of the era, it is also possible to use Marías's call as a lens through which to look back on the more apparently pressing issues of the day. Certainly, the *movida* was apolitical, concerned with the *coup* only insofar as it signaled a slight break in its continuous orgy of parties, concerts, and exhibitions.⁶⁹ But the *movida*, in this apparently superficial concern, displays links to significant social changes that were themselves integrally

connected with the problems surrounding the *coup*. Indeed, the *movida* would have been inconceivable without the social revolution that Helen Graham and Antonio Sánchez describe as occurring in Spain during the first decade of the democracy (407). *Movida* fashion, art, and music and the club scene that surrounded these relied on the end of censorship, the increased economic and political power of women, and of course, the widely publicized sexual revolution that came in the wake of these two. However, as this chapter will show, social changes were not only key components of the apparently superficial culture of the time but were lenses through which even the more pressing political engagements of the time might be viewed.

Movida culture, its products, and its legacy and the interaction, however tenuous, that it had with obvious developments of the city/country theme in question in this study, provide, then, a base from which to examine more carefully less conspicuous city/country developments. To begin, several characteristics of the *movida madrileña*, help register an overall spirit of the times that can ultimately be used to reflect back onto regionalist changes of the era.⁷⁰ The *movida*, for one, was an intense celebration of the absolutely contemporary, described by some as the manifestation of a generation that no longer remembered, or at least, would just as soon forget Franco (Hooper 73; Strauss 18). Such a focus on the immediate dovetailed nicely with the more general European postmodernism that was just beginning to receive media attention during the same years for its declarations of an end to history and a collapse of the distance between representation and reality.⁷¹

Focused on the present, the *movida* refused the political activities of the time, again a move reminiscent of the postmodernist denial of the ideological (“Pecado” 122; “Pasotas” 125-26). Finally, the *movida* was intensely urban and cosmopolitan. For the first time since the heyday of the avant-garde, Spanish culture turned its back on its native pueblo, looking instead to the international urban centers of New York and Paris for its models.

In fact, the *movida* not only sought inspiration in the international arena, but in fact established its cultural hegemony in Spain thanks to international media and market mechanisms. With the New York City discovery of director Pedro Almodóvar's fourth film, *¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto!!* (1984) the *movida* became an international phenomenon--a fact that turned Spanish eyes back onto their own cinema (Morris 9). At about the same time, Spain entered the European Union and was selected to host the World Expo and Olympic games of 1992. The new international attention, again, turned Spanish attention back onto itself and specifically onto the cultural happenings of its largest cities, especially of Madrid (Coad 377).

Consequently, Spain and its urban culture became “hip.” Almodóvar's now famous kitschy Madrid comedies became national phenomena even as they gained international recognition. This recognition paved the way for the “discovery” of other Spanish comedy directors such as Fernando Colomo, Fernando Trueba, and Bigas Luna (each of whom had, in fact, predated Almodóvar). At about the same time that

New York was putting Spanish cinema back on the map for Spanish audiences, Spanish readers also returned to their own literature. Around mid-decade Spanish novelists began again to top regularly their own nation's best-seller lists (Hooper 349).

The novelists and directors who triumphed during this period did so through a series of stories of urban life in particular. Colomo with *Tigres de papel* (1977) and Trueba with *Opera prima* (1980) initiated the urban focus with their studies of the *pasota* life of young urban intellectuals in the Madrid of the early democracy, while Bigas Luna with *Bilbao* (1978), *Caniche* (1978), and *Lola* (1986) worked the Catalan angle of the life of sexual liberation that Almodóvar then made Madrid famous for in works such as *Pepi, Luci y Bom y otras chicas del montón* (1980) and *La ley del deseo* (1982), among others. Even a typically more straight-laced director, José Luis Borau, joined in the spirit of urban comedy, directing the commercially successful *Tata mía* (1986). Many of Borau's peers, among them Carlos Saura (*Deprisa, deprisa*, 1980) and Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón (*Maravillas*, 1980), while maintaining their more serious, artistic approaches made films that focused on many of the same themes of juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, and urban crime that fascinated their comedic contemporaries. Similarly, the narrative that finally reconquered the home market told stories of the city. A new generation of writers, including Juan José Millás (*Visión del ahogado*, 1977; *El jardín vacío*, 1981; *Papel mojado*, 1983; *El desorden de tu nombre*, 1987; *Volver a casa*, 1990; *La soledad era esto*, 1990), Rosa

Montero (*Crónica del desamor*, 1979; *La función delta*, 1981; *Te trataré como a una reina*, 1984; *Amado amo*, 1988), Javier Marías (*El hombre sentimental*, 1986), and Soledad Puértolas (*Burdeos*, 1986; *Todos mienten*, 1988) joined older writers such as Eduardo Mendoza (*El misterio de la cripta embrujada*, 1979; *El laberinto de las aceitunas*, 1982; *La isla inaudita*, 1989) and Javier Tomeo (*Amado monstruo*, 1981; *La ciudad de las palomas*, 1989) in drawing readers back to their national literature with stories that in a sense held a mirror up to readers living in culturally rich, crime infested, and angst generating metropolis.

In essence, Spanish audiences did not so much rediscover Spain in the 1980s as they did discover the Madrid and, to a lesser extent, Barcelona of the new democracy. Of course, the two cities became--perhaps thanks as much to these movies as to the actual demographic shifts of previous decades--increasingly capable of capturing on their own the perceived essence of "Spain." A nation whose internal history, sacred essence, and social and political memory had forever been tied to the rural became, in the 1980s, definitively urban.

This is not to say, of course, that artists had utterly abandoned the provinces. In fact, during the decade, directors Manuel Gutierrez Aragón, Mario Camus, and Montxo Armendáriz produced a series of mythical and mystical studies of rural Spain, typified in such films as *Demonios en el jardín* (1982), *Los santos inocentes* (1984), and *Tasio* (1984), respectively.⁷² Novelist Julio Llamazares in *Luna de lobos* (1985) and *La lluvia amarilla* (1988) offered the most obvious narrative counterpart

to the rural-focused cinema, though others such as Luis Mateo Diéz (*Las estaciones provinciales*, 1986; *La fuente de la edad*, 1986; *Apócrifo del clavel y la espina*, 1988) and Miguel Sánchez-Ostiz (*El pasaje de la luna*, 1984; *Tánger-Bar*, 1987) also cultivated critically acclaimed rural-based literature. Nevertheless, rather than pitting the country versus the city as so many earlier non-urban works had done, these rural films and novels portrayed a rather mythic country-life through an apolitical, intensely poetic filter. The protagonists of these works lived secluded in mountain valleys, barren Castilian steppes, or at the least, forgotten provincial towns, spatially, temporally, and spiritually distant from contemporary urban concerns.⁷³

In short, by the mid-1980s, the traditional city and country division appeared to have lost its currency, swallowed up, like the serious discussion concerning regionalist divisions following the failed coup, in a “postmodern” celebration of a new fast-paced urbanism with occasional touches of rural nostalgia. The near disappearance of the city/country conflict seems to confirm the prognostications of some of the more optimistic proponents of postmodernism that argued throughout the 1980s that the advent of a globalized, technologically advanced society would spell the collapse of modernist hierarchies and the end of violent sexual, ethnic, economic, and national divisions in favor of a pluralist, heterogeneous culture.⁷⁴

Two works in particular, however, challenge this optimistic reading of postmodern, *movida* culture. Pedro Almodóvar’s movie, *¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto!!* and Luis Landero’s novel, *Juegos de la edad tardía* (1989) stand out

from most other works of the period for their explicit treatment of a very traditional city/country paradigm as well as for the critical and popular success they enjoyed. Indeed, *the* breakthrough work of Almodóvar's career, and in fact, *the* work that first made foreigners take serious notice of Spanish culture and cinema in the 1980s was *¿Qué he hecho yo . . . !!* (Morris 9). Landero's novel made its own significant impact within national literary circles, being acclaimed as *the* novel of 1989, and making Landero, *the* literary discovery of the end of the decade (Sobejano "Novelistas" 44).

Almodóvar's movie and Landero's novel share several noteworthy points, both in their treatment of the city/country motif as well as in their relationship to the overall festive spirit of their time. Both works focus on urban-bound characters, trapped in an alienating Madrid accompanied by rural memories and interfacing with rural contacts that shape their actions. Both also display what has been described in the case of Landero's novel as "anachronistic" approaches to the city/country division. Almodóvar explicitly to the techniques of 1950s and 1960s neorealist cinema to tell a contemporary story of what might be termed "postmodern" *paleta* suffering. Landero's anachronism is both stylistic and thematic, narrating a Franco-era interaction between middle-aged men trapped respectively in the city and country in a style more akin to Cervantes, Galdós, Kafka, and Proust than to any form of postmodernity. Finally, both Almodóvar's and Landero's works appear to be light-hearted comedic romps through fast-paced, playfully disorienting worlds, each inspiring their fair share of guffaws from their audiences. And yet, beneath what

could be described as their *movida* facades lays evidence of sensitivities not just to the celebrated social changes of the decade, but to often overlooked political dynamics as well.

In *¿Qué he hecho yo . . .!!*, for example, the city/country paradigm represents emergent issues of ethnic identity in the fragmenting society of the democracy. This questioning of ethnic identity plays itself out against the more commonly celebrated exploration of sexual identity in Almodóvar's cinema, revealing how the former grounds the latter exploration in materiality, while the latter introduces a postmodern element into the former. Almodóvar's combination of the two then posits a dynamic model of subjectivity in a heterogeneous Spain, while recognizing the continuing salience of a still traditional, premodern society.

In *Juegos de la edad tardía* the apparently anachronistic theme of city/country tensions points toward a reading of the novel as sensitive to the tensions resulting from Spain's decentralization. The city/country paradigm in the novel helps forge an identification between readers and their familiar *paleto* protagonist. Landero's narratological play with language and time then helps to suspend the reader's disbelief even as his exaggerated uses of the paradigm threaten to disrupt the reader/protagonist identification. The consequent stretching of the city/country division opens the novel up to a reading that, while never completely escaping "anachronism," places the temporally inappropriate alongside an absolutely

contemporary spirit, making Landero's novel, ironically, the epitome of the "postmodern" novel.

While Marías may have declared "let the party continue," and while Spaniards seemed to be ignoring the political while revolutionizing the superficially social and cultural, these two works indicate that Spaniards ultimately could not escape the effects of change. A return to Marías's party was ultimately another way of addressing the pressing issues of the day. Again, the city/country paradigm, even as it was becoming anachronistic, was still one of the most potent and still very popular models through which to represent the new Spain.

¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto!!

Pedro Almodóvar's fourth film, *¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto!!* opens with a long-shot of its middle-aged female protagonist, Gloria (Carmen Maura), crossing a plaza on her way to work. As she attempts to maneuver her way through a film crew shooting in the same plaza, one of its members, toting an extended microphone, begins following her while an unseen camera zooms in and gives the spectator a voyeuristic close-up of the working mother's legs. While the credits continue, Gloria enters a gym where students practice kendo with long poles extended before them. A subsequent shot juxtaposes these phallicized ninji with a brief glimpse of a crouched Gloria scrubbing the studio floor, inviting spectators to gaze down her blouse, understanding her as at once a neorealist heroine and Hollywood-

style sex object. The credits cease as the last students exit the studio following their workout. Still at work Gloria encounters a last kendo student now disrobed beneath the trickle of the locker room shower. She responds to his beckoning and they have an all-too-brief sexual encounter that leaves the man embarrassed and Gloria dissatisfied. In the concluding shot of the scene, Gloria now wields her own kendo pole, striking furiously at imaginary partners while sounds of a German aria arise in the background.

Such a beginning situates *¿Qué he hecho yo . . . !!* neatly within the parameters of typical descriptions of Almodovarian film as kitschy, even campy, and of course, obsessed with women's lives and sexuality.⁷⁵ But curiously, the breakthrough film, released in 1984 at the popular height of the *movida*, proceeds from the opening scene to relate what can be considered the most sobering story of Almodóvar's 1980s filmography. *¿Qué he hecho yo . . . !!* certainly maintains its focus on questions of sex. But at the same time, it complicates the stereotypical Almodovarian concern with gender and sexual revolution by introducing questions of class and what could be referred to as ethnicity into the revolutionary mix.⁷⁶ The insertion of the ethnic takes form, curiously, in a return to a Franco-era concern with city/country conflicts. At a time when every other Spanish director seemed to be entranced by a morbid fascination with the tragicomic in urban life or with the poetry of the rural, Almodóvar reappropriates the age-old conflict between city and country in order to broaden and deepen his trademark postmodern approach to the more "superstructural"

social changes of the democracy. Specifically, Almodóvar's use of the city/country division interacts with the subversion of gender and sexual roles to show complications in the supposedly radical sexuality of 1980s Spain. At the same time, the typically raucous representation of the sexual in Almodóvar cinema likewise points to fissures in the traditional structure of the city/country binary, opening it up for a postmodern critique cognizant of contemporary regionalist tensions.

In short, the following analysis extends the traditional reading of *¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto!!* as a subversion of gender roles and sexual identities by intertwining that subversion with the questioning of a variety of other social identities embodied in the construct of city/country relations. The nature of the city/country division as materially tied in the Spanish historical imagination and yet precisely a product of that imagination allows Almodóvar to combine successfully neorealist technique and its materially-based subject matter with postmodern metatheatrical and metacinematic mechanisms. This combination produces a society of simulacra wherein traditional divisions of class, gender, and ethnicity collapse around a dissolution of city/country relations in a performative play adorned in ceramic, lace, and celluloid. While Almodóvar never denies the material realities of economic, social, and geographically varied lifestyles in his movie, he calls into question (even as he reaffirms) every assumption that can be made concerning society and its sustaining subjectivities.

The interaction of city/country tensions with the sexual politics of the movie commences almost as soon as sex is first called into question in the shower scene. In the terms of Judith Butler's theory of sexual subjectivity and performance, from the point of Gloria's initial walk across the plaza she has been playing a metacinematic role, her every action foregrounded as a kind of performativity. The kendo students likewise run through their routine on a literal stage, costumed as it were in black robes and masks. The shower scene then features the figurative--and nearly literal--union of two performers. What is curious--and key to this analysis--is that when the two actors come together, their joint performance ends in failure. In the terminology of Butler, the laws that engender them through their performance produce a performative iteration that transgresses anticipated boundaries as set by the law. Hence, performance calls into question the roles of both performers, rendering the power of the law that has engendered the performance rather dubious. With sexuality and the subjectivities it produces hanging in limbo, spectators ready themselves for another romp through the subversive Almodovarian playground of post-Franco and postmodern Madrid.

Yet, as the post-performance Gloria now chops furiously with her kendo stick, the sounds of the German aria, Zarah Leander's "Nicht nur aus Liebe Weinen," awaken spectators from early assumptions. The choice of music is curious in light of the traditional uses of the Germanic in so much post-war Spanish culture. The choice may recall--as did the German artist in *Tiempo de silencio*--Spain's own failed

phallogocentric National Movement, with its close ties to German fascism. At the same time, the German music introduces a more contemporary international note to the “Madrid” comedy. Specifically, the song becomes a recurring signifier of Gloria's husband Antonio, who, like the *paletos* of Lazaga's *Vente a Alemania, Pepe*, has worked as an immigrant laborer in Germany.

The song provides a segway to the next scene where Gloria's husband, Antonio, the paragon of patriarchy in the film, cruises the streets of Madrid in his taxi singing along to the same Germanic tune. The musical overlap affirms the connection between sexual politics and broader forms of identity politics that the song and this second scene introduce. The expansion begins as a genteel middle-class author hails the working-class cabbie, joining issues of class to those of sexual and national identity. The author and Antonio discuss their respective lives as writer and chauffeur. In particular, they discuss Antonio's work as a forger in Germany. While economics and political relations dominate the conversation, the sexual--and the postmodern elements that it dynamizes--never wholly disappears. Not only is the scene connected by way of the musical segway to Gloria's destabilizing sexual performance, but the encounter of the two men is visually introduced by the author's possession of a still-packaged *Barbie* doll with which he hails his cab. It is, of course, curious that the writer's “weapon” is not his proverbial pen (with which he hopes to represent the female in a porn novel he plans to write), but is in a sense, woman herself--or her representation (or in a postmodern sense, her referent). The

cab conversation that supposedly centers on economics, in fact, circles around the body of the woman for whom Antonio originally forged documents. Moreover, the author's possession of a *Barbie* doll, especially one still packaged, allows Almodóvar to push the gender issues beyond a traditional discussion of identity politics. If woman is a tool of masculine power, the packaged, plastic woman is no longer "merely" flesh and blood. Instead, to use Baudrillard's terminology, she has become a "simulacra" of woman, an object that supersedes its original to the point of challenging the very concept upon which that original was based. As the story progresses through a subplot that many have viewed as one of the major flaws in Almodóvar's script,⁷⁷ the author's new "pen" will lead him in the film from *Barbie*, to Gloria's neighbor Cristal (who in her numerous costumes is herself a kind of virtual *Barbie* even as *Barbie* is the virtual woman, thus confirming the cat and mouse game of representation that Baudrillard identifies as the essence of postmodernity), and finally to Antonio's former lover in Germany, Ingrid Müller, a woman who "has not adapted to changing times," never learning to remake herself as Cristal so ably has. Of course, all of this is couched within a discussion of forgery, thus foregrounding these problems of authenticity.

With questions of representation still circulating, the action shifts to the apartment where Gloria lives with Antonio, his mother, and their two sons, Toni and Miguel. As in the previous scenes, the sexual construction enacted by phallogentric law makes itself instantly felt. As Antonio enters the apartment he asserts his

patriarchal authority, demanding dinner, complaining about the food, and then sexually accosting his wife. Gloria, meanwhile, fulfills her duties as homemaker, framed by shots of her taken as if from inside the oven and washing machine that critics identify as marking her as the prototypical homemaker of television commercials for laundry detergents and frozen dinners (Vernon 66; Strauss 48-49). At the same time, these camera angles situate the spectator as a voyeur, even as Almodóvar again invites a kind of neo-realist empathy for her pitiful situation, once more confusing the spectators' position with respect to the comprehending gaze.

As the scene continues, the patriarchal law continues to demand its replication. At the same time, failures in the performance of the law continue to undermine its supposedly firm foundations. Almodóvar metacinematically underlines Gloria's role as performer by way of the framing shots from inside the kitchen appliances. Furthermore, while the family converses during dinner, spectators hear the dull buzz of a television news program discussing the changing sexual habits of Spanish women, foregrounding the dynamics of contemporary sexuality and marking them as yet another form of performativity. Finally, while Antonio forces himself on his wife, their son Toni and his grandmother watch a television program in which Almodóvar himself and the transvestite singer Fanny McNamara bend gender while dressed in the satin and lace of a courtier and his lady. As at the beginning of the movie, the metacinematic performance begins with a view of the cameras that then seamlessly appear to be filming the spot. As the song concludes, a shot from the

other room of the face of a sexually victimized Gloria exposes for the second time that day the failure of patriarchal performance to properly reproduce its law.

Again, within this kind of theater of the sexual law, other aspects of identity construction come into play--this time in an overt use of the traditional city/country opposition. Gloria's suffering, Antonio's *machismo*, and the Grandmother's and Toni's conversations all occur before a television set in a cramped apartment that recalls the "chabolismo vertical" of Francoist housing projects.⁷⁸ These projects sought to redeem the very urban-bject *paletos* that had threatened social order in *Tiempo de silencio*. Significantly, social theorists signal the move to modern city housing as fundamental to the advent of postmodern consumer culture and to the end of premodern social relations (Lee 129-30). Within their modern *chabola* surrounded by cheap consumer goods but cut off from the outside world, Toni and his grandmother bemoan the miseries of urban living and discuss their mutual longing for their native village. Velvet paintings of rural scenes decorate the surrounding walls, punctuating this rural nostalgia and suggesting that the family is more a group of postmodern *paletos* than sophisticated urbanites, whatever their present geographic location.

Even as the velvet landscapes expose the family's premodernity, they also underscore the desired countryside as being as much a postmodern idea as a premodern reality. In fact, within the context of the events of the evening, their coveted country hamlet seems to be more a cultural product than a firm reality; it is an

idea that exists at the same nostalgic level as the traditional songs that the cross-dressed Almodóvar and McNamara perform on the TV set; it is as real to the grandmother and her grandson as the ceramic “Alhambra” that they will “visit” in a bar later in the movie. In democratic, cosmopolitan Spain the *campo* is, like the mock Alhambra or Almodóvar's song-in-drag, the reiteration of a reality only as solid as its most recent manifestation. Indeed, a later conversation between Gloria and a woman from her own pueblo confirms the frequency and familiarity of the performed rituals that maintain Spaniards in their proper place. As Gloria begins to speak of her estranged relationship to her birthplace, the fellow villager nods with *a priori* understanding; the conversation soon ends as the two realize that anything they have to say is always already understood.⁷⁹

The performative nature of contemporary Spanish reality is even more evident in the bourgeois author's activities that parallel the events in Gloria's apartment. At the same time that Antonio assaults his wife and that Toni and his grandmother dream of the pueblo, the author visits Gloria's neighbor, Cristal, a self-employed prostitute with a heart of gold, a head for business, and a body that “drives men crazy.” If Gloria and her family embody the connection between the sexual and a local city-versus-pueblo identity, the author manifests the same links on an international scale, representing the typical Spaniard as a *paleto* with respect to international capitalist culture. Rather than desiring a sexual experience, the author visits Cristal in search of inspiration for his porn novel. Cristal, the most overtly feminine character of the

movie, seems certain to provide the desired inspiration. And yet, she fails. Her failure stems from her inability to find the whip that the author requires for an envisioned literary scene. Hoping to satisfy, Cristal has gone to the home of her neighbor, Gloria, in search of the object. Gloria offers instead a large tree limb that the grandmother keeps along with other knickknacks she hoards in her closet. When Cristal presents herself with the limb, even larger than the kendo sticks Gloria swung earlier, the author balks. Initially, Cristal's masculinizing appropriation of the obvious phallic object seems just too much for the macho author. On second thought, however, it cannot be so much the phallic nature of the post that he rejects; after all, he had requested a whip. The author's complaint focuses instead on the ethnic; he explains that what he needed was something more in the tradition of French novels. The disappointment engendered by the tree limb resides more in its provincial quality than in its sexual nature. The author's sexual desire--and hence, his very subjectivity--is as much tied to geo-social constructions as to sexual ones.

In short, the simultaneously transpiring events in the neighboring flats underline the overlapping of sexual and ethnic politics, of the inner workings of desire for geographical and sexual freedom, and of the inability of any form of identity politics to cut itself off from any and all other subjectivizing discourses. And yet, at the same time, the interactions of the varied forms of identity politics underlines in the most postmodern fashion the performed nature of every aspect of subjectivity. Indeed, as the author's own performance shows, desires may not respond to the

sexual or the social at all but to a simulated experience that might lead to a further narrative of something that never really occurred in the first place. And this simulacra of a narrative would center on a non-experience with a woman who is, in her relationship to the packaged *Barbie*-doll, ultimately reduced--or exploded--to the status of a Baudrillardian fourth-order simulacra herself.⁸⁰

Ultimately, however, the author's elaborate postmodern simulacrum collapses amidst the material destitution of the vertical *chabola*. In the face of the poverty-induced lack in the apartments, the author cannot desire and hence, cannot remake himself. The bourgeois author realizes that his path to success must move in another direction, a direction that plays on yet another set of city/country divisions. The author abandons the brothel in favor, first, of the bar where he seeks the aid of Antonio in producing a sequel to his initial forgery. Next, the author in essence retraces the steps of earlier *paleto* actors Paco Martínez Soria in *La ciudad no es para mí* and Alfredo Landa in *Vente a Alemania, Pepe*, as he travels from Madrid's Barajas airport to the Berlin International Airport. He arrives finally at the home of Antonio's former mistress, the faded beauty, Ingrid Müller, whose lost luster significantly, points back to the same era as the very Lazaga *paleto* movies.

While the class-privileged author pursues a more postmodern subjectivity in Germany, the working class remain at home seeking alternative subjectivities within the laws that bind them, each doing so in preparation for his or her own particular escape. Antonio bides the time with memories of Frau Müller and the constant

company of his German music. The youngest son, Miguel, finds solace in comic books and non-traditional sexuality. Drugs, whether legal or not, offer the easiest and most powerful remedy to the ills of urban patriarchal culture for both Gloria and her son Toni.

Gloria finds escape through an over-the-counter caffeine-supplement called “minilips.” Curiously, Gloria’s legal-drug-induced escape produces greater complications for her than do the illegal drugs of her son. Gloria’s husband, children, and mother-in-law each note her disequilibrium as she burns dinner, misplaces her “minilips,” and loses her watch. The loss of her watch foregrounds the performative consequences of Gloria’s particular escapism. In her drugged-up state, Gloria cannot keep track of time, one of the prime models of traditional Western (patriarchal) values, that which measures, marks off, and always points in linear fashion toward a teleologic future.⁸¹ If the watch is the law, then in her harried, drugged state, Gloria cannot properly perform the roles that the law demands. As she fails to cook the perfect dinner or keep a spotless home, she increasingly fails to recognize herself in the ideal images of womanhood culture provides her. Combined with the failures of the sexual laws in which she is involved, Gloria seems to be in danger of losing her subjectivity. But while every other character appears to be searching for some kind of material geographical escape from the city, Gloria’s “*minilips*” keep her bound thereto. She finds her weekly supply at the ubiquitous urban pharmacy (humorously noted as a key sign of ultramodern city life in the opening sequence of *La ciudad no*

es para mí). And her ability to purchase is tied to her ability to work in different locations throughout the city, a form of occupation that, in spite of her unhappiness, she never questions in the movie. Finally, Gloria finds a certain solace in the consumer pleasures of the city as well as in the human contact she maintains with other women in her building.

Toni, on the other hand uses his drugs to get back to the country. A comic version of the adolescent criminal depicted in such early 1980s fare as Gutiérrez Aragón's *Maravillas* and Saura's *Deprisa, deprisa*, Toni sells drugs to a general populace in search of escape, and saves his earnings in preparation for his own flight to the family village. Toni does not pursue hallucination but instead uses drugs to procure a geographical exodus similar to the author's. The one time that Toni does internalize his own product, his body naturally rejects it, suggesting that for him, hallucinatory escape is inherently anathema. This rejection might suggest an essential difference between Toni and his mother that could be interpreted along lines of sexual difference: Toni is, after all, an apparent reiteration of his father. Already an expert forger, the son also identifies more readily with his paternal grandmother than with his mother. Furthermore, Toni is heterosexual and, more important, desires to impose that sexuality on others. In short, he would seem to be the latest inheritor of the family patriarchal tradition. Spectators would expect him to be as unsympathetic a character as his father.

Yet Toni remains one of the most likeable characters in the movie, revealing new non-binary possibilities made available by Almodóvar's linking of ethnic city/country with sexual issues. Though apparently raised in the patriarchal mode, Toni's desires to return to the country outweigh his sexual desires (he spurns Cristal's advances, for example). Consequently, his desires link him not so much to his *machista* father as to his grandmother, who, though overtly displaying signs of the cruel phallicized Spanish matriarch captured in Federico García Lorca's theater, builds, through her incessant talk of the pueblo, a bridge with the spectator that converts every aspect of her cruelty into the loveably comic. She would rather watch TV and its representations of "su época" and place than pay heed to the patriarchal demands of her son. The same desire for escape leads her regularly to upset the patriarchal laws that would require her grandson's strict adherence. Glued to the television set, she makes a mockery of formal education by disrespecting sacred cultural systems (e.g. the distinctions between Realism and Romanticism) that society would inculcate into Toni. She even encourages Toni to skip school--one of the most powerful of modern disciplinary apparatus--so he might accompany her in her walk through the abandoned wastelands that pass for countryside in the midst of the city. Furthermore, she inspires Toni to use his patriarchal inheritance of forgery skills not in the perpetuation of a fascist tradition noted for its patriarchal nature but in the service of consciously sentimental entertainment for her friends back in the pueblo. Finally, while the village may on the one hand seem to symbolize a retrenchment into

past traditions, the rural life that Toni pursues is, as shown above, as much a nostalgic simulacrum as a material reality. The pueblo for the urban delinquent Toni becomes as much an alternative to patriarchal law as the city does for his country-born mother.

At the same time, while city and country promise alternative subjectivities, those spaces cannot be attained as long as certain laws continue in the way; Gloria can continue to take drugs and Toni can continue to sell them, but neither will get what they want as long as the patriarchal laws that bind them remain intact. The second half of the movie works to dismantle them, showing the snowballing effect of the earlier transgressive performances. The first signs of the collapse and eventual disappearance of the patriarchal law manifest themselves in the quick exit of Gloria's youngest son, Miguel, from family life. Unable to fulfill the motherly obligations toward her son that patriarchy would demand of her, Gloria takes the first opportunity available and places her son in another's care, arranging for him to live with a homosexual pedophilic dentist who wins Miguel's allegiance with promises of videos, stereos, and art lessons. Miguel, dressed in Kiss T-shirts, offering sexual favors to his friends' fathers, and acting as a cinema-fascinated alter-ego of Almodóvar himself, embodies, on the one hand, the most extreme transgression of the patriarchal law. On the other hand, within the confines of the patriarchally controlled high-rise *chabola* even his potential transgression conforms to the law: despite appearances, he is the one family member who still demands the physical and emotional nourishment that the law requires of the mother.

Thus, with Miguel gone, a major part of the binding law breaks away, opening up larger fissures within the hegemony of patriarchy wherein agency might be located. Gloria, appropriately, can now afford a coveted curling iron, significantly an instrument with which she can better recreate herself through remaking her surface self. In a subsequent scene, Gloria, now clutching her curling iron participates in her first “sex”-play at Cristal’s, watching another very exaggerated, metatheatrical performance of machismo and heterosexuality, that foregrounds the performed nature of every sexual encounter.

Despite the increased ability to perform and the agency garnered therefrom, Gloria still lives within the shadow of her husband’s domineering patriarchy. Significantly, the last and most powerful bastion of the law, her husband, Antonio, is not only the paragon of patriarchy but also a constant reminder of the material connection between Gloria’s rural past--both in terms of her ties to her native village and to the *paleto* experience abroad. Like the “sexual” failure between the author and Cristal earlier, the failure of the patriarchal law in the relationship between Gloria and her husband is connected as much to these city/country relationships as it is to any sexual interaction.

The final collapse of the patriarchal law begins when Frau Müller, at the bequest of the author, calls Antonio from Germany soliciting his help in the forgery of a new set of documents. The call awakens a latent machismo in Antonio integrally connected to his days as *paleto* provider in Germany. With Ingrid on his mind the

frequency and volume of his impromptu German music recitals increase, bringing the specter of the *paleto* plus the multiple patriarchal connotations of the German music into Gloria's apartment to an unprecedented degree. Marital strife naturally increases as Antonio's enactment of the patriarchal ethnic and sexual law demands the performance of Gloria as housewife, who, however, is now so estranged from the law by previous performances that she no longer recognizes the authority that hails her. Consequently, when Antonio insists that she iron his shirt (Antonio as machista) even while he persists in singing his German music (Antonio as *paleto*), Gloria responds by whacking him over the head with a ham bone in a style recalling the kendo chops symbolic of Gloria's initial misperformance. Antonio crumples to the ground beneath the traditional Spanish ham, a metaphor for both sexual and ethnic patriarchy. In one fell swoop, Gloria rewrites both her sexual and ethnic subjectivity--freeing herself simultaneously from the bonds of patriarchy and traditional Spanish-ness and myriad social stigmas that accompany it.⁸²

Meanwhile, even as Antonio crumbles beneath the ham bone, Frau Müller succeeds in her own long-desired suicide. Spain's *paleto* past in all its Lazaga-esque varieties, collapses almost instantaneously. While an unshackled if also a bit uncertain Gloria stands holding a hambone in her kitchen, the deserted bourgeois author also stands holding a telephone in an international airport. In a sense, the traditional city/country division that the *paleto* and his international benefactress represented were the last hand that the author held. Without this traditional division

to exploit, the author's only options seem to lie with a younger, much more transgressive generation. However, his brief encounter with two *movida*-esque punks in the airport reveals basic communicative differences between generations. Almodóvar's uneven subplot ends here with a dubious message regarding the role of the intellectual and the upper classes in the breakdown of laws that the rest of the movie works out. Perhaps the eagerness with which the bourgeois cultural apparatus devours every and any form of being that may present itself is the one consistency to this often distracting portion of the story. In short, this apparatus is not as concerned with what the law is as with re-articulating it for its own benefit.

At this point, Almodóvar again returns to metatheater, introducing officers of the material, judicial law into his story, working the final collapse of the patriarchal law through the overt failure of the material law. A team of police officers arrives at Gloria's apartment to investigate Antonio's death. Their investigation functions symbolically as a last-ditch effort to sustain the laws of patriarchy. But if the law is only as solid as its latest performance, as Butler has noted (*Bodies* 225), then the actions of the police officers confirm the undoing of the law in postmodern Spain. The police officers prove first to be incompetent. They fail to recognize the obvious tensions between the sexes that the patriarchal law has imposed; they ignore Gloria's obvious bruise on her forehead from the fight with her husband and kill their "only witness" to the crime, the Grandmother's pet lizard Dinero. The latter suggests by comic means yet another failure of the traditional law; that is, its inability to

recognize the central importance of the economic to the new forms of power (a centrality foregrounded by the lizard's-eye view of Antonio and Gloria's confrontation and the central position the lizard occupies in a countershot *mise en scène* during the same encounter).

In addition to their incompetence, the police are, more importantly, impotent. Spectators recognize the chief investigator as the same disappointing lover from the martial arts studio. Another scene, shot in the office of a sex therapist--who happens to be the author's brother, thereby connecting the critique of the bourgeois to the problems of the patriarchal law in general--reveals that the macho cop is indeed sexually impotent. The libidinous problems lead to legal impotence in the officer that exacerbates incompetence. The officer cannot think straight around Gloria; clearly, he would rather avoid her and protect his character than find Antonio's murderer. In Gloria's presence the law that once shackled her through enforced performance now loses all power by way of the same performative demands. As Butler points out in her analysis of the role of performance and agency, frequent performance may lead just as often to subversion as to solidification of the law. Gloria's performances ultimately exonerate her of her crime to the extent that she is finally able to confess openly before the officer (a confession that occurs poetically on the same "stage" on which the kendo students performed in the first scene of the movie).

Nevertheless, when Gloria is finally "free," rather than rejoicing she acts overwhelmed. As the police refuse to accept her confession, Gloria sinks increasingly

into a kind of existential despair. Meanwhile, her only remaining family members, Toni and his grandmother, decide to return to the pueblo. The law has failed them: their respective son and father is dead and their symbolic urban Dinero is gone. They withdraw Toni's drug money from the bank and make for the country. In the most moving scene of the movie, Gloria sees them off at the bus depot. At the farewell the grandmother stands with an armful of kindling that she has gathered from city lots to take to the country, a significant inversion of the traditional city/country binary, similar to the three-way representational reversal of *Woman--Cristal--Barbie*. On seeing the kindling, an old friend from the pueblo suggests that the grandmother has made a wise choice because "en el pueblo hace mucho frío." This is the exact complaint the grandmother constantly makes of the city. Again, Almodóvar reconfirms that the "country" to which they travel is saturated in the spirit of simulacra, and is as much a product of urban discourse as of any material rural composition.

With the grandmother and Toni gone, Gloria finds herself suddenly unbound by "legal" restrictions. The patriarchal laws that determined for so long her sexuality and ethnicity, her role as mother, housewife, and *paleto* have disappeared. But rather than freeing her to act, the disappearance of all law leaves Gloria incapacitated, unable to act because she has no audience to perform for and hence, no law. Without the law Gloria finds herself lacking subjectivity. After seeing Toni and the grandmother off, Gloria returns home to an empty apartment. She steps out onto her

balcony. A reverse shot reveals the seemingly endless rows of distant, faceless high rise *chabolismo* that confronts her. In the face of a life on an empty stage, where significant performance is no longer possible and thus, subjectivity denied, she leans forward as if to jump toward her own nothingness. Without any law, Gloria may be free, but she is also nothing, as bereft of agency and power as she had earlier been oppressed by it.

On leaning over, however, Gloria sees her son Miguel ascending the steps below. Realizing that he is too young to be so tied down, Gloria's youngest son has returned home. As Miguel enters the flat and rehearses the events that occurred in his absence, he states, "this home needs a man," a line some see as rather problematic coming on the tail of so much patriarchy-subverting activity (Epps 115). But while the statement might initially suggest the retrenchment of patriarchy, on further thought, the "man"-liness that Miguel offers is a rather odd one at best. While he reintroduces law into the home, Gloria's homosexual, pre-adolescent, and relatively cosmopolitan son, presents a law free of traditional sexual or ethnic desire. Consequently, Miguel's declaration earns him not another ham bone to the cranium, but a warm, motherly embrace. Together, Gloria and Miguel will begin a new life with new possibilities in their postmodern Madrid.

And yet, while new possibilities avail themselves in a Madrid now free of old-fashioned sexualities and ethnicities, the setting of the momentary sense of utopia that their embrace inspires reconfirms a continuing connection between the new

postmodern cosmopolis and the premodern rural. The scene of the embrace, still the same undersized living room adorned by velvet landscape paintings, becomes, thanks to a change in lighting and camera angles, a kind of *locus amoenus* of green pastures, blue skies, and white ponies far removed from the squalor of working-class Madrid. The *mise en scène* reconfirms the continuing power of the countryside as a symbol of paradise-regained, even when the specific paradise that the material rural offers is of no interest to the protagonists.

More than acting as a mere symbol of liberation, however, the idyllic setting of the urban embrace suggests that the uses of the city/country paradigm continue to extend themselves into the changing psyche of the democratic and postmodern Spanish citizen. Just as the dismantling of formerly rigid sexual hierarchies has not put an end to sexual difference, and just as many of the formerly restrictive identities that so many social and political hierarchies imposed have not disappeared but instead been reappropriated for political means, Gloria's escape from city/country restrictions does not necessarily mean the end of the usefulness of the enduring paradigm. Indeed, as the traditional stigmas of the *paleto* have been masked by the combined camouflage afforded by history and a consumer culture wherein new identity can be purchased almost overnight, the division between city and country has been increasingly reappropriated by regionalist and micro-nationalist movements that pit a menacing metropolitan federalism against a passive, peaceful rural regionalism. This self-representation, like Almodóvar's cinematography in the final scene, sheds new

light on an old rural image thereby revealing Gloria's prototypical neorealist Spanish family--or the family that Franco imagined for his Spain--to be an idyllic guise.

Almodóvar's film, nevertheless, avoids placing hard and fast value judgements on this breakup. The setting established by the painting merely suggests that, like every other use of the city/country paradigm within the movie, any new representation of the supposedly geographically-stable spaces is always already thoroughly saturated. What the representationality of the new "cleaned-up" uses of the rural as well as the bitter-sweet ending do finally underscore, however, is that no peaceful idyll, either on the part of ruralist regionalism or metropolitan federalism, exists. In their stead, a feeling of anxiety surrounding the postmodern uses of the city/country paradigm grows. Five years later, Luis Landero, in *Juegos de la edad tardía*, would latch onto this contemporary anxiety to produce a novel of surprising popular and critical success that seemed even more than Almodóvar's movie to explore anachronistic city/country divisions.

Juegos de la edad tardía

After being rejected by nearly every major Spanish editorial house, Luis Landero's *Juegos de la edad tardía* (1989) was picked up by Tusquets whereupon it became a national best-seller and the recipient of the highest critical praise.

Curiously, while critics were elated with the appearance of a new author who showed evidence of having actually read before putting pen to paper, they generally agreed

that Landero's prose was too similar to that of some of the masters he had read.⁸³ For a novelist writing in the throes of postmodernism a Cervantine or Proustian style, they argued, however well-wrought, was unhappily anachronistic.

Landero's problematic style lends to his subject matter an equally "late" feel. The setting of *Juegos de la edad tardía*--the middle Franco years--although not without contemporary precedent, lacks the pastiching and problematizing of the past that typifies more "postmodern" novels.⁸⁴ Instead, the novel recreates an earlier Spain whose supposedly anachronistic issues remain the rule of the day. The following analysis shows, however, how Landero's use of one of these issues, the tension between urban Spain and its rural backwater, responds to alternative contemporary concerns and helps explain how what appears old-fashioned to editors and critics has enjoyed such unexpected reader success. Specifically, Landero employs city/country tensions to expand initial reader identification with a protagonist's search for wholeness into a broader search for collective meaning in a socially, politically, and even geographically disintegrating world.

Juegos de la edad tardía narrates the rise and fall of a middle-aged, wholesale clerk-turned-world-renowned-poet, Gregorio Olías. The rise of Gregorio-poet begins with a series of phone calls from fellow worker, Dacio Gil Monroy. Gil, a traveling salesman, exiled from the city for more than two decades by a job more tedious than Gregorio's, thirsts for news from the modern metropolis. Trying to keep up with Gil's demands for ever-more interesting information, Gregorio verbally constructs an

alternative Madrid and a corresponding alter-ego, the poet Augusto Faroni. The heart of the novel describes Gregorio's increasingly complicated attempts to revel in the pleasures of this alter-ontology while eluding the demands of his original mid-life reality. Gregorio ultimately fails and flees the city under pressure only to happen upon Gil in a typical mid-Franco years *pueblo perdido*. As the narrative concludes, the two begin making plans for an Arcadian future of farming and philosophy.

This search for Arcadia begins in the first chapters of the novel in which Landero presents Gregorio through a series of flashbacks as an incomplete subject alienated from a paradise lost and denied the tools to regain it. Early flashbacks establish Gregorio as a hapless urban employee separated from a paradisiacal childhood in the country. Readers learn that as a child Gregorio lived in the remote countryside, "en la soledad de un llano y unos cerros ásperos" distant from even the closest "pueblo pequeño con calles empinadas y casas bajas de cal" (51). Of this childhood idyll Gregorio recalls, "Yo tenía entonces unos cinco años y aquella fue la época más feliz de mi vida" (51). A group of passing railroad workers awaken Gregorio from his innocence, mocking the questionable sanity of the boy's progenitors. The loss of innocence, coming at the hands of an urbanized proletariat passing through the country, forges the first significant connection between a psychological sense of loss and socioeconomic and geographical factors. The workers' mockery of Gregorio's grandfather is inspired by an anecdote (the first in a series of bizarre stories that dot the novel). The latter relates the mythical and biblical

imagery of a house the old man constructed with his own hands. While the grandfather's anecdote stands on the fringes of rational explication, its rhetoric foregrounds the traditional differences between rural and urban, between myth and history, and between plenitude and alienation that expand the meaning of the psychic journey of Gregorio's nascent identity.

Other flashbacks extend Gregorio's story of aborted subjectification. Flashbacks reveal that soon after the railroad workers pass through, Gregorio's progenitors die, and he migrates to the city to live with an uncle. There, Gregorio finds initial respite from the alienating city through books. From behind the counter of his uncle's kiosk Gregorio escapes into an alternative world found within the contents of three fetishized books: a dictionary, an encyclopedia, and an atlas. These three volumes, gifts from a mysterious don Isafas to Gregorio's uncle, provide Gregorio with an illusion of escape from the tedium of work in the city.⁸⁵ The nature of the works, especially the fetishizing celebration of language that the dictionary briefly inspires, suggest a Lacanian pattern to Gregorio's subject development, language providing an initial means of return to the sense of plenitude that Gregorio left behind in the country. From these three books, Gregorio discovers poetry. For a time he appears to be recovering his lost sense of self through his verse. A series of misfortunes in love, however, dash Gregorio's adolescent dreams; by the time he arrives at early adulthood, Gregorio has abandoned his books and poems, succumbing to a drab existence, marrying the first girl that notices him, and working as a clerk at a

wine and olive retailer, Requena y Belson, where he takes written orders from people he will never meet and for products he will never see. In a sense, Gregorio's complete initiation into the symbolic order is nipped in the bud at the point of full entrance, so that for thirteen years it is as if Gregorio has no existence. Indeed, within a novel characterized by its obsessive use of flashbacks to describe every significant detail, there are no references to the thirteen years of marriage and work at Requena y Belson. It is as if the protagonist did not exist at that time.

The acquisition of the tools he needs to deal with his childhood losses comes to Gregorio in the form of a fellow worker, Dacio Gil Monroy. In a sense, Gil holds a Lacanian mirror up to the visionless Gregorio, reawakening him to a symbolic order that can provide him with some sense of hope. This reawakening commences when, after thirteen years of silence, the phone at Gregorio's desk rings. A dumbfounded Gregorio hears on the other end of the line Gil's voice for the first time. Gil's job as salesman for Requena y Belson took him from his beloved metropolitan home more than twenty years ago and has still not allowed him to return. In the ensuing years, Gil has lost contact with old friends, his fiancée, and even his parents. In the country Gil, like Gregorio in the city, ceases to exist.

Thanks to the exaggerated, but popularly accepted, differences between city and country, Gil is able to reawaken a totally unprepared Gregorio to his earlier forays into the realm of the symbolic and therefore, back into subjectivity. Begging for news of the city, Gil begins inspiring Gregorio to rediscover language as a tool for

making sense of a new self and for overcoming alienation. In their first conversations, Gil refuses to let Gregorio hang up without providing details of life in the city. He is never satisfied with short, unambitious, if truthful, answers to his queries. When Gregorio attempts to tell the mere facts about city-life, Gil reacts: "Diga mejor . . . que no me quiere contar nada" (109). Gil rejects any excuses that Gregorio would make; he insists that the urban world *is* marvelous and inspires Gregorio to discover it. This insistence, and its success with Gregorio, is, of course, closely linked with the divisions between country and city. Having lived in the city and known its marvels he demands news of them:

Yo, señor Olías, tuve una novia, una familia y un gato, ahí, en la ciudad. Por eso, a ver si me cuenta alguna vez una de esas grandes noticias que los dos sabemos que existen. De esas que se están gestando y que flotan en el aire de la ciudad, y que sólo ahí se pueden conocer. Comprenda mi petición. . . . Esa, si quiere que le sea sincero, es mi única ilusión. (111)

Interestingly, when Gregorio finally acquiesces to Gil's demands, he does so while doodling scenes of idyllic country life (113). Gregorio continues to sketch these pastoral scenes throughout the novel, especially when under pressure, underscoring the importance of the city/country division to the process of subject-formation. While Gregorio seems to want to escape to the country, Gil "knows" that anything and everything important happens in the city: "era en las grandes ciudades donde se estaba decidiendo el destino del siglo" (110). According to Gil, things are so bad in

the provinces that even thought has died there (132). Gregorio, of course, “knows” from “experience” that Gil is misinformed. Gregorio knows that the demands Gil makes of him are absurd; Gil’s notions of the city and country are obviously products of incredible naivete. And yet, Gregorio can never quite speak the truth. It is all too easy for Gregorio, living in a society in which city/country divisions as well as so many other discourses of “truth” have been so manipulated, to be unsure of what the “truth”--or even truth itself--really is. Gregorio, moreover, knows that he has hardly lived himself, that perhaps Gil--a man of cosmopolitan origins no matter what his current situation--knows something that he--a mere *paleto*--does not.

The same division functions similarly with contemporary readers of the protagonists’ absurd conversations. María Antonia García de León, in a study of cinematic representations of rural Spain, has described all contemporary Spaniards as ultimately *paletos* whose self-perception is inextricably linked to the films they have watched and the novels they have read (17, 24). These works more often than not confirm a vision of city/country relations more appropriate to Gil’s outlandish demands than to Gregorio’s or the readers’ better judgements. Consequently, while readers may be as frustrated with Gregorio for his inability to deny Gil’s demands as Gregorio is with himself, their culture has similarly positioned them to share Gregorio’s irrational intuition: that there is some truth to what Gil demands, that the city is indeed magnificent, that the country may indeed consist of little more than a miserable lot of *pueblos perdidos*.

Hence, thanks to the intensity of the Francoist city/country division, Gil is finally able to encourage a reluctant Gregorio to speak and otherwise incredulous readers to further suspend their likely strong desire to disbelieve. Thus, when Gil lavishes praise on his friend for his first prosaic lies (“Qué bien habla usted,”113) the reader, though pained for Gregorio’s initial foray into the world of the mentican, is wont to concur. Of course, Gregorio is likewise want to continue. Consequently, with Gil’s encouragement and the vast cultural and geographical gulf separating the country and the city as insurance, Gregorio soon finds himself speaking with unprecedented fluidity as he builds for Gil an urban utopia that soon exceeds even the salesman’s wildest dreams. The protagonist’s discovery of language, however, does not stop with well-versed phone chat. Gregorio rediscovers a lost ability to name that he had enjoyed as a child. At the high point of this rediscovery, Gregorio, while drunk at a New Year’s party renames each partygoer. In the aftermath of the party, while still enjoying the drunken euphoria of linguistic power, Gregorio informs his wife, “las palabras son mágicas” (171).

Nevertheless, like a child learning to speak, Gregorio’s reawakening to language is not completely smooth. At one point, frustrated with his inability to grasp the plenitude that words promise, Gregorio renounces language entirely, declaring, “las palabras son malditas” and then refusing to speak for months (172). When he at last reopens his mouth several months later, his approach to language has changed; it is now more imaginary and theoretical than real and practical. Rather than returning

to the legitimate poetic activities of his youth, the newly speaking Gregorio invents for himself the alter-ego of the world-renowned poet, Augusto Faroni. This invention creates a situation wherein Gregorio's late re-entry into the Lacanian symbolic excessively increases his already partially formulated subjectivity. This poet-alter-ego writes within an imaginary universe that exists only for the ignorant Gil and the consciously deceptive Gregorio. There his poetry can achieve a measure of success unattainable to the materially bound doggerel of the mortal "Gregorio Olías." While Gregorio continues to use language himself, he limits his expression to the few words essential to the continuation of the poetic world of Faroni. Within this ontology of the poetic, Gregorio can justify his lies because his words are the very foundations of this ontology, rather than the discursive aberrance of a more material setting. In one of many phone conversations with Gil, Gregorio explains, "la ciencia si miente pierde su valor y el poeta siempre dice la verdad, aunque mienta. Lo que se dice en verso nadie lo puede contradecir en prosa" (129). Gregorio uses language to create a poetic realm where words have the effortless effect that he dreams of, a place where Gregorio's utopian longings may be fulfilled: "Allí [in Faroni's poetic universe] se forjaba la inmortalidad y se trajinaban los olvidos" (131).

If immortality does not necessarily result, an alternative ontology nevertheless begins to acquire its own material form. Like objects on the Borgesian planet of Tlön, the fictional world of Augusto Faroni eventually works its way back into Gregorio's material world. Eager to assure himself of the "existence" of Faroni,

Gregorio publishes a volume of “Faroni’s” poetry. Initially, the book only makes its way around the house:

Siete meses después, el 4 de Octubre, Gregorio recordó que a partir de entonces los libros comenzaron a aparecer en los lugares más insospechados: debajo de los muebles, en las alacenas de la cocina, entre el ramaje de una maceta, al desdoblar una manta . . . y en todos los trajes, abrigos, batas y pijamas. . . . Vivían rodeados, acechados, sorprendidos y derrotados por aquel mar de letra impresa. La madre habló de plagas justicieras, y el perrillo, cada vez que encontraba un libro, se ponía a ladrar furiosamente a su alrededor.

(237)

Soon, however, the volumes extend beyond the home front as Gregorio places them in public libraries and leaves them with new acquaintances. In the countryside, Gil turns profits with his copies and creates the first "Círculo Cultural Faroni" (237).

When Gil finally visits the city toward the end of the novel he is able to find Faroni’s poetry in the National Library. At the same time Gregorio chances upon a suit of clothing matching that which he has described as belonging to Faroni. He begins faithfully wearing the suit to weekly literary gatherings where he comes to be known as his alias. By the novel’s end, when Gregorio’s lies have led him into criminal activity, the police base their investigation on biographical information concerning Faroni they find in the volume of poetry. To Gregorio’s delight, the false photos he includes in the collection, pictures of Faroni in the Arctic, the Amazon, Baghdad, and

other exotic locations, fool even the police. At the same time, don Antón, another man caught up in Gregorio's lies, inflicts actual physical violence on the literary group Faroni attends in defense of his own version of Faroni as cuckolded husband.

While Gregorio's Lacanian coming-of-age begins producing a subjectivity so overdetermined that it actually begins to double, the gap between fantastic city and miserable country that have permitted this subjectivity increasingly widens to a point that all subjectivities, once produced by this gap, threaten to fall through and collapse within it. Consequently, the division also threatens to overrun the bounds of the reader's willing suspension of disbelief. Yet, even as Gregorio keeps imagining increasingly complex methods for maintaining a separation between his city and Gil's country, thereby maintaining intact his alternative ontology, Landero keeps this suspension on edge by fomenting a spirit of plurality with respect to the final meanings of the same city/country division. In early flashbacks, Landero symbolically places the idea of geography in one of Gregorio's three childhood books, foregrounding the discursively constructed nature of space. As the novel progresses, Landero follows up on this symbolic reapproximation to supposedly stable space by intertwining apparently straightforward city/country divisions with disconcerting temporal shifts in the narrative. From the novel's opening line Landero distances the reader from literal or purely allegorical readings of the city/country binary through disruption of linear time. As critics have noted, on the surface Landero's novel seems not far removed from the straightforward narrations of

nineteenth-century realism; one review goes so far as to compare Landero's style to that of Galdós (Mainer 130-32; Hidalgo Bayal 114). On closer examination, however, the supposedly linear narrative thread starts to unravel.

Landero begins his novel *in medias res* as Gregorio recalls the events that have led him to the state of panic in which he finds himself as he awakes on the morning of an October 4th of an unknown year. The early flashbacks of the novel are interpolated with this present-tense narration of Gregorio's moves during the October morning. The reader learns in fragmented fashion that Gregorio awakens late to the sound of drums signaling the approach of a parade in honor of the unnamed but unmistakable figure of Franco, who *appears* to be celebrating 25 years of peace. Gregorio goes out into the street, loses himself in the parade, then while standing in a doorway spies a man in black from whom he must hide. These returns to a present--the full meaning of which the narration hides for yet another 150 pages--serve as key elements to the novel's most obvious enigmatic code: discovering what has happened to Gregorio. But they also combine with additional interior analepses to disconcert the reader, removing the narrative from a superficially realist plane to an abstract, atemporal, and even mythic one.

From within the memories recalled from October 4, the child, adolescent, and young adult Gregorio also experience their own respective flashbacks. Perhaps the most disorienting of the *mise-en-abyme*-style memories occurs while the Gregorio of October 4 recalls a summer in his youth. As part of that memory Gregorio

concentrates on a particular summer day when he felt “que la memoria se le iluminaba dolorosamente hasta adquirir la transparencia escénica e irreal de un acuario. . . . Parecía que el destino, a cambio de la inmolación le concedía el poder de los recuerdos claros e imprevistos. . . . Y el silencio era tal que la noción del tiempo se perdía” (49,50). Either within this memory or without, one of the two Gregorios (that of October 4th or that of the Summer of his youth) then searches through the depths of time for some childhood moment referred to merely as “aquel episodio olvidado de la infancia” (50):

Era como la memoria le ofreciese la posibilidad de un último refugio, y por un instante se estremeció en la oscuridad, pensando que acaso había equivocado la busca de la isla, imaginándola en los confines oceánicos y no en el mapa no menos fabuloso de su propio pasado. Lleno de milagrosa levedad, apretó los ojos y se dejó hundir en el tiempo. (50)

As if moving independently through time, Gregorio’s memory first mistakenly ends up in its search for “that unforgettable episode” in ancient Egypt. Only after this misadventure does Gregorio finally arrive at the memory of his grandfather. The doubled nature of this past episode challenges the reader’s attempt to know exactly whose memory this is. Is the Gregorio Olías of October 4 experiencing a flashback within a flashback, or is the child Gregorio experiencing a flashback within the adult Gregorio’s flashback? If the latter is the case, then what the reader experiences is not a simple linear move into the past carried out by a controlling focalizing character,

but the introduction of an additional ontologic level--produced as times and spaces shift together--into the previously unquestioned ontology of October 4. Furthermore, the inexplicable "arrival" of Gregorio's memory in ancient Egypt wrests the power of memory from either of the "Gregorios," introducing yet another ontological level pertaining to the process of memory itself.

The frequent references to a specific number of years mixed with other general references to the past and present heighten this confusion. Within the novel's first forty pages the reader experiences at least nine changes in temporal location. The story begins referring to "veinticinco años después" (18), then tells the reader it was "nueve años desde su primera mentira" the last which occurred yesterday (19). From within the past it catapults the reader to "años más tarde" (20), then "muchos años después" (21,26), then back to "aquella mañana" (38), to "veinticinco años antes" (38), and finally to "aquel verano" (47). The narration then moves the reader to the already-mentioned temporal ambiguity of Gregorio's infant recollections, and finally launches into a future postdating the original October 4: "le recordaría mucho tiempo después" (58).

This disorienting mix of often ambiguous temporal references defeats readers' attempts to interpret Landero's novel historically. It invites instead a mythic reading, wherein the unnamed *generalísimo* celebrating twenty-five years of peace, is both the historical and the mythical Franco, and the year of the oft-cited October 4 is not just the historical 1964. Jo Labanyi, in her work on myth and history in the post-war

Spanish novel, explains that the conversion of historical referents into myth rescues novels from provincialism and gives them universal appeal (*Myth* 53). In the case of *Juegos de la edad tardía*, myth-making may serve then to rescue the references to the idyllic life of the country or to the chaos and mystery of the city from their anachronistic plight. Once mythologized, they cease being mere anachronistic references to the angst of the massive mid-century migrations that changed the face of Spain and take on deeper, more inclusive meanings.

At the same time, it would be wrong to call *Juegos de la edad tardía* a purely myth-based work. Instead, Landero's play with time creates a tension between historical time and mythic time that is not won or lost by either but is rather a dialogical interplay that is a key to the success of the novel. For example, though these numerous temporal shifts frustrate the readers' attempts to follow the sources and destinations of temporal references, they can still locate approximate dates and times. In fact, their identification is essential if the aforementioned cultural codes of the novel are to function. Readers' experiences with temporal play are similar to Gregorio's, who "queriendo burlar el tiempo, sólo consiguió vivirlo con una intensidad interminable" (232). In short, even while Gregorio and Gil are busy creating alternative worlds around what for them is a rigid paradigm of city and country values, Landero works to deconstruct any reified version of the same for the readers of the novel. But even so, Landero refrains from a complete demythification,

thereby assuring that the same readers can never fully escape the effects of Gregorio and Gil's mythic possibilities.

Notwithstanding the dynamic of the city/country binary, the rigid divisions established by the paradigm, and the possible world built upon them inevitably begin to collapse around Gregorio. After years of surviving by the word, Gregorio finds himself unemployed, unwelcome in his own home, and wanted for attempted murder—all results of his attempts to maintain his fantasy for an insatiable Gil and an increasingly insatiable double subjectivity. The now harried Gregorio senses that the only solution to his woes may be in traversing the city/country division entirely; that is, to abandon the city once and for all, and thereby, transcend the discursive division that separates him from Gil and allows the deception between them to continue.

Gregorio decides then to board the first train out of town. Despite his hurry, however, he makes one last stop at the flat of his neighbor, don Isaías. Don Isaías is an odd hermit with purportedly magical powers who seems to offer a possible final explanation for the madness in which Gregorio and the reader have been involved. He represents a kind of last-ditch opportunity for the protagonist to transcend the alienation and frustration of his bi-ontological existence. After over an hour of personal anecdote and homespun philosophy, however, don Isaías has explained little or nothing. Realizing his inability to offer help and desperate to salvage at least his reputation, don Isaías finally resorts to memories of his own childhood, as Gregorio, Gregorio's grandfather, and Gil all have previously. Don Isaías, then, explains that

his own childhood happiness depended above all on his possession of a large diamond. This happy state shattered one day when a raven snatched the gem up in its beak and flew away, while squawking the phrase, “Viva la España colonial.”

Don Isaías’s story seems absurd, another piece of nonsense in the diatribe of a madman. And yet, the narrative positioning of the reader to this point draws special attention to this particular absurdity. First, the story of the diamond figures as part of a childhood memoir, a form employed in the initial interpellation of the reader’s nostalgic desires. Of greater significance still, the raven’s seemingly out-of-place phrase speaks to readers experiencing their own contemporary spatially induced alienation. Indeed, Isidoro Alvarez Sacristán locates the origins of contemporary Spain’s most pressing socio-spatial tensions in the very collapse of Spanish colonial power to which the raven refers (114). Alvarez Sacristán explains that contemporary regionalist and neo-nationalist movements arise at precisely the moment when Spain loses its final colonies, and therewith loses the external “other” that had facilitated the nation’s only extended period of political, social, and cultural unity.

In short, the socio-spatial resonances of the raven’s call fill don Isaías’s anecdote with allegorical potential appropriate as much to tensions in the Spanish present as in its past. One may read the paradise that don Isaías remembers as a unified Spain, his diamond as the economic, cultural, and political security promised by the colonies, and in a larger sense, as a symbol of the power over an Other that maintained the Spanish sense of a unified identity. Many readers, of course, may not

capture or even accept such a strict reading; nevertheless, the narrative positioning suggests some connection between city/country and regional/national tensions.

Furthermore, readers subsequently learn that the disappearance of the diamond occurs during roughly the same years as the disaster in Cuba and that it is precisely the loss of the jewel that incites don Isaías to begin conjuring up the alchemy that eventually, they learn, instigates Gregorio's own sense of alienation.

Hence don Isaías's search for wholeness, a search with resonance to Spain's socio-political spatial divisions, engenders Gregorio's own spatially tied journey. Through this connection the connotations of the socio-spatial as defined within the rubric of the city/country binary expand. City/country becomes, as Pedro Bosch-Gimpera outlines in an analysis of Spanish regionalism, a metaphor for any number of socio-spatial divisions through the centuries. From historic clashes between Kings and *Comuneros* to the contemporary antagonism between the Madrid Federalists and the Basque Nationalists, center/regional and court/country (later city/country) divisions are inseparably linked (134).

Finally, the proliferation of flashbacks, flash-forwards, and indexical allusions to events impedes readers from locating stable temporal referents for the spatial divisions in the novel. Readers must work through the proliferating socio-spatial tensions without resort to the tools of a rational or even reliable historiography. Consequently, the city/country binary slides along the axis of history, picking up the multiple sociopolitical associations that Bosch-Gimpera identifies. This

accumulation then allows the novel to tap into readers' own ahistorical, utopian longings for wholeness in a contemporary Spain under the stress of ever-broadening and deepening city/country-modeled ideologies. The power of the novel then turns as much on the readers' utopian memory of the past as on their contemporary ideological positioning.

This combination of the utopian and the ideological, in conclusion, recalls Frederick Jameson's analysis of the postmodern. Jameson has defined the postmodern condition as neither historically (ideologically) centered, nor entirely cut off from its history (the utopian) (74, 75). In a sense Jameson describes the city/country binary in *Juegos de la edad tardía* when he explains that postmodern art draws explicit attention to history while simultaneously effacing any causal connection to that history (74, 75). This simultaneous awareness and negation of the past typifies contemporary Spanish culture in its search for identity. On the one hand, they are pulled by desires to tap into deep regionalist roots that often, like the realm of Faroni, only exist as far as the ontology-constructing capacity of language can take them. On the other hand, they seek to recreate themselves according to cosmopolitan modes. Torn by such seemingly incompatible desires, contemporary Spaniards live Jameson's postmodern contradiction.

Within the temporally disjointed play between city and country, readers just may encounter that combination of ideological challenge and utopian promise that characterizes their polarized identity. Such cultural schizophrenia ultimately responds

then to a novel that divides the reader between unresolvable binaries, in this case not only between that of the city and the country but between the anachronistic and absolutely contemporary.

Conclusion

During the 1980s a variety of city/country-structured divisions overlapped and interacted with tensions between seemingly anachronistic, premodern impulses and supposedly more contemporary, postmodern ones. The dialogism established within and between these two divisions, as manifest in *¿Qué he hecho yo . . . !!* and *Juegos de la edad tardía*, may reflect more accurately the experience of Spanish citizens in the decade than the more celebrated purely “postmodern” works. While Javier Marías was busy celebrating the continuation of the *movida* party, and while critics spoke in favor of its purely postmodern products, the actual political, economic, and social situation was anything but that of a pure Baudrillardian “fourth-order simulacra.” The premodern, both in its physical and social manifestations, continued intact throughout this period of supposedly intense social change. Not only did ancient farmhouses, churches, and plazas remain standing beside the most contemporary bars, billboards, and discotheques, but likewise old-fashioned, even anachronistic religious and political values not only remained but in fact in some case gained ground, holding in check any postmodern hopes for a radical, ideology-free society (Hooper 161-63, 172-75, 184). Hence, while purely postmodern impulses prospered to a certain

degree, the few anachronistic uses of city/country divisions may have been the most appropriate to Spain's contemporary condition.

As the decade progressed, however, new versions of city/country-styled film and narrative began to appear that, while having very little if anything to do with traditional Spanish pueblos and metropolii, nevertheless followed in many ways the same patterns as the old-fashioned city/country film and narrative. While Almodóvar and Landero continued to treat the traditional city/country division, many authors of the same generation began finding subject matter outside the increasingly porous national borders.

In many senses, the internationalizing impulse of these novels began to erase the differences between Spanish narrative and other national traditions. As if in fulfillment of postmodern prophecies of an end to traditional localist, regionalist, and nationalist conflicts in the face of an increasing globalism, many of these "Spanish" novels were only Spanish insofar as their protagonists happened to have Spanish origins. These novels seemed to register a new, universalizing spirit in Spain. And yet, just as political and economic conflicts throughout the globe have not disappeared with some kind of postmodern "end of history," but have in fact increased in many "postmodernizing" parts of the world, the globalization of Spanish narrative--the move of typical Spanish *paletos* abroad--was to open up narrative spaces at home for the country-to-city journey of another breed of immigrants, and for the emergence of a previously residual brand of city/country tensions. As the 1980s

came to an end, the political and economic inroads achieved by regionalist governments, historically subject to their own country-to-city (or often what was expressed as a country-to-court) relationship with the central government in Madrid, began to be peopled by cultural products that would reappropriate the city/country division once again in their own cinema and narrative. This placing of new wine in old bottles--of regional and neo-nationalist issues in terms of the old city/country division--would again vindicate the few "anachronistic" uses of the city/country division that held out in the face of the more common cultural currents of the 1980s. The question in the coming decade would be whether the "old bottles" would hold up to their new regionalist uses.

Of Cows and Melancholics:

Regional Cities and Countries in a Time of Globalization

Julio Medem's *Vacas* and Suso de Toro's *Calzados Lola*

In 1984, author Cristina Fernández Cubas in her debut novel, *El año de Gracia*, released her protagonist from the four walls of a monastic cell into first, the decadence of Parisian night life and then, onto a ship that would become lost at sea, and leave him, like some postmodern Spanish Robinson Crusoe, on a deserted island bathed in nuclear waste. As if taking their cue from Fernández Cubas, a rising generation of Spanish novelists began springing their own protagonists from the cells of Iberia, casting them out into international seas. In the late 1980s and early 1990s Antonio Muñoz Molina took his protagonists to Portugal (*El Invierno en Lisboa*, 1987), England, Italy (*Beltenebros*, 1989), and New York (*El jinete polaco*, 1992) in his rapid ascent into royal academia and popular acclaim. Soledad Puértolas finally reached a broad public in 1989 with *Queda la noche*, narrating the story of a bored thirty-year-old in search of adventure on vacation in the orient. Javier Marías, in Almodovarian fashion, garnered national consecration in the 1990s by first conquering English, French, and especially German audiences with *Todas las almas* (1989), *Corazón tan blanco* (1992), and *Mañana en la batalla piensa en mí* (1994), all novels set in a polyglot global culture. In the latter half of the 1990s, the move beyond national borders has only accelerated. Recent novels by the former Madrid-obsessed novelist Rosa Montero (*La hija del Caníbal*, 1997), the traditional

city/country-focused Carmen Martín Gaité (*Irse de casa*, 1998), and heralded newcomer Juan Manuel de Prada (*La tempestad*, 1997) each begin with trips to or from major foreign cities. The winner of the 1997 Critics Prize for literature, Miguel Sánchez Ostiz's *No existe tal lugar* focuses on the plans of a marginalized Navarese living in Madrid to abandon his native land for Tierra del Fuego. Many of the recent literary awards--especially the most remunerative ones (notorious for their popular rather than critical register)--have fallen to this kind of travel/adventure literature (Premio Josep Pla, 1996 to Pep Subirat's *Cita en Tombuctú*, Premio Primavera de Novela, 1997 to Montero's novel, Premio Planeta, 1997 to Manuel de Prada's novel), confirming a popular approval of the novelistic obsession with the global.

The cinema has likewise expanded its focus. From Vicente Aranda's popular *La pasión turca* (1994)--based on Antonio Gala's own best-selling "travel" novel--to José Luis Guerín's more artistic *Innisfree* (1990) and Julio Medem's recent *Los amantes del círculo polar* (1998), Spanish directors are searching increasingly for subject matter that could not be considered traditionally Spanish. Even movies set within the peninsula, such as José Juan Bigas Lunas's trilogy of "Retratos Ibéricos" or Alex de la Iglesia's *El día de la bestia* (1995), manifest the anxieties of globalization (D'Lugo, "Form" 197; Kinder, "Refiguring" 21).

In the 1990s, Spain has moved outward. From the premodern Castilian pueblos to the ultramodern metropolii of Madrid and Barcelona, contemporary "Spain" appears to have extended its vision beyond its own growing cities and dying

pueblos. If narrative continues to serve as any kind of a register of Spanish society, Spain is now as much New York, Paris, London, Istanbul--even Tombuctú and Tierra del Fuego--as Las Hurdes, Villar del Río, Mágina, or Madrid.⁸⁶ In the 1990s the unified, homogenous Spain of the Franco years appears finally to have dismantled.

Of course, national borders, however porous they are now, were never as solid as Franco's centralist regime was wont to make them. Indeed, as much as Franco argued homogenization, and as effectively as his centralist hegemony worked, counter hegemonic forces were constantly at work within Spanish culture. From the earliest years of the Franco regime, the margins of what was officially considered as "Spain" (labeled as "Anti-Spain") produced their own version of "Spanish" culture. The most conspicuous products of this extended, counter hegemonic Spain came from artists, writers, and directors living in postwar exile. Novelists such as Francisco Ayala, Max Aub, and Ramón J. Sender, and such poets as Juan Ramón Jiménez and Jorge Guillén continued to write in their native tongue. But now they did so from new homes in Argentina, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the United States. Although economic factors prohibited the same counter hegemonic outpouring from cinema, director Luis Buñuel single-handedly problematized the very notion of "Spanish" cinema through his mere presence as an active filmmaker in exile.

Nevertheless, the geographic and ideological distance of these artists from their national homeland caused much of their work to drop out of the national tradition. The exiled novelists in particular were quickly forgotten as "Spanish" and

yet they never quite succeeded at being accepted as part of an Argentine, Puerto Rican, or North American tradition. Buñuel and the exiled poets, while enjoying international reputations that predated their exile, lost their place following the civil war in the national histories that often figure in determining what future audiences read.⁸⁷ In the face of twentieth-century scholarly obsessions with national traditions, much of the work of the writers of the so-called anti-Spain has slipped through the fissures that result in the encounter between cultures, caught as it were in the interstices of a kind of city/country relationship existing between civilized Spain and its ruffian colonial children.

A different fate, however, has followed another group that likewise belonged to the “Anti-Spain” and wrote in “exile” during the Franco years. While Sender or Buñuel challenged the external borders of Franco’s sacred Castilian homeland, a younger generation of marginalized artists whittled away at the internal structure of the monolithic state. Writing from what Paul Illie describes as a state of “inner-exile,”⁸⁸ novelists such as Josep Pla and Mercé Rodoreda in Cataluña, José Luis Alvarez Emparanza (Txillardegí) and Ramón Saizarbitoria in the Basque Country, and Eduardo Blanco-Amor and Alvaro Cunqueiro in Galicia challenged the limits of “Spanish” writing through stories not only set in their marginalized homelands but written in languages described by the Franco regime as “anti-patriotic,” “barbaric,” and compared to “barking.” (Tarrío Varela, *Literatura* 147; Rosenthal 7). Notwithstanding the opposition, these writers not only persevered but in fact evolved

their struggling regional traditions, bringing these in line with the most contemporary international cultural currents (Lasagabaster 5). Indeed, by the end of the Franco years, some of the most innovative cultural work in Spain--in the novel as well as in poetry (Pere Gimferrer) and theater (the Catalan troupes *Els Comediants* and *Els Joglars*)--was being produced in languages and by ethnicities still officially anathema.

In spite of such progress, at the moment of considering mainstream city/country divisions in Spain during the Franco years, the margins remain marginalized even in this study. Those works which demand initial attention are those that have had to this point the most significant impact. Notwithstanding the potential insight that the works of exile might provide, they simply did not have the critical or popular impact of the more “Castilian” works.

In recent years, however, a shift has begun to take place within the Spanish canon with respect to the works of exile. This is particularly true in the case of the regionalist writers. In fact, at least in critical circles, Pla, Rodoreda, Txillardegui, Saizarbitoria, Cunqueiro, and Blanco-Amor seem to be enjoying a return from what was perhaps an even more marginalized position than that of their trans-Atlantic associates. While the regionalist writers certainly did not go without certain recognition during the Franco years, that recognition initially placed them as somewhat marginal figures, either pegged as definitively Catalan, Basque, or Galician, or simply read as minor figures within the “Spanish” tradition. Now, not

only are they being reread by a younger generation in search of roots but new histories are being published that recognize their contributions to the development of present identities.⁸⁹

The causes of this rise are most readily found in the renewed political and economic opportunities that the Constitution of 1978 afforded Spain's historical regions. Certainly the establishment of "linguistic normalization" including bilingual and mandatory education in regional languages would produce a wealth of readers for whom regionalist works might otherwise have proved forbidding if not inaccessible. Equally important, democratic changes provided some of the new autonomous governments with substantial cultural budgets that in turn sustained the rise of local publishing houses, writers' workshops, theater groups, and regionalist filmmakers. The private sector as well--especially the numerous regional banks--seeking local loyalties further sustained suddenly prestigious regionalist cultural activities.

But as much of a paradox as it may seem, the steady rise of regionalist culture in contemporary Spain has as much to do with the aforementioned Spanish globalization as with any return to localism. As the novels of Fernández Cubas, Marías, and Muñoz Molina show, while regionalism was on the rise, so too was globalization. Local Spanish self-discovery has in fact gone hand-in-hand with its discovery by and of the outside world that has proceeded at a breakneck pace not dissimilar to the speed of the Marshall Plan motorcade blowing through Villar del Río in the ironically prophetic *Bienvenido, Mr. Marshall* (1954). Rosa Montero calls the

“incredible speed” of Spain’s evolution from pre- to postmodern “staggering” (“Political” 315). María García de León writes: “En escasas décadas nos volvimos tan modernos que olvidamos norias y albercas, trillos y botijos, señoritos, mulas y eras, campesinos pobres, a fin de cuentas aquello que componía el paisaje y el paisanaje español hasta hace tres días. Eramos rurales--ruralones y en breve nos convertimos en urbícolas y hasta <<yuppies>>” (“Presentación” 11). Globalization has intensified thanks to the explosion of a high-tech communications industry in recent years bringing the outside world into Spanish living rooms as never before. In the late 1980s, private television and radio was finally legalized, inviting foreign competition and foreign programming to occupy and even dominate national airwaves. A mere decade later, Spain has skipped entirely over the nearly twenty-year love affair with cable that occurred in the United States, moving directly into the digital age of satellite television with its almost limitless number of offerings from all corners of the globe (Iñaki 26). Spaniards have Americanized, quickly embracing the comedy of Will Smith, the drama of *E.R.*, and the North American conspiracy paranoia of *The X Files*.

At the same time, a now thoroughly metropolitan Spain has experienced a physical invasion of its soil by another generation of *paletos* from the hunger-plagued *campos* of Africa and Latin America. These immigrants have brought with them their own global culture, with its own unique standards of dress, diet, and work ethic. This influx of foreign culture has posed at least a perceived threat to defenders of unique

Spanish life styles (Sánchez 20). Since the democracy, racist actions, though isolated and unorganized, have increasingly made headlines.⁹⁰ Recently, Spain's conservative *Partido Popular* has risen to power on a platform of a new kind of Spanish unity that some see as an appeal to renewed national xenophobia (Martí-Olivella 216).

But again, as paradoxical as it may seem, the very globalization of mass media, the very homogenization of the culture, and the very return of xenophobic centralism in a postmodern context may be that which has most actively fomented the rise of regionalism. If Spain discovered its internal imperialism with the loss of empire in 1898, today a new foreign immigration and a global mass media have reintroduced both a new potentially colonized (immigrants) on the one hand, and a threatening colonizer (global media and capitalist culture) on the other. Curiously, while these new "others" unite Spain in a kind of post-totalitarian centralism, they also, through their own very strong "otherness," soften the relative threat of regional revival. At the same time, the mass media invasion of Spain has produced a new generation of globally savvy, street smart Spaniards who no longer flee from localisms. As Juan Mariscal, the Valencian artist and creator of the 1992 Barcelona Olympic mascot "Cobi," explains: "I think we are the first generation that has crossed international borders without a beret and without an inferiority complex; the first that has known how to sell, in a dignified and correct manner, a totally modern image of Spain, a Spain at the same time attached to very strong roots" (qtd. in

Morris, "Introduction" 9). The new Spaniard can embrace its internal "Other" with confidence, and in that "other" can then find comparative security.

Indeed, as paradoxical as it may seem, Spain's reaction to homogenizing globalization with a renewed centrifugal energy follows similar patterns noted by political geographers the world over. As Frederick Buell explains, while globalization may on the one hand homogenize, its components--expanding capitalism, Western rationality, and its corresponding breakdown of tradition--rather than homogenizing produces a breakdown of identity that exacerbates society and ethnic self-consciousness (8). Globalization both centralizes and marginalizes. While on the one hand, Spaniards may possess the best of both worlds, on the other, the move between leaves them continually in flux, always as it were in the margins between either world. Indeed, as Rosa Montero describes, the contemporary Spaniard no longer belongs to center or periphery, but instead must live with a sense of homelessness ("Political" 319).

Within a field characterized by homelessness, marginalized fields and the regional artists that inhabit them have found new space for maneuver. Homelessness has led to breakdowns in traditions and the cultural fields to which they give rise. Perhaps the most extreme example of this breakdown has occurred in the field of "Spanish" poetry where the globalist/regionalist tension has produced a field so dispersed, so heterogeneous, that contemporary critics find themselves unable to describe it (Silver 76). The now wide open field of Spanish culture has allowed what

might be described in the terms of Pierre Bourdieu as a new exercise of *habitus* on the part of Pla's, Txillardegí's, or Blanco-Amor's literary progeny. Suddenly, young regional writers find themselves in a position wherein, using tools they already possess, they can articulate their experiences to a broader audience. Consequently, numerous Catalan, Galician, and even Basque novelists now appear on bookstore shelves alongside more traditionally Castilian narrative. The first critical confirmation of the place of the margins in "Spanish" literature came in 1986 when Alfredo Conde's *Xa vai o griffón no vento* received both the *Premio Nacional* and *Premio de la Crítica*. But consecration of regionalist literature has come only in the current decade. In 1993 Bernardo Atxaga's Basque-written novel, *Obabakoak*, also received both literary prizes. The next year Galician Suso de Toro's *Tic-Tac* won the same awards, followed by Carme Riera's similar triumph in 1995 with her Catalan novel, *Dins el darrer blau* (translated into Castilian as *En el último azul*). Finally, another Galician, Manuel Rivas completed a four-year sweep by regionalist novels in 1996 with his collection of short stories, *¿Que me queres amor?*.

Cinema has manifest similar centrifugal tensions, though for obvious economic reasons, the decentralization has been less pronounced. Thanks to a vigorous program of economic subventions to works produced in Basque or by or with Basque personnel, the pull has been particularly pronounced in the Basque country. Consequently, from the late 1980s a generation of young Basque directors has come of age, boasting such talent as Montxo Armendáriz (*Tasio*, 1984), Juanma

Bajo Ulloa (*Alas de mariposa*, 1991), and Julio Medem (*Vacas*, 1991) among others. A young generation of Catalan directors has also enjoyed a degree of success with directors such as José Luís Guerin (*Innisfree*, 1990), and Agustín Villaronga (*Tras el cristal*, 1985).

The “triumph” of these regionalists, has of course, been a triumph based on centralist, and increasingly globalist, values. As some have suggested, the recent triumphs of regional works may be less a triumph of those cultures and more a sign of the final subsumption of these by the continuing Castilian hegemony. For these critics, to succeed in the center is necessarily to accede to the center. Basque critic Ibon Sarasola contests this critique specifically in the case of Atxaga’s triumph with *Obobakoak*, explaining that such a victory is at worst a necessary evil that finally places Basque literature on an even plane with the rest of the world (25).

But at another level, the critique of regionalist triumph is flawed just as any assumption of an unprecedented “breaking-out” by the Spanish novel in the 1980s is flawed. For just as this kind of reading implicitly accepts the Francoist notion of a unified, homogenous, and even culturally autarkic Spain, the rejection of regionalist triumphs in the center assumes a certain homogeneity in their own regions and a certain neatness in the division between Madrid and the historic regions that ultimately contradict their very *raison d’etre* of the various regionalisms. In terms of the division around which this study has been based, these commentators uncritically accept the romantic notion of a clean city/country division between Madrid and the

historic regions when in fact the porous nature of the division has inspired such a mythology in the first place.

In the last decade some of the best of the above-mentioned regional novelists such as Atxaga, Rivas, and director Montxo Armendáriz have turned once again to the city/country division in order to work through the tensions between multiple and conflicting peripheries that color the contemporary regionalist coming-of-age. Two in particular, Basque director Julio Medem and Galician novelist Suso de Toro have dealt explicitly with questions of national identity through a play between city and country.

The two initially appear to offer rather distinct prisms through which to study this dynamic and its relation to national identity. In a trilogy of highly metaphorical, frustratingly enigmatic movies, *Vacas* (1991), *La ardilla roja* (1992), and *Tierra* (1996), Basque director Julio Medem offers stories that avoid the direct address of his own Basque identity. In fact, Medem has shrugged off serious talk concerning Basque issues in relation to his films (Smith, "Angels" 14). Galician novelist Suso de Toro, on the other hand, established an early reputation for aggressive, technically ambitious explorations of Galician society and identity in novels such as *Polaroid* (1986), *Landrover* (1988) and *Tic-tac* (1993). In his most recent fiction, *Calzados Lola* (1998), the obsession with regional identity seems almost too apparent, and too simplistic. But whether from a point of enigma or from one of simplicity, both Medem's and Toro's work ultimately register similar complications in the identity

politics facing contemporary Spaniards. The two show through their apparent celebrations of regional cultures the heterogeneity within the Spanish nation, exposing the multiple layers of city/country relations that make every conflict between the urban and the rural at once a conflict between politico-economic centers and peripheries. At the same time, both works reveal that within the “countries” that stand for the regional homelands there exists an historical and contemporary wealth of other city/country relations in a never-ending *mise-en-abyme* succession that calls into question any notion of a fixed, homogeneous identity. In short, these works register the contemporary plight of the homeless Spaniard, a plight marked by an intense search for identity in a globalized postmodern world where none can be found.

Vacas

One of the favorite sites wherein Spanish citizens have been able to witness depictions of their supposedly essential identities has been in the long national history of rural cinema. Some of Spain’s most notable silent films such as Florián Rey’s *La aldea maldita* (1930) focused on the life in rural villages that so many Spaniards had left behind in the first three decades of the century. During the Franco years Antonio del Amo’s *Sierra maldita* (1954) and Tulio Demichelli’s *Carmen la de Ronda* (1959), among others, celebrated rural traditions, poeticizing small-town folkloric activity and resorting to historical traditions in order to remind Spanish spectators from whence they had come.

In the mid-1970s a new more intensely poetic depiction of the most primitive aspects of Spanish rural life began to appear regularly in local cinemas. Movies such as Elías Querejeta's *Habla mudita* (1973) depicted the rural as a wild, untamed, primordial space that might facilitate escape from the psychological pressures of civilization. José Luis Borau's *Furtivos* (1976), Mario Camus's *Los días del pasado* (1977), and Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón's *En el corazón del bosque* (1978) depicted rural Spain as a harsh, untamed landscape that offered refuge to those who refused to conform to the laws governing the civilization that lay on either side of their mountain valleys.

The majority of these wilderness films were set in the mountains of the north, geographically and historically appropriate to their use as last bastions of escape from civilization. It was natural then that in the mid-1980s, as regionalist sentiments grew, and as the Basque question in particular refused to disappear, a new generation of Basque directors would turn to this same genre of cinema and the same rural locations as in their earliest films. In 1984 Montxo Armendáriz directed his first major film, *Tasio* (1984), the story of a Basque *carbonero* (carbon-maker) and part-time poacher who refuses to abandon his mountain home in spite of economic and political pressures.

Julio Medem established himself according to many as the surest talent of the new Basque cinema with a film that Paul Julian Smith describes as “an idiosyncratic epic of rivalry amongst three generations of families in a lush Basque valley”

("Angels" 12). Indeed, Medem shot his film in what Sara Torres describes as "posiblemente el valle más hermoso y virgen de toda Euskadi: el Baztán" (95). Nuria Vidal writes that the first images of the movie situate spectators in "un mundo ancestral primitivo" (8). Ironically, the same critics that gush over the spectacular rural settings of the film insist that *Vacas* is nonetheless not another "rural" film (Vidal 8; Torres 95; Smith, "Angels" 12). Medem himself concurs, explaining, "Nunca he tenido la intención, al menos consciente, de hacer una película rural" (Torres 95). Medem associates "rural" cinema in particular with *costumbrismo*--a movement with which he is admittedly uncomfortable (Torres 95). Smith's definition of *Vacas* as non-rural draws parallels between the "rural" and depictions of socioeconomic conditions ("Angels" 12).

But if *Vacas* is not "rural" according to such definitions, it nevertheless bares resemblances that at least have necessitated such explanations on the part of critics. Indeed, it can be said that *Vacas* arises out of the rural tradition much as the *Quijote* arose from that of chivalric romances. And like Cervantes's novel, *Vacas* both contests the tradition and extends it. In the following analysis I want to consider the nature of a movie that focuses on rural Basque society and yet is not a rural film. In so doing, I will posit *Vacas* as a cinematic and postmodern manifestation of what literary historian Leo Marx calls the "pastoral" tradition. As a contemporary "pastoral" *Vacas* explores the irresolvable and intertwined oppositions that produce "rural" Basque identity and culture. Through a modern day pastoral, Medem works

out the tensions between three generations of Basque families as a metaphor for the tensions between nature and civilization that ultimately suggests a deconstruction of traditional notions of Basque identity.

In *The Machine in the Garden*, a study of the pastoral ideal in American writing, Marx investigates the use of “pastoral” literature in the making of America. Marx defines “pastoral” in opposition to a so-called spirit of “primitivism”--what Medem or Smith might refer to as “rural.” While primitivism registers a pure back-to-nature impulse, a desire to return to some anarchic primitive existence before or beyond the touch of civilization, pastorals present a more imaginative, complex desire to reconcile the tension between nature and artifice--or as Marx also calls it, the age-old conflict between the country and the city (5, 11, 22). “The vital element in pastoral,” according to Marx is “the design, the ordering of meaning and value around the contrast between two styles of life, one identified with a rural and the other with an urban setting” (94). The confluence of civilization and wilderness rather than leading to the “paving” of the countryside, converts the rural into a much more complex state, producing unresolvable tensions, dislocations, conflicts, and anxieties in transcendent relation to the civilization/nature conflict (15, 16, 22). In other words, in the pastoral, the rural is preserved, but only as the product of an unresolvable confluence of city/country conflicts. For Marx, this unresolved tension embodies a larger experience of political or social bearing that transcends the cultural product that expresses it (25).

From its opening scene Medem's movie foregrounds the interaction of civilization and nature, in the production of the rural, as well as in the construction of the ideologies that use that rural as a foundation. During opening credits an "aizkolari" (a traditional Basque lumberjack) chops at a fallen log in the hollow of a thick forest, suggesting the role of civilization in the construction of the rural. Following this brief, enigmatic sequence, Medem cuts to the first of four episodes that comprise the film. "El aizkolari cobarde" (1875) narrates the meeting of the patriarchs of two neighboring Basque families, the Irigibels and the Mendiluzes in a trench on the front of the second Carlist War. While the scene takes place in the lush mountains of Basque country, a lengthy trench stretches across the mountain battlefield symbolically scarring the primitive wilderness. Hundreds of red-beretted Carlist soldiers fill the trenches, their presence suggesting the extent of the literal and figurative scars of civilization on their "rural" existence. The Carlist struggle recalls a history of relations between a civilizing Madrid-based court and the erstwhile rural idyll that is the Basque Country. Not only has the landscape, championed by nineteenth-century-style nationalist fervor, already been tainted by earlier civilizing troops, but the primitive rights for which Irigibel, Mendiluz, and their Basque brothers fight are in fact a result of earlier participation in the affairs of their now vilified Castilian dominators that dates back to the first century of the Reconquest (Hooper 391). If the *aizkolari* in the forest underscored the civilization that constructs the rural, the Carlist trenches foreground the integral role that a "corrupting" foreign

civilization plays in the historical formation of the beloved Basque rural homeland for whose “purity” militants valiantly give their lives.

Indeed, Medem’s use of the Carlist wars as an introduction to his depiction of rural Basque country awakens nationalist sensibilities only to expose their theoretically soft underbelly, especially if we consider the connection of these sensibilities with the rural. That is, not only does Medem refer to the Carlist Wars, but he does so in a setting that, like so much of the earlier rural cinema, establishes a connection between the nationalist politics that stem from the War and the land on which the adherents to these politics live. Like every other Spanish nationalism except the Catalan, Basque nationalism has historically employed the tension of country versus city to represent its struggle against the Castilian imperialism (Uceland 37). Sabina de Arana Goiri, father of the contemporary Basque nationalist movement centered his movement from its inception on the idea of returning “the Basque country to a state of pre-industrial innocence” (Hooper 396). As the only European ethnic community to have apparently lived in the same place since the stone age, the link between ethnic identity and an unspoiled land has been particularly strong for the Basques (Hooper 387). To this day the Basques continue to be a mostly rural population, scattered throughout the countryside in precisely the kind of combination barn/homes or *caseríos* that Medem depicts in *Vacas* (Hooper 392). Finally, radical Basque nationalism receives the bulk of its most militant support from these rural areas that once so ardently defended the Carlist cause (Hooper 399).

The trench full of Carlist soldiers dug into the heart of a rural Basque valley thus awakens simultaneously Basque nationalist sentiment and its connection to the land, only to challenge their shared foundations. From the beginning, Medem seems eager to eliminate tendencies to idealize the rural, sensing perhaps the impediment to clarity of thought that such idealization encourages (Marx 7). Yet, at the same time, by awakening the primitivist spirit, Medem facilitates the exploration of what Marx calls the collective neurosis that primitivist longings signal (8).

The collective neurosis--what Freud calls the chronic yearning for freedom from the grip of external repression--further awakens when federalist soldiers overrun the Carlist trenches, mortally wounding Mendiluz in the process. At this point, the neurosis takes on a new twist that complicates Medem's exploration of Basque identity internally even as the Carlist battle has complicated it externally. Irigibel, after proving himself a coward in battle, eludes capture (and further military service) by covering himself in the flowing blood of his still conscious neighbor. The bleeding Mendiluz gives his life, in a sense, to save his bloodied neighbor. Irigibel, in partaking of Mendiluz's blood, finds new life. The blood-sharing forges a kind of primitive--and symbolically religious--bond between the rival families, even as the site of this bonding (the civilizing trenches) links this primitivism to an already complex interaction between city and country.

The lone witness to this blood-stained resurrection is, oddly enough, a dairy cow. After falling from a cart of dead corpses en route to his escape, a still-bloodied

Irigibel finds himself staring into the face of a cow. Medem's camera zooms in on the eye of the cow until the spectator seems to plunge into its pupil. Within the pupil, the spectator hurtles as it were through time, and emerges thirty years later in 1905 whereupon begins the second episode of the movie, "Las hachas." In this second episode the cowardly Irigibel is now the father of a grown son, Ignacio, whose own speed as a champion *aizkolari* is rivaled only by the endurance of the late Mendiluz's son of approximately the same age, Juan. "Las hachas" focuses on the rivalry between the two sons, on the growing wealth and fame of Ignacio Irigibel in *aizkolari* competitions, and on the realization of a mutual but forbidden passion between Ignacio and Juan's sister, Catalina. While "El aizkolari cobarde" emphasized the connections between nature and civilization before focusing more narrowly on the connections between two Basque families, "Las hachas" concentrates on family ties only to underline the links between familial connections and the nature/civilization dichotomy.

"Las hachas" functions first to establish the two families as rivals. While *aizkolari* competition is the most obvious factor in the rivalry, it is apparent that the Mendiluz matriarch knows the reason behind Irigibel's survival and her husband's death. Medem punctuates the rivalry through color schemes, the Mendiluz black contrasting sharply with the Irigibel white. But while the families seem polar opposites, a more profound antagonism--that of their struggle against nature from within the bounds of nature (that is the very essence of the *aizkolari*)--unites them and

begins to break the opposition down. When Ignacio returns home with a foreign-bred dairy cow he has purchased thanks to his *aizkolari* triumphs, he describes the heifer to his daughter Cristina as white with black spots. Cristina insists instead that it is, in fact, black with white spots. Their brief debate calls into question the supposed black/white opposition between the families and, in turn, reminds the spectator of the life-saving blood that has symbolically mixed the Mendiluz and Irigibel lines. In symbolically borrowing Mendiluz's life, Irigibel has become Mendiluz. The rural inhabitants of the valley are in a sense one large family led by one matriarch, the Mendiluz widow, and one patriarch, Irigibel, joined by the blood of Mendiluz. Ignacio and Juan, despite their rivalry, are in fact literal "hermanos de sangre," their opposing black and white manners of dress coming together in a mutual connection to the evolving city/country relations of their rural homeland that first brought them together. And, at the same time that the speckled exterior of the new cow symbolically connects the feuding families, its nature as a domesticated milk cow recalls the pastoral combination of nature and artifice, of the primitive and the civilized that first brought the two families together. Consequently, Medem's pastoral of geographic tensions becomes a pastoral of social tensions.

Moreover, Medem "pastoralizes" the combination of the two now interacting pastorals, by exploring this interaction not only through the symbol of the dairy cow, but in fact, through the eyes of the cow itself. From the first act of the dairy cow in "El aizkolari cobarde" of cow-as-witness, and the subsequent positioning of the

spectator as if a traveler within the gaze of the cow, the cows become, as it were, principal barers of the spectatorial “gaze.” The argument could be made that the final three episodes of the movie are all structured as intradiegetic narrations as seen through the original dairy cow’s eye. Indeed, Smith has described *Vacas* as a movie told through “ironic shots from the point of view of the cows of the title,” that he calls “mute witnesses to human absurdity” (“Angels” 12).

When Ignacio brings home his prize black/white milk cow, however, the role of the cow extends beyond a mere barer-of-the-gaze. Curious to discover what this new cow sees, the elder Irigibel--the original object of the cow-gaze--stares into the cow’s eye. The spectator, rather than seeing what the grandfather sees, views a reverse shot of the grandfather’s eye. At its most simple level, this curious reverse-shot confirms the cow’s role as viewer of human action. At deeper levels, however, the cow becomes first a mirror of human action, and finally, a replacement of the grandfather, converging the black/white or bloodied/bleeding Irigibel with the black/white dairy cow. Hence, in addition to standing as mute witnesses, as almost unperceived barers of the spectator’s gaze, as in an almost absurd sense stand-ins for the cinematographer and thus for the spectator, cows at the various intradiegetic levels seem to fuse with the humans with whom they interact. This fusion becomes apparent in the opening scene of “Las hachas,” in which the grandfatherly Irigibel sits painting what appears to be a portrait of his three granddaughters and the family dairy cow. The six-year-old Cristina, who enjoys a unique understanding of her unusual

grandfather, remarks that the portrait is of only the cow. When her sisters ask Irigibel if this is true he replies that they all appear, stating, “Todo el mundo sabe que una vaca no se sujeta solo, y mucho menos en un cuadro.” The spectator, enjoying a privileged camera angle that takes in grandfather, portrait, and models sees, however, only the likeness of a cow on the canvass. As the grandfather’s words still sound in the spectators’ ears, Cristina shews the cow away allowing her sisters to check the painting. The grandfather continues to paint. In a reverse shot, the spectator sees Cristina posing, standing as if knowing that while her grandfather was only painting the cow (that which she told her sisters), he is indeed at the same time painting her. Cristina and cow fuse in the minds of the spectator as they apparently already have in the mind and on the canvass of Irigibel. Cristina’s gaze back onto her grandfather then is not merely a human gaze, but is itself inseparable from the already potent gaze of the cow. Smith’s description of the cows as directing the gaze, again extends the connection between nature and humans, then, to an extra-filmic level, foregrounding Medem’s and the spectator’s positions as likewise “cow”-like.

The cow/human interconnection reaches its apex at the conclusion of the second episode in the long-anticipated consummation of Ignacio and Catalina’s growing passion. Medem’s choice of music and camera angle for this scene presents this potentially erotic encounter, however, as if it were merely the mating of two animals--or a cow and bull--in the middle of the forest. After panning the two copulating bodies from bottom to top, Medem’s insect’s-eye-view camera continues

along the forest floor without a break, up to the Irigibel farm. There Ignacio and his family--continuing the panting noises heard in the forest--now assist the black/white cow birthe a calf.

The next scene cuts the spectator to the third episode of the movie, "El agujero encendido," set ten years later in 1915. The episode opens with the shot of a ten-year-old boy accompanying a now teenage Cristina and the grandfather. The boy, Peru, is apparently the son of Ignacio and Catalina. But syntagmatically, he is also the calf of the black/white heifer. This third episode follows the relationship of the now two calf/children Cristina and Peru and their increasingly senile cow/grandfather, the aging Irigibel. The three appropriately spend much of their time exploring their natural surroundings centered around a hole in an old stump that they call, "El agujero encendido." While the three cow/people seem to move ever-closer to the primitive, Irigibel grows increasingly rich through his success as an *aizkolari*. Medem signals this success through yet another parade up to the Irigibel farmhouse. This second parade, rather than revolving around another black/white dairy cow, celebrates the purchase of a large automobile boasting a white paint job with black trim. As time has passed, the rural world has increasingly modernized. First, foreign dairy cows replaced domestic ones. Now machines replace animals. Nevertheless, within modernization and the increased civilization that it brings, the primitive remains. The connection to the past, and therefore, the interraction of the past with the present and of the natural with the artificial, continues. The irreconcilable pastoral tensions that

have characterized this mountain valley since its origins, will remain, even into its future--no matter the possible “paving” that may take place. Indeed, as the war in the final episode suggests, while time marches on, the course of that time is as circular as it is progressive.

Certainly, the car does not bring with it the end of the rural, but rather brings further technology that provides for the enhancement of the rural. A group of reporters with tripod cameras accompany Ignacio and his new automobile to his *caserío*. With the help of Peru and Cristina, the grandfather steals one of the cameras. In the camera lense, the grandfather discovers yet another eye onto the world. The three companions carry the camera with them on outings into the woods. Through the lense--a mark of urban modernization in the primitive Basque wilderness--the three friends learn to appreciate their natural surroundings with unprecedented intensity.

At the same time that the camera organizes nature, it also serves to “naturalize” civilization, transforming the man-made into something more pleasant, even a *locus amoenus*. In what is perhaps the most memorable image of the episode of “El agujero encendido” the Irigibels pose for a family photo. Through the camera lense three generations of Irigibels stand before their *caserío*, surrounded by automobile, cows, sheep, and horses. The framing of the camera converts the Irigibel homestead into an ideal pastoral image. At front and center of this rural picture stands the grandfather Irigibel, an embodiment of the pastoral combination of civilization and nature that the camera enhances.

At the point that the pastoral scene is about to be materialized through the technology of the camera, Peru, just arrived from his home in the neighboring Mendiluz *caserío*, approaches. Peru looks into the peephole of the timer-driven camera just as it snaps. In the subsequent reverse shot, instead of seeing the family, the spectator sees a brief shot of the moon. This curious montage functions in a process similar to that which occurred when Irigibel stared into the cow's eye; the spectator expects to see the framed shot of the family or at least Peru's eye ball at the other end of the apparatus. The moon then doubles as a replacement for the family and as a replacement for that which gazes down upon the family. This double-replacement, then, extends the meaning of this pastoral scene to a universal degree even as it stretches it to the breaking point of absurdity.

The next image, returns the spectator to earth--literally--showing a praying mantis as viewed through the circular lense of a camera. This shot of the insect becomes the opening image of the subsequent scene, comprising a series of similar shots of various arthropods with accompanying narration by Grandfather Irigibel. A reverse-shot taken as if from the insect's eye reveals a tight portrait of the Grandfather, Cristina, a camera-shrouded Peru, and the curious domestic dairy cow peering over their shoulder. Peru, the product of a double intermixing of blood, melds in this *mise en scène* with the camera that covers (and stands in for) his head, while through the shot-reverse-shot process, Peru/camera melds with the insects it studies. The insect, in turn, is sutured to the entire group and finally to the all-seeing

eye of the cow in the back. Through corporal connections and the suturing power of the gaze, divisions between families, civilization, and nature achieve their ultimate degree of collapse. The grandfather's running commentary advises, "Eso es importante. Eso es importantísimo. Nunca os olvidéis de eso."

If this fusion is not enough, the episode of "El agujero encendido" concludes with a growing love-interest between the two half-sibling cow-children Cristina and Peru. The love-interest promises to connect the feuding families again for a third time as well as to a third-degree. As their affection begins to blossom, however, Peru and his mother run off to America with Cristina's father. The episode concludes with a series of letters from Peru that note the passing years.

The final episode, "Guerra en el bosque" (1936) returns the spectator full circle to a scene of war and cowardice. As the scene begins, the camera positions the spectator's view through the eyes of a forest animal that is apparently stalking a now mature Cristina. The animal, appropriately, turns out to be an adult Peru (played by the same actor that played his father, Ignacio and grandfather, the original Irigibel). The cow-child has returned to his native land as a war photographer for an American magazine. The reunion between Peru and Cristina involves, among other activities, a study of their late grandfather's paintings. In the paintings two headed cows, cows that seep blood, and especially one in particular of two cow-headed humans standing in a trench confirm the connections between humans and cows that Cristina first intuited thirty years earlier. On the night after viewing the paintings, Peru awakens,

stares into the darkness, and calls Cristina's name. The only response is a distant cow bell.

The next morning a civil-war skirmish occurs in which nationalist troops, aided by Carlist allies, easily route the peasants. The earlier socio-political complexity introduced by the Carlist soldiers expands as those who once represented Basque privileges now betray their own people, who themselves fight in the name of ancient rights. While the two sides skirmish, the familiar native dairy cow from the first episode runs through the forest, finally coming face-to-face in an enigmatic encounter with a horse. During the battle Peru is taken prisoner by the nationalists, and soon finds himself standing before a firing squad. Beside him stands an old man who once served as water boy to Peru's two grandfathers in the trenches of the Second Carlist War sixty years earlier. At the last moment, Peru's uncle Juan, serving as a Carlist assistant to the nationalists, recognizes his now grown nephew Peru and identifies him as the grandson of Carlists, thus saving him from certain death. Peru, who until this point has shown himself indubitably allied with the peasants, unhesitatingly declares himself a Carlist, allying himself with his matriarchal blood, with the black rather than the white of his dappled ethnicity. The cowardly photographer, like his cowardly paternal grandfather sixty years earlier, metaphorically bathes himself in the blood of his Carlist grandfather, assuring the continuation of the two intertwined lines and the continued incarnation of their

rivalry. Peru is freed. As he walks off into the forest his uncle mercilessly guns down the former Carlist water boy.

After the escape, Peru returns to the place where he had left Cristina hiding in the forest and the two ride off on a lost horse toward France. These two former cow/children, after witnessing another scarring of their rural valley and following Peru's near-death experience and his denial/affirmation of his divided identity, symbolically forsake themselves by abandoning their cow-ness for the horse--an animal that curiously does not appear in this rural-set movie until the centralist troops arrive. The flight on the horse lends momentary meaning to the enigmatic battleground encounter between cow and horse. The battle acts metaphorically as a face-off of the forces of civilization (the Madrid-centered national troops) with those of nature (the primitivist, separatist republican peasants). But it is also a final encounter of the separatists with themselves, of two contradictory forms of Basque nationalism. Both of these nationalist movements find their claims to primitive rights tied into peripheral civilizations, whether Madrid centered in the case of the Carlists, or New York/Paris-connected in the case of the republican peasants. In this final encounter, and its final implosion of identities, Peru and Cristina--those who seem to most clearly embody such complexity--paradoxically appear to lose theirs. They shed their cowness, and like the cow staring into the eyes of the horse, move toward another identity. This new identity provides them with mobility and at last, the possibility of escape.

If all of this seems a bit enigmatic, even absurd, this is not accidental.

Jonathan Romney has written that Medem makes “mystification an unqualified virtue” (56), and Medem himself has encouraged laughter rather than serious critical approaches to his movies (Smith, “Angles” 12).⁹¹ It is perhaps impossible to find any exhaustive interpretation of *Vacas* that might satisfy the pleurably bewildered spectator. Nevertheless, in the midst of mystification a complex, subtle working through of Basque identity politics--especially in its relation to the age-old conflict between country and city, between protection of native, unsullied land and those who would attempt to civilize and thus pervert it--comes to the fore.

Medem’s pastoral portrayal of Basque nature and civilization in all its varieties and complexities forces a reexamination of the relationship between the Basque people and the earth to which they are supposedly so closely tied. In so doing, it forces a reconsideration of Basque identity and the ideologies that structure it. The Basque people are, like the dairy cow, a combination of black on white--or rather, white on black--intermixed if not genetically then certainly ideologically.⁹² Again, like the cow, the Basques find themselves united as much by exterior influences as by any internal essence. Moreover, these complex identities are inescapably tied to a sense of nature that is far from merely primitive. It cannot be what traditional Basque ideology would have it be.

As contemporary ecocritics have shown, the shift in focus away from the earth as an inanimate backdrop for human development toward a focus on nature as a

dynamic force demands a reconsideration of basic ethical relations.⁹³ Rethinking the relationship between civilization and nature forces an Other-ing of that nature. That is, it demands a fundamental reconsideration of the encounter between civilization and nature from what Levinas might term one of autonomy to one of heteronomy, forcing a view of the earth not as an inanimate signifier for my metaphysical presence, but as a separate and dynamic force--an Other--that returns my gaze and demands my response. The pastoral earth that *Vacas* creates is an absolute Other resistant to the totalizing demands of identity politics even as it seems integral to them.

Medem plays on familiar motifs of a popular and sentimental attachment to the wilderness but reworks these myths in creating a modern-day pastoral that undermines traditional modes of Basque identity politics, and forces their complete rethinking. This rethinking would be more in line with Medem's own response to his Basque identity as expressed in an interview with Paul Julian Smith:

Medem: "For me, being Basque is only relatively important; there are more important things to me."

Smith: "Such as being European."

Medem: "Such as being tolerant."

(Smith, "Angels" 14)

And tolerance can only come about by surrendering reactionary, sentimental attachments, and by rethinking one's relationship to that to which one has so fervently held.

When Peru returns from his near-death experience before the firing squad, he explains to Cristina that in the midst of the action he has lost his camera. He explains, "Yo, sin mi cámara, no soy nadie." The eye that focuses is the eye that supposedly gives life; but it is also an eye that frames, that delimits, and hence that denies life.

As Peru and Cristina ride off on their horse, they ride off in one sense as if dead. Peru is no one. Cristina mutely accompanies him. And while they claim that they ride for France, the only shot the spectator sees is their departure from their valley home and their disappearance into the forest. They abandon camera and valley, or rather, vision and being, to ride not toward a stable location but instead into the margins, into a space of Otherness embodied in the undefined horse. In the margins, in the space of a kind of Levinasian Otherness, or rather the space of the Marxian pastoral, they in fact turn to new life, accepting the possibility--and indeed, the responsibility--of living in the unresolvable tensions of the always unknown.

Calzados Lola

The need to abandon a modernist sense of identity and to turn more fully toward an unending ethical obligation to the always unknowable Other comes about naturally in a movie that seems to revel in enigma and to thrive on frustrating

absurdities and irresolvable incongruities. Curiously, however, a similar spirit can be found in works that on first readings seem to exude a modernist spirit of solid identity politics. Such is the case with Suso de Toro's most recent novel, *Calzados Lola*, a surprise to critics who thought they had figured Toro out as one of the most insightful authors at the moment of discussing the complexities of regional identity in contemporary Spain.

Indeed, over a ten-year period Suso de Toro has earned a reputation for narrative complexity. In structurally-experimental novels such as *Polaroid* (1986), *Land Rover* (1988), and *Tic-tac* (1993), Toro has established himself among contemporary Galician novelists as "el que mejor . . . muestra un talante más decididamente renovador." (Tarrío Varela, *Gallego* 208). Tarrío Varela describes his work as "una obra rupturista con respecto al pasado de la narrativa gallega" (*Gallega* 208). His novels have addressed the depth and breadth of human experience, of childhood trauma, birth, sexuality, and familial relations, of sickness, violence, and the grotesque (Tarrío Varela, *Galega* 457, 59). His characters have been noted for inspiring "toda la ternura y . . . todo el asco de que es capaz el ser humano" (Pereira Rodríguez 46). At the same time, Toro has proven himself through novels as well as through regular newspaper columns as an ardent critic of simplistic Galician identity politics, frequently challenging national stereotypes and attacking unexamined nationalist rhetoric. Speaking of Toro's early work, Tarrío Varela again comments,

“hace tiempo que echamos en falta una novela que nos explique qué es lo que ocurre aquí (Galicia)” (*Gallega* 209).

Consequently, Toro’s seventh novel, the reader-friendly *Calzados Lola* surprised critics. On the heels of such ambitious previous writing, *Calzados Lola* offered a rather traditional story of murder, love, and money, couched in a picturesque, even stereotypical, Galician setting more reminiscent of a tourist tract than of a Toro novel. Toro himself has attributed this notable change to the origins of the novel in the commission for a commercial movie script (Toro, Presentation). The simplicity of *Calzados Lola* may also be the inevitable product of simple market pressures attributable to Toro’s association with the publishing house *Ediciones B* that has made him one of only two contemporary Galician authors actively marketed outside their native community.⁹⁴ That is, Toro must write commercially successful novels, and moreover, must write them with a particularly “Galician” voice.

While such economic pressures may exert a certain negative pressure on Toro’s hypothetical autonomy as a writer, these same pressures need not, and indeed, may not necessarily dilute his politics. It is just as likely, instead, that Toro’s relations with *Ediciones B* and, consequently, with the Barcelona and Madrid publishing and marketing scenes have introduced him to new socioeconomic relations that position him to register a more nuanced cultural interaction between his native Galicia, its Madrid-based Other, and the broader order of global relations. Hence, Toro’s comparative simplicity may result not so much from his selling-out in the face

of economic pressures as from a change of perspective gained as a consequence of those pressures.

The following analysis attempts to illuminate the complexity that lies not beneath but within this simplicity. It seeks to show that while crime, murder, love interests, and shiny technologies never disappear from Toro's novel, these "pop" elements are lived by characters whose unstable origins call into question the easy thrills that they appear to experience. It further reveals a world in which the means to overcoming instability are in fact the ultimate producers of such. And finally, it registers the end result of such augmenting instability, an unmournable sense of loss akin to Freud's notion of "melancholia" captured in terms of the Galician *morriña* of the novel. By way of the spirit of *morriña* Toro captures the complexity of Galicia's position in the global community, a position devoid of supposedly stable historical foundations and alienated by an increasingly technologically sophisticated culture that prevents any comprehensive mourning for the losses it induces. Thanks to this interplay *Calzados Lola* presents a world in which Galicia's relationship as backward *aldea* with respect to metropolitan Madrid is as superficially useful as it is useless, in which today's *paleta* so easily may become tomorrow's executive and yet can never escape the inevitably schizophrenic identity that comes with such a shift.

As mentioned, *Calzados Lola* initially functions as a rather direct story of crime, privileged information, love, and murder. Manuel, a Galician rapidly ascending social and economic ladders in Madrid, wire taps a conversation that

compromises his boss. As he is about to deliver the tape to his employer, however, Manuel receives a cryptic phone call from his dying mother in Finisterre, Galicia. Dazed by the unexpected information, Manuel runs off to Galicia carrying the coveted cassette with him without offering any explanation to his anxious boss. Manuel's new girlfriend, Susana, who happens to be the employer's daughter, follows Manuel to his homeland, leading her father to believe that Manuel and his daughter are conspiring against him. In response, the boss sends two of his henchmen to Galicia to return Manuel, Susana, and the tape to Madrid. There in Finisterre, in between funerals for Manuel's mother and then his uncle, Manuel kills the two henchmen, consolidates his relationship with Susana, and with the aid of his recently matured younger brother, Miguel, comes to grips with his own conflicted history.

The criminal beginnings of the novel, the repeated confusion surrounding information, and the love interest sparked by the unlikely working-class, Galician immigrant and his older, bourgeois cosmopolitan girlfriend make for a story with popular appeal. In addition to its plot, *Calzados Lola* also boasts themes that strike a familiar, even popular chord with contemporary audiences (especially those from Galicia that have made it one of the best selling novels of the past year) ("Top"; Vilavedra). *Calzados Lola* indeed comes across as a kind of greeting card of contemporary Galicia. The first image that figures within the storyline of the novel is that of the Galician *rías* (fjords) reaching, as it were, to the paved boulevards of downtown Madrid. Manuel explains the beginning of his adventure thus:

Todo ocurrió poco después de que empezase de nuevo a oír aquellos ruidos de mar, me parece que se habían reanudado otra vez hacía unos dos días. . . . Los oía desde niño por temporadas, mi madre me había llevado varias veces al médico, me sacaron radiografías, pruebas y todos eso, pero nunca me habían encontrado nada, que eran cosas que desaparecían al crecer. . . . Hacía ya un par de años por lo menos que no los oía, desde que había vuelto de la mili y vivía en Madrid, como si al cambiar de lugar y de vida desapareciesen para siempre. (15)

Manuel, the Galician, cannot escape the sea. It inhabits him like a romantic, irrational, essential national identity. Its power is inescapable and almost supernatural: “el sonido fortísimo del golpe de una ola rompiendo en la playa me ensordeció, fue más definido e identificable que nunca, tan real que sentí como si yo mismo oscilase arrastrado como una madera hacia la orilla. Era tan claro que hasta vi la ola” (21). While the ocean inside the would-be madrileño underlines the power of the celebrated Galician landscape, its magical power points to popular cultural customs, legends, and superstitions. The importance and indeed the continued appropriateness of these to Galician culture is underlined in a second inescapable sound--that produced by the ringing bells of the church belfry of a submerged city that Manuel’s mother and later Manuel himself hear.

While readers might delight in these picturesque images, Manuel cannot do enough to escape them. Manuel’s two year stay in Madrid has been marked by an

intense desire to abandon his provincial background, including mostly successful efforts to drop his telltale accent. About the time of the phone call from his dying mother, Manuel has practically conquered the city, taking satisfaction in being considered “uno más de la ciudad, de mi ciudad” (33). Manuel’s most painful moments while still in Madrid in the opening pages of the novel come when others identify him, whether out of spite or kindness, as “paleta” or “gallego” (23, 33).

The majority of the story, however, narrates Manuel’s rediscovery of his native country. While Manuel has been uncomfortable during earlier visits home, on his return for his mother’s funeral the sights, smells, and sounds of his forgotten homeland awaken him to a sense of home and belonging:

me sentía como si aún fuese un muchacho, como si volviese atrás, a ser el de siempre, el chaval que aún no había ido a la mili ni había salido de allí. . . . Aquel aire entró en mí y me recorrió y me ocupó completamente. ¿Cómo podía haber estado tanto tiempo sin haber venido aquí? Me derritió por completo y pensé que al fin estaba en casa. Estaba dispuesto, estaba entregado de nuevo al lugar. Estaba vencido. Lloré de nuevo, y no sabía por qué. Eran los nervios, era el cansancio. Era que ya estaba de vuelta. (121-22)

His return to origins culminates when, following his mother’s funeral, Manuel walks into the pounding surf near his home, giving himself as if to the sea that has stretched as far as the pavement of Madrid to call back its native son.

Susana and the two henchmen's initial discoveries of a picturesque, even mythic (or stereotypical) Galicia add to the poeticization of the region created through Miguel's return. Susana, a former vacationer in Galicia, expresses the expected criticisms of the comparatively backward land on arrival. By the time she leaves, however, she has found a sense of self there unavailable to her in Madrid. The two henchmen display contrasting but equally typical attitudes, the one calling Galicia "el culo del mundo," while the other plays the role of fascinated tourist. On seeing the famed Galician "costa de la muerte" for the first time the latter comments to his partner, "Escucha, Felipe. ¿No oyes como un silencio? . . . Yo ya había visto el mar varias veces, pero éste parece como si fuese más de verdad, más real, como si tuviese más intención" (157). Later he speaks of Galicia in general as if reading from a tourist tract: "Un lugar raro este. . . . Está uno aquí y lo de allá ya me parece tan lejos. . . . Dan ganas de quedarse uno y no volver. De abandonarse" [194]). He even begins to experience the typically Galician feeling of melancholic-longing known as *morriña*: "Ahora entiendo lo de la morriña de esta gente, estoy aquí y la noto yo. Debe de ser una cosa que hay aquí y que se te mete dentro. Un bicho, un virus o algo" (208). Add to these commentaries the vistas of Finisterre and the Rías Altas, as well as the environmentalist diatribes that Toro places in the mouth of Manuel's eco-activist brother Miguel, and Toro's novel becomes a well-rounded introduction to the legends, opinions, politics, and society of Galicia. Finally, the fact that in the end Manuel, the Gallego *paleto* gets away with the murders of the two Madrileño

henchmen, swindles Madrid businessmen out of a fortune, and then, after so doing returns to Madrid to confront the man who tried to destroy him makes *Calzados Lola* not only a postcard of Galicia, but also a vindication of everything Galician, even a kind of nationalistic call to arms against the colonizing center that is Madrid.

If this is a call to arms, however, its representative soldiers are in no solid position to fight for their native land. In the midst of so many picturesque shots, stereotyping comments, and sentimental homecomings, an intense spirit of homelessness--the lack of father or mother in their very fatherland or *madre patria*--pervades the novel. From the first pages, set in Madrid, Manuel's attitude concerning his status as a recent immigrant betrays a discomfort with his identity that transcends his status as foreigner in the national capital. Perhaps Manuel's discomfort stems from his own problematic "native" identity that accompanies him wherever he goes. Manuel's parents are divorced, an atypical situation in a small Galician fishing village. Moreover, Manuel has had almost no contact with his father since his early childhood. Only while doing military service did he begin receiving letters from him. The situation is even worse for his brother Miguel, who has never enjoyed any fatherly communication, let alone affection. The brothers are obsessed with the paternal lack: as a child Manuel was known as "el inglés" because of the shirt with a Union Jack that he wore every day, an reminder to everyone of Manuel's father who currently lives in England; and when the boys get back together one of their first topics of conversation is their father (86, 120).

While their father has been practically nonexistent for years, their mother has just vanished from their lives with only the shortest notice. Other than her cryptic phone call to Manuel, she leaves behind no clue to accompany the again stereotypical plate of *filloas* she prepares for her sons before her suicide. The weight of this loss casts a constant shadow over the novel, a shadow foregrounded by the mother's mournful stream-of-conscious monologues with which Toro prefaces each chapter.

If the brothers' parents are present through their physical absence, their still-living grandparents are absent in spite of their material presence. The brothers are products of a Montague-Capulet-style union between the daughter of a nationalist and the son of a republican. Their nationalist grandfather takes pride, in fact, in having sent Manuel and Miguel's republican grandfather to prison during the civil war. Consequently, every relative but their uncle (the same who takes his own life a short time later--before providing any additional information) maintains a safe distance from the ideologically "bastard" children. Manuel and Miguel have no family; they live, in a sense, bereft of origin. Any sense of identity they might attain to is spiritually, ideologically, and genealogically unstable.

Already burdened by this lack of foundation, Manuel and Miguel must face first their mother's suicide and later that of their uncle. While the suicide precipitates their search for identity it also deprives them of primary sources that might provide at least temporary foundations in their search. The quest, moreover, commences on a rather disconcerting note with Miguel's discovery that he is, in fact, not his father's

son. On the heels of this orphaning discovery, Miguel also learns that he was born as a substitute for an older brother who died in infancy, and who originally bore his name. Miguel subsequently spends a good third of the novel feeling as if he does not exist or at least is a less-than satisfactory replacement: “Yo no existo para él. . . . Senti como si yo no fuese de vuestra familia. No sé de quién soy” (217). Manuel attempts to reassure his brother, insisting that origins are of less importance than present ties. Manuel’s assurances, however, provide little comfort. Without any notion of a father or of a mother that saw him as anything but a substitute, Miguel exclaims, “es como si estuviese muerto. ¡Soy un fantasma!” (220).

Miguel finds some solace from his identity crisis in the comradie that similar struggles produce in his brother and their respective girlfriends. Several days after their mother’s funeral the brothers find their uncle hanging from the ceiling of his home. With him they discover a portrait of the uncle, their mother, and an infant Miguel arranged as if seated for a family portrait. While Miguel initially breaks down at the sight of the portrait, he ultimately gains strength in the knowledge it brings. Manuel, on the other hand, now must face his own identity crisis. Suddenly it is he and not Miguel who has never belonged, who has always been an orphan within his own family. Manuel explains following the discovery: “Pero me sentía traicionado. Y marginado, yo era un extraño para ellos. Ellos eran la familia, y yo no. Precisamente yo, que era el hijo legítimo del matrimonio, era el ajeno” (290). Manuel, who has always sought to include his outcast brother, suddenly must grapple

with the fact that all along he has been the true outcast. Hence, at precisely the moment he seems to be accepting his Galician homeland he finds himself without a legitimate household: “Adónde voy yo ahora, adónde? Si no tengo una casa. . . . ¡No es mía, no es mía! Allí soy un intruso, es su casa, la casa de ellos. Mi familia, mi vida, no es la mía, es de ellos. La familia eran ellos” (305). The loss of homeland inevitably translates into a loss of being: “no tengo a dónde ir. Allí soy un inmigrante, no soy de allí y siempre seré de otro lado, supongo que de aquí. Y aquí no tengo casa. Como si no la tuviese, como si no hubiese vivido una vida mía y estuviese acogido en la vida de otros. Todo era una mentira. No soy de ningún lado” (309). Manuel the hero suddenly becomes the homeless.

If Manuel and Miguel serve as the representative Galicians in the national greeting card that *Calzados Lola* can appear to be, the card is in fact much less polished than it initially appears. The two brothers, despite the calls of the ocean or of the bells of submerged cities, ultimately have no deep roots in their ethnic homeland. The roots they can trace are contradictory, and finally repel the connections that the brothers would forge. The two “brothers,” united throughout life and bonded through shared experiences, in fact do not even share the same genealogy. And whatever their genealogical or ideological roots, they end up outcasts of their own community. At the end of the novel their paths will lead again in different directions. Miguel will remain with his Galician girlfriend in their native *aldea* where they work together on ecological projects that keep them close to the earth. Manuel,

on the other hand, will return with the jet-set Susana to the glass-and-steel towers of a well-paved Madrid. Before they separate, however, the two brothers attempt to help each other through what becomes a collective crisis. The two take comfort in frequent conversations through which they attempt to discover their respective histories and their present relations.

But if conversation proves effective with the brothers while they are together in Finesterre, it offers little hope for a stable future. If face-to-face communication offers present hope, communication in general--which in the novel tends to occur more often electronically--offers mostly headaches. The brothers' lengthy chats are an anomaly in a novel dominated by sound-bite communication through cell phones, tape recorders, stereos, and video machines. Most of the action of the novel stems, in fact, from the problems that result from the filtering of human messages through these machines. The novel commences as Manuel wire taps a conversation for his boss. This conversation is itself most likely based on other previously acquired electronic information. And this information concerns a crime that was itself effected by illegal electronic transfers of money. The triple layer of deceptive electronic communication in the first pages of the novel foregrounds the dubious sense of community that modern technology constructs. Modern processes allow for the gathering of a wealth of previously unavailable information, and hence for the heretofore unavailable garnering of power. But as easy as this power comes, it may

just as easily disappear when technological devices available to so many channel its flow.

Moreover, as the opening scenes of the novel demonstrate, communication in the technological age is subject to frequent failure. Manuel's initial wire-tap of the privileged information--as much as it may reveal--is distorted by confusing static and frequent interruptions. As the novel progresses fragmented and static-filled communication, as well as the splintered social relations that this produces, increase. Manuel's sudden disappearance with the coveted tape stems from a cryptic, one-way phone message cut short by the click of the caller's phone. Manuel, who finds himself stuck in an elevator and engaged in business at the moment of the call, cannot decipher the message until after his mother has already hung up. He remains with pressing questions but no longer has an interlocutor (his mother is only the first of many characters who regularly disconnect their phones as soon as they believe they have communicated their particular message). Continued use and abuse of technology--a series of dead batteries, disconnected devices, and uncontested answering machines--turn what should be a series of simple misunderstandings into a full-scale life-and-death chase literally to the "end of the earth." In short, they make the novel. Manuel turns his phone off, causing both Susana and her father to suspect the worst; the former then goes in pursuit while the latter sends his henchmen after the suspected blackmailer. Susana subsequently disconnects her own phone, leading her father to imagine a conspiracy involving his daughter and Manuel. Technology

also brings positive results. Thanks to the recording technology of answering machines Susana learns the reasons for Manuel's sudden disappearance and so follows him to Galicia. Through the same machine, Susana discovers her father's own interest in Manuel, thus allowing her to help her boyfriend piece together the puzzle of the tape, the phone call, the henchmen, and the electronic transfers. Finally, through the same machine, Susana's father learns that there really had been a death in Manuel's family. But again, all of this information is only half-information, the flesh-and-blood speakers always materially absent, often a phone click away from disappearance and hence, misunderstanding.

As a result, instead of meaningful relationships with human beings, people begin to develop as it were emotional relationships to their commodities:

“Se sentía ridícula hablando con un contestador en voz baja” (76).

“Lo acercó a la oreja vacilante, como con miedo” (97).

“Sonó un pitido ahogado. . . . Él se sorprendió, parecía no entender” (173).

Phones, and not actual human beings embarrass, frighten, and surprise.

Finally, if technology is the disease, for the general public it also seems to offer a paradoxical elixir. When Miguel needs comfort the evening following his mother's funeral, he initially seeks it not through his brother but through family home videos. Characters also make sense of their reality by means of technology, especially cinema. They describe the world around them in terms of images they have seen on the screen: “Me recuerda a una película” (157); “Como si fuese algo

artificial, o soñado; una película” (176); “También vi en la tele una película parecida” (182).

The contradictory play with technology culminates near the conclusion of the novel when, after the second funeral, Manuel and Susana row out into the middle of the local Ría to dump the body of one of the two henchmen. As they are about to roll the body overboard, the shrill beep of a cell phone shatters the silence of the Galician night. Someone, somewhere is still hoping to communicate with the long-dead corpse. In its final incarnation what has served as a mostly humorous motif now casts a somber shadow over the proceedings. After a quizzical look from Susana, Manuel simply rolls the body into the still ocean while the incessant rings quickly sink with the lifeless body. Technology has confused, alienated, and amused; now it seems even to extend life, to resurrect as it were the dead. It produces a sense of identity that extends beyond material presence and that underlines in sobering fashion the complexities of postmodern identity politics--of the investigation of being in a world where subjectivity so easily slips beyond flesh-and-blood frontiers.

The morning following the incident in the *ría*, Susana goes to the bank and, with the aid of modern technology, transfers the questionable funds that her father has been accruing in her name to her own private account, making her (and Manuel by association) suddenly independently wealthy. Just as technology makes identity slippery, so too it creates economic power--and its identity-constructing capability. While the stakes may be higher in the postmodern realm of identity politics, one's

identity is ultimately much more negotiable, both culturally and materially. Indeed, the attempts to communicate through technology show how slippery surface-links can be in the attempts to construct the kind of provisional “postmodern” identities so in vogue in recent theoretical writings.⁹⁵

Nevertheless, while identity may be slippery and negotiable in the postmodern world, *Calzados Lola* offers again no simplistic postmodern celebration of these possibilities. Indeed, the overall tone of *Calzados Lola*, in spite of its fast-paced plot, is far from one of postmodern festivity. Instead, a rather sobering spirit pervades the novel, forcing the reader to consider the real psychological effects of slipperiness long after the quick laughs of miscommunication die away. From the first pages with its prologue that recounts the dying thoughts of Manuel’s mother and the first paragraph that presents the confusion felt by a protagonist trapped by the sounds of an unwanted, internal ocean, a melancholic spirit pervades *Calzados Lola*. Toro acknowledges this spirit, by way of the frequently mentioned *morriña* that Manuel, Susana, and even the henchmen feel on entering Galicia. Of course, the plot of the novel itself deals with several rather sobering events, including the death of the rather likeable second henchman, Susana’s discovery of her own parents’ lack of love for her, and, of course, the brothers’ losses. The deaths are enough on their own to cast a certain pall over the events of the story. And yet, the feeling of sadness, of mourning, indeed, of *morriña*, that pervades the novel transcends mere funerary mourning.

Ultimately this sadness provides the most penetrating insight into the significance of *Calzados Lola* to the contemporary struggle for ethnic and individual identity.

Susana pinpoints a spirit of grief beyond traditional mourning when she exclaims to the two brothers: “¿pero no veis cómo sois? Sufrió mucho, demasiado. Siempre estáis o enfadados o tristes. No lo digo por estos días, por lo que ha pasado. Ya os recordaba así a todos. ¿No veis que siempre os estáis haciendo sufrir unos a otros o a vosotros mismos?” (257). Although aware of their recent loss, Susana recognizes a spirit of mourning that transcends this loss. Such deep grieving seems closer to what Freud has described as “melancholia.” Melancholia is, for Freud, a feeling of deep grief characterized at times by ambivalence, at others by rage, and often by self-loathing all brought on by the inability to sufficiently mourn a deep-seated loss--a precise description of the pain of the brothers who lack information sufficient to understand what they have lost in order to properly mourn those losses.

The significance of the brothers mourning as Freudian “melancholia” manifests itself in light of Judith Butler’s recent application of Freud’s term to contemporary theories of subjectivity. Butler explains that melancholia results from losses produced by the proscription of desires at the very point of the formation of the subject (*Psychic* 23). Melancholia derives its strength, and ultimately, its insuperability, from the fact that the loss that must be mourned can never be discovered because that loss was indeed integral to the very subject that would mourn it (*Psychic* 24). Butler extends the power of Freud’s term by pointing out precisely

what these proscribed desires are as well as their relations to the construction of subjectivity and hence, identity. Butler's principal concerns with melancholia center on the sexual, which she considers the most fundamental of all elements in the production of subjects. But she also acknowledges the possibility of melancholia centered on subjectifying factors other than the sexual (*Psychic* 165). It is here that the spirit of melancholia and *morriña* combine to open up the literary and cultural complexities of *Calzados Lola*.

In their grief and their obsession over unresolved and hence unmournable origins, Manuel and Miguel are locked in a kind of ethnic melancholia. They can never complete the requisite mourning. Appropriately, Manuel, like other melancholics according to Butler, searches in vain for but clings rigidly to any forms of identity that might draw a kind of psychic detour around the lack at the foundations of his subjectivity (*Psychic* 144-48). As a teenager Manuel was assiduous in his donning of the Union Jack t-shirt. As an adult he throws himself with abandon into Madrid society seeking emersion in an entirely new cosmopolitan self. Upon returning to Galicia, he openly repudiates his Madrid identity, embraces his ethnic heritage with a ferocity captured in his aforementioned aborted journey into the pounding surf following his mother's funeral. Manuel, like a typical melancholic, will cling to anything apparently solid in order to overcome the loss that lies at the essence of his subjectivity.

Yet, such clinging only heightens the melancholia since, as I have previously shown, Manuel's identity is, if anything, defined on the one hand by fundamental paradigmatic gaps in his historical origins, and on the other by syntagmatic gaps in the temporary bonds that he would forge with his contemporaries through communication. Manuel's life--or rather his subjectivity--is defined, in short, by lack.

If Manuel and his brother have served as stereotypical Galicians in so many ways in *Calzados Lola*, their melancholic state serves once again as symbolic shorthand for a broader consideration of Galician ethnicity. This is especially true when one considers the overall spirit of *morriña* that pervades the novel that--like the sea stretching to Madrid--ultimately reaches the reader. The connection invites a final rereading of the apparently superficial expression of Galician identity in *Calzados Lola*. Clearly, Toro recognizes the complex influence that traditional stereotypes and simplistic, romantic ideologies play in the construction of Galician identity. The identity struggles in the novel show that Toro understands these stereotypes and ideologies as ultimately fraught with tensions in a globalized and technologically-saturated world. More importantly, the *morriña* in the novel shows that as slippery as identity may be, more pernicious are the short-circuits in mourning generated by a culture that while championing identities that are ultimately founded on lack posits static and silence as a means to filling those gaps. This may be especially true in the case of contemporary Galicia.

Toro's depiction of *morriña* captures the melancholia of a culture caught up in unresolvable vertical and horizontal liminality, stirred up by nationalist sentiments even at a time when such a spirit is continually undermined by demystifying postmodern factors continually pulling the ground out from any lost "origins" that might be mourned. Indeed, referring to the problems of contemporary identity politics, Toro himself has explicitly narrated in numerous newspaper columns the material realities that collapse myths of a primordial Galician rural tradition (Toro, *FM* 43). Hard statistics confirm that the mythic, rural Galicia is, ironically, no longer rural (Pereira Rodríguez 45). Indeed, in *Calzados Lola Susana*, who had visited the region as a child, discovers now that in many ways urban/rural relations have completely reversed: "En fin, ya lo había visto más veces en la gente de los pueblos, les gustaba más lo artificial que a la gente de la ciudad" (128). Contemporary Galicia marches in step with a broader social spirit that has turned metropolitan eyes to the country while focusing rural desire on the pleasures of postmodernity (Hooper 282). At the same time that Galicia has moved away from its traditional postcard image, its periphery/center relationship with Madrid has shifted, trapping it, as Vilavedra and Anxo Tarrío Varela signal, between the self-consumption and inertia of its own peripheral precapitalist culture and the hyper-consumption offerings of a technologically advanced, cosmopolitan postmodernity (Vilavedra 335; Tarrío Varela *Galega* 456).

Such changes produce a kind of cultural schizophrenia among a people that in a matter of a few years have seen attitudes concerning language and heritage undergo a 180-degree shift. Whereas for centuries the Galician language had been the “dialect” of an illiterate rural population, almost overnight it has become not only acceptable but in many areas the language of choice of a new intellectual elite (Mar-Molinero 340). At about the same time that Galician suddenly became an official language of the new autonomous government, the break up of the state communications monopoly allowed new local, privately run radio and television stations to begin broadcasting almost completely in Galician (Xelís de Toro 347). These changes, all occurring within a few years of each other, cut a clear division between generations extending to private familial life, dividing children from parents in their attitudes and experiences with respect to their ethnic heritage. Such changes occur simultaneous to an increasing emphasis on defining one’s identity that has characterized globalization wherever it has occurred (Buell 9). At the same time, the spirit of collective loss--in the form of migration, economic sacrifice, and political subjugation--continues to form an essential part of the ethnic tradition (Mar-Molinero 340). In short, during the last decade Galician society has become what Dolores Vilavedra calls a culture in crisis (333).

Toro’s novel challenges traditional notions of national identity within such a crisis society. More importantly, though, *Calzados Lola* ultimately challenges the very longing for any cogent identity politics that continues to enjoy significant

theoretical attention even in an era that would seem to problematize the notion.

Manuel's actions at the end of the novel suggest just such a rejection and recall Judith Butler's own question in her work on melancholia and subjectivity: "What would it mean for the subject to desire something other than its continued 'social existence'?" (28). In the final pages of the novel, Manuel appears to have finally overcome his deep-seated melancholia, even though he still finds himself lacking any solid foundations of subjectivity. As early as the moment when he plunged himself into the sea, Manuel seems, while still searching for origins, to be entertaining the possibility of doing without: "Tampoco era propiamente de allí. De repente era como si no tuviese vida, como si toda mi vida, mis dos o tres vidas anteriores, fuesen pasado. Y un pasado tan extraño a mí como si fuesen la vida de otra persona" (164). Such alterity, according to Butler, is the nature of the melancholic subject that must be embraced if melancholia is to be overcome (*Psychic* 195-98).

When Manuel finally appears to arrive at a sense of peace he does not do so by embracing any specific cultural identity but instead by rejecting them all. Manuel, in rejecting his boss, has turned his back on the economic wealth and the socially homogenizing possibilities of Madrid. At the same time he abandons Galicia, sensing that his native land, though an important site in his discovery of a newfound spiritual strength, will not do either. Then, in a final defining act before leaving Galicia, Manuel visits the home of a companion who had been killed under suspicious circumstances while in the military. There he offers to risk his safety and security in

fighting to expose an official cover-up surrounding his companion's death. On the heels of abandoning his homeland, Manuel's actions are not so much an act of Galician bravado against an imperialist military, as they are a sign of a willingness to put his life on the line--that is, to experience literal liminality--against any totalizing identity-providing system.

Of course, Manuel and Susana then return to Madrid, and, using the very illegal money that caused their grief in the first place, seem to work their way back into the hegemonic system of international capitalism. Nevertheless, their attitude this time around is noticeably different. Susana, a figure whose relations with Miguel might initially be read as allegorical of international capitalist subsumption of the would-be Galician radical,⁹⁶ returns having rejected her supposedly stable origins (her parents) and looking instead to a schizophrenic grandmother for a role model. Manuel returns apparently no longer ashamed of his own "schizophrenic" identity.

In short, what might be seen as a sellout for some, evidences, instead, a rather insightful appreciation of a world in which old-fashioned utopian solutions no longer suffice. Manuel, like Galicians, Basques, and Castilians--or Serbs, Albanians, or Irish for that matter--lives in an ever-more global and postmodern world. With the aftermath of the official end to Francoism and more recently to the former Soviet Bloc, it has become apparent that one cannot simply toss out a corrupt society in favor of some new unpolluted paradise. As thinkers from a variety of disciplines have increasingly acknowledged, these unpolluted paradises do not merely not exist,

but in fact, never have (Buell 3). Instead, one can only work within existing systems of power, reworking those systems from within, performing in such a manner that the power that gives one being is reworked into a form of agency that exceeds its original impetus. In short, to work within the hegemony is not necessarily to succumb to it. For just as sexuality, ethnicity, race, and class are necessarily multiple and slippery, so too are the social, political, and economic systems they spawn. Toro's novel, on the one hand an apparent evidence of acquiescence to the hegemony of crime fiction and cheap regional sentiment, shows ultimately that even in acquiescence, even in presumed pandering, alterity can not only be found, but is in fact all there may be.

Conclusion

Certain political and social theorists have warned that cultural homogenization resulting from globalization threatens to efface local cultures, flattening the world "into a low-level monoculture, a gigantic K-mart with no exit" (Schiller 112). *Vacas* and *Calzados Lola* contest this dire prediction, as much through specific details they represent as in their overarching treatment of the subject of identity politics. While as a whole their depictions of the present cultural milieus appear similar in spirit to contemporary Western theories of postmodern identity, the issues with which each wrestles are unique to their communities, tied to particular histories that their respective cultures bring to the contemporary stage. As Susana discovers at one point in *Calzados Lola* when she decides to order a meal in a small Galician restaurant, the

locals may have access to the same products as their more cosmopolitan neighbors, but their use of those products, as well as the desires that fuel those uses, are never quite the same.

Identity, no matter the centralizing pressures, is always being negotiated according to very individual experience. Much as Ien Ang notes “the capacity of the audience to negotiate the possible contradictions between alien cultural values and the ‘pleasure of the text’” in his analysis of foreign spectatorship of *Dallas*, the unique positioning of Basque, Galician, and Catalan audiences empowers them to reshape hegemonic products in counter hegemonic ways (Tomlinson 46). The global becomes peripheral when it is resituated in the Basque language, or viewed from within the walls of a Galician farmhouse. As Helen Graham points out, in the hands of local governments, the global that would appear to strengthen the broader federalist hegemony, is actually turned against it or, according to Marsha Kinder, is at least seriously destabilized (“Culture” 9; *Blood* 397). And yet, the struggle against the traditional “city” or “court” comes at the expense of submitting to the even more ubiquitous “city” of European political-economic centralism and United States cultural imperialism (Maxwell 277). But again, the regional, as *Vacas* demonstrated, is always infused with its own already complex regional history.

In the midst of such an increasingly inseparable stew of city/country relations, Spanish writers and directors will continue to search for identity, more than likely through an increasingly pluralistic selection of styles and themes. Even now, while

the established writers of the generation that came of age in the 1980s move outside of Spain, and while regional artists harken back to rural settings, a new generation of young Spanish writers noted for its disdain for the very practice of reading have turned once again to a strongly urban literature in their search for identity.⁹⁷ The characters of novelists such as Ray Loriga (*Lo peor de todo*, 1993), José Ángel Mañas (*Historias del Kronen*, 1994), Benjamín Prado (*Raro*, 1996), and Lucía Etxebarria (*Beatriz y los cuerpos celestiales*, 1997) or of directors such as Alex de la Iglesia (*El día de la bestia*, 1995), Agustín Díaz Yanes (*Nadie hablará de nosotros cuando hayamos muerto*, 1995), Alejandro Amenábar (*Tesis*, 1996 and *Abre los ojos*, 1998), and Fernando León (*Barrio*, 1998) cruise the drug-infested urban streets of Spain in search of meaning. Appropriately, the urban angst that drives the hyper-speeds at which they cruise is fueled through encounters with the international: by British rock, American cinema, and South American cocaine; through demeaning jobs at McDonald's and hazy friendships with North American Mormon missionaries.

If the trajectory of the youngest generation of writers and directors indicates the increased presence of the global in the local, and if the generation of the 1980s continues to point outward, several senior members of the Spanish cultural world continue to reach inward even as they maintain a stance of external exile. Juan Goytisolo and Julian Ríos, while largely ignored by both their native press corps and university system, currently produce what, according to fellow intellectual-in-exile Eduardo Subirats, is among the finest current critical and stylistic work of Spanish

origin (23). This work focuses as much on the outside world as on anything uniquely “Spanish,” and its origins and inspiration can more easily be found in Paris, Tangiers, London, and even Bosnia, than in Madrid. Referring to the plight of Goytisolo and Ríos, Subirats claims that those who do not and/or cannot conform to mainline Spanishness continue to find themselves ignored in contemporary Spain (21). If such is indeed the case, then one must recognize that for all the changes in the last two decades, much of the specter of Francoism remains today, continuing to inhabit the supposedly cosmopolitan country.

In the closing years of the twentieth century, the city/country paradigm continues to acquire new meanings without appearing to lose its old associations. Currently several generations, each possessing unique city/country experiences and expressing these in a variety of manners, struggle for position within a cultural field as unprecedentedly heterogeneous as it is crowded. As this field expands and diversifies, the postmodern condition appears to set in; primitive, unused, and even exterior spaces seem to disappear in a field in which there is never anything new under the sun. In 1985, Fernández Cubas’s protagonist from *El año de Gracia* had led a kind of charge of Spanish protagonists into the big bad world of late international capitalism and culture. While her protagonist found there little of the transcendent that he had anticipated, nevertheless, he was able to leave. In 1997, on the contrary, Miguel Sánchez Ostiz’s protagonist of his novel *No existe tal lugar*, promises from the first pages of the novel yet another flight into the unknown, this

time to one of the world's last remaining primitive locales, Tierra del Fuego. Despite the promise of the primitive, despite the disgust with his native Navarre and his adopted Madrid, despite the reportedly indifferent behavior of his wife and friends, and despite a wealth of opportunity, Sánchez-Ostiz's protagonist never makes it out the door. All that can be concluded at the end of several hundred pages of anticipation is that the promise of the primitive only exists as such, that the kind of pure escape the protagonist seeks no longer exists in any discursively-innocent material state in his contemporary world. The protagonist, surrounded by his books, his maps, and his memories already has all that there is to have. Whether in Madrid or South America, whether in the postmodern city or in the premodern rural idyll of Tierra del Fuego (or the Basque Country, at that), the dreamed of paradise is just that, a dream; ultimately, after all his searching, he must face the fact that "no existe tal lugar." In their contemporary search for identity, Spaniards, at least if Toro's novel or Medem's movie offer any indication, presently face such a reality. And yet, if Sánchez-Ostiz's novel can contribute anything to these works, the search, for all its futility, will necessarily--and quite happily--continue.

The End of the Pilgrimage

About the time the first recognized authors of the Spanish tradition were beginning to sing the praises of rural paradises and lament the encroachments of a cancerous civilization, pilgrims from throughout Europe began arriving *en masse* at the tomb of Saint James the apostle at the city of Santiago de Compostela in Spain's northwest corner of Galicia. When their journey was completed, when they had smelled the strong incense of the famed *bota fumeiro*, embraced the altar of the apostle, and knelt in the presence of the martyr's bones, pilgrims still eager for more could continue onto still other sites such as the fabled End of the Earth (or Finesterre). For pilgrims less eager to stray from the comforts of their city of destination but still seeking a greater spiritual journey, a short pilgrimage up the gentle slope of the nearby *Monte Pedroso* still remained. By following a series of *cruceiros*, or granite crucifixes, pilgrims could make their way up the mountain for a final picturesque view of the city and further worship at a last, oversized *cruceiro*.

Today such a journey is still possible for the adventurous tourist/pilgrim who would venture beyond the traffic of Santiago's city streets to pass through the outlying pastures that maintain the city's still rural feel. If one is willing to venture beyond the slow-rising dirt road, one may still follow the very *cruceiros* that marked earlier pilgrim paths. But at the top, where a final cross once overwhelmed, drawing pilgrim eyes even further upwards, the modern day tourist/pilgrim finds, like the

Spanish movie *aficionado* a half-century before, the even more ubiquitous form of the radio tower, now raised even higher, built even stronger, and adorned by all manner of satellite dishes that too draw the modern pilgrim's sights beyond the immediate material realm and that likewise promise communications from the heavens.

As a wealth of statistics, images, speeches, and stories have repeatedly shown, Spain is certainly not the rural paradise whose loss medieval troubadours once wearily foretold. Satellite dishes, television cameras, and piped-in music now inhabit its most distant and often holy sites. Modern technology brings Hollywood to rural enclaves even as it takes Galician rain across phone lines to the living rooms of mid-America. But just as the radio towers of *Radinform* in the 1950s did not wipe out the local, the regional, or the rural in the sixties, seventies, or eighties, so too contemporary culture, for all its flattening potential, has not done away with the countryside. If anything has disappeared, it is the "ultra-modern" voices of 1950s DJ's. The granite crosses still stand.

Of course, such pastoral locales exist for the postmodern hiker of Santiago's *Monte Pedroso* because in large part the legacy of those invading urban voices from decades past have repeatedly led them to expect it too. The rural, while always outliving the urban, has become an integral part of city culture, even when that culture then disappoints and even disgusts as it blights any possible tourist photo that would bear witness to a pilgrim's journey back to nature. The rural is indeed integral to the urban, the country essential to the city. Regionalist nationalism and federalist

nationalism, globalizing pressures and local retrenchments pretend to seek the other's obliteration, when in fact they necessarily do exactly the opposite. And in carrying out their earnest game, these forces--mobilized by generations of Spanish citizens--continually return to the age-old model of the city against the country.

Indeed, for all the changes that may come about in the coming millennia, a rich history of city/country tensions ensures that not only will the countryside remain, but the tensions that come from its threatened blight will always be there as well; that not only will the city remain, but the tensions that enter in with every new generation of *paleto* will likewise continue. Whatever the future struggles of Spanish society, be they over nationality, ethnicity, class, sexuality, or some other lived experience as yet unimagined, city and country will continue to work side by side in Spanish culture and Spanish society, blinding those who would see even as it provides words to the culturally silenced.

Notes

1. Francisco Ruiz Ramón in *Historia del teatro español, siglo XX* describes the theater of Buero Vallejo and Sastre as founded “en la necesidad insoslayable del compromiso con la realidad inmediata, en la búsqueda apasionada, pero lúcida de la verdad, en la voluntad de inquietar y remover la conciencia española” (337). Andrew Debicki in his *Spanish Poetry of the Twentieth Century* describes much of the poetry of the 1950s as “works that deal with social and political themes” that “reflect the goal of constructing a powerful new realistic literature, suited to the circumstances . . . and the whole climate of the time” (80).

2. Juan Alborg in his *Historia de la literatura española*, vol I, describes Guevara’s work as a “típica manifestación de las corrientes renacentistas que preconizaban el retorno a la naturaleza y encarecían la paz de la vida campestre” (729). Alborg attributes Guevara’s motivations to a desire for personal comfort rather than to a dedication to the classical pastoral tradition. He makes no mention of any broader social or political aims in the popular treatise.

3. In 1898 the various intellectuals who would come to form the so-called “Generation of ‘98” were ideologically distant from the conservative centralist politics that would eventually evolve into the ideology of the Franco regime. Unamuno was a socialist and contributor to the review *La lucha de clases*. Azorín

was a libertarian socialist with anarchist sympathies along with Pío Baroja. Ramiro de Maeztu also wrote in favor of the class struggle (Martínez 20). Of these members only Ramiro de Maeztu became an eventual supporter of the politics of the Franco regime. Antonio Machado and Ramón de Valle-Inclán were early conservatives who became increasingly liberal in their thinking during the decades leading to the civil war (Martínez 22).

4. Ugarte's focus is the city. Azorín and Pío Baroja made similar comments concerning the countryside as well in works such as *La voluntad* and *Camino de perfección* respectively. The countryside that they attack, however, was one that was corrupted by a certain civilizing influence. The pure, unadulterated, primitive wilderness of Castile still offers respite to characters such as Baroja's Fernando Ossorio seeking respite from the cosmopolitan culture of Madrid.

5. While Raymond Williams dedicates a lengthy study to the city/country paradigm, he does so recognizing the work of this very paradigm to disguise real relations of power. He explains that this division has been employed in the past to "promote superficial comparisons and to prevent real ones" (54).

6. The most common myths concerned Spain's eternal mission of Reconquest and the Catholic nature that upheld it. Sustaining these myths and embodying the

spiritual, intellectual, and physical heroics that they called for were a wide range of historical, semi-historical, and purely fictional figures such as Santa Teresa, Seneca, El Cid, Don Quijote, and of course, the humble Castilian peasant. For an analysis of these figures and their reappropriation see Sebastian Belfour and Mike Richards, both in Graham and Labanyi's *Spanish Cultural Studies*. Carmen Martín Gaité also provides an entertaining analysis of the fictions used to promote proper versions of womanhood in *Usos amorosos de la posguerra*.

7. Adrian Schubert explains that most agrarian reforms were aimed at helping the already prosperous "latifundistas" (209). The few reforms instituted on behalf of peasant farmers only effected very small percentages (209). Initial limitations on migration, intense vigilance by the Civil Guard and other local watchmen (illustrated in Fernández Santos's *Los bravos*), and limits placed on crop experimentation only exasperated already difficult conditions (Sevilla-Guzman 104; Schubert 210).

8. In addition to hunger, Spanish peasants suffered during the mid-1940s from malaria and typhoid outbreaks (López de Sebastián 75).

9. While *Las hurdes* presented a devastating look at rural poverty, Pedro Puche's *Barrios bajos* (1938) provided a much lighter but still fairly realistic look at urban poverty during those years.

10. Robert Spires employs the term “register” to indicate that literary works carry within them evidence of the changing shape of their context without signaling deterministic causal relationships between text and context (*Post-Totalitarian* 5-6).
11. María Antonia García de León contributes an analysis of these films in her article “El paleta, un estigma del mundo rural.” Prominent movies in this genre include Pedro Lazaga’s *La ciudad no es para mí* (1965), Ignacio F. Iquino’s *De picos pardos a la ciudad* (1969), and Antonio de Jaen’s *Prisionero en la ciudad* (1969).
12. During the first four decades of the twentieth century Madrid and Barcelona both doubled in population. In 1900, six cities in Spain had more than one hundred thousand inhabitants. By 1930, eleven could boast such numbers (Alvarez Junco 86).
13. Kaja Silverman explains suture as the “means by which subjects emerge within discourse” (200). She explains that this subject formation is traditionally accomplished through the filmic rule of shot-reverse-shot, which she explains replicates the history of Lacan’s mirror stage, producing the experience of *jouissance*-recognition-unpleasure, that produces in the spectator a desire for the return of pleasure and hence of more viewing. Silverman explains that the inciting of desire that sutures the spectator is totally dependent on exposing a lack (231).

14. One such example is the publication of an “Acción Católica” conference on the cinema entitled, “Valor social y educativo de cine, prensa y radio,” by Narciso Puig Megías. This pamphlet expresses from a more scholarly angle concerns similar to those expounded in the numerous anti-cinema tracts aimed at a more naive audience. The view of cinema as morally debilitating was so unanimously accepted, in fact, that it figured predominantly in the opening editorial of the 1956 premier of *Film Ideal*, a film review founded on relatively liberal premises and aimed at educated cinephiles. In this opening editorial José María Pérez Lozano wrote, “El cine NO deja pensar”

(3). In answer to such a threat, he continues:

Hay que robustecer la salud moral de los hombres robusteciendo sus criterios. . . . Hay que vigilar su crecimiento ante la vida. . . . Del mismo modo hay que atender urgentemente a la educación cinematográfica de los públicos. . . . Se trata de no dejar solo al espectador ante esa avalancha de las imágenes. Hacer de cada espectador un hombre con profundo sentido crítico, capaz de colocarse con objetividad y seriedad ante el cine. . . . Y creemos en nuestro triunfo si pensamos que el objeto de nuestros desvelos es el mismo que el de los desvelos de Dios: el hombre. (3)

15. Reviews at the time of release celebrate the film’s stark realism. An article in the Barcelona based *La Vanguardia Española* applauds the “realismo cinematográfico más exacto” of the film. A review in *El Noticiero Universal*, also of Barcelona,

underlines the difference between the realism in *Surcos* and that of other contemporary movies, calling it a realism “raras veces vista en nuestro cine.” An advertisement in *Primer Plano* quotes a critic citing *Surcos* as a groundbreaking work of social realism: “la primera película social producida en España” (“Diez”). Of course, these critics did not view *Surcos* innocently. Their opinions were undoubtedly colored by their desires for an autochthonous answer to the much heralded Italian neorealist cinema that had invaded Spain earlier that year. Notwithstanding this less than innocent viewership, the comments of these critics confirm the thematic and technical gulf separating Nieves Conde’s film from its more melodramatic precursors.

16. Kaja Silverman explains that the “gaze” and the “look” are separate. The difference between the two is similar to that between the penis and the phallus. The “gaze” is more an idea, and a structure of power than an actual physiological action. Not all “looks” carry the power of the “gaze.” She explains that “although the gaze might be said to be ‘the presence of others as such,’ it is by no means coterminous with any individual viewer, or group of viewers. It issues ‘from all sides,’ whereas the eye ‘(sees) only from one point.’” (*Male* 130)

17. Both Stanley Brandes and Joseph Aceves point to the distinct social differences between doctors and their rural patients in their respective sociological studies of rural

Spanish towns. According to their findings, no matter the efforts or the time spent in a rural community, urban doctors will for the duration of their lives be partially excluded from the activities of the community (Aceves 39).

18. Silverman posits the song-and-dance number as well as the entire star system as an ideal example of the transformation of the female body into a substitute of the phallus (*Subject 224*).

19. Kinder supports this view of don Roque's character (43).

20. A wide variety of voices have participated in the debate over the structure of power since modernization. While few agree as to the details of the structure, let alone the name that should be given it, the vast majority, from Michel Foucault to Stuart Hall, and from Daniel Bell to Anthony Giddens agree that these systems of power are incredibly diffuse and disconcertingly surface-oriented. Bell, Giddens, Scott Lash, and Ulrich Beck in addition describe modern structures of power as inherently contradictory and consequently always self-subversive. However, rather than destroy itself, the modern (or postmodern) system of power actually grows through this activity.

21. The story and script of *Surcos* were written by the then well-known novelist Eugenio Montes and a lesser known young author, Gonzalo Torrente Ballester.

22. Barry Jordan has written the most recent in-depth analysis of this generation of writers. In addition to the neorealist influence, Jordan identifies their reading of the American realists as well as their familiarity with the commitment-oriented writings of Jean Paul Sartre (*Writing* 84-128).

23. For a review of this crisis, see Jordan, *Writing* 176-80.

24. Jordan says of traditional approaches to the work: "Such clearly opposed critical reactions not only tend to deflect attention away from other relevant features of the novel; they also oversimplify and obscure more complex attitudes and motivations in the characters, especially in the doctor, whose outlook is by no means wholly consistent with the 'substitution/new tyrant' argument" (*Writing* 153).

25. The only analysis of the novel that does not touch on the role of the doctor is John B. Margenot's "Architectonic Space in Jesus Fernandez Santos' *Los bravos*." Other studies, such as Michael D. Thomas's "Penetrando la superficie: Apuntes sobre la estructura narrativa de *Los bravos*," although focused on other issues return to the question of the doctor somewhere within their work. Book-length studies or monographs on more than one novel by Fernández Santos follow along the lines of Thomas's article. See for example, Concha Alborg, Gaston Gainza, David K. Herzberger, Ramón Jiménez Madrid, Jorge Rodríguez Padrón, Darío Villanueva, and

Carlos Zamora among others.

26. Rosemary Hennessy writes: “by explaining materiality so exclusively in terms of discursive practices, Butler effectively conflates the materiality of the social into culture.” Hennessy explains that “reducing materiality to discourse alone has the effect of obscuring much of social life” (149). Stuart Hall has made a similar critique of Foucault’s work explaining: “if Foucault is to prevent the regime of truth from collapsing into a synonym for the dominant ideology, he has to recognize that there are different regimes of truth in the social formation” (Hall 136).

27. I am aware of the dangers of fetishizing materiality as the last realm of “truth.” Scientific research is increasingly alerting us to the possibility that matter or materiality does not exist. Science has shown that what is popularly considered solid matter is in fact the product of infinite constantly moving electrons, and has posited that these electrons are themselves composed of presently unmeasurable “intelligent” matter. The existence of such “intelligence” at the very building blocks of the “material” world gives new significance to the analysis of discourse and power carried out in the soft sciences and humanities.

For the sake of my analysis, however, I hold that, despite the apparent universality of “construction,” there continues to exist at present a hierarchy of power with regards to different constructs. Hence, while ideology may act through certain

very powerful discursive constructs to interpellate its subjects, those discourses still must get around still more powerful (even if that power comes merely from their being more deeply embedded in our social fabric) “constructs” of hunger, physical violence, encarceration, homelessness, etc. The differences in wealth that lead to what Stuart Hall considers the materiality of class conflict, or the differences in social and cultural experience that stem from geographic divisions are among these more powerful, and hence more immovable constructs.

28. Anthropologists studying Spanish rural communities confirm the impossibility of certain outsiders ever enjoying full fellowship with native inhabitants. Doctors comprise the group of outsiders most typically excluded from the close-knit sense of community that exists in these rural *aldeas*. According to Stanley H. Brandes a physician may spend the entirety of his or her adult life in a village, marry his or her children to local youth, and develop close one-on-one relations with selected townspeople and yet never be accepted as a member of the community (37-39); see also Aceves.

29. Carmen Martín Gaité, Rafael Abella, and Fernando Vizcaíno Casas all conclude their memoirs of post-Spain in the early 1950s. Vizcaíno Casas explains at the conclusion of a chapter on the year 1949:

nadie imagina entonces que ha vivido la época más difícil, contradictoria y

discutida del siglo. Nadie sabe tampoco que España comenzará a andar nuevos caminos, radicalmente distintos a los anteriores. La posguerra (que sigue viva, material y espiritualmente, a los casi once años del 'parte de la victoria') será, al fin, superada en la década que se inicia.

Para entonces, una generación de españoles que no intervino personalmente en la guerra civil, comenzó a levantar su voz. Forzosamente, los otros españoles tendrían que oírla. Las estructuras mentales del país acusan, con ello, un visible cambio. (327-28)

30. Jordan explains that following 1963 the social realist novel "came to a virtual standstill and writers such as López Salinas, López Pacheco, Goytisolo, Caballero Bonald, etc. entered a period of silence and reassessment; indeed, García Hortelano abandoned the novel for virtually a decade." He also recognizes the curious periods of silence from the generation's most representative authors, Sánchez Ferlosio and Fernández Santos (*Writing* 177-78).

31. Critics have given little consideration to this subgenre despite its phenomenal commercial success. Lazaga's *La ciudad no es para mí*, the initiator of the subgenre, brought in 70 million *pesetas* in 1966, making it the top grossing film of the decade and maintaining it in third place on the all-time list of Spain until 1987 (Gubern 336, 364). Of the subgenre in general F. Soria writes, "Con las deformaciones y omisiones

que se quieren, estas comedias reflejan la cotidianeidad, las apetencias y frustraciones de una sociedad retratada epidérmicamente y sin rigor, pero dejan traslucir la mentalidad y los modelos de vida de aquel momento” (14).

32. In this study I seek to use the terms commodification and commodity in their original marxist sense. Marx explains commodification as the process whereby the exchange value of an object effaces its use value so that the relation between people defined by that object take on the appearance of a relation between things. Through the process of commodification, the products of labor are transformed into social hieroglyphics (commodities) that appear to contain their value in themselves as if that value is some inherent property (see Marx, “Fetishism”). In terms of the Spanish countryside, commodification results in the notion of the *campo* as commodity--as inherently possessing such marketable qualities as relaxation, charm, and abundance and as independent of the back-breaking labor and the exploitative relations that in fact produce those qualities.

33. Frank Krutnick and Steave Neale explain: “Comic structure is characterized specifically by its logical structure. This structure consists of two syllogisms, or systems of reasoning and deduction. One is plausible, the other implausible. They are thus in contradiction with one another, though the implausible syllogism carries greater weight” (69). For a comedic event to succeed it must combine an action that

the audience can loosely imagine as possible in the material world with another that seems absurd so that the event will not be taken seriously.

34. Paul Preston includes *porteros* (doormen) and *serenos* (night-watchmen) as what could be considered “lay” members of the group of hard-line conservative politicians, military officers, and Civil Guard known by the late 1960s as the “bunker” for their determination to defend the dictatorship to the end (19). Preston explains that the employment of this group all depended on the continuation of the dictatorship.

35. For example, of the 128 entries in Alfonso Rey’s annotated bibliography of the novel, less than twenty treat explicitly social questions of the novel. Even analyses that claim to focus on the social often deviate into the stylistic so much that they ultimately miss their proclaimed purpose. Typical of this latter approach to the novel is Paul Alexandru Georgescu’s interpretation of the novel as “un enjuiciamiento ético y social”; despite an early focus on the social, Georgescu concentrates in his analysis on the aesthetic presentation of the ethical and social. Finally, it is worth noting that one of the most authoritative voices on the novel in the Franco years, Gonzalo Sobejano, has described *Tiempo de silencio* as a novel of form and not content.

In addition to Rey’s annotated bibliography, Malcolm Compitello provides a complete bibliography in “Luis Martín-Santos: A Bibliography.” William Sherzer’s

“An Appraisal of Recent Criticism of *Tiempo de silencio*” is a useful tool for working through the wealth of material written on the novel.

36. Social-focused approaches to the novel tend to concentrate on Martín-Santos’s critique of Spanish society as corrupted by its flawed historical traditions and its contemporary class conflicts. Jo Labanyi’s *Ironía e Historia en Tiempo de silencio* offers the most complete historically-focused analysis of the novel, while Jorge Riezu provides in his *Análisis sociológico de la novela Tiempo de silencio* the most complete sociological approach.

37. The current MLA bibliography lists ninety entries for *Tiempo de silencio* since 1963, followed by eighty entries for Cela’s *La familia de Pascual Duarte*. The novels comprising Juan Goytisolo’s so called “trilogy of treason,” *Señas de identidad*, *Reivindicación del conde don Julián*, and *Juan sin tierra* and Cela’s *La colmena* are the only other post-war novels to merit comparative critical attention, each averaging between sixty and seventy entries apiece in the bibliography.

38. I read the narrative voice here as occupying a middle ground somewhere between the extremes argued by Walter Holzinger and Felisa Heller. Holzinger draws a clear distinction between the voice and vision of the narrator and Pedro, claiming that Pedro eventually recognizes his own vision as absurd and subsequently succumbs to

the vision of the narrator (75). Heller, employing the theories of narrative voice of Wayne Booth's *Rhetoric of Fiction*, argues instead that Pedro is the third-person narrator throughout the novel (28). I concur with Holzinger with respect to the distinction of voices between the narrator and the protagonist. However, I agree with Heller in as much as a unity can be located on the level of vision. That is, while the narrative voice is not that of Pedro's, I read most of the passages of the third-person narrator as being very close to Pedro's own thoughts. In the parlance of narratology then, *Tiempo de silencio* is told almost entirely by a heterodiegetic narrator with Pedro as the principal focalizer.

39. In spite of the popular perception of Martín-Santos's novel as representing a clean break from neorealism, *Tiempo de silencio* is perhaps as much a continuation of this tradition as it is the beginning of the 1960s *nueva novela*. Of the link between the novel and its past, Sobejano writes, "Martín-Santos no pretendió evadirse de la tónica general a la novela española de su tiempo: el realismo. Al contrario, habiendo sufrido la misma realidad de aquella aislada España de los tiempos del hambre (...) quiso dejar testimonio de ella y se diría que, lejos de prescindir de sus antecesores inmediatos, escogió adrede la materia por ellos abordada" (549).

40. Curiously, Pedro's new approach combines two traditional branches of research to form a third that has generally been dismissed by established medicine, much as

study of so many levels of socio-spatial binaries under the common rubric of city/country has rarely been attempted. It is curious that modern medicine has recently begun to reexamine the long-discarded possibility of viral causes for the initiation of cancer even as contemporary social and cultural theory inspires a rethinking of traditional spatial categories and of their interaction.

41. The reference to “negros” and “blancos” comes directly from Pedro’s own vision of Muecas as an African anthropological curiosity in a white world (71-72). The differentiation between whites and blacks shows a sensitivity to the changing conditions of capitalism, in which labor exploitation was being increasingly internationalized, “underdeveloping” Africa and Latin America to the benefit of the developed--and white--capitalist countries to their north. Frank Buell points out that one of the most common associations of “Third World” to this day is that of a space “embodying darkness in contrast to the West’s enlightenment” (23). It is also interesting to note that Martín-Santos’s use of the black/white contrast to capture economic inequalities as linked to space comes at the height of Léopold Senghor and Aimé Césaire’s *négritude* movement that sought to establish common bonds among the exploited of Africa. In 1963 Franz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* would challenge the naivete of the movement by showing the economic and not racial links between the exploited cultures of the globe. In short, Martín-Santos’s use of the black/white division appears to register the same socioeconomic struggles that

theorists of the day were wrestling with in their analysis of the evolutions of contemporary capitalism.

42. Of Cervantes's *Don Quijote* and its reflections on space and time, Milan Kundera writes, "Don Quixote set off into a world that opened wide before him. He could go out freely and come home as he pleased. The early European novels are journeys through an apparently unlimited world" (7). By the end of Cervantes's novel, space begins to close in on the knight as modernization, symbolized in the visit to the Barcelona printing press, begins to limit the areas where the knight can freely wander.

43. One of Unamuno's principal concerns in *En torno al casticismo* is the historic ignorance of the Spanish people, of institutions such as the Inquisition that have isolated Spain from European ideas and progress (3:297-98). Ángel Ganivet's *Idearium español* makes similar arguments. Martín Santos's contemporary, Juan Goytisolo, broadens the attack on celebrated Spanish ignorance in his novel *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* with repeated references to Unamuno's statement, "qué inventen ellos" and Millán Astray's comment, "Muera la inteligencia" (see note 185 on page 215 of Linda Gould Levine's edition of Goytisolo's novel).

44. Since the 1950s ETA, or (Euzkadi ta Askatasuna), has been struggling for the independence of the Basque provinces of Spain and France. In 1959 what had begun

as a small study group of disenchanted youth members of the main Basque separatist party (PNV or the Basque National Party) officially became ETA (Clark 27). During the 1960s the small study group consisting of a couple dozen young activist enjoyed membership growth that led to numbers in the late years of the decade near 600 (Clark 222). ETA's history of violence, for which it has become most commonly associated, also dates from the decade of Spain "economic miracle" when the first group members as well as the first Spanish police inspector were killed in separate attacks in 1968 (Clark 3).

45. For example, at a Catholic Church-sponsored conference on the problems of immigration in 1964, Vicente Borregón Ribes criminalizes the rural immigrant *a priori* by beginning with the question of whether society owes the immigrant any rights. Borregón Ribes expresses concern at the Church's celebration of the right to immigrate as "natural" (115). While on the one hand he seems to be arguing for better treatment of the *campesino*, on the other his approach betrays a clear air of superiority, of a belittling attitude toward the peasants and their lands.

46. Paul Preston's *The Triumph of Democracy in Spain* offers a detailed narration of the politics of the decade.

47. The phrase comes from Linda Gould Levine's book of the same name, *Juan*

Goytisoló: la destrucción creadora.

48. For example, between 1962 and 1972, 319,000 small farms (under 50 hectares) disappeared; A 1966 newspaper article listed 100 abandoned villages for sale; by 1970 there were 547 fewer population centers than in 1960; by 1984 *El País* listed 2000 abandoned villages and 3,500 on the verge of abandonment (Schubert 210, 219). Even for those villages still in existence, a slow death at the time seemed immanent as revealed by a statistic from 1973 showing more deaths than births in the provincial town of Teruel (Hooper, *Spaniards* 23).

49. In 1971 Mario Gaviria in *Campo, urbe y espacio del ocio* celebrated the disappearance of rural Spain and declared that if the country were to continue its impressive path toward modernization it would need even further to accelerate the annihilation of its rural self (28-35). In an article in *Cuadernos para el diálogo* in 1975 Cristino González Velasco speaks of the death of rural life as inevitable in any country that hopes to modernize. He insists that even after the modernization of the 1960s, Spain is still too rural (71).

50. On the Francoist about-face with respect to rural policy see introduction to chapter three. Spanish governments since the 1970s have yet to formulate any serious and sustained policy concerning the countryside (Schubert 221).

51. Between 1961 and 1973 over a million Spaniards received official assistance to work throughout Western Europe. By 1973 there were also over 34 million tourists visiting Spain per year. After 1970, however, the numbers of workers began to drop and by 1975 an estimated 200,000 Spaniards returned home, most without encouragement from home. At the same time tourism also began to decline significantly (Hooper, *New* 20-21, 28).

52. Terán calls the 1970s the decade of Foucault in reference to the common concern of Latin American novels with ideas of Truth, Power, Knowledge, as well as their general disappointment with centers of power. Marshall Berman writes, “Foucault is a world-historical alibi for the sense of passivity and helplessness that gripped so many of us in the 1970s” (Mudrovcic 445-55).

53. It may seem initially counterintuitive to posit the city and not the country as the site of panoptic power. After all, the size of the country village makes it a place where everyone can see and be seen quite easily. While everyone can see and be seen, in the village unquestioned hierarchies still control the power of each gaze. As Anthony Giddens explains, in the village the peasant relies on a system of formulaic truth whereby he or she may know clearly in what and in whom lay the forces of power, as well as by what mechanisms these forces might typically be exercised

(Giddens 79-80). Life in what Giddens calls the “post-traditional” society of the city offers the peasant the chance to escape the control of traditional guardians and to become one’s own expert. However, in such a society, expertise (i.e., Foucauldian power) is shared equally by all. Hence, while the city appears to offer escape from traditional hierarchies and a certain sense of previously unavailable power, it in fact presents an even more binding disciplinary apparatus.

54. Antonio Sánchez and Helen Graham describe the Constitutional solutions to the regional/center struggle as anachronistic, being based on economic imperatives that no longer obtain in contemporary Spain (408). They compare the resulting socio-political instability to a potential time bomb. Paul Preston explains that much of the success of the Constitution was based on keeping the relationship between the central state and the autonomies purposefully ambiguous. But while this led to immediate success, it forebode trouble in the future (136).

55. After critical success in Cannes, the regime was under pressure to show Saura’s film in Spain uncensored. Conservative groups organized in-theater protests in Madrid and even bombed a Barcelona theater where it was playing. Rosa Montero described the movie as “uno de los films que más pasión ha despertado, despierta y--suponemos--seguirá despertando en nuestro país” (“Carlos Saura” 4). All of this, of course, turned Saura’s film into a box-office hit.

56. Marvin D'Lugo writes, "The film's sense of liberation comes from Saura's directness in depicting a number of scenes in which the nationalist cause is either ridicules or presented as inspired more by petty animosity than by patriotic or religious fervor. But more volatile than the treatment of the victors was the first compassionate view of the vanquished" (116).

57. Of his preference for the term "parabolic" to describe his cinema Saura explains: "Todos los periodistas no hacéis más que ver símbolos en mis películas, cuando yo no lo veo así. . . . Se habla mucho de mi lenguaje críptico, como dices, del uso que hago de las alegorías..., pero es que este tipo de lenguaje es la única posibilidad existente de expresión, no se puede atacar de frente en nuestro sistema, en nuestro cine no cabe la línea recta y siempre es necesario hacer un rodeo. . . . Lo que sí se mantiene es la necesidad de contar las cosas de forma parabólica. . . . La parábola es un cuento o narración que presenta un suceso inexistente pero que pueda hacerse realidad en cualquier momento" (Montero, "Carlos Saura" 6).

58. Of Foucault's mostly unrecognized contribution to geography and the study of the spatial, Edward Soja writes: "The contributions of Foucault to the development of critical human geography must be drawn out archeologically, for he buried his precursory spatial turn in brilliant whirls of historical insight. He would no doubt

have resisted being called a postmodern geographer, but he was one, *malgré lui*” (16). Foucault himself shared the opinion that “the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than with time” (“Spaces” 23).

59. Foucault had coined the phrase earlier in a section from *The Order of Things*. Foucault significantly refocuses his definition for “heterotopia” in “Of Other Spaces.” This later essay has been the source for the majority of critics who have worked with the term.

60. Debra Castillo and Robert Spires are representative of numerous critics on this question. Castillo calls *El cuarto de atrás* a “book on memory” and a “recuperation of a lost historical past” (814). She notes the central importance of memory and fiction in all of Martín Gaité’s writings. Spires studies the role of the novel in “the freeing of memory from the shackles of historical narrative; the recognition of the fantastic as an integral part of existence; the dynamic role of discourse in the transformation of the work into a network of interconnecting texts” (“Intertextuality” 147).

61. Martín Gaité’s works figure prominently in *El cuarto de atrás*, providing through intertextual play some of the key city/country divisions of the novel. Martín Gaité is herself an author who has lived the contradictions and contradistinctions of

heterogeneous space. She has lived the city/country dichotomy on multiple levels. Linda Chown has written of Martín Gaité as growing up on a borderland between two frameworks, the social and the mental. While she spent her adolescence and entire adult life until approximately the time of the writing of *El cuarto de atrás* living under the restrictions of the Franco regime, she enjoyed a personal freedom raised in a prosperous home by an educated mother and a father whom she describes as “incorruptibly independent” (24). Her parents not only provided her with a refuge against the repressions of *franquismo*, but also a mixed ancestry of Castilian and Galician blood that gave her an inescapable feel for living life on spatial and cultural borders. This is probably why although she grew up in Salamanca she always identified much more with her Galician heritage. The anxiety of influence of the city also marked itself permanently on Martín Gaité, who continues to consider herself a girl of the provinces, who as a teenager nestled up next to the radio to hear the latest tunes that might bring a fresh breath of cosmopolitanism to her static provincial life, and who as a young adult “fled the provinces” for the experiences of the city. While her writing style has developed and matured, the mark of these numerous spatial tensions appear like a constant water mark in all of her novels. In her debut novella, *El balneario* (1954), a provincial girl travels to a resort with her husband, displaying all the anxieties of a small town girl but manifesting confusions of an even international nature, specifically with her inability to recall her national status. Her first novel, *Entre visillos* (1957), winner of the *Premio Nadal*, is set in Salamanca and

describes the contrasting lives of the town's young women and a visiting foreign instructor. Her next novel, *Ritmo lento* (1961), though set almost entirely in Madrid, contains a key moment that leads to the ultimate insanity of the protagonist when she discovers the same neo-rural abject that Martín-Santos so powerfully registered in his novel of the same year. Finally, Martín Gaité's *Retahílas* narrates a nocturnal conversation of an aunt and nephew who return to Galicia from other parts of Spain to keep vigil at the death of their grandmother. Each of these novels deal with city/country issues. They are unmistakable representations of the anxieties and concerns that arose during the Franco years as urban centers subsumed the countryside, as international capitalist society subsumed the local economy, and as the regional sovereignty appeared to die a slow death at the hands of a suffocating centralist regime.

62. Mirella Servodidio and Marcia Welles's collection of essays, *From Fiction to Metafiction: Essays in Honor of Carmen Martín-Gaité*, provides the most accessible, complete resource for a consideration of Martín Gaité's oeuvre. Within the collection, essays by Julian Palley and Kathleen Glenn consider the role of the painting of Luther with the Devil; Glenn also considers the place of the letter that C. discovers lying on her floor; nearly every critic in the collection of essays considers in some detail the connections between Todorov's work on the fantastic and Martín Gaité's novel. Debra Castillo also given some consideration to Todorov in her article,

Never-Ending Story. Finally, Aleida Anselma Rodríguez devotes an entire article (“Todorov en *El cuarto de atrás*”) to the relationships between the theorist and the novelist. For an in-depth analysis of Martín Gaité’s fictional oeuvre through the 1980s, see Joan Lipman Brown, *Secrets from the Back Room: the Fiction of Carmen Martín Gaité*.

63. The ritualistic interaction of individuals repeating memorized words and phrases, giving signs, and participating in carefully choreographed activities (like C. and the cockroach) is a common part of many spiritual orders. For an overview of the activities of perhaps the best known of these societies, that of Freemasonry, see Harold Waldwin Percival, *Masonry and its Symbols* and C.C. Zain, *Ancient Masonry*.

64. The reference is of course to the dictator himself. While the association of the interviewer with Franco may be ultimately untenable, it should be noted that the novel is precisely about C.’s wrestle with her various demons--principle among these being her historical memory (always closely linked to Franco). While the interviewer for the most part encourages an attitude anathema to that encouraged by the regime, he similarly inspires many of the anxieties that C. must overcome. Furthermore, C.’s repeated sense of connection to Carmencita Franco makes of the dictator a father figure by association. C. clearly never shows any daughterly affection toward the dictator but nor does she display outright antipathy. Her attitude is more one of

ambivalence--similar to that which she feels for the interviewer throughout most of the night together. Finally, in a novel self-consciously saturated with discourse it should be clear that Franco is no more the evil dictator than Isabel la Católica is the straightforward Francoist heroine. Indeed, both interviewer and dictator impose alternatively fear and sympathy, anxiety and curiosity. And both of them have powerful effects on C.'s past, however opposed their professed methods. For a review of the variety of interpretations of the interviewer, see Kathleen Glenn, "*El cuarto de atrás*: Literature as *Juego* and the Self-Reflexive Text."

65. Martín Gaité's review of the postwar years, *Usos amorosos de la posguerra*, is dedicated to a review of the rigid codes of behavior covering nearly every aspect of life handed down to each and every citizen by Church and State authorities. These codes, according to Martín Gaité, preached against "cualquier exceso o derroche," guaranteeing a fairly homogeneous--at least on the surface--society (13).

66. Debra Castillo describes the novel as "a recuperation of a lost historical past but not a history" and identifies its central concerns as "the forms of writing and the function of memory" (815). Mirella Servodidio argues that novelistic technique ensures that "the truth of (C.'s) history is not fully contained in the script" (125). Joan Lipman Brown focuses an entire article, "A Fantastic Memoir: Technique and History in *El cuarto de atrás*" on the issue of writing and history. Spires and Glenn

have likewise commented on problems of writing and history in *El cuarto de atrás*.

67. In his essay “Walking in the City,” Michel de Certeau presents a theory of the city more as a lived space than as a planned entity. By walking through the city, rather than viewing it from above, Certeau discovers how individual inhabitants work within the supposedly rigorous limits of city planners and government officials to make the city their own. Ultimately, the best laid plans of engineers and bureaucrats “produces effects contrary to those at which (they) aim” and “space becomes the blind spot in a scientific and political technology” (155). The result is a city with “a second, poetic geography on top of the geography of the literal, forbidden or permitted meaning” (159).

68. For a complete review of the events of the February 23, 1981 see Paul Preston’s *The Triumph of Democracy in Spain* (195-201).

69. Eduardo Subirats has, in fact, termed the whole process of political transition that culminated in the early eighties during the years of the *movida* in the election of the PSOE, “una fiesta” (12). The news magazine, *Cambio 16*, made similar reference to the spirit of the times as one of “fiesta” (“Pasotas” 126). John Hooper describes the period as a rejection of the “serious 70s,” of a time of creation and enjoyment of wealth, of money, style, glamour, and scandal (58) in which leisure was seen as more

a right than a privilege (188).

70. If this was not the overall spirit to begin with, the popularization of the *movida* by the Spanish media after 1984 ultimately served to catch the entire country up in some form or another of *movida*-worship. Vernon and Morris divide the *movida* into two distinct phases, the second of which, beginning in 1982, involved this media popularization (8). They quote Borja Casani as explaining, “(W)hen the interest in politics waned, the communications media began to look at the cultural movements, the festivities, the fads, the ceremonies that were being produced. . . . (E)veryone attempted to publish in their newspapers what they called signs of the postmodern” (9). Vernon and Morris refer to this process as the “fetishization of the *Movida*” (9).

71. In *Post-Franco, Postmodern: The Films of Pedro Almodóvar* Kathleen Vernon and Barbara Morris provide a brief analysis of the debates surrounding the connection between Spanish culture of the 1980s (especially the *movida*) and the broader phenomenon of postmodernism that arose in 1984 around the popularization of the *movida* (10-11). Within the review they specifically refer to the *movida* as the “sometime standard-bearer” of Spanish postmodernism (11).

72. John Hopewell explains that while these polished rural films treat Spanish themes that often involve social injustices and economic suffering, they do so in such a

universal, polished style that the films lose their social power. The Spanish society they present is one without any real bearing on present social, economic, and political issues (226-33).

73. Gutierrez Aragón's *La mitad del cielo* is the only major motion picture of the decade to my knowledge that treats the experience of country immigrants in the city (1986). Aragón's presentation, however, seems to place the film more as a slight variation on the theme of rural movies than a serious consideration of city/country interaction. Nearly a third of the movie takes place in the lush valleys of northern Spain, depicted with the polished technique that Hopewell claims removes the social power from the typical rural movie. More significant, however, is that when the movie moves to the city, the highly polished cinematic techniques continue so that the city never exhibits the shocking force exhibited in *Surcos*, *La ciudad no es para mí*, or finally, in *¿Qué he hecho yo. . . !!*

74. Early proponents of postmodernism such as Jean Francois Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard, and Zygmunt Bauman saw in the contemporary "incredulity towards metanarratives" and its subsequent preference for the act of knowing rather than the fact of knowledge a necessary move toward ethics that might redeem society from the errors of modernist thought (Lyotard xxiv). Regarding this possibility Bauman writes: "pluralism of authorities is conducive to the resumption by the agents of moral

responsibility that tended to be neutralized, rescinded or cede away as long as the agencies remained subordinated to a unified, quasi-monopolistic legislating authority (. . .) Agents face now point-blank the consequences of their actions (. . .) Self-monitoring, self-reflection and self-evaluation become principal activities of the agents” (202).

75. Lesley Heins Walker writes: “More than any other Spanish director, Pedro Almodóvar makes films about women” (274). Paul Julian Smith captures the overall spirit for which Almodóvar is known in his analysis of two of the director’s films in particular: “the director’s first and third films foreground the spectacle of lesbian desire in a self-conscious celebration of the breaking of sexual taboos, both societal and cinematic” (“*Pepi*”). James Mandrell provides a nice overview of popular perceptions of the “gay sensibilities” in Almodóvar in his “Sense and Sensibility, or Latent Heterosexuality and *Labyrinth of Passions*.” Vernon calls *¿Qué he hecho yo . . . !!* specifically a “tale of frustrated feminine desire” (“Melodrama” 61) and describes Almodóvar as having “a reputation as a man at home cinematically in a feminine universe” (“Melodrama” 62). Brad Epps describes Almodóvar’s cinema as “frenetic, effervescent, wild, and rapturous, (. . .) Willful, deliberate, and self-conscious. (His movies) focus on dispersion, center on marginality, and concentrate on excess. They seem designed, almost systematically, to scandalize and trouble; they seem fixed, almost obsessively, on the movement of sexual desire. They are

also, of course, a frame largely around figures of femininity and homosexuality” (99).

76. Sander L. Gilman cites sociologist M. Bulmer as defining ethnicity as “a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared past, and cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements that define the group’s identity, such as kinship, religion, language, common territory, nationality or physical appearance” (19).

77. Of the subplots in the film, Augusto M. Torres writes, “con ella (the main plot) discurren demasiadas historias laterales sin interés, mal desarrolladas, y que no hacen más que enturbiar la claridad de la principal” (*Diccionario* 387). Vernon also mentions “a number of viewers and critics” who complain about “the tangential character of this complicated Teutonic subplot” (“Melodrama” 68).

78. María García de León explains: “se le llamó ‘chabolismo vertical’ a esos enjambres de pisos diminutos, viviendas construidas con míseros materiales que sustituyeron (sólo parcialmente) a las chabolas de lata y de cartón, diseminadas irregularmente por el extrarradio, hechas furtivamente por la noche, antes que la orden judicial las pudiera eliminar” (“Paleto” 42).

79. And yet, at the same time, Almodóvar hardly reduces the city and the country to purely discursive constructs. Indeed, Gloria’s son will eventually abandon her for a

material space geographically removed from her urban haunts. And the same move will nearly result in the protagonist's likewise very real suicide. Nevertheless, the power that these sites hold and the law that seemingly provides (but is indeed simultaneously provided for by) that power has been infused by the simulacra-producing power of late capitalist culture. Any simple cause-and-effect connection between a more material geography and a discursive sexuality or vice-versa unravels. In this postmodernized order, no aspect of identity completely transcends the interplay of polyvalent performance.

80. Jean Baudrillard argues that in the postmodern era distances between "reality" and its "representation" have become so flattened so as to convert even the most material events into more a kind of representation of themselves than a mark of any "reality." Baudrillard explains the four orders of simulacra as the following: 1) the image is the reflection of a basic reality; 2) the image masks and perverts a basic reality; 3) the image masks the *absence* of a basic reality; 4) the image bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum (11). Society, according to Baudrillard, is moving toward this latter stage in which "the whole system becomes weightless, it is no longer anything but a gigantic simulacrum--not unreal, but a simulacrum, never again exchanging for what is real, but exchanging in itself, in an uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumference" (10-11).

81. Elizabeth Ermarth, in an analysis of postmodern time in the contemporary novel argues that the particularly Western European concept of time as linear, historical, and teleological has acted as “the Metanarrative” of Western thought (7). It has established a base for Western civilization’s most defining disciplines: empirical science, modern historiography, tonal music (20). But more importantly, the linear organization of time has, like the neutral space created by the single-point perspective of realist painting, created an illusion of homogeneity among reference points (27). This illusion has produced the binary oppositions and, in turn, the hierarchical thinking that leads to the moralizing value judgements against which postmodernism struggles.

82. Note that as Gloria “rewrites” her world the author himself is finally left without any options. Gloria, in a sense, becomes the new author of Spain’s new urban and “postmodern” society. It is curious then, that this new author writes not with a pen--the traditional phallically-charged agent of male authorship of reality, but with a hamhock. Gloria does not completely change her stripes, but instead with her new instrument of creation, introduces reality into the world of those stripes. For another creative use of the hamhock in contemporary Spanish cinema, see Bigas Lunas’s *Jamón, jamón* (1992).

83. Critics have compared Landero’s style to that of Cervantes, Galdós, Kafka,

Proust, Onetti, Faulkner, and García Márquez (Mainer 130-32; Hidalgo Bayal 114). Mainer also notes its connections to Mennipean satire and to the folkloric (130-32). An article in *El Europeo* calls Landero “narrador abundante, pero anacrónico (Pope 59). Santos Sanz Villanueva calls *Juegos de la edad tardía* “un libro de sabor clásico” (Pope 59).

84. Frederick Jameson argues that in postmodern times the depth necessary for parodic narrative has disappeared. He claims that in postmodernity, pastiche has replaced parody. He explains that “pastiche, like parody, is the imitation of a peculiar mask, speech in a dead language: but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody’s ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter and of any conviction that alongside the abnormal tongue you have momentarily borrowed, some healthy linguistic normality still exists. Pastiche is thus bland parody” (73-74). Jameson refers to E.L. Doctorow’s novels *Loon Lake*, *The Book of Daniel*, and *Ragtime* as examples of this postmodern tendency in their particular appropriation of American history so as to create a *deja vu* experience within readers that exceeds the typical experience created by the traditional historical novel of a simple application of past knowledge to the story at hand. Practitioners of this type of pastiching novel in Spain include Antonio Muñoz Molina (see Robert Spires’ analysis of the uses of jazz, detective fiction, and *film noir* in *El invierno en Lisboa* in *Post-Totalitarian Spanish Fiction*), Rosa Montero (her use of boleros in *Te trataré como a*

una reina), and Miguel Sánchez-Ostiz (the pastiche of class cinema in *La gran ilusión*).

85. José García offers an interesting analysis of the three books in his article, “*Juegos de la edad tardía: apoteosis de un discurso literario*.” According to García, through the dictionary, Gregorio becomes master of the work; through the atlas he remakes the geography of the city; through the encyclopedia he learns to invent knowledge, events, and even rewrite history (105-06).

86. Villar del Río is the fictional town in Bardem and Berlanga’s *Bienvenido Mr. Marshall* (1954) that anticipates the arrival of the Americans with a transformation of their rather dull Castilian town into a stereotypical Andalusian movie set. Mágina is the fictional focus of Antonio Muñoz Molina’s *El jinete polaco* (1991).

87. The poetic work of Guillén, Juan Ramón, or Pedro Salinas written in exile has, of course, not been ignored. However, critics tend to consider their poetry once they cross the Atlantic as something other than belonging to the Spanish tradition. *La poesía en el siglo XX: desde 1939*, part of a twenty-five volume overview of Spanish literature, dedicates only two pages to poetry written in exile. Andrew Debicki in *Spanish Poetry of the Twentieth Century*, while paying unprecedented attention to the work in exile for a history of Spanish poetry, nevertheless sustains the need to

separate their expatriots' work from their compatriots in Spain (89). Similarly, Buñuel, while seldom ignored by cinema histories, Spanish or otherwise, is nevertheless never considered a part of the Spanish tradition except when he makes a movie in Spain (see Gubern's *Historia del cine español*).

88. In *Literature and Inner Exile* Paul Ilie argues that exile is more a mental than a physical condition. He writes that "to live apart is to adhere to values that do not partake in the prevailing values; he who perceives this moral difference and who responds to it emotionally lives in exile" (2). He explains that the immigration of physical exiles at the conclusion of the civil war left a "hollow" to which those who remained were forced to respond. Consequently, "while the extirpated segment (was) territorially exiled from the homeland, the resident population (was) reduced to an inner exile" (3). Ilie's focus in his study is, however, on the expression of exilic sentiment of writers such as Juan Goytisolo, who for all their sense of alienation, nevertheless, wrote from within the Castilian-speaking mainstream. Ilie pays only passing notice to the "exiled" ethnicities of Galicia, Basque Country, and Cataluña, showing just how intense and enduring their rejection by the regime was.

89. For instance, in Galicia the work of Blanco-Amor has enjoyed recent "rediscovery" with the publication of his *Obra en galega completa* by Editorial Galaxia in 1992 and the celebration in his honor during the 1993 Day of Galician

Letters. Such events have brought to light a work “en grande parte desconocida” (Tarrío Varela, “Presentación”). Other works, such as Mercé Rodoreda’s 1965 *La placa del Diamant*, have been granted renewed popularity thanks to recent movie versions. Also, anthologies of regionalist fiction such as Jesús María Lasagabaster’s *Antología de la narrativa vasca actual* recruit new readers through the use of both current and older material, remarketing the latter (works by Txillardegui, for example) as “contemporary.” In the late 1980s the editorial house Taurus published volumes on Galician, Catalán, and Basque literature to be included in their *Historia crítica de la Literatura Hispánica*, a series supported by the Spanish Ministry of Culture that by appearances aims to inculcate a foundational understanding of the Spanish literary tradition.

90. Historians, sociologists, and cultural critics unanimously point to racial tensions as one of the significant problems facing Spain in the near future (Graham “Politics” 414; Harris 1; Sánchez, “Imigrantes”). John Hooper in particular points out the interplay of the regional question and the foreign migrations that he sees as comparable as the internal ones of the Franco years (442-43). A recent inquiry by the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, however, suggests that xenophobic attitudes in Spain are actually decreasing as the number of immigrants increase (“Los españoles”).

91. Medem's encouragement of laughter at a movie that questions the very idea of solid identities or cultural essences recalls the joke: "If you want to make God laugh tell him your plans." Medem sets up a sort of planning on the part of the audience, awakening at least a recollection of the plans that they bring with them to the theater. He then forces those plans to dissolve in the face of absurdity. One can either laugh or cry. Further planning is not an option.

92. The rate of intermarriage between Basques and immigrant ethnicities is higher than that between Catalans and others. Less than half the Basque population is in fact, what is officially considered as "Basque" (both parents born in the Basque country) (Hooper 401). Basque extremism is fraught with contradictions between material genealogies and the eternal essences for which they fight. Many ETA terrorists cannot count themselves as Basque. In 1994 one of the most wanted ETA terrorists was, ironically, the daughter of parents from Salamanca (Hooper 404).

93. This is the argument, for example, in Christopher Mane's essay, "Nature and Silence." A common theme of much ecocriticism is the critique of the western view of the earth as an inanimate, mute object to be acted upon by humans who uniquely enjoy the power to speak and act. See Cheryll Glotfelty's "Introduction" to *The Ecocriticism Reader*.

94. In addition to Toro, Manuel Rivas has enjoyed the support of Alfaguara, placing him on the shelves of major bookstores throughout Spain. While other Galician writers such as Gonzolo Torrente Ballester or Alfredo Conde also enjoy widespread circulation their work is not typically cited by those who write on Galician culture. Torrente's case is typical of writers that, while writing on Galician themes, have written almost entirely in Castilian. Conde, while meriting the National Critics Prize in the mid-1980s for a novel originally published in Galician, simply may have come of age a bit too early to fit in the nationalistic wave that seems to have picked up the writings of Toro and Rivas.

95. While the concept of individual identity is a product of modernist thought that is initially rejected by postmodernist thinkers (see Jameson, *Postmodernism* 71), it has continued to be perhaps the one modernist tenet that the same postmodernists are most hesitant to do away with. In collections of essays such as Linda Nicholson's and Steven Seidman's *Social Postmodernism* postmodernists, gender theorists, gay rights activists, and postcolonialists among others attempt to construct a theory of social postmodernism that allows for the political saliency of old-fashioned identity categories without falling into the modernist traps of restrictive identities.

96. Paul Fallon shows in an analysis of Galician author Francisca Herrera y Garrido's *Martes d'antroido* how amorous relations between Galicians and Castilians in early

twentieth-century Galician literature ultimately resulted in the subsumption of the former culture by the latter.

97. Among cultural influences the youngest generation of Spanish novelists lists rock music, television, and movies as often as they do literature (“Fichados”). In a survey conducted by the popular reading magazine, *Qué Leer*, one of the most successful, José Ángel Mañas lists as his only influence the news documentaries on Spanish Television’s “La 2” (“Fichados” 77). In Pedro Maestre’s speech at the awarding of the prestigious Nadal prize for his *Matando dinosaurios con trincheras* (1995) he boasted, to the horror of nearly everyone in attendance, that he never read anything, that the inspiration for his winning novel had simply been life itself. Much of this may be nothing more than an attempt to make space in the national field of cultural production by means of shock, of course. Critic Ignacio Echevarría has written, against an initial critical avalanche against this younger generation, that in fact, “La generación joven tiene bastante respeto por la institución literaria” (Castile 4).

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