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Yoknapatawpha County-on-the-Mediterranean: Barcelona, Literary Capital of Catalan-language Letters and the Third World (1962-1975)

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of a perceived near total hegemony of Anglophone norms and scholarly practices within the discipline of international geography, a growing chorus of voices from outside Anglo-Saxon geography is currently pleading for a greater sensitivity to context and language diversity in the field. Nowhere is the sense of exclusion and marginalization more acute than in the often frustrated attempts by non-English language geographers to publish in the leading Anglo-American geographical journals. This paper argues that the current state of debate on the issue has reached a certain conceptual impasse, as those voices from the self-proclaimed “peripheries” of international geography today cannot seem to reconcile a central tension between a call for greater context-specificity in knowledge production and an abiding concern to avoid the parochialism of local or national scholarly traditions. In an attempt to open alternative visions for publishing practices within the non-English language discipline, the author engages in a geo-historically informed analysis of the Barcelona-based book publishing industry during a crucial time of socio-political transition informed by anti-Franco cultural resistance. By excavating the geo-history of this urban industrial

milieu (1962-75), the author attempts to reveal how the Catalan capital became, for a brief moment, the center of a *world*, connecting not only Latin America to the Iberian Peninsula but articulating wider politico-cultural projects between the global North and South. The political as well as geographical knowledge revealed from this case, it is argued, demonstrates that the task of creating a truly international geography may be more complex than its advocates may wish to acknowledge.

Keywords: international geography, Anglo-Saxon scholarly norms, Barcelona, book publishing, *gauche divine*

The space of “international geography” has emerged as an increasingly key concern of the discipline in recent times. Responding to the nearly complete hegemony of Anglo-American geographers in setting research agendas across many parts of the world, geographers working primarily in languages other than English have drawn attention to the unequal power geometries privileging English-language academic norms, values and associated scholarly styles, arguing that they effectively silence intellectual voices originating from outside the Anglo-American centers of geographical knowledge (Pénot and Agnew, 1998; Minca, 2000; Gregson et al, 2003; García-Ramon, 2003, 2004a, 2004b). Nowhere have these power asymmetries been more acutely revealed than in the perceived hidden cultural biases underlying the publication criteria of the major English-language geographical journals (Gutierrez and López-Nieva, 2001; Paasi, 2005). Against this backdrop, some members of the discipline have renewed the call for Anglo-American geography to re-engage with issues of context-specificity and diversity, not only in terms of substantive theoretical content but professional practice. García-Ramon has made the point succinctly:

“Although postmodernity describes knowledge as situated – and not only within the Anglosaxon world – in geography, little systematic attention has been paid to these differences and to the connection between production of knowledge and specific places, although place is a fundamental category of analysis for geography.”

(García-Ramon, 2003, p.2)

As one of several strategies to overcome the perceived hegemony of Anglophone norms within the discipline, García-Ramon suggests that critical geography “needs to look at the peripheries and learn from and work with them in order to have a non-exclusionary type of critical geography” (2004a: 524). Only by this means, it is implied, will the desired goal of “truly international journals” be achieved, rather than only those partially globalized publication fora on offer today. In this paper I would like to intervene in this

vital and ongoing discussion by problematizing the local, context-bound, and peripheral nature of non-Anglo-Saxon scholarly research as the identity from which to best engage with Anglo-centered scholarly practices. In this, I do not contest the fact that many non-Anglophone geographers rightfully feel embattled under the increasing pressure to access English-language publication outlets. But, taking seriously the injunction to avoid the “parochialism” that comes from closing “in [on] our own tradition and national school” (García-Ramon, 2003, p. 3), I propose in what follows to chart an alternative narrative identity for a more fully globalized publishing *praxis* by way of a geo-historical account of Barcelona-based *avant-garde* publishing houses during the period of anti-Franco cultural resistance. Indeed, I argue that in the waning years of the dictatorship, Barcelona became the capital not only of a self-defined nation but of a *world*, encompassing not only Spain and Latin America, but large segments of the developed North and developing South, due in large measure to the space it provided Catalan and non-Iberian authors to innovate in the Spanish- and Catalan-language, and thereby serving to rejuvenate a novel form considered to be moribund throughout much of the advanced West.

Contesting Early Iberian “Orientalisms”¹

Franco’s 1959 anti-inflationary Stabilization Plan (*Plan de Estabilización*) set in motion a dynamic of economic growth and industrial “modernization” in Spain that was to have far reaching consequences throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Without accompanying political reforms, however, the opening and reinvigoration of the Spanish economy through an engagement with wider European market forces elicited the first stage of a gradually deepening disillusionment on the part of Spanish intellectuals and dissidents who had placed their hopes in the imminent demise of the Franco regime and a subsequent revolutionary “break” (Mangini: 1987). As Spain’s economy internationalized, the Spanish *intelligentsia*, building on a network of contacts established during the previous decade, pushed their opposition politics beyond the peninsula, while creating at home — in the new air of ambiguous press tolerance conceded by the regime — spaces which rehearsed the political transformations to come.

In 1963 the Paris-based *Comité Español de la Asociación Internacional por la Libertad de la Cultura* sponsored a *Coloquio sobre Realismo y*

¹All subsequent material is derived from the author’s dissertation book project, written under the supervision of Edward Soja, Michael Storper, John Agnew and Leobardo Estrada at the Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, UCLA [Thesis title: “Tracing Catalan Modernities: the Space of Book Publishing and the Graphic Arts” (1999, unpublished). I am extremely grateful to María-Dolores García Ramon and Abel Albet i Mas for providing me not only with a warm institutional home over the course of fieldwork conducted in Barcelona (1995-1998), but their ongoing and abiding friendship.

Realidad en la Literatura Contemporánea, providing a safe platform for Spanish dissidents to criticize the Franco regime and engage in dialogue with other European intellectuals. A critical debate erupted there on the “Europeanization” of Spain. The polemic was initiated by a segment of the Spanish intellectual Left which, concerned with the harmful effects of technocratic modernization on Spanish society, rejected Europe as an economic development model. Writing in *Les Temps Modernes*, Juan Goytisolo exclaimed that, before the inherent “conservatism” of the Europeans, it was the countries of the developing world that were now in the vanguard of development. In this intervention, Goytisolo turned on those who would wish a “chastity of material poverty” for Spain:

“The European admires the backwardness of Spain for *aesthetic reasons* and, in the manner of our 19th century conservatives, asks that we remain *as we are*. Here as well the interest of our upper classes converges with the appetite for chastity [which] Europe [harbors]. The egoism of [these classes] finds its unexpected ally in the pleasure of our [tourist] visitors. Spain-as-servant of Europe above the Pyrenees is exchanged for Spain-as-spiritual refuge below the Pyrenees... The Europeans have imposed a persona on us and demand that we represent it faithfully. We Spaniards are valiant, proud landowners, and many [more] things, but we must never step outside the limits of our *ascetic* poverty. The European searches in Spain the soul he has lost. Our mission, they say, is a spiritual one...”

(Goytisolo, 1962, p.128; translated from Spanish by author; hereafter “tsba”)

As a response to these orientalizing narratives, Goytisolo argued that Iberian intellectuals should turn Cuba and the rest of Latin America, Asia and Africa. Whereas Europe, he claimed, “represents, historically, the past, immobility”, it was now time to “Africanize [ourselves]... and transform into a banner of vindication that stale irony, ‘Africa begins at the Pyrenees’” (Goytisolo, 1962, p.128; tsba).

“Africa Begins at the Pyrenees”: Cuban and South American Magical-Realism Lap Gently Against the Statue of Christopher Columbus on Barcelona’s Ramblas

Yet whereas intellectuals such as Goytisolo, from their self-imposed Parisian exile, made a call to arms against “official European culture” (1962, p.128), their belief in a process of “Africanization” via an Iberian “national and popular culture” seemed strangely out of sync with the new atmosphere of heightened internationalism and political pluralism characterizing cultural work in Spain in the 1960s. It is in just such a spirit, for instance, that the

Catalan publisher Carlos Barral traveled to Latin America to establish contact with “a generation of... writers whose [literary] motors were [rooted] in the Cuban revolution” (Barral, 1988, p.58). For Barral, the merit of this group of novelists, which included, at its apex, Colombia’s Gabriel García Márquez, Peru’s Mario Vargas Llosa, Mexico’s Carlos Fuentes, Argentina’s Julio Cortázar, and Chile’s José Donoso, lay precisely in the fact that:

“... [T]hey were interpreting, finally, the significance of a very old and rich literature which took [upon itself] the testimony of the arduous social problems of that most punished [Latin American] continent. What flourished in that literary renovation [emerged from] the contradiction between a literature older than [that of] the Slavs and the themes of a primitivism and atrocity unknown until that time within the boring and well-groomed Euro-American world of the postwar period... For many [observers] this phenomenon, [which involved] the introduction of one or two young and well educated novelists from the savage republics, appeared to signify the rebirth of an era and a rehabilitation of the functions of modern prose...”

(Barral, 1988, p.58; tsba)

While visiting Cuba and Mexico, Barral was guided by purely literary ambitions, which were “very different from those of [traditional] Spanish publishers” (Barral, 1988, p57; tsba):

“The motives were various: to participate in courses of literary exploration, prizes, conferences... but the substance [of the meetings] was the same everywhere: to get to know people of letters, famous or would-be writers, and to organize methods and a system [to achieve] the literary unification of the [Spanish] language world, a preoccupation that was very common in those years among writers of all kinds and nations and totally foreign to the cultural policies of each [respective] republic.”

(Barral, 1988, p.58; tsba)

Providing an opening salvo in this neo-Bolivarian mission, Seix-Barral awarded its prestigious *Biblioteca Breve* prize in 1962 to a non-Spaniard, then 24-year old Mario Vargas Llosa, for his novel, *La ciudad y los perros*. Upon receiving the *Biblioteca Breve* prize, Vargas Llosa moved to Barcelona, residing in the affluent residential district of Sarriá, north of the Ensanche. During the remainder of the 1960s, the Catalan capital would become a temporary creative haven for numerous other Latin American writers: the Argentinean Nestor Sánchez; the Peruvians Mirko Lauer and Julio Ortega; the Dominican Pedro Vergés; the Colombians Gabriel García-Márquez and Rafael Humberto Moreno-Duran; as well as the Uruguayans

Eduardo Galeano, Cristina Peri Rossi, and Carlos Rama (Generalitat de Catalunya, 1992, p.320). As late as 1973, after the fall of Salvador Allende, the Chilean writer Jorge Edwards, expelled from his post as Chile's ambassador to France, also found a receptive home among the Catalans and fellow Latin Americans (Generalitat de Catalunya, 1992, p.320).

As a magnet for writers from throughout the Latin American hemisphere, Barcelona would become the crucible for the internationalization of the Spanish-language novel, launching its authors into non-Latin publishing markets. Within the urban *milieu* of the Catalan capital, the Latin American novelists benefited from their immersion within a dense network of publishing houses ranging from large firms oriented towards the literary mass market, such as Planeta and Bertelsmann-Círculo de Lectores,² to small and medium-sized *avant-garde* niche firms: Laia, Destino, and Lumen (Generalitat de Catalunya, 1992, p.317). Numerous authors were brought into contact with one another under the stewardship of the Catalan literary agent Carmen Balcells, whose agency provided an important binding function for the entire Latin American "set" living in Barcelona. Carlos Barral's family residence in the seaside village of Calafell, located on the Costa Brava, two-hours drive north of Barcelona, provided another important haven for the New World expatriate community (Barral, 1978).

But the centripetal forces grounding Latin American novelists and poets to the Catalan capital were not rooted solely in economic self-interest. More vitally, a strong sense of cohesion among the members of the Latin American diaspora was produced through a shared political solidarity with the Cuban revolution and a desire to bear witness to the anti-Franco opposition from Barcelona's *avant-garde* cultural perch. For these writers-in-residence, it was this transnational bond which conferred a peculiar universal sensibility to their work, allowing for a freedom denied them in their respective home countries. This universality of the imagination was as much a product of the circumstance of local and regional novelistic experimentation occurring within the different Latin American republics as was the context of their wider international reception and promotion in Spain of the 1960s. José Donoso, dean of the Chilean literary "boom", explains that prior to the 1960s, most Latin American novelists wrote according to the rules of a national or regionally-inflected "canon". The practitioners of this literary genre, labeled *criollismo* or *costumbrismo*:

² Founded by José Manuel Lara Hernández in 1949 and incorporated in December, 1964, Editorial Planeta S.A. is the corporate anchor of what in the post-Franco era would become a vast publishing empire, one of the most profitable in the Spanish-language world, specializing in the mass-market best-seller genre (Bustamante and Zallo, 1988, p.227). Círculo de Lectores, established in Catalonia in 1962 as a merger between the Spanish publisher Vergara and the German media conglomerate, Bertelsmann, A.G., is the first Spanish-language book club on the Iberian Peninsula, acting as a launching pad for Bertelsmann's titles throughout Spain and the Latin Americas (Bustamante and Zallo, 1988, p.230). Needless to say, the Barcelona *dissidentsia* view the presence of Planeta and Círculo de Lectores-Bertelsmann with varying degrees of concern. For the Catalan nationalists intent on preserving "high" Catalan print culture, their existence, so "close to home", must have been viewed with alarm. The fact that Planeta's José Manuel Lara had a close personal friendship with Franco must not have done much else to increase confidence in the "editorial politics" of the Spanish-language publishing giant.

“... [W]ith the magnifying glasses of entomologists, would go on cataloguing the flora and fauna, the races and [colloquial] sayings [which were] unmistakably ours, and a novel was considered *good* if it faithfully reproduced these autochthonous worlds, that which specifically *differentiated* us — separated us — from other regions and other countries of the continent: a kind of macho chauvinism for all to see... [A]t this time, literary quality was subordinated to mimetic and regional criteria.”

(Donoso, 1972, p.21; tsba)

Echoing the experience of the Iberian novel, the local and particularistic qualities of Latin American literary *regionalismo* was exacerbated by the requirements of social realist literary practice:

“... The protest novel, concerned [as it was with] the national, [with] the ‘important problems of society’ [in need of] urgent resolution, imposed [on us] a long-standing and deceitful criterion: above all else, the novel had to be — in addition to being unmistakably ‘ours’, as the criollistas wished — ‘important’, ‘serious’, an instrument useful in a *direct* way for [the achievement of] social progress. Any attitude in which could be found vestiges of a something that could be labeled ‘aestheticist’ was anathema. The investigation of form was prohibited. The architecture of the novel, as well as its language, had to be simple, two-dimensional, bland, sober and poor... The fantastic, the personal, strange and marginal writers, those who ‘abused’ language and form, were cast aside...”

(Donoso, 1972, p.22; tsba)

The exclusively regional or nationalist focus of many Latin American novels in the 1950s thus hindered accessibility to reading publics located outside each country of origin. The resultant isolation of Latin American writers was reinforced by national publishing and distribution networks which promoted only foreign titles, or, at best, a traditionalist canon blind to the work of contemporaneous writers. The Mexican publishing houses Fondo de Cultura Económica and Joaquín Mortíz, or those located in the Latin American publishing capital of Buenos Aires such as Losada, Emecé, Sudamericana and Sur:

“... [W]ere either completely oriented towards Europe and the United States, publishing the most important works to be found abroad, or produced text after text [culled] from the arrogant and closed [Mount] Olympus of Buenos Aires; these publishing firms never — or only rarely... considered for publication contemporary novelists from other Latin American countries...”

(Donoso, 1972, p.62; tsba)

The outcome, for writers such as Donoso, is that:

“No one knew, in each country, what was being written in the other Latin American nations, particularly as it was so difficult to publish and distribute a first novel or a first book of short stories... [For the publishing firms] the question of selling and distributing books to other countries was never even posed. This was the situation for all the novels of the time: publishers and distributors neither imported nor exported, while the immense Spanish-language domain was dying of hunger, convinced of its incapacity to produce its own [literary] nourishment. Towards the end of the 1950s no awareness existed of the millions of potential readers, of the hundreds of young writers anxious for expression... It was impossible to buy novels of foreign writers in our country, and at the same time it was impossible to export our books.”

(Donoso, 1972, p.26, p.29; tsba)

Alienated from their own regional literary traditions, and working on the margins of their own national publishing institutions, the young novelists of the different Latin American republics residing on the shores of the Mediterranean suddenly felt free to learn from outside literary sources, drawing inspiration from “foreign fathers” (Donoso, 1972, p.19). Writers bearing this orphaned sensibility read works not limited to that of their Spanish-language contemporaries, but, where available, devoured texts ranging from Sartre and Camus to Grass, Moravia, Lampedusa, Durrell, Robbe-Grillet, Salinger, Kerouac, Miller, Frisch, Golding, Capote, Pavese, the British Angry Young Men, to the classics of Joyce, Proust, Kafka, Mann, and Faulkner (Donoso, 1972; tsba). For many of the authors of the soon-to-be Latin American “boom”, Faulkner’s prose, in particular in its evocation of the lyrical and tragic landscape of the rural American South, was found to be peculiarly apposite in expressing the reality of underdevelopment on the Latin American sub-continent.

This range of foreign influences lead Donoso and others to:

“... [D]are think literarily no longer in terms of what was ‘ours’ as Chileans, but what was ‘ours’ to the degree that what was mine and Chilean could, and had, to interest the millions and millions of readers comprising the zone of Spanish-speakers, and, breaching the borders [that were] so well defined [for us], invent a language that was broader and more international.”

(Donoso, 1972, p.37; tsba)

Opening themselves to “all of the ‘impurities’ that came from outside...” the Barcelona-based Latin Americans experimented with the novel form, played with authorial perspective, and embraced deeply sensuous, baroque language (Donoso, 1972, p.23). Often perceived by their respective national reading publics as “cosmopolitans, snobs, producers of foreignness” these writers appeared “as traitors before the naive gaze of their time” (Donoso, 1972, p.23). Yet gradually, imperceptibly, despite the hostility at home, their work, seemingly trapped within their national and regional confines, began to filter into the outside world:

“Suddenly a letter: someone had read them in Cuba, in Montevideo. How did these books travel? How could the yellow-colored edition of [Donoso’s novel] *Coronación* have arrived at that second-hand bookstore in Managua... purchased by the Central Americanist and bibliophile, Franco Cerutti? Fernando Tola [of Seix-Barral] discovered another yellow edition of *Coronación* in a Barcelona book flea-market stall in 1970 and the bookseller asked 50 pesetas for it.”

(Donoso, 1972, p.29; tsba)

Encouraged by these hopeful sightings, the emergent authors of the various Latin republics established an informal distribution network for their work, supported by their many travels among the literary social circles of the hemisphere. Donoso elaborates:

“Fortunately I had traveled and continued to travel. And [the Peruvian novelist] Salazar Bondy traveled, as did [the Argentine] Ernesto Sábato and [the Uruguayan] Angel Rama and Carlos Fuentes, and we brought and carried books with us stashed in our luggage to give [them away] to friends, who read, wrote [about], commented on, and interested themselves for the new [works] being written in our part of the world. And we returned to our travels with our suitcases overflowing with books, as if we were literary *chasquis*,³ to drink wine with friends and comment on the books [being written] in other capitals on the continent... It’s funny... absolutely none of the books I acquired during this time was bought in a bookstore. All were given to me [as gifts], stolen, brought to me, recommended by friends, sent in packages and brought in the suitcases of the *chasquis*. Alicia Jurado and Pipino Moreno-Hueyo, in Buenos Aires, gave me the books of Borges. Juan Orrego Salas brought me *Los pasos perdidos* [by the Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier] from Caracas.

³ “*Chasqui*”, an Andean Quechua word referring to the fleet-footed messengers used by the Inca kings in the 15th-century to transmit news and information to other members of their court within the greater *Tahuantinsuyo* empire.

Montserrat Sanz gave me *La región mas transparente* [by the Mexican Carlos Fuentes]. Sonia Vidal brought me *El llano en llamas* and *Pedro Páramo* [by Juan Rulfo] from Mexico. Alastair Reid had sent me a copy of *La ciudad y los perros* from his publishing house [in the U.S.]. Edmundo Concha provided me with *Sobre héroes y tumbas* [by the Argentine Ernesto Sábato]. Carlos Fuentes himself sent me [his] *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* from Mexico. And my wife brought me Cortázar from Buenos Aires.”

(Donoso, 1972, p.63, p.71; tsba)

Bound by a common attachment to the ideals of the Cuban revolution, as well as a shared commitment to experimental, post-realist novel-writing, the underground *chascui* literary circuit fostered an intimacy and conviviality among the “orphaned” novelists of the different Latin American nations quite different from the competitive intrigue marking authorial relations within each republic. This atmosphere of transnational friendship and mutual admiration, characterized by envious detractors as a literary complot or *mafia*, was only enhanced among the writers residing in the receptive womb of the Iberian *Madre Patria*:

“One of the things that is least understood in Europe... is this friendship, or at least the generally cordial relations linking the Latin American novelists... [W]hen the novel jumps over the frontiers of nation-state and [becomes] international, good [social] relations are possible. Not only healthy relationships, but many times a genuine admiration on the part of one author for the works of another. An Italian critic passing through Barcelona was once in a reunion attended by [Mario] Vargas Llosa and the Latin American novelist [Gabriel García-Márquez]. When he saw them laugh together and talk during the cocktail, he remarked: ‘In Italy, that an author [of the stature of] Vargas Llosa writes a book on the work of another writer such as García-Márquez, would be impossible. And that both would be found together in the same reunion without one poisoning the cup of the other, well, that would be science-fiction.’”

(Donoso, 1972, p.57; tsba)

The nexus linking the new generation of Latin American novelists to Barcelona was primarily forged through the publishing house of Seix-Barral, under the charismatic stewardship of Carlos Barral. Barral explains that the unique symbiosis tying the internationalization of the Latin American novel to Spain was partly attributable to the fact that:

“... [T]he channels diffusing Spanish-language literature have changed much in the last few years and... have contributed to the de-provincialization of Latin American, as well as Iberian, literature... [I]n publishing terms, Spain has recuperated a certain capital [status], or a kind of central position, in the diffusion of this literature. I believe that had Cortázar published exclusively in Argentina, Vargas Llosa exclusively in Peru, and García Márquez with a Colombian publishing house, this kind of world-wide impact would have been slower [to take root]... Spain was the launching pad [for this literature] not only for the Iberian public but for the publics of other Latin American countries: it has been easier for Vargas Llosa to reach Argentina from Spain than directly from Lima.”

(Barral, cited in Tola de Habich and Grieve, 1971, p.16; tsba)

But the *bonhomie* uniting the diverse Latin American writers and the international resonance of their work cannot be attributed solely to the *tertulia* dynamics occurring within the *salons* of Catalan literary society nor in the promotional strategies of *avant-garde* publishing firms. This conviviality is also nurtured by the peculiar outdoor urban *milieu* of Barcelona, a peculiar environment which allows the novelists to feel-at-home-in-the-abroad, providing a familiar yet indeterminate setting within which to explore the diverse facets of Latin American identity as a bordered extension of the European historical and geographical experience (Mignolo, 2000). For the diaspora novelists located in this space of fragile yet liberating ambiguity, Barcelona is transformed into a peculiarly vibrant *barrio* within a larger Latin American metropolitan cosmos, linked in real-and-imagined ways to the residential districts of Miraflores in Lima, La Merced in Mexico City, or La Boca in Buenos Aires. José Donoso’s wife, María Pilar Serrano, explains:

“In those days no one [among the Latin Americans] thought yet of ‘returning to the home country’. We lived our European lives without forgetting our nations [of origin], [while] missing [our] families and friends, eating our typical foods with *aji*⁴ sent from Peru and Bolivia or bought from the supermarket, preparing the traditional *pastel de choclo chileno* with frozen corn acquired in some very special delicatessen, or buying empanadas, tacos, and enchiladas in restaurants [belonging to fellow] exiles and nostalgic but entrepreneurial expatriates.... We relished at the same time all that Europe had to offer us, without any desire yet to return to America.”

(Serrano, cited in Donoso, 1972, p.109; tsba)

⁴ “*Aji*”, a commonly used food condiment in the nations of the Andean cone, akin to monosodium glutamate (MSG).

This awareness of an expanded geographical “belonging” across the web of the Latin Atlantic⁵, of being received in the Catalan *cosmopolis* as a fellow traveler within the wider *chasqui* loop of the transnational Spanish-language world, was only transformed into a sense of exile at a much later date when, during the 1970s, the possibilities of movement are severely curtailed with the return of repressive regimes in many Latin American countries (Donoso, 1972, p.148). For the moment, the young Latin American novelists are at home in their *Madre Patria*, aiding in the task of renovating the American — and by extension, European — novel from its moribund state. Thinking and feeling deeply beyond the nation-state, from a place that is also a no-place, yet still feeling “whole”.

The Maturation and Diversification of Cosmopolis: Barcelona’s Catalan- and Spanish-language “Gauche Divine”

Encouraged by the atmosphere of expanded tolerance and openness ushered by Fraga’s censorship reforms, liberated from the confining strictures of social realism, and striking a pluralist tone with respect to the impact of the first blush of economic modernization, cultural production in Spain from the mid-1960s into the early 1970s partook of that wide-eyed interest in the “everywhere-contemporary”, born of simultaneous “eruptions” occurring in many parts of the world. This attentiveness to the everywhere-at-once (“the whole world is watching” heard clearly from Chicago), of living through a moment of epochal rupture, is felt with particular keenness in the Catalan capital:

“... [P]erhaps infected by movements that were more anarchist [*libertaria*] in nature occurring all over the world, such as the communes in Germany, the hippie and underground movements in the United States, the Vietnam anti-[war effort]... flower people... the music, the music was essential, all this did not come to us clandestinely, because they were tolerated [by the regime]... [B]ut this air, [which] one breathed in the world at that moment, May ‘68 came, and when it came, it came to Barcelona.”

(de Moura, 1996b; tsba)

From the spaces of Barcelona’s “internationalized” cultural *milieu* emerged a roving menagerie of Catalan and Spanish-language novelists, poets, painters, film-makers, photographers, musicians, publishers, architects, journalists, and free-thinkers who, referring to themselves collectively as *gauche divine*, signaled a conscious attachment to leftist opposition politics within the context of relative socio-economic privilege. In the sphere of

book publishing, young *avant-garde* Spanish-language publishers such as Jorge Herralde of Anagrama and the Brazilian-born Beatriz de Moura, of Tusquets Editores, hew to the cosmopolitan editorial criteria of their predecessors at Seix-Barral. Josep María Castellet, who since 1964 was literary director of the Catalan-language publishing house Edicions 62, repudiated his Iberian-inflected social realism to dedicate himself to “build [a Catalan] country” (*fer país*), constructing a Catalan-language cultural and literary canon filtered through the widest of European intellectual currents. Yet, like two asymptotic lines whose parallel trajectories throughout the 1960s and early 1970s widen in the period of post-democratic transition, Catalan- and Spanish-language publishers develop different “windows on the universal” in pursuing their editorial strategies. And it is precisely herein that they reveal the unique pressures bearing on each idiom’s discrepant engagement with market forces, the contested cultural role assigned to publisher-intellectuals, and differing levels of competition and collaboration with intermediaries in the Iberian publishing world.

Edicions 62, for instance, staked its universalizing claims for Catalan culture by initiating collections dedicated to contemporary issues of social and political import (*Llibres a L’Abast*), with contributions ranging from the Catalan poet Joan Fuster (*Nosaltres, els valencians*, 1962), Yves Lacoste (*Els països subdesenvolupats*, 1963), Francois Perroux (*El capitalisme*, 1964), Gunnar Myrdal (*Perspectives de la planificació*, 1965), and Gyorgy Lukacs (*La teoria de la novel·la*, 1966) (Edicions 62, 1987, p.89). The house furthermore inaugurated a series devoted to the best of contemporaneous North American and European fiction (*El Balanci*), introducing authors as varied as Vasco Pratolini (*Crònica dels pobres amants*, 1965), Marguerite Duras (*Un dic contra el Pacífic*, 1965), William Faulkner (*Llum d’agost*, 1965), Elio Vittorini (*Conversa a Sicília*, 1966), and Italo Calvino (*El cavaller inexistent*, 1967). For almost all of its collections in this period, Edicions 62’s in-house graphic artist, Jordi Fornàs, produced cover artwork of a quiet and lyrical beauty, relying on an imaginative array of images, colors, and font types. Both *Llibres a L’Abast* and *El Balanci* required large investments in translations, as by the mid-1960s the larger share of output was derived from foreign authors. As the decade progressed, the house incorporated additional collections devoted to spiritual themes and the sociology of religion (*Blanquerna, Biblioteca de Pensament Cristià*); the *noir* detective novel (*La Cua de Palla*); canonical 20th-century Catalan writers (*Classics Catalans del Segle XX*); texts targeting adolescent readers (*El Trapezi*); titles dealing with scientific and philosophical concerns (*Biblioteca Bàsica de Cultura Contemporània*); the literary essay (*Cara i Creu*), and the works of Charles Schulz (*Còmics*). Exemplifying the robust nature of associative and mutualist relations linking publishers and local private sector agents, in 1965 Banca Catalana subsidized Edicions 62 in its efforts to create an encyclopedia mod-

eled on the French Larrousse: the *Gran Enciclopèdia Catalana* (Edicions 62, 1987, p.45).

Channeling a wider European concern with high theory accompanying epistemological and novelistic reformulations in the wake of the perceived “end of art” as a medium for social change (Jameson, 1998), Anagrama inaugurated the collections *Argumentos* and *Textos* in April, 1969, focusing on the political and philosophical essay genre, while betraying a slight bias towards French critical theory: Hans Magnus Enzensberger (*Detalles*, 1969), Jurgen Habermas (ed., *Respuestas a Marcuse*, 1969), Gilles Deleuze (*Nietzsche y la filosofía*, 1971), Georges Mounin (*Introducción a la semiología*, 1972), Gaston Bachelard (*Epistemología*, 1973). The artwork for the covers of *Argumentos* titles, chosen by Herralde himself, featured small, close-cropped images, bordered by stark white lettering against somber black surfaces. In 1970, Anagrama inaugurated *Cuadernos de Anagrama*, an attempt to fill the existing void in journals devoted to critical theory, with contributions culled from *Les Temps Modernes*, *L’Homme et la Société*, *Il Manifesto*, and the *New Left Review* (Anagrama, 1994, pp.31-32). Its book covers, even more austere than those of *Argumentos*, simply revealed crude white lettering foregrounded against a dark canvas. Herralde explains the logic underpinning the *Argumentos* collection as filling a gap in the essay form and political literature, genres which had been traditionally neglected by larger *avant-garde* firms such as Seix-Barral:

“... [A]lthough my first vocation as a publisher was literary, in that moment in which one could observe that despite the censorship one could do things, I felt very politicized at this time, [I decided] the collection *Argumentos* would have to be the collection of political rupture and incorporation, and here there was an enormous bibliography still left to organize, from the recuperation of historical texts to those reflecting on what was happening in May ‘68, the counter-culture... [S]o it appeared to me that the essay genre was the most interesting aspect of the time... [T]his appeared more stimulating to me: there were the grand theoretical debates of the moment, including all the Marxist families, the *libertarias* movements, structuralism, and there was almost none of this when I first began [to publish] in Spain.”

(Herralde, 1996, tsba)

Although the small, *avant-garde* presses considered themselves to be primarily literary by vocation, they produced texts across a wide variety of disciplines, ranging from the sciences to the humanities, thus fulfilling a role equivalent to European or North American university presses. In this manner, Beatriz de Moura, who founded Tusquets Editores in the Fall of 1968 with the collection *Cuadernos Ínfimos* and *Marginales*, showcased authors

previously unavailable in Spain: André Gide (*La secuestrada de Poitiers*, 1969), Fiodor Dostoievski (*El gran inquisidor*, 1970), Theodor Adorno (*Reacción y progreso, y otros ensayos musicales*, 1970), Antonin Artaud (*Carta a la vidente*, 1971), Georges Bataille (*El verdadero barba-azul: la tragedia de Gilles de Rais*, 1972), and Michel Foucault (*El orden de las cosas*, 1973). Supported by an architect-graphic design team comprised of her husband, Oscar Tusquets, and Lluís Clotet, de Moura created wacky, provocative covers — often featuring geometrically misaligned fonts and lettering against gold and silver backdrops — for books meant to be read “on campus and on the beach” (de Moura, cited in Tusquets Editores, 1994, .p. 9; tsba)⁶.

As the decade of the 1960s drew to a close, it was a measure of the common cultural and political affinities binding the authors and publishers of the Catalan *gauche divine* that the growth of Spanish- and Catalan-language *avant-garde* firms was viewed as a complementary development with the broader dissident movement on the Iberian Peninsula. From the heat of collective opposition to Franco was forged a transactional logic peculiar to Barcelona’s literary field, marked by strong relations of trust promoting “fair play” in the business practices of individual firms, reflected as well in their linkages to the various downstream nodes along the book production chain: distributors and booksellers. Moreover, the diverse components of book production were bound not so much by an overarching ideological unity as by an awareness of working together in a united “cultural front” as the most effective means for confronting a regime already perceived to be in decline (de Moura, 1996b; tsba). Such bonds translated for individual publishers into “respect” for each others catalogues to the degree that they did not raid one another’s stable of authors nor undercut one another in price competition or print production runs. With the exception of occasional co-editions between Catalan- and Spanish-language firms, language differences were respected and firms tended to specialize in one or another language (de Moura, 1996a).

Moreover, and upholding a *noucentiste*-inspired belief in the moral role of the artist-intellectual, both Catalan- and Spanish-language publishers cultivated a patrician disregard for monetary gain, which they upheld as an ethical stance vis a vis the dictatorship. In this view, publishers considered themselves more as cultural arbiters than “industrialists” or “entrepreneurs”, their motivations guided more in terms of vocation and with an emphasis on “quality” over profit. In shaping his outlook of the profession, for instance, Anagrama’s Herralde was influenced by the Catalan publishers Josep Janés and Carlos Barral; the Paris-based José Martínez of *Ruedo Ibérico*;

⁶ In so doing, de Moura adopted a self-consciously ironic tone, as she playfully subverted the seriousness of books that were meant — during the era of critical realism — to be read “in the fields and factories” (*en el campo y en las fábricas*).

Argentina's *Losada*; Mexico's *Siglo XXI*; Italy's *Einaudi* and *Feltrinelli*; as well as France's Francois Gallimard, Jerome Lindon, and Maspero (Herralde, cited in Anagrama, 1994, p.9; 1996).

Recalling the influences on her own biography of Jerome Lindon, Jean-Jacques Pauvert, Francois Maspero, and Carlos Barral, the director of Tusquets Editores exclaims:

“I had a very good personal relationship with them [these publishers], enriching, in particular very intriguing, and they taught me that I could be a small, independent publisher, risking much, and, especially, emphasizing literary quality over economic projects aimed at immediate monetary gain.”

(de Moura, 1996b; tsba)

Within an increasingly precarious national economic environment, the bonds of a “shared cultural front” cited by de Moura lead in October, 1970, to the creation of a common book distributor, Enlace, incorporating six Barcelona-based publishers (Barral Editores, Edicions 62, Laia, Anagrama, Lumen, and Tusquets Editores) and two from Madrid (Cuadernos para el Diálogo and Fontanella). Working in tandem, the eight publishers establish one of the first inexpensive soft-cover book collections on the Iberian Peninsula, *Ediciones de Bolsillo*. Herralde describes the professional mood underlying the work of the group's members:

“We were all friends, and [acted] much more as accomplices than as competitors. The struggle against censorship, in some cases, almost became a sport, in a kind of ‘see if you can top this one’, as in [the acrobatics of] a circus... [F]or example we are very good friends with Beatriz [de Moura], especially, we recreate together, we used to go on trips together... [Our foreign publisher colleagues] are stunned that two firms... publish not identical texts but more or less the same material. [They ask:] how do you maintain such good relations?... What happens is that one can't understand these things if one doesn't link it to the anti-Franco time...”

(Herralde, cited in Anagrama, 1994, p.14; tsba; Herralde, 1996, tsba)

A “breathless” sense of the here and now served as the backdrop for the actions of the various members of Enlace, wherein a peculiar intimacy was perceived between texts and the reality of unfolding events. Navigating the shoals of government censorship, publishers such as Pedro Altares of Cuadernos para el Diálogo and Esther Tusquets of Lumen competed with ever-shifting developments taking place further afield, at times anticipating correctly and achieving that coveted “break”, while at others preempted by political action “on the ground”. Herralde recalls, for instance, considering

for publication in 1970 the book *Estrategia judicial en los procesos políticos*, by the future lawyer of Claus Barbie, Jacques Vergés:

“In this book [Vergés] came to the defense of what he himself practiced, which was the defense of rupture, in which the accused becomes the accuser of the [judicial] tribunal, with examples taken from Socrates and Christ to Dimitrov, or Fidel Castro with his famous speech, ‘History will absolve me’... [This book] had been considered for Cuadernos para el Diálogo... [A]t that time we still circulated this information among ourselves... I decided [then] to try it and submitted it [before the Ministry of Information and Tourism]... the very same day that the accused of ETA [put into] practice the defense of rupture during the Burgos trials⁷ (laughter). A farce, no?”

(Herralde, 1996; tsba)

Sharing in the cultural mission of publishers and distributors, investors routinely accepted financial losses in order to ensure the survival of the small, independent firms. An economy of bohemian disinterest also seeped into relations binding publishers and authors, and underpinned the tacit bonds linking writers and their wider reading publics. De Moura cites her collaborative ties — “very active, spontaneous, and disinterested” (Tusquets, 1994, p.12; tsba) — with writers and intellectuals scattered all over the world: the Peruvians José Miguel Oviedo, Ricardo Silva Santistéban, and during their Barcelona residence, Julio Ortega and Mirko Lauer; in Mexico, Sergio Pitol, Hector Manjárez and Octavio Paz; in Paris the Argentine Hector Bianciotti and the Cuban Severo Sarduy; in London the Cubans Guillermo Cabrera Infante and Miriam Gómez; in Italy the members of *Gruppo 63*, including Umberto Eco, Furio Colombo, Guido Davico Bonino, and Nanni Balestrini; and in Spain Gabriel Ferrater, Jaime Gil de Biedma, Felix de Azúa, Ricardo Muñoz Suay, Roman Gubern and Francesc Parcerisas (Tusquets, 1994, p.12). A symbiotic relationship thus often formed in which publishers invented books for authors to write as authors presented fresh manuscripts for review without expectations of remuneration. Illustrating the degree of author-publisher trust, de Moura recounts:

“[Gabriel] García-Márquez lived here... during the late 1960’s until 1970 or 1971. And he commented precisely that he had made a jour-

⁷ In 1970, several members of the Basque armed independence movement (ETA) are placed on trial in the city of Burgos, accused of having assassinated a policeman. In the face of massive international response protesting their likely execution, Franco commuted their sentence. This was considered an important victory by opposition forces both inside and outside Spain (Mangini, 1987, p.214).

nalistic report about a boat sinking in Colombia, for which he was forced to leave Colombia. And so I asked him to bring me this report so that I could read it, and truth be told it was an extraordinary book. I proposed to [García-Márquez] to publish it in book form. He did not have much confidence in this manuscript; the proof is that in the very prologue he accuses me of (at that time he had already become known through *One hundred years of solitude*)... exploiting an author who has already become financially successful. Today, he singles out this book as one of his most distinctive works, particularly in the world of journalism. As I continue to be his friend, I remind him [of this] each time I can, but the fact is that I did a thing that I think every publisher must do, which is to invent a book... And in this respect if I worked much during that period, [it was to] invent books. I really invented books..."

(de Moura, 1996b; tsba)

Acknowledging his admiration for Catalan-language writers and poets such as Salvador Espriu, Merce Rodoreda, Joan Oliver, Ferran Soldevíla, and Maurici Serrahima, whose works he publishes throughout the 1960s, Edicions 62's Josep María Castellet remarks:

"Those authors, now passed, represented, along with others, the essential [qualities] of Catalan authors of a given era. I mean [to say that] great writers, the best of our century, their literary passion superseded any other ambition or vanity of a personal nature, of which the second-rate writers of today are so enamored. They wrote thinking about literature and their language, and not in [terms of] ephemeral [literary] prizes and awards."

(Castellet, cited in Edicions 62, 1987, p.50;
translated from Catalan by author; hereafter "tcb")

Drawing on the legacy of *noucentisme's* preoccupation with product quality, *avant-garde* Catalan publishers applied great care to their books' formal qualities, revealed — despite material hardship — in the innovative and experimental graphic artwork invested in their covers. Confessing a debt in this regard to the publisher Josep Janés, Herralde exclaims, "...what I have often liked is the tactile qualities of books, an appreciation of artisanal work... [Janés] was the first publisher whom I noticed for these reasons" (Herralde, 1996; tsba). But attention to design was often a contentious issue among publishers aligned within the anti-Franco cultural front. De Moura explains:

"The aesthetic policies underlying the collections were very contro-

versial. For instance, I remember that many of the people deeply involved on the Left labeled our collections elitist, and in some way frivolous, based on the argument, which I think has been largely superseded today, of ‘art for art’s sake’, etc.... [T]he reigning mentality of the time on the Left was that books needed to be, had to identify with the people, with the tastes of the people, so that the masses could have access to this product... [O]ur covers were in gold and silver. This was immediately associated with money... [though coming from] a publishing house with no money (laughter). But from the start it referred to a product with little access to what could be considered ‘popular’, [and this was contrary to] the mentality that [argued] books had to be sold in the factory doorways. I already knew at that time that books do not change life, they do not cause revolutions. Some people still believed very firmly that books could cause revolution. I already at that time did not. For that reason, I always thought that one shouldn’t condescend to the tastes of others, but, on the contrary, I think people want more, and within the minimal economic constraints of the time (laughter), well, I don’t disdain people, on the contrary, because people know very well how to appreciate [culture] (more laughter), and in effect this was confirmed for me.”

(de Moura, 1996b; tsba)

Perhaps it is not by chance that the consensus established between Catalan- and Spanish-language publishers regarding commitment to product quality converged with Franco’s desire to keep mass-consumer culture at bay on the Iberian Peninsula. Only in this context was it possible, for instance, to publish Marx and Engels as long as they were produced in expensive hardcover editions, or in large, illustrated formats (de Moura, 1996b). Similarly, Latin American authors were also treated leniently by Franco’s censors, as their publication in Spain boosted exports (Labanyi, 1995b, p.209).

Opposition Culture “In the Streets”: The Lived Spaces of Barcelona Publishing’s Avant-Garde

As hinted at previously, Barcelona’s urban space played a vital role in nurturing Catalan- and Spanish-language dissident cultural politics. It is in the restaurants, bars, and *pensiones* of the Catalan capital that the various political and artistic “tribes”—later to assume leadership roles after the democratic transition—first came into contact with one another. As recounted by Beatriz de Moura, in particular the bars of the *Barri Gòtic* were associated with different literary and political traditions:

“In the bars... people convened according to their political tendencies. There were some which more or less attracted the orthodox Communists. There were those bars which I frequented, for instance, which were more working class, less refined, where the *libertarians* gathered... We didn’t meet with the same... frequency and discipline as those associated with the more militant bars, especially those of the Communist Party, or the Socialist Party, but the more free ones, those that are more free, and go a little bit everywhere (laughter)... These bars have since disappeared, they were neighborhood bars, some of which didn’t even have names, others were called Bar Pepito Grillo, or bar ‘I can’t remember’, but they were not named that way. One found oneself at the corner of such and such a street, and went to the nearest bar in the area near Santa María del Mar [cathedral]...”

(de Moura, 1996b; tsba)

Other key meeting grounds included La Mariona restaurant, located on the Carrer Valdoncellas, near the Ronda de Sant Pere; foreign specialty bookshops such as Letra Dura, founded by Herralde’s wife, Lali Gubern; and various *boites nocturnes*: the Stork Club, Whiskey Club, El Patuset, Celeste, and Jamboree (Herralde, 1996). But one place more than any other came to define a “neutral” meeting ground reuniting all the contesting elements of Barcelona’s late-1960s political and artistic *avant-garde*: the Bocaccio. Founded by the publisher Jorge Herralde as a bar with a subterranean discotheque, the Bocaccio quickly became the epicenter of the “enlightened”, anti-Franco Catalan bourgeoisie, a space where new friendships were made over drinks and projects planned in an atmosphere of relative security from Franco’s police. The bar was also a space whose design helped define a peculiar “moral economy” uniting the heterogenous cultural workers gathered there. De Moura explains:

“... [T]he atmosphere [of the Bocaccio] was one of apparent luxury, and in contrast those of us who went there didn’t have a cent... I mean I went there practically every night, and spent almost nothing either because the barmen gave me whiskey for free, or I shared a drink with a friend... The funny thing about Bocaccio’s is that here we were as a group, we projected an image to the outside world that we were people with a lot of money, when in reality we lived on very meager earnings, and badly at that. What happened is that there was an aesthetic attitude, almost as if one didn’t talk about money, and one had to live above and beyond ones possibilities, and this ‘air’, as if money didn’t matter, and that we really lived well, was almost an ethical attitude... [The idea was that] it is the person that matters and has value, with or

without money... Curiously, we all unconsciously had the notion that what we had to do was be good professionals in each of our fields, each in his own discipline. We worked all day, hard, and at night we enjoyed ourselves. We slept very little.”

(de Moura, 1996b; tsba)⁸

Keen to explore the reuse of degraded urban spaces as sites of creative possibility, de Moura — consciously evoking Andy Warhol’s “factory happenings” — launched the collections *Cuadernos Ínfimos* and *Marginales* by convening a large gathering in “an enormous locale, [which] today has disappeared, devoted to boxing matches, named El Price” (Tusquets, 1994: 10; tsba):

“The truth is that with very little resources we managed to throw — thanks to the disinterested help of friends [who were] photographers, architects, and painters — a party-spectacle attended by all the complex flora and fauna which at the time comprised the group of artists, writers, publishers, film-makers, actors, journalists and intellectuals of Barcelona of which I was a part. ...This [event] made manifest... the desire to express a liberty of criteria to the limits of what was possible, not exempt of a certain spirit of provocation, which...wounded the sensibilities of a certain left orthodoxy and profoundly irritated the conservative [sensibilities] of the period... [In using the space of El Price] we departed... from the typical presentation of new publications, which at that time was done in a bookstore, a very serious bookstore, a bookstore which was known beforehand to be associated politically with the Left, [whereas in El Price we had] a party. For the reader, what remained was a festive experience. What we wanted to do was shake a bit this world which was anchored in a [mentality which suggested that] all cultural expression should be solemn in Spain... Well, it still is a little! (laughter). Solemn, very solemn, because... the bourgeoisie, if it was to a certain degree anti-Franco, acquired the solemnity of the orthodox Left... [W]hat we really wanted to spread [was the idea that] culture is something festive, something that can be acquired with joy.”

(Tusquets, 1994, p.10; tsba; de Moura, 1996b; tsba)

⁸ One of the more spectacular moments of opposition politics planned within the nurturing confines of the Bocaccio was the reunion of 300 artists, intellectuals, and dissident politicians in December, 1970, in the monastery of Montserrat (Mangini, 1987, p.215). Convened to protest the outcome of the Burgos trials and to spur a nation-wide amnesty for political prisoners, what came to be known as *La Tancada* (the shut-in) gained international attention, so much so that the *Guardia Civil* cut off all communication between the monastery and the outside world after the second day of protest, and effectively quashed it the day after. Despite its short-lived existence, *La Tancada* laid the foundations for the future *Asamblea de Catalunya*, a primary instrument of Catalan resistance during the 1970s (Mangini, 1987, p.216).

The Unraveling of Ties that Bind

As the movement of “boom” authors within pan-Latin space is swept up in the whirlwind of events associated with increasing economic modernization in Spain, unexpected pressures come to bear on the cohesion of local conventions and oppositional alliances governing the close-knit world of Barcelona publishing. Intimations of the stresses and strains to come were revealed in the economic difficulties of the joint book distributor, Enlace, whose increasingly demanding operational requirements, a product of the rapidly “oxygenated” mass consumer market ushered into existence in part by the success of its own inexpensive, soft-cover editions, risked overwhelming the “disinterested”, artisanal routines of its respective members. Having settled on a loose, free-wheeling administrative style, the distributor’s associates produced without coordinating output, creating redundancies and bottlenecks in domestic and foreign book markets. For a small publishing house such as Tusquets Editores:

“... [W]e began to notice a tension between our way of working, as we had founded the firm as an enterprise, and the demands of a distributor which, in order to survive, required of each publisher more and more titles, and which considered incorporating additional publishing ventures. Tusquets didn’t have the means to take on more commitments (between 20 and 25 titles a year), and I resisted participating in a race which, inevitably in my particular circumstances, would [have] obliged me to place greater emphasis on quantity to the detriment of quality.”

(Tusquets, 1994, p.15; tsba)

Enlace’s unwieldy business practices seep into its overseas distribution subsidiaries, scattered throughout the Latin American sub-continent. The lack of coordination between headquarter firms in Barcelona and their overseas operations result in numerous cases of abuse and financial loss:

“Latin America has always been [a] very complicated [market], due to political and economic instabilities. During that time a Peruvian Enlace was established, a Mexican Enlace, and [they were] absolute disasters. Then [we made] links to Argentina through a certain [distributor named] Corregidor, which cheated us again: monumental mistakes. During the 1970s Latin America was the source of numerous displeasures and bankruptcies.”

(Herralde, 1996; tsba)

The erosion and fragmentation of Enlace's organizational structure both within Spain and in relation to its overseas markets was symptomatic of broader, transnational cultural and political realignments impinging on the members of Barcelona's *avant-garde*. The formerly unstinting solidarity of Iberian/Latin American intellectuals towards Cuba began to disintegrate in 1971 after the novelist Heberto Padilla was put on show trial for subversion and the news emerged of labor camps for homosexuals (Labanyi, 1995a, p.296). The issue of Cuba bitterly divided the Latin American *menagerie* residing in Barcelona, exemplified by the gradual distancing between Mario Vargas Llosa and Gabriel García-Márquez. Furthermore, with the return of authoritarian regimes in many Latin American republics at the start of the new decade, authors such as Chile's Jorge Edwards felt impelled to return to their home countries to continue their opposition work. The urgency of return, however, signaled an acknowledgment of the political realities reworking notions of "home" and "abroad" among the artists and novelists circulating within pan-Latin space. The dissipation of enthusiasm for a shared political-cultural project grounded in a common space of urban conviviality reinforced a disenchantment stemming from the painful disclosure of CIA links to the International Association for Cultural Freedom, the same organization which had provided so many Spanish writers their first contacts with wider European intellectual currents (Labanyi, 1995a: 296).

As the state of economic "exception" imposed by Franco in 1969 lurched agonizingly into the first half of the 1970s, the core of small, *avant-garde* firms making up Enlace negotiated with an increasingly schizophrenic regime; in 1973 Fraga was dismissed from MIT and was replaced by the hard-line Ricardo de la Cierva, only to be replaced the following year by a much more liberal Pio Cabanillas. The instabilities provoked by the steadily deepening economic crisis and a generalized expectation of Franco's imminent demise provoked a "helter-skelter" atmosphere of violence, terrorism, and assassination. The killing is democratic, felling the conservative Carrero Blanco as well as the Catalan anarchist Salvador Puig Antich. In 1974 Enlace's book-storage warehouse is fire-bombed, just one of the sixty-six attacks recorded on alternative bookshops and cinemas between 1971 and 1976 (Labanyi, 1995b, p.213). In successive spasms of repression, Franco's police increased the confiscation of books produced by the publishing *avant-garde* (Anagrama, 1994).

The immolation of Enlace, occurring one year before Franco's death, represented the siren song of a particular utopian urban praxis. With the onset of the post-Franco democratic transition, the rise of autonomous Catalan government institutions, and Spain's entry into the European Union, the cultural and economic landscape for Barcelona's small-scale, niche publishers, graphic designers, and booksellers underwent a sea-change, which few manage to survive. Yet those firms which succeeded in passing intact through the fire of the political transition and the mass-based consumer culture which it

heralded did so in part to the degree that they had already “rehearsed” a certain rupture of modernist economic practices within the cultural sphere of the Franco period. This “post-utopian” sensibility conferred a particular flexibility for those operating in the new, more contentious economic environment of the 1980s and 1990s, allowing firms to reinvent themselves through collections whose authorial relations signaled new inflections of the transnational, a renegotiation of high and mass-cultural forms, and a transformed aesthetic, while drawing warmth from the embers of an uncommodifiable dissident culture whose spaces, though weakened, continued to exude a palpable aura. At the threshold of the post-Franco era, Gil de Biedma described the social *milieu* washed up at the Stork Club, as if recording the last sighting of a fast vanishing species:

“Comprised of men and women of diverse backgrounds and occupations, their ages vary between twenty-something and a bit over forty. One thing unites them, however: the consciousness of having been born in a Spain in which the mythology of the teenager did not yet exist. They all drag [along with them], I’m not sure whether for all eternity, a potential of unrealizable youth...; they find themselves in that desolate moment in which one wishes to stay young, as has been the case up until now, above all other things. And perhaps it is this anguish which lends them an indeterminate artistic presence. From the entryway to the bar there mingles a world whose members have known each other for some time. They are, in their circle, famous. Second-rate actresses, tabloid models, married wives attempting to find serious compensation for their matrimonial frustrations, public relations executives, photographers, poets who have only published one book, objective novelists, new wave film directors, leaders of the student rebellions of 1957 and 1958 — still nostalgic for gunpowder and song —,... off-duty publishers, [interior] decorators, engineers with an incurable weakness for letters... In sum, charming and amiable folk, though a bit depressing, people who refuse to settle down, who have not stopped paying their dues to life. The older ones are of a more bohemian cast, those with long and loose hair, those with an air of the style prior to that of the Europe of the miracle — one still sees some blue jeans —, when one was disheveled and still had the memory of Saint Germain des Pres. After many years of going to bed late, having little love [affairs], consuming mixed drinks, of feeling unadaptable, of working without desire, of transmigrating from the sordid bars close to the Ramblas to the sophisticated bars further up on the Diagonal, here they are, at last reunited, already a bit deteriorated, if not pathetic, but still the unrepentant mouthpieces of their generation.”

(Gil de Biedma, 1980: 225-226; tsba)

What is at stake here, in Gil de Biedma's elegiac prose, cannot be expressed as Barcelona's ability, for a brief and fragile moment, to "hold down the global" as the central node in a truly transnational republic of letters (Amin and Thrift, 1994). Nor is it quite a "global sense of place" in the sense Massey has described it (Massey and Jess, 1994). It certainly cannot be captured through the fashionable yet hopelessly inadequate vocabulary observing a putative "rescaling" of the Catalan national imaginary (McNeill, 2001). To know its significance and resonance for our lived present requires Spanish and Catalan, an experience of their latitudes, and something more that may be, in the last instance, ineffable. And rightly so.

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