

MASCULINE TEXTUALITIES: GENDER AND NEOLIBERALISM IN
CONTEMPORARY LATIN AMERICAN FICTION

Vinodh Venkatesh

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Romance Languages (Spanish).

Chapel Hill
2011

Approved by:

Oswaldo Estrada, Ph.D.

María DeGuzmán, Ph.D.

Irene Gómez-Castellano, Ph.D.

Juan Carlos González-Espitia, Ph.D.

Alfredo J. Sosa-Velasco, Ph.D.

© 2011

Vinodh Venkatesh

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

VINODH VENKATESH: *Masculine Textualities: Gender and Neoliberalism in Contemporary Latin American Fiction*
(Under the direction of Oswaldo Estrada)

A casual look at contemporary Latin American fiction, and its accompanying body of criticism, evidences several themes and fields that are unifying in their need to unearth a continental phenomenology of identity. These processes, in turn, hinge on several points of construction or identification, with the most notable being gender in its plural expressions. Throughout the 20th century issues of race, class, and language have come to be discussed, as authors and critics have demonstrated a consciousness of the past and its impact on the present and the future, yet it is clear that gender holds a particularly poignant position in this debate of identity, reflective of its autonomy from the age of conquest.

The following pages problematize the writing of the male body and the social constructs of gender in the face of globalization and neoliberal policies in contemporary Latin American fiction. Working from theoretical platforms established by Raewyn Connell, Ilan Stavans, and others, my analysis embarks on a reading of masculinities in narrative texts that mingle questions of nation, identity and the gendered body. The first chapter examines nationalism and the writing of masculinity in the context of the new historical novel, keeping in mind economic paradigms of *laissez-faire*, marketing,

privatization, and the deterritorialization of economic markets. In the second chapter I examine the narrative usage of the cultural artifacts of popular music and song, both as a textuality of Latin American identity and as a political affront to the forces of neoliberal cultural imperialism. Chapter three recontextualizes masculinities in contemporary Latin American fiction through a study of the diegetic usage and characterization of space in Mexico City. I trace a practice of representation through novels from the 1970s to the early 2000s, focusing on the contemporary works of Ana Clavel. Taking into account current approaches to the study of masculinities, I conclude with an analytic presentation of new culturally-indigenous literary tropes that dialogue with globalized representations of power and gender.

To my parents...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are so many people to thank at this moment, at the end of what can be called a career of learning, though we all know that such a label is false, as to myself and those mentioned below, learning seems to be a never-ending source of delight and at times frustration. First and foremost I want to thank my family for always supporting me and my decisions. To my parents who always trusted in me and who never wavered in their appreciation of everything I do. To my siblings for being the two most amazing people I know, and for always caring and being there.

I want to thank the members of my committee for being incredibly supportive and available throughout this process. This dissertation would not be possible without the careful readings and comments by María DeGuzmán, Irene Gómez-Castellano, Juan Carlos González-Espitia, and Alfredo J. Sosa-Velasco. In addition to being excellent scholars to work with, I can sincerely call them my friends who always were willing to go beyond the professional call of duty.

I want to thank Oswaldo Estrada for being more than a dissertation director. From the first coffee we shared at Foster's Market in Chapel Hill, he has been more than an adviser. I have learnt so much, both as a scholar and person, from his sayings, songs, writings, and advice. Few people are as jovial, forthright, and knowledgeable as him, and it is safe to say that I would not be writing these words if not for his constant support. Working on the dissertation has been a pleasure given our frequent meetings and discussions, his suggestions

and references, and the close editing and reading that helped me polish these pages. From being a professor to adviser to friend, I write my heartfelt thanks to Oswaldo.

These pages would not be complete without mention of Shifra Armon, Gillian Lord, Pablo Gil Casado, José Manuel Polo de Bernabé, and Alicia Rivero for being excellent mentors and teachers. I am forever thankful for them instilling in me a passion for language and literature.

To Montse, Alfonso, Giada, Maria and Stephanie, I thank you for the bursts of laughter and cups of coffee that got me through the MA. To Katie, Jon, Rosario, Holly, Michael, Inma, Sam, Hamilton and Suzie, I thank you for being an amazing set of friends. Potlucks, dinners, and afternoons basking in the sun with burgers and beers are the memories that I will forever cherish. Last but not least, I want to thank Mari Carmen for always being there for me and making my life easier. I also thank her for being my accomplice and partner in crime...

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	
I.	INTRODUCTION.....1
II.	MARKET(ING) MASCULINITIES / MATERIALIZING BODIES IN LATIN AMERICA’S NEW HISTORICAL NOVEL.....45
	Commoditizing Resources: The Male Body in <i>Margarita, está linda la mar</i>49
	Trafficking in Masculinities in <i>Nadie me verá llorar</i>59
	Undercover Marketing: Politics and Masculinities in <i>La fiesta del Chivo</i>73
	Bodies that Matter: Queer(ing) Masculinities and the Fall of the Dictator.....82
	Materialized Bodies / Marketable Bodies.....95
III.	LYRICAL TEXTUALITIES: MUSIC AND MUSICALITY IN THE (DE)CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITIES.....99
	Defining the Literary OST: Pedro Lemebel’s <i>Tengo miedo torero</i>104
	Towards a Lyrical Epistemology of Masculine Desire.....115
	Soundtrack, Seduction, and Homosocial Dynamics in <i>El huerto de mi amada</i>132
	Between Rock and a Hard Place: Gender in Franz Galich’s Managua.....147
	Lyrical Desires and an Aesthetics of Resistance/Confrontation.....167
IV.	FROM THE SPATIAL TO THE VIRTUAL: GENDERIZED AND GENDERIZING SPACES IN THE METROPOLIS.....170
	Writing/Mapping the Subaltern Space: <i>Los deseos y su sombra</i>180

	Plotting Masculinity and Conceiving the Virtual in <i>Cuerpo náufrago</i>	204
	The Failure of Space and the Destabilization of Masculinities.....	228
V.	HARD DRIVES, CYBORGS AND VIAGRA: NEW CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF MASCULINITIES AND THE BODY.....	232
	Natural, Comic, and Existential Masculinity in <i>Barrio Alto</i>	237
	<i>Domo arigato, Mr. Roboto</i> , or Cyborg Masculinity in Tokyo.....	254
	Transnational Viagraphies in Enrique Serna's <i>La sangre erguida</i>	271
	Writing the Male Body and Questioning Masculinity.....	286
VI.	CONCLUSION: OF TROPES AND MEN.....	288
VII.	WORKS CITED.....	300

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A casual look at contemporary Latin American fiction, and its accompanying body of criticism, evidences several themes and fields that are unifying in their need to unearth a continental phenomenology of identity. These processes, in turn, hinge on several points of construction or identification, with the most notable being gender in its plural expressions. Throughout the 20th century issues of race, class, and language have come to be discussed, as authors and critics have demonstrated a consciousness of the past and its impact on the present and the future, yet it is clear that gender holds a particularly poignant position in this debate of identity, reflective of its autonomy from the age of conquest.¹ I am not arguing that gender in Latin America is mutually exclusive of the events circa 1492 and afterwards, a look at the countless tales of La Malinche or La Perricholi prove otherwise, but that gender in contemporary society exists as an ontological expression that can be discussed, delineated and performed a priori to a paradigm of hybridity, conquest, and *mestizaje*.

The construct of gender in Latin America, however, is not so much rooted in North American academic debates of performativity or essentialism, but is instead reliant on privileges and powers that leave women and non-heteronormative gender identities to the side, as subservient bodies that are trafficable and disposable. It is not surprising, then, that a

¹ I use Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990), *Bodies that Matter* (1993), and *Undoing Gender* (2004) for my base definitions of the concept. I also refer to Michel Foucault's ideas on sexuality and the coding/encoding of the term in *The History of Sexuality* (1977).

populist critical vein of inquiry has risen, focusing on these *othered* bodies in Latin American societies and fiction. Subsequently, and as I will explain in further detail, a recent interest has surged in the studies of masculinity, that ambiguous term or gender that has been pegged as responsible for the subjugation of millions.

Part of this surge coincides with what has been called a crisis in masculinity, a global phenomenon that has been particularly noted in Latin America due to the traditional expressions of machismo or machista masculinity that enshrines maleness.² By crisis, we are referring to a change of order or roles, as women are increasingly allowed and encouraged to work and lead lives that were only privileges enjoyed by men. Economic autonomy, sexual liberation, and the right to an education are some of the changes that have impacted gender politics in Latin America. These changes, in turn, are products brought about by the opening of local markets to foreign economies and economic policies, as free-trade and foreign direct investment becomes a norm in Latin American countries in the latter half of the 20th century. The policies of open trade and liberalized economies has been labeled by critics as neoliberalism, or a contemporary motif of liberal economic thought that opens borders and markets, and reduces the role of government in previously nationalized industries. These measures, as can be expected, democratize societies and unregulated the power held by men in local societies.

The connection I draw between gender and neoliberalism is built upon the crisis that the latter causes in the concept of masculinity, triggering the critical interest in the strategies

² I use the term Latin America to describe the geographical and political grouping of Spanish-speaking nation states to the south of the United States. My study does not take into account Lusophone narratives or the literatures of other language groups such as English or Dutch. Though I mention the impact of neoliberalism in Latin America, I also am conscious of alternate political systems that annul the agents of free markets such as communist Cuba that understandably has not been influenced by the social changes brought about by neoliberal tendencies.

of change and coping that men undertake as a result, a motif that is evidenced in fiction produced in the second half of the century. The connection between neoliberalism and masculinity, however, also elucidates a paradox, as the economic policy seemingly supports fluid and multiple expressions of gender. While this may be true for the increasing openness of non-heteronormative genders, the converse is produced in the representation of masculinity. The neoliberal market asserts a new position of hegemony over local gender expressions, perpetuation what critics call transnational business masculinity, and destabilizing what was already in crisis due to the social changes brought about by economic liberalization.

The novelistic ruminations on the crisis and its aftereffects forms the corpus of my study, as I examine fiction produced since 1990, focusing on how and why masculinity is treated as a reference within a discourse of identity. I identify this starting point as the years immediately afterwards coincide with the liberalizations of economies and the political changes brought about by revolutions and tensions between Leftist and Rightists groups. The subsequent crises in governments, combined with a crisis of gender engineered by neoliberal tendencies, posits the genesis of the texts I study in these pages. Their treatment of masculinity, I argue, is fundamental to an understanding of gender and self.

When we take a look at some recent postulates on masculinity, for example, it is clear that some theorists adopt a women's vantage point; others focus on Queer views, or more specifically, transsexual and/or transgender experiences. Instead of focusing on what masculinity is, how it comes into play, and to what extent it shows variation (just as feminism is not a universal), critics have tended to follow an alternate route. Simply put,

when dealing with masculinity, critics tend to construct the male gender category in relation to an Other.³

This is (partly) the reason I am interested in researching the affairs, representations, and discourses of masculinity. From an initial inquiry into the field, it is clear that criticism relies heavily on a single critic and text, just as gender studies tends to ubiquitously sprinkle Butler in its pages. In her canonical tome, *Masculinities*, Raewyn Connell, formerly known as Robert Connell, presents a systematic sociological theory of gender. Writing in a nascent field without any true theoretical pillars, Connell appropriates Antonio Gramsci's ideas of hegemony, asserting that gender is, in addition to being a socially and culturally constructed historical process and subject position, a process of hegemonic domination by one group over another. Importantly, masculinity is not a proscriptive identification based on anatomical structures. Instead, masculinity is a place where the subject is positioned in within the contexts of power. We observe here the poststructuralist roots of her argument, as he takes as a functional paradigm Foucault's ideas on power and history. Connell expands the bounds of masculinity beyond simple role theory, and locates men within broader systems of power (Ashe 145). There are no ontological accounts of men, or an essential core. Similarly, Judith Halberstam in her book *Female Masculinity* (1998) affirms that masculinity is not inherently male; going so far as to suggest a separate gender category of "female masculinity" in a poly-

³ I am using the terms "Queer" and "Other" in regards to subject positions that are diametrically opposed to heteronormative gender conceptions. "Queer" is capitalized as an umbrella term for all non-heterosexual gender orientations and gender positions. I use the term "Other" to refer as well to any subject position that is not defined as heterosexual masculinity. It can be used, however, to describe other heterosexual gender positions such as that occupied by heterosexual women. Ontologically, being an "Other" is intrinsic in being "Queer," whereas the opposite does not hold true. Both terms, however, provide an epistemological base for understanding gender. Furthermore, I am hesitant in my analysis to use the word Queer or Queering (with capitals or in lower-case) as the term has become an identity and not an action. To queer is to decenter, to question, to challenge the binaries of heteronormative power, but in recent years the verb has become synonymous with a North American idea of non-heterosexual. Therefore a queer subject is not a subject who questions heteronormativity, but is instead automatically taken to be homo/trans/bisexual, showcasing the affinity to use labels and to establish an identity of sexuality, which I argue is not always the case in Latin America.

valenced examination of both high and low culture. Maleness is not to be equated with masculinity and vice versa, Halberstam argues. I tend to agree but suggest that the latter, however, always dialogues with masculinities to establish a subject position, particularly in literature where the body and its appendages are structural tools of characterization.

Before going any further into these pages, a brief discussion on what masculinity is warranted, as many a critical volume of late leaves the idea of masculinity lingering over its arguments and diatribes, without necessarily providing a definition. Though a brief look through some of these arguments would lead the reader to conjecture that the masculine is the not-feminine, I want to turn this posture on its head. The feminine(s), the Queer(s), and the masculine(s) are all created, put into play, and allowed to perpetuate by the Masculine (to be used interchangeably with Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity, but that comes later). Borrowing from Ben Sifuentes-Jáuregui, the Masculine "designs itself from the outside of culture and society, and doubles an idea of itself as the very interior of that culture and society" (108). Those characteristics deemed powerful, desirable (both to the projected and real heterosexual, and repressed homosocial imagination vis-à-vis desire) and viable as the pillars of the social matrix are enshrined as the Masculine, intrinsically linked to the male body. The penis, by association, Ilan Stavan's Latin Phallus, becomes more than a reproductive tool but is representative of a greater psychological (and physical) process of control that potentiates power.

I want to suggest that the Masculine is deified and assimilated through aesthetic, discursive, behavioral, and (even) sartorial cues and practices and is enabled by all gendered bodies within a given culture and society. The reverse process, I want to make clear, is what creates the other non-Masculine gender expressions, as whatever that does not lie within or

rigidly follow this specific epistemology of power is relegated to alternative and subservient roles and positions. This includes the creation of masculinities, those male (though at times female) approximations to the Masculine that in some shape or form fall short of embodying the socially/culturally enabled construct. Aside from being performative, iterative, and sociocultural in constitution, gender is a tableau vivant defined and brushed over by the previously and simultaneously enabled position of the Masculine.

Within this framework of masculinities (and femininities and Queerities, for that matter) the body is engaged in a dialectic process of identification where gender is not attributed to or defined simply by performance. I want to suggest that gender is a verdant association between the physical body and those social traits outlined earlier that sustain the image of the Masculine (as it is nothing more than a projected ideal, a *méconnaissance* that depending on level of adherence to or disassociation from establishes a gender expression), and that we cannot completely do away with the anatomy of the subject when talking about gender, no matter how en vogue the words performance, performativity, and drag have become.⁴ Halberstam's female masculinity is only an approximation of the Masculine, as its gendered subjects can never fully publicly attain a position of power without an anatomic appendage that hangs loosely between their legs. Female masculinity, like others that I define and study in these pages, attains a position of masculinity in its desire to approximate, and the level to which it succeeds in this approximation of the Masculine.

The corporal escapism that Butler and others have pushed ahead is useful when talking and recreating gender, but falls short of establishing a system of gender that revolves

⁴ Though I disagree with Sifuentes-Jáuregui's Queer studies take on some of the novels he analyzes (most notably the coital scene between La Japonesa Grande and La Manuela in Donoso's *El lugar sin límites*), I do agree with his affirmation that "that there is a critical difference about the place of the body in Latin American cultures vis-a-vis the place of the body in contemporary gender theory in the United States" (7).

around specific axes or loci that keep the semiotic game alive. It is here that the biggest benefit in studying masculinities lies, as by understanding the construction and definition of the Masculine, and by carefully reading its approximations can we begin a holistic attempt to understand the role and system of gender within a specific sociocultural and historical moment.

In literary studies, a theory of gender can be observed when we come across Jung's collective consciousness, as we are forced to encounter the polemics of genderizing semantic fields. According to Jung, the gender binary is existent not only in the psyche of the individual, as in the poles of the anima and the animus, but also within society as a whole. The former system, according to Jung, represents the two inherent qualities that the individual possesses in the mind. Centering, maternal, and soft drives are governed by the anima; whereas violent, demanding, and active drives are manifestations of the animus. In the collective consciousness, the Swiss theorist identifies archetypes that are inherently feminine and masculine. It is important to note that he places these archetypes at the extremes of a spectrum, with human beings occupying an in-between space. Such bipolar gendered figures are particularly evident in Latin American foundational fictions where gender is intrinsically connected to sex. Problems arise, however, when we encounter fictional subjects who are inherently ambiguous, both physically and performatively. The narrative voices in Luis Zapata's *La hermana secreta de Angélica María* (1989) exemplify this problem or issue, as what the reader believes to be a silicone burlesque dancer, is actually a homicidal hermaphrodite. Staying with a Jungian philosophy, then, how can we talk about gender in Zapata's novel?

The issue of gender is paramount in the study of Latin American literatures of the latter part of the 20th century until today. The issue of identity is ubiquitous in both texts and literary movements. Groupings such as the post-Boom novel, McOndo, the New Narratives, and the New Historical Novel all polemicize the importance of identity both at the individual and nation-state levels. Gender, as evidenced not only by the popularity of psychoanalysis and feminism in literary circles, is a central characteristic of identity. Adding to the debate, Diana Fuss notes that identity has a “colonial history” and that this history “poses serious challenges to contemporary recuperations of a politics of identification” (141). The existence of a colonial history between Europe and Latin America accentuates the importance of identity.

Using identity, however, as a foundation for politics involves some form of reiteration of that identity and its power-effects (Ashe 91). If gender is used to define both personal and national identity – as it has been in Latin America – there must be an after-effect or result. If gender is binary (as some conceive it), then to simply study it discursively from the perspective of feminism or Queer studies is not enough to understand the construct of identity. As Fuss comments, “the signifier ‘Other,’” whether it be the homosexual male or the woman, “in its applications, if not always its theorizations, tends to disguise how there may be other Others – subjects who do not quite fit into the rigid boundary definitions of (dis)similitude, or who indeed might be left out of the Self/Other binary altogether” (144). It is this disconnect that I am interested in, as I argue that the position of power, inherently Masculine in most social contexts, is not all-encompassing of male gendered bodies. What I am trying to say is that the position of masculinity does not always apply to male gendered bodies, and when it does, it tends to diffuse in gradients. Connell’s structural model proves

useful here, as the position of hegemony is often never fully occupied, thereby pushing those subordinate and complicit masculinities outside the circumference of power into a disadvantaged position.

I am not arguing that men occupy an analogous position to women in Latin American society; a perusal of a daily newspaper holds the opposite to be true as women are still the victims of domestic violence, workforce discrimination, and sexism. What I am putting forward is the idea that the masculine experience is not simple and uniform, and that men too must face the consequences and judgment imposed by the unrealistic gendered position of the Masculine. That being said, for a fruitful step forward in the study of identity in contemporary Latin America, masculinities within greater discourses of gender and power in Hispanic literatures must be critiqued.

Although substantial research has been undertaken in the field by critics such as Rebecca Biron, Héctor Domínguez Ruvalcaba, David William Foster, and Robert McKee Irwin, among others, there is still much to do. These critics use masculinity as an organizational point in identity politics without really taking into account the multiplicity of the position that I stress earlier. Though some critics such as Steven Marsh do analyze and focus their studies on men, the majority, as I have referenced above, focus on the Other. In the critical work done on Cristina Rivera Garza's *Nadie me verá llorar* (1999), for example, there has been a focus on the female body as a transgressive entity. If the topic of masculinity has been addressed, it has been done superficially; the various male gendered bodies in the text, which is to say the men, are left aside by most scholars. Rivera Garza's turn of the century doctors, lawyers, photographers and drug addicts provide literary fodder in the portrayal of the nation and a reexamination of identity vis-à-vis nationality. I build on this

analysis in the first chapter as I focus on current rewritings of the past and the implications of the male body within the imaginary of a nation. That being said, masculinities and masculine bodies must become a focus of study if we are to not only understand the literary production of Hispanic writers but to also understand power structures and modalities inherent and extant in Latin American societies. It is through this methodology that I aim to add to the growing critical corpus pioneered by Biron, Domínguez Ruvalcaba, Sifuentes-Jáuregui and Mckee Irwin amongst others.

Part of this process involves a careful hermeneutic cultivation of traditionally considered macho subjects as bodies that occupy the binary position of Other. By systematically distinguishing the drug addict or the revolutionary from the standards of masculinity that dictate specific sociocultural power structures, we can unearth a rich substrate of characters, identities, and gendered positions that are just as reactive to the hegemonic as say feminine and Queer expressions. This, I underline, is central to my approximation of masculinities. An illustrative example to this approach can be seen in my analysis of Franz Galich's *Y te diré quién eres (Mariposa traicionera)* (2006), where the macho heterosexual men are queered not only by the betraying butterfly from the Maná song, but also by their increased use of homophobic slurs and labels. Their recourse to a colonizing language (of the hegemonic over subordinate masculinities) coincides with their new interest in the supple buttocks of a transvestite prostitute and the fact that they, and not the women in the novel, increasingly become traitors, reflecting the title song of the soundtrack. It is important to note that a recognition of masculinities does not in any shape or form degrade a Queer perspective to the text, as these men of complicit masculinities (Connell 79) mutate with the aid of music as an intertext into being potentially Queered subjects. They evidence a

struggle to gain subjectivity, just as and perhaps a reflection of the problems of sovereignty and progress in a post-war Central America left identity-less by years of turmoil and North American imperialism.

This struggle with gaining subjectivity within the politics of the Other has been explored by Judith Butler in *Undoing Gender* (2004). Butler studies how “restrictively normative conceptions of sexual and gendered life” might be undone (1). My textual study of masculinity in Latin American narrative by implication involves an identification of the normative conceptions of sexuality and an exploration of how these conceptions can be undone. I will look at how contemporary authors use the brothel space, the archetypal coordinates where young men engage in the coital process of *hacerse hombre*, but focus on how the politics of the brothel are rewritten within a system of undoing traditional gender norms, with the latent possibility of (in some cases) a reconstruction of gender.

This analytics of gender, or a study of its implications within a literary treaty of subjectivity and identity vis-à-vis space and the nation has been attempted in several critical works from the first decade of the 21st century. A useful tome is Héctor Domínguez Ruvalcaba’s *Modernity and the Nation in Mexican Representations of Masculinity* (2007), which adopts an interdisciplinary approach to the study of gender in Mexico. The title of the book presents it as an exploration of masculinity and the homosocial mass before, during, and after the Mexican Revolution. In reading the critic’s work, however, it is clear that the author’s *punto de partida* is the dichotomy extant in masculinity studies, with heterosexual, or heteronormative masculinity on one end of the binary, and everything else negated, abhorred, and persecuted by it, on the other. This latter group becomes the core of his analysis, as a book that specifies the term “masculinity” in its title, deals very little with the

implications and representations of masculinities in Mexican texts, and instead focuses on how Queer representations are formed and survived by hegemonic masculinity. This exercise in itself is fundamental in building an understanding of Latin American masculinity, as it emphasizes the position of control held by the Masculine throughout the 20th century.

In another critical study dedicated to national identity vis-à-vis masculinity, Robert McKee Irwin diachronically examines Mexican texts from the 19th and 20th century to develop a theory of masculinity and its heteronormative constructs that confronts Octavio Paz's traditional take on Latin American sexuality. Citing Paz, Irwin argues that it is not the object of desire that is important in sexuality (as is the case in North American identity politics), but is instead the aim of sexual relations (xxiv). Irwin's argumentation is constructed in opposition to the observation that sociologists have taken these words to be gospel as they claim that sexual acts such as fellatio and reciprocal penetration in male homoerotics are foreign imports. Focusing on how the construct of hegemonic masculinity changes from the non-eroticized homosocial of the "hombre de bien" (47) of the 19th century to more transgressive relationships in the 20th century, McKee Irwin develops a theory of Queer masculinity that challenges Paz's ideas. My issue with *Mexican Masculinities* (2003), however, is that it orients its analysis along North American identity constructs of desire *ab initio*, thereby skewing its textual analysis of novels towards a Queer studies perspective. That being said, however, the analysis carried out by the author is fundamental to a field of masculinity studies within Latin American studies, as it sets up an evolution of the gender expression within Mexico, thereby providing a useful methodological tool.

The problematic of using North American ideas of gender when considering texts from south of the border is the critical practice of sustaining a language that may or may not

be productive when dealing with the Spanish-speaking world. A good illustration of this critical quandary lies in Mayra Santos-Febres's *Sirena Selena vestida de pena* (2000), where the young protagonist goes from being a drug addicted street urchin to an alluring bolero singer. Under the aesthetic and theatrical guidance of a transgendered madam, Selena adopts the persona of a sensual transvestite who seduces all those who listen to him. What at first glance seems to be a novel about transgendered and transvestite identities is overhauled by the author as we realize that the labels of transgendered, transvestite, heterosexual and homosexual are not so easily applicable to the characters of the novel. Though some critics have been quick to point out that Selena is a woman trapped in a man's body, it is clear from a close reading of the novel that his identity is not as black and white. It becomes clear, particularly through the analogous development of Leocadio, that Santos-Febres's "coming out" novel is only truly a reflection of the economic plight of a society devastated by end-of-the-century economic policy that has enslaved the islands to the imperial West. An understanding of the economic paradigm of the novel is fundamental in reading gender, just as it is the case with Galich's *mariposas*.

It is obvious, then, that the epistemological challenges within these critical texts lie in their projection of theories of gender onto a sociocultural matrix that did not experience Stonewall or the advent of gender-identity social movements. Studying masculinity through the optic of Queer studies is to leave aside the specific circumstances of a society, or in more general terms, to superimpose the identity politics of one culture onto another, without necessarily problematizing gender and sexuality within that context. Though I posit this from a critical standpoint, novelists such as Santos-Febres and Luis Zapata have posed similar concerns in their novels. The latter's canonical *El vampiro de la colonia Roma* (1979)

questions categories of gay and straight through the picaresque adventures of Adonis García in the streets of Mexico. Though the novel has been heralded as Latin America's first gay novel, it is naïve to assume that it conforms to Queer ideas of identity, which are normative in their imposition of an intrinsically non-heteronormative stance. Without delving into a coming-out narrative that stresses some sort of innate homosexual identification, Zapata's novel successfully problematizes local and foreign sexualities, questioning what is masculine, feminine, and Queer. The problem, I argue, lies in the reception of the text, as critics attribute it a political role that is invoked *a priori*.

I am not arguing that a Queer studies perspective to masculinity is erroneous or methodologically unsound, as there are strong readings and postulates extant in the critical works cited previously. What I am pointing out, however, is the non-focus on masculinity as a construct that this approach warrants, as the topic at hand deviates substantially from the intrinsic plurality of the term. A similar, albeit ideologically different position is invoked in Rebecca Biron's *Murder and Masculinity: Violent Fictions of Twentieth Century Latin America* (2000), as she examines masculinity in the detective novel of the continent, not confining herself to country, period, or movements. Like Domínguez Ruvalcaba's tome, Biron's text rarely talks about *masculinities*. The methodology behind her analysis positions masculinity as a hegemonic, phallogentric entity that dialogues with women, who are in effect the primary concern of her text. Biron's point of departure is the binomial conception of masculinity as being a pole with a necessary opposite or Other; with masculinity and the Other mutually defining each other. It is clear that Biron like Domínguez-Ruvalcaba views gender as a phenomenological construct, though she side-steps the ontological questions of masculinity that are left undiscussed. As an example, we can glean from the text how the

novels included in the study “explore the actual erasure of women and its implications for prevailing images of masculinity” (7). According to Biron, masculinity is about violence, about the repression of the Other, whether it be Queer or female, and the imposition of a heteronormative discourse in the national literary space. The usefulness of this study is again fundamental to an understanding of the role of the Masculine within Latin America, as the violence imparted by men is an everyday occurrence.

Reading Connell, Biron notes that though few men meet the normative definitions of masculinity in a given cultural and historical context, “they may nonetheless partake of the power associated with hegemonic masculinity” (8). Biron, however, does not delve further into Connell’s structuralizations of masculinity into further categories, and instead focuses solely on the violence exerted by men in Latin America who are “in crisis” and who use violence to “simultaneously celebrat[e] and undermin[e] hegemonic masculinity” (8). What I would like to highlight is that these men occupy a paradoxical position, as both perpetrators and victims.

Taking this observation in hand, I would add to Biron’s excellent analysis a study of how violence operates within circles of men, and how the oppressors against women are equally oppressive against subordinate male bodies. Societal violence stemming from and against groups of men, rigidly held in position by hegemonic masculinity, is evidenced in Franz Galich’s *Managua salsa city (¡Devórame otra vez!)* (2000), where violence is both a fundamental narrative and linguistic device. The city of Managua as depicted in the novel adheres to Biron’s idea of a Latin America whose “contemporary violence points to crisis tendencies” (8), where Galich, by means of a tightly spun narrative focusing on a prostitute and her band of conmen, weaves a tale of urban violence and corruption in a city that lays

bare at night the open wounds of a bloody civil war.⁵ Linguistically, the text is violent in its abrupt changes of narrative voice from the first to the third person and vice versa. The prevalence of colloquialisms, idiolects, and non-standard syntax in the text signals a violent shift from a normative narrative. The violence against women that Biron theorizes exists on a fantasized level in the novel. The one-time street but now club-going prostitute, Tamara, tells her potential John, Pancho, that she was sexually abused as a child. When asked how many people raped her, she explains that she was gang-raped. Pancho does not believe her, as she later corrects herself by saying her cousin assaulted her and that her parents did not ever discover the rape.⁶

This verbal intercourse plays itself out over a greater game of seduction between the two, as they dance, eat, and converse with the topic of sex-for-money never openly discussed in the third person narrative, though it is explicated in the first person shifts. Physical violence in the text, however, is only exerted between men. Just as Biron notices an allegory between the men and the nation in the texts she studies, Galich evokes a similar motif in the characters he builds in *Salsa city*. Pancho is an ex-soldier who works as a houseboy of an affluent family vacationing in the United States. Tamara sided with the Sandinistas. Pancho drives a modern Toyota whereas the group of conmen who pursue him around the city drive an antiquated Russian (communist) Lada (15). The Calle Ocho duo, another group of men who get caught up in the con game run by Tamara, are Americanized, speak *Spanglish*, and do not fit the local model of the “latin lover” (60). One of them is both rat-faced and an

⁵ This is the same city that Gioconda Belli writes about in *La mujer habitada* (1988), though in Galich’s novel, we see the physical remnants and psychological shrapnel of the conflict within the urban space.

⁶ A similar gang-rape with an equally incredulous male character occurs in Mario Vargas Llosa’s *Travesuras de la niña mala* (2006). The fabrication of violence against women by female characters is intrinsically connected to the positioning and creation of masculinities as the men who listen to the trumped-up charges of rape and sodomy must decide to take a position within or against the misogynistic practices of the violent perpetrator who often embodies a hegemonic position of power vis-à-vis the female.

opportunist as he attempts to seize Tamara for himself. Even amongst Tamara's ragamuffin band of thieves, there are individual characters who subscribe to macro-level subject positions. Mandrake is an ex-soldier who fought against the Contras. Hodgson is a drug-dealer of African heritage, who plays the role of the hyper-sexualized black man, or what Connell calls marginalized masculinity.

With so many male characters populating a microcosm of the nation within Galich's diegesis, the issue of violence cements the struggles between men. In fact, Tamara is treated as sacred and always protected, even at the cost of male lives in the final showdown in Pancho's place of work. Contrary to Biron's claim that masculinity is an assertion of violence against women (who represent the Other) to promulgate a new national space within times of crisis, Galich shows how violence and masculinity need not always be formulated with an analytical focus placed on the Other. Violence can and is exerted by and against men, who negotiate and define the various incarnations of masculinity within their historical and political context. A clear example of this occurs in Vargas Llosa's *La fiesta del Chivo* (2000) where an impotent and incontinent dictator unleashes physical and emotional violence onto a community of men who live in a constant state of fear. In this particular case, the Peruvian writer (re)writes a historical account of the last days of Rafael Trujillo's dictatorship and examines the symbols and practices of regime-based masculinity.

Though Biron includes women in her study of masculinity, she does so from the axiom that women are objects within the binary. Parting from ideas first put forth by Gayle Rubin, she notes that women are victims of violence, or currency in a larger economy of men. The weak-links within Biron's work are explored by Judith Halberstam, in *Female Masculinity*, where she evaluates masculinity in relation to women, but as opposed to Biron,

she does so by positioning women as the subject. Halberstam argues that women can and do perform masculinity and as such are active entities within the power modalities constructed and perpetuated by societal norms of patriarchy. She further proposes that female masculinity is its own gender, which breaks from Connell's sociological hierarchization of men into varying masculinities. In saying this, my study of masculinities will include Halberstam's theorizations as the concept of masculinity is a subject position and not necessarily dictated by physical sexual anatomy, although bodies *do* matter, as Judith Butler has pointed out.

Women can and do become the subject within the axis of masculinity, turning on its head the binary conception of gender prevalent in critical studies to date. In the hermeneutic work done on Gioconda Belli's *La mujer habitada*, for example, studies have focused on the "nueva mujer" as a model of feminist movements in Latin America. Others have also commented on the ecofeminist aspects of Belli's work, uniting discourses of gender and ecology under the oppressive presence and actions of men.⁷ In the case of Belli's novel, I propose that it can be contextualized within Nicaraguan society by an analysis of how the protagonist Lavinia performs masculinity not only within political and guerrilla movements, but also within the landscape of the cityspace. The implications of a "nueva mujer" and on her role in the civil war can be juxtaposed with the women and men portrayed in Galich's novels, which depict a Managua in the 21st century. Masculinity shapes and operates in the discursive space of the city and society, with both men and women occupying positions of subjectivity. A similar example of female masculinity can be noted in Cristina Rivera Garza's *Nadie me verá llorar* (1999). Here, masculinity is primordial to not only the understanding of society during and after a civil war, as in Nicaragua, but also in regards to

⁷ I will further discuss the theories behind ecofeminism, and will provide a counterpoint to the idea in what I observe as "ecomasculinity" in texts such as Hernán Rodríguez Matte's *Barrio alto* (2004).

the project of modernity. The city is paramount to this task, as undesired elements of society are segregated to a psychiatric institution at the periphery of Mexico City. Rivera Garza's principal female character Matilda Burgos negotiates gender norms and transgressions, as well as societal constructs and institutions of hegemonic masculinity, such as the police and the medical conscription of prostitutes.

The playful approximation to gender in Rivera Garza, Ana Clavel, and others makes me stop to consider the critical binary vis-à-vis masculinity that is seen in Biron and others who tend to depart from the axiom that masculinity does not exist as a mutually exclusive discursive element, but is instead always written, dialogued and commensurate with the gender-Other, whether this be a Queer or feminine identity. This ambiguity returns us to my initial inquiry: what about the study of masculinities? What are the implications of these masculinities on male gendered bodies? Here, of course, I mean "men" without a colon to follow, for I refer to the characters that appear in texts as principal, or sometimes absent, subjects. They are automatically ignored or assigned to the hegemony, though they themselves actively engage just as Queer and female characters do with this controlling brand of masculinity. I speak of male gendered bodies, or "men," to highlight their presence as representatives of distinct masculinities occupying subject positions in a larger societal matrix held together by power.

A theoretical framework to this quandary is, however, a possibility, given recent writings on the idea of masculinity studies as an academic field. Fidelma Ashe, in her book *The New Politics of Masculinity: Men, Power and Resistance*, distinguishes between two stark veins of masculinity studies: that which is anti-feminist, and that which is pro-feminist. The former group is against dialoguing with women and promotes traditional gender

dichotomies and gender roles. Ashe identifies anti-feminists as “generally orientated towards stalling or overturning the effects of feminism on contemporary cultures” (3). Men are seen to have lost the “sex war” against the perceived onslaught of feminist and pro-women rhetoric and politics. In opposition, pro-feminism has attempted to build on the gains and changes of second wave feminism. There is an interest for not only liberating women but also liberating men from traditional gender roles. In response to the problematic posed by asserting an Other to men in discussions of masculinity, pro-feminists have employed feminist and Queer discourses to develop forms of reflexivity around and not opposed to the categories of men. Pro-feminist discourse, within masculinity studies, takes identity as a “problematic construct, rather than a natural taken-for-granted reality” (Messner 97). Pro-feminism, both as a theoretical framework and a political discourse, is poststructuralist in its conception of power and identity (Hearn, Connell). By decentering gender from the individual, in terms of anatomical composition, to larger macro-levels of power, and micro-levels of behavior, pro-feminism provides a toolbox for the exploration of masculinities.⁸

John Stoltenberg, a significant figure in pro-feminist politics, declared that men do not exist as an ontological entity (xiv). There is no essentialism to the idea of masculinity or men. Ashe identifies his theories as a “radical constructionist framework” (96). Importantly, though, he is not a non-normative thinker, as he advocates for a moral framework to guide the reconstruction of subjects defined as men. Stoltenberg, however, is also a universalist. His ideas do not reflect the experiential disparity of the Mexican *mayate* and the American

⁸ It is important to note that not all pro-feminist ideas are poststructuralist. Mythopoetic groups within the movement, for example, subscribe to characterizations of an ‘essence’ of masculinity, quite similar to Jung’s terming of the male archetype.

jock.⁹ Jeff Hearn goes beyond Stoltenberg, focusing on the epistemological issues of pro-feminist thought within masculinity studies. Echoing other poststructuralist views on gender, he asserts that men are a socially constituted, multiple and variable social group. He also argues that men are collectively representative of a gender class, though they are not per se reflective of an ontological category.¹⁰ Men's power, Hearn contends, is supported through economic, political, institutional, and discursive structures.

In addition to placing masculinity within a larger matrix of power and interests, Ashe cites Hearn as she critically examines masculinity studies and suggests that it is currently flawed in that "men are referred to explicitly but not necessarily problematized, and little, if any, exploration of 'men' is provided" (128). A similar concern erupts from Latin American critics who have studied masculinity from the fields of anthropology and sociology. The effects of machismo on society have been discussed by Mara Viveros and Norma Fuller, though both agree that little has been done in the social sciences to examine the impact of unrealistic male expectations on groups of men who live under patriarchy. The most pertinent study to date comes from the FLACSO conference on masculinity held in Santiago in 1998. The proceedings, edited by Teresa Valdés and José Olavarría, continually return to Connell's ideas vis-à-vis the structuralization of masculinity. Scholars such as Isabel Hernández and Gonzalo Pérez take as an axiom Connell's language and hierarchies, thereby legitimizing the use of a non-specific model to the very specific context of Latin American sexuality.

⁹ Domínguez Ruvalcaba studies the phenomenon of *mayate* culture in Mexico. They are men who routinely engage in man-on-man coitus, but always performing the penetrative role, in opposition to the *joto* who is always the receiver. This paradigm of sexual practices, and its effect on subject gender identification is similar to Roger Lancaster's observations of the *cochón* in Nicaragua.

¹⁰ The idea of a gender class emerges with second wave feminism. Ashe indicates that the usefulness of the term has been contested (125). Hearn, however, uses the term to "capture the effects of the historical and ongoing politically constituted relationships of power between men and women."

In effect, Connell's idea of plural masculinity is reinforced by critics such as Oscar Misael Hernández who observes that "los estudiosos/as de los hombres en América Latina han propuesto superar la noción de masculinidad y suplirla por masculinidades, reconociendo la diversidad de experiencias e identidades de los hombres y los riesgos de una perspectiva esencialista que encierre a todos los hombres en una sola identidad" (70). A similar tone is adopted by José Olavarría when he writes that "los estudios sobre identidades masculinas heterosexuales han buscado hacer visible el referente dominante, hegemónico en términos de Connell" (4), calling to attention once more the structuralist paradigm of gender.

What I am trying to get at here is the international acceptance of Connell's language of talking about masculinity, as his terminology and ideas are perpetuated by critics that originate from and study Latin American masculinity and its intricacies. By saying that I stress that my study is not an extrapolation or a projection of ideas from the North towards the South, but is instead conscious of and sensitive to local tendencies in gender expression and its representation. In effect, the analysis and postulates I labor on in the following pages take into account the writings of the main players in the Latin American academy dealing with masculinity studies, namely Mara Viveros, José Toro-Alfonso and José Olavarría and their writings on masculine identity. These thinkers argue that a discursive approximation to the study of masculinities in Latin America is needed to better understand the pluralities of identity that come with being associated to the masculine. With that being said, I keep in mind Ilan Stavans's idea of the Latin Phallus when discussing the cultural implications of hegemonic masculinity, as the critic provides a fruitful way of reading masculinity within Latin America. He argues that both men and women "seemingly revolve around the phallus, an object of intense adoration, the symbol of absolute power and satisfaction" (51). Reading

between the lines of his work, however, elucidates a critical need to go beyond the phallus in Latin American discourses of masculinity, as the adoration of the phallus and the subsequent sociological product of machismo are the “greatest contradiction in Hispanic male sexuality” (51).

My study, in contrast to other critical works I have cited above, intends to take up Hearn and these critics on their challenge to examine, problematize and explore men in the narratives of Latin America. As an example, I will study the role of men and masculinities vis-à-vis violence in Galich’s *Managua salsa city (¡Devórame otra vez!)* and Vargas Llosa’s *La fiesta del Chivo*, thereby diverting from Biron’s assertion that masculinity specified by violence, exists primarily in opposition to women. I further look at the importance of male desire, sexuality and impotence in *La sangre erguida* (2010) by Enrique Serna, paying close attention to how the penis is dethroned and examining the ramifications of publicly outing the impotent male in a social context hampered by omnipotent and virile masculine norms.

In my analysis I stress the pertinence of Connell’s model of understanding gender, not as a universal testament to its role within identity, but as a strong system of identification that lends subjectivity to the body and the nation. Before going further, however, a few terms must be brought up and discussed.

The idea of masculinity, particularly its hegemonic variant, is often used interchangeably with the idea of patriarchy. Feminists and anti-feminists have viewed patriarchy as a male-dictated, phallogentric, and hegemonic set of institutions, discourses, and structures. Poststructuralists, however, differ from the above, citing patriarchy to be particular and not universal (Ashe, Connell, Hearn, Foucault). Male power is in no terms inherent in social systems, but is instead “historical, shifting and dependent on specific

social, cultural, and geographical environments” (Ashe 140). Power, importantly, does not have a simple logic or direction, but is instead an intersection of the modalities of different power planes. I, therefore, understand patriarchy to be a system of power dictating the social matrix under which gendered bodies are collocated, connected by micro and macro tangents of power relations restricted by a particular avatar of hegemonic masculinity.

Keeping this notion of power in mind, Connell from a sociological standpoint identifies masculinity as an ontoformative phenomenon: it defines, structures, and concretizes gender identity. The critic differentiates between hegemonic masculinity and other masculinities, identifying, how feminism has done before, that there are pluralities to an umbrella-term such as gender identity. Hegemonic masculinity is defined as “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (77). The masculinity of the upper Anglo-Saxon class in the United States is necessarily different from the masculinity of middle class men in Managua, Nicaragua, as Roger Lancaster studies it. For the former group, any form of homoerotic expression, not always including male-on-male penetration identifies both parties as homosexual. To the Nicaraguan man, however, the only homosexual is the effeminate man being penetrated – he is a *cochón*, deriving from the Spanish for mattress. The *activo* in this relationship gains esteem, expressing his virility and machismo by penetrating others, whether they are women or men.

In contemporary North American popular media, the slightest hint of homoerotic desire is qualified by the phrase “no homo” in both music and in oral discourse. Jonah Weiner in an article in *The New York Times* dealing with homosexuality in the hip hop

community, cites multi-award winning artist Kanye West who while pushing for acceptance of homosexuality, raps in a 2009 song: “It’s crazy how you can go from being Joe Blow, to everybody on your dick, no homo.” Perhaps the most illustrative example of masculinity in contemporary American pop culture comes from an artist who has not only performed in traditional hip hop circles but who has also successfully crossed-over to other mediums such as film. In a *Blender* magazine interview, the artist Method Man confirms, “you can’t be fuckin’ people in the ass and calling yourself gangsta” (Weiner). The Nicaraguan men studied by Lancaster, however, beg to differ. For them, as for other men in countries such as Mexico and Cuba, it is perfectly normal to sodomize the Other and still parade and perform the role of the macho *varón*.¹¹ Interestingly, the men in Lancaster’s study do not engage in oral sex with each other. Oral activities such as kissing are further not practiced amongst men engaged in homoerotics in Nicaragua. Their interactions of carnal commerce are solely anal. How would these men, along with the listeners of Method Man who cringe at the thought of giving each other a hug, react to being felled by the transvestite “loca del barrio” as we see in Pedro Lemebel’s *Tengo miedo torero*?

The different geographic and national contexts are to note, as I am not attempting a reading of gender and sexuality in the social field.¹² I am examining the representations and reconciliations of gender and identity in the literary, which is not altogether divorced from social constructs and phenomena. Galich’s characters in *Y te diré quien eres (Mariposa traicionera)* are aware of *cochón* culture. This is evidenced in the transvestite prostitute

¹¹ I defer to Judith Butler’s assertions on gender, performativity and iteration in *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Undoing Gender* (2004).

¹² As understood by Bourdieu. He notes that “[a] field is a separate social universe having its own laws of functioning independent of those of politics and the economy” (162).

Xaquira (named after the Colombian singer) when she beats a married client, exclaiming that only now will society see who the “real” *cochón* is. Similarly, the men in the novel such as Pancho Rana and El Brujo hire other transvestite prostitutes during their alcohol-induced celebrations, fully aware that by doing so they escape being homosexuals in the social.

It is not fortuitous that these men are aware of the hegemonic structuralizations of masculinity in Nicaraguan society. The term “hegemonic masculinity,” however, has also been problematized as being too general. Wetherell and Edley have contested the term “hegemonic” as they observe that nobody can fully embody it (Ashe 155). They suggest that it has multiple meanings and that scholars should focus on how “men negotiate, produce and reproduce identities by taking up multiple meanings of masculinities in particular contexts” (Ashe 155). They not only suggest that it has multiple meanings, but that also scholars should focus on how men negotiate, produce and reproduce identities by taking up the multiple meanings of masculinities in particular contexts. They, like Hearn, argue that it is important to “trace the *discursive* strategies men employ to position themselves as part of a constituted category of men and the implications of these self-positionings rather than commencing the analysis of men by defining masculinity as prior to its constitutions” (Ashe 155, my emphasis).

From a structural standpoint, their criticism holds water, as hegemonic masculinity is variable. On the other hand, we must remember that hegemonic masculinity is a subject position and not a subject quality. It is only hegemonic in relation to others. It is however, as they argue, not a tangible position. Hegemonic masculinity therefore might be simply a hypothesized position and not actually embodied by one singular group or individual. It is, however, for all intents and purposes, the figure that Stavans (through the possession of the

Latin phallus) and others contend structures Latin American erotics. In my study, I will analyze this polemic, evaluating both sides of the argument, and seeing if in the texts, which is to say in the “discursive strategies,” there is an answer that will provide a much needed addition to not only Hispanic literatures but also to masculinity studies. In examining Rivera Garza’s *Nadie me verá llorar*, for example, I will show how the author creates a character within the subject position of hegemony in constant opposition to what George Mosse terms the “countertype” (6). In *La fiesta del Chivo*, I will examine the structure of the New Historical Novel and how it uses history and paratextual sources to create a subject position that is not necessarily embodied by any singular character within the diegesis.

When talking about men, I am not interested in how hegemonic masculinity dialogues with the Other, especially since the critical volumes cited above have already done so. I am instead interested in how hegemonic masculinity dialogues *with* other masculinities. My study is focused on men, though in constructing and dialoguing with hegemonic masculinity, queer and female gender identities cannot be ignored, just as male gender identities cannot be ignored when countering queer positions with hegemonic masculinity. I will address these other gender positions without devolving into a theory of Queer or feminist identity in literature as to date, for critical studies in these fields are both thorough and beyond the scope of this investigation. My project, however, will incorporate ideas and theories from these fields with the aim of theorizing a more holistic study of gender.

To be clear, I will be focusing on what Connell denominates as subordinate, complicit and marginalized masculinities (79-81). Note that all deal within masculinity and are in fact testimony to what has been examined to date on the plurality of the gender construct. Subordinate masculinity in relation to hegemonic masculinity can be viewed as the Hegelian

slave to the master. Citing Gramsci, Connell asserts that hegemony inculcates “specific gender relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men” (78). In modern Western society, the most visible case of this relationship is seen in the dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of homosexual or Queer men. As Connell notes, “this is much more than a cultural stigmatization of homosexuality or gay identity” in that “gay men are subordinated to straight men by an array of quite material practices” (Connell 78). The treatment of transvestites in *El lugar sin límites* can attest to this, in addition to the various laws passed against homosexuals and homosexual practices amongst men in Chile during the 19th and 20th centuries, to name a few examples. Even within cultures in which homoerotic actions are permitted, such as Nicaragua, there is still a hierarchy of dominant and subordinate masculinity. The active penetrator is deemed dominant, whereas the *cochón* is viewed as subordinate. Interestingly enough, he is not as subordinate as the *cochón* who only sleeps with and is involved in relationships with other *pasivos*.

On a similar note, complicit masculinity takes as a point of departure that fact that normative definitions of masculinity face problems of adherence. Most men do not meet the normative standard of hegemonic masculinity, for example. Though the majority of men do not belong to hegemonic masculinity, they do in part gain from the hegemony as it subordinates women. Connell theorizes that complicit masculinities are “constructed in ways that realize the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the frontline of troops of patriarchy” (79). Connell further notes, in her sociological study, that by sheer numbers, complicit masculinity is the most pervasive category she observes in Western culture. Complicit masculinities furthermore “often involve extensive compromises with women rather than naked domination or an uncontested display of authority” (79). Men in

this group are complicit with the hegemonic project. In the reading of several novels, I have noticed how male characters at times clamor for the approval of other men in regards to their female partner or their profession. One character, for example, avidly shows a picture of his fiancé to another man, questioning yet declaring at the same time: isn't she beautiful? The other character sees the fiancé as less than pretty and in fact rather frail – a “shell” of what a woman “should” be, he notes (*Nadie me verá llorar* 53). Is this a case of subordinate masculinity in the engaged man? The answer is not that simple, as on the one hand he is not downtrodden by the homosocial mass. From another angle, neither is he a member of the hegemony, because a hegemonic member would be self-aware and self-assertive in his role amongst men. He, is after all, complicit with the hegemony, as to him, the group's valuation of his fiancé is paramount to his being with her. He subscribes to the hegemony's subordination of women to a commoditized currency. This thesis, however, is clearer *a posteriori* as from a textual standpoint, Rivera Garza struggles with an in-progress work of identity positioning. The author reflects a similar process in her later novels and short-story collections; putting emphasis on the importance of discursive strategies as a series of snapshots of an in-progress negotiation of identity.

The final categorization of masculinities according to Connell is that of the marginalized variety. He cites the example of the black athlete in the United States, who is viewed as an exemplar of hegemonic masculinity, yet at the same time black men are treated as subordinates on a generalized level. The relationship between the marginalized and the hegemonic is dictated by the “authorization of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group” (80). The example of Oscar Wilde also proves interesting, as the homosexual Briton was allowed to be homosexual, until his legal battle with a rich aristocrat, the Marquess of

Queensberry. Marginalized masculinities are particularly poignant in heterogenic cultures such as those in Latin America. In Peru, for example, where there is a divide between the European upper class and the indigenous peoples, the existence of *cholo* masculinities is an interesting element of analysis. If they were to dialogue with Connell's categories, would they be marginalized, or simply subordinate? In Nicaragua, Mexico, and Cuba, how do revolutionary fighters interact with and subscribe to an institutional power structure characterized by masculinity that they themselves are attempting to behead? Can they reconcile their Oedipical mission statement while being masculine yet ideally asexualized? (*¿Entiendes?* 170). In Chile, how does masculinity negotiate a national subject position in relation to the decentralizing forces of economic agglomeration? In Trujillo's Dominican Republic, how do masculinities interact and evolve during the rise of the monolithic father-figure? I will examine these questions in my research, focusing on the relationship between masculinities.

In dialoguing with hegemonic masculinity, the construct of nation building in Latin America is necessarily conjured, as Doris Sommer has showed in her seminal *Foundational Fictions*: gender and the body are intrinsic to the construction and imagination of a national space with national boundaries and national subjects. Claire Taylor's 2009 anthology titled *Identity, Nation, Discourse: Latin American Women Writers and Artists* further explores the construct of nation through/with/for identity. As the hegemony is directed towards establishing and perpetuating a power structure, the role of masculinity is paramount to the discussions of power. Men, and more importantly masculinity, shape the Foucaultian notion of power.

Beyond actively defining the project of nation, “the male body claims its centrality as the hero figure, this centrality makes his body an object of desire [...] On the other hand, if virility is prestigious, effeminacy is dishonorable,” thereby placing virility at the center of national aesthetics (Domínguez Ruvalcaba 65). Men are not only central as political bodies; they are also primordial in aesthetic representations and allegorical constructions of the nation. Beyond simply being a body defined anatomically as male, the bodies that come to define national aesthetics are virile. They are strong, powerful, and definitive. They are discursive and visual avatars of hegemonic masculinity. An example as simple as Nazi Germany illustrates how the figure of the well-built, blonde and blue-eyed soldier is the axis mundi of the Third Reich. In Jaime Bayly’s *No se lo digas a nadie* (1994), the protagonist’s father exemplifies the idealized center of the family. Sporting a moustache, a suit and tie, and a large penis, he perpetuates the image and discourse of the hegemonic onto a domestic space. Aside from his functionality, the man ontologically adheres to a specific aesthetic body that George Mosse identifies as being so important to the imagining of the nation.

If men and masculinity are central to the imagining (or inoperativeness, as Jean-Luc Nancy would argue) of the nation, then an epistemological space, aside from structure, is needed to discuss the construction of power. Ángel Rama, and as a follow-up, Jean Franco, discuss the role of the intellectual in public discourse. Rama identifies the city, the “ciudad letrada,” as the place where the male intellectual holds court. Franco, in turn, examines the “fall” of the lettered city in her analysis of Latin America during and after the Cold War. To her, the city has lost its place as the center of discourse, as the public intellectual fades and is diluted by political, economic and social paradigms and events during the 20th century. The final section of Franco’s book, “A Cultural Revolution,” delves into Latin American

narratives during the years of crisis. Numerating several important events such as the civil wars in Central America, she notes that “these were not only significant political changes that removed or weakened ideological opposition to neoliberal reform” and that “they also changed the coordinates of people’s lives, their expectations, their possibilities” (179). This period of change during the second half of the 20th century triggered not only an existential crisis in Latin America with the shifts of government and the anniversary of Columbus “discovering” the New World, but also a renewed spatial interest in the conception of the nation-state. Traditional, 19th-century models of the Center-Periphery were debunked, or at least challenged by indigenous and guerrilla groups such as the Zapatistas in Mexico and the Shining Path in Peru. Literary movements such as *indigenismo*, though peaking in the first quarter of the 20th century, saw a resurgence. It is not accidental that the novels discussed in the following pages utilize the urban landscape as a backdrop or matrix of power and gender construction. They polemicize the traditional referent of the city as an identifying trope, relating social and economic changes of fin-du-siècle Latin America within the diegesis.

These changes at the local and national level coincide with what masculinity studies has called a crisis in masculinity in Latin America and beyond. The idea of crisis is highlighted by the changing social roles of men in a more democratic and meritocratic social system, brought about by what José Olavarría identifies as “las políticas de ajuste económico, la reformulación del papel del Estado, la creciente globalización de la economía y de los intercambios culturales” (“Masculinidades en América Latina” 1). These processes culminate in a demographic shift that leaves the Latin American male in a freefall, away from the traditional position of power at the familial and societal level. It is clear from Olavarría’s comments that the real trigger of the crisis is the economic system of neoliberalism that

spreads throughout the continent like an unchecked cancer in the latter half of the 20th century. The economic and political strategies of liberalized markets and opened borders exasperate a system in flux to the point that traditional gender roles and systems of expression are supplanted and/or glossed over by imported ideas.

More importantly, the effects of neoliberalism on contemporary Latin American societies provide a seismic point in the study of the continent's fiction as writers struggle to capture the magnitude of change in their works. Just as products and identities are imported from the North and the East, there is a conscious attempt to reintegrate or resemanticize the local in the fictions of authors such as Juan Villoro, Maurice Echeverría, Hernán Rivera Letelier and Franz Galich. The cultural work done by fictions of this era are equally concerned with unearthing a Latin American identity as they are with examining the impacts of cultural mixing and hybridity that comes as a result of globalization and freer markets. Looking at the ideas of theorists such as Homi Bhaba, Arjun Appadurai, Nestor García Canclini and Frederic Jameson amongst others, I examine in these pages the influence of cultural homogenization and heterogenization in the construct of a gendered identity in Latin America.

In my analysis, I argue that neoliberalism provides more than a simple backdrop to these contemporary narratives. It is an aesthetic point of reference, as writers attempt to capture the economic nuances of trade and markets, and the importance of capital in the characters and worlds they textually put together. Money, commodification, and marketing become fundamental aesthetic and poetic inspirations in the works of Sergio Ramírez, Santiago Roncagliolo and Pedro Lemebel amongst others as they inscribe economic models into the gendered bodies that populate their texts. The philosophy and principles of free-

market economics, I argue, is fundamental to the reading of gender in contemporary Latin American fiction.

Returning to a temporal reference, the 1990s also include a formation of a “new narrative” in countries such as Mexico, Chile and Peru. These writers are aware of identity as it applies and is formed by transnational factors and symbols, thereby augmenting the importance of gender and sexuality. (Gendered) spaces become important as writers such as Alberto Fuguet and Iván Thays dialogue directly with the city as a place of becoming. The former uses Santiago in his coming-of-age *Tinta roja* (1996) as a referent to the protagonist and to the homosocial mass of journalists who populate the novel. In *Cuerpo naufrago* (2005), Ana Clavel focuses on the notion of individuals and spaces in the process of “doing” gender (Butler, *Gender Trouble*). Her protagonist undergoes an over-night shift from being a woman into a man and must negotiate her new physical form with her learned behavior of being. Similarly, she notices how the bathroom as a space does gender, examining the anthropomorphic characteristics of urinals across the city. Following Judith Butler, Clavel emphasizes the importance of semiotics in the construct of gender and how behavior and space can be central to its perpetuation and iteration.

These writers, however, are equally conscious of the social implications of their fiction as they strive to keep in mind the tangible constructs of identity that anchor their exercises and experiments with representation. Even when playing with the notion of transvestitism and transgenderism in *Sirena Selena vestida de pena*, Mayra Santos-Febres never loses sight of the economic realities of the Dominican Republic in relation to its more open-minded neighbor, in stark opposition to the earlier fictions of Severo Sarduy for example. Similarly, Clavel’s play on masculinity and the body is conscious of the acceptance

of subordinate sexualities in Europe, where the powers of the Latin phallus are not suffocating, as Ilan Stavans would argue. What I am trying to say is that though there is a playful experimentation with gender and masculinity, there is not a complete disassociation with the realities and effects of neoliberalism as these authors attempt a discursive approximation to identity.

With that being said, I title my dissertation “Masculine Textualities: Gender and Neoliberalism in Contemporary Latin American Fiction.” The title is a knowingly in homage to David William Foster’s *Sexual Textualities: Essays on Queer(ing) Latin American Writing* (1997), which is a primordial text in understanding Queer subjectivities in Latin American fiction. Taking as an axiom the plurality of Latin American masculinities that José Olavarría and José Toro-Alfonso among others theorize, I focus on how these different gender expressions interact with each other in an ever-changing matrix of power that is increasingly global in its boundaries. More importantly, I focus on the socio-categorical work done by Connell and its instrumentation in contemporary fictions, but I also keep in mind the writing of the male body, reflecting on Sifuentes-Jáuregui’s assertion that that bodies do matter, keeping in mind the economic, political and cultural affronts extant in an age of homogeneity. To do so, I propose the following chapters to organize my textual analysis of novels written in Latin America in the last twenty years:

- 1) *Market(ing) Masculinities / Materializing Bodies in Latin America’s New Historical Novel*
- 2) *Lyrical Textualities: Music and Musicality in the (De)Construction of Masculinities*

3) *From the Spatial to the Virtual: Genderized and Genderizing Spaces in the Metropolis*

4) *Hard Drives, Cyborgs, and Viagra: New Conceptualizations of Masculinities and the Body*

An initial glance at this abbreviated table of contents illuminates a path of action towards establishing a practice of the study of masculinities in contemporary fiction. Keeping in mind broader topics such as history, popular culture, urban landscapes and the role of globalization in formerly national narratives, I aim to show not only how the male body and masculinities are written, but also to what effect within the text.

In the first chapter, I take into account Sergio Ramírez's *Margarita, está linda la mar* (1998), Cristina Rivera Garza's *Nadie me verá llorar* (1999), Mario Vargas Llosa's *La fiesta del Chivo* (2000), and Pedro Lemebel's *Tengo miedo torero* (2001).¹³ These novels are critically collectivized under the contentious umbrella of the New Historical Novel because they decenter traditional constructs of the past in favor of a paradigm shifting reimagining of historical events, which are invariably linked to questions of the present. The past is not a literary exercise in these novels, but is instead a means to reflect on the status quo. They are, furthermore, works that construct and dethrone the figure of the Latin American caudillo, which I argue to be a central figure in the reconstruction of a contemporary masculine identity. I examine how these novels on the one hand create systems of masculinities that dialogue with one another in a textual process of elimination to establish viable models of gender and subjectivity for the nation. On the other hand, I suggest that the framework and

¹³ Certain texts such as Rivera Garza's *Nadie me verá llorar* will be used in subsequent chapters as my study is not divided into monographic studies of individual novels but is instead meant to be a fluid interchange of ideas and trends between chapters and between novels. The analytic tools and perspectives used in each chapter elucidate unique inquiries into each text.

reality of neoliberalism is acutely significant in the aesthetic representations of the body, as I link different anatomical sites of the male anatomy with specific points of discourse vis-à-vis the politico-economic aftereffects of neoliberal policy.

I follow up this hermeneutic approach of reading neoliberalism and the male body in the second chapter through an analysis of the usage of musical intertexts in contemporary fiction. Just as history is intrinsic to understanding and conceiving an idea of self (and nation), I posit that music establishes a cultural referent for texts that explore gender in relation to the national. Beginning with Lemebel's *Tengo miedo torero*, I put forth a critical methodology for reading music in narrative, borrowing from the cinematic convention of the Original Soundtrack as a semiotic doubling that enriches discourses of gender. Using this approximation to the text, I examine Mayra Montero's *La última noche que pasé contigo* (1992) as an example of how criticism has taken a blinded approach to studying gender in the text by only focusing on feminine and Queer expressions. My analysis differs from these takes as I center myself on the male protagonist and the implications of bolero music on his masculinity. I then trace how music functions as a discursive tool in delineating the spaces of masculinity in Alfredo Bryce Echenique, arguing that the inclusion of musical registers and tones spatializes the narrative, localizing it in the face of globalization. The final project in this chapter concerns the cultural inclusion of non-indigenous popular music in the continent. Taking into account texts by Franz Galich, I look at how a narrative reappropriation of rock music cements an authorial treatise of post-revolutionary Central American masculinity in the wake of US incursions and involvement. Music, I argue, fundamentals Galich's writing of challenging masculinities that survive in the wake of dictatorships and civil wars.

The study of rock music in the region calls to attention the geographical limitations and boundaries of the text, which in the third chapter I confront as I propose a study of masculinities through the motif of space that necessitates a topographic separation of center and periphery. Working with the idea that space is genderizing and genderized, the pages of this chapter study various critical approaches to quantifying and specifying textual gender constructs within the matrix of the city. Using Edward Soja's notions of the city as a text and the Deleuze and Guattari model of rhizomatic spaces, I look at how the city and gender are conceived in the works of Ana Clavel, tracing similar trajectories and articulating lines of flight away from the traditional relationship between patriarchy and the urban center. In this chapter I highlight the problematic of articulating a spatial conception of gender within narrative just as the urban referents of space fragment and dissolve into disparate and archipelagic centers of control, dispelling the traditional centers of the male homosocial in Latin America. The city is less and less the phallic compendium of buildings and geographies that Luis Zapata describes in *El vampiro de la colonia Roma* and is instead substituted by a polycentered and polyvalenced place that decenters the urban subject.

It is after this study of space vis-à-vis masculinity that I culminate my analysis with an examination of contemporary novels that are reactive to the globalized reality of Latin America, and by extension its cities. This fourth chapter addresses the need to unearth and specify an indigenous textual theory and practice of masculinity in contemporary Latin American literature. I examine how ideas such as ecomasculinity and technomasculinity rearticulate the male body at times of crisis and support the establishment of a modern system of gender that is reactive to Connell's theorization of the global hegemonic gender expression of transnational business masculinity. I look at how Santiago Roncagliolo

appropriates the gendered cyborg as a textual affront to the tenets of the hegemonic order, focusing on how non-biological masculinities provide an analytic tool to understanding and potentially confronting the negative effects of a unified controlling subject position. In this final chapter I also include a novel that openly speaks about impotence and the vulnerability of men under patriarchy, calling to attention the recent trend of explicating male sexuality beyond the textual façade of the brothel and the violence exerted onto women and Queer bodies.

The trends and postulates I examine engage in a complex textual theatre that novelists today weave into their fictions, fully conscious of a theoretical understanding of gender that influences their characterizations. In broad terms we often see explicit citations of Butler, Garber, and Kristeva amongst others, whether as epigraphs or footnotes in the works of Clavel and Rivera Garza. In other works, the intertextual references to theory are more subtle; a quick leafing through Galich, Santos-Febres, and Lemebel underscore the importance of performativity and iteration over an essential quality of gender. This cognitive practice of gender illuminates the construction of masculinities, as authors such as Vargas Llosa and Serna are aware of the multiple layers and variations of the gender expression, not limiting their writing of the Latin American male to the hegemonic position. It is through a theoretically conscious text that problematizes Stavan's Latin phallus and the idea of omnipotent masculinity can we evidence some other telling components of contemporary fictions and how they deal with masculinity.

On the one hand there is an ample usage of popular culture intertexts such as cinema and music to lend another tier of discourse to the novel, enticing the reader to go beyond the printed page to construct a multi-faceted and globalized notion of gender. Men in these

fictions are not stereotypes or tropes, but are intricately juxtaposed to the erotics of the *bolero* or *bachata*, and/or combined with the visual aesthetics of Hollywood and comic book masculinities to create a novelistic figure that stretches the borders of the genre. This genre-bending characterization of masculinity is gender-bending in its successful rupture of the virile, homosocial body that Biron and others choose to focus on.

The successful deconstruction of the façade inculcates a consciousness of the body that goes beyond the performative, as there is an acute authorial focus on how the male body is written. I am not, however, talking about simple characterizations that previously united the virile, muscular body with the idea of nation. Instead, what we see in these texts is a fixation on the body as a discursive space with individual and specific loci that capture a broader message that is emblematic of the social contexts described and or replicated in fiction. The penis is no longer the all-powerful “index of masculine value, as well as the passport to glorious erotic adventure” (Stavans 53) but is instead a site of political malleability, where challengers and dictators negotiate their claims of control. Similarly, the testes become a site of economics, as the most reproductive grouping of cells in the human body metaphorize the economic climate of countries run amok by liberalization. Castration is not so much a psychoanalytic or physical threat, but is instead a critique of neoliberal tendencies that make the rich richer at the cost of millions. Last but not least is the anus, which I argue is not only a site of queerness, but also in its inversion, a point of political critique, as the subsequent staining of the figure abjects it from the homosocial and viable components of society.¹⁴ It is easy to fall into the temptation of undertaking a psychoanalytic

¹⁴ The anus has been discussed by Sifuentes-Jáuregui in a study of Manuel Puig’s *El beso de la mujer araña* (1976), but my reading of the corporal site is not done through the optic of psychoanalysis but instead according to a hermeneutic praxis of juxtaposition between the literary body and the national body. Following this argumentation, the anus and other anatomical sites become corporal discursive spaces within the larger dialogic

reading of the texts I study, particularly given my usage of terms such as castration and the focus on the anus. Though I mention terms that are often used and cited in psychoanalysis, I want to make it clear that the focus of my study resides in the textualities of gender and how and why masculinity and the male body is written, and to what effect given the political, economic and social climate of Latin America.

On the other hand, these different anatomical cues and positions of discourse establish what I call a market of masculinities in these fictions, as different positions are played off one another, problematizing the relationship between masculinities. The end-game in this standoff involves a thesis on identity as competing masculinities engage in a winner-takes-all game of power that establishes an authorial position vis-à-vis the nation. We note, for example, how Rivera Garza creates a system of stereotypes and countertypes in *Nadie me verá llorar* that obfuscates the position of the patriarch and the dictator in favor of less structured and virile masculinities, pushing forward an idea of nation that is not intimately linked to the traditional stereotype of the Mexican macho. In a similar vein, but dealing with post-war Central America, Franz Galich juxtaposes competing masculinities in the power-void left by the United States and the failed revolutions, putting forth a less-than-virile example for the region's future.

Last but not least, we see a transnational theatre of masculinities in the fictions of writers such as Carlos Labbé, Hernán Rodríguez Matte, Santiago Roncagliolo and Ana Clavel, where the figure of the hegemonic is an international player that shows no mercy in amassing economic and sexual gains.

of the nation and society, without necessarily involving the individual process of subject formation that psychoanalysis specifies.

The idea of transnationality is poignant, as a cursory glance at these pages reveals no true nationality to the texts studied. I freely interrelate Mexican and Chilean novels, Nicaraguan and Peruvian texts, arguing that these contemporary fictions can no longer be considered within a canon of national literature. Any semblance of a national corpus, I argue, can be put to rest with the advent of the Boom writers and the subsequent mass-marketing of Latin American fiction, culminating with what we see today, and what I jokingly refer to as the Generation Alfaguara, or a group of writers who claim one (at times two) passport(s), live away from their country of origin, and publish through transnational editorials, and in multiple venues such as newspapers, journals, anthologies, and the internet. The writers I work with are reflective of a new age in Latin American fiction that is just as reactive to neoliberal trends as the diegeses and characters that populate their pages. They are equally at ease talking about Tokyo as they are about Lima, marketing themselves as writers that go beyond the lettered cities of yore. Though there is a propensity to go beyond the borders of Latin America in their fiction, I argue, however, that they are immediately conscious of their position as Latin American writers. An example can be seen in the work of Roncagliolo; though *Tan cerca de la vida* (2010) takes place in Tokyo, the author's body of work including his essayistic production is forever conscious of the issues faced in his native Peru and the continent as a whole.

The moniker of Generation Alfaguara is in turn intimately connected to the neoliberal paradigm as the transnational free trade of authors and their writings is reflective of the tenet of opening markets. That being said, however, the writers who operate across borders are paradoxically connected to the delineations of nation, as is the case with Roncagliolo or Vargas Llosa. Though they participate in a global economy of fiction that resists national

denominations, their thoughts and narratives are intimately connected to the sociopolitical conditions at the local level.

Adding to this idea, the Generation of writers I deal with is not a traditional generation in terms of age, gender, or political thought, but is instead held together by the cementing effect of the transnational editorials that market its fiction. Writers such as Galich who do not necessarily publish with Alfaguara or Planeta are still inspired by the markets of distribution and production enabled by the larger houses. They further this idea of the paradox of neoliberalism in recent Latin American fiction, as they are both deterritorialized and reterritorialized by the transnational publishing economy.

The tangible effects of this movement can be seen in the paradox of masculinity that neoliberalism creates in these texts, which I flush out in greater detail through the progression of subsequent chapters. Though neoliberalism on the one hand would seemingly suggest an expression of masculinities, its gendered avatar of transnational business masculinity develops a position of hegemony that textually creates a paradigm of tension with indigenous masculinities. This paradox is fundamental in understanding the need to write masculinities, as I argue that the neoliberal marketing of contemporary fiction engages an authorial fixation on writing marketable masculinities and male bodies. These masculine textualities are products and characteristics of the Generation Alfaguara that writes for a market of readers and critics that openly accept their fictionalizations of issues of race, gender, and identity. Paradoxically, their engagement within a neoliberal market of narrative is poignant in its usage of the male body as a system and trope of cultural and ideological affrontation with the structures of globalization, as they write fictions that are conscious of and reactive to the crises brought about by neoliberal tendencies in Latin America.

Building on the idea of materialized and marketable masculinities, these fictions blur the borders of nation and space to engage in a continental/international affront to the powers of neoliberalism. The focus on materialized masculinity, which is to say not solely an awareness of the economic narrative viability of different male characters but also their material constitution, takes on a high-tech note as writers reconceptualize the male body as a computer or cyborg that engages questions of identity in relation to neoliberalism in virtual and spatial fields of battle.

It is through these different approaches and postulates to the texts at hand that I hope to provide the reader with a caveat into how and why masculinities are written today in Latin America, keeping in mind the social implications of constructing the male body and masculine gender expressions. Without falling into the dichotomy of masculinity versus a specific or generic Other, I keep in mind the plurality of masculinities in my analysis, consciously aware of the many male characters that do not completely subscribe to the tenets of patriarchy and hegemony. By doing so these pages provide a fresh take on the topic, differing from recent critical approaches, with the hope of providing some needed insights to the field of Latin American masculinity studies.

CHAPTER 2

MARKET(ING) MASCULINITIES / MATERIALIZING BODIES IN LATIN AMERICA'S NEW HISTORICAL NOVEL

In a print culture focused on the past, where writers both rising and established have repeatedly followed the strategy of fictionalizing the history of the continent, authors (and critics) have become key instruments in societies' rewriting of societies. This remembering by means of fiction has continued to examine the figure of the dictator in Latin America as an organizational position in political and sexual spheres, as these *caudillos* sit up as discursive targets, which we can understand to be characterized by an omnipotent and hyper-virile masculinity. The importance of history and the examining of the past have contemporary implications in Latin America before, during, and after the 1990s. As María Cristina Pons reckons, the rewriting of the past from the margins and peripheral positions “le da a la novela latinoamericana contemporánea una dimensión reflexiva y un carácter político, y no meramente filosófico” (268). Continuing with this thought, Michael Rössner notes, “el nuevo interés por la novela histórica tiene todavía que ver con la búsqueda de la identidad continental” (170).

This search for identity is paired with what Gareth Williams calls a shift in “the underlying telos of the nation” (23), which “is not a single process of evolution but an accumulation of distinct and uneven processes of transition toward so-called globalization,” which has been brought about by “neoliberal restructuring of the nation-state together with

the emergence of the transnational marketplace as a new and dominant force throughout Latin America” (23). As a foundational work to Williams’s thesis, Nestor García Canclini observes that part of this process revolves around a dissolution of the great narratives that “used to order and hierarchize the periods of the patrimony and the flora of cultured and popular works in which societies and classes recognized each other and consecrated their values” (243-44). This search is not a process within the nation, but is by necessity and consequence of economic and political developments, a transnational questioning. This identity comes into play just as capital markets enjoy a free-floating and deterritorialized era of inversion. As Fredric Jameson observes, “the goal of production no longer lies in any specific market, any specific set of consumers or social and individual needs, but rather in its transformation into that element which by definition has no content or territory” (153). This shift, critics note, has led to both a deterritorialization and dematerialization of economic systems.

These processes are products of what economists and politicians call neoliberalism. Though the term is neither an official designation of policy, nor a rulebook for states to follow, it is characterized by three broad components: the privatization of state-owned enterprises, austerity programs, and the opening of trade barriers (Day 21). As I explicate in my introduction, research regarding gender and sexuality has followed a similar course, with what can be observed as a deterritorialization of theorists and theories. This process, in turn, coincides with a boom in *caudillo* novels.¹⁵

¹⁵ As Carlos Pacheco explains, the transition to democratic governments on the continent has led to a rise in the writing of novels of and about dictators (7). Commenting on the inefficacy of previous critical work done on the dictator narrative, which established congruencies and disjuncts between novels and reality, Pacheco surmises that a new branch of study must undertake an analysis of the narrative in itself and examine how and why dictators are written (42). As Lola Colomina-Garrigós notes, the dictator novels from the 90s evidence a shift from their antecedents in the 80s and 70s. The critic summarizes previous studies done on the genre and establishes three distinct phases. Colomina-Garrigós’s addition to the field lies in her identifying a new phase in

These new narratives are not so much concerned with exploring polyphonic voices of the dictator but are instead geared towards a presentation of a singular alternative history official history championed by regimes. This alternative history is substantiated by and through a retooling of the male body and an exploration of the shift in the underlying telos of masculinity that has been brought about by neoliberal policies.¹⁶

Taking into account Sergio Ramírez's *Margarita, está linda la mar* (1998), Cristina Rivera Garza's *Nadie me verá llorar* (1999), Mario Vargas Llosa's *La fiesta del Chivo* (2000), and Pedro Lemebel's *Tengo miedo torero* (2001), in these pages I focus on the process of writing masculinities and the dictator; the construction of texts that are brought alive by characters inscribed on the surface in black ink, yet which are created and come to life in a more than three-dimensional space. This space, beyond the imaginary and beyond the literary, is polytemporal, polyphonic, and polyveracious. Some critics have chosen to call this space the new historical novel because it decenters traditional constructs of the past in favor of a new configuration of historical events.¹⁷

the genre beginning in the 1990s, where authors leave behind questions of representation and authorial authority in favor of the writing of marginalized and alternative versions of history.

¹⁶ This investigation follows Norma Fuller's assertion that "la identidad de género masculina debe ser entendida dentro de un marco mayor, como la expresión de un orden sociopolítico, fundado en el control de los medios estratégicos de producción y reproducción, como son el parentesco, los sistemas económicos y políticos y del poder simbólico que igualan al orden patriarcal con el 'mundo real'" (57).

¹⁷ Seymour Menton establishes six general characteristics for this genre of novel. First, there is an attempt at probing philosophical ideas, instead of simply mimetically reproducing the past. Second, there is a distortion of history through omissions, exaggerations and anachronisms. Third, there is a fictionalization of historical characters that differs from the writing of purely fictitious characters. Menton mentions the usage of metaliterary devices as authors comment on their own works, exhibiting a consciousness of the process of writing; of putting pen(is) to paper. Fifth, the narratives in this genre are bonded to other texts and discourses as intertexts. Lastly, Menton notes the dialogic, carnivalesque, parodic, and heteroglossic nature of these new novels (*New Historical Novel* 42-5). María Cristina Pons agrees with Menton on most points, but further adds that these new historical novels do not pretend to be neutral in their takes on history: they are subjective and stress the relativity of historiography (256). Furthermore, they reject the supposition of historical truth and the notion of historical progress, and put forward new nomos of representation from the margins of the social. Ramón Luis Acevedo, citing Fernando Aínsa, adds to the critical corpus of the new historical novel, noting that

The choice of novels provides a variety of authors that do and do not subscribe to the phallic voice of patriarchal systems. Ramírez writes from a position of authority within the Sandinista government. Rivera Garza writes with a female, though gender-ambiguous, pen; Vargas Llosa takes the pen at its most phallic, in textual and political terms, though his own defeat and exile from Peru can be read in his version of the *caudillo*; and lastly, Lemebel queers the text by dressing, transgendering, and metaliterizing the pen, providing a glimpse into a counter-voice of the hegemonic that Vargas Llosa explores in his retelling of the death of the *Chivo*. These multiple positions in the writing of history vis-à-vis identity are auto-reflexive of their own tools, as they plant the problematic of the legitimacy of these alternative versions of history (Pons 206) against the traditional dominant masculinity of the South American dictator figure. These authors, importantly, circumscribe the figure of the dictator not through polyphonic confusions or ambiguities, but instead put their own mark on the trope by displacing the figure along lines of gender composition and sexual expression that dialogue directly with Raewyn Connell's theorization of hierarchical and plural masculinities.¹⁸ In her seminal *Masculinities* (1995), the critic would argue that masculinities exist in a matrix of power dominated by a hegemonic variant that permits and perpetuates the subjugation of the feminine subject/gender position by an effective social, political and

the genre promulgates a multiplicity of perspectives and interpretations of the past and a distancing from the mythological hegemony of historiography (4).

¹⁸ The use of Connell's theory in dealing with Latin American literature and culture is documented and prevalent. In an excellent anthology on masculinity in Latin America, *Lo masculino en evidencia: Investigaciones sobre la masculinidad* (2009), José Toro-Alfonso repeatedly cites Connell's ideas in his introductory remarks (14-23). Other critics, such as Oscar Misael Hernández, use Connell's ideas on hegemony and its challengers without specific citation. Hernández uses the terms "modelo de masculinidad hegemónica" and "modelo normativo de masculinidad" (68) in "Estudios sobre masculinidades. Aportes desde América Latina" (2008) without referencing Connell's work in *Masculinities* (1995). Hernández further adds that "los estudiosos/as de los hombres en América Latina ha propuesto superar la noción de masculinidad y suplirla por masculinidades, reconociendo la diversidad de experiencias e identidades de los hombres y los riesgos de una perspectiva esencialista que encierre a todos los hombres en una sola identidad" (68). The critic attempts to summarize the state of masculinity studies in Latin America but fails to identify their underlying model.

economic strategy (77). These authors furthermore engage in a displacement of the dictator that is scripted by and in reaction to the economic and social changes brought about by end-of-the-century politics in Latin America. As José Olavarría notes, “los procesos macrosociales y económicos, así como la disponibilidad de recursos que hacen de nexo entre esas políticas macros y la vida cotidiana” (328) have come to form a crisis in masculinity that these novels react to.

Commoditizing Resources: The Male Body in *Margarita, está linda la mar*.

The possibilities of both spatial and temporal displacements through fiction can be evidenced in Sergio Ramírez’s *Margarita, está linda la mar* (1998). By means of a dual inquiry into the past, Ramírez puts under the microscope the political dictator, Anastasio Somoza García, and the poet and father of *modernismo*, Rubén Darío. The novel juxtaposes the return of Darío to Nicaragua in 1907 after his stay in Europe, with the plot to assassinate the dictator Somoza García in 1956. Ramírez recounts in candid detail both the alcoholism of the poet and the antics of the conspirators as they attempt to organize a foolproof plan to liberate the country.

In a study on contemporary novels of the dictator, Gabriela Polit Dueñas notes that the novel marks a new phase in the *caudillo* genre, as “el carisma, la personalidad y la capacidad personal de encarnar un poder absoluto – elementos que obsesionaron a los escritores en décadas anteriores – dejan de ser la preocupación del autor,” and that “tampoco hay una idealización de la militancia de izquierda” (130). The critic notes that the assassination of Somoza is carried out by individuals, and is captured as a political happening

instead of a product of a common political ideal (130). Polit Dueñas asserts that the novel marks a new phase that shows “un profundo desencanto con el poder y el quehacer de la política” (130). While this can be read in the context of apolitical ennui from the left after the fall of the communist bloc and the failure of popular revolutions such as the Sandinistas, the critic suggests that the novel is conceived from the author’s own political life.

Margarita, está linda la mar can be read as a reflection of the personal on the political vis-à-vis the national, as Ramírez draws parallels between two masculinities that represent the modern Nicaraguan state: the authoritarian politician, and the eloquent man of letters. This dualism in the imagining of the nation is systematically approached in the novel through the temporal displacements between the assassination of Somoza by the poet Rigoberto López Pérez, and the return of Rubén Darío to the continent after a stay in Europe. This connection was cemented by the author at a stop in New York during a promotional tour of the novel. Ramírez affirms that Nicaragua is the only Latin American country whose father-figure is a poet and not a *caudillo*, explicating “por esta razón en Nicaragua todos somos poetas, y aquel que no lo es, tiene que aparentarlo” (Polit Dueñas 135).

In her attempt to trace Ramírez’s published work in tandem with his political life, Polit Dueñas hesitates in performing a close reading of the text and how it writes gender and sexuality, and what ramifications these have on the national imaginary. Though the critic employs a psychoanalytic reading to construct a connective thread between Darío, Rigoberto, and Ramírez, her study does not address the constructions of masculinities within the text. This is not to say that the national imaginary is left aside completely, as she argues that the figure of the poet competes with the dictator to assert a phallic masculinity that identifies the former as a founding father of the nation (150). The physical brain of the poet is juxtaposed

with the penis as representative of power, best evidenced in the final pages of the novel as Quirón buries a jar containing Rigoberto's castrated organs next to the buried jar containing Darío's stolen brain.

Polit Dueñas's reading identifies the physical penis as the metonymic phallus, which correlates with a possession of power. The cultural critic, Ilan Stavans, summarizes the power of the phallus in Latin America, when he explains that both men and women "seemingly revolve around the phallus, an object of intense adoration, the symbol of absolute power and satisfaction. It is the source of the macho's self-assurance and control, sexual and psychological, and the envy of the Hispanic woman" (51). Ramírez's text, however, upon closer inspection displaces the physical phallus from the penis to the testicles, asserting these reproductive factories as the source of masculinity and power. The hegemony is not defined by being able to urinate standing up, as is the desire of La Caimana (304), or by being able to sustain an erection, as we note Darío's impotence (73), but is instead only characterized by possessing the reproductive testes of the male. Following this trend, Vargas Llosa underscores the importance of the testicles in identifying power and masculinity, as it is only through their removal that the subject loses power, as I will explicate later. Ramírez suggests the same, as one of the conspirators asserts that "éste es un país de eunucos. Se engorda más fácil cuando no se tiene testículos" (218). The eunuch, as we all know, lacks testicles and not a penis, thereby emphasizing the importance of these productive sexual organs in the construct of masculinity vis-à-vis subjectivity. I underline the productivity of the testicles as unlike the penis, which serves a coital and urological purpose, the testicles are solely responsible for creating, storing, and disseminating the subject either through the prosthesis of the offspring, or through the act of copious ejaculation that defines virility. The anatomy

of the male, then, suggests a deviation from Piedra's notion of the pen(is), as it is not necessarily the organic phallus that circumscribes masculinity and Power, but is instead a paradigm of economic productivity that leads to a writing of the past with the aim of understanding contemporary Latin American society.¹⁹

By emphasizing the corporeality of the male subject in *Margarita, está linda la mar*, Ramírez highlights the construct of masculinity within the novel as a crossroads in understanding the present through a mythification of the past in his native Nicaragua. As José Ángel Vargas has studied, Ramírez mythifies and then demythifies important historical figures in order to construct “un ícono de la realidad de un país que aparece por una parte pletórico de gloria, y por otra, castigado terriblemente por el poder político” (33). The leftist revolutionary figure of Sandino is described as having “los huevos [...] enormes y sonrosados, como la posturda del ave fénix” (218). The failure of the left in contemporary Nicaraguan politics is addressed in the description of the male's testicles, as they will rise again like the mythical bird. Their productivity is stressed in opposition to the relative impotency of the penis, as the novel is rife with characters with failing organs that curiously belong to the homosocial. To further emphasize the connection between the testes and subjectivity, Somoza on his deathbed orders his troops to castrate Rigoberto. He stresses the cutting of the “huevos” and not the penis.

As Somoza's men round up the plethora of suspects, Rigoberto's testicles in a bottle are described as resembling a fetus (367). This last observation suggests that the nation is birthed from the testicles of the poet, and not his penis. The testes establish a genealogy

¹⁹ Keeping with this idea, Vargas Llosa's Trujillo in *La fiesta del Chivo* similarly berates his challengers by removing their testicles. In opposition to local bishops who sermonize against the regime, Trujillo exclaims: “¡Los maldecidos! ¡Los cuervos! ¡Los eunucos!” (32). By figuratively castrating those opposing his rule, Trujillo affirms that the clergy are “traidor[es] a Dios y a Trujillo y a su condición de varón” (32).

amongst sons and fathers, and only by eliminating them can the son avenge the father. Trujillo's sons in *La fiesta del Chivo* best represent this trope, but it is extant in Ramírez's narrative as well. When one of the conspirators, Cordelio, returns to León, he is asked by a priest if he is going to hang by the testicles the coronel who killed his father (253). The testes represent the connection between the father and the son, as the son is merely a prosthesis produced in the scrotal sac. By focusing on the testes, the text hints at an economic understanding of the nation that is not necessarily connected to the equivalency of the penis to the Lacanian phallus that Polit Dueñas suggests is pervasive in the novel (143-150).

From an etymological standpoint, the testicles originate from the Latin "witness." They witness virility, masculinity, reproduction, and even, as in *Margarita, está linda la mar*, the subjectification and desubjectification of individuals. From an anatomical standpoint, the testes house the development of germ cells into reproductive gametes. It is only by means of the testicles that the male individual can reproduce. Masculinity is, therefore, not solely formed by a psychoanalytic construct, but is instead manufactured in tandem with the idea of economic productivity, highlighting the economic changes in Nicaragua after the handover of the government from Ramírez's party to the rightwing Unión Nacional Opositora. The new government, headed by Violeta Chamorro, institutes economic and social policies that attempt to align the country with neoliberal tendencies in Latin America. Unlike Vargas Llosa's Peru that undergoes a *Fujishock* in the early 90s, Sandinista Nicaragua refused to incorporate the economic policies disseminated from the north. Written during a shift away from leftist economic ideals, and Ramírez's own divorce from national politics, which he will enshrine in *Adiós muchachos. Una memoria de la revolución Sandinista* (1999), *Margarita, está linda la mar* is conscious of the economic facet of national identity.

Ramírez's emphasis on the testes as a source of masculinity, as a source of virility for both the leftist poets and the rightist *caudillos*, reflects the importance of economics in imagining the nation. By writing the castrations of Sandino, Rigoberto, and three other conspirators (373), the author reconciles the lack of economic growth in Nicaragua during the revolution, and its inability to undergo an urban boom. This is reflected in the descriptions of the capital Managua in contemporary Nicaraguan fiction. It is not the urbanized, cosmopolitan expression of McOndo as are other cities such as Santiago and Lima, but is instead deathly and lost, emphasizing Seymour Menton's notion of a poetics of disillusionment in contemporary Central American fiction, which I will elucidate in my study of Franz Galich's novels.

As the testicles are paramount to the connection between masculinity and the national, the printing press is similarly connected to the community's imagining of the nation (Anderson 6). This comes as no surprise, as Ramírez continues publishing fiction during his tenure as vice president, and during his charge of the National Council of Education from 1979 to 1984. The press in *Margarita, está linda la mar*, however, is the institution under Somoza that Ramírez undermines by writing gender and sexuality onto its body. I say undermines because he does not adhere to Connell's ideas of the hegemonic and how it establishes itself through discourses of science, objectivism, and the official reporting of history.

Ramírez notes the importance of science as a discourse of modernity and progress in the building of the nation. His interpretation of the topic is centered on Godofredo, the cuckolded husband of Darío's lover, who functions as the (de)mythified man of science in *Margarita, está linda la mar*. Nicaragua during this time, however, does not enjoy a precise

and overbearing figure such as Somoza in the latter half of the 20th century, and must instead contend with “el inventor paralítico que se había caído del caballo el día de San Juan Bautista” (96). Science is further castrated from the discussion of the national through the figure of Dr. Baltasar Cisne, a Darío fanatic and supporter of Somoza’s regime. On the way to León, the Dr. shares a beer with some of the conspirators, who know him from La Caimana’s brothel. Jorge Negrete addresses Cisne by asking him to recount how “le pidió a *La Caimana* que le consiguiera la mejor de las muñecas” (108). Cisne ignores the comment, only to have Negrete follow with “cuénteles porqué ninguna quería con usted, y cuénteles lo que al fin le dijo aquella morenota rolliza, la *Flor de un día*: <<¡Ay, no, yo con usted no, doctor! No voy a saber si me está cogiendo, o lo estoy pariendo>>” (108). The man of science in Ramírez’s early 20th century Nicaragua is definitely not the mobilizing, domineering voice that is associated with Connell’s hegemonic masculinity in the structuralizing of society.

Margarita, está linda la mar does, however, include a reference to Connell’s last strategy of control. The official reporting of history is carried out by the printing press, which in the novel serves as a meeting point for the conspirators. We note how the building is guarded by an “empleada, calzada con zapatos de varón” (144). This is the first step in Ramírez’s undermining of hegemonic power. The transvestite sweeper is hesitant to allow the preacher Cordelio to enter, as printed on a tattered sign on the door is a warning: “AQUÍ SOMOS CATÓLICOS Y NO ADMITIMOS PROPAGANDA PROTESTANTE” (146). Ramírez is careful to connect the press to established hierarchies of the hegemony such as religion, yet at the same time sidesteps gender norms to subvert the power of the press under Somoza. This strategy of connecting the press to authority, and then sublating this very

authority by means of gender is best evidenced in the figure of Rafael Parrales and his journal *El Cronista*.

The journal is housed in a city block with a funeral parlor and a professional school of commerce, both of which represent legislative bodies of the state, with the former legalizing death and the latter education. The funerary alludes to the military and traditional branches of virile masculinity, with its emphasis on the shield. Within the journal, the printing press is operated by human labor. Ramírez asserts the connection between *El Cronista* and the government when he notes that the press is physically run by Kid Dinamita, a disgraced boxer who is condemned to jail after stabbing his wife. He is loaned to Rafa during the working week “como reo de confianza, para que haga girar la pesada rueda de la prensa manual” (216). Dinamita subscribes to the virile and violent masculinity that precedes the agenda of science and knowledge that dominates movements towards modernity from the middle of the 20th century. He represents that violent and hyper sexualized masculinity that Polit Dueñas connects to the dictator figure. More importantly, he reflects the commoditization of masculinity that I allude to in the emphasis on the testicles and not the penis in definitions of subjectivity in the novel.

Returning to the construction of hegemonic masculinity during Somoza’s regime in reference to the importance of the printing press, the owner of the journal proves interesting, as he conforms to the thesis of connecting to and then subverting the institution. Ramírez provides a genealogy of ownership of *El Cronista*, ending with Rafael Parrales who buys the journal with a loan from his godmother doña Casimira who is the mother in law of Somoza. He is further linked to the regime when one of the conspirators notes that using the journal as a hideout for Cordelio would be “como si lo llevaras directo a manos del coronel Melisandro

Maravilla” (288). The apotheosis of this association occurs at the banquet, moments before Rigoberto assaults Somoza, when Parrales sits at the dictator’s table and tells him that Rigoberto would be an ideal candidate to work in the national press (propaganda machine) in Managua. His penetration into the hegemonic is formalized when he flirtatiously invites Somoza’s wife to dance (339).

It is in this act of courtship that we are reminded that though owning the press and belonging to the intimate table of the dictator, Parrales is a homosexual. There is some confusion in the novel regarding his sexuality, as he is both described as a *cochón* (302), who in Nicaraguan homosexual circles is solely penetrated, and as a penetrator. As the conspirators approach *El Cronista*, Rafael is described as a “loco peligrosísimo” (208) who sensually fixates on Norberto. When the other conspirators mock him for this attention, Norberto staunchly denies any connection with Parrales. It is only when one of the conspirators affirms that “tuyo es tu culo. En eso, yo no me meto” (209) does Norberto laugh, suggesting that he has been penetrated by the journalist. Herein lies the subversion of the press, as Parrales is not only a queered figure, but is also sexually ambiguous within his practice of homosexuality. He is not the willing penetratee that Roger Lancaster conceptualizes in his sociological study of homosexuality in Nicaragua, but is instead a new archetype that does not conform to traditional tenets of sexual expression. I will further analyze this problematic in the queer and virile masculinities written in Franz Galich’s novels. Parrales ritualizes a practice of seduction that Reinaldo Arenas similarly enjoys in *Antes que anochezca* (1992) as he is a “pescador” who catches a “pez” (205). His bait is “un billete de mil córdobas con el perfil en óvalo de Somoza” (205). The inclusion of this caveat has a dual significance in the text. On the one hand, sexuality and masculinity can be bought

and sold, as it is alluded that the otherwise heterosexual Norberto fell trap to the “pescador.” This builds on my reading of the importance of the testicles and not the penis in constructing masculinity, as masculinity is for all sakes and purposes a commodity that subscribes to the laws and pressures of the market. On the other hand, the inclusion of Somoza’s profile in the scheme hints at the dictator’s economic policy, which was shrouded by under the table dealings, oligarchic structures, and hierarchies built around nepotism and cronyism. This system impoverished the populace and augmented the divide between rich and poor in Nicaragua. By following the metaphoric banknote printed with the *caudillo*’s portrait, Ramírez affirms that the nation as the unassuming and anonymous “pez” assumed the role of the sodomite. The nation under a rightwing, neoliberal government effectively becomes a *cochón*. The *cochón*, as one of Somoza’s sergeants asserts, is an “invertido” (302).

The verb *invertir* conjures a dual schema of characterization. On one level, the verb indicates a changing or substituting of the order, position or sense of a thing. The *cochón* would, therefore, be inverting heteronormative sexual practices and expressions. The verb, however, also has an economic definition, wherein it signifies the productive application of capital. Can the sodomite be thought of in terms of economics, as a product of *caudillo* and neoliberal economics? I will touch on this in Chapter 4 when I analyze in closer detail Galich’s two novels on post-Sandinista Nicaragua. Returning to the new historical novel, however, and Menton’s criteria, the first entry of the verb *invertir* is a central axis in the genre. But does the second entry of the verb reverberate in these rewritings of history? Referencing traditional, heterosexual patriarchal societies, Gayle Rubin theorizes that the system only functions by means of a traffic in the corporal bodies of women within the masculine homosocial. From my analysis of *Margarita, está linda la mar*, it is evident that a

trafficking in bodies is taking place. But is it the movement of women as possessions between men that defines Ramírez's reflection on the past through the optic of the present?

Trafficking in Masculinities in *Nadie me verá llorar*.

Cristina Rivera Garza's *Nadie me verá llorar* underscores the substitutive process of inversion as it recounts the life of a woman in the last years of Porfirio Díaz's regime and the Mexican Revolution. The novel is constructed around an oppositional gender voice to the main narrative as the photographer Joaquín Buitrago provides Rivera Garza with a framing device to the narrative of and about Matilda Burgos, a provincial girl from Papantla, Veracruz, who leaves the house of her uncle in Mexico City after a brief involvement with revolutionary fighters. Matilda becomes a prostitute, and then later a patient in a psychiatric ward where she is classified as being mentally ill after she refuses the advances of a group of soldiers. The critical work to date on the novel has focused on the feminine/feminist aspects of this transgressive woman who turns her back on hegemonic masculinity's strategies of societal control.

Upon her arrival in Mexico City, we note how Matilda's uncle Marcos Burgos functions as the axis around which society revolves. In a microeconomic sense, he structures and dictates the machinations of his household by means of a set of rules designed to inbreed hygiene and order. Mexican society at the beginning of the 20th century and during the last years of the Porfiriato was underscored by the project of modernization. As Castro Ricalde has shown, society was structured around institutions of law, hygiene, and order that permitted a national project of modernity (viii). The historicized dictator, including the

domestic dictator Marcos, seems to inscribe the importance of hygiene onto his own body. Marcos Burgos is preoccupied with cleanliness and being well-dressed.²⁰ Writing hygiene onto the body of these patriarchal men becomes a metonymic inscription of writing codes of hygiene and cleanliness onto society. As Ricardo Melgar Bao notes, hygiene, as a sociopolitical discourse, in Latin American projects of modernity is identified with the importance of a sanitized populace in constructing the nation (31) – a nation that is, by virtue of the power structures of government, phallogocentric.

Keeping this in mind, the hyper masculinity of the political dictator in *Nadie me verá llorar* within this matrix is an afterthought, as Rivera Garza reorients the axis of power to the domestic dictator in the form of Marcos Burgos, reflecting her own preoccupation with the role of women in Mexican society. The author acknowledges this point, stating in an interview that the original title of the novel was to be *Yo, Matilda Burgos* (Macías Rodríguez), though it was discarded as it was too similar to testimonio-style narrative produced by female authors in the 20th century. *Nadie me verá llorar* illustrates a narrative “de desarraigo tanto vivencial como intelectual, de buscados puntos-de-fuga, de estar-en-el-fuera-de-lugar, de una gozosa (aunque también sufrida y a veces violenta y violentada) autonomía, que me gusta mucho, con la que me identifiqué profundamente y a la cual no voy a dejar escapar” (Macías Rodríguez). Rivera Garza’s own description of her work becomes tangible in the presence of history and the dictator within the diegesis. In keeping with this thought, before examining the role and positioning of hegemonic masculinity in Rivera Garza’s Porfiriato, the role of women must first be unearthed.

²⁰ In a similar stroke, the dictator Trujillo in *La fiesta del Chivo* never perspires in public and Ramírez’s Somoza uses copious amounts of Eau de Vetiver throughout the novel.

Women in Rivera Garza's novel gain a level of subjectivity above their simplistic, monetary value that Gayle Rubin suggests.²¹ They instead become cogs in a system, where “una buena ciudadana, una muchacha decente, una mujer de buenas costumbres tiene que empezar por aprender los nombres exactos de las horas” (119). Marcos's wife works like an automaton around his schedule and preferences, which are underlined by the necessities of personal hygiene. The lack of hygiene serves as a first physical step in the desubjectification of men, which is followed by psychological or physical castration as a final blow.²²

These acts are in essence transgressions of the established matrix of masculine power within the social context of the diegesis. Rivera Garza, furthermore, discursively negotiates transgression and masculinity, vis-à-vis history, through the feminine character of Matilda who posits an un-*Santalike* prostitute. I refer here, of course, to Federico Gamboa's *Santa* (1903), the novel that is a recurrent intertext in *Nadie me verá llorar*. Though Rivera Garza gives a voice to this silenced faction of Mexican society that Gamboa synthesizes into the submissive and sexualized Santa, the novel also explores the multifaceted role of masculinities in a historicized Mexican society.

If the domestic dictator, Marcos Burgos, is akin to George Mosse's idea of the masculine stereotype (6), then the other men in the text such as Joaquín Buitrago, Eduardo Oligochea, Paul Kamack and Arturo Loayza function as countertypes. For a stereotype to

²¹ Women are, however, characterized as simple goods of trade between men in Vargas Llosa's *La fiesta del Chivo*.

²² Trujillo's impotence in *La fiesta del Chivo* is predicated by the spreading stains of urine running down his leg. Similarly, prior to the castration of Román Fernández, the dictator stains him with the putrefying excrement that spews from a burst sanitation pipe around a military camp. The stain, the deviance from cleanliness, is ontological to the non-masculine. In Pedro Lemebel's *Tengo miedo torero*, the voice of the dictator (Pinochet) similarly mourns the poor masses that come to the valley to wet their backsides in the river (48). In Ramírez's *Margarita, está linda la mar*, the conspirators plotting the assassination of Somoza are systematically stained by ink and grease (148). The stain, or “mancha” that Melgar Bao observes, runs contrary to eugenic discourses of modernity. The stained individual becomes an unwanted member of society, or within the paradigm of patriarchy, an effeminate and castrated subject.

come into existence, Mosse argues that an efficient system and hierarchy of countertypes must first be constructed. He notes that the masculine stereotype is to be strengthened by “the existence of a negative stereotype of men who not only failed to measure up to the ideal but who in body and soul were its foil, projecting the exact opposite of true masculinity” (6). The character of Marcos Burgos, Matilda’s uncle, serves as the most stereotypic example in Rivera Garza’s examination of masculinity in the text. He is not the virile, sensual body that Domínguez Ruvalcaba notes, but instead belongs to the new hegemony of knowledge and science that subverts the traditional emphasis on physical power. This new ethos of science, and by default its discursive elements, defines the strategies of modernization. Jorge Ruffinelli notes how “los ‘científicos’ formaban parte de los niveles sociales dominantes” (35). Marcos demonstrates an avid interest in the project of modernization when he notes that “si el régimen en verdad creía en el orden y el progreso, [...] los médicos, y no los políticos, tendrían que dictar estrictas legislaciones urbanas” (126). Roberts-Camps, however, using Julia Kristeva’s terminology, identifies Marcos Burgos as a character who is also abjected from the nation due to his provincial heritage (84). I disagree with her evaluation, as we observe how “Marcos desarrolló una fe ciega en las posibilidades abiertas del futuro, en el progreso de la nación” (124). He becomes a symbol of knowledge-based hegemony. His belonging is tied to an unabashed imitation of the stereotype, as “no sólo imitó [la] manera de vestir [de sus maestros] sino que además pudo desarrollar la misma ingravidez de movimientos y la mesura pacífica de sus miradas,” and that “todos olvidaron que era de Veracruz y, de la misma manera, todos estuvieron de acuerdo en su brillante futuro” (125). Marcos, though coming from the province, evidences the possibility of simulation and performance of Masculinity as a successful strategy of becoming the stereotype.

The morphine-addicted, failed photographer Buitrago in particular plays the role of the countertype to the scientific and modernizing stereotype. As a “sissy” in the economy of masculinity, he is both subjugated and ontological to the hegemonic (Piedra 383). José Piedra defines “the sissy” in gender relations amongst men as being a subject that is “‘ultra’ feminine, feminized, and/or [whose] effeminate behavior [is] perceived as passive, weak, and forever ready to suit the bully’s whims” (370). Other characters such as the psychiatrist Eduardo Oligochea who treats Matilda, and Arturo Loayza, who is Buitrago’s childhood friend and now lawyer, pose middle grounds between the stereotype and the subordinate masculinities that populate Rivera Garza’s novel. They slip into the crevices or grey spaces between the gender/subject positions of dominant and subordinate.

As an example, Eduardo Oligochea is a man who places an utmost importance on the precision of science as “tanto en su escritorio como dentro de su cabeza los objetos y las palabras se mueven con ritmos metódicos, siguiendo patrones rigurosos pero nimbados de armonía” (103). These “patrones” suggest a connection to Marcos Burgos’s rules of hygiene and the imitation of his own “patrones”: the professors on which he modeled his behavior and countenance on. Rivera Garza effectively contrasts his fixation on language and certainty with the self-narrative of a patient, Roma Camarena. When asked by Oligochea about her parents, she responds “¿mis padres? Las putas lo vuelven loco” (101). She sidesteps his questioning and instead focuses on the philandering husband that she blames for her condition. Eduardo’s medical evaluation of the subject is of interest, as he notes that: “su delirio era polimorfo, destacándose con más claridad la idea de que el marido la había hecho guaje, y que ella, a su vez, lo había engañado para vengarse de él. Tenía un delirio de ideas por asociación” (101). His evaluation concludes with “le quedó sólo el resentimiento hacia su

esposo al que no le perdona las faltas que según ella le ha cometido. *Locura intermitente. Violento celoso. Acceso maniaco. Libre e indigente*” (102). We notice a precision of language that contrasts sharply with Camarena’s self-styled narrative. Furthermore, an implicit doubt is placed on the woman, who by being interned in La Castañeda, is now an unwanted societal element. Oligochea’s official report places doubt on her husband’s actions but strongly asserts Camarena’s transgressive actions of adultery that break the code of order and hygiene. The novel further notes that “entre las palabras y el olor, él busca uniformidad, exactitud. Un método científico. Una manera de explicar la vida del cerebro y la conducta de los hombres basada en experimentos” (39). The novel, borrowing from Rivera Garza’s doctoral dissertation *The Masters of the Streets: Bodies, Power and Modernity in Mexico, 1867-1930*, specifies how in 1917, a small group of doctors gets together to (re)configure “el lenguaje de la psiquiatría” (104), so much so that now “la verborrea incomprendible de los mayores de cincuenta años se convierte en demencia senil” (103).

Science becomes a hegemonic textual strategy defined by its economy of verbiage and its descriptive accuracy, which in turn permits a discursive definition, separation, and purification of the nation. Scientific discourse as a hegemonic text is contrasted with the voice of poetry and poets. Eduardo affirms that though some “psiquiatras todavía son poetas, hombres subyugados por las profundidades ignotas del alma” (39), he is instead what he wants to be, “un profesional sin poesía” (39). Marcos Burgos adds his two cents when he affirms that “los bohemios, como denominaban a los poetas, eran tan peligrosos como los mismos pobres” (129); who were, and still are a societal element defined by the “stain” that Melgar Bao affirms is contrary to the construct of a nation.

This fixation on the word, both spoken and written, is specified in Oligochea's most worrying dream, which is centered on "palabras equívocas" (105). These "wrong words" are evoked by a relationship the doctor had in his youth with a young girl from provincial Jalapa, Mercedes Flores, who after making love for the first time, tells him "I'm your man [...] You're my woman, Eduardo" (105). Language becomes not only important in the discourse of nation, as seen in Marcos Burgos, but is also primary in the construct of the self, a theme seen in *La cresta de Ilión*.

Oligochea, furthermore, is completely dependent on the approval of the homosocial mass in his self-justification as a mature member of society. Subjectivity is essential, and he makes it most clear when he shows Joaquín a photo of his fiancée, who notes "la necesidad de aprobación en los ojos de su confidente" (52). Eduardo does not gain subjectivity by means of the scrotal sack like Vargas Llosa's males, but instead through homosocial approbation, reminiscent of Eve Sedgwick's postulates of homoerotic desire. Sedgwick describes the homosocial as "a word occasionally used in history and the social sciences, where it describes social bonds between persons of the same sex; it is a neologism, obviously formed by analogy with 'homosexual,' and just as obviously meant to be distinguished from 'homosexual'" (1). The reference to homosexuality corroborates an application of the countertype/stereotype model, as the term homosociality "is applied to such activities as 'male bonding,' which may, as in our society, be characterized by intense homophobia, fear and hatred of homosexuality" (1). Continuing with Eduardo, his moment of castration, though political and not physical, occurs when Buitrago sees that "de repente éste parece un perro amaestrado o un mozalbete de apenas diecisiete años, ambos con el hocico abierto como si aguardaran palmas en el lomo o regalos" (52). The climax, which is to say the

metaphorical flaccid penis or swallowing of the testicles, occurs when Buitrago chastises Eduardo: “Vamos Eduardo. No te hagas pendejo. Esto ni siquiera es una mujer. Cecilia es tu boleto para entrar por la puerta grande a la colonia Roma” (53). Rivera Garza dephallicizes Oligochea through a sustained inquiry into relations of power amongst men, and not through the manipulation of the male organ, that the author of *Margarita, está linda la mar* is guilty of.

Rivera Garza foments a discursive space that dialogues not only with historic ideas of Mexican masculinity (Mckee xxviii), but also with the writing of gender into a text that in its historicity, implicates contemporary positions and constructs of identity. If Matilda Burgos is to be read as an alternative identity position for the contemporary Mexican woman, then how do the men like Joaquín Buitrago function in the dialectic between text and identity?

Rivera Garza creates a market dynamic of competing yet variant masculinities that uphold a singular structure of power that is Connell’s hegemonic masculinity. Eduardo Oligochea, as an example, does not conform to the definitions and expectations of the homosocial, and belongs instead to what Connell terms “complicit” masculinity. She theorizes that complicit masculinities are “constructed in ways that realize the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the frontline of troops of patriarchy” (79). Connell further notes that by sheer numbers, complicit masculinity is the most pervasive category she observes in Western culture. Complicit masculinities furthermore “often involve extensive compromises with women rather than naked domination or an uncontested display of authority” (79). Men in this group are complicit with the hegemonic project.

They are neither Mosse’s stereotype nor countertype, instead existing in a crevice between the two terms. They sustain hegemonic masculinity through their pervasive and

unrelenting adulation of the political phallus. Rivera Garza does not displace the focus of power from the corporal penis to the testicles, but instead creates a market of masculinities where men are commoditized as types. Oligochea for example, belongs to the stereotype in his stubborn yet consistent adherence to the language of science, but falls from hegemony, as he cannot gain the approbation of a drug-addict photographer who for the first time, “le habla de tú” (53). Eduardo’s slippage, both into the crack between stereotype and countertype, and into actions that run against law and order, is punctuated by an encounter with a young drug-addict from a seemingly wealthy background who asserts that “todo el mundo rompe las reglas, doctor, todo el mundo” (97). The speaker belongs to a demographic who:

Son, por lo regular, aunque no todos, oficinistas, farmacéuticos, estudiantes de leyes o de medicina. Gente como él. Gente a la que puede ver a los ojos sin conmiseración. Hombres jóvenes de traje, corbata y sombrero de fieltro que llegan de la mano de sus padres o sus tutores, con el afán de verlos curados del vicio y el cinismo de las drogas. (98)

The youth (like Eduardo) who belongs to the hegemonic class, asserts that though his father (like Marcos Burgos) “cree que el país está destinado a encontrar su propia grandeza” (99), he does not share the same hope. This disenchantment with the national rhetoric of modernity and progress is made complicit with a usage of drugs as a means of escape, an approach that is in stark discord with the strategies of the hegemonic dictator Marcos Burgos . The theme of drugs and the subsequent escape from reality brings to the fore Joaquín Buitrago who is the opening narrative element in *Nadie me verá llorar*.

Buitrago at first has the potential of being the stereotype of masculinity as he not only comes from a wealthy family but is also blessed with good looks and education. In his youth, he potentially could have subscribed to both discursive and aesthetic hegemonies of masculinity. Unlike the drugged youth who confronts Eduardo, Joaquín shows no semblance

of belonging to the modernization project. He shows first signs of breaking with this rhetoric when, in an almost vampiric state, he observes “la luz de su propia figura en los aparadores. Lo hace con duda, volviendo ligeramente el rostro a la derecha y luego a la izquierda, como si temiera que algún transeúnte se burlara de él” (24). As an insomniac, Buitrago is also located outside the culture of work and order specified by Marcos Burgos, as he goes to bed just as “los demás despiertan y la ciudad vuelve a juntarse en su nudo de ruido y velocidad” (14). He shows a precocious fixation on subjectivity like Eduardo, but makes no attempts at reconciliation with the homosocial as he lacks his own Cecilia. Joaquín also evidences a break from the linguistic economy of Oligochea; when the latter questions the former who “rara vez tiene respuestas inmediatas o lineales” (33). Furthermore, “hablar, para Joaquín, es desvariar. Confunde el tiempo de los verbos y los pronombres” (33). The fall from both norms of work and language place Joaquín in what Connell calls the category of subordinate masculinities, which unlike the complicit varieties, are countertypes to the stereotype.

Rivera Garza places Buitrago in a central dialectic that frames the novel, marked by the question of “¿cómo se convierte uno en fotógrafo de putas?” (19, 186). His profession, at first glance, adheres to the hegemonic norms of hygiene and order as photographers were hired by state institutions to photograph and document prostitutes and patients in mental institutions (Irwin 75). Buitrago, however, comes to focus on elements of the photographed subject that go beyond simple scientific documentation. He notes how the prostitutes he photographs “hacía[n] esfuerzos entre risibles y sinceros por imitar las poses de languidez o de provocación de las divas” (19). Though the man controls the gaze of the photographic apparatus, the subject in Buitrago’s photography is the woman, or object of the photograph, as women exist as independent subjects in the photo. They are conscious of their own

movements and are given free rein in the composition of the photo. They become subjects when the lens becomes a mirroring surface onto which they model the poses and expressions of vedettes and Hollywood actresses. Buitrago becomes nothing more than a body holding a camera; a finger pressing a shutter. Joaquín is therefore deobjectified, and becomes a portal by which the objects of his photography gain their own subjectivity, seeing the lens as a mirror. He aims to capture “el lugar en que una mujer se acepta a sí misma. Allí la seducción no iba hacia afuera ni era unidireccional; allí, en un gesto indivisible y único, la seducción no era un anzuelo sino un mapa” (19). This space, or perhaps surface, where the woman comes to terms with herself, recounts a Lacanian mirror stage where the subject engages in a Hegelian dialectic with the image in the mirror (lens). Joaquín is further convinced that it is possible to reach that place (19). Psychoanalysis holds the opposite to be true, which in turn leads to the futility of Buitrago’s aesthetic project.

This futility is further evidenced in his interactions with other members of the photographic homosocial. One member comments upon seeing Joaquín’s portfolio, “¿esto es lo que fuiste a aprender en Roma, flaco? Esto es un trabajo muy menor” (23). Aside from belittling his art, the speaker also aesthetically countertypes Buitrago, separating him from the virile and sensual male body that Domínguez Ruvalcaba notes in early 20th-century Mexican visual and textual culture. Even amongst the complicit group of photographers, Buitrago embodies a subordinate group, a countertype that serves as the antithesis of what man (or the photographer) should be within the project of modernity.

Aside from not belonging to the homosocial mass, or from participating in the linguistic economy of modernity and science, Buitrago shares with the reader a fatalistic outlook on the future that cannot be reconciled with Marcos Burgos’s ideas of progress. He is

marked by Alberta, whom he met while studying in Rome. He breaks off a relationship with her, but she mails him pornographic snapshots of herself in the arms of other men, after being declared dead. He succinctly divides his life: “una mujer: Alberta. Roma, que había partido su vida en dos: antes y después. Antes Alberta y después la morfina” (16). National discourses of the future do not fit into this paradigm of failure and obsession, but drugs as an escape, figure heavily into his existence.

Instead of populating the novel with a random spattering of men, Rivera Garza establishes a system of comparisons among the male characters in *Nadie me verá llorar* by means of ontological equivalencies that later fragment into the multiplicities of men in society. Buitrago is tied to Oligochea by working within the world of science, but differs from the latter as his narrative voice is far-removed from the structural and lexical precision of the psychiatrist. Oligochea is similarly connected to Marcos Burgos as both subscribe to the linguistic economy of science. Buitrago is similarly associated with the lawyer Arturo Loayza, who shared a common childhood.

Both characters were born into wealth and educated; their parents were also friends. Joaquín demonstrates a calculated adherence to Loayza’s belonging to the hegemonic discourse, modifying his speech to mimic the hegemonic voice of order (as the newly arrived Marcos Burgos once did in copying his “patrones”) as “cada una de sus frases contiene al final un punto y aparte. Un Nuevo párrafo” (217). Buitrago dialogues with Arturo to secure the patrimony left by his parents. While Arturo by day is the stereotype of the wealthy, progressive, and articulate Mexican man, he shows a slippage into the crevice between stereotype and countertype in the company of Buitrago. The text observes how “los dos se observan con una delicadeza casi femenina, un cuidado que sólo están acostumbrados a

practicar frente a las mujeres” (235). Loayza, in Buitrago’s house, seems to break with one of the tenets of the homosocial, which is to say the lack of expressing homoerotic. This feminization of the lawyer stresses Rivera Garza’s project of questioning the male stereotype, without necessarily mounting an oppositional countertype: Arturo, much like Eduardo, is never discredited from the discursive and professional spaces of science and law.

Connell’s strategies of hegemonic masculinity include in addition to science and law, both sources of objectivism, the role of the press in society. Rivera Garza displaces print culture to the realm of the individual, just as she does with the creation of a market of individual masculinities that compete and collaborate in the construct of the nation. The character of Matilda Burgos is juxtaposed intertextually with the protagonist of *Santa*, as Matilda reads the novel while working amongst other prostitutes in a brothel. She comments “sólo las muy atolondradas o francamente estúpidas, como Santa, acudían al registro y pasaban por la humillación del examen médico” (162). Matilda carves out a textual niche characterized by a transgression of this literary norm that does subscribe to patriarchal norms and regulations of economy and hygiene. Here we note again the importance placed on cleanliness. But the literary model in *Nadie me verá llorar*, much like the model of masculinity, is not without countervoices. Ligia, Matilda’s theatrical and romantic partner, follows a Quijotesque reading of *Santa* when she imitates the literary character and finds herself a man who rescues her from the brothel. She comments that “es el sueño de toda puta, ¿no? Tú deberías hacer lo mismo. La Modernidad no va a durar toda la vida” (185). By implication, *La Modernidad* allows for independent women and the transgression of social constructs and regulations.

Gender roles and models within the literary texts interlaced with *Nadie me verá llorar* are not only geared towards the female characters. Men also have a literary tradition of behavior, of performance shall we say, that designates their position within, in complicity with, or outside patriarchy. In the novels Matilda reads in the house of her uncle's friend Columba, she notes that "los héroes son siempre hombres [que] [á]giles de mente y cuerpo, logran vencer todos los obstáculos para rescatar a las heroínas en el último momento" (140). If men are to be men, like the young revolutionary Cástulo Rodríguez who initiates her into the world outside the sanitized confines of her uncle's house, then they too must in some way or fashion dialogue with these literary models. Following with the effects of the literary in both the discursive space and outside it, Jorge Ruffinelli notes an acute sensibility for language and the epistemological paradigms it opens up in Rivera Garza's textual production. He surmises that "Rivera Garza estudia en su ensayo los lenguajes, y en su novela *crea* un lenguaje a la vez que *explora* (a través de sus personajes) el *lenguaje*. Estamos, al fin, en el centro de lo literario" (38). The literary and language provide a model and a playground for identity experimentation and expression, whether it be following the hegemonic system or transgressing it.

The Mexican writer displaces the dictator from the national to the domestic, and emphasizes the role of the hegemonic on more intimate and interpersonal relationships. The exploration of masculinity is structured around countertypes vis-à-vis the domineering stereotype of the domestic dictator, Marcos Burgos. Unlike the Nicaraguan Poet/Politician, she does not hold political aspirations but instead dedicates her work on the one hand to an exploration of legal codes of sanity and the institutionalization of the mentally infirm, and on the other to the role of writing and literature in contemporary Mexican society. In latter

works such as *La cresta de Ilión* (2002) and *Ningún reloj cuenta esto* (2002), Rivera Garza liberates her texts from the historicized discursive space, and instead focuses on the usage of language to explore the phallic positionings of patriarchy. Patriarchy is not embodied in the figure of the dictator, but in something else. In *La cresta de Ilión* for example, the anxiety experienced by the unnamed protagonist is a gender-anxiety that is rooted in something other than the social constructs of history and institutions.

In comparison to Sergio Ramírez's work, *Nadie me verá llorar* is divorced from contemporary Mexican politics, but inculcates an economy of masculinities reminiscent of free market Mexico with its evident positioning of stereotype versus countertypes, and the reconciliation of complicit masculinities with the hegemonic domestic *caudillo*. Returning for a moment to Rubin's thesis on the commodification of women, it is evident from a structural reading of *Nadie me verá llorar* and *Margarita, está linda la mar* that these writers commodify male bodies within an economy of masculinity. The Mexican author alludes to the second entry of the verb *invertir*, as she creates a market of masculinities that are played off against each other with the end game of providing a dominant model that colonizes and defines the market dynamics of gender in her text.

Undercover Marketing: Politics and Masculinities in *La fiesta del Chivo*.

Keeping with this economic concept of gender, Mario Vargas Llosa pens a much-studied *caudillo* novel that explores the role of masculinity within a the authoritarian market of Rafael Trujillo's Dominican Republic. Published a year after Matilda Burgos's incursion into the literary, *La fiesta del Chivo* creates a renewed interest in the genre of the dictator

novel. Polit Dueñas's book is a prime example in this trend, as the critic includes a chapter on Vargas Llosa's novel (2002).

What interests me, as a critic, is how Vargas Llosa pens the hegemonic or patriarchal aspects of masculinity in relation to society in a discursively complex and varied style, and how masculinity vis-à-vis subjectivity is construed and constructed. As Pons notes, the past in *La fiesta del Chivo* "no es un tiempo fijo y concluido, sino cambiante que se conecta con un presente también cambiante, inacabado, en su contemporaneidad inconclusa" (262). The author has often cited "demons" as being the basis of any writing, and as Sabine Köllman has noted, "politics is one of the most persistent 'demons' which [...] provoke his creativity" (1).²³ Keeping with the idea of an economy of masculinities, I argue that Vargas Llosa writes masculinities into a critique of authoritarian government that controls both economic and social markets. The novel, as we know, unfolds through the return of Urania Cabral, daughter of a one-time confidant of the sanitized and DonJuanesque dictator, Rafael Trujillo, to the island of her birth. She cannot explain her return and her need to talk to her father; a father who consented to her rape to regain favor with Trujillo. In this sense, as has been noted by Lady Rojas-Trempe, the novel appears to be structured around the implicit and explicit violence towards women, and the fear engendered by a patriarchal society that not only commodifies, but that actively barter with the female body. Following this argumentation, Miguel Gabriel Ochoa Santos posits that the corporal body, and in particular the female body, is a discursive site of oppression and transgression (214). The critic, however, does not pay attention to the male bodies that are routinely and methodically violated.

²³ Vargas Llosa's own thoughts on writing and being a novelist, including the presence of inner demons, can be found in *Cartas a un joven novelista* (México, D.F.: Ariel/Planeta, 1997).

Much has been said about the historiographic and metaliterary aspects of the novel, with even a former Spanish head of state claiming that the novel is “más verdad que la verdad” (Lefere, “*La fiesta*” 331) in regards to what happened in the Dominican Republic during Trujillo’s government. While this may be up for debate, the idiosyncrasies of the text reveal a dialogic that goes further than a conversation between terms such as “history” and “truth.” Though the violence against women, which is to say the digital penetration of the young girl performed by the impotent dictator, may provide a silenced aspect of state repression and control, I argue that it simply presents an anachronistic context that permits the narrative voice of the dictator and Dominican society during the years of the Trujillato to be uttered.

In a thoroughly researched study, Nicasio Urbina explores the connection between violence(s) and structure in *Margarita, está linda la mar*. The critic underlines the violence perpetuated by the *caudillo* figure as a structuralizing frame in the text, focusing on the desubjectication of those surrounding Somoza (365). Similarly, Vargas Llosa’s novel is punctuated with violence in both textual and linguistic terms. Though writing about the Dominican Republic, the author shies away from using the dialect and lexicon of the island and his characters – all from diverse social and economic classes – speak in a standard Latin American Spanish. Vargas Llosa further writes violence into (and not by means of) the text with the use of temporal jumps between the narrative of Urania and the events of her youth. When she first talks to her invalid father, her voice intermingles with a separate narrative of the past. Mention is made in an impersonal point of view, to a celebration in Santo Domingo immediately after Urania addresses her father. Within the impersonal recounting of the celebration Urania speaks, correcting the narration (or herself?), noting that the name of the

city was changed to “Ciudad Trujillo” (133) during the dictator’s regime. This detail adds to the characterization of the dictator’s hyper masculinity, if this hegemonic masculinity can be viewed as being synonymous with the Foucauldian concept of power.²⁴ By genderizing the city as a metonymic representation of the oppressive male figure, the politics of the nation are circumscribed in relation to the centrality of the city versus peripheral towns, villages and regions. Later on, Urania’s first meeting with Ramfis Trujillo is told in the same impersonal style, complete with dialogue that is not part of her diegesis. Thus, the story within the story appears as the author creates a separate narrative space, characterized by a change in narrative voice, one that runs simultaneous and coherent with Urania’s return to the Republic.

As critics have underlined, the novel can indeed be framed by her contemporary situation, which in turn compels the narrative of the past to be a traumatic text (Caruth 24, LaCapra 48). On the other hand, the violence of fear and assault against the female body is actually quite secondary in terms of violence exerted in the text. Men, in fact, are as much (or even more) victimized by the regime of fear and violence in Vargas Llosa’s dictatorship. The revenge vetted out by Ramfis after the murder of his father is brutal and visceral as he assumes the position of hegemonic masculinity, yet lacks the suspense and textual detective work on the part of the reader, which is characteristic of the rape of Urania. The torture of

²⁴ I am referring to the thinker’s conceptions of power as outlined in his work in *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990). More specifically, “power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization: as the process which, through ceaseless struggle and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or even reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies [...] Power is everywhere not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere [...] is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society.” (92-3).

Román Fernández, for example, is written without the aid of extended metaphors or symbolisms. His eyelids are sewn shut, he is periodically electrocuted, and is even castrated in graphic detail: his testicles are snipped off with a pair of scissors, and he is then made to swallow them (431). The castration of the male subject vis-à-vis the exertion of phallic power by Ramfís, underlines the author's position of writing the dictator. Though careful in deconstructing the sanitized and erect figure by mentioning the dictator's incontinence and impotence, Vargas Llosa resists completely doing away with the hyper masculine subject position within Dominican society, perhaps reflective, on the one hand, of his own political assertion in his native Peru, and on the other, of Judith Payne's thesis of Boom writers continuing to enshrine the tenets of patriarchy in their exercises of representation (7).

The violence exerted against men by men, however, is central to the author's Trujillato. It is axiomatic of the diegesis, where paradoxically what is not tolerated is the violence against women. Antonio Imbert, one of the conspirators in the plot against the dictator, is agitated by the famous murder of the Mirabal sisters, commenting that "¡Ahora también se asesinaba a mujeres indefensas, sin que nadie hiciera nada!" and that "¡Ya no había huevos en este país, coño!" (319). Having "huevos," it seems, implies that one does not kill women, yet testicles are primal to the definition of the male subject in the text. Returning to the torture scenes of Román, he hears (since he has had his eyelids shut) "risitas sobreexcitadas y comentarios obscenos, de unos sujetos que eran sólo voces y olores picantes" (431). By being castrated, Román loses subjectivity in the face of these mocking "sujetos," effectively losing position in the dialectic amongst males. Román is deconstructed by the agents of the dictator's successor as Ramfís exerts a phallic masculinity that interestingly asserts its position by dephallicizing, in the organic sense, its competitors.

Men in *La fiesta del Chivo* are the main players in the text, even though the text is “framed” by Urania’s trauma. By giving the fictional Trujillo a voice, the author narrativizes hegemonic masculinity. This concept, as penned by a very hegemonic writer, is epitomized by the virile, clean-cut and non-perspiring dictator figure who engages in a process that feminizes men “cuyos cuerpos no corresponden al estereotipo de la masculinidad hegemónica. Hombres que expresan sus emociones, artistas, de contextura debil, enfermizos, entre otros, tenderian a ser feminizados” (Olavarria 120). Trujillo survives in a culture and homosocial body of men that are complicit with his strategies of domination. Their complicity is marked by a silence that is omniscient, as one of the conspirators notes: “en esos años, Antonio no se hubiera atrevido a hablar mal de Trujillo” (111). When the younger Urania spies the dictator visiting their neighbor’s house, her father chides her and stresses that she did not see anything. Note here that the silence enforced by the dictatorship is more than discursive, as Urania is not told to remain silent and not tell anybody about what she saw. This option would require a textual, albeit silent, acknowledgement of the action observed. Her father, however, pushes for an erasure of the action in itself, disabling language as signifier of the violence and strategies of the hegemonic character.

What is aptly and often used as a signifier of masculinity is the dismembered but all-powerful scrotal sac that houses the essence of man. It is not surprising that Trujillo’s demise is precipitated by an uncooperative penis and a urethral sphincter that has a mind of its own. Emblematic of the importance of the testicles within the homosocial, Trujillo never loses his position within the hierarchy of power in the novel. Only Urania knows of his impotence, and only his trusted manservant knows of his incontinence. Even after being ambushed, he does not lose his stature as the stereotype of masculinity, as the General Fernández

mentioned earlier fears reprisals and revenge if he were to take hold of the system. Trujillo only loses prestige and dominance in the text, in the discursive interior of the subject that Vargas Llosa pens, which is to say within the textual signifiers of the novel. Only through Vargas Llosa's imagination of the man can the text undermine his position, underscoring the author's own political situation. What is to note, however, is the importance of the male bodies and their testes in Vargas Llosa's work. The economy of masculinity is therefore ontoformative to the erotics and poetics of a text that both subscribes to a phallogocentric diegesis and circumscribes a phallogocentric society.²⁵ Vargas Llosa seems to suggest that Dominican (and implicitly Peruvian) society can examine the past in relation to the present through the optic of a masculine discursive space.

After having lost political elections to Alberto Fujimori and suffering a phase of self-imposed disenchantment with his native Peru, Vargas Llosa's rewriting of the dictator figure is poignant in its extrapolation of national, which is to say Dominican, politics to a transnational poetics of trauma. By structuring the novel around Urania's migration from the cosmopolitan city of the United Nations to the island of her ancestors, the author suggests a converse relationship between the dictator's masculinity, actions, and strategies of power towards other social contexts. We must remember that Vargas Llosa first demystifies the dictator, only to later re-strengthen the position of the hyper masculine by dephallicizing, in the psychoanalytic and physical sense, challengers to Trujillo and his offspring. This exercise, in turn, suggests that under an autocratic regime of violence, history is bound to repeat itself and those who suffer are the silenced and raped subjects that enable the dictator. The author's gendered and masculine discursive space is reflective of his own position as an

²⁵ By phallogocentric I refer to the privileging of the masculine and the male in the understanding and evaluation of meaning and/or social relations and structures.

outcast politician seeking to reestablish his own political agency against the machinations of his rival Alberto Fujimori who suffered political defeat in the year of the novel's first edition. The connections between the literary and the social have been addressed by Vargas Llosa, as he notes that "Fujimori was quite different to Trujillo – a more mediocre tyrant" (Jaggi 31). The author's position within the commerce of literature is strengthened by an exploration of masculinities vis-à-vis the transgression of the hegemonic that surreptitiously introduces Vargas Llosa's own personal position within Peruvian politics.

Following this train of thought, Andrew Foley has systematically analyzed the development of the author's fiscal views in his narrative. Beginning with his early work that is harshly opposed to authoritarianism and a growing disenchantment with socialism (3), the author reaches a breaking point with other writers of his generation when he publicly denounces Castro's Cuba. Upon his return to Lima in 1974, the author shows an increasing concern with extremism both on the Left and the Right. The author is above all else a classical liberal (Foley 5) who upholds ideas of the free market, and is not a neoliberal that Ramírez seeks to disenfranchise. *La fiesta del Chivo* is, therefore, a critique of authoritarian economics. The author writes this critique through an inscription of gender onto the dynamics of violence and silence that demarcates the narrative.

The narrative as a construct of language genderizes the extra-textual economic and political paradigms. Vargas Llosa's narrative is painstaking in its research and inclusion of national economic policy, as the dictator is shown with his aides discussing the country's state of affairs. Faced with low revenues, Trujillo refuses to reduce his workforce or to cut costs as to do so would cause social tumult and unemployment (155). One alternative suggested is to nationalize the dictator's industries, thereby shifting the weight of ledger

books in the red to the State, a move which Vargas Llosa's Trujillo is stoutly against. Speaking to a group of senators, he observes, "robarías cuanto pudieras si el trabajo que haces para la familia Trujillo, lo hicieras para los Vicini, los Valdez o los Armentero. Y todavía mucho más si las empresas fueran del Estado. Allí sí que te llenarías los bolsillos" (157). Most importantly, the dictator in the novel, which is to say the embodiment of hegemonic masculinity, creates a market system based on his own position as the dominator, where subordinate positions are understood and commodified by "su conocimiento profundo de la psicología dominicana" (169). This understanding constitutes "trabar una relación de compadrazgo con un campesino, con un obrero, con un artesano, con un comerciante," which results in "la lealtad de ese pobre hombre" (169).

In another example of the connection between the dictator's body and national policy, Trujillo's virility and phallic masculinity are contrasted with Venezuela's democratically elected Rómulo Betancourt, who is described by an announcer in the dictator's Radio Caribe. The announcer, "poniendo la voz que correspondía para hablar de un maricón, afirmaba que, además de hambrear al pueblo venezolano, el Presidente Rómulo Betancourt había traído la sal a Venezuela" (35). We must remember that Betancourt not only nationalized Venezuela's oil industry, against the precepts of a free market neoliberal system, but also held a longstanding rift with Trujillo that resulted in assassination attempts against both rulers. As Trujillo reflects after taking a bath and putting on talcum powder and deodorant, "el mariconazo ese no se saldría con la suya. Consiguió que la OEA le impusiera las sanciones, pero ganaba el que reía último" (35). The supposed homosexuality of Betancourt, and the purported penetration that accompanies the condition, are juxtaposed with the clean, hygienic

body of a man who promises to “ha[cer] chillar a una hembra como hace veinte años,” when his “testículos entraban en ebullición y su verga empezaba a enderezarse” (236).

Returning once more to Jameson’s observation of the politico-economic climate of Latin America in the latter half of the 20th century, and Rubin’s notions of commodification and gender, I suggest after my analysis of Ramírez, Rivera Garza, and Vargas Llosa’s work that these fin-du-siècle caudillo novels engage in a materialization of the male body that inverts the traditionally held view that it is only the female that is commoditized. I argue that the male body and its manifestations are materialized as units of commerce that disassociate men from the Masculine. They connect with social and political institutions through an engagement with economic models, as they write masculinities into their narratives to characterize, organize, and place their own authorial thought. In the work of Sergio Ramírez and Mario Vargas Llosa, the testicles not only house the economic productivity of a market system of masculinities, but also subjectify the male within the homosocial. Though capital loses its materiality in a climate of liberalization, masculinity becomes a commodity as it is written onto the testicles.

Bodies that Matter: Queer(ing) Masculinities and the Fall of the Dictator

In keeping with this matrix that interrelates gender, politics and economics, Pedro Lemebel imagines the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet in Chile. Lemebel’s narrative is not structured around a wayward prodigal son or a traumatized victim. In its place, he probes a failed communist plot to assassinate the dictator in 1986. Instead of focusing the narrative on an intimate voice within the rebels, he pens a neighborhood transvestite, La Loca, who not

only falls in love with Carlos, a young revolutionary, but whose house becomes the functional center for the group as they store their weapons and propaganda in camouflaged boxes. *Tengo miedo torero*, the author's first novel, follows the themes of his previous three collections of chronicles, in the sense that it "redraws the map of Santiago from its margins, revealing and redefining sites and subjects that have been neglected by both high culture and the communication media" (Palaversich 99). I have placed this novel at the end of this chapter for two reasons. Firstly, it is chronologically the last of the four new historical novels to be published, implying in part that it has the benefit of having been potentially exposed to the other works in its own poesis. Secondly, discussing the novel as a Queer work or as a queering work requires a point of reference or comparison. Following David Halperin's idea that the term and the verb circumscribe "not a positivity but a positionality vis-à-vis the normative" (62). Therefore in discussing *Tengo miedo torero*, my analysis reverts at times to a comparative model that conjures a point or position (or novel) that *is* normative. The inclusion of Lemebel's work does not serve as a parenthesis within this chapter, but instead serves to illustrate how masculinity and the representation of it is a pluralistic identity and process.

Lemebel's novel fits into current trends in Chilean literature that are characterized by a proliferation of the new historical novel by a diverse set of authors from multiple movements and generations, from Alberto Blest Gana's 19th-century stories and 20th-century authors such as Carlos Droguett, to the more recent Antonio Gil and Francisco Simón or Fernando Jerez. Lemebel's *Tengo miedo torero* sneaks into this trajectory of the genre by its inclusion of the events leading up to the assassination attempt on Pinochet. But unlike previous Chilean authors, Lemebel is the first to write the dictator from a Queer perspective.

Unlike Vargas Llosa's politically charged extrapolation, Lemebel's writing of the dictator occurs at a time of relative political stability. The novel coincides with the presidency of Ricardo Lagos Escobar, who oversaw the democratization of the Constitution and the elimination of Pinochet-era oligarchic cronyism. Lemebel's Pinochet therefore lacks some of the metonymic qualities of Vargas Llosa's Trujillo, as Chile undergoes a process of liberalization in the early 2000s that is unlike the politics of Fujimori in Peru. Conversely, Chile under Lagos Escobar does not suffer from the *Fujishock* of the early 1990s, or from the delegitimizing effects of the *Fujigolpe*, a self-coup d'état that destabilized national politics into an autocratic regime very much like that Vargas Llosa opposes in *La fiesta del Chivo*.²⁶ Chilean society in the early 2000s, instead, is punctuated by a series of social advances that point towards a just and more democratic society, though the government did contend with charges of corruption. More importantly, Lemebel writes at a time when the presidency enjoys historic approval ratings, which is reflected in his tongue in cheek depiction of a henpecked Pinochet.

Returning to the novel at hand, the band of communist rebels represents a masculinity that is not necessarily complicit with the dictator. They are neither high-ranking generals nor are they close aides to Pinochet. Lemebel's communist rebels do not adhere to the same strategies of political domination or economic constructs forwarded by the hegemonic voice. They instead *query* traditional, patriarchal systems of gender and identity, subscribing to what Connell deems "subordinate" masculinities (78). Subordinate masculinity in relation to

²⁶ The connections between *Tengo miedo torero* and *La fiesta del Chivo* are various. Society is portrayed in crisis, undergoing a moment of flux where a gubernatorial paradigm shift may or may not occur. Lemebel's novel, however, is politically distanced from the present, unlike Vargas Llosa's narrative which flows from a poetics of allegory, as his Trujillo is reflective of a certain other Peruvian autocrat. The writer, however, evades ambiguity in his recent *Travesuras*, where the voyeuristic, sadistic, and Japanese Fukuda eviscerates the female body. As Oswaldo Estrada has noted, Fukuda undoubtedly is representative of the *japonés* who controlled Peruvian politics for over a decade (171).

hegemonic masculinity can be viewed as the Hegelian slave to the master. Connell borrows Gramsci's usage of the term hegemony, as it inculcates "specific gender relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men" (78). In modern Western society, the most visible case of this relationship is seen in the dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of homosexual or Queer men. As Connell notes, "this is much more than a cultural stigmatization of homosexuality or gay identity" and that "gay men are subordinated to straight men by an array of quite material practices" (78). The communist rebels are subordinate on two levels. On the one hand, their aim as a group is to topple the patriarch and to establish a (theoretically) non-hierarchical social structure. Strategies of subverting and oppressing women and other men would in theory not apply. On the other hand, they are also more accepting of the subordinate male par excellence – the homosexual. After the plot fails, they transport La Loca to where Carlos is hiding, showing some tolerance of alternative sexual practices and expressions.

In their romance, which carries the narrative more so than the political machinations of the rebels, La Loca del Frente's communist lover Carlos is highly sensualised in the text through the furtive and at times explicit glances, comments and touches of the Queer figure. She throws him a birthday party complete with cake, children, music and a fine tablecloth, only to later offer him some liquor in an adult celebration once the neighborhood children have left. Carlos is sensualized in the text when La Loca notes that he extends "sus labios en una sonrisa perlada de licor" (101).²⁷ His lips become a point of seduction as she asks him to

²⁷ José Quiroga provides an equally demythifying anecdote about the quintessential communist rebel, Ernesto "Che" Guevara in an essay on Virgilio Piñera. He recounts how when Guevara "saw a volume of Virgilio Piñera's *Teatro completo* in the Cuban embassy, he hurled it against a wall: 'How dare you have in our embassy a book by this foul faggot!' he shouted" (168). Quiroga explains that this anger "testifies that Piñera has already sexualized the revolutionary hero, he has turned him into a representation, has furnished that representation with a (homo)erotic's" (177). I argue that Lemebel has not only sexualized the hero, but has also made him a subject within the homoerotics of politics.

tell him/her something important about his life, a secret, though she does not want to know everything, as he must remain an enigma. He tells her about a close friend he had in his youth, growing up poor in the country. Naked and by a reservoir, Carlos and the friend start rubbing their penises against the warm sand. Overcome by an uncontrollable urge, Carlos recounts how “de un salto lo monté,” and that he asks him “que me dejara ponerle la puntita, la pura puntita” (103). What follows is a standoff between the young communist and his friend, with both boys stroking their adolescent genitals and neither one willing to be the *maricón*. Reminiscent of a duel, the boys charge the other to bend over, until Carlos’s friend ejaculates without warning on his leg. The semen stain on his leg angers Carlos and becomes a source of, until now, unspeakable shame. The image of the sensual, virile communist rebel is further sexualized when La Loca returns from getting him a blanket to spend the night in her house. She notes how:

Una de sus piernas se estiraba en el arqueo leve del reposo, y la otra colgando del diván, ofrecía el epicentro abultado de su paquetón tenso por el brillo del cierre éclair a medio abrir, a medio descorrer en ese ojal ribeteado por los dientes de bronce del marrueco, donde se podía ver la pretina elástica de un calzoncillo coronado por los rizos negros de la pendejada varonil. (105)

The teeth of the zipper opening to his genitalia serve as the next step in the sensualization of Carlos, following the description of his pearly lips. Lemebel’s queering of the communist rebel is oral and centered on the mouth, in both physiological and textual terms. I will contrast this later with the queering of the most patriarchal figure in the novel. Returning to Carlos, the text sensualizes the macho figure, and in a conscious step takes a moment of pause to contemplate the subverted, virile phallus. La Loca “tuvo que sentarse ahogada por el éxtasis de la escena, tuvo que tomar aire para no sucumbir al vacío del desmayo frente a esta estética erotizada por la embriaguez” (105). Lemebel’s self-conscious usurpation of

patriarchy is deliberate and focused, as though not only La Loca but also the text and the reader need a moment of pause. Though Carlos is allowed to be a macho and to continue his anti-Pinochet activities, he cannot escape the queer pen that eroticizes him.

This queer pen goes further than simply eroticizing the macho male under the queer gaze; Carlos as subject undergoes a gender-morphing game of metaphorical transvestitism. Sprawled on the couch with his crotch open to La Loca's gaze, he is first described as a "puta de puerto" with "tetillas quiltras" (106). The feminized body then becomes "un dios indio [...] un guerrero soñador" and finally "un macho etrusco" (106). Lemebel indicates not only how gender is transitory, from female to male within the same gaze, but also how it is culturally coded. Carlos's body is the gendered body that Judith Butler envisions in *Gender Trouble*. It is discursive, relational, and societal. The body as surface is written upon by the pen and gaze of La(s) Loca(s).²⁸

After fellating Carlos, La Loca notes how he lays unconscious to her oral pleasuring, in a pose "de Cristo desarticulado por el remolino etílico del pisco" (109). Lemebel's juxtaposition of the male archetypes demonstrates a deftly crafted deconstruction of the patriarchal voice, showing even the atheist communist can become a Christ-like figure – after being fellated by a transvestite, of course. Lemebel de-phallicizes Carlos's model of patriarchy not only by re-aestheticizing the macho body, but by also giving the "sissy" a voice within the national context of overthrowing a dictator. As José Piedra has noted, "in terms of sexual prowess, the sissy comes into his or her own by embracing, coupling, and strangling, and ultimately by merely provoking a symbiotic relationship with an obliging bully" (383).

¹² The author himself never shied away from the public spotlight and frequently dressed in drag. The photograph in the sleeve of the edition used shows Lemebel wearing a dress, his long hair collected in a disheveled ponytail, his eyebrows carefully manicured, and his face made up with rouge.

Lemebel's queering of the communist Carlos is called into being by the portrayal of a "guagua-boa, que al salir de la bolsa se soltó como un látigo," that exhibits "la robustez de un trofeo de guerra, un grueso dedo sin uña que pedía a gritos una boca que anillara su amoratado glande" (107).²⁹ The mouth that the physical phallus begs for is the space where the subject is queered in Lemebel's novel. This site of utterance is also where the Lacanian phallus is negotiated, as the writing of the revolutionaries and their machinations vis-à-vis the dictator occur from the epicenter of the Loca's house and mouth. In a textual sense, as the mouth is the origin of the utterance, song partakes in an oral inscription onto the sexualized male body. La Loca's drunken oral encounter with Carlos's penis is structured around the bolero "Tengo miedo torero" which lends its title to the novel. Lemebel sensuously weaves in the lyrics and emotions evoked by the song to sexualize the "torero" figure - the neighborhood transvestite needs the arms of the young Carlos to satiate and protect her. Music as intertext is dialogic as a queering element, both of the Communist rebel and of the text, a factor that I analyze in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Lemebel does not stop at simply queering the macho rebel, but instead focuses his narrative on the figure of the dictator, Augusto Pinochet. Unlike Vargas Llosa who resorts to the interiority of the dictator in relation to everyone around him, Lemebel triangulates Pinochet with his wife and her effeminate companion Gonzalo. The queer Gonzalo, who although does not appear explicitly in the novel, provides a homosexual object to Pinochet's homophobia. Gonzalo importantly does not have his own voice, but speaks by means of the

²⁹ Lemebel's queering of the communist Carlos can be contrasted with a Vargas Llosa communist figure. In *Travesuras de la niña mala*, the protagonist's "niña mala" leaves Paris for Cuba to undergo military training to become part of the rebel forces planning to invade Peru. True to form, and to the chagrin of the narrator, she becomes the lover of a Commander Chacón. Though the Commander never appears as an active subject within the text, he is imagined and written by the narrative voice as being a virile and mustached macho that struts around with a pair of pistols on his hips (38). Beyond the aesthetics of masculinity, he is sexually superhuman as he sports a dual phallus.

dictator's wife, which compounds the intimacy afforded by historicizing the patriarch. In a style that does not include the punctuated separation of voices in the text, her criticisms of Pinochet echo within and around the interior space of the dictator. She follows him one morning as he leaves the house, dressed in a bathrobe and yelling:

Tú no me crees, tú piensas que es puro teatro mi dolor de cabeza para no acompañarte. Tú crees, como todos los hombres, que las mujeres usamos la artimaña de los bochornos para no hacer ciertas cosas. Imagínate cómo voy a preferir quedarme aburrida en esta casa tan grande, mientras tú te rascas la panza frente al río, rodeado de árboles, en esa preciosura de chalet que tenemos en el Cajón del Maipo. Porque fue idea mía que se la compráramos tan barata, casi regalada, a esos upelientos que mandaste al exilio [...] Piensa tú, ¿que haríamos si no tuviéramos todas estas propiedades para descansar? Tendríamos que mezclarnos con la chusma que va al Club Militar a remojar las patas en la piscina. Qué asco, bañarse en la misma agua donde tus amigotes, los generales vejestorios, se remojan las bolas. (135)

In addition to disqualifying his thoughts on women, she also asserts herself as the decision maker of the household. The chalet they own, in addition to the other properties the dictator amassed are her idea. She does not shy away from deconstructing the façade of the military man, calling him overweight, and noting that the rest of the military is full of “chusma” that goes to the Club Militar. The intimacy afforded by Lemebel's narrative queers the hegemonic position of the male within the household, especially when compared with the relationship between the dictator and his wife in *Margarita, está linda la mar*, where the relationship between Somoza and Salvadorita is explored through the proxies of the conspirator Cordelio and the unsuspecting sergeant Domitilo. With Bible in hand, Cordelio wonders aloud why the boat they arrive in is named “Salvadorita.” The increasingly annoyed Domitilo replies that the boat belongs to the First Lady, and that “son sus negocios propios, distintos de los que tiene *el hombre*” (82). The wife is separated from *el hombre*, as Ramírez's focus is not so much on demythifying the dictator as it is finding a point of contact

between the *caudillo* masculinity and the masculinity of the poet figure, with the end game of constructing a genealogy of the nation based on the latter.

Returning to the years surrounding the publication of *Tengo miedo torero* and *La fiesta del Chivo*, we note that the Chilean author is not constrained by an authoritative climate of allegory, like that experienced by Vargas Llosa. This is reflected in the almost playful depiction of Pinochet as a harassed husband in opposition to the hyper masculine in crisis that the *Chivo* enacts. Continuing with a comparison between the two novels, testicles continue to be an important corporal metaphor of patriarchy. Unlike *La fiesta del Chivo*, there is no deification of them being essential to masculinity. Instead, Lemebel's usage of the corporeality of the male is founded on them being quotidian and dirty. "Huevos" here are not essential to man or necessary for patriarchal position – rather they seem to be the stain (that Melgar Bao describes) inscribed onto the body. Lemebel effectively queers this normative description of the male body that is observed in works by Vargas Llosa and Ramírez.

The motif of hygiene appears in *Tengo miedo torero*, just as it did in Vargas Llosa's *La fiesta del Chivo*. As noted above, the soiling of the Dominican dictator's pants was the first step in his eventual personal (and not political) castration. Lemebel, however, queers the idea of soiling oneself as he de-phallicizes the act from an organic standpoint, as the penis is not blamed for staining the patriarch. As Pinochet rests in his car after surviving the plot to dynamite his motorcade, he loses subjectivity.³⁰ In the backseat of the car, "el Dictador temblaba como una hoja, no podía hablar, no atinaba a pronunciar palabra, estático, sin moverse, sin poder acomodarse en el asiento" (174). We learn immediately afterwards that his paralysis is voluntary: "más bien no quería moverse, sentado en la tibia plasta de su mierda que lentamente corría por su pierna, dejando escapar el hedor putrefacto del miedo"

³⁰ In much the same way Trujillo did after digitally-raping Urania in *La fiesta del Chivo*.

(174).³¹ The patriarch is soiled, but it is not the penetrating phallus that castrates him from hegemony. Instead, it is the uncontrollable anal sphincter; the quintessential site of being penetrated that releases the fecal stain that condemns the dictator, who two years later would concede political power to a newly formed democratic coalition. The inversion of the staining tool from the penis to the anus hints at the political position of the author, as Lemebel, unlike Vargas Llosa, is not engaged in a dialectic of political phallic privation.

Vargas Llosa suggests that Trujillo as the symbolic phallus is broken, thereby emphasizing the writer's own lack and subsequent envy. In opposition to the Peruvian writer who writes the fall of Trujillo through castration and impotence, Lemebel seems to dip his Queer pen(is) in something other than ink to inscribe the body of the failing patriarch. Pinochet, we must remember, faced a controversial return to Chile in 2000 after facing extradition orders from Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón. *Tengo miedo torero* coincides with a period of reckoning for the ex-dictator, as he struggled with repeated indictments related to the oppressive practices committed during his rule. Lemebel's exercise in releasing the character's anal sphincter during a tense moment in the novel hints at the author's own judgment of the fate and culpability of Pinochet. If the courts cannot serve justice, then it is up to Lemebel's pen to stain the figure of the dictator.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, the anus precedes the phallus as a zone of psychosexual development in Freudian thought.³² By relaxing the dictator's anus, Lemebel emphasizes the organic nature of the nation that he envisions in the essay "Censo y conquista". He writes:

³¹ The experience of paralysis following desubjectification is much like that experienced by Trujillo in *La fiesta del Chivo* who lays crying in bed after being unable to achieve an erection.

³² Trauma in the former phase, in the shape of fussy parenting, results in an anal retentive character, much like that of the diegetic Trujillo who suffers from some symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder

De esta manera, las minorías hacen viable su tráfica existencia, burlando la enumeración piadosa de las faltas. Los listados de necesidades que el empadronamiento despliega a lo largo de Chile, como serpiente computacional que deglute los índices económicos de la población, para procesarlos de acuerdo a los enjuagues políticos. Cifras y tantos por ciento que llenarán la boca de los parlamentarios en números gastados por el manoseo del debate partidista. Una radiografía al intestino flaco chileno expuesta en su mejor perfil neoliberal como ortopedia de desarrollo. Un boceto social que no se traduce en sus hilados más finos, que traza rasante las líneas gruesas del cálculo sobre los bajos fondos que las sustentan, de las imbricaciones clandestinas que van alterando el proyecto determinante de la democracia.

Lemebel's social critique does not stop with Pinochet but continues through the democratic era. He is particularly taken with neoliberal economic policies and their effect on the people of Chile. Lemebel's disenchantment with neoliberalism calls to mind Sergio Ramírez's own divorce from politics in Nicaragua amidst the liberalizing of the nation's economy. One of the conspirators in *Margarita, está linda la mar* notes that Somoza "caga por la barriga [...] por medio de una válvula de goma. Lo que pasa es que es un secreto de estado" (37). The procedure is then described as a "supresión del tracto rectal y formación del ano artificial por el método de Charles Richter" (37), signaling Somoza's own artificial rule in Nicaragua as he was kept in power by and for American interests. The connection between the anus of the dictator and the nation is stressed at the end of the novel as Somoza lays on his deathbed after being stripped naked. An authorial voice intervenes in the narrative and questions: "¿Para eso te hiciste falsificador de moneda, mariscal de excusados? ¿Qué harías con diarrea?" (351). Somoza, importantly, never faced the challenges of balancing neoliberal policies with social problems and the needs of the poor, lending another question to the narrative's interrogation. *Margarita, está linda la mar* coincides with the contemporary Rightwing government of Arnoldo Alemán who held political office under Somoza's younger son, Anastasio Somoza Debayle. The final scatological question in the novel hints at the problems faced by Alemán

as he increased foreign investment in the country, which resulted in an economic boom. This boom, however, occurred amidst widespread corruption and nepotism in the government, which only came to light after Alemán's government and after the publication of *Margarita, está linda la mar*. The final interrogative by the authorial voice in Ramírez's novel underscores the author's own Leftist ideals and his disenchantment with and suspicion of the Rightist Nicaraguan governments at the turn of the century.

Taking the anus as a corporal site of political discourse, much like the usage of the testicles as a signifier for turn-of-the-century economic realities, we can see how Lemebel queers masculinities and the dictator in *Tengo miedo torero*. The releasing of the anal sphincter in Lemebel results in not only a staining of the dictator but also a staining of the nation, as the country must deal with the fecal remnants of not only Pinochet's political rule but also the neoliberal policies he instituted towards the end of his regime. Lemebel highlights this problematic in the essay "La esquina es mi corazón", where he writes:

Herencia neoliberal o futuro despegue capitalista en la economía de esta "demosgracia". Un futuro inalcanzable para estos chicos, un chiste cruel de la candidatura, la traición de la patria libre. Salvándose de la botas para terminar charqueados en la misma carroña, en el mismo estropajo que los vio nacer. Qué horizonte para este estrato juvenil que se jugó sus mejores años. Por cierto irrecuperables, por cierto hacinados en el lumperío crepuscular del modernismo. Distantes a años luz, de las mensualidades millonarias que le pagan los ricos a sus retoños en los institutos privados.

The future under current neoliberal ideas, borne from the "herencia" of the dictatorship, is sordid and dark according to Lemebel. The scatological connection between the release of the sphincter and the subsequent "hedor putrefacto del miedo," with society's primordial "carroña" establishes a connection between the assassination attempt in the novel and Lemebel's writing of contemporary Chilean society in the first decade of the 21st century. In what has come to be known as "El manifiesto de Pedro Lemebel", written in 1986, the same

year as the failed assassination plot, the writer acknowledges: “Me apesta la injusticia / Y sospecho de esta cueca democrática” (N.p.). He continues to lambast the status quo, affirming that the present is “como la dictadura / Peor que la dictadura / Porque la dictadura pasa / Y viene la democracia / Y detrasito el socialismo / ¿Y entonces?” (N.p.). The fecal discharge in *Tengo miedo torero* is the metonymic representation of Pinochet’s free market economic policies instituted in 1974 to grow the national GDP, which Lemebel cites as leading to injustice. Chilean neoliberalism put into place by “los Chicago boys” has led to what has been questionably called in economic circles the Miracle of Chile.

Lemebel’s sustained critique of neoliberalist tendencies reflects a populist social concern with the purported economic benefits of the free market system. Lemebel’s political position is written into *Tengo miedo torero* through the anus, which has its own placement within the erotics of the author and paradigms of sexuality. It is the penetrated orifice, which Ramírez hesitates to open yet questions, that connects the economic failings of the *caudillo* with contemporary neoliberal Latin America. The Loca in *Tengo miedo torero* engages in oral sex with the Leftist revolutionary, just as the narrative voice receives fellatio from the geriatric Loca in “Bésame otra vez forastero” (1992). Lemebel’s aversion of the anus from a strictly erotic perspective calls to attention his stressing of the dictator’s anus and its aftereffects, as it is an inverted penetration of the sphincter, which is to say not a penetration from outside the body that leads to the staining of Pinochet. This inversion, again, calls to mind the economic definition of the term, stressing the conjunct between national economics and the anus as a discursive site.

Materialized Bodies / Marketable Bodies.

The displacements of the male body in these new historical novels fall under a larger concern with how and when the figure of the dictator is written by contemporary Latin American writers. Sergio Ramírez underscores a trend in commoditizing the male body in economic terms that deviate from the traditional adoration of the phallus. Vargas Llosa builds on this objectification of the male body, and chooses a history that is alien to his own political and societal trajectory, but in doing so suggests that contemporary Peruvian society is under the iron fist of its own hyper masculine dictator. The writer successfully projects a political project onto the interplay of masculinities and the erotics of the body within the societal matrix of Trujillo's dictatorship. In a recent interview, the author affirms that "todas las dictaduras son el mal absoluto" (Forgues 256), suggesting that the diegesis in *La fiesta del Chivo* is representative of plural social contexts. In essence, Vargas Llosa's Trujillo becomes a subject within the demystification of hegemonic masculinity in the novel, though this position of power is never fully challenged in the text. As the final pages suggest, the cycle perpetuated by the dictator continues with his offspring and that those raped and traumatized will never fully return to normalcy or heal (Henighan 387).

Conversely, Lemebel and Rivera Garza show an interest in uncovering the aura of the hyper virile, hegemonic embodiment of masculinity. On the one hand, Rivera Garza explores the lucid shadows of the psychiatric state in early 20th-century Mexico to bring to the fore practices, norms, and transgressions of gendered subjects in a society marked by the project of modernity. The connections between the novel and contemporary Mexican society are many, as Rivera Garza suggests that women, and men, are still under the auspices of

hegemonic dictators. She, however, dislocates the political dictator, instead focusing on the domestic and scientific patriarch and how he was able to carve a period of economic growth in Mexico that can be read in parallel to 20th-century neoliberal moves. Lemebel on the other hand, seeks to “denounce the amnesia of the Chilean postdictatorship” (Palaversich 102), as he notes in an interview, “a country without memory is like a blank slate on which one can write whatever one wants, reinventing history in agreement with and at the discretion of the powers currently in vogue” (Novoa 29). Though Lemebel successfully takes up the pen to fill-in the gaps in Chile’s lacunar amnesia, it cannot be ignored that he writes, or “reinvents,” with a Queer pen, as he follows the contemporary polemics of holding Pinochet responsible for his actions.

Though the figure of the *caudillo* has been studied ad nauseum, the new historical novels studied in these pages suggest that the writing of his role within the literary is pertinent to, and formulated by the economic and political climate of fin-du-siècle Latin America. As Jameson and others have noted, neoliberal tendencies have led to a deterritorialization and dematerialization of economic systems. Following this observation, ideas regarding gender and its representation have suffered a similar fate in Latin American texts, as a greater number of authors include direct and indirect references, quotes and epitaphs alluding to North American gender studies. The novels studied in this chapter, however, evidence a shift from this thought, as these authors attempt a territorialization of their stories by means of historical contextualization. They are rooted in the contemporary “crisis in masculinity” brought about by the socioeconomic changes of neoliberal policies that Mara Viveros (39) and Connell (81) cite.³³ Resorting to the past allows for a momentary

³³ Viveros sustains the Latin America is undergoing a crisis in masculinity brought about by “importantes transformaciones sociales, económicas e ideológicas, entre las cuales vale la pena destacar el acceso de las

escape from the transnational non-spaces and non-identities that McOndo fiction/Latin America is built on. The new historical novel is by necessity a national manuscript.

Secondly, these authors resist the dematerialization of identity vis-à-vis gender by explicitly locating their sites of discourse on the male body. The testicles, the mouth, and the anus all operate as plateaus of inscription, deviating from the physical phallus as signifier of power. The testes as an example function as an economic discursive space. The mouth harkens to the possibility of enunciating and/or queering the hegemonic. The anus, as observed in Lemebel, is the territorialized site of political discourse. They function and dysfunction as metonymic representations of greater and extratextual processes that can only be sustained and encapsulated by the corporeality of the male body.

Furthermore, these authors create a market of masculinities within their texts which reveal a precocious understanding of the interplay between identities, politics, and economics. Whether it is Ramírez and Vargas Llosa who take great pains to consecrate the economic nucleus of the testes, or Rivera Garza who creates a system of competing masculinities vying for political and economic control, a conscious attempt at materializing the male body has been made. But this process doesn't simply stop there. Masculinities in these texts are commoditized and commercialized in a process and system of mercantilism that operates in a mimetic fashion to contemporary disjunctions and uncertainties in politico-economic policies and governments. Rivera Garza's text, as an example, does not adhere to traditional positions of depicting a single archetype of the masculine ideal as the embodiment

mujeres a niveles de educacion cada vez mayores y los nuevos patrones de insercion laboral de las mujeres". Connell argues that the current imperialism instituted by globalization and neoliberalism in Latin America is analogous to the momentous changes experienced during and after the arrival of the Spaniards, noting that "el imperio marca un cambio histórico decisivo en la encarnación social de las masculinidades" (84). Connell appears as Robert Connell in the anthology, prior to her sex reassignment surgery.

of the national ideal. Instead, she constructs an intricate web of men that is conscious of gender theorems of hegemony and historicity.

The four novels studied in this chapter share this common trait as they challenge the novel's power in creating the embodiment of hegemonic masculinity. They, instead, opt to fabricate poly-dimensional matrices of textual masculinities that explore contemporary themes of power, gender relations, and national identities. As can be expected, these new masculine textualities force a reframing of the practice of masculinity in contemporary Latin American fiction; a reframing that is cemented in part by the use of music as an intertextual referent, which I analyze in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

LYRICAL TEXTUALITIES: MUSIC AND MUSICALITY IN THE (DE)CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITIES

The new historical novels sampled in Chapter 2 undertake both a rewriting of the dictator-figure in Latin America and of the male body in a traditional genre that espouses the phallic power of men. Though each author has been internationalized to some extent, they territorialize their narratives within a nationally historic framework, just as contemporary national economies are being deterritorialized. These new historical novels arise at a time when masculinity is in crisis, due in part to the vast social and demographic changes brought about by neoliberalism.

Their reaction to this second crisis, however, establishes two distinct characteristics. First, masculinities in these texts are not simply dominated by the status quo hegemonic variant. Masculinities are fluid entities that circulate within the interstitial fluids of the greater construct that is gender in Latin America. They circulate keeping in mind an economic shift that has changed Latin American society at the turn of the century. They are ontologically varied and spatially elusive. Secondly, these texts explore the male body as an epistemological site for political, economic, and social discourses. The corporality of the body is stressed as erogenous zones are objectified, resulting in a textual meshing of erotics and economics that reacts to a post-Macondo literary existence.

These two masculine textualities are put into further evidence when studied alongside another literary trend in Latin American fiction: the intertextual and paratextual use of musical registers and lyrics. In what has been called “la narrativa de la música popular latinoamericana,” Enrique Plata Ramírez comments that “a partir de la articulación entre la literatura y la música popular, alterna y paradójicamente se sacralizaran y desacralizaran, tanto la música como la literatura” (53). The critic further writes that the point of connection between music and literature produces “más un encuentro erótico, pulsional, que cultural” (53). Music is more than a textual leitmotif in these works; it establishes a parallel plane of discourse that elucidates deeper interpretations of the erotics of any given text. It functions as a Barthesian semic code that triggers a receptive hermeneutic practice of intertextuality. This code is appropriated and reworked by these authors who function as *bricoleurs* that undertake the Lévi-Straussian enunciative practice of bricolage, where the “signified changes into the signifying and vice versa” (21).

The inclusion of music as a mutually exclusive medium to narrative establishes a system of multiple codes, where these codes are not “added to one another, or juxtaposed in just any manner; they are organized, articulated in terms of one another in accordance with a certain order, they contract unilateral hierarchies,” thus producing a “system of intercodical relations [...] which is itself, in some sort, another code” (Metz 242). This other semiotic code, a mixture of both narrative and lyrical registers, houses a tangential, cognitive system of meanings where the musical and narrative signifiers are re-semantized, thereby permitting a fruitful perambulation into this intercodical erotics. It is this other plane, where the axes of narrative and lyric connect, that I am interested in.

This connection is privileged by the inclusion of music into the written, narrative text, which follows three poetic schemas, each with their own distinct structures, constructs, and results. On one level, music serves as a textual channel of sexual objectification. The subject of desire resides in the diegetic singer who evokes the song and its lyrics. Popular song characterizes the enunciator and structures his or her interactions. The corporality of the subject is called into question as the mouth functions as a bodily site of discursivity that is not limited to the actual text of the music, but instead becomes a position by which gender is written onto the literary bodies extant in the text. This is evident, for instance, in Pedro Lemebel's *Tengo miedo torero*, when the neighborhood transvestite's mouth represents the diegetic site of popular music and the physical pen that writes gender onto her lover's body.

Yet popular music as an intertext does not always benefit from an intratextual subjectification. It appears at times as a passing song overheard on the radio, or as recurring memory that is evoked and formed around a particular tune. Music as a textuality is evocative of Mikhail Bakhtin's thesis on language in the novel. In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984), he explains that "dialogic relationships exist among all elements of novelistic structure; that is, they are juxtaposed contrapuntally" (40). Music as a dialogic element, therefore, partakes in what the Russian thinker terms polyphony and heteroglossia. The latter circumscribes the collision of multiple languages and registers within the text, whereas the former points towards the many voices inherent in an utterance and within a text, as "each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions" (*Dialogic* 293).

When present as a dialogic element, music in these cases is extracted from the corporal body and becomes a body of its own; as an intertextual referent that allows a deeper

reading into the matrices of power, gender, and race that are extant in contemporary fiction. As a result, the reader is forced to stop in his tracks and to take an inferential walk away from the printed page. As Wolfgang Iser underlines, music exists as a literary and social repertoire (69), though each set of verses forms a schema, which elucidates the reader's involvement, as "the text mobilizes the subjective knowledge present in all kinds of readers and directs it to one particular end [...] It is as if the schema were a hollow form into which the reader is invited to pour his own store of knowledge" (143). The narrative text is, therefore, dialogic with the musical referent and its lyrics, genre, interpreters, and receptors. The use of particular musical genres territorializes this fiction within a sociocultural context, just as the device of the historical novel roots the works of Cristina Rivera Garza, Pedro Lemebel, Mario Vargas Llosa and Sergio Ramírez within a topographic boundary.

In this chapter I study Lemebel's *Tengo miedo torero* (2001), Mayra Montero's *La última noche que pasé contigo* (1991), Alfredo Bryce Echenique's *El huerto de mi amada* (2002), and Franz Galich's *Y te diré quién eres (Mariposa traicionera)* (2006) as artifacts of the dialogic relationship between musical and narrative registers. It is by pausing at the junctures between musical verse and narrative text that I reveal how these novels dialogue with greater critical and social questions of masculinity. The inclusion of Lemebel's novel serves as fulcrum for establishing a practice of music within the text, as *Tengo miedo torero* is flush with multiple points of entry and varied systems of dialogism that allow for a reading that stresses authorial and hermeneutic appropriations of popular song. In the next step, I analyze Mayra Montero's *La última noche que pasé contigo*, as it incorporates popular autochthonous music in an erotic tale that explores the intersections of masculinity and desire in Caribbean fiction. The inclusion of the novel in this chapter also highlights a critical

lacuna that has failed to understand the problematizations of masculinities threaded into Montero's narrative. This is brought to fruition as the bolero and other popular Latin genres embed the narrative within a larger cultural context and allow for non-traditional desires and sexualities to be experimented with. Popular music within this schema permits a textual segue between spaces and characters, serving as supportive scaffolding. We can also observe this structural usage of song in Alfredo Bryce Echenique's *El huerto de mi amada* (2002), where the classic Cuban tune *Siboney* clears the path for an exploration of masculinities in relation to the urban space of Lima. Taking into account theorizations of the homosocial group vis-à-vis the control of political and societal power, I argue that Bryce Echenique's novel exemplifies the power struggles extant between the various social and cartographic centers and peripheries in Peru. Building on this dialogic mapping of space and power, the last novel, Franz Galich's *Y te diré quién eres (Mariposa traicionera)*, involves a politicization of music as a genre and explores how it is used in politically reactive fiction. It occupies a parallel plane of discourse not because it is able to express more than the narrated text, but because it confronts on a popular and cultural level the challenges faced in neoliberal and post-revolutionary Latin America. In other words, rock music in Galich's text ingrains an economic repertoire that forces a postcolonial reading of contemporary cultural imperialism.

Defining the Literary OST: Pedro Lemebel's *Tengo miedo torero*

The use of music in *Tengo miedo torero* is unsurprising, particularly if we take into account that Pedro Lemebel is not only an accomplished writer but also a controversial visual artist whose gay art collective “Yeguas del Apocalipsis” fosters various video and photography art projects, performance pieces and plastic sculptures. Those of us familiar with his multifaceted work know that Lemebel is well known for kissing men in theatre pieces, and has publicly displayed a television set with pornographic images over his genitals. This explicit exploration of the scandalous and the taboo explain in part his use of music in *Tengo miedo torero*.

Music as a medium is rooted in oral expression and auditory reception. As Sonia Montecino notes, “la oralidad es la forma en que el ethos latinoamericano ha transmitido su historia y su resistencia frente a la expansión del texto. La oralidad es también el lenguaje que [...] desencadena un habla que se resiste a cierta economía porque sus tiempos no son los de la producción en serie” (164). Lemebel’s text is polyphonic in the Bakhtinian sense, leading Berta López Morales to characterize *Tengo miedo torero* as an expression of multiple ventriloquist voices.³⁴ The critic notes that the text substitutes for the real body and allows a reading that allows a penetration of the body from various angles:

Por un lado, la fruición del lenguaje, gustado y degustado por la lengua que al tocar el paladar repite la fricción, el contacto de los fluidos corporales; por otra, el placer voyeurista, el ojo voraz que mira aquello dicho, susurrado, murmurado por la voz

³⁴ Bakhtin argues that the author channels the heteroglossia incorporated into a piece of writing, animating these voices as though they are coherent, akin to the theatrical device of the performer who imbibes life through speech into a mannequin (*The Dialogic Imagination* 181). Lemebel’s narrative speaks the discourses of multiple groups and subject positions within and outside the diegesis in a complex polyphonic register that illuminates the multiplicities of masculine identity. Similarly, Erving Goffman’s work in *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard UP 1974) builds on the art of ventriloquism in the novel.

otra, voz ventrilocua, contradictoria y contrahecha que oculta, se sobrepone y borra la Voz oficial. (121)

López Morales focuses her analysis on the second exception of the voice in Lemebel's work. The critic demonstrates how the protagonist's register and diction are a reflection of her own physical body, commenting that "cuplés, baladas, boleros, tangos, música del recuerdo, del ayer, le prestan su registro y hacen de su voz un collage, un pastiche de sonidos donde el sentido se fuga, haciendo de la voz de la Loca del Frente una voz travesti, excedida en la modulación de lo femenino" (127). Music frames the figure of the Loca in the novel, but I argue that it goes further than being a mere novelistic recourse of characterization. Music holds a structural function in La Loca's interactions with Carlos, the young Communist revolutionary who is also her lover, and lends itself as a textual soundtrack to the plot. Lemebel evokes music as a filmic recourse, much like the songs sung by actors and actresses of celluloid art, and much like the extradiegetic tunes that were made popular in Hollywood cinema, especially with the advent of "original soundtrack" compilations that were later sold to satiate film fans.

The reference to cinema as a narrative medium serving as an intertext to these novels should come as no surprise as film's poietic past is structured around filmic adaptations of popular narratives.³⁵ The use of popular music in cinema, according to Arthur Knight and Pamela Robertson Wojcik, creates a tangential trajectory of meaning as "increasingly, it seems, we think in soundtracks" (1). They argue that popular music in film is not exclusively a post-1950s phenomenon, but instead harkens back to the original days of silent cinema. It isn't until the 1950s, however, that Hollywood begins to market compilation albums that were labeled as original motion picture soundtrack, which was later contracted to "original

³⁵ For further reading into the history of film vis-à-vis literature, please consult Brian McFarlane (381) and Linda Hutcheon (Introduction).

soundtrack,” or “OST.”³⁶ Contemporary OST recordings include a mix of diegetic popular songs, nondiegetic lyrical and acoustic compositions, and cast-sung numbers that are intrinsically diegetic to the filmic plot.

What interests me in their analysis of the intersection between music and cinema is the assertion that “popular music becomes a key aural component of *mise-en-scène* in genre films” (4). The connection between music, the fictive plot, and reception is summarized by Annette Davison when she adds that “as a result of adhering to classical conventions, this kind of scoring works hard to encourage the audience to surrender to the film and fully engage with the emotional worlds and action depicted on the screen” (3).

Analogously, the intertextual relationship between literature and music holds these observations to be true, as the juncture between narrative and song creates an alternate plane of meaning in the novel. This connection between purportedly high and low art is contextualized by Iris Zavala in the case of Latin American fiction. She reflects how “los saltos cuánticos de la música que llevamos por dentro que se hace letra [...] la inyección de vida que le da lo llamado popular a la escritura de esa ciudad letrada en que se suele monumentalizar y canonizar la así llamada *gran literatura*” (11). The critic summarizes her position by emphatically proclaiming that “ni muros, ni vallas, ni murallas pueden contener el torrente de la expresión cultural mal llamada *popular*” (11). Keeping with this assertion, we can observe how popular music becomes a key aural and literary component of gender discourses in contemporary Latin American narratives, as authors revert to specific genres to serve as the foundations to the erotics they pen to fully engage their readers within the emotional, fictive world of the novel.

³⁶ For a comprehensive introduction to the phenomenon of the soundtrack album, see Annette Davison’s *Hollywood Theory, Non-Hollywood Practice*, 2004.

Adding to the theorization of an affective intertextuality between sound/song and the narrated plot (whether visual or textual), Knight and Wojcik note that “in addition to serving as nondiegetic score, popular music enters the soundtrack by ways of musical performance, source radios, and record players. In films, people sing, sing-along, lip-synch, dance and play to popular music” (5). Analogously, music enters the novel through a variety of mediums and textual strategies, including the nondiegetic score, character performance, radio and sound devices, and diegetic singing, indicative of the plurality of composition in cinematic original soundtrack albums.³⁷

The original soundtrack to *Tengo miedo torero* begins with the title song in the introduction of the protagonist, La Loca, in her neighborhood as she sings “*Tengo miedo torero, tengo miedo que en la tarde tu risa flote*” (10). The transvestite begins the novel’s OST album with a diegetically sang piece, which in the case of *Tengo miedo torero*, would be referenced as a cast-sung numer.³⁸ Critics have mistakenly pegged this tune to the popular Spanish singer Sara Montiel, which the author, however, explains to be false. Lemebel clarifies that the title of the book comes from a meeting with an old transvestite friend, who

³⁷ Davison defines classical Hollywood scoring as a set of practices “united in the aim of heightening the fictive reality of a film’s narrative” (2), which saw a re-emergence beginning with a series of disaster movies in the early 1970s.

³⁸ During a recent discussion of this novel, I was chided by a member of the audience who told me to never refer to the protagonist as a transvestite, as the correct term is a transgendered person. I have several problems with this assertion. First, by calling La Loca a transgendered person, we are assuming that she is a woman trapped in a man’s body. Sifuentes-Jáuregui asserts otherwise, and I tend to agree with him, as he argues that the transvestite blurs the boundaries of male/female, and that transvestism cannot be confused with wanting to be of the other sex. My second problem with my interlocutor’s terminology resides in the unabashed application of a North American gender studies term to a very local figure that clearly does not associate herself/himself with women, but instead carves out a separate and very specific gender expression. We can note this separation in her thesis on fellatio, as she argues that “las mujeres no saben nada de esto [...] ellas solo lo chupan, en cambio las locas elaboran un bordado cantante en la sinfonía de mamar” (100). It is through this act of gender disassociation from the binary that I identify La Loca as a transvestite and not as a transgendered person, as she shows no inclinations of belonging to the parameters of woman. The problems faced by critics when talking about trans identities is perfectly novelized in Santos-Febres’s *Sirena Selena*, where the only thing we can be sure about is the trans- nature of the protagonist, which is to say a state of being that is always in between different positions, without necessarily subscribing to any single role or rulebook, escaping the lingo perpetuated by gender studies.

told him of her performances as Montiel, and how she sang the tunes “El último cuplé” and “Tengo miedo torero.” A laughing Lemebel asks her what follows, to which she replies “tengo miedo que tu risa, a la tarde, flote,” which is represented by the Loca singing in the novel. The author then unveils that the song does not exist and that “la travesti mintió” (“Entrevista”).³⁹

Inadvertently, Lemebel’s appropriation of the transvestite’s lie comes to form the structural, literary, and lyrical axis mundi to the novel. From a structural standpoint, the song establishes a positionality of power within the text, with the singer, the torero, and some unseen danger forming a triangulation of potential erotic dynamics in the novel. The song acts as a literary center as its use establishes the inclusion of other diegetic and nondiegetic popular music, thereby aligning Lemebel’s narrative with other contemporary fiction that recurs to song. Finally, the singing of the fictitious *Tengo miedo torero* by Lemebel’s protagonist establishes the beginning of a structured and documented set of songs that come to form the novel’s OST album.

Though the author’s appropriation of the song is ontological to both the poesis and reception of the text, it does create a literary side effect, as by using a fictive song, the inclusion of *Tengo miedo torero* (the novel) into the musical-textual mould of other works such as *La última noche que pasé contigo*, *El huerto de mi amada*, and *Y te diré quién eres* (*Mariposa traicionera*) proves problematic. The recurrent use of verifiable popular music in the text, however, allows for a musical analysis, as popular music is actively interlaced as

³⁹ Lemebel makes no reference to the song “Tengo miedo torero” by Spanish *copla* singer, Marifé de Triana, who records the song in 1964. The song expresses the fear a woman feels every afternoon she sees her adored torero fight a bull. The song is vaguely voyeuristic of the erotic agony of bullfighting, and places the female (or homosexual) subject at a place of power, away from the violence of the ring, yet at the same time intimately connected to the blood and death experienced by the male figure and the bull. The verses that La Loca sings, however, do not appear in the song.

intertext to the novel. What is relevant, from a critical standpoint, is that Lemebel's failure to investigate the true origins and lyrics of the song lends a tone of uncertainty to the narrative, suggesting that not everything is as it seems (or as it is historically represented). The writer pens a new historical novel, but in doing so, deviates heavily from the traditional dictates of this literary genre.⁴⁰

Returning to popular song in *Tengo miedo torero*, we note how immediately after the purported title piece, the narrative segues into Consuelo Velázquez's "Bésame mucho," which is the only song that is explicitly mentioned by title but that is never sung by the Loca or heard on the radio or included as transcribed lyrics. Instead it is mentioned in passing, as La Loca is described as "tosiendo el <<Bésame mucho>> en las nubes de polvo y cachureos que arrumbaba en la cuneta" (10). "Bésame mucho" is never enunciated, never placed in the mouth as a discursive site, and therefore evades a positioning vis-à-vis the desire, identity, and gender of La Loca. This caveat hints at the connection between the title of the song and the titular "Tengo miedo torero," suggesting that Velázquez's song functions as the real secondary level of discourse that music brings to the text. A closer examination of the lyrics of both songs shows how "Tengo miedo torero" borrows heavily from the final lines of the first and last stanza of "Bésame mucho," as what is expressed is the fear of losing love and the loved one. La Loca's interpretation of the song, however, subjugates her voice to a domineering, macho, and penetrating matador, when compared to Velázquez's gender neutral lyrics.⁴¹ This genderizing of the title results in a queering of the subject's speech that goes beyond the rouge and lipstick that physically contrasts La Loca to the normative, virile

⁴⁰ I analyze this particular aspect of the novel in Chapter 1, "Bodies that Matter: Queer(ing) Masculinities and the Fall of the Dictator."

⁴¹ I refer to both the diegetic and extra-diegetic Locas who enunciate the song.

masculinities of the military dictator and the Communist rebel. Music, therefore, creates a second level of gender discourse that is only made possible by being enunciated from the mouth of the toothless Loca. The Loca as a corporal body that captures and enables this discourse harkens to the authorial note where Lemebel reveals that the novel was originally written in the 1980s but remained “por años trasapelad(a) entre abanicos, medias de encaje y cosméticos que mancharon de rouge la caligrafía romancera de sus letras” (7). Like the frilled fan that only gains meaning when agitated rhythmically, music as an intertext only rises to the plane of discourse when performed or gestured to.

Song in *Tengo miedo torero* is queered as a result of the dialectic between “Tengo miedo torero” and “Bésame mucho,” which results in gender neutral pieces such as “Tú querías que te dejara de querer” being tinged by the homoerotics of the author. La Loca sings this popular Juan Gabriel song as she ponders her one-sided relationship with Carlos (36).⁴² She surmises that her relationship is representative of:

Amores de folletín, de panfleto arrugado, amores perdidos, rastrojeados en la guaracha plañidera del maricón solo, el maricón hambriento de <<besos brujos>>, el maricón drogado por el tacto imaginario de una mano volantín rozando el cielo turbio de su carne, el maricón infinitamente preso por la lepra coliflora de su jaula, maricón trululú, atrapado en su telaraña melancólica de rizos y embelecos, el maricón rificí entretejido, hilvanado en los pespuntos de su propia trama. (36)

The song laments the loss of affection in a relationship as one lover leaves the other who still yearns for physical intimacy. Not having had relations with Carlos, La Loca’s singing of “Tú querías que te dejara de querer” implicates gender structures on a societal level as Lemebel poeticizes the plight of the homosexual in Chilean society who has an ambiguous relationship with heterosexual men. The line between homo- and heterosexuality is not

⁴² Born Alberto Aguilera Valadez (1950), Juan Gabriel is a Mexican singer best known for his *rancheras*, ballads, and pop music. Though strongly secretive about his own sexuality, popular opinion holds him to be a quintessentially Queer Mexican popular figure.

always clear in a context where the depictions of the virile masculine abound. Citing works by Roger Lancaster and Richard Parker, Oscar Misael Hernández argues that dichotomies of hegemonic versus non-hegemonic masculinities do not always function in Latin America, as it is normal for married men, who self-identify as heterosexuals, to engage in homosexual sex with various partners (70).

La Loca's song, therefore, summons the homoerotics of a Chilean society that subordinates the homosexual, yet at the same time uses him to satiate its own desires. The mouth is the locus of a political, queering discourse that engages the practice of masculinities, especially in relation to the subordination of homosexual masculinities. But it is only La Loca's mouth that enjoys this privilege, as when Carlos attempts to sing "Contigo en la distancia," his voice "se quebró en un gallo lírico que lo hizo toser y toser, llenándose los ojos de lágrimas por el ahogo y la risa" (83).

His failed attempt at singing, characterized by the impotency of his mouth, is contrasted with La Loca's mouth where her "lengua marucha se obstinara en nombrarlo, llamándolo, lamiéndolo, saboreando esas sílabas, mascando ese nombre, llenándose toda con ese Carlos tan profundo" (13). Lemebel's text is not only musical, as in the description of the condition of the homosexual in society, but also evocative of a symphonics that interweaves the written word, the dressed up Loca, the listened song, and the hypermasculine, virile body of the Communist rebel. He is called into being as the transvestite pronounces that his name is so strong "para quedarse toda suspiro, arropada entre la C y la A de ese C-arlos que iluminaba con su presencia toda la c-asa" (13). La Loca's reflection on his name involves a climax and a decline into silence that is punctuated by a sigh that is eroticized by her tongue that calls, licks, and tastes him/the syllables of his name.

The mouth of La Loca comes into play once more in the one sexual encounter between the two characters. After hosting a Cuban-style birthday party, La Loca surprises Carlos with a bottle of pisco and some music. Lemebel incorporates the lyrics of his phantom song into this scene, as both characters listen to a vinyl recording. Popular music cinematically frames the narrative, taking on the role of the title song of the original soundtrack to *Tengo miedo torero*, as the two characters share a moment of intimacy that is interrupted by La Loca's melancholic yearning for being closer to Carlos. He subsequently consoles her, adding that "pero no por eso vamos a dejar de tomar, reina [...] poniéndole la corona al extender sus labios en una sonrisa perlada" (94). This is the first reference that the reader has to Carlos's mouth, which immediately precedes his confession of a (queering) secret to the transvestite. He tells her of an encounter with another young boy when he was thirteen or fourteen. Just as the adolescents began to rub themselves against the sand, Carlos is overtaken by desire and he confesses "y no pude más porque de un salto lo monté, pero él se dió la vuelta y me dijo que yo primero, pero yo le contesté que ni cagando, que me dejara ponerle la puntita, la pura puntita" (95). By bringing Carlos's mouth into being, Lemebel opens a dialogue into the queering of this masculine figure that is for all sakes and purposes the heterosexual ideal. He falls outside of Raewyn Connell's idea of hegemonic masculinity, but his political leanings do not necessarily sublimate his complicity with the ideal, if this is to be taken as the dictator figure that was analyzed in the first chapter.

It is Carlos's words that queer him, especially after he confides: "no sé por qué yo no me moví cuando le saltó el chorro de moco que me mojó la pierna" (96). This staining of the subject, which I explicate in the previous chapter, causes a sense of shame in Carlos, so much so that "a los dos nos quedó una cosa sucia que nos hacía bajar la vista cuando nos

cruzábamos en el patio del liceo” (96).⁴³ The textual introduction of the subject’s mouth enables a queering of the subject’s masculinity, a decentering from the viably Masculine, recognizing that this position is variable and contingent on societal constructs of what is and what is not metonymic of power. The source of shame in Carlos’s encounter is the staining of the semen on his leg and not the desire he felt for sodomizing his friend, as this is explained as simply being “cosas de cabros chicos” (96). More so than homoerotic desire, it is the violation of the Masculine’s adherence to cleanliness and hygiene that succeeds in displacing the revolutionary masculine from a position of power.

After this confession La Loca leaves to find Carlos a blanket, only to discover him asleep and snoring “por los fuelles ventoleros de su boca abierta” (97). His open mouth foreshadows La Loca’s subsequent actions, as she undresses him to reveal “un grueso dedo sin uña que pedía a gritos una boca que anillara su amorado glande” (99). Lemebel’s narrative underlines the queering nature of the physical mouth, as La Loca prepares herself to fellate Carlos, “sacándose la placa de dientes, se mojó los labios con saliva para resbalar sin trabas ese péndulo que campaneó en sus encias huecas” (99).

If bodies do matter, as gender theorists such as Judith Butler and Raewyn Connell assert, then the ontologically masculine protrusion of the male body enters a site of reckoning as it is placed in the discursive site of the mouth, where discourses of gender, masculinity, and queering take place. The author further refers to the transvestite figure as “la boca-loca” (100), suggesting that the mouth is ontological to the Queer subject, and that only in and

⁴³ I analyze a similar scene in Jaime Bayly’s *No se lo digas a nadie* (1994) in Chapter 3, paying special attention to the importance of the school as a spatial referent for the construct/construction of masculinities.

through it can the negotiation of a Queer(ing) identity take place.⁴⁴ In the “concauidad húmeda” (99) of La Loca, Lemebel evokes music, musicality, and song as he observes that “las locas elaboran un bordado cantante en la sinfonía de su mamar [...] La Loca solo degusta y luego trina su catadura lírica por el micrófono carnal que expande su radiofónica libación” (100). The detoothed transvestite further comments that fellatio “es como cantar [...] interpretarle a Carlos un himno de amor directo al corazón” (100).⁴⁵

This scene in the novel is brought to a sensual crescendo when the author again locates his narrative in the male mouth, as “el mono solidario le brindó una gran lágrima de vidrio para lubricar el canto reseco de su incomprendida soledad” (100). Lemebel immediately follows with the lyrics to “Ansiedad” by J.E. Sarabia Rodríguez, which evokes imagery and sentiments that are congruent with the narrated events:

Ansiedad de tenerte en mis brazos,
musitando palabras de amor,
Ansiedad de tener tus encantos
y en la boca volverte a besar. (101)

The text does not disclose whether or not this song belongs to the diegetic vinyl record that is played at the beginning of their encounter, or if it belongs to the cinematic soundtrack that floats over the narrative, setting the mood of the scene and creating a secondary level of discourse that runs parallel to the signifiers in the text, but that elucidates an intertextual

⁴⁴ This idea brings to mind José Donoso’s La Manuela, in *El lugar sin límites* (1966), who proclaims that “vieja estaría pero se iba a morir cantando y con las plumas puestas” (16). La Manuela, unlike Lemebel’s Loca, never succeeds in queering an other, and is queered herself when she recounts how La Japonesa, a woman, cajoles her into having sex to win a bet. Donoso, however, does not objectify the male body but instead explores the violence exerted against homosexuals by other masculinities in a rural Latin American village. He does objectify the transvestite’s penis, which is described to be enormous, reflecting the importance placed in fiction on the physical phallus to characterize the masculine in early and mid 20th-century fiction.

⁴⁵ The relationship between heterosexual revolutionary and homosexual bears some resemblances to Manuel Puig’s couple of Valentín and Molina in *El beso de la mujer araña* (1976). Their moment of physical engagement and the subsequent queering of the dissident Valentín, however, are mediated through the anus, which I argue is a site of political discourse that is inscribed onto the male body, which Puig uses to challenge Argentine censorship and oppression during the 1970s.

reading that overhauls traditional textual analysis of the work. Connecting the two narratives together, we can see that Sarabia Rodríguez's lyrics reveal La Loca's love for Carlos as being rooted in more than physical desire. We can also observe in the song that the evocation of the mouth as a site of desire and as a site of utterance is queered when associated with the character of La Loca who fellates the young revolutionary, thereby calling into question his positioning within the matrices of masculinity.⁴⁶

Though Lemebel's novel is titled with an imagined song, the role of popular music as an intertext in writing masculinities within its pages cannot be ignored. The OST of *Tengo miedo torero* is replete with diegetic solos, extradiegetic tunes, and diegetic pieces that reflect the narrative trajectory of La Loca and Carlos. Song, as lyrics sung by diegetic characters, however, is primal in understanding the Queering politics of Lemebel and the usage of the male mouth as a site of discursivity that confronts heteronormative ideas of masculinity.⁴⁷ But not all literary soundtracks enjoy the collaboration of the leading lady/man/transvestite. How are masculinities, then, negotiated in these texts, when the narrative stops short of, or actively resists a representation of desire?

Towards a Lyrical Epistemology of Masculine Desire.

Mayra Montero's *La última noche que pasé contigo* is a classic erotic-Caribbean text that inculcates the use of the bolero as a literary intertext, following in the school of other

⁴⁶ I look at this archetype of revolutionary masculinity in greater detail in Chapter 6.

⁴⁷ Another example of this phenomenon can be seen in Mayra Santos-Febres's *Sirena Selena vestida de pena* (2000), where the transvestite protagonist sings a series of boleros that challenge gender norms and what it means to be masculine/feminine. The young Sirena queers heteronormative figures like the married businessman, Hugo Graubel, through the boleros that she sings in her performances. Furthermore, the bolero functions as a psychical barometer of the desire felt by the protagonist, and of her self-identification with a Queer identity.

novels such as *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* (1989) by Luis Rafael Sánchez, *El entierro de Cortijo* (1983) and *Una noche con Iris Chacón* (1986) by Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá, and *El libro de Apolonia o de las islas* (1993) by Iris Zavala. The use of popular music by these authors comes as a result of earlier shifts in the telos of Puerto Rican literature, which began to veer from the works and styles of canonical authors and their texts. As Leonora Simonovis explains:

Escritores como Luis Rafael Sánchez, Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá, Ana Lydia Vega y Rosario Ferré, entre otros, se abocaron a la tarea de desplazar el discurso canónico de las décadas precedentes, así como a proyectar el universo simbólico de sus obras hacia otros ámbitos, distintos a los que proponían los escritores canónicos. En este sentido, la indagación histórica, el diálogo con otros discursos (feminista, político o económico, entre otros) y la asimilación de la cultura popular o de masas, constituyen [. . .] un conjunto de respuestas a las crisis políticas y sociales de Puerto Rico . . . (11-12)

From a cultural standpoint, the sociopolitical crises of the 1970s and afterwards throw traditional family and sexual structures into a flux that unearths private and public concerns with gender. Emblematic of this process is *La guaracha del Macho Camacho* (1976) by Luis Rafael Sánchez. This period onwards, as outlined previously, has been characterized by a crisis in the systems of gender in Latin America that has manifested itself in popular cultural artefacts. The use of music in these texts, therefore, is symptomatic of a broader feeling of change and crisis, and a study of its tunes permits an unearthing of its many problems by means of tearing at the fabric of the canonical and/or high culture. These narratives explore the quotidian, personal happenings of peoples and situations that open up tectonic crack-lines of power and identity over the image of the region. As Enrique Plata Ramírez observes:

La narrativa caribeña se apropia del discurso musical, para dar cuenta del caribeño en cuanto ser pluricultural, de su cultura, su identidad y su perifericidad. Estas apropiaciones discursivas musicales permiten sostener el encuentro de lo heterogéneo y la transgresión de una alta cultura que dará paso a la cultura popular. Esta tradición narrativa es ya larga e intensa y no parece tener punto final en lo inmediato. (61)

The use of the bolero as a narratological fulcrum to explore plural and varied discourses is a result of its own historical development.⁴⁸ In an archaeological social study of the genre, Alex Fleites affirms that:

El bolero ha devenido un estado del espíritu y un elemento de reconocimiento del llamado ser latino; quizás después del Español, el único nutriente fácilmente detectable de la identidad continental. Es algo que nos signa, que nos expresa y, ¿por qué no?, nos limita dentro de unos marcos éticos y filosóficos que, con el tiempo, han llegado a constituir verdaderos esquemas de conducta. (2)

The genre, he explains, is historically adaptable and transnational.⁴⁹ Bolero music is also a highly erotic genre of musical expression, as it proposes “una actitud ante el amor, pero más: organiza a nivel simbólico las distintas situaciones que puede enfrentar el enamorado” (8).

The inclusion of its lyrics and melodies into the narrative of writers across the continent stresses its exploration of identity in Latin America, as “muchos de los elementos estables de la identidad latinoamericana, de su ser más entrañable, se han depositado, se han difundido y fijado a través del bolero” (Fleites 11).

This intersection between culture and identity is explored in its plural manifestations in Montero’s novel.⁵⁰ *La última noche que pasé contigo* inserts the reader into the marriage and personal musings of a pair of empty-nesters (Celia and Fernando) who take a cruise vacation after the marriage of their only child (Elena). Located in the nonterritorial spatial

⁴⁸ Jorge Rosario-Vélez provides a succinct yet complete bibliography of the bolero in his article “Somos un sueño imposible.”

⁴⁹ Citing “Tristezas” (1885) by Pepe Sánchez as the first bolero, the critic explicates the incorporation of jazz instruments and contemporary techniques in 1950s Havana as an example of how the bolero has kept up with the times (3).

⁵⁰ Though born in Havana, Cuba, Montero has lived for over half a century in Puerto Rico. She is politically active and has taken part in proclamations presented by the Latin American and Caribbean Congress for the Independence of Puerto Rico (November 2006). She heavily favors a change towards sovereignty and independence from North American legislative rule. In an interview given in February of 2008, the author argues that Puerto Rico “es una colonia de los Estados Unidos, y a nadie le gusta vivir en un régimen colonial.” In interviews, Montero endorses a distinctively Latin American tradition to her texts instead of a more North American heritage.

coordinate of the ocean, the couple enters a period of marked sexual activity with each other and with others. The trip cathartically plays out in the sexual awakenings of both husband and wife. Celia reminisces about an extramarital affair she had with the caretaker of her sick father, Agustín Conejo. She subsequently has another affair during a stopover in their cruise with an Afro-Caribbean man. Fernando, on the other hand, rehashes the feelings and passions he felt during Celia's first infidelity and has his own trysts with the enigmatic Julieta, a mature woman who meets the couple aboard the cruise. Arranging an erotic dynamism that weaves tales and encounters of passion, mistrust, and animalistic sex, Montero places all the cards on the table when at the end of the novel, the reader discovers that Julieta is Conejo's ex-wife, thereby connecting all ends in an act of erotic serendipity.

In addition to separating the novel into eight distinct chapters headed by bolero titles, Montero intersperses amidst the voices of Fernando and Celia a collection of nine letters that appear sporadically in the novel. Written between Abel (a pseudonym for a woman, Mariana) and Ángela, these letters we find connect Fernando to Celia in their respective childhoods. The letters also reveal that Mariana leaves Ángela for a younger woman, Julieta, who becomes Fernando's lover while on the cruise.

Jumping to a structural characterization of the piece, popular bolero music composes the OST of *La última noche que pasé contigo*, as Montero organizes her chapters around the genre, probing Enrique Plata Ramírez to argue that “la letra de los boleros [son] el recurso ficcional que permit[e] instaurar el discurso narrativo, aproximarse hacia el erotismo, la sensualidad y las historias paralelas de los sujetos periféricos que se sienten al borde de sus

vidas” (60). The critic’s observation is followed by others who have studied the role of song in Montero’s pages.⁵¹ As an exemplary voice in this chorus, Irma López underlines that:

Montero emplea la música del bolero para darle sustento a toda su novela, tanto a nivel de la estructura como de la fábula, ya que no solo el título corresponde a esta música tradicional del mundo hispano sino que las ocho secciones de la novela están encabezadas con esta “lírica del goce,” de seducción y sensualidad [...]. Tema y técnica se entrelazan en la elaboración textual, pues las historias de los personajes paralelan los arrebatos pasionales de las melodías. (138)

The connection made between bolero and the erotics of the novel is strengthened in Myrna García-Calderón’s article, as she underlines that the symbiosis between lyrical and narrative text is very different in each chapter. She identifies how Celia’s relationship with the bolero changes as the novel progresses, with the final chapter showcasing the female protagonist’s rejection of patriarchy and phallogocentrism that is almost intrinsic to the erotics of the bolero. The focus on feminine sexuality is echoed in López’s study, as she asserts that “*La última noche* se suma así a un corpus de ficción hispanoamericano que trata el discurso erótico como otro medio para mellar los códigos sociales rígidos que impiden la autonomía sexual de las mujeres” (134).

From this cursory review, it is obvious that the role of music in *La última noche que pasé contigo* vis-à-vis desire and eroticism, especially per the female subject, has been analyzed ad nauseum. The inclusion of this novel in this chapter may seem off-putting to the reader, leading to an inquiry of what can be further analyzed that has not already been said. The following pages, however, will build on the critical work done on popular music in the text by examining how these frames represent and negotiate masculinities in *La última noche que pasé contigo*, taking into account the essence of the bolero and the spatial referents that

⁵¹ For an excellent structural analysis of the novel, see Robert Lauer’s article (1997). The critic organizes his analysis around the perceived speed of narrative versus epistolary text, which allows for an infusion of “ficción sexual” in the novel (46).

plot out Montero's narrative. It builds on the idea that popular music functions as a textual resource to write, represent, and discuss masculinities in fiction.

Curiously, the only critical texts dealing with masculinity in the novel focus on the "lesbianizing" of the male protagonist (Lauer, "El (homo)erotismo" 47; Lauer, "La representación" 47). The critic, Robert Lauer, cites the latent homosexual desire in Fernando and his sexual fixation on orality to characterize him as being lesbianized. He interjects that men are less likely to problematize their own sexualities in fiction ("La representación" 46). To typify Montero's fiction, he adds:

La ficción sexual de Mayra Montero, al investigar la psique de sus personajes, nos da una representación del deseo masculino en toda su vulnerabilidad y complejidad, dando a la literatura erótica escrita por una mujer una perspectiva más amplia y humanizante, que al mismo tiempo que desestabiliza, también amplía el canon de un modo literario que hasta tiempos recientes solía considerarse propiedad casi exclusiva de hombres de letras. ("La representación" 48)

Lauer's assertion, though well-intentioned, fails to acknowledge the narratives of heterosexual men who do problematize their heterosexuality and desire.⁵² Furthermore, the critic does not engage the practice and existence of masculinities in the novel's topographic referent, a striking omission in a novel that is rich in its portrayal of hierarchical masculinities in the Caribbean.

The matrices of masculinity are unearthed through the male protagonist, Fernando, as his narrative opens Montero's foray into empty-nester sexuality. Aside from commenting on the redundancy of coitus with his wife, he reveals his friend Bermúdez as a symbol of male homosociality, as it is through him that he learns lessons about marriage and of the cruise

⁵² Sergio Ramírez's *Margarita, está linda la mar* and Franz Galich's *Y te diré quién eres (Mariposa traicionera)* are two examples of the many texts that examine seemingly heterosexual male characters who indulge in isolated or frequent acts of homoeroticism. His comments also fail to account for various novels published by Enrique Serna and Luis Arturo Ramos. On another note, Lauer's assertion fails to account for the narratives of self-identified homosexual male authors who routinely put under the microscope masculine erotics. The novel by Pedro Lemebel, studied earlier in this chapter, is a small caveat in this tendency.

that they are on. The relationship between Bermúdez and Fernando does not reveal per se a dialoguing with Connell's ideas of hegemonic masculinity, in the political or Gramscian sense, but instead reflects on Chris Beasley's reclassification of what hegemony actually means in masculinity studies. The homosocial group in *La última noche que pasé contigo* reflects the usage of the term hegemonic masculinity only if and when it applies to an "empirical reference specifically to *actual groups of men*" (171). Beasley underlines that these men are not "entirely discrete definitional entities" (173) from the mechanism of patriarchal legitimization that is traditionally defined as hegemonic masculinity. We must keep in mind, however, that the umbrella term in its cultural and political incarnation is implicitly constructed by and through real groups of men, as the "butcher" homosocial evidenced in Montero's novel.

The narrative further reveals that Bermúdez takes on the role of educator to Fernando, teaching him what the homosocial considers the ways of life, love, and adventure. He is a figure full of theories and explanations for the intricacies of gender relations. In one example, he hypothesizes that the open ocean will make Celia into a tigress in the bedroom, as the hot waters of the Caribbean smell of rotten seafood. Bermúdez argues that "el marisco pasado, ya tú sabes, es olor de mujer" (14). Whether consciously or simply through a process of dialogic osmosis, Fernando assimilates this discourse as he discloses that Celia touches his "labios con la punta de su dedo perverso, su dedo sátiro que olía a marisco antiguo, a tierra remojada, a puro mar de las Antillas" (23).

The homosocial bond between Fernando and Bermúdez is reinforced when the former confides a dream he has the night before his daughter's marriage to Alberto, where he finds himself in his son-in-law's car having sex with a friend of Elena. With what can be

characterized as a homosocial reply, following Eve Sedgwick's idea of desire within the all-male group, Bermúdez asks if the friend is attractive or not. Basing her ideas on the earlier work by René Girard, Sedgwick further argues that the expression of desire within the homosocial group is often through the use of violence (176). She further theorizes that homosocial groups of men are interdependent on each other and on the group as a whole, and are kept in this relationship by the commercialization of women as an outlet for the desire they feel for each other. Sedgwick's theory relies on an implicit homosexual drive between members of the homosocial that can only be made public by the possession of desired women. Fernando, however, does not disclose the events of the day before the dream, when he spied Elena having sex with Alberto in the backseat of the car. His silence convicts him of first degree voyeurism and incestuous thoughts, though Freud would argue that the latter always merits a pleading of *nolo contendere*.

The language of the middle-aged Fernando reveals a subtle discomfort with the practice of heterosexual, vaginal sex, as he describes it as being "la carnicería" (15). It is an act where Alberto massacres his daughter and where he massacres his daughter's friend. More importantly, we understand that Fernando constructs his expression of gender around an oral dialectic with other men that is rooted in the narration of sexual practices and desires that are described as violent and bloody. This narrative subjectifies the male as the butcher entering his domain with a phallic knife and anonymizes the woman as a simple piece of meat in the "carnicería." This epistemology of coitus is ontological to the homosocial bond that is shared by Fernando, Bermúdez and others. It is founded on phallic, unredeeming violence that ignores the penetratee's desires and subjectivity. This is noted in "las atrocidades" (107) that Fernando shares with Celia in bed at night, which include an anecdote

about the fishermen of Mombasa. These African men “subían a bordo los cuerpos moribundos de los dugongos, unas vacas marinas con pechos de matrona, y fornicaban con ellos hasta que las pobres bestias dejaban de existir. Era un sencillo coito anal [...] con el raro aliciente de que el animal, durante el acto, lanzaba unos gritos angustiosos que parecían sollozos de mujer” (107-8). Sex within this group is limited to the violence exerted by the self over a possessed and violated other.

Returning to Fernando’s real expression of sexuality (versus the idealized paradigm of butcher homosociality), we can see that he does not fully fall into the categorization of butcher masculinity, as one could argue that he is latently homosexual due in part to his very oral and visual sexuality (Lauer “La representación” 47). This conjecture of male desire succeeds in portraying Fernando as a vulnerable, complex, and humanized representation of male sexuality that does not necessarily conform to the Neanderthal archetypes of the Latin male who is dressed up by the possessed phallus.⁵³

This fragile, non-phallogocentric nature is evidenced when Fernando eats another man’s semen from the cinnamon-garnished vagina of a prostitute, and when he kisses Julieta whose mouth is coated with the ejaculate of a black, brutish taxi driver. These incidences, which are intimately linked to the mouth as a (queering) site of sexual expression, are seemingly contradicted when Fernando describes how Celia mounts his mouth after every visit she makes to her father’s house to take care of him. The protagonist’s oral enjoyment is truncated when “con más firmeza, la empujaba hacia atrás, la obligaba a retroceder, la ensartaba furiosamente en su verdadero trono” (18).⁵⁴ The male finds a need to emphasize his phallic

⁵³ See Ilan Stavans’s comments on the “Latin Phallus” in Chapter 1.

⁵⁴ I resist to call this a moment of homosexual panic, as Fernando does not violently act out but instead firmly reasserts his position of dominance.

corporality and denies his own oral impulses, though in latter scenes of the novel he shows an animalistic consumption-drive, wanting to devour his lover Julieta and to drink her urine.

The textual descriptions of cunilingus between Celia and Fernando subtly, yet quite perversely, react to the lyrics of the bolero that titles the first chapter, “Burbujas de amor.” The song narrates the yearning desire of a subject for his/her lover, who wants to “Pasar la noche en vela / Mojado en ti.” The reasons for placing this bachata at the beginning of the novel are elementary as Montero chooses a nondiegetic referent that explicates the underlying tensions and desires in the narrative. The bachata as a sensual, body-clinging art, after all is meant to be accompanied by “todas esas cosas salvajes y calientes” (88) that constitute human desire. It is to note that the only character that is actively described as being “mojado” is Fernando as he has a “rostro empapado” (18) after Celia spends a good fifteen minutes “remando absorta” on top of his face (18). The contrasts between this initial performance and the subsequent “placing on the throne” are highlighted when Fernando dephallicizes his body by analogizing his face with the dead calm of the sea. He is not the virile male who massacres the female, but is instead composed of a dismorphic, desubjectified orifice that sexually pleasures Celia. His corporal body is desubjectified into an anonymous, shape-shifting mass like the ocean as Celia rows on top of him.

Though Fernando strives to define himself away from the butcher mentality of the homosocial, it is plain to see that the break is not as clearcut as criticism and critics would lead one to believe. In those many encounters with his wife, where he haphazardly reassumes his role as King (of the “carnicería”) by placing Celia on her throne, he finds a mark near her breast that confirms his suspicions of her having an affair with Marianito, her father’s cousin. Reinforcing his interdependence on the homosocial, Fernando conjures a narrative of how

Celia and Marianito engage in a repeated set of trysts that can only be intertextually inspired by the sordid, yet serendipitous tales of sexual conquest shared amongst groups of men and/or in commercial erotica.

This focus on orality is strengthened by Celia's diegetic singing of the titular bolero in the chapter. *La última noche que pasé contigo* follows the intertextual model of the literary OST though it is a two-sided album, with the boleros that title each chapter as Side A, and the characters who pronounce the lyrics within the narrative as Side B.⁵⁵ Celia repeats the line "mojada en ti" several times, finishing with a languid "oooooh, mojada en ti" (27) that is described by Fernando as being uncouth and off-key. He attempts a reversal of roles by situating Celia within the aquarium that houses the lonesome subject in the lyrics of the bolero, making her the fish that repeatedly exclaims "mojada en ti." The opposite, however, is not simply dissimilated by his narrative, but is put into tension by the recurring, routine practice of her mounting him. Keeping this in mind, Celia's diegetic singing of the bolero succeeds in decentering, or at least subverting, the phallic masculinity that is espoused by Fernando (at times) and his homosocial group. The lyrical referent assumes an explicitly mocking tone as it is the male character that is wetted by the female, either through her coital mounting of his mouth, or by her wetting of his lips with her finger that tastes of "marisco antiguo" (23).

The lyrical referent being sung from the mouth of a character recounts the idea of the mouth as a site of queering discursivity. The subversion of Fernando's "massacring" masculinity underlines his interdependence on the phallic homosocial. The homosocial

⁵⁵ My musical metaphor is of course in reference to audio cassettes and not modern digital recording technology, which in many ways erased the traditional practice of placing more commercial and popular tracks on Side A and demoted "filler" tracks on Side B. In the age of being able to download individual songs instead of whole albums, the concept of a Side has grown irrelevant, leading some popular bands and singers to release B-side compilations for the true fan.

group, we must remember, is kept alive by implicit, unseen, and changing tangents of desire between male subjects and a mediating female. Sedgwick's triangulations of desire into a social model of power are reliant on the non-expression of desire between men. The bolero sang by Celia, however, seems to deliver the initial blow in defacing the façade that is Fernando's carnal brand of masculinity. He is further defrocked when he recounts his encounter with a prostitute who mixes cinnamon powder with talcum. The lady asks him to leave as she attends to another customer, a man who spurns envy and violence in the awaiting Fernando when he brushes off the cinnamon-laced powder from his clothing after completing his business with the prostitute. The male protagonist engages in what can be termed as oral rape when he barges in on the prostitute and saturates her genitals with the cinnamon powder before tasting her. Quite ironically, the violence he feels towards the other gentlemen is vicariously first expressed through the use of the mouth in oral sex and not through the phallic, violent thrusts of the homosocial butcher entering the "carnicería."

The dialectic between belonging to and deviating from the homosocial's narrative is not a simple issue of black and white, as it is complicated by Fernando's description of the prostitute's taste: "Adentro sabía amargo, sabía de cerca a concha triturada, y sabía lejanamente, cada vez más lejanamente, a la canela" (30). He reassumes Bermúdez's discourse, only to have the prostitute reveal that he had swallowed "la leche de otro hombre" (31). The ties that bind the homosocial are momentarily severed by Fernando as he engages in a passive, not violent or phallic, expression of his own homosocial desire. This act of transgression takes on a nostalgic, uncanny tone when he describes his ambiguous relationship with cinnamon: "me repugnaba algunas veces, y había veces en que amanecía con un deseo brutal de saborearla" (31).

The character's belonging to the homosocial, which is to say not the group that is "mojado" in the song, is further complicated when he meets the mature Julieta. She notices his hands rubbing suntan lotion on her body and he makes a direct effort to "hacerlas parecer más fuertes y laboriosas, más hábiles y despiadadas, es decir, más temibles" (34). Though the diegetically enunciated lyrical intertext characterizes a queering of the male body, it shows signs of fighting this process, of somehow reaffirming its knife-like, Latin phallus. Though critics argue that it is a female author that allows for a problematization of male sexuality in erotic fiction, I argue that this is only truly allowed when the heterosexual male narrative voice is dialogically engaged with the musical intertext, as a portal that elevates any discussions of sexuality above and beyond the limits of prose.

Popular song, as part of a diegetically sung OST, decenters the homosocially-dependent Carlos in Pedro Lemebel's *Tengo miedo torero*. Lemebel's narrative, however, lacks the male countervoice to the queering erotics of the song. The one exception, however, occurs when imbued with a poetics of inebriation, the rebel Carlos takes over the narrative as his ventriloquist voice explains a long-kept secret of homoerotic frolicking at the banks of a river with another youth who ejaculates onto his leg. *Tengo miedo torero* manages to queer and decenter virile masculinity through song, but it is only through an exchange in the control of the narrative voice, in this case brought about by copious amounts of pisco, that Lemebel succeeds in exposing heteronormative masculinity as a construct that is dependent on its ties to the homosocial, which are in turn woven by a reliance on oral narratives.

The converse, which is to say the sexual reliance on orality, however, has an opposite effect within the homosocial. The process of sexualized eating queers the male's belonging to the group, as the couple and Julieta eat sushi at a local restaurant in one of the cruise stops.

Celia assumes the active, violent role that she occupies when mounting Fernando by cajoling the culinarily conservative Julieta to try the Japanese delicacy. Montero creates an ephemeral, yet tangible triangle of desire between the two women and Fernando when he joins in the sushi “no tanto por el apetito como por la necesidad de unirme al culto” (39). His mouth becomes a site of seduction as he physically assimilates the raw mollusks in a slow and sensual fashion that incites Julieta to caress his ankles with her feet. Fernando’s oral fixation alludes to the incident with the cinnamon powder and to his subjugation by the rowing Celia over his face, both incidences that disassociate him from Bermúdez’s butcher masculinity. The text as narrated by Fernando, however, shows an awareness of this deviation, as it reverts to the homosocial’s animalization of the female body. Fernando transmutes the genitalia with each piece of sushi offered to him, as the *aoyagi* becomes a “vulva sonrosada, la cresta del clítoris sobresaliendo de su cojín de arroz, palpitando intensamente bajo unos polvos misteriosos” (39-40), and as the *torigai* is described as “otra vulva cercenada especialmente para mi exclusivo festín, otro clítoris latiente, esta vez pardo y resbaloso” (40). The dead mollusk is not simply reimagined as genitalia, but is brought to life as a pulsating organ of female sexuality. The “polveros misteriosos” reveal an unconscious reference to the prostate and cinnamon-laced talc that constituted Fernando’s first documented deviance from butcher masculinity.

The role of the bolero in the process of constructing a gender identity in Fernando is addressed further in the third chapter when he sings a few lines of “Negra consentida” to Celia, as he reminisces about his adventures from the night of the restaurant. The song conjures exotic visions of the Afro-Caribbean as a source of unrestrained, animalistic sexual expression that is underlined by the mythically large African penis. Fernando wonders if

Julieta wishes to “convertirse en una negra procaz, maquinadora, pervertida; una negra devoradora de ardientes negros insaciables” (81). This metaphor connects the sung lyrics of the bolero to the erotics of the text, as the description of Julieta as a carnivorous sexual subject versus the equally subjectified insatiable negro is juxtaposed with the events of the night before, where Julieta forces Fernando to perform oral sex on her. She removes his hold on phallic penetration in their relations, and subjugates him to the objectified role of giving her pleasure, akin to the pieces of meat that are massacred by the homosocial’s butchering paradigm of sex.

Julieta desubjectifies Fernando within the aesthetics of cunilingus by reversing the narrated actions of the restaurant. She impregnates sushi/female genitalia with the butcher’s sexual power, as it is responsible for devouring and ingesting both of them the night before and not vice versa. The consumer, which is to say the oral technician of the erotic act, is the phantasmal, consumed object and not the purveyor of any form of agency, phallic or otherwise, in the text.

The use of popular music in *La última noche que pasé contigo* is not simply limited to the negotiation of masculinities in Fernando. It is captured as a narratological strategy by Celia as she describes how she would masturbate during her engagement to Fernando, listening to Lucho Gatica’s rendition of “Amor, qué malo eres.” Montero problematizes female desire by confronting the female masturbatory act as Celia relates how she begins to touch herself: “No era exactamente que me masturbara, no era así, tan burdo, la expresión exacta era ‘reconocerme’” (103). The bolero is used as a parallel yet alternate discourse to create a discourse that runs counter to heteronormative models of sexuality. As Jorge Rosario-Vélez judges, “Celia, como la Catalina de Ángeles Mastretta en *Arráncame la vida*,

invierte su prioridad de hija, esposa y madre por la de amante” (73).⁵⁶ The critic continues his study of the transgressive power of the bolero by citing examples from the epistolary lesbian relationship, and from Celia’s own necrophilic thoughts when she fellates Fernando. He mixes examples of diegetic and structural referents of the bolero in his analysis to arrive at a strong hypothesis: “Celia polemiza la apropiación del bolero como medio de enunciación de estos deseos porque los sujetos carecen de la capacidad lingüística apropiada para articular lo ‘salvaje y lo caliente’” (68). The critic goes on to add that in the novel “el cuerpo femenino emerge como ambrosia sin corresponder a la sexualidad reproductiva, mimética y de acreditación cultural” (68).

The female body, therefore, becomes the site of erotic discursivity in the novel. But do the limits of the body stop there, at the anatomic border between the female and the male? The body in Montero’s text is problematized beyond the reductionism of biological attributes, as the bolero also serves as a means of problematicizing male sexuality, and how its lyrics can mediate the many transgressions of Masculinity extant in the text.⁵⁷

The examples of how Fernando dialogues with song to expose his own vulnerability as a heterosexual male who partakes in “la sexualidad reproductiva, mimética y de acreditación cultural” have been outlined in these pages. That being said, the character of Agustín Conejo undergoes a similar process vis-à-vis music at the beginning of the chapter

⁵⁶ The use of the bolero in Mastretta’s novel allows for the novelistic emancipation of the female character from the societal controls of patriarchy. Please see the works of Salvador Oropesa and Álvaro Salvador for further analysis.

⁵⁷ The critical void on this novel is akin to critical stance taken towards Cristina Rivera Garza’s *Nadie me verá llorar*, analyzed in Chapter 1 (See the section “Trafficking Masculinities”). Rivera Garza’s novel is replete with male characters who ponder their own heteronormative stands towards sexuality and their ties to the historically hegemonic homosocial. Critics, however, have focused on the female body and the feminine as transgressive entities in the novel, similar to Rosario-Vélez’s argumentation in regards to Montero’s *La última noche que pasé contigo*. In another example, Sonia Valle engages the reader in a psychoanalytic reading, paying close attention to the manifestations and incarnations of lesbian love and desire as rooted in the female body in the novel.

titled “Amor, qué malo eres.” Celia remembers how he comes to her one day after his shift at the hospital in a shroud of mystery, wanting to share with her the two things that he has never done sexually. He repeatedly swears her to secrecy, emphasizing that what they are going to do “sería un secreto entre los dos, únicamente de él y [ella], un pacto que [debían] sellar con sangre” (94). In what follows, Celia alludes to but never makes explicit both her sodomizing him with a dildo, and her performing anilingus on the same point of entry into the male body. Though Conejo lacks narrative control of the text, Montero creates a circumstance that is inclusive of his dalliance into sexual expression that is not “reproduciva, mimética y de acreditación cultural” (Rosario-Vélez 68). The author achieves this in part due to the structuralizing referent of the bolero that speaks of rejection, lies, secrecy, and ultimately estrangement between two lovers. It is through the referent of popular song that Conejo’s purported animalistic, domineering, butcher masculinity is revealed to be as vulnerable and as polysemantic as Fernando’s interdependency with the butcher homosocial.

The use of popular bolero music as an OST to *La última noche que pasé contigo* promulgates a literary tradition in the Caribbean that began with authors attempting to subvert dominant writings and writers. In keeping with this movement, Montero creates an epistemology of desire and sexuality that emanates from the bolero, which cannot be found within the linguistic constraints of narrative fiction. The writer’s resourcefulness echoes Judith Butler’s thesis on the production and expression of desire. The critic argues that “desire is manufactured and forbidden as a ritual symbolic gesture whereby the juridical model exercises and consolidates its own power” (76). The idea of a juridical model, however, confines the analysis of power to what is prohibited and held as taboo within the system, without necessarily unmasking the actual operations of power, if the latter is to be

understood under the model proposed by Foucault. Without delving, however, into a political critique of Butler's assertion, we can still appreciate her putting into a dynamic the source and perpetuator of desire. The legislative branch, so to speak, of this model is language as it is socialized and permissive of certain desires and not others. The use of popular song in *La última noche que pasé contigo* is therefore an exemplar of how this model is and can be subverted, and how narrative fiction can engage in a representation of all that is taboo, unsaid, and secret that unveils our own sexualities to be vulnerable, social, and phantasmic constructs. Ultimately, the use of popular music in the text cements the notion that masculinity as a gender expression and identity is not fixed or permanent in the many men who roam Montero's Caribbean, but is instead a fluid, amobeous, and at times contradictory.

Soundtrack, Seduction, and Homosocial Dynamics in *El huerto de mi amada*.

Alfredo Bryce Echenique's *El huerto de mi amada* is the latest novel by an author who began his literary career with the publication of *Huerto cerrado* (1968), but who did not find fame until the publication of his second novel, *Un mundo para Julius* (1970), which went on to be an international bestseller. Bryce Echenique has often been lumped together with other writers of his generation under the commercially viable umbrella-term of the *Latin American boom*, but he has resisted this association.⁵⁸ The author, furthermore, has focused

⁵⁸ Born in 1939, Bryce Echenique shares some similarities to another great Peruvian author, Mario Vargas Llosa (1936). Their first novels were published in the 1960s (though Vargas Llosa publishes *Los jefes*, a collection of stories in 1959), and have continued to write prolifically. In opposition to other writers of their generation, and of their commercial/editorial grouping, the two Peruvians have managed to keep with the times in their fiction. Vargas Llosa, for example, begins to explore the feminine world in his recent novels. His highly-acclaimed *La fiesta del Chivo*, for example, is structured around textual strategies of trauma such as sudden flashbacks and the meshing of a past traumatic incident with a superfluous contemporary occurrence. Bryce Echenique, on the other hand, jokingly refers to psychoanalytic theories and methods of reading literature, when Carlitos and Natalia attempt to psychoanalyze their own relationship. He ponders: "imagine tú todo lo que se imaginarían

his narratives on the class struggles faced in Peru and Latin America, as he attempts to expose the machinations of gender, power, and race. In *La amigdalitis de Tarzán* (1999), for example, he pens the struggles faced by an inter-class relationship between a Peruvian and a Salvadorian. In an attempt to emphasize this point, César Ferreira observes, “Bryce es uno de los grandes cronistas de la burguesía peruana [...] todas las novelas de Bryce examinan la psicología del sujeto desclasado, antiheroico y solitario” (75). He works in the tradition of other Peruvian scribes who assign to the past an aura of privilege, lending a melancholic tone to their narratives (Ortega 237). Though his earlier work fixates on Peruvian society, his latter novels suggest a deterritorialization that has taken place in his narrative.

El huerto de mi amada is the story of an upper-class, Peruvian youth, Carlos Alegre, who falls in love with the much older, and much fawned upon Natalia de Larrea. The two escape his bourgeois house in Lima to hide from his family in her country estate, where they are still harassed by his father and by the men who want to bed Natalia. The novel recounts Carlitos’s love for Natalia, his adventures with the social-ladder climbing Céspedes twins, and his final reintegration into Limean society as he leaves Natalia and marries Melanie after becoming a world-renowned doctor. Julio Ortega observes that *El huerto de mi amada* “es la novela más novelesca de Bryce” (242), given that it eludes including the author within its pages, and that its plot is purely novelistic. The critic goes on to comment that the novel “ha adelgazado sus referentes a unos cuantos tópicos suficientes [...] que se acompaña de pocos personajes, perfilados por la comedia social esperpéntica y vodivilesca” (242). The novel conforms to Ortega’s labeling of a social comedy, as there is no room for tragedy within the

los discípulos de Freud, si se enteraran de esto” (212). They then suggest that their case is either characterized by “gigantescos complejos recíprocos de Edipo” or “un caso de predestinación fálico-clitórico-vaginal” (212).

diegesis and the amorous comedy ends with marriage, though Bryce Echenique's pairs are distinctly alternate conjurations of what is permitted under the social code of power.

The novel begins with an epigraph by Felipe Pinglo (1899-1936), the father of Peruvian *música criolla* and a grand proponent of the *vals criollo*. Pinglo's music has continued to be popular in 20th-century Latin America as Los Panchos, Julio Jaramillo, Pedro Infante, and Julio Iglesias are some of the talent that has continued to interpret his music. Included in the epigraph are quotes from the French politician Antoine Barnave, the Duchess of Angouleme, the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, the English playwright William Shakespeare, and the French writer Marie-Henri Beyel, better known by his pseudonym Stendhal. This gathering of eclectic thinkers and writers immediately following Pinglo's lyrics suggest a redrawing of the social and temporal concerns of the novel. Bryce Echenique's usage of Kant in the epigraph seems uncanny at first. Stendhal quotes the same passage from Kant in the epigraph to the second part of his 1830 novel *Le rouge et le noir*, which chronicles the life of a young man, Julien Sorel, who attempts to rise beyond his low-class social upbringing, yet who ultimately fails at the hands of his own passions. The placement of both quotes in the epigraph to *El huerto de mi amada* emphasizes the intertextuality of Bryce Echenique's novel, as he ties his tale of 1950s Limean society with the social travails of a 19th-century French youth. It, however, also dislocates the comparative practice of intertextuality in this context as Bryce Echenique creates a physical point of union between Stendhal and *El huerto de mi amada*, without calling to attention this second layer of intertextuality.

The first layer of intertextuality, which is to say the primordial connection between the greater works of these snippets in the epigraph and the novel itself, is territorialized in

Pinglo's song. Though Bryce Echenique attempts a movement of the novel away from national boundaries and across temporal frameworks, from the beginning he situates his narrative alongside the parallel text of Pinglo's song that begins innocently with the lyrical enunciator directing the listener towards the orchard of his lover where "un florestal que pone tonos primaverales / en la quietud amable que los arbustos dan." This seeming tranquility that sets the tone for the beginning of the novel is shattered upon closer inspection of the song. It is at the very beginning of the novel can we begin to note how music as a narrative device in *El huerto de mi amada* conjures a topographic mapping that is intrinsic to an understanding of how space functions in relation to personal markers of identity such as gender.⁵⁹

The second stanza begins with the subject lamenting "allá dónde he dejado lo mejor de mi vida / ahí mis juramentos vagando han de flotar / porque ese ha sido el nido de amargos sufrimientos / y allí la infame supo de mi amor renegar." The suffering of the subject is evidenced at the beginning of Carlitos's affair with Natalia. Immediately after their dance, the other men attending the party scuffle with Carlitos, leaving him to flee with his mature lover to her abode outside the power-constraints of Lima. The rest of Pinglo's song continues with the theme of love lost and the lover spurned, which breaks with the paradisiacal tone set in the first stanza of the song and in the first few pages of the novel. The second stanza to Pinglo's tune succeeds in mapping out a textual terrain that establishes a spatial referent to self, as it is far from the subject, in the *huerto*, does his happiness reside, creating a before and after and/or system of causality that triggers a narrative exploration of Carlitos's life.

⁵⁹ The exploration of space and masculinity is performed in Chapter 4.

The congruency evidenced between the lyrical and the narrated text is akin to the use of music in Mayra Montero's *La última noche que pasé contigo*, where the artifice of music functions as a cinematic soundtrack that lends a pluralistic and auditory level of reception and interpretation. But music plays a direct diegetic role in Bryce Echenique's novel, as it is through Stanley Black's *Siboney*, and with a pinch of magical realism, that Carlitos becomes enchanted by the sultry Natalia.⁶⁰ With the first notes of the song, "Carlitos había sentido algo sumamente extraño y conmovedor, explosivo y agradabilísimo, la sensación católica de un misterio gozoso" (19). The song ends as Carlitos leaves his room to find the source of the music in the garden, though he continues to feel the song in his ears and head, suggesting that though Black's version of the song has ended, a further intertextuality is still taking place. This suggestion, of course, is supported by the varying levels of intertexts in the epigraph, suggesting that each text has a series of hypertexts that run parallel and/or disjointed.

In the garden, Carlitos happens upon a party hosted by his father for his doctor friends. The homosocial mass of doctors, combining their societal position and faith in science, is placed in hegemonic position vis-à-vis other masculinities in the text. These men are cultured, foreign (in the case of the Argentine cardiologist Dante Salieri), and well-spoken. As the divorcee Natalia and Carlitos get swept away by their passions, the cardiologist destroys the *Siboney* record in anger, suggesting that the record and by extension the song are mutually exclusive from the homosocial body that rules Lima. The name of the chief antagonist is not fortuitous, as Bryce Echenique sustains the intertext with music by alluding to Mozart's prime enemy, Antonio Salieri.

⁶⁰ The tune was originally composed by the Cuban-Spanish composer Ernesto Lecuona, though Bryce Echenique references Black's version of the song on the album *Cuban Moonlight* from 1969, temporally placing the novel at least after this date, though the text suggests quite anachronically that the events narrated occur in the late 1950s.

The breaking of the record, furthermore, establishes separate social groups in the novel that are defined by their own soundtracks. This is confirmed by Bryce Echenique's notoriously polyphonic writing style, as during the dance between Natalia and Carlitos, the author introduces a myriad of reflections, opinions and commentaries on the constructs of power, race, and gender in Lima. The African male, for example, is eroticized, as in Montero's *La última noche que pasé contigo*, as Natalia addresses him as "negro bandido [...] negro atrevido, pero negro ricotón, sí, eso sí" (24). In a drunken rage, Salieri attacks Carlitos, exclaiming that Natalia belongs to him. It is the musical framing of Carlitos and Natalia's dance that creates a spatial exclusion of the other males in the vicinity which leads to an armed conflict between the musically privileged male, which is to say Carlitos, and the others. After a series of skirmishes Natalia and Carlitos manage to escape, with the latter successfully fending off his four attackers. The attackers are composed of the Argentine cardiologist, the doctors Alejandro Palacios and Jacinto Antúnez, and Fortunato Quiroga.

These men of science, as I argue in Chapter 1 in reference to Cristina Rivera Garza's *Nadie me verá llorar*, are hierarchically superior to other masculinities due in part to their role in developing the nation and promoting modernization. The last member, however, is described in more detail than the doctors, as he is a "solterón de oro, senador ilustre, y primer contribuyente de la república" (27). The cardiologist Salieri is the most spurned of the lot and it seems that the others aid him simply to fulfill their function within the homosocial mass. Salieri constantly calls Natalia "la puta" (35), negating her subjectivity as a person yet reaffirming her position as an economic entity that is for sale and that can be bartered between the members of the homosocial. The objectification of Natalia as a prostitute conforms to the eugenic discourses of modernity promulgated by scientific modernists, as

she is a divorcee and does not adhere to the nuclear model of family that metonymizes the nation and power.

After their escape from Carlitos's house, and once in the confines of the *huerto*, Natalia seeks medical help for Carlitos as he suffers several wounds from the skirmish with the doctors and the senator. The reader pauses as the spatial referent activates schemata that interrelates Pinglo's *vals* to the text, and we remember that the *huerto* is that other space that characterizes a narrative of causality in the enunciator. The doctor who attends to Carlitos is given a narrative voice as Bryce Echenique splices him into the polyphonics of the text. The young doctor, who belongs to the hegemonic homosocial group of Salieri et al, reveals "yo soy el primero que los vio meterse mano de lo lindo, porque besarse apenas podían con ese labio del tal Carlitos" (56). The young doctor also partakes in the group's objectification of and assumed ownership of women, as he describes how he saw her "escandalosamente desnuda" (56). She is objectified due to her sexuality because she is only metaphorically stripped of clothing, as the doctor explains: "hay que oírla cuando te suplica con esa voz tan suya, genial, sensual, así de medio la' o, y sexi [...] porque entre una cosa y otra como si se fuera quitando prenda tras prenda y hasta con música de ambiente" (56). It is the same tone of sexualization and ownership that is expressed in Dante Salieri as he jealously tries to keep her from fleeing with Carlitos. The young doctor who attends to Carlitos concludes his description of Natalia by swearing "por lo más sagrado que se le pone a uno la verga al palo con solo verla y escucharla" (57). To the man of science, the traditional patron to phallogenic Masculinity, the penis permits his entrance into the hegemonic homosocial.

The educated, urban group gains its status of hegemony from a monopoly "de la vida política y económica del país y la autoridad dentro de la familia" (Fuller 56). From this

homosocial group that functions in contraposition to the effeminate, naïve, and infantile figure of Carlitos, we note how Bryce Echenique engages in a dynamic of masculinities that implicate society and the nation.⁶¹ Their belonging to the objective worlds of science and law is fundamental to their masculinity, as Norma Fuller notes, “el trabajo es el eje fundamental de la identidad masculina adulta” (64). It is this association that I find pertinent in reading a contemporary politics of masculinity in these fictions, as there is a setting up and subsequent challenge of the powers of modernity/patriarchy that forces the reader to rethink the existence of masculinity as a non-universal and plural expression.

The political institution is explicitly involved in *El huerto de mi amada* as Fortunato Quiroga becomes the country’s president. His office is composed of “[una] elegancia suprema. Muebles franceses. Mucho oro y mucha plata por todas partes. Lámparas maravillosas con las bombillas más poderosas del mundo” (64). A tracing of the lines of power that emanate from Quiroga connect him explicitly with the homosocial mass that is made hegemonic in part due to his position as president. After sitting at his presidential desk for the first time, he announces that he will not work until Lucas, his henchman, kills “la parejita esa” (64). From this we can surmise two things. First, that hegemonic masculinity as embodied by this specific, historical group acknowledges and eliminates challengers. Secondly, the paralysis to function faced by the hegemonic suggests that the challenger, Carlitos, in this situation is more than an oppositional entity.

Focusing on the behaviors exhibited by Dante Salieri and the young doctor, it is evident that hegemonic masculinity is not only hegemonic due to a system of policies and strategies that control women, but also due to an objectification of the female body and

⁶¹ Please see the analysis of Cristina Rivera Garza’s *Nadie me verá llorar* in Chapter 2 (“Trafficking Masculinities”).

female sexuality. The homosocial group's overblown reaction to the couple's elopement can be explained by the removal of the female, or the object of trade, from the intra-hegemonic market of desire that Eve Sedgwick theorizes in *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. The homosocial market of desire, more importantly, is spatially outside the diegetic referents of music in the text. First, the lines of desire that commoditize women are excluded from the diegetic bubble created by the song *Siboney* that serenades the two lovers away from Salieri and his group. We then note how the spatial elopement to the *huerto* that is central to Pinglo's intertext succeeds in disassociating Carlitos and Natalia from the political and economic center of Lima, which is invariably controlled by the homosocial.

Basing her ideas on the earlier work by René Girard, Sedgwick further argues that the expression of desire within the homosocial group is often through the use of violence (176), which corroborates Quiroga's hiring of a hitman to kill Natalia and Carlitos. The statesman instructs Lucas: "métele todos los plomazos que pueda, en mi nombre. A ella, en cambio, un solo balazo, y en el corazón" (64). The use of violence as a mediating language between the members of the homosocial is necessary as the bonds that unite men, which is to say the latent threads of homosexual desire, cannot be specified or acknowledged. Violence, therefore, becomes the de facto language of a group that cannot verbalize their own transgressive desires. We note the extent to which the female is objectified when Quiroga warns his henchman: "como me la desfigure o algo así, lo mando colgar de los huevos" (64). Natalia's face is important as Quiroga "quier[e] estar en ese entierro y contemplar por última vez ese rostro maravilloso. Y además quier[e] darle el único beso de toda [su] puta vida" (65).

This group of men in *El huerto de mi amada* is importantly situated in, and ontological to the urban center of Lima (away from Pinglo's *huerto*) that seems to diffuse into every voice of the narrative. Their space is ontological to their own selves, so much so that immediately after Natalia and Carlitos make their escape, Salieri repeatedly calls her a whore, "como si empezara a despertar de la peor pesadilla de su vida y estuviese completamente solo y muy adolorido en medio de un hermoso jardín" (35).⁶² The non-city is a hellish proposition, as Salieri quickly interjects, "pensar que pude haber tomado el avión de regreso a Buenos Aires esta noche... La puta..." (35). The city is left behind in the narrative, as in their escape to the *huerto*, Natalia observes:

Atrás habían ido quedando barrios enteros, distritos como San Isidro, Miraflores, Barranco, ahora que ya estaban llegando a Chorrillos y torcían nuevamente, en dirección a Surco. Ahí se acababa la ciudad de Lima y empezaban las haciendas y la carretera al sur... La idea le encantaba, le parecía simbólica: los distritos y barrios residenciales en los que vivía toda aquella gente, todo aquel mundo en el que había pasado los peores años de su vida, siempre juzgada, criticada, envidiada, tan solo por ser quien era y poseer lo que poseía, y por ser Hermosa, también, para qué negarlo, si es parte de la realidad y del problema, parte muy importante, además; esos malditos San Isidros y Miraflores, y qué sé yo, iban quedando atrás. (39)

The spatial trajectory in the narrative towards the non-city is preceded by a discussion on music, as Carlitos casually calls Natalia's home "el huerto de mi amada" (39). She informs him that the song is an old *vals criollo*, the same song that appears in the novel's epigraph. Carlitos also wants to listen to *Siboney* when they get to the house, calling it "nuestra canción" (39), or more importantly, a lyrical testament to their usurpation of the homosocial. It is by reference to Pinglo's song that Natalia comes to ponder the power structures extant in the city. In the same regard, the reference to *Siboney* and her new affair with Carlitos triggers a memory of her marriage to "un hombre tan brutal y celoso, tan lleno de prejuicios, tan

⁶² See Norma Fuller's chapter on masculinities in urban centers in Peru (*Hombres e identidades de género: Investigaciones desde América Latina*). Fuller's sociological study will be critical to the analysis of the relationship between space and masculinities in Chapter 3.

acomplejado, tan braguetero, y todo para que su única hija naciera muerta y aquel sinvergüenza se largara con otra mujer y una buena parte de su dinero” (39-40). We can see that music triggers a pondering of gender that is unavoidably leashed to a discussion of Peruvian masculinities. On the one hand, music functions as an intertext in the escape from hegemonic urban men who use violence to dominate and own women. On the other hand, music engages the development of the subordinate masculinity of Carlitos as he embarks on a process of maturation and conflict with the hegemonic referent to his own gender identification.

By resorting to music as a narrative trigger, the author arranges a necessary pondering of the title to Pinglo’s song and the novel, which is the point of meeting in these intertextualities. As they approach the country house, Natalia asks Carlitos if he knows what the idiomatic “llevarse a alguien al huerto” means. She goes on to explain that “llevarse a alguien al huerto quiere decir engañar a alguien. Y, actualmente, mucha gente usa la expresión solo con el sentido de llevarse a alguien a la cama con engaños” (40). Carlitos’s response is unsurprising, as he exalts her: “dame el huerto, Natalia. Todo el huerto que puedas” (40). If we were to read intertextually, the change that is noted between the first stanza and the subsequent verses in Pinglo’s song comes into play in this scene, as Natalia suggests that the *huerto* is not as idyllic as it may first seem. The spatial referent of the *huerto* that is brought into being in the first stanza is established in the novel as Natalia hopes that “Lima nos olvide” (41), thereby distancing the events and characters of the *huerto* from the Masculine cityscape.

Paradoxically, the two characters engage in a romantic and carnal relationship that has them recolonizing the city with their kisses and trysts. It is also in the city that Carlitos

meets his future wife, Melanie. Carlitos's subordinate masculinity comes back to Lima and begins to study medicine, which is of course the profession of the old hegemonic group that loses its power seemingly from one day to the next in a narrative that bends temporalities. The old locus of power is challenged and subordinated by Rudecindo Quispe Zapata, a man with indigenous roots from the province whose pedigree is unclear: "nadie sabía muy bien de dónde había salido [...] [ni] si terminó su secundaria, si realizó algún estudio superior [...] no era miembro del Club Nacional [...] tampoco había viajado a Europa en el *Reina del Pacífico*" (230).⁶³

Keeping in mind the new political tone of the capital, we observe how Carlitos's once subordinate and rejected masculinity has now become a competing strain within the metropolis. He does not assume the stranglehold that his father's generation had over public institutions as his stay in Lima is cut short by the rise of Quispe Zapata who metonymically represents the political, economic and social changes produced in Peru at the end of the 1960s. Quispe Zapata is a new political player in Bryce Echenique's Lima, though scorned by the members of the old guard. His rise to fame and power leaves the scientific homosocial incredulous as he neither belongs to the old aristocracy, nor is he educated. Bryce Echenique's text coincides with the democratic rule of Fernando Belaúnde Terry and with the military coup by General Juan Velasco Alvarado in 1968. The former represents in many regards the elite, European, and educated class that the Alegre family belongs to, as he was

⁶³ The inclusion of this indigenous character in the novel highlights the problematic of race and power that Bryce Echenique attempts to illustrate throughout his literary production. *El huerto de mi amada* is rife with characters, dialogues and descriptions that unearth the plight of the *cholo* in Peruvian society as he seeks a place of belonging in the urban centers of power. For a brief introduction see Jorge Bruce's excellent psychoanalytic study of Peruvian society in *Nos habíamos choleado tanto: Psicoanálisis y racismo* (2007), including the illuminating epigraph by Vargas Llosa, who argues that racism in Peru "nace de un yo recóndito y ciego a la razón, se mama con la leche materna y empieza a formalizarse desde los primeros vagidos y balbuceos del peruano" (5).

responsible for establishing the Banco de la Nación and for developing infrastructure during his political tenure as president.⁶⁴ These centralizing factors, in turn, create a centrifugal effect that augments the position of the capital vis-à-vis the institutions of power occupied by the hegemonic homosocial, which is to say the textual space that is differentiated in the *vals*'s lyrics.

The marking of space within the novel through popular music creates a sense of silence and vacuum in the descriptions of Lima that Bryce Echenique's characters chronicle, as music only appears as a reference to the amorous philanderings of Carlitos and Natalia when they visit the center. The rest of the city, including its affluent neighborhoods and plazas are textually built around an auditory void that disarticulates Lima as a point of identity or topographic referent to the placement of the novel's two protagonists. Space, after all, is only defined by the lyrical *huerto* and everything else that is around it, which is necessarily an ontological antonym of its non-centered positioning vis-à-vis the city. The lack of lyrical textualities within and in reference to the city as a dialogic space, however, points towards a narrative obsession with history and self in Bryce Echenique, as his pages are replete with allegoric and masked references to Peruvian history, evoking the melancholic tone that Julio Ortega reads in *El huerto de mi amada*.

The 1960s in Peru, following a larger trend seen on the continent, are also characterized by the rise of Marxist revolutionary guerrillas, such as the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria, which later splintered into the Partido Revolucionario Socialista and the Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru. These groups were responsible for the

⁶⁴ Belaúnde's presidency was preceded by the democratically elected government of Manuel Prado Ugarteche, who held office from 1957 to 1962. He too belonged to a wealthy, conservative, and patriarchal family. The presidencies of Belaúnde and Prado were interrupted by a short military regime that lasted from July 1962 to the same month of the following year.

proliferation of guerrilla-style protests and violence in the country, which would serve as a harbinger for the Partido Comunista del Perú, more popularly known as Sendero Luminoso. Their missions and manifestos advocate for greater democracy and transparency, and for an equitable redistribution of national resources that facilitate the reintegration of indigenous and lower classes into society. The figure of Rudecindo Quispe Zapata, as coming from a poor, non-European heritage, can be read as a fictive pastiche of Juan Velasco Alvarado who led a left-leaning military government after staging a coup against Belaúnde in 1963.

The old guard is estranged from Lima by these changes, as Carlitos's father closes his practice and moves the family to San Francisco in the United States. Carlitos and Natalia are also displaced as they live the next seven years in Paris, where Carlitos becomes a prize-winning researcher and doctor. The shift away from the metropolis resonates in Carlitos's masculinity, as he is not a power-wielding social phallus like his father and Dr. Dante Salieri. Carlitos, instead, is described as being an absentminded scientist. But this personal characterization reflects a larger change in the position of power and authority held by the European man of science and letters that is metonymized by the homosocial group of Alegre, Salieri, Quiroga, et al. This group loses its power due to a "democratización de los valores" (Fuller 56) and changes in the political climate.

The relationship between Carlitos and Natalia is also affected by time as she begins to feel inadequate and too old to be with him. If *Siboney* triggered their love, then it is its replacement that cements the end of their relationship. While attending a conference in Baltimore, Carlitos, now known as Carlos Alegre, is arrested for leaving the premises with a radio belonging to the dormitory in which he is staying. The young Carlitos who was entranced by the maracas of *Siboney* is now enthralled by Ludwig Van Beethoven's Seventh

Symphony, a piece known for its usage of an Austrian hymn, and for its rhythmic balance. After being arrested and then cleared by the police, we learn that he has similarly taken radios in Munich and Zurich, as though his person is lost without an accompanying classical soundtrack.

Continuing to connect musical and narrative texts, we observe how Carlitos loses his relationship with Natalia as she undergoes a crisis of affection. As his plane lands in Paris after a trip abroad, “Natalia de Larrea hace el amor frenéticamente con un muchacho casi treinta años menor que ella. Y que se joda Carlitos, al ver que esta vieja de eme todavía los puede encontrar mucho menores que él” (279). Their affair comes to a crescendo when Natalia throws him out of the house and claims to hate him. Recovering in hospital, Carlos is reunited with the young Melanie Vélez Sarsfield, a girl he tutored while in medical school. She is the polar opposite to Natalia, and after marrying her, the older woman comments: “yo siempre dije que Carlitos terminaría casándose con un hombre” (286), bringing to a fore the male’s complete reterritorialization into the spatial center of power, and = the matrices of masculinity that traditionally hold the woman (and not a man as wife) as objects of power, pride, and prestige.

Bryce Echenique’s text is symphonically plural and historically bound to the social and political changes and realities experienced by Peruvian society in the second half of the 20th century. Though he has traditionally been lumped together with the writers of the *boom*, due in part to the date of publication of his first book and to his own age, Bryce Echenique’s narrative has evolved into the 21st century. It is this spatial movement away from the polis and away from the power structures of hegemonic masculinity, as championed by the scientific/political homosocial, which permits a realignment of the masculinities extant in the

text. This realignment, in turn, forces a discussion of the changes experienced in Peru in the 1960s and beyond, as Julio Ortega adds:

Aunque esta fábula de amor libre está enmarcada en el humor de su comedia social de época, no deja de comunicar la irracionalidad de la razón social peruana y latinoamericana. En estos años en que la pobreza de todo orden ha afligido las libertades del sujeto entre la violencia racista, le ferocidad machista y la corrupción naturalizada, nuestras sociedades han regresado a la cruda realidad de estratificación de clase, a su largo vicio antimoderno. Este mapa de clases declara los límites de la democratización en una América Latina cuya vida cotidiana sufre varias regresiones autoritarias. *El huerto de mi amada*, tras su juego gentil, no deja de traducir este sentimiento de los límites de la sociabilidad. (244)

Between Rock and a Hard Place: Gender in Franz Galich's Managua.

From a schematic standpoint, the use of music in *El huerto de mi amada* creates a diegetic topography of masculinities that enables the author to explore further questions of Peruvian identity and history, as he uses traditional Latin American music to root his pages within a national imaginary. The other novels studied in this chapter represent historical and/or deterritorialized diegeses, and as such employ music within an impermeable space that houses the many matrices of power, gender and race extant in their texts. But what happens when this constraint is removed, and the narrative is rooted in the present, within a tangible social reality? What becomes of this narratological strategy when the text reacts to an increasingly globalized world where jumping borders is an everyday reality and necessity?

Keeping this fluidity of influences in mind, especially when it comes to the movement of popular culture and its artifacts, Beatriz Cortez argues that “durante la segunda mitad del siglo veinte y a medida que se fueron desarrollando los procesos revolucionarios en Centroamérica, la música pasó a desempeñar un papel importante en la resistencia a los procesos colonizadores de la música popular norteamericana, así como también en el reto a la

construcción de la identidad nacional.” The critic, of course, keeps in mind the social changes that occur in countries such as Nicaragua in the 1990s after the failure of socialist regimes and policies.⁶⁵ These changes are reflected in the novelistic production from the region, as Elizabeth Ugarte notes:

El consumismo es presentado como fenómeno devorador de la identidad que se acrecienta en Nicaragua en la década de los noventa con el fracaso del proyecto socialista impulsado por la revolución de 1979. Y la violencia como la expresión simbólica de la alienación y marginación, producto de la desocupación y pobreza extrema, uno de los grandes problemas que enfrenta el espacio social urbano de Managua ante la falta de alternativas.

From this tumultuous period of political ennui and social malaise, a border-hopping author takes up the task of understanding and representing Central American society with the ashes of the sociopolitical revolutions of the 1970s. Born in Guatemala, Franz Galich spends the greater part of his life living and working in neighboring Nicaragua. He is, par excellence, an advocate of the notion of there existing a transnational literature and identity of the post-Macondo literary scape, as his own textual and critical production has grown in scope. His first novel, *Huracán corazón del cielo* (1995) deals with the 1976 earthquake that wrecked geological and social havoc in Guatemala as it unearthed the many fissures between social groups and hierarchies in the country. His latter work, including *Managua Salsa City* (*¡Devórame otra vez!*) (1999) and *Y te diré quién eres* (*Mariposa traicionera*), attempts a portrait of a Nicaraguan society that is bullet-riddled by the armed conflict between the Sandinista government and the Contra fighters. The author describes his work as one not bound by physical borders, opining that “de alguna forma ya me he integrado al proceso productivo nicaragüense pero prefiero hablar en términos generales de un proyecto centroamericano, es decir de una literatura centroamericana” (Martínez Sánchez).

⁶⁵ Please see the section “Commoditizing Resources” in Chapter 2 for a more detailed overview of Nicaragua’s politico-economic climate in the 1990s.

Aside from writing short stories and novels, Galich is an avid social commentator. He places his work within “tiempos de la cólera neoliberal” (“Tandas”), and writes keeping in mind the migratory nature of literature and culture in the late 20th and early 21st century.⁶⁶ In the pages to follow, I focus on his last novel and its incorporation of contemporary musical intertexts as diegetic referents vis-à-vis the constructs of gender, and as extratextual entities that negotiate with the author’s own concerns of the creation of a regional identity against the colonizing cultural waves coming from the North.

As noted from the title, *Y te diré quién eres (Mariposa traicionera)* differs from the other works studied and mentioned in this chapter, as it incorporates contemporary, globalized popular music and not traditional Latin tunes. The novel is the immediate sequel to *Managua Salsa City (¡Devórame otra vez!)*, which recounts the meeting of the prostitute, La Guajira, with the lower-class, ex-military Pancho Rana. An analysis of *Y te diré quién eres* can only be contextualized by an initial probe into the role of music and gender in *Managua Salsa City*, as the latter novel takes as an axiom the diegesis of Rana and La Guajira.

This earlier text sets in motion an inquiry into the relationship between modernity and masculinities, as it weaves a spider’s web of male characters, factions, and political interests, with La Guajira sitting in the middle as the black widow spider that controls the fate of the many men in her life. She is a prostitute and the head of a band of conmen who operate out of a taxi. Her prey/client, Pancho Rana, is the chauffeur of a rich family that has left their

⁶⁶ Born Franz Galich Mazariegos, the author dies in Managua in February of 2007, not quite a year after publishing his last novel *Y te diré quién eres (Mariposa traicionera)*. This novel, along with its antecedent, is meant to comprise the first half of a Central American quartet of novels dealing with the social unrest in the region. Unfortunately, Galich’s work is unfinished, and the use of music in the two remaining novels can only be speculated. The void in critical voices on the author is also surprising, as aside from a few newspaper articles and web postings, there is hardly any examination of his work from outside the literary circles of Guatemala and Nicaragua.

house to their employee as they travel to Miami on vacation. La Guajira and Rana meet at La Piñata, a popular nightclub in Managua where, hiding their true identities, the two become enveloped in a passionate game of seduction, dance and music that leads them to Rana's house, where a shootout ensues between him, the conmen, and two other opportunistic male assailants with designs of robbing the house.

Managua Salsa City (*¡Devórame otra vez!*) plays out through the desires felt by the two protagonists as they trade control of their sexuality and of the text's narrative voice. Galich employs what Misha Kokotovic calls a "popular, oral style – reminiscent of testimonio – in which both the narrator and the characters express themselves" (20). The novel is set in a dark and somber Managua that is controlled by the Devil at night. Galich's capital is intimately connected to sex, as its heat emanates from a collection of multiple, unseen vaginas (1). It is a dark city that evokes disillusionment with the politics of the last quarter of the 20th century. The recurrence to mythical, supernatural conceptions of good and evil in Galich can be read in context with a larger trend in Latin American fiction. Mary Louise Pratt suggests that free-market neoliberalism has produced a process of demodernization in Latin America. She argues that through socially exclusionary practices, large portions of the continent's population have faced a regression in quality of life. This process of modernization, which in reality has had effects quite contrary to the term, has led many to discredit rational and scientific belief systems in exchange for traditional, and sometimes supernatural, belief paradigms to explain the reality of neoliberal capitalism. The narrator summarizes this history in a fable-like manner, commenting:

Pero lo peor de todo es que después del terremoto se creyó que Dios podía ganar y finalmente volvió a perder y así seguirá pasando hasta el final de los siglos, donde Dios tal vez logre vencer al Diablo, pero para mientras, aquí en el infierno, digo Managua, todo sigue igual: los capotes piderreales y huelepega, los cochones y las

putas, los chivos y los políticos, los ladrones y los políticos (que son lo mismo que los políticos, sean sandináis los liberáis o conservaduráis, cristianáis o cualquiermierdáis, jueputas socios del Diablo porque son la misma chochada). (2)

Kokotovic adds that “indeed, neoliberal, free-market capitalism in Nicaragua comes in for a scathing critique as the novel examines the tragically violent outcome of the unbridled pursuit of narrow individual interests” (22). These narrow individual interests are observed in the male bodies in Galich’s text that make money and social position their driving forces, above the libidinal impulses of sex, as one of La Guajira’s henchmen notes that “era más importante la alianza económica” (45).

This consumerist culture is further reflected in the textual depictions of the body, as *Managua Salsa City* (*¡Devórame otra vez!*) succeeds in animalizing and commoditizing male and female specimens. The examples of the animalized male abound: La Guajira’s henchmen display the pack-mentality of wolves; Pancho’s last name is Rana; the lone male assailant who survives the final shootout is described as being rat-faced. The female body is similarly objectified by a male gaze as Rana and others deconstruct the curves and mounds of the female form according to their own personal desires.

Music is intrinsic to the mapping of these matrices of bodies, economies, and gender in the text, as popular salsa music provides the OST to the exposition of masculine desire through a detailed and ritualistic courtship that passes between Pancho and La Guajira.⁶⁷ This courtship involves a lyrical dynamism (created by Galich’s strong regionalist diction) and a

⁶⁷ For an excellent reference on the genesis, history and genealogy of this musical genre, see Lise Wexer’s anthology *Situating Salsa: Global Markets and Local Meaning in Latin Popular Music*, 2002. Wexer argues that the spread of salsa in the 1970s across Latin America, and in the 1980s and 90s to Europe, Japan and Africa can be thought of in terms not unlike the shift made away from boom literature in Latin America. The critic notes that “though salsa’s diffusion to these places does not quite fall into the category of globalization along the lines of McDonald’s, MTV, Microsoft, and Michael Jackson, the distinction between ‘transnational’ (cutting across national boundaries) and ‘global’ (truly worldwide) is not always clear in salsa’s case” (8). Wexer continues this archaeology mapping of the genre by adding that only with the aid of the Big Five recording companies such as Sony and BMG in the 1990s salsa truly achieves a globalized outreach.

dancing ritual that is almost theatric in its performance and reliance on a set of pre-established gender cues. The male negotiates the female's body to the tune of salsa in an attempt to cajole and capture her in his libidinal trap; though in reality La Guajira is also laying a trap for Pancho in the form of her waiting henchmen.

Their dance is cinematically choreographed to the diegetic playing of the salsa tune "Devórame otra vez." The lyrics to the song suggest an experiential approximation to sexuality that is sensual in its failure to establish a strict ontological base for desire as the bodies within the song are systematically devoured. The lyrics focus on the eating of the singing subject in a passion-induced consensual cannibalism:

Devórame otra vez, ven devórame otra vez,
Ven castígame con tus deseos más
Que mi amor lo guardé para ti
Ay ven devórame otra vez,
Ven devórame otra vez
Que la boca me sabe a tu cuerpo
Desesperan mis ganas por ti.

The first verses of the song introduce the courtship between Rana and La Guajira, though Galich's transcription of the lyrics are inaccurate, suggesting that the words printed are indicative of diegetic singing and not an overlaying OST track that ambients the narrative. The text is polyphonic as it meshes Pancho Rana's thoughts with song lyrics, suggesting that he mindlessly verbalizes popular songs within the diegesis. By assigning the utterance of the title song to Pancho, we can surmise that by asking to be sexually consumed, the male subject loses the phallic power of sexual dominance over the female. The position of subject is also held by La Guajira as she sings a few verses from the song at the moment they begin their interactions, suggesting that she too engages in a diegetic sacrifice to a cannibalizing lover. But the desecration of the body is not one-way in the song; the subject is also guilty of

consuming the other, as his/her mouth tastes of the lover. Note the emphasis on the mouth as a corporal site of enunciation in the text, as it is through the mouth that the hegemonic status of masculinity can be challenged and subordinated. The mouth and not the vagina or anus is the receiver of male desire in *Managua Salsa City* (*¡Devórame otra vez!*), as La Guajira refers to her own orifices as “mis tres bocas” (37).

Like other texts written in fin-du-siècle Latin America, *Managua Salsa City* (*¡Devórame otra vez!*) evidences a textual effort to represent and characterize masculinities as representations of greater influences and components extant in contemporary societies. By using the automobile as a modern representation of the subject, Galich’s men drive Toyotas and Ladas. The latter makes reference to the inflow of foreign goods and multinational companies into Nicaragua, while the latter, of course, harkens to the left-leaning days of the nation’s politics during the Cold War. These men assume violence to be ontological, as Pancho comments: “por un lado le molestaba, pero por otro le gustaba porque no solo lo hacían recordar una época en la que se sentía poderoso con su Aka plegables, los magazines y su Makarov, sino que le daba cierta confianza” (28). In another example of how Galich writes masculinities into the text, the two assailants who join the onslaught on Rana’s temporary residence are representative of a hybridized, *Spanglish*-speaking masculinity that has lived in the United States. By imbuing this last spatial referent as the origin of predatory economic policy, the two assailants are described to be animal-like, immoral, criminal low-lives with the sole aim of raping La Guajira and robbing Pancho. It is through simple material referents that the author creates a system of competing and alternating masculinities that compete for control over the lost city space, the remnant of neoliberalism.

Just as a theatre of reconciliation is established between the competing factions, the novel ends in bloodshed and mayhem as La Guajira's gang is decimated and Pancho is taken for dead. The sun begins to rise over Managua as the prostitute and the rat-faced assailant leave on a motorcycle. An extrapolation of the sexualized couple onto the imagining of the nation is not out of place in these pages, as Galich's text suggests a bleak future for the region.⁶⁸ *Managua Salsa City* (*¡Devórame otra vez!*) points towards a future composed of an opportunistic prostitute who changes her alliances depending on her company and a rat-faced invader from the North who is the epitome of self-serving, consumerist neoliberalism.

Written as a sequel, but perhaps also as a response to *Managua Salsa City* (*¡Devórame otra vez!*), *Y te diré quién eres* (*Mariposa traicionera*) picks up the aftermaths of the shootout and the escape of La Guajira with El Cara de Ratón. Pancho Rana is found close-to-death by the police who try to make some sense out of the attack. The novel develops Rana's search for La Guajira across the region, involving the homosocial police, headed by Captain Anastasio Cerna, and the homosocial press, led by Parménides Aguilar. Though the first novel ends with an apparent respite as the Devil leaves the city with

⁶⁸ The use of a sexual imaginary as a blueprint for national identity has been studied extensively, both from Doris Sommer's heteronormative viewpoint and from alternative perspectives. Sexuality as a negative allegory of nationhood has been used in the study of Puerto Rican literature. Arnaldo Cruz-Malavé notes "that unlike those Latin American foundational texts that Doris Sommer has so passionately analyzed, Puerto Rican canonical texts have rallied us and bound as through failure and impotence" (140). He further notes that there exists in these texts "an impotence that has cunningly incited us to close ranks around the father, with righteous indignation or with race" (141) and that "at the center of the author's paternal voice there's not a subject but an *object*: the monstrously mangled body of a 'feminized' man that bears, like all figures of gender-crossing, the marks of a 'category of crisis,' of the impossibility of sustaining paternal hierarchies that the discourse of nation identity both spectacularizes and condemns" (141). This frankensteinian model of a gendered nation is borne from Cruz-Malavé's assertion that Puerto Rico exists in that "queer state of freedom within dependency, of nation without nationhood" (140). It is also argued that Antonio S. Pedreira's novel *Insularismo* (1934) is the founding text of 20th-century Puerto Rican letters; a text in which the nation's identity is codified in a failed bildungsroman. This founding text when juxtaposed with Rodó's *Ariel* (1900) and Vasconcelos's *La raza cósmica* (1925) demonstrates a lack of a "voz magistral" (150) or authorial voice that promotes an author's "version of Latin-Americanness" (150). Pedreira's novel instead is characterized by a conspicuous emptiness and lack of inspiration. When Rodó succeeds in galvanizing the continent's youth, Pedreira writes: "atentad al *divino Tesoro*, pues el título más alto se puede convertir en mote" (174).

daybreak, Galich reminds the reader that the disasters of war and neoliberalism are not subtle phantasms that appear and disappear at the whim of the sun. Instead, we are presented with a city where “el calor sube hasta el delirio y la gente camina como si acabaran de llegar al Infierno” (7). By reverting to a mytho-poetic representation of reality, Galich underscores Pratt’s observation of consensus disillusionment with the status quo of modernity.

The narrative proceeds to summarize the events from the previous book with quick cuts between scenes and the use of an occasional flashback or two to get the reader on pace with the plot, marking a stark departure from the lyrical, baroque style of *Managua Salsa City* (*¡Devórame otra vez!*). Aware of this change, Galich leaves the reader a note of caution: “Cómplice lector, esta novela se puede leer de varias formas, huelga decirlo: como documento histórico o sociológico. Pero la mejor forma es como si se tratara de una película made in Hollywood” (6). By hinting at the possibility of a written text being read as a sequence of celluloid film, the novel metaphysically encompasses the visual and aural components of film. In doing so, Galich’s words necessitate an intertextual reading of *Y te diré quién eres* (*Mariposa traicionera*) that keeps in constant reference the extraliterary references to popular music.

The note does not stop there, but cajoles the reader to not “establecer relaciones, semejanzas o comparaciones con países de América Latina, Asia, África” (6). The author’s attempts to deviate his text from a national referent are acutely and intentionally sabotaged in the first sentence of Chapter 1, which opens with “*en Managua, a las doce meridiano en punto, el calor sube hasta el delirio y la gente camina como si acabaran de llegar al Infierno*” (7). This cheeky, puzzle-solving dialectic between author and reader, which is first enunciated by the former, is evident in the title of the novel that begins with the response to

the idiomatic expression “dime con quién andas, y te diré quién eres.” This play on words is picked up in a discussion on corruption amongst the police forces in various Central American countries, with a journalist beginning the expression but not finishing it, forcing an involved reading of the text that contradicts the author’s note to not extrapolate fiction to reality. In another scene, one of Pancho’s acquaintances, El Brujo, spews a series of idiomatic phrases, including “más vale pájaro en mano que cien volando” (177). From the beginning, before the reader delves into the cinematic depiction of late 20th-century Central America, Galich stacks the deck in favor of an intertextual, fill-in-the-blanks hermeneutics of *Y te diré quién eres (Mariposa traicionera)*.

The reference in the introductory note to the North American media goliath brings to mind the idea of cultural imperialism as a by-product of neoliberal policy.⁶⁹ Commenting on the operations of the North American music industry, Ian Biddle and Vanessa Knights observe that:

This infrastructure is at once concerned to address itself to a maximum number of addresses *within* its ‘own’ territory and, at the same time, concerned also to export that process of address maximization to territories ‘outside’ the West, until such a time (projecting itself into an infinitely occidental future) as the distinction between being ‘inside’ and being ‘outside’ that infrastructure will become ever more difficult to recognize. (7)

They reflect on the role of identity and music within the politics of location, stressing that current trends in the study of popular culture have sidelined the “national (of nationalisms, nation-states, national mythologizing narratives and other manifestations of national or

⁶⁹ In their ground-breaking anthology *Rockin’ Las Americas*, Deborah Pacini Hernández, Héctor Fernández L’Hoeste, and Eric Zolov note that the initial spread of rock music to the southern regions of the hemisphere can be attributed to a process of “cultural imperialism” (7). It is not until sociological processes of urbanization and economic growth does rock truly become an accultured phenomenon. Rock at the beginning of the 1970s “was often regarded as a sign of imperialist attack, moral collapse, or worse” (9).

nationalist ideologies)” (1). This has been blamed, in part, to the binarism or syllogism of local/global, which from a topographic standpoint expunges the existence of a national.

Keeping in mind Slavoj Žižek’s and Fredric Jameson’s variations of the Hegelian “vanishing mediator,” Biddle and Knights argue that the national can be said to occupy the position of this term vis-à-vis the syllogism, thereby opening up “new critical trajectories for popular music studies” (12).⁷⁰ The idea of the national in Galich, however, is based on the panamericanism that the author advocates in his own writings on identity. Though the music of Maná does not strictly adhere to what can be thought of as a national essence in Nicaragua, it does play out Galich’s musings on the idea of a Central American identity that is borne from the politico-economic disasters of the 1990s.⁷¹ Reacting to similar trends seen in global music, John O’Flynn observes that “the designation of ‘national essence’ to particular music is more problematic within modern nation states where tensions between homogenous and heterogenous are often lived out” (22). The critic concludes that “we should not be surprised to find that new forms of nationalism continue to emerge and that force of the nation as a

⁷⁰ Žižek has used this term, as well as Jameson on their writings of late capitalism. Žižek argues that late capitalism and feudalism were mediated by Protestantism. The national according to Žižek has become the vanishing mediator. the concept “serves here as a useful model for understanding the ways in which a set of new cultural conditions can hide the operating territory of its inception: it is useful therefore to think about this tendency as part of the mechanism by which the local/global dynamic has sought to obfuscate the fact that the ‘birth’ of that syllogism can be traced specifically to nationalist ideologies” (11).

⁷¹ Formed in 1978 as “The Green Hat Spies,” Maná’s music can be seen as a timeline of the development of rock in Latin America. Their early cover recordings represent a period in Mexican and to an extent continental, music history where large rock concerts and venues were prohibited. As Pacini Hernández, Fernández L’Hoeste and Zolov note, rock is nationalized in the 1980s following the popularization of the use of original Spanish and Portuguese lyrics, local slang, and local and national topics. This *rock nacional* coincided with the advent of neoliberal economic policies that “signaled the collapse of the nationalist projects [...] that had defined the economic policy of Latin American governments since the 1930s” (16). Following this trend, Maná releases their first album titled *Sombrero Verde* to reflect the new name of the group. Their rise to international fame in the 1990s is largely due to a series of albums composed of popular love songs, danceable tunes, and socially conscious works such as the 1992 hit “¿Dónde jugarán los niños?” that continued some of the earlier themes first made popular during the boom of *rock nacional* in the 1980s. Their 1997 “Me voy a convertir en un ave” famously describes the corruption of the police and the establishment. The group deviated from the apolitical trend in Latin American rock of the 1990s that was no longer concerned with the politics of music, but that “enacted a politics of *anti*-politics, repudiating at the level of sound and performance not only the old hegemonic ideology of the socialist Left but the ascendant ideology of neoliberal capitalism” (17).

cultural trope continues to adapt to new political and material conditions” (22).

Consequently, the use of a popular Mexican band by a Guatemalan/Nicaraguan writer in *Y te diré quién eres (Mariposa traicionera)* does not seem so strange.⁷²

The novel, however, does not solely connect to one specific band or genre, as it includes diegetic references to Chente Fernández (Mexico, ranchero), Daddy Yankee (Puerto Rico, reggaeton), Shakira (Colombia, pop), José Feliciano (Puerto Rico, rock), Carlos Santana (Mexico, rock), La Suprema Corte (Colombia, salsa), and Julio Jaramillo (Ecuador, pasillo). These intertexts, however, appear in passing or as comedic relief in tense scenes.

The lyrical intertext is not simple adornment, or a subtle reference to paratextual erotics that cannot be linguistically expressed by narrative, as Galich explicits an intratextual association between the listened song and the events of his textual movie. Upon listening to the lyrics “*Ay mujer, cómo haces daño, pasan los minutos cual si fuesen años... Mariposa Traicionera...*” (51), Rana exclaims “¡no, no, mi Tamara no es mariposa traicionera!” (51).⁷³ The song is violently stirred into the narrative and not allowed to linger over diegetic ears as an alternative emotive plane of expression. By connecting the song to La Guajira, Rana establishes a schema of interrelations between the lyrics and the narrative plot and its characters. If La Guajira is not the mariposa traicionera, then who is?

⁷² Galich’s ideas of the national are circumscribed by the importance he gives to indigenous identities in the region. In an article that questions the existence of a Guatemalan identity, he affirms that “aunque suene como un anacronismo, en estos tiempos de la cólera neoliberal, es más necesario que nunca que la revolución social y para que ésta sea, pasa necesariamente por la revolución de los pueblos indios de América Latina, pues ésta no echará a andar hasta que no marche el indio” (“Tanda de sueños”). The importance given to indigenous rights is paralleled in Maná’s 2006 album *Revolución de Amor*, where the Leftist track “Justicia, Tierra Y Libertad” advocates natives’ rights to democracy and land.

⁷³ Galich’s transposition of the lyrics is inaccurate, as the song should read “Ay mujer, cómo haces daño, pasan los minutos cual si fueran años.” The author later repeats the same mistake in the inclusion of the lyrics of a Julio Jaramillo song, “Nuestro juramento” (206).

The novel renews the author's spotlight on the detritus left by decades of war and negative economic policy, focusing on the Central American male bodies that are socially unadapted and lacking in direction. The characterization of masculinities in Galich's two novels reflect José Toro-Alfonso's assertion that hegemonic masculinity as a referent is no longer viable at the beginning of the 21st century, and that "si existe diversidad en la representación social de lo masculino entonces es necesario explorar esas formas particulares en que muchos hombres construyen y reconstruyen su hombría" (15). Given that *Managua Salsa City* ended with a negative prototype of the national, Galich seems to probe at a different relationship between individual identity vis-à-vis the idea of a Central American identity, inserted in the narrative through the structural schema layed out by the diegetic reference to *Mariposa traicionera*.

The linkage between song and narrative is established prior to the diegetic OST, when La Guajira seduces Cara de Ratón in a motel room where she is being held hostage. She seduces him after realizing that her body as a sexual commodity gives her the upper hand, calling him a "Ratoncito" (22), making reference to the verses "Yo soy ratón de tu ratonera, trampa que no mata pero no libera, vivo muriendo prisionero." The narrative concretizes the genderizing of the *mariposa* as a feminine body by holding the male (Cara de Ratón) as the now prisoner to La Guajira's charms.⁷⁴ This association, however, is inverted when Rana refuses to accept his lover as a traitor who has left him to die after the events of *Managua Salsa City*. The vilinization of the female is completed when the investigating officers conclude that a woman must be responsible for the mayhem left at Rana's house, as she functions as the Girardian mediator in Sedgwick's theorization of the homosocial.

⁷⁴ Maná's song is already genderized, as the *mariposa* is explicated to be a woman: "Ay, mujer como haces daño [...] Ay, mujer que fácil eres."

The inversion of the association between woman and *mariposa* is emphasized when La Guajira takes Cara de Ratón's virginity. She is not the fluttering insect that is "fácil y ligera de quien te provoca," but is instead a manipulative vamp who kisses violently and mounts the "indefenso Roedor" (53). Following this process of inversion, the gender of the lyrical butterfly becomes paramount in a textual reading that is intimately related to the descriptive modifier *traicionera* and its lexeme *traicionar*. The lyrical metaphor is representative of a promiscuous lover, but seems to appropriate it for an altogether other purpose. If the prostitute in *Y te diré quién eres (Mariposa traicionera)* is not the lyrical subject, then who is?

Aside from Rana's exclamation upon first listening to the song, the text reveals a narrative mise-en-abyme when the male protagonist ponders the results of the Sandinista Revolution. Rana reflects that "lo que se comenzó en el setenta no se ha concluido, esta chochada quedó incompleta, fue traicionada, unos más otros menos, pero en fin, traidores" (61). What is of interest here is Rana's diegetic usage of the lexeme *traicionar*, as it begins to establish a gendered identity to the lyrically juxtaposed *mariposa*.

In fact we discover that men are the only traitors in Galich's tale, including the ex-soldier Medallitas who betrays the government to the Contras. Given that the author plays a textual game of inversion to explore the constructs of masculinity in Central America, it comes as no surprise that he fashions groups of homosocial masculinities, such as the police, the press, and the group of conniving politicians who are blamed for ransacking the country, in a textual economy of nation evocative of similar strategies seen in the new historical novels studied earlier. Rana attempts a bombing of this group, leading to one politician to scream "¡traición! ¡traición!" (94). In a knowing wink towards the role of music as an

intertext, the only figures left standing, nonchalantly gathering their instruments after the bombing are a group of hired musicians. They don't stop playing their instruments during the action sequence of the bombing, suggesting that whatever tunes their bandleader waves belongs on the diegetic audiotrack and in the novel's OST album.

Returning to the idea of inversion vis-à-vis the title song, Pancho Rana is also associated with the trope of the traitorous military male when he suggests that he might be viewed as a turncoat for escaping with jewels entrusted to him by a transnational Mafioso known as El Jefe. Therefore if the hypervirile Rana is characterized as a traitor, along with a series of other masculine characters, how does the relationship between *traicionar* and *mariposa* develop?

The latter term is used descriptively to refer to prostitutes who Rana consults when looking for La Guajira. But the reference is glossed over when the "mariposas nocturnas" (63) are immediately after described as a group of "abejitas" (63). The author swiftly capsizes the culturally atuned idea of the female butterfly in favor of an alternative reading of who betrays who in contemporary Managua's *infierno*, as it is the many subordinate masculinities who are labeled as traitors. Even when the gathering of politicians is bombed, they as hegemonic entities are spared the queering effect of betrayal.

I say queering as it is evident that the real *mariposas* in *Y te diré quién eres* are the many subordinate masculinities that prowl the streets of the region. They become associated with the lyrical imagery of the floating butterfly that actively goes from lover to lover, and who passively opens her "alitas, muslos de colores" where her lovers mount her. The syntactic association is diegetically played out in the case of Cara de Ratón, who is arguably the greatest social/moral traitor when he surprises La Guajira in the motel room where she is

held hostage. Galich cross-dresses the already animalized male “con su calzoncito bikini, el brasier y sus zapatos de plataforma, y las joyas” (70). Faced with this ghastly specter, La Guajira wonders if he is a *cochón*, referring to the cultural phenomenon of the heterosexual male who has relations with other men, but always as the insertee.⁷⁵

The implied plurality of masculinities is mentioned in an earlier scene between Pancho Rana and one of the “abejitas,” La Chobi-Xaquira, who is described by Rana as having an attractive body. Xaquira is a transvestite prostitute who claims to know where La Guajira is. She coyly asks Rana what kind of a man he is: “¿Macho-menos o macho-más, macho probado o macho-macho?” (64). This depiction of Central American masculinities is reinforced when Alexa, a prostitute who is gifted to Pancho, shares with him her knowledge of men:

Hay quienes les gusta que la mujer los masturbe oralmente, les gusta la eyaculación bucal. Otros, en cambio, les gusta hacer el beso negro; pero eso es babosada [...] hay otros que les gusta que les besen la roseta, pero hay otros que les gusta que les metan el dedo [...] Ya no digamos los hombres que les gusta dar y que les den y los que les gusta con dos y tres y hasta cuatro mujeres. O todos contra todos, como en la lucha libre. (144)

The smorgasbord of male sexuality as laid out contradicts anthropological work done on the region that isolates *cochón* culture as a specific example of the traditional aim versus object of desire paradigm that is reserved for discussions about Latin American erotics. The practices related by the young prostitute contradict Rosario-Vélez’s denomination of a sexuality that is “reproductiva, mimética y de acreditación cultural” (68). The idea of a macho-menos is illustrated by El Guapo, a businessman with illicit businesses who agrees to sell the stolen jewels. His feminine physicality is contrasted with his sexual tastes, as he has affairs with both La Guajira and Xaquira. El Guapo eludes the *cochón* label, queering a

⁷⁵ See Roger Lancaster’s study on this erotic phenomenon in Nicaragua.

sexuality that is traditionally viewed as compatible with heteronormative practices. The dialectic agent of sublation is the transvestite who reveals that El Guapo likes to be sodomized, in addition to sodomizing others. The final queering touch of the businessman is added when Xaquira calls him a “traidor degenerado” (164), thereby morphing his physical and semantic characteristics with the lyrical and ontological schema captured in Maná’s song. El Guapo becomes one of many *mariposas* that Galich gathers in his text, lacking agency and any semblance of a physical and/or psychological phallus. He becomes a seductive butterfly that goes from flower to flower, “seduciendo a los pistilos.”

This verse of the song reveals a mistyped sexualizing of the lyrical subject, as the botanical pistil houses the female genitalia of the flower. The female-gendered butterfly therefore seduces and goes from female-sexualized flower to flower, suggesting that there is an underlying queer facet to the song that Galich exploits in his intertext.

Following the trajectory of El Guapo, Pancho Rana is sublated from a position of virile masculinity to a subordinate position that is brought about by the queering transvestite. He recounts the sexual conquests over La guajira and Hope, the wife of his anglicized boss in Managua, but then wonders how Xaquira’s lips taste. In another scene Rana reminisces about Xaquira’s “lindas piernas y un culo mejor que el de muchas mujeres” (151). Though Rana never engages in explicit sexual relations with Xaquira, it is alluded to that he participates in a night of debauchery that includes “bichas” and “bichos” (179), suggesting that he engages in some of the practices that Alexa shares with the reader.

The figure of the transvestite further queers Rana by the many lexical borrowings he displays as the scenes progress. Xaquira and a homosexual make-up artist are known for their usage of pejorative, homophobic language such as “maricón” and “degenerado.” Their first

line of defense against would-be attackers and cheating lovers is to appropriate the lexicon of heteronormative discourse. Rana re-appropriates Xaquira's appropriation of this discourse as he escapes capture from a group of men who hunt him, calling them "¡jueputas maricones!" (157). Though Rana is quick to assume the transvestite's manipulation of hegemonic discourse, he fails to fully articulate his own homosexual desire. The parallelism between Maná's "Mariposa traicionera" and *Y te diré quién eres* succeeds in queering the ex-military masculinity of Rana but the text resists a full-blown recategorization of the character, suggesting that the ties between the poetics of the text and the social erotics of Galich's post-Sandinista Central America are not firm. After all, the half-written title of the novel evokes the incomplete nature of the connection between language and sexual desire/practice, putting forward an aesthetics of incompleteness as a model for representing turn-of-the-century Central America. This is plasmated in a conversation between Rana and an associate who is attracted to Xaquira. At this juncture in the text both men know that she is a transvestite, leading Rana to ask: "¿Y por qué si tanto te Gus...tavo no te la Jala...pa para el Mo...motombo?" (184). Though linguistically queered by the mimicry of the transvestite's defense-mechanism, Rana remains an ambivalently heterosexual man who cannot fully express his desire towards Xaquira. The play on words, the theatre of syllables uttered and absent, suggests to the reader the inherent difficulty in quantifying and qualifying masculinity in a society turned on its head.

Following this observation, it is evident that the other masculinities in *Y te diré quién eres* (*Mariposa traicionera*) are similarly precluded from a hegemonic position in Galich's Managua. The press, for example, does not support Connell's theory of science and objectivity as a necessary strategy for achieving hegemony. They are a haphazard group of

misfits that exaggerate and speculate on the news, repeatedly blaming the Islamic terrorist group Al-Qaeda for the bombing engineered by Rana.⁷⁶ The police, metonymized by the womanizing Anastasio Cerna, are initially characterized as patriotic, masculine, and in control of strategies that promote a patriarchal control of society. This is lyricized by Cernasinging “Palomita Guasiruca,” a song made popular by the Sandinista Carlos Mejía Godoy, a nationalistic and progressive singer/politician. Cerna, however, is disqualified from a position of hegemony when he fails to achieve an erection while having an affair with his assistant Vilma. The police captain’s final coup de grace, however, is saved for Xaquira who seduces him with her “bello tronco asentadero que tanto le apasionaba” (192).

Following her association with the queering of Rana, based on the syntactic relationship between *mariposa* and to betray, it comes as no surprise that Cerna, representing the law, is the biggest traitor in the novel. The dying Pancho Rana recognizes the head of the Policía Nacional as an ex-Sandinista recruit who betrayed his group to the Contras, only to betray them by reverting to the FSLN (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional). It is the same Cerna, who then betrays the power entrusted to him as a member of law enforcement by allowing drug lords to operate and by taking part in a “red de corrupción que involucraba a personas del gobierno, la policía, y particulares” (200). Cerna executes Rana as one of the many who “se oponen al *progreso* de la patria” (201, my emphasis). If Galich is ambiguous in his characterization of Rana, he leaves no room for doubt in the elimination of Cerna from a position of socially-hegemonic masculinity, as he is incapable of articulating progress for the nation.

⁷⁶ Following their practice of speculation, it can be assumed that Galich is aiming an implicit dagger at the North American press who repeatedly and unapologetically blamed Al-Qaeda for a series of international terrorist bombing after the attacks of September 11, 2001.

The imminent execution of the protagonist instigates a stream of consciousness where Rana epitomizes a greater sentiment of loss, frustration and disillusionment that characterizes Central American fiction produced in the last twenty years. As a testament to his frustration, Rana describes himself as a “perro rabioso que echa fuego por los ojos por la boca por la nariz” (202). The narrative stream includes lyrics from the final stanza of “Mariposa traicionera,” suggesting a narrative awareness of the text’s conclusion and/or a diegetic awareness of impending death. The disjointed, accelerated comments, images and lyrics succeed in disarticulating Rana’s control over the narrative. Rana inaccurately calls La Guajira a “Mariposa Traicionera,” when it is clear that it is the men in the text who are the *traidores* and *mariposas*.

The biggest traitor, Anastasio Cerna is obliterated in an ambush orchestrated by Rana’s men, thereby assuring that no negative literary extrapolations can be made at the end of *Y te diré quién eres*, as is the case in *Managua Salsa City*. As Rana slips into unconsciousness, he leaves the reader with a new model of masculinity that emerges from the chaos left by decades of misanthropic politics and top-serving economics that is composed of “hombres dispuestos a cualquier cosa con tal de conseguir siquiera un tuco de lo que ellos [los ricos políticos y poderosos] consiguen sin verguiarse en las calles bajo el nica sol de encendidos lolos” (210). The symbol of the Masculine, Cerna, that entity that previously

Taking this model as a point of entry into a larger thesis on a post-Sandinista, destroyed-by-neoliberalism Central America, we can note two arguments. First, gender as a socioliterary trope is made malleable and negotiable by the disarticulation of a traditional hegemonic model of masculinity. The novel is noticeably lacking in metaphysical and homosocial hegemonic masculinity and instead presents a series of subordinate masculinities

that are ontologically impotent when it comes to establishing a functioning strategy of patriarchy. Second, by substituting in a group of men who are *mariposas* due to their betraying and being betrayed, the author establishes a hermeneutic erotics that is based on popular culture.⁷⁷ With that being said, the central axis of Galich text is the intertextual referent of Maná's transnational yet ontologically Latin American brand of rock music as a carefully conceived affront to the cultural colonization that began in the 1980s as neoliberalism invaded the region.⁷⁸

Lyrical Desires and an Aesthetics of Resistance/Confrontation

The use of popular music as an intertext in the writing of masculinities vis-à-vis societies during and in the wake of the neoliberal tsunami evidences a renewed connection between these texts and their ideas of the national. In these societies, popular music is deified, as Vicente Francisco Torres notes, “la canción popular es una religión; el altar es el aparato de sonido y los sacerdotes los ídolos” (21). The religiosity of song is imbued into the novel by authors who are “intermediarios, como los santos u orishas que conectan a los fieles – los lectores – con sus deidades populares” (Ramírez Plata 53). The product of this sacred textuality is a narrative that is rich in cultural referents, which additionally serves as a site of enunciation for political, economic, social, and erotic discourses.

⁷⁷ I appropriate Jeanette Winterson's coinage of the term in her essay “The Erotics of Risk,” where the critic understands hermeneutic erotics to be “those features of narrative form that capture the reader by setting out the diegetic erotics of the story itself” (48).

⁷⁸ Like Mayra Montero, the members of Maná have publicly supported Puerto Rican sovereignty from the United States.

The novels examined in Chapter 2 sought a theorization of the textual signifiers and strategies of representation of masculinities in contemporary Latin American fiction. These textualities are compounded by the literary veneration of song, as the lyrics, melodies and dance of musics open up new hermeneutic entry-points into an understanding of desire, and of the role of gender within the representation of the social changes occurring outside the novel-scape. In Pedro Lemebel's *Tengo miedo torero*, the text exposes all the characteristics of a popular music novel, from its usage of song for a title, to diegetic and narrative lyrical verses, leading the way to what can be thought of as a literary OST. It is clear that music becomes a plane of expression for non-traditional and/or queering desires that cannot (or will not) be expressed through narrative. This is the case in Mayra Montero's *La última noche que pasé contigo*, where the repeated boleros provide a lyricized language to codify the latent and implicit desires of the characters on a cruise. The use of music as a narrative apparatus shifts from a psychoanalytic to a political gear in Alfredo Bryce Echenique's *El huerto de mi amada*, where the writer uses diegetic song as a means to establish diverging topographies that are metonymic of the power exerted by hegemonic masculinities in Lima. The politicization of this novelistic strategy is taken further when Franz Galich carefully controls and employs rock music in his (incomplete) transnational thesis against Northern imperialism.

The fixation on borders in the face of cultural imperialism in *Y te diré quién eres* (*Mariposa traicionera*) is sensitive to the novelistic role of topographic space. What is it about Managua, Lima, or the open waters of the Caribbean that triggers a discussion of masculinity and power? Is this a renaissance of the age-old binary of center/periphery that structures so much earlier Latin American political and literary thought? The presentation of

new masculinities that are central to the recovery of the national in the face of the encroaching and assimilating forces of globalization is contingent upon a spatial demarcation of identity. Galich's new model, after all, only becomes a possibility through the textual *mariposas* within the delimitations of the infernal setting of Managua, *Rock City*. The presentation of a post-war, anti-neoliberal model confronts Connell's transnational business masculinity that takes a leading role in an emergent gendered world order, which is associated with the dominant, transnational institutions of the world economy. This brand of masculinity, according to Connell, has achieved a position of hegemony over other models (*The Men and the Boys* 46). But these other models have arrived, and actively resist domination in the battlegrounds of the neo-liberal agenda, in the spaces that negotiate a struggle between homogenous modernity and autochthonous alternatives. Space in these contemporary works is both genderized and genderizing, and gives way to the formation of organic masculinities that rise from the continent in the face of cultural and economic imperialism.

CHAPTER 4

FROM THE SPATIAL TO THE VIRTUAL: GENDERIZED AND GENDERIZING SPACES IN THE METROPOLIS

*Vista desde las alturas, la Ciudad de México es
una mancha urbana; vista desde la cercanía
más próxima, es un muestrario de destrozos.
Ciudad sin forma, encuentra sentido en la
deformación de uso.*
Juan Villoro, *El Olvido: Un itinerario urbano*
(25).

If in the previous pages I presented a textual space conscious of the limits and boundaries of space within the discussions of gender, self, and nation, in this chapter I focus on what Manuel Castells calls the megacity to craft an inquiry into the relevance of the urban when dealing with Masculinity. The sociologist defines this space as “the nodes of the global economy, concentrating the directional, productive, and managerial upper functions all over the planet” (403). He specifies that this new space is composed of “discontinuous constellations of spatial fragments, functional pieces, and social segments” (407). The discontinuity of the megalopolis can be viewed as a schism from previous ideas of the Latin American city. As Sarissa Carneiro observes, “si, en distintos momentos de la historia, la ciudad fue el símbolo del orden, la perfección, la civilización y la modernidad, es decir: la realización de un diseño buscado como Ciudad Ideal, las megalópolis latinoamericanas actuales son, en muchos aspectos, un contratexto de dicha idealidad” (69).⁷⁹

⁷⁹ They are importantly an amalgam of several urban centers, which Edward Soja denotes as a geopolitical instance of synekism that is explained to be a “regional concept of cityspace, a form and process of political

My concluding remarks in the previous chapter point towards a geopolitical challenge in North/South cultural relations that assumes a process of cultural imperialism, where the use of rock music as a narrative affront to political and economic influence axiomizes the process of globalization. This process, as Edward W. Soja asserts, is a “particularly voracious trope, devouring and digesting a widening gyre of alternative discursive representations of what is new in our present world, while at the same time asserting itself as the necessary foundational concept for deciding what is to be done in response to this pervasively global newness” (190). The trope gains footing in narratives that map tangential loci of representative urbanisms that symbolize and juxtapose presupposed sets of values and power relations. The novels of Jaime Bayly, for example, systemize a tectonics of erotics that locate free homosexual expression and identification in the anglicized space of Miami and not the archaic, repressed and oligarchic cesspool of Lima.⁸⁰ In this literary paradigm, a mapped out transnational space is necessary for the identification and expression of self along an axis of gender that is codified, textualized, and defined by space.

governance, economic development, social order, and cultural identity that involved not just one urban settlement or node but many articulated together in a multi-layered meshwork of nodal settlements or city-centered regions” (13). In biologic terms Soja understands the grouping of urbanizations as a process of cephalization that is bonded together by agglomeration economies which he defines as “the economic advantages (and at times disadvantages) that derive from the dense clustering of people and sites of production, consumption, administration, culture, and related activities in nodal concentrations that form the focal points of a regional system of settlements” (13).

⁸⁰ Employing an autobiographic narrative style that is best understood as recycling, Bayly engages a process of sexual globalization that underlines the rise of a homosexual *internacional* in Lima, an identity that does not conform to traditional ideas of *activos* versus *pasivos*. The fluidity of ideas from Miami to Lima, which is to say a presupposition of an intangible highway of influence, is studied by Robert Ruz in a survey of Bayly’s literary production in the 1990s. The critic argues that though Bayly’s narratives are firmly rooted in Lima’s society and politics, his life and work are strongly influenced by US popular culture and sexual politics. My description of Lima is not rooted in personal experience but is instead a snapshot that attempts to capture the city that Bayly narrates in novels including *No se lo digas a nadie* (1994), *Y de repente, un ángel* (2005), and *El cojo y el loco* (2009).

It comes as no surprise, then, that contemporary Latin American fiction evidences a spatial mapping that attempts an anti-regionalism through the depictions of what Alberto Fuguet calls non-places. In his novels he constructs a spatial Latin America that is metaphysically linked with North American and/or globalized culture.⁸¹ The focus on the foreign within the politico-physical boundaries of Latin America creates a praxis of space that is not necessarily regional or indigenous: Fuguet's non-spaces are airports, Starbucks, and commercial malls, where the ambulating literary subject undergoes a topographic dislocation into an imagined global order that is rife with these markers of cultural globalism.⁸² The iconic reference to this phenomenon comes in the introduction to *McOndo* (1996) where Fuguet argues that Latin America has become “otro país [...] [que] es más grande, sobrepoblado y lleno de contaminación, con autopistas, metro, TV-cable y barriadas. En McOndo hay McDonald's, computadores Mac y condominios, amén de hoteles cinco estrellas construidos con dinero lavado y *malls* gigantescos” (17).⁸³

The qualitative problem with denoting these locales as non-spaces is that Fuguet fails to acknowledge their physical positioning within what Soja calls a cityspace. The

⁸¹ Illustrative of this process is *Mala onda* (1991), which deals with the fetishization of North American popular and filmic culture amidst the decidedly autochthonous backdrop of Pinochet's government.

⁸² Fuguet's *Por favor, rebobinar* (1998) showcases the construction of the cinemaspace as a non-space where US popular culture diffuses into the national imaginary of Chilean youth. The exploration of non-space is best noted in *Aeropuertos* (2010). Taking this shift a step further, the protagonist in *Las películas de mi vida* (2003) is only able to reflect on his identity when he travels abroad, evocative of Jaime Bayly's autobiographic character, Joaquín, in *No se lo digas a nadie* who only begins to gain a sense of self when he leaves Lima for Miami and is freely allowed to express his sexuality, undoubtedly a reflection of the author's own move and creation of a persona that hinges on sexual ambiguity.

⁸³ Though the impact of any anthology or manifesto poses a cultural quandary of causality, the quoted lines from *McOndo* represent an ethos of literature that has been produced in Latin America in the past fifteen years. For a more complete understanding of some of the trends seen in this fiction, please see Francisca Noguero's “Narrar sin fronteras,” where the critic identifies a set of qualitative trends evidenced in contemporary regional (and not national) fiction.

geophilosopher defines the concept as a “historical-social-spatial phenomenon, but *with its intrinsic spatiality highlighted* for interpretive and explanatory purposes” (8). The non-space is by default not exclusive of the physical and theorized structures of Latin American cityspace. It is fine and well that Fuguet and his followers choose to focus on a conceptualized Latin America that rumbles smoothly to the beat provided by an iPod but in reality, they promulgate nothing more than fodder for the neoliberal movement that Franz Galich and others warn of in their fiction.⁸⁴

More tellingly, Fuguet’s conceptualization of space presumes an utopist understanding of a McDonald’s as an oasis within a desert that imagines a non-belonging to the Latin American cityspace. His conjecture seems to sustain what Michel Foucault denotes as the heterotopias of contemporary space.⁸⁵ These heterotopias are further developed in the work of Soja who articulates a three-tiered understanding of spatiality. He defines firstspace as “a set of materialized ‘spatial practices’ that work together to produce and reproduce the concrete forms and specific patternings of urbanism as a way of life” (10), with secondspace occupying a dialect position where cityspace becomes “more of a mental or ideational field, conceptualized in imagery, reflexive thought, and symbolic representation, a *conceived* space of the imagination” (11). From a critical standpoint, secondspace is the realm of an “urban epistemology, a formal framework and method for obtaining knowledge about cityspace and

⁸⁴ For an in-depth criticism of McOndo, see Palaversich’s *Macondo a McOndo: Senderos de la postmodernidad latinoamericana* (2005), where she systematically demythifies Fuguet’s neoliberal, panamericanist project in *McOndo* and *Se habla español. Voces latinas en USA* (2000). The critic deconstructs both anthologies and their proposals in “Entre mangos y Coca-Cola: el planeta USA” (49-60).

⁸⁵ “There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias.” (Foucault, Michel. *Of Other Spaces* [1967], *Heterotopias*).

explaining its specific geography” (11). The critic’s hypothesized thirdspace, conversely, occupies a third axis where the urban space is “a simultaneously real-and-imagined, actual-and-virtual, locus of structured individual and collective experience and agency” (11). It is in this third level of conceptualizing space does Soja argue that we can critically observe how and why societies and cultures operate.

I propose that one (of the many) problems with Fuguet’s understanding of space is that he gets lost in secondspace, as he fails to consider that the non-space and/or the McDonald’s is physically and textually linked to the streets of Mexico City, Lima, Santiago, and Managua. The reality of the malls, Macintoshes, and McDonald’s that Fuguet and others normalize is also an exclusive existence that is prohibited to the majority of Latin Americans. How many Peruvians enjoy the upper-class lifestyle of Jaime Bayly? How many Chileans fly first class like Fuguet? How many Mexicans enjoy the advanced and modern commodities of Xavier Velasco’s city? Even if globalization has changed the exportable face of Latin America, its interior and young cities and neighborhoods are far-removed from the McOndo spaces represented in certain strands of contemporary fiction.

The question of masculinity is primal in the conception of the urban, as the centers of power are traditional strongholds of Connell’s strategy of hegemonic masculinity. We can note the political power of Marcos Burgos in Rivera Garza’s *Nadie me verá llorar* as he controls economic production and personal sexuality in turn-of-the-century Mexico City. A similar genderizing of space occurs in Bryce Echenique’s *El huerto de mi amada*, as the centers of Lima legitimize the discursive power of the homosocial group. The binary city-hegemonic masculinity can further be observed in traditional *caudillo* novels as the phallic position of the capital is metonymized by the phallic body/role of the dictator. Even in

Fuguet's *Mala onda* (1991), the urban center is the playground of hegemonic masculinity, as the protagonist, Matías Vicuña, gains admission to its ranks when he joins his father in a brothel, thereby engaging himself in the process of *hacerse hombre*. Though he is critical of a myriad of things, Vicuña manages to reintegrate himself into society and his social class by agreeing to be genderized by the center and entering the Masculine.

Even with the crisis of regional masculinities that overshadows Latin American discourses of *hombría*, it is evident that the urban center never loses its association with hegemonic masculinity. This latter term is of course being used in a culturally-sensitive fashion, as the values of hegemonic masculinity in Latin American societies share several points of meeting. The brothel, for one, is a common space of becoming, and the importance of the Latin phallus that Ilan Stavans carefully describes is ontological to an understanding of masculinity and space. My point here is that though masculinity as a social construct is in flux due to the democratization of society, its hegemonic variant seemingly never loses a symbolic hold over the center.

In the following pages I study the structure of the city and how it is represented. Focusing on the symbolic spaces that genderize and are genderizing, I reflect on how masculinities survive in the chaotic centers of the growing Latin American city. Going beyond a strict existence of survival, I speculate on the possibilities of resemanticizing the urban symbols that subjugate genders to hegemonic masculinity. My study is, therefore, grounded in a practice that considers the tangible cityspace in a position that disarticulates it from the literary fixation on globalization.⁸⁶ In this chapter I propose a study of a materially,

⁸⁶ The subsequent narrative focus on the indigenous city and its corridors, centers, and spaces without relying on allochthonous projections of identity (rooted in fictive spaces such as Miami or New York). A similar process is carried out by Fuguet in the least critically-evaluated *Tinta roja* (1996), where the writer takes a Baylyesque

textually and physically constructed Latin American cityspace that sits at the tectonic juncture of political and erotic North/South relations: Mexico City. By means of a close reading of Ana Clavel's *Los deseos y su sombra* (2000) and *Cuerpo náufrago* (2005), this chapter articulates the need to map-out the Masculine city, and to understand the subject's position within this textual space as an intrinsic step in the development of creating an identity vis-à-vis a nation. I purposely leave aside McOndo representations of the city in favor of texts that emanate a physicality that is rooted both in the imaginary and real Latin America; i.e. in Soja's thirdspace. This rooting or process of reterritorialization takes into account masculinity as a socio-historic construct that to be defined must necessarily be contextualized.

I focus exclusively on Clavel and not on the myriad of other city narratives as she evades the literary comfort zone of the *flâneur* and instead performs multiple interpretations and/or approximations to the idea of a representable city. As a writer that intratextually cites Barthes, Foucault, and Freud, Clavel incites a theoretical perspective to the writing and interpretation of her narratives. The two novels I analyze in these pages make reference to the two prominent schools of thought vis-à-vis the hermeneutic study of the city. The textual strategies in *Los deseos y su sombra* perpetuate the city-as-text methodology framed by critics and theorists such as Barthes, Soja, and Lefebvre, whereas *Cuerpo náufrago* is evocative of the rhizomatic, non-directional, and atextual ideology initiated by Deleuze and Guattari and continued by John Protevi, Mark Bonta, and Tom Conley amongst others. Including references to other works by Juan Villoro, Armando Ramírez and Cristina Rivera Garza, the analysis and juxtaposition of these two novels, therefore, addresses a procedural

turn in the chronicle of the early career of journalist exploring the sordid underworld of Santiago, without involving foreign centers of representation.

facet to the study of masculinity vis-à-vis the city, as I explore different conceptions of space and evade a critically-biased strategy by putting forth multiple ideas of spatiality and its representation.

It comes as a methodological departure that my analysis should focus on solely the Mexican context, as the previous and subsequent chapters attempt an understanding of continental practices of representation, but I leave the reader with the caveat that this analytical focusing on Mexico City does not establish an exclusivity to its textual and physical boundaries.⁸⁷ It is, after all, only one of the many large and growing metropolitan areas in Latin America. Critics since Ángel Rama, writing about the cityspace in Latin America, have established a generalized ontological model that roots the Latin American center in the arrival of the Spanish conquerors and the establishment of artificial centers of control.⁸⁸ Parting from this hypothesis, Dietrich Kunkel argues that urban centers in Latin America, though unique in their development and character, converge in certain points, including an unregulated speed of growth and divide between rich and poor that lead to stark demographic stratification (325). The rich neighborhood of Polanco in Mexico City, for example, is analogous to Miraflores in Lima, or El Barrio Alto in Santiago. They are urban and aesthetic centers of wealth and power that are fundamental to a textual construction of

⁸⁷ The focus on the works of a single author also comes as a methodological departure, but I underline the commitment to a praxis of space and subsequently gender that is problematized eloquently and exhaustively through multiple points of view and gendered narrative voices.

⁸⁸ See his quintessential text *La ciudad letrada* (1984). Rama's work has influenced the critical thought of other thinkers such as Jean Franco and Álvaro Cuadra whose *De la ciudad letrada a la ciudad virtual* (2003) provides a third millennium approach to the idea of the lettered city. Franco's critical readings of García Márquez, Vargas Llosa, Roa Bastos and Onetti in *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City: Latin American in the Cold War* examines aesthetic, ethical, political, and economic changes in Latin American culture and literature in the latter half of the 20th century.

privileged and *other* space that is often unseen, unheard, and irrelevant to constructs of nationhood and modernity.⁸⁹

In saying that I believe a critical analysis rooted in an understanding of one (representative) urban center is more productive than a half-attempted analysis of several cities. Such a project undoubtedly requires its own space and corpus of study, which falls outside the larger aim of my analysis. It is my scholarly hope, however, that the analysis performed on Mexico City will prove fruitful in similar mapping vis-à-vis gender inquiries into other urban centers in Latin America.

The textual work behind this process in these pages is traced through a connective hermeneutics between Ana Clavel's *Los deseos y su sombra* and *Cuerpo naufrago* to propose an understanding of space in relation to gender that is contingent upon what Soja terms the dialectic pairing of deterritorialization and reterritorialization (212), which is borne from the debates and postulates of critics of globalization and hybridism such as Homi Bhaba, Arjun Appadurai, and Nestor García Canclini. If Fuguet and his contemporaries such as Edmundo Paz Soldán and Santiago Roncagliolo push towards a deterritorialization of Latin American space in their fiction, then a dialectic reaction of reterritorialization must occur.⁹⁰

This converse process, however, is what interests me in the novels of Clavel, as her texts emphasize the central tension between what Arjun Appadurai calls “cultural

⁸⁹ I contend that the textual construction of these privileged spaces is perpetuated and repeated by upper-class writers who enjoy the protection and dissemination of international publishing houses that package, commercialize, and export their literature (and depictions of the Latin American city). There are, however, exceptions to this rule, notably in the works of Pedro Lemebel, Armando Ramírez, Franz Galich, Carlos Labbé and Maurice Echeverría amongst others.

⁹⁰ The Bolivian writer, Paz Soldán, is well-known for his novels in addition to the anthology, *Se habla español* (2000) co-edited alongside Fuguet. Roncagliolo, on the other hand, first gains fame with his work on the *Sendero luminoso* movement in Peru, but his most recent *Tan cerca de la vida* (2010) favors the anonymity of space that comes with deterritorialization in a globalized world.

homogenization and cultural heterogenization” (32). It is the latter that places emphasis on the territorialized and unique, which is to say the spatial specificity of Latin America and its cities as discursive sites of convergence, as it is the shift towards the mega-city status of the 1980s that triggers the writing of the cityspace in *Los deseos y su sombra*.

On the one hand, I study how the city is composed within the narrative, paying attention to the spaces that are inferred and explicated in the text. It is here that I pause to consider how the cityspace articulates a dynamic of gendered power that has typically been encapsulated by the binarism of *civilización* and *barbarie* that the Argentine Domingo Faustino Sarmiento first penned in *Civilización y barbarie. Vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga y aspecto físico, costumbres y hábitos de la República Argentina* (1845). The naturalist positions of the urban subject versus his rural counterpart came to underline Latin American understandings of identity, best noted in Esteban Echeverría’s Argentine classic *El Matadero* (1839) that juxtaposes the urban civility of a young *unitario* who strolls into the slaughter yard occupied by the multitude of animalized lower-class men, women and children who take part in the orgiastic slaying of the animals.⁹¹ This traditional geospatial understanding of space and self is counter-theorized by Soja as he observes that the binary of center and periphery is neutralized by the discursive practice of cityspace, as it “will always contain inhabited or, for that matter, uninhabited or wilderness areas that do not look urban in any conventional way, but nonetheless are *urbanized*, part of a regional cityspace” (16).⁹² The

⁹¹ Reacting to the dictatorship of Juan Manuel Rosas in the first half of the 1800s, Echeverría’s romantic prose exalts the young *unitario* who supports a centralized government for the newly independent region. The adjectivization of space in relation to the subject was central to the author’s earlier verses, as in the epic *La cautiva* (1837), he spatializes the libidinal, brutal, and backwards native within the periphery whereas the heroic (and European) savior of the captured female comes from the city.

⁹² The works of the Chilean Hernán Rivera Letelier are representative of this break that Soja theorizes, as even in the description of the rural, barren landscape of the salt mines in the desert, space is conceived of in urban

urban metropolis, therefore, no longer conforms to the 19th-century naturalist and romantic philosophy of *civilización* and *barbarie* that counterpoised conflicting yet mutually defining ideas of self that were incarnated in the discursive geographic spaces of city and periphery.⁹³

On the other hand, these pages consider the textual placing of the subject within the reterritorialized cityspace, following Henri Lefebvre's assertion that action only gains meaning when spatialized, or as Soja rehashes, "all social relations, whether they are linked to class, family, community, market, or state power, remain abstract and ungrounded until they are specifically *spatialized*, that is, made into material and symbolic spatial relations" (9). It is through this affirmation that the relationship between subject and city can be condensed and evaluated through the optic of masculinity as a building block of constructed, performed, and imagined self. The city is, after all, a literary character and a discourse that speaks and listens to its inhabitants as it is (a)textually mapped-out, and (a)textually maps its subjects.

Writing/Mapping the Subaltern Space: *Los deseos y su sombra*

Writing on the position of the metropolis within global geopolitical tectonics of the 21st century, Iain Chambers argues that metropolitan centers such as Mexico City have

terms and comparisons. The economic models that Rivera Letelier superimposes onto his work, which bears some recyclage, are evocative of contemporary allegories of North American influence in the economies of Latin America. A perusal of novels such as *Canción para caminar sobre las aguas* (2004), *La contadora de películas* (2009) and *El arte de la resurrección* (2010) sustain this hypothesis.

⁹³ Margarita Vargas undertakes an archaeology of Mexican Romantic literature with a focus on how writers attempted to nationalize literature. She unmasks their efforts as methods of perpetuating patriarchal and phallogocentric ideas of nationhood.

“invariably functioned as the privileged figure(s) of modernity” (55).⁹⁴ They are the apotheosis of aesthetic and economic forces that become models of financial and social development and metaphors of modernization and “metaphysical reality” (55). It is this dysfunctional and disjointed approximation to the metropolis that leads Edward Soja to coin a post-spatial understanding of the city.⁹⁵ The demystification of the urban center is continued by Chambers who argues that the metropolis is only a:

[M]yth, a tale, a telling that helps us to locate our home in modernity [...] The metropolis is an allegory; in particular it represents the allegory of the crisis of modernity that we have learnt to recognize in the voices of Baudelaire, Benjamin, and Kafka [...] [T]his metropolis is not simply the final stage of a poignant narrative, of apocalypse and nostalgia, it is also the site of the ruins of previous orders in which diverse histories, languages, memories and traces continually entwine and recombine in the construction of new horizons. (112)

By alluding to the textual nature of the city, Chambers calls to attention a need to understand the mythology of the urban space. Aside from identifying its phenotype, a critical understanding of how it operates and how power runs through and is captured by it is

⁹⁴ Anadeli Bencomo’s *Voces y voceros de la megalópolis: la crónica periodístico-literaria en México* (2002) provides a well-thought introduction to the textualization of the postmodern city. Fitting into a line of critical inquiry characterized by tomes such as *Carlos Monsiváis: Culture and Chronicle in Contemporary Mexico* (Linda Egan, 2001) and *The Contemporary Mexican Chronicle: Theoretical Perspectives on the Liminal Genre* (Corona and Jörgensen, 2002), Bencomo focuses on the works of Elena Poniatowska, Carlos Monsiváis and José Joaquín Blanco, as she examines the chaotic reality of “la megalopolización de la capital mexicana” (36).

⁹⁵ The conception of the urban or the megacity, therefore, is understood along the planes of first, second, and thirdspace as an interactive and physical locus of spatiality, behavior, meaning, and discourse. It is formed by a process of synekistic agglomeration, which is a “behavioral and transactional as well as political and economic concept that activates, makes into a social and historical force, the spatial specificity of urbanism” (13). It is this understanding of space vis-à-vis urbanism that explains Neville Brown’s strongly imperialistic description of Mexico City as a “feral” city (239). Under a precociously innocent subheading of “Cities too soon?” the critic posits that third-world centers such as Beijing, Johannesburg and Mexico City are not ready for urban modernity. In the latter example he points out that “both the police force and the judiciary are seriously corrupt, a reality that no doubt reflects the situation nationwide” (239). It is the condition of being “feral” that Edward Soja, however, assigns to all contemporary urban centers of synekistic agglomeration, as he argues that the traditional binary of center and periphery no longer applies in the 21st century, and that the idea of a “tame” urbanism is a practical and theoretical fallacy. Echoing this sentiment of the modern urban space, Juan Villoro asserts that “la descripción de la ciudad como caótica no implica por fuerza una crítica ni un lamento desesperado. Se trata, más bien, de un retrato de su peculiar condición operativa” (*El Olvido* 17).

necessary. These questions of composition are asked and answered by Ana Clavel in *Los deseos y su sombra*.

Born in 1961, Clavel has been considered to belong to what critical circles have called New Mexican Narrative and gains literary accolades in the 1980s with the publication of two collections of short stories. *Los deseos y su sombra* is the author's first and is reminiscent of the Boom novels in its usage of plot fragmentation, multiple perspectives, and a stream of consciousness narrative that invites the reader to decipher the many puzzles and complexities in the text. As Jane Elizabeth Lavery notes, *Los deseos y su sombra* is "notable for its dialogic richness, interweaving the historical, the fictional, and the fantastic" (1068). The use of the fantastic and hints of magical realism situate her amongst contemporaries such as Ana García Bergua, Adriana González Mateos and Cecilia Eudave, all of whom Ana Rosa Domenella defines as "autoras neofantásticas" (353). The critic affirms that the fantastic in Clavel is not necessarily the mixture of realities or paradigms, but is instead a focus on the body as a fantastical creation that can be played with, teased, and molded into whatever we want.

The novel traces the life of Soledad García, a young, introspective and precocious girl who lives in Mexico City from the 1950s through the 1980s.⁹⁶ The timeframe of the novel

⁹⁶ A discussion on the narrative changes seen in Mexico City through the second half of the twentieth century would not be complete without a reference to José Emilio Pacheco's *Las batallas en el desierto* (1981). Noting the textual development of Carlos throughout *Las batallas en el desierto*, Beatriz Barrantes-Martín argues that the development of narrated self runs parallel to the development of the narrated cityspace. She notes that the city and Carlos are spatial recipients of the changes brought about by globalization and urbanization in the post-War period, observing that "el proceso de transculturación sufrido por el país, en el cual el precio de la *tecnologización* y el progreso son una galopante *norteamericanización*" (25).

The rupture from a binary optic of national space, more importantly, signals the positioning of Mexico City within a global discourse of the metropolis and its subsequent impact on the role of the urban conjectures of human and planetary futures. The city as a burgeoning metropolis comes under the microscope in the 1990s as it experiences a boom in local artists and writers who take to the streets to find inspiration and to chronicle their reality. If the earlier works mentioned here problematized the urban as a space of cohabitation between different groups and ideas, the 1990s evidence as axiomatic the animalistic, organic, and converging nature of

reflects a period rife in social and economic change in Mexico, problematized by internal migrations and the setting up of industrial centers sustained by foreign investment.⁹⁷

Blending temporalities and levels of lucidity, the text explores the life of Soledad as she negotiates the streets and spaces of the city in a process of self identification. The body-city metaphor which is a leitmotiv in many contemporary fictions is taken to a fantastic level as the body-text and city-text (remember that both are semiotic products and games) are entangled in a chicken versus the egg dialectic of causality that escapes the simple metonymization of space that was evident in more naturalist literature. Soledad talks of her childhood, her revolutionary father, the brother of her best friend who was killed in the 1968 student revolts, and of the mysterious *Desconocido* who repeatedly rapes and molests her in her youth. As an adult, the narrative picks up from her relationship with a visiting Hungarian photographer, Peter Nagy, who abandons her in Mexico when he leaves for his homeland. Soledad spirals swiftly into a self-destructive gloom of loneliness, lyrically evocative of her own name. She fools her mother and brother into thinking that she has been given a scholarship to study abroad and instead takes up a photo-archival job in the Palacio de Bellas Artes. It is as an adult that the narrative diverges into the fantastic as the reader is left to

Mexico City. The question now focuses on what is to come from this thirdspace, as in Homero Aridjis's *¿En quién piensas cuando haces el amor?* (1996), Mexico City mutates into a futuristic dystopia that takes its last breaths through the narrative voice of its female narrator, Yo Sánchez. The novel ends with the destruction of the city and the dawn of the new era, signaling an authorial disdain of the technocratic processes of modernization that came with renewed urbanization in the 1990s.

⁹⁷ The sociological work done by Jonathan Kandell and Judith Adler Hellman prove interesting in understanding this shift towards synekism that occurs from the 1960s onwards. They study the demographic cephalization that resulted in massive waves of urban migration that intensified in the 1980s. The move towards urban living is stressed by Hellman who observes that only 35% of the population in the early 80s lived in rural areas with the majority being concentrated in nodal centers such as Mexico City. Similarly, internal migration is explained by Kandell: "The migrants were expelled from the countryside by prolonged droughts, the inability of *ejidos* (communal farms) to sustain families, the mechanization of private farms, and the growing population resulting from health care improvements that cut mortality rates of infants and adults" (186-187).

decipher whether Soledad is alive or dead, as she is suddenly able to walk unnoticed through the city.

Keeping the dematerialization of the female body in mind, Luzma Becerra argues that the novel undertakes a “desprendimiento de la realidad, sin que llegue a desaparecer un ‘estar ahí’” (370). Through the narrative of Soledad, Clavel succeeds in hazing the limits of space but we are never fully disarticulated from a narrative of the city or a city-text per se. Space and the city, after all, are central to Clavel’s positioning of Soledad in relation to other characters in the novel. From the Palacio de Bellas Artes and the Castillo de Chapultepec the protagonist centers the expansive and multiplicitous city through a narrative and diegetic telephoto lens that establishes its spaces as the canvas that must and will be painted over by Soledad. Keeping this conception of spatiality in mind, Becerra observes that “la historia de *Los deseos y su sombra* reelabora un contexto cultural, que es el de un imaginario femenino con su educación tradicional en lo referente al registro genérico” (372). The novel’s narrative trajectory is mapped out as Soledad constructs a fake world in response to the weight of patriarchal systems; an alternate mapped out space with the individual as the sole cartographic referent and the locating device of language as an obfuscated medium of finding and plotting points of contact between the multiple worlds that Clavel’s protagonist negotiates.

A similar deconstruction and simultaneous reconstruction of Mexico City occurs in Juan Villoro’s *Materia dispuesta* (1996). Conforming to what can be called a failed bildungsroman, Villoro interweaves the maturation of his protagonist, Mauricio Guardiola, with the development of Mexico City from the 1960s to 1980s. Masculinity is an ontological concern in Villoro’s narrative as Mauricio is never worried about belonging to a fixed sexual

identity (Deleuze 27). He is attracted to both men and women, and differentiates himself from his nation-building architect father who shows a renewed commitment to making the city more “Mexican.” The father as a purveyor of a planned-out city that adheres to aesthetic ideals of identity catalyzes the failure of controlling the urban in Mexico City as his models and designs fall through. His physical body is symbolic of this failure when he drunkenly exclaims to his son: “no tengo verga. No se me para” (291). The novel concludes with the 1985 earthquake that rocked the city with a magnitude of 8.1 on the Richter scale. Villoro’s dematerialization of Mexico City is brought to a close by the romance between the amorphous protagonist and a neighborhood girl who spent her youth in a coma. Their foundational romance sparks the portrayal of a city that is fractured, shapeless, and lost without identity.⁹⁸

Los deseos y su sombra focuses on the elements and voices of society that hegemonic power chooses to silence or ignore, but which can very easily upset the status quo. These groups, which Edward Said denotes as the “ignored group” (“Foreword” v), represent the oppressed, desobjectified and unprivileged sectors that Ramírez shockingly put to ink in *Pu* (1979); they are the masses who migrated to and subsist in Mexico City.⁹⁹ But Clavel does

⁹⁸ The dissolution of the cityspace into a polymorphic void that resists quantification is suggested in Villoro’s novel, but is an active reality in Margarita Mansilla’s *Karenina Express* (1995) and Rivera Garza’s *Nadie me verá llorar* (1999). In the former that mixes four narratives through the metafictional reference to Tolstoy’s classic *Anna Karenina* (1873) the city becomes a blur that is lost in a moment of motion, or as Debra Castillo notes, “like the fragmented meta-self, it is everywhere, and everywhere dispersed” (94). The idea of space is deterritorialized as larger questions of language, representation, literature and globality come into play.

⁹⁹ Mapping as a narrative necessity is performed by Ramírez through the visual descriptions that are generated from a first-person journey through the city’s roadways. The cityspace is organic in the sense that it can only be accessed through this over-ground network of pavement that breathes life into the notion of a dual Mexico City that deviates from firstspace conceptions of the urban. The author’s take on the city and its spaces, more importantly, shakes to the foundation the neoliberal McOndo ideas of globalized spaces in contemporary Latin America. Writing decades before Fuguet and his contemporaries, Ramírez points to the already existing schism between the rich and the poor, the privileged and the invisible, that exists in the 1970s with the shift towards urbanization and the rupture of a *civilización* and *barbarie* topography for the national imaginary.

not perform a textual ventriloquism of their voices, as she instead focuses her attention on making Soledad a metonymic and corporal representation of the fractured city and its voices. The novel becomes, therefore, an authorial and reader-intense activity of unearthing the truth about Soledad and/or the city and all that it represents, leading Lavery to hypothesize:

The unknowability of her truth becomes inextricably interconnected with the text's comments on historic reality, symbolically illustrating that what we might perceive as reality or 'truth' is ultimately an imaginative construct [...] Even though historical realities are subordinated to social and psychological issues, the physical violence suffered by Soledad and various other characters reflects the experiences of silenced Mexicans under the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI: Partido Revolucionario Institucional) between the 1950s and 1980s. (1054)

The role of gender within Clavel's greater literary endeavor is evident in the choice of a female character who actively perambulates through the defined city as observed from the Palacio and Castillo. Establishing an alternative understanding of the nation and its history necessarily debunks traditional patriarchal and phallogocentric conceptions of state.¹⁰⁰ The reimagining of society in turn sets up an analogous process within an understanding of the subject as traditional ideas of gender are discarded.

Stemming from the early memories of intercourse with the *Desconocido*, which go unexplained and without much detail, Soledad's journey of self-discovery forces Clavel to conceive a non-patriarchal notion of female subjectivity vis-à-vis the city. This exercise is keeping with broader trends of understanding the city/self and the positioned subject in its streets and *barrios* that can be observed in Luis Zapata's novel, though in Clavel it is a

¹⁰⁰ For a complete understanding of Mexican masculinity in relation to the state and nationalism, please see Héctor Domínguez-Ruvalcaba's *Modernity and the Nation* (2007), where he argues that through a practice of sensuality and violence representations of masculinity and the male body abound in the historical period of modernization in the 20th century.

distinct process in that the urban subject is a female.¹⁰¹ Lavery comments upon this difference as she explains that the protagonist's journey and "remapping of her own body in the megalopolis feminizes the traditional male quest in the Mexican urban novel. The notion of the city as a whore, which provides the space for male journeys over what is depicted as prostrate female terrain, continues to hold sway in Mexico's masculine literary (postcolonial) imagination" (1056).

Following a Kristevan understanding of the subject as being in process, Lavery analyzes the text in relation to the formation of the female, without necessarily unearthing a critical interest in Soledad's space. The critic does, however, open a pathway into an understanding of the city as a patriarchal stronghold when she comments that "the foundation of the city is intimately connected to the cartography of male desire, where man writes the body of the other (woman) and brutally inscribes upon it his own history" (1056). These centers of patriarchy, or closely delineated topographies that capture phallogentric power, are pervasive and effluent in *Los deseos y su sombra*.

The bodies that capture and perpetuate phallogentricism as a cultural and national paradigm begin in the ubiquitous space of the household through the figure of Soledad's mother, Carmen. After the death of her husband she reminds Soledad that her brother is now the man of the house and must be respected, and that she as a girl must fit into the role

¹⁰¹ In the works of Luis Zapata during the 1970s, for example we see a narrative focus on identity that is painted onto the cityspace as a heteroglossic and heterotopic textual canvas. The author engages in the Barthesian dialectic of space and autonomous human subject, as both participate in a conversation that defines the other. In the classic *El vampiro de la colonia Roma* (1979), for example, Zapata's homosexual protagonist engages in a picaresque promenade through the urban alleyways and habitats of Mexico City in search of sexual gratification. Zapata's literary exercise has been touted as groundbreaking in the expression of Mexican homosexuality, with his earlier *Hasta en las mejores familias* (1975) setting a narrative tone of self and spatial exploration that will continue throughout his work. His writing of Mexico City as a signifier and signified of identity is evident in *La hermana secreta de Angélica María* (1989) that narrates the coming-of-age story of a young provincial boy.

afforded by patriarchy: “las niñas no hablan cuando están entre mayores, quietecita como una muñeca de porcelana: si se mueve se rompe” (21). Carmen is strongly subservient to the tenets of a heteronormative society controlled by the hegemonic imaginary of masculinity that holds women below men in all measurable and intangible aspects. Men, in her worldview, are always correct and knowing whereas women lack reason and subjectivity. She also perpetuates the idea of public female genitalia, whether in form or use, as shameful when she spies Soledad plumping her lips in front of a mirror. She tells her daughter to bite her lips to make them seem smaller and less alluring. When Carmen demonstrates this to her daughter she is described as having the mouth of a fish or a monkey, emphasizing Clavel’s authorial position that patriarchy and phallocentrism desubjectify women. They become animals who cannot speak and communicate, part of the “ignored group” that aimlessly and mechanically mull through the corridors of the city and keep it alive with their work, yet who cannot and must not partake in its construction and spheres of influence. Carmen and Soledad are, after all, the sole breadwinners in the family as they sell pastries and breads in the local community.

The domestic space is controlled by the voice of patriarchy and not necessarily a hegemonic male, as this latter subject position is reinforced by the chidings of the terrible mother and not the heir to the phallogentric throne, Soledad’s brother Luis, who prefers to play football with his friends. His other pastimes include, however, an urban-style pack mentality of attack as he joins other boys in hunting “un buen trasero, unos ojos soñadores o un cabello suave” (47), reinforcing the traditional idea of the city as a whore to the urban male subject. The outside space, which is to say the city-text that lies beyond the kingdom of the domestic, is equally controlled by the marauding bodies of homosocial masculinity.

Soledad as a young girl feels trapped and asphyxiated in the busy commercial streets of the center, as though “el espacio que ocupaba en el aire no le perteneciera” (16).

The city and its streets as being metonymic of a greater masculine force is hinted at by Barthes in his suggestion that space too becomes a character when narrated. Clavel personifies the urban as she describes how the city “despertaba, perezosa, en el valle: estiraba los brazos de humo de sus fábricas, contoneaba las piernas de sus avenidas, se arrebujaba de nuevo en las cúpulas de sus iglesias” (19). The succinct literary tool of personification gives way to an understanding of the city not only as a character but also as a masculine entity that is defined by its heteronormative components. Its anatomy is composed of the factories that create economic wealth that enslaves the masses to what Connell terms transnational business masculinity, or the rising hegemonic group that controls gender, political and economic systems across national frontiers.¹⁰² Dressed in uniformed suits and deeply interested in indiscriminate economic amassment, Connell’s multinational masculinity has loose sexual ethics and is purely concerned with the subjugation of others. The network of streets and avenues calls attention to Soledad’s inability to breathe outside and the actions of the predatory urban homosocial groups that actively hunt women. Lastly, the church and its resounding bells signal an understanding of the clerical binds that enslave the feminine and non-heteronormative to ecclesiastical social doctrine.

The avenues of the public city-text furthermore establish a viaduct for hegemonic control in the form of patrolling police troops. They are the city/body’s antibodies that flow through its arteries, identifying and eradicating all threats to the greater self. After Peter leaves her and she spirals into a self-defeating depression, Soledad finds herself in the

¹⁰² This global incarnation of masculinity is further evoked in Carlos Labbé’s *Locuela* (2009), Hernán Rodríguez Matte’s *Barrio Alto* (2004) and Maurice Echeverría’s *Diccionario Esotérico* (2006) amongst others.

company of a blind man (Matías), a young mime (Jorge), and a group of street urchins who regularly steal and use intravenous drugs. In one of the group's adventures Jorge calls them to a halt as he notices a truck slowly approach, with:

[H]ombres que colgaban de los estribos y mostraban sin pudor los brazos desnudos y amenazantes, el gesto fiero y desvergonzado del que sabe el increíble poder de la violencia de su parte. No levantaron a nadie pero se paseaban alardeando por aquella avenida tan cercana a la Plaza de la Constitución con la prepotencia que les otorgaba esa cara siniestra de la represión y el terror instituidos como medidas de orden y seguridad social. (262)

The circulatory agents of hegemonic masculinity, as identified by Clavel, are even able to see the ghostly Soledad though they only sense her presence and not her actual corporality. They are responsible for keeping order and peace, which can alternatively be interpreted as keeping the silence and ignored under the yoke of economic and social modernization that was politically, and still is, promulgated. The author's description of these hegemonic agents is visual in that it establishes an aesthetics of virility that privilege the strong masculine body over the lanky and effeminate mime and the blind Matías. The text further visualizes a spatial position of this interaction between the hegemonic and the oppressed in a topographic relation to the Plaza de la Constitución, or what is commonly known today as the Zócalo, the main square in the center of historic Mexico City, which has served as the heart of government of both the nation and the capital and where popular protests have often taken place. In the exchange between the police and Soledad, *Los deseos y su sombra* is careful in its mapping of the subject and subjectivities in relation to a territorialized spatial referent that underscores the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and the national imaginary. The police agents, corporal antibodies that circulate the veins and arteries of the city-body, keep under control any threats to the national, which is to say Masculine, body that sustains the country.

The need to root the national imaginary within the masculine is further traced in the textual placing of Soledad within the physical city when she discovers the Castillo de Chapultepec. She brings to mind Chambers theory of the metropolis as myth when she remembers “aquel niño héroe que se había arrojado envuelto en la bandera nacional” (17). Clavel references the taking of the Castillo during the Mexican-American War by a band of US Marines that stormed the building. During the conflict, six young Mexican cadets valiantly defended the space (of the nation) from the foreigners, with one of them, Juan Escutia, wrapping himself in the tricolored flag before throwing himself from its towers. This much contested story has, however, come to form what Soledad calls “la necesidad de un país de inventarse una historia admirable y prodigiosa” (17), which is necessarily bound to the virile, youthful male.

The connection between nation and masculinity is further concretized in the Paseo de la Reforma and the many statues and monuments that dot its 12 kilometer incursion into the heart of the city. After leaving her mother and brother, Soledad routinely walks along the Paseo’s streets and plazas, stopping at the many statues that include monuments to the *Niños héroes*. As she approaches the *boulevard de los héroes*, she engages in one of many moments of existentialist pondering as she wonders: “¿Dejo de ser porque ellos no pueden verme? [...] ¿Entonces esta ciudad existe o solo la imagino?” (197). This line of inquiry requires the reader to pause and take a step back from the diegesis, if only for a moment, and ask ourselves the same questions. This tangential exercise, however, permeates the passages that follow, as Soledad walks amongst the statues and figures that adorn the metonymic space of the nation in the city, “como una lección de historia tridimensional que ya pocos – o nadie – leía” (197).

Like in several other points of the narrative, Clavel situates her protagonist in a topographic space that is pinpointed by statues which are “situados en lugares estratégicos que obligaban a la vista a reparar en ellos” (198). It is the placing of a silenced, ignored feminine subject in a spatial relationship vis-à-vis stone soldiers, politicians, and other primal male figures of Mexican nationhood do we concretize Clavel’s assertion that the city is an intrinsically masculine space, and the *boulevard of heroes*, with its vertical epitaphs and figures, is its particular physical and phallic contribution to the imagining of the nation. Each statue with its inscription and historical note maps out another topography that places the idea of Mexicanness on a polytemporal and polyspatial plane of discourse.

The blind Matías furthers this thesis in a story he tells Soledad and the street children, one of the many short intertexts that populate *Los deseos y su sombra*. Here he recounts how “*México* fue una ciudad vehemente como el deseo que le dió origen” (254), as its founding originates in the dreams of a band of tribal hunters, evocative of Luis’s own prowls through the city-whore. He explains:

Vieron a una mujer que dormía en las aguas de un lago. Soñaron que la forzaban y que ella, sin despertarse, respondía a sus caricias y a su violencia. La tomaban una y otra vez pero ella no despertaba del sueño de agua y ellos en realidad no la poseían. Al despertar, los cazadores buscaron aquel lago. Peregrinaron de un sitio a otro pero no encontraron rastros del sueño y, en cambio su sed por la mujer iba en aumento.¹⁰³ (255)

It is at this juncture in the tale do the men chance upon a valley surrounded by thick vegetation and spy a woman asleep by a lake. They rush to possess her only to find that she is nothing more than an illusion. The physical root of the mirage is where they decide to settle

¹⁰³ The old man’s story is a veiled reference to the role of the feminine in Mexican lore of origin, making reference to the Aztec goddess Cihuacoatl and the popular myth of *La Llorona*. The former represents the tropes of motherhood and fertility whereas the latter consecrates the negative stereotype of the feminine in popular culture. *La Llorona*, in particular, represents the archetypal evil woman who violates her role as mother and wife (Candelaria 93).

and to build a city that keeps present the woman's "caderas, el horizonte de su rostro, sus párpados tenues" (255). The genesis of the urban space, from a textual standpoint, is further described as being reflective of "la brutalidad del asedio, la violencia al someterla" (255), reinforcing Lavery's hypothesis of the city as a whore, and Paz's idea that Mexican identity is best captured by the void left by the abject mother, as he explains that "la cuestión del origen es el centro secreto de nuestra ansiedad y angustia" (84).

The narrative side-trip into Matías's interpretation of the history of the city keeps with the characterization of the urban as a metonymic construct of the hegemonic masculine and as a terrain that keeps those gendered bodies that do not conform to its rules in bondage. Clavel addresses the mythopoetic conceptions of the metropolis by acknowledging a non-Spanish past to the city, much like the philandering bus ride in Ramírez's *Pu* establishes an indigenous epistemology of space. She acknowledges popular myths of an underground Indian city below the roads patrolled by the current government's police forces as Soledad's work involves her photographing the subterranean recesses of the Palacio de Bellas Artes under the direction and supervision of Martín Rueda, a rich, omnipotent and sexually predatory businessman that embodies many of the characteristics that form Connell's contemporary hegemonic variant of globalized, neoliberal masculinity. He is physically fit and virile with well-manicured fingernails that stress the importance of hygiene as ontological to modernity and modernization. He is quick to undermine the rights of workers and does not hesitate to flirt with a young girl who enters a café holding hands with her boyfriend. His eagle-like looks and stares, which cause discomfort in Soledad, contextualize him within a given space as the alpha hunter in the urban jungle where omega packs of youth like Luis and his friends hunt.

His subjectivity vis-à-vis the Masculine city is highlighted when he has Soledad go below the floors of the Palacio to unearth its history. It is in these subterranean rooms and spaces, which Clavel describes in great (visual) detail, does Soledad reveal that the buried past of the city, like the myths of foundation that Matías perpetuates, are truly masculine spaces. Even if they originally were not controlled by heteronormative gendered bodies, they are now, as the many workers who regularly use the tunnels overwrite its walls and spaces with their phallic sexuality. She describes how the men play football and get drunk in the underground rooms, leaving pools of urine and “carteles de mujeres desnudas y hermosas” (137) pasted onto the walls. It is this underworld space, the prehistoric antecedent to modern day Mexico City that Rueda wants catalogued by Soledad’s camera, as though through her prints he can gain discursive control over the past. After all, don’t the erected statues that dot the streets of the city do just that?

The subterranean space within the national imaginary holds a sacred position of origin that Ramírez’s indigenous men were quick to point out to the Caucasian woman they beat and raped in *Pu*. The need to look under the hood of the city is summarized by Villoro, who argues that “la operación literaria de buscar el esqueleto urbano, el paisaje fosilizado bajo las apariencias, ha sido común a escritores [contemporáneos]” (*El Olvido* 30). In *Los deseos y su sombra*, an older worker at the Palacio talks to Soledad about the possibility of an underground city, which is brought up repeatedly by different characters as a mythological edenic answer to Paz’s hypothesis of Mexican identity. The older worker, Gallegos, dismisses the underground city as “puras fantasías inventadas por la gente” (173). But the repetition of a space below the three-dimensional city-text is pertinent to any post-modernist understanding of the urban, as the present is invariably built upon and/or added to past

structures, ideas, and paradigms. Clavel is aware of the importance of an underground as a textually powerful referent to the overground, which is to say the modern city, as a mapping of what lies below leads to a more holistic understanding of the city. Recurring again to a biological metaphor, it is only through an understanding of circulatory/digestive/endocrine systems that we can understand the human body/city and its many ailments. To take this line of inquiry a step further, we can argue that it is only through a knowledge of the body's genome, which is to say the ontological and epistemological center that defines the phenotype, can we completely understand human and animal anatomy. Clavel works with this metaphor as her text does not stop at simply naming the city-text, but instead shows a precocious yearning to go deeper and to understand the how and why the city is and becomes.

This narrative concern is first suggested by the underground city in *Los deseos y su sombra* and is further hinted at during Soledad's childhood in the company of Miguel, her friend Rosa's brother. It is within the domestic space of feminine subjugation to the phallus does Soledad contemplate an existence as a man, with a penis and the ability to "caminar rumbo al baño de hombres para sellar esa alianza de sexos que se da de mingitorio a mingitorio, sin paredes ni compartimentos aislados como los de mujeres" (48). It is the public space of the men's bathroom does Soledad hypothesize that masculine and patriarchal power emanates from, as it is a privileged and ubiquitous spatial position that genders the city-space through its expression, akin to a gene innocuously located on the double helix. It is this genomic understanding of the city-text, combined with a circulatory understanding of its roads and underground tunnels that suggests to be most fruitful to Clavel's existential quandary, but we are left asking for more as the articulation of the phallogocentric and

phallogocentric city becomes inevitably linked to the dismembering of the female subject and the analogous demystification of the masculine landscape, stopping short any exploration of the underground and the bathroom within *Los deseos y su sombra*.

The ghost-like state of Soledad that hinges between lunacy and sanity is exemplified in the conversations she holds with the statue of Leandro Valle in the Paseo de la Reforma. By giving the statue speech, by removing it from the silenced and manipulated bodies that the Masculine controls, Clavel demystifies the position of the male hero within the national imaginary. This desecration is carried out to full force when Soledad describes how the statue has had its sword removed, dismembering its military garb and effectively castrating the hero as a bastion of masculine patriotism. The castration of the phallogocentric figure is taken a step further when it is revealed that the street named after him in Mexico City is now a home to prostitutes and drug dealers. This plotting of the road vis-à-vis the patriotic national imaginary is poignant in the sense that Clavel remaps or resemanticizes the hegemonic strategy of naming roads and streets within a privileged politico-historic discourse.¹⁰⁴ The statues are further removed from a phallic position of power as the groups of street children and Jorge mock their poses. Forever conscious of the textual power of cartography, Clavel astutely places the performative pantheon of children and mime in a spatial juxtaposition to “las estatuas de soldados que vigilaban desde las cornisas de Palacio como gárgolas fantasmales” (273), thereby calling attention to the demystification of the Masculine that is attempted in *Los deseos y su sombra*.

¹⁰⁴ A similar remapping of the city occurs in Maurice Echeverría’s *Diccionario Esotérico*, where Guatemala City is reconceived as the sociopathic narrator’s “Playground.” Similar to Clavel’s mission in *Los deseos y su sombra*, Echeverría creates an alternative space, mapped over the grid of the city to locate his serial-killing protagonist. The similarities in regards to space end there, as the Guatemalan writer employs a narrativization of the city that better resembles the organic and atextual spaces of *Cuerpo náufrago*.

This process is central to the figure of Soledad as she evidences a childhood struggle with the maternal voice of patriarchy that continues throughout her adult years. The search for identity and Soledad's resultant inability to recognize herself as a whole subject is reinforced by "metaphors of the female body as abject, disfigured, and grotesque" (Lavery 1062). Soledad's break from the patriarchal occurs as she breaks from her mother when the latter tells her to pinch her lips shut lest they should resemble genitalia. The protagonist's search for identity and independence is only realized when she is able to separate herself from her mother in this scene which is reminiscent of a Lacanian Mirror Stage where the ego gains wholeness from a *méconnaissance* of a reflected ego ideal. It is the recognition of herself as an individuated body, away from the hold of her mother and the voice of patriarchy, does Soledad gain footing in the realm of subjectivity. But the process of identification results from her suggestions of autoerotism that evoke an incestuous desire as her features strongly resemble the father. Soledad resists complete identification and instead participates in a Kristevian subject-in-process model of formation, which leads Lavery to observe that Soledad "comes to embody the abject itself, oscillating ambiguously between life and death [...] between the fully and partially formed subject, the semiotic and symbolic" (1060).

The dismembered feminine subject is further brought into tension by the series of relationships Soledad has with men. From the violent encounters with the unnamed and undifferentiated *Desconocido*, to the boyfriends of friends that she ruthlessly beds, Soledad lacks a centripetal force of self in relation to the masculine. She is never an independent subject in relation to the male, as though she never fully succeeds in silencing the maternal call to subservience and phallic adoration. The idea of desire, which often holds a central

position in Soledad's existential musings, is defined by a lack and a void, and not another gendered body or fetish that points to an unresolved unconscious drive. The novel is instead a story about the undefined shadows of desire, and more importantly about the unresolved desire of disappearing which is repeated throughout the text. The latter is a physical and at times metaphysical wish, as the protagonist engages in a continuous entanglement and desire of detachment from the power of masculinity as inscribed onto the city and society.

The dissolution of the feminine body becomes intrinsically connected to the author's attempts at dissecting and disarticulating the cityspace, particularly through the spatialization of Soledad's relationship with Peter Nagy in Mexico City. After he leaves her to return to his native Hungary, the text hints at a slow desubjectification of the body (and city) as Soledad notices that "las manos se le despellejaron" (73). The practice of corporal representation is stitched to a formation of the city-text, as Soledad wonders, "¿cómo describir esa ciudad en aquellos días posteriores a su abandono?" (73). Space, like her body, enters an existential purgatory of being and not-being as she explains "a donde pusiera la mirada, los edificios y las calles, los cafés y galerías por donde con frecuencia deambulaban y por donde vagó después solitaria, adquirieron para ella una nubosidad escalofriante: tal era la sensación de irrealidad, de caminar en falso, ajena por completo de sí misma" (73).

Though not representative of an indigenous hegemonic masculinity or homosocial, Peter embodies the paternal voice that Carmen channels to her daughter at an earlier age. Far from being a gender-enlightened body that understands systems of patriarchy to be unfair and demeaning, Peter repeats the mantra that women must be held silenced and subjugated, scolding Soledad when she asks him a question: "las niñas inteligentes sólo hablan si tienes cosas importantes que decir" (75). As a foreigner, Peter initially represents a spatial escapism

from the Masculine of Mexico City but he instead perpetuates an animalistic oppression of the feminine. During intercourse, for example, he routinely penetrates Soledad's increasingly fragile body from behind and enforces a role-playing relationship of dominator and dominated with him occupying the former position. Parting from a master-slave relationship, Soledad is further desubjectified as a woman when he offers her body to a friend, Montero, in a triangular evocation of Eve Sedgwick's ideas of homosocial desire. The feminine is sanitized under the guise of a nurse's uniform as Montero and Peter take turns penetrating Soledad. The final stroke of feminine dismemberment occurs one night as the three characters engage in a *ménage à trois* and Peter penetrates Soledad but concentrates his desire on their moving shadows and not her curves and touches, putting forward the thesis that Soledad's body stops existing on a physical and metaphysical plane.

The departure of Peter coincides with a self-imposed exile on the part of Soledad from her family and work into the streets of Mexico City that begin to lose shape and definition as her own body slowly begins to dematerialize. The body and city are further undefined by the narrative inclusion of a large Chinese vase that houses Soledad's alter ego, Lucía, and an angry red dragon that makes several appearances in the novel during moments of crisis. The fragile yet paradoxically extensive space of the vase becomes both a metaphor of her body and the city she maps out as she observes that "la ciudad y sus calles podrían convertirse en un laberinto propio y quién sabe, tal vez podría encontrar, a la vuelta de una esquina, más que el dragón o a Lucía, su rostro verdadero" (213). This confusion of outside and inside spaces, of the body-text and the city-text, is underlined by Soledad's repeated refusal to be mapped as a subject within the city as she emphasizes her invisibility and lack of belonging to the social and spatial milieu of contemporary Mexico City. Paradoxically,

this refusal proposes a narrative quandary in *Los deseos y su sombra* as it is only by means of Soledad's positioning in relation to the Plaza, Castillo and Palacio amongst other buildings do we gain access to Mexico City as a narrated city-text. Soledad's refusal almost engages the protagonist in a textual duel with the author who can only gain narrative admission to the city through the eyes of the usurper, highlighting Clavel's own inability to fully articulate a break from masculine codes and phallogocentric representations of the city.

A strategy of breaking from the hegemonic and Masculine city is evoked towards the end of the novel as Soledad imagines a heavenly angel descending upon *avenida 20 de Noviembre*. She notes how "por un momento, ese instante único entre la nueva inmovilidad del ángel y la celeridad retomada de la avenida, [...] habría podido jurar que la gente había atisbado un rincón del Paraíso" (259). But this process of separation from phallogocentric codes is not taken to fruition as Soledad slips further into the realms of lunacy and depression. We can observe the usage of this strategy by another female author, Gioconda Belli, whose narratives are strongly territorialized within the masculine city. Beginning with *La mujer habitada* (1988) to *El pergamino de la seducción* (2005), Belli's women are strongly aware of the city as a gendered and genderizing construct. It is only in her remake of the biblical genesis in *El infinito en la palma de la mano* (2008) does the Nicaraguan writer succeed in debunking phallogocentric practices and dethroning hegemonic masculinity from its semiotic and symbolic position of societal power. This inversion of power, which is to say a spatial remapping and replotting in reference to a pre-edenic space, however, does not occur in *Los deseos y su sombra*, though Clavel hints at its possibility if only for a heavenly moment.

The process of gendered (un)becoming in *Los deseos y su sombra* is understood through the placement of the subject within the textual construct of the city and its masculine phenotype. Though Clavel hints at the underlying mechanisms and bodies of control in the urban space, the reader is left with an existential text that ponders feminine subjectivity in the light of phallic and phallogocentric social codes. Clavel does, however, succeed in demystifying the heteronormative city through an ontological metaphorization of the body-city dialectic in the shape-shifting form of Soledad García. The protagonist ultimately materializes within the diegesis when she poses for a photograph with Matías, Jorge and the street urchins. The photographer composes a portrait of the silenced and ignored, and when the photo is finally revealed, “los niños aparecieron más delgados que de costumbre, Jorge – que se había movido en el último momento – se veía desenfocado y Matías tenía los ojos en blanco. La única figura favorecida [...] resultó ser una muchacha que de seguro pasaba por ahí y que la cámara había captado en la última fracción de segundo” (304).

The materialization of Soledad analogously rearticulates the city as a stronghold of patriarchy and hegemonic (and multinational) masculinity as the metaphysical questions posed by the text conform to an aesthetics of definition that do not break from the established order of the symbolic. Soledad as a subject in process is resubjectified in the epilogue to *Los deseos y su sombra*, which in turn functions as a diegetic epitaph for the protagonist. We learn that her mother contacts the “Centro Nacional para la Localización de Personas Desaparecidas y Extraviadas” (307), a fictitious though official-sounding organization that is a social arm of the Law and the hegemonic forces that patrol the streets of the city-text. The organization continues the mapping process that Soledad began by pasting posters describing her and the conditions of her disappearance around the city, emphasizing the corporality and

substantiality of the cityspace vis-à-vis the living Soledad. The posters specify the 23rd of June, 1985 as the day of her disappearance, which coincides with the terrorist bombing of an Air India plane. More relevantly, however, the date coincides with the first *Reunión Nacional sobre Movimientos Sociales y Medio Ambiente* at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, signaling a tangential connection between Soledad and the rise of an interest in urbanization and its effects within Mexico in the mid-1980s after decades of urban migration and sprawl. The date underscores an authorial preoccupation with the concept and writing of space in relation to patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity in the processes of self and national identity formation and individuation.

The novel, however, refuses to close the chapter on Soledad and her city by simply explaining in the epilogue that she is a runaway with possible mental conditions. Writing on the importance of the epilogue, Randolph Pope argues that its pages often negate the aesthetic and/or ethical standpoints of the corpus of the novel (116). This, in turn, would call to attention the failed purpose of disarticulating the subject and the city to unearth a deeper understanding of self that is unaffected by the hegemonic voice. Any such freedom is only achieved momentarily with the attempted remapping of the space onto a biblical framework that escapes the genderization of the urban. What signals a final confrontation to this voice of authority, and what constitutes another usurpation of authorial control over the text, occurs when the epilogue notes how on one poster someone writes a graffiti that challenges the official discourse of the Centro Nacional. Written in a rush, it reads: “*Su cuerpo no la contiene*” (307), suggesting that after all Soledad may have been dematerialized, just as the text as a narrative exercise succeeds in unearthing the vestiges and clues of hegemonic masculine genomic control over the urban space, and its phenotypic representations of power

that ensure the economic, political, and social subjugation of non-hegemonic voices and groups. The graffiti as an unauthorized textuality codifies a counter-voice to Clavel's own authority as Soledad may have escaped the confines of her physical form that visually and socially ascribe her to a social position vis-à-vis the erotics of Mexican culture.

More than anything we realize that once the city is written, plotted out, and spatialized, once exposed to the power channels and controls of hegemonic masculinity, it cannot be easily dislocated or disarticulated. The epilogue as textual challenge, and the final piece of graffiti, however, give us hope that a textual deconstruction of the city as metonymic and allegoric hegemonic masculinity is a possibility. The metropolis in *Los deseos y su sombra* is a cognitive step towards the representation of a post-metropolitan space that is conscious of the various and varying layers, tangents, and points of power that constitute modern urban textual spatializations.

This model or conception of the city in relation to masculinities is, however, dependent upon a cultural geography that relies on a reading of space as constituted by signs and signifiers without taking into account any external or outside force that interrupts pure signification. In *Los deseos y su sombra* we evidence a critical opposition to the idea of city as text as noted by the failure of the epilogue to capture the non-hegemonic body from flight. The conclusion to Clavel's first novel begs the question, how else can space in relation to gender be conceived, if not as a polymorphous text?

Plotting Masculinity and Conceiving the Virtual in *Cuerpo náufrago*

For Henri Lefebvre, the relationship between the spatial city and the individual subject can be thought of in a hermeneutic sense, where the interpretive objective is “conceiving the city as a semantic system [...] arising from linguistics, urban language, or urban reality as a grouping of signs” (108). If the city is therefore thought of as a text, then the reading of its signifiers and semantic systems opens up a cartographic project where the mapping of the literary subject underscores a process of identity and identification. The super-imposition of the subject onto this space, however, forces a situating within the pluri-dimensional tangents of power, as Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift argue, “power – whether organized through knowledge, class, ‘race’, gender, sexuality and so on – is (at least partly) about mapping the subject; where particular sites – for example, the body, the self and so on – become ‘points of capture’ for power” (13). But how is this power articulated? How are these bodies or points of capture signified when the semantic system of mapping the city-text fails?

The words of Lefebvre have been cited by a plethora of theorists who define the physical space as a textually mapped out discourse that permits spatialized subjectification, but as the conclusion to the last section indicates, this model often falls short of truly understanding a praxis of identity. The geographic reliance on signifiers is challenged by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987) where they map out an alternative paradigm of non-axiomatic geophilosophical thought to conceive of and construct space and spatial relationships. Taking the city to be a point of stratification, which is to say a process where the implantation and territorialization

of codes forms new dominating bodies, the two philosophers argue that the intensive or internal processes of these positions of stability must first be unearthed and plotted. In a free-flowing, often repetitive style of writing, Deleuze and Guattari propose that the congealing of intensive, far-from-equilibrium processes is a temporary fixing as these structures, such as the city are always subject to the flight of particles away from the construction. Clavel's protagonist in *Los deseos y su sombra* functions as a metonymic representation of this renegade particle as the final words of the epilogue suggest that she has escaped the system and that the city as a structure has been uncongealed and is again an unstratified body.

Ana Clavel's *Cuerpo náufrago* undertakes an *écriture hermaphrodite* that recounts the life of Antonia, a woman who wakes up one morning as a man, Antón. Employing non-traditional and transgressive narratives that explore the constructs of desire, gender, and love, Clavel's novel of sexual metamorphosis builds on her previous work in *Los deseos y su sombra*, where the female body is mapped onto the cartographic referent of Mexico City. Though *Los deseos y su sombra* conceptualizes a dark and mysterious center to the city, *Cuerpo náufrago* avoids the cartographic and textual details of streets and alleys. Clavel, after all, is an urban writer, though the term "urban writing" in contemporary Latin America is redundant given the socioeconomic changes of the last quarter century. The author, as Deborah Parsons explains, "is not only a figure within a city; he/she is also the producer of a city, one that is related to but distinct from the city of asphalt, brick, and stone, one that results from the interconnection of body, mind, and space, one that reveals the interplay of self/city identity" (1).

This interconnection is explored by the character of Antonia/Antón who awakes one morning with a decidedly masculine body. Prior to the textual autoscopic doubling, the

protagonist linguistically reaffirms her identity, stressing the third-person, singular feminine pronoun and adding, “no había duda sobre su sexo, aunque las presiones de la época contribuirían a que asumiera otros roles” (11). Clavel’s text reveals the other side of the crisis of masculinity that I discuss in the introduction to these pages, as women have similarly faced a disruption of the roles and avatars they are allowed in daily life. The emphasis on the pronoun “ella” underscores a textual preoccupation with the signifiers of gender, re-elaborating Judith Butler’s quandary at the end of *Gender Trouble* that serves as an epigraph: “¿Cómo figura un cuerpo en su superficie la invisibilidad misma de su profundidad escondida?” (9).¹⁰⁵ Starting with this thought, it is evident that Clavel seeks to question the ontological integrity of the gendered-subject, as she places emphasis on the performative aspects of gender. It is not so much the new physical appendage that changes Antonia, but the way that she must now dress and behave that triggers a crisis of identity.¹⁰⁶ The character reaffirms Butler’s thought that “if external genitalia were sufficient as a criterion by which to determine or assign sex, the experimental research into the master gene [of gender] would hardly be necessary at all” (147).

Antonia questions the physicality of identity and challenges Butler’s assertion that bodies do matter, asking if “¿la identidad empieza por lo que vemos?” (12). She is quick to suggest an alternative to the performativity of identity, suggesting that “la identidad empieza

¹⁰⁵ The critical work done on Clavel’s novel is scant. Rodrigo Díaz Cruz’s essay “La huella del cuerpo. Tecnología, máquinas y el cuerpo fragmentado” focuses on the cultural construct of the human body, as he undertakes an archaeology of the body from philosophical and sociological schools of thought. The critic, however, leaves untouched the porcelain bodies in *Cuerpo naufrago* that play a definitive role within the diegesis and Clavel’s larger treaty on Mexican identity.

¹⁰⁶ Oswaldo Estrada’s essay on Clavel, Rivera Garza and Rosa Beltrán is a useful genealogical referent for *Cuerpo naufrago* as the critic establishes lines of similitude between Clavel and other women writers born in the 1960s. He affirms that Clavel’s novel works “in support of Butler’s argument that we become subjects from our performances and the performances of others towards us” (68).

por lo que deseamos” (13), thereby creating a dialogic binarism that structures the pages of *Cuerpo náufrago*. Is it the physical body and its composing behavior, or something more intimate, innate, “secreta, persistente” (13) that defines gender? This line of inquiry is interrupted, albeit momentarily, by the narrative need in Clavel to locate her narrative within a topographic plane, to structure her musings in a space that can take as referents points of capture for power that illuminate her thoughts. As in her other novels, the writer places the subject within the streets of Mexico City, a real space that has been theoretically mapped out by Saskia Sassen. Building on Edward W. Soja’s ideas of the postmodern space where the city “seems too limitless and constantly in motion [...] too filled with ‘other spaces’ to be informatively described” (*Postmodern Geographies* 222), Sassen identifies Mexico City as a postmodern space where the global city is a nexus for free-market (neoliberal) economic practices and “a strategic site for disempowered actors because it enables them to gain presence, to emerge as subjects, even when they do not gain direct power” (xxi).

The tangential lines of power are presented in Clavel’s narrative as running through a space for the male as a privileged subject, as Antonia recalls: “recordaba perfectamente de niña envidiando a sus hermanos y a sus amigos de sus hermanos, esa manera de apoderarse de una calle para jugar fútbol, para salir solos por la ciudad sin correr tanto peligro” (13). She contrasts the masculine position of power with a textual void in describing the role of the female subject, as the feminine is only present in the public space through its absence. The mapping of the gendered subject is congruent with the larger project of identity, as her brothers’ identities are based on their physical performances. They are allowed to “engrasarse las manos y los pantalones al enderezar la cadena de una bicicleta o ponerse un traje y sentirse importantes” (14).

It is this public space that initiates a crisis in performativity in Antonia, as she realizes that she must face the postmodern city. She prepares herself for the outside space by putting on masculine clothing, and collecting her hair in “una coleta como las que la moda y los tiempos se lo permitían a los hombres que se animaban a dejárselo crecer” (15). Note in Antonia’s preparation the acknowledgement that gender as a social construct is socially constructed, and historically sensitive, echoing the theories of Butler. More importantly, Antonia’s preparation is a calculated step in a practice of mapping by Clavel, as the character leaves her car keys behind as she “deseaba enfrentar la ciudad y la gente con sus propios pasos” (15). The postmodern city that Antonia descends into is a space undergoing what Fredric Jameson calls a crisis of boundaries where the borders and categories of space are blurred. The indeterminate physical space in turn contributes to an indeterminacy of the subject, as Jameson asks if this postmodern space does “not tend to demobilize us and surrender us to passivity and helplessness, by systematically obliterating possibilities of action under the impenetrable fog of historical inevitability?” (86).

From a feminist standpoint, Jameson’s question incites a dialectic challenging of the ontological “us” that is blurred in this process of late capitalism. After all, Clavel’s Antonia is aware that the postmodern space as a site of subjectivity, or as a theatre-stage on which the body can perform gender, is inescapably articulated by the norms and codes of gender. From experience, Antonia asserts that the streets of Mexico City are genderizing, as gender is assigned by the body’s ability to freely roam its streets and to serve as a nexus of cartographic power. Challenging this disjunct, Kathleen Kirby argues that Jameson’s “us” is categorically masculine in nature, as the consciousness of corporeality experienced by the postmodern subject due to the indefiniteness of his surrounding space is an extravagance that

women have never been able to identify with. Women, Kirby argues, have consciously and wearingly been aware of their embodiment, as articulated by Antonia's inability to place herself within the streets of freedom experience by her brothers. Clavel's city-text is a postmodern space that is negotiated differently by men and women, as Kirby notes:

For the man [...] the most prominent feature of the landscape would be pathways, along which he projects himself, making his world a space that returns to him a self-image of movement, command [...] For the woman [...] I imagine a world structured not by pathways but by obstacles [...] rather than seeing how to get from 'point A' to 'point B' I often see what is keeping me from getting there. (53)

This gender-nuanced reading of the postmodern city is problematized by Clavel's *écriture hermaphrodite*, as Antonia never fully assimilates a gender identity and instead prefers a playful, almost infantile attitude towards belonging to and defining the dichotomy. More importantly, Antonia questions the existence of this dichotomy, which is inscribed onto the city-text in the semantic code of "*damas/caballeros*" that meets her gaze when she needs to use a public restroom.

The contrasting views of the postmodern city-text are encountered by Antonia/Antón as she leaves the private space of her apartment for the public, Masculine of the city's streets. She encounters a lady who attempts to seduce her, confirming that the physical disguise is convincing. This encounter, furthermore, is highlighted by the woman's cleaning of the streets by heaving pails of water onto them, emphasizing the mapped city-text and how this space becomes a site of gender differentiation, as Antonia reflects on the failed seduction: "¿De modo que así de fácil les resultaban las cosas para los hombres?" (19).

This over ground site of gender intercourse and gender differentiation, which is primal to a reading and writing of *Los deseos y su sombra*, is left unexplored in *Cuerpo náufrago*; Antonia's encounter with Enedina, the cleaning lady, is a spatial anomaly in the

relationships that follow between Antonia/Claudia, Antonia/Malva, Antonia/Raimundo, and Antonia/Paula, in that the brief encounter is the only affair that plays out in Clavel's textually mapped city. The author follows the brief scene on the street with a narrative strategy that invokes a cognitive understanding of the city as a textual construct. Antonia walks a few blocks and finds herself at the entrance to the metro system. As the subject goes underground the narrative leaves behind the streets, buildings and spaces of Mexico City. They do not cease to exist, but are instead left unmapped by the narrative and by the literary subject. As Antonia descends into the underground world of the metro, the narrative carries out an inferential mapping of the subterranean non-city, a place that is ontologically metonymical of the above-ground space. Antonia describes how "en el piso del corredor se extendían puestos con mercancías diversas como en muchos de los accesos a la red de transporte subterráneo de la ciudad de México" (21). The underground is a mirrored tracing of its above-ground spaces and viaducts, and is similarly defined by the postmodern economic realities of Sassen's global city where trade and commerce define the public space. The semiotic importance of the metro system is commented by Villoro in *El Olvido: Un itinerario urbano*, where he argues that "las obras públicas se conciben con frecuencia como una metáfora de la vialidad y no como forma real de desplazamiento" (47).

On a further note, Clavel's placing of the subject in a terminus of the underground space effectively maps out the rest of the above-ground city, as the reader is asked to superimpose a diagram of the city's transportation system over the narrative. Though *Cuerpo náufrago* lacks the explicit mention of streets and spaces, the underground referent creates a parallel, multidimensional schema that is reflective of the 280 miles of rail that run across the

metro system.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, the *Sistema de Transporte Colectivo Metro* includes both underground and aboveground stations that service the system's eleven lines. The mapped space of the metro succeeds in organically composing Clavel's Mexico City, as the city in *Cuerpo náufrago* is not brought into being by text but by a bodily system of transportation, akin to the corporeal system of arteries and veins that lie beneath the surface of the gendered body. Just as Clavel's narrative style is dependent on Butler's premise that bodies do matter, the city is depicted as a physiological space that escapes the power of language as a codifier of space. Mexico City exists in the text not as a city-text that is codified by language and semantic codes, but as an extra-textual referent that is intertextually called into being by the superimposition of the transportation map. It exists on another plane, away from the narrated metro stops, but is never left out of the reader's consciousness.

This process gestures towards a virtualization of space that defers from the depiction of Mexico City as an actual or stratified space in *Los deseos y su sombra*. The virtual, we must remember, calls to attention the possible patterns and thresholds that arise in and from a system through a Deleuzoguattarian appropriation of complexity theory as an ontological tool of inquiry. As Bonta and Protevi note, the virtual in relation to space is often impossible to access directly from the actual or the momentarily fixed stratified system. Parting from

¹⁰⁷ Similar concerns with gender and masculinity in relation to space amount in Mario Bellatin's Queer classic *Salón de belleza* (1994), which narrates the story of a transvestite hairstylist who converts her salon into a purgatorial hospice for dying AIDS sufferers. Though positioned in reference to a large Latin American city (that could equally be Mexico City or Lima), the novel chooses to disassociate a truly mapped-out space, and defers to the spatial characterizations of self that Rivera Garza employs in *Nadie me verá llorar*. The salon is ontological and epistemological to Queer identities whereas the city represents a jungle where non-Queer and heteronormative masculinities are negotiated through the economic interactions with the visiting transvestites who hunt married men on street corners and in movie theatres. The author calls to attention this deterritorialization of space in an essay on writing where he reveals that the image that inspired him to pen *Salón de belleza* was that of "peces atrapados en un acuario, suspendidos en un espacio artificial que poco tiene que ver con el entorno real en que la pecera está colocada" (159). The narrative specificity of space, or more accurately its lack of in Rivera Garza and Bellatin's work is emblematic of the first half of Soja's dialectic of globalization that witnesses a hesitation to geographically and geopolitically locate narrative space.

this idea, any access to the virtual city is almost impossible in Soledad's subject-plotting across Mexico City-text. The evocation of the metro in *Cuerpo náufrago*, however, gestures towards a non-textual city and thereby a virtual structure of the intensive morphogenetic processes that sustain and form such substances (like gender) by "placing the variables themselves in a state of continuous variation" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 369). This process permits what Deleuze and Guattari call "nomad" or "minor" science, which Clavel perpetuates in the novel through a mapping of the virtual realm that establishes "the existence and distribution of the singularities (attractors and bifurcators; patterns and thresholds) of that field by differentiation prior to integration, which establishes actual trajectories and the precise nature of such singularities" (Bonta and Protevi 23).

The rhizomatic mapping and/or understanding of space in contrast to the discursive, phenotypic praxis suggested by Barthes and Soja in *Los deseos y su sombra* underlines the narrative disjunct between Clavel's two novels. The conclusion to the first suggests a disillusionment with the idea of the city and body-text, brought to attention by the inability of Soledad's physical body to contain her. The shift in *Cuerpo náufrago* to a Deleuzoguattarian cartography of the city provides Clavel with the tools to explore and destabilize the control exercised by hegemonic homosocial masculinity over Mexico City and its inhabitants.

This strategy gives way to Clavel's greater preoccupations of gender, the body and identity, as she escapes the spatial naming that underscores Parson's self/city postulate. The textual codes in *Cuerpo náufrago* are not so much preoccupied with the question of "does" the city define gender and the Masculine but by the interrogative of "how." The novel escapes the self/city process that is characteristic of Mexican fiction, perhaps most

controversially pursued in Armando Ramírez's *Pu*.¹⁰⁸ Clavel's *Cuerpo naufrago* takes for granted the diegetic city, seducing the knowing reader to intertextually involve the city-text as a system of signifiers, descriptions, and novels that emanate from the organic body that the arterial metro maps-out. Clavel, more importantly, sidesteps the other organizational points of class and race by focusing the above-ground narrative on specific sites that serve as specimens or apparatus of capture in her *écriture hermaphrodite*. The apparatus, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is an assemblage that captures localized territories by overwriting their surfaces and pouring their flows into a centralized system. The bathroom becomes the apparatus of capture for hegemonic masculinity across Clavel's two novels, though only fully explored by an approximation to the virtual in *Cuerpo naufrago*.

From this vantage point the narrative proceeds to concentrate on spaces that delineate the semanticization of gender in Mexico City. It is in this process does Clavel's autoscopic protagonist gain access to the traditionally masculine space of the cantina where she shares a beer with Francisco, a good friend from college. Their serendipitous meeting in the metro reveals a diegetic doing of gender by Antonia that is rooted in her Quixotic reading and acknowledgement of *Amadís de Gaula* as a stereotypic model of masculinity. Francisco's presence in the narrative is equally Quixotic, as he functions as a dialectic Sancho Panza who

¹⁰⁸ The writing of Mexico City is most polemic in the works of Armando Ramírez who gains notoriety with *Pu* (1977), later reissued as *Violación en Polanco* (1980). As Delia Galván notes, the majority of the author's cityspace is mapped out across the northern and eastern sectors of the city center of Mexico City, where the greatest concentrations of the urban proletariat reside. The exploration of the citified space, however, takes on an organic tone in *Pu* as the author questions ideas of race, identity, and sexuality. Ramírez pulls no punches in his usage of the city as a stage of injustice and violence, leading Vicente Francisco Torres to plainly state: "por primera vez en la literatura mexicana, los jodidos se expresaban como jodidos" (50). The novel narrates the raping and subsequent murder of an upper-class Caucasian woman by three Mexican men who are shown to identify with their indigenous background. They kidnap, rape, and brutally beat the woman in a sacrificial rite that attempts a purging of the injustices perpetuated against the indigenous peoples by an enemy that Carol Clark D'Lugo calls "a composite from the past (the invading Spaniards), the immediate present (the upper classes that prefer to not see the pitiful circumstances of the indigenous poor), and the post-revolutionary institutions (any of the successive Mexican governments of the years leading up to the novel's publication)" (53).

inquires “¿para qué diablos traes un paraguas en un día tan soleado? ¿O es una lanza para arremeter dragones ahora que te has armado... caballero?” (22). Aside from hinting at a literary model for Antonia’s interrogative of gender and sexuality, Francisco adds to the literary mapping of characters within the undefined diegetic Mexico City, as he mentions how some of their mutual friends and themselves “desaparecimos del mapa” (23), alluding to a Deleuzian understanding of geography. The character is also conscious of the socioeconomic changes in Mexican society, as he instructs Antonia: “se supone que el mundo ha cambiado y que nos permitimos algunas emociones. Pero llorar... eso es de maricas” (43).

Their meeting allows a narrative entry into the masculine space of the cantina, which functions as a spatial and literary genderizing trope. The subject when placed within its real and textual walls is assigned a gender, as either a *dama* or a *caballero*. Antonia reflects on this process as she is now able to drink her beer from the bottle, though “de adulta acostumbraba dejar a un lado los vasos que le ofrecían de manera automática los meseros” (24). This observation reflects the changing role of women in Mexican society, a change that has not been altogether assimilated by the phallogentric entities and attitudes that constitute it. Antonia’s observation further highlights the genderizing effect of the cantina, as women are expected to adhere to a code of behavior that evokes Kirby’s reading of the postmodern space. This silent code is again played out when Antonia spies a young couple who sit at a (public) restaurant to order food. The wife selects the meals for herself and her husband, yet it is her husband who must perform his role of macho by ordering for the couple, in a public assertion of his control over the household.

The cantina also houses Antonia's moment of engagement with the problematic semantic gender codes of the city when she hesitates in entering the bathrooms labeled by "los símbolos *damas/caballeros*, como puertas ineludibles del destino" (25). Keeping with his Quixotic role as mediator, Francisco directs her to the men's room, where she, and the reader, are privileged a view of "una hilera de mingitorios" (25). Clavel's narrative halts for a moment as the author inserts the first of many photographs, prints, illustrations, and footnotes (and footnotes to her footnotes) that make *Cuerpo naufrago* a hypertext that is always in progress, reflecting that gender, as a Butlerian action, and the city as a gendered construct, is also always in process.

Once inside the public yet private space of the male bathroom, Antonia reflects that the shape of the urinal evokes "las caderas de una mujer" (27). This realization comes as a surprise to the protagonist, as the simple act of evaluating the aesthetics of the urinal, an object that is within the collective consciousness yet reserved for half its population, makes her feel as though she "transgredía un límite desconocido" (27). This limit is topographic, as Antonia notes, "siendo mujer no era fácil topárselos en los baños públicos" (31). It is also, however, semantic, as access to the mapped space of the male public restroom permits a genderizing of the subject, as the female body is defined by its lack of access or spatial void vis-à-vis the urinal. This is textualized by Clavel when Malva, a young art student who has a brief affair with Antonia, observes that "los mingitorios son objetos del mundo íntimo de los hombres [...] diseñado para su uso exclusivo" (88).

The transgression of this limit is combined with a now innate need to unearth the performativity of her new gender, as she ponders: "¿cómo se construye un disfraz de hombre?" (27). Parting from a literary paradigm, Antonia attempts an answer through the

novels of *caballería*, though she reconsiders, “¿no [era] acaso una forma estereotipada de la masculinidad?” (29). The textual consciousness of what is masculinity mingles with Antonia’s (and Clavel’s) exploration of the plurality of the urinal, as it too is not simply a porcelain fixture that facilitates male urination. The urinal is physiologically gendered, and spatially genderizing, as Antonia realizes when she first makes contact with it. Even in a male body, she is hesitant to face its porcelain sides and curvaceous walls: “sin entender por qué, cerró la puerta con seguro y permaneció desarmada frente a aquel objeto que bostezaba ensimismado en su propia vanidad” (32).

Antonia’s inherent fear underlines the disconnect between the imagined body and its physical attributes, as she never fully assimilates into her masculine role, signaling a failure on the part of the text or the literary as a means of gaining insight into experience. It is as though Clavel’s Kafka character is never fully convinced of her metamorphosis, stopping to ponder at every turn the cultural and historic construct that is embedded onto the male body and its curiously hanging appendage. The mapping of the public space, which is to say the bathroom, gives a clue to this incomplete assimilation, as it is during her first confrontation with the urinal does Antonia reveal an intrinsic inability to be within the spatial limits of its tiled domain: “se percató del intenso olor que emanaba de las paredes interiores. Una marejada acre y corrosiva, pero también dulzona, que le hizo perder el aliento” (32). Though spatially planted within the masculine, Clavel’s protagonist falters in assuming her body-text as the space is not simply visual. It is the smell of urine left in and around the urinal that triggers an awareness of her ontological non-congruence with her physical form and the inability of the space as a textually constructed medium to capture or constrict her identity. It is as though Clavel’s protagonist channels the anxieties and inadequacies of men who stand

in front of the urinal every day, measuring up to and performing a role inscribed onto their bodies by the Masculine space.

The relationship between space and Antonia's personal identity is concretized when she visits an all-male sauna with Carlos, a pilot who comes to her acquaintance through Francisco. Like the men's bathroom, the sauna is a genderizing space where its spatial boundaries attempt a definition of the plotted subject. The naked male bodies cause a crisis in Antonia, as she relates, "nunca como ahora había experimentado la sensación opresiva de ser tráfuga sobre todo por el temor a que una mirada suya, un gesto inapropiado, la hicieran parecer sospechosa a los ojos de otros" (63). The sauna is also a performative space, a theater of masculinity, where "unos y otros fingían una indiferencia que nada tenía que ver con sus impulsos" (65). These impulses, Antonia explains, are rooted in the adoration of the penis, as the physical phallus is epistemologically essential in a gender-inscribed topography. She observes that "los hombres siempre estaban viéndose el sexo propio y el de los otros en una perpetua comparación y competencia" (65). Following the equivalencies of theatricality and costuming that Clavel establishes, the penis is the metonymic sword of the *caballero andante*, as Antonia "estaba desnudo pero sintió el peso de la armadura que más que protegerlo la aprisionaba" (66).

The writing of the penis circumscribes a greater imaginary of the role of performance and the male body within the cultural construct of masculinity. This textual exploration coalesces with Clavel's foray into the urinal-space, as Antonia interpolates the physicality of the male body in coitus with the act of urination, thereby extrapolating the behavioral functions of the mapped out urinal-space outside its boundaries. In her first relationship with Malva after the metamorphosis, Antonia imagines the female anatomy as a carnal urinal,

“como una enorme boca abierta, una gruta insondable” (68). The connection between the female form and coitus, however, is not only an imagination of the erect phallus, as Malva emphasizes the ontological referent of the urinal when she places herself within it during an impromptu photo-session that Antonia incites, where the former realizes that the urinal looks like a woman. Malva admits that they are physically disturbing and uncanny, suggesting a Freudian disjunct that adds to the genderizing effect of the space. She, however, is a traditional Mexican woman who believes that men should be jealous and violent, and silently assumes the phallogocentrism of the bathroom-text. Antonia contemplates “el cuerpo desnudo de Malva recargada en un urinario, como un capullo dentro de otro capullo. Se sintió gravitar en dirección de ese doble gineco que también temblaba de deseo. Apartó los pétalos y se perdió en él” (91). This encounter is preceded by Antonia privately commenting that the *mingitorio* evokes a vagina that elicits desire “en un ritual inconsciente de descarga que emulaba una copula en el sentido más inmediato y animal” (50). This descriptive point becomes the fulcrum to Clavel’s theorizations on masculinity and gender as she instills in the urinal’s porcelain walls a reading of gender that subjugated the feminine to the masculine. Though her analysis at first glance seems over-arching, the plethora of photographic and narrative “evidence” aesthetically supports the claim that the urinal is an anthropomorphic female orifice that publicly receives the male. Its curves and sinews, juxtaposed with graphic anatomical depictions of female genitalia, add a pseudoscientific air to *Cuerpo naufrago*.

The correspondence between physical penetration and the shape of the urinal directly implicates the mapped space of the public though private bathroom within a larger social consciousness of the Masculine. Even Carlos, a pilot who regularly travels outside of Mexico City, which is to say away from the phallic center, comments that “los mingitorios son como

las mujeres, los usas y ya” (36). Within the topography of the public space, the urinal is an inert, always available, and bound metonymization of the female, as Antonia observes that “en cada uno de ellos, la sensación de poderío al verterse, una descarga que la hacía creer que el mundo estaba dispuesto y acondicionado para sus necesidades” (33). The urinal as a structure, therefore, is anatomically gendered (as woman), yet at the same time spatially genderizing. The latter is a twofold process, given that first it spatially delineates the boundaries that exclude women, and that later functions as a locus of masculinity, as a body that both captures phallogentric power through its patrons and perpetuates its adoration of the penis outside its walls through the exclusivity gained through the act of public desecration of the feminine form. It is telling that Clavel paints an organic, non-textual body above the arterial metro, as the urinal is para-textual in its definition of power. It is, according to Clavel, not limited to the city-text in its ability to genderize paradigms.

The recurrence to the bathroom as an entity that defies the comprehensive control of the city-text reflects on Deleuze and Guattari’s understanding of social space, which is to say the city, as a self-organizing system that resists a state of flux in favor of a congealed or stratified actuality. As Mark Bonta and John Protevi note, “spaces are NOT constructed by discourse alone, and thus are not configured solely to be read” (40). The bathroom and public centers of masculinity such as the sauna, therefore, become non-discursive spaces that do in a very tangible way impact the mapped and non-mapped spaces of Mexico City.

The power it captures and imbues in its patrons emanates from the blueprinted boundaries of the restroom to society as an imagined and un-written, unit. Clavel hints at this process as she describes several bars in Mexico where the urinal leaves the closed space of the bathroom and becomes a public fixture in the cantina, thereby genderizing this space as

an all-male stronghold, though this as a process is suggested by the waiters who automatically provide glasses for female patrons to consume their beers. It is as though the bottle is too genderized, anthropomorphic of the penis, as only a woman of ill repute would put her mouth to its phallic opening and drink in public. It is decidedly not feminine to metaphorically and publicly evoke fellatio among women. Unsurprisingly, this behavior is discouraged in a society where female honor is valued, though there are no problems with the orgiastic act of a male copulating with a urinal in public view.¹⁰⁹ The genderized tiled space that is semantically coded by the signifier *caballero* contaminates the surrounding space with a phallogocentrism that is rooted in its own corporeal anatomy. The female form of the urinal and the subsequent and repetitive penetration/copulation of it emphasizes patriarchal and phallogocentric codes and behaviors.

This practice extends to the domestic space, as the misogynistic Carlos comments on the shape and use of the bidet, which is only anatomically present within the confines of the residential bathroom. He points out that its presence is not very common in Mexico, as he defines the bidet as “esos extraños objetos de porcelana donde las mujeres se lavan sus intimidades antes o después de hacer el amor” (40). Though it is ontologically feminine, the bidet’s function is phallogocentrically circumscribed by the notion that its usage is contingent upon sexual relations with a man, which is reminiscent of the public act of urinating into the urinal.¹¹⁰ The bidet, furthermore, is spatially located in a private space where a woman metaphorically drinking from a bottle is not frowned upon, in opposition to the urinals that

¹⁰⁹ I make reference to one of the bars that Clavel describes where men openly relieve their bladders amongst other patrons imbibing beers.

¹¹⁰ Though Carlos does not make direct reference to the gender of the woman’s lover, it can be extrapolated from his opinions, behavior, and general *machista* stance that he fosters a heteronormative conception of female sexual relations that exclude lesbian and non-reproductive sexual practices.

“nunca aparecen en las casas ni en el dominio de la vida privada. Como si hubiera que sustraer a esa mirada otra, siempre vigilante, de las mujeres, un universo de intimidad instintiva, territorialmente masculino” (103-104).

From the textual process of attempting a writing of the bathroom as a center of power, and the subsequent virtual mapping of the city-space from the subterranean arterial trajectories of the metro, Clavel explicates the power of the phallus through the ubiquitous urinal, arguing that men possess “esa naturaleza que quisieran dominar y tener en un punto, estaba no solo en la cama o en los genitales...Pero pensar así, con esa carga erótica latente evidenciada y asomando por todas partes” (52). The osmotic effect of power is textually unexplored, save for when Antonia uses the bathroom in a café near the ministry of foreign affairs. The café, from its proximity to the city’s connection to the outside world, where in cities like Paris and London women can urinate in urinals and bathrooms are increasingly unisex, evidences a subtle shift in the phallogocentrism that defines the rest of the city-non-text. Instead of a plaque reading “damas/caballeros,” the doors read “Capuccino/Espresso” (179). Antonia’s confusion in facing this new semantic code of gender is compounded by the lack of urinals in either space. The codes that genderize are presented in a subtle reference: “los baños sugerían juguetonamente una gradación apenas, un matiz en la cantidad de café” (180). Clavel suggests that even in this space that is spatially linked to the cosmopolitan centers of the West, the Mexican bathroom is never fully relieved of the grasps of phallogocentrism that seemingly defines the gendered-body by the coffee it drinks. This is playfully mocked in the character of the barista who pronounces these imported words as “un capuchino, un expreso” (181). In a textual stroke that reveals the cartographic difference between the mapped spaces of Mexico City and its European cousins Paris and London,

Antonia orders a decidedly local drink, the *cortado*, instead of the genderized Italian beverages.¹¹¹

This play on identity vis-à-vis space is brought to fruition by the description and photograph of a urinal that bears the following graffiti above its labial porcelain: “todos somos chingones” (100). The urinal is juxtaposed to Antonia’s musings on the essence of masculinity, as she suggests that women envy the male ability to forget, “ese instinto nómada para orinar, subirse la bragueta, abandonar y seguir su camino mientras una se queda ahí, reconcentrada, atada a la memoria, incubando resentimientos, hijos, esperas” (105). The product of the male ability to forget is reminiscent of Paz’s thesis of Mexico and Mexicans as the sons of La Malinche, or as he eloquently puts it, as the sons of “La chingada” in his quintessential *El laberinto de la soledad* (1950). The graffiti artist agrees with Paz, and Clavel seems to take a similar stance by defining the effects of the *chingón* as an overarching complex created by Mexican, homosocial and hegemonic masculinity. This inclusive statement reflects upon the text’s initial hesitance to map out the city and is paradoxically put to rest, as through the bathroom-space Clavel manages to map-out Mexico City vis-à-vis a phallogentrism that defines the communal, masculine bathroom.

The bathroom space in *Cuerpo naufrago* establishes cartographic centers that define the power held by the masculine homosocial that frequents the *mingitorio*. The referent of center inadvertently creates a dialectic periphery that is rooted in its non-compliance with the tenets of power that emanate from the city. Antonia, as we know, is hesitant in conforming to

¹¹¹ Just as Mexico City is only mapped out by the phallogentrism of the bathroom, Clavel undertakes a similar practice of creating a city through a non-text in the case of Paris and London. The reader is cajoled into taking an inferential walk through their undescribed streets, creating a city that is imagined through the power-dynamics of the urinal. This exercise is suggestively more than literary, given the inclusion of photographs in the novel, asserting a reading of the city that is beyond the writing of its space. The inclusion of the *cortado* is further relevant in that it represents an intermediate point between milk and coffee: it is by nature a mixture that defies black/white categorizations.

the expected performance of her new gender as she questions the literary and real armor and sword that she is culturally forced to wear. In the men's room she evidences a primal sign of difference when the overpowering smell of the urinal forces her to leave the bathroom, which is to say the center of phallic power. This separation is furthermore linguistic, as the protagonist explicitly sections off her penis from her idea of self, explaining: "ella – Antonia – y él – su falo" (53). She does not partake in Carlos's theorization of masculinity that takes the penis as an ontological base: "para nosotros los hombres [...] el que nuestro sexo sea exterior, es una confirmación fundamental, por eso verlo, tocarlo, mostrarlo son actos necesarios y hasta inconscientes" (71).

Antonia's inability to associate with this archetypal model of *chingón*/phallus draws attention to her relationship with Raimundo, a photographer and friend of Carlos and Francisco, who is fascinated with the liminal world of shadows as an alternative space to reality, and who seems to embody a literary reincarnation of the Peter Nagy character from *Los deseos y su sombra*. Though at first he joins Carlos and Francisco for beers and revelry, the reader slowly unearths his ontological separation from the homosocial. This is predicated by the fascination for urinals that he shares with Antonia, which Francisco explains as simple "fantasías de las mujeres" (157). Raimundo is equally disqualifying when he states that men do not exist, and are only "la fantasía del deseo de las mujeres" (87), a belief that extricates his body from the ideological championing of the phallus by Carlos, and from the city as a center of masculine power. Raimundo leaves behind his apartment and friends as he falls in love with a woman on an island away from the city and away from Mexico. The islands therefore are textually mapped out in a syllogism that is operative under the binary city/periphery, where the non-masculine is banished to the queered space of the ocean.

Raimundo's movement from the city to the periphery, though highlighted by his belief in another plane of materialization is associated with a decentering masculinity that deviates from Carlos's fixation on the penis as a penetrating weapon. The disassociation between penis and self is similarly followed in Antonia, who engages in homosexual coitus with Raimundo. Their affair, however, is foreshadowed by the metaphorical plotting of Antonia as a subject within the shapeless space of the ocean. This replotting of the subject is brought about by the textual trigger of the *mingitauro*, a covered urinal in what is now a women's bathroom. Antonia suspects that the space was recently remodeled, with a male plumber choosing to cover the urinal with a black bag that is held in place by black tape that forms the shape of horns above the covered porcelain. It is a queered urinal, with feminine shapes and masculine horns, and though it is covered, its absence emphasizes its presence, as even in the public female space we are reminded of the phallogocentrism that emanates from a door away. The discovery of the *mingitauro* forces a psychological break in Antonia as she abandons her quixotic mission of unearthing the essence of masculinity that is based on performance.

The first step in this abandonment is described in a nightclub where Antonia, Carlos, Francisco and Raimundo engage in the services of a stripper/prostitute in a private room. In a space that is traditionally reserved for men to *hacerse hombres*, Clavel writes through an aesthetics of inebriation as she expresses Antonia's fragile identification with the gender assigned to her physiological anatomy. The prostibule becomes a place where Antonia does not *hacerse hombre* and conversely begins a decentering process in regards to her sexual identity; the ocean effectively becomes a gestured space of *hacerse queer*. The narrative delves into aquatic metaphors as the drunk Antonia begins to feel herself slip into the blue

depths of the ocean, away from the city and away from the theatricality of gender, as Carlos and Francisco indulge in the body of the prostitute. Raimundo, however, silently observes the orgy and does not participate as Antonia slips into unconsciousness. It is here that she remembers kissing someone, though the text is unclear, imprecise, and throbbing in its alcoholic amnesia.

The spatial displacement from the prostibule into the ocean is textually illustrated by the biology of migratory eels that are sexually undifferentiated when young, but change as adults according to the “dictados del medio ambiente: condiciones de salinidad, índices de la tabla periódica de la pasión” (114). From this biological metaphor, Clavel suggests that human bodies are too cultured and differentiated by similar environmental factors, though ours tend to be historical and cultural internal processes of gender formation and not necessarily public performances and iterations. Clavel further identifies the migration of eels as being intrinsic to their sexual differentiation, emphasizing how they are able to travel great distances without any navigational referents. This performativity of sexuation is mimicked by Antonia as she approaches Raimundo’s apartment. Though initially holding onto the walls of his building to guide her, she lets go and drifts like an eel towards a genetic moment that will define her sexuality. The use of the life history of eels in combination with Antonia’s slippage into the waters of inebriation depict the underlying shift in the telos of her identity as she engages in carnal relations with Raimundo where both are penetrated and penetrating. Antonia describes male homosexual sex as always violent, like “un salto al oceano” (119), underscoring the cartographic shift from city to non-city that defines queerness in *Cuerpo náufrago*.

This shift, however, is never fully complete as Clavel resists a complete inversion of the heterosexual, masculine *caballero* model that up until this point defines Antonia's gender. Her description of penetrating Raimundo is resplendent with chivalric imagery, indicating that social phallogocentrism is a difficult devil to shirk: "reconoció que nunca antes había sentido poder semejante: una plenitud victoriosa, el resplandor de una espada para someter y degollar al otro" (124). It is as though those repeated actions of urinating in the urinal, an iterative performance of the Masculine, have conditioned Antonia to think with and through the phallus. The penetrative act in Antonia is not rooted in an ontological discourse of queerness that is diametrically opposed to heteronormative sexuality, but is rather a position that is founded on a refusal to adhere to any subject-sexual position, as Antonia notes, "a pesar de los tiempos que corren el cuerpo soy-mujer sigue siendo un vestido con corsé, lo mismo que el cuerpo soy-hombre es una armadura. Nos preocupamos y ocupamos de las diferencias (incluso en el cuerpo soy-gay)" (164). Clavel's protagonist deceives these theatrical roles as she falls in love with Paula, a researcher who studies biodiversity in the Grecian isles. Returning to the biological metaphor of the migratory eels, Clavel's description of Antonia falling in love is highlighted by an internal "torrente de anguilas tornasoleando vibrátiles" that emphasize her shift away from the cartographic city.

Antonia's identity as based on her sexuality is seemingly returned to the heteronormative model of male-body with penis showing desire for a female, as Paula is first described as "ella – porque no había duda sobre su sexo" (127). This description, however, is ambiguated when Paula is described to have a female penis. Clavel carefully evades an anatomic description of Paula's genitalia, suggesting that the narrative is now too dislodged from the tangents of power that emanate from the Masculine *mingitorio*, as Paula is

described to have a bulge in between her legs that is sexually reactive and sovereign, though it is never specified as the metamorphic appendage that befuddles Antonia the morning of her transformation.

The process of sexual transmutation in *Cuerpo náufrago* comes full circle as Antonia, described as “él o ella – porque cabía la duda sobre su género” (181) arrives at the Aeolian isles as a Deleuzoguattarian body without organs (159). Antonia becomes an “organism moved from ‘equilibrium,’ that is, out of a stable state or ‘comfort zone’ [...], to an intensive crisis realm (producing changeable, ‘metastable’ habits)” (Bonta and Protevi 63). She is liberated from the obsession with chivalric performativity and the physiology and physiognomy of the urinals that populate the many public spaces of Mexico City. This last point is noted as she mentally leaves behind her former life, “como quien da un salto en el vacío o se arroja al mar abierto” (182). Her final act of sexual ambiguation, as an antonymic function of differentiation brought about by society and culture, is founded on the cartographic placement of the body within the indefinite and ambiguous coordinates of the ocean. The ocean, we must remember, resists the Cartesian physics of two-dimensional textual city-mapping as it introduces a third axis of movement that is rendered impotent in the imagined city. By launching Antonia into this non-space, Clavel’s character escapes the power matrices of Mexico City.

Focusing on a poetics of the city, *Cuerpo náufrago* is minimalist in its naming of delineating the spaces and alleyways of the megalopolis. This, however, does not render Clavel’s text impotent in defining the connection between city and self. Through the arterial channels of the metro lines, the city becomes an organic body that defies textual representation and the paradoxical non-representation that it implies. Space for Clavel is

more intimately connected to a theoretical questioning of how the city defines gender, as Antonia's spatial exodus from Mexico City to the Grecian isles, combined with her theatrical exodus from the performance of heteronormative masculine gender roles, accentuate the centrality of the city as a spatialization of phallo and phallogocentrism that is captured in the gendered and genderizing kingdom of the *mingitorio*.

The Failure of Space and the Destabilization of Masculinities

The narrative trajectory of gender across a larger canvas of mapped-out and virtual space in Ana Clavel's two novels signals a failure to capture the gendered-subject within a matrix of masculinity along the reterritorialized axes of Latin America. The city as an ontological and epistemological referent evaporates as an obsolete construct that is unable to articulate a sustained inquiry into the possibility of dephallicizing contemporary Latin American culture. In the psychological and existential travails of Soledad in *Los deseos y su sombra*, the city as a textual space is left impotent as her body and self are lost and cannot be spatially plotted in relation to the Castillo, Palacio or *boulevard de héroes*. Clavel's authorial challenge to Masculinity is left mute and unseen, much like the vagabonds and transients that populate and mechanize her discursive urban-space-text. The writer's concern with dethroning the phallus and its metonymization in the hegemonic is remapped onto a virtual space that gestures towards Mexico City without necessarily naming it. This alternative process, following a Deleuzoguattarian cartographic praxis, potentiates a second challenge to the power of masculinity over the subaltern and non-heteronormative through an exploration and articulation of the bathroom as a genderized and genderizing space. Through a structured

methodology of minor science as a tool of understanding the internal tensions and forces of the city, Clavel's *Cuerpo náufrago* reorganizes space along the rhizomatic modeling of the centers of capture of hegemonic masculinity. The metamorphic protagonist, Antonia, and the textual author, Clavel, engage in an attack on the masculine as an enabling and defining constituent of the greater social and spatial milieu of Mexico City. But does the recurrence to a virtual space succeed in reterritorializing Latin American conceptions of gender vis-à-vis space? The final exodus away from the city and the deindividuation of the gendered subject suggest otherwise.

Leaving Mexico City behind, Clavel's *Las violetas son flores del deseo* (2007) reassumes the author's interrogation of desire but focuses on the paternal temptations of pedophilia, channeled through the creation and marketing of life-sized prepubescent dolls named after the protagonist's daughter Violeta. The androgyne figure of *Cuerpo náufrago* is catalyzed into an asexuated doll, "la Desnombrada" (99), that complicates the protagonist's sexuality. He is confronted by a secret society that fights pedophiles and is almost killed, but the narrative takes a surprising twist as the now-adult Violeta returns to her father's side. By clouding the lines between pederasty and desire, Clavel forces the reader to reflect on the basis of our own desires. Her novelistic exercise is, however, disjointed from the urban space, and instead takes place in a vaguely European city.

Though the era of a literary and political *civilización* and *barbarie* has led into an understanding of the urban as being all-encompassing, space as represented by the city is delegitimized as ontological to the subject and its personal markers of identity. The disempowerment of space coincides with the onset of a (more) democratic and mobile society that has been forced to adapt under the economic forces of neoliberal globalization

that José Emilio Pacheco first signals in *Las batallas en el desierto*. With the resultant internal and thermogenetic processes of instability and reorganization, Latin American society looks towards a new articulation of gender that allows for a reimagining of the national as another cog in an increasingly deterritorialized global. The writing of space in Clavel, following a longer line of authors who pen the urban, underscores the ubiquity and unanimity of hegemonic masculinity as an organizational point and process that cannot be easily usurped, even through the cartographic and theoretical tools of the virtual and the rhizome.

Subsequently we are left with a series of questions that indicate a crisis of spatiality that operates as a sub-plateau to overriding crises in masculinity and identity as the processes of hybridization and transculturation obfuscate an imaginary that is indigenous, understanding, and encompassing of Latin America. I point once more to Raewyn Connell's theorization of a global order of hegemonic masculinity that spreads its tentacles through multinational business conglomerates, as a challenge to an idea of Latin American masculinity that resists a deterritorialization and commercialization of the body and self. The failure of space in Clavel is emblematic of a similar failure in territorial masculinities in the works of Bayly, Fuguet and Belli who insist on a deterritorialized or non-specific praxis of space to discursivize masculinities and genders.

But not all is lost. Though the idea of a national Masculine order or a particular aesthetics of virility may be dead as we push forward into the 21st century, new models and approximations to masculinities are appearing in contemporary Latin American fiction. These tropes and characters evidence a shift away from a naturalist or romantic writings of self, as they suggest an indigenous, culturally-sensitive understanding of masculinities,

phallogocentrism, and phallogocentrism that subtly defect from unifying globalized representations of gender. In the next chapter I put forward a series of reconceptions of masculinity and the male form that arise from contemporary societies' interactions with transnational economic and technocratic forces of change.

CHAPTER 5

HARD DRIVES, CYBORGS, AND VIAGRA: NEW CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF MASCULINITIES AND THE BODY

*You're wondering who I am – machine or mannequin
With parts made in Japan, I am the modern man.
Styx, "Mr. Roboto."*

In this chapter I look at current trends in the writing of masculinities, focusing specifically on works that question the corporeality and position of masculinity vis-à-vis Latin America. Building on the failure of space to serve as a topological referent to a challenge of gender phallogentrism in contemporary fiction, I invite the reader to embark on a literary journey that illuminates a textual practice of gender that is questioning and unwilling to accept canonical norms of representation. Just as Jesús Montoya Juárez and Ángel Esteban observe in *Entre lo local y lo global: la narrativa latinoamericana en el cambio de siglo (1990-2006)* (2008), Latin American fiction is increasingly pushing the geospatial boundaries that we know. Works by authors such Mario Bellatin, Edmundo Paz Soldán, Iván Thays, Santiago Gamboa, Roberto Bolaño and Enrique Serna write the Latin American condition into esoteric references such as Japan, New England, Paris and Barcelona. I am interested in these fictions that stretch conceptions of Latin Americanness, which in turn suggests an inevitable stretching of the cultural ideologies of gender that are so-often attributed to sociocultural systems.

Within the study of Latin American gender studies, the last decade has seen a boom in certain topics and ideologies. On the one hand, we have the rise of an increasingly eco-

aware criticism that builds on critical work done in the North American academy in the 1990s. Critics such as Marisa Pereyra, Laura Barbas Rhoden, and Alicia Rivero have been instrumental in creating a critical consciousness of the relationship between nature, humanity and the dynamics of power that are characteristic of patriarchal Latin American societies. Other relevant fields of criticism include the branch of ideas, articles, and books that surge from Donna Haraway's influential thesis on the cyborg body and feminism. An initial incursion by Claire Taylor and Thea Pitman in their anthology, *Latin American Cyberculture and Cyberliterature* (2007), questions the fusion of body and machine in Latin American literature and culture but this line of investigation is nascent and ripe for further study.

On the other hand, there has been a surge in inquiry related to the effects on and representations of gender in popular culture such as comics. Critics such as Bruce Campbell and David William Foster have undertaken a reading of the impact of comic book culture in Latin America following Ariel Dorfman's influential *The Empire's Old Clothes: What the Lone Ranger, Babar, and Other Innocent Heroes do to our Minds* (1983). These critiques question the impact of both US influence over the economic industries of culture in the South and the resultant ideals and tropes that this brand of imperialism deploys via mass media. Keeping in mind this notion of influence and/or causality, critics and authors have reflected on the validity and viability of including Latin American gender studies within debates raging in the North, as writers and thinkers note the emphasis placed on the body over performance, on the blurred spaces of identity that escape categorizations that are popularly and casually thrown around in North American schools of thought. With that being said, however, the points of cultural contact, assimilation, and hybridity cannot be ignored, even if a local, independent notion of gender is to be cultivated.

In this chapter I build on the postulates, theorems, and analyses put forth in earlier pages as I examine three distinct works from a spectrum of male writers, produced in the past decade. I am not so much interested in a textual analysis of each work per se, but instead arrange these texts in a tableau that inculcates broader categorizations and extrapolations that stretch the boundaries of gender and Latin American fiction. That being said, I am not suggesting that each work be included in a canonical array of the state of masculinity in Latin America today. Instead, I propose that each text, in its own right, provides a juicy caveat into what to expect from an increasing corpus of writers who are more and more preoccupied and reactive to the state of masculinity and men.

The ontological disappearance of space that I examine in the previous chapter is rolled over into my study of Hernán Rodríguez Matte's only novel *Barrio Alto* (2004). The text follows in a series by others such as Alberto Fuguet (*Mala onda*, 1991; *Por favor, rebobinar*, 1998), Jaime Bayly (*No se lo digas a nadie*, 1994; *La mujer de mi hermano*, 2002) and Xavier Velasco (*Diablo guardián*, 2003) that portray youth enslaved by consumerism. Though originally included in Alberto Fuguet's ambitious *Cuentos con Walkman* (1993), Rodríguez Matte develops a relatively recluse literary career that is punctuated by short stories and regular essays in journals and newspapers. Akin to his countryman Fuguet, Rodríguez Matte's forays into the world of cinema and art-house shorts has garnered more attention than his novel. In what can be considered a fast-forward of *Mala onda* (1991), Rodríguez Matte highlights questions of class, globalization, and ennui in contemporary Santiago. But what differentiates this piece from Fuguet's generationally-defining work are the seeds and referents to the protagonist's existential crisis. In my analysis of *Barrio Alto*, I call attention to the disarticulation of space vis-à-vis hegemonic masculinity

in an increasingly agglomerative urban space. This, in turn, is combined with the use of North American comic book superheroes as cultural axes that structure the performance of masculinity in upper-class Chile.

Just as the new historical novels in Chapter 1 paid particular attention to the anatomy of the male body, Rodríguez Matte focuses on the fragmentation of the protagonist's body into different discursive and epistemological sites that are related through the language of computer science. The hinted cyborg body in *Barrio Alto* is developed in Santiago Roncagliolo's *Tan cerca de la vida* (2010), where the Peruvian journalist/author meshes science fiction with romance into a 21st-century foundational myth for a globalized and technocratic society. In my study I highlight the writing of the male body through Donna Haraway's vision, touching base with feminist criticism on the female cyborg and the potential ramifications of writing a Latin American male cyborg that challenges multinational masculinity.

The final novel I examine deviates from a focus on cybernetic and ecocritical thought in the theorization of contemporary masculinity. I study, instead, Enrique Serna's *La sangre erguida* (2010) as a text that puts forth a separate incursion into an inquiry of Latin American masculinity. The Mexican novelist, essayist, and screenwriter is well-known for his historical novels, but chooses to focus on questions of masculine development and sexuality in his latest work. I examine some of the questions he plants in essays regarding the crisis in Latin American masculinity and suggest an exit strategy to the problematic of the Latin phallus that Ilan Stavans eloquently describes. Looking at issues of bisexuality and impotency, I argue that Serna's take on the phallus is reflective of a need to rearrange the role of the Latin phallus within society.

The end-game of these pages is two-fold. First, I suggest current and (possibly) future trends in the conceptualization of masculinity in contemporary Latin American fiction. The scope of these pages, however, leaves out other trends that can be seen in the fiction of writers such as Alfredo Sepúlveda and Jaime Bayly who metonymize the concerns of an emasculated demographic into the figure of the *cojo*. Bayly's *El cojo y el loco* (2009) is particularly illuminative as his allegorical style portrays a male body that is subjugated to the ire and power of North American, oligarchic, and hegemonic masculinities. We can see a similar pessimism vis-à-vis masculine gender in Sepúlveda's *Las muchachas secretas* (2004), where the paraplegic protagonist must flee the detritus and despair in his middle-class neighborhood, and can only attain success abroad. Both works coin an alternative politics of masculinity in Latin America that is castrated by the effects of neoliberalism.

The figure of the *cojo* is reactive to Connell's theorized multinational masculinity, but shows no signs of resisting or positing a tangible and viable alternative to foreign hegemony, which elicits the second aim of my analysis. Following in the footsteps of the work of Mara Viveros Vigoya, José Olavarría, and José Alfonso-Toro amongst others, I study the literary dialogue between culturally indigenous representations of masculinity and multinational hegemony, which permits a line of flight away from the "crisis" that is repeatedly invoked. I suggest that the crisis in masculinity has changed from the initial skirmishes between machismo and emancipated women to a continent-wide struggle between subjugated national masculinities and hegemonic, heterogenous multinationalism, reaffirming Ignacio Sánchez Prado's call to recognize "la región como interlocutora legítima en los debates culturales a escala mundial" (30).

Natural, Comic, and Existential Masculinity in *Barrio Alto*

*I've got a secret I've been hiding under my skin
My heart is human, my blood is boiling, my brain IBM
So if you see me acting strangely, don't be surprised
I'm just a man who needed someone, and somewhere to hide.
Styx, "Mr. Roboto."*

The spreading of Connell's latest brand of theorized masculinity has been studied by economists and anthropologists who have described the dynamics of neoliberalization in Latin America. Though the tangible realities of these changes have been analyzed, the literary representations of these changes are a work in progress as an increasing number of hybridized, globalized, and kitsch fictions come off the presses. What needs to be seen, however, is how this globalized masculinity has been portrayed in fiction and what measures are taken to affront and/or question its authority over the landscape. In the following pages I will bring up questions and answers to the portrayal of what Connell calls transnational business masculinity in Latin America, paying careful attention to how these male bodies are represented and how alternative avatars of masculinity are created and substantiated in fiction.

The processes of neoliberalism, aside from changing wealth and class demographics and social conditions is also responsible for the decentering of the traditional military and political homosocial that characterized the center of Latin American societies. From a literary standpoint, novels such as Rivera Garza's *Nadie me verá llorar* and Bryce Echenique's *El huerto de mi amada* are effective representations of the power held by small, homosocial groups of men that controlled the destiny of Latin America since its inception into the politics of the nation. But what happens to these groups when bigger honchos from abroad invade their stranglehold over domestic channels of power?

The capitalist project of urban diversification and sprawl can be noted in Hernán Rodríguez Matte's *Barrio Alto*, a 2004 reincarnation of *Mala onda* that shares similar ideologies and stylistics. Like Fuguet's novel, Rodríguez Matte frames his text around a pop-culture epigraph that embodies the cultural and existential ennui faced by the first-person narrator. Adhering to an aesthetics of cocaine and alcohol, the narrative shows the same disdain for all-things Chilean that Fuguet's protagonist, Matías Vicuña, embodies when he identifies himself as "un pendejo de un país que nadie conoce y que a nadie interesa. Un país que se cree lo mejor, como yo aquí" (*Mala onda* 14). Furthermore, the protagonist in *Barrio Alto*, Benjamín Ossa, follows the self-centered worldview of his predecessor. On a final note, the similarities between *Barrio Alto* and *Mala onda* are structural, as the former's chapters are also positioned around specific dates, though it is decidedly apolitical, unlike Fuguet's direct reference to Pinochet's plebiscite. Rodríguez Matte's novel is, however, placed in 1999, which holds economic and/or modernist implications as the author questions if and how things will change as Chile enters the new millennium. The title refers to the Northeast and eastern regions of Providencia, Las Condes and Vitacura that become the cordoned off locales of the rich and powerful in the 1980s.

Just as the novel can be traced as a literary evolution of *Mala onda*, it also channels the economic and social changes that are brought about by agglomeration economies and the archipelagation of the cityspace. We must remember that Santiago is unlike other Latin American megacities in that it is only now following growth patterns parallel to Mexico City's "feral" development. As a result, Santiago's older neighborhoods of wealth have lost their traditional role in the lives of the rich as the new upper class is content with setting up shop in varying spaces in and around the city. The city is moving towards the North

American model of the metropolitan urban center, where several economic nodes are interconnected by convenient and efficient infrastructure to create an archipelago of urbanity that decenters the traditional center/periphery model. As the city shatters and fragments archeological strata and zones of containment, the powers of hegemonic masculinity lose their spatial hold over the center and the *barrio alto* and instead take up symbolic positions and channels of power, as evidenced in my analysis of Clavel's *Los deseos y su sombra* and *Cuerpo náufrago*.

The novel is centered on a personal crisis characterized by a non-belonging to a defined social context that offsets the stability enjoyed by the protagonist as a wealthy youth. We can first note Benja's disdain for the local as understood in regional terms, when he emphatically affirms that "esos sofisticados grupos les importara un carajo lo que sucede aquí en Sudamérica, en el culo del mundo" (44). Secondly, the protagonist is critical of a consumerist culture that Fuguet and others normalize in their narrative. As a university student majoring in marketing, Benja observes: "más de la mitad del mundo occidentalizado se había dejado seducir por la idea de comprar sin saber que eso no servirá de nada. La televisión, los avisos publicitarios, y la idea de acumular nuevas cosas nos estaba rodeando al punto de dejarnos insensibles y asfixiados" (166).

This realization leads to a crisis in the subject which is necessarily linked to a crisis vis-à-vis the thirdspace of the *barrio alto* as a symbol of hegemonic masculinity. As a wealthy university student, Benja's life is defined by mindless consumption that repetivizes pleasure into a static condition that desensitivizes the urban flaneur, leading him to note: "Estoy cansado de masturbarme. Estoy cansado de fumar marihuana y de ver televisión. Estoy cansado de esta casa y de la gente que la habita" (11). The placement of the narrative

voice within the house is intrinsic to a discourse of discontentment that circumscribes the novel. Unlike Fuguet's protagonist in *Mala onda* who never quite understands the source of his crisis, Benja is plainly aware of the negative impact the *barrio alto* has on his own existence.

The idea of manliness and belonging to the urban homosocial has further evolved from the temporal space of *Mala onda* as the economic power to buy drugs and cigarettes, and not carnal prowess in the brothel, defines the act of "hacerse hombre" (*Barrio Alto* 13). The protagonist is unapologetic in his criticism of neoliberal policies in Chile, which he contends has defined the nation and its people as a vague simulacrum of the United States. The confrontation with foreign influences over national identity takes on a cultural angle when Benja observes:

Podía verme a mí mismo tratando de imitar lo que había aprendido toda mi vida en los programas de televisión, en las películas, en la ropa y en la música que escuchaba, en la comida y los artefactos eléctricos, los modismos, los peinados y hasta la manera de quedarme callado, todo había sido aprendido de algún estúpido actor medio drogadicto y medio amanerado de Estados Unidos. (67)

Taking as a basis the explicit challenge to US cultural imperialism that was lacking in *Mala onda*, Rodríguez Matte engages in an urban mapping that is at first glance analogous to the car rides and enunciations of the cityspace performed by Matías. The differences arise, however, in the protagonist's ability to move outside the comfort zone of the *barrio alto* and into the southern topographies that left Matías Vicuña scared and disoriented, urging him to return to civilization. After his break from the thirdspace of his neighborhood, Benja finds himself in a lower-class bar that "podía atemorizar a cualquiera" (116). When approached by two ruffians, he quickly engages in conversation and gains a certain level of trust and friendship with 'El Manilla' and 'El Chico Jano.' The interchange between the wealthy,

educated Benja and the two working-class men, who belong in any of Lemebel's *crónicas* or *Tengo miedo torero* (2001), is short-lived but powerful in that it establishes a cartography of self that transgresses the topographic borders of the traditional *barrio alto*.

The protagonist in Rodríguez Matte's novel, however, is able to articulate the source of crisis vis-à-vis space and subjectivity in turn-of-the-century Santiago as he realizes that the ideological stronghold of the genderizing *barrio alto* no longer exists. He suffers from a cartographic dislocation that leaves him without secondspace referents to root him within the firstspace, thereby permitting a sense of self within the contemporary thirdspace of Santiago. Benja stresses that as a wealthy Chilean, "no estoy ni en el centro ni en el exterior. Quizás no estoy en ninguna parte" (24). The motto of non-belonging, of floating through the cityspace instead of defining it, is illustrative of the archipelagic and decentralized body of urbanization that occurs, in part, due to the rise of the town-center model in fin du siècle Santiago as space loses its tectonic identity.

We are allowed to pause and reflect on this cartographic schism in urban development when Benja philosophizes that "el barrio alto había dejado de existir" (36). During one of many drives through the city, he stops to remember "la época en que no había tanta congestión. Las estrechas calles estaban rodeadas de árboles y se respiraba una atmósfera campestre" (36). Keeping with his role as an enlightened intellectual observer, Benja explains that this soon changed, as "una estampida de familias emergieron de quién sabe dónde para instalarse en sus casitas iguales, comprar en el supermercado y llenar sus autos de bencina" (36), reflecting on the rise of an urban middle class that has access to personal transportation. He addresses the construction of the town centers and the resultant geospatial cephalization of agglomeration economies when he notes that during the

weekends, these same families “se paseaban por el mall llenos de satisfacción sabiendo que por fin estaban instalados en el barrio alto, sin saber que el barrio alto ya no estaba ahí” (36). The novel, however, never explicates the new location of the *barrio* as the reader and protagonist are left with a social and spatial void that Rodríguez Matte’s text exploits as an existential conundrum that can only be solved by imbibing massive quantities of imported spirits and snorting high-quality cocaine.

The sense of not-belonging by a gendered body belonging to the hegemonic group reflects upon the democratization of space away from traditional demarcations of gender, but the veins of power that emanate from the homosocial are not extinct. The destabilization of the *barrio alto* as a thirdspace requires a parallel restructuring of the imagined ideals and attributes of the space, as the changes described by Benja only reflect a topographic decentralization of the wealthy and poor in Santiago. The traditional *barrio alto* is defined by money, family name, and honor, as Benja explains that his grandmother is most affected by the topographic shift in Santiago, as she complains that:

Los nuevos ricos no hacían otra cosa que ostentar el poco dinero que tenían. Los viejos ricos, en cambio, trataban de ocultar su inmensa fortuna ante los demás bajo el slogan de la austeridad. En cualquiera de los casos, lo que ella realmente no podía tolerar era la idea de una clase media emergente que le importaban un rábano los apellidos y las tradiciones de las que ella se jactaba tanto. Los viejos ricos estaban en extinción, pero ella no quería verlo. (36)

The disintegration of the hegemonic space in *Barrio Alto* calls to attention the role of the ruling homosocial of the Club de la Unión, a physical meeting point of political, economic, and social strains of hegemonic masculinity. This space is metonymized in the figure of Roberto, an over-achieving friend of the protagonist who comes from a storied line of politicians and businessmen who own the privatized power company that literally, and metaphorically, sustains Chile and its projects of growth. The critique of this powerful

homosocial is carried out through a sustained desubjectification of Roberto, who like others of his generation is described to have been “tragado por el efecto sedante del sistema corporativo” (70). Similarly, these men who occupy and define the traditional pockets of power within the *barrio alto* are described as “robots esclavizados por la idea de acumular y ganar más dinero” (70).

The similarities to Connell’s idea of transnational business masculinity are powerful, as Rodríguez Matte effectively contrapositions the libertine protagonist to the mindless, dressed-in-grey-suits male bodies that function as minions of the neoliberal cancer that is slowly infecting the planet. Rodríguez Matte’s Benja challenges the traditional cartographies of control by refusing to be like Roberto and his countless classmates who now dress in imported suits and drive expensive cars to brain-draining jobs that can only guarantee economic amassing. His refusal is grounded in the parallel disintegration of the *barrio alto* as a result of archipelagic urban growth and the rise of the middle class that dislocate the traditional referents of money and privilege from the mapped-out spaces of the wealthy.

The textual construction of transnational business masculinity is compounded by its collocation with traditionally hegemonic masculinities. In a tense moment between a group of wealthy youths, including Benja, and a patrolling pack of bloodthirsty police officers, the protagonist observes that they “no hacían otra cosa que deambular como sanguijuelas buscando una manera de sacarle provecho a su poder. No podía razonar con ellos. Había algo demasiado equivocado en la gente que usaba uniformes” (155). Benja, furthermore, opines that the police, military and clergy are all alike, “débiles detrás de los uniformes” (155). He places the enslaved robots like Roberto within this group, arguing that “los ejecutivos y políticos vestidos iguales, llevando coléricas corbatas como si fuese la única prenda con la

que pueden tomarse ciertas libertades. Se esconden detrás de la institución” (155). The institution in *Barrio Alto*, however, is not as salient as Benja at first imagines, as it has given way to transnational businesses that ignore the traditions of the homosocial that were sacred in *Mala onda*.

The dematerialization of the local homosocial, which is to say the politicians and businessman that traditionally controlled the Club de la Unión, results in a reorganized and/or disorganized cartographic theatre for the subject who cannot help but assert: “no estoy ni en el centro ni en el exterior. Quizás no estoy en ninguna parte” (24), calling to mind what Fredric Jameson calls a crisis of boundaries where the borders and categories of space are blurred. The critic ponders if this postmodern space does “not tend to demobilize us and surrender us to passivity and helplessness, by systematically obliterating possibilities of action under the impenetrable fog of historical inevitability?” (86). The conclusion to Rodríguez Matte’s Bildungsroman is not afforded the sanctity of the *barrio alto* as Benja must instead negotiate a masculine identity that is constructed as a product of transnational business masculinity and the hegemonic power it holds over developing societies such as Santiago.

In what follows, the protagonist and his friends get together for a farewell dinner at a Chinese restaurant in the historic center as Benja arrives in a drunken and coke-induced state as Roberto is to leave for the United States to continue his studies in law, whereas Javiera, Benja’s love interest, is pregnant with Olaf’s baby. The group melancholically finishes their meal amidst goodbye speeches but is accosted by a group of urban “pelusones” (191) who rob the tires from Olaf’s car. Resembling more a band of animals than urban dwellers, the low-class invaders of the urban space stab Olaf to death and leave Benja with multiple

internal wounds. The punctured body of Olaf insinuates the death of traditional hegemonic masculinity in Santiago, though we know the opposite to be true, as the sons of the old guard are now cogs in the international homosocial of multinational masculinity.

The realization that the city has changed and that the *barrio alto* has ceased to exist as a real and imagined space triggers a survivalist strategy in Benja, as the past is left behind and “se vislum[bra] una oportunidad para reorganizar [su] vida como un computador que se reinicia y logra reordenar todos sus archivos desde el principio” (199). By reconfiguring hierarchies of power amongst masculinities, transnational business masculinity forces a reevaluation of local masculinities as they assimilate and diverge from pop culture and technocratic influences. The narrative trajectory of the protagonist in *Barrio Alto* calls to question this process of change as Rodríguez Matte pays careful attention to the construction of the male body and his subjectivity.

The author’s reimagination of the corporeality of masculinity is garnered through a dialectic construction of the female in relation to nature, echoing what recent trends in ecocritical thought have established in the context of Latin American narrative. As a distinctive school of thought, ecofeminism only gains a following in the 1990s, though its origins can be traced to earlier works such as Susan Griffin’s *Women and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (1978). The aim of ecofeminism is to give inanimate natural objects and elements a voice, so that we can understand the position of the Other. By giving nature a voice, we force ourselves into the position of the Other through language, allowing for an understanding of the effects of phallocentrism and andro-domination over the planet as an extension of the same in society.

The problem with ecofeminism, however, lies in its objectives as they are often obtuse and mythopoetic, seeking to find some long-lost Edenic paradise that holds no real world value or potentiality. Foundational texts such as *Literature, Nature, and Other* (1995) by Patrick Murphy argue that the greatest value of ecofeminism is that it provides a best approximation of the other because the fights against patriarchy and capitalism must be placed in a broader context, which is to say in the context of the relationship between humanity and nature, though the oppression suffered by nature and women is not the same. Similar comments are made by Alicia Rivero, who affirms that “ecocriticism probes the way in which literature is related to the environment from an ‘earth-centered’ perspective” (5). More radical thinkers such as the activist and writer Starhawk argue that that the goal of ecofeminist thought is “not to just change who wields power but to transform the structure of power itself” (76).

Such vague aims and methodologies are intrinsically problematic and often only idealistic in their application, but a closer look into ecofeminist thought evidences a recurring trope in Latin American fiction. Commenting on the state of ecofeminism in Latin America, Gloria da Cunha-Giabbai notes that the genderizing of the natural occupies a central role in late 19th-century and early 20th-century fiction. Citing works by Rómulo Gallegos and others, the critic calls to attention the characterization of the feminine natural as a monstrous *barbarie* (53), which is portrayed in opposition to the masculine civilization. She notes, however, that this trend changes in the mid 20th century with works such as *La casa verde* (1966) by Mario Vargas Llosa where “la naturaleza se presenta como el regazo Salvador que protégé al hombre de la injusticia social” (53).

The recurrence to the natural as feminine is problematized by Gretchen Legler when she asserts that “the constructions of nature as female (as mother/virgin) are essential to the maintenance of [...] hierarchical ways of thinking that justify the oppression of the various ‘others’ in patriarchal culture by ranking them ‘closer to nature’” (228). This can be applied to how Ana Clavel portrays female genitalia as a flower that must be perforated and inseminated in her thesis on the nodes of masculine power in contemporary urban spaces. A similar narrative strategy is carried out by Rodríguez Matte in *Barrio Alto* as he struggles to find tangible referents to his displaced and decentered subject. The protagonist uses nature as a gendered tool to characterize his own masculinity as he contrasts himself with a love interest, Amelia, described as “una delicada mariposa entre el pastizal, libre y despreocupada y yo en cambio me siento como una mosca sucia y oportunista, volando entre el alambrado de púas y una bosta de caballo” (24).

There is an initial attempt to resemanticize Benja along the lines of the natural but this fails as the protagonist equates the condition of nature with the power of the multinationals over Chilean society as they create and feed the mindless disease of capitalism. Disdainful of the new middle class and the robotic automatons of transnational business masculinity, Benja realizes that conceiving himself through nature only leaves him as “otro pájaro sin cerebro” (44). The failure of nature as a referent for the protagonist’s nascent masculinity is put down when he affirms that “a veces trato de hablar con mi naturaleza, pero ella no quiere hablar conmigo” (60). We see a final break from the dialectic between nature and man when he describes the flooding of a river: “el río y el mar no son más que un macho y una hembra apareándose. Sólo que esta vez, el macho no está para sutilezas” (136), reflecting the discord felt between the male subject and its natural metaphor.

A second attempt at resemanticizing Benja's masculinity occurs as a direct by-product of the author's incursions into the realm of the natural as the protagonist visits the house of a famed architect during a party. The owner of the house is described as an ecologically conscious designer whose "construcciones se adaptan a la naturaleza y no dañan el ecosistema" (49). The architect's abode is described in great detail by Simone, a Dutch woman who befriends the protagonist in one of his many drug-fueled romps through the privileged bars and discotheques of Santiago. She comments that the house "estaba inspirado en el refugio de Lex Luthor" (49), making reference to the comic book Superman and his nemesis.¹¹² The connection between nature and Lex is strategic in that the author juxtaposes the natural as villainous with the neoliberal apotheosis of masculinity in the shape of the virile and benevolent Superman that filled Benja's childhood.¹¹³

We see in *Barrio Alto* another attempt at creating a viable alternative masculinity in the face of multinational masculinity, though it is ironically a by-product of the latter's spreading southwards in the guise of cultural imperialism. The role of the comic book character in Latin American cultural discourses has grown exponentially as a series of books, dissertations and articles question the impact of the comic on questions of identity. The importance of comics in the cultural life of the continent is underlined by Héctor Fernández L'Hoeste and Juan Poblete as they argue that "graphic narratives such as comics have constituted one of the important media in [the] connection between socio-economic

¹¹² The use of North American superheroes as a referent when constructing masculinity is a recurrent tool in contemporary fiction and can be seen in Ana Clavel's *Los deseos y su sombra* (1999) and Enrique Serna's *La sangre erguida* (2010). The former juxtaposes indigenous, poor men to the crime-fighting figures of Superman and Batman whereas the latter describes the man of steel as the apotheosis of masculine virility.

¹¹³ It is important to note the omission of popular Latin American superheroes as masculine referents in contemporary fiction. Most notable are the omissions of the ethnically hybridized Kalimán and El Payo as local rebuttals to Superman and the Lone Ranger.

modernization, cultural matrices, and mass-mediatization” (3). Frederick Luis Aldama’s *Your Brain on Latino Comics* (2009) is a useful guide to understanding some of the implications of the superhero in creating ideals of race (white is good, dark is bad) and gender (hyper virile and muscular males, women as male-fantasy objects) (2-11). The earlier work by David William Foster in *From Mafalda to Los Supermachos: Latin American Graphic Humor as Popular Culture* (1989) is also useful in contextualizing the importance of North American popular drawings such as the ubiquitous Disney characters in the economic liberalization of Latin America in the second half of the 20th century.

What is important to keep in mind when talking about the influence of comics in the region is the understanding that the graphic drawing market is not controlled by a single group and is instead composed of interdependent spheres or genres. We can discern the sphere of the North American superhero comic; the ironic social commentary of Condorito; the Japanese-style Manga comics; and the adult-oriented offerings.¹¹⁴ The superhero, however, is particularly useful when discussing masculinity in Rodríguez Matte’s novel as the protagonist declares that when younger he wanted to be Superman or the Green Lantern. The schizophrenic man of steel from another planet (the United States?) posits an ideological quandary for Benja as he is a product of the consumer-drive culture that he despises. The ideological connections between Clark Kent and US imperialism are summed up in Higilio Álvarez Constantino’s *La magia de los “comics” coloniza nuestra cultura* (1978), as the critic argues that Superman embodies North American arrogance in the hemisphere (86).

¹¹⁴ Created by Rene Ríos in 1949, this anthropomorphic inhabitant of the fictional Chilean town of Pelotillehue is well known throughout Latin America as a reference to the common citizen. He is somewhat of an antihero, unambitious and lackadaisical, who gets caught up in everyday problems and circumstances.

Returning to the eco-aware architect's house, Rodríguez Matte engages Benja in a struggle towards masculine subjectivity as he introduces the figure of the superhero as a viable alternative to ecomasculinity. The protagonist disassociates himself from the natural as he links himself to Superman and the anti-natural, but is unable to live up to the superhuman expectations that come with wearing a red cape. At the party he encounters Montserrat, the older sister of Max (a classmate and another representation of transnational masculinity), and is seduced by her bad-girl airs as they lock themselves in a bathroom and frantically begin to remove their clothing. Though Superman never engages in animalistic and passionate sex, his virility is left unquestioned as he is able to leap buildings with a single bound and move mountains. Benjamin's sexual prowess, however, leaves much to be desired in the shadow of the man from Krypton as Montserrat takes control of the situation, domineering him into satisfying her fantasy. She performs fellatio to her own rhythm and ignores his pleas for intercourse. The decidedly lacking in superhuman-aura encounter "fue bastante rápido" (52) as Benja is unable to embody the impossible masculinity of Superman.

The protagonist is further desubjectified when Montserrat asks him to introduce a Grolsch beer bottle instead of his penis into her vagina. The choice of beer is not fortuitous, as the brewery is owned by a multinational beverage company and has been at the center of price fixing scandals with other companies such as Heineken and Bavaria between 1996 and 1999. The Grolsch bottle represents the economic interests of Connell's transnational business masculinity as it replaces Benja's flaccid phallus in impaling the woman. From an anthropomorphic standpoint the elongated neck and corked spout of the Grolsch bottle replicates the coronal sulcus and glans of the male penis, emphasizing the absence of Benja's phallus.

Cowering from the inability to satisfy Montserrat in the presence of a superhuman, neoliberal prosthetic penis, the protagonist flounders like a fish out of water as he is unable to construct a masculine identity. The attempts to resemanticize himself through nature and popular culture fail as the symbols of transnational masculinity continue to desubjectify him, both spatially, through the dissolution of the *barrio alto*, and anatomically, through the supplanting green-glass phallus. His physical body is further dematerialized in his failed emulation of a television psychic who is able to foretell the future by reading the textures and lines of his own anus.¹¹⁵ Benja's attempts, as we can well expect, fall terribly short as his stepmother spies him in a compromising posture and accuses him of being a homosexual.

After his encounter with Montserrat, Benja's life spirals out of control as he increases his alcohol and drug intake and is unable to maintain any relationship with his female and male peers. His isolation and disassociation from the social milieu of upper-class Santiago is punctuated by an overnight stay in jail and the death of Olaf. The protagonist ends his journey by accepting to be the father of Olaf's baby as he begins a relationship with the pregnant Javiera, echoing his physical and societal impotence in asserting a phallogocentric or patriarchal position.

At first glance the future is dismal and dark for Latin American masculinities that must negotiate alternative positions and/or challenge neoliberal masculinity. The trope of nature or the superhero fail, due in part to internal paradoxes of power, patriarchy and control as the male is unable to appropriate that which has so successfully subjugated others. By planting the problematic between conflicting masculinities in contemporary Latin American

¹¹⁵ The implications of the male anus recall Pedro Lemebel's *Tengo miedo torero* where the sphincter and its physiological function were contextualized within an anti-Pinochet Leftist discourse. The anus here, however, lacks the power to establish a politics of self or subjectivity in *Barrio Alto*, as it is demoted to a hysterical point of homophobia that further alienates the protagonist from society.

society, *Barrio Alto* succeeds in updating the cultural ennui experienced by Fuguet, Bayly and others in the 1990s. The writing of masculinity in Rodríguez Matte's novel, however, substantiates an alternative formation of the male body as it is coded and imagined as an object, as a piece of technology that is separated from the biological determinism of gendered bodies.

The protagonist and his friends ruminate on the symbolic analogies between personal computers and human beings, arguing that some people are like traditional hard drives in that they can store a lot of memory whereas others resemble random access memory (RAM) chips that temporarily hold information while the central processing unit (CPU) calculates and performs operative functions. It is not surprising that the protagonist imagines himself as a computer, half man and half technology, that is unable to “hablar con [su] naturaleza” (60).

The metaphor is extended in Benja's critique of transnational business masculinity as he insists that his tie-wearing, 9-5 working peers all have a “preocupación por ganar y competir. Para eso nos habían entrenado. Para eso habíamos sido programados. Aunque, claro, a todos nos entró un virus en el camino” (99). The figure of the virus advances the technical metaphor of the male body in Hernán Rodríguez Matte, but importantly places the body within a larger hypertext markup language universe where subjectivity and location are never set and defined, leading Benja to comment that “no estoy ni en el centro ni en el exterior. Quizás no estoy en ninguna parte” (24). The body is virtualized in *Barrio Alto*, beyond the simple transmogrification into a bundle of wires, silicon chips, and blinking LED lights; it is a computer in a digital age where information and business transactions are wired, deterritorialized, and instantaneous.

The protagonist recurs to a technological idea of self at the end of the novel, after the death of Olaf and the dissolution of the *barrio alto*, in a novelistic stroke evocative of Fuguet's disenchanted character reassimilating into the homosocial. But unlike Matías, Benja is not hesitant or vaguely pessimistic. He, instead, accepts the role he must take in a topographically decentered city and society, as he “se vislumbraba una oportunidad para reorganizar mi vida como un computador que se reinicia y logra reordenar todos sus archivos desde el principio” (199). The subtle optimism in being able to press the ‘reset’ button evidences Rodríguez Matte’s thesis of gender vis-à-vis the clean-cut minions of the multinationals who are taking over Latin America. Though the subject has lost his position in society and the city has shape-shifted into an unrecognizable constellation, the male body still houses the potential to discursively reimagine a future, to re-image a hard drive littered with faulty clusters and virus-infected files, to reformat the societal implications of the “robots esclavizados” who infect the arterial veins of Santiago.

The future of masculinity in Benja’s Santiago is summed-up by his association with the Fasat Alfa satellite sent into orbit by the Chilean government as a sign of modernity and welcoming the 21st century. The protagonist optimistically affirms that “en algún momento Fasat Alfa logrará cumplir una misión que cambiará para siempre el curso de la historia espacial de Chile y la gente la recordará por siempre. De algún modo, yo me siento como esa sonda espacial” (86). By pressing the ‘reset’ button and launching himself into the unmapped infinity of space, Hernán Rodríguez Matte posits an anti-apocalyptic future for Latin America, anchored in the reimagined masculinity of Benja.

Domo arigato, Mr. Roboto, or Cyborg Masculinity in Tokyo

*I'm not a robot without emotions – I'm not what you see
I'm not a hero, I'm not a savior, forget what you know
I'm just a man whose circumstances went beyond his control
Styx, "Mr. Roboto."*

If *Barrio Alto* provides a reimagining of the corporal referents to the subject, and their failure in articulating a hegemonic masculine discursive space, then what is left in understanding the position of the individual within the larger matrix of the citified globe? Working with the idea of transnationality, a series of authors both old and new are including the foreign within their 'Latin American' narratives, even as they continue to explore themes of gender, class, and identity. From Clavel to Vargas Llosa, Belli to Bolaño, writers today are more and more comfortable in narrating the disparate and exotic locales of Paris, Tokyo, and Milan in their narratives. The transposition of these local dilemmas and tropes to the global, however, does not entirely disassociate their fictions from their politico-economic spheres of genesis. Vargas Llosa's *Travesuras de la niña mala* (2006) is emblematic of this shift, as the author does not shy away from placing and critiquing Alberto Fujimori and his politics in contemporary Tokyo. The fictionalization of Japan is not accidental, yet perhaps more reflective of the increasing influence of Japanese culture in Latin America, as evidenced by Mario Bellatin's fascination with all things from the Far East. At first glance, then, Santiago Roncagliolo's *Tan cerca de la vida* (2010) follows the same trajectory as he situates his narrative in Tokyo.

Peruvian by birth but resident of Barcelona by choice, Roncagliolo's previous works have explored facets of terrorism (*Abril rojo*, 2006) and the problems of the middle class (*Pudor*, 2005) in his native Lima. The controversial *Memorias de una dama* (2009), conversely, forces his readers to go beyond the national as he narrates the memories of a lady

of the upper class in the Dominican Republic. This latter work, though spatially separated from Peru, reflects upon the effects of violence, terror and trauma in the context of collective memory and remembering, following a strategy established by Vargas Llosa in his *Trujillato*, and Iván Thays in *Un lugar llamado Oreja de perro* (2008). The use of a foreign context to talk about Peru and/or Latin America continues in *Tan cerca de la vida* as the narrative picks up the story of Max, a logistician working for the multinational company Corporación Géminis, as he arrives in a postmodern Tokyo to participate in a conference on artificial intelligence. The novel develops Max's feelings of not-belonging to the identity espoused by the multinational and his subsequent affair with Mai, a hostess at the hotel hosting the conference.

Roncagliolo's Tokyo is a carefully constructed site of disconnection and simulation. It is discursively disconnected from the global network that Rodríguez Matte alludes to by the quarantine operations at Narita airport: "Bienvenido a Tokio. Si siente algún tipo de malestar, fiebre o tos, pase a la enfermería" (9). The control enforced at entry-points into the city, which is to say a calculated reckoning of those subjects allowed within its discursive walls, suggests that the author has created a space that is not the real Tokyo, but is instead an assembled site of debate. It is a controlled, non-porous city-text that comes to life as Roncagliolo dialogues with broader questions of technology, masculinity, neocolonialism and globalization. The city of Tokyo in *Tan cerca de la vida* becomes a series of images and simulacra, as Max spies a succession of images "[que] había visto en otras ciudades, la mayoría sólo en películas: un castillo Disney, un puente de Brooklyn sobre un fondo de edificios, una Torre Eiffel. Tokio parecía infestado de réplicas, como un parque temático de las grandes ciudades" (10). The author suggests that the Tokyo we observe and read in the

novel is nothing more than a collage of other metropolis, a pastiche of the modern world that can easily be dislocated to any other global city.

Any allusions to a global space, however, are conflicted by the inclusion of characteristically Japanese vignettes that the author emphasizes to lend credibility to his simulation of Tokyo. The cemetery-like cubicles that serve as overnight hotels for overworked urbanites who miss a train to the suburbs is not science fiction, though the protagonist's surprise would suggest otherwise. Similarly, the manga-inspired café and the cat brothel where city dwellers without pets go to get their furry fix are not figments of Roncagliolo's imagination. This play between veracity and simulation, self and other, subject and object, is a repeated trope in *Tan cerca de la vida*, as emphasized by the Corporación Géminis billboards that dot the city's landscape. Showing close-up shots of frogs and other living and non-living subjects that are reflected over a clear pool with the slogan "Corporación Géminis, Tan cerca de la vida, Como dos gotas de agua" (116), the narrative proposes a consideration of reality and subjectivity that is rooted in the visual and experiential. Roncagliolo undoubtedly sparks inspiration from Hollywood projects that repeatedly depict those spaces that come together in his vision of Tokyo, but further skims off near-future, post-humanistic celluloid projects like *Blade Runner*, the *Terminator* series, and *Minority Report*, to name a few, that explore the role of the human and its identity/body.

The author's reimagining of Hollywood is not the only filmic source for *Tan cerca de la vida*, as the neo-horror scenes between Max and a mysterious girl in the hotel's elevator lend a sly wink to the Japanese horror genre that has enjoyed recent critical and financial success, particularly with Hollywood remakes of cult favorites such as *The Ring* (1998), *The Grudge* (2000), and *Dark Water* (2002). This renaissance in the Japanese horror genre is

characterized by the recurrent figure of the demonic, zombie-like child that signals a narrative continuity with a horrific and covered-up past. The inclusion of this figure in *Tan cerca de la vida* provides an authorial clue as to the true nature of Roncagliolo's protagonist, adding to the discursive separation of Max and his surroundings from a textually veracious Tokyo or identity.¹¹⁶

The development of a distinctly Japanese cinematic referent in the novel, vis-à-vis the traditional inclusion of Hollywood and/or Mexican cinema tropes and figures calls to attention the divide or binary that the author emphasizes with the visual cues and propaganda for the corporation, which is prophetically named after the Zodiac constellation represented by a set of twins, which on a symbolic level enshrine the dialectic of self that Roncagliolo attempts to decipher in the novel. Twins, as we know, are genetically identical. Their genotypes are replicas, with identical genomic expressions at all loci. There is, however, by scientific logic, a single source, which is to say that within a pair of identical twins, one is always the replica of the other. The source of origin, even within a seemingly identical sampling of identical twins, is what interests Roncagliolo's investigation into the questions of identity that espouse *Tan cerca de la vida*.

He establishes a point of entry into this quandary by juxtaposing Max to his colleagues and the larger ideal of the Géminis man put forth by the corporation and its leader, Marius Kreutz. The relationship between the individual and the company, the individual and society, is what propels the narrative forward, as Max's unrest with belonging to the carnivalesque assemblage of men, machines, and automatons establishes a diegetic point of

¹¹⁶ An exploration of the influence of popular Japanese culture in *Tan cerca de la vida* warrants critical attention. From the dream-like spaces of the manga shops to the trope of the devil-child, Roncagliolo's text is a veritable catalogue of popular Japanese culture whose study, unfortunately, falls outside the scope of these pages.

contention that permits an examination of his own identity vis-à-vis the group. The group, composed of educated, international men of all shapes, sizes, and backgrounds, is carefully depicted in the narrative, escaping the superficial characterization of transnational business masculinity that we observe in works such as Carlos Labbé's *Locuela* (2009), Ana Clavel's *Los deseos y su sombra* (2000), and Maurice Echeverría's *Diccionario esotérico* (2006) where Connell's transnational business masculinity makes a cameo appearance without any authorial emphasis placed on understanding the gender expression. Roncagliolo goes beyond diegetically confronting the businessman with subordinate masculinities and/or female bodies, instead embarking on a thorough examination of how Connell's idea of a global Masculine operates.

This contemporary idea of hegemonic masculinity as a sociological category, is conceptualized by Connell as a transnational and transcultural subject position that escapes traditional limitations of borders and cultures due to the over-arching reach of multinational business in a neoliberal and globalized age. Transnational business masculinity as a gender expression is intimately connected to the operational capabilities and characteristics of the neoliberal economy, characterized by a lack of allegiance to any particular sociocultural context and an egotistical reliance on the subject vis-à-vis other communities and their interests. Men who express this gender configuration are, therefore, concerned primarily with their own financial well being, without taking into account the negative impact their financial transactions may have on the environment, women, and local hierarchies. They view corporal bodies as marketable economic units within a global system of production. From a relational standpoint, their position subordinates local masculinities and femininities through the exportation and mechanization of jobs, and through their non-commitment to strengthen local

infrastructures and social services. Their impact from a socioeconomic perspective is harshly criticized by Connell, who views the specter of transnational business masculinity as a demonic harbinger of the subordination of all other gender expressions as we move towards a globalized 21st century.

From an aesthetic standpoint, and perhaps more pertinent to the textualities of fiction, transnational business masculinity is slick, styled, and predatory. The men that work in Corporación Géminis adhere to this mould, as they are meticulous in their grey suits and stylishly coiffed hairdos. The chief executive officer of Géminis, Kreutz, is the bastion of Connell's subject position, as he is quick to define this new breed of masculinity, this new world order that is intent on global domination, and that is very different from previous avatars of phallic power.

Kreutz, more importantly, gels together the idea of a unified transnational gender expression as he always uses the first person plural subject when talking about the corporation and its dealings, “decía *somos una familia. O nos preocupamos por usted*” (66). There is no individual or self within the position of transnational masculinity, calling to attention the paradox between the subject and the group that exists in Connell's theorization. The individual who professes this brand of hegemonic masculinity must be highly self-reliant and self-serving in his behavior, but can only attain this position of power through belonging to a larger corporation of like-minded individuals, thereby emphasizing the unviability of the position and its economic model. This paradox, however, simply adds to the critique of neoliberalism as a short-sighted plan for development that does not foster any sense of community or continuity to current systems and structures of power.

The men that populate the convention center are representative of this paradox between self and group that characterizes Connell's theorized position of power. They come from different backgrounds, countries, and cultures, but are unified by their uniforms and their adherence to rising within the power structures perpetuated by Géminis. Power within the MNC, is created and perpetuated by the executive branch that makes decisions. Therefore when Max introduces himself to his colleagues as someone who works in logistics, they ignore him and instead wonder if peripheric departments have also been included in the meeting. This is the first in a series of juxtapositions made between Max and the drones of the corporation, emphasizing Roncagliolo's questioning of the hierarchies and hegemony of transnational business masculinity.

Returning to the diegetic representations of transnational masculinity, we can see that their bodies are too subjected to the nature of neoliberal economics, as they are "etiquetados, como productos con códigos de barras" (40), like products in a global supply chain that can always be tagged, located, and accounted for. The textual detail paid to this masculinity is careful and thorough in *Tan cerca de la vida*, differentiating it from other narratives that simplistically critique the role of the businessman in contemporary Latin American societies, and its impact on other gender expressions. By creating Géminis, its workers, and Kreutz, the author textualizes the threat of transnational business masculinity, putting forth a fictive study of its systems, hierarchies, and semantics of power. This is fine and well, as from a literary standpoint, an examination of the trope is needed, but what is the greater purpose of delving into this power structure? Particularly within the Petri space that Roncagliolo quarantines, what is the narrative aim of writing the transnational businessman?

The answers to this problematic are rooted in the experiential and experimentative protagonist that infiltrates the convention on artificial intelligence from his seemingly peripheral role as a logistician that does not belong to the executive order of *Corporación Géminis*. As evidenced in his rejection by his peers, we can note that Max plays a challenger role to hegemonic masculinity. He does not occupy the categories of subordinate or complicit masculinity, but is instead involved in a textual work in progress, a narrative examination of how hegemony is constructed and what makes it tick. It is through the corporal body of Max does Roncagliolo, then, attempt a challenge to the omnipresent hegemony of Kreutz and Co.

This affront is carried out through a calculated performance of gender on the part of Max who after encountering the transnational businessmen of the company, “se dio ánimos mentalmente. Se dijo que todo era cuestión de actitud. Ensayó movimientos naturales, de hombre de mundo” (43), reflecting a Butlerian consciousness of gender.¹¹⁷ But this performance fails abruptly as his co-workers ignore his standing within the company, as his job description, and not his virility or musculature qualify him for inclusion within the homosocial, as “se dio por vencido en el propósito de codearse con sus colegas. En vez de confundirse entre ellos, trataría de apartarse de ellos” (45).

The construction of Max’s masculinity fails at performing a viable position against the hegemonic expression of gender, which Connell argues is the dilemma faced by contemporary masculinities, but Roncagliolo follows Rodríguez Matte’s cue of reimagining the male body. Unlike the new historical novels that recalibrate the anus, testes, and mouth as discursive sites of expression, Roncagliolo’s futurist narrative computerizes the male anatomy, but not through a superficial, semantic system of equivalencies between the body

¹¹⁷ We see a similar consciousness in the works of Belli, Clavel, Serna, Rivera Garza, Lemebel, and Galich, though it is hypothesized that this literary trait goes beyond the corpus of these pages.

and hardware. In *Tan cerca de la vida*, the distinction between technology and anatomy is blurred, as the narrative confuses what is robotic and what is alive and breathing within a larger matrix of how masculinities subsist under the yoke of hegemonic masculinity.

The fusions between technology and masculinity becomes a reality in the novel as the company assigned PDA (personal digital assistant) “evalúa todas sus señales vitales, incluso las físicas” (66). The handheld device becomes the new neural center of the globalized subject who is connected to other bodies through the global positioning satellite system that plots the minions of Géminis in relation to their desires, whether they be restaurants or brothels and massage parlors. When Max is feeling lonely, for example, the device pops up the following message: “sé de un lugar que ofrece compañía femenina. ¿Quieres la dirección? ¿Información sobre tarifas?” (62). A praxis of technologizing the body does not stop at the male bodies of the corporation but extends towards all spaces of the novel, punctuated by the convention center where the latest advances in artificial intelligence are paraded. Mixing in with the groups of international men in suits are a plethora of robotic projects that perform various tasks. The little boy who sings oldies is the first example of cybernetic engineering, though the designers “le habían dejado la parte posterior desnuda” (21), to emphasize the artificial nature of the singing subject who is merely a glorified jukebox in terms of the tasks it can perform.

Other robotic bodies in *Tan cerca de la vida* are not as clear cut in their adherence to either side of the binary robot/human. The domestic assistant, BIBI, for example, recognizes voices and commands and is designed to perform everyday household tasks. Kreutz summarizes what she is able to do, including “contestar el teléfono (de hecho, ella *es* el teléfono)” (26). Another robotic figure, DEV, is designed to deactivate explosive devices,

and is marketed as a global necessity for police and security forces. Kreutz notes that “él y BIBI son en este momento nuestros módulos estrella” (29). Note the genderizing of the robotic body, as the domestic, anthropomorphically svelte servant with “labios sensuales” (83) is automatically rendered female, whereas the brutish “cubo metálico con una puerta que se abría y se cerraba, como si fuese a tragarse a alguien, y un solo brazo con una pala mecánica” (27) is necessarily masculine. Commenting on the future of robotics and cybernetics, Michelle Chilcoat comments that “the obsolescence of the body also implied the loss of biological matter, traditionally viewed as the immovable or fixed material upon which to construct gender differences and inscribe male privilege” (156). But this promise, we see, is resisted from a linguistic standpoint as the robotic, non-human bodies are still categorized as male and female, based on their performative and aesthetic characteristics. The possibilities of the technological vis-à-vis gender often posit that the former provides an avenue into dislocating traditional binaries. As Claire Taylor and Thea Pitman argue, technology and cyberspace have a “contradictory position, in that [they] offer its users the opportunity to swap gender at will, but frequently the alternative gender identities chosen have recourse to gender stereotypes” (13-4). The technological and cybernetic in *Tan cerca de la vida* fulfill this evaluation of a gendered post-human existence, as the machines engineered, designed and produced by the company perpetuate the gender structures of Corporación Géminis.

Following this line of argumentation, the technological gendered bodies of BIBI and DEV do not pose a challenge to the hegemonic, but they operate instead as a rhetorical tool in the construction of Max as the true challenger to Kreutz and the corporation. Just as he is juxtaposed to the executive branch of Géminis, Max is contrasted with the automatons that

exemplify the purely robotic. While riding the elevator with one of the robots, she asks him how his day has been, to which he replies: “no dormí nada [...] Me emborraché con unos tipos que trataron de atacar a una mujer. Y luego tuve pesadillas” (82). Adhering to the categorization of non-human, thereby implying a cerebral inability to produce coherent language, the robot responds: “yo también tengo una buena mañana” (82), emphasizing the disconnect between Max and the alternative to transnational business masculinity at the convention.

Before continuing, it bears mentioning that Max’s reflections on his own behavior and performance qualifies him as robotic and repetitive in his need to categorize and organize information as part of his job, but also in his descriptions of his subjectivity, as love, for instance, “era un dato fuera de su sistema lógico. Un electron libre de su experiencia” (85). By alluding to the body as a machine, Roncagliolo seems to hint that Max is more robot than human, at least more robot than transnational masculinity, but disqualifies this postulate through the incoherent dialogism between the protagonist and the robot. By playing the character off against several positions along the masculine and robot-human binary, the narrative calls to attention the problem with conceiving the subject along a two-fold system, putting forth instead a theory of continuity that is less drastic in its separation of man from machine, and from power.

This strategy is brought to fruition in the subsequent conversation between Max and Kreutz as the former notes that BIBI, DEV, LUCI and the other examples of artificial intelligence are not very intelligent at all. Standing in front of the executive board of directors headed by Kreutz, Max affirms that LUCI is just a machine and lacks the cerebral coherence to truly be intelligent. The CEO surprisingly supports his position, exclaiming that “LUCI es

una máquina. Ése es el problema, y no hay nada que podamos hacer para solucionarlo... Por mucho que aceleremos sus movimientos, incrementemos su repertorio de frases hechas o la forremos con cuero de cero, no conseguiremos cambiar ese hecho esencial” (86). Kreutz, and by definition, the corporation’s aim is to create something more than machine, something “capaz de aprender, de adquirir todas las habilidades que le demande su entorno, de adaptarse a cualquier situación nueva y extraer de ella conclusiones para prever situaciones futuras” (88). The corporation’s intentions, however, are not to create a human but to engineer life, placing the onus on the action of programming, designing, and manufacturing gendered bodies that are enslaved to the deified position of the transnational corporation and its particular trope of masculinity.

It is at this juncture that Roncagliolo’s novelistic imagination appropriates the clichés and repeated scenarios of science fiction and Hollywood, where man and machine coalesce into a cybernetic hybrid that is neither one or the other, eliminating the binary and establishing a continuum of being that challenges the hierarchical power of the hegemonic. It takes little detective work on the part of the reader to deduce that Max is not a simple worker in the corporation as he is invited to this high-level meeting and is favored over the homosocial mass in understanding the corporation’s next move. His personal circumstances and the textual cues that point to an unresolved past and domestic situation with his wife furthermore add an aura of suspense and suspicion to his background. This is cemented by Kreutz as he notes that Max is different than “los miles de mediocres que tenemos en nómina y que se pasan la vida hinchando sus méritos para conseguir promociones” (89). The protagonist is neither robotic nor masculine (in the hegemonic sense), but is instead something else.

This other identity is the mixture of human and robot, the cyborg that Donna Haraway theorizes in her manifesto against patriarchy. The novel, however, rehashes the narrative recognition of otherness that has characterized neo-futuristic Hollywood narratives that revolve around a point of self-consciousness that establishes the subject as non-human. Akin to Arnold Schwarzenegger's character in *The Sixth Day* (2000) who realizes that he is clone of his previous self, Max realizes that his current body has been reengineered and reproduced. He used to work for a large business, but committed suicide after murdering his family and cutting out the eyes of his daughter.¹¹⁸ He is reprogrammed and regenerated just as he arrives at Tokyo airport, emphasizing the spatial separation of the narrative in the simulated space of the Japanese capital. Max's moment of unveiling or auto-subjectification occurs just as Kreutz markets the protagonist's body to a group of Japanese investors, commenting that "Max está rediseñando toda la estructura comercial de nuestra corporación. Es un trabajo que debería hacer un equipo de técnicos, ingenieros y abogados, pero él lo está realizando en solitario, ¿no es increíble?" (249). Any doubts as to Max's condition of cyborg are dispelled as Kreutz recalls the Hollywood blockbuster *The Matrix* and its imagined world of artificial intelligence and generated experiences, explaining to Max that he is now a product of the transnational corporation's engineering.

Writing Max as a cyborg body in opposition to the transnational business masculinity of his peers at Corporación Géminis posits a strategic challenge to the quandary of hegemonic masculinity in the 21st century, given Connell's emphasis placed on the overarching power of this masculinity over previous systems of control such as the military. This

¹¹⁸ The explanation of the dead girl in the elevator follows the narrative trope evidenced in the revival of Japanese horror cinema, where the demonic child is a call to the protagonist's consciousness of a past moral/legal infringement.

new incarnation of masculine power does not adhere to traditional codes or aesthetics of masculinity or phallic power, as Kreutz affirms “esto no es el ejército” (68). The cyborg as a strategy of subverting patriarchy is forwarded by Haraway who argues that “cyborgs have more to do with regeneration and are suspicious of the reproductive matrix and of most birthing [...] We require regeneration, not rebirth, and the possibilities of our reconstitution could include the utopian dream of the hope for a monstrous world without gender” (38-9). The power of the cyborg as a body lies in its unconformity with the process of reproduction that stresses the anatomic differences that give rise to a semantic, sociological, and theological system of gender. By reneging from the commitment to the duality of reproduction, the cyborg body resists the genderizing tentacles of patriarchy and can posit a theoretical paradigm for understanding the self, rooted in the blurring of boundaries and dualities.

What is important to note at this point is Haraway’s vision for the cyborg as a decentering force vis-à-vis patriarchy and its subjugation of women. The role of women and men in *Tan cerca de la vida* is not nearly as problematized or problematic as the relationship between transnational business masculinity and subordinated masculinities. Roncagliolo’s text maintains the domination of man over woman, as evidenced by the sexual relations between Max and Mai, the hostess at the convention that starts a romantic relationship with him. We learn that Mai too is a cyborg, a regenerated suicide victim who given the technological limitations of earlier models cannot speak, but instead communicates through a silent language that Max and other cyborgs understand. Sex between Max and Mai is consensual, but always violent and assertive as the male takes a dominating role over the female cybernetic body. The author is careful, however, in writing these scenes as he dabbles

between the line of rape and BDSM as he describes how Mai lets out “bocanadas de aire que podían ser tanto de placer como de sufrimiento” (178). The subservience of the female is not purely coital, as Roncagliolo’s narrative condemns the female cyborg body to an objectified position that appears sporadically in the second person register, seemingly placing the reader within the position of the dominated female. The feminine lacks narrative and narratological subjectivity in *Tan cerca de la vida*, to the extent that it is only the male cyborg that can actively stand against Kreutz’s transnational business masculinity. Therein lies Roncagliolo’s reinterpretation of the cyborg manifesto, as his foray in the blurred bodies of the non-human and non-robotic is not necessarily concerned with decentering patriarchy, but is instead a challenge to one masculinity by another.

Commenting on the cyborg figure in contemporary fiction, Geoffrey Kantaris observes that:

The Latin American cyborg seems to condense specific anxieties surrounding the dissolution of collective identities and collective memory, anxieties which connect historically to the experience of colonization on the one hand and, on the other, to the erasure of the nation as a space of collective agency and memory, an erasure which seems to be inscribed in the very mechanisms which affect the transition from nation-state to global market. (52)

The Latin American cyborg is essential, therefore, in condensing these subjective anxieties that are reactive of broader processes of change, but maintains the essential anxiety behind the crisis of masculinity produced by demographic changes in the continent. The Latin American cyborg, therefore, is not Haraway’s cyborg that potentiates the dissolution of gender, but is instead a body that, from a literary standpoint, provides a metonymic challenge to the forces of change and the structures of subjugation. The protagonist in *Tan cerca de la vida* is not a condensing of the anxieties of gender change, but is instead a symbolic coalescing of the anxiety faced by Latin American men at the mercy of transnational business

masculinity that has successfully supplanted and eviscerated traditional metaphors and positions of power.

The writing on the body here, in difference to Rodríguez Matte's technologically imagined body, is built upon the fantastic identity of the cyborg as a symbolic affront and not as a theorized reappropriation of the male anatomy. It is not preoccupied with gender democratization or the ending of patriarchal systems, but is instead focused on decentering the omniscient power of the hegemonic that other narratives take as axiomatic. Unlike the masculinities evidenced in Galich, Labbé, and Echeverría that posit a subjugated but subversive male identity to the transnational, Roncagliolo puts forth a neo-scientific commodification of the male body that refuses to follow the orders of Kreutz and the Corporación Géminis. At first glance, it seems that Roncagliolo's writing echoes the words of Taylor and Pitman who argue that "rather than aping metropolitan literary currents, [...] Latin American writers are feeling the need to think through the implications that global technologies have for the writing of the Latin American experience" (20). Upon further review, however, it is clear that the author is not preoccupied with the local or continental crisis of masculinity, but is instead scripting a transnational, non-specific text that lacks political, geographic, and linguistic markers of origin, much like the products of a neoliberal economy.

The novel ends with a confrontation between Max and Kreutz as the latter informs the protagonist of his true genesis from a harvested body that later undergoes cybernetic implantation and programming to become the corporation's latest product. Astounded, deceived, and confused, Max is informed that the cyborgs (Mai and Max, amongst others) are programmed to shut down if they cannot "vivir más consigo mismos" (312), and as a

final recourse, enter a destructive kamikaze setting that ensures their inevitable end. It is at this moment that the protagonist's non-organic yet very human masculinity confronts Kreutz's explanation, asking if the cyborgs cannot think with a mind of their own and go around the self-destructive parameter. The CEO's reply is symptomatic of an essentialist and supremacist paradigm that underscores transnational business masculinity's handling of other gender expressions, claiming that "nada puede violar su naturaleza [...] Un león no puede ser un elefante" (313).

Faced with this fatalist pre-determinism, Max's subsequent actions point towards a refusal to accept the role tendered by the hegemonic as he throws away the PDA device that previously connected his body to the global network created and controlled by Kreutz and company. He leaves the hotel where all traces of his being are erased and moves away from the cybernetic, globalized, and synthetic space of Roncagliolo's Tokyo to a deserted cemetery shrouded by cherry trees. With a suitcase in hand, both cyborgs reunite, Max the newest version and Mai, the prototype, challenging their preprogrammed nature to destroy each other. The two non-humans stand together as the snow falls and "las primeras flores de la temporada asomaban entre los copos, como bebés recién nacidos" (328), suggesting that regeneration and not reproduction is what lies ahead. The cherry trees, we must remember, flower at an exact moment every year, regenerating a visual and floral moment that defies the laws of reproduction, as they operate on a disparate timetable from fertilization, pointing towards the possibility of regeneration as a strategy of combating the hegemonic order. The meeting between Mai and Max, and their relationship, however, does not undermine or challenge heteronormative patriarchy, as men are still in control and women lack a voice of reason or protest.

The writing of the male body in *Tan cerca de la vida* is predicated on an understanding of the new order of masculinity as Latin America and the world leave behind the artificial categorizations of nation and sovereignty in the face of an economic order that crosses borders and demographics, establishing a system that promulgates a culture of wealth and accumulation at the expense of all other gendered bodies. The male body as a textual creation, however, empathizes with and strategically reappropriates the figure of the cyborg as a decentering force that melds man and machine, in a reimagining of a new Eden that posits an optimistic future for the male against transnational business masculinity.¹¹⁹

Transnational Viagraphies in Enrique Serna's *La sangre erguida*

*The problem's plain to see: too much technology
Machines to save our lives. Machines dehumanize
The time has come at last
To throw away this mask
Styx, "Mr. Roboto."*

The writing of masculinity in the 21st century is not simply a structuralist construction that engages in gender and/or political warfare. There is a broader group of writers that openly discuss issues of male sexuality and gender through a discursive focus on the body and its traditional loci of power and identification. From writers such as Giovanna Rivero, Cristina Rivera Garza, Ana Clavel, Jaime Bayly and Maurice Echeverría, there has been a steady textual production that contemplates how and why masculinity is defined. A writer at the forefront of this movement is the Mexican Enrique Serna, whose *La sangre erguida* (2010) portrays the psychological and physiological intricacies of manhood, through the

¹¹⁹ The idea of writing paradise either as escapism or as a rearticulated possibility vis-à-vis gender is not exclusive to the continuum of masculinity. Gioconda Belli embarks on a similar task in *El infinito en la palma de la mano* where she refocuses the constructs of femininity through the writing of the biblical Eden.

intricate telling of the lives of three Hispanic men irreversibly connected by the atomic bonds of $C_{22}H_{30}N_6O_4S$.

Known as an accomplished novelist, essayist, *cronista*, and journalist, Serna's earlier narratives have focused on the historical novel and the state of the arts in contemporary Mexico. The latter lies at the center of *El miedo a los animales* (1995), where through the charade of a detective novel, the author pens a harsh insider criticism of the way Mexican literature and the publishing houses work. His two recent novels written after the booming success of *El seductor de la patria* (1999) reflect a shift away from the themes of history and politics as he focuses on male sexuality and masculinities in contemporary Mexican society, reflective of much of his earlier essayistic work. In *Fruta verde* (2006), for example, he samples the bisexual experimentation of a young writer/journalist who has a relationship with a homosexual writer who mentors his career.¹²⁰ Exploring the many facets of desire, gender, and (public and private) sexuality, the novel causes a stir amongst readers accustomed to the figure of the seemingly heterosexual writer who does not shy away from hinting at certain autobiographical notes that hint at making the novel a coming-out experience for Serna.¹²¹

Continuing with an examination of not-so-comfortable topics, *La sangre erguida* (2010) narrates the lives of three men living in Barcelona, all connected by the omnipotent

¹²⁰ The novel bears some similarities to the works studied in Chapter 2. My notion of the literary O.S.T. provides a fruitful optic to study the erotics of the text. Taken from the title of a popular bolero by Luis Alcaraz, the lyrics to the bolero structure the relationship between the protagonist, Germán, and his older homosexual lover, Mauro, and his mother and her younger lover, who is the best friend of the protagonist. The title of the song, like *Tengo miedo torero*, establishes a power relationship between the lovers, as the young fruit in each relationship is held up as a forbidden delicacy that tempts the older, more mature lover who must resist the urges that direct our libidos.

¹²¹ I am aware here of the dangers of calling *Fruta verde* a novel of coming out, as the verb is plagued with intrinsic cultural problems. On the one hand, coming out is a North American idea, extraneous to many cultures where homosexual activity is not to be confused with a homosexual identity. Secondly, though the work does point towards an autobiographical tone, the relationship between author/work/protagonist is a dicey one at best, and any attempts at drawing corollaries runs up against the authorial disclaimer of fiction.

dictatorship of the penis and the impending fear and reality of its flaccid fall. In what can be considered a biography, or “viagrafia” (306) of a Mexican, Catalan and Argentine man, Serna interrelates the stories of a man subjugated by a voluptuous Dominican lounge singer, a businessman who suffers from anxiety related impotence, and a porn star who can control his penis at will to create a narrative flush with the importance of the Latin phallus in the age of globalization.¹²²

The writing of men in *La sangre erguida* evidences a separate strain of fiction that does not necessarily engage in a class or group-based mentality of writing and challenging masculinities, but is instead focused on the microwars fought by men on a daily basis to establish and perpetuate their masculinities. There is a focus on the body, specifically the penis, and its role in the subjective and textual construction of the protagonists that populate Serna’s fiction. Told through alternating chapters with a liberal use of intertexts, memoirs, and prison documentation, the novel chronicles the lives of three different, yet very similar men in turn-of-the-century Barcelona. Coming from three distinct backgrounds and circumstances, the city establishes a globalized tableau onto which their narrative trajectories are plotted amidst the hustle and bustle of multinational corporations, local *chino* stores, and the many ethnic neighborhoods that color the cityscape. It is, importantly, not a Latin American city per se that functions as the textual referent for the subjects’ gender, as seen in Clavel’s earlier novels and Fuguet’s Santiago, to name a few examples. Serna’s usage of Barcelona articulates the failure of space in establishing a paradigm or practice of gender

¹²² Serna employs tropes and strategies inspired from Hollywood productions, much like Roncagliolo in *Tan cerca de la vida*. The figure of the ghostly girl who serves as a rhetorical interlocutor to Juan Luis in the mental institution evokes the ethereal relationship between phantasm and troubled subject in M. Night Shyamalan’s *The Sixth Sense* (1999).

identification that leaves the characters in an existential cloud that problematizes their relationships with the penis and its implications on masculinity.

The traditional spaces of masculinity in *La sangre erguida*, however, exist on an operative level as the brothel, for example, appears as a space of becoming man. The Catalan character, Ferrán, repeatedly finds himself in a brothel where prostitutes bring him to orgasm through non-coital stimulation, highlighting his impotence as an obstruction towards the path of establishing a politically and economically privileged masculinity in Barcelona. The brothel, however, is a product of globalization, and is not the traditional house of prostitutes that paves the way to adulthood.¹²³ The character's visits to the brothel, furthermore, only serve to highlight his inability to sustain an erection, which underscores the narrative importance given to the penis. Ferrán suffers from psychological impotence triggered by bouts of anxiety that originate in his first sexual encounter as a teenager. Unable to achieve an erection for coitus, he satisfies himself by being successful at work and through intense masturbation sessions.

The Argentine Juan Luis has an opposite relationship with his penis, as he is able to control its blood-filled vesicles with the power of his brain. After experiencing an involuntary erection as a child when his mother was taking his temperature, he vows to never be betrayed and attains the quasi magical ability to raise his penis on command, leading to his eventual success as an actor in pornographic movies. His career, however, is intimately sabotaged by an uncooperative penis that will only rise to the touch of Laia, a woman that he

¹²³ The brothel in *La sangre erguida* shares more in common with the Americanized whorehouse in Mayra Santos-Febres's *Nuestra Señora de la noche* (2006) than Donoso's rural structure in *El lugar sin límites* (1966). The brothel as product or symbol of globalized economics signals both an entry into the homosocial and the influence of globalized gendered norms into traditional expressions of masculinity, femininity and queer identities.

serendipitously meets and falls in love with. The character's storyline highlights the position of the penis in contemporary sexuality as it is through its dominance, control, and size that men aspire to the virtual and idyllic aesthetics of global pornography.

The power of the physical phallus highlights the condition of the Mexican, Bulmaro, as he leaves behind a wife and children in Mexico City, and is subjugated to the desires and whims of Romelia, a Dominican lounge singer who brings him to Barcelona searching for her big break in show business. Their relationship inverts the traditional roles of man and woman, as it is Bulmaro who is the househusband that begrudgingly welcomes Romelia after she has a night out with Wilson Mendoza, a music producer who promises riches. Upon smelling alcohol in her breath and another man's cologne, he observes that "lo mismo hacía mi mujer cuando yo regresaba pedo de mis parrandas" (183). He is also in charge of cleaning the house and preparing food, calling to attention his assumption of traditional feminine duties. Perhaps the greatest inversion from the position of being a macho *latino* comes in the shape of his attitude towards modern women, as he characterizes them as jealous Don Juanas who jealously rein in the male gaze whilst unabashedly flirting and fornicating with a bevy of men.¹²⁴

The relationship between Bulmaro and Romelia evokes the importance of the penis in writing masculinity, as it functions as a metonymic representation of the male-gendered subject within the broader matrices of power that form the fabric of diegetic societies. His disenfranchisement and emasculation, for example, is corroborated by his flailing genital appendage as he attempts to reassert his position as penetrator in their relationship, thereby

¹²⁴ Serna mockingly disdains modern magazines that exult women to have multiple affairs and lovers, claiming that the institution of marriage is nullified and that monogamy is not an option for Mexican men in the 21st century (*Las caricaturas me hacen llorar* 19, *Giros negros* 45).

reassuming the social benefits of the male. We note how “la puso bocabajo con bruscas maneras de violador, para cogérsela como lo que era: una perra libidinosa” (190), only to be foiled by “su blandengue instrumento” (191) that refuses to be engorged. The idea of the failing penis has been rehashed by writers attempting to pen a non-hegemonic position, but its inclusion in *La sangre erguida* goes beyond a simple literary artifice of characterization. Like a plethora of writers who cite and/or write the theories of gender scholars, Serna is acutely aware of the power of the biological phallus from a textual standpoint, knowing full-well that sexual impotence is a metaphor for societal impotence.

The writer aptly and amply uses literary referents that have historically constituted gender norms in the Hispanic letters. From quotes and references to Don Juan Tenorio and Martín Fierro, he juxtaposes canonical representations of the macho with contemporary men who model their behavior on the masculine figures of literature. The Argentine Juan Luis, for example, exclaims that he must win over his lover “como los gauchos del *Martín Fierro*, que seguían luchando con un trabucazo en la espalda” (198). The relationship between literature as a means and mechanism of doing gender is reflected upon in Serna’s narrative, highlighting the connection made between the potency of the penis, or lack of, in the construction of the diegesis. Just as the writers of the new historical novels sampled in Chapter 1 focused on the discursive sites of the male body to problematize gender within debates of the nation, Serna appropriates the penis as a metaphor for writing masculinity onto the globalized and neoliberal climate of Barcelona.

The powerful/weak dialectic of the penis in the novel circumscribes the author’s understanding of masculinity in crisis. Commenting on the state of virility in contemporary Mexico, “El imán del andrógino” begins with a simple question: “¿Qué le verán las mujeres a

Leonardo Di Caprio, si es una nena?” (*Giros negros* 41). Serna picks up this question as a mode of reflecting on the increased prevalence of feminized and ambiguated masculinities that partake in the “devaluación de la virilidad en el mercado mundial de valores eróticos” (41). This “devaluación” is exemplified by the androgynous men who attain heartthrob status in contemporary popular culture in Latin America and abroad. In *Giros negros*, a collection of essays from the 1990s, he extrapolates the failing power of traditionally virile masculinity in the face of feminized and emasculated bodies that shock the Latin macho into contemplating a strategy of change. Faced with the devaluation of traditional virility, it comes as no surprise, then, that *La sangre erguida* contemplates the theme of impotence as a modern affront to traditional masculinity.

The novel is centered on the supply and demand of the erectile dysfunction drug Viagra, which caused a seismic shift in talking about male sexuality, as it became mainstream to discuss the flaccid problems of age and anxiety that were previously held at bay by public displays of machismo. The acceptance of these drugs in the Spanish-speaking world, however, did not benefit from Super Bowl advertisements or sponsored vehicles in NASCAR; impotence and its medical alleviators remain a hidden and sensitive topic in a cultural matrix where figures such as Leonardo Di Caprio cause a realignment in the aesthetics of desirable masculinity.

The theme of impotence in *La sangre erguida* is more than purely physiological, as Serna emphasizes the societal disenfranchisement of his characters through the metaphoric connotations of the noun. Men are not only sexually impotent but unable to assert themselves as lovers, husbands, and heads of the household. A prime example is the husband of Ferrán’s ex-girlfriend, Gregorio Martínez. Upon discovering that his wife is leaving him for the

sildenafil citrate popping businessman, he disappears into his studio for half an hour, only to emerge “con las mallas negras de mimo, la cara y las manos maquilladas de blanco. Se había pintado en los pómulos dos lagrimas con marcador negro, y en el pecho un corazón rojo con espinas [...] él quería [gritar] su dolor en el lenguaje que mejor domina. Hizo la pantomima de arrancarse el corazón y pisotearlo en el suelo” (256). The mime is unable to speak or act on his betrayal and emblemizes the fall of the macho Latino to a position of subservience, away from the traditional role of womanizer and head of the household. Not only is Gregorio cuckolded but also reneged of the power of speech to protest, cementing his status as a second-tiered gendered subject within the erotics of Serna’s globalized Barcelona.

Faced with the inevitability of a gender democratic future, Serna’s characters retrograde into their own bodies as they attempt to find the answers to the problematization of traditional systems of masculinity that held them to impossible and powerful standards. There is a cognitive separation between the self and the penis, the subject and its libidinal appendage, that drives the narrative forward. All three protagonists maintain extended conversations with their penises, isolating their true identities from what it forces them to do. Bulmaro, for example, comments that he no longer has free will and feels like “el último eslabón en la cadena de mando” (22). A similar separation occurs in Ferrán when he stops to ponder the mental disconnect between the penis and the mind, asking “¿por qué la voluntad puede alzar una pierna o un brazo, y en cambio no tiene control sobre el pene? [...] ¿Qué oscuro poder gobierna el mecanismo hidráulico de la erección?” (31). The separation of the subject from the penis calls to attention the importance of the body in understanding and doing gender, if we are to rely on the ideas of Judith Butler and others who emphasize that bodies do matter in concocting a theory and/or praxis of gender. Even when in drag and

usurping traditional norms of virility, the male body never loses the penis and is dictated by a separate criteria that labels a series of behaviors, appearances, and diction that we term masculine.

The penis as a physiological and discursive site is appropriated by Serna as he emphasizes its hold over male subjectivity. Though it is textually separated from Bulmaro, Ferrán, and Juan Luis, it is not a separate entity but instead a controlling force that reigns over their every move. Men in *La sangre erguida* operate under the autocratic regime of a “dictadura de la testosterona” (20) headed by a “caudillo rapado” (147) who orders their movements. It is not fortuitous that the penis is described as a caudillo that is uncompromising in its power, evoking the writing of the dictators we saw in Chapter 2. By writing the caudillo and semanticizing different sites of his anatomy writers such as Serna, Vargas Llosa, Lemebel, Ramírez and Rivera Garza are able to challenge traditional structures and hierarchies of power as societies shift in the wake of a neoliberal tsunami that indiscriminately overruns shores. The focus on the penis, however, aligns *La sangre erguida* with Vargas Llosa’s Trujillato, as though the penis is problematized and made vulnerable, it is never fully castrated from a position of hegemony. We observe its challenge and reclaimed power in the relationship between Bulmaro and Romelia as she kicks him out of their apartment after a heated argument. Out on the street and smarting from being emasculated by the domineering lounge singer, Bulmaro contemplates “hacerse respetar a la Antigua, con un par de nalgadas y una buena cogida” (146) but hesitates to follow through as he is conscious of his secondary role in the household. What follows is a debate with the little caudillo that encourages him to admit his mistake and to climb back in bed with Romelia, but Bulmaro resists, instead opting to pack his bags and leave. He undermines the dictator’s wishes and

takes the reins of subjectivity, ordering the caudillo to “baja[rse] del trono y entreg[arle] la corona” (149).

His domestic politicking has the desired effect as Romelia chases him onto the street where “le bastó forcejear con ella un momento para comprender que había bajado a rendirse” (150). Their bout of make-up sex leaves the two satisfied and fatigued, as Bulmaro lights a cigarette and comments to his penis: “te lo dije, compadre, a los dos nos conviene que me dé a respetar” (150). Though at first glance it seems that the subject has overthrown the phallic dictator, it is upon closer inspection that we realize that nothing has changed; Bulmaro is back in the household and is still the last in command, subjugated by the will of Romelia and the libido of the caudillo. He is removed from his previous position of power, afforded by patriarchy, and relegated to the role of the subservient housewife, not challenging patriarchal systems of domination or the importance of the penis in determining masculine expression.¹²⁵

The autonomous condition of the penis, from a subjective and textual position, underlines the author’s preoccupation with a crisis in masculinity that does not go unnoticed in the scenes in which the protagonists engage in coitus with their lovers. When Bulmaro has sex with Romelia, for example, “estaba tan entregado a ella que en el umbral del éxtasis perdió la noción del yo, como si Romelia fuera una usurpadora de cuerpos y se penetrara a sí misma con el pene que le había robado” (22). A similar sexual dynamic is described by Ferrán, as he notes how “dentro y fuera de su coño, logré ser al mismo tiempo actor y observador de la cópula” (73). The power of the penis as agent of penetration paradoxically relegates men to a position of voyeur, removed from the power struggles of penetration that physiologically support patriarchy.

¹²⁵ There is a system of usurpation that connects *La sangre erguida* to the caudillo-politics of *La fiesta del Chivo*, as in both the apparent coup only solidifies the phallic power of the dictator.

This is best illustrated in Serna's take on the pornography industry, as narrated through the travails of Juan Luis. After having enjoyed tremendous success in the Californian mecca of adult entertainment due to his telekinetic prowess, the Argentine now moonlights as an expensive and exclusive gigolo. The industry, he explains is built around the male erection, as he loses castings to "vergas nuevas" (44) who benefit from the modern-day advances in video editing and photo retouching. His ephemeral presence in the business is combined with an acid critique of the directors, producers and distributors of modern pornography, described as "buitres de la libido, vendedores de frustraciones al mayoreo" (116). More importantly, the digitalization and virtualization of sex has led "[al] ser humano de fin de milenio [a ser] un ente que no piensa con su cerebro ni hace el amor con su cuerpo, un minusválido emocional aplastado por las imágenes y las cosas" (*Las caricaturas me hacen llorar* 19-20). In describing his life as a gigolo, Juan Luis further demotes himself from subjectivity when he observes that his female clients "decidían cuándo querían llevárselo a la cama y cuándo lo desechaban, eran ellas quienes lo usaban para cumplir sus fantasías eróticas, mientras él perdía iniciativa y capacidad de elección" (155). It is this attitude of disenchantment that highlights the commodification of the penis as the new locus of hegemony over the male and his body. We evidence this in the comments of one of Juan Luis's customers who notes that the vibrator is "el marido ideal" (53).

This disconnect and its effects are brought to fruition in the pill-popping and Viagra-empowered character of Ferrán who assumes the schizophrenic identity of Amador Bravo: "di por muerto a Ferrán Miralles, el agachado solterón sin agallas para ligar, y adopté como

programa de vida el nombre de mi áter ego Amador Bravo” (122).¹²⁶ The autoscopic reimagining of the narrative voice evidences what happens when the little caudillo is given free reign and the male body completely loses subjectivity. Unlike the dialogue established by Bulmaro that resists complete control, Ferrán’s identity is overrun by the penile politician who assumes power.

The Catalan’s body becomes a site of converging forces that are artificially concocted by the pirated Viagra that he buys from Bulmaro. On the one hand it seems that the character metonymizes a political discourse of autocracy and the potential failings of given a single person or entity complete control. He routinely seduces and forces women to have sex with him and records them in the act, fueled by a desire of “la contemplación, no de los cuerpos que había poseído, sino de [su] propio desempeño en la cama. Narciso posmoderno, lo que más [le] fascinaba de esa pornografía casera era ver[se] de pronto con el nabo erecto cuando cam[biaron] de postura. Ellas eran un mero instrumento para glorificar [su] pene, para ceñirle la diadema de emperador y pasearlo en triunfo por las calles de Roma” (177). On the other hand, there is a sustained consciousness of the artificiality of the testosterone dictatorship, as it is only through the bootlegged Chinese pills can he experience a strong enough erection for sex. As one of many clients of Bulmaro, who markets the pills for a local storeowner, Deng, Ferrán is involved in the black market of pharmaceuticals that in itself serves as a critique of the business of healthcare that ensure large profits for multinationals that have no qualms in

¹²⁶ The autoscopic separation of Ferrán from Amador in the novel harkens to Juan Marsé’s *El amante bilingüe* (1990) where a similar process defines the neurotic condition of the protagonist who suffers a psychological break when he spies his wife with an Andalusian lover. He assumes a new personality, speaking and thinking as a Don Juan figure to reclaim a position of hegemony after being emasculated. Issues of Catalan autonomy, though not explicated in Serna’s text but do exist as an underlying layer to the space of Barcelona, is fundamental in Marsé’s incursion into the linguistic hierarchies of masculinity.

parlaying their economic might into instigating police raids on generic and contraband providers.

The sustainable erections that enable Ferrán's narrative doubling and assumption of a hegemonic sexual position are only facilitated through "el poder de la farmacopea" (71), calling to attention the engineered condition of his body that is punished with incarceration after one of the homemade videos is posted on the internet. In jail, his body demonstrates its fragility when it is discovered that the pills were simple placebos and that he was never really impotent. The artificial foundation and skeleton that sustains his erections and status as a member of hegemonic (transnational business) masculinity calls to mind the problems with neoliberal economic strategies of growth, as its tenets often only provide an appearance of progress while the majority wilts away under the duress of poverty and unemployment. His fall from economic, social and sexual dominance to being a common criminal underscores the author's warning of the times to come where globalized cities and their globalized (black) markets run the risk of sabotaging intrinsically viable systems of production and rule.

The rise to power of Ferrán, furthermore, inculcates him within Connell's hypothesized position of gender dominance in the 21st century, as he embodies the pillars of transnational business masculinity in both his appearance and behavior, particularly towards other gender expressions. With the Pakistani immigrant, Nadira, he plies her with alcohol and blues music, noting that "el primer paso en corremperla era derribar sus prejuicios contra la civilización europea" (173). His cultural and corporal colonization of the third world female is compounded by the joy he feels when sleeping with Mercé, a rich Catalan socialite who cuckolds her husband for the young, dashing Ferrán. This second relationship inscribes the economic characteristics of transnational masculinity onto the protagonist when he notes that

when kissing, her rich husband “estaba metido entre [sus] lenguas, de manera que [él] besaba también su yate, sus hoteles, su astronómica cuenta bancaria” (171). It is not only the obsession with wealth that drives Ferrán but also a need to assert himself over other men, as he “descubri[ó] que buena parte de [su] placer provenía del daño inflingido al esposo engañado” (171).

It comes through a reading of Ferrán that the writing of transnational business masculinity and other forms of hegemony in *La sangre erguida* distinguishes itself from that posed by Roncagliolo, Rodríguez Matte and others. What we have here is akin to the strategy followed by Vargas Llosa and Lemebel in the writing of their respective caudillos, as it is through the artifice of narrative interiority can the patriarch be dethroned from power. By exposing the libidinal urges and simulated potency of Ferrán, Serna succeeds in doing two things. On the one hand, he demystifies the hegemonic as a product of placebo pills that only highlight the lack of strength extant in the position. Secondly, we note that the interiority created by the narrative, and the reliance on the penis as a point of orientation, juxtaposes Ferrán to the subordinate (Bulmaro) and marginalized (Juan Luis) masculinities that populate Serna’s work.

By creating tangents and points of contact between the distinct masculinities of the protagonists, the text asserts an underlying essence of maleness that is not rooted in performativity or social constructionism, but is instead a byproduct of the physical composition of the subject. The three principal male characters are exaggerated tropes, in the sense of the virile porn star, business masculinity, and Bulmaro’s everyday Latin macho, but they are more alike than what first appears, connected by the “dictadura de testosterona” that keeps them under a common yoke. We see other signs of comparison, particularly between

Bulmaro's aspirations and Ferrán's categorized masculinity. Unsatisfied with the profits he makes from being a distributor for Deng, the Mexican vies to "independizarse de ese vampiro," and to "comer[le] el mandado, no solo en Barcelona, sino también en México, donde tendría amplias facilidades para extender sus tentáculos" (141). It is not fortuitous that Bulmaro too assumes transnational hopes of economic growth, cementing the overarching influence of how and to what extent multinationals have become an important entity in global and local affairs.

It is telling, then, that the relationship between the three men is centered around pharmaceutical aids to the common problem of impotence, inscribing onto their bodies the macro events of economic and political policy. The body becomes an important locator of their gender norms and roles, as well as the challenges faced by traditional expressions of masculinity in a globalized city, society and age. Escaping the structuralist categorization of masculinities that Roncagliolo adheres to and plays off against in *Tan cerca de la vida*, the writing of masculinities in *La sangre erguida* is predicated on the importance of the body in constructing and identifying gender. By writing, voicing, and usurping the testosterone caudillo, the author effectively undermines the façade of power associated with the phallus, creating a textual space where masculinity is problematized, though not necessarily dethroned as a hegemonic gender expression and identity.

Writing the Male Body and Questioning Masculinity

The narratives examined in these pages connect the dots among several issues that are becoming central to Latin American fiction, namely the pressures of globalization, questions

of identity and gender, and philosophies of representation. I am not making the claim that this is something new, or original in the fiction produced in the past twenty years; issues of identity are as old as the continent's extant civilizations and the influences of global cultures dates back to pre-national times with the chronicles and early essays on the New World. What differentiates these contemporary works from their earlier permutations, however, is an authorial acknowledgement and/or consciousness of the process and problems with representation that involve as a result a critical evaluation of the issues discussed.

The city that Rodríguez Matte, Roncagliolo, and Serna use as a backdrop to their stories is an active agent in defining their thought, as it is through its representation and exposed crevasses that a hermeneutics of identity can take place. What I am trying to say is that Santiago, Tokyo and Barcelona are not simple scenic details, or textual attempts at exoticism, but are instead intrinsically glued to the questions of identity, and more specifically masculinity, that the protagonists and characters negotiate. What further sets these fictions apart is a concerted effort to put to paper the implications and effects of transnational business masculinity on local and global gender expressions that are invariably affected by its homogenous yet hegemonic position. It is not a matter of writing bad guys versus good guys and having the latter castrate the oppressor, signaling a new lease on life. Instead, what we see in these fictions is a carefully considered narrativization of the macro and micro relations between men, penned to create a literary and philosophical challenge to a current and impending dictator-position that shows no sign of halting as globalization spreads its tentacles.

Whether it is through a reimagining of the male body and the existential possibility of resetting current paradigms, or through the futuristic figure of the cyborg, Latin American

writers are transposing a technological consciousness that is inscribed on their ideological positions against domineering masculinities. In a sense we are seeing the narratological expressions of the Latin America of iPods and Macintoshes, though not as commodities that are signifiers of wealth and social position; this Latin America is a place where the male body becomes a series of integrated chips, memory modules, and liquid crystal displays, reappropriating the merchandise of the transnational in an ideological struggle to maintain sovereignty.

A separate trajectory, however, highlights the physiological anatomy of the male body, calling to attention the cellular structure of bodies that do not dissipate in the face of Butlerian theologies of performativity and iteration. The curiosities that define the male body are not glossed over or relegated to a secondary tableau in favor of the performance, language, and dress of gender, but are instead present and dissected in the fictions of Enrique Serna and Ana Clavel, begging the reader to reconsider the social constructivist paradigm that underscores a substantial sum of the critical work done on masculinity and gender.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: OF TROPES AND MEN

The figure of the cyborg or cybernetic masculinity as a way of challenging the forces of a global Masculine calls to attention some of the major points of contention I explicate throughout these pages. Building on what I noted in the first chapter, where the male body and its gender expression become key components of texts that mesh the fields of history and identity, these original ways of seeing and writing the masculine force a rethinking of how gender is conceived of and utilized in contemporary fiction. The mechanized body, I want to underline, is not necessarily a questioning or queering of patriarchy, or a move to dethrone phallic power, but is instead a conscious attempt at empowering and defining masculinities against the Masculine.

By writing a cyborg male body, which in the case of Santiago Roncagliolo is an anti-Masculine masculinity, *Tan cerca de la vida* perpetuates the trend I note in contemporary fiction of engineering competing and alternative masculinities within a single text, enticing the reader to decipher and analyze the writing of gender in a way that decenters the critical practice of solely focusing on hegemonic masculinity. This is not to say that hegemonic masculinity in its socioculturally sensitive avatars is not written, as the figure of Kreutz or the caudillos in the new historical novels are alive and well. What is key, however, in understanding gender in these fictions, is the textualization of plural masculinities, creating a

market of male commodities, created in part by the commodification of the male body, reactive to the economic paradigm of end-of-century Latin America.

This market of masculinities is perhaps most evident in Rivera Garza's stereotype/countertype exercise in *Nadie me verá llorar*, or Franz Galich's *Y te dire quién eres (Mariposa traicionera)*, where competing masculine expressions are written against each other. This latter text I further find interesting in any study of contemporary masculinity in Latin America as it includes and cultivates music as a secondary plane of exploring sexuality and gender. These caveats of popular culture within contemporary texts are more than a postmodern decentering of narrative, but are instead symptomatic of the limitations of representation extent in the novel when dealing with gender. If prose cannot fully capture desire, identity, and pleasure, then lyrical registers seem to be the appropriate and logical step to take to understand and represent masculinities, particularly in the wake of the domineering machista Masculine that continues to sputter forward in Latin American societies.

The recourse to music and popular culture, including comic book artifacts and tropes, is representative of the broadening of critical debates of gender away from rhetorical and philosophical schools to a cultural studies model that ponders alternative modes of study. The shift from a center, represented by the novel, towards other areas of popular expression also highlights the spatial shifts seen in contemporary fictions and societies, as the central business/administrative district loses its phallic hold over the national imaginary and space is virtualized. If the traditional textual referent of space is disarticulated, then how can gender be textually traced? The works of several of the authors studied in these pages point towards a democratization of space as a tangential process to the (increasing) democratization of societies as women enjoy more rights and masculinity goes into "crisis." The stretching of

borders beyond the national to regional economic groupings or the incursions of multinationals into larger and smaller urban centers also highlights the challenges faced by local substrates of gender that must adapt to foreign models and Masculinities. The cyborg and technical body, as seen in the last chapter, is a textual codification of this process, as masculinity and gender can no longer be conceived in strictly localized bubbles, just as commercial systems are no longer immune to economies of scale and scope brought about by the unstoppable, voracious processes of globalization.

These strategies of writing the male body in tandem with an understanding of the plurality of gender has further developed into other tropes and approximations that are reactive to the impact and structures of neoliberal tendencies. Just as the cyborg is reflective of the role of technology, cyberspace and multinational companies slowly making inroads into local economies, the figure of the *cojo* that I mention previously succeeds in representing a local masculinity hampered and handicapped by changing and foreign powers. The figure's inherent anger and exclusion from heteronormative social circles and family structures cements its position as an outlier, as a body that somehow does not fit within the modern Latin American landscape. The *cojo* in Bayly and Sepúlveda is, importantly, not a rethinking of the potential power of masculinity, but is instead a reimagining of a local avatar that struggles with new gender expectations and social demographics. Appropriately, both writings of this model end in shame and/or death, indicating the eventual impossibility of reappropriating the antiquated model of the Latin macho.

The idea of writing a handicapped male body that fights the status quo and the new economic models that shift control from the hands of local Masculinity to a transnational board of governors is not alone in systematizing a narrative practice of gender cognizant of

the importance of male corporality. We can note a different textual strategy in the work of Hernán Rivera Letelier, where the figure of messianic masculinity provides a gendered structure to the urbanized narratives of the *salitreras*. This may seem contradictory, as the vast empty landscapes that shape his novels seems at first glance to be completely anti-urban. A closer inspection, however, reveals the opposite to be true, as the true centers of his narrative are the mining towns built as cities, metaphoric of current neoliberal influences in Santiago. It is in this urban yet non-urban space does Rivera Letelier's messianic masculinity constantly reappear, as a figure that professes hope and salvation through a return to the older ways before big business decided the fate of millions. Like the figure of the *cojo*, however, Rivera Letelier's messiahs perish (*El fantasista*, 2006), are relegated to aimlessly walking the desert (*El arte de la resurrección*, 2010), or are revealed to be minions of the earlier Masculinity of the military and the caudillo (*Canción para caminar sobre las aguas*, 2004), highlighting the futility of this approximation.

The textual process of writing a challenge to regimes of power is not complete without a mention of the roles of revolutions and revolutionaries in contemporary Latin American society. Going back to the earlier years of Leftist upheavals in Central America, to modern writings of revolution, the figure of the *revolucionario* bears mentioning as an axis around which gender systems can be balanced. In the former example, Gioconda Belli's *La mujer habitada* is a useful artifact in understanding and characterizing the figure of the revolutionary who wants to dethrone the caudillo. A contemporary writing of this trope can be found in Cristina Rivera Garza's *Nadie me verá llorar* and Pedro Lemebel's *Tengo miedo torero*, where young groups of men organize urban movements that seek to usurp the Masculine body. In both situations, the figure or trope of revolutionary masculinity is

characterized by an agile and sensual body, virile and attractive to the female and male gaze, yet carefully separated from the expectations of caudillo masculinity. They are often poorly dressed, unwashed, and sweaty, antithetical to the textual Somoza or Pinochet, yet alluringly sexy in their bad-boy image. The rough but groomed erotic body is combined with a linguistic inaptitude at the moment of formulating sentences or writing memorandums, emblematic of the control held over language, politics, and history by the homosocial Masculine. As challengers to this order, their language demonstrates a refusal to adhere to spelling and grammatical norms, planting a challenge to the powers that be in both the form and content of their manifestos. The trope of revolutionary masculinity is, however, only revolutionary in the political sense, in its stated desire to dethrone the government or the autocrat, and is in no shape or form indicative of a revolution of gender norms, as these movements succeed in perpetuating the evils of homophobia and sexism. The female protagonist in Belli's novel, for example, is made to perform domestic duties and is initially regarded as a mere housemaid to the revolutionary fighters.

The picture, however, is not as bleak as it may seem from the cursory study of these other masculinities, as there are some tropes that hold their own against local and foreign hegemonic groups. The first figure worth mentioning is that of the journalist, the pen-in-hand urban chronicler who uncovers the involvement of Masculinity in organized crime rings. The protagonist and his mentors in Alberto Fuguet's *Tinta roja* serve as a good representation of the detective that relies on words and representation to unmask the striations of power that suffocate democracy. The writer turned detective in Enrique Serna's *El miedo a los animales* (1995) also fits this concept. Aesthetically disheveled but intellectually strong and inquisitive, this mode of masculinity relies on the rewriting of history and other official

discourses as a challenge to the powers of the hegemonic. The journalist or writer, armed with the decentering power of words and fiction is able to counteract master narratives and decrees, exposing Masculinity for what it is and positing several exit strategies away from patriarchal control. It is through the linguistic and mediatic field does journalistic masculinity pose a threat to order, suggesting that the work and narratives produced by contemporary writers is a viable strategy to combat globalization and the subjugation of the local to the transnational.

A further field of inquiry lies in the study of regional representations of masculinities. Though the fictions produced in Latin America in recent years have more in common than not, the existence of local issues and paradigms cannot be ignored, no matter how much marketing editorials like Alfaguara undertake. Though the entire continent has been steeped in the common juices of neoliberalism and the subsequent corruption of governments and democracies, there are some very local conditions that do not go unperceived. The example of Central America is particularly poignant, as unlike other areas, the region has been under the auspices, tutelage and military involvement of the United States. In the wake of failed revolutions and the divorce from *gringo* protection, the masculinities in narratives by Franz Galich and Maurice Echeverría are strikingly similar in their imagining of a hell-on-earth scenario where Masculinity is no longer a tangible social referent and is instead substituted by animalistic, sociopathic, and delusional avatars that perambulate the stricken cities of Nicaragua and Guatemala with no hope in sight. Though reflective of the broader trends of materialized and marketable masculinities that I site as being intrinsic to an understanding of gender in contemporary fiction, these writers posit a masculinity that holds no aspirations of

power or structure, paving the way for an interpretation of their societies left directionless as we continue through the 21st century.

Further regional inquiries may settle in Mexico, given its proximity to the United States and the osmotic effect of sexual politics that can be seen in Luis Zapata's *El vampiro de la colonia Roma*. A cognitive exploration of sexuality in relation to identity is undertaken in a multitude of contemporary works where a reconciliation between northern and local models of gender are played out; one only has to flip through any of Ana Clavel's or Pedro Lemebel's novels to understand how important US gender theory is in their writing of masculinity and femininity. Similarly, a poetics of assimilation occurs in Puerto Rican narrative, as seen in the works of Mayra Santos-Febres, opening up a field of study that focuses solely on the existence and writing of masculinities on and about the island, as so many Puerto Rican writers today write from the United States. These approximations differ from current approaches to masculinity in these regions which have heavily relied on the system of Masculinity/Other that I argue against in the introduction.

While looking at regional or national expressions of gender, we cannot ignore the case of Argentina, the birthplace of canonical gender studies narratives such as Manuel Puig's *El beso de la mujer araña* (1976), which holds its own clues to the study of revolutionary masculinity. Akin to Chile in its experience of dictatorships and *desaparecidos*, texts such as Mariano Dupont's *Aún* (2003) presents an alternative reading of post-war male bodies that must deal with the aftershocks and shrapnel left behind by socially suffocating regimes. Written from a hospital bed, Dupont's protagonist recounts the fear and oppression engendered by judicial Masculinity and showcases, by means of a repetitive rewriting compulsion, the power of journalistic/literary masculinity to reshape official discourses.

It bears halting at this moment to mention the importance of free-market, and at times virtual economics in the carving out of textual masculinities in contemporary fiction, as the process of writing the male body is evocative of the economic changes brought about by globalization and free trade. The last text I examine in the final chapter, Enrique Serna's *La sangre erguida*, evidences the influence of global pharmaceutical companies and the competing made-in-China industries that engage in a borderless battle to ensure economic hegemony. The inclusion of Viagra as a direct interjector within questions of male impotence is not fortuitous, but an indicator of the importance of world markets in male sexuality. This is to note as Serna's novel is not the first Mexican text to openly discuss, critique, and problematize male impotence. Writing in 1992, Luis Arturo Ramos's *La casa del ahorcado* focuses on the mid-life crisis of a high-ranking government worker, Enrique Montalvo, who begins to question his marriage, sexuality, and professional ethics, just as his penis begins to disobey him.

Unlike Serna's protagonists, however, Montalvo's inability to sustain an erection is not blamed on the testosterone dictatorship of a little caudillo, but on the shriveled appendage that is compared to Lazarus from the Bible. The penis as caudillo in Serna is perhaps reflective of the popularity of the new historical/dictator novel in Latin America, which only begins to surge following *La casa del ahorcado*. What could potentially have been innovative in the novel is left unrealized as the development of the protagonist's impotence and its questioning within male sexuality and masculinity is obscured by a Nazi detective story and Montalvo's unhappiness with his son-in-law, leaving the reader unfulfilled and gasping for more, just like the women who share Montalvo's bed. Sensual metaphors aside, the text leaves untouched the topic of impotence, as the protagonist is magically cured by

agreeing to have an affair with a secretary and flee the strangling confines of an upper middle class life.

Unlike its successor, *La casa del ahorcado* writes the penis as a hapless subject to the male body, controlled by mysterious forces that are teased to the surface yet never fully uncovered. The tedious and difficult task of getting a raise out of the issue is, however, realized in Serna's thesis on masculinity, as the penis gains subjectivity by being characterized as a dictator, so much so that the suffering male becomes an object to the dictatorship, his survival connected to an usurpation of the caudillo, evocative of a multitude of social changes in 20th-century Latin America. This challenge of the corporal appendage turned subject, however, is only made possible by the drug Viagra, indicating that globalization and capitalism are intimately connected to the masculine condition of the 21st century.

What does bear mentioning in Ramos's text, however, is the textual use of the anus as a site of political abjection. The protagonist describes in vivid detail how he accidentally spies the conception of his grandchildren as he observes his daughter and her boyfriend copulating on the family's living room furniture. Shrouded in darkness and crouching in a nook in the stairwell, Montalvo is greeted by his future son-in-law's gaping anus as his daughter separates his cheeks in a moment of pleasure. The cyclopean greeting is branded in the protagonist's memory, and seems to demarcate the son-in-law's position within the family, as he promptly leaves the daughter for the United States to study law, only to return and seek a separation, underlining Ramos's political dissatisfaction with American influence in the politics of the federal district. The anus is furthermore implicated in Montalvo's reception of its offspring, as the two twins are given Russian names by their mother, as a

final dedication to the now-defunct second world. Like their defecting father, the twins and the economic model they represent are held in disdain by the protagonist as an unviable solution for the stagnancy of Mexico.

Like the anus in Lemebel and Ramírez (*Margarita, está linda la mar*), Ramos decides to test its sphincter in *La casa del ahorcado* when the protagonist begins to suffer from painful hemorrhoids, just as he begins to get involved with his colleagues in the black market business of selling used medicine bottles to pharmaceutical companies, and as he gains membership to an all-male support group named Adulterers Anonymous. Both activities signal his fall into the webs of corruption and moral infamy that Ramos writes against at the beginning of the novel, indicating that the narrative voice of Montalvo is also part of the problem. The inflamed and bleeding vascular structures that line his anal canal are a textual cue for his fall from grace, akin to Lemebel's Pinochet soiling himself through the authorial inversion of penetration, cementing the role of the anus as a discursive corporeal site.

Keeping these textual strategies of writing the male body and masculinities in contemporary Latin American fiction must be approached through a hermeneutics of gender that is open to going beyond the binary of Masculinity/Other. The time is ripe for criticism to approach texts from a masculinity studies perspective, keeping in mind how the Masculine is constructed, and deconstructed by and into masculinities, femininities, and Queerities. There needs to be a shift from the approaches undertaken to date, where masculinity is stereotyped as Masculinity, and the critical onus is placed on the Other. As these pages have studied and attempted, I argue that an approximation to current Latin American genders must be aware of the break between the hegemonic and its pluralities. That being said, a critical understanding of femininity today must be aware of the plethora of masculinities that are written and lived

as demographics and populations change under the pressures of neoliberalism. Similarly, an analysis of Queer identities requires a knowledge of how the Masculine has evolved and to what extent other masculinities now operate as individual and autonomous subjects.

And yet, these pages do not put forth a practice of gender that is centered solely on masculinity, and in no way advocate a colonizing of feminist and Queer schools of thought. There is no implicit message to forget about or nullify female and homosexual gender expressions and studies, and there is no questioning of the existence of patriarchal systems that continue to oppress gender minorities. What I am suggesting is an understanding within these other paradigms of the non-universality of Masculinity, which is to say a consciousness of the non-adherence of all male bodies to its tenets. Such a basis for criticism would open the doors for an evaluation of gender in contemporary fiction that goes beyond the traditional, dare I say, closed-spaces of feminist and Queer studies.

How would this work? In the study of Rivera Garza's texts, for example, the action of gender transgression would not solely focus on Matilda Burgos, but would also take into consideration the many male subjects that effectively bend gender and Masculinity. Instead of repeating and regurgitating the motif of the transgressive female, a holistic approach to the novel would underline all transgressive bodies, thereby setting up an understanding of how all gender norms can be surpassed and blurred, first by establishing how and to what effect these norms are created within the text. A similar shift can occur in the reception of narratives by Mayra Montero, Mayra Santos-Febres and Enrique Serna studied in these pages, as criticism can be conscious of how it at times quickly and sometimes haphazardly labels diegetic characters with North American categories of identity that are not always analogous to the narrated worlds.

These literary representations of particular types of masculinity are useful in establishing a practice of gender that seeks to decipher the structures of power within defined social systems, and are not explicit references to actual groups of men. Revolutionary, cyborg, and the other masculinities mentioned above are textualities, or textual codes and systems for approaching and (de)constructing gender norms, with the purpose of elucidating a critical study of Masculinity, as they are written vis-à-vis the hegemonic variant no matter the sociocultural context. It is through this critical approach that gender studies, and not only masculinity studies, can move forward and provide a fresh take on gender and sexuality in Latin American fiction.

WORKS CITED

- Aínsa, Fernando. *Reescribir el pasado: Historia y ficción en América Latina*. Mérida: Ediciones Otro, el Mismo, 2003.
- Aldama, Frederick Luis. *Your Brain on Latino Comics: From Gus Arriola to Los Bros Hernández*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2009.
- Álvarez Constantino, Higilio. *La magia de los comics coloniza nuestra cultura*. México: H. Álvarez Constantino, 1978.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 2006.
- Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996.
- Aridjis, Homero. *¿En quién piensas cuando haces el amor?* México, D.F.: Aguilar, 1996.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1981.
- . *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Trans. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984.
- Barrantes-Martín, Beatriz. "Transformaciones seculares en la ciudad de México: *Las batallas en el desierto* de José Emilio Pacheco." *Taller de letras* 34 (2004): 25-37.
- Bayly, Jaime. *El cojo y el loco*. Madrid: Santillana Ediciones, 2010.
- . *No se lo digas a nadie*. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1997.
- . *Y de repente, un ángel*. Barcelona: Planeta, 2005.
- Beasley, Chris. "Re-thinking Hegemonic Masculinity in a Globalizing World." Ana Marta González and Victor J. Seidler, eds. *Gender Identities in a Globalized World*. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2008. 167-94.
- Becerra, Luzma. "Otra forma de estar en el mundo: Sobre *Los deseos y su sombra* de Ana Clavel." Jorge Chen Sam y Isela Chiu-Olivares, eds. *De márgenes y adiciones: Novelistas latinoamericanas de los 90*. San José, Costa Rica: Perro Azul, 2004. 369-91.
- Bellatin, Mario. *Salón de belleza*. Barcelona: Tusquets Editores, 2000.
- . "Underwood portátil: Modelo 1915." Cristina Rivera Garza, ed. *La novela según los*

- novelistas*. México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2007. 159-78.
- Belli, Gioconda. *El infinito en la palma de la mano*. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2008.
- . *El pergamino de la seducción*. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2005.
- . *La mujer habitada*. Managua: Editorial Vanguardia, 1988.
- Bencoma, Anadeli. *Voces y voceros de la megalópolis: la crónica periodístico-literaria en México*. Madrid: Iberoamericana; Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 2002.
- Biddle, Ian and Vanessa Knights. "Introduction." Ian Biddle and Vanessa Knights, eds. *Music, National Identity and the Politics of Location: Between the Global and the Local*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007. 1-18.
- Bonta, Mark and John Protevi. *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Guide and Glossary*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2004.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. New York: Columbia UP, 1993.
- Brown, Neville. *The Geography of Human Conflict: Approaches to Survival*. Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2009.
- Bruce, Jorge. *Nos habíamos choleado tanto: Psicoanálisis y racismo*. Lima: Universidad de San Martín de Porres, Escuela Profesional de Psicología, 2007.
- Bryce Echenique, Alfredo. *El huerto de mi amada*. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 2003.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Campbell, Bruce. *¡Viva la historieta!: Mexican Comics, NAFTA, and the Politics of Globalization*. Jackson: U of Mississippi P, 2009.
- Candelaria, Cordelia. "Letting *La Llorona* Go, or, Re/reading History's 'Tender Mercies'." Manuel de Jesús Hernández-Gutiérrez and David William Foster, eds. *Literatura Chicana, 1965-1995: An Anthology in Spanish, English, and Caló*. New York: Garland Pub, 1997. 93-100.
- Carneiro, Sarissa. "La (pos)moderna Tenochtitlan: notas sobre la ciudad en *Materia dispuesta* de Juan Villoro." *Revista Iberoamericana* 73.218 (2007): 69-77.
- Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996.

- Castells, Manuel. *The City and the Grass Roots*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1983.
- Castillo, Debra. "Anna's Extreme Makeover: Revisiting Tolstoy in *Karenina Express*." Anne Lambright and Elisabeth Guerrero, eds. *Unfolding the City: Women Write the City in Latin America*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2007.
- Castro Ricalde, Maricruz. "Nadie me verá llorar de Cristina Rivera Garza: Cuestionando el proyecto de nación." *Revista de Literatura Mexicana Contemporánea* 26 (2005): 1006-12.
- Chambers, Iain. *Border Dialogues: Journeys in Postmodernity*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Chilcoat, Michelle. "Brain Sex, Cyberpunk Cinema, Feminism, and the Dis/Location of Heterosexuality." *NWSA Journal* 16.2 (2004): 156-76.
- Clark D'Lugo, Carol. "Armando Ramírez's *Pu or Violación en Polanco*: Looking at Race and Revenge in Modern Mexico." *Chasqui: Revista de Literatura Latinoamericana* 30.2 (2001): 53-64.
- Clavel, Ana. *Cuerpo naufrago*. México, D.F.: Alfaguara, 2005.
- . *Las violetas son flores del deseo*. México, D.F.: Alfaguara, 2007.
- . *Los deseos y su sombra*. México, D.F.: Alfaguara, 2000.
- Colomina-Garrigós, Lola. *La nueva novela latinoamericana del dictador. Un estudio de la autoridad discursiva*. Diss. Michigan State University, 2003. Ann Arbor: UMI, 2003.
- Connell, Raewyn. *Masculinities*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1995.
- . *The Men and the Boys*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.
- Connell, Robert. "El imperialismo y el cuerpo de los hombres". Teresa Valdés, José Olavarría, eds. *Masculinidades y equidad de género en América Latina*. Santiago, Chile: FLACSO-Chile, 1998. 76-89.
- Connell, R.W. and Julian Wood. "Globalization and Business Masculinities." *Men and Masculinities* 7 (2005): 347-64.
- Cortez, Beatriz. "La producción musical en Centroamérica." *Istmo: Revista Virtual de Estudios Literarios y Culturales Centroamericanos* 17 (2008). Web. 11 Sep. 2010.
- Cruz-Malavé, Arnaldo. "Toward an Art of Transvestism: Colonialism and Homosexuality in Puerto Rican Literature." Emilie Bergmann and Paul Julian Smith, eds. *Entiendes?: Queer Readings, Hispanic Writings*. Durham: Duke UP, 1995. 137-67.

- Cuadra, Álvaro. *De la ciudad letrada a la ciudad virtual*. Chile: LOM Ediciones, 2003.
- da Cunha-Giabbai, Gloria. "Ecofemenismo latinoamericano". *Letras Femeninas* 22.1 (1996): 51-63.
- Day, Stuart. *Staging Politics in Mexico: The Road to Neoliberalism*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2004.
- Davison, Annette. *Hollywood Theory, Non-Hollywood Practice: Cinema Soundtracks in the 1980s and 1990s*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. London: Athlone Press, 1998.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *La lógica del sentido* [1969] Miguel Morey, trad. Barcelona: Piados Ibérica, 1989.
- Díaz Cruz, Rodrigo. "La huella del cuerpo. Tecnociencia, máquinas y el cuerpo fragmentado". *Tópicos del Seminario* 16 (2006): 145-70.
- Domenella, Ana Rosa. "Tres cuentistas 'neofantásticas'." Alfredo Pavón, ed. *Cuento y figura (la ficción en México)*. México: Universidad Autónoma de Tlaxcala, Serie Destino Arbitratío, 1999. 351-75.
- Domínguez-Ruvalcaba, Héctor. *Modernity and the Nation in Mexican Representations of Masculinity: from Sensuality to Bloodshed*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Donoso, José. *El lugar sin límites*. México: Alfaguara, 2005.
- Dorfman, Ariel. *The Empire's Old Clothes: What the Lone Ranger, Babar, and Other Innocent Heroes do to our Minds*. Durham: Duke UP, 2010.
- Echeverría, Esteban. *La cautiva*. Salamanca: Ediciones Almar, 2000.
- . *El matadero, ensayos estéticos y prosa varia*. Hanover, NH: Ediciones del Norte, 1992.
- Echeverría, Maurice. *Diccionario Esotérico*. Guatemala: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2006.
- Estrada, Oswaldo. "Against Representation: Women's Writing in Contemporary Mexico." *Hispanófila* 157 (2009): 63-78.
- . "Desplazamientos políticos del discurso sentimental en Travesuras de la niña mala de Mario Vargas Llosa." Pol Popovic Karic, Fidel Chávez Pérez, eds. *Mario Vargas Llosa: Perspectivas críticas, ensayos inéditos*. México: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 2010. 149-80.

- Fernández L'Hoeste, Héctor and Juan Poblete. *Redrawing the Nation: National Identity in Latin/o American Comics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Ferreira, César. "La palabra de Alfredo Bryce Echenique." *Letras* 78 (2007): 75-88.
- Fleites, Alex. "Canta lo sentimental, o la importancia de escuchar boleros entre los 3 y los 100 años." *Latin American Studies Association*. University of Pittsburgh. 18 Oct. 2010. Web.
- Foley, Andrew. "Power, Will and Freedom: Mario Vargas Llosa's *The Feast of the Goat*." *Journal of Literary Studies* 24 (2008): 1-31.
- Forgues, Roland. *Mario Vargas Llosa. Ética y creación*. Paris: Éditions Mare et Martin, 2006.
- Foster, David William. *From Mafalda to Los Supermachos: Latin American Graphic Humor as Popular Culture*. Boulder: L. Rienner, 1989.
- Foucault, Michel. *Of Other Spaces [1967], Heterotopias*. Web. 11 Sep. 2010.
- . *The History of Sexuality*. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.
- Fuguet, Alberto. *Las películas de mi vida*. Chile: Aguilar Chilena de Ediciones S.A., 2003.
- . *Mala onda*. Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1991.
- . *Por favor, rebobinar*. Buenos Aires: Alfaguara, 1998.
- . *Tinta roja*. Santiago: Alfaguara, 1997.
- Fuguet, Alberto and Sergio Gómez. "Presentación." Alberto Fuguet and Sergio Gómez, eds. *McOndo*. Barcelona: Grijalbo Mondadori, 1996.
- Fuller, Norma. "La constitución social de la identidad de género entre varones urbanos del Perú". Teresa Valdés, José Olavarría, eds. *Masculinidades y equidad de género en América Latina*. Santiago, Chile: FLACSO-Chile, 1998. 56-68.
- Galich, Franz. *Managua Salsa City (¡Devórame otra vez!)*. El Dorado, Panamá: Editorial Géminis, 2000.
- . "Tanda de sueños, visiones y ficciones." *Istmo: Revista Virtual de Estudios Literarios y Culturales Centroamericanos* 5 (2001). Web. 11 Sep. 2010.
- . *Y te diré quién eres (Mariposa traicionera)*. Managua: Anamá Ediciones, 2006.

- Galván, Delia. "El barrio residual en la narrativa de Armando Ramírez." *Revista de Literatura Mexicana Contemporánea* 1.5 (1997): 69-75.
- García-Calderón, Myrna. "La última noche que pasé contigo y el discurso erótico caribeño." *South Eastern Latin Americanist* 38 (1994): 26-34.
- García Canclini, Nestor. *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1995.
- Griffin, Susan. *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her*. New York: Harper and Row, 1978.
- Halperin, David. *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*. New York: Oxford UP, 1995.
- Haraway, Donna. *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Hellman, Judith Adler. *Mexico in Crisis*. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1983.
- Henighan, Stephen. "Nuevas versiones de lo femenino en La fiesta del Chivo, El paraíso en la otra esquina y Travesuras de la niña mala." *Hispanic Review* 77.3 (2009): 369-88.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Adaptation*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Irwin, Robert Mckee. "La modernidad es un prostíbulo." Nora Pasternac, ed. *Territorio de escritura: Narrativa mexicana del fin de siglo*. México: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 2005. 71-82.
- Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978.
- Jaggi, Maya. "Fiction and Hyper-Reality." *Mail and Guardian* Mar 22-29 2002: 30-31.
- Jameson, Fredric. *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998*. London: Verso, 1998.
- . *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1991.
- Kandell, Jonathan. "Mexico's Megalopolis." G.M. Joseph and Mark Szuchman, eds. *I Saw a City Invincible: Urban Portraits of Latin America*. Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1996. 181-201.
- Kantaris, Geoffrey. "Cyborgs, Cities, and Celluloid: Memory Machines in Two Latin American Cyborg Films." Claire Taylor and Thea Pitman, eds. *Latin American Cyberculture and Cyberliterature*. Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2004: 50-69.

- Kirby, Kathleen. "Re:Mapping Subjectivity: Cartographic Vision and the Limits of Politics." Nancy Duncan, ed. *Body Space: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Knight, Arthur and Pamela Robertson Wojcik. "Overture." Arthur Knight and Pamela Robertson Wojcik, eds. *Soundtrack Available: Essays on Film and Popular Music*. Durham: Duke UP, 2001. 1-18.
- Kokotovic, Misha. "Neoliberal Noir: Contemporary Central American Crime Fiction as Social Criticism." *Clues: A Journal of Detection* 24.3 (2006): 15-29.
- Köllman, Sabine. *Vargas Llosa's Fiction and the Demon of Politics*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2002.
- LaCapra, Dominick. *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994.
- Lauer, Robert. "El (homo)erotismo musical en la narrativa caribeña de Mayra Montero: *Púrpura profunda*." *Chasqui: Revista de Literatura Latinoamericana* 34.1 (2005): 42-50.
- . "La representación del deseo masculino en *La última noche que pasé contigo* de Mayra Montero." *Entorno* 43 (1997): 45-8.
- Lavery, Jane Elizabeth. "Beyond the Shadow of Solitude: Self, Desire, and (Dis)embodiment in Ana Clavel's *Los deseos y su sombra*." *Modern Language Review* 102.4 (2007): 1053-68.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *Writings on the Cities*. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, trans. and eds. London: Blackwell, 1996.
- Lefere, Robin. "La fiesta del Chivo, ¿mentira verdadera?" *Actas del XIV Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas*. Newark, Delaware: Juan de la Cuesta, 2001. 331-38.
- Lemebel, Pedro. *La esquina es mi corazón*. Chile: Seix Barral, 2004.
- . *Tengo miedo torero*. Santiago: Editorial Planeta Chilena, 2001.
- . Interview. *FILBA*. 2008. Web. 11 Sep. 2010.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude. *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1966.
- López, Irma. "La última noche que pasé contigo: El crucero del placer y los excesos dionisiacos." *Latin American Literary Review* 33.6 (2005): 133-44.

- López Morales, Berta. "Tengo miedo torero, de Pedro Lemebel: Ruptura y testimonio." *Estudios Filológicos* 40 (2005): 121-9.
- Macías Rodríguez, Claudia y Jung-Euy Hong. "Desde México para Corea: entrevista a Cristina Rivera Garza." *Espacio Latino*. N.p., Jun. 2006. Web. 14 Mar. 2010.
- Mansilla, Margarita. *Karenina Express*. Mexico City: UNAM, 1995
- Martínez Sánchez, Carlos. "Managua Salsa City ¡Devórame otra vez!" *El Nuevo Diario* 17 Jan. 2001. Web. 11 Sep. 2010.
- McFarlane, Brian. "Novel to Film." Leo Braudy and Marsha Cohen, eds. *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. New York: Oxford UP, 2009.
- Melgar Bao, Ricardo. "Entre lo sucio y lo bajo: identidades subalternas y resistencia cultural en América Latina." Jorge Turner Morales, ed. *Tradicón y emancipación cultural en América Latina*. México: Siglo XXI Editores, 2005. 30-56.
- Menton, Seymour. *Latin America's New Historical Novel*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1993.
- Metz, Christian. *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema*. New York: Oxford UP, 1974.
- Misael Hernández, Oscar. "Estudios sobre masculinidades." *Revista de Antropología Experimental* 8 (2008): 67-73.
- Montecino, Sonia. *Madres y huachos. Alegorías del mestizaje chileno*. Santiago: Ediciones CEDEM-Cuarto Propio, 1991.
- Montero, Mayra. *La última noche que pasé contigo*. Barcelona: Tusquets Editores, 2001.
- Montoya Juárez, Jesús and Ángel Esteban, eds. *Entre lo local y lo global: la narrativa latinoamericana en el cambio de siglo, 1990-2006*. Madrid: Iberoamericana; Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 2008.
- Mosse, George. *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*. New York: Oxford UP, 1996.
- Murphy, Patrick. *Literature, Nature, and Other: Econfeminist Critiques*. Albany: SUNY P, 1995.
- Noguerol, Francisca. "Narrar sin fronteras." Jesús Montoya Juárez y Ángel Esteban, eds. *Entre lo local y lo global: La narrativa latinoamericana en el cambio de siglo (1990-2006)*. Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2008. 19-34.
- Novoa, Loreto. "Lemebel se ríe del Sida: es la defensa de los homosexuales." Interview with

- Pedro Lemebel. *La Epoca* 25 (1996). Web
- Ochoa Santos, Miguel Gabriel. "Cuerpo, dominio y escritura: La fiesta del Chivo." Pol Popovic Karic, Fidel Chávez Pérez, eds. *Mario Vargas Llosa: Perspectivas críticas, ensayos inéditos*. México: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 2010. 211-46.
- O'Flynn, John. "National Identity and Music in Transition: Issues of Authenticity in a Global Setting." Ian Biddle and Vanessa Knights, eds. *Music, National Identity and the Politics of Location: Between the Global and the Local*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007. 19-38.
- Olavarría, José. "Hombres e identidad de género: Algunos elementos sobre los recursos de poder y violencia masculina". G. Careaga, S. Cruz Sierra, eds. *Debates sobre masculinidades: Poder, desarrollo, políticas públicas y ciudadanía*. México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma, 2007. 115-30.
- . "La investigación sobre masculinidades en América Latina". J. Toro-Alfonso, ed. *Lo masculino en evidencia: Investigaciones sobre la masculinidad*. Puerto Rico: Publicaciones Puertorriqueñas: Facultad Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2009. 315-44.
- Oropesa, Salvador A. "Popular Culture and Gender/Genre Construction in Mexican Bolero by Ángeles Mastretta." David William Foster and Roberto Reis, eds. *Bodies and Biases: Sexualities in Hispanic Cultures and Literatures*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996. 137-64.
- Ortego, Julio. "Bryce Echenique y los tiempos de la escritura." *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos, U.P.R.* 30.1 (2003): 231-45.
- Pacheco, Carlos. *Narrativa de la dictadura y crítica literaria*. Caracas: Centro de Estudios Rómulo Gallegos, 1987.
- Pacheco, José Emilio. *Las batallas en el desierto*. México, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1981.
- . *Ciudad de la memoria: poemas 1986-1989*. México, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1989.
- . *Miro la tierra: poemas 1983-1986*. México, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1986.
- Pacini Hernández, Deborah, Héctor Fernández L'Hoeste and Eric Zolov. "Mapping Rock Music Cultures Across the Americas." Deborah Pacini Hernández, Héctor Fernández L'Hoeste and Eric Zolov, eds. *Rockin' las Américas: The Global Politics of Rock in Latin/o America*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 2004. 1-21.
- Palaversich, Diana. "The Wounded Body of Proletarian Homosexuality in Pedro Lemebel's Loco afán." *Latin American Perspectives* 29 (2002): 99-118.

- . *De Macondo a McOndo: senderos de la postmodernidad latinoamericana*. México, D.F.: Plaza y Valdes, 2005.
- Parsons, Deborah L. *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City, and Modernity*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.
- Payne, Judith. *Ambiguity and Gender in the New Novel of Brazil and Spanish America: A Comparative Assessment*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1993.
- Paz, Octavio. *El laberinto de la soledad*. Madrid: Cátedra, 2007.
- Piedra, José. "Nationalizing Sissies." Emilie Bergmann and Paul Julian Smith, eds. *Entiendes?: Queer Readings, Hispanic Writings*. Durham: Duke UP, 1995. 370-409.
- Plata Ramírez, Enrique. "El Caribe cuenta y canta. Transversalidades del discurso narrativo y el discurso musical." *Voz y Escritura. Revista de Estudios Literarios* 16 (2008): 53-65.
- Polit Dueñas, Gabriela. *Cosas de hombres: escritores y caudillos en la literatura latinoamericana del siglo XX*. Argentina: Beatriz Viterbo Editora, 2008.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. "Globalización, desmodernización y el retorno de los monstrous." Ramón Pajuelo y Pablo Sandovla, eds. *Globalización y diversidad cultural: Una Mirada desde América Latina*. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2004. 399-415.
- Puig, Manuel. *El beso de la mujer araña*. Buenos Aires: Compañía Editora Espasa Calpe Argentina, 1993.
- Rivero, Alicia. "Ecocide in Paradise: The Turn of the Century in Fuentes's 'Las Dos Américas'." *Latin American Literary Review* 32.63 (2004): 5-23.
- Rodríguez Matte, Hernán. *Barrio Alto*. Santiago: Alfaguara, 2004.
- Rosario-Vélez, Jorge. "Somos un sueño imposible: ¿Clandestinidad sexual del bolero en *La última noche que pasé contigo* de Mayra Montero?" *Revista Iberoamericana* 68 (2002): 67-77.
- Quiroga, José. "Fleshing out Virgilio Piñera from the Cuban Closet." Emilie Bergmann and Paul Julian Smith, eds. *Entiendes?: Queer Readings, Hispanic Writings*. Durham: Duke UP, 1995. 168-80.
- Rama, Ángel. *La ciudad letrada*. Hanover, NH: Ediciones del norte, 1984.
- Ramírez, Armando. *Chin Chin el teporocho*. México: Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo, 1986.

- . *Pu*. México: Océano, 2003.
- . *Tepito*. México: Terra Nova, 1983.
- Ramírez, Sergio. *Margarita, está linda la mar*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 1998.
- Rivera Garza, Cristina. *La cresta de Ilión*. México: Tusquets, 2002.
- . *La muerte me da*. México: Tusquets, 2007.
- . *Nadie me verá llorar*. México: Tusquets, 1999.
- Rivera Letelier, Hernán. *El arte de la resurrección*. México, D.F.: Alfaguara, 2010.
- . *Canción para caminar sobre las aguas*. Santiago de Chile: Editorial Planeta Chilena, 2004.
- . *La contadora de películas*. Santiago de Chile: Aguilar Chilena de Ediciones, 2009.
- Rojas-Trempe, Lady. "Violencia político-sexual del Estado, trauma y la historia de una víctima en La fiesta del Chivo". Roland Furgues, ed. *Mario Vargas Llosa: Escritor, ensayista, ciudadano y político*. Lima: Editorial Minerva, 2001. 537-52.
- Rubin, Gayle. "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex." Rayna R. Reiter, ed. *Toward an Anthropology of Women*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975. 157-210.
- Ruffinelli, Jorge. "Ni a tontas ni a locas: La narrativa de Cristina Rivera Garza." *Nuevo Texto Crítico* 41-42 (2008): 33-41.
- Ruz, Robert. "Queer Theory and Peruvian Narrative of the 1990s: the Mass Cultural Phenomenon of Jaime Bayly." *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 12.1 (2003): 19-36.
- Salvador, Álvaro. "Novelas como boleros, boleros como novelas: una lectura de *Arráncame la vida*." *Anales de Literatura Hispanoamericana* 28 (1999): 1171-90.
- Sánchez Prado, Ignacio, Ed. *América Latina en la "literatura mundial"*. Pittsburgh, PA: Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana, Universidad de Pittsburgh, 2006.
- Santos-Febres, Mayra. *Sirena Selena vestida de pena*. Barcelona: Mondadori, 2000.
- . *Nuestra Señora de la noche*. Madrid: Espasa, 2006.
- Sarmiento, Domingo Faustino. *Facundo: civilización y barbarie*. Madrid: Cátedra, 1990.

- Sassen, Saskia. *Globalization and Its Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money*. New York: New Press, 1998.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. New York: Columbia UP, 1985.
- Sepúlveda, Alfredo. *Las muchachas secretas*. Santiago: Planeta, 2004.
- Serna, Enrique. *Fruta verde*. México, D.F.: Editorial Planeta Mexicana, 2006.
- . *Giros negros*. México D.F.: Cal y Arena, 2008.
- . *Las caricaturas me hacen llorar*. México, D.F.: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, 1996.
- . *La sangre erguida*. México D.F.: Editorial Planeta Mexicana, 2010.
- Simonovis, Leonora. "La casa de la laguna de Rosario Ferré: Verdad histórica frente a verdad literaria." *Actual* 55-56 (2005): 11-21.
- Soja, Edward W. *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000.
- . *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. London: Verso, 1989.
- Starhawk. "Power, Authority and Mystery: Ecofeminism and Earth-based Spirituality." Irene Diamond and Gloria Fernan Orenstein, eds. *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Book, 1990.
- Stavans, Ilan. "The Latin Phallus." *Transitions* 65 (1995): 48-68.
- Taylor, Claire and Thea Pitman. *Latin American Cyberculture and Cyberliterature*. Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2008.
- Toro-Alfonso, José. "La investigación sobre masculinidades". J. Toro-Alfonso, ed. *Lo masculino en evidencia: Investigaciones sobre la masculinidad*. Puerto Rico: Publicaciones Puertorriqueñas: Facultad Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2009. 13-33.
- . *Masculinidades subordinadas: Investigaciones hacia la transformación del género*. Hato Rey, PR: Publicaciones Puertorriqueñas, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2008.
- Torres, Vicente Francisco. *La novela bolero latinoamericana*. México: Coordinación de Difusión Cultural, Dirección de Literatura UNAM, 1998.
- . "Armando Ramírez: la reivindicación del barrio." *Esta narrativa mexicana: ensayos y*

- entrevistas*. México, D.F.: Leega, 1991. 49-69.
- Ugarte, Elizabeth. "El lenguaje y la realidad social de *Managua, Salsa City*." *Istmo: Revista Virtual de Estudios Literarios y Culturales Centroamericanos* 3 (2001). Web. 11 Sep. 2010.
- Urbina, Nicasio. "Violencia y estructura en Margarita, está linda la mar de Sergio Ramírez." *Revista Iberoamericana* 207 (2004): 359-70.
- Valle, Sonia. "Ramificaciones caribeñas de la subjetividad lesbiana: Una lectura no-heterosexual de *La última noche que pasé contigo* de Mayra Montero." *Revista Iberoamericana* 74 (2008): 1099-116.
- Vargas, Margarita. "Mexican Romanticism." David William Foster, ed. *Mexican Literature: A History*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1994.
- Vargas Llosa, Mario. *Cartas a un joven novelista*. México, D.F.: Ariel/Planeta, 1997.
- . *La fiesta del Chivo*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 2000.
- . *Travesuras de la niña mala*. Lima: Alfaguara, 2006.
- Villoro, Juan. *El Olvido: Un itinerario urbano*. México D.F.: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 2009.
- . *Materia dispuesta*. México D.F.: Alfaguara, 1996.
- Viveros, Mara. "Quebradores y cumplidores: Biografías diversas de la masculinidad". Teresa Valdés, José Olavarría, eds. *Masculinidades y equidad de género en América Latina*. Santiago, Chile: FLACSO-Chile, 1998. 36-55.
- Waxer, Lise. *Situating Salsa: Global Markets and Local Meaning in Latin Popular Music*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Williams, Gareth. *The Otherside of the Popular: Neoliberalism and Subalternity in Latin America*. Durham: Duke UP, 2002.
- Winterson, Jeanette. "The Erotics of Risk." Carolyn Allen, ed. *Following Djuna: Women Lovers and the Erotics of Loss*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1996.
- Zapata, Luis. *Las aventuras, desaventuras y sueños de Adonis García: el vampiro de la Colonia Roma*. México: Editorial Grijalbo, 1979.
- . *Hasta en las mejores familias*. México: Organización Editorial Novaro, 1975.
- . *La hermana secreta de Angélica María*. México, D.F.: Cal y Arena, 1989.

Zavala, Iris. "Con la música por dentro. La transculturación, la tropología y el enigma."
Intersecciones 74-75 (2008): 11-32.