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## The Post-Boom in Spanish American Fiction

### Abstract

The article discusses the dating of the beginning of the Post-Boom, the factors involved in discussing it, and lists possible representative writers belonging to it. The views of Skármeta, Allende and others are reported and a list of possible Post-Boom characteristics is suggested. It is argued that there are difficulties in the way of relating the Post-Boom easily to Postmodernism, but that the notion of Post-colonialism may prove helpful in future criticism.

### Keywords

Post-boom, Skármeta, Allende, postmodernism, post-colonialism

## The Post-Boom in Spanish American Fiction

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Any attempt to discuss the Post-Boom in Spanish American fiction must attempt to deal with four questions:

1. Can we postulate some general characteristics of the Post-Boom? In other words, what does the term mean?
2. Can we, as yet, say anything useful about periodization? In other words, when did the Post-Boom begin?
3. Can we name a suitable group of representative Post-Boom novelists? In other words, who are the Post-Boomers?
4. Can we relate the Post-Boom convincingly to Postmodernism? In other words, where does the Post-Boom fit?

Questions 1 and 2 can be answered fairly briefly, if somewhat arbitrarily. We can agree with Elzbieta Sklodowska that the Post-Boom began in the mid-1970s (ix). A suitable date might be 1975, that of the publication of Antonio Skármeta's first novel, *Soñé que la nieve ardía*, which is about the collapse of the left wing Allende government in Chile. Just as the great decade of the Boom was the sixties, so the great decade of the Post-Boom appears to be the eighties, beginning in 1982 with the runaway success of Isabel Allende's *La Casa de los Espíritus* and including a number of works that indicate the adoption of a Post-Boom stance by older Boom authors such as José Donoso, who weighed in early with *La misteriosa desaparición de la marquesita de Loria* in 1980, the lesser-known but very representative Carlos Martínez Moreno of Uruguay with *El color que el infierno me escondiera* (1981), Gabriel García Márquez himself, with *El amor en los tiempos del cólera* (1985), and Mario Vargas Llosa with *¿Quién mató a Palomino Molero?* (1986). Just as a number of Boom novelists were active before

the sixties, so a number of Post-Boom novelists were active before 1975. The question is not when they began to publish, but when they began to emerge recognizably as a group whose work illustrated a definite shift of outlook and technique.

As to representative writers: Skármeta who does not readily accept the term Post-Boom, mentions in addition to fellow Chileans like Ariel Dorfman: José Agustín, Gustavo Sáinz and Jorge Aguilar Mora from Mexico, Luis Rafael Sánchez (Puerto Rico), Manuel Puig and Eduardo Gudiño Kieffer (Argentina), Reinaldo Arenas and Miguel Barnet (Cuba), Oscar Collazos (Colombia) and Sergio Ramírez (Nicaragua) ("Al fin" 139). Ricardo Piglia mentions his fellow Argentines Juan José Saer and Puig, Skármeta, Dorfman, Rafael Humberto Moreno-Durán (Colombia), Agustín, Sáinz and José Emilio Pacheco (Mexico) (Viereck 131). We must, of course, add Mempo Giardinelli (Argentina), and most importantly the new group of women novelists including Isabel Allende (Chile), Luisa Valenzuela (Argentina), Elena Poniatowska (Mexico) and sundry others. It is with the Post-Boom that women novelists in Spanish America really come into their own.

So far, so good. But the real task is to try to outline some of the main characteristics of the Post-Boom as we see them at present.<sup>1</sup> It helps to recognize that to some extent the Post-Boom is a reaction against the Boom on the part of younger writers who tended to be critical of it on three grounds:

1. excessive elitism and reader-unfriendliness
2. excessive cosmopolitanism and desire for universality at the expense of the here and now in Spanish America
3. excessive emphasis on technique, on the supposed mysteriousness of reality, and on the possible inability of language to express it.

This is not the place to enter into a detailed discussion of the characteristics of the Boom in order to try to clarify the degree to which those of the Post-Boom might be different. I and other critics have given our views on this elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Suffice it to say that what characterizes the Boom writers above all is their radical questioning: a) of reality and b) of the writer's task. This is seen as having led to the rejection of old-style realism, with its simple assumptions about time and about cause and effect, and its replacement on the one hand by a heightened sense of the mystery and ambiguity of things and on the other by a greater

reliance on fantasy, myth and the creative imagination. New, experimental narrative techniques were developed to express this new view of reality. These included the abandonment of linear, chronological narrative, giving up conventional character presentation and authorial authority, the adoption of a more sophisticated view than before of the role of language in fiction, and in general a greater tendency towards “writerly” rather than “reader-friendly” fiction.

In my 1989 article on the Post-Boom I suggested that the writer belonging to the movement who describes it most lucidly is Antonio Skármeta. Without repeating the entire list of characteristics he attributes to it, which formed the core of that article, we may emphasize two as the most essential. One is a renewed acceptance of, and confidence in, “esta realidad que por comodidad llamamos realidad” ‘this reality which for the sake of convenience we call reality’ (Ruffinelli 143); the other is social commitment, i.e. the incorporation of a critique of specifically Spanish American society.<sup>3</sup> Such a critique was not, of course, absent from the novels of the Boom. We need only think of the banana massacre episode in García Márquez’s *Cien años de soledad* (1967). But the impact of that episode was characteristically undercut in the novel by two facts: no one believed in it and, more importantly, the village priest, traditionally the representative of confidence in our God-given ability to understand the creation, at the head of which we have been placed, in this case dismisses it with the well-known (and classic) phrase: “Ay, hijo, a mí me bastaría con estar seguro de que tú y yo existimos en este momento” ‘Alas, my boy, it would be enough for me to be sure that you and I exist at this moment’ (345). Clearly, if one doubts all reality, including the reality of the self, there is not much room for uttering convincing calls to change *social* reality. Contrariwise, once confidence is recovered in the writer’s ability to report and interpret what Skármeta also called “el rostro convencional de la realidad” ‘the conventional face of reality’ (“Tendencias” 758), and when one recalls the horrors of the Videla and Pinochet regimes in Argentina and Chile, the military regime in Uruguay after 1973, and the Somoza regime in Nicaragua in the seventies, a response in terms of novels of protest becomes obligatory. Typical are, for example, Skármeta’s *La insurrección* (1982), Allende’s *De amor y de sombra* (1984), Martínez Moreno’s *El color que el infierno me escondiera* (1981) and Luisa Valenzuela’s unforgettable short story about symbolic sexual oppression of a woman urban guerrilla by an army officer from the collection of the same name, “Cambio de armas” (1982). We

might contrast this with a typical late Boom novel such as Vargas Llosa's *Historia de Mayta* (1984), whose message is that revolutionaries are crackpots and that the reality both of events and of individual psychology is largely indecipherable.

A perhaps less reliable, but always interesting, occasional commentator on the Post-Boom is Isabel Allende, who adds three further points to those of Skármeta. These are: a return to the love-ideal, a greater degree of optimism, and the experience of exile. The first is very important: the Boom writers were as a rule very uncomfortable with the notion of human love. It is very hard indeed to think of a novel in which love between the sexes plays an important role in helping the individual to solve his or her basic existential problems. We think of Pedro Páramo, denied the love of Susana; Artemio Cruz unable to love Catalina or Laura in a fulfilling way after the death of his first love, Regina; the ubiquitous lovelessness in Vargas Llosa's *La Casa Verde* (1966); or the plight of the narrator in Carpentier's *Los pasos perdidos* (1953). The reason for this is perhaps indicated in two recent publications: Pamela Bacarisse's *Carnal Knowledge* and Alun Kenwood's *Love, Sex and Eroticism in Contemporary Latin American Literature*. What emerges from them is that the writers were much more interested in exploding the tabus on the open presentation of sexuality in fiction than in exploring the role of love. We need to recall how little real sexuality there was in the pre-Boom Spanish American novel, with the exception of Roberto Arlt and a tiny number of others. Characteristic is the way in which Gallegos removed references to Bárbara's sexual relations with her peones after the first edition of *Doña Bárbara* (1929). Hence the greatly enhanced role of sexual behavior (including at times some highly unconventional sexual behavior) in the Boom. The Post-Boom writers who, as Skármeta points out in "Al fin y al cabo . . .," grew up between the arrival of the pill and the emergence of Aids, could take sexuality much more for granted; while the emergence of the phalanx of new women novelists ensured that love, whose role in everyday life is after all a matter of simple observation, should return to a prominent position in fiction. We have such obvious examples as Allende's own *De amor y de sombra*, Poniatowska's *Querido Diego te abraza Quiela* (1978) and Skármeta's *Ardiente paciencia* (1985). In fact it is extremely interesting to notice how Valenzuela's very early first novel *Hay que sonreír* (1966) is about a desperate search for love and understanding by a woman, Clara, who fails to find it, while Allende's *El plan infinito* (1991) is about a man, Greg, who similarly

searches for real love and fulfilment until middle age, and finally discovers it as the novel ends:

Somos gente más esperanzada. [Allende asserts of her group] Este es un punto bien importante de lo que ha marcado a nuestra ola de literatura. Por ejemplo en la actitud frente al amor somos más optimistas. . . . Hay una especie de renovación—yo diría de romanticismo, de amor, de los sentimientos, de la alegría de vivir, de la sensualidad. Y una posición mucho más optimista frente al futuro y a la vida.

We are more hopeful people. This is an important point among those which have affected our literary wave. For example in our attitude towards love we are more optimistic. . . . There is a kind of renovation—I should say of romanticism, of love, of feelings, of *joie de vivre*, of sensuality. And a much more optimistic stance towards the future and towards life. (Alegria 76)

In the same interview, Allende also stressed the important role played by exile among the writers of the Post-Boom. In her own case, and those of Skármeta and Giardinelli, the exile experience (which she calls “el trasiego de culturas” ‘the reshuffling of cultures’) has had a very clearly defined impact, for example, on choice of themes and settings (73). In other cases such as those of Valenzuela or Cristina Peri Rossi, the effect of life abroad is less obvious. But as an influence on their writing, it cannot be overlooked.

The next important element in Post-Boom fiction is its greater reader-friendliness. Boom writing was characterized by experimentalism, unleashed by the desire to find new ways of expressing the kind of content that resulted (as Ernesto Sábato insisted in his illuminating *El escritor y sus fantasmas* [1963]) from a whole new way of perceiving reality, both internal and external. It tended to produce, especially in certain novels that employed a fragmentary technique such as Julio Cortázar’s *Rayuela* (1963), Juan Rulfo’s *Pedro Páramo* (1955) or Carlos Fuentes’s *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (1962)(there are plenty of others) a “splintered mirror effect.” One can still see reality reflected in the Boom’s splintered mirror, but it is often a complicated, puzzling reality, which the reader has to struggle to put together.

The clearest statement of why the writers tended in that direction was made by Cortázar when he wrote that he was opposed to “ese falso

realismo que consiste en creer que todas las cosas pueden describirse y explicarse . . . dentro de un mundo regido más o menos armoniosamente por un sistema de leyes, de principios, de relaciones de causa a efecto” ‘that false realism that consists in believing that everything can be described and explained . . . inside a world governed more or less harmoniously by a system of laws, principles, cause and effect relationships.’ (“Algunos aspectos” 3-4) Cause and effect, together with the idea of chronological sequence, are our basic tools for understanding the real. The writers frequently tried to undermine our confidence in them. By contrast, the Post-Boom writers on the whole return to them. That is to say, many novels contain a *disturbing* metaphor of a possibly unintelligible world, whereas many characteristically Post-Boom novels contain a *reassuring* metaphor of a world that we can more readily understand. Thus it is characteristic that Skármeta should make fun in the prologue to *Ardiente paciencia* of “el relato lírico en primera persona” ‘lyrical story-telling in the first person,’ “la novela dentro de la novela” ‘the novel inside the novel,’ “el metalenguaje” ‘metalanguage’ and “la distorsión de tiempos y espacios” ‘the distortion of time and space’ and that Allende should say “En general, uso el tiempo cronológico. No hago experimentos con el texto, procuro contar con sencillez” ‘In general, I use chronological time. I don’t make experiments with the text, I try to tell the story simply’ (Gutiérrez 134). In particular, she said in an interview in English: “I am not detached or ironical” (Jones and Prillaman 13). Similarly in another classic Post-Boom remark, Valenzuela said “I think the one thing we [writers] must do is speak about what is going on” (Magnarelli 207) Clearly, writers are going to have a difficult time speaking out about what is going on in contemporary Spanish America if at the same time they are trying to undermine the reader’s presuppositions about time, cause and effect and linguistic referentiality. Hence Mempo Giardinelli, in a comment on the Post-Boom, included among its characteristics the fact that “Formas y estructuras parecen hoy más sencillas” ‘Forms and structures seem simpler today’ (30) and Salvador Elizondo, whose work up to *Elsinore* (1988) was almost excruciatingly experimental, unexpectedly confessed: “He llegado a la conclusión, un poco deplorable para mí, de que ya no hay campo para la experimentación” ‘I have reached the conclusion, a rather deplorable one for me, that there is now no space left for experimentation’ (Toledo and González Dumas 38). Ricardo Piglia, for his part, emphasized that much Boom-type experimentalism was essentially verbal and suggested rather paradoxically



that “El uso de géneros convencionales es un modo, de alguna manera, de hacer novela experimental hoy en día” ‘The use of conventional genres is nowadays, in some sense, a way of writing experimental fiction’ (Viereck 137).

At this point it may seem that at the heart of the Post-Boom is a return to a form of accessible realism with a strong socially critical slant. There is some truth in this, but caution is needed for two main reasons. The first is that the Boom’s attack on simple referentiality left the Post-Boom an awkward legacy. We notice that in the statement quoted earlier Skármeta referred to “that reality that *for the sake of convenience* we call reality,” showing that he had fully understood the position. Most of the time, like other Post-Boom writers, he writes *as if* reality were intelligible and the relation of the signifier to the signified were reasonably simple and unambiguous. But in his well-known story “El ciclista del San Cristóbal” (“The Cyclist from San Cristóbal” [1973]) and in his novels *Soñé que la nieve ardía* and *No pasó nada* (1980) reality is not so simple and uncomplicated, here and there, as it is, for example, in his *La insurrección*, his most committed novel. Allende is even more interesting. She has said: “The first lie of fiction is that you are going to put in some order the chaos of life,” but, “All that is a lie because life is not that way. Everything happens simultaneously in a chaotic way” (Kimheim and Layoun 69). In other words, we *impute* order to reality. It is constructed by the creative imagination, not perceived as objectively existing. But, if this is the case, how can we seriously regard her novels (or any others) as advocating the values of justice, love and human solidarity that she asserts they contain? If any pattern in reality is a construct of the imagination, then surely values are constructs also, and action would seem to be fruitless. When in *Eva Luna* (1987) the autobiographical narrative merges with a TV soap-opera script, it is more than just a gimmick. It is a strategy for attempting to avoid, or possibly resolve, the Post-Boom’s great dilemma: the difficulty of expressing the real while retaining an awareness that all expressions of reality are fictions.

The second reason why we need to be cautious about associating the Post-Boom too closely with some sort of neo-realism is that one of the major genres of the movement is the New Historical Novel, with authors like Abel Posse and Alejandro Paternain, and, as usual in the Post-Boom, with contributions from older authors like Fernando Del Paso and even Vargas Llosa and García Márquez. As Seymour Menton (14-26) and Skłodowska (25-61) have argued, it frequently takes as its

starting point the impossibility of ascertaining the true nature of reality (in this case historical reality). For this and other reasons, including the use of the carnivalesque and dialogic modes, intertextuality and occasional hints of metafiction, the New Historical Novel is quite closely related to the Boom. This serves to remind us that the Post-Boom is a considerably less homogeneous movement than the Boom was. And even the writers' family resemblance is not accepted by all critics, still less by all the writers concerned. What is important to recognize is how the New Historical Novel differs from the "testimonial" or "nonfictional" novel such as Elena Poniatowska's *La noche de Tlatelolco* (1971), Hernán Valdes' *Tejas verdes* (1974), Martínez Moreno's *El color que el infierno me escondiera* (1981) or Tomás Eloy Martínez' *La novela de Perón* (1985). The testimonial novel accepts history as knowable and uses it to attempt to raise our threshold of awareness about some of the horrors of the recent past. Thus it shares the critical attitude towards the injustice and oppression prevailing in some parts of Spanish America both in the recent past and in the present that underlie many central novels of the Post-Boom. By contrast, the New Historical Novel tends to reject the notion of history as knowable and, as Linda Hutcheon has said in another connection, to "problematize the entire question of historical knowledge" (55).

Old-style realism and Post-Boom realism both aim at the "reality effect," but the Post-Boom writers tend to be conscious of the fact that they are producing self-aware signifying structures, even if they reject overtly metaliterary elements in their work. That is to say, they are writing novels and short stories that accept the referential function of language to a greater extent than some Boom writers have done, but at the same time they remain alert to the potential problem that it involves. This is what separates the mainstream Post-Boom writers like Allende, Skármeta and Valenzuela from those of their contemporaries like some in the "Escritura" movement in Mexico or the Chilean Diamela Eltit, who, consciously or otherwise, write much more in the shadow of the Boom. Eltit, for example, specifically rejects Post-Boom neo-realism and reasserts the central importance of ambiguity and metaphorical expression in fiction. When she says of her first novel *Lumpérica* (1983): "Esta novela se desarrolló en torno a un discurso de la fragmentación, la duda, la ambigüedad, la negación" 'This novel developed around a discourse of fragmentation, doubt, ambiguity, negation' (Garabano and Carcía Corrales 67), and when she draws attention to the technique and the manipulation of syntax in *Por la*

*patria* (1986) (Piña 243), her self-presentation as a writer is clearly different from the way mainstream Post-Boom novelists tend to see themselves.

If we glance for a moment at the transition from the Boom to the Post-Boom we can see with hindsight that on the one hand we have writers like David Viñas and Mario Benedetti who during the Boom remained broadly faithful to a form of realism and social protest. They represent continuity with the past and the link between it and the Post-Boom. On the other hand we have Manuel Puig, who is a real transitional figure for two reasons. The most important is his incorporation of pop material and “low” literary elements into “high” literature. Not surprisingly, Piglia, in the interview already mentioned, asserted that the central problem for the Post-Boom was “si la novela tiene que ver con la tensión de la alta cultura o la novela tiene que ver con la tensión de la cultura de masas: con el cine, con la televisión, con el folletín etc.” ‘whether the novel has to do with the tension of high culture or the novel has to do with with the tension of mass-culture: with the cinema, with TV, with pulp-novels etc.’ He concludes, “Nosotros, manteniendo la misma tensión y la dificultad, tendemos al cruce ¿no?, y a usar formas de la cultura de masas con contenido de la cultura alta” ‘Keeping up the same tension and difficulty, we tend towards a blend, don’t we? Towards using forms from mass-culture with a high culture content’ (134). Puig, that is, set the pattern followed in different ways by Donoso in *La misteriosa desaparición de la marquesita de Loria* (1980), Vargas Llosa in *La tía Julia y el escribidor* (1977), Allende in *Eva Luna* and the various authors of the “New Detective Novel” or crime thriller such as Giardinelli, Piglia, Vicente Leñero, Juan Carlos Martini and José Ernesto Pacheco. The other historically important aspect of Puig’s work is his open return to referentiality, in contrast to Severo Sarduy, who is sometimes mentioned alongside him as marking a move in the Post-Boom direction, but who only really returned to a measure of referentiality with *Cocuyo* (1990).

At this point we can hazard a check list of Post-Boom characteristics. Already mentioned were: criticism of the Boom, a conscious return to referentiality, to optimism, emotion and the love-ideal, to social commitment, ideology and protest, and, along with these, the incorporation of pop and youth-culture elements (sport, jazz etc.) and the experience of exile. Clearly we must also emphasize the emergence of viewpoints formerly marginalized or largely absent, such as feminist

ones and those of groups such as Jews (Isaac Goldemberg, Mario Szitchman, Gerardo Mario Goloboff), homosexuals (Oscar Villordo, Senel Paz) as well as the greater importance of working class characters. Characteristic Post-Boom genres include the New Historical Novel (with the qualification registered above), the Novel of Exile, the New Detective Novel, and the nonfictional or documentary novel. At the technical level we can postulate: reader-friendliness, based on strong emphasis on plot, sometimes with elements of melodrama and romance (i.e. elements that commonly reflect a consensual pattern of values rather than questioning the existence of such a pattern), a tendency towards closure rather than open-endedness, a reaction against experimentalism both in narrative-technique and in the use of language, involving a return towards linear, chronological structure and “strong” characterization.

If the foregoing account of the Post-Boom is reasonably accurate, it seems clear that there are great difficulties in the way of regarding it (except for the New Historical Novel) as a postmodern movement in any familiar sense of the term. We must beware of giving in to the desire for a quick-fix solution to this very complex problem. To be sure, concepts can be appropriated from the mass of writing about Postmodernism and applied to the Post-Boom by a familiar process of lateral thinking, instead of working inductively from data supplied by direct research. But good criticism is rarely produced by this home-dressmaking approach. We need to keep in mind the facts that Postmodernism is a far wider-ranging concept than that of the Post-Boom, and that it arose and developed in relation to the culture of advanced industrial or post-industrial societies, whereas Post-Boom is a much humbler and narrower term restricted to fiction on one continent.

To the extent that Postmodernism involves the apparently final collapse of all older, over-arching interpretations of man’s place and role in the universe (Lyotard’s well-known “grand narratives”) and involves what Fredric Jameson calls “a crisis of representation” or a loss of confidence in “a mirror-theory of knowledge and art, whose fundamental evaluative categories are those of adequacy, accuracy and Truth itself” (Foreword 8), much of the Post-Boom writing we have been referring to here is clearly not postmodernist. In fact, it could be plausibly argued that the only potentially postmodern genres prominent in the Post-Boom are the New Historical Novel and the New Detective Novel. The mainstream Post-Boom does not in general

articulate the experience of a disorderly, directionless world. Rather, some form of ethical collective project survives strongly in it, just as it does in feminist writing and Black cultural manifestations in the United States. All three remain committed to an ideal of social justice that is largely incompatible with the postmodern rejection of ideology. Thus both Jameson and Hutcheon are clearly uncomfortable when they attempt to incorporate Post-Boom figures into their descriptions of Postmodernism. Jameson, indeed, is potentially sensitive to the whole question of the Post-Boom's specificity to Spanish America and its prominent social vision. In his important essay "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," he is quick to perceive the difference between the literature of the Third World and that of the developed West. In particular, he stresses the continuing production in Third World literature of "national allegories" that reflect the experience of the collectivity in question and form a kind of counterdiscourse to that of Postmodernism. While there is a certain condescension in this approach, his notion of the existence of two rather distinct "cultural logics" (postmodernist and third world) is convincing. It is quite preposterous to write (as some commentators of the Lyotardian persuasion do) as if confidence in the great explanatory or dynamizing myths and ideologies of modern society had been eroded everywhere to the same degree.

A better way to approach the problem might be to borrow the distinction between Postmodernism and Post-colonialism made by During and Tiffin and applied to the work of Eduardo Galeano by Palaversich. The value of this distinction is that it places the Post-Boom in a wider perspective, one that foregrounds the ideological difference between a metropolitan movement, which is sometimes alleged to reflect the current phase of Capitalism through a crisis of cultural authority and of epistemological confidence, and a peripheral movement, which is apt to be more testimonial and militant. Post-colonialism can be seen as resisting Postmodernism, accepting ideology and referentiality, and responding to a third world need to explore national identity and local social problems. It is possible to argue that the process by which European and North American writers have sometimes tended both to become estranged from society and to disassociate themselves from "objective" reality is not currently so prominent in Spanish America, where social reality often still hovers between the traditional and the contemporary, has more clear-cut problems of injustice and oppression, and is in a sense a more *shared* reality than

that of metropolitan nations. At the same time, however, we must keep in mind that Post-colonialism is a term that is related particularly to countries that attained independence much later than Spanish America. In them, the notion that Postmodernism merely reinforces European and North American cultural hegemony might be expected to be more pronounced. Similarly, the relation between Post-colonialism and the search for national identity might be expected to be stronger in more recently independent countries. Finally, while writers in Africa, India or the West Indies may have acquired familiarity with the outlook and techniques prevailing in some areas of Western fiction, Spanish America is unique in having experienced the Boom. When Post-Boom writers in Spanish America react against certain features of the Boom, their reaction is more complex. It is not just a reaction against foreign models, but one directed against a home-grown movement, and one that brought Spanish American fiction world attention. Post-colonialism, therefore, must mean something slightly different in Spanish America. But it seems to be a highly relevant term, which might relate writing in Spanish America to writing in other parts of the Third World. Post-colonialist writers from Mexico to New Zealand may well write with an awareness of the heritage of Modernism and the thrust of Postmodernism. But they often choose to write deliberately "as if" the ongoing evolution of literary outlook, and the changes of technique that go along with it, have a diminished relevance in Third World contexts, where the pressures on the writer are different.

## Notes

1. See in this connection, among other discussions of the topic: David Viñas et al., *Más allá del*. Ricardo Gutiérrez Mouat, "La narrativa latinoamericana del Post-Boom," *Revista Interamericana de Bibliografía*. Donald Shaw, "Towards a Description of the Post-Boom," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*. Gerald Martin, "After the Boom" in his *Journeys through the Labyrinth*. Philip Swanson, "Conclusion: After the Boom" in his *Landmarks of Modern Latin American Fiction*. Peter G. Earle, "Back to the Center, Hispanic American Fiction Today," *Hispanic Review*. Roberto González Echevarría, "Sarduy, the Boom and the Post-Boom," *Latin American Literary Review* and Gustavo Pellón, "The Spanish American Novel: Recent Developments 1975 to 1990" forthcoming in *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature*.

2. See Donald L. Shaw, *Nueva narrativa hispanoamericana*, Madrid, Cátedra, 5th ed. 1992, 211-25; J. Ann Duncan, *Voices, Visions and a New Reality*, p. 9 and Elzbieta Sklodowska, *op.cit.*, note 1 above, pp. xii-xiii.

3. All translations are mine.

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