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At the Green Blade's End: Jose Pedro Diaz Allegorizes Uruguay in Crisis

Marie Johnston Peck

AT THE GREEN
BLADE'S END

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AT THE GREEN BLADE'S END
JOSÉ PEDRO DÍAZ ALLEGORIZES URUGUAY IN CRISIS

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JOSÉ PEDRO DÍAZ ALLEGORIZES URUGUAY IN CRISIS

BY

MARIE JOHNSTON PECK
B.A., University of New Mexico, 1968

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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Marie Johnston Peck, Ph.D.
Department of Ibero-American Studies
The University of New Mexico, 1974

The purpose of the research was to study Uruguay through an examination of social, political and economic themes in Uruguayan narrative literature during the 1960s. The novel Partes de naufragios was selected after the consideration of many alternatives. José Pedro Díaz has achieved a synthesis of the messages contained in the narrative fiction of the sixties. Exhibiting consummate skill, the author has constructed a novel whose architecture possesses dynamic esthetic appeal. Publication of Partes de naufragios in December of 1969 coincided with the termination of a decade of crisis in Uruguay. Drawing upon events of the twentieth century, Díaz allegorizes the process of the nation's disintegration.

The dissertation is divided into three parts. Part 1 provides a brief summary of events of the twentieth century in Uruguay, amplifying the allusions of the novel's text. Part 2 examines the literary techniques of the author. Part 3 attempts to construct the Allegory.

Through the nouveau roman, Díaz creates a moving structure which constantly refocuses the historical and

political content of the novel. Nostalgia for a time irreparably past is contained within the multiple frames of a labyrinth of decay.

In harmony with the nouveau roman, the world which the narrator inhabits is not the subject of the novel. Rather, the mind of the narrator and his anguished response to the reality which surrounds him afford the novel its focus. Díaz believes that the portrayal of a disoriented consciousness--unable to find meaning in the here and the now of his existence--is more representative of the world in which he lives than a direct description of that world.

Díaz creates a personal myth which transcends the cycle of limited time and embodies the realization of eternal, moving time. The immediate crisis of man's existence occurs within the broader spectrum of continuous time, symbolized by the sea as the source of life at the moment that it ends life. Multiplicity of images and concepts prevents closure of the structure of the novel.

Partes de naufragios epitomizes Uruguay's identification with Latin America during the decade of the sixties, as an expression of the nation's authentic identity.

PREFACE

When I departed from Uruguay in December of 1970, I carried with me an extensive collection of research materials which--quite by accident--included two copies of Los fuegos de San Telmo by José Pedro Díaz. Not until I arrived in the United States did I realize that the duplication existed. The only other duplication was that of Arca's brochure entitled "El mensaje de los jóvenes."

These duplications were symbolic. It had been my original intention to study three authors of the Generación de la Crítica and three authors of the Generación de la Crisis as the basis for the dissertation. However, the theme was too vast. Selection of Partes de naufragios by José Pedro Díaz resulted from the consideration of many alternatives. His novel was a synthesis of all of the other works I had read, presenting the message of the young people of Uruguay, as well as the messages of Uruguayans of all generations. Although the author is a representative of the Generación de la Crítica, rather than the Generación de la Crisis, he is able to convey "el mensaje de los jóvenes" because he is the link between the optimism of the era of Batlle and the hopelessness of the era of Pacheco Areco.

Why did I return to the United States with two copies of Los fuegos de San Telmo? A most kind and solicitous gentleman named Rubén Cotelo had repeatedly insisted to me, "Be sure you get a copy of Los fuegos de San Telmo. It is very important."

Ironically, José Pedro Díaz was not among the authors whom I interviewed in Montevideo. I have not communicated with him and this dissertation will come as a surprise to him. I have taken the liberty afforded the reader of the nouveau roman to interpret the novel independently. Nor do I believe that my interpretation is definitive. Rather, it is subject to change when viewed from another perspective and as new information is received.

I would like to express my gratitude to Señorita María Teresa Castilla, Director of the Artigas-Washington Library of Montevideo. Señorita Castilla graciously facilitated my research by introducing me to members of the literary community.

I am particularly indebted, also, to Señor Julio C. Da Rosa who made it possible for me to visit Treinta y Tres and to become acquainted with some of the traditions of the interior of Uruguay.

Señor Cotelo was especially helpful in orienting me to resources and guiding my research while I was in Montevideo. I am indebted to many kind people who assisted me

in becoming acquainted with Uruguay. Although it is not possible to mention all of their names here, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following persons: Srta. Renée Abaracón of the Fulbright Commission, Srta. Coral Bacchetta of the Artigas-Washington Library, Sr. Juan Carlos Blanco of the Organization of American States, Sr. Antonio Bovino of Variedades "CAPRI," Srta. Amanda Cordones, Prof. José Echeverry, Dr. Washington Escobar of the Museo del Indio y del Gaucho of Tacuarembó, Sr. Gley Eyherabide, Sr. Mario Gardiol of Colonia Valdense, Sr. Hugo Giovanetti Viola, Sr. Ulises Graceras, Sr. Alfredo Gravina, Sr. Juan José La Coste, Ing. Christian de Lannoy of the Merim Lagoon Regional Project, Sr. Washington Lockhart, Sr. Alfonso Jaime López, Srta. Isabel Lussich, Sr. Carlos Maggi, Sra. Graciela Mántaras Loedel de Eyherabide, Sr. Carlos Martínez Moreno, Sr. Jorge Onetti, Srta. Cristina Peri Rossi, Sr. Carlos Pezzano, Prof. Walter Rela, Prof. Emir Rodríguez Monegal, Sr. Jorge Ruffinelli of Marcha, Prof. Eneida Sansone de Martínez of the University of the Republic, Sr. Aníbal Sampayo, Sra. María Inés Silva Vila de Maggi, Sra. Armonía Somers, Sr. Arturo Sergio Visca of the National Library and Sra. Clara Silva de Zum Felde.

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INTRODUCTION

The Author

José Pedro Díaz (born 1921) is Professor of Literature at the University of the Republic in Montevideo. He is recognized as an authority in the field of French literature. A member of Uruguay's "generación de la crítica,"[1] Díaz is esteemed by Montevideo's literary community for his critical and creative writing.

He has achieved special recognition for a critical monograph Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer: Vida y poesía,[2] a critical study of the works of André Gide[3] and an extensive analysis of the fiction of Felisberto Hernández entitled "f.h.: una conciencia que se rehúsa a la existencia." The latter is considered one of the most profound interpretations to date of the Uruguayan author's creative art.[4] Díaz' most recent scholarly publication is a critical edition, Augusto Ferrán y Forniés (1836-1880): Obras completas.[5]

His creative works, in addition to the novels, include poetry and essays. In 1941 Díaz published his first short work of fiction, El abanico rosa. It was followed in

1949 by El habitante. More than fifteen years elapsed before the appearance of a third short novel, Los fuegos de San Telmo (1964). Partes de naufragios (1969) is the author's first full-length novel.

According to Rubén Cotelo and Jorge Ruffinelli, the author entered the mainstream of Latin American fiction in the sixties.[6] His themes became identifiable with the River Plate Region and with Latin America as a whole.[7] The theme of the immigrant's mystique of Los fuegos de San Telmo is true to the reality of the cities of Montevideo and Buenos Aires. The setting of Partes de naufragios is indisputably Montevideo, a Montevideo of kaleidoscopic images. Clara Silva affirms that the novel is an "obra que alcanza de por sí a ser testimonio de una época." Elaborating upon the Montevideo reflected therein, Silva observes:

> Y allí van desfilando, en una pluralidad física y social, en simultaneidades y reiteraciones de fechas abolidas, en flujos y reflujos, que vienen como a golpes de subjetividades imperiosas, donde una misma peripecia vuelve a aparecer contada desde otro ángulo, como imágenes de espejos superpuestos. Nombres, cosas, figuras (notable la escena del entierro de Batlle), todo el resquebrajamiento melancólico de una época, en una significación llena de sugerencias, para él que tenga ojos y oídos. Y no por eso menos dramática.[8]

In recent years, the urban theme has dominated Uruguayan narrative literature.[9] The type of individual portrayed by the "generación de la crítica" is uncertain of his identity and frequently lacks faith in himself. He may vacuously conform to society. Or, overwhelmed by loneliness,

isolation and anguish, he may grope for communication with his fellow man or express contempt for society by retreating to an inner world.[10] Juan Carlos Onetti, Mario Benedetti and Carlos Martínez Moreno are the Uruguayan authors most frequently mentioned as depicting the urban setting of the River Plate Region in the sixties.[11]

Díaz' interpretation of the theme incorporates elements of the fantastic and synthesizes events of the twentieth century in Uruguay. Partes de naufragios is written in the convention of the nouveau roman. A characteristic shared by these literary trends and fused in the novel is the search for authenticity as expression of the here and the now of the author's existence.

Thus, a Latin American literary theme combines with a European literary form to convey an evolving creativity. Reinforced thereby is the basic premise of the author's world view: antithesis and duality, multiplicity and endlessness. Frank Kermode has given a related interpretation of antithesis in his essay "World Without End or Beginning."

> In apocalypse there are two orders of time, and the earthly runs to a stop; the cry of woe to the inhabitants of the earth means the end of their time; henceforth "time shall be no more." In tragedy the cry of woe does not end succession; the great crises and ends of human life do not stop time.[12]

In Partes de naufragios Díaz juxtaposes the concept of eternity, sustained through a personal myth, to the events of earthly tragedy--the disintegration and collapse of Uruguay

in the mainstream of crisis in Latin America. Time appears to cease within moving eternal time.

The Novel and its Antecedents

Allí golpea lejos sobre el mar
la lluvia.
Desde siempre y siempre.
Desde quién sabe qué oscuro
designio,
allí golpea y golpea la lluvia
sobre el mar.

Oh! ¡inmemorial paisaje!
Monstruo paciente y solitario,
mar amargo, agua última
donde un hombre y su miedo
huyen, beben y vuelven
en secreto y solos.

Cuando de allí se vuelve
nada alcanza en la Tierra y todo
es triste.
Sin embargo, con urgencias de
ahogado
uno pregunta y llama, y otros
nos oyen;
porque es preciso juntos, enterrar
la muerte.

Líber Falco
"Regreso"

Publication of Partes de naufragios coincided with culmination of a decade of crisis in Uruguay. The crisis had been gestating throughout the century, had been foreseen as early as 1930 by Martínez Lamas,[13] had been a subject of the polemics of the "generación de la crítica" since 1939,[14] had become increasingly apparent since 1955 and had christened

a new generation of Uruguayan writers as the "generación de de la crisis."[15] Throughout the sixties, dramatists, poets, journalists, musicians, political and social satirists, humorists, cartoonists, writers of fiction and essayists of history, political science, theology, economics and sociology had directed their creative and analytical talents to a searching examination of the critical situation confronting Uruguay.[16]

At the decade's end, the crisis continued to plunge the nation deeper and deeper into a never-ending spiral of economic collapse and consequent political instability. In a nation whose citizens have always prided themselves upon their democratic institutions, individual freedoms were being eroded.

During the sixties, not only did Uruguay become aware of her identity as a nation in crisis; but, also, she recognized her affinity with the brotherhood of nations which is Latin America.[17] If there exists a solution, it must be one which Latin America will discover. The answers will be evolved from within; they will be drawn from many and varied sources and tailored specifically to an authentic identity. The reader of Partes de naufragios will discover that he must shed any inappropriate and rumpled skin of preconceived reference frames.

It is a tribute to the author's creative talent that the novel evokes the moving present of collapse in a

manner perceived as real by the reader who is familiar with Uruguay in the decade of crisis. Anguish is heightened by awareness of the reality of the horror which the novel conveys. If the reader is Uruguayan, a "trapped" participant, the pain of perception and identification will be all the more intense.

The novel's structure squares the anguish. At a moment when the reader has succeeded in conceptualizing an image or an episode, he discovers a contradiction which negates portions of what has gone before. The reader becomes involved in the creative process. He identifies with the author, rather than with the narrator. As Emily Zants explains, the nouveau roman "is the growing consciousness of the reader, and perhaps of the character."[18]

The nouveau roman form allows the author of the historical novel to resolve a contradiction which has been identified by John Williams. The author of a work of fiction, involving either historical personalities or historical milieu and events, must deal with certain information--the "given" data. The "given" data embrace information known to the reader as well as to the author. The plot of the work of fiction must be faithful to that which is an historical "given." The problem for the author becomes one of allegiance to truth while creating a work of art which is conceived at a different moment in time, perceived from the here and the now. Through the form of fiction, it is possible to be

faithful to esthetic truth and to the content of the historical past.[19]

The structure of Partes de naufragios revises the previously accepted interpretations of social, political and historical events of the twentieth century in Uruguay. Constantly realigned perceptions question the validity of established frames of reference and values. Although it may not be possible for the author to change his world, it may be possible to change man's vision of that world.[20]

Since form takes priority over content in the nouveau roman, the meaning may be hidden--even from the author--until the completion of the work.[21]

Partes de naufragios synthesizes the anxieties, disillusionments and nostalgias of the people of Uruguay. The crisis is reflected in the psyche of one human being who is trapped in the morass of frustrated aspirations and lost beliefs of Uruguayans in their nation. The novel's end returns the reader to the beginning, capturing him like a gerbil in a treadmill, within the cycle of disintegration.

Synthesis of the mass of "given" material is achieved as the author does not attempt to portray the total panorama, but limits his impressions to those received and relayed by the narrative consciousness. In so doing, the author "delineates the viewer rather than the world."[22]

It is preferable that the nouveau roman possess neither a beginning nor an ending. Zants explains the necessity

for sustaining multiple interpretations, in order to prevent closure of the space which the author wishes to construct around the narrator. "If the book had any one correct interpretation, it would stand as an answer, not as a question; it would no longer be a 'search' for reality."[23]

In a variety of ways, Díaz defies the reader's natural tendency to effect closure. The multiple frames, which surround an image or event, project the image or event variously. The reader participates in a happy moment which is enclosed within a labyrinth of decay. Erasure occurs when a personality reconstructs a memory and then recalls that the incident happened in another way. Annihilation of schemata is achieved through negations at their centers. (See figures 3 and 4.) Pronouns are unstable. The narrator may be "I", "you" or "he"; rarely, if ever, is the narrator "we" or "they." He is isolated. Nor is his position fixed upon the planet Earth. He transposes himself to outer space, thereby achieving a point of view other than his own.[24] There is a "hollow" within the text into which the reader fits.[25] He will need to revise his impressions with each new datum perceived.

The title of the novel is an example of the existence of multiple interpretations. To select any one, would close the gap and end the search; it would create an evolved--rather than evolving--form. Eternal renewal and rebirth are

symbolized in the sea, the source of life at the very moment that it takes life. The sea neither begins nor does it end.

One interpretation of the title of Partes de naufragios is that of the catastrophe of a shipwrecked nation and the individual wreckages of the lives of the people. The communiqués convey the messages of the victims, their disillusionments and their failures. The totality of their anguish signifies the frustration of the aspirations of the nation.

The reader reverts to spectator with the interpretation that the whole work of fiction is but a theatrical production. It is possible to draw this conclusion when one considers that the skyline of Montevideo is depicted as a gigantic stage set. The cloudburst rips the canvas to reveal the battens. The fragment of an eye continues to view the invisible while the reader observes the eye, enhancing the effect that he is a mere spectator. There are fragments which have not yet fallen, as indicated by the phrase "pero hay partes que todavía no cayeron."[26] That the fiction might be a stage play diminishes the credibility of the content. And, now, even the stage version is disintegrating.[27]

The journey and the proximity of death--each of which are implied by the title--are necessary for rebirth in the eternal process of becoming. Díaz reveals this interpretation as he analyzes the work of André Gide, whose philosophy he appears to share.

> El movimiento de liberación que en Gide se realiza y que es un violento arrancarse de sí mismo, se opera pues al través de la enfermedad y del viaje que son dos formas de renovación, interior la una y la otra exterior. Pero, sobre todo, y como impulso decisivo para el duro esfuerzo liberador, la cercanía de la muerte.[28]

The significance of the journey and of the proximity of death is that each shatters the stable order which confines the individual.[29] In the spirit of Gide as interpreted by Díaz, the search for authenticity becomes the "redescubrimiento del hombre en un pliegue más auténtico de su propio ser."[30] This idea is reinforced by the dynamic unfolding which occurs in the novel's structure.

That the architecture of the nouveau roman should never become rigid is, thus, harmonious with the philosophical premise shared by Díaz and Gide.

> La búsqueda incesante de la autenticidad es el camino del descubrimiento del hombre. ¿Por qué? Porque todo tiende a emboscarlo, todo cristaliza en torno de él con excesiva facilidad, lo fija, lo falsea. Cada nueva situación lo tienta, dentro y fuera de él, con convenciones que atraen y adormecen como los perfumes del laberinto.[31]

It is interesting that Díaz here associates the labyrinth with what he has defined elsewhere as the "monstruos interiores que nos acechan para arrastrarnos hacia lo inauténtico."[32]

It appears that the narrator of Partes de naufragios is lost within his own interior labyrinth.[33] The thought processes woven by the grandson, or narrator, are described

in one instance as "ese mismo pozo" (p. 57). The well of his interiorization contains the water of memory. Fragments of the lives--and of the material remains of the lives--of all of the other personalities of the novel are seen floating in the interior water of the grandson's psyche. Similarly, the mind of the grandson receives the distraught messages of the victims. In terms of the nouveau roman, his mind is the dynamic and mobile "point present" of the novel.[34]

By contrast, the grandson's father is a courageous man who never ceases to seek authenticity. At death, Antonio leaves unspoken words in the process of being formulated.

> Y hay un secreto que no dijo, que no dijo todavía. Siempre hay algo que no llega a decirse. Esa misma vejiga hinchada vibra a veces cuando sus labios se mueven y el aire forma sonidos en su boca escondida; pero llegan emboscados, es una confusión de sonidos; no habla. (p. 129)

The significance of the unspoken words is explained in a quotation from Gide which Díaz cites, stating that Gide wrote the passage only six days before his death at the age of 82.

> Non! Je ne puis affirmer qu'avec la fin de ce cahier, tout sera clos que c'en sera fait. Peut-être aurai-je le désir de rajouter encore quelque chose. De rajouter je ne sais quoi. De rajouter. Peu être. Au dernier instant, de rajouter encore quelque chose ... J'ai sommeil, il est vrai. Mais je n'ai pas envie de dormir. Il me semble que je pourrais être encore plus fatigué. Il est je ne sais quelle heure de la nuit, ou du matin ... Ai je encore quelque chose à dire? Encore à dire je ne sais quoi.

> Ma propre position dans le ciel, par rapport au soleil, ne doit pas me faire trouver l'aurore moins belle.[35]

The unspoken words of Antonio recreate Gide's never-ending desire to sustain the adventure of the search for authenticity.

Thus, the title of the novel Partes de naufragios reinforces its structure while the structure reinforces the title. There is no beginning and there is no ending. Rather, there is an eternal cycle of birth and death portrayed by the implied presence of the sea. Within the eternal moving structure, apocalypse becomes manifest as disintegration. Disintegration itself, the implication of the journey and the imminence of death combine to destroy an established order which confines man. His liberation becomes possible. The structure of the novel gives birth to the content which is the philosophy of the search for freedom and authenticity in a continuous process of becoming.

Even more influential upon Díaz' theory of fiction is the Uruguayan author Felisberto Hernández (1902-1964). Whereas, the search is embodied in the psyche of a protagonist in Gide, it is manifested in the form of the narrative in Hernández. The themes and the voices contained within the form of Hernández's fiction seek truth in much the same way as does the structure of the nouveau roman.

Although certain of Gide's characters fail in their search, Hernández's narrators refuse even to attempt self-assertion. To some extent, the blurring profile of the narrators in Hernández's fiction is a prodrome of the _nouveau roman_. If, then, his narrators are not individuals with whom a reader might readily identify, the identification will be made with the author in what Díaz describes as "esta actitud de sostenida autenticidad."[36]

In writing his own fiction, Díaz projects upon the theories he defines and derives, in part, from Hernández. Views shared include: the depiction of an urban setting, the role of memory as the time beyond time to which the narrator retreats, the concept of the _conciencia desdichada_ as derived from Hegel, the theme of _el otro_, the emphasis upon eyes, the symbolism of water, the fantastic and the creation of a theatrical extravaganza as an expression of the atemporal.

Although Hernández began to publish his fiction as early as 1925, his major contributions date from the 1940s. _Tierras de la memoria_, published posthumously, is a product of that decade.[37] Throughout his entire literary career, Hernández declined to adhere to the prevailing literary styles. He describes his creative process in "Explicación falsa de mis cuentos."

> Mis cuentos no tienen estructuras lógicas. A pesar de la vigilancia constante y rigurosa de la conciencia, ésta me es desconocida. En

> un momento dado pienso que en un rincón de mí nacerá una planta. ... no sé cómo hacer germinar la planta, ni cómo favorecer, ni cuidar su crecimiento: sólo presiento o deseo que tenga hojas de poesía; o algo que se transforme en poesía si la miran ciertos ojos.[38]

For Hernández, the role of objects acquired a different dimension. He created around the object an aura which enveloped other objects in its proximity and held them together in a galactic tension. The aura provided an environment propitious for the displacement of human characteristics to objects and inert qualities of objects to humans. As early as 1929, Hernández had written a story displaying the innovation.[39]

At odds with the sometimes superficial tastes of the early twentieth century, Hernández used humble words when they most appropriately conveyed his intention.[40] For his lack of conformity, he suffered criticism as he did for his allusions--direct or indirect--to the human body and to human sexuality. It was alleged that Hernández occasionally portrayed aspects of sexuality which bordered upon what social convention had defined as abnormal.[41]

Only a select minority was aware of the little jewels which were being published in limited number, usually by a small press in a city of the interior of Uruguay. The Uruguayan philosopher Carlos Vaz Ferreira (1872-1958) was one of the earliest admirers of Hernández. Referring to <u>Fulano de tal</u> (1925), Vaz Ferreira commented that "tal vez no haya

en el mundo diez personas a las cuales les resulte interesante, y yo me considero una de ellas."[42]

Hernández's struggle to cut a swath through the conventions of his time has been compared with that of Charlie Chaplin (born 1889), whose creative talents first found expression in the silent film in 1914. (At that time, Felisberto was twelve years old and played the piano accompaniment for silent films.)[43] By 1915 Chaplin had joined a film company which would permit him to write and direct films--as well as to act--allowing him full expression of his imaginative and creative powers.[44] Comparing the struggle of these two artistically sensitive personalities, Norah Giraldi de Dei Cas observes:

> Y esto es muy importante; porque de aquí también puede desprenderse la implicancia moral de la literatura de Felisberto Hernández, ese deseo regenerador, corolario de una actitud de afirmación vital, de chaplinesca voluntad de empresa, que hemos señalado en trabajos anteriores.[45]

Attributes shared by Hernández and Chaplin include: episodes of fantasy, insistence upon drawing material from daily human experiences, frequent depiction of lower middle class settings, emphasis upon the eyes, mutual contemplation as the actor looks straight into the camera while the camera observes the actor, the irrational and autonomous behavior of objects, an economy of means and the concept of humor defined as "moralizing" by Giraldi de Dei Cas.[46]

Arturo Sergio Visca believes that the fantastic in Hernández is derived from variations on three elements: memory, animation and the absurd. They combine to leave the reader with an "impresión de vaivén entre la prosa de la realidad cotidiana y la poesía de un mundo fantástico."[47] Each of the elements conveys an aspect of the manner in which the author views reality.

Visca points out that memory functions in an aqueous setting, as evoked by Hernández. "El esfuerzo por lograr esta recuperación subjetiva del pasado, hace que ese pasado quede como hundido en un agua traslúcida que lo tiñe de lirismo y fantasía."[48] It is not the past which is recaptured; but, the image of the past is transformed through memory.

Animation of normally inert objects or of inanimate concepts disrobes reality to reveal hidden perceptions. For example, the ineffable quality of silence metamorphoses into a black cat. "Pero cuando el silencio ya era de confianza, intervenía en la música: pasaba entre los sonidos como un gato con su gran cola negra y los dejaba llenos de intenciones."[49] Animation is expressed by the ability of dependent parts of the body to become independent and to express their own volition.

The third element identified by Visca, the absurd, is frequently derived from a somewhat extravagant psychological peculiarity exhibited by a personality and accepted as normal by interacting personalities. An ancillary technique,

which might be considered a fourth element, has been identified by Visca as the "extra-natural." Hernández's El acomodador contains the example of a man whose eyes project light into the darkness. According to Visca, phenomena of this nature may be interpreted symbolically or may be attributed to fantastic perceptions of real experiences.[50] The rich vein of the fantastic which underlies the inundation of Partes de naufragios derives from the theory of fiction shared by Hernández and Díaz.

From the viewpoint of Díaz, evocation of a time beyond time in memory does not achieve evasion of the present. Actually, it increases the tension to which the narrators of Hernández subject themselves:

> Y tanto menos puede evocar con precisión y corporeidad el tiempo que recuerda cuanto más lo ansía como sustitución de este que vive, cuanto más le exige una condición envolvente de presente, cuanto más quiere anularlo en lo que realmente es, recuerdo, pasado. El escape se transforma en cárcel: el tiempo vivido no puede ser vivido nuevamente, y este que vive queda adulterado, enajenado por el empeño de incorporarle las vivencias del pasado. Por eso es tan grave la tensión en que el narrador está atrapado. Allí donde quiere soñar o inventar, el tiempo es otro y no siempre dominable, no corre con la homogénea textura que tiene sobre la tierra; sus direcciones se confunden, también su intensidad. El autor puede ir a dar a zonas donde dominen torbellinos y las corrientes lo arrastren haciéndole perder sus puntos de referencia.[51]

Díaz emphasizes the ceaselessness of time's flow, regardless of the narrator's efforts to place himself beyond its confines:

> El autor puede hacer que sus temas se evadan de su tiempo, puede imaginarse en el otro, lo que no puede, si es auténtico, es escribir en otro lugar que en el que está. Puede no poder empuñar con su propia voluntad el derivar de este tiempo presente en el que vive, puede sentir que la calidad de su empeño de vivir no se acondiciona con la calidad de la duración que le ofrece el mundo en el que está inserto, y puede preferir mantenerse en el aire mientras la muerte pase por la tierra, pero no podrá evitar--no hay escape para eso--marcar la distancia a que flota u ocultarnos ese su flotar.[52]

The only manner in which it might be possible to evade the present would be by fleeing authenticity, by refusing to become:

> En realidad el escapismo debe referirse a un salirse de la conciencia de sí; no a huir de ningún lado ni de ninguna circunstancia, sino de la autenticidad.[53]

It is in Díaz' study of Bécquer that one may examine the origins of the poetic imagery of Partes de naufragios. Referring to a shared concept of "dynamic motion," Díaz explains:

> Este movimiento a que aludo es siempre, naturalmente, un movimiento de algo; la imaginación que expresa ese dinamismo psíquico, imagina, simultáneamente al movimiento, las materias que mejor lo expresen. Por eso, una imaginación dinámica es, como ya dijimos, una imaginación aérea, sensible al viento, al soplo, al vuelo; una imaginación que maneja materiales sutiles o rápidos: el suspiro que viaja, el agua que corre, el corcel que galopa, el viento o la llama o la luz; lo que vibra o palpita, sea flecha, rayo de luz, polvo dorado en el aire o átamos de gas encendidos. Lo que produce rumor, lo que ondula y también lo que se desvanece.[54]

Dynamic motion infers its opposite. "El movimiento uniforme, en una altura uniforme, es la expresión de la desdicha."[55]

Antithesis between dynamic and uniform motion is an essential aspect of the inundation of Partes de naufragios. It allows the interpretation of rebirth and ceaseless time to be applied to the apparent disintegration. The deluge may possess a special meaning for Díaz:

> En el mundo imaginario la tempestad, el huracán, son una fuerza creadora, un despliegue de auténtica riqueza, son el bien de la vida y del desarrollo, y, por contraste, lo aniquilador es la quietud. En la mitología centroamericana la creación estuvo en manos del huracán.[56]

It follows that the inert condition of Antonio as he lies in his hospital bed conveys the end of the era which his life embraced far more graphically than does the inundation, which actually may be viewed as a prelude to rebirth.

Díaz has created a personal myth which resolves the antithesis between eternal time and human time, between spiritual man and earthly man. It is the myth of the flame and its multiple imagery. Díaz' belief in the symbolism of the flame is elucidated in the Tratado de la llama, an essay published in 1957.

In the multiplicity of its shapes, the flame embodies various symbols. It is a symbol of thought, of both the object upon which thought is nourished and the thought itself. The flame is perishable but the fire of which it is a part

is eternal. There is an affinity between the flame and the sea, trees, a street in the port--whatever is very old and very solid and very real.

The flame is the transparency of the present, its transfiguration. It is also the nullification of the present, the delineation of the limits of the present in time.

> El tiempo se transfigura, y en vez de mostrarse como un camino que recorremos se nos ofrece como un incesante y firme brote de lo más seguro de la existencia: como un fluir inagotable cuya fuerza recóndita e infinita baña, envuelve el momento, hace estallar sus límites. El vector que el tiempo es cambia su dirección: no apunta ya hacia adelante, en el sentido de la historia, sino que se expande en el sentido de la vida, hacia más allá de nosotros mismos o hacia más adentro de lo más hondo de nuestra interioridad. Se borra el devenir y el tiempo se transfigura en resplandor. La diafanidad que entonces nos envuelve queda más allá de las formas, porque éstas no pueden soportar una luminosidad tal; una inquieta palpitación las recorre protéicamente, un latido aniquilador las anima y alienta; el ser ve en ellas su propia infatigable surgencia y en su activa contemplación se refleja a sí mismo.[57]

The fire which comprises the flames may be considered the transcendence of time delineated by the flames--eternity. The darkness which surrounds the individual flame portrays man's mortality and loneliness. "La luz, que nos desnuda, nos hace sentir la envoltura de la sombra infinita que nos abraza con su desamparo."[58]

The brilliance of the flame contains a special dimension which Díaz describes as, "<u>En la llama se conforma el Ángel</u>."[59] Intrinsic to the nature of the Angel is the

role of messenger. Antithetical elements fuse in the flame. "Los contrastes desaparecen porque el Ángel se enciende."[60] Thus, mortal man clings to the winged spirit of the Angel who has delivered the message of man's dual nature.

The spirit of corporeal man is compelled to experience what the world offers. But the message does not come simply from without: there is a message which rises from deep within man's innermost being. One of the wings of the Angel corresponds to a brilliant renewing, a miraculous unfolding of the visible world. The other wing agitates the profundity of man's psyche and obliges him to affirm authenticity and truth in the adventure of flight with the Angel.

As a mortal creature, man suffers a heightening of his anguish by union with the Angel. The Angel has brought the message of the limit to man's existence, of the loneliness and darkness which surround the brilliance of the flame of man's being. Why has the Angel united his wings with the body of man? The Angel needs man just as man needs the Angel. The only manner in which the spirit of eternal truth of the Angel's wings may become airborne is by opposing that spirit to the weight of man.

Man undertakes flight without knowing the destination of his flight, knowing only that he will soar upward.[61] Ultimately, both man and the Angel are consumed in their upward flight. The burning flame unites man's being with space and his life with light.[62]

The personal myth of the author transcends the process of disintegration and constitutes the thematic and conceptual unity of three of his works of narrative fiction published to date.[63] A world of light and a world of darkness permeate the fiction of Díaz, evolving from starkly contrasted juxtaposition to subtle coalescence.

El habitante might be considered a prelude to the two novels of the sixties. With surprising efficiency, the short novel portrays an initial phase of images and attitudes which will unfold in the subsequent works.

As a moth attracted to the flame, the phantom--who is narrator of El habitante--is drawn to the side of the living, mortal female Alicia. His telescoped perception of time permits him to juxtapose the image of an unpredictable little girl, whom he remembers from previous summers, to the image of the sensually attractive and blossoming adolescent. A dreamlike milieu sustains his incorporeal being and her corporeal being. The time beyond time in which his dream occurs is that of memory. In memory the sound of Alicia's voice startles the narrator into a realization of his unsubstantiality, awakening him from his dream and confronting him with the present reality, a remembered present.[64]

The phantom perceives his time as eternal. Upon discovering his invisible condition, he realizes that the sun-laden body of Alicia is limited to a mortal world of definitive boundaries in time. She, as flesh and flame and

the adventure of life, will die. He, as shadow and ash and spirit and evasion of life, will exist forever.

That he and Alicia are each relegated to their own portion of the world is implied by the observation "Eramos habitantes casuales de un doble mundo de luz y ceniza."[65] But he is drawn into her world because she is the adventure of flight with the Angel.[66] Through her he can experience joy ("alegría"), a fleeting moment of communication that has the duration of a flickering of the flame.[67] "Alegría" is the momentary revelation of eternity which illuminates that which is transitory. It is a flash of authenticity as a person breaks from the confines of his individual order to express a genuine identity.[68]

At the moment that Alicia looks into his eyes and smiles, the phantom shatters the boundaries of his spiritual world of darkness while she, purportedly, briefly departs from her luminous world of mortal flesh. The instant of communication affirms their having broken the order of the worlds which contain them.

Through poetic imagery, Díaz has portrayed the spirit of man progressively attracted to and finally trapped by a material world. The phantom once roamed freely in his environment of sea, wind, waves, sand and fishermen; in the end, he is confined within his garret at the side of Alicia's photograph, endeavoring to recapture in writing a time which has past.[69] Díaz describes the implication of the presence

of objects in the fiction of Hernández:

> Así el mundo interior tiende a quedar reposando en objetos. En estos casos el punto de arranque no es el objeto: hacia el objeto se va, se cae; se va hacia la inercia, hacia lo inanimado; el espíritu queda atrapado en la materia y enajenado. Reposa, fuera de él, en el mundo; se hace él mismo cosa, y el mundo, por su parte, se hace inextricable y su presencia obsesiva.[70]

The myth of the flame and the adventure of man in flight with the Angel is apparent in the title as well as the content of Los fuegos de San Telmo. The "fire" refers to the blue lights observed by Mediterranean seamen over the centuries in the mastheads of ships before and after storms.[71] Another reference to fire is associated with Tío Domingo, whose namesake--Saint Dominic--counted among his iconographic symbols a dog running with a burning torch in its mouth.[72] Tío Domingo is the repository of eternal truths preserved from generation to generation in the small village of Marina di Camerota, on the Gulf of Policastro south of Naples. He has brought the Old World traditions to Uruguay and, there, he teaches them to his nephew José Pedro.

Memories of Tío Domingo inspire José Pedro to visit Marina di Camerota. He undertakes a journey to his origins, a search for the lost paradise.[73] The journey represents his individual effort to achieve authenticity. The attitude with which he embarks is one of willingness to follow wherever the search may lead.

There was a time when man walked with God and with legend and myth. Domingo had bequeathed the awareness of that time to his great nephew José Pedro. Belief in the miraculous powers of Saint Elmo was a part of the lore received from Domingo. José Pedro had forgotten the story Domingo used to tell about the time that he saw Saint Elmo's fires in the mast of a small fishing boat, in which he was a passenger. The boat had almost capsized off Cape Palinuro. Only when José Pedro arrived at Palinuro by land did he remember that the short route to Marina di Camerota was by water--that same stretch of water of which Domingo had spoken. Suddenly, the whole adventure as it had been recounted to him when he was a child flashed before his mind.[74]

The transition from unquestioning faith to walking without God and to speaking of the Gods as being dead may be considered as one aspect of modern man's evolution to a condition of psychological anguish. José Pedro has not escaped this burden. He believes now, as he writes about his journey and reflects upon it, that even then the Gods had abandoned man, though he was not yet aware of it.

> ¿Lloraba yo entonces realmente dioses perdidos? No. Todavía no. Fue después que aprendí que siempre hay dioses muertos que esperan de nosotros la historia imaginaria de sus encarnaciones sucesivas. Lo que ahora recuerdo como un andar desolado, aquella búsqueda de nada mientras andaba rodeado por una nube de recuerdos y de mitos, era un andar sin dioses. Era una espera que no sabía de sí misma. Nada había alterado todavía el pórtico severo, y en el fondo de la gruta, la Sibila dormía.[75]

There is an existential nothingness in the foregoing passage, as José Pedro speaks of "aquella búsqueda de nada." Indeed, this may be the final stance of José Pedro. It represents what he believes in the present while in the act of writing. It also represents a transition over time in his attitudes and beliefs.

José Pedro is representative of urbanized man in the River Plate Region in that he is a descendant of immigrants. The inhabitant of Montevideo or Buenos Aires--more often than not--is man displaced from Europe or from the interior of Uruguay and Argentina. The identity of the newcomer is an asset and a liability. The immigrants arrive as the result of a process of natural selection: it is primarily the courageous and the strong who venture forth on such an undertaking. They believe in themselves and in their own strengths and capabilities.

They arrive with an indomitable optimism, bringing with them their beliefs: they walk with God and with legend and myth. Their destiny is a shared destiny and so it is that a spirit of cooperation and of solidarity provides a source of tenacious power for survival. The reality is not always equal to their dreams and anticipations. In a new land, they must adjust to new customs and a new language. As the generations descend from the original couple, belief may become diluted and falter; human relationships may correspondingly weaken and human courage may diminish.[76]

As we examine Uruguay in Partes de naufragios, we will ask why it is that the flickering flame of Saint Elmo no longer appears miraculously in the uppermost tip of the masts of the ships.

Many elements of Los fuegos de San Telmo will appear in Partes de naufragios. The novella and the novel are alike in that the events of each are contained within the matrix of memory of a human mind. As the needs of the psyche of the narrator or narrators change, the structure of the work of art changes to accommodate a new world view. Ben Stoltzfus interprets Alain Robbe-Grillet as believing that "dream, day-dream, fantasy, imagination, the creative process, are all related; that the factor which differentiates dreams from imaginative creation of fiction is a matter of volition, direction, or perhaps even coherent organization."[77]

Essentially, what differentiates the structure of the novella from that of the novel is the degree of "volition, direction and coherent organization" expressed by the narrator. This may be interpreted as the reflection of varying psychological needs of two different individuals or of the same individual at different times.

Considering the possibility that the narrators of the novella and the novel may be the same individual, is there a turning point in the narrative of José Pedro which would explain a transition to the labyrinthine psyche of the grandson? Is there, perhaps, a lost opportunity which

changes the direction of his life? Díaz identifies an opportunity lost to an anti-heroine of Gide, lost because of doubt and hesitation to act at a decisive moment.[78] One must know how to dare to embark upon the adventure of the search and how to sustain it as a true adventure. Díaz elaborates:

> Al través de las observaciones que venimos haciendo creo que se dibuja ya, en efecto, una noción que, sin paradoja, puede constituir a la vez la aventura y el orden que se expresa en la narrativa de Gide. El orden de que aquí se trata es, claro está, un orden dinámico, en el que podemos llegar a ver la estructura misma de la aventura. Puede concebirse, ciertamente, una noción de aventura que implique la de un orden activo, progresivo; es la que supera cada situación mediante un nuevo impulso ... asumiendo siempre una mayor altura desde la cual superar los fatales límites de cada hallazgo parcial.[79]

The dynamic order which Díaz describes may be interpreted as a reconciliation between opposites. The achievement of harmonious equilibrium through the mobile structure of Díaz' novel may account for the diminishing contrast between the worlds of light and darkness which become simply the "iluminado espacio oscuro" (p. 17). It is the structure of the fiction which continues the dynamic search for authenticity.

The decisive moment foregone by José Pedro may have been the instant of the severing of the line which linked a small fishing vessel to the giant pescecane. With the severing of the line, occurring within memory as José Pedro looks upon the Mediterranean, a decisive moment of insight

may have been lost.

In a broader sense, if we examine the moment at which José Pedro writes about the lost pescecane, we realize that he is trapped in the same prison of a time beyond time which confined the narrators of Hernández. On several occasions José Pedro expresses his sense of futility in trying to recreate the past or to make discoveries of the secrets of the past. His disillusionment might be interpreted as absolute in at least one instance:

> Allí, en Nápoles, solo sentía que se me anunciaba una abertura nueva, y aun llegué a presentir que mi llegada a Marina di Camerota alcanzaría a colmarla. No sabía entonces que jamás podría ser así, que todo él no había sido nunca otra cosa que el silencioso ofrecimiento de un despliegue nuevo, de otra expectativa, pero no nada que pudiera clausurarse.[80]

It is possible that José Pedro becomes lost in the process of the conciencia desdichada, which Díaz defines as "el drama de la conciencia que busca en sí un último apoyo ... de si misma."[81] José Pedro's inability to relate to the world of the present is betrayed by his phrase "aquella búsqueda de nada."[82]

The premise of Díaz is that the individual escapes existence through the conciencia desdichada.

> Pero el narrador ... no entra, sino que precisamente, por el proceso que se describió, sale de la existencia.[83]

Once the thread has been broken, the narrator is doomed to wander within his interior labyrinth. "Lo vivido llega al

presente como los fragmentarios y desorganizados reflejos de un espejo que cayera trizado a sus pies."[84] Such an individual is the narrator of Partes de naufragios. For Díaz, the depiction of such a psyche is more representative of the narrator's milieu than a direct description of that milieu.[85]

Characteristics shared by Los fuegos de San Telmo and Partes de naufragios are: (1) identical origins and influences derived from the region of the Gulf of Policastro off the southwestern coast of Italy, (2) the personalities of Domingo and Francisco as counterparts of one another, (3) the lineage of the narrators who occupy the same relative position in the structure of their families, (4) the relegation of events to the time beyond time of memory, (5) the transition in tone from one of relative hope and affirmation to one of abject pessimism and alienation, (6) the search for a meaning to man's existence as a desire to achieve authenticity and (7) the shifting of emphasis from a search which is primarily lateral--the journey--to a search which is primarily vertical--the interiorization.

One interpretation of the relationship between the novella and the novel is that any closure which the novella might have effected is annihilated by the novel.[86] This interplay fulfills the premise of Michel Butor that "the book should be a mobile awakening the mobility of other books, a flame rekindling their fire."[87]

Notes to Introduction

1. Writing in 1947 for Escritura, Díaz characterized the esthetic values of his generation: "Si fuera indispensable caracterizar esta generación habría que repetir esta frase: la caracteriza una empecinada voluntad de lucidez; y habría que señalar además que experimentan una consciente libertad estética que no involucra ni indisciplina ni desorden. Reconocen en la literatura un fin tan alto--realización, en alguna manera, de lo humano--que no se consiente en fiscalizar tal fin con recetas de escuela" (Alberto Paganini, "Los cuentistas del 45," p. 538).

2. Originally published in 1953, it was subsequently republished in 1958 and 1964 by Editorial Gredos, Madrid.

3. This study appeared in 1958 in the Revista de la Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias, Universidad de la República.

4. Alberto Paganini, Alejandro Paternain y Gabriel Saad, Cien autores del Uruguay, p. 31.

5. Jorge Ruffinelli, "José Pedro Díaz de viaje," p. 31.

6. Rubén Cotelo observes that the narrative literature of Díaz has been more closely identified with Uruguayan themes since 1960 (Rubén Cotelo, Personal Interview, 27 September 1970).

7. Ruffinelli affirms that Díaz became part of the mainstream of Latin American literature with publication of Partes de naufragios. He further explains that the theme of plague recalls the epidemic of yellow fever which afflicted Montevideo in 1857. The prevalence of refuse and garbage in the streets and the rabid dogs link the novel to similar themes in literature throughout Latin America (Jorge Ruffinelli, Personal Interview, 8 December 1970).

8. Clara Silva, "Los laberintos del recuerdo," p. 2.

9. Cotelo, Personal Interview.

10. Ángel Rama, "Origen de un novelista y de una generación literaria," pp. 62-68.

11. María Ester Gilio, Sylvia Lago, María de Monserrat, Cristina Peri Rossi, Teresa Porzekanski, Clara Silva, María Inés Silva Vila and Armonía Somers are among authors who have portrayed the urban theme from the feminine viewpoint. Other writers of narrative fiction who have examined the

decade of the sixties in the setting of Montevideo or cities of the interior include: Anderssen Banchero, Luis Castelli, Hiber Conteris, Gley Eyherabide, Mario César Fernández, Eduardo H. Galeano, Juan José Lacoste, Carlos Maggi, Jorge Musto, Jorge Onetti, Alberto Paganini, Jorge Sclavo, Claudio Trobo and Pablo R. Troise.

12. Frank Kermode, The Sense of an Ending, p. 89.

13. Carlos Real de Azúa, "Julio Martínez Lamas (1872-1939)," pp. 63-68.

14. The usual designation is "generación del 45." I prefer to be guided by the terminology of Ángel Rama who explains his rationale: "Confieso mi entero desapego por las designaciones numéricas para los procesos socio-culturales, máxime cuando, como en este caso, el número adoptado nada significa. Prefiero llamarla 'generación de la crítica', que creo supera las otras fórmulas barajadas--generación de 1939, generación de 'Marcha', etc.--al atender a su signo dominante, que tampoco debe entenderse como alusión excluyente a los ejercitantes de la crítica, sino a esta conciencia crítica definidora de una amplia multiplicidad de disciplinas y funciones intelectuales, porque esta generación de la crítica ha dado políticos, sociólogos, directores, teatrales, músicos, economistas, poetas, de real significación en la cultura del país" (Ángel Rama, "La conciencia crítica," p. 106).

15. Ángel Rama, "180 años de literatura," p. 39.

16. Ángel Rama, "El boom editorial," pp. 3-5.

17. Mario Benedetti, "La literatura uruguaya cambia de voz," pp. 9-45.

18. Emily Zants, The Aesthetics of the New Novel in France, p. 10.

19. John Williams, Problems of the Historical Novel, 2 February 1974.

20. Leon S. Roudiez, French Fiction Today, p. 286.

21. Zants, p. 24.

22. George H. Szanto, Narrative Consciousness, p. 128.

23. Zants, p. 16.

24. Szanto, p. 108.

25. Szanto, p. 140.

26. José Pedro Díaz, Partes de naufragios, p. 276 (hereafter cited as Partes, subsequent page references will appear in the text).

27. The title may also be considered an allusion to El astillero by Juan Carlos Onetti. The miniature shipyard of Antonio--with its bits and pieces of masts and hulls--is similar to the setting of Onetti's novel, which has been interpreted as an allegory foretelling the collapse of the nation (Juan Carlos Onetti, El astillero).

28. José Pedro Díaz, "La búsqueda del orden y el impulso a la aventura en la narrativa de André Gide," p. 119.

29. Ibid., p. 141.

30. Ibid., p. 152.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., p. 142.

33. Díaz shares with Gide and with the authors of the nouveau roman the theme of the labyrinth and the hero Theseus. Zants elucidates: "The New Novel, however, is the experience of the labyrinth without the saving grace of a thread. Since events themselves are forever changing, the character of the New Novel searches for the meaning of them and does not find it" (Zants, p. 57).

34. Zants, pp. 39-45.

35. The quotation cited by Díaz is from Gide's Ainsi soit-il (Díaz, "la búsqueda del orden," p. 162).

36. José Pedro Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia que se rehúsa a la existencia," p. 98.

37. Ibid., pp. 69-71.

38. Felisberto Hernández, "Explicación falsa de mis cuentos," 4:103.

39. Felisberto Hernández, "La casa de Irene," 1:51.

40. Ángel Rama y Carlos Martínez Moreno, "Felisberto Hernández," pp. 454-455.

41. Rubén Cotelo, "La casa inundada," p. 105.

42. Rama y Martínez Moreno, p. 449.

43. Ibid., pp. 454-458.

44. Isabel Quigly, Charlie Chaplin, passim.

45. Norah Giraldi de Dei Cas, "Aproximación a 'El cocodrilo,'" p. 100.

46. Ibid., pp. 98-100.

47. Arturo Sergio Visca, "Felisberto Hernández (1902)," p. 198.

48. Ibid.

49. Felisberto Hernández, "El balcón," 3:13.

50. Visca, pp. 199-200.

51. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 81.

52. Ibid., pp. 80-81.

53. Ibid., p. 81.

54. José Pedro Díaz, Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer: Vida y poesía, 3d ed. enl. (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1964), p. 402 (hereafter cited as Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer).

55. Ibid., pp. 409-410.

56. Ibid., p. 410.

57. José Pedro Díaz, Tratado de la llama (1967), p. 86.

58. Ibid., p. 89.

59. Ibid., p. 87.

60. Ibid.

61. While the imagery which conveys a dynamic motion may be seen in the author's analysis of Bécquer's poetry, the idea of a journey which is open-ended appears in his study of Gide: "El camino iniciado en su búsqueda no puede tener itinerario previsto" (Díaz, "La búsqueda del orden," p. 141).

62. The idea of life as a journey into the unknown is conveyed also by the prow of the ship. In his essay "Navegar" Díaz observes: "Prefiero no decirles que lo que a nosotros nos importa no es algo que quede detrás de nosotros, no es la estela, sino la inagotable incertidumbre de la proa que, esa sí, no se borra nunca" (José Pedro Díaz, "Navegar," pp. 20-21).

63. Unfortunately, I have not had access to El abanico rosa.

64. José Pedro Díaz, El habitante (1970), pp. 89-90.

65. Ibid., p. 36.

66. Ibid., p. 72.

67. Ibid., pp. 60-61.

68. Díaz, "La búsqueda del orden," pp. 122-125.

69. Díaz may allude to the phantom of El habitante in one of his essays: "Escribía libros que decían que lo que veía no era cierto y contaba historias en las que yo mismo me disfrazaba de fantasma" (Díaz, "Ejercicios arqueológicos," p. 102).

70. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," pp. 109-110.

71. Gradually, the lights came to be interpreted as the flashing signs of their patron's protection, referred to as "St. Elmo's Fire" or "los fuegos de San Telmo." St. Elmo was believed to have suffered torture by fire during the Diocletian persecution and to have been brought to a small town in Italy by an angel. Being thus favored, he was an ideal heavenly protector for the Neapolitan seamen. A natural phenomenon, the luminous flashes occur "when the atmosphere becomes charged and an electrical potential, strong enough to cause a discharge is created between an object and the air around it" (New Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v. "St. Elmo's Fire").

72. New Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v. "Dominic, St."

73. Ángel Rama, "Ellos vinieron a este país," pp. 14-16.

74. José Pedro Díaz, Los fuegos de San Telmo (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1968), pp. 56-57 (hereafter cited as Fuegos).

75. Ibid., pp. 49-50.

76. Díaz points out that loneliness is all the more painful for the person who does not believe in God: "Y el sentido de esa soledad es, en el contexto, terriblemente denso, ya que puede allí entenderse que es una soledad sin Dios" (Díaz, "La búsqueda del orden," p. 110).

77. Szanto, pp. 147-148.

78. Díaz, "La búsqueda del orden," pp. 119-120.

79. Ibid., p. 131.

80. Díaz, Fuegos, p. 50.

81. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 85.

82. Díaz, Fuegos, p. 50.

83. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 84.

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid., pp. 83-84.

86. It is worth noting the esthetic and moral assertion of Díaz that "de cada negación otra afirmación más alta puede surgir" (Díaz, "La búsqueda del orden," p. 132).

87. Zants, p. 60.

PART 1

AMPLIFYING ALLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION TO PART 1

The reader discovers that the author of the nouveau roman does not clarify and does not offer explanations. The broader reality is glimpsed through the perceiving mind of a human being at center. In Partes de naufragios the mind of the grandson receives the messages of the victims of the shipwrecks. Many of the allusions are to actual events of the twentieth century in Uruguay.

José Pedro Díaz uses a light stroke of the brush, causing associations to arise in the reader's mind. For the Uruguayan reader, the images inspired will be limitless. Most of the associations will be painful. Díaz desires that the reader bring to the act of creation his memory of experiences shared with the narrator and with the author.

Perception and portrayal of the environment are a key to understanding the psyche of the narrator. As George Szanto has commented, the reader may wish to apply the techniques of a Rorschach test to examination of the patterns which emerge as the narrative consciousness interprets its milieu.

Part 1 represents the attempt of a reader who was not there and who did not participate to somehow convey--albeit inadequately--a portion of the broader context in which the events of the novel occur, some small fraction of the lore of Uruguay to which the author deftly but silently alludes.

CHAPTER 1

THE HAPPINESS OF ANOTHER TIME

EL ESTE, LA CELESTE Y "LA CUMPARSITA"

Nostalgia for a happier time intensifies the sensation of disintegration in Partes de naufragios. The trajectory of the carefree days of happiness and of their erosion is traced through the life of Mario. His life style typifies the period frequently referred to as the años locos and identified by Carlos Maggi as the period from 1919 to 1933. It is Mario who owns a forchela ("Model T Ford"), who likes to go on picnics, who plays soccer and is acquainted with the cracks ("champions"), who knows how to dance the tango and who has a casita dedicated to bachelor pursuits in Malvín or Buceo. Mario never marries. He is an ambiguous personality. There are many secrets in his life. All we can be sure about Mario is that he is dedicated to the good life and that he is insecure. Around him is woven a theme closely associated with the plight of the immigrant or immigrant offspring--the theme of social mobility.

A Nation of Newcomers

The Shared Endeavor

Maggi has captured the special circumstance confronted by a newcomer, a circumstance shared by the men and women who sought opportunity on both sides of the River Plate.

> Cada tanto tiempo hay que preguntarse de donde se viene para saber adonde se va y cómo se es.
>
> Nosotros--más cerca, más lejos--venimos de un hombre y de una mujer que se largaron a la aventura; abandonaron su mundo, cruzaron el Atlántico y puestos aquí buscaron con uñas y dientes hacerse la América. Somos hijos de una audacia inicial, de una esperanza y también y sobre todo de una inmensa desolación, de un pasmo pavoroso. Cuando alguien es pasado por agua, cuando alguien recibe el bautismo de un océano y queda solo y desamparado del otro lado del mar, este escalofrío se fija en su alma para siempre y secretamente lo irá trasmitiendo después a sus hijos y de estos a sus descendientes. Por eso, mientras no conozcamos mejor la sustancia y las consecuencias del acto inmigratorio, poco sabremos de nosotros mismos.
>
> ...
>
> De esta experiencia total--atroz y deliciosa--pienso que nace lo que dimos en llamar viveza criolla. Por una ley biológica bien conocida, los seres vivos sometidos a contingencias adversas, en vez de disminuirse--como sucede con las fuerzas físicas que siendo contrarias se anulan entre sí--puestos ante la adversidad, se excitan, se crecen y pasan a ser más fuertes o mejores; arrancan de sí mismos aptitudes inesperadas.[1]

Identification with the plight of the immigrant is something which may be appreciated by the vast majority of Uruguay's population, as Maggi points out.

Statistics on population growth are not entirely reliable nor are they historically comprehensive. Pi Hugarte and Vidart identify six waves of immigration as having inundated Uruguay during the period since nationhood was achieved. The first wave arrived between 1837 and 1842. It was composed predominantly of French, especially immigrants from the Pyrenees. Montevideo retained most of these newcomers. Immigration fell off during the Guerra Grande but resumed again upon its termination in 1852 with the defeat of Rosas at Monte Caseros. The interior of Uruguay received many of the new newcomers, ravaged as it was by war and deserted by men and cattle. From the Río Negro north, the country received waves of Brazilian immigrants. Some men from the French Legion and from José Garibaldi's Italian Legion had also remained behind after assisting the Colorados in raising the siege of Montevideo. European input at this time was predominantly from Spain; immigration from Italy was markedly increasing. The traditional landholding classes found that they had new landholding neighbors of European origin.

Between 1870 and 1873 emigration exceeded immigration, due to the Guerra de las Lanzas, and there was a net loss in population. A third wave began in 1875 and climaxed in 1889. It was composed mainly of Italian immigrants, especially from Naples, Genoa and the region of Liguria. An 1884 census in Montevideo revealed 115,500 inhabitants

of whom 45% were immigrants. Italians numbered 33,000, Spaniards numbered 22,000 and French numbered 7,400. However, many immigrants departed between 1890 and 1891 due to the economic crisis in Uruguay at that time. The fourth and fifth waves arrived in the twentieth century. In 1902 and from 1904 to approximately 1913 arrival was both direct from Europe and indirect from Argentina. The First World War witnessed an almost complete stagnation in terms of immigration from Europe. The sixth wave occurred around 1930 and was composed of other than traditional sources. Slavic, Armenian, Jewish, Lebanese and Syrian immigrants arrived at that time.[2] The influx appears to have diminished after 1938, according to another source. The years 1948 to 1955 saw yet a seventh wave, totaling some 50,000 new arrivals.

Over the years, immigrants have tended to congregate in Montevideo, and descendants of immigrants who settle in rural areas show a greater tendency to migrate to Montevideo than do the descendants of the criollos.[3] By 1970 an estimated 14% of Uruguay's population was foreign-born, while as high as perhaps 75% of the population was composed of second or third-generation newcomers.[4] While Spanish, Portuguese and Italian surnames do predominate in Uruguay, the nation has also received a considerable number of Germans, English, Irish and Scots.[5]

Further complicating the picture has been, from the outset, Montevideo's tendency to dominate the nation in terms of economic and political issues as well as population. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, access to the land virtually ceased.[6] In 1970 this had culminated in a situation whereby an estimated 50% of the population of Uruguay resided in Montevideo.[7] Allegedly, Uruguayans would prefer to live in the city even if the alternative of living in the country's interior were made available to them. This appears to be a debatable point.

Man's confrontation with the urban setting is a major concern for the majority of Uruguayans who live in Montevideo or in the adjacent cities of Las Piedras, La Paz and Pando or in more distant cities like Paysandú, Salto, Colonia, Durazno and Maldonado.

The Theme of the Immigrant

At the time in the novel when Mario would have been a young man, there existed an amazing amount of social mobility in the city of Montevideo.[8] This does not eliminate the possibility that a certain proportion of newcomers may have found that the struggle was overwhelming, or nearly so.

Mario possessed the advantage of being a second-generation newcomer. His parents had been born near Naples and had arrived in Uruguay some time in the latter part of

the nineteenth century. He did not have to endure the same type of struggle as did they, plunged into a totally new environment.

It is Mario's mother who most intimately portrays the mystique of the immigrant. Mamagela must struggle to economize and to provide for the family inasmuch as her husband, Pedro, becomes bedridden relatively soon after their arrival in the new nation. She portrays the vigor and strength of the immigrants, their ingenuity and their willingness to sacrifice and to work hard for future well-being. This is the significance of brief allusions to her shrewdness in managing her household and business finances.

> Es el carro del verdulero que se detiene siempre delante de la carnicería, y a veces en la esquina de la calle Paysandú, y en torno al cual se arraciman las amas de casa. Entre ellas está siempre su abuela /del nieto/, apretando en una de sus manos el monedero con el que pagará al fin lenta y discutidamente: "¡Las acelgas dos vintenes!" "¡Angela! ¡Cómo dos vintenes! ¡Dos vintenes y dos cobres las pagué en el merdado!" "¡Ah, Capuccio! Ponemos dos atados y es un real". "Real y medio, patrona, real y medio!" "Bah! Un real y dos cobres. Vamos. ¿No? Buenos, bueno, basta: un real y un vintén. Llevo dos atados, eh". Y hunde las acelgas en la canasta. (p. 131)

Mamagela's trips to the shoemaker and the yuyero ("vender of medicinal herbs") portray another aspect of the struggle of the immigrants and the newcomers from Uruguay's interior.[9] Her grandson, the narrator of the novel, remembers that he often accompanied Mamagela. On such

occasions, he would catch a fleeting glimpse of the conventillo where their shops were located.

> Al dar vuelta la esquina se siente el olor a alcohol y a tabaco que sale del boliche que tiene las ventanas enrejadas; después entran en el conventillo, aunque no siempre llegan hasta el patio, que es un lugar maravilloso y deslumbrante, donde el sol cae en fuertes bandas sesgadas sobre la ropa blanca que cuelga de las cuerdas y sobre las piedras grises pulidas y los charcos jabonosos; donde hay mujeres que lavan en tinas, niños que gritan y con los que no se debe conversar, ropa colgada en cuerdas que se comban cruzando el patio, chicos más chicos, desnudos, que gatean con el culo al aire sobre las grandes losas desparejas, y algunos hombres que toman mate y fuman sentados en sillas bajas frente a las puertas de sus piezas, y que de cuando en cuando lanzan maldiciones o ríen a carcajadas o dicen a las mujeres que se asoman semivestidas por las puertas entreabiertas, frases y palabras que hay que hacer como que no se oyen. Todo eso se va viendo ya desde la puerta, pero no es necesario entrar al patio, porque el zapatero ocupa la primera puerta de la izquierda, la que da al zaguán, y el yuyero la de la derecha. (pp. 235-236)

Jorge Páez has described the origin of the conventillo in Buenos Aires and has compared it with similar manifestations in other industrializing nations during a particular period in history. In the River Plate Region, the urban poor frequently congregated in old colonial mansions whose traditional owners had lost their financial status or had moved from the neighborhood because it had ceased to be fashionable.

> Buenos Aires, como hemos dicho, debió duplicar o triplicar en pocos años su capacidad habitacional para dar cabida a los nuevos contingentes inmigratorios. La mudanza de los

> grupos tradicionales al Barrio Norte (alrededores del 80) permitió alojar a numerosas familias, que se hacinaron en los ya obsoletos caserones del Sur. Los especuladores, a su turno, no tardaron en acondicionar vetustos edificios de la época colonial o en hacer construir precarios alojamientos para esta demanda poco exigente y ansiosa por obtener, mal o bien, su techo. La improvisación, el hacinamiento, la falta de servicios sanitarios y la pobreza sin demasiadas esperanzas hicieron el resto. Había nacido el conventillo ... [10]

Another view of the struggle of the immigrants may be seen in the visits to the home of Alberto and Catalina in the neighborhood referred to as Unión. Like the visits to the shoemaker and yuyero, trips to Unión are described as being made by the grandson, hand in hand with Mamagela. Public transportation was furnished primarily by the streetcar at that time.

> Después, cuando ya sonaron las campanillas de la partida, suelta el cric con un golpe del pie, gira loca la gran manija dejando sueltos los frenos, y comienza el avance por grados de la manija corta de la izquierda, que obedece a las sacudidas de la muñeca, y que el tranvía entero recibe con impulsos que hacen crujir toda su estructura, y vibran los vidrios de las ventanillas en sus marcos, y las cabezas de los pasajeros se vuelcan hacia atrás como si despertaran; y cuando ya el tranvía corre alegremente y bamboleándose, van pasando las esquinas mientras el mótorman da entusiastas golpes con el taco del zapato en el botón de la campana. (p. 239)

Arriving in Unión, the grandson is treated to an afternoon in the ball park or a silent film at the biógrafo ("neighborhood movie theater"). He and his cousin go together. Between reels, the boys run back to Alberto's

tailor shop, continuing on through to the back of the shop into the patio, finally arriving at the kitchen in the rear.

It is apparent that Alberto and Catalina are working hard to make a living through their tailor shop. Nevertheless, their generosity is a detail of the memories of a happier time.

> Y Alberto, que ya estaba bastante calvo, pero que entonces conservaba todavía, planchada sobre el cráneo, una delgada y brillante capa de pelo negro, y en cuya cara redonda y alegre--pero ésta sin bigotes--se refleja el esplendor de la mesa cargada y se mantiene el regocijo de cuando llegaba con su familia y subía la escalera ruidosamente, cargados todos con paquetes, con envoltorios de papel blanco, porque habían estado en la feria y ya antes de que la mesa estuviera servida él había ido deshaciendo los paquetes entre los platos, había llenado la mesa de hilos y papeles arrugados y bandejas de cartón, y había empezado a repartir jamón y salame y sobre todo butifarras que algunos comían después de pelarlas cuidadosamente de la tripa gris y casi transparente ... (p. 150)

The Image within the Image

Unión was settled originally by families of soldiers, by artisans and shopkeepers during the siege of Montevideo in the 1840s. At that time outside of the city, it was a settlement of the besieging forces. Unión has always retained some of its original character. In 1860, recognition of the preponderance of immigrants in the neighborhood took the form of the construction of a bullring there. "Por ese entonces Montevideo trata de reabilitar la Unión donde construye, siguiendo la tradición española, y para solazar a los 'gallegos', una plaza de toros."[11]

The movie which the grandson sees at the biógrafo is a Charlie Chaplin film. It appears to be The Cure, which was made in 1917.[12] The inclusion of a Chaplin film in the setting of a biógrafo in Unión is an example of the technique of the image within the image, employed by Díaz.

An important theme in the movies of Chaplin is the portrayal of a somewhat forlorn individual, physically slight in stature, contrasted with a rather heavyset villain or semi-villain.

> El gordo barbudo, en cambio, sí, se dio cuenta de que el agua tiene vino y que la culpa es de Carlitos. Todos vieron cuando fue a probarla, se detuvo en el primer sorbo y miró a Carlitos con una mirada terrible. Carlitos también lo vio, pero se hace el distraído. El gordo deja el jarro sobre la fuente y se dirige hacia Carlitos levantando los dos brazos; es un gordo enorme; pero Carlitos gira sobre un pie mirando hacia otro lado y revoleando el bastón. Cuando el gordo lo va a agarrar, él le engancha una pierna con el bastón y el gordo cae en la fuente. (p. 241)

The forlorn individual never loses his dignity and frequently emerges with the last laugh. Throughout the career of Chaplin, he portrayed a broad spectrum of working-class personalities in a variety of occupations. Usually, the heavyset character was outwitted and often it was a rich person who was the butt of a joke. Laughter was the cure for the anguish of man. In 1917 Chaplin made another film which must have been popular in Montevideo. It was entitled The Immigrant, whose plight it portrayed in pantomime.

His film Modern Times, made in 1936, contains a skit in which a factory worker has a nervous breakdown while working on an assembly line. In one sequence, a machine developed for feeding workers on the job (in order to save time and increase production) is demonstrated on Charlie. The wires of the machine must be crossed because poor Charlie very nearly does not emerge alive from the beating the machine gives him. The hostility of objects is a theme which Chaplin and Díaz share.

Chaplin knew intimately the desperate straits of the impoverished. As an adolescent, he had spent time in a workhouse for boys in England. His vehicle of ascent was the movie industry. The inclusion of a Chaplin film in the setting of Unión reinforces the symbolism and social significance of the Chaplin commentary, which was appreciated the world over through the medium of pantomime.

The whimsy of a Chaplin skit may be identified in a piece of stage business from Partes de naufragios. The grandson is still a young boy; he is having difficulty seeing the soccer field above the heads and shoulders of the crowd.

> ... después del frío limpio, traslúcido, de la tarde con sol, de las tanjerinas que había que pelar con los dedos duros de frío mientras se estiraban en puntas de pie sobre las gradas de madera, tratando de ver si el puntero se puede colar, si el back lo marca a tiempo; las tanjerinas estaban tan frías que hacían doler los dientes, y no alcanza a ver entre tantos sobretodos, y mientras se estira siente que se le cae

> una media, y trata de levantársela, y mientras está agachado mirando las tablas de madera y el agujero que hay debajo de las gradas, y tira de la media con una sola mano, porque en la otra tiene otras tanjerinas y cáscaras, oye el ¡Goooooo! que grita toda la cancha, y entonces se levanta y tira las cáscaras arriba, y se siente con los pies helados pero feliz, mientras de nuevo siente que se le baja la media, con una felicidad que se iba formando entre todos, allí ... (p. 250)

Through laughter, Chaplin united the isolated individuals in his audiences and conveyed to them a sense of solidarity with their fellow man. The game of soccer and the Generation of Champions performed the same miracle for Uruguay. It provided the heterogeneous array of newcomers and the criollos a rallying point around which there emerged a cohesive, unified, national identity.

La celeste

Los años locos

"¡Hay que echarle agua a la sopa!" or "¡Agua a la sopa, Doña Angela!" (p. 149) were the words everyone in the family remembered as announcing the arrival of Mario and his friend Scarone, unexpected guests for the noonday meal. And the memory of Mario's words preceding him up the stairway suggests other associations. It was Mario who organized the family picnics; when two forchelas were needed to pack out all the people and equipment, it was his friend Scarone who pitched in to help.

Mario and the members of his family demonstrate the adaptive quality of the Italian temperament. Among the most important of the customs which they have incorporated into their life style are the native beverage mate and the manner of preparing meat, the asado (although not an asado con cuero). These are customs derived from the life of the campo and, especially, from the habits of the gaucho.

It is Tío Francisco who performs the morning ritual of preparing the water for mate, when he returns from his nightly round of fishing in the bay of Montevideo.

The asado is prepared in the garden of the summer cottage in Malvín, with the table set in the glorieta. Mario arrives at the asado in true gaucho style:

> "¡A ver, cuñado, ¿cómo anda eso?!", decía Mario mientras todos se acercaban a la forchela que acababa de detenerse frente al portón, y que aunque ya estaba detenida seguía temblando como un caballo brioso, y no cesaba de vibrar, y todos se acercaban para ayudar a sacar canastos y bajar gente, pero sobre todo para verlos en el momento mismo en que llegaban y saludarlos a gritos. (p. 180)

The ritual of preparing the asado is performed by Mario's sister Catalina and her husband Alberto, while Mario teaches his nephews how to play soccer.

> Pero él /Mario/ no era nada cocinero, de modo que mientras Alberto cuidaba el asado y Antonio preparaba la mayonesa, los dos enfundados en los grandes guardapolvos blancos, limpios pero manchados de verde, él terminaba por ponerse a jugar al fútbol lanzando enérgicos pelotazos que pasaban cerca del asador ... (p. 182)

Mario demonstrates his skill at soccer as he plays with his nephews, one of whom is probably the grandson. Mario numbers at least one of the Uruguayan cracks as a personal friend, the black player Arizpe. The names of Andrade, Scarone and Arizpe are familiar to every Uruguayan.[13] Is it possible that Mario's friend Scarone was either Héctor or Carlos Scarone? During the años locos, the names of Andrade, of Carlos and Héctor Scarone, of Arizpe, Petrone and Piendibene were among the greats of soccer: cracks who had contributed to a record which appears almost unbelievable. They and their teammates led Uruguay to the World Championship at Colombes in Paris in 1924, at Amsterdam in 1928 and in Montevideo in 1930. Competing with Argentina on a continental basis between 1916 and 1929, Uruguay won First Champion America in 1917, 1919, 1922, 1923 and 1926.[14]

What was the secret of these remarkable victories? "Se ganaba por mejores, sólo por eso, nada más que por eso,"[15] affirms Franklin Morales.

The Olympic Generation

The game of soccer was perfected on the sidewalks, in the streets and in the open lots of Montevideo. "De ninguna casa de ricos salió un crack,"[16] according to a popular refrain. Morales points out that the game of soccer was nurtured in the conventillos where it drew upon the courage of the gaucho, the physical agility of the black and the spirit of determination and cooperation of the immigrant.

The British introduced Uruguay to the game of soccer. Rowing, tennis, rugby and cricket--as well as equestrian activities--were institutionalized by the British in their private clubs. By 1890 the Uruguayan elites had copied the British system and had created the Uruguay Club and the Jockey Club. Members of the Uruguay Club included personalities of the government, high finance and the diplomatic corps. Also much in evidence were eligible young ladies accompanied by their mothers, some foreigners and a variety of elegant types. Even more attractive than the Uruguay Club was the Jockey Club of Carreras. It boasted the participation of Lord Derby, Lady Hamilton and other Britishers.[17]

During the late nineteenth century, José Pedro Varela had created an environment receptive to athletic activities through development of the public school system. Reinforced by the ethic of positivism, the public school system provided an impetus to the cultivation of physical fitness and active participation in sports.[18]

In 1891 the British formed a private club which they called the Football Association. The name was changed almost immediately to the Albion Club. Meanwhile, the Central Uruguay Railway founded the Central Uruguay Railway Cricket Club (CURCC). Participation of the railway workers was allowed. Their workshops were located in Villa de Peñarol, not far from Montevideo.

The National Club had been formed by the University of the Republic before the end of the century. Speaking of the sport of soccer, Ángel Rama observes "al cruzar el siglo ya era deporte tan popular que los miembros de la 'high life' comenzaron a alejarse de él buscando nuevos campos a su afán de exclusivismo."[19]

While those who could afford to do so participated in the athletic activities of private clubs, others were involved in the labor movement. Data reflects that in 1875 a manifesto of the Federación Regional de la República Oriental del Uruguay stated that the normal work day of a laborer varied between 12 and 18 hours. Living conditions were extremely poor.

> Las condiciones de habitación las conocemos a través de documentos oficiales, como el informe de la Dirección de Estadística, según el cual en el año 1876, cuando Montevideo tenía 110.000 habitantes, casi todos los trabajadores (exactamente 17.024 personas) residían en 589 conventillos con 8.050 habitaciones.[20]

Salaries were low and the incidence of disease was high. Tuberculosis, venereal disease, yellow fever and smallpox took a high toll of death, especially from the neighborhoods of Aguada, Sur, Cerro, Reducto and Unión. Among the groups of workers organized by labor groups were the railway workers.[21] Morales believes that the introduction of soccer through the CURCC team was a diversionary tactic aimed at neutralizing railway worker participation in the labor movement.[22]

José Luis Buzzetti gives credit to a Scot for honing the CURCC team into a precisioned group whose tactics were planned and coordinated to perfection. As a result, in 1910 a generation of soccer players was created: the Olympic Generation whose influence would extend throughout the two successive decades contained the names of Carlos Scarone, Romano, Harley, Piendibene, Dacal, Foglino, Benincasa, Saporiti, Zuazú and Landoni. By 1913 the CURCC team had become so successful that they had outgrown limitations which the Central Uruguay Railway attempted to place upon them. The result of a conflict between labor and management was that the soccer team achieved independence of the Railway. The name of the Club was changed immediately to "Peñarol" or the Peñarol Athletic Club.[23]

Still to be overcome was the opposition of the National Club, whose team was composed of players from more favored sectors of society. According to Morales, in 1924 the Uruguayan Olympic Committee denied Peñarol the right to represent Uruguay in the Olympic Games. They declared that "los hijos de la barbarie no podían competir con los de la civilización."[24] Again, it was popular sentiment which weighed more heavily upon the outcome of the clash of interests. Francisco Ghigliani, a colleague of José Batlle y Ordóñez, intervened in behalf of Peñarol. The result was that the Uruguayan Olympic Committee was dissolved.

There was yet another objection to be overcome. It was necessary to reply to an objection of the International Olympic Committee before Uruguay was allowed to enter the Olympic Games of 1924 in Europe. The belief there was that Uruguay was a province of Argentina and that, as such, was not entitled to participate. In the person of Peñarol, Uruguay had kicked her way into geography, as one French newspaper put it.[25] Thus it was that the players of Peñarol donned the blue sweat shirts to represent Uruguay at Colombes in Paris. Captain of the world champion team was José Nasazzi.

Montevideo hosted the Olympic competition in 1930. One by one, Uruguay eliminated opponents until Argentina and Uruguay were competing for the world championship. More often than not, the fiercest competition for Uruguay was that of Argentina--whose cracks were the product of the same cultural diversity which characterized all of the River Plate Region. Belief in himself and in the team of which he was a part enabled Nasazzi to lead the Uruguayan team to victory in spite of the formidable competition of Argentina. In addition to the psychological impetus derived from belief in oneself and in one's team, strength was gained from identification with fellow Uruguayans in what was almost a religion, a religion of optimism.

José Nasazzi--and other players like him--placed Uruguay on the maps of South America conjectured by Europe and the world, to the eternal gratitude and pride of all

Uruguayans. The sport of soccer and players like Nasazzi created a dynamic, unifying force for the nation.[26]

Unity and solidarity were significant sources of strength for the Olympic Generation. Morales describes the rhythmic synchronization of the team.

> Nuestros equipos llegaron a moverse con tal perfección colectiva, con tanta facilidad para coordinar el esfuerzo de uno con el de los otros diez, que bien podían jugar con música. El futbolista desarrolló una maravillosa combinación de habilidad e instinto, una especie de supersentido que hizo del traslado de la pelota y del esquive, alardes de precisión y belleza. El esquive y el pase del jugador uruguayo crearon una trama de rara belleza, una sucesión de acciones fluyentes, hermosas. Fue ese el primer impacto que recibieron los entendidos europeos en 1924, cuando el núcleo comandado por José Nassazi se lanzó al asalto de las ciudadelas de la civilización.[27]

In part, the spirit of cooperation in working together for a common goal was derived from the similar background of the players, especially those who composed the team of Peñarol. In 1916 the First South American Championship competition was held in Buenos Aires in commemoration of Argentine independence. Chile took exception to the fact that at least two of the players on the Uruguayan team were blacks, Juan Delgado and Isabelino Gradín. Throughout the years, other outstanding black players who wore <u>la celeste</u> were Andrade and Arizpe.[28]

In like manner, the courage of the gaucho was bequeathed to the early greats of Uruguayan soccer. Morales identifies this contribution, emphasizing that "el fútbol

donde luchan cuerpo a cuerpo once hombres, es una batalla caliente, llena de acechanzas, plagadas de ardides, ahíta de trampas y zancadillas." Qualities of the gaucho met the challenge.

> Para todas sus posibilidades el hombre medio de extramuros tenía un escudo, porque "el gaucho, que creía en el coraje por sobre todas las cosas, cuando fallaba el zarpazo del léon recurría a la picardía del zorro", como dice Daniel Vidart. La "picardía criolla" fue el sustituto a que echó mano el futbolista allí donde la batalla frontal imponía exigencias mayores a sus fuerzas, en la gran traba de la cancha. Hay toda una historia. Esa "picardía" es hija de la necesidad. En el fondo había un "viejo Vizcacha" en cada futbolista nuestro.[29]

Not the least of the elements contributing to the sense of solidarity was the spirit of the immigrants. That each man is a Prince in his own right was demonstrated by José Miguel Piendibene Ferrari. Piendibene is referred to as a criollo by Buzzetti. However, his political sensitivities reveal that in the not too distant past his forebears had had experience in Italy. In 1924 Prince Humberto de Saboya, heir to the throne of Italy, visited Montevideo. In his honor a soccer game between Uruguay and Argentina was organized. Piendibene, whose championship performances had won him the nickname of "El Maestro," boycotted the game.[30]

Comet with a Straw Tail

The meteoric trajectory of championship soccer in Uruguay flashed across the sky and disappeared, leaving in its wake only an occasional glimmer of former brilliance.

In Partes de naufragios, the game of soccer and associated allusions are framed within the labyrinth of decay. Perceived in retrospect, the theme of soccer is last glimpsed as a thread in the fabric of the grandson's memory of the last day that he saw Tío Mario alive. Chapter 28 weaves together contrasting memories of his uncle's disease and of sunny afternoons at the soccer stadium, of a café full of enthusiastic soccer fans after a game in contrast to a café which smells of coffee with no one. The perceiving mind of the grandson is so weighted by anxiety for his uncle's condition that the memories of happier times have the weight of lead. The lethargic movement of time within the limits of the chapter attests to the burden of anguish. The events of the day when Tío Mario was last seen alive are being recalled at the bedside of the dying Antonio. Thus, memory of the anguish for Tío Mario's death is framed by the imminence of death for Antonio.

The happier incidents of Chapter 28 are perceived by the reader as being very near the end of the novel; foregoing images have been those of overwhelming disintegration. The preceding chapter was punctured at the center of its nostalgia by the word "FIN"; the succeeding chapter is the pivotal one of the novel.

If, then, no argument can be made for happiness in association with the memories of Chapter 28, perhaps Chapter 21 might offer a modicum of pleasurable experience

for the reader. The theme of soccer appears in juxtaposition to the happiness with which Mario is greeted as he arrives at the cottage in Malvín on the day of the asado, thundering to a halt on his mighty steed the forchela. The nostalgia of the scene of the preparation of the asado by Alberto and Catalina seems only momentarily interrupted when one of the children steps into an anthill. Tío Mario takes full advantage of the opportunity to show off his soccer skills for his nephews and, incidentally, for other members of his family--his sisters and brothers-in-law.

Taking a closer look at the chapter, the reader will sense that there is something about it which is indefinably macabre. Something about the anecdote which is told as a joke by the grandson and his parents, Antonio and Margarita, to Tío Miguel creates uneasiness. It is the story of the chicken which Antonio thought he had killed. Actually, he had only pulled its neck enough to make it faint. During the night, Antonio was stirred from bed by a noise in the bathroom where the plucked chicken was hanging. He decided to take a look. The chicken had managed to get off the hook and, naked to the pinfeathers, it had stretched its neck to capture a few drops of water from the leaky faucet.

Chapter 21 ends with the reader's discovery that Mamagela was saving chicken feathers to fill the pink comforter which will suck the life from her body in her declining years. It will appear again--emerging from a

black trunk--to cover the limbs of her daughter Margarita, as life ebbs from her body in the remote future.[31] This analogue leads to Horacio Quiroga's story "El almohadón de plumas." The new bride Alicia withers and fades and dies before the eyes of her husband Jordán. Only after her death does he discover a monster within the feathers of her pillow, puffed up with the life it has sucked from her.[32] Thus, the reader realizes that Chapter 21 is also framed by the labyrinth of decay.

The theme of soccer makes a fleeting appearance in Chapter 23, associated with the political crises of 1933 and 1969. In the midst of details of student militancy, censoring of the newspapers, concern about the omnipresence of tiras ("police detectives"), an occasional bomb burst and the suicide of Baltasar Brum on Río Branco Street, the brief allusion appears.

> ... mientras en los cafés se discutía la composición de los cuadros de Peñarol y Wanderers que jugarían al día siguiente en el estadio ... (p. 202)

In his essay "Esa anestesia llamada fútbol," Mario Benedetti addresses this obsessive concern for the game of soccer while the nation, itself, disintegrates. He considers soccer a kind of delirium which demands a degee of emotional involvement that saps its fans of the physical endurance necessary to confront crucial issues affecting their daily lives. Moreover, he attributes to the politicians the

same manipulation which Morales believed to be the rationale for the promotion of soccer among railway workers. "El político, con esa extraña y sórdida lucidez que da la demagogia, ve claramente el sentido usufructuable de esas fatigas, y las remata convirtiéndose él mismo en dirigente deportivo."[33] Soccer has become a form of anesthesia for the Uruguayan people, according to Benedetti.

A vague similarity exists between Mario's hypnotized faith in the inadequate cures of Don Pedro and the conversations of café customers about soccer. All of the personalities are confined within the labyrinth of decay. However, they are too engrossed in their situations to recognize the fatality of the decay which surrounds them. It may be stated that they are defying the omens.

The theme of soccer in the novel evolves from an early, jubilant nostalgia evoked by the happy-go-lucky personality of Mario. Textually, the theme is juxtaposed to the political crisis of 1933 and to the death of a syphilitic in 1938 or 1939. Juxtaposition also relates the theme of soccer to that of collection of feathers for the demonic pink comforter.

Soccer may well be an innocent victim, condemned equally with those who share guilt.[34] As Benedetti points out, "El deporte, como tal, es el gran inocente de esta historia. ... El cándido, inocente fútbol no tiene la culpa."[35]

"La cumparsita"

Both sprang from the same root, according to Franklin Morales--both soccer and the tango. It is natural that Mario is also most experienced in the art of dancing the tango. Chapter 17 contains a series of locations in time which are superimposed one upon the other. If we follow the time frames back into the scene where Mario is dancing the tango with his sister Margarita, it is possible to identify scraps of conversation which furnish a clue to the date of the incident. The dialogue includes such phrases as "El sábado llega Carusso", "Sí, Cavallería Rusticana" and "¿Oíste Quévachaché?" (p. 153).

The tango "Qué vachaché" was premiered in Montevideo in 1926 by Enrique Santos Discépolo, who wrote the words. The words were a source of consternation to the Montevideo audience, reflecting as they did a very bleak view of man and society. The conversation conveyed in fragments within this frame may have taken place in 1926 when "Qué vachaché" was still uppermost in the minds of Montevideans.[36]

By that time, the tango had been accepted within the circles of polite society on both sides of the River Plate.[37] What Díaz portrays is a tender moment within the confines of family and home; a moment when brothers and sisters dance to the music of the tango. The music is provided by the Victrola which was a relatively new invention at that time. Again, what

is being suggested is a nostalgia for the lore and the mystery of the world of the tango.

> Suenan los primeros compases, y Mario, alegre, pero algo más serio--él es el que sabe qué es el tango--se adelanta hacia Margarita: "--A ver, hermanita, vení!" (p. 152)

That it is Mario who knows what the tango is and how to dance it well conveys a world of associations for the person who lived in Uruguay during the 1920s.

A Natural Child

The parentage of the tango is uncertain, although much has been written and authorities have presented conflicting opinions. It appears safe to attribute the tango to a variety of musical and cultural influences which gestated on both sides of the River Plate from at least the mid nineteenth century. The Andalucian tango, the Cuban habanera, the milonga of the gauchos and the candombe of the blacks have been identified as contributing to the dance which finally emerged and took all Europe by storm during the first decade of the twentieth century.[38] Having been recognized in Europe--especially in both Paris and London--the natural child was tardily acknowledged by Buenos Aires and Montevideo.[39]

First and foremost, the tango was a dance form. As it evolved, it was transformed into song with emphasis upon the words and the meaning conveyed. Finally, it became a musical form interpreted with a maximum of variation.

Daniel Vidart identifies a series of transitions or phases through which the dance evolved before the tango achieved its own identity and, having done so, was exported from the River Plate Region to the world.

The first phase took place in the dwellings of the women of the soldiers at about the middle of the nineteenth century. A cosmopolitan atmosphere characterized their spontaneous musical gatherings. Waltzes, mazurkas, polkas, the habanera and the chotís (or "schottische") were but a few of the dances popularly acclaimed. Often, local musicians participated. They played by ear and incorporated native elements--the milonga of the gauchos or the candombe of the blacks--into the broader repertoire. Similar gatherings occurred in the boits or cafetines of the area near the port of Montevideo where sailors from all over the world congregated.[40]

From the rooms of the soldiers' women and the nightlife of Ciudad Vieja, the tango passed to the Academias Montevideanas and to the dance houses of Buenos Aires.[41] Vicente Rossi identifies at least four Academies in Montevideo, one in each of the neighborhoods referred to as "el Puerto," "el Bajo," "la Aguada" and "el Cordón." The most famous was San Felipe, located on the banks of the River Plate in what was then called "el Bajo" (a neighborhood which has since undergone urban renewal).[42]

In Montevideo's Academies, the dance was cultivated as an end in itself; it was not a pretext for sexuality and it was not part of a courting game. The women most desired as partners were sometimes less than attractive, according to Rossi. Their desirability in the dance could be attributed to their ability to dance expertly and to allow the man an opportunity to cut a grand figure by anticipating his steps and gestures. Dancing began in the evening and continued until sunrise. Tremendous physical endurance was necessary, both for the females who collected a meager wage, and for the males intent upon demonstrating their innovativeness and physical prowess.

Rossi explains that male participants were from all classes of society.

> Ya no sólo el negro se floreaba y divertía con sus reminiscencías raciales a través de costumbres, tiempos y temperamentos; acudían a la Academia en busca de las sensaciones de la Milonga, la juventud masculina de todas las clases sociales; de espectadores-alumnos en enorme mayoría, que bailar en público no era para todos, y, allí, donde canchaba el orillero, mucho menos, pues se jugaba un ridículo seguro. En privado satisfacían sus entusiasmos los aficionados.[43]

The competitive spirit between musicians matched that of the dancers. Creativity was much admired. Each musician could contribute his own composition, his own specialty which he shared freely with the dancers and other musicians when called upon to do so.[44]

It was the Teatro Nacional Rioplatense which first made possible the broader diffusion of the tango.[45] Arriving in Europe, the tango provoked such a controversy that its impact was captured in a Spanish refrain, "Dicen que el tango tiene una gran languidez,/ por eso lo ha prohibido /el Papa Pío Diez ... ."[46]

The tango as a dance form was symbol of the vitality of the immigrants, the gauchos and the criollos and of their optimism and self-sufficiency, as well, believes Vidart. Moreover, it expresses the yearning for a lost paradise--definable in spiritual rather than physical terms--which is shared by inhabitants of the River Plate Region. He further explains that

> este afán simbólico nos ha movido a los rioplatenses a fabricar el tango primero y a explicarlo después. El tango, mientras desenvolvía su madeja vital, era una actitud, un modo de ser, una respuesta al reto del medio; hoy, clausurados sus escenarios por el portazo del tiempo y desaparecidos sus protagonistas por imperio de la guadaña, se ha quedado sin funciones. Entonces lo clavamos como a una mariposa nocturna en un cartón rotulado y lo estudiamos con una lupa, verificamos el color de sus ojos muertos, olemos el dorado polvillo de sus alas, reconstruimos la ruta de sus vuelos, adivinamos sus antiguas peripecias orilleras. Locos de melancolía, sin nada con qué abrigarnos, pobres de solemnidad en medio de la pobreza de América, levantamos el farol humeante del tango para encontrar el rumbo de nuestros pasos, para justificar nuestras incertidumbres, para descubrir una isla--desierta--en medio de las negras aguas de la noche. Y de nada nos sirve. Seguimos tan vacíos, tan banales, tan abandonados como antes: exiliados de Europa, extraños en el Nuevo Mundo, náufragos de la historia.[47]

In 1920 the world championship of modern dance was won by a porteño who performed the tango in Paris's Teatro Marigny. Casimiro Aín's victory confirmed the popularity of the dance which had been the rage of Europe for at least a decade. Inasmuch as it was the Argentines who effectively exported the dance--through the efforts of Aín and other porteños who had gone to Paris to teach the tango--the dance was referred to as the "Argentine tango."[48] Nevertheless, the tango is a product of the cultural diversity shared by both Uruguay and Argentina. The tango evolved on both sides of the River Plate and its evolution was stimulated by continuous interchange between sailors from port to port, musicians from city to city and performers who made personal appearances in theaters and in cabarets or cafetines.[49]

Discépolo explains that the impact of the singer Pascual Contursi upon the tango "llevó el tango de los pies a la boca."[50] Contursi composed the words for some of the tangos which he sang. One of the most famous of his compositions is "Mi noche triste." Contursi, an Argentine, wrote the words of "La cumparsita," a tango which was composed by the Uruguayan musician Gerardo Matos Rodríguez in 1917.[51]

It remained for Carlos Gardel to bring to fruition the tango as song of the people. For Daniel Vidart, Gardel achieved the reverse of legendary figures like Santos Vega or Cantaclaro who forged myths out of daily contact with the people.

> Se dedicó a fabricar mitos para esconder tras ellos su vida, dejando a la historia menor de los sucesos rioplatenses la liviana tarea de aventarlos. Su lugar de nacimiento, su formación juvenil, sus amores y otros pequeños misterios laterales eran sabiamente aderezados con sonrisas, evasivas o silencios para crear en derredor suyo un aura de incertidumbre que sentaba bien a su fama de príncipe de los cantores.[52]

Maggi identifies a relationship between Gardel's personality and the nostalgia of the immigrants.

> Nunca en la historia del mundo se acumuló tanto desamparo como el que trajeron a esta orilla nuestros padres, a puñados sobre el corazón, disuelto como sal amarga en las lágrimas o en el miedo. Y ese mismo desamparo lo siguieron trayendo después los inmigrantes por años y años y lo están desembarcando ahora mismo, cada día, los que recién llegan. ...
>
> La añoranza transparente y de sombra que está en la voz nocturna de Carlos Gardel, capaz de salvarnos del mundo y dejarnos a solas con nuestra soledad.[53]

For Francisco Espínola the genius of Gardel lay in the broadness of his appeal which cut across classes, cultures and races and united all of the people of the River Plate.

> Así, bajo el sortilegio de su voz, sus nuevos auditores del Centro olvidaron un poco el español castizo, el francés y el italiano (el inglés no había llegado, aún) en que acostumbraban oír y también entonar sus cantos preferidos, para irse sintiendo todos hijos de una santa tierra común que, bien se ve también por esto, no divide un río. Pronto, ya la joven aristocrática no se limitaría sólo a atreverse a danzar el tango, impuesto cada vez más por los conjuntos orquestales que ascendían a los salones y que estaban operando con sus modestos bártulos una aproximación de espíritus por encima de las barreras sociales, aproximación que en América el arte grande no había podido lograr sino en contados casos. Esa niña mimada por la vida,

> bajo el influjo del arte de Gardel, también experimentó, a solas, la necesidad de ponerse delante, en su imaginación, y de contemplarlo, un mundo tan próximo que habría podido tocarlo, y las características de cuyos seres ni siquiera sospechaba, sin embargo, sintió esa necesidad y, para satisfacerla, a solas, dije, en la intimidad de su ser, tarareó o resueltamente cantó los cantos de Gardel. La muchacha estudiante, la joven obrera, la empleada--no imagino, estoy seguro--desde su pureza empezaron a mirar con ojos graves y ensimismadores, no con los mismos de antes, a la joven giranta cuando, por la calle, les cruzaba al lado como infortunada mariposa entre las ráfagas. Y, misteriosamente, la obrera, la empleada, la estudiante, la chica bien se encontraron más serias y más justas, se sintieron, por ende, mejores. Sí, el realismo de la letra tan magistralmente cantada hizo que parte considerable de los tangos obrara como ventanas abiertas a un mundo de seres de cuya intimidad la mayoría ciudadana no tenía ni noticias. A influjo de la voz de Gardel, tan conciliadora por otra parte, en su nobleza--el timbre, el timbre sólo de Gardel ya es solidario como ninguno--, a influjo, digo de esa voz, sus canciones consiguen que los grupos sociales enriquezcan su experiencia humana.[54]

Idea Vilariño emphasizes the fact that the times which produced the tango no longer exist; the tango as song immortalized the era of the heroic struggle of the newcomers to the River Plate Region.

> Podemos recordar también que, según dicen los sabios, casi toda edad heroica es cantada después, cuando ya ha periclitado, cuando el tiempo transcurrido permite idealizarla, embellecerla, disimular sus pequeñeces, sus horrores, poblarla de hombres que fueron más enteros, más capaces de grandeza, de hazañas y de gloria que los del vulgar presente. Y también eso se dio en las letras de tango; de ahí la rememoración, la exaltación, la estilización del malevaje

> orillero, de sus hazañas y de sus valores, en la época en que todo eso estaba prácticamente cancelado. Y de ahí la aceptación del público, a quien, en todos los tiempos ha apasionado la crónica cantada e idealizada del ayer.[55]

It is the belief of many Uruguayans that Carlos Gardel was born in Uruguay. His origins are equally as mysterious as those of the tango with which his name had become synonymous at the time of his death in a tragic airplane accident in 1934 while returning from a long series of singing engagements in Europe, North and South America.[56]

Un pensamiento triste

It was Enrique Santos Discépolo who defined the tango as "un pensamiento triste que se baila."[57] Maggi explains that a portion of the tango's sadness may be attributed to longing for that which has been lost. And, for the immigrant what has been lost is a world on the other side of the ocean or across the undulating pampa in the green interior of Uruguay. The descendant of the immigrant longs for the heritage which he feels he has been denied. However, longing and nostalgia are only a portion of the sadness identified by Maggi. Loneliness is the essential square of the anguish in the words of the tango.[58]

Ernesto Sábato carries the sense of isolation even further as he points out the irony of feeling lonely during the physical proximity of the dance. It is not longing for physical contact which accounts for the loneliness of

which the tango speaks. "Era precisamente lo contrario: la nostalgia de la comunión y del amor, la añoranza de la mujer, no la presencia de un instrumento de su lujuria."[59] That the dance should be an expression of man's essential isolation from his fellow human being is a logical artistic antithesis according to Sábato.

Thus, in Partes de naufragios brothers and sisters dance to the tango with a serious demeanor which contrasts with the gaiety of the occasion. Especially is this true of Mario. He does not speak as he performs "los pasos más audaces."

> Todos son altos y sólidos en torno; cuando dan un paso de baile es muy diferente a cuando caminan: algo los mueve de manera poderosa, atropellan si uno está cerca, sin mirar siquiera, porque están como pensando fijamente en una cosa que no se entiende. Casi no se les reconoce. (p. 154)

In the earlier tangos, loneliness may be attributed to longing for the world which was left behind. By the 1920s the sadness of the tango was becoming ever more acute. By then, Contursi had created words for the music of "La cumparsita." Man was being abandoned by all living creatures, according to the lyrics he composed.

> Al cotorro abandonado
> ya ni el sol de la mañana
> asoma por la ventana
> como cuando estabas vos
> y aquel perrito compañero
> que por tu ausencia no comía
> al verme solo, el otro día,
> también me dejó.[60]

By the end of the twenties, Discépolo was equating man with the rapaciousness of animals in a manner which foreshadows similar themes of the French nouveau roman. A verse from the tango "Cambalache" displays his abject pessimism.

> Que el mundo fue y será una porquería
> ya lo sé;
> en el quinientos seis
> y en el dos mil también;
> que siempre ha habido chorros,
> maquiavelos y estafaos,
> contentos y amargaos,
> valores y duplés,
> pero que el siglo veinte es un despliegue
> de maldá insolente
> ya no hay quien lo niegue;
> vivimos revolcaos en un merengue
> y en un mismo lodo todos manoseaos.[61]

El tango de la hermanita

The tango to which Mario and Margarita dance is perceived within two merging and blurring frames: the original occasion (in 1926) in the house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street with the green leaves of the plátanos--outside the windows which open upon the balcony--rustling in harmony to the music and the repeated occasion as the original is remembered in the dining room of the house in Malvín. As dialogue from both frames intersects, the anguish of the reader is heightened. He is reminded that the world of the tango and its associations can never again be recaptured. Only several pages before, such a message has been received through the scratching of the needle upon a record, "como el indescifrable mensaje de las galaxias lejanas, el ruido de fondo de un mundo perdido" (p. 151).

From the two frames, phrases of dialogue intersect with a third voice--that of the person who sings the tango being played on the same Victrola in both scenes. Occasionally, an individual in one or the other of the frames reacts to the words of the tango which are being heard in both scenes. From the frame of the dining room of the house in Malvín, Tía Marcela is heard commenting, "Pero es muy viejo este disco, ¿no?" (p. 153). Within a few seconds, the voice on the record responds with the words "Chueca, vestida de pebeta" (p. 153). Marcela believes that the singer is alluding to her.[62] She reacts indignantly to the words of the record.

> --¡Che! ¡No me gusta! ¿Está hablando de mí? Pero yo no me visto de pebeta, ¿verdad? Esta Margarita siempre me está diciendo que si me pongo dos sacos, que me fije que el de afuera sea más corto que el que me pongo abajo y yo qué sé, así que por mí no lo dice. (p. 153)

The next reaction to the words of the tango comes from Alberto, who is within the innermost frame, as he imitates the posture of a rooster in harmony with the words. It may be that this is a caricature improper to the dignity of the tango. Alberto is either expressing satire or making a joke which is, perhaps, in poor taste.[63]

The final indignity to which the tango is subjected occurs in the dining room in Malvín. The great grandson plays with the record whose voice is "todavía más lejana y gangosa" as he opens the lid of the Victrola; he toys with

the speed regulator and it becomes even more distorted as "la voz se hace primero enfermiza, infantil, y después se pierde en un histérico chillido contínuo" (p. 155).

Margarita snuffs out the scene of the tango as she admonishes her grandson, "Bueno, dejá en paz eso" (p. 155). Thus, the reader senses the futility of trying to recapture the lost world of the living tango.

El este

The exodus of Montevideans to the East in an endless unfolding of beach communities is another aspect of the pleasures of a happier time, only slightly hinted in the novel. The _años locos_ witnessed the coming of the vogue of sunbathing, swimming and weekending on the beaches of Uruguay which endlessly ring the country from the southernmost tip of Brazil along the Atlantic Coast to Punta del Este--the peninsula which is bathed on the east by the Atlantic and on the west by the Plate River. Beaches along the River Plate continue in endless succession to its juncture with the Uruguay River, along whose flow there are also many stretches of open sand which lend themselves to the recreation of swimming and sunbathing.

In _Partes de naufragios_ the superimposition of locations in time upon places in space is an aspect of the description of the metamorphosis of the piece of land which

abuts that upon which the abandoned house in Malvín is located. In their early years in Malvín--probably the beginning of the 1930s--Antonio and Margarita had rented the adjacent lot to Don Juan and his wife Doña Juanita.

> Entonces el terreno se veía de lejos, porque era un rectángulo plantado de eucaliptus jóvenes. El único plantada en toda la cuadra, allá donde el hormigón terminaba ... (p. 96)

A shift in time occurs from the distant past to a time which is indeterminate, but closer to the present.

> Ahora allí riegan las achiras, y sobre todo, al fondo, el sauce nuevo, que quieren que brote bien, y todavía aparecen entre el césped los muñones de los ultimos eucaliptus que cortó González, y, de cuando en cuando, algún pedazo de hierro, algunos de los fierros que tenía don Juan dentro del rancho, algún pedazo de cachivache enterrado, porque todo no lo pudieron limpiar bien. (p. 96)

A third transition is made to an intermediate time when the family cleaned up the <u>rancho</u> upon the death of Don Juan and preparatory to the departure of Doña Juanita.

> Entonces, entre las maderas caídas y astilladas, todavía fueron apareciendo más cosas, pero ya no se las llevó siquiera a doña Juanita: el sable de caballería con la hoja comida, algunas baldosas que habían sobrado cuando hicieron la casa, una jaula de pájaro oxidado con papeles de diario dentro, algunas herramientas que faltaban desde hacía tiempo y que estaban enterradas en la arena, debajo de donde había estado la cama, oxidadas y con las roscas atascadas, inservibles, y sobre todo una buena docena de botellas de leche estabilizada, de esa que se compra en la farmacia, que seguramente alguien le regalaba ... (pp. 96-97)

Time metamorphoses to a position which is closer to the present.

> No se sabe tampoco muy bien donde estaba el rancho; saben que caminan sobre el lugar, eso sí, pero no saben ya exactamente donde estaba: el césped ya creció parejo ... (p. 97)

With a giant step into the past, the plot of land is visualized before it was planted with eucalyptuses.

> Antes era un arenal, un arenal que vendió Piria, como vendió el terreno donde está también la casa de su padre ... (p. 97)

The mention of the name of Piria alludes to the time when Montevideans were moving to beach communities east of the city.

At the turn of the century, Capurro was the most stylish of Montevideo's beaches. Located on the bay at midpoint in its crescent, the beach of Capurro eventually had been overwhelmed by the industrial environment which was mushrooming around it. By 1916, expansion from the city's peninsula toward the east was already well under way. The Rambla, or riverside drive, which had extended westward to Capurro from the peninsula, was being extended eastward along the River Plate. Pocitos and Carrasco were brought within range of city dwellers. By 1925 the eastward expansion in a series of beaches had become an active commercial enterprise.[64] In the novel, Miguel recalls that Antonio purchased the property in Malvín "allá por el ventinueve, cuando murió Batlle" (p. 79).

Maggi explains the popularity of the beaches to the east of the peninsula by relating the exodus they occasioned to completion of Hotel Carrasco in 1921. At that time, summer cottages were selling for $900 (pesos Uruguayos). One of the most prominent of the promoters was Don Francisco Piria, "un viejo condotierro de la guerra inmobiliaria que arboló la costa dibujando calles y terrenos, inventó compradores, puso en producción el aire, el agua y el sol."[65] The enterprises of Piria are still evidenced today in the name of the resort community of Piriápolis, located between Montevideo and the now famous Punta del Este.

Turning once again to the novel and thinking in terms of a happier time--days of sunshine and of the warmth of being together in Malvín--one discovers an intimate and yet universal image.

> En el jardín había rosales y margaritas. Eso debía ser lo que más se veía de la casa, aunque había además olor a madreselva, y las flores pequeñas y curvas se podían morder por la base cuando estaban abiertas y con los pistilos a la vista, para sorber el jugo dulce de la flor. Pero lo que más debía verse eran las margaritas, porque una vez, cuando los dos, el padre y la madre, prepararon la casa para una fiesta que en ella iban a hacer todos los compañeros del taller, él hizo un bastidor de madera, lo cubrió con una tela blanca y tensa, y sobre ella pintó, con precisas letras de imprenta, VILLA, y con otras más elegantes y dibujadas, Las Margaritas. "Villa LAS MARGARITAS". En el jardín había margaritas, pero además, ella se llamaba Margarita, de modo que cuando vio el cartel que él había pintado, corrió sonriente y él la recibió con un abrazo y un beso. (p. 177)

Notes to Chapter 1

1. Carlos Maggi, "Origen y diatriba de la cachada," pp. 571-572.

2. Renzo Pi Hugarte y Daniel Vidart, El legado de los inmigrantes, 1:13-17.

3. Thomas E. Weil et al., Area Handbook for Uruguay, pp. 40-41.

4. Ibid., p. 58.

5. Guillermo Vázquez Franco, "Ingleses, ferrocarriles y frigoríficos," pp. 83-85.

6. Germán W. Rama, "El ascenso de las clases medias," p. 112.

7. Weil, p. 43.

8. Germán W. Rama, pp. 115-116.

9. María Inés Silva Vila treats a similar theme in her novel Salto cancan. The Saavedra mansion deteriorates into a conventillo and members of the traditional family are relegated to the coach house. Italian immigrants provide the dynamic and progressive forces of the novel (María Inés Silva Vila, Salto cancan, passim).

10. Jorge Páez, El conventillo, pp. 12-13.

11. Daniel Vidart, "El gran Montevideo," p. 148.

12. Gerald D. McDonald, Michael Conway, and Mark Ricci, eds., The Films of Charlie Chaplin, pp. 143-145.

13. Díaz, Partes, pp. 251-252.

14. Franklin Morales, "La garra celeste," p. 33.

15. Ibid., p. 28.

16. Ibid., p. 26.

17. Ángel Rama, "La belle époque," p. 148.

18. Morales, "La garra celeste," p. 25.

19. Ángel Rama, "La belle époque," p. 149.

20. Carlos M. Rama, "Obreros y anarquistas," p. 24.

21. Ibid., p. 26.

22. Franklin Morales y Carlos Martínez Moreno, "Literatura y fútbol," p. 657.

23. José Luis Buzzetti, "La nacionalización del fútbol," El fútbol (Antología), ed. Franklin Morales and Carlos Martínez Moreno, pp. 7-16.

24. Morales, "La garra celeste," p. 29.

25. Morales y Martínez Moreno, "Literatura y fútbol," p. 658.

26. Dionisio Alejandro Vera, "La muerte de Nasazzi," El fútbol (Antología), ed. Franklin Morales and Carlos Martínez Moreno, pp. 45-48.

27. Morales, "La garra celeste," p. 29.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., p. 32.

30. Morales y Martínez Moreno, "Literatura y fútbol," p. 659.

31. Díaz, Partes, pp. 172-173.

32. Horacio Quiroga, "El almohadón de plumas," p. 48.

33. Mario Benedetti, "Esa anestesia llamada fútbol," El país de la cola de paja, p. 155.

34. The idea is analogous with Cotelo's interpretation of "La gallina degollada" by Quiroga. The punishment inflicted upon the parents--for their defiance of omens and refusal to accept reality--results in the death of the innocent child (Rubén Cotelo, "Horacio Quiroga, vida y obra," pp. 263-265).

35. Benedetti, "Esa anestesia," pp. 155-156.

36. José Wainer y Juan José Iturriberry, "El tango," p. 55.

37. Daniel Vidart, "Realidad e imaginación del tango-danza," El tango (Antología), ed. Daniel Vidart and Carlos Maggi, p. 88.

38. Sábato identifies an Italian influence, as well: "Es el baile híbrido de gente híbrida: tiene algo de habanera traída por los marineros, restos de milonga y luego mucho de música italiana" (Ernesto Sábato, Tango, p. 18).

39. Wainer y Iturriberry, "El tango," p. 43.

40. Vidart, "Realidad e imaginación," p. 61.

41. Ibid., pp. 58-61.

42. Vicente Rossi, Cosas de negros, p. 129.

43. Ibid., p. 135.

44. Ibid., p. 133.

45. Vidart, "Realidad e imaginación," p. 61.

46. Rossi, p. 172.

47. Vidart, "Realidad e imaginación," p. 64.

48. Rossi, p. 150.

49. Daniel Vidart y Carlos Maggi, "Literatura y tango," p. 673.

50. Wainer y Iturriberry, "El tango," p. 50.

51. Vidart y Maggi, "Literatura y tango," p. 674.

52. Daniel Vidart, "Carlos Gardel, o el milagro," El tango (Antología), ed. Daniel Vidart and Carlos Maggi, p. 120.

53. Carlos Maggi, "Hubo sí," El tango (Antología), ed. Daniel Vidart and Carlos Maggi, p. 118.

54. Francisco Espínola, "Un ejemplar humano," El tango (Antología), ed. Daniel Vidart and Carlos Maggi, p. 113.

55. Idea Vilariño, "El tango," El tango (Antología), ed. Daniel Vidart and Carlos Maggi, p. 47.

56. Erasmo Silva Cabrera, Carlos Gardel, pp. 225-239.

57. Sábato, Tango, p. 11.

58. Maggi, "Hubo sí," p. 118.

59. Sábato, Tango, pp. 14-15.

60. Pascual Contursi, "La cumparsita," Cambalache, ed. José Wainer and Juan José Iturriberry, p. 50.

61. Enrique Santos Discépolo, "Cambalache," Cambalache, ed. José Wainer and Juan José Iturriberry, pp. 56-57.

62. "Pebeta" is Lunfardo for "niña" (Federico Cammarota, Vocabulario familiar y del lunfardo, p. 158).

63. Sábato states: "Sólo un gringo puede hacer la payasada de aprovechar un tango para conversar o para divertirse. ... Algunos arguyen que no es siempre dramático y que, como todo lo porteño en general, puede ser humorístico; queriendo significar, supongo, que la alegría no le es ajena. Lo que de ningún modo es exacto, pues en esos casos el tango es satírico, su humorismo tiene la agresividad de la cachada argentina" (Sábato, Tango, pp. 16-17).

64. Vidart, "El gran Montevideo," p. 152.

65. Carlos Maggi, "Los años locos," p. 14.

CHAPTER 2

BATLLE AT THE PROW

The Paternal Figure

What a father is for his family José Batlle y Ordóñez was for Uruguayans and for his political party the Colorados. In the interior of Uruguay the traditions of Spain and Portugal reinforce one another, perpetuating the partriarchal family. The city of Montevideo, on the other hand, has been in a constant state of flux, having received immigrants from the interior of Uruguay and from Europe. Urban life tends to break away from traditional values because of the tremendous mixing of cultures in the capital city. Nevertheless, the people of Uruguay as a whole are accustomed to a strong paternal image. While José Batlle y Ordóñez lived, the people believed in him and looked to him for leadership and protection. The death of Batlle in 1929 and the loss of the paternal figure he represented have affected the morale of the country. Luis Alberto de Herrera of the National party served the same function for the Blancos, who suffered a similar loss with his death in 1959. In conveying this

impression of the impact of Batlle upon Uruguay, I am paraphrasing the writer Julio C. Da Rosa who expressed his admiration of Batlle to me in an interview.[1]

Da Rosa stated that he is an orthodox Batllista. He believes in the maxims of the great statesman Batlle, and in the collegiate form of government whereby a directing board of administrators--rather than a president--governs the nation. The open political meeting, an integral part of the system, allowed party members to meet and discuss controversial issues. Moreover, young people were involved in the democratic process. These channels were created by Batlle to allow maximum participation in the government. He favored measures to promote the welfare of the middle class and to improve conditions for the poorer classes. There was a balance between socialized government and private enterprise in the tenants of Batllismo, according to Da Rosa.

He believes that the followers of Batlle began to stray from his teachings and to demonstrate increasingly less talent soon after Batlle's death. From 1930 to 1940 the benefits of Batlle could still be felt because there was a sufficient accumulation of well-being to allow some carry-over. From 1940, a disintegration occurred as the teachings of Batlle were increasingly left aside by his followers. Speaking in 1970, Da Rosa observed that about twelve years previously the national convention of the Colorado party

and the local meetings of the party ceased to exist. It became even more difficult for the people to participate directly in the political process. Above all, this has precluded the opportunity for youth to become involved in politics. In 1966, the Colorado party further violated the tenants of Batlle by allowing the abandonment of the collegiate form of government.

As Di Segni and Mariani explain, although the Colorado party won the presidency in 1966, the strength of Batllismo was not sufficient to prevent passage of a new Constitution.

> Lo que es indudable, sí, es que en 1966 los uruguayos votaron por una Constitución que volviendo al régimen presidencialista, imponía un Ejecutivo con poderes como nunca los había tenido antes--salvo la excepción de algún período dictatorial --poderes que, se suponía, iba a ser herramienta adecuada para garantizar un buen gobierno.[2]

In Partes de naufragios the portrayal of Batlle is basically harmonious with the observations of Da Rosa. The novel conveys fleeting impressions which the grandson still recalls of the day when Batlle's body lay in state. It is notable that those portions of the novel which contain a degree of linear integrity, as opposed to increasingly fragmented structure, relate to a happier time before Batlle's death. This may simply be explained as a function of nostalgia. On the other hand, the author is examining the plight of man inexorably entangled in economic, political and

historical processes. Díaz is endeavoring to portray the effect of those processes upon man rather than to portray the events themselves.

As the narrative progresses beyond the death of Batlle in 1929, events perceived tend to become fragmented in an ever-increasing fashion. Moreover, it is symbolic that the paternal figure, Antonio, is rushed to the sanatorium in a comatose condition in Chapter 29 and that he has virtually died by Chapter 33. Antonio portrays the strong paternal image in the family of the novel. His warmth and love are not limited only to his son but are extended, equally, to his brother Miguel and his brother-in-law Mario. The sense of loss of the paternal image felt by his son is conveyed in the phrase "se le borra esa palmada que no sabía que le era tan necesaria" (p. 100). Also suggested through the personality of Antonio are the precepts of Batllismo in which he believed. Through this link, the events of Chapters 29 and 33 reinforce the concept of disintegration of the democratic process which Batlle had struggled to promote.[3]

It was in 1933 that Gabriel Terra took over the government of Uruguay through a coup d'état, establishing himself as dictator. It is difficult, indeed, to indicate any portion of the novel occurring after that date whose prose is characterized by linear integrity. Almost all of the events which occur subsequent to 1933 in the novel are portrayed in a fragmented manner.

In the novel, it is the death of Batlle which leaves the most enduring memory of the historical personality.[4] The grandson must have been five or six years old, at the most, when his father took him to the Legislative Palace. One of the most striking aspects of the memory is the sensation that the child receives of being surrounded by limitless waves of people. The sense of solidarity, of unity and grief shared is present.

> La multitud es una gran masa silenciosa y lenta. No se oye más que el rumor de los pasos que rozan contra el pavimento. Pero dentro de ella se marcan senderos borrosos que van hacia el Palacio. Después de andar sin saber dónde, durante un tiempo, desde que bajaron del tranvía--él siempre de la mano del padre--, sintieron que habían entrado en uno de esos senderos, y así, empujados por los que venían detrás, casi en vilo, y apretados por la muchedumbre, subieron sin darse cuenta la enorme escalinata, de la que no vieron tampoco ningún escalón, porque la multitud cubre todos los alrededores del Palacio, y las escalinatas y el Palacio mismo. Y es una muchedumbre en silencio. Los escalones los tienen que adivinar por el paso que da el que está adelante, pero cuando pasan cerca de las astas de las banderas que caen desde el medio del palo sobre ellos y sobre los hombros de todos los que pasan, se pueden dar vuelta y se dan cuenta de dónde están y de cuántos son, de que no hay nada que no sea gente, que toda la explanada está cubierta, y llenas las calles que desembocan en ella. ... El sendero sigue, da vueltas, y baja por el otro lado de la escalinata. "¡No empujen que hay escalones!" El padre lo alza otra vez para que pueda ver la explanada donde la multitud se extiende hasta donde alcanza la vista, y le dice: "¡Mirá!". (pp. 79-81)

The grandson remembers the face of Batlle in the coffin and even in death a kindness is conveyed. "No se ve más que la cara palidísima entre las flores, con los ojos cerrados y un gesto de preocupación bonachona pero dura" (p. 80) he recalls.

As if the emotions of the multitude could be crystallized in one image and the sense of loss portrayed in but a few words, only one of the mourners is depicted.

> Una vieja que tiene la cabeza cubierta por un pañuelo y que extiende una mano para tocarle la frente (todos lo tocan), y llora, le dice: "¡Ah, m'hijito, se nos murió el ponchito'e los pobres!" (p. 80)

The grandson is unable to forget his father's reaction to the death of Batlle. He remembers that

> ese día habían cerrado el taller temprano porque las Cámaras habían decretado duelo nacional y ya se sabía que lo velaban en el Palacio Legislativo. Cuando llegó le dijo a su mujer que vistiera al hijo, y él mismo se afeitó de nuevo y se cambió de ropa, como cuando iba al velorio de alguien de la familia, y salieron juntos. Lo llevaba de la mano. Para ir hasta el Palacio tuvieron que tomar el tranvía. "Tenés que venir conmigo, ¿sabés?", le dijo. (p. 86)

Antonio painted a portrait in miniature of Don Pepe (popular name of Batlle) in sepia, the same color used in the Sunday supplement of Batlle's newspaper <u>El Día</u>. Miguel recalls that his brother Antonio made a Batllista out of everyone in the family. Whenever Batlle was holding a public meeting at the Royal Theater, there was no use in expecting Antonio home for dinner.

Meetings in the old Royal Theater commenced in 1920.[5] The scene of those historic gatherings is recreated through Miguel's description. He accompanied Antonio to the Royal at least once and he heard the accounts of other occasions from Antonio. This appears to reproduce the manner in which the author Díaz must have heard such events recounted by people who participated.[6] The figure of Batlle is depicted at the prow of the ship.

> Cuando el viejo se pone de pie la sala entera estalla en aplausos. Da tres pasos hasta la tribuna y se queda quieto, con las manos planas hundidas en los bolsillos del saco y los pulgares afuera, porque no le caben, y levanta la cabeza y se queda mirando la platea, como si el ruido fuera un viento que le viene de frente y él estuviera en la proa de un barco. (p. 83)

Miguel further recalls that, on the occasion when he accompanied Antonio, he was able to catch a glimpse of Don Pepe's colleagues. He comments upon the youthful appearance of Brum and upon the manner of dress of Arena. He saw the others, too; the others who later showed their true colors--but for the time being they were with Don Pepe. The image of Batlle is repeatedly that of the figure at the prow--presumably of the Ship of State. What may be implied is a foreboding or foreshadowing of the eventual capsizing of the ship, with Batlle at the prow--the destructive blow to the democratic goals of Batlle which will be dealt by Terra and Ghigliani and the rest in 1933.[7]

In the public meeting (or Convention) in the Royal Theater, it was the custom of Batlle to discuss political theory and strategy with other members of the Colorado party, members who were not always in agreement. Antonio had disagreed with Batlle on the manner of achieving party unity, Miguel recalls.[8] Although he has difficulty remembering exactly when it was that the incident occurred, he believes that it was at the time when the Halty Formula was an issue in 1922.[9] Or, it may have involved Manini Ríos. Since differences between Batlle and Manini Ríos were part of a continuing pattern, reference to him is an ambiguous clue. The issue of "diecisiete y medio" to which Miguel refers is another allusion to the Halty Formula. The difference of opinion between Antonio and Batlle may have revolved around the strategy for the 1922 elections, although the ambiguity serves to reinforce the premise that problems of party unity were a constant and recurring issue, especially from the time that Batlle first proposed the collegiate form of government during his second administration (1911-1915).[10]

In the midst of Batlle's speech to the Convention, Antonio challenges him with the still small words "¡Quién sabe!" (p. 84). From the point of view of Antonio, pacts and compromises to obtain votes are not desirable. The pacts referred to may be with dissenting Colorados. As Antonio

describes the incident, "El le estaba hablando a la Convención y la iba a convencer; ¡claro que la iba a convencer!" (p. 85). Antonio expresses his sense of frustration as he listened to Batlle.

> ¡Quién me iba a escuchar a mí! Pero yo hubiera querido explicarle que no era como él decía; se trataba de que si ganábamos con los otros no valía la pena ganar, ¿te das cuenta? Y además muchos batllistas íbamos a votar con menas ganas. Pero claro; ¿cómo se lo iba a explicar? Además yo no soy orador. Yo ni siquiera me daba cuenta de lo que iba a pasar y después pasó, que iba a haber abstención. ...
>
> Y sabés que cuando terminó miraba para donde yo estaba. Yo me acuerdo que me paré. Tenía ganas de gritar: ¡No es eso! ¡Unidos sí, pero los batllistas! Pero ya todos estaban gritando ¡Bravo! ¿Qué le ibas a hacer? (p. 85)

Batlle and Antonio agree upon the need for unity but disagree as to the means of achieving it. Even more important is the manner in which Batlle responds to Antonio's question. On the one hand, Batlle is portrayed as addressing his devoted followers in a most personal manner, as if they had been invited to visit him at his <u>quinta</u> in Las Piedras. On the other hand, he does not enter into a dialogue with Antonio. He does not respond directly to Antonio's interjection. Batlle incorporates the words of Antonio into his speech and then continues with his own thrust, as if Antonio were not there at all.

> Si oímos ese "Quién sabe" podríamos arriesgar el triunfo; y nosotros no debemos ir a las elecciones para satisfacer el deseo de medirnos con el adversario, porque entre

> el adversario y nosotros está el País; debemos ir a las elecciones seguros de derrotarlo. (¡Bravo! ¡Viva Batlle!) Y para eso no hay más que una solución: ir a la lucha unidos para triunfar! (¡Batlle! ¡Batlle! ¡Batlle!) (p. 85)

Batlle is depicted in the basic contradiction of his personality, as defined by Carlos Real de Azúa: he desires that the government be of the people, a spontaneous and continuous act of participation. At the same time, he does not relinquish the decision-making power. His convictions as to what is necessary for the well-being of the nation do not allow him to step aside, or even--in this novelized instance--to enter into a dialogue with Antonio. Real de Azúa expresses this contradiction as follows:

> Contemplando, sin embargo, las cosas desde lo más alto posible, todo el Batllismo sufrió, y aquí sí, cabe la palabra, de una esencial duplicidad. En esto acorde con el más ilustre antecedente uruguayo posible --quiero decir Artigas y el artiguismo--fue la contradicción entre ese impulso a la espontaneidad popular y su expresión en un partido gobernado desde las bases por el "hombre común" y el temperamento político de su creador y jefe. Porque Batlle, como Artigas y como todo auténtico conductor de multitudes y naciones era un político incapaz de marginalizarse cuando su conciencia (que le hablaba siempre) le mostraba el recto camino, la verdad más defendible y eficaz, el peligro de que los otros se desviasen. En suma, en Batlle luchó siempre empecinadamente la aspiración a que los otros mandasen, o mejor: "no mandase nadie" y la incoercible proclividad a ser él quien lo hiciera, por lo menos en una etapa prologal al funcionamiento de esa ideal espontaneidad. Como esta etapa tendió inevitablemente a identificarse con toda su carrera política activa, ocurrió que fue siempre él quien señalase la ruta y quien impusiese los criterios.[11]

The most intimate glimpses into the personality of Batlle as conveyed by the novel are those which have just been described. Partes de naufragios also contains indirect references to the career of Batlle.

The series of civil wars and international wars which had plagued Uruguay during the nineteenth century and which were brought to an end during the first term of Batlle are suggested through the personality of Don Juan in Chapter 10. The barbarity of Don Juan epitomizes a history of violence and bloodshed to which Batlle was inexorably opposed. Ironically, Don Juan had fought on the side of the unifying forces of Batlle at the beginning of the twentieth century. Ambivalence in the modern novel explains the fact that the forces of what may be construed as progress and the good of the nation contain elements of barbarity. Not all of the good cowboys wear white sombreros. Or, if they do wear white sombreros, they may possess a black heart.

Chapter 10 counterpoises the paternal images of Batlle and Antonio against the barbarity and grotesque aspects of the personality of Don Juan. Was it not Don Juan who made a pact with the Devil? Set like a gem into a total context of horror juxtaposed to the minutiae of daily activity is a brief flash to the illness of the grandson when he was a small child. Antonio is telling his son one of the many stories which filled the interlude between his arrival from his shop and the moment when Margarita would call him

to supper. On this occasion, the story relates to an episode in the career of Batlle.

> Entonces Batlle mandó tropas hasta la frontera, en Rivera. Desde hacía tiempo estaba haciendo venir armamento nuevo, sobre todo los fusiles de repetición; y puso tropas en toda la frontera con ese armamento. Y todos estaban satisfechos porque tenían miedo a una invasión. Pero después, como no pasaba nada, Aparicio le mandó decir que estaba bien y que ya no lo necesitaba más. ... y allí fue que don Pepe le mandó decir que no, que el gobierno del País llegaba hasta la frontera, y que mientras le pareciera necesario iba a dejar el ejército allí; que no podía ser que la mitad del País la mandaran los blancos y la otra mitad los colorados, ¿comprendés?; que como gobierno no tenía más remedio que ocuparse de la seguridad de todo el País, y ahí fue que los blancos se levantaron. ... Esa fue la última revolución, la de mil novecientos cuatro. Aquí, más al sur, Batlle tenía a Galarza, que fue el que peleó por Minas y por toda esta parte, y al norte ... (pp. 93-94)

Reinforcing the paternal and protective elements of Chapter 10 is the note upon which it ends: "pero todo está lejos, lejos, apenas siente ya el apoyo de su mano sobre los hombros; se le borra esa palmada que no sabía que le era tan necesaria" (p. 100). There is a sense of loss of the security and goodness inherent in the personalities of both Antonio and Batlle, one of whom is dead or dying--the other of whom is now dead.

The sense of loss is intensified by the architecture of the novel. Whereas Chapter 9 ends with Antonio and his son together having just paid their last respects to the body of Batlle, Chapter 10 ends with the son totally isolated from all mankind remembering his father who is dead. The

framing of Chapter 9 within a labyrinth of decay is emphasized through the content of Chapter 10. The scene in which Antonio tells his son the story of the good works of Batlle is overwhelmed by the massive moral disintegration of Don Juan, the major framing component of the chapter. The story of the episode in the career of Batlle is perceived as being told under circumstances which are amplified elsewhere in the novel: they are associated with the feverish mind of the sick child who listens. The reader relates the story of Batlle to the other stories heard by the child: the story of "Ismael y el tigre" conveying the symbolism of the hunt and the story of the women in the well who metamorphose into witches.[12]

Total isolation of the grandson at the chapter's end is achieved through a variety of mechanisms. Emphasis is placed upon the distance between the narrative consciousness of the grandson and the living Antonio; Batlle is perceived through Antonio's mind and Antonio is now dead. Concrete identification of the interior labyrinth of the grandson's mind and reference to a universe whose nature is determined by decree remind the reader that the grandson has defined his position--as he remembers these events--as within the capsule of a space vehicle in outer space. The menacing head of the Medusa threatens sudden death.

> De los eucaliptos aquellos que estuvieron moviéndose todos juntos, quedan todavía algunos, en realidad, solo dos; y no se ve

> ningún hilo, pero en algún lado sigue esa madeja invisible, y el hilo, el alambre de la madeja importa porque es ubícuo, es el mismo hilo trenzado en una tupida madeja, aunque a veces esté tejido en cáñamo, o sea una cinta, o lo tejan idas y venidas de piquetes de caballos o recorridas del break de un cobrador de la Compañía del Gas, o viejos pelos de pelucas, o largas gomas de instrumental médico, o recuerdos, o lentas columnas de humo blanquecino que sube de montones de desperdicios húmedos, y se entrelaza, se expande, se disuelve en el aire, la fina tela indestructible como la invisible ruta que las hormigas dibujan y tejen desde el hormiguero. Cada hebra es la misma hebra con su exacto lugar en el espacio de la esponja. El universo está decretado. Su padre gime. Está aceptada la existencia desconocida de un Newton que determina la ley de sus laberintos. ... ese es su oficio: que esa madeja ruede en el espacio arrastrando una cabellera de medusa desde uno de cuyos pelos alcance a verle a ella misma la cara ... (pp. 99-100)

Again, the immediate framing mechanism of the chapter is the moral decay of Don Juan. His death occurs in the setting of the beach and its environs. The neighbors who normally congregate for the purposes of sunbathing, come together on this occasion to assist the widow who remains at the dead man's side in the glaring sunlight. To protect her from heat exhaustion, they shade her with an orange and white beach umbrella, bring her a chair and a cup of tea. The corpse of Don Juan is described.

> Todos rondando alrededor del viejo muerto: la vieja, los perros, las hormigas, las pulgas, los vecinos; todos en torno al viejo pedazo de patriada tirado en el pasto, junto al hormigón de la calle, como un fardo roto y entreabierto arrojado por las olas a la costa ... un pedazo de un cuadro de Blanes tirado en el suelo y

> pisoteado, sobre el que saltan las pulgas, ese pedazo de vieja furia descompuesta, después de tanto andar a pie y sin lanza, apenas, a escondidas y por si acaso, como facón, el viejo sable de caballería metido dentro del pantalón a lo largo de la pierna, y sin lancear de verdad, ni degollar más que a perros, por lo menos desde mil novecientos cuatro, que fue la última vez que manejó el brazo con la tacuara. "Y ... la revoleábamos así, nomás", le dijo, y retorció el brazo por la espalda como llevando desde atrás y revoleando sobre la cabeza la vieja chuza imaginaria, pulida y ennegrecida en la memoria por los gruesos dedos rudos, y apretó de golpe el brazo contra el cuerpo al terminar el revoleo, y lo lanzó para adelante con toda su fuerza hasta que medio se tambaleó: "de modo que cuando juera para adelante ensartara con juerza, nada más". Y se achican y endulzan los ojos con sonrisa de inteligencia, ahora que piensa en el degüello, arriba de las dos chatas bolsas que le cuelgan debajo, siempre húmedos de vejez y de alcohol, en el largo y caballuno rostro ceniciento. (p. 92)

Juxtaposed to the description of Don Juan's body has been a memory of him when he was alive, as he described the method used for disposing of an enemy in battle. Reference to the painter Blanes reinforces the idea of the traditional image of Uruguay associated grotesquely with Don Juan.[13] That he is a victim of a shipwreck is suggested by the phrase "como un fardo roto y entreabierto arrojado por las olas a la costa" (p. 92).

It is not only Don Juan's death which conveys the idea of the macabre--it is the manner in which he lived, as well. It was Don Juan and his wife who rented the <u>rancho</u> from Antonio and Margarita.[14] One wonders if they might not have rented the plot of land, rather than the <u>rancho</u>,

and constructed their own dwelling. Don Juan and his wife possessed what appear to have been at least a dozen mangy and ill-natured dogs and lived in conditions which were less than hygienic.[15] They had appeared to be respectable individuals when Don Juan first approached Antonio about the possibility of renting from him.

After they became neighbors, it was apparent that the old soldier was given to intoxication and that his long-suffering wife frequently bore the brunt of his brutal behavior. The sounds of their quarrels were familiar to the neighborhood. Would Don Juan have been different in the interior of Uruguay, away from the city of Montevideo? Had he been able to ride a horse and continue to lead the life of a gaucho, would he have been a different person? Regardless of what the alternatives might have been, Don Juan was observed one evening while performing a grotesque ritual:

> Muy bien no lo debe haber visto, por suerte, porque contra el tejido crece una de esas enredaderas que dan campanillas azules, pero con todo vió bien que el viejo tenía colgado al perro de una rama de eucalipto, y que por eso chillaba, y justo en ese momento empezaba a degollarlo, que dice que vio como saltaba el chorro negro del pescuezo y la cabeza quedaba girando, mientras alrededor daba vueltas el círculo de los demás perros aullando y ladrando; habían empezado acompañando los aullidos del que estaba colgado, pero después que lo degolló, seguramente por la sangre, o porque lo sentían colgado muerto arriba y goteando, o por el olor nomás, siguieron aullando toda la noche. Aunque ella dice que los vio lamiendo la arena sucia debajo del perro muerto. (pp. 94-95)

That aspect of Don Juan which may be described as demonic was betrayed by the remnants of his existence which were encountered in the rancho after his death, in the process of demolishing the structure and removing the accumulated trash.

> Pero el insecticida que le habían vendido debía estar hecho a base de azufre o alguna otra substancia rara, porque después, cuando terminó de arrastrar las latas hasta la calle y de desarmar todo lo que se podía desarmar o romper, y le prendió fuego a lo que quedaba, el fuego hacía llamaradas azules y violetas, como nadie había visto nunca, sino pequeñitas, en alguna experiencia de laboratorio, y era como para creer que don Juan había dejado alguna brujería entre sus pilchas, porque lo que más empapado estaba, y donde esas llamas extrañas eran más altas, era en los montones de trapo, la ropa que había estado amontonada en un rincón del rancho. (p. 97)

One may question whether the human deterioration of Don Juan is the result of the marginalization of the gaucho in keeping with the thematics of José Hernández's Martín Fierro, or a condemnation of the alleged barbarity of the interior in keeping with the writing of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. If living by the lance was a mode of existence ingrained into the interior of Uruguay by more than a century of alternating civil and international strife, may not the latifundia have reinforced the disintegration of the rugged temperament of the gaucho, forcing him to choose between two alternatives: the pueblo de ratas of the interior or the villa miseria of the city and its environs. (A rancho in the beach areas of Montevideo is often constructed of cardboard, tin cans and other refuse.)

The death of Don Juan in a fashionable beach neighborhood of Montevideo may also be symbolic of the megalocephaly of Uruguay's capital city as compared with the remainder of the nation. The variation on a wake which occurs at the side of Don Juan in the shade of the beach umbrella might be interpreted as symbolizing the structural imbalance in the economy of the nation: an economic process which saw people migrating from the land into the cities not because land was being used efficiently and at full productivity, but because it was being used inefficiently and at a fraction of productive potential. Opportunities were not made possible for bringing the interior of Uruguay into full and equal participation in the economy. Moreover, in rural areas the benefits of education, health care, retirement income and related social programs were extremely limited by comparison with benefits to urbanized citizens of Montevideo. One may only speculate about Don Juan. The ambiguity is complete.

The Optimism of Another Time

In order to appreciate the associations inherent in the novelized references to José Batlle y Ordóñez, it will be necessary to highlight the goals and objectives of his career, with which every Uruguayan reader would be familiar. It should be borne in mind that not every Uruguayan would agree as to the significance of Batlle in history. Since many

conflicting and contradictory evaluations of the career of Batlle have been written, I have relied primarily upon Carlos Real de Azúa and Carlos M. Rama.

As has been the case with other manifestations of the dynamism of the populace of the River Plate Region at the beginning of the twentieth century, Batlle believed in the power of the individual to improve his human condition if society would but allow him the opportunity. He believed that the nation, in turn, would benefit from the integration of all of its people into a system whereby they might enjoy family life, educational and health opportunities, fair wages and a degree of economic security. The newcomer from Europe was equally as entitled to human dignity as were the descendants of the founders of the nation, women equally as entitled as men. Individual freedom should be protected through a form of government which vested power in a group of individuals elected by all of the people and responsible to all of the people.[16]

According to Carlos M. Rama, the government of Batlle (1903-1907; 1911-1915) was the first in Uruguay to take an interest in labor problems. Since 1865, the laboring class had actively sought the recognition and concern of the Uruguayan government. "Antes, (y también después) si los problemas obreros ingresan en las preocupaciones gubernamentales es a través de disposiciones policiales tendientes a negar los derechos sindicales y laborales."[17]

Insistence upon the rights of the worker may appear anachronistic from the vantage point of the 1970s. In the early part of the twentieth century indifference to the plight of the laborer was not limited to Uruguay. However, it appears that members of the elite classes not only were indifferent but also compounded their incomprehension by derogatory writing about the laborers. The following quotation from a Batlle speech of 1906 should be placed in such a context in order to appreciate the stress he places upon the rights of labor.

> Resalta así que, en la generalidad de los casos, la misma porción minima de reposo que requiere el obrero para recomenzar sus tareas con nuevas energías, es sacrificada a la necesidad premiosa de efectuar una producción abundante y a reducido precio, destruyéndose de esa manera prematuramente la salud y la vida del obrero. Sin declamación ni exageración, puede asegurarse que las condiciones de vida, a este respecto de los animales de trabajo, son frecuentemente más ventajosas que las del hombre, pues, siendo aquellos propiedad del que los utiliza, inspira mayores cuidados su conservación ya que el sustituirlos con otros importa nuevos dispendios, mientras que el obrero que desfallece es inmediatamente reemplazado sin mayores erogaciones.
>
> Pero la misma porción minima que se requeriría para conservar la fuerza que permita continuar el trabajo no es el único reposo a que tiene derecho el hombre. Hay que reconocer al obrero, y, en general, a todos los hombres de trabajo, miembros y factores importantes de una sociedad civilizada, el derecho a la vida de la civilización, a la vida del sentimiento, de las afecciones, de la familia, de la sociedad, y, por tanto, el derecho de disponer del tiempo indispensable para participar de esos bienes. Cuando hayan

> destinado a la alimentación y al reposo de su organismo el tiempo necesario, todavía deben armonizar ideas con sus esposas, para conocer y acariciar a sus hijos y para extender su cultura moral e intelectual.
>
> Estas ventajas, por otra parte, no lo favorecerán exclusivamente, sino que beneficiarán en primer término al organismo de la Nación, que los sentimientos patrióticos deben inducirnos a vigorizar y perfeccionar. El elemento trabajador constituye, por su numero, la masa de la población del país. La defensa nacional le está principalmente encomendada. De él saldrá una parte considerable de los hombres destinados a dar dirección a la República. En él se debilitará o se robustecerá la raza; se mejorarán o corromperán las costumbres; se enaltecerán o abatirán las aspiraciones públicas.[18]

Apparently, the debate continues into the decade of the sixties. In a somewhat more entertaining vein, Benedetti says the same thing:

> Existe un diario montevideano que periódicamente publica enconados editoriales contra el exceso de descanso en las clases trabajadoras. De sus innumerables redactores, la mayoría son rentistas, o gente acomodada cuyo hobby es ponerse a la máquina dos o tres veces a la semana (o quizá dictar telefónicamente desde algún bungalow de Punta del Este) y escribir violentos ataques contra los feriados, contra las licencias, contra el sábado libre. "Hay que producir más", escriben, entre bostezo y bostezo. Se desperezan, y luego, en una ráfaga de lucidez, sugieren que los empleados y obreros terminen con la manía de comprarse solares en la costa. Eso hay que dejarlo para las clases pudientes. Que los no pudientes conserven su lugar social y se vayan al campo; allá podrán comprar un terrenito para los fines de semana y hacer surcos, cultivar hortalizas, regarlas con amor. A algún resentido se le ocurrió preguntar: "¿Quién regará los canteros (con amor o con odio, eso no importa) en los días de trabajo?" Bueno, la teoría falló, qué

> lástima, porque hubiera sido lindo que los trabajadores descansaran trabajando (¿acaso los ociosos no trabajan descansando?), así no dejaban nunca de producir.[19]

Batlle has been referred to as a true caudillo. Alberto Zum Felde describes the political system which demands the personality of a strong leader--the role which Batlle fulfilled and yet feared to trust to other men.

> Para comprender bien el carácter y sentido de los hechos a que nos referimos en este capítulo, es menester tener en cuenta que la índole psico-social de los partidos tradicionales del Uruguay es esencialmente caudillista. Necesitan una cabeza de prestigio absoluto que sea su centro directivo. Esto ha sido así para ambos bandos desde sus orígenes históricos hasta el presente. Nacidos en torno de un caudillo, éste ha seguido siendo su centro de gravedad; cuando les falta el caudillo, el jefe, estos Partidos entran en un periodo de crisis interna. Su tendencia natural es asociarse en torno a un centro personal; cuando lo encuentran, recobran su fuerza.[20]

In the novel the loyalty of Antonio to Batllismo harmonizes with the tradition of party loyalties described by Zum Felde. Antonio has married into a family of Italian immigrants. His own derivation is not clear, but would appear to be Italian. According to Zum Felde, immigrants of Spanish origin--especially Basques and Galicians--whose arrival occurred toward the end of the nineteenth century or the beginning of the twentieth century more frequently identified with the Blancos. The Italian immigrants tended to identify with the Colorados and with the role of José Garibaldi in the Guerra Grande. Garibaldi supported the

Colorado party, aiding in the defense of Montevideo on the side of Fructuoso Rivera as opposed to Manuel Oribe.[21]

The prevailing optimism of the first three decades of the twentieth century was not unfounded.[22] Referring to this period, Ulises Graceras supplies indices of upward social mobility:

> El elemento coyuntural fue francamente favorable para la economía uruguaya en este período y eso permitió financiar un grado importante de desarrollo social. Si atendemos nuevamente a la evolución de las matrículas de enseñanza como indicador de este fenómeno complejo, pese a las limitaciones de tal formulación obtendremos resultados harto elocuentes. Según Antonio M. Grompone las matriculaciones en la Enseñanza Secundaria crecieron un 229% entre 1913 y 1923. Las cifras recogidas por París, Faraone y Oddone, muestran que en 1912 habían /sic/ en la enseñanza media uruguaya 1900 matriculaciones, mientras que en 1930 el número de las mismas se había elevado a 10.890. El fenómeno es aún más impresionante si se atiende a las matrículas de la enseñanza superior según datos de los mismos autores: en 1900 los alumnos de la Universidad eran unos 450; 30 años después habían llegado a ser 1.955.[23]

In Partes de naufragios there is direct reference to a family of immigrants who started out with a small shop and rose through the commercial class to become industrialists and estancieros.[24] The family is that of Caviglia, whose fortunes evolved from their furniture business.[25] The land enterprises of Francisco Piria appear to represent another such breathtaking ascent.[26]

Individual success did not conflict with the tenants of Batllismo. Rama affirms that Batlle was opposed to class

struggle. A worker should be able to ascend the social and economic scale, according to Batlle. "No hay que odiar a una clase de la cual se querría formar parte," he is quoted as having observed.[27]

The optimism of a happier time associated with the period of José Batlle y Ordóñez in the novel reflects social and economic opportunities which existed during the first two decades of the twentieth century in Uruguay.

Don Pepe and Antonio

Batlle was a man who created his times to the same degree that he was created by them. The optimism which made it possible for him to effect government reforms so broad in scope was characteristic of the crest of the wave of hope, of faith and of new vigor which brought him to power and which was occasioned in no small degree by the tremendous influx of immigrants to the River Plate Region. The expectation was high that things would be different from the old continent. What happened to that original burst of strength and vigor will be discussed in the following chapter.

In Partes de naufragios, interplay between the historical personality of Batlle and the novelized personality of his devotee Antonio is extremely significant. In Antonio are combined elements of traditional Uruguay as well as of the immigrant or newcomer. Antonio's lineage is not described

beyond the identification of his mother and father. In this sense, he is symbolic of his generation in a universal manner which would embrace all of urbanized man in Uruguay. Antonio's optimism and faith in man's perfectibility are corollaries to his belief in Batllismo. He was a skilled craftsman, a kind father and a friend to all men. Antonio is overcome by a massive cerebral hemorrhage in the twenty-ninth chapter of the novel and his journey to the hospital is associated with the appearance of a cross.[28]

The portrayal of Batlle at the prow of the Ship of State integrates that ship into the generalized chaos and collapse allegorized in the novel. Shortly after Batlle's death on October 10, 1929, the Western World plunged into the depths of an economic depression. That depression began to erode the infrastructure of Uruguay's social reforms, which had received their initiating impetus from the patriarchal and paternal figure of the great statesman José Batlle y Ordóñez.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. Julio C. Da Rosa, Personal Interview, 2 September 1970.

2. Rosanna Di Segni y Alba Mariani, "Uruguay hoy," 2:185.

3. It may be that Chapter 29 indirectly alludes to the death of Batlle in 1929. Chapter 33 would, then, correspond to the coup of Gabriel Terra in 1933. Thirty-three is a magic number in Uruguay as it connotes the thirty-three liberators who struggled to achieve Uruguayan independence from 1825 to 1828 under the leadership of Juan Lavalleja.

4. Batlle's death is the theme of Chapter 9 (perhaps linked symbolically to Chapter 29 by removal of the digit) and is framed by the scene of Antonio's approaching death. It is a memory triggered within the grandson's mind by a comment of Miguel as they converse at the door of Antonio's sickroom.

5. Carlos Real de Azúa, El impulso y su freno, p. 45.

6. Silva makes a similar observation: "Ese mundo hecho, rehecho, y perpetuado, no sólo con aquello que él mismo vivió, sino 'con lo que te contaron, lo que te ocurre, lo que inventás y te acordás, y las mezclas que hacés con todo eso', esos relatos orales, esas crónicas palpitantes y nostálgicas que se trasmiten como una herencia en la conversación de las familias, y que persisten y persiguen en la vida como una resonancia de la sangre, como una exigencia de perduración en la fragilidad de nuestro tiempo; y sólo llegan a aquietarse cuando el escritor las fija en la presencia de sus páginas" (Clara Silva, "Los laberintos del recuerdo," p. 2).

7. Díaz, Partes, p. 83.

8. Ibid., pp. 83-85.

9. Roque Faraone, El Uruguay en que vivimos (1900-1968), p. 67.

10. Ibid., pp. 59-60.

11. Real de Azúa, El impulso y su freno, p. 44.

12. Díaz, Partes, pp. 223-228.

13. Juan Manuel Blanes, the most famous of Uruguayan artists, lived from 1830 to 1901 and painted historical personages and themes.

14. Díaz, Partes, p. 95.

15. Physical and moral decay are also seen in association with dogs in Vargas Llosa's La ciudad y los perros (Luis Harss, Los nuestros, p. 422).

16. Carlos M. Rama, "Batlle: la conciencia social," passim.

17. Ibid., p. 73.

18. José Batlle y Ordóñez, "Los problemas sociales," p. 95.

19. Mario Benedetti, El país de la cola de paja, p. 58 (hereafter cited as Cola de paja).

20. Alberto Zum Felde, Proceso histórico del Uruguay, p. 248.

21. Ibid., pp. 231-232.

22. Germán W. Rama agrees with the interpretation of rapid social change during this period: "El cambio era tan acelerado que los pasajes de un tipo a otro de roles no se realizó a lo largo de varias generaciones, sino que los mismos individuos, experimentaron en su existencia los cambios ocupativos, mientras preparaban a sus hijos para otras etapas que ellos no pudieron alcanzar por carencia de educación formal. Los individuos se movilizaban en una sociedad en proceso de cambio; ellos y el todo social eran móviles" (Germán W. Rama, "El ascenso de las clases medias," p. 115).

23. Ulises Graceras, Los intelectuales y la política en el Uruguay, p. 74.

24. Díaz, Partes, pp. 18-21.

25. Germán W. Rama, p. 115.

26. Real de Azúa, El impulso y su freno, p. 28.

27. Carlos M. Rama, "Batlle: la conciencia social," p. 76.

28. Díaz, Partes, p. 259.

CHAPTER 3

A TAIL OF STRAW

> Yo decía que me parece que la novela es una tentativa de recuperación y de exorcismo de ciertas experiencias. Es como si desde el punto de vista social e histórico ocurriera lo mismo, como si las novelas surgieran a fin de recuperar, de salvar, de rescatar de la nada a esas realidades que van a morir, que van a desaparecer, que van a cambiar, de rescatarlas y también de exorcizarlas, porque justamente esas sociedades que ellas reflejan, que ellas muestran, son sociedades roídas por la descomposición, son sociedades enfermas, y las novelas son también, al mostrar ese mal, esas deficiencias, esos daños, esas lacras, como tentativas de exorcismos de esos mismos daños, de esas lacras y deficiencias.
>
> Mario Vargas Llosa
>
> "La novela"

Lost Footsteps

"Este es el Salón de los Pasos Perdidos," Antonio comments to his son as they enter the chamber in the Legislative Palace where the body of Batlle lies in state.[1] These seem most appropriate words as one looks back upon 1929 from the vantage point of the decade of the seventies. So many of the innovations and dreams of Batlle came to naught. His political reforms were engulfed by broader forces unfolding not only in Latin America but throughout the world. In particular, economic problems affected both hemispheres.

The political system which Batlle had fashioned was but one of a wave of victims as coup followed coup throughout Latin America in response to the economic insecurity of the thirties. The key year for Uruguay was 1933. In that year, Gabriel Terra--President of the Republic and former Batllista--declared himself dictator.[2] Former President Baltasar Brum committed suicide. Was he perhaps overwhelmed by the specter of dictatorship arising from Batllismo itself to destroy everything which he and Batlle had spent their lives constructing?[3]

Chapter 23 of the novel juxtaposes the crisis of 1933 to the crisis of the sixties--1969, to be specific--in a manner which suggests the continued unfolding of an endless series of crises. If the existence of two crises may be demonstrated, then the possibilities for doubling are

infinite.[4] All one need do is change the attire of the performers and the crises become endlessly repetitious. It is worth examining the passage of the novel which alludes to the personal crisis of Brum in March of 1933.

> Durante muchos años, cada mes de marzo, el suplemento dominical de El Día fue repitiendo en tinta sepia la imagen del hombre bajo, de cara casi redonda y con expresión de mal dormido pero sonriente, de pie en la puerta de aquella casa, con el saco puesto y el cuello de la camisa desabrochado y sin corbata (entonces se usaban cuellos postizos y quedaba raro verlo sin cuello y con el saco puesto) y con los brazos caídos a los lados y un revólver corto en cada mano. Detrás se veía el piso del zaguán, de grandes baldosas de mármol blancas y negras--que en la fotografía del suplemento se veían color sepia--, y más allá se adivinaba una cancel y un patio. Algún día de marzo, pero de un año diferente, esa foto fue a parar a la pared donde quedó clavada con cuatro chinches junto al robusto perfil de abuelo justiciero y obstinado de Don Pepe, también en sepia, también en la tapa del Suplemento de El Día--pero con los bordes más rotos y retorcidos, dorados por la luz que había ido quemando el papel ordinario, ya aterciopelado de polvo, sobre todo en las ondas que se formaban cerca de las chinches--, detrás del escritorio oscuro, barandilla de balaustres de nogal, bajo la cartulina tostada por la lámpara eléctrica y cerca de la acuarela con el paisaje del rosedal del Prado. (p. 199)

All are vignettes laden with details which convey the style of a particular moment in history and all are related, each to the other: the color sepia of the supplement of Batlle's newspaper <u>El Día</u> envelops the personalities of Brum, Batlle and the father of Antonio and Miguel (whose desk is described). Associated with the color sepia are the attire, the styles of architecture and the tradition-steeped rose garden of

the Prado alluding to the summer quintas of the Patrician families at the turn of the century. The vignettes frame the death of Brum.

> El hombre bajo había estado esperando todo el día anterior y toda la noche hasta que al fin le llegó el tiro, pero tuvo que disparárselo él mismo en la sien, cansado de esperar, y cayó tumbado y sangrando sobre la vereda, como se lo vio después--pero no aquel mismo año, sino otros--, en los suplementos de El Día, en aquella fotografía color sepia que lo mostraba al sesgo y en la que no se le veía bien la cabeza, pero sí la postura de un hombre muerto, y el manchón cerca de las baldosas, que debía ser la sangre ... (p. 201)

The significance of the suicide of Brum is lost upon many of the personalities of the novel, just as it was lost upon many Uruguayans at the time when it occurred. The response of Antonio, Mario and Alberto exemplifies this.

> "Bueno, cuñado", dijo Mario: "Yo creo que eso de matarse fue una exageración." "Es un hombre de vergüenza. Era la mano derecha de Don Pepe", dice Antonio; "y éste otro, en cambio, desde el principio no me gustó nada. Se los engatusó a los de El Día. Por eso yo voté a Fleurquin." "Yo también lo voté, cuñado ... ", dice Mario. "¡Brum es un héroe!", dice Alberto. (pp. 200-201)

Only Alberto seems at all sensitive to the magnitude and implications of the event.

While Brum awaited a public manifestation or indignation in response to lost freedoms, a manifestation which did not materialize, the topic of conversations in the cafés and boliches was the composition of the soccer teams of Peñarol and Wanderers who would be playing one another in the stadium on the following day.

And the occasional bomb bursts which were noted and which were a response to the message conveyed by the white blotches of unprinted columns in the newspapers caused the elimination of those white pieces of paper by fill-in type.[5]

In July of 1934, Jornada (the official publication of the Federación de Estudiantes Universitarios del Uruguay) carried an article entitled "La Universidad intransigente ante la dictadura" in which students expressed their indignation at the dictatorial stance of Terra and vowed that they would fight his dictatorship regardless of whatever measures he might take in reprisal.[6] On the other hand, apathy was more often the response of the general populace to their loss of personal freedoms. "Brum se mató ... en plena calle, mientras las gentes, atónitas o indiferentes, iban y venían entre sus ocupaciones y sus ocios"[7] points out Carlos Quijano.

Looking back, Benedetti laments the generalized apathy which characterized the public response to the suicide of Brum. "Brum fue el último político que, con el más irrefutable de los argumentos, demostró que anteponía el bien del país a su propio bien."[8] The very heroism and genuineness of Brum's personal sacrifice has caused him to be forgotten in Uruguay, according to Benedetti. The spirit of Brum haunts the conscience of the indifferent citizen who fills his mind with thoughts of soccer and horse racing. Benedetti affirms that Brum nourished the vain hope that his suicide would be

the spark to trigger the response of his countrymen. "Sin duda creyó que ese sacrificio encontraría un eco inmediato en la decisión de quienes vivían permanentemente con la democracia en los labios."[9] A twelve-year old at the time, Benedetti recalls that what shocked him most was the shamed silence which was the only response to that death on Río Branco Street. He believes that at that moment the people of Uruguay realized that their moral obligation was to add their individual voices and actions to the explosion which Brum had attempted to spark. The fainthearted citizens of 33 sensed the shame of their cowardice; those of 60 have lost even the sense of shame.[10]

Terra's Mushroom

Mentioned only fleetingly, Terra's mushroom silently and imperceptibly expands throughout the novel.[11] It appears to have been little more than a folk remedy which was adopted as a fad by many Uruguayans in 1933, shortly after President Terra proclaimed himself dictator. Terra's mushroom cure corresponded to displaying red in the time of Rosas in Argentina, although the mushroom was a much more subtle and insidious form of complicity. Accepting and disseminating the folk remedy which either had been invented or discovered by the self-proclaimed dictator conveyed a tacit acceptance of his stance that constitutional government would not work

and that he must bring his own brand of healing to the nation.[12] That the remedy was composed of water-immersed pieces of a mushroom or fungus (a growth which lives upon dead organic matter) and that it possessed the capacity to expand in a semi-miraculous manner is a reinforcement of the massive mushrooming decay apparent throughout the novel:

> ... y las eras prehistóricas cursan al revés: la vida encuentra cauces elementales que ya estaban olvidados: un deambular entre los corredores de la madriguera, entre olores primarios y agresivos, entre depósitos de desperdicios y reservas: y el viejo moho vuelve a su función abrigadora y vital, y se redescubre el olvidado lujo de su aérea textura de terciopelo que flota sobre alimentos descompuestos y sobre detritus orgánicos. (p. 188)

Recognition of the serious nature of Mario's illness coincides with the end of the <u>años locos</u> and the popular acceptance of the <u>hongo de Terra</u> in 1933. Mario had been under the care of Don Pedro before that time inasmuch as the condition had been in its incipient stages. (It may have been in gestation since 1929.) That Mario's illness was serious became apparent during the period of time when visits to Don Pedro's office in the Belvedere section of Montevideo were accomplished in an atmosphere of political unrest, police surveillance and generally increased tension.

> Pero aunque nada de eso llegó a interrumpir los viajes a Belvedere, les dio más emoción que antes, porque ahora era necesario disimular; la policía tenía los ojos puestos en todo, y alguien dijo que había habido denuncias, y parecía que era cierto, así que no era

> cosa de dejar que la gente se amontonara en la casa, y, sobre todo, si no cabían en la sala, en el jardincito, porque el grupo de personas podía llamar la atención; además no podía haber grupos de más de tres en ningún lado. El mismo Mario, que ya estaba yendo regularmente, y que, como tenía auto, iba más a menudo, traía noticias de cómo iban las cosas y explicaba. (pp. 202-203)

In the midst of the political uncertainties of 1933 Mario is advised by Don Pedro that what he most needs, in order to cure his condition, is to take a trip to Paraguay so that he can be bitten by a mosquito and catch a fever which will, in turn, raise his body temperature to a point that the organism responsible for his illness will be destroyed.[13] This is a strange remedy. Don Pedro learned his medical theories in Europe; he has brought them to Uruguay where his patients fail to seek modern medical care because of their blind faith in the efficacy of his remedies.

There is no obvious connection between Terra's mushroom cure and the disease of Mario other than the coincidence of their becoming recognized in 1933.[14] Antonio believes that the illness of Mario is the result of the bite of a certain snake, apparently a reference to folk beliefs.[15] As his symptoms progress, Mario suffers from hallucinations and other psychological signs. The grandson thinks that he may be afflicted with malaria, a diagnosis reached on the basis or perusal of a molding, infectious-appearing medical text, which describes a "Parálisis General Progresiva" (p. 209) among other ills. On that remote day towards the end of the

1930s when Mario is rushed to the hospital in total delirium, he informs the grandson that what he suffers from is syphilis.

The grandson never forgives Don Pedro for the death of Tío Mario. In the hospital, the doctor comments that if Mario had sought assistance sooner, a series of injections would have saved him. But Mario had not done so because he was a patient of the hypnotizing Don Pedro.[16] On that final black day when Mario is whisked off to the hospital in an ambulance, Don Pedro appears on Julio Herrera y Obes Street without even being called--perhaps indicative of his occult or demonic powers.[17]

Terra's cure is associated with the increasing symptomatology of Mario's illness, which in turn is associated with the contagious medical text describing a general progressive paralysis. Again, there is no concrete link with the various degenerative processes of the novel other than the fact that they accelerate markedly and tend to create a general progressive paralysis of action of the novel after popular acceptance of Terra's cure in 1933.

A variety of crippling and metastasizing illnesses befall the members of the grandson's family. True, some existed prior to 1933. His grandfather Pedro had been immobilized from the waist down years before the marriage of Antonio and Margarita. A brother of Margarita had died of the bite of a rabid dog and her uncle, Vicente, was afflicted

with alcoholism. Alberto had succumbed to an undiagnosed condition by 1939.[18]

Appalling as the foregoing may be, progressive illnesses are even more apparent after 1933. In addition to Mario's condition, diseases afflict Antonio, Mamagela and Margarita. Miguel dies of an uncontrollable cancer. Tía Marcela seems to suffer from symptoms sometimes associated with hardening of the arteries which affect her memory. She also has been operated upon for cancer.[19] The psychological paralysis to which Marcela is subject will be examined below with relationship to the power of objects to affect the flow of time and to saturate space with memories. The figurative paralysis of Marcela is conveyed by her transformation into the Venus Anadiomena, a portion of the wooden bowsprit of an ancient ship.[20]

The grandson himself displays symptoms of inertia or paralysis. He is a purely contemplative being. His attention is fixed upon objects, upon imagined observation of the child he once was, upon memory and fantasy. He does not participate. He does not act. He is essentially inert. One wonders if his spirit may be transposed to the objects which he examines, thereby accounting for his immobility. If he is like the "pawnbroker of nostalgia" created by Hernández, the memories in which he deals will be progressively flattened and lifeless the nearer they are to the illusive present.[21] Indeed, this appears to be the case.

In most instances the family resorts to the advice of Don Pedro or to folk cures. The evocation of the fragrant and mysterious "cave" of the yuyero Don Celedonio and the marvelous assortment of herbs and curative agents is a delightfully nostalgic episode. The children believe that the fragrant leaves, twigs and bundles of aromatic herbs have the power to whiten the faces of humans and they always watch Grandma Angela's (Mamagela's) face when they leave the shop, to see if it will turn white from exposure to the yuyería.[22]

When Margarita becomes very ill, she refuses injections not because she fears them; but, because they represent an unnecessary and unjustified intrusion and discomfort. She does not believe in them. She believes that what would make her feel better is a tea which her mother used to prepare with "semillas de amapola." The grandson agrees, saying that this is precisely the remedy he has brought for her, but that now it is purchased in the form of the juice or fluid of the leaves of the poppy plant as a transparent liquid which is given in an injection, rather than as a cup of tea. Margarita accepts this

> promesa de un reposo que nunca tuvo y que sólo apenas ahora que tiene tantos años, rememora oscuramente como un bien remotísimo y sin embargo cercano, familiar y corriente, el sereno bien de algunos sueños de niña, la confianza en la total entrega despreocupada que le traía su madre en las manos en una taza de te de amapola preparado para que durmiera. (p. 231)

The remedies which are effective and do bring relief to suffering derive, as a rule, from the knowledge of Mamagela and the advice of Don Celedonio or Doña Mariquita, who is also knowledgeable in cures provided by folk medicine. Generally speaking, they are New World rather than Old World cures.

On the other hand, demonic qualities are not limited to the personality of Don Pedro. One wonders about the time that Grandpa Pedro feared that his three daughters had been stricken by the evil eye. Margarita recalls that "nosotras éramos tres entonces, después no quedamos más que Catalina y yo, pero entonces éramos tres" (p. 174). What happened to the third sister is not fully explained, but Margarita remembers her father's superstitions and the remedy.

> Pero en cuanto se fue papá llamaba ¡Angela!, ¡Angela!, ¡que vengan las muchachas! y nosotras fuimos de nuevo, y papá estaba serio, la mandaba traer a Mama fuego y las ramas benditas--sí: laurel: los ramos que traíamos en Pascua y Mama los guardaba--. ¡Fuego! decía, Poné el ramo en el fuego, decía, y en una pala trajo brasas del calorífero y la puso en el suelo, y arriba las hojas del laurel que hacían humo. ¡Saltate, ahora, saltate! nos mandó papá, y deci conmigo: Fuego Santo, Ojos malditos fuera, Fuera Satana, Salve la Virgen! ¡Saltate, saltate! y nosotras tres saltábamos arriba de la pala de un lado para otro, y él decía siempre lo mismo y nosotras saltábamos dentro del humo. (p. 174)

Mamagela and her daughter Margarita suffer from the same crippling disease, linked by the pink comforter which each uses during her illness. Margarita remembers as she

lies in bed, so ill that she has moved to the home of her son.

> Su hija lo recuerda. ... mientras padece como su misma madre, Doña Angela, la misma enfermedad, bajo el mismo gastado edredón rosado que duró más que todos y que aparentemente había desaparecido, oculto seguramente en la profundidad de algún ropero, o quizá de aquel mismo viejo baúl negro de la buhardilla, pero que reapareció como surgido del aire en cuanto la enfermedad mostró su cara verdadera e irreversible, dispuesto a cobijarla hasta el fin, como cobijó a su madre, de modo que uno piensa que aunque luego que cumpla su función se le quemara--luego, porque ahora nadie se atrevería a tocarlo, y hasta se le maneja como a algo cotidiano y familiar--, aunque se le quemara y se le viera disolverse delante de los ojos en humo negro de plumas y en ceniza, y esparcirse, un día reaparecería con su mismo gastado aspecto familiar, como un Ave Fenix al revés, no que siempre solamente renaciera, sino que siempre, reaparecido del aire, terminara deshaciéndose en cenizas luego de haber tomado, durante el tiempo que fuera necesario, la forma del bulto de otro cuerpo que busque ser cobijado inútilmente debajo de otras cobijas hasta que ese edredón aparezca, porque para eso es, para chupar lo último que quede, para nutrir con un poco de vida final sus propias futuras renovadas cenizas; pero ahora, en otro cuarto, no en el dormitorio que fue el suyo y de su marido ... la última habitación donde ese edredón tuvo esa misma forma de ventosa rosada cubriendo y sorbiendo un cuerpo tendido o arrollado ... (pp. 171-172)

The demonic pink blanket had been hidden between illnesses, perhaps in the black trunk previously associated with the misfortunes of either Grandpa Pedro or Tío Vicente.

There is a certain futility implied in the grasping at straws of the various remedies which are tried, whether they are suggested by Don Pedro, Doña Mariquita, a relative

who believes in the hongo de Terra or the corner pharmacist.

When was the turning point? When did the times begin to change? Wasn't it in 1933 when there was all that trouble? Again and again physical illness is related to political upheaval by the protagonists of the novel. Even in the pharmacy the pharmacist talks about illnesses and political crises as if they were associated with one another.

> Allí también se habla de enfermedades, pero sobre todo del destino y de la crisis, que son las cosas de que hablan los mayores. El que más habla es el farmacéutico ... sale de la trastienda y habla con su padre; del Comercio, de la situación, del Crédito y del Destino. También habla a veces de la enfermedad de su mujer y de la Crisis, que están relacionadas con la situación y con el destino; esas son las cosas de que hablan los hombres como su padre y sus amigos. (pp. 232-233)

As Margarita becomes increasingly hallucinated with the excruciating pain of her illness, she experiences a moment of lucidity and cries out, "¡Todo esto! ¡Ah! ¡Es algo que está pasando; es un mal ... es una brujería que hay en el mundo!" (pp. 277-278).

Just as the original reference to dogs as malevolent creatures occurred near Marina di Camerota;[23] so, too, allusions to the stench of decay are traceable to the old continent. Early in the novel Partes de naufragios, a pungent stench is noted. It is a stinking odor like that which wafts from the windows of the second floors of the houses of Marina emanating from the chamber pots.

The description of the abandoned house in Malvín is punctuated by repeated reference to the fetid smell.

> ... en el comedor y en toda la casa hay silencio, y si se trata de escuchar se oye en los oídos el zumbar de la propia vida orgánica. Se advierte además que en algún lugar debe haber quedado algún pedazo de verdura, o alguna fruta olvidada hace muchos días: quizá algunas hojas de ensalada que no se usaron y que se olvidaron de tirar. (p. 31)
>
> ... y da a un pasillo que termina en la galería. Por allí es por donde parece venir el olor de algo que no vieron cuando vaciaron la heladera y las cestas de la cocina. (p. 34)
>
> Algunos de esos ramos están en esa misma casa; uno de ellos en la galería del fondo, allí de donde parece venir ese olor a ... (p. 37)
>
> Desde el mismo pasillo de abajo, desde allí mismo donde empieza a sentirse el olor que viene del fondo, quizá de la galería ... (p. 40)

It is uncertain to what the smell may be attributed. It appears that it may be explained by the absent-minded habit of Marcela who stuffs dirty linen between the wardrobe and the wall while she is living in one of the small bedrooms on the second floor of the house in Malvín before it was abandoned.[24]

The stench of decay suggestively links Uruguay with her European origins. The malevolence of the rabid dogs of Montevideo may be traced to a dog in or near Marina. The imported impotent cures of Don Pedro lull his patients into a false sense of security, a false belief in the efficacy of Old World remedies.

Is there a connection between the hongo de Terra, the cures Don Pedro has imported from Europe and Mario's illness which is recognizable in 1933 and death-dealing by the end of the decade? In 1939 Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini were applying variations of Terra's cure to portions of Europe and Africa.

The Mushroom Spreads

Seeds of decay have been sewn almost imperceptibly throughout the novel. Returning to the nostalgic scenes of a happier time, closer examination reveals constant and continuous repetition of details which presage disaster. The calorífero upon which the teakettle sang to announce that the water was hot for the morning mate ends a rusted relic in the tool shed of the abandoned house in Malvín:

> ... de modo que la ventana del galponcito llegó a tener hasta una jardinera donde crecieron malvones y besitos porteños en latas de aceite pintadas de verde. Allí escondido, protegido por esas maderas que ahora se deshacen si se golpean con el puño, estaba escondido el calorífero. El galponcito entero está apolillado, de modo que las tablas sólo se sostienen por la pintura amarillenta que las cubre y por la fina capa exterior que no trabajó el taladro; allí quedó protegido: no fuerte ni seguramente protegido por una sólida construcción, sino por una envoltura deleznable pero delicada que sirve de capullo a los pedazos de recuerdos caídos, embicados después de tanto tiempo. (p. 107)

While Alberto and Catalina are preparing the asado, one of the nephews who is playing soccer with Mario runs into an anthill.

> Hasta que de pronto tenían que atender al menor de los sobrinos, que mientras trataba de correr tras la enorme pelota de cuero engrasado, había hundido una pierna en el hormiguero y gritaba mientras veía su pierna cubierta casi hasta la rodilla por los puntos negros y curvos de las hormigas, crispadas sobre la piel y la media y sobre el mismo zapato, y veía que en torno se extendía la movilización de todo el hormiguero que trabajaba por el desmoronado cráter que había abierto el zapato del niño; y las hormigas buscaban dónde cobijar las larvas blancas y delicadas que llevaban en la boca, urgidas y desorientadas, trepando hojas de hierba y empujando pequeñísimo terrones, mientras otras se defendían del ataque, defendían a las que todavía no habían nacido, mordiendo, hincándose rabiosas en la piel, y el niño gritaba. (p. 182)

In the midst of jubilant anticipation of a soccer game, Moirano exhibits sadness.

> Moirano siempre con la sonrisa un poco triste como de hombre que sabe más de lo que quiere, que sabe además cosas que los otros aún no saben, y acaso no sepan nunca, y que es un poco mayor, con canas en las sienes, y un poco más gordo, siempre bien afeitado y limpio, y trata de disimular lo que sabe para que los demás no se enteren, para no entristecerlos ... (p. 249)

There is never any explanation offered for the sadness of Mario's friend Moirano.

Decline of La celeste

In a broader sense, the activities which formerly absorbed Mario's attention show signs either of declining

vigor, deterioration, pessimism or fragmentation. As a natural process of aging, his forchela loses the romantic glow of the años locos. Even the Olympic Generation has come to an end.

> Con un curioso paralelismo, el ascenso de Batlle expresando el sentir de aquellos mismos desheredados creadores de un deporte singular, y el término de su tránsito por el mundo coinciden con el comienzo, el auge y el principio de la declinación del fútbol del país. Como si perdido su principal intérprete, la masa desconcertada hubiera engendrado sus exteriorizaciones con la secreta angustia de su futuro. En ese volverse a la premisa irracional para sostener lo que ya no era, en ese acto de fe hacia un símbolo colectivo y hondamente popular como "la celeste", estaba también el íntimo deseo del rescate del país que fue. Sólo que si ese incentivo funcionaba--y llegó a funcionar muy bien --en la lucha de la cancha, no servía como tabla de salvación para ninguna otra cosa.[25]

Morales identifies the decade of the thirties as containing the seeds of the decline of Uruguay's superiority. He believes that when the decline in skill, vigor and unity was reflected in fewer championship victories, team members turned to a sort of folklore or black magic. They believed that they could invoke the glorious heritage of the garra celeste and that this alone would suffice.

The prolongation of some victories into the 1950s correlates with a degree of economic well-being which was sustained through the Korean War as a continuation of Uruguay's role of supplying beef and wool to nations involved in the wars of the twentieth century. Morales explains that the soccer player, like the gaucho, lived for the day. When the

economy went down, he went down with it. A new type of player has since emerged, a player whose primary concern is with his earnings and savings. The game of soccer itself is now secondary.[26]

Uruguayan soccer has changed because the player of the thirties, forties, fifties and sixties is not the same man who composed the Generation of Champions. "La declinación y el recurso mitológico aparecen justamente cuando el país de las instituciones perfectas, ve rodar por el suelo un andamiaje jurídico en el que, pensó, estaba la raíz de toda la buenaventura nacional"[27] comments Morales. Quoting Ricardo Martínez Ces, he finds a common denominator between the decline of soccer and that of Batllismo.

> Toda esta actitud medrosa--que vale tanto para el país como para el fútbol--es el "estilo batllista" del que se empregnó todo después de tantos años de influencia. La "garra celeste" es ese esquema espiritual batllista aplicado al fútbol. Menos que nadie podía escapar a su influjo, porque fue la creación lúdica de la masa que también fermentó al batllismo. "El estilo batllista es la filosofía de la facilidad", señala Ricardo Martínez Ces. Y agrega que se nutre "de providencialismo, humanismo, justicia y felicidad y como consecuencia de todo eso, la inexistencia de una problemática profunda". También el fútbol criollo confío en un orden natural que le concedía la gracia de su primacía. También terminó asimilando esa "filosofía de la facilidad" que aún campea. Esa filosofía de la comodidad nos borró el aleccionante camino de los "por qué". Jamás nos interrogamos seriamente sobre las razones del auge y la caída.[28]

The monopoly enjoyed by the two traditional teams of Peñarol and National are a source of concern to Morales. He

criticizes management of the clubs because of excessive attention to television receipts and disregard for the technical perfection of the teams. He laments the omission of youth and women from the realms of spectator and enthusiast. He observes that box office sales have not increased proportionately to the increase in population and he feels that this forebodes ill for the future of soccer.[29]

Fragmentation, excessive individualization, loss of identification with the team and loss of the spirit of unity of the earlier decades are among the most injurious of the adverse psychological factors, according to Morales.

> Es la culminación de la filosofía del "cada uno para sí": el que tire más fuerte se queda con el pedazo mayor. Como en el Estado Moderno. Sólo queda en pie, sobreviviente a fogonazos, el valor humano de algunos jugadores excepcionales.[30]

Evolution of the Tango

The nostalgic evocation of the dining room of the house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street at a time when brothers and sisters danced together contains fragments of the words of a tango by Enrique Santos Discépolo. The complete words are:

> Sola, fané, descangallada,
> la vi esta madrugada
> salir de un cabaret;
> flaca, dos cuartas de cogote,
> y una percha en el escote,
> bajo la nuez;
> chueca, vestida de pebeta,
> teñida y coqueteando
> su desnudez,
> parecía un gallo desplumao,

mostrando al compadrear
el cuero picoteao.
Yo, que sé cuando no aguanto más,
al verla así, rajé
pa no llorar.

Y pensar que hace diez años
fue mi locura,
que llegué hasta la traición
por su hermosura;
que esto que hoy es un cascajo
fue la dulce metedura
donde yo perdí el honor;
que chiflao por su belleza
le quité el pan a la vieja,
me hice ruin y pechador;
que quedé sin un amigo,
que viví de mala fe,
que me tuvo de rodillas,
sin moral, hecho un mendigo,
cuando se fue.

Nunca pensé que la vería
en un requiescat in pace
tan cruel como el de hoy.
Mire si no es pa suicidarse
que por ese cachivache
sea lo que soy.
Fiera venganza, la del tiempo,
que le hace ver deshecho
lo que uno amó ...
Este encuentro me ha hecho tanto mal
que si lo pienso más
termino envenenao.
Esta noche me emborracho bien,
me mamo, bien mamao,
pa no pensar.

Y pensar que hace diez años
etc.[31]

Insertion of the words of the tango "Esta noche me emborracho" within the nostalgic family scene conveys a sinister note. Especially is this true when one realizes the illnesses and the personal disillusionments which lie in store for the happy young people who dance to them, blithely unaware of

the message conveyed. The author has chosen to place in this scene a tango whose words were written by Discépolo, the famous letrista associated with a specific phase in the evolution of the tango. It is a phase of disillusionment with the world and with modern society, epitomized by Discépolo who has been described by such phrases as "sintetiza el panorama social de Argentina y del mundo en ese sombrío período," "cuestiona ... la posibilidad de una vida moral en la sociedad competitiva, de cuya entraña misma surge la idea de que el hombre es el lobo del hombre" and "los hombres se dividen en dos grandes grupos: los que muerden y los que se dejan morder."[32]

Interestingly enough, one of the most recent innovations in the musical interpretation of the tango is that of fragmentation or atomization mentioned in connection with Horacio Salgán. "La inclinación favorita de Salgán era atomizar los elementos de la interpretación, fragmentar hasta su mínima expresión la estructura musical."[33] Aesthetically, this reinforces the splintering seen in the novel as well as that described by Morales as affecting team spirit in soccer. Real de Azúa describes a disarticulation of political and economic events after the death of Batlle, which might also be considered fragmentation.[34]

Earlier in the century, a cohesive force united the people on both shores of the River Plate. That unified spirit found its expression in soccer and in the music of

the tango. It is understandable that the transition in these forms of cultural expression reflects the trajectory of optimism and vigor which declined with the unfolding of the century.

Political Unrest

For the purpose of analyzing the novel, it has been assumed that Mario was born during the first decade of the twentieth century (probably around 1900). The capacity of Montevideo to absorb the influx of people arriving from Europe or emigrating from the interior of Uruguay has declined as the century has progressed. Let us contrast the life style of Mario with the letter of a young man who writes toward the end of 1969, quoted by Eduardo Galeano in his essay entitled "El desafío."

> Soy un joven uruguayo típico, 24 años, soltero, empleado de oficina de una empresa a punto de dar quiebra ... Perspectivas de futuro: absolutamente ninguna ... Quitando horas al sueño y con ingentes sacrificios, cumplí con éxito los cursos necesarios para recibirme de técnico de programación y de computadoras electrónicas (rimbombante, ¿no?) ... no me sirve de nada ... las pocas plazas existentes están cubiertas por demás ... Debo quedarme en mi trabajo actual mientras dure, y esperar cruzado de brazos sabe Dios qué, echando por la borda todas mis aspiraciones? ¿O debo poner esos mismos brazos en posición de ataque y, junto con otros muchos de mi misma situación, dedicarme a tirar piedras y romper vidrios en son de protesta? Señor: soy uruguayo. Quiero quedarme en mi país ... Pero no puedo ... ¿Qué hago? ¿Tiro la primera piedra? ¿O qué?[35]

Galeano speaks for the writer of the letter and for other members of the "generación de la crisis." He is considered by Benedetti to be "uno de los periodistas uruguayos de trayectoria más incisiva, inteligente y creadora."[36] The letter which Galeano quotes is like one more of so many messages within bottles washed ashore and conveying the plight of the shipwrecked youth of the nation. Galeano affirms that one need not be clairvoyant to perceive in 1969 that the nation is disintegrating. Even more insidious is the realization that as the nation collapses, its very collapse becomes an excuse to plunder it. "La catástrofe enciende la codicia y abate los escrúpulos y los frenos; la bandera oculta, entre sus pliegues, las mercaderías robadas. Cuanto más aguda es una crisis, más lucrativa resulta."[37]

In talking with young people of Uruguay in 1970, I received the impression that there existed for them roughly four alternatives. Assuming that the young person was from an average family and that the resources of the family did not allow for continued dependence, the opportunities included: (1) resignation to impoverishment, (2) exodus without working papers, (3) exodus with working papers and (4) various degrees of opposition, involvement and militancy. The individual who crosses the borders into Argentina and Brazil with only an identification card may be limited in the types of employment which he can enter. Without proper working

papers, the process of obtaining a meaningful job is more difficult. On the other hand, in Uruguay the process of obtaining a passport may be delayed as much as two years if the individual does not possess sufficient funds or personal influence to shorten it. During that period of time, the currency faces continuous devaluation and commands less and less in terms of foreign currencies. Since most countries expect the immigrant to demonstrate a certain amount of solvency upon arrival, it is necessary to save money to convert into their currencies. Often, the simplest recourse is that of immigration without working papers.

The response of the young person to the crisis in Uruguay is obviously varied, as is the ability of the adult to comprehend the reactions of the youth.[38] The most acute years of economic disintegration date from approximately 1955. In proportion to the year in which one was born, the young person possesses an image of a nation in constant economic decline and exacerbating crisis, or a contrasting image of relative well-being which has been diminishing relentlessly. The period of time in which Mario would have lived is but legend for the youth of today. Changing attitudes are reflected in the novel by the conversations among the students in 1933 and 1969. A fragment from Chapter 23 displays relative unawareness on the part of the young people in 1933. This coincides with the apathy of the adults at that time.

> "¿Y quién lo quería mandar preso, che?" "Terra, el Presidente, ¿o no sabés que hay golpe de estado?" "No sé qué quiere decir." "Anoche el viejo dijo que ya lo tenían cercado." "Mi tío también lo vio; dice que había más de un batallón en cada esquina." "Ojo, che, que viene el Dire!" "¡Bueno: a casa, muchachos! ¡A casa y sin demorarse por la calle!" "Soriano dice que se pegó un tiro." "¿Viste el ruido que hay en la calle?; están pasando soldados con fusiles, ¿viste?" "¡No jodas!" "¿Qué no joda? Andá al salón Uno y mirá para afuera!" (p. 201)

A contrasting passage related to the crisis situation of 1969 reveals varying degrees of politicization among the young people. The students involved attend liceo or secondary school.[39]

> " ... Donde tiran parece que es en el centro". "En mi liceo no; no pasa nada". "¡Qué vivo! ¡Si vas a un liceo pago!" "¿Y qué tiene? Tengo que estudiar igual, ¿no?" "Sí; pero no hacen huelga. No saben nada, ustedes!" "Y ustedes por qué hacen huelga? Para no ir a clase, hacen huelga". "Por los frigoríficos, abombado! Y además no hacemos huelga; hacemos peajes; paramos a los autos en la calle y les pedimos plata para los frigoríficos. Y cuando la policía se entera vienen las camionetas. ¿Las viste? ¡Son un quilo! Pero cuando paran y empiezan a bajar tipos por todos lados se te ablandan las piernas, ¡qué lo tiró! Y después corrés como no corrés nunca. Yo salí por arriba de uno de esos montones de basura y llegué a la carnicería y ni me di cuenta que había pasado por encima de la verja. Y los tipos siguieron por la calle y me perdieron. Pero conseguimos pila de plata". (p. 196)

Solidarity of the students with the laboring class is characteristic of the political situation in Uruguay. Germán D'Elía explains that the workers arrive at the stance

of militancy through the route of economic deprivation whereas the university students evolve to the same stance through various leftist ideological theories. Secondary students have been nurtured in the environment of chaos and their militancy is a response to a world "que nada les ofrece" and a society "que no puede integrarlos porque es una sociedad en desintegración."[40]

Ares Pons analyzes the problem in greater depth. He finds the educational system lacking in that secondary schools prepare the student for university studies in a traditional classic manner. Students receive only a modicum of practical technical instruction upon which to base alternative approaches to the problem of securing employment. The probability that the student will be able to continue into the university and graduate from it is constantly diminished by an economy in crisis. Whether the student be the son or daughter of a laborer, seeking social mobility through education, or the offspring of a middle class family following a traditional educational pattern, the end result may be similarly frustrating. A great number of secondary students discover that their economic resources are insufficient to finance university education. What they have learned in secondary school fits them neither for employment as a skilled craftsman nor even for employment in an administrative capacity in private enterprise. Moreover, at the age of 18 it is already a bit late to enter a shop as an apprentice. To do so, is further

complicated by familial and social taboos which have surrounded the youth during his formative years and discourage entering a career of manual labor. Sooner or later, a certain number of these disillusioned young people will swell the ranks of government bureaucracy, despite their inadequate preparation.[41]

Student sympathy with striking workers of various meat-processing plants in 1969 was a topic examined by María Esther Gilio through a series of newspaper interviews. One of the workers interviewed commented that:

> Not only did they /the students/ help financially, they attended our meetings and discussed our problems with us. . . . It may not be the first time they've helped, but it's the first time we've been helped this way. They seemed to be the same as us, and when we had to face the police or build barricades, they were in front.[42]

It is this type of student-worker interaction which is reflected in the episode which depicts secondary students having erected a barricade and exacting a toll of drivers, so that the money may be used to feed the families of the workers who are on strike.[43]

> Los muchachos están desparramodos por la acera y a lo largo de la barrera que hicieron en la avenida con tablones, y que obliga a los automóviles a pasar por una senda estrecha, de modo que se van deteniendo y formando una cola, y a lo largo se amontonan los estudiantes: "Para los obreros de los frigoríficos, Don". "Muy bien, muchachos, tomen". "Para los obreros de los frigoríficos; esto es un peaje, señor". "¡Me quieren decir por qué no van a clase, revoltosos!" "Pedimos para los obreros, don, para los que

> están en huelga". "Palos, habría que darles; ¡salgan de ahí!", y el coche acelera separándose de la fila, y empuja los tablones que cortan la calzada. Junto a los demás autos quedan algunos estudiantes recogiendo el dinero, pero el resto se apeñusca en torno al coche encabritado que se separó y hace esfuerzos por pasar, con una madera atascada en el paragolpes: "¡Dale que es un hijo de puta roñoso!" y le dan puntapiés a los guardabarros. (pp. 196-197)

Writing in 1969, D'Elía expresses his reaction to student political activity:

> En los dolorosos acontecimientos recientemente vividos, quienes han manifestado una mayor agresividad, un mayor empuje, una combatividad más intensa y una capacidad de sacrificio más amplia han sido estudiantes de Secundaria y de los primeros años de la Universidad. Es decir, generaciones que nacieron y comienzan a tener una visión de la vida en medio de un mundo en conmoción y de un Uruguay desgarrado por la más profunda crisis de su historia.[44]

One of the loose threads of Partes de naufragios is the position of the great grandson in relationship to the reality of the sixties. What lies in store for him in the future is not known. What his ideas and attitudes will be the reader does not know. The reader is left to wonder, as must many parents in Montevideo, whether this youth will even grow to adulthood. It is always possible that he might suffer the same fate as Líber Arce, Hugo de los Santos and Susana Pintos, students killed by the bullets of the police or military during 1968.[45] There is no commentary by the author.[46] There is no effort to plumb the psyche of the great grandson. Two young boys play in their tree-ship and

observe below an incident which is not a mere training maneuver.[47]

Another aspect of the paralysis of the sixties was continuous agitation by labor throughout a broad spectrum of industry and services. One of the most flagrant examples of the dynamic quality of Terra's mushroom, as portrayed in the novel, is demonstrated by the garbage which accumulates in the streets of Montevideo because of the strikes of the workers who normally remove the refuse.[48] The heaps of garbage give rise to a secondary industry; the poor--or at least some of the poor--emerge with their decrepit carts to scavange in the mountains of rot for items of some possible value. Then it is that the military are given the none-too-prestigious task of clearing away the putrefaction. They are unable to stay with the task because the danger of rabies makes it necessary for them to shift their efforts toward the capture of stray dogs and the innoculation of dogs volunteered for such protection by owners. Even that rather urgent task had to be abandoned by the military when the "Medidas Prontas de Seguridad" were declared.[49]

Uruguay in the sixties is portrayed through the disintegrative and metastasizing processes of the novel which accelerate as they move closer to the illusive present. The process of evolution, in reverse, toward prehistoric flora and fauna is dramatized by the encroachment of the ants and other insects which constantly gnaw at the leaves

and vegetation, by the burrowing of the tucu-tucus in their tunnels beneath the sand dunes and by the spreading of rabies which is carried by dogs and bats.

> La furia de un año terrible /1965/, incluyó hasta un rebrote de una epidemia que se creía totalmente erradicada del Uruguay: la hidrofobia, registrándose en pocos meses más de 100 casos, que se repetirían en el correr del año siguiente.[50]

The author has chosen to examine the impact of the crisis upon the lives of the people rather than the crisis; for the crisis, itself, is the head of the Medusa.

A Tail of Straw

Inertia is one of the most serious social ills facing Uruguay, according to Mario Benedetti. He defines a feeling of guilt which Uruguayans must share: he attributes the guilt to an awareness that something must be done coupled with the failure to do something. Prerequisite to the feeling of guilt is fear, fear which becomes cowardice when the individual refuses to confront his situation.

> Ahora bien, el especial estado de ánimo que la jerga popular ha dado en llamar cola de paja, es precisamente una antesala de la cobardía. No es la cobardía en sí, pero es la disposición de ánimo que va a caracterizar el decisivo minuto que la precede. Si tener cola de paja es sentirse culpable, esa culpabilidad tiene una determinada dirección: la de una actitud que es urgente asumir, y no se asume.[51]

The tail of straw is that "particular susceptibility and weakness of Uruguayan society which renders it

vulnerable"[52] to a form of inauthenticity which contributes to the massive stagnation described theoretically by Real de Azúa and symbolically by Díaz.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. Díaz, Partes, p. 80.

2. Taylor observes: "The complex of factors which contributed to the coup of March must be considered in the light of the world depression of the early 1930s. Governmental deficits in Uruguay reflected the unsettled world condition: for the fiscal year 1931-1932 the governmental budget was 62,657,244 pesos and the deficit nearly one million pesos per month; in the last six months of calendar 1932 they approached one and one-half million pesos per month" (Philip B. Taylor, "The Uruguayan Coup d'État of 1933," p. 302).

3. From the perspective of 1970, Quijano affirms that it was Batllismo which buried Batlle (Carlos Quijano, "Washington Beltrán y Baltasar Brum," p. 7).

4. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 86.

5. Díaz, Partes, p. 202.

6. Federación de Estudiantes Universitarios del Uruguay, "La universidad intransigente ante la dictadura," pp. 194-195.

7. Quijano, "Washington Beltrán y Baltasar Brum," p. 7.

8. Benedetti, Cola de paja, p. 82.

9. Ibid., p. 81.

10. Ibid., pp. 81-82.

11. Díaz, Partes, p. 204.

12. Terra's mushroom appears to be a novelized theme; it may or may not be based upon historical fact.

13. Díaz, Partes, p. 203.

14. There is a textual relationship, however. Terra's mushroom is mentioned on pages 204-205, at the end of Chapter 23. Chapter 24 treats the theme of the medical text showing diseased portions of the body; it ends with a description of the advancing symptoms of Mario's illness and the treatments with which he experimented.

15. Antonio asks Mario "si lo había picado la víbora" on page 210 of Chapter 24. Chapter 24 has been published as a

short story entitled "La mordedura de la víbora."

16. Mario's failure to experiment with other physicians and to seek innovative medical treatment reflects a similar acceptance of inherited structures which doomed Batllismo. Quijano points out that in 1933 Terra's supporters expressed opposition to the pacto del chinchulín; as members of the dominant class and representing the interests of cattlemen and commercial exporters, they rallied together to oppose the pacto. Once in office, Terra's group legalized the pacto and amplified it. In the same way, the forces of opposition representing Batllismo and other ousted political factions lamented the procedures of Terra. Returning to power in 1938, they refrained from making substantial changes and even legitimized procedures they allegedly abhorred by institutionalizing the Ley de Lemas. Quijano concludes: "Todo cambió para que todo quedara igual" (Carlos Quijano, "Reflexiones sobre el 31 de marzo," pp. 5-6).

17. Díaz, Partes, pp. 256-258.

18. On page 255 of the novel, the grandson recalls that Alberto had died prior to the death of Mario. As will be substantiated in the following chapter, Mario's death may be established as occurring in approximately 1939.

19. Díaz, Partes, p. 69.

20. Ibid., pp. 69-70.

21. Felisberto Hernández, El caballo perdido, 2:34-35.

22. Díaz, Partes, pp. 236-238.

23. The malevolence of dogs may be compared with the same theme in La ciudad y los perros (1962) by Vargas Llosa, as previously stated. Harss elaborates: "El título ya es sintomático, y perfectamente indicativo. Nos hallamos en un mundo en el que los perros se devoran mutuamente. El elemento clave de este mundo es la violencia bruta. Los débiles sucumben. Sólo los más fuertes o adaptables sobreviven. El autor traza un cuadro fúnebre de descomposición física y moral" (Luis Harss, Los Nuestros, p. 422).

24. Díaz, Partes, pp. 114-115.

25. Franklin Morales, "La garra celeste," p. 35.

26. Ibid., pp. 33-35.

27. Ibid., p. 35.

28. Ibid., p. 36.

29. Benedetti suggests that the decline of popular enthusiasm for soccer may be desirable from the viewpoint of the nation's well-being: "En un momento en que la crisis golpea cada vez más fuerte, la desocupación extiende su vigencia, la corrupción invade nuevas zonas y el gobierno parece cada vez más incapaz y atomizado; en este instante desgraciado y confuso que vive el país, el pueblo debe prestar a cada tema la atención que se merece, la importancia que realmente tiene. Dentro de ese panorama, el fútbol no parece ser el tema más urgente" (Mario Benedetti, "Esa anestesia llamada fútbol," Cola de paja, p. 156).

30. Morales, "La garra celeste," p. 39.

31. Enrique Santos Discépolo, "Esta noche me emborracho," Cambalache, ed. José Wainer and Juan José Iturriberry, p. 58.

32. José Wainer y Juan José Iturriberry, "El tango," p. 54.

33. Ibid., p. 57.

34. Carlos Real de Azúa, El impulso y su freno, pp. 38-107.

35. Eduardo H. Galeano, "El desafío," p. 122.

36. Benedetti praises not only the journalistic abilities of Galeano, but also his creative talent. He considers him to be "en el nivel más creador de la última promoción de narradores uruguayos" (Mario Benedetti, Foreword to Los fantasmas del día del león, pp. 9-12).

37. Galeano, "El desafío," p. 122.

38. Ares Pons describes contrasting world views of parents and young people in a disintegrating economy: "Quienes sufren más agudamente la nueva situación son los jóvenes de la clase media. Sus padres suelen disponer de paliativos más o menos eficaces: ahorros de mejores épocas, vivienda propia, menos necesidades, una economía doméstica asentada cuyas bases fueron establecidas tiempo atrás. Los jóvenes deben enfrentar la búsqueda de empleo y la organización de su subsistencia (problema de la vivienda, etc.) en condiciones acentuadamente peores que las halladas por la generación precedente" (Roberto Ares Pons, "Aproximaciones a la problemática de nuestra juventud," p. 15).

39. Roberto Copelmayer and Diego Díaz have transcribed interviews with students of secondary schools in their study

entitled Montevideo 68: La lucha estudiantil.

40. Germán D'Elía, "El movimiento estudiantil y los sindicatos," p. 30.

41. Ares Pons, "Aproximaciones," pp. 16-20.

42. María Ester Gilio, The Tupamaros, p. 64.

43. In answer to a question by Gilio as to what was new and important about the strike, one worker and union leader replied: "In the first place we had total solidarity and unity. When I say total I include the unions up-country who have for the first time come massively into line with the main union. Another new feature was the camps; these were not only new but in one sense they were very important /where food was made available to the families of striking workers/. . . . Equally important was the permanent contact between the men in the camps. This did away with the 'weekend strikers'--those who stayed at home and watched it on TV. . . . There came a moment when we realised that if the whole leadership of the union was arrested, there was already sufficient human material qualified and capable of replacing them" (Gilio, The Tupamaros, p. 67).

44. D'Elía, "El movimiento estudiantil," p. 30.

45. Rosanna Di Segni y Alba Mariani, "Uruguay hoy," 2:195.

46. Margarita comments upon the death of a youth who may be Líber Arce on page 274 of the novel: "Yo le oí decir al nene y no le quise preguntar tampoco: ¿pero es cierto que murió un muchacho en la calle? ¿que lo mataron? Pero entonces ahora viene a ser peor que entonces. Era cuando ya Mario estaba enfermo."

47. Díaz, Partes, pp. 286-287.

48. Ibid., pp. 108-113.

49. During the period July through September of 1970 while I was in Montevideo, I observed that the police and the military were fully occupied in the task of searching from house to house for hostages sequestered by an organization whose name could not be used in publication--the Tupamaros. The political persuasion of each of the various newspapers was apparent by the manner in which they responded to the restriction: the Tupamaros were variously alluded to as the "delincuentes," the "innombrables," the "inmencionables," the "malcriados" and the "grupos de acción directa." The latter euphemism is probably the most objective. At that

time the "Medidas Prontas de Seguridad" were in effect. This meant that an individual was subject to search and arrest upon sight, whether a passenger on a bus or simply out walking the dog. When I returned briefly to Montevideo in November of that year, I noted that importation of newspapers from Buenos Aires had been prohibited because the political events in Montevideo were openly discussed on their pages and the organization of direct action was named specifically. Humorously, the Tupamaros were referred to as the "Tapamuros" in conversation among young people.

50. Rosanna Di Segni y Alba Mariani, "Los Blancos al poder," 1:179.

51. Benedetti, Cola de paja, p. 17.

52. I am indebted to Dr. Marshall R. Nason for this explanation of the concept of the "tail of straw," expressed by Benedetti in a personal conversation when Dr. Nason was in Montevideo in 1960.

PART 2

CONSTRUCTING SPACE

INTRODUCTION TO PART 2

The author of the nouveau roman constructs space between the narrative consciousness of the protagonist and the perceiving mind of the reader. Thus, the reader is a functioning element of the processes which create the architecture of the novel. The more vast the distance erected by the author, the greater will be the narrator's sense of isolation. The greater the narrator's sense of isolation, the more intense will be his need to communicate with the reader. Loneliness becomes motivation for entering upon and sustaining the narrative.

The nouveau roman is dynamic and never-ending creation in ceaseless flow. Díaz portrays the narrative consciousness in the process of becoming. The reader assimilates and transforms that consciousness. As he extends the dynamic moving forces of the novel, the reader will attempt to assemble the pieces. The author has bequeathed to the reader freedom to reconstruct the novel in his own way, upon the condition that the reader never allow his interpretation to become fixed or rigid or definitive.

Part 2 reflects the architectural structure of Partes de naufragios as perceived by one reader.

CHAPTER 4

THE ILLUSIVE FLAME: MAN'S QUEST FOR A MEANING

Confronted by a world of declining faith, man experiences a disquieting awareness of the vacuum which remains after belief has departed. Tío Domingo's sturdy precepts, optimism and faith as portrayed in Los fuegos de San Telmo possess only limited relevance as conveyed by his counterpart Tío Francisco in Partes de naufragios. In the novel, elements of nostalgia are overwhelmed by the chaos of the decade of the sixties in Uruguay.

The significance of Francisco to the structure of his family is notably less than that enjoyed by Domingo in the eyes of his family. There is no attempt to probe the psyche of Francisco or to present him as a wellspring of the knowledge of the eternal truths. He is but a colorful family character; he is a sentimental link with customs which are being shed, just as a snake sheds its skin.

Even the fishing boat of Francisco emphasizes his waning role and curtailed image.[1] It is little more than a black and battered hulk as compared with that of Domingo

so romantically depicted in the novella. Its identity is lost among the wretched black skeletons mired in the muck of the bay of Montevideo:

> Algunos de esos negros esqueletos curvados, con la espina dorsal hundida en el fango negro de la bahía y las cuadernas levantándose sobre el chapoteo de las aguas oscuras, y algunos pedazos de tablas no del todo sueltos aún; alguna de esas debe ser, de las que se veían todavía no hace mucho por Capurro, o más acá, cerca del muelle de pescadores. Ni mástil, ni velas, ni nada, claro, sólo las cuadernas negras que suben de la quilla enterrada, y cuando mucho algunos pedazos de tablas. (p. 136)

The transition in tone from relative affirmation to doubt reflects a duality in the nature of man which has existed throughout the ages. Just as man has found refuge in the security of the eternal verities, so also has man tended to question inherited beliefs:

> When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.
>
> My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome.
>
> My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.
>
> O remember that my life <u>is</u> wind: mine eye shall no more see good. (Job 7:4-7)

The sorrows of man are acknowledged implicitly in a passage which Díaz quotes as a portion of the epigraph to his <u>Tratado de la llama</u>.

> Porque lo que al presente es momentáneo y leve de nuestra tribulación, nos obra un sobremanera alto y eterno peso de gloria. (2<u>a</u>. Corintios, 4, 17)

The need to discover a meaning for man's existence has always been present. The manner of the search is substantially different in the novel as compared with the novella. The ambiguous personality of the narrator is hidden among the folds of the novel. Whether he is survivor or victim of the shipwrecks is uncertain.

The Nature of the Quest

Evasion of the Present

The task of locating the present is very nearly impossible in Partes de naufragios. "El aire no ofrece estela que atestigüe el vuelo."[2] Lives flash upon the pages in fragmented manner. There is a kaleidoscope of images and chips of images, of memories and portions of memories, of dialogues and shards of dialogues, of objects and pieces of objects, of fantastic events and components of those events. There are pieces of string, fungus, rot, a billiard ball, a wig, the dog who listens to his master's voice, pieces of white paper, a jaguar consuming the flesh of a gazelle, ants, wasps, rats, bats, a wedding dress, a pulsating green globe, great grandfather's revolver, the words of José Batlle y Ordóñez, the rotor of a helicopter, an oriental vase, grandmother's spoons, Miguel's medicine bottle, an octopus, watermelons under the beds and a giant paper ball which is propelled into outer space and returns to earth slightly swelling a heap of garbage whose fermentation is licked by

rabid dogs. Somewhere behind or within these objects and many others the illusive present lurks.

Coalescence of all the fragments into a coherent series of images and events is a task which the reader must accomplish. Threads of action are allowed to dangle even after an attempted reconstruction of the fragments of the novel. Questions remain unanswered. Ambiguity persists. An open-ended effect results. The reader is uncertain which shard of dialogue or memory or invention was the last and final one. He is uncertain whether time has elapsed between that unidentifiable last fragment and the illusive present.

With the exception of momentous events in the life cycle--birth, death and marriage--the reader knows very little about the lives of the various individuals. In a happier time, their lives appear to have been composed of a series of Sundays and special holidays when the family was together. Their lives have flashed across the horizon and the material remnants associated with individual personalities are all that attest to their once having lived. Except for memory: a blurred image is retained in memory. There is one personality who, more than any other, is weighted down by the burden of memory. He is the individual whose thought processes most nearly approximate the present. It is he who accumulates the memories of almost all of the other individuals of the novel. It is the grandson who receives the messages of the victims of the shipwrecks.

Underlying the jigsaw puzzle--a term which most appropriately describes the structure of the novel-- is an intense and sustained thought process on the part of the focal personality whose name may never have been mentioned and who is variously referred to as the "hijo," "sobrino," "nieto," "niño," "padre" or "viejo" and "amigo del barrio." With reference to the family structure, he may most appropriately be referred to as the "nieto" or the "grandson." The very anonymity of this personality--unidentifiable by name--reinforces his ambiguity. This unidentified being has thrown up a whole series of obstacles to communication between himself and the reader, who is placed at a distance thereby. At the same time, loneliness and isolation cause him to occasionally emerge from the interstices of the novel and seek human contact.[3]

In discussing a similar aspect of the work of Hernández, Díaz comments:

> Los diversos lugares del tiempo se refieren normalmente a un presente que debería coexistir con el sujeto consciente y un pasado que se identifica como objeto. Pero pronto, y procurando un ahondamiento mayor en su búsqueda, el narrador pierde el punto de apoyo inicial y descubre otros puntos de vista en los que queda parcialmente instalado y que lo hacen objeto a él mismo. Ese es el proceso de la conciencia desdichada. Ya no predomina una vivencia básica, sino que ésta se estratifica en diferentes capas temporales, a la vez que el narrador se disocia en sucesivas reflexiones parciales de su propia vivencia. Lo vivido llega al presente como los fragmentos y desorganizados reflejos de un espejo que cayera trizado a sus pies.[4]

The foregoing quotation reveals the significance of the various roles played by the grandson. In the process of his inward search, he is discovering and examining various points of view which are conveyed fragmentally. He is perceiving those points of view and he is being observed by them. The firm soil of his basic identity becomes quicksand; his identity disintegrates into a myriad of forms. As one may successively truncate the angles of a cube in order to achieve new perceptions of forms inherent in the original form, so also may one truncate the angles of a personality in order to achieve a series of infinite variations of that personality.

If the present of the novel is captured in an act of writing, the reader is not so advised. In the quotation below, ambiguous reference is made to a possible act of writing. The passage represents an involuntary response on the part of the grandson, or narrator. The response is to events which are occurring in a time which is very close to the illusive present. The incident being evoked in memory is suddenly interrupted and the narrator--obeying an urgent need to communicate directly--makes a fleeting appearance.

> ... y de pronto el cansancio, el cansancio de esa misma letra sobre ese mismo papel, o sobre un papel tan parecido a aquel en el que empezó a escribir sin aprender nunca hace tiempo. La letra debe ser diferente sin duda, pero va variando tan lentamente y tan de acuerdo con él mismo que sigue siendo la misma, la misma letra

> sobre el mismo papel de siempre, y siempre tan lejos de lo que se podría escribir, de lo único que hay que escribir; el cansancio de páginas y páginas inútiles, de saber siempre de antemano el modo como han de venir las palabras, esperando inútilmente que venga ese pedazo de lenguaje capaz de decir de golpe toda la iluminación que se necesita, un pedazo de fulgor que valga como la llama enceguecedora de un soplete que funda todo lo que toque y lo trasmute en una materia de otra naturaleza ... (pp. 160-161)

The use of the third person of the verb "empezar" further disguises the nature of this intrusion upon the flow of memory.[5]

We have already seen a precedent for loss of faith in the communicative ability of the written word in Los fuegos de San Telmo. The structure of Partes de naufragios is presaged in the fragments of memory and the flashing images --like those projected upon a movie screen or similar to the shattered pieces of a mirror--which objectify reminiscence of the encounter with the ancient goatherder on the road to Marina di Camerota.[6] Memory proves inadequate, as does the written word, because it is confined by the same limitations in time and space which restrict the narrator. In order that the written word be effective, man would have to live forever.

The grandson may have additional reasons for not limiting the creative or memory process to the written word. In connection with the writings of Hernández, Díaz explains the possible reasons:

> Quiere lograr, de sus recuerdos, una calidad más pura que la que tienen recuerdos meramente evocados para escribir (!). Su propia reciente escritura le muestra a su conciencia como mediatizada y mercantilizada--por el mismo hecho de escribir--en la captación que realizó, y por ello, para ahondar--para ser más auténtico--, se repliega más en sí: "Entonces traté de estar solo, de ser yo solo, de saber cómo recordaba yo".[7]

If it is a factor at all, writing is but one aspect of the response of the grandson to his anguish. The process of thought or introspection which he brings to bear upon the material is an attempt to communicate with himself and, occasionally, with the reader. As defined in the Tratado de la llama, one of the symbols of the flame is the process of introspection.

What is the nature of the material which is being examined by the grandson? What are the processes being used to examine and analyze the material? What is the purpose or goal of that examination? What is the spark which causes the inward probing to occur? The author evades answering such questions in a direct manner. On the basis of information afforded him, the reader can only surmise what it is that causes interiorization by the grandson on a scale so vast that the novel itself emerges as objective proof.

The grandson has observed the death of many of the members of the family which composed his world when he was a child. Frequently, deaths of loved ones have been long

and agonizing. Cancer, syphilis, a coma induced by a cerebral hemorrhage and forms of arthritis or degenerative diseases of the musculoskeletal system have gradually sapped the lives of their victims. His mother Margarita has been dying slowly of one of these painful and progressive conditions. The reader wonders which members of his immediate family still live in the illusive present. There is ambiguity as to whether his mother still lives. She is among the members of the family who have died, according to Tía Marcela.[8] However, Marcela is not a reliable informant. It appears that the grandson has a wife, although she is rarely mentioned. In addition to her brief appearance in Chapter 17, she may be one of the unidentified informants in Chapter 25. His cousin Luis appears to be in poor health. The grandson does have a son.

The reader may assume that the grandson does not know what will befall his son, whose adolescence matures in the midst of the problems of student involvement in the chaotic political and economic scene of the sixties. The broader reality which confronts the grandson is that of Uruguay in crisis: Uruguay in the mainstream of crisis in Latin America.

Previously, the grandson shared the anguish of remembering with Miguel. At the time of the approaching death of his father Antonio, he and his uncle conversed at the father's bedside. That has been quite some time now.

Miguel has since died. Antonio's death is but one aspect of the total spectrum of loss, although loss of the paternal figure is perhaps the most profound loss experienced by the grandson.

The sense of anguish is heightened by its contrast with the memory of a happier time. The grandson remembers the days of his childhood when the extended family lived on Julio Herrera y Obes Street in a house and neighborhood identifiable with the tranquil era of early twentieth-century Montevideo. That house has been demolished. Memories are all that remain of the happier time.

The grandson is not optimistic about the possibility of finding an answer to the dilemma shared by modern man with his fellow.

> ... porque sigue buscando algún modo de estar donde no se puede estar, antes, después o de otro modo que como está, como si hubiera manera, como si a fuerza de mirar lo que se ve o lo que se recuerda, o de empeñarse en inventar, pudiera encontrarse el modo de romper la costra de basalto del mundo, y hacerla saltar en pedazos para tocar al fin una entraña más ardiente, asible y válida ... (p. 161)

He would break the basaltic crust of the Earth's surface in order to touch its fiery entrails and to discover that meaning, were it possible to do so.

What methods might achieve the task of discovering the meaning of man's existence? The grandson does not employ the more conventional act of writing nor the catharsis of telling his story in conversation to someone else.

> Lo único que se puede hacer es vivir mirando, inventando y recordando, tratando de empezar de nuevo hasta creer que tiene sentido insistir y buscar como si pudiera hallarse, siempre con esa misma letra sobre el mismo inacabable papel, buscándole a la vida su sentido repitiendo algo de la vida, como si fuera necesario volver a ver la misma película muchas veces para poder encontrar al fin una brecha, para poder descubrir que todo estaba también ahí, sí, en el momento en que se aplasta con el movimiento palpitante del vientre de un insecto verde, una vejiga de goma ... (p. 161)

The grandson believes that all man can do is to live observing, beholding and contemplating that which occurs and has occurred--creating and remembering. It is necessary to examine and contemplate over and over again. In this way, one may actually arrive at belief that the act of searching is a reasonable human undertaking. The sheer dint of effort deemed necessary betrays his uncertainty that an answer actually exists.

Not only is the grandson searching for a meaning, but he is also endeavoring to discover a unified identity. This would constitute a solution for the dilemma of the <u>conciencia desdichada</u>, as defined by Hegel:

> El texto de Hegel que se refiere a la <u>Consciencia desdichada</u> dice así: "Esta <u>consciencia desdichada</u>, dividida en dos en el interior de sí misma, debe forzosamente --puesto que esta contradicción de su esencia es para ella misma una sola conciencia--tener, siempre, en una conciencia, también a la otra; y así ser expulsada inmediatamente y de nuevo de cada una en el momento en el que imagina haber llegado a la victoria y al reposo en la unidad. Sólo su verdadero retorno en sí misma o su reconciliación consigo presentará el concepto del espíritu vuelto vivo y llegado a la existencia."[9]

Stress upon reconsideration of specific details accounts for the tendency of the narrative repeatedly to examine certain leitmotifs: the abandoned house in Malvín with the continuously dripping faucet, the portraits of the family in the main bedroom, the lifeless-appearing television screen in the living room of that house, the crest of Julio Herrera y Obes Street and the dining room of the house on that street.[10]

Repeated scrutiny might at last reveal that the answer has always been there, if one could have perceived it "como si fuera necesario volver a ver la misma película muchas veces para poder encontrar al fin una brecha" (p. 161).

Two Skeins

The approaching death of Antonio creates a dynamic tension which is sustained throughout the novel. His breathing deflates and inflates the green rebreathing bag with a sound much like that of an insect's wings. Occasionally the sound falters and ceases, as if someone had stepped upon the green insect and squashed it flat.[11] In those moments the grandson and Miguel listen anxiously, fearing that Antonio no longer lives. The pulsating green globe is one of the leitmotifs to which the narrative returns again and again. Amplified by the deflating and inflating of the rebreathing bag, the pulsations of the breathing of Antonio provide the dynamic force which compels Miguel to recall

events of his life and to pour them forth in a ceaseless stream as he converses with the grandson. The grandson reacts in quite another way.

> ¿Y a él qué le pasa?; su tío le cuenta historias, pero delante de él está su padre; siente frío en el vientre; ve todo como desde más allá de donde está: todo lo pequeño lo ve con nitidez, con mirada de miope: siente cada una de las arrugas que le forman las tiras de goma que le rodean la cara, y las agujas que le trasvasan líquidos y le hacen hinchazones en las piernas; y el aire, que le seca los ojos entreabiertos; pero todo lo ve a la vez desde muy lejos: ese pedazo de sombra que está encerrado en el sanatorio, la avenida que corre fuera y que termina en el mar, y la ciudad, que tiene luces, y el globo entero de la tierra que nos lleva y donde estamos, y sin dejar de estar en ella, la ve como desde la cápsula de un cohete interplanetario, girando ingrávido, y todo con su sentido-sin-sentido ahora comprendido como la madeja total ... (p. 16)

In sympathy with his father, the grandson's belly turns cold; he observes the setting of the sickroom and the sanatorium from a position which is beyond his position on the planet Earth. He sees every little detail, he is able to feel every one of the wrinkles which join to form the oxygen mask covering the face of Antonio, he is able to feel the needles which penetrate the skin and the dry air which desiccates the half-opened eyes of Antonio. He sees and feels all these things not from where he sits--at the door of the sickroom of Antonio--but from a vast distance.[12] He sees the fragment of shadow which envelops Antonio's dying flame in the sanatorium, he sees the avenue which

leads to the sea, the city and the lights of the city--the entire planet which bears him and the others. Without ceasing to be upon the planet, he observes it as if he were enclosed within the capsule of an interplanetary spacecraft. From his vast distance, he perceives the meaning-without-meaning of man's existence, objectified as a total skein of endless filament. The force of gravity shattered, he is a man loosed from Earth's atmosphere. He gently levitates in memory, cutting himself off from the planet Earth--whirling weightlessly in space which is at once illuminated and dark.[13]

As his viscera--moist and bleeding--are bombarded by solar radiation, he realizes that each and every strand of the filament is important in and of itself. Everything which has ever happened and every unfulfilled destiny is spun into the thread which winds upon the skein.[14] His glance from the capsule takes in the planet Earth and comprehends its position in the universe; the interplanetary journey is itself one of the threads which feeds upon the skein. It is a thread spun from memory and from memories: from the lives implicit in memory and memories.

He notices yet another thread, a thread which is one with the filament of life and which spins with it onto the total interstellar skein: it is the thread of invention, the filament of creativity, a tendril which spins off into the fantastic in order to form its own skein. His viscera are

a part of that thread as are all the words which man has ever created, and all of the other manifestations of the thoughts of man.

From his extraterrestrial position, the grandson notes that if one of the filaments is interrupted, if one strand comes to an end, another draws near and with a slight undulation performs a somersault which ends in a surgeon's knot and the filament continues--at once different and the same. Symbolic of the continuation of life processes, the allusion is seen elsewhere as

> a menudo, cuando acaricia la cabeza de su hijo su mano forma el mismo gesto de esa otra mano que se descama, y a veces mira como los ojos de la cara del retrato que está en la casa abandonada, en una habitación alta, un dormitorio. (p. 17)

Transition in Tone

In Partes de naufragios the blues of the waters and the skies--so expansive in Los fuegos de San Telmo--have been reduced to mere fragments, occasional glimpses of a former beneficence "entre los verdes intensos de las hojas y los recortes de cielo azul" (p. 157).

It is appropriate that we examine the significance of the transition from the preponderance of the color blue in association with sea and sky in the novella to the striking frequency of green in the novel. Realization of the relative absence of the color blue is heightened by

the conditioned sensitivity of the reader to the remembrance of that color in the novella, by the images intensified in the color blue which are retained in the retina of memory. The sky has been reduced to a patch of blue which peeps through the green leaves. Moreover, nostalgia for the color blue and its associations finds concrete expression in one of the few other references to that color which occur in Partes de naufragios, a passage which evokes the Italian setting depicted at length in the novella.

> Algo de la herrumbre que ahora tiene debe haber empezado a formarse entonces, sobre el mar, sobre la barca, la gran barca de vela latina que durante tanto tiempo fue azul, teñida de azul, como las que salen todavía ahora, tanto tiempo después, y desde hace tanto tiempo, en el Golfo de Policastro, y doblan hacia el norte del cabo Palinuro. (p. 133)

The foregoing passage is associated with the youth of Pedro when he was in the prime of his life.

The colors most frequently mentioned in Partes de naufragios appear to be green and black. This is the case even with reference to water. Water is sometimes black:

> En las habitaciones del frente debe estar subiendo, además, un agua negra. (p. 58)

Drops of water from a leaky faucet have left a stain the color of tabacco:

> una mancha ovalada, de color tabaco pálido. (p. 40)

Color seen in association with reference to the sea is frequently green:

> Entre brumas verdes, se distingue una de las carabelas navegando sobre un mar encrespado de ondas de fieltro verde de la carpeta del comedor. (p. 38)

The foregoing dining room is that of the abandoned house in Malvín. Reference to the dining room in the house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street contains a similar hue.

> Cuando se piensa en la victrola, el comedor se inunda de una luz verde de fondo de mar. En el centro flota, sobre la mesa, una gran medusa verde, una semiesfera de armazón de alambre cubierta por una tensa seda verde de cuyos bordes cuelgan largos y frágiles tentáculos dormidos, también verdes. (p. 145)

Several pages later, the origin of the green hue is identified. "La pantalla /de la victrola/ es la que da la luz verde, una luz amarilla cobijada de verde," (p. 147) the grandson recalls.

Not the least significant in the differentiation between green and black is reference to the green trunk and the black trunk. The mysterious and marvelous green trunk is associated with Tío Francisco.

> Puede ser que algún pedazo haya quedado arrollado en alguna esquina ... o dentro del baúl, del otro baúl, no del verde sino del negro. El baúl negro está allí todavía, pero no tiene, como el verde, secreto, ni suena ninguna campana cuando se mueve la llave --que no tiene--, y la tapa, en su parte interior, es lisa, con el pino a la vista y sin ningún dibujo. El que tenía dibujo--un barco empavesado y coronado por una gran bandera en cuyo centro estaba pintado el escudo de la Casa Real de Italia--era el verde, el que había traído tío Francisco, pero este negro es más sencillo, y debió venir con Vincente o con el mismo Pedro. (p. 36)

On the other hand, the black trunk is associated with either Pedro or his brother Vincente. Bleak, indeed, were the fates of Pedro and Vicente in Uruguay. Vicente died an alcoholic, disillusioned by the death of his young nephew Vicentito who had been bitten by a rabid dog in Montevideo. As has been mentioned, Pedro suffered from a disease which crippled and atrophied his legs. For many years he was relegated to the role of a bedridden fisherman, while his wife Angela assumed the burden of providing for the family.

Although the malevolent significance of the color black is apparent, the associations inherent in the colors blue and green are less easily discernible. We will need to turn to the Tratado de la llama in order to discover the secret of the blue and the green.

In the Tratado de la llama, there occur several references to "las bodas del cielo y de la tierra" and the "juntura milagrosa del cielo y de la tierra."[15] The flight of man as a counterweight to the wings of the Angel lifts him upward into the blue sky on a journey into the unknown and that flight both edifies and wounds man. Man and the Angel are consumed in flight and all that remains are the semisolid remnants of the quest: some of the bloodstained feathers from the wings of the Angel and some feathers whose edges are a bit charred glide undulatingly through the air, recovering their slight response to the force of gravity as they descend innocently to the eternal earth and its green

fields. Man aspired toward the blue of the horizon but all which remains of his aspirations are a few feathers gently drifting back to the green earth.[16]

Unity in Duality

A Duplicated Lineage

Comparison of the lineage of José Pedro, in Los fuegos de San Telmo, with that of the grandson reveals that each bears the same relationship to an original couple who emigrated from Italy. Pedro and Panella, grandparents of José Pedro, were born in Italy near the Gulf of Policastro as were Pedro and Angela, grandparents of the grandson.

José Pedro and the grandson are descended from the original couples through a daughter who becomes their mother. Rosa and Margarita, mothers of José Pedro and the grandson respectively, have sisters who marry a man with a small shop in the part of Montevideo referred to as Unión. The sister of Rosa is Clara; the name of her husband is not mentioned. The sister of Margarita is Catalina; the name of her husband is Alberto. Both husbands die when they are still relatively young men. Alberto dies before the death of his brother-in-law Mario. Both Rosa and Catalina had sons. The name of the son of Alberto and Catalina is Luis.

José Pedro and the grandson are alike in ways other than their Italian derivation on the maternal side of the

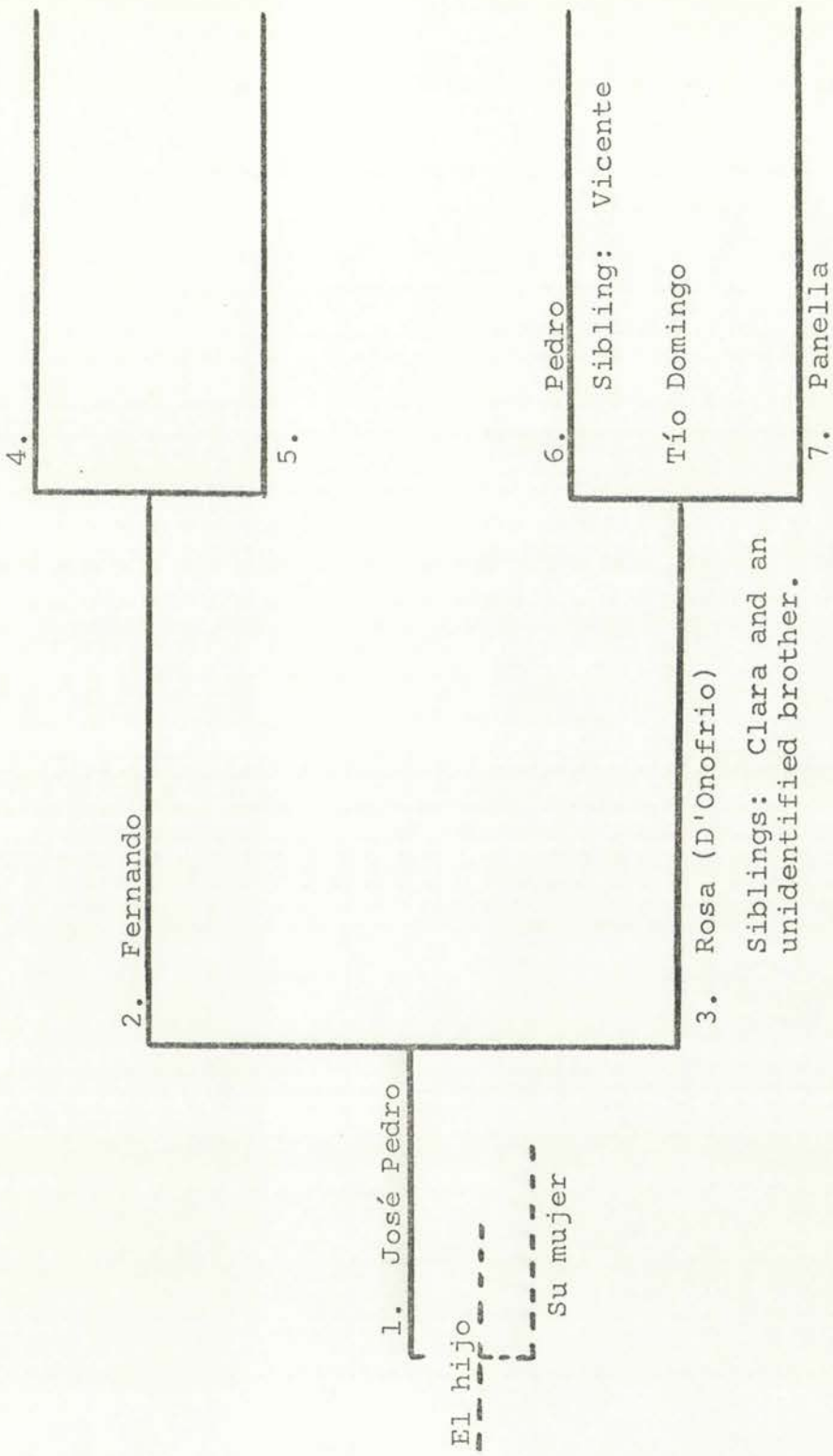

FIGURE 1.

Lineage of José Pedro.

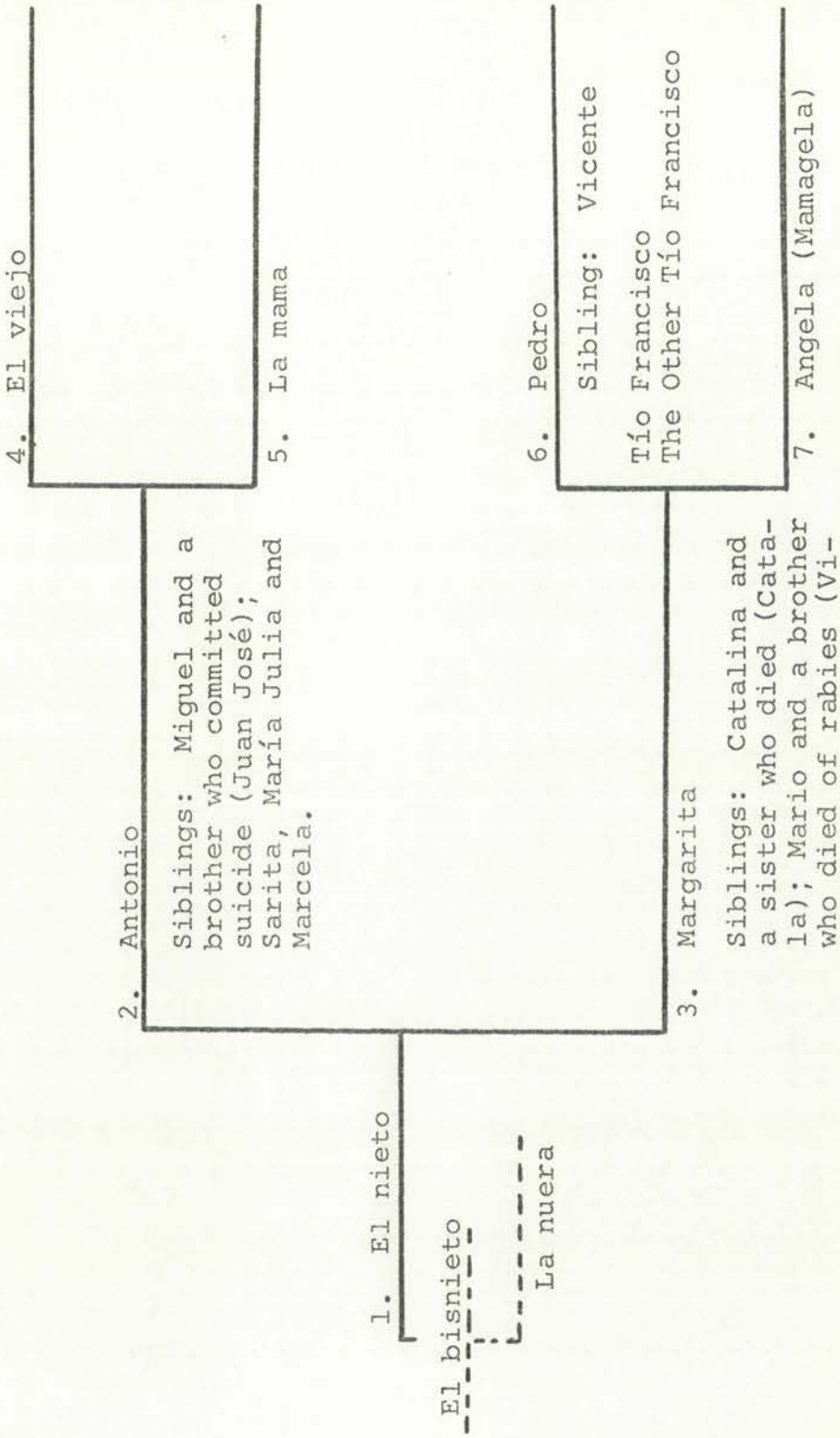

FIGURE 2.

Lineage of the Grandson.

family. They are probably about the same age, judging by their frame of reference. They both live in Malvín and each is married and has a son.

Both Tío Domingo and Tío Francisco are referred to occasionally as the "tío abuelo." However, neither appears to be definitely identified as brother of either of the Pedros or of Panella or Angela. The symbolic aspect of their personalities may account for this vagueness. Their daily activities have much in common.

> Lo que debía ser bueno es que tenía un tío que era pescador y se iba a pescar con él. Eso sí debía ser un quilo. En el puerto, pescaban. Pero embarcados. ... Dice que caminaban unas cuadras nomás: se iban caminando. De noche, dice. ... Sí, de noche. Cuando salía el sol estaban en el mar hacía rato. Eso sí que debía estar bárbaro, che, pero bárbaro. (p. 28)

The words are those of the great grandson who is talking about his father's childhood.

It was Tío Francisco who assumed the responsibility for starting a fire in the <u>calorífero</u> each morning so that the family would have hot water for the first mate of the day. Probably he accomplished this task shortly after sunrise, just after he returned from his nightly round of fishing on the bay. These are activities described as being performed by Domingo in the novella. In his declining years, Francisco lived in Malvín and one assumes that he, like Domingo, spent much of his time on the beach communing with the sea and remembering the Gulf of Policastro.

Locations in Time and Space

Inasmuch as Domingo made a return trip to Marina di Camerota around 1900, it is possible to conclude that he and his siblings probably arrived in Uruguay in the latter part of the nineteenth century.[17] Extrapolating from the duplicated lineage, the same dates of arrival may be established for Francisco, Pedro and Angela.

Early memories of both families center upon the crest of Julio Herrera y Obes Street. The setting suggests that they lived in one of the older homes of Montevideo, in a house with many rooms and probably an interior patio as well as an azotea or flat roof used as a sun deck. The proximity of the house to the intersection of Julio Herrera y Obes and Paysandú Streets places it in one of the oldest sections of Montevideo--Ciudad Nueva. It is this section of the city which first burgeoned over the boundary that had been defined by the original fortress walls which were demolished in 1829.[18] The location of the original wall is traced by Ciudadela Street which separates Ciudad Nueva from Ciudad Vieja, the original city. Ciudad Vieja is confined to the peninsula and contains the activity of the port and financial district.

The traditional neighborhood of Julio Herrera y Obes Street sets the pace for the lives of the family in Partes de naufragios until at least 1933, in the sense that its tone is still identifiable with events which occurred

before that time. The Montevideo evoked is one of tranquility, with tree-shaded streets and the sounds of children and an occasional passing streetcar. The very name of the street suggests the Patrician for whom it was renamed. (Previously, the name of the street may have been Daymán.) Julio Herrera y Obes, President of Uruguay before the turn of the century, was a man influential in cultural as well as political circles during the belle époque, the note upon which Uruguay completed her nineteenth century.

About 1929 a subtle transition commences, a transition from Julio Herrera y Obes Street to the then open stretches of sand in Malvín. The family becomes one with the linear expansion of Montevideo eastward, as a series of beach communities unfolds.[19] As was frequently the case with families who lived in the center of Montevideo, the parents of the grandson originally purchased the lot in Malvín for a summer retreat. Summer had become synonymous with Malvín by the time the Graf Zeppelin was observed from the azotea of the house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street.[20] The Graf Zeppelin could not have been seen over Montevideo before 1931; probably its appearance occurred in 1932 or 1933.[21] By 1933 the family had become acquainted with new neighbors and was somewhat established in Malvín; during March they feared for the safety of their neighbors the Cabreras.[22]

The transitionary period during which summers were spent in Malvín corresponds to the decade of the thirties.

The wake for Mario appears to take place in the house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street.[23] It was probably shortly thereafter that the family moved to Malvín, relinquishing all claim to the house on Julio Herrera y Obes--other than the claim of memory. Subsequently, the house was demolished.[24]

Based upon the stated age of the grandson at the time of Mario's death, it is possible to conclude that Mario died in the latter part of the decade of the thirties. The grandson recalls that he was fourteen, or perhaps a little older, when his uncle died.[25] In order to determine the approximate date of birth of the grandson, we must fall back upon the description of the nation's mourning at the death of Batlle in October of 1929. The grandson accompanied his father to the Legislative Palace where the multitudes pay their respects to Batlle. He is young enough that Antonio takes his hand and sufficiently dimunitive in stature that he is unable to see much of what is going on around him.[26] One would guess that he is probably not more than five years old. He might have been born in approximately 1924. He would have been fourteen in about 1938 and "perhaps a little older" in 1939.

By the time of Batlle's death in 1929, the grandson was probably in the habit of accompanying his grandmother to Unión where he and his cousin saw Charlie Chaplin films in the neighborhood theater. At intermission they would

run to Tío Alberto's tailor shop for a snack.[27] When the grandson was old enough to be called "pibe" ("muy jovencito") by the local pharmacist and to examine the windows of Cassa Tucci Billares on his own, Antonio was catching an occasional glimpse of Baltasar Brum in his official limousine.[28] The possibility that this might refer to the period from 1919 to 1923 when Brum was President of the Republic must be discounted, inasmuch as it is inconsistent with the age of the grandson. These incidents may have occurred when Brum was President of the National Council of Administration between 1929 and 1931.[29]

The Miraculous Unfolding

The Other Tío Francisco appears at the wake for Mario, much to the consternation of the members of the family who are assembled in the patio of the house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street.

> La aparición de Tío Francisco en ese momento se anunció por los gemidos que llenaron toda la casa; pero del otro Tío Francisco, aquel que no habían visto nunca antes, y del que apenas les habían llegado a veces algunas noticias fragmentarias y fabulosas; pero entonces apareció. (p. 265)

There is something fabulous about the Other Tío Francisco, something which has caused his relatives always to regard him with a bit of awe. Coincidentally--as if heralding his arrival--a wreath of flowers has appeared. The magnificent floral display was sent by the mysterious woman in

the life of Mario. The card attached to the wreath contains a tear-stained and agonizingly scrawled message of condolence, a card which the family wishes they could hide so that the flowers might remain anonymous. She and the Other Tío Francisco have something in common. They are both unknown. They are both mysterious. Just as the Other Tío Francisco has appeared to disquiet the mourners, the mysterious woman might appear to their further chagrin. The family would like to bury Mario without having to confront the delicate issues of the more secret aspects of his life.

Lateral memories which are associated with the unwelcome flowers detain the appearance of the Other Tío Francisco in the sequence of remembered events. It is necessary to return to the night before and close the lid of Mario's coffin and to awaken the next morning and to drink mate in the kitchen before the reader is allowed a glimpse of this unexpected and undesired visitor. When the Other Tío Francisco is finally allowed to penetrate the lateral memories and to put in his appearance, he makes his entry in dramatic style.

> Y fue entre esas coronas y los barrotes de hierro de la escalera que vieron al Otro Tío Francisco mientras él los miraba a ellos. Entonces agachó la cabeza y emprendió su último empuje--desde ese descanso ya no quedaban más que cuatro o cinco escalones: en realidad ya estaba en el patio--y dio los últimos pasos bamboleándose: "¡Dónde!" dijo, "¡Dónde está! ¡Cómo pasó!", decía, pero no eran palabras, eran como pedazos de goma rotos que salían mezclados con espiraciones y aspiraciones

> apenas moduladas, mezcladas con un gemido respiratorio que las enturbiaba. Cuando puso los pies en el patio, unos grandes pies calzados con zapatos de cuero grueso y agrietado, pareció trastabillar un momento, y alguíen se acercó para saludarlo, para sostenerlo y para detenerlo, pero él era grande y pesado, y se bamboleaba como un oso, pero no porque fuera a caerse, al contrario: estaba ahí de pie, bamboleándose, y alcanzaba con verlo para saber que era imposible que alguien lo moviera de donde estaba si no quería, o para impedirle que diera un paso si se le ocurría darlo; él se movía solo, con un balanceo que le nacía de adentro, un balanceo de pasión o de ira, pero no de debilidad, sino, precisamente de poder ... (p. 267)

There is something about the manner in which the Other Tío Francisco is dressed, about the manner of his walk and the shape of his shoes which is reminiscent of a Charlie Chaplin skit. He is a large man; in size and action he resembles the "heavy" of a Chaplin film. The theatrical business about the coffin of Mario combines the same comedy and pathos one associates with the art of Chaplin. But, most important is the touch of the fantastic. Out of nowhere a personality has suddenly emerged. He will be seen for a few moments at the side of his nephew's coffin, never to be seen or heard from again.

The Other Tío Francisco looks directly at the family, his face framed by the iron spokes of the stairway; Chaplin characters looked out of the screen directly at the audience or camera in much the same way. He observes them while they observe him. Mutual contemplation is also an

important aspect of the literary theory of Hernández as related to the phenomenon of el otro.

The Other Tío Francisco is grief-stricken over the death of Mario. Some of the relatives feel that this is unlikely inasmuch as Mario and the Other Tío Francisco hadn't seen one another for twenty years. Or, if they have seen one another, the family is not aware of it. Mario is actually the namesake of the Other Tío Francisco; they share the name Francisco Mario.[30] The Other Tío Francisco is a key to a whole series of doublings.

In the description of the two interstellar skeins, the word "other" is used.

> ... y no sólo el recuerdo, la invención también, que es a la vez la misma y otra madeja interestelar, nebulosa en explosión ... (p. 17)

The "other interstellar skein" is that upon which are wound the filaments of fantasy and imagination. These filaments are a part of memory and yet different from memory. The Other Tío Francisco is related to the other interstellar skein through the link of fantasy and imagination. But if there are two of anything, the key is turned in the lock to release an infinity of variations on the original. Two instances of duplication have been identified. How many more exist? Answering that question reveals that the possibilities are limitless.

If there was another Tío Francisco, could there not have been another grandson? What is José Pedro, if not a

double of the grandson? If the family itself, by extension from the grandson, is also duplicated; then, why not the setting? If both families lived in a traditional neighborhood and then moved to the more stylish Malvín, then why not their origins? If both families are the offspring of couples who were born along the Gulf of Policastro, then why not their anguish? If both families possessed a grandson who bore the burden of grief for lost loved ones and who might reasonably be concerned for the future of his son, then why not the journey? And, what of the journey? Was not the journey of José Pedro undertaken so that he might visit a land which was the reflected image of daily scenes in Uruguay? Was not the beach of Marina di Camerota the double of the bay of Montevideo?

The grandson also undertakes a journey, a journey into the seas and oceans of space. And once he has achieved the breakoff phenomenon and senses that he no longer is a part of the atmosphere of Earth nor of the human community upon Earth, he dispassionately observes his own position in the corridor outside the sickroom of his father in a sanatorium on an avenue which leads to the sèa. The bombardments of cosmic and solar waves duplicate the sulfurous volcanic region visited by José Pedro in Italy: he is closer to the entrails of the universe as was José Pedro closer to the entrails of the planet. Each, with his own Angel, has embarked on a journey in quest of the meaning of man's existence.

Within the structure of Partes de naufragios it is possible to detect an infinite series of doublings. There are two dining rooms which merge and diverge in memory. One is in the house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street; the other is in the abandoned house in Malvín. There are two trees in which young boys play. One is ascended by means of rungs which have been hammered into it, whereas the other is ascended by means of a rope pulley. The former is the tree in which the father or grandson played as a child; the latter is the tree in which the son or great grandson plays. The first tree is a scene of events surrounded by the political turmoil of 1933; the second, of the decade of the sixties. A clock strikes twice, in close succession. The clock is one and the same: it strikes in two different locations in time and space. First, the clock strikes in the dining room of the house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street at a time when the sinister Don Pedro had neither been discovered nor was necessary to cure family ills.[31] Second, it strikes in the dining room of the house in Malvín at a time when many familiar faces have long since disappeared. The two scenes appear as one; a memory in the first triggers a memory in the second. In each of the portraits which hang on the wall of the main bedroom of the abandoned house in Malvín there is another portrait. Each is a blowup of an older photograph. There are two sickrooms which interweave: that of the father Antonio with the son at his side

and that of the son as a small child with Antonio at his side. There are two times of political crisis: one in 1933 and one in the late sixties.

The Other Tío Francisco does not emerge until very nearly the end of the novel. He is symbolic of el otro who insists upon awareness, who seeks out the narrator and insists upon recognition. So insistent is el otro that it will be necessary to defer amplification to a separate chapter. First, let us examine the vast atemporal jigsaw puzzle of which el otro is a part.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. Philosophically portrayed is a tendency in the twentieth century to discard the "firm, hard outlines of individual personality" in order that the writer may be able to recreate the "deeper world beneath /the surface world/ which gives it its structure" (Stephen Heath, The Nouveau Roman, p. 49).

2. Díaz, Tratado de la llama, p. 93.

3. Zants explains the nature of character in the nouveau roman: "Character acquires a name only when as an object, some other character needs to refer to him because he has disappeared from the novel as a concrete individual since the impossibility of ever knowing another has been established. He has been restricted to a series of subjective reactions to others and appears only in his relationship to them. These relationships, in themselves, are what count, not the character, not the others. The novel is that relationship set in motion, that relationship in the process of becoming" (Emily Zants, The Aesthetics of the New Novel in France, p. 53).

4. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 84.

5. Another interpretation of the use of the third person might be that it reinforces a basic structure of the novel, the extravaganza. Zants explains: "The use of the third person would place not only the author, but also the reader, outside the creative mind, thus making a spectator rather than a participant of both" (Zants, p. 32).

6. Díaz, Fuegos, pp. 65-66.

7. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 86.

8. Díaz, Partes, p. 218.

9. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 84.

10. Szanto discusses a similar repetitive technique in the writing of Alain Robbe-Grillet. One significance is that of effecting transition in time and space. "The manner of movement from one object or scene to another to a third and back to the first can be described as a series of incompleted analogues. An incompleted analogue allows a shift from one object to another, linked by the juxtaposition of features similar in the two objects. The association is made by the mind, which finds a detail in one item analogous to a similar aspect of another" (George H. Szanto, Narrative Consciousness, p. 155).

11. Repetition of this image may be compared with an observation by Zants: "The repetition is not a proof of reality, but simply a point from which the reader can become conscious of a transformation of reality in the process of becoming. The spot on the wall left by a crushed centipede in Robbe-Grillet's Jealousy is referred to in scene after scene and the very repetition creates the jealousy and dissipates it" (Zants, p. 55).

12. Nathalie Sarraute has pointed out that the immobilization of characters in a situation which makes contact impossible may mean that "distances as vast as interplanetary space separate human beings from one another" (Zants, p. 14).

13. Much of the novel's imagery of the experience in space may be compared with the MGM Film 2001: A Space Odyssey, produced and directed by Stanley Kubrick. The novel based upon the screenplay was published by Arthur C. Clarke in 1968.

14. The grandson is like an astronaut who receives radio communiqués from persons on the planet Earth.

15. Díaz, Tratado de la llama, p. 87.

16. Ibid., pp. 92-93.

17. Díaz, Fuegos, p. 84.

18. Daniel Vidart, "El gran Montevideo," p. 147.

19. Díaz, Partes, p. 79.

20. Ibid., p. 103.

21. According to Vaeth, the first South Atlantic flight of the Graf Zeppelin reached Río de Janeiro in 1930 but did not venture further south, inasmuch as technicalities were still being developed regarding winds, air currents and mooring. From 1931 to 1937 the Graf Zeppelin provided regular service between Germany and Brazil, especially because of the German colonies in southern Brazil. Also, the South Atlantic enjoyed very little in the way of transportation with Europe even at that late date. For publicity purposes, the skipper of the Graf Zeppelin might well have wished to dip down over the River Plate Region early in the establishment of regular service--1931 or 1932. Interestingly, the Graf Zeppelin suggests the image of her sister ship, the Hindenburg. The latter did literally consume itself in flame in the adventure of flight in 1937 (J. Gordon Vaeth, Graf Zeppelin, pp. 138-154).

22. Díaz, Partes, p. 74.

23. Ibid., p. 266.

24. Ibid., p. 173.

25. Ibid., p. 255.

26. Ibid., pp. 79-81.

27. Ibid., pp. 238-246.

28. Ibid., pp. 22-24.

29. Roque Faraone, El Uruguay en que vivimos (1900-1968), p. 149.

30. Díaz, Partes, p. 266.

31. Ibid., p. 150.

CHAPTER 5

THE EXTRAVAGANZA

AN ATEMPORAL JIGSAW PUZZLE

> El cine de mis recuerdos es mudo. Si para recordar me puedo poner los ojos viejos, mis oídos son sordos a los recuerdos.
>
> Felisberto Hernández
>
> *El caballo perdido*

The illusiveness of the present is one of several qualities which place the novel in a time beyond time. Another of those qualities is the fragmentation of the content which produces the effect of a theatrical extravaganza. The atemporal character of the whole content of the novel must be recognized before considering the milieu in which the events occur, a milieu of memory and fantasy. Let us turn to an examination of the methods by which evasion of the present is achieved.

The Breakoff Phenomenon

The "breakoff phenomenon" has been defined as a "feeling during high-altitude flight of being totally detached from earth and human society."[1] The reader may experience just such a sensation upon completion of several readings of Partes de naufragios. A first reading may not produce the sensation inasmuch as the fragments must coalesce, the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle must be assembled. It then becomes apparent that certain of the threads of the various lives have been left dangling. There is a sensation of having been cut off: not knowing how things ended, one believes that they may not have ended and that the filaments continue to wind upon the skeins without the participation of the reader. Through the structure of the novel, the author has reproduced and reinforced the sensation of breakoff described by the grandson. Through imagination, the reader experiences a psychic phenomenon previously reserved for the pilot or occupant of a lunar rocket which has broken away from the gravitational pull of the planet Earth.[2]

What is the length of time required for a spacecraft to break away from the pull of Earth's gravity? The passage of time is accelerated as man is propelled outward. Once he has gone beyond the atmosphere of Earth, he will penetrate space ever more rapidly.

> ... sus propias vísceras extendidas girando espiraladas a velocidades vertiginosas, pero

> lentísimamente para la mirada de los telescopios, para la minuciosa anotación de tablas y de módulos ... (p. 17)

Time possesses the dimension of both moment and position. Relative to flight in an interplanetary rocket, a moment in linear time instantaneously becomes past time. Relative to such a position in the universe, any location within the atmosphere of the planet Earth instantaneously becomes past time. Even if it were possible to identify which of the fragments--of dialogue or of observed or experienced events--constitutes a moment and position in linear and spacial time closest to the present, that fragment would be in the past relative to flight through outer space. Therefore, everything which happens in the novel occurs in a time which is in the past as compared to the moment when the fragments coalesce within the mind of the reader and, having done so, allow him to experience the breakoff phenomenon described by the grandson. The sea or ocean of space which surrounds both the grandson and the reader is that of memory as "un hombre desprendido de la tierra, rota la fuerza de gravedad, levita, flota, gira lentamente en el recuerdo separándose del planeta en el iluminado espacio oscuro" (pp. 16-17).

Levitation in Memory

The ideas which occur to the grandson as he floats weightlessly in space are similar to those which occur to

his mother Margarita as she lies helplessly in bed, remembering.

> ... recuerdos, imágenes, personas, recuerdos que le cambian el nombre la cara la estatura a las personas que la atienden; pero recuerdos que en algunos momentos en que surge al mundo de los otros, por un momento condesciende a comunicar, cuando se despliegan de pronto, a veces de modo inconexo, pero con extraordinaria precisión, reproduciendo fragmentaria, pero fidelísimamente, imágenes arcaicas ... (p. 173)

The alienation evidenced by the grandson's evasion of the present results in the process of interiorization, a process which is the expression of the <u>conciencia desdichada</u>. The fragmentation is incidental to introspection.[3] Although the pieces of dialogue, for instance, may represent varying points of view of different observers; they are conversations which the grandson once participated in or heard repeated. They constitute the messages of the victims which he receives much like an astronaut communicating with various earthbound tracking stations.

Some of the fragments are the product of imagination and fantasy. The objects relate to the grandson, even though they may represent other individuals. It is the grandson who observes the objects and ascribes to them their significance. Events either occurred in his presence or were told to him by an informant. Objects, events and memories may acquire autonomy and act upon their own in a spontaneous fashion. They do so within the mind of the grandson. It is uncertain who may have written those chapters which are

fragments of scientific treatises, but they throw additional light upon the creatures which inhabit the world of the grandson. Events which occurred before he was born were part of the treasure trove of family lore, a knowledge of previous events which he would have acquired naturally. It is the world of the grandson which is recreated in the novel--a world which embraces the fantastic, imaginative and mysterious as well as memory.[4]

Obstacles to Interiorization

The fragmented structure of the novel is indicative of the memory process unfolding in the present within the mind of the grandson. Equally important as the content of memory are the processes whereby memories interact in an autonomous manner beyond the volition of the protagonist. Indeed, it may be that process exceeds content in importance. Díaz points out that Hernández used memory as raw material for the purpose of showing relationships between present time and remembered time; he explored in depth the interaction of remembered events, places, objects and people evoked and framed by the mind of the narrator. He demonstrated that obstacles occur to interiorization, lateral memories crowd in, the flow of time may be interrupted, remembered events may be transformed and may even be pushed aside.[5]

Fragmentation attests to the author's concern that the form of the novel be consistent with its content, individual and universal crisis and collapse. In this respect, Díaz shares the aesthetics of other nouveau roman authors. Alain Robbe-Grillet explains:

> Every artist must create the forms proper to his own world. Only I think that if the attempt at form is so interesting in the work of art, it is precisely because this form can have a content that the novelist does not yet know.[6]

A technique attributed by Díaz to Hernández is the sudden intrusion of the present upon the thoughts of the narrator.[7] In the novel, there are various examples of the present taking the narrator by surprise. This is especially true of Chapter 17, which involves three locations in memory. The effect is that of a series of vasos comunicantes which interact within the mind of the grandson.[8]

For the purpose of discussion of Chapter 17, we may consider reference to the present as identification of moment and position derived from the galaxy of fragments contained within the chapter. Play upon multiple presents is partially attributable to the duality identified by Szanto as "two narratives--the tale of the telling and the tale told."[9]

In Chapter 17 the present may be defined as that of the abandoned house in Malvín, the intermediate past may

be defined as a gathering of the family in the dining room of that house and the distant past may be defined as a dinner in the dining room of the house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street. The approach to the distant past is through the intermediate past, to the intermediate past is through the present. The present is objectified in the visible details of furniture and décor contained in the abandoned house.

The grandson is immersed in the memory of the distant past and is absorbed in observing the child who listens to a record on the Victrola, which is one of the pathways by which the memory of this dining room may be evoked. The light cast by the Victrola upon associated pieces of furniture and adornments is green, a visual image which has been captured in memory. The Victrola and the records also recall the music which was contained in the records. The grandson has penetrated memory to the depth that what he is remembering is the music itself, which he had learned by heart when he was the child whom he is observing.

A clock strikes in the dining room and fragments of dialogue follow. The fragments comment upon the fact that the clock strikes a different hour from that which the hands show. The intermediate past has been suggested by the sound of the clock and the words of the dialogue. The sound of the clock preparing to strike and striking is

immediately reproduced in a slightly altered version and followed by a similar dialogue. The second striking of the clock corresponds to a memory from the intermediate past which superimposes itself upon the memory from the distant past. Evoked by the sound of the clock in the distant past, the second striking has obliged the grandson to turn his thoughts to the intermediate past.

After sustaining his attention upon the conversation in the intermediate past, the grandson will once again seek a recall of the distant past, this time using a route which he describes as that of the old photographs in the photograph album.

> Hay dos modos de acordarse de ese comedor: pensando en la Victrola, o pensando en las viejas fotografías que había en un álbum. (p. 145)

The double striking of the clock is an example of the capacity of the past to absorb one's attention to a degree that an event in the present comes as a surprise. It contains a significant variation: the present is one of the locations in memory. The event of the present in the past has been triggered by an association in memory. It is a memory. The sound of the first clock gives rise to the memory of that same clock striking in another dining room at another time. In this instance, memory relates to an event which will occur in the future rather than to an event which occurred in the past.

Such an interaction between past and future might be impossible were it not for the fact that all of the places in time correspond to memories; none of them correspond to the illusive present. Even the house in Malvín in its abandoned condition is located in the past, although it is defined as "ahora." The position of the grandson levitating weightlessly in memory corresponds to the illusive present, the abandoned house in Malvín to the present in the past, the occupied house in Malvín to the intermediate past, and the house on Julio Herrera y Obes to the distant past.

In the example of the clock which strikes twice in close succession, a memory from the intermediate past insists upon awareness, displacing a memory from the distant past. This process may be reversed: the distant past may displace memories from the intermediate past which have previously displaced memories of the present in the past. The abandoned house in Malvín, containing the many objects and their inherent associations, may be examined room by room. In observing and scrutinizing the dining room of the house, the people who once assembled for Sunday dinner in that room will saturate its empty space. Once one's position in memory has shifted and one sits at the table with other members of the family in what has become the present, it then becomes inevitable that the furniture in the dining room--which includes the old Victrola and the oriental vase --will in turn suggest the dining room of the house on

Julio Herrera y Obes Street. Memories of a similar event in the dining room of that house crowd in upon the present in the past--the intermediate past--having been suggested by the furniture which was common to both dining rooms.

Regardless of whether one is situated in the illusive present or any one of the locations in time between it and the distant past, it will always be possible for a memory to displace a memory by insisting upon recognition. Moreover, the displacing memory will always correspond to the present which is a moving present. One literally does levitate as the position in memory shifts forward and backward from one place in time to another. The fragmentation occurs as memories from different locations in time successfully insist upon awareness and gain recognition. Díaz identifies the same technique in the fiction of Hernández.

> El narrador nos da testimonio de la vivencia de un tiempo que ha perdido su condición lineal, que se bifurca o polifurca en una intrincada madeja difícil de vivir. Ese sentimiento de estar enredado en el tiempo viene además acompañado del aflorar de una presencia interior que le es misteriosa y que lo arrebata al fluir de la propia vida.[10]

The autonomous nature of memories creates a condition which is propitious for the phenomenon of <u>el otro</u>.

The Extravaganza

The fragmented prose of the novel lends itself to interpretation through a literary theory of Díaz. He

identifies the theme of the espectáculo in the fiction of Hernández, stating that it is a consistent expression of the atemporal in that author's work.

> Hay otro tema, que es persistente en Hernández, y que nos muestra una muy curiosa extrapolación de esta atemporalidad de su obra: se trata de lo que llamaremos el "tema del espectáculo" que se da a propósito de varios de sus personajes. Estos se niegan al mundo como decurso natural e insisten en estar ante él como ante un espectáculo; o mejor: necesitan que los hechos les sean ordenados como espectáculo--y no como vida.[11]

In Hernández's Las hortensias, panes of glass form a showcase and the glass heightens the sensation of a time beyond time.

> Es evidente que para el autor la formulación inversa sigue siendo válida: ver las cosas en el recuerdo es verlas en vitrinas, esto es, fuera del tiempo.[12]

Díaz points out that an atemporal quality is also conveyed by the narrative structure of the fiction of Hernández, comprising as it does a series of disarticulated fragments.

> Esta falta de temporalidad se manifiesta también en la misma estructura narrativa. Lo señalamos ya a propósito de El caballo perdido, pero también es visible en la estructura esquemática de Tierras de la memoria, en la que el autor nos ofrece una sucesión de escenas que no son necesariamente interdependientes: son simplemente estampas que el recuerdo ofrece y aún, ellas mismas, están a veces como seccionadas. El autor da la sucesión, no el sentido de la sucesión; da los cortes, no la secuencia.
>
> En algún momento se omite totalmente el aspecto narrativo para acentuar la aparición de sucesivos pasados inconexos. Es característico que en un pasaje un párrafo empiece así:

> Después todos estaban de nuevo alrededor de la mesa ...
>
> Esta visión de una historia realizada por cortes hace de la misma historia un espectáculo similar a los que quieren contemplar los protagonistas de los relatos arriba mencionados: algo que ocurre porque sí: sin necesidad; sin tiempo del que emerjan y sin destino al que arribar.[13]

An Atemporal Jigsaw Puzzle

Based upon the foregoing theory of Díaz, we may conclude that the atemporal quality of the content of Partes de naufragios may be demonstrated in its fragmented structure which conveys the effect of an extravaganza. This accounts for the fact that we know very little about the intimate lives of the personalities or the context in which the shards of action occur. It also explains why it is the task of the reader to become involved.[14] All that the author intends to convey of the lives of the individuals is a series of disconnected images like the pieces of a broken mirror.

The breakoff phenomenon possesses aspects of the extravaganza as does the extravaganza share characteristics with the breakoff phenomenon. The latter may be said to represent the skein of filaments upon which are woven the threads of memory and the life processes whereas the former may be said to represent the other skein, the skein upon which the threads of the fantastic spin.

The Medusa

That the entire content of the novel may be defined as atemporal is extremely significant in terms of what this indicates about the author's attitude toward his immediate circumstance. The message implied is that the circumstance of writing contains aspects sufficiently appalling that the author prefers not to examine them directly but rather to examine the effect upon the individual and upon universal man.[15] It also indicates that a portrayal of the effect upon the lives of the people is more valid and more revealing than direct examination of their circumstance. The narrator expresses the desire to place himself in a position apart, from which he would like to observe his immediate reality. This has been demonstrated through the psychological transposition of the grandson from the bedside of his father to a position in space where he is surrounded by the protective sphere of the capsule of an interplanetary rocket.

The agonizing attempt to view the circumstance of the crisis without being lacerated by it is captured symbolically through allusion to the Medusa. In the text, ambiguity arises through the application of the word to the monster of Greek mythology and to various jellyfish or jellyfish-appearing designs which swim in the aqueous environment of the novel. In at least one instance, it is the head of the monster which best conveys the meaning.

> Tiene que fabricar una hebra más, que se extienda, que se aleje; ese es su oficio: que esa madeja ruede en el espacio arrastrando una cabellera de medusa desde uno de cuyos pelos alcance a verle a ella misma la cara mientras va dibujando su órbita que fue, que pasó, que está siendo, pero ¿dónde? ¿dónde? (p. 100)

The head of the Medusa rotates in space as does the interstellar skein of memory and the life processes, the total skein which also comprises tendrils from the skein of the imaginative processes. There is no visual connection between the head of the Medusa and the skein: what is suggested is that the rotation of the skein creates its own gravitational pull which has seized the head of the Medusa and drags it in its orbit. The speed at which the skein rotates is generated by spinning of the thread which prolongs itself in the creative life processes of the grandson; a thread which, in turn, knots itself to the threads of others and increases the speed of the rotation of the skein. Perhaps from one of the hairs of the serpented hairdo it will be possible to see the face of the Medusa without suffering instant death. The Medusa also has the power of doubling or spontaneously growing anew, with all the horror that such a concept conveys when applied to a malevolent person, object or event.

Unwinding a Filament

Turning to the examination of the fragmentation of the flow of water into drops and the images contained in memory thereby conveyed, it is possible to observe how time and space may be penetrated by a series of progressions through a point in space and a moment in time.[16]

The Drops of Water

In the abandoned house in Malvín there is a faucet which cannot be closed tightly.

> Pero ya en el pasillo de abajo se oye el goteo de una de las canillas que resuena contra la bañera, en la que es fácil adivinar la mancha ovalada, color tabaco claro, que formó la sucesión de gotas que se filtraron apretadamente contra el cuero del grifo y destilaron su color. (p. 38)

Díaz discusses the symbolism of water with reference to the fiction of Hernández. Water is associated with the memory process. He cites a passage from <u>El caballo perdido</u> as an example.

> En cambio debo agradecerle que me siguiera cuando en la noche yo iba a la orilla de un río a ver correr el agua del recuerdo. Cuando yo sacaba un poco de agua en una vasija y estaba triste porque esa agua era poca y no corría, él me había ayudado a inventar recipientes en qué contenerla y me había consolado contemplando el agua en las variadas formas de los cacharros.[17]

He goes on to explain the various associations conveyed by the conditions of the water: whether it flows freely, overflows or stagnates in a well. Water which flows freely or

overflows may be associated with amniotic fluid, assuming that other details support that interpretation.[18] A sparcity of water might have the opposite connotation, depending upon the circumstances.

The abandoned house in Malvín has been abandoned because the people who once lived in it are now dead or dying, or have established their homes in other houses. In a sense, lives have dried up and withered away or they have been transplanted to a new location. The opposite end of the life cycle has been reached. The process of drying up is mentioned in connection with the vegetation around the house and with one of the former occupants of the house. As Antonio lies in the bed of the sanatorium, one of the sensations which he feels is that of air drying his eyes as stated in the phrase "y el aire, que le seca los ojos entreabiertos" (p. 16).

Memory has not run dry. It persists in the ceaselessness of the drops of water which painfully force themselves through the worn washer, soiling the white porcelain as they drip. The house is saturated with the memory of the people who once lived there. The images of those people are retained in memory. Like the color of the wine bottles which remains upon the table after the bottles have been removed,[19] the drops of water and the stain which they have left on the porcelain are remnants of memories and sounds of memories of the people who once lived in the abandoned house in Malvín.

All the houses which have gone before and, in particular, the house which once existed on Julio Herrera y Obes Street are embraced within the house in Malvín.

The Oriental Vase

In order to approach the now demolished house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street through the abandoned house in Malvín, a series of transitions in time and space must be accomplished. Chapter 17 contains an example of the unfolding. The chapter opens with an oblique reference to the oriental vase.

> Reposa en la habitación en penumbra, hacia un ángulo, cerca de la ventana. Es muy diferente ahora, aunque sin duda es el mismo. (p. 141)

The object being examined suggests the popularity of oriental art during the belle époque, the cultural note upon which Uruguay ended her nineteenth century. The belle époque corresponds to the early married life of Pedro and Angela, although the young couple would not have been in the financial position--nor perhaps even emotionally or psychologically inclined--to indulge in the extravagances of the new rich of the commercial and industrial class.[20] Ángel Rama explains the origins of this particular taste for the exotic:

> Ya antes de la exposición de 1875 del Palacio de la Industria de París, donde el pabellón japonés provocó deliquios, el japonesismo se había introducido en Europa. En Francia fue su mediadora una mujer múltiple, Judith Gautier (hija de Gautier, ninfa inspiradora de Wagner, mujer de Catulle Mendès) quien contagió de su entusiasmo a los Goncourt,

> desencadenando el afán coleccionista de los hermanos. Japonerías y chinerías estuvieron a la moda por largo tiempo: potiches, muebles, kimonos, estampas, llenaban la casa Bing.[21]

The oriental vase is an object which possesses interest and significance in and of itself, as the foregoing quotation suggests. It retains much of the opulence of the era when it was in vogue and much of the elegance of the culture which produced it. Unwittingly, the ravages of time trace upon its surface in smudges of color the artistic values of impressionism. The vase was once restored. The pieces into which it was shattered may still be discerned. They resemble the structure of the novel.[22]

It was possible to examine the vase and to perceive the map (of the disaster traced upon its surface) on the day when the family inexplicably had Sunday dinner in the dining room of the house in Malvín, rather than in the room in that house in which they were accustomed to having Sunday dinner. Having dinner in the dining room made it possible to unfold the images which were doubled over within a fold which--when opened out--revealed a similar dining room, somewhat wider, in the house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street. The map traced upon the surface of the oriental vase leads into the unfolding: the vase was broken in the dining room of the house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street.

Unfolding the Dining Rooms

With the shifting of attention from the oriental vase to the dining room, the dispassionate and impersonal observation which has been lent to examination of the vase yields to a point of view--that of the grandson. The unfolding occurs within memory. One might say that the communicating vessels are within the mind of the grandson. A series of locations in time are brought into play as the image unfolds.

> Hacía ya mucho entonces que no se había vuelto a usar esa mesa de roble en el cuarto estrecho donde apenas hay lugar para las sillas entre la mesa y los otros muebles. (p. 142)

The grandson is positioned in a place in time from which he observes a previous place in time referred to as "entonces." The place in time defined as "entonces" is closer to the grandson's position than is another place in time when the same maple table was previously used. The grandson enumerates the various articles of furniture and china in the dining room and, upon completion of the enumeration, he comments that "estaba igual que ahora; pero entonces la casa estaba todavía habitada" (p. 142). He has defined his position of observation in time as "ahora" and has further explained that "ahora" is the time of the abandoned house in Malvín.

The grandson's memory of the family gathering in the dining room of the house in Malvín "entonces" is livened with fragments of dialogue as members of the family arrive and Margarita greets them. Fragments of dialogue and

remembered incidents interweave within the grandson's mind. He becomes immersed in these details and, as he does so, "entonces" becomes "ahora." Finally, the members of the family seat themselves around the table in the dining room and, by so doing, they inspire a series of associations.

> Señala uno de los asientos, una de esas sillas de roble claro, de respaldo alto y delgado. Antes tuvieron cuero en el tapizado del asiento, ahora tienen pantasote verde. Lo que antes era verde era la luz. El cuero era marrón y todo parecía más severo. El comedor, que era más grande que éste, comunicaba con la pieza vecina, que usaban como dormitorio, por una serie de puertas vidriera que en las grandes ocasiones --Navidad, Año Nuevo--se abrían para dar cabida a la mesa con todas las tablas puestas. ... Hay dos modos de acordarse de ese comedor: pensando en la Victrola, o pensando en las viejas fotografías que había en un álbum. (pp. 144-145)

From the point in time formerly identified as "entonces" and now become "ahora," the grandson observes the visual images of that earlier dining room in the house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street. Again, the oriental vase comes under his scrutiny. The flowers which the vase contains are made of durable materials including fish scales and sea shells, suggesting the eternal nature of the sea.

Having approached the place in time identified as "antes" through the route of the associations inherent in the furniture and other objects located in proximity to the Victrola, the grandson once again shifts his position in time. He becomes immersed in the memories of the dining room in the house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street.

> Es de tarde; debe estar anocheciendo, pero las puertas y las ventanas que dan al balcón y que tienen cristales y cortinas, están ahora cerradas y cubiertas por gruesos postigos de madera pintada de gris. (p. 146)

The extent of the grandson's participation continues to be that of an observer and of the mind which receives all of the fragments of dialogue, observation, creativity, fantasy and memory which combine to recreate the family gathering in the dining room of the house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street.

> El niño se levanta y anda marchando alrededor de la mesa--aunque sin alejarse demasiado, sin entrar en el agua de sombra verde que la rodea--, mientras el ritmo se hace cada vez más enérgico y empiezan a aparecer otros sonidos nuevos, más altos, que se mezclan y se alzan, todavía más impetuosos, y hacen que no se pueda pensar ya en hacer nada que pueda estar acorde con ellos: es más, más, más lo que hay que hacer--¿pero qué?--: se sienta, porque no se trata de andar, pero se mueve, porque de todos modos la música le impide estar quieto. (p. 146)

He retains his attitude of observation as he watches himself as a child, listening with the child to the music being played on the Victrola. The green shadow is cast by the Victrola and it would seem that the fluid created by it contains the memory of the various melodies and intervals in the music of the record. The child has listened to the record often enough that he is able to anticipate what will come next. The designs which the child follows in the music are portions of the filaments of memory and creativity which wind upon the two interstellar skeins. The double striking of the clock returns the grandson to the dining room of the house in Malvín.

While the grandson observes the dinner, fragments of comparisons between the two settings briefly interlace: the two dining rooms alternately converge and diverge. The grandson then embarks upon an approach to the dining room in the house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street through the route of the photograph album.

This filament may be continuously unwound. The maximum penetration would be to a record on the Victrola or to a photograph within the family album.

Annihilation at Center

Having unwound the filament to the point of maximum penetration, the reader discovers that the schemata are annihilated.[23] Not only does the photograph in the album not exist but, also, the message which emanates from the scratchy record upon which the nicked needle girates is "el mensaje de las galaxias lejanas, el ruido de fondo de un mundo perdido" (p. 151). Annihilation occurs in the center of the space occupied by the novel which consists of 280 pages.[24] With respect to individual chapters, there are multiple instances of annihilation within chapter context, taking the form of either a negation or an affirmation.[25] Chapter 4 places the multiple frames of vegetative decay around an affirmative moment expressed as "el olor entero y puro de los jazmines sólo se podía sentir dentro de la casa y por la

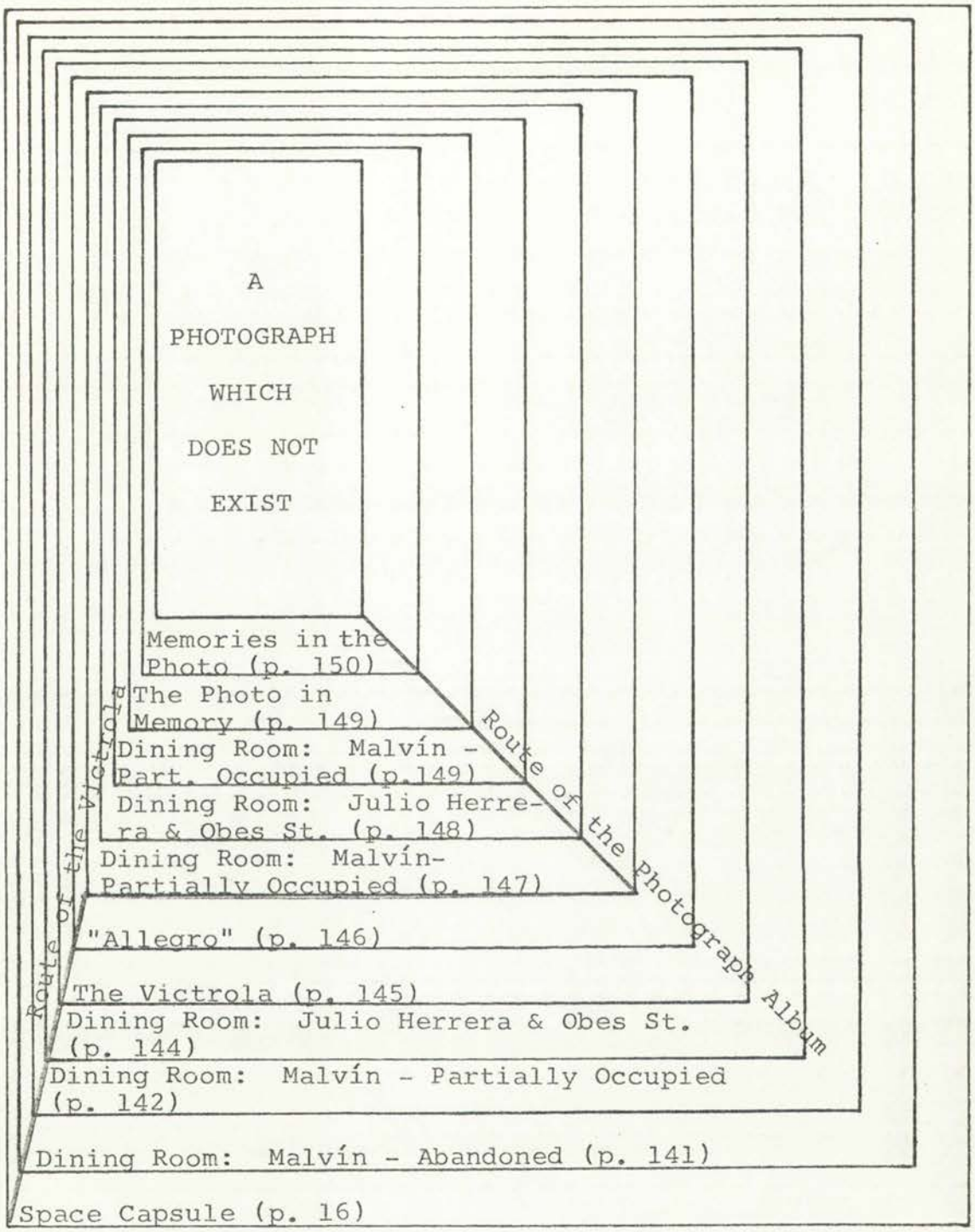

FIGURE 3.

Annihilation at Center: Route of the Photograph Album.

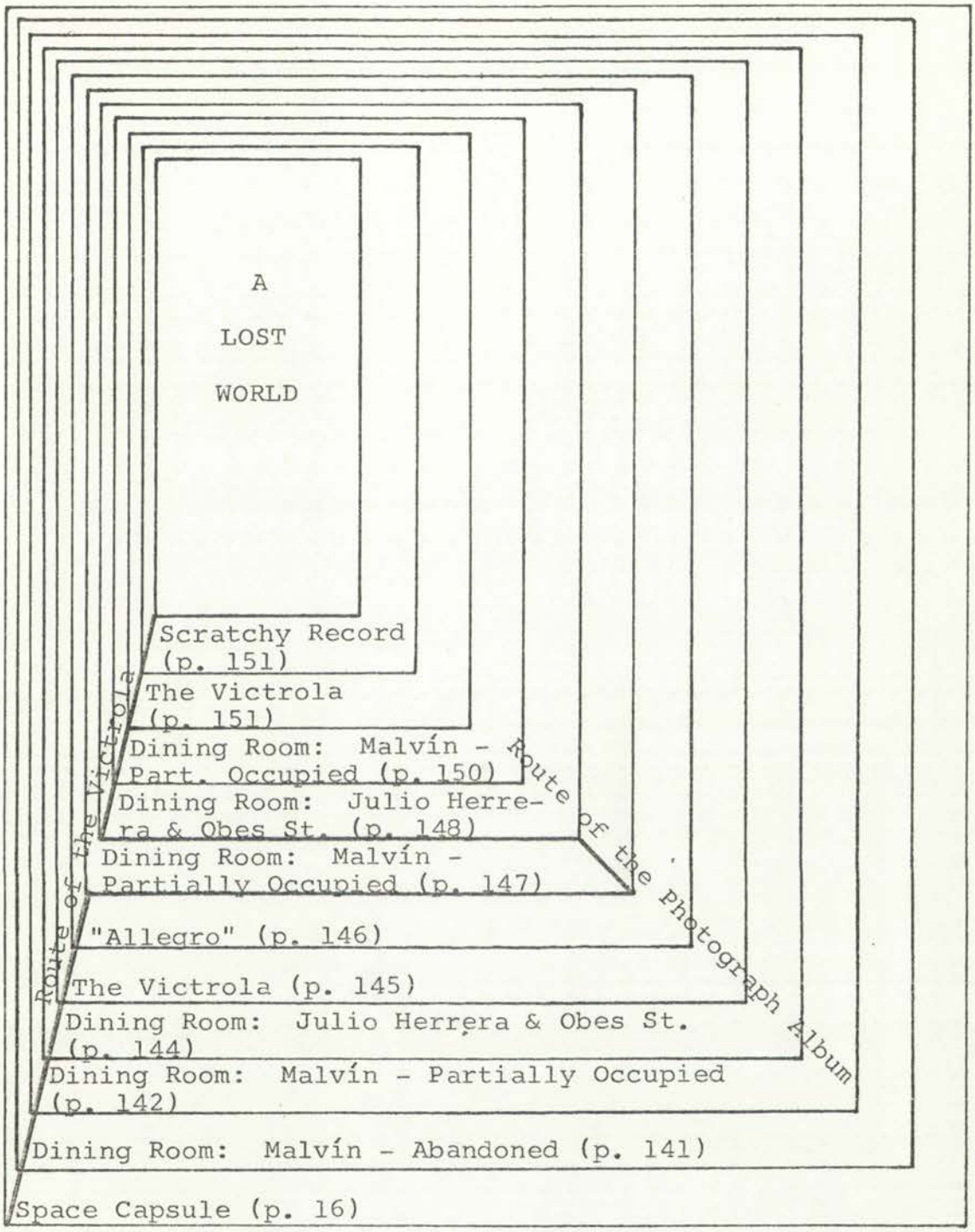

FIGURE 4.

Annihilation at Center: Route of the Victrola.

tarde, cuando su madre ponía algunas flores en la jarrita azul y esperaba, con la casa arreglada, la llegada del padre" (p. 42).

Framing Time and Space

Díaz repeatedly returns to the theme of inability of the written word to communicate and of the limitations in time upon the individual who writes. Man is limited by time in an immediate and mortal sense. In a given moment, it is rarely possible to put down on paper the words which might adequately convey the thoughts occurring to the individual.[26] A lifetime would be inadequate for experiment in recreating limitless realities.[27]

Endeavoring to discover limitations upon the word in Partes de naufragios, the reader notices that the clock of the present in the past has ceased to tick.[28]

> Pero es inútil ahora siquiera darle cuerda; el péndulo oscila y se detiene: algo en sus pequeños engranajes se atasca y no sigue impulsándolo; quizá haya herrumbre, o quizá el aceite envejeció y se espesó junto al eje del áncora, de modo que cuando el vaivén del péndulo la deja libre para que dé un paso y pueda adelantar un diente del engranaje, el áncora queda abierta ante ese espacio vacío, con un movimiento inacabado como la boqueada incierta de los moribundos, que no se sabe si se debe a alguna imposibilidad, o a un momento de duda, durante el cual tardan en decidirse a seguir viviendo, y mientras tanto se les hace tarde para retomar el ritmo que tenían; así el péndulo sigue oscilando si se le impulsa, pero sin que por eso avance el delicado mecanismo, porque la amplitud de su movimiento es cada

> vez menor, y cuando el áncora cae al fin, la oscilación es ya tan corta que no deja paso para que su extremo alcance al otro diente del engranaje, y después de algunas pequeñas olas, el tiempo se estanca definitivamente dentro de la caja. (pp. 33-34)

There are no apparent limitations in time and space within the silence of the grandson's interior labyrinth. Knowing the author's belief in limitations,[29] the reader may reasonably suspect that they may be hidden within the folds of the novel. This is all the more true when one takes into consideration the esthetics of the authors of the nouveau roman, who experiment with the spatialization of time while also limiting time.[30]

A limitation to time's dimension which the reader may inflict upon the narrator (and upon himself) is the observation that the moving present of the novel progresses through the fourteen stations of the cross. (See figure 5.) The importance of the appearance of a cross in Chapter 29 is enhanced by the constellation of signs and symbols which accompany it. The number of the chapter alludes to the death of Batlle in 1929; the content alludes to the death of Antonio in the sense that he will never recover from the coma whose onset is described.

> Y estalla, estalla en ramazones de relámpagos cárdenos que inundan el cerebro de vibrátiles extremos luminosos, y de pronto es la sombra que lo inunda todo y lo cubre. (p. 260)

STATIONS OF THE CROSS FRAGMENTING ANALOGUES

1. Jesus is condemned to death.
   Chapter 1.
   "Los ojos están opacos." (p. 12)

2. Jesus bears his Cross.
   Chapter 2.
   "¡Treinta años trabajando en el mismo taller! ¿Porque fueron treinta, no? Apenas uno o dos años de aprendiz en lo de Crubelati y después ya no se movió de allí." (p. 23)

3. Jesus falls the first time.
   Chapter 3.
   "¡Y mirá que tenía constancia!" (p. 35)

4. Jesus meets his mother.
   Chapter 5.
   "Se le acerca su madre para saber si Miguel necesita algo." (p. 58)

5. Jesus is helped by Simon.
   Chapter 9.
   "¡Ah, m'hijito, se nos murió el ponchito'e los pobres!" (p. 80)

6. Jesus and Veronica.
   Chapter 14.
   "En qué tierra que el tiempo erosiona y disgrega hasta hacerla porosa como una gran esponja estéril de blanda piedra pómez ... en qué nube de memoria que el tiempo barre y el sol disuelve?" (p. 128)

7. Jesus falls a second time.
   Chapter 15.
   Two deaths: Pedro and Vicente (pp. 135-136).

8. Jesus speaks to the women.
   Chapter 22.
   Catalina, Margarita, Doña Mariquita and "la tipa." /Miguel/ (pp. 204-205)

FIGURE 5.

The Frame of Time and Space

FIGURE 5--Continued

9. Jesus falls a third time.
   Chapter 26.
   "Cómo puede subir de ese lugar al que fue cayendo, en el que se dejó caer, donde cayó luego de tropezar con un microscópico tubo que se rompió y desprendió, como un calamar, una líquida humareda negra que le hizo caer, y en ese remolino de espiras negras en lo negro desflecándose se hundió, siguió cayendo aunque esté tendido, horizontal y asido por esos tentáculos de goma que lo apresan; pero él escapa por otro lado y cae, cae para adentro." (p. 222)

10. He is stripped of his garments.
   Chapter 27.
   "Ni siquiera supe ... hasta que se lo llevaron." /Mario/ (p. 246)

   "Sí, fue conmigo, sí. De eso me acuerdo bien". /Mario/ (p. 246)

11. Jesus is nailed to the Cross.
   Chapter 28.
   "Y se mordía los labios mientras le ponían los pantalones--porque al final colaboraban todos." /Mario/ (p. 257)

12. Jesus dies on the Cross.
   Chapter 29.
   "Él está delante tendido. Siempre estará tendido. Su madre se persigna cuando pasan por Rivera para el centro. Ella piensa en él. Él piensa en su forma de ahora, en el color de sus huesos, en la madera deslustrada, en sus dientes. Está delante tendido. Comparte la habitación con otro que tiene la pierna quebrada." (p. 263)

13. Jesus is taken down from the Cross.
   Chapter 33.
   "Él ya no está asido a nada: huido al fondo de sí, dejó su cuerpo flotando en algún lugar." (p. 282)

FIGURE 5--Continued

14. Jesus is laid in the tomb.
Chapter 34.

Y cuando llegó recorrió toda la casa, y abrió puertas y ventanas, y subió las cortinas de madera y corrió los cortinados.

Pero se hacía de noche, y entonces volvió a recorrerla, y subió al primer piso y encendió todas las luces, hasta la del jardín. La iluminación de la calle no estaba todavía encendida. Sólo la casa. Pero él no pudo quedarse en ella; salió a la calle, la cruzó y caminó luego hasta la esquina; y desde allí los vio llegar, y vio luego cómo el cuerpo de su hermano entraba en aquella casa, la única de la cuadra que estaba iluminada, con todas las puertas y ventanas abiertas de par en par, y las sombras de algunos vecinos que habían salido a la acera para ver qué pasaba. (pp. 290-291)

¡Aleluya! (p. 59)

Further, if the scene is interpreted as the twelfth station of the cross, it will correspond to the station which portrays the death of Christ.

As Antonio is rushed to the hospital on the first page of Chapter 29, a dramatic series of doubled images occurs. Moreover, the myth of the flame and man's flight with the Angel underlies the description of events. The flickering flame of Antonio's feeble existence is reflected in the pulsations of the ambulance's gyrating red light as, "Rojo, parpadea el ojo giratorio" (p. 259). There is an ambiguous reference to the marriage of earth and sky in the observation that "en algún lugar del cielo, por arriba de los árboles, hay una mancha rojiza" (p. 259). The foregoing may be compared with a passage from the Tratado de la llama.

> No es cosa del hombre mantener inmóvil para sí, fijo, el resplandor de un día eternamente naciente; un pulso secreto y suyo le obliga a sentir en el peso de su cuerpo la ráfaga del tiempo que lo empuja. La llama tiembla ante ese empuje, vacila, pero lo que la amenaza la enciende, y ella acentúa su intemporalidad con el brillo con que responde a lo perecedero. Así ella es el festejo sobrenatural de las bodas del cielo y de la tierra.[31]

The varied signs and symbols which converge in Chapter 29--in association with the cross--suggest that the cross may convey a special significance. A question arises as to whether other symbols of the Passion are present. The attempt of Antonio in Chapter 29 to create a second caravel which will be more perfect contains a vague quality of

Resurrection not materialized. An allusion to a Resurrection is seen in the light which inundates the abandoned house in Malvín and spills out of its windows, an image of potential rebirth which is depicted on the last page of the novel. The existence of a Chapter 34 is a form of Resurrection, Christ having died in his thirty-third year. Moreover, a second cross--luminously white--appears in that chapter. There exists a possibility that the name of the abandoned house in Malvín is changed after the death of Antonio to "¡Aleluya!" (p. 59). And, finally, the inundation is a form of rebirth and renewal as interpreted through the author's world view.

Further examination of the novel is stimulated by these findings. It reveals that fourteen chapters contain scenes at the bedside of the dying Antonio where two individuals accompany him in a vigil which forms a trilogy reminiscent of the three deaths on Calvary. Might this be interpreted as a second Crucifixion? The Cross of the Passion may be implied through the use of the word "aspas" in connection with the mills which grind the fragments of the lives of the victims of the shipwrecks, "aspas que giran, molino que tritura en su muela ese pulverulento vaho de agonía" (p. 12). In this instance, the mill powered by the aspas is the craw associated with the green rebreathing bag which rhythmically inflates and deflates as a point of sustained attention. The craw fabricates the labored breathing

of death, as attested by "todo es ahora un mismo grano para el molino que gira lentamente sus viejas aspas moliendo y moliendo, fabricando más estertor" (p. 13).

The stations of the cross may be perceived in the process of returning again and again to the scene of Antonio's sickroom dominated by a point in space which is the green, pulsating globe. The space through which the reader and the protagonist move is the repeated examination of this scene, either wholly or fragmentally, in fourteen chapters of the novel. Included are the first and the last of the 34 chapters. As Miguel and the grandson accompany the dying Antonio in his symbolic Passion, their awareness of their own mortality is enhanced. The word "asentir" acquires yet another meaning, when viewed in this context. "Sin duda él está asintiendo a algo" (p. 259) describes the attitude of the grandson accompanying his father in Chapter 29.

Reader identification and designation of the stations of the cross imposes a limit upon the creative process of the grandson by limiting the flow of the internal time of his labyrinth. The dimension of space is applied to time's limitation. What the mind's eye perceives is not simply each of the individual stations of the cross, but a progression in space from one station to the next until the fourteenth station has been reached. There is always the option of returning to the first and commencing again to increase the square of anguish.

The anguish of time's passing is intensified by the nature of the limitation upon it. It is a limitation imposed upon a man who probably does not believe in life after death. Ironically, the limitation is being imposed upon the thought processes of the grandson who levitates in memory--in a time which is beyond time.[32]

Fragments

Objects

Objects possess significance in and of themselves. The oriental vase is not only a work of art, but it is also an evocation of an era in Uruguay, a map of a reconstructive process, the product of a culture itself mysterious, an object within a galaxy of objects, an artifact of the family which lived in its proximity and a symbol of the structure of the novel. The oriental vase embraces the life of its creator which has been transferred to it in the act of creation--and, in this instance, that of the restorer as well. This latter quality increases the anguish of the mortal observer who contemplates it.[33] The vase will probably endure longer than the lives of the people who created, restored and contemplated it. The oriental vase provides a pathway to a place in memory, a guidepost whereby one may be oriented as to a specific location in the process of introspection.[34]

The Flow of Time

The flow of time may be altered. It may be made to flow either more rapidly or more slowly. It may be interrupted completely. The alteration of time's flow may be attributed to memory or to natural and quasi-natural phenomena.

What might be considered a quasi-natural phenomenon is the slowing of time's flow by an object. Objects may imprison an individual.[35] This may result from a reciprocal process whereby the person's soul is transferred to an object, leaving the person inert; while the object receives the transfer of energy and becomes animated. Díaz explains:

> Así el mundo interior tiende a quedar reposando en objetos. En estos casos el punto de arranque no es el objeto: hacia el objeto se va, se cae; se va hacia la inercia, hacia lo inanimado; el espíritu queda atrapado en la materia y enajenado. Reposa, fuera de él, en el mundo; se hace él mismo cosa, y el mundo, por su parte, se hace inextricable y su presencia obsesiva.[36]

In Partes de naufragios the flow of time may be observed to cease because of the inertia produced by transposition of the soul of an individual to an object. An example is Tía Marcela. She is a personality who tends to live in the past. Her involvement with objects results from a sentimental attachment to them. Each one is a memory. Moving from one house to another is a trauma for Tía Marcela since it always involves an inventory of objects and the loss of some of them.

> ... porque cada vez que intentaban preparar las cosas y ordenarlas para la mudanza, las dos comenzaban por abrir el ropero y los cajones del tocador y empezaban a sacar cosas; pero en seguida la habitación se llenaba de objetos que quedaban repartidos sobre el tocador, las mesitas, los cajones apilados junto a la puerta, la cama y el suelo, y mucho antes de que se pudieran vaciar los muebles ya era imposible caminar ni moverse. Como además Marcela seguía tratando de deambular entre las cosas sin reposo, tratando de reconocerlas y cambiándolas de lugar, al poco de trabajar ya estaban todos de sobra en la habitación, y el trabajo se iba haciendo cada vez más lento, una parálisis progresiva los invadía, hasta que al fin se detenían del todo y quedaban con las manos y los brazos ocupados sin acertar a encontrar donde poner lo que llevaban, y sin embargo el ropero seguía con el vientre abierto y las entrañas a la vista, desbordándose y amenzando despeñarse sobre ellos; de modo que, casi invariablemente, terminaban por guardarlo todo como podían ... (p. 189)

The foregoing demonstrates how inertia may result from the transfer of man's spirit to an object or objects. It provides an example of a reciprocal process whereby Marcela has externalized her soul and has become part of the objects which surround her while the wardrobe exhibits characteristics of a human being. Moreover, the wardrobe threatens to throw itself headlong upon the family. The wardrobe has come to life; it is hostile and menacing.

The episode demonstrates another aspect of man's alienation from his world. With relationship to the fiction of Hernández, Díaz explains:

> "El trabajador--dice Marx--, pone su vida en el objeto y su vida no le pertenece ya a

> él sino al objeto". Y luego: "La enajenación del trabajador en su producto no sólo significa que su trabajo se convierte en un objeto, asume una existencia externa, sino que existe independientemente, fuera de él mismo y ajeno a él y que se opone a él como un poder autónomo. La vida que él ha dado al objeto se le opone como una fuerza ajena y hostil".[37]

Reciprocal action with the hostile object entails an exchange of energy, according to Díaz. "El modo de realizar el enfrentamiento con el objeto hostil es dinamizándolo con una energía que le otorgue algún común denominador con el sujeto."[38]

In the passage describing Marcela, the energy exchange occurs with the transposition of Marcela's belly to the wardrobe, including the objects to which she has bequeathed her spirit, accounting for the inertia into which she sinks.

The flow of time very nearly ceases again, with the discovery of the photograph which does not exist. The discovery is made in the midst of the turbulence just described. The memories which pour forth from the photograph threaten to paralyze other members of the family who are helping Marcela move. People enter the room out of the photograph.

> Y mientras habla, en la habitación apeñuscada y revuelta, empiezan a entrar otras personas, y sus sobrinos y su cuñada, que están con las manos ocupadas y los pies enredados en las sábanas sueltas, empiezan a enredarse también en los recuerdos, que ella hace entrar y tratan de impedir la avalancha: "Sí Marcela; déjalas ahí que otro día las vemos". (p. 191)

Relatively subtle in the foregoing instance, the inertia of time's flow is intensified to the breaking point in the far

more dramatic example of the exteriorization of the bronchial tree of Antonio.

> Los tubos de goma se tuercen en el aire y caen sobre él e hincan sus agujas en la pierna y en el brazo; otro viene desde los manómetros del oxígeno hasta la máscara irrisoria que le cubre la boca y la nariz; debajo cuelga, como un buche monstruoso, una esfera de goma; aplanada cuando aspira, llena, redonda a reventar como una pelota de playa cuando espira, como si el secreto mundo de su árbol respiratorio se le hubiera puesto fuera, como si no hubiera ya lugar en él para la delicada, silenciosa urdimbre que el aire teje en el pecho de los vivos, y la seca pulsación de sus gemidos viniera de otra cosa que de respirar, de esa crepitación cartilaginosa; glóbulos de respiración triturados por un molino inacabable: aspas que giran, molino que tritura en su muela ese pulverulento vaho de agonía. (p. 12)

Graphically portrayed is man's servitude to an object. The monstrous craw literally sustains and prolongs the life of the patient. The inflation of the rebreathing bag when the patient exhales and its deflation when he inhales indicates that vital signs continue. The power of life and death possessed by this hideous rubber sphere reduce to an absolute man's dependence upon an object and the hostility of the object.

The dynamic exchange is symbolized in the use of the word "buche" to convey the rebreathing bag which contains an exteriorized delicate and silent warp woven by air within the chest of Antonio--the bronchial tree of Antonio. The corresponding content of the craw has been transposed into the thorax of Antonio, emitting a non-bronchial sound which

is the crepitation of the grinding and digestive process of the craw. The respiratory globules upon which the mill of the grinding craw feeds and which the tooth masticates are the vaporous powder of anguish and agony. The "aspas" allude to the mill which grinds, to the crossed sails which power a windmill and to the Cross of the Passion. The craw has been grinding the pieces of the shipwrecks and now the mutilated fragments have filled the thorax of Antonio in a dynamic exchange of energy which has displaced his respiratory apparatus to within the grinding craw.

The flow of time is traced in the pulsations of the green rebreathing bag. Time is running out for Antonio. Occasionally, the bag falters and goes flat and displays with increasing clarity the effects of the transfer of his soul to the object.

> Hacía dos días que jadeaba. Pero no era él: era su cuerpo allí tendido; aquí, sobre la tierra. Y se oía aquel latido como un reloj que dejara caer segundos verdes como latigazos. El tiempo se rompe y caen confundidos, mezclándose como cenizas, pedazos de días y de noches que irrumpen unos dentro de los otros. (p. 259)

Time shatters and the chips of days and nights burst one from another, mixed with the ashes of the dying flame of Antonio.

The memory process may account for alterations in the flow of time. In the episode of Marcela, the objects were laden with associations in memory. The flow of time may also be altered by the varying intensity of individual

memories which superimpose themselves upon one another, displacing a memory of lesser intensity. This technique explains, in part, the seeming endlessness of the dream-like episode of Chapter 28.[39] Associations clustered around Mario's enthusiasm for soccer and his happy-go-lucky life style are counterpointed with the psychological and physiological manifestations of his illness. Once again, the mind of the grandson provides the broader receptacle within which the communicating vessels interact. Several locations in memory are functioning. From the illusive present, the grandson recalls his conversation with Tío Miguel outside Antonio's sickroom. Miguel has just alluded to the illness of Mario and his death. The allusion causes the grandson to shift his position to the day when he last saw Tío Mario alive. Ruffinelli has described the dreamlike episode:

> De esto, que la novela, abigarrada en su estilo, densa en muchos episodios (la simple llamada del muchacho a la Asistencia Pública para que recojan a su tío Mario está como escrita en "cámara lenta", oníricamente, como si nunca, a través de páginas y páginas, el muchacho pudiera alcanzar ese teléfono) llegue a ser asfixiante, intolerable, difícil de mantenerse como lectura de gratificación antes que como fascinada visión del horror inacabable.[40]

A multiple counterpoint partially explains the effect of a slow motion camera. The grandson arrives breathlessly at the neighborhood café on the grievous errand of calling for an ambulance for his uncle. Memories of happier occasions

cluster around the actual moment and alternate with the urgency of his sprint--three steps at a time--down the stairway. His last glimpse of Tío Mario beheld him near the refrigerator eating raw eggs and nude. The café contains nothing tangible of the evenings when he and his uncle used to go there with friends, after the soccer games, to exchange reactions to the players and their style. Allusion to the streetcar implies the presence of Mamagela and the security of childhood.

> Es el que viste mejor /Moirano/, con la camisa limpia, el cuello duro y el reloj de oro en la muñeca, y dirige sobriamente los movimientos del grupo: "Convendría ir yendo, viejo, así vemos a los muchachos de la reserva. ¿Viste jugar a Gómez? ¡Vas a ver qué botija!" Pero no hay nadie; ni Moirano, que es de la Directiva, ni el Flaco Pérez, ni el Electricista, ni el Yuyero González, ni Delfino, ni nadie. Además ni hay olor a café: hay olor a café con nadie y al polvo que barre el mozo, que además es otro, ni el viejito de la noche que también trae las cañas y los cafés--Mario siempre toma café, Moirano a veces alguna cañita--y el capuchino con sevillanas cuando vuelven del partido; y éste de ahora lo mira como si se hubiera metido donde no lo llamaron; lo mismo que el del mostrador, como si se hubiera metido en un café de otro barrio, y ni el vapor sale de la máquina, ¿a quién le va a explicar que tienen que ir pronto, que ya no aguanta, que por eso viene a telefonear? ¿Dónde estará la guía? Mientras bajaba la escalera a todo lo que le daban las piernas, él se quedó al lado de la heladera de hielo que está en el corredor, donde están los huevos frescos, y se comía uno en la misma cáscara, que había abierto cascándolo, golpeándolo contra el borde de madera, pero aquí el único ruido es el de la puerta que quedó sonando cuando golpeó al volver a cerrarse, y el vidrio temblando en el marco como la ventanilla de un tranvía ... (p. 249)

In referring to the breakoff phenomenon, an example was given of the acceleration of time through a natural quality of the universe. The lessening density of the air as it distances from the planet Earth allows a progressively increasing speed of penetration of space.[41]

Another example of a natural phenomenon which accounts for alteration in time's flow is seen in the portrayal of time from the viewpoint of an insect. The epigraph to the novel contains a fragment from Stendhal:

> Una mosca efímera nace a las nueve de la mañana de uno de los largos días de verano para morir a las cinco de la tarde; ¿cómo podría comprender la palabra noche?

Within the text of the novel, the same type of time acceleration occurs:

> El gran hormiguero total; quedan huellas de destrucción: es el pie del niño que al volver de la escuela incrustó su zapato para ver las atareadas hormigas corriendo con las blancas larvas de las que todavía no nacieron en la boca y buscando refugio; pero eso ya pasó: están ahora en otro orden, miles de generaciones después, y corren y se atarean las descendientes de aquellas larvas y en medio del montículo tuvo tiempo de crecer la hierba que casi oculta la forma del zapato que todavía no se gastó. (pp. 17-18)

The life span of the shoe exceeds that of the ant by thousands of generations.[42] The same type of contrast between life spans is seen here as in the example of the oriental vase as opposed to the man who created it. The possibilities for comparison are infinite. The life span of man may be compared to that of an archaeological site and the flow

of time will have been altered again. The application of a constant linear dimension of time to varying entities accounts for the phenomenon.

An Unexpected Mutation

The concept of an unexpected mutation of a known memory or object is fleetingly mentioned by Díaz in his analysis of Hernández's fiction.[43] One of the elements of the extravaganza is a mutation of a familiar object. The object is one for which Miguel searches. He has asked his brother Antonio to ask Marcela to see if she can find it.

> "Y decime, total: ¿conseguiste los papeles aquellos? En algún lado tiene que estar el cilindro aquél de lata; era como un tubo, ¿te acordás?", dice dirigiéndose al hermano. "Sí, tenés que acordarte. Y alguna de ellas seguramente lo guardó; yo no sé si fue María Julia o Marcela. O Sarita, a lo mejor. Porque Sarita era muy guardadora, también; guardaba siempre todo: los libros, los papeles, las revistas. ... Y después de la muerte de María Julia no sé dónde habrá quedado. En alguno de los roperos, seguramente. Marcela debe haberlo metido por ahí." (p. 114)

The tube contains papers upon which are written portions of the ceremony of the Masonic Lodge to which the father of Miguel and Antonio belonged, when he worked for the Compañía de Gas. Miguel is insistent that the tube must be found. Again and again he brings the subject up.

> El cilindro de latón nadie lo encontró nunca hasta entonces, pero en él, o cerca de él, o en el arcón de las herramientas, o en algún otro lugar que no se sabe, hay un folleto de tapas grises y en algunas de sus páginas ... (p. 119)

In a most unexpected fashion, the remembered papers in the missing tube undergo a mutation into a gigantic paper ball, launched with a swift kick. Like a rocket from its launching pad, the ball hurtles upward into outer space only to return to Earth where it lightly swells a heap of garbage.

> Nadie lo encontró nunca, pero de todas maneras los papeles hay que encontrarlos, aunque no estén, unos papeles que pueden estar dentro de un cilindro de latón o no, o en algún cajón o cajita que habrá que inventar; un manojo de papeles amarillentos, pero no demasiado quebradizos, así tendrán que ser, para que al apretarlos y arrugarlos se pueda hacer una pelota que al vuelo, gozosamente, pueda ser lanzada al aire, aunque algunas hojas se desprendan, y si se desprenden mejor, para que ese pedazo de destino se desparrame: una ceremonia que vaya cayendo sobre las casas de la ciudad como una red que aprese y ordene todo este desastre con la pompa que merece; una pelota de papel desconocido volando, las hojas de papel viejo inventado, arrugadas y apretadas en una buena pelota que salte y suba hasta más allá de la altura de la atmósfera, esos papeles que se buscan, como una estrella en llamas, un meteorito incendiado por el soberano empujón de la patada, que arda rozando lo que no hay, ella, que no es, y hasta sea observada por los telescopios y las estaciones de rastreo de satélites, y descripta cada una de las arrugas posibles del papel con escrupulosa telemetría, y pueda dibujarse su mapa y deducir con espectroscopios la atmósfera que pueda tener; o, simplemente iluminada por otros astros, sin luz propia y de órbita indecisa, pueda determinarse la condición de los seres que la habitan, y hasta se les vean inscriptos signos enigmáticos sobre su superficie, y aquellos seres trepando como arácnidos por las cordilleras de papel un poco flojo ahora, que gira en lo alto, suelto y sin peso, y hasta pueda deducirse su vida antes de que vuelva a caer, sin duda demasiado lentamente para incendiarse, pero, de todos modos, arrastrada por los alisios, se desintegre y suelte trozos, livianos asteroides muertos, y

> se disuelva al fin, y lleguen sus partes de incógnito, luego de un viaje, nada más, de ida y vuelta, a modificar levemente otro montón de basura de una esquina apenas diferente, donde los labios suaves de los caballos rebusquen una cáscara de fruta, y el montón quede, estratificándose bajo la lluvia, a la espera de un carro que después de las huelgas, o en ellas, vendrá. (pp. 118-119)

As if this startling transformation of the papers containing Masonic secrets were not sufficient, the contents of the tube undergo a second metamorphosis which corresponds to their actual condition upon being discovered.[44] The discovery occurs during the episode of Marcela's move, shortly after the emergence of the missing photograph. (Miguel has already died of cancer.) The relatives postpone examination of the tube to a more auspicious moment, fearing that it would have the same effect upon Marcela as the photograph and objects within the wardrobe. When the tube is finally examined, its contents come as a surprise.

> Y encontramos el tubo aquel, al final, pero lo que había y nada es lo mismo. ¿Quién lo habrá ido vaciando, a ese tubo, no? Al principio nos pareció que estaba lleno de papeles, y papeles tenía, pero el único papel papel era la partida de bautismo de la abuela, que no se podía tocar, porque se cortaba en los dobleces de tan viejo, y los demás, ¿a que no te imaginás?: eran copias. Sí, copias del papel aquel, del más viejo, pero viejísimas también, sólo que de diferentes vejeces, de manera que se partían cada vez menos porque eran de otra época, y algunas casi nuevas, ni amarillas ni nada, y los dobleces como recién hechos. ¡Me querés decir cómo se habrá ido vaciando el tubo ese, y cuándo, y dónde habrán ido a parar los demás papeles que debía tener sobre la masonería y esas cosas que ustedes decían? ¿Y quién fue sacando papeles y poniendo copias y copias de

> aquella partida de nacimiento tan vieja? (pp. 220-221)

Multiple Interpretations

Ruffinelli highlights one of the salient aspects of the writing of José Pedro Díaz: multiple images and repeated examination of the same object, scene or fantastic element convey an ever-changing reality. Ruffinelli has also drawn attention to the enigmatic nature of the grandson; the reader will be unable to determine whether he is a survivor or a victim of the shipwrecks.

> ... donde el escritor está escondido en los repliegues de su propia ambigüedad y es el cazador oculto y dispuesto a lanzar sus dardos llenos de ironía hacia el mundo circundante, o, también, el dueño y señor de un universo sobre el cual proyecta las obsesiones, los sueños, los terrores, sin desnudarlos al ojo impúdico del lector ...[45]

Juxtaposition of similar-appearing incidents which are widely separated in time causes ambiguity. This may be seen in Chapter 23. The phrase "flor de lío" is used in connection with two different incidents. The first incident occurs in the decade of the sixties--probably in 1969. It may be identified by the comment, "Vinieron los tipos con las camionetas que tienen ahora, y cuando te das cuenta ya tenés una docena de tipos con los cascos esos de marcianos que te están corriendo con los garrotes" (p. 196). The student involvement with the meat packers' strike is a detail of recent events.

The scene shifts to 1933 with the sentence, "El bedel viene a decirles que las clases se suspendieron" (p. 198). However, the incidents are similar. The location in time may be identified by reference to Baltasar Brum.

A similarly misleading juxtaposition fuses the final event of Chapter 28 with the opening paragraph of Chapter 29. The opening paragraph begins:

> No lo vio morir. Tampoco a él lo vio morir. Hacía dos días que jadeaba. Pero no era él: era su cuerpo allí tendido; aquí, sobre la tierra. (p. 259)

Chapter 28 had ended with Mario at the point of death, having been taken to the hospital in an ambulance. The person who has been agonizing for two days is Antonio. The only indication of a time transition is the doubling of the introductory idea of Chapter 29.[46]

Multiplicity as a function of juxtaposition is never carried so far that the reader is unable to catch his error. It simply leads him astray for a moment; he is then able to get back into the proper place in time.

The phenomenon of <u>el otro</u> is suggested by the theme of multiple interpretations. As a fragment in the extravaganza of memory and the fantastic, <u>el otro</u> is very nearly autonomous and insists upon being acknowledged in a chapter apart.

Notes to Chapter 5

1. Richard M. Skinner and William Leavitt, eds., "A Missile and Space Glossary," p. 252.

2. A similar thought transfer is described by Clarke: "And now, out among the stars, evolution was driving toward new goals. The first explorers of Earth had long since come to the limits of flesh and blood; as soon as their machines were better than their bodies, it was time to move. First their brains, and then their thoughts alone, they transferred into shining new homes of metal and of plastic. . . . They no longer built spaceships. They were spaceships" (Arthur C. Clarke, 2001: A Space Odyssey, p. 185).

3. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," pp. 84-85.

4. Observing directly the tale which is being told, the absence of the first person denies the reader entry to the psyche of the grandson. The use of the second person by Miguel, Margarita and Antonio--in addressing the grandson --conveys an impression of him as perceived by others. The grandson's interiorization occurs in the third person and portrays him in one of his many roles: use of the third person places an additional obstacle between the grandson and the author and between the grandson and the reader. Only at the remove of the telling of the tale and the perceiving of it, is it possible for the reader to appreciate the psyche of the grandson. Zants discusses the significance of pronouns and their limitations or flexibilities in creating point of view (Zants, The Aesthetics of the New Novel in France, pp. 31-35).

5. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 72.

6. Zants, p. 24.

7. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 76.

8. Mario Vargas Llosa, "La novela," pp. 22-24.

9. George H. Szanto, Narrative Consciousness, p. 90.

10. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 76.

11. Ibid., p. 79.

12. Ibid., p. 80.

13. Ibid.

14. Robbe-Grillet emphasizes: "For, far from neglecting him, the author today proclaims his absolute need of the reader's cooperation, an active, conscious, creative assistance. What he asks of him is no longer to receive ready-made a world completed, full, closed upon itself, but on the contrary to participate in a creation, to invent in his turn the work--and the world--and thus to learn to invent his own life" (Alain Robbe-Grillet, For a New Novel, p. 156).

15. Perception of the world through the limitations of one perceiving consciousness is in harmony with the esthetics of the nouveau roman; the evolving theory of writing has been traced in detail by Heath (Stephen Heath, The Nouveau Roman, pp. 15-43).

16. The terminology originates with Zants who describes the charting of time "around a point, the present moment being to time what the point is to space" (Zants, p. 42).

17. Felisberto Hernández, El caballo perdido, 2:44.

18. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," pp. 114-115.

19. Ibid., p. 91.

20. Ángel Rama, "La belle époque," p. 145.

21. Ibid., p. 144.

22. As the reader contemplates the grandson contemplating the oriental vase which mirrors the structure of the novel, he may sense the same anguish as the grandson: the novel portrays the timelessness of the object before which man's awareness of his mortality is increased. Zants discusses the significance of the description of objects in her chapter entitled "Phenomenological Description" (Zants, pp. 17-23).

23. Robbe-Grillet explains: "It is not rare, as a matter of fact, in these modern novels, to encounter a description that starts from nothing; it does not afford, first of all, a general view, it seems to derive from a tiny fragment without importance--what most resembles a point--starting from which it invents lines, planes, an architecture; and such description particularly seems to be inventing its object when it suddenly contradicts, repeats, corrects itself, bifurcates, etc. Yet we begin to glimpse something, and we suppose that this something will now become clearer. But the lines of the drawing accumulate, grow heavier, cancel one another out, shift, so that the image is jeopardized as it is created. A few paragraphs more and, when the description

comes to an end, we realize that it has left nothing behind it: it has instituted a double movement of creation and destruction which, moreover, we also find in the book on all levels and in particular in its total structure--whence the disappointment inherent in many works of today" (Robbe-Grillet, pp. 147-148).

24. The schemata of Partes de naufragios are obliterated on pages 140 and 141 which are numbered "150" and "151," inasmuch as the text begins on page 11.

25. Other examples of annihilation are the demolished house of Chapter 2, the fragmented painting stored in the black trunk of Chapter 3, the word "Aleluya" buried within the theme of multiple deaths of Chapter 5, the "youth of the dead" of Chapter 7, the decadent hero of Chapter 10, the metamorphosed content of the tube of Chapter 26, the word "FIN" within the nostalgic space of Chapter 27, the death of the hope embodied in the second caravel of Chapter 29 and the erasure of Tío Francisco by the Other Tío Francisco in Chapter 30.

26. Zants, p. 14.

27. José Pedro Díaz, "Taxidermia," p. 48.

28. Robbe-Grillet queries: "Why seek to reconstruct the time of clocks in a narrative which is concerned only with human time? Is it not wiser to think of our own memory, which is never chronological?" (Robbe-Grillet, p. 139).

29. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," pp. 80-81.

30. Zants describes the process and gives examples of limitations upon time and space in the work of Michel Butor. The present moment passes through a point in space delineated by the compartment of a moving train in Change of Heart; everything is related to one hour in Degrees; and time is projected spatially upon tapestries of the legend of Theseus in Passing Time (Zants, p. 42).

31. Díaz, Tratado de la llama, p. 87.

32. It is conceivable that an interpretation for a second crucifixion might be explained through a theory of Maurice Blanchot, according to which an inversion occurs which theoretically allows a crucifixion of mankind /the interpretation is my own and not that of Blanchot/. Blanchot writes: "Hoy el poeta ya no debe mantenerse como intermediario entre los dioses y los hombres, sino mantenerse entre la doble infidelidad, mantenerse en la intersección de esa doble inversión divina, human, doble y recíproco

movimiento por el cual se abre un hiato, un vacío que desde ese momento debe constituir la relación esencial entre los dos mundos. El poeta debe resistir así a la aspiración de los dioses que desaparecen y que lo atraen hacia ellos en su desaparición (particularmente el Cristo); debe resistir a la pura y simple subsistencia sobre la tierra, esa tierra que los poetas no fundan; debe realizar la doble inversión, cargar con el peso de la doble infidelidad y mantener así distintas las dos esferas, viviendo puramente la separación, siendo la vida pura de la separación misma, porque ese lugar vacío y puro que distingue a las esferas es lo sagrado, la intimidad del desgarramiento que es lo sagrado" (Maurice Blanchot, El espacio literario, p. 262).

33. The sense of isolation is increased by the establishment of distance between the grandson and the object (and the reader and the object). "Optical description is, in effect, the kind which most readily establishes distances: the sense of sight, if it seeks to remain simply that, leaves things in their respective place" (Robbe-Grillet, p. 73).

34. Robbe-Grillet emphasizes the exterior outline of the object, the fact that the interior may not be observed. "Nothing is more fantastic, ultimately, than precision. Perhaps Kafka's staircases lead elsewhere, but they are there, and we look at them, step by step, following the detail of the banisters and the risers. . . . Even what the hero is searching for vanishes before the obstinacy of his pursuit, his trajectories, his movements; they alone are made apparent, they alone are made real" (Robbe-Grillet, p. 165).

35. Zants explains that the object acquires the power of creation in the nouveau roman (Zants, p. 22).

36. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," pp. 109-110.

37. Ibid., pp. 108-109.

38. Ibid., p. 111.

39. Phenomenological description of the subjective responses of the grandson, as events accumulate in the present around memories, also contributes to the slow motion effect (Zants, p. 21).

40. Jorge Ruffinelli, "Salvatajes desesperanzados," p. 22.

41. Díaz distinguishes between dynamic movement in time and dynamic movement in space: "Porque, por una sutil ley

psicológica, el movimiento sólo lo es verdaderamente si es creciente en el tiempo (esto es: si es acelerado), o si es creciente en el espacio (esto es: si es expansivo). O si tiene dirección positiva: si se alza, si es un subir" (Díaz, Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, p. 409).

42. An unpublished manuscript of Hernández contains an incident which is similar: "Vengo a mostrarle a mi madre el dedo índice señalando para abajo. Lo he metido en un hormiguero y lo traigo lleno de hormigas negras. Mi madre grita pero a mí no me duele" (Felisberto Hernández, "Primera casa," 1:144.

43. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 77.

44. This may be considered a variation on the technique of annihilation or erasure; it is also demonstrated on pages 130-132 of the novel where an incident remembered incorrectly is eliminated when the error is noted.

45. Ruffinelli, "Salvatajes desesperanzados," p. 22.

46. The duplication of phrases constitutes an erasure of the first by the second, thereby effecting the change of scene.

CHAPTER 6

MEMORY IN COUNTERPOINT

THE MIRACULOUS UNFOLDING

The Other

The Other Tío Francisco represents the indefinable, the mysterious and the inexplicable. He conveys the need of human beings for communication with one another. He is the key to the miraculous unfolding--the objectification of the concept of el otro. Because the Other Tío Francisco exists, el otro gains legitimacy. An infinity of doublings becomes possible.

> Fácilmente se advierte que se produce así una situación de equilibrio inestable, por la cual queda motivada una vertiente de infinitos desdoblamientos sucesivos: cada vez que uno de ellos acontece, es separado, se objetiva, y el narrador pretende encontrar otro lugar desde el cual ampliar la conciencia de lo que ocurre para operar su síntesis, pero el análisis vuelve a escindirla, y así se desarrolla el peregrinaje de la conciencia desdichada en una monstruosa partenogénesis de infinitos yoes interiores.[1]

José Pedro Díaz states that the theme of the double has been common in European literature since at least 1800 as an expression of the author's rejection of his time and

circumstance. Díaz sees Uruguayan society during the nineteenth century as somewhat isolated from the characteristics of European society which nourished the theme. Its appearance in Uruguayan literature about 1940 is a consequence of social change which had produced conditions similar to those in Europe.

> Pero por otro lado debemos señalar que si atribuímos a ese tema un valor dado como expresión de la situación conflictual en la que el hombre se halla en relación con su medio, si expresa un desacuerdo básico con la sociedad que fatalmente integra, pero con la que no puede en realidad integrarse desde la plenitud de su ser, es natural que aparezca también entre nosotros hacia el año cuarenta, esto es, cuando se están dando en nuestra sociedad caracteres que dominaban la europea desde hace más de un siglo.[2]

As previously noted, Díaz believes that alienation because of inability to integrate into one's time and society accounts for the <u>conciencia desdichada</u>. He finds that interiorization frequently leads to the presence of <u>el otro</u> in the fiction of Hernández.[3] The process by which <u>el otro</u> emerges has been mentioned in connection with the grandson's introspection. Renewed examination of the explanation furnished by Díaz seems appropriate.

> Pero pronto, y procurando un ahondamiento mayor en su búsqueda, el narrador pierde el punto de apoyo inicial y descubre otros puntos de vista en los que queda parcialmente instalado y que lo hacen objeto a él mismo. Ese es el proceso de la conciencia desdichada. Ya no predomina una vivencia básica, sino que ésta se estratifica en diferentes capas temporales, a la vez que el narrador se disocia en sucesivas reflexiones

> parciales de su propia vivencia. Lo vivido llega al presente como los fragmentarios y desorganizados reflejos de un espejo que cayera trizado a sus pies.[4]

To what extent is it possible for el otro to participate in the actions of the original individual? Díaz gives an example from Hernández's El caballo perdido in which the writer of the narrative is alleged to have been el otro.

> Ese otro, ese socio que allí aparece y que fue quien escribió la narración, apenas advertido queda separado y el narrador se retrepa hasta otra posición desde la cual contemplar--unificándolas--las diferentes actitudes de su propio ser.[5]

According to Díaz, a prelude to el otro is lo otro. Lo otro is the mysterious unknown which insists upon awareness. It is like the unknown content of a nouveau roman which may be perceived only after its architecture has been completed by the author.[6] Hernández identifies lo otro at the beginning of Por los tiempos de Clemente Colling.

> Además tendré que escribir muchas cosas sobre las cuales sé poco; y hasta me parece que la impenetrabilidad es una cualidad intrínseca de ellas; tal vez cuando creemos saberlas, dejamos de saber que las ignoramos; porque la existencia de ellas es, fatalmente oscura: y esa debe ser una de sus cualidades.
>
> Pero no creo que solamente deba escribir lo que sé, sino también lo otro.[7]

It is el otro who reciprocates contemplation: "Por lo pronto el doble no sólo es visto sino que también nos mira. Somos sujetos en cuanto lo determinamos, pero objetos en cuanto nos determina."[8] El otro provides a different vantage point from which to view man's circumstance

or from which the individual may view himself. This explains the first glimpse of the Other Tío Francisco who looks at the members of the family while they look at him.

Duality is an important aspect of man's flight with the Angel. The Angel has delivered to man the message of his dual nature.

> Porque el llamado del Ángel es doble. Su presencia compromete a la vez y simultáneamente, un mensaje que viene de fuera y un llamado que nos sube nuestra interioridad. Dos alas tiene: una que se despliega en una brillante renovación de lo visible y otra que agita nuestro ser profundo y nos obliga a la verdad del vuelo. El mundo y nuestro ser se queman juntándose en ese vuelo que llega a iluminar y a herir.[9]

Man and the Angel are antithetical. Synthesis of man with the Angel is achieved only in the moment of flight. Aside from that moment, duality is insuperable.

> No hay un triunfo del Ángel, porque él corporiza su vuelo con materia de muerte; no hay un triunfo del hombre, aunque en su ser despedazado y roto se inserten plumas angélicas; hay sólo el triunfo fugaz del vuelo, sólo triunfa la llama ardiente que pone nuestra esperanza en lo que no sabemos.[10]

Another variation of _el otro_ appears in _Los fuegos de San Telmo_. "El ruido familiar del motor me había puesto en otro lugar, pero además el mar, visto detrás de aquellos árboles, era también otro," recalls José Pedro. Another place is evoked. Another sea is perceived. The spirit of _lo otro_ is present, searching out José Pedro. "Hasta creí sentir otros pasos junto a los míos." _El otro_ links José Pedro with his father, in an indirect fashion. "Mi

padre caminaba al otro lado del ataúd."[11]

The scene overlooking the Mediterranean is duplicated by a view of the River Plate from the avenue which leads to the cemetery in Buceo. José Pedro examines anew a remembered incident; he observes that incident from a new vantage point. From the scene in Italy he views an identical scene in Uruguay. Moreover, he has journeyed to Italy because he had inherited from Domingo perceptions of Italy in Uruguay. Marina di Camerota sought out José Pedro. Or, was it the pescecane which lured him to the Gulf of Policastro? A new perspective of the family in the novella will be achieved after reading the novel. So, too, the double observes and is observed.

In Partes de naufragios the Other Tío Francisco makes his appearance at the wake for Mario. He disappears as inexplicably as he appears.[12] Mario's death has been placed in the latter part of the decade of the thirties, probably 1938 or 1939. In the interest of dovetailing events of the novel with certain historical moments, let us assume that Mario died in 1939 and that it was in that year that the Other Tío Francisco emerged from the folds of the novel.

One of the most significant literary events of 1939 was publication of Juan Carlos Onetti's El pozo. Eladio Linacero, a personality disarticulated from life, presented a prototype for the conciencia desdichada.

In addition to the appearance of the theme of alienated man in the asphalt jungle, 1939 also marked the debut of Marcha. Emir Rodríguez Monegal reminisces about the impact of these events upon Montevideo:

> Hay que empezar por contar qué significaba Onetti para un grupo de escritores uruguayos que tenían entre quince y veinticinco años hacia 1939. El mismo Onetti tenía solo treinta años entonces. (Nació en 1909.) La fecha no es arbitraria. En junio de ese año de 1939 se funda en Montevideo el semanario Marcha, que era apenas el órgano periodístico de una pequeña fracción disidente de una fracción mayor de uno de los dos partidos tradicionales del Uruguay: el Partido Blanco, el más conservador, el de los terratenientes y latifundistas. Con el tiempo, ya se sabe, Marcha realizaría un tardío viraje hacia el socialismo. Pero en 1939 es sólo un tabloide que se parece demasiado a los franceses de aquel entonces. El director (abogado de renombre, educado en Francia y afrancesado) pegaba así tributo a la cultura de aquel país. En esa fecha, Marcha se ocupa principalmente de política, nacional e internacional, de economía (sobre todo, nacional) y dedicaba muchas páginas a asuntos de arte, de música y de literatura. El secretario de redacción era un joven moreno, alto y sombrío, con una cara alargada que él mismo describiría más tarde como de caballo. A pesar del sesgo italiano de su apellido, habrá de insistir más tarde que es una corrupción de O'Netty, lo que haría de origen británico. Ese joven escribe y publica en Marcha curiosos relatos y notas críticas. Algunos textos que elige son seudónimos, otros vienen de las letras europeas y, sobre todo, de las norteamericanas. Pero tienen como autores a nombres que no se esperaban entonces en el Río de la Plata.[13]

The emergence of the Other Tío Francisco at approximately the same historical moment in the novel reinforces the pivotal nature of the year 1939.[14] Coherent expanses of linear time occur prior to Mario's death. This

culminates a tendency toward accelerating fragmentation noted as early as events of 1929 in the prose of Partes de naufragios. After Mario's death, events are far more disjointed, dissociated and shattered. The span of attention upon any given shard is more fleeting the nearer the event is to the illusive present.

Unfolding the Novel

El otro

A vague uneasiness affects the child who listens to the Victrola in the dining room of the house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street.

> El niño se levanta y anda marchando alrededor de la mesa--aunque sin alejarse demasiado, sin entrar en el agua de sombra verde que la rodea--, mientras el ritmo se hace cada vez más enérgico y empiezan a aparecer otros sonidos nuevos, más altos, que se mezclan y se alzan, todavía más impetuosos, y hacen que no se pueda pensar ya en hacer nada que pueda estar acorde con ellos: es más, más, más lo que hay que hacer--¿pero qué?--: se sienta, porque no se trata de andar, pero se mueve, porque de todos modos la música le impide estar quieto. ... pero aún al través del sonido que se puso gangoso, sabe que hay que hacer algo, algo importante, y a la vez, que nada hay que hacer ya. (pp. 146-147)

The incident described occurs within the mind and memory of the grandson. He has interiorized to a position in the distant past, but has stopped short with external observation of the child. There are two possible explanations for his not having penetrated the final barrier to synthesis with

the mind of the child. It may be that the grandson prefers to continue the role of an observer. It may be that he is unable to achieve that final transposition which would constitute a regression to childhood. His oneness with the child in listening to the music creates an ambiguous effect. He is one with the child and yet he is apart.

> La reconoce: eso sobre todo le gusta; las primeras veces sólo era un murmullo confuso, después descubrió que dentro tenía dibujos, y ahora espera que aparezcan para reconocerlos; le gusta advertir que se anuncian y al fin llegan; pero eso que sube ahora y se acentúa es casi doloroso, y sigue, sigue subiendo y martillando, insistiendo, y también es parecido a la alegría, a una desolada alegría. ... pero la música lo ocupa todo, está en todos lados; y de pronto la sombra se anima y se llena de voces, voces de mujeres, mujeres que gritan pero que no están desesperadas; el ritmo no se acabó, sigue apoyado por los mismos sonidos de antes, pero todavía más arriba, mientras muchas mujeres gritan lo mismo, casi lo mismo, desesperadamente, tanto que la membrana resuena y se enturbia. (pp. 146-147)

Details of the scene may be analyzed from the viewpoint of the grandson and from the viewpoint of the child. First, let us examine the cause for the child's reaction.

What is the source of the psychological discomfort of the child? What is the reason for the insistence upon "lo que hay que hacer"? Does the child sense the presence of the observer? Does the child sense that another being listens with him to the music? Does he sense the presence of the man he will become? How is it possible that future time and past time are thus fused?

The striking of the clock twice in succession is essential to the creation of an amalgam of different locations in time. The second striking of the clock occurs in the intermediate past where the grandson has succeeded in positioning himself with relatively secure footing. He has been endeavoring to penetrate time to the location of the distant past but he finds that he is able to achieve only fleeting images. His relationship to the distant past is not stable. He is using two pathways to the dining room on Julio Herrera y Obes: the Victrola and the photograph album. The response of the child may be one of discomfort occasioned by sensitivity to the probing of the grandson. Or, the response may be occasioned by sensitivity to the identity of the grandson as the man he will become.[15] This could explain the significance of the final phrase in the first striking of the clock:

> ... primero se sintió el anuncio de las campanadas por el rumor del mecanismo que preparaba el movimiento del martillo, y luego los golpes caen rotundos, retóricos, inútiles, extendiéndose en lentos y seguros círculos acuáticos que dominan el gangoso vibrar de aquellas voces que estaban ya por alcanzar a decir lo que hay que hacer. (p. 147)

On the one hand, there is an insistence upon the need to do something which is indefinable. On the other hand, a contrary emotion is expressed that, now, there remains nothing to be done "que hay que hacer algo, algo importante, y a la vez, que nada hay que hacer ya" (p. 147).

The explanation for the contradiction may lie in the duality in time which is contained within the scene of the child playing the Victrola. The initial instance in time is fused with the repeated instances in time, assuming that by "initial instance" one refers to the first instance--the original event. The repeated instances would then correspond to the repeated probings by the grandson. The antithesis between the first instance and the repeated instances which are converged into one image would account for the polarity of emotion conveyed by the phrases "there is something which must be done" and "something important" as opposed to "nothing remains to be done now." The affirmative may correspond to an active attitude by the child as contrasted with a passive resignation by the grandson.

Is it reasonable to believe that the child might have sensed the impact of the man he was to become, even in the original instance of listening to the record without being observed? The answer to this question may lie in a similar metaphysical phenomenon in the fiction of Hernández.

Hernández's response to his reality is described by Díaz as ambiguous, open-ended and rejecting of omniscience as compared with the definitive and authoritative tone associated with writers of an earlier period in Uruguay.

> Desde 1890 hasta 1940 los tiempos giraron violentamente. Para el escritor que consideramos el cuerpo social que lo determina es más envolvente y difuso, más opacamente resistente, se hace impenetrable no como un muro sino como

> un arenal; contra el muro empeñamos nuestra fuerza, en el arenal nos perdemos entre espejismos e inseguros horizontes. Es el espíritu complicado y perdido, es la angustia.[16]

The mysterious and the inexplicable constitute the medula of el otro. As we have seen, Díaz emphasizes that a key to understanding the fiction of Hernández is his affirmation "no creo que solamente deba escribir lo que sé sino también lo otro."[17] It is precisely the element of the inexplicable embodied in el otro and foreshadowed by lo otro which accounts for the filament that winds upon the other skein, the skein of invention and the fantastic.

In Partes de naufragios it appears that the child falls short of realizing the source of his psychological discomfort. He does not verbalize or exteriorize recognition of the presence of el otro. Were he to recognize that his anxiety is generated by el otro, i.e. by the individual into whom he will metamorphose, he would relinquish at least a portion of his autonomy.[18] As Díaz explains, the loss of the integrity of one's identity to el otro has a devastating effect upon the personality.

> Es un ejemplo claro de una de esas situaciones en las que, una vez hallado un momento de conciencia diferente, éste se transforma en un punto de vista que se dirije sobre el mismo y lo enajena. Que ese proceso es una de las más fuertes raíces de la experiencia del tema del doble y que lo arrebata a la vida, queda expresado ...[19]

The child, then, senses the presence of el otro but appears not to discover the separate identity.

Let us now examine the scene from the point of view of the grandson. The grandson plays multiple roles. With relationship to the child, the grandson is el otro. He is the identity which the child will become. El otro is both a consequence of the unfolding of chronological time and a circumstantial consequence of the grandson's position as observer. In other words, the grandson possesses the power of el otro both in the initial or original instance and in the repeated instances of the scene. Moreover, the grandson is absorbed in his identity as a conciencia desdichada. He is el otro and a conciencia desdichada. The future and the past are fused through the identities of the grandson. The fusion is achieved by memory.[20]

In Hernández's El caballo perdido, the narrator recognizes the existence of el otro and gradually yields his autonomy to the identity he is destined to become, the identity of el otro who is a pawnbroker dealing in nostalgia. A clear example of the soldering of time through memory may be seen.

> Entre la persona que yo fuí y el tipo que yo iba a ser, quedaría una cosa común: los recuerdos. Pero los recuerdos, a medida que iban siendo del tipo que yo sería, a pesar de conservar los mismos límites visuales y parecida organización de los datos, iban teniendo un alma distinta. Al tipo que yo sería se le empezaba a insinuar una sonrisa de prestamista, ante la valoración que hace de los recuerdos quien los lleva a empeñar. Las manos del prestamista de los recuerdos, pesaban otra cualidad de ellos: no el pasado personal, cargado de sentimientos íntimos y particulares,

sino el peso del valor intrínseco.

> Después venía otra etapa: la sonrisa se amargaba y el prestamista de los recuerdos ya no pesaba nada en sus manos: se encontraba con recuerdos de arena, recuerdos que señalaban, simplemente, un tiempo que había pasado: el prestamista había robado recuerdos y tiempos sin valor. Pero todavía vino una etapa peor. Cuando al prestamista le aparecía una sonrisa amarga por haber robado inútilmente, todavía le quedaba alma. Después llegó la etapa de la indiferencia. La sonrisa se borró y él llegó a ser quien estaba llamado a ser: un desinteresado, un vagón desenganchado de la vida.[21]

The memories which fuse the personalities of the child and the grandson are the designs in the music to which they listen simultaneously. This is a possible explanation for the ambiguity of their oneness--and yet separateness--conveyed by the attentive absorption of both the child and the grandson in the music.

Moreover, Hernández's narrator may very well be the prototype for the personality of the grandson; he may well be a pawnbroker speculating in nostalgia. Through a series of unfoldings, he may have arrived at a position in the illusive present much like that of an uncoupled railway coach.[22] In more recent terminology, this corresponds to the grandson's position in the capsule of an interplanetary spacecraft where he is experiencing the breakoff phenomenon.

This possible description of the grandson would explain the heightened tension of the child. It would explain the urgency of the feeling that there is something

important which must be done. The child would abhor that which he is to become if he could but perceive the existence and the nature of el otro; el otro appears to be a conciencia desdichada whirling weightlessly in space and immersed in a quagmire of memories which no longer possess human value or meaning. The grandson appears to be an indifferent observer, his soul transposed to the objects which are little more than signposts along the pathways to places in the land of memory. He appears to be disarticulated from life.

Might the narrative have been written by el otro? El otro, as he corresponds to the conciencia desdichada of the grandson, is hidden among the folds and fragments of the novel. However, the grandson has never affirmed that he is in the process of writing the memories and fantasies which occur to him. Turning again to the fleeting moment of direct communication of the narrator, who interrupts the flow of memory, the significance of the use of the third person of the verb "empezar" is a source of concern.

> ... y de pronto el cansancio, el cansancio de esa misma letra sobre ese mismo papel, o sobre un papel tan parecido a aquel en el que empezó a escribir sin aprender nunca hace tanto tiempo. La letra debe ser diferente sin duda, pero va variando tan lentamente y tan de acuerdo con él mismo que sigue siendo la misma, la misma letra sobre el mismo papel de siempre, y siempre tan lejos de lo que se podría escribir, de lo único que hay que escribir ... (p. 160)

The handwriting gradually evolves and changes as does the writer. Is this perhaps the voice of el otro describing

the action of the grandson? Or is it perhaps the grandson describing the action of el otro? Or, is it the grandson speaking of himself behind the disguise of the third person?

The grandson has stopped short with the child. He has not penetrated the psyche of the child, nor has he achieved synthesis with the child. It may be that he is incapable of creating such a synthesis, that he is not able to revert so perfectly to childhood.[23] His personality is, thus, multifaceted. Does his psychological transposition to the protected interior of the space capsule constitute survival? Does it justify being counted a psychological casuality of the shipwrecks? May we apply a future dimension and believe that his conciencia desdichada will coalesce into a firm identity?

Ruffinelli points out the uncertain nature of the grandson. He also identifies the existence of a demon which affects the family of the novella and the family of the novel:

> Como en Los fuegos de San Telmo--o más que allí--hay un ámbito y un demon familiar: del mismo modo que las pulsaciones aparecen y desaparecen los personajes de una familia abolida, cuyo único sobreviviente--¿o náufrago?--es el personaje--niño y muchacho--que la vertebra horizontal y verticalmente.[24]

The enigma of the grandson appears irreconcilable.[25] As the child listens to the music, he senses the anguish which the future will bestow upon him. He may fear also that it is already too late and that "nada hay que hacer ya."

Dynamic Tension

The scene of the child listening to the Victrola may be interpreted as an interesting variation on the technique of communicating vessels described by Vargas Llosa. The two dining rooms are permeated each by the other through the designs and sounds of the music which undulates between them as if through a membrane. As the child listens, the grandson listens in memory. The variation consists of the dynamic tension created by the mutual response of the grandson to the child and the child to the grandson. The time lapse between the event of the first vessel and that of the second is bridged through the memory process. Normally, one might expect only the flow of the narrative to connect the isolated vessels.

The child reveals what may be considered a response to the observing eyes of the grandson through a difficulty in remaining still, associated with the rising voices of the music. It is almost as if the child realizes that someone else is also listening and that he is being watched. A dynamic tension fuses the child to the man he will become and vice versa.

Dissociation

Díaz states that when the <u>conciencia desdichada</u> does not become manifest as an actual double, dissociation of parts of the body occurs as a compensatory response.

> Pero esa discordia es difícilmente superable. En primer lugar porque allí donde no aparece el tema del doble se da, como sustitución, el tema de la fragmentación de la persona. La conciencia aparenta estar en paz consigo misma, reunida, pero contempla, del mismo narrador, partes autónomas.[26]

However, dissociation of the individual from his body may be a prodrome of the appearance of el otro. Díaz elaborates:

> Nos interesa subrayar este hecho porque la autonomía de miembros, partes del cuerpo o energías físicas aparece como un término medio entre la disociación de la conciencia y la formulación del tema del doble. Se trata en realidad de diferentes modulaciones expresivas de una misma experiencia o situación básica.[27]

Dissociation of the parts of the body occurs to the grandson as he waits at his father's deathbed, still hoping that Antonio will survive the coma. The first indication of the dissociation is the grandson's, or son's, identification with the sensations of his father in a sympathetic pattern, whereby his own organs feel the physical sensations to which his father is being subjected. The grandson recalls that while he waited outside his father's sickroom, he was able to feel "cada una de las arrugas que le forman las tiras de goma que le rodean la cara, y las agujas que le trasvasan líquidos y le hacen hinchazones en las piernas; y el aire, que le seca los ojos entreabiertos" (p. 16).

The second phase of dissociation occurs after the grandson has psychologically transposed himself to the interior of the capsule of an interplanetary space vehicle. (Indeed, the transposition may constitute dissociation.)

Dissociation is seen in the effects of weightlessness upon the body and in the other physiological transformations associated with breaking away from the pull of Earth's gravity.

> ... la falta de presión distiende su envoltura natural, su piel se desgarra, y se expanden, se vierten extendidas, flotando, sus vísceras palpitantes que son bombardeadas por todas las radiaciones y todo lo registran en su íntima superficie sensible, húmeda, sangrante ... (p. 17)

The possibility exists that it may be el otro who whirls weightlessly in space. Whether the occupant of the space capsule is el otro or the conciencia desdichada of the grandson, the result is that the grandson becomes the desinteresado or the "vagón desenganchado de la vida" or "el hombre desprendido de la tierra" (p. 16). His only hope for survival is that he may achieve integration of his psyche.[28]

Unfolding Details

The phenomenon of unfolding is not limited to the larger vessels of time such as houses, rooms in houses, neighborhoods or streets in neighborhoods. It may be seen in the more compact form of phonograph records, photographs, the oriental vase and the Victrola. The unfolding of associations also receives a light stroke of the brush with reference to specific family pets, each corresponding to an owner in one of the locations in time.

The nature of the pet conveys an insight into the nature of its master or owner. The pet may even observe its master just as the master observes the pet. The nostalgia of the cat Pulguita and her impression of Marcela underlie various passages of Chapter 25.

> ... desde el ángulo espera y no se va, porque algo oye y un poco de olor sube, y le viene nostalgia del más intenso cálido olor del cuarto cerrado donde se acumulan emanaciones de ropa usada y de comida y del cuerpo, donde se van acumulando delgadas capas de sudor que se acidulan, y era abrigado, y lo atenacea la comida, el hambre, y al fin se decide y prueba y lanza un llamado no muy fuerte, para probar, pero no ya tendido sino agazapado, prudente, en posición de alerta, por si no es ella la que escucha o está cerca la bestia ... (p. 216)

Pulguita is in need of the protection and care to which she had become accustomed in the room of Marcela when she lived in the house in Malvín. Pulguita is a somewhat dependent creature, not accustomed to sleeping outside in the cold and the rain. She is fearful of the dog who considers the house of Luis to be his territory and objects to her intrusion. Marcela, herself, is a helpless being who tends to forget what she is doing or where she is going. In this way, the pet of Marcela is a reflection of its master, a suggestion--ever so slight--of unfolding.

An animal can be an important clue to ascertaining the true nature of a personality in the novel. The mysterious Don Pedro is perceived as being beneficial to the family by Miguel and as being demonic by the grandson. That which allows

the greatest insight into the true nature of Don Pedro is not any fragment of dialogue but an object. The object is the statue of a jaguar consuming the flesh of another animal.[29] It occupies the waiting room of Don Pedro's office.

> ... si había gente, había que dar vueltas hasta que al fin se pudiera entrar derecho a la sala, donde, allí sí, se podía esperar, delante del jaguar brillante que despedazaba la carne esmaltada y dura de la gacela ... (p. 204)

The dog Chiquita of the intermediate past is reminiscent of the dog which appears inside the lid of the Victrola of the intermediate and distant past. The dog, in turn, listens to its own Victrola.

> Al otro lado del aparador, esquinada, está la Victrola de caoba oscura, con su tapa cerrada, esa tapa en cuya parte interior, en lo oscuro de su encierro, permanece atento, cabeza abajo, el foxterrier de pelo blanco y manchas más oscuras, con las orejas erguidas y dirigidas hacia el gran tulipán metálico de donde surge la voz de su amo ... (p. 31)

> ... en su parte interior, en el centro del dorso lustroso, el mismo foxterrier, un poco más grande, escucha también atentamente su pequeña victrola, que allí no es dorado sino de verdadero color madera. (p. 146)

Chiquita is also a foxterrier. She evokes a touch of nostalgia for the time when the Victrola and the records were used by the young people of the family. "Seguramente la perrita fóxter que tiene ahora escarbó un poco en aquel lugar y por eso aparecieron," (p. 129) recalls the grandson. Moreover, Chiquita is suspected of being the one who unearthed the bones of Pirata, the dog beloved by Antonio and Margarita during a happier time.

An ambiguous animal who seems not to be associated with any individual, Chiquita is a product of the time after the death of Antonio when the family has truly begun to fragment. She is a pathetic creature.

> Y quedan todos detenidos, atascados en el corredor, porque ella /Margarita/ se inclinó sobre la perra levantando amenazadoramente la mano y se quedó mirándola, con los ojos duros e iracundos, y la perra se aplastó contra el suelo; negra, chica y gorda como una oruga, queda haciendo torpes movimientos de largato ... (p. 143)

Other animals hide in tunnels and small caverns beneath the sand of Malvín. They are the mysterious tucu-tucus, small mammals which normally live on vegetable matter and whose silent presence threatens an unperceived incubation of rabies. There are rats which live within the sewers of the city and which are flushed out by the inundation, perhaps accounting for the black color of the rising tide. There are rabies-infested bats arriving from the interior of Uruguay. There are rabid dogs. There are decrepit nags which pull the wretched carts of the poor, who scavange among the heaps of rubbish and disintegration. This is the face of the city. These are the animals of the city, the animals which project the image of Montevideo in crisis.

Examination of the personalities and characteristics of the animals is but one approach to identification of the true nature of the individuals associated with them. That of the portraits and the photographs is another.[30]

> La cara de ella ... corresponde seguramente a una época remota, seguramente cuando no se trataba todavía de la calle Julio Herrera y Obes, sino de la calle Daymán. (p. 235)

The ellipsis enclosed the following information about the abandoned house in Malvín:

> ... tal como está allí, en el retrato de la casa vacía, en el dormitorio grande del piso alto, en el dormitorio que fue de su hija y de su yerno ...

and the following information about the frame in which the portrait is captured:

> ... junto al retrato de su marido, que también está sostenido, como el suyo, en un marco de plata vieja ...

and the following information about the manner in which the features of her husband are framed:

> ... pero que está enmarcado, además, por aquella melena y aquella barba negras ...

and the following allusion to the son of Angela and Pedro:

> ... y junto al de Mario, que está a un lado ... .

The description of the face of Mamagela with lateral associations has served as a steppingstone into a location in the distant past. The original photograph was taken at that time. The theme of trips with grandmother to the shoemaker and the <u>yuyero</u>, as well as longer trips by streetcar to Unión, completes the chapter introduced by the face of Mamagela. It will be necessary to turn to a different chapter in order to further examine the face of grandmother.

> Mamagela, serena y de ojos claros ... más delgada y descansada que cuando iba a Malvín

> los sábados de tarde. Nada la apura allí, y hasta tal punto está serena, que se duda en reconocerla: todo es plácido en ese medio perfil que se destaca contra la extensión blanca y arenosa del fondo frío del retrato que nadie sabe quién hizo ni cuando. La foto tiene una gama de grises porosos, de grano abierto, porque es la ampliación de una fotografía muy pequeña, sin duda de carnet, que debió ser fotografiada a su vez y ampliada para cubrir la nueva superficie. Ahora es un retrato de 15 x 20, como los otros dos que están en esa pared, y también sostenido en un marco plateado y patinado. (p. 169)

Mamagela's portrait is an enlargement of a small identification photograph. There is a photograph within the photograph. Therefore, the texture is changed. The portrait is more porous. It suggests the ever-decreasing density of the air as one travels away from the planet Earth, reinforcing the sensation of distance between the observer and the object.

From viewer to viewer that which is perceived in the portraits changes. It appears that the observer in one instance is the grandson, considering the touch of existential nothingness.

> El fondo es blanco, de modo que la mirada se pierde hacia la nada. (p. 169)

Margarita describes the same detail of her mother's portrait differently:

> ... su rostro es dulce. Y tranquilo. Se extiende como una playa hasta el borde blanco del fondo. (p. 175)

The photograph of Pedro was taken before he became ill; it relates to a time long before the wedding of his daughter. He had already been bedridden for many years when

Margarita married Antonio. The image of Pedro in the photograph is very like, and yet different from, the person described in the narrative.

> Ahí está él todavía: tiene ojos verdaderamente terribles debajo de la ancha frente de la que se suelta a los lados la espesa melena negra que brilla todavía, untada todavía con aceite de oliva, y que se retuerce en bucles viriles. (p. 132)

Again, it is pointed out that within each of the three portraits--that of Pedro, that of Mamagela and that of Mario --there is another portrait.

> Son reproducciones de reproducciones. Allá, en Julio Herrera y Obes y en las diferentes casas de la calle Paysandú, eran pequeños retratos opacos, en color de sepia desvanecida, con grupos de dos o tres personas. Esa cabeza suya estaba entonces culminando dos figuras endomingadas: él, con un brazo apoyado en la cadera y sosteniendo el sombrero, y con la otra mano reposando sobre el respaldo de la silla en la que está sentado su hermano mayor, Vicente, junto a una mesita que debió ser dorada. (p. 132)

The porous quality of the second photograph is again mentioned, visually reinforcing the sensation of an expanding universe with the molecules of air becoming less and less densely compacted.

> El fotógrafo tuvo que trabajar sobre aquella pequeña cartulina desvanecida, y destacó la cabeza, que ahora está en negro, pero que tiene una calidad porosa y corroída porque la ampliación se hizo hasta más allá de lo que en realidad permitía el primitivo pequeño retrato en sepia donde estaban los dos, Pedro y Vicente. (p. 133)

Differing viewpoints emphasize distinct qualities once again. From the point of view of the great grandson, Pedro's

portrait takes on a totally different aspect. The perspective is that of someone who never knew Pedro and who thinks of him in romantic terms.

> En el dormitorio de mi abuela sí que hay retratos. Hay uno del abuelo de mi padre, que era pescador, con una barba rarísima que va para todos lados. ¿Cómo que no era nada mío? Mi bisabuelo, ¿qué te parece? Tenía una barca con marineros y todo, a vela; y él los mandaba con el revólver ese que hay en la chimenea. ¡No va a servir! ¡No tira ahora porque no tiene balas! Son difícilísimas de conseguir esas balas, porque ahora no se fabrican. ¿No ves que lleva balas especiales? (p. 167)

Even the realm of the fantastic is possible. The grandson sees Pedro in quite another way:

> ... la fotografía así delimitada ... cobra, para el observador de hoy, un sentido diferente, y parece más bien una rápida instantánea de una cabeza en movimiento, que mira sin embargo de frente, sorprendida hábilmente por el fotógrafo en el fugaz instante en que ello pudo haber ocurrido en medio de la agitación de una danza paroxística; su quietud resulta por ello alarmante, y la fijeza de sus ojos transida. Y aunque no hubiera danzado nunca, o tan solo mucho tiempo antes, antes aún de que fuera hasta imposible la idea misma de danza, cuando empezó a guardar cama porque sus piernas le dolían y no le obedecían . . . y el conocimiento que todos tenían de cómo estaban debajo de las sábanas cruzadas aquellas piernas sarmentosas, le otorgaba un equivalente de la danza mágica, un sustituto legítimo, dramático y fatídico, y quizá más eficaz todavía desde la inmovilidad; porque la danza sacraliza un instante preciso pero fugaz de la vida de alguien, el instante en el que se entrega voluntaria y embriagadamente, o no, a una presencia que lo trasciende, mientras que esa actitud suya había venido a incorporarse a él no se sabía de dónde ni por qué, pero había ido penetrando y alterando su carne misma, dándole un dolor y una consciencia, y una forma y un color de otro mundo a aquella parte baja de su cuerpo, que hacía que el torso

> que sostenía la cabeza poderosa, y la cabeza misma, estuvieran como enseñoreándose sobre un trono secreto y vergonzoso, que trasmutaba sin embargo su miseria otorgándole poder sobre algo que ni él mismo conocía bien, aunque sabía que lo inundaba. Por eso, aunque no danzara ya, ni hubiera danzado nunca, ordenaba danzar. (pp. 170-171)

(The ellipsis contains details of the progressive atrophy of the lower limbs of Pedro and of the folk remedies used to alleviate his agony.)

The photographs within photographs--multiply framed by hair, picture frames, walls and the rooms in which they are located as well as the houses containing the rooms--are steppingstones into the places of memory. This is one of the reasons why the portraits are examined again and again. The evocations which are densely compacted within them may be extracted and examined from a seeming infinity of viewpoints. However, the basic mechanism at work is one of unfolding. A related premise is that of el otro, for what is a portrait but one image captured? Cannot the portrait view the human original while the original, or another, views the portrait?

A Noxious Bloom Doubles

The Gulf of Policastro reproduces the bay of Montevideo, the Other Tío Francisco seeks out Mario Francisco, a second dining room surfaces through the first, a second sickroom interweaves with the first, witches become the nude women in the well of a duplicated episode and el otro

insists upon recognition. The very limitlessness of the numbers of unfoldings which are possible conveys a note of terror. Especially is this true when the doubling is applied to political and economic crisis. All one need do is change the attire of the participants and the second incident portends endless repetition. The following excerpts have already been examined in a different context.

> Durante muchos años, cada mes de marzo, el suplemento dominical de El Día fue repitiendo en tinta sepia la imagen del hombre bajo, de cara casi redonda y con expresión de mal dormido pero sonriente, de pie en la puerta de aquella casa, con el saco puesto y el cuello de la camisa desabrochado y sin corbata (entonces se usaban cuellos postizos y quedaba raro verlo sin cuello y con el saco puesto) y con los brazos caídos a los lados y un revólver corto en cada mano. (p. 199)

> Vinieron los tipos con las camionetas que tienen ahora, y cuando te das cuenta ya tenés una docena de tipos con los cascos esos de marcianos que te están corriendo con los garrotes. Pero aquí no tiraron; nos corrieron, nomás. Donde tiran parece que es en el centro". ... "Y ustedes por qué hacen huelga? Para no ir a clase, hacen huelga". "Por los frigoríficos, abombado! Y además no hacemos huelga; hacemos peajes: paramos a los autos en la calle y les pedimos plata para los frigoríficos. Y cuando la policía se entera vienen las camionetas. ¿Las viste? ¡Son un quilo! Pero cuando paran y empiezan a bajar tipos por todos lados se te ablandan las piernas, ¡qué lo tiró! Y después corrés como no corrés nunca. Yo salí por arriba de uno de esos montones de basura y llegué a la carnicería y ni me di cuenta que había pasado por encima de la verja. (p. 196)

> El bedel viene a decirles que las clases se suspendieron y que tienen que irse pronto para casa, pero nadie sabe por qué. "¿Qué pasa?"

> "¡Yo qué sé!; me parece que hay flor de lío, pero nos libramos de cosmografía, botija!" "Y por qué? ¿Hay huelga?" "¡No seas idiota! ¿No estás viendo que nos echan?" "¡Vamos, muchachos! ¡Vamos! ¡Con orden!" "No, ¡qué huelga! Dicen que Brum se mató". "¿Y que tiene que ver?" "¡Vamos, los de Segundo! ¡Al patio! ¡Fuera del salón!" "Che, ¿quién es Brum, vos?" "Uno que fue presidente". "¡Seriola!" (p. 198)

The student conversation which revolves around the suicide of Brum in 1933 is very similar to that which attests to the crisis of 1969 and the latter part of the decade of the sixties in general. Even if one is unfamiliar with the political details, it is possible to differentiate the crises one from the other by the style of dress. Díaz cites a passage from "Lucrecia" by Hernández as an example of the same technique.[31] He explains the significance:

> El entrecruzamiento interior de los diferentes tiempos, el mismo que ya estudiamos en <u>El caballo perdido</u> y en otros textos suyos, se objetiva ahora en las ropas de época que provocan el sentimiento directo de la posibilidad de desdoblamiento.[32]

Returning to the original premise that the existence of two implies the possibility of an infinity and that an entity once doubled may do so endlessly, it is apparent that the sensation of horror is amplified by application of unfolding to political instability and the consequences thereof.

Center Fold

Emily Zants theorizes that a novel may be "a moving present that creates its own past as it progresses."[33] In Partes de naufragios, an illusion has been created and carefully nurtured that the present of the novel may be the scene of the vigil of Miguel and the grandson at the side of the dying Antonio. This illusion begins to disintegrate as Miguel is recognized dying of cancer on page 58 and Antonio appears already to have died on page 100. Page 115 contains the definitive information of Miguel's death buried between two fragments of conversation attributed to him during his lifetime. Are these references to the same Miguel? If so, the present of the galaxy of fragments thus far accumulated must be reassessed. This may be achieved only within the mind of the reader. Without participation by the reader, the contradiction will stand immobilized and unresolved.

Resolving the contradiction requires first that the grandson be relegated, at least for the moment, to his position within the capsule of the interplanetary spacecraft. The reader may wish to accept the inner chronology of the grandson, which represents his psychological time. With reference to the narrative structure of a nouveau roman by Robbe-Grillet, Szanto explains that in no instance "does the time of the narrator on a page toward the end of the book

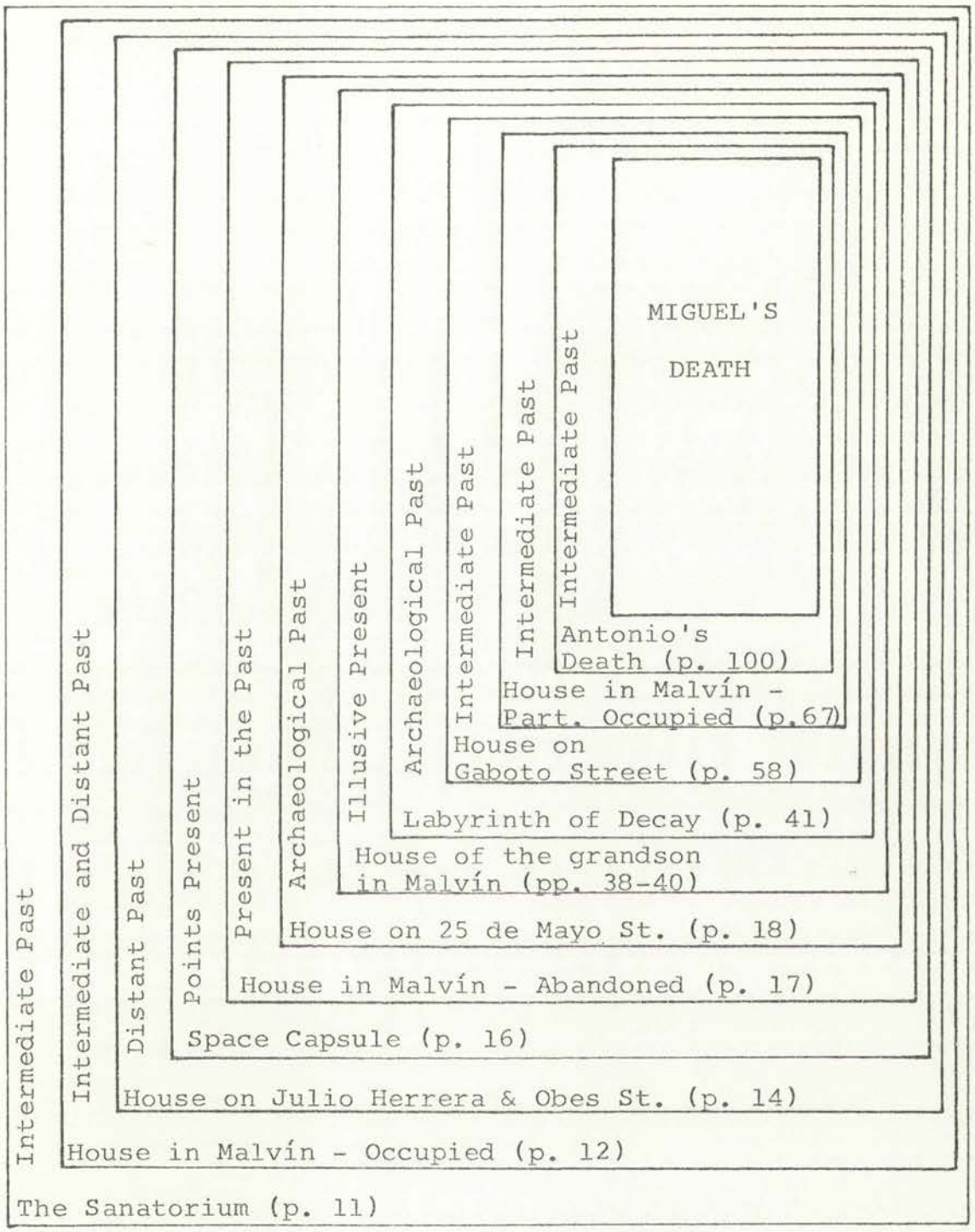

FIGURE 6.

Levitation in Memory: Chronology of the Grandson.

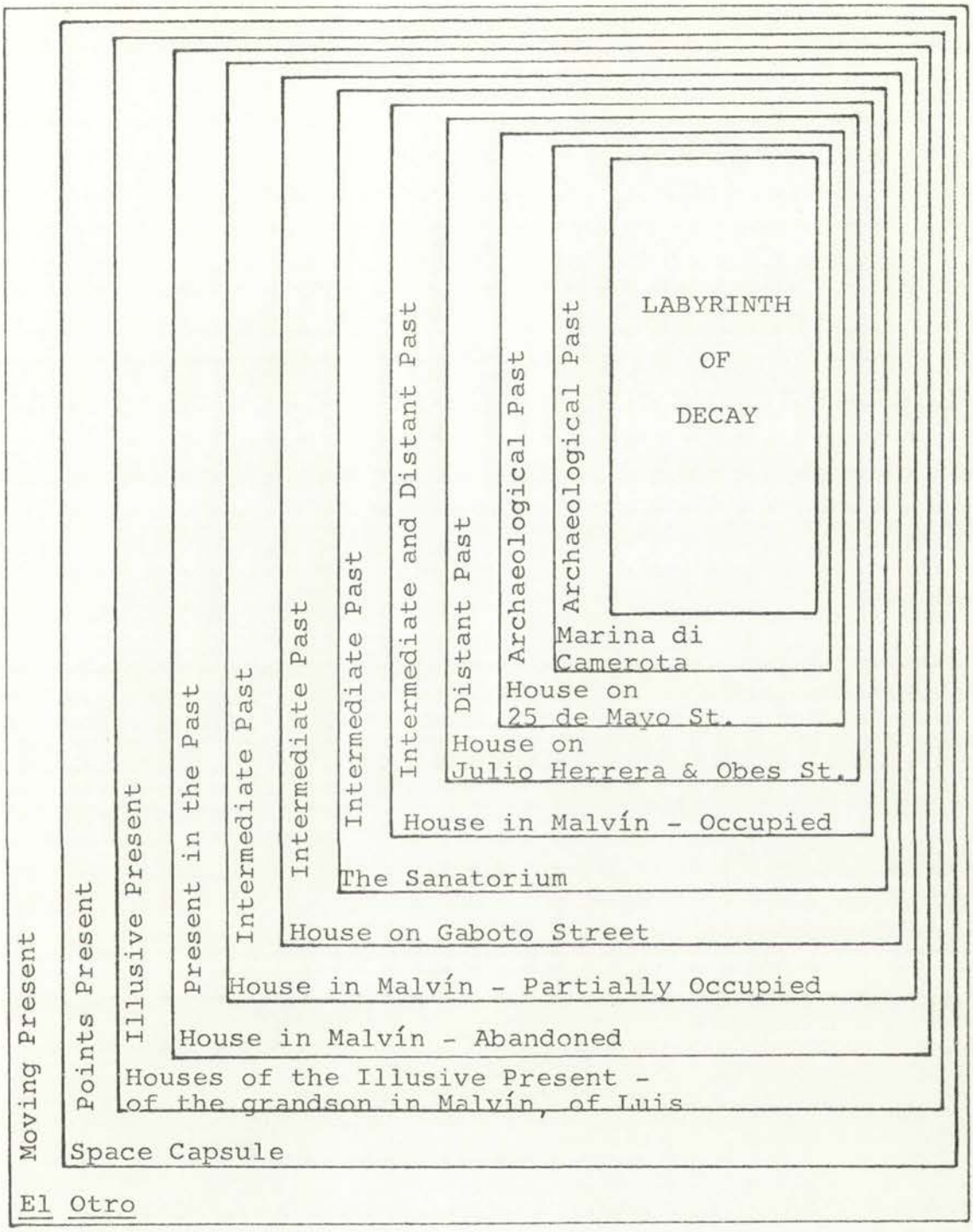

FIGURE 7.

Levitation in Memory: Chronology of El Otro.

actually precede the time on an earlier page; the problem is never one of shuffled pages."[34] The interior time of the grandson is the moving present of the novel in the process of coalescing within the mind of the reader who is El Otro.[35]

As defined by Zants, the governing time of the nouveau roman is the moving present. "Time passes through the space of the present and one of the characteristics of the present is that it is the only time which is spatial,"[36] she affirms. She elaborates that spatialization of present time--passing all events through present time--creates a sensation of flatness. Widely separated events appear juxtaposed on a flat surface somewhat like that of a ticker tape. The present is moving, in Partes de naufragios, in that it is constantly changing within the mind of El Otro as new details accumulate with the progressively forward advancement of the present.[37] Events are perceived through shifting frames which reflect different moments and points in time. The nature of the content of memory is repeatedly transformed like the constantly rotating surfaces of a mobile. The content of memory is set like a gem within the multiple frames of time. The gem may not be flawless, even though it is a gem which appears to be of great value. A remembered happiness may not have been a happy moment when originally experienced. The gem may take on the appearance of a remembered happiness relative to preceding

or subsequent events examined in the flattened totality of the moving present. Duration of the moment of happiness is limited implicitly by the multiple settings of its gem-like quality.

El Otro will continually annihilate schemata as new information is received. Upon completion of the first reading, he may return to the beginning and read again. New details will emerge with each reading and past impressions will be reconsidered and restructured. At some time in the future, El Otro may experience the sensation of the breakoff phenomenon as the pieces fall into place and he, like the grandson, is psychologically transposed to outer space while the novel continues to unfold of its own volition. Within the mind of El Otro the process of creation is the continuous one of the moving present.

The existence of El Otro obliterates the autonomy of the individual in Partes de naufragios. Individual identity is antithetical to "decentralization of the world in the direction of another subjective consciousness,"[38] as Zants has pointed out. This is demonstrated symbolically as the Other Tío Francisco erases Tío Francisco. The mood of the novel is that of accelerated change, crisis and disintegration.[39] These processes are reinforced through the structure of the novel which obliges El Otro to embark continuously upon revision, erasure and creation anew.

Like the narrators of Proust, the grandson does not accumulate new information about him in the present; he is levitating in memory in a time beyond time.[40] It is El Otro who perceives the contradictions and accumulates the multiply framed images in the dynamic moving present, thus preventing closure or petrification of the novel's processes.[41]

Refolding the Novel

Limitless Drops

The image retained in memory is evoked by the drops of water dripping endlessly from the leaky faucet in the bathroom on the second floor of the abandoned house in Malvín. The house is silent now; the screen of the television is dead. Silence absorbs the drops of water in echoing response. And the sounds of the family which once occupied the house absorb the echo. The sound and the silence are duplicated in the empty house, the sounds of the people who once lived there and the silence of daybreak before the family descended from the second floor--where the leaky faucet now drips. A process of withering or contraction has begun.

Spontaneous Coalescence

Fragmentation provides the opportunity for the antithetical response of coalescence. Díaz explains the concept:

> Naturalmente que esto le permite luego el desarrollo de un tema secundario del que muchas veces saca partido a lo largo de su obra y que es como el negativo del que venimos comentando: el análisis de la armonía entre las diferentes partes que primero disoció y suposo aisladas, para sorprenderse después por su coordinado juego.[42]

Evocative of the coordinated and synchronized performance of Uruguay's champion soccer teams of the twenties, a paper ball is kicked into the sky and miraculously animates a series of objects which deftly fall into position to convey a dramatic and harmonized image. The launching of the ball has been quoted in its entirety above. It calls into play many of the dissociated objects scattered through the pages of the novel.

The disintegrating sheafs of paper upon which are written the hieroglyphics of a secret society spontaneously coalesce into the giant paper ball which is launched joyously, dropping a few shreds of Masonic ceremony here and there over the roof tops with suitable pomp bringing order out of chaos and that projectile incorporates the elements of man's flight into space and returning to Earth ever so slightly increases the volume of another heap of garbage where the soft lips of the horses will rummage for a fruit skin and the rain will come as will the wretched carts of the poor after, or as a part of, the strikes of the municipal workers.

The function of this unexpected mutation of an object is that it incorporates many elements previously examined individually and it fuses them into one linear episode through time and space, transforming them dramatically. Again, the triggering element is folding: this time in reverse, in the sense of mashing the pieces of paper together within the fist.

> ... un manojo de papeles amarillentos, pero no demasiado quebradizos, así tendrán que ser, para que al apretarlos y arrugarlos se pueda hacer una pelota que al vuelo, gozosamente, pueda ser lanzada al aire ... (p. 118)

Reconstruction by El Otro

The memory of the reader will fuse the pieces of the novel in much the same manner as the coalescing orbit of the paper ball. Retention and assembling of the fragments is an aspect of reader participation in the creative process. The insight of the reader will not always be the result of direct observation. The author has planted seeds of associations for the objects and they become remembered associations in the mind of the reader, subject to recall which in turn may occasion an insight or observation.

It is difficult actually to pin down this mental process. Chapter 26 contains an example of how it may work. A third of the way through the chapter, the father Antonio arrives from work and enters the sickroom of his son.[43] He is telling his son the story of "Ismael and the Tiger."

The act of telling the son a story suggests the visual image of a book in the mind of the reader. Leafing back a few pages, one discovers that there was a book suggested in the sentence "El día anterior había llegado con un paquete: era un regalo; al través de la forma del paquete se sentía el libro encuadernado" (p. 224). There are two analogues which evoked the memory of the book as the father tells the story of "Ismael and the Tiger." The first analogue is that the father has just returned; the second is that he is telling a story which suggests a book.

Having verified the existence of a book, the question arises as to whether the book contains the story. The reader will recall that, several pages before, the child was imagining personalities who peopled the curtains and that three stories were mentioned. Perhaps there is a clue on that page.

> En las cortinas se pueden ver paisajes según en lo que se esté pensando. Se puede estar pensando en Ismael y el tigre o en la Historia del Segundo Califa Hijo de Rey, pero también, a veces, es difícil dejar de pensar en las brujas arrodilladas junto a la lápida. (p. 223)

Unfortunately, there is no mention of the known title of a book.

Continuing the chapter, a portion of the fragments unexpectedly fall in place when the grandson comments to Miguel: "Fue cuando me regaló las Mil y una Noches. Y me contaba cuentos. Papá y Tío Francisco" (p. 227). In response

to the grandson, Miguel replies, "Pobre viejito." He is referring to Tío Francisco. The comment serves to immerse the grandson once more in the memory of his childhood illness and this time he recalls the story which was told to him by Francisco. It is one of the three stories mentioned previously but not yet clarified. It is the story of the nude women discovered in the well. The women are described through the memory of childhood.

> Y entonces quedaban las cortinas sobre las puertas de vidrio. Y empezaban a aparecer aquellas mujeres que habían encontrado en un pozo, y que quedaban tendidas junto al brocal, sobre la tierra húmeda. Habían corrido a llamar al alcalde y al cura, que llegaban cuando ya un grupo grande estaba rodeando a las mujeres y hacía comentarios porque estaban desnudas, y una de ellas era muy linda, aunque tenía roto y desprendido un brazo. Entonces el cura decía que había que tratarlas con cuidado y que tenían que llevarlas a la ciudad, y que cuidaran también del brazo, que estaba casi entero aunque tenía un poco lastimada la mano. Algunos creían que eran brujas o cosas del demonio, pero el mismo cura les explicaba que eran estatuas que había hecho una gente muy antigua. Pero en las cortinas no se notaba. (p. 227)

The scene contains touches of the fantastic until the priest explains that the women are statues sculpted by an ancient people. It recalls a similar and amplified version narrated by Domingo in <u>Los fuegos de San Telmo</u>. José Pedro remembers the story while visiting Paestum, overlooking the Mediterranean.

> En Marina encontraron una vez. ¡Fue un barullo tan grande! Estaban ahondando el pozo, que no traía agua porque hacía tiempo que no llovía.

> --¡Pero qué encontraron, tío?, preguntó mi padre.
>
> --Estatuas, como dice el libro. A él ya le conté muchas veces, dijo señalándome. Era una mujer desnuda. ¡linda!: le faltaba la cabeza. Entonces todos dijeron que el pozo tenía maleficio y corrieron a buscar al cura. Pero él dijo que aquello lo había hecho otra gente, gente muy antigua. Después vino el Prefecto de Camerota y los felicitó todos y quiso que sacaran a la mujer con mucho cuidado, y la pusieron cerca del pozo. Más tarde la llevaron a Camerota y después a Nápoles, y allí la pusieron en una pieza grande, muy acomodada, para que la viera la gente.[44]

The feverish child remembers the story not as it was told to him by Francisco but as it appears to him at dusk in the designs of the curtains. It takes on the aspects of a nightmare.

> Y aunque lo explicara el cura y aunque su tío se lo repitiera, él no podía dejar de pensar que estaban mojadas, y por eso tenían esa forma fluctuante en la cortina; mojadas y salidas del pozo, de modo que estaban muertas ahogadas, seguramente como el que estaba en el libro junto a la lápida, el que sostenían las dos mujeres arrodilladas, que tenía agujeros en los ojos, y por eso debía evitar mirar las cortinas ... volvía a ver a las dos mujeres arrodilladas alrededor, hincadas en el suelo y agachadas, comiendo el brazo del muerto que sostenían con sus manos, y dejando las claras huellas de sus mordeduras en la carne, como si todo su cuerpo tuviera una gris consistencia masilla. (p. 228)

Indirect associations, direct observations, remembered fragments of dialogue, episodes from the novella (which may contain more detail) and the various shards will fall into place within the mind of the reader through the memory process. This may, in turn, reproduce the breakoff phenomenon

when it becomes apparent that there are many threads continuing to be spun, left dangling and undefined, as well as a variety of pieces which have been completely lost to the undertow.

Father and Son in Sympathy

Chapter 29 recalls the unfortunate occasion when Antonio was rushed to the sanatorium for a second time because of a second stroke. He has been lying in the hospital bed for two days. There are two automobiles. The first is the ambulance. The second is that of the son. "Hay muchos automóviles, pero aquellos dos van a otro lugar," (p. 259) muses the grandson. Two automobiles together and apart from all the rest are speeding to a place apart for a second time. The son is one with the father. "Sin duda él está asintiendo a algo." They speed along Rivera Avenue on the route which they always take, but probably at another hour; the Avenue is unfamiliar. It is a tunnel. There is a cross. There is no exit.[45]

The Slightest Opacity

The slightest opacity dulls the colors, a light film of dust covers the caravels, time and again there is mention of a tangible, visible evidence of disintegration--a premonition of death.

Los ojos están opacos. (p. 12)

Sostienen copas de diversos tamaños y formas, ordenadas en escalones crecientes por su altura, y en las que casi no se advierte polvo, apenas si una leve opacidad. (p. 29)

Son las exudaciones de la cola con que el restaurador trabajó, una materia negra, blanduzca y pegajosa que mantiene, si no se la toca, una superficie casi brillante, pero basta rozarla con las manos para que deje en los dedos manchas opacas y tenaces como de goma descompuesta o de alquitrán viejo. (p. 142)

... bajo el delicado vellón dorado que apenas la cubre ... (p. 208)

Era inevitable sentir, al hojearlas, la adhesión de la superficie envejecida, húmeda y maloliente, así como era inevitable vincular el contenido de aquellas fotografías con la calidad enferma que el olor y el tacto proclamaban. (p. 209)

El polvo se acumula. La aspiradora se llevaría velas, jarcias y gallardetes. Un pincel quizá. Mientras tanto, el polvo cubre las jarcias, y las mismas velas, endurecidas por la goma laca, se hacen corpóreas y peludas. Hay un aire gris, anubarrado, y una lenta, impalpable llovizna de tiempo. (p. 263)

Pero es inútil que canten los pájaros en el jardín y se persigan para poseerse, gozosamente, entre las hojas: también mientras copulan y gorjean; un lento molino inacabable muele el polvo de las alas, desmenuza las lujosas y brillantes caparazones de los insectos, hace polvo de las hojas, del mismo brillante pétalo rotundo y rojo de las achiras. (p. 263)

The Death of Memory

Inside Antonio's brain a squid squirts its black ink:

Será diferente, pero ¿dónde está?, cómo puede subir de ese lugar al que fue cayendo, en el que se dejó caer, donde cayó luego de tropezar con un microscópico tubo que se rompió y desprendió, como un calamar, una líquida humareda

> negra que le hizo caer, y en ese remolino de espiras negras en lo negro desflecándose se hundió, siguió cayendo aunque esté tendido, horizontal y asido por esos tentáculos de goma que lo apresan; pero él escapa por otro lado y cae, cae para adentro. (p. 222)

The Death of Fantasy

Inside the brain of Antonio a black bat folds up its wings as if to sleep and stills forever the endless unfoldings:

> Cae un manto de pasados, negros tules opacos que vibran, que ondulan y vibran y se recogen, se pliegan en un estremecimiento de murciélago que se dispone a dormir. (p. 260)

With the folding of the wings of the bat, the flight of man with the Angel ends for Antonio.

Notes to Chapter 6

1. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 86.

2. Ibid., p. 96.

3. Felisberto Hernández, El caballo perdido, 2:28.

4. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 84.

5. Ibid., p. 86.

6. Emily Zants, The Aesthetics of the New Novel in France, p. 24.

7. Felisberto Hernández, "Por los tiempos de Clemente Colling," 2:49.

8. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 87.

9. Díaz, Tratado de la llama, pp. 88-89.

10. Ibid., p. 92.

11. Díaz, Fuegos, p. 125.

12. Zants explains that the reader never manages to define the character of a nouveau roman "which makes him realize that he is dealing with a true other." She quotes Ortega y Gasset who has expressed the same theory: "We are never quite let into their /the other people in the lives of human beings/ secret, they stubbornly refuse to adjust themselves to our ideas about them. And this is what makes them independent of us and brings it home that they are an effective reality transcending our imagination" (Zants, p. 49).

13. Emir Rodríguez Monegal, Foreword to Obras completas de Juan Carlos Onetti, pp. 11-12.

14. The year 1939 has been ascribed to the birth of the "generación de la crítica" by Rama (Ángel Rama, "Origen de un novelista y de una generación literaria," pp. 57-110).

15. The sense of uneasiness is shared by the reader. It is provoked as much by the technique of communicating vessels as by the content of the scene. Vargas Llosa explicates: "Este asociar dentro de una unidad hechos, acontecimientos, personajes, que ocurren en tiempos distintos o que se hallan en lugares diferentes, me parece que crea en el lector una especie de inquietud, una especie de incertidumbre, de sorpresa, y es esa sorpresa e incertidumbre lo que lleva al

lector a inquietarse, a alarmarse frente a lo que ocurre, y a la vez a depositar en lo que está leyendo su parte de vivencia para que la vivencia del mundo literario surja" (Mario Vargas Llosa, "La novela," p. 24).

16. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 96.

17. Ibid., p. 75.

18. Zants demonstrates the loss of autonomy which results from "decentralization of the world in the direction of another subjective consciousness" (Zants, p. 48).

19. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," pp. 87-88.

20. Crisis possesses the same capacity to fuse past, present and future affirms Kermode. He explains: "We make sense of the past as a book or a psalm we have read or recited, and of the present as a book the seals of which we shall see opened; the only way to do this is to project fears and guesses and inferences from the past onto the future" (Frank Kermode, The Sense of an Ending, p. 96).

21. Hernández, El caballo perdido, 2:34-35.

22. Ibid.

23. The grandson appears similar to the narrator of El caballo perdido in several ways. In addition to sharing with him--possibly--the personality of the pawnbroker of nostalgia, he may share with him the desire to return to childhood. The narrator of El caballo perdido endeavored to penetrate the psyche of the child he once was but found it impossible to do so (Hernández, El caballo perdido, 2:45).

24. Jorge Ruffinelli, "Salvatajes desesperanzados," p. 22.

25. Zants discusses the loneliness and isolation of the being at center of the nouveau roman and his endeavors to communicate with others, a motivation underlying the creative process. The isolated protagonist reaches for the reader only to be rebuffed through mechanisms of the novel as constructed by the author (Zants, pp. 11-16).

26. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 88.

27. Ibid., p. 93.

28. Ibid., p. 88.

29. Implied is the violence attributed to human confrontations. Roudiez explains metaphors which involve animals

or attributes of animals in Nathalie Sarraute's fiction: "Animals, in many instances, are preying upon other animals, fleeing before them or fighting. The vocabulary of the hunt provides a ritualistic element, enabling related metaphors to mirror the complexity of human relationships, those hardly perceptible but sudden shifts from the supposedly authentic to the nonauthentic" (Leon S. Roudiez, French Fiction Today, p. 49).

30. Robbe-Grillet points out that the meticulous description of an object which is apparently immobile nevertheless contains movement. "It is matter itself which is both solid and unstable, both present and imagined, alien to man and constantly being invented in man's mind. The entire interest of the descriptive pages--that is, man's place in these pages --is therefore no longer in the thing described, but in the very movement of the description" (Alain Robbe-Grillet, For a New Novel, p. 148).

31. The cited passage reads in part: "A mi lado había un tipo vestido de azul y sentí como un terror de que aquel traje fuera mío y de que yo llegara a ser aquel tipo" (Felisberto Hernández, "Lucrecia," 5:104.

32. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," pp. 95-96.

33. Zants, p. 38.

34. George H. Szanto, Narrative Consciousness, pp. 151-152.

35. Zants, pp. 46-53.

36. Ibid., p. 40.

37. Subsequent references in the text to the reader in his function as El Otro will be capitalized in order to differentiate from the theory of el otro or the role of the grandson as el otro.

38. Zants, p. 48.

39. The theme of crisis, as related to the twentieth century, is portrayed in broader context by Kermode in his essay "The Modern Apocalypse" (Kermode, pp. 93-124).

40. Zants, p. 37.

41. The reader must perform the role of El Otro in order that the architecture of the novel be sustained and continuously unfolded. The reader fills a hollow in the text. Robbe-Grillet points out that in the nouveau roman there

exists frequently a "hollow" into which the reader fits, a missing factor or a personality who represents the reader (Szanto, p. 140).

42. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 92.

43. Díaz, Partes, p. 226.

44. Díaz, Fuegos, pp. 52-53.

45. The doubling phenomena occur on the first page of Chapter 29, as does the sign of the cross. The numbers of certain chapters convey multiple allusions. Especially is this true of Chapters 29 and 33. The appearance of the cross in Chapter 29 reinforces the pivotal nature of the chapter. In the broader context of a second crucifixion --that of mankind--one might say that in the ninth hour of the second crucifixion mankind cries out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34).

CHAPTER 7

THE INUNDATION: FILAMENT OF THE FANTASTIC

> And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* upon the earth.
>
> Genesis 9:16

> Me hubiera gustado clavar la noche en el papel como a una gran mariposa nocturna. Pero, en cambio, fue ella la que me alzó entre sus aguas como el cuerpo lívido de un muerto y me arrastra, inexorable, entre fríos y vagas espumas, noche abajo.
>
> Juan Carlos Onetti
>
> *El pozo*

> El país totalmente en ruinas. El agua arrastra todo por las calles. No hay más puentes. No se sabe cuántas víctimas. Todo destruído. Una catástrofe como nunca. El país borrado del mapa. Campo y ciudad. Arrasado, totalmente arrasado.
>
> Mario Benedetti
>
> *Gracias por el fuego*

> Entre cansancio y negrura, se sentía como perdido, confundiendo a tal punto los predicamentos, que ya no supo quién era ni dónde estaba; y siendo propenso a considerar las cosas al revés, no advirtió que contemplaba el cielo sino que se pensó asomado a un pozo. Y hasta vértigo tuvo, arriesgando tumbarse, de no ser para abajo, para arriba.
>
> María Inés Silva Vila
>
> Salto cancan

Since the earliest recorded concern of man for survival, the mythology of the deluge has been a source of fascination. The telluric strains in Spanish American Literature survive in a variety of ways, one of which is the inundation. Earlier in the twentieth century, Horacio Quiroga provided memorable examples of the theme of the flood with his stories "Anaconda" and "El desierto." The impending catastrophe--so succinctly implied by Onetti in 1939--appears in the literature of the decade of the sixties as the chaos and tumult of the deluge materialized.[1] Disintegration, collapse and inundation are themes shared by many Uruguayan authors during recent years.[2]

Among the more outstanding examples are Benedetti's Gracias por el fuego (1965), wherein the inundation results from a supposed seaquake interpreted as divine retribution by the Uruguayan protagonists.[3] Death by drowning assumes

the dimensions of political satire and human pathos in María Inés Silva Vila's Salto cancan (1969).[4] The image of a drowning individual--and by implication of a nation in danger of inundation--appears in recent political writing in Montevideo in the form of variations on such phrases as "con el agua al cuello." Sensitivity to death by drowning appears to be a logical concern of Uruguayans, whose nation is almost completely surrounded by water.[5] Perhaps, too, this fear is a phantom of the psyche of the immigrant whose origin was a seafaring nation.

In Partes de naufragios the inundation is derived partly from the wrath of nature and partly from the filaments which wind upon the other skein, the skein of imagination and the fantastic. It occurs in the broader context of the lore of the sea which is the heritage of the immigrants. The filament of the fantastic is inspired, in part, by Felisberto Hernández who develops the symbolism of water throughout his writing. Hernández's La casa inundada (1960) matures the symbolism of water in the context of the fantastic.[6]

Diversified and Varied Waters

Stagnant Runoff

The malevolence of stagnating runoff is identified by Señora Margarita, proprietor of the inundated house of

La casa inundada. She believes that

> si el agua que corre es poca, cualquier pozo puede prepararle una trampa y encerrarla: entonces ella se entristece, se llena de un silencio sucio, y ese pozo es como la cabeza de un loco. ... Yo debo estar con mís pensamientos y mis recuerdos como en un agua que corre con gran caudal.[7]

With reference to the foregoing belief of Señora Margarita, Díaz comments that "la primera parte de este pasaje nos dice muy bien cómo ese agua es sobre todo interior--'ese pozo es como la cabeza de un loco'--y la última nos señala que es allí donde flotan los recuerdos."[8] The malevolence of the water of the well, whether it will lead to psychosis or death, derives from the fact that it is not flowing water, that it is not water in abundance and that it is not pure water. It may be noted, also, that it corresponds to an interior water, a product of man's search within himself.

The memories which float in this type of water are associated with death in Partes de naufragios.

> En el fondo de ese mismo pozo, en un agua igual, sobrenada Miguel, pero también Alberto, y Mario y pedazos de casas que flotan ya partidas ... y hay perros muertos, perros muertos de rabia, de esa misma rabia que ahora aparece como si hubiera estado dormida durante años--y lo estuvo, estuvo dormida desde entonces, desde que murió el perro de Vicentito ... (p. 57)

How does the author define "ese mismo pozo"? More than one level of definition exists. "Ese mismo pozo" would appear to be the product of the interiorization of the grandson.

It may also be defined through an image within the mind of the grandson. Liquids and gases circulate through an elaborate system of tubes, impelled by throbbing pumps whose cylinders reproduce the shape of a well. The image suggests the power plant of the sanatorium or the engine room of a ship. (The sanatorium displays similarities with a ship in the mind of the grandson.) Wreckage floats in the water of the cylinders.

> Cuando se inclina advierte en el fondo movimientos, pedazos de imágenes diferentes, fragmentarias pero móviles, como pedazos de cadáveres movidos por el mar; las ondas empujan hacia los bordes espumosos restos, pedazos de maderas flotantes, algunas todavía ensambladas entre sí, como ese pedazo del pie del maniquí de Alberto. ... También flota y se arrastra el mueblecito de las herramientas, pintado con diversos tintes que imitan la fibra de la madera, donde cuelgan ordenadas y cada una en su lugar, las mechas, las sierras y los alicates, los martillos de diferente tamaño, y los trápanos, y todas se tambalean, tintinean entrechocándose ... (pp. 49-50)

The tools which float in the water of the cylinders belong to Antonio who lies dying, or has died. Alberto and Mario have died already and Miguel's death will follow that of Antonio.

As a nurse walks down the corridor of the sanatorium wheeling a cart of medicines, in the mind of the grandson the inundation is observed to have risen from the power plant on the first floor:

> ... una enfermera empujando un carrito con frascos y con instrumentos niquelados que tintinean, y se hunde en el corredor vecino, y

> junto a él, sin separarse, flota la caja de pinturas con sus pomos y pinceles, que siempre estuvo junto a ese mueble, en el suelo, y ahora se hunden en algún agua que sube, y soportan el empuje de olas que se vuelcan sobre ellos en algún lado. Y en el centro, en un agua quieta de acuario, reposa, como un gran pez dormido, la gran cerámica del recibidor de Don Pedro que ocupa toda la mesa del centro: un jaguar que despedaza una gacela. Y un pedazo de su padre: una cabeza inclinada, saludando, y el cuello, y una mano tendida con el borde del puño de la camisa que asoma bajo la manga (no se ve el brazo), que dice: "En cuanto lo vimos yo le dije a mi señora: 'Ni que lo hubiéramos mandado hacer'. Parece que está diciendo: La carne para las fieras. ¿No es cierto? Mirá, le dije, estoy seguro de que a Don Pedro le va a gustar". (p. 50)

Confronted by the image of the jaguar tearing the gazelle limb from limb, the attention of the reader is turned to Don Pedro. That he is essentially evil and may be the family demon suggested by Jorge Ruffinelli is verified through the animal which represents him, ironically a gift from Antonio. Between page 49 which contains the definition of the pozo as the cylinder of a pump and page 57 which contains the phrase "ese mismo pozo," fragments of illnesses intervene. The illnesses were treated by Don Pedro, the mysterious quasi-curandero who discovered his cures while being treated in Europe for his own condition. All of his patients have died or will die.

Another indication of the demonic nature of Don Pedro may be seen in a passage from an earlier chapter. The grandson and Miguel are conversing in the corridor of the sanatorium. The grandson comments that Miguel has a few chin

whiskers; Miguel has been unable to grow hair on his face or head ever since an accident in his youth.

> "¡Te creció la barba!", le dice. "¡Si hasta tuve que comprame una gilette!", le contesta, "¿no te habías dado cuenta? Pero hace tiempo. ¿Sabes quién me la hizo crecer? Don Pedro. Y pensar que desde entonces sigo comiendo manzanas ralladas!" Entonces hay un brusco remolino negro en el aire negro y resbalan, caen, deslizándose, y se ven en escorzo algunas imágenes que se deforman por el movimiento del agua que las cubre: Mario, Alberto, la asquerosa sopa de trigo y naranja que al final se tomó su padre: "¡Puta, mirá que hizo morir gente, Don Pedro!", dice. (p. 15)

The association of black magic and death with a well and with water in a well may also be seen in the episode of the nude women in the well who metamorphose into witches within the mind of the feverish child who perceives them as designs in the curtains of his sickroom.[9]

Seen repeatedly throughout the novel, water stagnating in a well--and occasionally overflowing from the well--connotes the water of the grandson's interior anguish.

Impure Water

Impure water exists outside and within the well of interiorization. In the novel, it is associated with death in a direct and causative manner.

The black ink of the squid is a form of impure water which permeates the brain of Antonio causing the death of memory. It is a poetic manner of conveying a brain hemorrhage "luego de tropezar con un microscópico tubo que

se rompió y desprendió, como un calamar, una líquida humareda negra que le hizo caer, y en ese remolino de espiras negras en lo negro desflecándose se hundió" (p. 222).

Water with chlordane is poured into an anthill through a hole made with a stick in order to kill the voracious insects.

> A pesar del clordano, las hormigas se agitan y corren pasando unas sobre las otras, buscando, empujándose, encontrando agujeros y hundiéndose en otros corredores, hasta que la pala corta un pedazo de tierra mejor amasada y trabajada por ellas mismas, y queda a la vista, en el corte vertical y neto de la pala, la inextricable red de túneles de una parte profunda donde ya cundió la alarma, y llegan algunas, y buscan atareadas las larvas blancas y blandas y las toman en la trompa y retoman su camino, que ahora que se rompieron las paredes es diferente, difícilmente reconocible, corriendo, tropezando y cayendo en enormes abismos, en hendiduras de la tierra, y trepando de nuevo, cada una con su propia larva entre las duras quijadas ... (p. 126)

A menacing black water rises in the house on Gaboto Street. It is probable that this rising black tide is associated with rats being flushed out of the sewers by the inundation, although it may also be an overflow of the water from the stagnant well of the grandson's interiorization. The latter interpretation derives from textual juxtaposition within Chapter 5. Toward the end of the chapter, the house on Gaboto Street is mentioned with reference to the death of Miguel.

> La casa está ahora llena de fantasmas. Debajo de los pisos había ratas. ... Está demasiado llena de cosas. En las habitaciones del frente debe estar subiendo, además, un agua negra. (p. 58)

Liquidity and disease appear in association, again connoting impure water and death:

> En la tercera pieza está Miguel, tendido en su afilada flacura de bronce, no amarillo, sino color bronce, como si el grumoso sol del cáncer lo hubiera ido quemando, tostando por dentro; soltó sus ésporas, sus células gigantes corrieron por su sangre, se arracimaron y multiplicaron en su cuerpo, y él espera. Hierve dentro de él una vida enemiga. El cáncer se vistió de él como con un guante; le soltó dentro sus jugos; su bronce fundido lo quema y lo tiñe con ese color de habitante de otro planeta. (p. 58)

Desiccation

The Other Tío Francisco is unable to cry.[10] There is dissociation between the function of the body and the emotion of the person inhabiting the body. His anguish is intensified because he cannot unburden himself through tears. That water in one form or another should be totally absent is undesirable, as is demonstrated in Hernandez's work:

> Todavía antes de dormirse, mi socio, intenta recordar la cara de Celina y al mover el agua del recuerdo las imágenes que están debajo se desforman como vistas en espejos ordinarios donde se movieran los nudos del vidrio.
>
> Recién me doy cuenta de que el recuerdo ha pasado cuando siento en los ojos una molestia física, presente, como un escozor de lágrimas que se han secado en los párpados.[11]

Drying of the eyes has a specific meaning for Díaz. He explains that throughout life vision is lost little by little. In childhood, some vision remained. Only in a totally immersed condition did the eyes possess full vision.

He is referring to the fetus immersed in amniotic fluid, within the womb. Díaz elaborates:

> Por otra parte es muy significativo que estas imágenes del agua /en Hernández/ aparezcan tan frecuentemente vinculadas a lo oscuro (las manos de una ciega tantean en su superficie; el caballo bebe en la noche) y aún vinculadas al caballo.
>
> Comentando un verso de Víctor Hugo, G. Durand señala que los poetas no hacen más que volver a encontrar "el gran símbolo del caballo infernal tal como aparece en innumerables mitos y leyendas", vinculado a "constelaciones acuáticas". Y su estudio se desprende, en efecto, que caballo, noche y agua configuran en realidad una constelación temática que expresa la angustia ante el cambio y el tiempo.[12]

Desiccation is associated with death or with dying in Partes de naufragios.

> ... se inclina para levantar un párpado; pero está levantado y no tiene mirada: está opaco, se seca, se achata. "Está deshidratado". Se seca; se secan los ojos. (pp. 282-283)

The death of the sea may also be attributed to desiccation.

> Rollos de papel con los planos, y unas hojas de una vieja revista donde navegan, sobre el mar verde y deslucido de la tricromía, la Pinta, la Niña y la Santa María, sobre el verdeamarillento mar embravecido y muerto. (p. 263)

The abandoned house in Malvín contains the echo of the lives which were once assembled there in the individual drops of water dripping from the faucet. Death has taken many of the lives which the sparing drops of water represent. The drops are anguished, for their very sparcity, "gotas que se filtraron apretadamente contra el cuero del grifo y destilaron su color" (p. 38). They do not flow freely as

does the water from the half-closed faucet of Onetti's El pozo.

> Pero toda la noche está, inapresable, tensa, alargando su alma fina y misteriosa en el chorro de la canilla mal cerrada, en la pileta de portland del patio. Esta es la noche.[13]

A variation of flowing water as the symbol of memory, the half-closed faucet of El pozo may be interpreted by the phrase of G. Bachelard which is cited by Díaz. "L'eau melée de nuit est un remords ancien que ne veut pas dormir."[14]

Free-Flowing Water

We have been emphasizing the nature of water and the manner of its flow or lack of flow. The pieces of memory which appear as fragments floating in the water are less a matter of concern than is the water itself and the relationship of the water to the narrator. Díaz explains the concept as follows:

> Los recuerdos son, se ve claramente si se atiende a lo que estos pasajes dicen, sólo fragmentos fijados, detritus de lo que más verdaderamente importa, y lo que verdaderamente importa no son precisamente los recuerdos mismos sino aquella agua a la que el narrador se asoma, aquel río. Cuando, en otro lugar del libro, se siente inútil y sin sentimientos, sus pensamientos le llegan por costumbre, y el narrador anota: eran como animales que tenían la costumbre de venir a beber a un lugar donde ya no había más agua. Es una tristeza similar a la que expresó el fin del pasaje anterior porque el agua era poca.

> Esa necesidad de dar con el agua madre de los recuerdos, de que los recuerdos le dan, es cierto, noticia, pero sólo, como si dijéramos, por la humedad de que vienen impregnados. Los recuerdos sólo le ofrecen un sustituto imperfecto de su necesidad. Su necesidad última es, en realidad, que aquel agua se desborde: "Algunas veces yo los contemplo y otras veces ellos se desbordan". Ese agua en la que sobrenadan recuerdos y que se desborda, es la que inunda <u>la casa inundada</u>.[15]

The transition whereby the free-flowing water of memory becomes overflowing water will now be examined, taking into consideration the personalities most closely associated with the various aspects of the inundation: Miguel, the grandson, the great grandson and Marcela.

Free-flowing water may be most closely associated with Miguel, allowing minor contributions from the grandson. Miguel and his nephew will spend a total of three days outside the sickroom of Antonio. The reader is introduced to their vigil when it is night. They have already maintained the vigil long enough that the grandson becomes uncertain of his surroundings because of physical exhaustion and he muses: "¿A quíen le habla? Es de noche todavía, aunque no sepan cuál. Están sentados en el corredor, en dos sillas de Viena" (pp. 15-16).

As the grandson perceives the dialogue, Miguel is unburdening himself of his memories. He is placing his life on the table like a deck of cards and, in so doing, he is helping ease the anguish of death for his brother Antonio.[16]

Miguel's verbal outpouring is referred to as a "manantial." The sound of the breathing of Antonio and the pulsations of the rebreathing bag act as a pump expelling from Miguel the memories of his lifetime.

> Y se dispone de nuevo a hablar. Aquel sonido lo nutre, le abre su propio manantial. Está inmensamente dolorido y es inmensamente féliz. Su hermano se está muriendo, pero él lo asiste, y su vida entera la pone sobre la mesa como un juego conocido y para él: repasa todas las cartas, una a una, y a veces las baraja. (p. 16)

The counterpoint to the reminiscence of Miguel is the verbal response of the grandson, stimulated by the interchange of memories. The free-flowing water receives the memories of Miguel and his nephew. In addition, the flow of the stream of memory is enhanced by fragments of sounds and views of Antonio's sickroom, outside which they wait. The stream of memory flows through the novel. It is a stream which is relatively pure and healing, a form of catharsis. The stream will be made turbulent by the occasional rise of malevolent waters or by the surging and churning of more violent waters.

Much of the response of the grandson to the dialogue takes the form of interiorization. This explains the minimal nature of his contribution to the free-flowing stream. Some of the fragments which float in the interior water of the grandson take the form of dialogue. Thus, not all the words of Miguel correspond to the scene in the sanatorium. Some of the words of Miguel were spoken in another place

in the memory of the grandson. Moreover, within the mind of the grandson the menacing waters of the well (or the cylinders of the power plant on the first floor of the sanatorium) have overflowed and may be seen carrying their debris of fragments of memory on the second floor in the adjacent corridors, in and around the sickroom.

There exist still other sources of inundation. Water damage may be observed in varying degrees in different houses. In some instances, the results are chaotic; whereas in other instances, this is not the case. As Hernández demonstrated in La casa inundada, an inundated house is not necessarily a capsized house. Díaz indirectly refers to this contradiction in a passage which provides an added dimension to the significance of inundation. He reminds us that the psychoanalytic interpretation of water has to do with the uterine environment.

> Esta agua en la que sobrenada la historia entera con permanente peligro de naufragio, revela su índole por otra frase del mismo relato: "El sentimiento de una religión del agua era cada vez más fuerte" (p. 26). Se advierte así que la ironía está emboscando un ritual. El agua de la que nos habla se parece mucho al agua-madre de los alquimistas. Y es por aquí, parece, que aflora el otro modo de culminación que nos propone este último libro de Hernández, en que nos entrega una pequeña obra maestra.[17]

Alluvion

Capsized Houses

A house may be in the process of drying up for want of use, as is the case with the abandoned house in Malvín with its ceaselessly echoing drops of water; or a house may be subject to a rising black tide, presumably of rats, as is the case with the empty house on Gaboto Street:

> ... y la casa de la calle Gaboto, que se fue quedando desierta y se balancea como un navío partido que hace agua y cuyas partes flotan separadamente, hundiéndose. (p. 58)

The exterior of the house on Gaboto Street does not betray the source of the water which has inundated it. The source will become apparent below, as we examine the interior of the capsized house. Fragments of houses also are observed floating in the water within the cylinders of the power plant of the sanatorium.

Another manner in which a house may be inundated to the point of capsizing is through fantasy. In particular, the games of childhood provide ample opportunity for this method of bringing about overflow.

> Nosotros podemos jugar a lo que se nos ocurra, ¿quién nos va a decir nada? El Viejo tampoco. Si queremos jugamos a que la casa es un barco y naufraga, y ya está; y decimos que se inclina y que el agua empieza a entrar por debajo de la puerta, y después por la ventana, y que hace tanta presión que los vidrios se rompen y el agua entra a chorros, y nosotros nos salvábamos porque nos subíamos a los botes salvavidas. ¿Estamos?" (p. 60)

The great grandson plays with a friend--or perhaps even a brother--and through the power of imagination they are able to create a variety of marine settings, including the evocation of a dangerous octopus. (It suggests the one which seized Tío Domingo when he played on the beach as a child in Marina di Camerota.)

A house may be inundated to the point of capsizing by wish fulfillment. Quoted below is a fragment of interiorization by the grandson; it corresponds to one portion of a dialogue. Whether it is the grandson speaking to himself or perhaps a manifestation of El Otro speaking to the grandson and advising him is uncertain.[18] It is part of an incident which is placed in juxtaposition to the games of childhood described above. It begins with a similar idea "Entonces decíamos que todo era una casa silenciosa y vacía y que no había nadie, o que sí había, si querés, pero todos andaban como fantasmas" (p. 61). In parentheses, the reader learns of the grandson's rides along the Rambla ("Avenue") bordering the River Plate as he looks for something which he is unable to find.[19] What he is looking for is unclear. The means for finding it will be a reproduction or a doubling of the games of childhood.

> Solo que así no vale la pena; y además no te vas a pasar la vida andando en bicicleta como un loco. Haceme caso: decidite de una vez, porque si no, no te va a quedar tiempo tampoco, y al final vos vas a crepar también y no te vas a sacar ni siquiera las ganas de gritar las ganas de todo. ¡Metele! ¡Total! ¡Lío! ¡Ya

> sé que es un lío! Pero me querés decir a quien le importa el lío que armás entre lo que te contaron, lo que se te ocurre, lo que inventás y lo que te acordás, y las mezclas que hacés con todo eso; a nadie, le importa. Hacés lo que se te ocurre, lo mejor que puedas y ya está. (p. 63)

The passage contains one of the few references to the mental processes of the grandson, processes which form the infrastructure of the novel. He admits to a state of confusion because of the various elements being used: stories he has been told, events in which he personally participated, more deep-seated memories which tend to surface on their own and pure imagination. The one-sided conversation sounds as if perhaps El Otro speaks to the grandson, as if El Otro had taken the place of a playmate in the games of childhood. Through the power of fantasy, the grandson will go on to construct a capsized house or capsized houses.

> Por eso te digo: decimos que hay una casa, y que hubo un tiempo en que era así, y si no te gusta la hacés de nuevo, total, ladrillos no tiene, y mientras metele, que la selva va creciendo, y a lo mejor te aparece hasta agua, y si conseguís bastante, en una de esas hasta navegamos, nomás. Y en todo caso ponés a alguien dentro, y decíamos que la casa naufragaba, y que se está por ahogar, ¿estamos? y así hasta nos aseguramos el agua y todo. (p. 63)

The fragment of conversation conveys the possibility of inundation through wish fulfillment realized in fantasy. It alludes to an affirmation that water in abundance might prove beneficial "y hasta aparece un agua que al principio es poca, pero que a lo mejor puede seguir manando ¡y andá

a saber si esa agua no es justo lo que nos viene bien, al fin y al cabo!" (p. 63).

The entire episode leaves the reader with the disquieting suspicion that the whole motivation for the novel may be little more than the games of childhood. Were the reader--as El Otro--to ascribe such a significance to it, in effect the novel would be obliterated. If the reader actually participates in the games of childhood as El Otro, the effect of an atemporal extravaganza is heightened. So, too, is the reader's sense of participation.[20] The structure of the novel is causing questions to arise and accepted frames of reference to disintegrate. It is eschewing closure.

Capsized Interiors

As may be demonstrated in a passage from Partes de naufragios, an abandoned house is a propitious setting for inundation.

> En las casas vacías hay lugar para muchas cosas: crecen para adentro, silenciosamente, y algo se expande en ellas en ramificaciones que se hunden y llegan hasta recovecos y lugares que la vida había ido olvidando, o sobre los que pasaba sin poner atención. Además, la soledad hace a las casas, como a los hombres, más sensibles a la memoria, y recrea los significados de las cosas, y a veces, hasta los cambia. (p. 101)

In Hernández's "La casa de Irene" an aura surrounds the individual and the object or objects; the person tends to resemble the objects while the objects take on human

characteristics. This special galaxy of objects and individual creates its own gravitational tension and the air becomes saturated. The same may be seen in another excerpt from Partes de naufragios:

> Además, a medida que se las movía, las cosas crecían, y no porque, bajo su atención trabajosa, o merced al calor que les daba con las manos mientras las llevaba de uno a otro lado, se esponjaban y leudaban, y hasta llegaban a colorearse con su antiguo destino, emergían de la masa confusa que eran, y recobraban una individualidad que hacía tiempo habían perdido y que, sin embargo, no podían recobrar del todo; y les crecían significaciones e historias que iban poblando el cuarto y lo sobresaturaban de un viejo vaho familiar que lo impregnaba todo y llegaba a condensarse en personas desvanecidas que rezumaban sobre las cosas. ...
>
> ... ella empezaba, por su parte, la otra tarea, la de descubrimiento, porque mientras /Marcela/ iba y venía, siempre con algo en las manos y obstruyendo los pocos senderos que todavía se podía recorrer, aún hacía lugar a más parientes que la acompañaban, transparentes y ubicuos, terminando de sobresaturar aquel espacio. (pp. 190-192)

The space has actually become saturated with the people who compose the memories of Marcela, suggested to her by the objects.

A green light is cast by the Victrola in the dining room of the house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street. The color enhances the illusion of the presence of water.

> Cuando se piensa en la victrola, el comedor se inunda de una luz verde de fondo de mar. En el centro flota, sobre la mesa, una gran medusa verde, una semiesfera de armazón de alambre cubierta por una tensa seda verde de cuyos bordes cuelgan largos y frágiles tentáculos dormidos, también verdes. (p. 145)

The Victrola is surrounded by green shadowy water, as is demonstrated by reference to the medusa and by identification of the ambient as agua in the sentence "El niño se levanta y anda marchando alrededor de la mesa--aunque sin alejarse demasiado, sin entrar en el agua de sombra verde que la rodea" (p. 146).

Díaz associates a touch of magic with the dynamic tension which unites objects and contributes to their animation.

> Por lo pronto se esboza el sentimiento de una fuerza mágica que enlaza entre sí las cosas del mundo: "La mesa de luz me pareció distinta: tenía una alianza y una asociación extraña con el cigarrillo". El mundo aparece como indescifrable; fuerzas lo recorren que no tienen que ver con la voluntad del sujeto; se trata de algo así como de una rebelión espiritual de lo material; tiene un sentido en sí, ¿pero cuál? Es lo que Jaspers llama la infilosofía.[21]

In Partes de naufragios, it is Marcela who best demonstrates the manner of interaction between objects and the individual which results in an alluvion. Let us now examine the aspect of the inundated interiors which is directly attributable to Marcela.

The Water Nymph

Marcela is forever young. She possesses the quality of helplessness, of not quite being able to take care of herself. When she still lived in the home of her parents on Gaboto Street, she would go to the plaza and feed the

pigeons and then fall asleep on the park bench while the pigeons swarmed around her. Often she would eat little more than a sandwich. Marcela had never married. She had never lived on her own, alone, until the death of her parents and all of her brothers and sisters--Antonio, Miguel, Sarita and María Julia. Inevitably, the day arrived when Marcela was alone in the rambling old house on Gaboto Street.

Because her sister-in-law Margarita worried about Marcela's apparent inability to take care of herself, Marcela was allowed to move to the house in Malvín where Margarita had been living alone after the death of her husband Antonio. Marcela lived with Margarita until Margarita became so ill that it was necessary for her to move to her son's home. Once again, Marcela was alone. This time she was moved by her nephews from Malvín to a house in an old section of Montevideo, a house which belonged to Luis (son of the sister-in-law of Antonio).

Since Marcela has never actually entered the adult world, memories of adolescence and young adulthood are for her an expression of the present. She is frequently observed reading the same old newspaper as if it were a chronicle of current events. She is extremely forgetful of events in the immediate present.

Moving from house to house has been especially traumatic for Marcela because, with each move, her relatives have insisted that she leave some of her treasures behind.

Each time, she has had to sort through the many objects to which she has imparted a portion of her personality--objects which once belonged to her brothers and sisters and parents and are the remnants of a happier time.

Marcela is both a humorous and a pathetic personality. New Year's Day in the house of Luis was totally disrupted by Marcela. The house was awakened during the wee hours of the morning by a dog and cat fight. Pulguita, Marcela's cat, had offended the territorial imperative of the dog of Luis. Pulguita took refuge in the eaves of the house. In the morning Margarita decided to find her box of photographs. Having done so with unusual precision, she made her way to the bedroom of Luis and his wife in order to show them the photograph of all of the members of the family together around the dining room table in the house on Julio Herrera y Obes Street.

> Y justo eran las fotos aquellas que había sacado hace añares, donde estaban todos: Antonio y Margarita y Mario y Sarita, y también, claro, los padres de él, Alberto y Catalina, y él mismo: Luis; al principio la mujer no se dio bien cuenta, pero cuando ella viene llorando, pero llorando a gritos, y se pone a explicarles a los dos quienes son, y qué les pasó y de qué se murieron, y que ella misma los había fotografiado, pero que todos se fueron y que ahora está sola, y que aquel chiquilín que está en la fotogravía ahí a su costado, es un sobrino que tenía su hermano, que no se acuerda cómo se llama pero que es justo Luis, que la está escuchando, ¿te das cuenta?, y que el otro medio calvo ella se acuerda de que venía a ser cuñado de un hermano también y que le parece que se llamaba Alberto, y era justo el padre del que tiene ahí

> delante, ¡mirá qué diversión de primero de año! (p. 218)

Thereupon, Marcela went out to see if she could find Pulguita who was quietly hiding in the uppermost portion of the patio. Inasmuch as Marcela was new to the neighborhood in which Luis's house was located, she lost her way. The holiday guests had to interrupt their celebration to go out and look for her. "Yo no sé qué demonios tienen esos días como Navidad y Año Nuevo y todos esos" (p. 218) are the words uttered by an unidentified member of the family, summing up the sense of exasperation occasioned by Marcela's behavior. To a more perceptive observer, it would be obvious that Marcela behaves in an even less rational manner on holidays because of the memories of her family celebrating together.

Equally difficult for her relatives was the task of moving Marcela from the house in Malvín to the home of Luis. It was on that occasion that the many drawers and nooks and crannies of her wardrobe were partially emptied of the seemingly endless stream of objects and associations and memories contained therein. Marcela possessed many more objects when she lived all alone in the house on Gaboto Street, after the death of Miguel. There, the inundation actually resulted in a capsized interior.

> La habitación se balancea en lo hondo como la profunda bodega de un buque en alta mar. Arriba hay un candil o una lamparilla amarillenta que cuelga de lo alto, cerca de

> la escotilla, junto al techo. Pero no es alta mar. Ahora hay ya poco fondo. En cualquier momento un ángulo de la habitación se encajará en la arena y el agua empezará a rezumar por las paredes, por la tablazón del piso; la misma arena se colará por los intersticios y se estancará en el ángulo, hará una pequeña playa de entrecasa y empezarán a moverse, como arañas, nidadas de estrellas de mar. Las otras partes del barco ya no existen, se desprendieron. Flotan despojos que se mueven alejándose; giran en torno con balanceo de gruesos tablones oscurecidos por la brea. Arriba de uno va moviéndose la lámpara de cristal y bronce de María Julia. ... Cuando el mar se encrespa no se sabe si lo blanco es la espuma de las olas o las hojas de papel brillante y retorcido, con fotografías de gallos, de cipreses piramidales y toros holando. Otro pedazo entero de la habitación está esquinado y encajado entre bajíos: en el piso inclinado, cuyo extremo se hundió ya bajo el mar, está firme todavía una cama de bronce. No se distingue si el cuerpo de Miguel, que tenía también color de bronce, está sobre ella. (pp. 64-65)

Among the treasures of Marcela is the wedding dress of her older sister, María Julia. The tulle of the wedding dress is seen again and again, and is reminiscent of a similar fabric observed in Hernandez's La casa inundada.[22] It appears in the death of memory and fantasy in Partes de naufragios:

> ... cae un manto de pasados, negros tules opacos que vibran, que ondulan y vibran y se recogen, se pliegan en un estremecimiento de murciélago que se dispone a dormir. ... Ese estremecimiento. Antes no tuvo ese estremecimiento. Los tules caían, nada más, caían y empezaban a plegarse, pesados. (p. 260)

The irony of Marcela's attachment to the wedding dress places the tulle in a different perspective in the

passage which follows.

> ... así, al través del quemado polvoriento tul que ella quiere guardar todavía, pero que antes contempla y se lo muestra a su cuñada, irguiéndose hasta donde puede con su pequeña estatura cada día más encogida, ciñéndoselo al pecho ya tan caído y que sólo a medias queda después que la operaron; ella, que admira y respeta ese instrumento ceremonial, ese tocado para una prueba de iniciación que no conoce, y por eso contempla, porque es de su hermana, y porque la casa ya tambalea y escora ... (p. 69)

So intense is the identification of Marcela with the tulle of the yellowed wedding dress that she dissolves in tears and becomes an object herself; the Venus Anadiomena of the bowsprit of an ancient vessel, she is seen to rise from the breaking waves of a sea of memories.[23]

> ... y se levanta la espuma de las olas de proa, agrietada ya la madera, viejo el bajel, resquebrajada figura de Venus, con piernas torcidas y cortas que surge de las ondas de un mar de mohosos recuerdos; pero no hiende las olas; es sólo un pedazo de madera encallada, y la espuma del mar rompe sobre ella ... como si la figura se desprendiera del bauprés y cayera al mar, pero no cae, se tambalea, y los gemidos cavernosos obligan a reparar en la imagen de una pequeña mujer sola, en medio de los restos de una casa ya sin nadie, bajo la lenta impalpable fina lluvia amarilla de la luz que la envuelve como una mortaja. (pp. 69-70)

Water Enters Water

Cloudburst on Canvas

The concept of water entering water or of the mixing of different types of water is seen in <u>La casa inundada</u>.

"Volvió a mirar el mar, que recibía y se tragaba la lluvia con la naturalidad con que un animal se traga a otro,"[24] recalls Señora Margarita. In Partes de naufragios, the deluge which descends upon the city of Montevideo mixes and mingles not only natural waters but also waters derived from the fantastic. The floating wreckage is testimony to the disintegration and collapse.

The allusion to a dramatic presentation--to the scene of a theatrical extravaganza--is reinforced through the depiction of the cloudburst as the collapse of a vast panoramic stage setting, as if the city and the sky and the skyline were painted upon a gigantic canvas backdrop. Even the colors are conveyed as if they were the product of an artist's brush.

> Como si se estuviera en lo alto del Cerro de Montevideo, se ve a lo lejos la península: el centro de la ciudad está pintado de grises y ocres, recorta sus formas sobre el fondo añil del cielo y se estira sobre la lisa mancha celeste opaco de la bahía ... hace brotar un estrellerío opaco de colores eléctricos: amarillos, rojos, azules, y el haz del faro cruza inmóvil el cielo. Pero vienen nubes del sur: el telón entero se desprende de lo alto, quedan a la vista los listones que lo sostenían, y la tela se embolsa formando nubes que se desploman sobre la ciudad, se pliegan y caen, la ciudad se tuerce, el horizonte se inclina, y el telón entero se derrumba sobre el piso polvoriento ... (pp. 275-276)

The verb "plegar" applied to the theatrical backdrop is the antithesis of the unfolding process seen everywhere and may be compared to the refolding or folding of the

wings of the black bat within the brain of Antonio. The adjective "polvoriento" implies the process of desiccation in premonition of death. The noun "piso" further intensifies the suggestion of a stage setting rather than a natural panorama.

> ... el viento marino sopla, inunda, oxida, agita postigos desgonzados, barre sordamente; hay pedazos de cielo hechos jirones que vuelan arrancados de las chimeneas, la arena voladora entierra entre conchillas un pedazo de ojo a la orilla del mar, que sigue mirando lo invisible ... . Pero hay partes que todavía no cayeron: la materia se cubre de anuncios, viva piel sobre la que sube una lenta lepra como una plaga de arañas vivíparas que andan, procrean y paren, y sus generaciones cubren cada parte viva y la secan y arrugan. El edredón aplana sus bordes y se abulta en el centro, como si creciera, y de allí parten gruesas arrugas combadas, como un pulpo que simulara grotescamente una galaxia en espiral. (p. 276)

There is a sea wind which blows: the caravels disintegrate. The absence of vitreous fluid or watery substance in the eyes is implied by "se quiebra la porcelana de los ojos" (p. 276). The verb "derrumbar" (one of the words used most frequently during the decade of the sixties) is repeated twice. Again, nature becomes little more than an object in a theatrical setting as shreds and tatters of the sky are torn from the chimneys. The mortality of human flesh is juxtaposed to elements of varying degrees of longevity or immortality with the phrase, "la arena voladora entierra entre conchillas un pedazo de ojo a la orilla del mar, que sigue mirando lo invisible" (p. 276). The omnivorous

sea-spiders multiply infinitely and cause the desiccation and refolding of that remnant of life which deceptively appears intact and viable. The total structure is doomed to collapse. The pink comforter which has sucked the life from Mamagela and Margarita, each in turn, appears in association with the octopus of the youth of Domingo.

The deluge projects multiple impressions. It conveys the crisis of the sixties in Uruguay. It is a promise of creation anew. It evokes the sensation which would be felt by an observer or participant, that of sea-sickness or nausea. The crisis for the individual is most effectively conveyed by a phrase of Felisberto Hernández, "la marea de las angustias había subido hasta casi ahogarme."[25]

Return to the Womb

The fragmented structure of the extravaganza places the narrator beyond the time of the deluge. On the other hand, the deluge may be but a fantasy of the narrator.

The waves which break at the feet of Marcela betray her failure to regress to a uterine environment, despite her many childlike qualities. Señora Margarita of La casa inundada has described the type of water which is identified by Díaz as amniotic fluid.[26] According to the Señora, it is a tranquil water which is desirable, although she may not realize that she is describing amniotic liquid.

> Pero no podía abandonar sus pensamientos del agua quieta: "Yo debo preferir, seguía

> pensando, el agua que esté detenida en la noche para que el silencio se eche lentamente sobre ella y todo se llene de sueño y de plantas enmarañadas. Eso es más parecido al agua que llevo en mí; si cierro los ojos siento como si las manos de una ciega tantearan la superficie de su propia agua y recordara borrosamente, un agua entre plantas que vio en la niñez, cuando aun le quedara un poco de vista".[27]

It is the grandson who has succeeded in placing himself in a context which demonstrates the elements of a uterine fantasy. His position within the capsule of a spacecraft figuratively reproduces the interior of the womb. He appears to have achieved fulfillment of the wishes expressed in the games of childhood--an abundance of water in the presence of verdure. If we assume that water--so closely associated with memory through symbolism--implies memory, then memory has acquired association with water. The substance in which the grandson levitates so gently is therefore aqueous. The "iluminado espacio oscuro" (p. 17) implies and fulfills the condition of night. The capsular shield which protects him and forms a cacoon for him creates the protected environment of the womb. And, as the grandson views the Earth through space he sees in its atmosphere the interstellar skein of the threads of memory and the other skein of the fantastic, which wind the threads of the life processes and imagination: the umbilical cord or tendrils described by Señora Margarita as plant life. The grandson has achieved the time beyond time defined by Díaz as the

objective of the uterine fantasy.[28] The fragments of the novel float within the grandson's mind. All of the scenes and props of the extravaganza are suspended in an aqueous solution. The water in which the pieces float corresponds to the interior water of the well of anguish of the grandson who levitates within the womb.

Notes to Chapter 7

1. The inundation is manifested as psychological anguish in El pozo: "Hubo un mensaje que lanzara mi juventud a la vida; estaba hecho con palabras de desafío y confianza. Se lo debe haber tragado el agua como a las botellas de los náufragos" (Juan Carlos Onetti, El pozo, p. 75).

2. In the literature of the River Plate, a really impressive example is Bullrich's La creciente, first published in 1967. The immigrant's mystique is seen in association with the inundation: "Todo esto les había sido transmitido por abuelos nostálgicos y La Ciudad entera sufría de un mal que Sol calificaba burlona de 'nostalgias ajenas'. Añoraban una tierra que no habían conocido, se sentían solidarios de una patria que no era de ellos, apenas si había sido un suelo del que habían renegado los abuelos, hartos de privaciones, atraídos por el espejismo de hacer la América. Y la habían hecho. Pero no habían tenido fuerzas o dinero suficiente, o acaso no habían tenido ganas, la cuestión es que diferían año tras año el regreso a la tierra lejana y ya legendaria. Morían en suelo sudamericano legando a los hijos una absurda nostalgia y un ferviente deseo de volver a la fuente, a la patria misteriosa y desconocida con la que soñaban en los momentos huecos de la oficina tediosa" (Silvina Bullrich, La creciente, p. 70).

3. Mario Benedetti, Gracias por el fuego, pp. 36-37.

4. Silva Vila has created the anachronistic personality of General Saavedra, who combines both retrograde aspects of traditional Uruguay and the positive qualities of Don Quixote. She allows him to die in the well of the patio of the conventillo, which was once the mansion of his ancestors' estancia. The direct cause of his death is that he becomes disoriented in the modern world and plunges to the depth of the well, believing it to be the night sky. There is a curious ring of poetic justice as the old General dies within the locked patio in the shade of the ombú of the campo. Neither he nor the tree associated with the freedom of the gaucho were meant to be confined (María Inés Silva Vila, Salto cancan, pp. 262-263).

5. As recently as 1959, serious floods caused chaos in Uruguay: "Pero el hecho más destacado del año /1959/ se produce en el mes de abril. Lluvias prolongadas en el sur del Brasil y norte de nuestro país alteran el régimen fluvial y provocan graves inundaciones en las cuencas de los ríos Uruguay y Negro, con la inevitable secuela de desastres sociales y económicos. Vastas zonas quedan inundadas y el

18 es necesario evacuar la ciudad de Paso de los Toros, para liberar la represa de Rincón del Bonete, que ha quedado cubierta por las aguas. Desde el 15 de abril al 8 de setiembre, el país vive bajo medidas prontas de seguridad, decretadas por el Ejecutivo y aprobadas por la Asamblea General: las medidas 'buenas'. Durante ese período, se raciona la energía, se modifican los horarios laborales (bares y espectáculos públicos cierran a las 17 hs.), se establecen medidas para combatir la especulación y se organiza el Movimiento Coordinador General Pro-Ayuda a los Damnificados, cuyo primer acto se lleva a cabo en el Paraninfo de la Universidad. El Estado emite, también, un Empréstito Patriótico al 5%" (Rosanna Di Segni y Alba Mariani, "Los Blancos al poder," 1:166).

6. Ángel Rama y Carlos Martínez Moreno, "Felisberto Hernández," p. 461.

7. Felisberto Hernández, La casa inundada, 5:72.

8. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 114.

9. Díaz, Partes, p. 228.

10. Ibid., p. 270.

11. Felisberto Hernández, El caballo perdido, 2:33.

12. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 115.

13. Onetti, El pozo, p. 75.

14. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 116.

15. Ibid., p. 113.

16. The game of chance implied in the deck of cards reinforces what has been the life style of Miguel. It may also possess connotations of the game of solitaire--loneliness and isolation--as attributed to the deck of cards in Butor's fiction by Roudiez (Leon S. Roudiez, French Fiction Today, pp. 280-281).

17. José Pedro Díaz, "Una bien cumplida carrera literaria," p. 40.

18. Zants identifies the second person as the most versatile for establishing viewpoint of the narrative consciousness. She quotes Butor: "This 'you' permits me to describe the situation of the character and the way in which language is born in him" (Emily Zants, The Aesthetics of the New Novel in France, p. 34).

19. On page 62 of Partes de naufragios, the bicyclist notices a pebble on the pavement between his feet. It is a piece of quartz; one side displays a little dirt which clings to it. The other side is broken and "el corte deja a la vista su blanca materia cristalina y brillante." The sky is a tense blue suggestive of the color of flight with the Angel: the flowers are smudges of red or flame. As Robbe-Grillet has pointed out, "Optical description . . . establishes distances" and he cites a passage from Sartre's Nausea in illustration of his point: "The pebble was flat, dry on one side, wet and muddy on the other. I was holding it by the edges, my fingers far apart to keep from getting dirty" (Alain Robbe-Grillet, For a New Novel, p. 73).

20. Zants quotes Butor with reference to positioning the reader within the architectural structure of the novel: "It is indispensable for the story to grasp the whole of society not from the outside like a crowd looked on by an isolated individual, but from the inside like something you belong to, and whose individuals, however original, however eminent they may be, would never be able to break away completely" (Zants, p. 49).

21. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 106.

22. Hernández, La casa inundada, 5:73-75.

23. The drama of Marcela's figurative transformation is heightened by the effect of juxtaposition in that her portrayal as an individual within a house which capsizes /in Chapter 7/ follows immediately upon the games of childhood /in Chapter 6/ which end with the fragment of dialogue introducing or presaging her predicament: "Decimos que hay una casa ... ponés a alguien dentro, y decíamos que la casa naufragaba, y que se está por ahogar ... y así hasta nos aseguramos el agua y todo." In a sense, the creation of the drama of Marcela is obliterated by the realization that it may simply arise from fantasy and wish fulfillment (Díaz, Partes, p. 63).

24. Hernández, La casa inundada, 5:78.

25. Hernández, El caballo perdido, 2:40.

26. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 115.

27. Hernández, La casa inundada, 5:73.

28. The imagery of the return to the womb may be compared with comments by Blanchot who interprets a theme of Hölderlin: "Edipo es el héroe obligado a mantenerse al

margen de los dioses y de los hombres, que debe soportar esta doble separación, debe conservar pura esta distancia sin llenarla con vanos consuelos, mantenerla como un espacio intermedio, lugar vacío que abre la doble aversión, la doble infidelidad de los dioses y de los hombres y que él debe conservar puro y vacío, a fin de que se asegure la distinción de las esferas, esa distinción que desde ahora es nuestra tarea" (Maurice Blanchot, El espacio literario, p. 260).

PART 3

BECOMING REFUSAL TO BECOME

INTRODUCTION TO PART 3

Ironically, the narrative consciousness of Partes de naufragios is a personality who refuses to become. The grandson refuses to evolve to his full potential as a human being; he refuses to exist. Despite the refusal of the narrator to become, the novel continues to unfold. So dynamic is the architecture which the author has constructed that the novel no longer requires the narrative consciousness in order that the vital forces as a work of art may continue.

The Allegory which forms a portion of Part 3 is but one Allegory. Each reader enjoys the freedom of constructing his own allegorical or symbolistic interpretation of Partes de naufragios.

CHAPTER 8

AT THE GREEN BLADE'S END

> Creo que ... América Latina tiene una realidad que está por cambiar de piel, una realidad que va a ser sujeto de grandes transformaciones y de cambios, y creo que justamente ante esa especie de cadáver surgen ahora, como han surgido--siempre en la antiguedad, esos buitres en cierta forma, que son los novelistas.
>
> Mario Vargas Llosa
>
> "La novela"

Through allegory, the disintegration of the Legend of the Land of Milk and Honey is portrayed by Díaz. Lured by a legendary land of plenty, immigrants flocked to the shores of the River Plate during the latter part of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century. Ernesto Sábato has identified a mystique which unifies the immigrants and their offspring and differentiates them psychologically. The psyche of the immigrant comprises a variety of phantasms, which are identifiable in the writing of Díaz. Let us examine just a few of them.

The Immigrant's Mystique

Referring to the River Plate Region embracing both banks of the fluvial boundary which cleaves and unifies the pampa and allows two cities each their respective sphere of influence, Ernesto Sábato has identified a common trait of the people--the immigrant's mystique. An antithesis to nativism, the mystique of the immigrant is a legitimate phenomenon prevalent in Buenos Aires and Montevideo. In 1962, Benedetti indirectly alluded to the phenomenon when he noted the virtual absence of an autochthonous element in the culture of the River Plate Region.[1] Sábato comes full cycle in 1963 with his affirmation that a significant aspect of reality for the Region is the very newness of its history, the confused identities of its peoples. One of those identities is that of the immigrant. The vacuum which had been noted by Benedetti is filled by the antithetical identity of the psyche of the immigrant. Sábato elaborates:

> Y acaso el problema psicológica y metafísicamente más complejo es el descendiente de extranjeros, extraña criatura cuya sangre viene de Génova o de Toledo, pero cuya vida ha transcurrido en las pampas argentinas o en las calles de esta ciudad babilónica. ¿Cuál es la patria de esta criatura? ¿Cuál es mi patria? Crecimos bebiendo la nostalgia europea de nuestros padres, oyendo de la tierra lejana, de sus mitos y cuentos, viendo casi sus montañas y sus mares. Lágrimas de emoción nos han caído cuando por primera vez vimos las piedras de Florencia y el azul del Mediterráneo, sintiendo de pronto que centenares de años y oscuros antepasados latían misteriosamente en el fondo de nuestras almas. Pero también, en momentos de soledad en aquellas

> ciudades, sentimos que nuestra patria era ésta, estaba acá en la pampa y en el vasto río; pues la patria no es sino la infancia, algunos rostros, algunos recuerdos de la adolescencia, un árbol o un barrio, una insignificante calle, un viejo tango en un organito, el silbato de una locomotora de manisero en una tarde de invierno, el olor (el recuerdo del olor) de nuestro viejo motor en el molino, un juego de rescate. ¿Y cómo esta novela puede ser simple o nítida o folklórica o pintoresca?[2]

What was it that had attracted Europeans to the shores of the River Plate? A legend, perhaps: a legend which began before 1492 when Columbus set sail in search of a route to the spice islands of the East Indies. The legend was nurtured by the discovery of rich and exotic civilizations in the New World. The legend was provided further impetus through the ransom of Atahualpa, a room filled once with gold and an adjacent room filled twice with silver. The legend was further enhanced by the discovery of the silver mountain of Potosí. The mountain of silver attracted explorers endeavoring to discover a more direct route from Europe to the heart of the continent of South America by penetrating it from the east through the river systems. The legend crystallized as wild horses and cattle bred prolifically upon the pampa in what would some day become Argentina and Uruguay. The legend evolved into that of a Land of Milk and Honey, whose beaches contained a finer sand, whose rivers channeled a purer water, a land noted for its democratic institutions and its great statesman José Batlle y Ordóñez.

But, the silver rainbow vanished.

> Se necesitarán muchas novelas y muchos escritores para dar un cuadro completo y profundo de esta realidad enmarañada y contradictoria: la oligarquía en decadencia, el gaucho pretérito, el gringo que ascenció, el inmigrante fracasado o pobre, el hijo y el nieto de ese inmigrante, el habitante cosmopolita de Buenos Aires (indiferente y apátrida, el hombre que vive aquí como se vive en un hotel). Y todos los sentimientos cruzados y los mutuos resentimientos.[3]

The dichotomy of the psyche of the immigrant is manifested as an inability to identify his own nationality. This is expressed in Los fuegos de San Telmo through the personality of José Pedro. It is almost as if it were necessary to leave Uruguay in order to be assured that one's true country is that which forms a portion of the duality of the River Plate Region. In a broader sense, the nations of the River Plate comprise various psychological identities. Like the conciencia desdichada of Hegel and Díaz, these nations must coalesce the various elements they comprise in order to discover a true and legitimate identity.

Just as the city dweller of the Andean Region may tend to overlook the native peoples living in the provinces of the country; so, too, the inhabitant of Buenos Aires or Montevideo may lose sight of the fact that the mythology of his forebears is one of the phantasms of his psychic existence. A statement by Carlos Fuentes describes psychic duality as it applies to La casa verde.

> Y la contradicción se acentuaba porque detrás de la fachada relumbrona de las ciudades

> permanecían, inmutables, la selva y la montaña, con sus indios de carga, sus mineros devorados por la silicosis, sus mujeres mascando coca; sus niños muertos, sus jóvenes iletrados, sus prostíbulos verdes. A este mundo habría de regresar, con singular eficacia, Mario Vargas Llosa, para recordarnos su persistencia, sí, pero también para transformarlo con una técnica novelesca de antifonías totalizantes.
>
> Presionado por estas contradicciones, sofocado el sueño de la "civilización moderna" por el encuentro del capitalismo norteamericano y las oligarquías criollas, el intelectual de América Latina sólo ve la perspectiva de la revolución. En las últimas décadas, y sobre todo a partir del triunfo y el ejemplo de la revolución cubana, la inteligencia de nuestros países se sitúa, mayoritariamente, en la izquierda. Pero ni el anhelo ni la pluma del escritor producen por sí mismos la revolución y el intelectual queda situado entre una historia que rechaza y una historia que desea. Y su presencia en un mundo histórico y personal contradictorio y ambiguo, si lo despoja de las ilusiones de una épica natural, si lo convierte en un hombre de preguntas angustiosas que no obtienen respuesta en el presente, lo obliga a radicalizar su obra no sólo en el presente, sino hacia el futuro y hacia el pasado.[4]

The journey of José Pedro to Marina di Camerota conveys a double significance. It radically redirects the flow of time into the past, implicitly negating the present. It is a vehicle for affirming the persistence of Marina's mythology in Uruguay today. Partes de naufragios confronts the myth, analyzing it and refashioning it so that it will correspond to current reality.

Emphasis upon the journey as a means of amplifying one's understanding of reality is an aspect of Sábato's affirmation that the writer must reflect the "here" and the

"now" of his existence.[5] Sábato believes that the only manner of understanding eternal truths is to probe inwardly the moment and point of time which befalls the individual and that the only manner of universalizing a truth is through examination of the individual circumstance. The task of the writer is to confront the eternal values of the social and political drama of his time and place, of his historical moment. True art is faithful to the reality which conceives it.[6]

This does not mean that the image created by an author necessarily will be a direct observation of his reality. "Una escuela, una doctrina, se constituyen de manera compleja y casi siempre polémica, pudiendo expresar su tiempo en forma directa o inversa,"[7] Sábato explains. Díaz uses an inverse approach. He examines not the crisis which faces Uruguay but the effect of the crisis upon the persons who are enduring it. Sábato writes:

> Alberto Zum Felde ha visto bien esta condición de nuestra realidad y ese sentido problemático que debe tener nuestra literatura. En este desorden, en este perpetuo reemplazo de jerarquías y valores, de culturas y razas ¿qué es lo argentino? ¿cuál es la realidad que han de develar nuestros escritores? Al menos, en lo que al Plata se refiere, es evidente que su misión consiste en la descripción de esa alma atormentada por el caos, de esa anhelosa búsqueda de un orden y un porqué. En otras palabras: esa violenta tectónica de nuestra realidad nos determina hacia una literatura problemática: en lo social, en lo político y, en última instancia, en lo metafísico.[8]

Sábato defines two crises affecting man transplanted to Montevideo or Buenos Aires: the crisis of the culture of origin and the crisis of the derived or transplanted culture.

> Pero si la condición catastrófica rige para Europa, para nuestro país rige con mayor fuerza: como integrantes de la civilización que sufre ese cataclismo, tenemos un primer motivo de angustia; pero como pertenecientes a una de las líneas de fractura espacial de esa civilización, tenemos un segundo motivo, que es específicamente nuestro. Estamos en el fin de una civilización, y en uno de sus confines. Sometidos a una doble quiebra en el tiempo y en el espacio, estamos destinados a una experiencia doblemente dramática. Perplejos y angustiados, somos actores de una oscura tragedia, sin tener detrás el respaldo de una gran cultura indígena (como la azteca o la incaica) y sin poder tampoco reivindicar de modo cabal la tradición de Roma o París.[9]

The original crisis presages the second crisis, manifested as the _hongo de Terra_ and the complex spectrum of disintegration in _Partes de naufragios_. In the new land, not even eternal verities will provide solace for the affliction of man who is dissociated from his origins.

> Pues si el problema metafísico central del hombre es su transitoriedad, aquí somos más transitorios y efímeros que en París o en Roma, vivimos como en un campamento en medio de un terremoto y ni siquiera sentimos ese simulacro de la eternidad que allá está constituido por una tradición milenaria, y por esa metáfora de la eternidad que son las piedras ennegrecidas de sus templos y sus monumentos milenarios.[10]

The reader of _Partes de naufragios_ will receive an impression of dehumanization of the content of the novel, of

the dimunition of man's life into the evocation of Sundays and holidays and of sickness and death, of the absence of continuity and of an inordinate obsession with objects. Sábato would explain that this phenomenon is indicative of the nature of modern man's reality. It is not the art form which has suffered dehumanization and disease, but rather the life form upon which the artistic creation is based.[11]

A Personal Myth

From time to time we have turned to the Tratado de la llama in order to examine a mythology which is personal with José Pedro Díaz--an integral portion of his world view. The multiple symbolism of the flame comprises two salient ideas: migration interiorly combined with upward flight with the Angel. As man migrates inwardly, there is also an upward surge of awareness. These two concepts are symbolized by the two wings of the Angel and, in each instance, there is an insistence upon upward motion. Man fulfills his destiny in the mere act of flight into the unknown.[12]

In the novel, Antonio conveys the signs and symbols of his flight with the Angel. In so doing, he portrays the courage of man who must face the unknown while the Angel suffers the physical anguish of association with the flesh of man. In a broader sense, Antonio's life has represented the optimism and faith of a generation nurtured in the epoch

of Batlle; a generation which garnered the vigor and strength of the immigrants who had embarked upon an even greater journey and an even greater adventure when each with his personal Angel took leave of the members of his family and the land of his birth.

There exist in Partes de naufragios certain symbols which directly involve Antonio in the mythology of the flame. Indications of Antonio's flight with the Angel are scattered through the series of scenes which form the stations of the cross and limit the time and space of the novel. At the twelfth station (Jesus dies on the Cross), the spirit of Antonio has become dissociated from his body.

> Hacía dos días que jadeaba. Pero no era él: era su cuerpo allí tendido; aquí, sobre la tierra. Y se oía aquel latido como un reloj que dejara caer segundos verdes como latigazos. El tiempo se rompe y caen confundidos, mezclándose como cenizas, pedazos de días y de noches que irrumpen unos dentro de los otros. (p. 259)

The pulsation of the rebreathing bag occasions a sound like that of a clock ticking green seconds. Time is splintered into the color associated with the end of man's flight with the Angel, the green of the earth. The ashes are that which remains of the life which the flame has consumed: the days and nights of a lifetime (the life of Antonio) shattered into splinters like ashes and possessing the expansive capacity to burst one from the other.

> Es de tarde y va a ser de noche cuando corre por la avenida Rivera detrás de la ambulancia. Rojo, parpadea el ojo giratorio, y la sirena

> separa en los cruces a los demás automóviles. La calle es un túnel. (p. 259)

Night falls. The darkness of mortality and loneliness envelops the flame which palpitates ever more rapidly as it senses that its very existence is in jeopardy. Compare the anxious fluttering of the gyrating light of the ambulance with the following description of the flame:

> La llama misma, ¿cómo es? ¿Cómo desenvuelve su ardor desde el pabilo ceniciento hasta su vértice móvil, iluminador, quemante? Porque el ardor de la llama es entero y su luz sostiene la leve densidad de su brillo sobre una ceniza que la nutre acrecentando su propio despojo. En la presencia fulgurante hay un latido angustioso que la sostiene.[13]

The word "cruces" in the passage from the novel connotes the Passion, an interpretation reinforced in the folklore of Uruguay. "La cruz de los caminos, con su directa alusión al símbolo del martirio divino, está cargada de significación y potencia."[14] Immediately, it is stated that there is no exit. The street is a tunnel.

> Hay muchos automóviles, pero aquellos dos van a otro lugar. En el coche de adelante va él, acostado, envuelto en la frazada marrón a cuadros, y su mujer, a su lado, le sostiene la cabeza. En alguń lugar del cielo, por arriba de los árboles, hay una mancha rojiza. Puede ser el poniente, o quizá son letreros de luces de neón. (p. 259)

Father and son are caught in the same dynamic moving force as if they were within a pneumatic tube. Somewhere in the sky above the trees is seen the faint reddish remnant of the flight of Antonio with the Angel. The "mancha rojiza"

corresponds to a similar occurrence in the Tratado de la llama.

> Allí sólo es cierto el pulso ardoroso del vuelo, el enérgico palpitar de las alas que se desangran nutriendo su ardor en lo invisible, sorbiendo el espacio en su aleteo, ganando altura. La llama que allí arde funde al ser con el espacio y su vida con la luz. Un remoto punto vibrante que se borra en el puro resplandor.[15]

A leitmotif of the novel reinforces the urgency of the upward flight of man with the Angel. "¡Arriba, arriba! ¡Hay que subir!" (p. 70) is an exclamation uttered in response to the fear of the rising black tide and the rats which are gnawing at the infrastructure of the vast stage upon which the action is occurring.[16]

In the context of the mythology of the flame, the flight undertaken by man will end with the disintegration of his body into the ashes left by the consuming flame while the Angel, combined with man, will suffer the anguish to which all human flesh is heir. The only purpose of the flight is flight itself.[17]

As symbol of man's inward search, the flame possesses the power to direct time away from the present. In the novel, time accelerates and space expands in a dynamic unfolding which reveals a universe whose molecules are ever more loosely associated as their proximity to a center of gravity diminishes. And time penetrates the psychological processes with an inward thrust. Time assumes the dimension of interiorization

symbolized in the flame, as described in the Tratado de la llama.

> El vector que el tiempo es cambia su dirección: no apunta ya hacia adelante, en el sentido de la historia, sino que se expande en el sentido de la vida, hacia más allá de nosotros mismos o hacia más adentro de lo más hondo de nuestra interioridad. Se borra el devenir y el tiempo se transfigura en resplandor. La diafanidad que entonces nos envuelve queda más allá de las formas, porque éstas no pueden soportar una luminosidad tal; una inquieta palpitación las recorre proteicamente, un latido aniquilador las anima y alienta; el ser ve en ellas su propia infatigable surgencia y en su activa contemplación se refleja a sí mismo.[18]

Man is captive of that portion of his duality which is his soul. "Somos presa entonces de nuestra alma y ella nos lanza a la variedad del mundo."[19] The outcome of man's adventure will be known only in retrospect as he approaches death. Will man be given another chance? Chapter 29 reveals that Antonio had fashioned for his doctor a skillfully crafted and fully rigged miniature caravel, a romantic ship which evokes the spirit of the adventurers who crossed the unknown waters in ships like the Santa María of Columbus and other fifteenth and sixteenth century vessels of the Spanish and Portuguese. However, from Antonio's point of view the diminutive ship had a defect and he hoped to be able to create a more perfect one as a gift for his doctor. The dreams and aspirations of Antonio were terminated by the harsh reality of death. His workshop was the mute evidence of dreams forever stilled.

> Y el trépano con el hilo roto, las pinzas, las sierras, restos de maderas, restos de naufragios y fino aserrín de madera, y polvo; las polillas de la vieja mesa continúan ahora sus agujeros en la madera blanca que estaba destinada a la obra muerta y en el cedro de la tablazón. El astillero en ruinas. Rollos de papel con los planos, y unas hojas de una vieja revista donde navegan, sobre el mar verde y deslucido de la tricromía, la Pinta, la Niña y la Santa María, sobre el verdeamarillento mar embravecido y muerto. (pp. 262-263)

The pieces Antonio had fashioned, as portions of the caravel he did not live to finish making, found their way to a closet or an attic where they became just so many more fragments of the shipwrecks. Antonio's spirit lived on in the filaments winding upon the skein of memory and the life processes, the thread of his life knotted to that of his son and continuing in succession. The great grandson speaks proudly of his grandfather Antonio's genius at shipbuilding.

> ¿Y no viste las carabelas? Todas las hizo mi abuelo. En serio: las hizo él. En la casa de mi abuela hay otra que tiene en la chimenea, como nosotros. Y el otro día encontramos una caja con pedacitos de carabela: escaleritas, y una rueda de timón, había y cosas de esas. Tenía herramientas para eso. Se ve que quería hacer otra. (p. 168)

The optimism of the immigrants and their faith in their own abilities and in the opportunities afforded them in the new land are embodied in Antonio. He portrays the dual identity of the nation which received the newcomers and afforded them safe haven while at the same time garnering the reward of their vigor, skills and optimism. So, too, does Antonio convey the final disillusionment and

disappointment of the generation of Uruguayans nurtured in the great expectations of Batllismo. "Es una lástima: no me salió tan bien, doctor," he murmurs to his doctor expressing his disappointment with the product of his labor.[20]

The disintegration of the Legend of the Land of Milk and Honey was but a portion of the broader perspective of events in the River Plate Region, as Ernesto Sábato attests.

> Al producirse la crisis universal de 1930, terminó la era del liberalismo y, como consecuencia, empezó el derrumbe de una serie de mitos, instituciones e ideas. En esa atmósfera crítica se formó la nueva generación de escritores a la que pertenezco, y la estructura literaria se complicó radicalmente ... [21]

José Pedro Díaz is representative of a synthesizing line of writers described by Sábato. Díaz has demonstrated that the twain shall meet; a novel may be at one and the same time a work of art and an involvement in the here and the now. His allegorized version of the disintegration of the legend conveys the disillusionment and loss of identity experienced by man transplanted to Montevideo and Buenos Aires. What survives the collapse is the personal mythology of Díaz which affirms man's individual worth and universalizes the anguish of his search in the symbolism of the flame.

Thus, the fourteenth station of the cross (Jesus is laid in the Tomb) occurs in the thirty-fourth chapter of the novel and annihilates the apocalyptic quality ascribed to the number "33" by both divine and human calendars. A second cross appears. It is white and sun-streaked, luminous

and tranquil. And the house in Malvín which awaits the body of Antonio contains an internal light which spills forth from its widely opened windows and doors to illuminate the darkness of the street at dusk.[22] It is a light of spiritual truth and of rebirth which may partially explain the appearance of the word "Aleluya" hidden within the folds of the fourth station of the cross as the name of a cottage whose pathway is overgrown with vegetation and in whose proximity a gigantic heap of garbage ferments.[23]

An Allegory

> Cada una con su propia larva entre las duras quijadas, y logran trepar algunas por una larga hoja de hierba hasta la punta que se balancea en lo alto, a pocos centímetros del suelo, y recorren la fina hoja de uno y otro lado, buscando un lado más alto, pero los dos son iguales, los dos lados de la hoja terminan en la misma única punta en el aire, balanceándose, y arriba nada ...
>
> José Pedro Díaz
>
> Partes de naufragios

The grandson has lost contact with the eternal verities of the land of his forebears. He is like one of the frantic ants struggling to emerge from the catastrophe depicted in the epigraph to Partes de naufragios. The epigraph

from Stendhal's Le Rouge et le noir depicts an episode of a hunter lurching forward to capture the prey he has just wounded with his rifle. The boot of the hunter strikes a giant anthill which collapses under the impact, destroying the home of the ants and their eggs. Not one of the insects is sufficiently endowed with reasoning power to grasp the significance of the disaster: the terrifyingly huge, black body which has brought death and destruction with the rapidity of lightning defies comprehension. There was no more warning than the thunder of the hunter's rifle and some glints of flame as it discharged. Death, life and eternity are concepts /perhaps/ easily comprehended by a being endowed with adequate reasoning faculties. For the fly which is born at nine o'clock in the morning and dies by five that afternoon, what possible meaning may be conveyed by the word "night"?

The grandson does not speak of having undertaken a journey to the land of his forebears. He appears to have lost touch with the Old World portion of his background and with the centuries of civilization implied therein. He is dissociated from the impact of Tío Francisco, bearer of that civilization. Tío Francisco has been reduced to little more than a colorful personality and, eventually, he is annihilated or erased by the Other Tío Francisco.

For the grandson, there are no new worlds to discover nor old worlds to rediscover. Ironically enough, the grandson

undertakes a journey to the valley of the shadows of death, to the realms of the underworld, to the regions dominated by the devil. He would break the basaltic crust of the Earth's surface in order to touch its fiery entrails and to discover the meaning of the existence of man, were it possible to do so. The grandson's journey takes the form of an inward migration, an interiorization into his own personal infernal region. He hopes to find the golden bough which may prove his salvation. Within that psychological well there flows a River Styx, the river of his inward probing. It is frequented by the malevolent creatures of hell, by disease-infested dogs and bats. There exists a hunter, Don Pedro. There exists a variation on Minos, a quasi-judge of souls, Miguel. There is a monster, the head of the Medusa. And there is an anti-hero, the grandson.

The grandson's disarticulation from life is demonstrated in various ways. He is an enigmatic individual. He changes roles according to the person with whom he relates in memory. He may also be son, father, nephew or husband. He does not refer to himself by name. The grandson is never observed in direct association with his wife or his son. All that remains of the beautiful episode of "El pique" where José Pedro holds his son on his lap while the child holds the fishing rod with line cast to the sea is the splinter "a menudo, cuando acaricia la cabeza de su hijo su mano forma el mismo gesto de esa otra mano" (p. 17).

In his dual nature as a conciencia desdichada and el otro, the grandson confounds attempts to identify him among the folds of the novel. Nevertheless, he betrays his identity through the quality of the memories which he examines.

The Pawnbroker of Nostalgia

The memories of the grandson conjecture a personality strikingly similar to that of the narrator of Hernández's El caballo perdido who refers to himself as "un desinteresado, un vagón desenganchado de la vida."[24] With introspective precision, Hernández's narrator describes the process which leads to his disarticulated condition--the successive stages of a dynamic progression.

Hernández's narrator comments that memories were the link between his original self and the identity he was destined to become. The latter identity appeared to him, at first, like a smiling pawnbroker who weighed the memories that the narrator wished to pawn and, disregarding their nostalgic worth, "pesaban otra cualidad de ellos ... el peso del valor intrínseco."[25] In the next stage, the smile on the pawnbroker's lips grew slightly bitter "y el prestamista de los recuerdos ya no pesaba nada en sus manos." The memories simply represented a time which had past. Ironically, the pawnbroker had robbed the narrator of "recuerdos y tiempos sin valor." Worse still, the pawnbroker evolved to an attitude of indifference. His original bitter smile had

disguised a soul and, presumably, was a betrayal of some small sense of guilt. When the smile disappeared, it meant that the pawnbroker /and the narrator by extension/ had become the "vagón desenganchado de la vida."[26]

The narrator has allowed his autonomous identity to be eroded by the incursion of el otro, who now possesses sufficient power to dominate him. As the object of the scrutiny of el otro, the narrator becomes increasingly inert. "Nos hace caer entre las cosas: nos mira y nos desanima o nos impone un alma en la que no nos reconocemos,"[27] writes Díaz--explaining the powers of el otro.

The memories which are the common denominator between the narrator and the pawnbroker demonstrate a dynamic exchange of energy as the narrator becomes progressively dehumanized and his memories lose their value. The transition is mirrored through the smile of the pawnbroker which, at first, betrays the existence of a soul but eventually reflects the inertia which el otro has become.

A similar transition may be seen in the weight and value of the memories which occur to the grandson who admits to being "el hombre desprendido de la tierra."[28] His earliest memories revolve around Mamagela and related incidents of childhood. They are value-laden memories. Evocation of them usually assumes the form of a relatively intact linear narrative. Also related to this initial phase of the transition are the memories of Tío Mario and his forchela,

memories associated directly with a happier time. Intermediate memories tend to be more splintered. They refer to a period when the family is being fragmented by disease and death, as well as the crisis of Uruguay in 1933. Finally, little remains to occupy the mind of the grandson except the abandoned house in Malvín with its objects. The evocation of this house is essentially dispassionate, indifferent. The capacity of the objects to obsess the grandson is indicated by his inertia "porque el objeto obsede en la medida en que no es trascendido por la acción del hombre."[29] The inordinate emphasis placed upon objects is an explanation for the markedly diminished expression of ideas and attitudes on the part of the protagonists of the novel. As Nirenberg explains, an individual does not share emotions or opinions with an object nor exchange ideas and attitudes with an object. One simply examines its texture, appearance, weight and dimensions.[30]

Interestingly enough, Benedetti has observed that Montevideans, on the whole, tended to recognize complicity and felt guilt during the regime of Terra; this would correspond to the bitter smile of recognized guilt on the face of the pawnbroker. Similarly, Benedetti comments that in recent years Montevideans have failed even to recognize their complicity; this would relate to the loss of the smile on the pawnbroker's lips, to the absence of soul, to his indifference.[31]

That the grandson is a "vagón desenganchado de la vida" is conveyed by his dramatic psychological transposition to a condition reproducing that of the fetus in the womb, whereby he has achieved a time beyond time and has refrained from all manner of action. He has not identified himself as a narrator. Despite his attempts to hide within the many folds of the novel, he is at the very least a neo-narrator. The psychological processes through which he weaves the novel include memory of events in which he participated, recall of conversations about events in which he may or may not have participated, the examination of objects which provide guideposts along pathways to remembered events and pure fantasy.

El Otro

Although the grandson fulfills the role of the double for the child he observes, a double of the grandson is difficult to isolate: El Otro is the reader. It may be El Otro who engages in the dialogue of the games of childhood with the grandson; clearly, El Otro is involved in writing the narrative and is observing the grandson in the act of creating the narrative. El Otro, rather than the grandson, may be enclosed eventually within the spacecraft.

The Moving Present

The moving present is the process whereby El Otro assimilates the interior chronology of the grandson and

transforms the narrative consciousness in a continuous cycle of creation and annihilation. Past and future coalesce within the moving present.

The Anguish of Dissociation

Within the protected interior of the space capsule, the grandson levitates weightlessly in memory, weaving the threads which will form the filaments of the skeins of memory and the fantastic. Memories and fantasy surface in an incoherent manner. As the grandson communicates with himself, it is always possible for one thought to crowd out others. When the end of a fragment has been reached, the thread curls itself into a surgeon's knot and continues. One suspects that, with or without the participation of the grandson, the life threads of others--and even that of his own inertia --will continue to wind upon the skeins. Even the reader senses that this dynamic process continues, although the book may have been laid aside. Díaz points out that "Sartre se refiere a esa situación cuando alude a la angustia ante una existencia que no necesita de mí para existir."[32] There is an essential irony in the realization that achieving a time beyond time does not eliminate anguish.

Stagnation

Generalized inertia characterizes the attitude of many of the novel's protagonists, often because their souls have been transferred to objects upon which they have become

dependent. The grandson is within the womb of the capsule, having transposed his soul to the gigantic panorama of the stage set and props which are Montevideo and its bay. Marcela has become the wooden Venus decorating the bowsprit of a sailing vessel, her dynamic forces transferred to the objects which coalesce magically to form that portion of the inundation attributable to her memories. All that remains of Antonio is his limp body, for his life forces have been conveyed to the green, pulsating craw. Mamagela and Margarita have been immobilized by the pink comforter which has sucked life from them. The great grandson and his playmate are transfixed with a combination of fear and fascination as they quietly sit in their tree-ship observing the stark human drama being enacted below.[33]

The Demon

The brutality of the wars which plagued Uruguay during the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century and their retrograde effect upon the development of the nation are conveyed by the demonic personality of Don Juan.

An Expanding Universe

Throughout the novel there is a dimension of dynamic expansion. Doubling or unfolding is an aspect of this dimension. So, too, is the porous quality of the portraits, blow-ups of smaller originals wherein the molecules of the images

were closer together. Objects tend to grow larger, as if leavened by yeast. The expansion of the universe is conveyed by the giddying velocities achieved in space flight as one departs from the center of gravity of the planet, penetrating an atmosphere increasingly rarified. The sensation of accelerating forces of transformation is reinforced by the structure of the novel; the tendency to fragmentation increases in proportion to proximity to the illusive present.

An Expanding Decay

Terra's mushroom grows and expands and is reproduced in the syphilis of Mario, in the cancer of Miguel, in the atrophy and paralysis of Mamagela and Margarita, in the rabies which killed Vicentito and lies festering for years, in the inertia of the grandson, in the gnawing of the rats, in the ever-constant menace of the tucu-tucus, in the heaps of fermenting garbage licked by the rabid dogs and decrepit nags, in the chewing of the insects, in the nocturnal flight of the diseased bats, in the duplication of crisis and in the black ink of the squid within the brain of Antonio.

The Rabid Dogs

Disintegration, disease and decay are a portion of a reality infinitely more vast. They link Uruguay with the broader crisis facing all of the nations of Latin America during the decade of the sixties.

The Hunter

There is a hunter whose weapon is not the gun. He is the mysterious Don Pedro. He is a self-proclaimed curandero whose remedies are imported from Europe, remedies whose inefficacy allows the death of Mario and the end of the euphoria of the años locos. The hypnotic personality of Don Pedro blinds his victims to the essential anachronism of relying upon the cures of a civilization which is itself diseased.

The Head of the Medusa

The crisis of the sixties which neither the author nor the grandson can bear to observe directly is the head of the Medusa. The selection of the head of the Medusa as the monster symbolizing the crisis reinforces the unwillingness of the grandson to face his reality and the aesthetic values of the author who prefers to portray the psychological and metaphysical effects upon the participants rather than the crisis itself. The Medusa possesses the horrifying capacity to reproduce endlessly.

The Illusive Present

Through creation of an extravaganza and through the breakoff phenomenon, present time has been evaded. Carlos Fuentes would explain that the present is unable to respond constructively to the reality portrayed by the novel and that the author has no alternative but to examine the past

and the future. What there is of the future is contained within the past. It is the second striking of the clock. An interpretation of the deluge as the future would be erroneous. The catastrophe of the novel is occurring in the illusive present. Evasion of it is demonstrated by the disarticulated position of the grandson. "El derrumbamiento está aquí, en torno a nosotros y en nosotros mismos, que somos sus protagonistas," writes Eduardo Galeano in the latter part of 1969.[34]

The Philosophy of Ease

The _años locos_ were a time of abundance and a time of happiness. It was perhaps natural that the young people of those years should optimistically anticipate the indefinite prolongation of material well-being and even of youth. Most aptly personifying what has been defined as the "philosophy of ease"[35] is the personality of Mario, who lived for the day and participated in all of the good things of life which the _años locos_ offered in such abundance. He never demonstrated an inclination to plan for the future. The significance of the suicide of Brum was totally lost upon him, representing as it did a political morality which was the direct antithesis of a philosophy of ease.

The Shipyard

The shipyard of Antonio contains the promise of the skills and ingenuity of the people of Uruguay. Antonio is

the embodiment of that promise. He portrays talents which are never fully appreciated or realized. Antonio was displeased with the first caravel he fashioned for his doctor, and dreamed of creating another that he hoped would be more perfect. That he failed to do so because death intervened alludes to a loss far greater than that of the miniature caravel which was never completed. Just as the doubling of any entity portends an infinite unfolding of that entity; so, also, the failure of an entity to double may signify the withering of the process. Whereas the malevolent crisis has achieved doubling; the benevolent creation of a gift for Antonio's doctor was not repeated. The forces of good and the realization of human potential have been aborted in the absolute and in the multiplying of that absolute, while the forces of evil reproduce themselves endlessly.

The Ships

Lives are ships. Houses are ships. The sanatorium is a ship. There exist miniature ships which have been created by Antonio. There exist the ships within the bottles, forever protected from the impact of time by their sheathes of glass--ships created by Vicente. There exist the three romantic vessels of Columbus sailing upon a desiccated sea. Not the least of the many ships of Partes de naufragios is the Ship of State with José Batlle y Ordóñez at the prow.

The Masts

There are two masts and each corresponds to a time of crisis. The first mast is the tree which the grandson clambers up by means of rungs hammered into it, whereas the second mast is the tree in which the great grandson and a playmate hide while they observe the activity of the uniformed figures below. The second mast is ascended by means of a pulley rigged like a bosun's chair.

The Bowsprit

Marcela is the wooden Venus adorning the bowsprit of an ancient sailing ship. Waves of a sea of memories break at her feet. She is motionless. Her obsession with the objects (remnants of the youth of the members of her family) has culminated in a dynamic energy exchange. Marcela ceases to exist as a human being and becomes an object while the objects are animated participants of the capsizing of one of the ships, or houses.

The Rotor

The rotor and the craw grind the splinters of the splintered ships which are the lives of individuals. The rotor and the craw are the same as, and different from, the Cross of the Crucifixion. The craw is associated with the pulsating green rebreathing bag which sustains the life of Antonio: it is like a mill which grinds, powered by great blades in the form of a cross. The rotor is that of the

helicopter, a giant bird of prey which hovers in the air above its victims casting its foreboding shadow upon their lives.[36]

Water

The inundation combines many waters; water enters water. Each of the waters possesses an individual identity and symbolism which may be interpreted by the nature of its flow, its quantity, its origin and its purity or lack of purity. Water may be the creation of the fantastic, associated with memory or a natural phenomenon of nature.

Dynamic Energy Exchange

As a possible pawnbroker of nostalgia, the grandson has allowed the human value of memories associated with objects to diminish. He has become so fascinated with the objects that his soul or spirit has been transferred to them. His spirit is a part of them and a source of their animation. Probably, the object which best synthesizes all of the other objects contained within the mind and memory of the grandson is the gigantic stage of the extravaganza. Coalescence of objects is achieved through a dynamic exchange of energy, transposed to the vast panorama of the city and its bay from the inertia of the grandson.

Cloudburst on Canvas

The sound and the fury which generates the cloudburst on canvas and causes the collapse of the vast stage

may represent the unleashing of the energy sapped from the grandson.[37] Montevideo is diminished to an object painted on canvas and elements of nature have become additional props of the spectacle.

Spiritual Rebellion of the Material

"Por lo pronto se esboza el sentimiento de una fuerza mágica que enlaza entre sí las cosas del mundo,"[38] writes Díaz. The deluge, when it comes, may be interpreted as a spiritual rebellion of the material. The many objects conspire to overwhelm man in their animation. Their ability to do so is proof of the inertia of man, of his disarticulation from life, of his indifference and infilosofía. In the novel, the latter is alluded to as "la nada."

The Deluge

As the dialogue between Miguel and the grandson gave rise to the cleansing springs of catharsis, it also contributed to a subsidiary flow interiorly within the grandson. The subsidiary flow corresponds to the interior waters of descent into the well of memory. These waters at best are stagnating, anguishing. Stemming from the fantastic and within the imagination of the grandson, portions of the interior waters are seen to rise from the cylinders of the power plant on the first floor of the sanatorium and to overflow on the second floor in and around the rooms of the patients and through the corridors. Bits and pieces of

reminiscences of persons now dead, of houses now demolished or abandoned and fragments of other wreckage float upon the water of interiorization. Other waters are polluted; black rising water provokes the exclamation again and again, "¡Hay que subir!" Chlordane and water are poured into a hole probed by a stick into the vital inner labyrinth of an anthill. The frantic insects are sent into hysteria by the sudden collapse of their world. They seize their young in their jaws and start upward, endeavoring to rediscover their disintegrated tunnels to the surface of the earth. Struggling to escape the noxious water, a desperate parent scrambles up a slender green blade.[39] Marcela wishes to regress to childhood, to the womb perhaps. The spiritual rebellion of the objects she reveres breaks in waves of memories, spraying upon her wooden figure. The games of childhood bring about inundation and capsizing of a house through sheer fantasy. And the grandson reproduces the games of childhood in a dialogue with an unidentified individual who may be El Otro: together they plan an inundation which will be the result of wish fulfillment and which may explain the total phenomenon of the deluge of Partes de naufragios.

Refolding

The canvas sky collapses, exposing the silk threads which had formed its support. As it collapses, it falls into folds--the antithesis of the unfolding seen elsewhere in the novel.

At the Green Blade's End

The deluge is to man as the boot of the hunter to the ant. It descends upon him almost without warning. His world suddenly collapses. His survival and, more important, the survival of his progeny is jeopardized. Man is like the ant frantically trying to escape from an inundation of water and chlordane, the ant which eagerly scrambles up the glimmering sun-struck surface of a slender blade of grass, an egg clutched in its jaws. Up and up it climbs until it reaches the green blade's end. Eagerly it circles the blade's tip, under and over. The ant and its young remain quiveringly poised at the green blade's end, the rays of the sun bringing death from the sky while the pool of chlordane threatens death from below.[40]

End of the Adventure of Flight

"¡Hay que subir! ¡Hay que subir!"[41] How can man escape the rising black tide of the rats which are being flushed from the sewers of the city when the rotor of a helicopter breathes death from above. The blue of the sky no longer provides an avenue of escape for the suffering of mortal man. The rotor is a gigantic mill which grinds the lives of the victims. Into its craw it will suck the tiny prow and the masts and hull and other bits of that romantic caravel which Antonio had hoped to fashion, a ship so like that upon which Columbus had embarked centuries before in search of a legendary land.

The Great Grandson

The great grandson and his playmate watch the unfolding and the doubling of the drama below from their perch in the eucalyptus tree, at the green blade's end.

A Time Before Memory

Cries of hopelessness, disillusionment, despondency and despair emanate from the immobilized victims of the shipwrecks. Floating aimlessly in an amniotic fluid within his protected capsule in outer space--dissociated and inert --the grandson passively listens to the frantic entreaties of the earthbound mortals.

Notes to Chapter 8

1. Mario Benedetti, "La literatura uruguaya cambia de voz," pp. 44-45.

2. Ernesto Sábato, El escritor y sus fantasmas, p. 35.

3. Ibid.

4. Carlos Fuentes, La nueva novela hispanoamericana, p. 29.

5. Sábato, El escritor, pp. 50-51.

6. Ibid., p. 42.

7. Ibid., p. 40.

8. Ibid., pp. 38-39.

9. Ibid., p. 38.

10. Ibid., p. 39.

11. Ibid., pp. 73-77.

12. Díaz, Tratado de la llama, pp. 92-93.

13. Ibid., pp. 86-87.

14. Eduardo Faget, Folklore mágico del Uruguay, p. 17.

15. Díaz, Tratado de la llama, p. 93.

16. As previously observed, Díaz demonstrates in his study of Bécquer that motion or movement is dynamic only if it accelerates in time, expands in space or moves in a stated direction, "si se alza, si es un subir" (Díaz, Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, p. 409).

17. Díaz, Tratado de la llama, p. 92.

18. Ibid., p. 86.

19. Ibid., p. 88.

20. Díaz, Partes, p. 261.

21. Sábato, El escritor, p. 44.

22. Describing Bécquer's imagery, Díaz comments: "La luz es sentida como la más leve corporización del movimiento. ... El fuego y la luz--esto es: la llama--expresan simultáneamente ese movimiento de alzamiento del alma por encima de su condición original" (Díaz, Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, pp. 410-413).

23. Díaz, Partes, p. 59.

24. Hernández, El caballo perdido, 2:34-35.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 87.

28. Díaz, Partes, p. 16.

29. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 107.

30. Jesse S. Nirenberg, Getting Through to People, p. 35.

31. Benedetti, Cola de paja, pp. 81-94.

32. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 107.

33. In describing Bécquer's imagery, Díaz emphasizes that devastation corresponds not to the storm, but to an ensuing motionlessness (Díaz, Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, p. 410).

34. Eduardo Galeano, "El desafío," p. 122.

35. Franklin Morales, "La garra celeste," p. 36.

36. The imagery may be compared with that described by Roudiez in Butor's Passage de Milan; also of interest is a similar yet different framing of time and space. Roudiez explains: "One need not proceed very far before suspecting that the plot, closely circumscribed in space, will also not extend over any great length of time. Indeed, Passage de Milan begins at seven on a Friday evening and ends, twelve chapters later, at exactly seven the following morning. The framework of the novel is thus provided by time, and time is hieratic: throughout the night, bells of a nearby convent toll the hours; a priest opens the novel, and another priest closes it. As priests of other religions relied on birds to foretell the future, birds are linked to the Ralons; the kite, bird of prey, casts a shadow of death on the house when Father Ralon looks out" (Leon S. Roudiez, Michel Butor, p. 11).

37. Again, it should be noted that the deluge may represent the powers of renewal and rebirth within the world view of Díaz (Díaz, Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, p. 410).

38. Díaz, "f.h.: una conciencia," p. 106.

39. Díaz, Partes, p. 126.

40. In his Tratado de los lugares, Díaz defines a series of places which the body may occupy while the spirit has been relegated to "el hueco que deja la ausencia de la esperanza." It may be that the ant at the green blade's end physically occupies the position which Díaz identifies as "el lugar de la pendiente." The dilemma created by position of the body in such a place is explained as: "Cuando se está en ese lugar en general se termina mal, porque no tiene más que dos salidas: una de ellas, dificilísima, hacia la cumbre. Ésta no sólo es difícil porque se necesita, para encontrarla, una fuerza y una habilidad de alpinista que no todos poseen. (Téngase en cuenta que cuando alguien se topa con ese lugar no es precisamente porque sea un alpinista que se cansó de trepar; en general uno se encuentra en el lugar inclinado sin haber trepado nunca antes.) Pero la dificultad mayor para ponerse a trepar consiste en que para ello se necesita pensar en la inclinación y en la cúspide que se encuentra en lo alto, y eso parece sencillo, porque todas las pendientes tienen una cúspide o, siquiera, un arriba, pero como para no caerse uno está aferrado a un pensamiento, a otro pensamiento, no puede soltarlo para pensar en lo alto, de modo que más bien se crispa, asiéndose cada vez con mayor violencia a ese único pensamiento que le parece sólido, y que además lo es. Uno se desgarra, se acalambra, se endurece, siente tensas cada una de las fibras de cada músculo. A lo mejor queda así por años; todo por creer que sólo de ese modo se puede sobrevivir. Y en verdad es cierto: sólo se sobrevive que no se vive" (José Pedro Díaz, Tratado de los lugares, pp. 67, 70-71).

41. Díaz, Partes, pp. 71, 284.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Marie Johnston Peck was born on August 15, 1932 in New Haven, Connecticut. An honor graduate of the James Hillhouse High School in 1950, she received the Associate in Science Degree from Quinnipiac College, Hamden, Connecticut in 1952. Varied employment included the position of Secretary in the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. In 1962 Ms. Peck left Brooklyn, N.Y. on a Chilean freighter, destination South America. Subsequent to her arrival in Callao, Peru, she secured employment as liaison and interpreter with Project HOPE. She worked on the HOPE Ship and in Peruvian hospitals for the next two years.

In 1968 Ms. Peck received the B.A. Degree in Latin American Studies "With Distinction" from the University of New Mexico and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Awarded a four-year Title VI Fellowship in Latin American Area Studies, she began work toward the Doctorate in Ibero-American Studies.

Returning to South America in 1970, she attended the Andean Center of the University of New Mexico in Quito, Ecuador during the spring semester. From July through December, on a research fellowship from the Organization of American States, she conducted research in Montevideo, Uruguay. Since 1971, she has worked as Administrative Assistant for Colorado Springs Urban Renewal Effort while completing requirements for the Ph.D. Requirements were completed in 1974.