McOndo (Explained) in the Latin American Literature-World

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Declaration

This thesis is my own work and all sources used, to the best of my knowledge, have been acknowledged. Except where previously published English translations have been cited, all translations from other languages used in this thesis have been translated by me with the original text included in footnotes.

Thomas David Nulley-Valdés



Abstract

The end-of-century heuristic shift in the study of world literature introduced by Pascale Casanova and other critics has provided new tools of literary analysis in need of testing within discrete and concrete fields. Casanova's theorisation of the literature-world, in particular, has amassed considerable critical attention across the globe. Rather than approach Casanova's proposal with a euphoric acceptance or a confrontational rejection of her theorisations, I propose an assessment of this model to evaluate its explanatory strength within the Latin American field. The test case is the Latin American short story anthology *McOndo*, edited by Alberto Fuguet and Sergio Gómez and published in 1996. It is a compilation which both affirms and challenges conceptions of Latin American identity and literature, as well as the very processes of canonisation. This anthology, which generated a substantial polemic, can be re-interpreted in a more holistic and genuine manner than has hitherto been possible, while at the same time accounting for its paradoxical positioning. Casanova's theoretical and conceptual tools—founded on Bourdieu's sociological approach to the study of literature (especially his theory of fields)—, permit a thorough and nuanced reading of this text through its context, authorial and editorial position-takings, narrative devices, impacts, and processes of canonisation, made possible by a Casanovian methodology centred on a back-and-forth mutually informing process of macroscopic analysis of contexts and microscopic analysis of texts, as well as authors' trajectories. After thoroughly exploring the scope and limits of this theoretical approach, corrections and enhancements can be applied to this developing theory, grounding it firmly within the world it analogically seeks to explain.

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What, then, is left for the critic to do? Perhaps just this: to restore the lost relationship between the world and the trousers of literature, to patiently retie the threads that link these two universes, which otherwise are condemned to exist in parallel without ever meeting each other.

PASCALE CASANOVA

Chapter 1: Introduction

Questions old and new of an aesthetic, generic, theoretical, and methodological categories continue to create fruitful debates and provide new directions for literary criticism. Whether this be in the form of canon-building such as Harold Bloom's contested canon of world literature and its postcolonial counter-canons; Wimsatt and Beardsley's well-known intentional fallacy and questioning of external forms of evidence in literary analysis; once revolutionary and now institutionalised methods of deconstruction and the ongoing expansion of cultural studies; or the epistemological geopolitics of the Global North and South in postcolonial critique and decoloniality. In recent times World Literature theory has developed new theorisations and methods for analysing literature, literary structures and fields, authors, genres, forms, and literary history, and is intimately engaged with these aforementioned debates. These theorisations by critics such as Franco Moretti and Pascale Casanova, among others, are generated as solutions or contestations of these concerns, the greatest of which is the insistence on grounding analyses within national contexts. Hence, the need to generate models and tools to analyse literature at different strata including in translation, reception in other nations and across continents, and in global circulation.

While many world literature analyses (both from the United States but also from the Global South) continue to elevate the novel as the paradigmatic case study, this thesis analyses the short story anthology *McOndo*. This anthology dovetails some of these discussions, forcefully advancing authorial intentions and concerns, marking ways of being read, and transcending the national referent and intervening at a particular level of world literary space both imagined and constructed: namely, *Latin American literary space* or the *Latin American literature-world*[1]. Latin America as a conceptualised geography, hybrid imagined community, or occidental *other*, has been interrogated and by consequence propounded through an identity discourse beginning with European conceptions of the New World in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries (such as Columbus' letter to Isabel la Católica, or Ferdinand Magellan's chronicles), and developing endogenous voices in this discourse through a long list of intellectuals of the 19th and 20th centuries, such as Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, José Martí, José Enrique Rodó, Juan Carlos Mariátegui, José Vasconcelos, Fernando Ortiz, and Roberto Fernández Retamar. Alongside these identitary proposals there has recently existed a metadiscourse about these

[1] Terms which the author will use interchangeably throughout this work.

very discussions made most visible in the work of Edmundo O'Gorman, Aníbal Quijano, Walter D. Mignolo, and with a perspective from literature through contributions by Octavio Paz, Ángel Rama, and Fernando Aínsa. Once this regional discursive space is imagined it exists both in *thought* and in *thing*, and, as such, has consequences in the political, economic, cultural, academic, and literary dimensions of social interaction.

In the literary dimension, it is very common to hear of the category of "Latin American literature" used as much in journalistic as well as academic publishing to denote the works originating from this highly diverse region. Nevertheless, this category or space of literature must be further interrogated and theorised in order to understand *how* it, in fact, exists, that is how it operates within broader structures of the literature-world, and who and what is considered to belong to this classification. In analysing the *McOndo* anthology *through* its national and regional context, it is possible to understand some of these macro-level concerns, in effect, giving form to this supranational category of literature while simultaneously bringing to light more accurate interpretations of this often-misunderstood text.

The concern of this work is not solely a routine and unproblematised application of theory onto text. One of the guiding principles of this work is captured in a reflection by Michael Wood (2000):

> [s]hould critics have parameters prior to reading and observing, which afterwards they will apply when they begin to work, or should they permit the text or the image in question show them the parameters by which these ought to be judged?[2].

This is of course a loaded question, perhaps one with its own critical biases in favour of a careful discernment on the part of the critic regarding the tools most appropriate to analyse a text, a notion founded on the belief that a text has an intention (*an* opinion which other subject positions, such as those of many deconstructionists, would question). Notwithstanding this critique, which will be discussed further in subsequent chapters, Wood's question led me to seriously consider the most appropriate theoretical and methodological tools to analyse *McOndo*, an anthology which in reading and analysing has provoked—and here I bear my critical conviction for open critique and justification herewith—a sense of great significance to this generation of writers, our conceptualisation of Latin America and more specifically Latin American literary space.

Following Wood's challenge, the analyses conducted in this study have progressed through various instantiations and developed organically in a search for greater depth and

[2] '¿Deben los críticos tener parámetros anteriores a la lectura y la observación, que después aplicarán cuando se pongan a trabajar, o deben permitir que el texto o la imagen en cuestión les muestren los parámetros mediante los cuales estos deben ser juzgados?' (Wood 2004).

breadth of understanding. Firstly, a process of matrix-based comparative close reading of the texts in the anthology (as well as related anthologies such as *Cuentos con walkman* and *Se habla español: voces latinas en USA*) developed preliminary interpretations on the texts. Secondly, through historical investigation into the macro-level contexts of literary spaces, it was possible to begin mapping how these texts could be understood to be operating within certain spaces of works. Thirdly, through biographical research into the professional lives and development of these authors, in part informed by the 27 research interviews I have conducted with authors and editors involved, various aspects of this research could be informed and corroborated, and new material was unearthed. Once these areas had been sufficiently explored and analysed, it became apparent that a study involving so many disparate literary spaces, authors, works, and levels and scopes of analysis would require a theory and methodology capable of unifying these into a single analysis. Fourthly, the selection of the concepts and framework of world literature theories and methodologies, most especially Pascale Casanova's, provided me with tools necessary to approach all of these diverse texts and contexts. Ultimately, a final dimension developed once it became clear that this research was more than an unproblematised application of theory onto text, but in itself capable of producing meta-criticism on the value and application of world literature theories from/in the Latin American context.

Part 1 of this thesis will deal specifically with this process of theoretical and methodological reflection, by looking in particular at the various world literature theories and methodologies that have developed at the turn of the century. In 'Chapter 2: World Literature Theories and Methodologies', the recent development of this bourgeoning field of theory as well as the principal theorists are detailed, especially Franco Moretti, David Damrosch, Pascale Casanova, and Alexander Beecroft. This chapter then leads into a detailed interpretation of Casanova's theory of the literature-world, and how this can be understood principally in relation to how she builds explicitly (and implicitly) on Pierre Bourdieu's sociology and theory of fields. Critiques of Casanova's and Moretti's models from a number of critical positions are brought into dialogue with their work once more in examining the theoretical fortitude and the explanatory value of these methods, and especially Casanova's. 'Chapter 3: Casanova and Latin America' deals with the way in which the Latin American case study is partially narrated by Casanova in her main theoretical book *The World Republic of Letters* (2007 [1999]). Conversely, it also critically engages with the major critiques made of Casanova's work in Latin American criticism in three particular areas: firstly, regarding Casanova's theorisation which appears to construct a world literary space from a French perspective rather than a global

one; secondly, a critique of the apparent autonomy of the literature-world in regard to the politico-economic world; and thirdly, a methodological critique concerned with epistemological geopolitics and structural inequalities in the circulation of academic literature. Rather than considering how these critiques might demand a rejection of Casanova's theory and methodology, I propose that they might lead to necessary improvements in its application, underpinned by the perspective I take on Bourdieu and Casanova's models as capable of growth and development through praxis.

Consistent with Casanova's methodology of a back-and-forth macro and micro level analysis, Part 2 involves a case study of *McOndo* informed by a context of various dimensions. 'Chapter 4: Contextualising *McOndo*' details this context through a perspective on the national and regional level as afforded as much by critical studies as by the testimony of authors such as José Donoso, who witnessed and experienced the apogee of the Boom, its decadence and decline, especially in his *Historia personal del boom*. Throughout this history, which is overviewed *structurally* (at the level of Latin American literary space as a whole) and *individually* (in how it can be given form through the concrete example of José Donoso's trajectory), a number of forces mediating literary existence, circulation, and success from politics (e.g. the Cuban Revolution), publishing circumstances (e.g. poor domestic production and the rise of Seix Barral), generational awareness (e.g. discovery of literary peers and opportunities related to this) and unity (e.g. the construction of the Boom and its "aesthetic"), become apparent. The second part of this chapter analyses the context of the Postboom, which saw numerous transformations of literary production and creativity resulting from the Boom (e.g. establishment of themes and bestsellerism), publishing expansion and balkanisation (e.g. Spanish conglomerates buy up local Latin American publishers), the politicisation of narratives and aesthetics (e.g. in Puig, Skármeta, Giardinelli, and Allende), and the contributions of the internationalisation of potent exotic portrayals of *latinidad* on understandings of Latin American identity and foreign horizons of expectation known as *macondismo*.

This context provides the necessary historical, literary, political, identitary, economic, and publishing circumstances with which to understand the intervention of the *McOndo* anthology in a number of these spaces through a micro level analysis of both its prologue and its stories in Part 3. 'Chapter 5: The *McOndo* prologue', analyses the infamous introductory remarks by the editors Alberto Fuguet and Sergio Gómez, remarks, in their moment, taken to represent a manifesto-styled generational pronouncement. In this chapter the pronouncements of 'Presentación del país McOndo' (Introduction to the Land of McOndo) (Fuguet and Gómez 1996), are interpreted as working on a number of levels and inserting themselves into a number

of debates: from a diagnosis of the publishing challenges which authors in Latin America are facing; a critique of *macondismo*; to a rejection of the political demand of literary creativity and the authorial vocation. It is in this sense, that *McOndo* calls attention to itself through a paradoxical subterfuge. That is, while openly denying it is a manifesto, it reads like one (e.g. through its polemical claims); while claiming it has no generational pretensions, it appears to incarnate the desire to define one (e.g. by fulfilling many aspects of a generational anthology); by challenging and denying magical realism and *macondismo*, they also contribute, in some senses, to reinforcing this edifice.

'Chapter 6: the *McOndo* stories' considers these texts as a generational selection from across Latin America and Spain through which to evaluate their engagement with wider debates in a comparative analysis of their collective or unique themes and contributions. The stories are analysed in a broad sense according to their engagement with the political question and the rise of popular culture, the mostly urban environment of these stories and how this is dealt with narratively, the examples of deterritorialisation and extra-national narratives, and the negotiation of the local and the exchangeable through the use of localism and foreign loan words. These themes can be interpreted as in-text negotiations by these authors within the space of possibilities permitted entry into the anthology, as well as responses to broader debates of the political question, the spatialised dimension to Latin American authenticity, and the distancing (but not supersession altogether) from the national referent, both in setting and in language.

Part 4 returns to the macro-perspective to analyse the aftermath of the *McOndo* anthology in the individual trajectories of the authors involved as well as the anthology's afterlife through its canonisation. 'Chapter 7: The trajectory of the *McOndo* authors', comparatively analyses the development of these authors' careers, aesthetics, or vocation, in relation to the *McOndo* anthology in how they were *unimpacted* (e.g. those who had already accumulated an upward momentum enough that their rise was unimpacted by their inclusion), *unbenefited* (e.g. those who due to numerous factors from the individual to the structural were unable to capitalise on their inclusion), those whose trajectories were *transformed* (in an aesthetic or vocational sense through their inclusion in *McOndo*), and lastly those *ambiguous* cases whose trajectories are more difficult to map resulting, in part, from reasons both structural or of personal *habitus*. This kind of evaluation of trajectories necessarily relies on an analysis of each specific author's *habitus* in order to account for these very disparate results, as well as an analysis of the structural inequalities, as much *actual* as well as *illusios* existing in the literary world—two implicit aspects to Casanova's Bourdieusian theory. They also permit a

deeper analysis of some of the stories in *McOndo* seen through this prism and practice of back-and-forth macro and micro-analysis.

'Chapter 8: The Canonisation of the *McOndo* Anthology' continues this macro-analysis in attempting to account for *how* it is that this commercially and critically unsuccessful anthology could be increasingly considered part of the Latin American literary canon. The chapter analyses how the claims of the *McOndo* prologue, while controversial, were lent further credibility as a supposed generational pronouncement through the staging and internationalisation of numerous simultaneous yet isolated literary interventions which shared many commonalities with *McOndo* (e.g. Crack, the *Generación Mutante*, *Moho*, isolated South American, Central American, and Caribbean interventions, and in commentary through important anthologies such as *Palabra de América*). Alongside a growing academic corpus surrounding the anthology, a number of other short story anthologies continue to vindicate its claims and its selection (e.g. *Líneas aéreas*, *Se habla español: voces latinas en USA*, *Les bonnes nouvelles de l'Amérique latine*), further entrenching its position within the canon as an indispensable reference for understanding the strategies of internationalisation of this generation of writers. It is from this distance that *McOndo* can be understood as the most vocal of generational pronouncements in the autonomisation and periodisation of these Latin American writers.

The fifth and final section of this thesis is a theoretical-methodological *coda* in which I step back from the case study procedure of macro/micro-analysis in the previous three sections, and return to theoretical and methodological questions. In 'Chapter 9: Informing World Literature Theories and Methodologies', I return to some of the debates which were detailed in the beginning section to analyse the procedure which has been taken in this research and how it is different to Casanova's. What this chapter reveals is that while Casanova's theory and methodology are immensely valuable for shedding light on this anthology—the various literary spaces, and authors, notably through the recuperation of certain theoretical concepts from Bourdieu's original analysis such as the *illusio* and *habitus* which were only implied by Casanova—, Casanova's analysis could also be extended to consider, not solely the production of literary canons via reception, but also different *kinds* of canonisation. Part of this would include an exploration of the specific canonical quality of a text, that is, its canonicity, or its timely capacity to be canonised through factors not entirely exterior but also interior. This procedure has also made it possible to consider *McOndo*'s atypical place in the Latin American canon, as a text—especially its prologue—belonging to an historical line of autonomising interventions in literary space from Dante, Du Bellay, Joyce and Beckett, and even Borges. In

respect to the synchronous nature of this study of contemporary literature and authors, I recommend the reapplication of Casanova's general authorial typologies for an appreciation of the multidirectional nature of authorial interventions, especially in light of the evolving state of these writers' *œuvre.* Related to this is the methodological process of creating extra-literary material to make up for that which is lacking, but also in preparation for an era in which authorial archives may suffer from a lack of material. And lastly, having explored at great depth the case study anthology, its context and afterlife, it is possible to theorise the structure of the Latin American literature-world and its operation within the literature-world as a scaled *regional-world*: similarly polycentric, hierarchical, and competitive.

Part 1: Theory and Methodology
Chapter 2: World Literature Theories and Methodologies

2.1.1 The Worlding of literature: from concept to theory

The comprehensive collection of essays *World Literature: A Reader* by Theo D'Haen, César Domínguez and Mads Rosendahl Thomsen (2013), has compiled a genealogy of the principal figures in the development of the study of world literature, reconfiguring its origins and intellectual contexts. The volume begins its chronological overview with the Spanish Jesuit Juan Andrés, who was among the first scholars to attempt an ambitious history of *ogni letteratura* (all literature) or *tutta la letteratura* (the whole of literature) in his *Dell-origine, progressi e stato attuale d'ogni letteratura* (*On the Origin, Progress and Present State of All Literature*) published between 1782 and 1799 and translated into a ten-volume Spanish edition between 1784 and 1806 (Galdón et al. 1997).

Despite this early research, which could perhaps be better understood as an a universal account of *all* literature, it was the German author J. W. von Goethe who coined the phrases (which later became concepts) 'world literature' or 'universal world literature' in a number of letters between 1827 and 1831, and the figure who is generally credited as the starting point for this global literary research. After having recognised the diminishing significance of national literatures in Europe and the increasing circulation of literature (including his own), Goethe imagined the future of literary production expanding from a purely national to an international sphere. The immense recognition that Goethe received in his lifetime from British and French critics; his translations into European languages; the renewed study of literatures beyond the national space; and the tidal wave of popular literature which 'meets with approval in all countries and regions' (Goethe 1973, 10), all contributed to his understanding of *Weltliteratur* as a growing network of transnational literature. Caught up with the humanism of his time, Goethe believed that this world literature would serve the cause of tolerance and understanding within Europe where until recently, many nations had experienced the instability of the Napoleonic Wars[1].

[1] Goethe writes in an Introduction to Thomas Carlyle's *Life of Schiller* published in 1830, '[t]here has for some time been talk of a Universal World Literature, and indeed not without reason: for all the nations that had been flung together by frightful wars and had then settled down again became aware of having imbibed much that was foreign, and conscious of spiritual needs hitherto unknown. Hence arose a sense of their relationship as neighbors, and, instead of shutting themselves up as heretofore, the desire gradually awoke within them to become associated in a more or less free commerce' (Goethe 2013, 15). Other thinkers of the time similarly shared Goethe's

Nevertheless, Fritz Strich (1949) has rightly clarified that at 'at no point did Goethe himself unequivocally state what he wished to be understood by world literature' (5). This uncertainty nevertheless provoked a discourse regarding Goethe's phrases and their largely disjunctive use throughout the 21 passages in which they are used. David Damrosch (2013) argues that in a supremely optimistic sense, Goethe 'hoped that the age of world literature would be an era of international exchange and mutual refinement, a cosmopolitan process in which Germany would assume a central role as a translator and mediator among cultures, leading an international elite to champion lasting literary values' (1). This prophetic Gothean vision into the future is something which literary comparatists such as Albert Guérard (1940), Fritz Strich (2013 [1930]), and Richard Moulton (2013 [1911]) adopted in their very own academic proposals, by critiquing the traditional division of literary studies on linguistic or national lines and by proposing what the study of world literature would entail and promise[2].

On the opposite side of the argument, the Dane Georg Brandes was critical of Goethe's optimism, claiming that a hierarchy of linguistic prestige exists in Europe with French, English and German as the most highly respected and most advantageous literary languages for building world renown, while authors who wrote in Finnish, Hungarian, Swedish, Danish, Icelandic, Dutch and so on, were disadvantaged by the languages' lack of circulation and prestige (Brandes 2013 [1902]). Later, and in a similar vein to Brandes, Fritz Strich (2013 [1930]) and René Étiemble (2013 [1964]), would criticise the decidedly Eurocentric understanding of the world's literature which the discipline of comparative literature had until then constructed[3]. However, the American scholar Richard Moulton, turning his attention to these very pronouncements and theorisations, was the first to highlight the consistently

optimism, with Marx and Engels remarking in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) that '[n]ational one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the many national and local literatures, a world literature arises' (Marx et al. 2008, 39).

[2] As Damrosch (2003) captures, national literary scholars and comparatists held each other in mutual contempt, such that '[c]omparatists in the postwar era often returned the specialists' disregard, holding out messianic hope for world literature as the cure for the ills of nationalistic separatism, jingoism, and internecine violence—and, by implication, advancing the comparatist as the transcendent heir to the narrowness of monolingual specialization' (282).

[3] Arguing particularly against European comparatists who consistently left-out literature beyond their regional limits, René Étiemble demonstrated through his analysis of World literature lists compiled both within and outside of Europe that all of them represent a national partiality, 'victims of their own particularism, of the idols of their tribe, we still have a long way to go before we are ready to shoulder the task that Goethe assigned to us a century and a half ago: to hasten the dawn of world literature [*Weltliteratur*]' (Étiemble 2013, 101). To demonstrate how world literature is interpreted from very national or regional constraints by European comparatists, he proposes the opposite scenario which to a European scholar surely would represent scandal: '[o]r let us suppose that, putting together a world literature following his own judgement, a Japanese scholar would overlook Goethe, Schiller, Nietzsche, Jean-Paul, Hölderlin and Thomas Mann, how would this go over this side of Eurasia?' (Étiemble 2013, 97).

subjective reading of what constituted world literature as being one's history and the texts which circulate within one's nation, or in other words, how world literature functions as autobiography. He explained:

> I take a distinction between Universal Literature and World Literature. Universal Literature can only mean the sum total of all literatures. World Literature, as I use the term, is this Universal Literature seen in perspective from a given point of view, presumably the national standpoint of the observer [...] World literature will be a different thing to the Englishman and to the Japanese (Moulton 2013, 31).

Despite being far from an elaborated idea, the concept of *Weltliteratur* continued in circulation, particularly among comparative literature specialists—where the discussion on World Literature continued—and who despite their best intentions, in reality tended to restrict their research to comparing only Western literature, as Moulton, Strich and Étiemble's critiques suggest. Postcolonial literary studies, in a sense, bridged the global divide between Western literatures and the rest of the world's literatures by analysing texts from outside Europe. However, this would have the deficiency of either only constructing a counter-canon or by still only analysing literature written in colonial languages (D'Haen et.al, 2013).

It was only recently that an increasing number of critics such as Pascal Casanova, Franco Moretti, David Damrosch and Alexander Beecroft turned to Goethe's term and transformed it and the discussions around it into a sizeable wave of theoretically applied research. Among the numerous factors that could be used to explain the formidable re-emergence of world literature as a concept but also as a theoretical starting-point, are the increasingly significant discourses on globalisation and its effects (material, cultural and identitary), which demanded of scholars a more transnational, international, and even global perspective, moving beyond an interpretation of literature from within a solely national framework (D'Haen et al. 2013). Secondly, contemporary theorisations of world literature were also formulated in response to the shortcomings and incommensurability of methodologies which had long since begun attempting an international approach, namely comparative literature studies and postcolonial literary studies. As has been summarised above, earlier understandings and discussions of literature on a global level constructed conflicting views on a world literary corpus as either "the best" (of universal appeal, quality and influence) and usually synonymous with the Western literary canon, or "all" the world's literature (across space and time). These competing definitions, one hierarchical and the other anti-hierarchical, undoubtedly raised many questions. According to D'Haen, Domínguez and Rosendahl Thomsen (2013), the marked difference between these and more contemporary understandings of world literature are that world literature is no longer an *object* of study (e.g. a canon), but rather, a *paradigm*. These critics (Casanova, Moretti, Damrosch, and Beecroft), being among

the most recognisable figures of this field, approach from different disciplines and perspectives, and present divergent responses to the question "what is World Literature?", not as an object but as a theoretical approach with its own methodology to study, read or conceive of literature and how it circulates within distinct local, national, regional, linguistic, or global spaces.

Among the first critics to approach world literature from this renewed perspective was a professor of English and comparative literature at Stanford University, Franco Moretti, seen especially in his seminal essays[4] 'Conjectures on World Literature' (2000a) and 'More Conjectures' (2003). Moretti (2000a) maintains that the question before the study of world literature 'is not really *what* we should do—the question is *how* [...] world literature is not an object, it's a *problem*, and a problem that asks for a new critical method' (54-5). It is from this standpoint that he proposes a new critical method which does not rely on just reading more texts (a temptation which Moretti sees as helpful but not as a solution), but rather, which analyses how literary genres circulate across the world and are transformed in different spaces and times. Borrowing from the world-systems theoretician Immanuel Wallerstein, *the world literary system*, for Moretti, is treated as undeniably *one* and *unequal*, made up of core and periphery. In formulating his theory, he proposes two metaphors, the tree and the wave, which he appropriates from a variety of other disciplines in which they are already a common typology. These two metaphors are some of the conceptual tools at hand for the world literature critic, to analyse how *waves*—or literary genres and forms—advance across the world, and how they are compromised and transformed by *trees*—the local traditions cultural, oral, literary or otherwise—. These concepts are two of the ways in which Moretti proposes looking at literatures using his new critical method: *distant reading*, which unlike *close reading*, rather than examining literary texts themselves, relies on national literature specialists' research in order for the world literature analyst to make global conclusions on the spread and transformation of genres across space and time.

Also belonging to this paradigmatic shift in the study of world literature is the contribution of David Damrosch, comparatist at Harvard University. In his monograph *What is World Literature?* (2003), Damrosch summarises some of the principal questions of the discipline raised by previous comparatists such as Moulton, Strich and Étiemble: what did Goethe mean by *Weltliteratur*?; can world literature disrupt and overcome monolingual or national literary specialisation and the apparent dangers these present in regard to nationalism?;

[4] However, there are some antecedents to these formal theoretical incursions in Moretti's monographs *Modern Epic* (1996), which analysed modern novelistic epics, and *Atlas of the European Novel 1800-1900* (1998), which outlined the literary influence and exchange between nations.

is world literature conceivable? Generally, Damrosch (2003) defines world literature as all literature that circulates beyond its national or linguistic limits either in its original language or in translation. However, to further bifurcate this definition and present some differing methods to the study of world literature, Damrosch proposes a threefold definition focused on the world, the text, and the reader. For Damrosch (2003), '*[w]orld literature is an elliptical refraction of national literatures*' (281), in the sense that while a literature inevitably continues to 'bear the marks of their national origins', after circulating globally and at being received in a foreign culture, it is re-defined in many ways and for a variety of strategies[5] (283). In this sense then, he proposes an analysis of world literature not as an ungraspable canon of works, but as a mode of circulation of texts which can be analysed in their origin or in their reception in other nations or regions[6]. Damrosch (2003) also claims in regard to the text that '*[w]orld literature is writing that gains in translation*' (281), meaning that works which rely on translation for their internationalisation that do not meet with approval in other nations remain within national or regional traditions, whereas texts which gain in translation are conceived of as world literature (289). Finally, in terms of readership and particularly the study of world literature, Damrosch (2003) proposes world literature not as a canon or "must-read books" but as a *mode* of reading detached from our own world and which looks beyond to other spaces and times, he states that '[w]hereas the specialist attempts to enter as fully as possible into the source culture, the student of world literature stands outside' (297). Similarly to his comparatist colleagues (Moulton, Strich, and Étiemble), Damrosch also acknowledges that any attempt at a global perspective is still a perspective *from somewhere*, but far from claiming the requirement of mastery of the text's source language and culture in order to "properly" understand a text, Damrosch (2003) argues that this distance can uncover different readings of the text and of the reader's own moment (300).

The French researcher and literary critic Pascale Casanova's *Le République mondiale des Lettres* (1999)[7], was among the first theoretical formulations of this kind and a notable

[5] Damrosch (2003) goes on to extrapolate: '[t]he receiving culture can use the foreign material in all sorts of ways: as a positive model for the future development of its own tradition; as a negative case of a primitive, or decadent, strand that must be avoided or rooted out at home; or, more neutrally, as an image of radical otherness against which the home tradition can more clearly be defined' (283).

[6] Damrosch (2003) explains his use of elliptical refraction as follows: '[w]orld literature is thus always as much about the host culture's values and needs as it is about a work's source culture; hence it is a double refraction, one that can be described through the figure of the ellipse, with the source and host cultures providing the two foci that generate the elliptical space within which a work lives as world literature, connected to both cultures, circumscribed by neither alone' (283).

[7] Casanova's monograph was first translated into Spanish in 2001 and into English in 2004.

contribution to this body of research. The seemingly simple phrase "world literature" as Pascale Casanova (2005) outlines, is not to be understood as

> a body of literature expanded to a world scale, whose documentation and, indeed, existence remains problematic—but a *space*: a set of interconnected positions, which must be thought and described in relational terms. At stake are not the modalities of analyzing literature on a world scale, but the conceptual means for thinking literature *as* a world (72-3).

In this sense, Casanova clarifies her rejection of the traditional question concerning world literature (e.g. how to understand it as a collection of texts), by arguing that works are situated within spaces—national, regional, linguistic or world—, and that these spaces are not populated necessarily by all the works produced under those categories (as Moulton's simpler definition would maintain), but represent hierarchical and contested spaces of circulation, reception, valorisation of which selected works are granted access. In the preface to the English translation of *Le République mondiale des Lettres,* Casanova (2007) explains that '[t]he central hypothesis of this book [...] is that there exists a "literature-world," a literary universe relatively independent of the everyday world and its political divisions, whose boundaries and operational laws are not reducible to those of ordinary political space' (xii). Casanova utilises Braudel's *economy-world* and Pierre Bourdieu's *field* to create her concept of *world literary space*, a complex literature-world relatively independent from (but still related to) the political and economic world[8] with its own historical development, structural mechanisms of recognition and canonisation, where authors struggle against their literary inexistence within their national and linguistic sub-spaces in a competitive global environment for literary existence and legitimacy. Casanova (2007) at times, somewhat like Bourdieu, appears to overstate the claims of her discovery, claiming this literature-world to be more than just a theoretical model but an 'actual—albeit unseen—world' (3). However, at other moments, tempering her claim, she acknowledges the fact that world literary space 'is no more than a tool that should be tested by concrete research', an 'instrument,' or a 'hypothetical model' (Casanova 2005, 72).

Most recently Alexander Beecroft, a classicist and comparatist from the University of South Carolina, has provided an ambitious theoretical model with which to analyse literature in a variety of ecologies, from literatures restricted to small communities to those in global circulation as in the modern era. Regarding the contributions of the above-mentioned

[8] In the final chapter and conclusion to *The World Republic of Letters*, where Casanova (2007) chooses to outline some of her literary hermeneutics, she states that the literature-world 'is quite separate from the ordinary world, but it is only *relatively* autonomous, only relatively independent of it—which is to say, by the same token, relatively *dependent* upon it' (349). In this she reflects Bourdieu's conception of the autonomous field ultimately depending on the field of power, for a more extensive discussion of this Bourdieusian connection, see sections 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

theoreticians, Beecroft (2015) noted an almost exclusive concern with Western literature and the non-West's reaction to this literature in Casanova's and Moretti's models, and deems them not especially applicable to pre-modern and non-Western (or both) literatures (2). While Damrosch's model is capable of assimilating these literatures into his model, his analysis is mostly concerned with how the modern West appropriates and understands these texts (Beecroft 2015, 2). However, despite Beecroft's criticism, he does not see his model as incompatible with those he critiques, as each separate approach provides 'rather different concrete answers, emerging in specific contexts, to the same set of problems about the interactions between literatures and their environments' (Beecroft 2015, 3). In contrast to Casanova's Bourdieusian economic metaphor of symbolic capital, Beecroft chooses the language of ecology as his governing metaphor to understand literature across genres, ecologies and times. He appropriates etic[9] concepts such as *ecozone*—analogous to the cultural notion of "civilisation"—and *biomes* or *ecologies*, which are the contexts in which extra-literary forces interact with literature, such as linguistic situation, politics, economics, religion, cultural politics, and technologies of distribution (Beecroft 2015, 25-7). Beecroft (2015) maintains that literature or *a* literature (French, Japanese, Latin American etc.) cannot be solely understood by the texts which comprise it, but rather as being 'in an ecological relationship to other phenomena—political, economic, sociocultural, religious—as well as to other languages and literatures with which it is in contact', which all work to shape it (19). While these factors contribute to an understanding of the unique literary biome of a literature, Beecroft (2008) provides a list of six 'meta-systems' or literary typologies defined by how literature circulates, although he acknowledges that this is not an exhaustive list[10] (92). Beecroft's contribution is undoubtedly broad and inclusive and consequently his concept of literature or 'verbal art' is not restricted only to particular genres, such as narrative fiction, but is intentionally expansive

[9] Beecroft (2015) describes his model as utilising "etic" concepts, that is, the introduction and application of exogenous concepts to particular cultures by the scholar, as opposed to "emic" concepts, which are those concepts indigenous to a particular culture (28-9). Beecroft (2015) borrows the terminology "emic" and "etic" from the linguist Kenneth Pike to demonstrate the methodology of his conceptual model and to prepare a pre-emptive theoretical defense. Aware that he might be accused of applying foreign concepts onto unsuspecting texts, he argues that his position is not attempting neutrality nor objectivity, rather, he acknowledges that all critical perspectives which put forward either "etic" or "emic" concepts 'are embedded in the cultural and ideological situation of their authors, and all necessarily result in (at best) a distortion of what they study, if not (at worst) the construction of the very object they hope to examine' (30).

[10] These typologies, modes or ecologies are: *epichoric* (literary language circulating at the local community level); *panchoric* (literary language circulating between a range of epichoric communities); *cosmopolitan* (cross-cultural system where many communities share a common literary language such as Sanskrit or Latin); *vernacular* (literary languages which react against the hegemony of cosmopolitan languages); *national* (when a vernacular literary language is mapped onto the history and culture of a contemporary state); and, *global* (when national literary languages circulate across the globe) (Beecroft 2008 and Beecroft 2015).

to account for the different forms which 'verbal art' has taken through time and space, such that in these literary ecologies oral tradition, Homeric text, cinematic, dramaturgical, narrative or even religious text have all constituted literature. Beecroft, as such, orders as much literatures into the very ecologies they participate in, but equally orders and periodises the contributions of his world literature theory peers, emphasising the preoccupation which Casanova and Moretti, in particular, share with the national and global ecologies.

These varied and ambitious world literature theories have given us sophisticated analyses and understandings of world literary space (Casanova); the world literary system (Moretti) or world literature (for Beecroft and Damrosch). In this chapter, I will critically engage with some of the most significant contributions to our understandings of this concept and bring to light some of their canonical, temporal and regional biases, with a special focus on Pascale Casanova's theory of world literary space as put forward in *The World Republic of Letters* and additional articles. In so doing, I will distil and present the concepts and methodology I will be employing in my analysis of *McOndo* (1996), its historical context, the respective literary fields of intervention, a close reading analysis of the texts (prologue and stories), and an assessment of the trajectories of its authors, as well as its eventual canonisation.

2.1.2 Building on Bourdieu

While numerous scholars have recognised a prevalent use of Bourdieu's concepts in Casanova's work (Prendergast 2004, Eagleton 2005, Sánchez Prado 2006b, Perus 2006, Franco 2006, Poblete 2006, Damrosch 2013), lacking in a lot of these responses is a closer comparative analysis of her methodology and Pierre Bourdieu's. To generate her model, Casanova relies on a number of Bourdieu's sociological concepts[11] which he notably applied to literature in *Les règles de l'art* (1992). These phrases, far from being terms which carry a general social meaning, represent intentional appropriations of a theory which must be looked at comparatively to explore and understand how Casanova's theory 'builds explicitly'—as John Speller notes (2011, 71)—on Bourdieu's theory of fields, but also analyse what aspects of Bourdieu's methodology Casanova has adopted implicitly and not developed as fully, or has largely left-out.

[11] They include: 'field' or 'space' ('*champ*' or '*espace*'); 'consecrating authorities' ('*instances de consécration*'); 'symbolic capital' ('*le capital symbolique*')[11]; 'literary capital' ('*le capital littéraire*'); 'tempo' ('*tempo*'); 'subfield of restricted production' ('*champ de production restreinte'*); 'commitments' or by the translator's own admission another more common translation is 'position-takings' ('*prises de position*'); 'career' which the translator preferred to use for the term '*trajectoire*' in the original French text (Casanova 2007, n11, 402), 'autonomization' ('*l'autonomisation progressive du champ littéraire*') and adaptations of the terms 'heteronomous' and 'autonomous' which Bourdieu also uses in his analysis.

Bourdieu's theory of fields was developed in response to three predominant theoretical paradigms (which also had a large effect on literary studies), Claude Levi Strauss' structuralism, Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism, and Jacques Derrida's post-structuralism. Bourdieu was critical of structuralism because of its neglect of individual agency within the equation. For the opposite reason, Bourdieu was critical of existentialism, because by its overemphasis on the role of the freely choosing subject there was little or no acknowledgement of the structures which inform and determine decision-making. In this sense, Bourdieu developed his sociological theory as an attempt to synthesise and reconcile these aforementioned binaries within the broader agency/structure debate occurring in the social sciences (Swartz 1997).

On this topic, it is significant to make a note on the English translation of Casanova's work, in which Casanova's Bourdieusian terminology has been obscured by the more readable approach of the translator M. B. DeBevoise. I am referring specifically to the preference by the translator for terms with wider usage in English, such as 'commitment' and 'career', over the very specific Bourdieusian terms of 'position-taking' and 'trajectory' (even used in Bourdieu's *The Rules of Art* published by Polity). While 'position-taking' is clunky and not particularly concise, it captures both the very act of taking an authorial stance, through a personal agency, as well as an understanding that this stance occurs within a determinate context and structure, highlighting the way in which this theory was developed as a synthesis of the abovementioned agency/structure debate.

Another term, 'commitment', is defined according to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) as a dedication to a cause, ideology, etcetera (OED, 'commitment' 7a.) or '[i]n the existential philosophy of Sartre: the action of engaging with the world or committing oneself to a social or political cause' (OED, 'commitment' 7b.). The issue with this commitment, dedication or engagement is that it erroneously emphasises a Sartrean existentialism which Bourdieu did not profess and whose origin is not understood in context but by some interior authorial decision alone.

This agency/structure paradigm at the heart of Bourdieu's work, as well as a significant feature of Casanova's, is further occluded through the use of the word 'career' over 'trajectory'. 'Career' has been defined by the OED as '[a] person's course or progress through life' (OED, 'career' 5a.). This definition is juxtaposed to 'trajectory,' whose Latin etymology and origin in the natural sciences is applied figuratively to a number of things as '[t]he path of any body moving under the action of given forces' (OED, 'trajectory' B1a. and B1b.), once again emphasising these structural factors at play.

Much later when Bourdieu was to expand his sociological theory into the artistic sphere with *Les règles de l'art* (1992), post-structuralism, synonymous with the French thinker Jacques Derrida, had gained particular momentum in the scholarly world of literary analysis in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly in the United States. This new wave of analysis related to a philosophy of literature was a reaction particularly against structuralism and the natural sciences, and claimed that science was one discourse among many whose 'texts' had no truth-value claims which could grant it epistemological supremacy over any other discipline[12]. Implementing this principle in literary analysis, scholars attempted to read a text against itself or deconstruct it (using a hermeneutics of suspicion), rendering any discussions on social context, authorial biography or authorial intent increasingly irrelevant. As another deconstructionist Roland Barthes (1986) explained in his seminal essay 'The Death of the Author':

> [t]hus literature (it would be better, henceforth, to say writing), by refusing to assign to the text (and to the world as text) a "secret:" that is, an ultimate meaning, liberates an activity which we might call counter-theological, properly revolutionary for to refuse to arrest meaning is finally to refuse God and his hypostases, reason, science, the law (521).

The philosophical and literary implications for scholars who embraced post-structuralist analysis are that the meaning of the text is not analysed through the external elements of the text, such as the social context, the author's biography, motivations or intent. Instead, the text is to be analysed internally, in isolation from all of these other elements, denying the validly of the former approach.

With his theory of fields, Bourdieu establishes his own position on the side of the scientific community and in opposition to post-structuralist or post-modernist stances[13] (See: Bourdieu 1988). In 'Structuralism and Theory of Sociological Knowledge', Bourdieu (1968) defines theory (scientific and literary):

> not as a literal translation based upon a term-by-term correspondence with the "real," merely reproducing the apparent elements and properties of the object after the fashion of the mechanical models of ancient physics. The structure of symbols symbolizes the structure of relations established by experience in such a way that the relation between theory and facts, between reason and experience, is still a structural homology (688-9).

[12] An enormously influential text in this early post-structuralist research is undoubtedly *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts* (1979) by Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar.

[13] In Bourdieu's ethnography of the academy *Homo academicus* (1988), he commented the following regarding the recent waves of the postmodern study of science and his position in respect to them: '[f]ar from leading to a nihilist attack on science, like certain so-called 'postmodern' analyses, which do no more than add the flavour of the month dressed with a soupçon of 'French radical chic' to the age-old irrationalist rejection of science, and more especially social science, under the aegis of a denunciation of 'positivism' and 'scientism', this sort of sociological experimentation applied to sociological study itself aims to demonstrate that sociology *can* escape from the vicious circle of historicism or sociologism' (xii-xiii).

Bourdieu, as such, applies the same relational principles used in advanced sciences to his sociology and in turn to his study of literature in *Les règles* (39), in which theory is a translation or a symbol of what it attempts to capture in the real world via analogy (Bourdieu 1968, 689). In this way, Bourdieu (1968) sets himself the task of constructing an evolving theoretical model (which could be fine-tuned over time[14]) and which could explain the invisible laws and structures of not only the social world, but also the artistic (699-700). However, there is an important difference, in that contrary to the positivist tradition in science which maintains that scientific knowledge is based on observable and verifiable phenomena, Bourdieu maintained that the real world is understood and reinterpreted through the constructed model, and not observed necessarily in a pure and objective sense[15].

Nevertheless, Bourdieu's model, much less positivistic in its make-up, is more traditionally formalistic, in the sense that it is a growing model which can be tested and corrected, with an explanatory ability to reveal the world to us, as interpreted through the developing model. As was to be expected in this context of suspicion and scepticism on the part of post-structural and post-modern literary critics, Bourdieu's particular brand of social science and literary criticism was criticised, particularly in Western academies, for its foundational contradiction of these many theories in vogue. However, in the contemporary university setting we are once again at a time when literary studies must continue struggle to remain a relevant discipline amidst an increasingly instrumentalised and profit-driven education sector, literary analysis is experiencing shifts towards empirical methods of research with subareas such as the digital humanities gaining significant institutional backing and the emergence of big data collection projects such as those by Franco Moretti's distant reading. The question then remains whether Bourdieu's claim to connect external and internal levels of analysis through an exploration of text and the world have more impact now (or perhaps will receive renewed attention) than it did when it was first formulated.

[14] 'These partial theories that formulate the generating and unifying principles of a system of structural homologies are the systematic realization of a system of relations to be verified or already verified, and demand a procedure of verification that cannot but be itself systematic. Consciously constructed against the immediate "given," they allow the testing against reality of the properties that can be exposed completely, by deduction, thanks to the irreality of such theories' (Bourdieu 1968, 699-770).

[15] In respect to the positivistic tendencies of certain branches of sociology, Bourdieu (1968) criticised the 'false philosophy of objectivity' and what Nietzsche had called 'the dogma of the immaculate perception' (695).

2.1.3 Bourdieu's position-taking, Casanova's context

Bourdieu's theory of fields can be simply conceived through the metaphor of Russian dolls, in regard to the concentric levels of power relations, their relational character, and the different levels of analysis. Bourdieu's starting point and largest Russian doll is that of the 'field of power', a national structure defined by unequal internal power relations. Within this space, is the social structure of the 'fields' or competing groups hierarchically ordered according to the varying levels of economic and cultural capital within the field of power; Bourdieu (2017) situates the literary field within this broader social structure, as 'a universe obeying its own laws of functioning and transformation, meaning the structure of objective relations between positions occupied by individuals and groups placed in situations of competition for legitimacy' (214) which encloses writers and their competing struggles. As John Speller (2011, 56) recognises, Bourdieu, in effect, attempts to provide a more detailed analysis of the well-worn term 'Republic of Letters,'[16] with his own 'literary and artistic field' in order to show that it is a social category with its own struggle for a specifically literary capital (or power, prestige, influence, etc.) rather than political or economic capital[17]. In reference to the symbolic capital or value of a work, however, Bourdieu claims that what we perceive to be the inherent quality, value or significance of a work are in actual fact products of the literary game founded on collective belief, or the *illusio*.

For Bourdieu (2017), the *illusio* is present in a variety of fields (be it literary, political, religious, scientific). However, generally-speaking it is the collective belief in "the game" held by players (writers or even critics in this case, in other cases believers, scientists, etc.), and which simultaneously contributes to the existence of the game through their participation in it and consequently also to perpetuate its *illusio*. It is from this standpoint that Bourdieu (2017) describes the literary field as a separately functioning *illusio* to that of the ordinary common-sense world:

> [t]o take the literary illusion seriously is in fact to play one *illusio* off against another: [...] the literary *illusio*, the belief of learned people, a privilege of those who live literature and who can, by writing, live life as a literary adventure, is played off against the most common and most universally shared *illusio*, the *illusio* of common sense. Sancho is to Don Quixote what the Thracian servant is to Thales, a permanent reminder of the reality of the world of common sense,

[16] This is a critique which has also been leveled against Pascale Casanova, even though throughout her work she favors the term 'world literary space', over the catchy 'world republic of letters' which she uses to title her main work.

[17] Bourdieu (1993) states in his essay 'The Field of Cultural Production' that '[t]he *space of literary or artistic position-takings*, i.e. the structured set of the manifestations of the social agents involved in the field—literary or artistic works, of course, but also political acts or pronouncements, manifestos or polemics, etc.—is inseparable from the *space of literary or artistic positions* defined by possession of a determinate quantity of specific capital (recognition) and, at the same time, by occupation of a determinate position in the structure of the distribution of this specific capital' (30).

> of the common world, almost universally shared, unlike special worlds which are microcosms founded, like the universe of literature or of science, on a rupture with common sense and with the doxic adherence to the ordinary world (335).

Here Bourdieu compares the real or common-sense world with the literary world, in a way describing a worlding of literature which in Casanova's model would take a more ambitious proportion and a topographic resemblance to the international political world.

The Russian Dolls continue, as within this literary field, Bourdieu postulates the existence of two subfields which categorise authors according to their cultural production. Firstly, heteronomous writers, who belong to the subfield of mass production (popular with the public and the media), and secondly, autonomous writers, who belong to the subfield of restricted production and despite being less successful commercially, accumulate greater symbolic capital due to their greater ability to innovate, create and set trends. It is this group within the literary field that through their specifically literary capital exerts dominance over writers: the dominated writers such as popular writers (heteronomous writers); the new or nascent—and as yet unrecognised—avant-garde (autonomous writers); and, failed writers who fall between these two poles for their use of out-dated forms which do not bring them great commercial success nor innovate literary forms, leaving them without economic nor symbolic capital. This symbolic capital, however, is not something which Bourdieu (2017) considers inherent to the work or measurable according to universal norms or aesthetics, but rather relating back to the *illusio*, '[t]he producer of the *value of the work of art* is not the artist but the field of production as a universe of belief which produces the value of the work of art as a *fetish* by producing the belief in the creative power of the artist' (229). Thus, it is the actors within this artistic and literary field of production—the critics, publishers, academies, and juries—which mediate quite overtly in the production of value of works and their authors.

Additional to this broader level of analysis of the 'field of power' and the 'literary space' is an analysis of the writer's trajectory and position-taking (or 'space of positions') within this literary space, as well as the comparatively more micro-scaled analysis of their literary position-takings through their fiction, within the 'space of possibilities' (Bourdieu 2017, 231-9). Bourdieu's methodology analyses an author's trajectory by expanding the work of a traditional literary biography, which might predominantly focus on just the subject, to also analysing the writer's social position-takings and overall social trajectory within the structure, such as their choice of publishers, groups with which they are affiliated, manifestos, or even their choice of writing style or genre, all which are understood as '*placements/investments* and

displacements/disinvestments' into specific types of symbolic or economic capital[18] (Bourdieu 2017, 258-9). These decisions, however, are mediated by a person's *habitus*, which is formed throughout their life, from their family to broader levels of interaction which culminate in a personal conviction about one's social identity and one's place in the world. The *habitus*, for Bourdieu, holds a determinate sway in the kinds of position-takings, risks, genres and groups writers might participate in. Bourdieu (2017), for example, describes how affluence can provide the preconditions to literary advantage by being born and cultivated in a social position of high cultural capital, as well as the economic stability to be audacious in their pursuit of artistic prestige, while conversely, working class, provincial and foreigner writers may experience disadvantage in these areas due to their social and geographic distance (261-2).

One final level of analysis in Bourdieu's method requires an analysis of the author's written text within the broader 'space of works' and within the 'space of possibilities'. Bourdieu sees each work of fiction as belonging to a 'space of works' in which it is situated in a relational position to other texts by way of refusal, approbation, parody, denial, or emulation. In this sense, the author's position-takings can be interpreted from an additional dimension of analysis, not solely their choice of publishers or groups, but also their work as responding to other works in a struggle to define themselves apart within this competitive structure of the literary field. Moreover, for Bourdieu, what a particular writer has produced is only part of the 'space of possibilities' or, in other words, potential other works or literary courses of action. Whilst heavily invested in constructing and detailing the *structure* of the field of power; the literary field; and the socio-cultural formation of writer's *habitus*, Bourdieu also emphasises the agency of the writers by acknowledging their career position-takings and their interventions into the space of works within their personal 'space of possibilities'. In short then, as John Speller (2011) summarises, for Bourdieu's method

> [m]icro-textual analysis and macro-social analysis are thereby linked in a sort of hermeneutic circle (not a term Bourdieu uses), in which our understanding of the 'part' (here, a singular text), defined within a web of intertextual relationships, (the 'space of works') is informed by our understandings of the 'whole' (the author's position, again defined relationally in the literary field and in the field of power), which in turn increases with our understanding of the 'part', and so on (64).

Bourdieu's analysis then, is an attempt to account holistically for the existence and form of a particular literary text (and also in-turn how this informs the other levels of analysis) as it is

[18] Bourdieu (2017) constructs his own biographical analysis of position-takings and social trajectory in contradistinction to a simple and traditional kind of biography, which he critiques for its undervaluing of the significance of those structural interactions: '[t]rying to understand a career or a life as a unique and self-sufficient series of successive events without any other link than association with a 'subject' (whose consistency is perhaps only that of a socially recognized proper name) is almost as absurd as trying to make sense of a trip on the metro without taking the structure of the network into account' (258-9).

explicated by its multiple simultaneous positions as an intertextual interlocutor in the space of works; as one product among many potentials in the space of possibilities; and informed by an author's *habitus*, trajectory, position-takings in their respective division (heteronomous or autonomous) within the local literary field.[19]

2.2.1 Casanova's theoretical and methodological proposal

Similarly to Bourdieu, Casanova generates her theory out of a series of theoretical and methodological disagreements. To begin with, it must be stated that just in the same way that Bourdieu claims that literature (as it was in the French scholarly space) should not require a separate form of analysis, applying his theory of fields to art in *Les règles*, Casanova also, building on Bourdieu's theory of fields and Braudel's *économie-monde*, applies sociological and economic models to develop her own international literary criticism. It is with these theoretical foundations that she also responds critically to predominant methods of literary analysis such as close reading, postcolonial literary analysis, and traditional national literary analysis.

Pascale Casanova reads Henry James' short story 'The Figure in the Carpet' (1896) (as cited in Casanova 2007, 2) as a veiled criticism of the enduring critical assumption that every work of literary fiction is a sudden and inexplicable expression of artistic creativity. In the story, the critic represents the view that texts are somehow autonomous from the world (and in extreme cases from each other and even the author himself), and any attempt at tracing dependence, influence, or connection with these external factors is an impossible task. In opposition to this view for James' author, to understand the secret to an author's work one must change one's critical vantage point and take into account the whole of the "the figure in the carpet" or, in other words, the complex and apparently disordered pattern and structure of, for instance, a Persian rug. Answering this complex challenge, Casanova (2007) sets the parameters of her own literary criticism, which moves beyond the tradition of the 'nationalization' of literatures and literary histories, to a more international approach (xi). Similarly to Bourdieu's relational analysis of the 'space of works' then, for Casanova (2007), texts must be analysed within 'the totality of texts and literary and aesthetic debates with which

[19] Within this model, Speller (2011) surmises that '[t]he analyst's task is then to explain why particular authors have adopted particular strategies, which have propelled them on various trajectories (for example, to one or the other of the field's two 'poles', and to a dominant or dominated position within one of the two 'sub-fields'), always in relation to the strategies of others around them. Included in such strategies (alongside manifestos, choices of publisher, etc.), are literary works themselves, which also contain many 'position-takings' relating to form and subject-matter' (67).

a particular work of literature enters into relation and resonance' of similarity and dissimilarity 'and which forms the true basis for its singularity, its real originality' (3). Casanova, similarly to Bourdieu, is critical of literary practices that would either dissociate text from author (and therein from context) and the reification of texts and authors to such a level that there is a forgotten or wilfully ignored appreciation of their background, context, and the internal structures of literisation and consecration at play.

In the concluding chapter to *The World Republic of Letters*, Casanova critically engages directly with Barthes on this very theoretical rift between history and literature, or the real world and the literary world. Barthes (1960) in his essay 'History or Literature' speaks of the irreconcilability of the two universes: '[o]n the one hand the world, with its profusion of facts, political, social, economic, ideological; and on the other the work, apparently solitary, always ambiguous, since it lends itself to several meanings at the same time' (524)[20]. While acknowledging that some efforts in this task of establishing links between these seemingly irreconcilable worlds has been made by postcolonial criticism, Casanova claims that postcolonialism's primarily political link and external criticism can fail to account for the very literary (aesthetic, formal and stylistic) elements that also connect the two worlds. By applying Casanova's relational principles back onto her own academic position-taking, we can see how she is also positioning herself by critiquing huge bodies of literary criticism and thereby situating her unique methodology and theorisation within the field of literary criticism[21].

It is from this standpoint that Casanova (2007) lays out a 'new tool for reading' (73) the texts themselves, or a 'new hermeneutic logic' (352) to literary analysis which is both literary and historical, and which constantly passes 'back and forth between the microscopic and the macroscopic, between the individual writer and the vast literary world' (352). In a sense, then, Casanova attempts to achieve, similarly to Bourdieu's passing between micro-textual analysis and macro-social analysis, a mutually informing harmony between external and internal levels of analysis in response to the purported antinomy claimed by Barthes. Casanova (2007) provides what she calls a new 'international literary criticism' (4) that attempts to unite the historical "real" world with the literary world, as a kind of resolution of the antinomy apparent between the real-world emphasis of postcolonial critique and the

[20] '[D]'une part le monde, son foisonnement de faits, politiques, sociaux, économiques, idéologiques ; d'autre part l'œuvre, d'apparence solitaire, toujours ambiguë puisqu'elle se prête *à la fois* à plusieurs significations' (Barthes 1960, 524). In the text I have cited the English translation from *The World Republic of Letters* (Casanova 2007, 349).

[21] A more detailed discussion and an extension of the concept of literary field to literary criticism will be discussed in Chapter 9.

aesthetic internal analysis of the French critical tradition (xiii). On a theoretical level, Casanova is responding to the post-modern nihilism of Roland Barthes and similarly minded deconstructionist critics, which would maintain the inexistence of the "real" world (including the very real author) and the devaluation of any of this on the interpretation of the literary text[22]. Similarly, she claims to provide a model which in a specifically literary way accounts for the connection between the literature-world and the real world, rather than needing to (as she claims post-colonialism does) rely heavily on the political world as a principal starting point.

2.2.2 The Persian rug: The emergence and enlargement of world literary space

However, in order to understand the convoluted Persian rug, its pattern and structure as well as mapping authorial positions within it, Casanova (2007) accounts for the historical internationalisation of literature and eventual emergence of this world literary space beyond the largely nationally focused literary histories. She states: '[a] change of literary lenses, as it were, also involved retracing another history of literature: a non-national history of strictly literary events, of the rivalries and competitions, the subversions and conservative reactions, the revolts and revolutions that have taken place in this invisible world' (Casanova 2007, xii). In tracing this non-national history, Casanova distinguishes three major stages in the genesis of world literary space; firstly, the vernacularising moment of European languages; secondly, the nationalisation of these languages; and thirdly, the decolonisation of much of the world leading to an international literary space of global proportions.

Building on Benedict Anderson's work in *Imagined Communities* (1983), the first stage takes place during the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance and is the vernacularising (and autonomising) movement away from Latin (language of the Catholic Church and education) to the recognition and literary use of vulgar tongues (Casanova 2007, 47). The rediscovery and translation of Ancient Greek classical texts of fiction and philosophy such as those of Homer, Plutarch, Ptolemy, Plato and Aristotle into Latin between the 12th and 14th centuries, only further strengthened Latin's hegemonic position as the cosmopolitan language of Europe and as the language of literature and learning. The drawn-out vernacularising thrust to challenge this position was spearheaded in Tuscany by Dante Alighieri with his *De vulgari eloquentia*

[22] In the preface to the English translation of *The World Republic of Letters,* Casanova (2007) states: '[t]he ambition of the international literary criticism that I propose in the pages that follow is to provide a specifically literary, yet nonetheless historical, interpretation of texts; that is, to overcome the supposedly insuperable antinomy between internal criticism, which looks no further than texts themselves searching for their meaning, and external criticism, which describes the historical conditions under which texts are produced, without, however, accounting for their literary quality and singularity' (4-5).

(On Vernacular Eloquence, 1303-4) and two centuries later by Joachim du Bellay in France with his *La deffence et illustration de la langue françoyse* (The Defence and Illustration of the French Language, 1549), two manifestos advocating the acknowledgement of the spoken vernacular over Latin dominance. This effort would be continued in universities and eventually royal courts (Casanova 2007), and due to the labour of grammarians, philologists, and lexicographers who studied, compared, codified, and classified vernacular languages across Europe, the older and "sacred" languages of Latin, Greek and Hebrew were placed on equal footing with vernacular languages (Anderson 2006, 70-1). As such, the vernacularising movements in Europe were reacting against Latin in an attempt to enter into competition with it and dethrone it. They are for Casanova, early manifestations of the desire to transform linguistic and literary hierarchies and, in so doing, temporalise the literature-world.

Within Casanova's model, continuing from this first stage of vernacularisation, is the second major stage in the genesis of world literary space, the emergence of national literatures in the late 18th Century and early 19th Century. It is important to note that the vernacularisation of European languages by lexicographers, grammarians, philologists and litterateurs described above was occurring concurrently with nationalist movements. During this revolution, according to Anderson (2006), nations at different moments adopted certain 'print-vernaculars' as 'languages-of-state' (84). This stage, which Casanova also adopts from Benedict Anderson, is described by the later as the 'philological-lexicographic revolution' (2006, 83), or the stage when languages become languages-of-state and literatures are associated with the nation. Similarly to Beecroft[23], Casanova (2009) also argues that 'when a national space emerges and demands the right to political existence and independence, it proclaims at the same time that it possesses—that is 'nationalizes'—a cultural, linguistic, historical and literary heritage' (122).

Casanova's third major stage in the enlargement of the literature-world—and perhaps the most contentious—is the process of decolonisation beginning roughly after the Second World War and continuing to the present day. While this could be critiqued from the Latin

[23] Beecroft (2008) identifies the vernacular and national literary stages as arising out of a cosmopolitan literary environment, something which Casanova only alludes to in her contextualisation of the French language's contestation of Latin, the cosmopolitan language of the time. And while Beecroft (2008) rightly states '[t]he boundary between a vernacular literature and a national literature is necessarily a vague one', he—like Anderson—proposes that this transition occurs when a literary history is mapped onto the political state (97). Nevertheless, Beecroft (2008 and 2015) identifies additional ecologies of literature which could account for Casanova's prehistory, those stages prior to the vernacular, national and de-colonial or international in her description of the genesis of world literary space. As such, firstly, this would include the circulation of texts within isolated communities (Beecroft's *epichoric* ecology), secondly, the circulation among a network of these communities (Beecroft's *panchoric* ecology), and thirdly, Beecroft's *cosmopolitan* ecology in which a particular language reigns supreme over local languages, this last case clearly the foundation of Dante and Du Bellay's interventions as described by Casanova.

American historical perspective, in that the decolonisation of much of the Americas which took place in the late 19th and early 20th centuries should be considered an important stage in the unification of literary spaces into world literary space, however, it is eclipsed by the sheer number of entrants after the Second World War when there was an unprecedented surge of independence beginning in Asia continuing in Africa, and later the Caribbean and Oceania. It is in this process of decolonisation that the parts of the world hitherto under colonial (political and economic) control, parts of Asia and much of Africa, were able to assert their literary existence as national literary competitors in world literary space. This claim by Casanova that whole swathes of literature produced outside of the geopolitical space of Europe were only really recognised as such and included in the nascent world literary space would, naturally lead to criticism from postcolonial critics.

Debjani Ganguly (2012), for instance, takes this as a denial of pre-colonial literary heritage and that colonised spaces are considered 'pre-literary' until their establishment in the European literary market (254)[24]. This is not how Casanova presents her history, however. Casanova (2005) accounts for the existence of the space of literature or literary fields in varied forms prior to their connection with the European centre. She explains that '[a]lthough the space of literature has been constituted more or less everywhere in the world, its unification across the whole planet is far from complete' (Casanova 2007, 74). This is precisely because of the nationally defined conception of literature of the last few hundred years, such that the unification or worlding of literary spaces takes place once literatures independent from their colonial power are introduced to the centre as a national tradition. As Damrosch (2003) also argues, '[a] culture's norms and needs profoundly shape the selection of works that enter into it as world literature, influencing the ways they are translated, marketed, and read' (26). In other words, because world literature is defined relationally between nations, translation into more powerful languages of the centre (such as French, English and Spanish) allows for the recognition of texts as literature, as belonging to a discrete national tradition, and, as such, participating in the global game of world literature.

In Casanova's model, differently to Beecroft's, and relative to the particular historical period in which she situates her analysis, the nation is central as it is the locus of literary production, reception, and exchange. Casanova acknowledges the undeniable connections

[24] Ganguly (2012) argues that '[s]he [, Casanova,] interprets this phase in *developmental* terms where 'minor' literatures from non-European parts of the world have begun catching up with Europe in the production of 'proper' literature. There is no recognition in her analysis of their pre-colonial literary heritage. They are assumed to be 'pre-literary' till they establish themselves in the European markets' (47-8).

(without conflating the two) between the politico-economic and literature worlds. In fact, her description of the emergence of world literary space, which I have just described, traces a history of a parallel politico-national and literary struggle. For Casanova (2007), it is the nationalist theory of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) which transformed the literary game, as language was proclaimed as "mirror of the people" and the belief has since developed that "language is the reservoir and content of literature," thereby valorising an 'alternative notion of literary legitimacy, at once national and popular' (77). It is thus the Herderian model, for Casanova, that has definitively established a link between nation and language, and which has contributed to the structuring of the literary world according to the national space, a link which would benefit the nation through the construction of an imagined community, to use Anderson's terms. Part of this Herder Effect was the enlargement of the literature-world to include all of Europe, as nations raced to collect and literarise folk tales, oral histories and the like, and enter into transnational literary competition with one another[25]. However, Herder's ideas would have continuing effects across the globe in helping other nations outside of Europe to realise their literary independence through the creation of national literary spaces. Through a kind of auto-ethnological practice, writers, musicians, and artists could capture the specificity of autochthonous folkloric and indigenous culture and map them onto the nation, in the creation of a unique national culture. Examples of this in the Latin American region are numerous, from the search for indigenous and folkloric heritage by the Argentinian musician Atahualpa Yupanqui, to the literature of the naturalists, *criollistas* and *costumbristas* at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. From a particularly literary perspective, national literary spaces could be consolidated, and literary nations could enter into international competition endowed with a specific literary national identity.

However, Casanova (2005) argues that an after-effect of this connection between nation and literature (and the emphasis on identitary specificity) meant that similarly to the way in

[25] Casanova further elaborates on this point in *Kafka, Angry Poet* (2015), when she analyses the coexisting literary spaces of Prague: '[t]his is how, since Herder, 'popular' forms, including stories from what is called 'folklore', folk tales, legends, proverbs and songs—in short, all those forms linked to the existence of a people or the claim that a people exists—came to be regarded as noble. Literary production itself acquired a totally different definition when it became 'popular': it was supposed to be addressed to the people; it showed what the people was like; in short, it made the people the be-all and end-all of literary production. This very powerful and widespread ideology […] permeated almost the entirety of the literary space. It was present in all the debates as an indisputably self-evident fact and was found within all groups, even those who opposed it and had to defend themselves against it. It established itself in many different forms at every stage; it contradictorily served the interests of the many different camps in play and was, above all, omnipresent as a category of thought, even when those concerned were involved in combatting it' (61). The existence of this national literary psyche within Latin American literary space as well as national spaces such as Chile, are highlighted by some of the pronouncements of the *Cuentos con walkman* and *McOndo* prologues (Fuguet and Gómez 1993, and Fuguet and Gómez 1996) and constitute the necessary unformulated background knowledge for interpreting these texts which will be explored in Chapter 4.

which nations were seen as 'separate, self-enclosed units, each irreducible to any other; from within their autarchic specificity', so too was their literature (78). The effects of this paradigm are still apparent in the academic reaction of comparatists to generate a more international and transnational literary criticism away from commentary which would serve to further entrench and strengthen the link between literature, language and the nation-state. Akin to Althusser's notion of ideological state apparatuses, for Casanova (2007), it was not just universities that fostered this division of literatures according to nation-state, but literary institutions, school syllabuses, and canons also became instruments of national identity (105). The essentialised differences between national literatures were further perpetuated by their varying and incompatible critical periodisations and temporalisations[26]: French literature according to centuries; English literature according to sovereigns; and Spanish literature according to generations (a concept that is still prevalent in Spanish and Latin American literatures) (Casanova 2007, 105-6). An area, however, which goes unexplored in Casanova's study is how these periodisations have shaped an understanding of literary struggle, revolution and evolution, despite her insistence that both world literary space and history are underpinned by these struggles[27]. The generational standard which Spanish-American literatures have inherited from Spain, can be seen as demanding innovation or at the very least a distinct generational character from each period of new literary entrants, whether this demand would manifest itself in this collective sense in literary fields, where this is not the way literary struggle is imagined, is debatable.

While the national literary space is generally the first and an important site of literary creation and distribution, studies which limit themselves according to the national literary boundaries are also placing boundaries onto their possible interpretations and findings. On the other side of the argument, are the proponents of the diminished political and economic importance of the nation-state, particularly prevalent in discussion toward the end of the 20th Century. In response to these critics, Casanova does not do away with the national space in her model. To do that would be contrary to the overwhelming evidence to suggest its significance for literature historically, which she details. Instead, Casanova (2005) responds that

[26] This idea is similarly held by Bourdieu (2017), when he argues that literary histories are founded on literary struggles: '[i]t is not enough to say that the history of the field is the history of the struggle for a monopoly of the imposition of legitimate categories of perception and appreciation; it is in the very *struggle* that the history of the field is made; it is through struggles that it is temporalized' (157).

[27] Casanova (2007) argues that 'the only genuine history of literature is one that describes the revolts, assaults upon authority, manifestos, inventions of new forms, and languages—all the subversions of the traditional order that, little by little, work to create literature and the literary world' (175).

> contrary to what economistic views of globalization would have us believe—international struggles take place and have their effects principally within national spaces; battles over the definition of literature, over technical or formal transformations and innovations, on the whole have national literary spaces as their arena (81).

The national literary space is an essential level of analysis for Casanova's model. However, the separate and divided analysis of national literatures which naturally arise out of the historical emergence of world literary space, represent to Casanova a form of critical astigmatism (2005, 78). Necessary, then, is an understanding of the whole, the make-up of the Persian rug or world literary space, which allows for a more complete understanding of the international or transnational trajectories, interventions, and the recognition of literatures and what norms and prejudices inform that recognition (Casanova 2005, 78-9). It requires not only an awareness of the author's position within their space, but also the positioning of that space within the fabric of the literature-world.

Nevertheless, Casanova's account of the contemporary state of world literary space does not provide the same depth of analysis as other historical periods treated in her book. In fact, her chapter on the subject 'From Internationalism to Globalization' only provides tentative inroads into understanding the global present. As such, scholars such as Debjani Ganguly (2012), have rightly criticised Casanova for not being able to account for some of the profound global changes which have occurred during the Cold War and Post-Cold War eras. Nevertheless, due to the historical underpinning of much of Casanova's work, and without the benefit of time to understand the geopolitical transformations in these very recent time periods, it is understandably difficult to adequately and confidently map the transforming landscape of world literary space. In fact, Casanova (2007), echoing Immanuel Wallerstein[28], states that:

> [t]he configuration of contemporary literary space is not easy to characterize. It may be that we find ourselves today in a transitional phase, passing from a world dominated by Paris to a polycentric and plural world in which London and New York, chiefly, but also to a lesser degree Rome, Barcelona, and Frankfurt, among other centers, contend with Paris for hegemony (164).

In the contemporary literature-world, as difficult as it is to map, Casanova (2007) makes clear that Paris' unquestionable domination is no longer so, instead highlighting a more polycentric and fractured world order where London and New York are dominant centres for Australian, New Zealand, Irish, Canadian, Anglophone Asian, and African literatures; Barcelona for Hispanic literatures; the German capitals of Berlin and Frankfurt for Austrian, Swiss,

[28] 'I have argued in some detail, and on several occasions, about why globalization is an unhelpful rhetoric and that we should think of the current period of the past twenty years and the next thirty to forty years as a time of transition, a chaotic and dark time, from our present historical system (a capitalist world-economy) which is, in my view, in a process of disintegration toward an unpredictable future system which will emerge from the multiple social actions of a virtually infinite number of actors' (Wallerstein 2004, 224).

Scandinavian, and parts of Eastern Europe; with Paris remaining a capital for the Francophone world as well as many 'deprived' or 'marginal' literatures (166).

It is important to note that Casanova's (2007) understanding of authority relies on belief, such that the authority and prestige of a language, national literature, author, work or capital (even the capital of capitals) rests upon the collective belief in its authority (164-5), similar to Bourdieu's *illusio*. In this sense, the *illusio* which drew so many writers to Paris for inspiration, discovery of form, strategic positioning, or linguistic ennoblement during the 19th and 20th centuries, all confirmed and contributed to its undisputed authority. However, the increasing significance of English as the language of research, the language of global popular culture (music and cinema), international trade of the 20th and 21st centuries, as well as its formidable commercial literary capacity, are further measurable effects of a change in linguistic and literary centrality. This polycentric shift is as much apparent in the anthologies treated in this research, such that each anthology represents and intervention and attempt to conquer a distinct literary space: *Cuentos con walkman* (the national Chilean field), *McOndo* (the Latin American field), *Líneas aéreas* (Spanish literary space), *Se habla español: voces latinas en USA* (United States literary space), and *Les bonnes nouvelles de l'amérique latine* (the French field). And yet, at least for Latin American writers, there appears to be an abundance of cases demonstrating the centrality of New York as the new capital of capitals, not least evident in the consecration and popularisation of the Chilean writer Roberto Bolaño examined by Sarah Pollack (2009), but also the flocking of numerous writers to this literary and cultural capital.

2.2.3 Understanding literature

An additional area of contestation is Casanova's understanding and elusive definition of literature. Arising from of her understanding of the complex relationship between language and literature and their joint development during the nationalistic historical periods discussed, Casanova speaks of the *littérarisation* or literarisation of literature and its progressive autonomisation from national political functions, eventually leading to what can be considered narrative texts—in other words imaginative literature. For Casanova, a text or an author is made universal once they not only transcend their national frontiers in circulation, but also come to be regarded (by those in the literary machinery: editors, publishers, translators, critics, bourgeois readers, especially those in the centre) as a patrimony for all. This resembles, in a sense, Damrosch's (2003) basic understanding of how texts enter into world literature: firstly, by being identified as literature, and secondly by achieving global circulation (6).

The Uruguayan critic Hugo Achugar (2006) questions the very conceptualisation of the universal throughout Casanova's historico-literary analysis as profoundly caught up with her own centralised and hegemonic understanding of universality (202). In a similar sense, the Mexican author and critic Pedro Ángel Palou is also critical of Casanova's apparent use of the Nobel Prize as 'objective conditions of universality'[29], which according to Palou (2006), is more an example of aesthetic production than aesthetic consecration (309). Critical of these apparently objective or universal aesthetics, Achugar (2006) argues, from a cultural relativist standpoint, that what is considered universal is determined by the dominant, 'I am not arguing for the value of the "local", [...] what it's about is to be aware that universality is always a narrative told by the winners where the losers are, most of the time, invisible'[30] (206). Achugar's is an idea similar to his compatriot Eduardo Galeano's famous essay *Las venas abiertas de América Latina* (1971), where in a strictly economic sense he details Latin America's subordinate position as the historical losers in respect to the winners in the West[31]. For Achugar's point, this winners and losers paradigm is related specifically to the literary subordination of Latin America due to not only literary but also political and economic factors.

However, without realising it, Achugar appears to be exposing the very kind of ethnocentric thinking which Casanova both highlights and critiques. Casanova's understanding of literature is profoundly related to the concept of literariness and its defining authorities of editors, critics and translators in the global literary capitals, something which has gained her the praise of critics such as Ignacio Sánchez Prado (2006b). Literariness in not defined in the traditional sense by identifying the immanent characteristics of a narrative work or according to a understanding of aesthetic essentialism, but in the literary capital based on material and historical circumstances such as the development of the language, stylistic creation, debate and competition (Sánchez Prado 2006b, 26). In the same way as Bourdieu's *illusio* applies to literature, Casanova's concept of literarisation is not dependent on a problematic understanding of universality based on some sort of aesthetic and essentialist criteria of literariness, but rather, is critical of its production, as it is profoundly caught-up with the *illusio* of European symbolic

[29] '[C]ondiciones objetivas de universalidad' (Palou 2006, 309).

[30] 'No estoy argumentando el valor de lo "local", [...] de lo que se trata es tener presente que la universalidad es siempre un relato narrado por los vencedores donde los vencidos son, las más de las veces, invisibles' (Achugar 2006, 206).

[31] Eduardo Galeano (2006a) summarises his history of the defeated in the following way: '[p]ara quienes conciben la historia como una competencia, el atraso y la miseria de América Latina no son otra cosa que el resultado de su fracaso. Perdimos; otros ganaron. Pero ocurre que quienes ganaron, ganaron gracias a que nosotros perdimos: la historia del subdesarrollo de América Latina integra, como se ha dicho, la historia del desarrollo del capitalismo mundial' (16).

hegemony. In fact, Casanova (2007) clearly positions her work as a process of demystifying what has been considered as universal, and those Eurocentric critics who, without realising it, impose arbitrary and ethnocentric standards across the literary world:

> [t]he authority of the great literary capitals is not unambiguous, however. The power to evaluate and transmute a text into literature is also, and almost inevitably, exerted according to the norms of those who judge it. It involves two things that are inseparably linked: celebration and annexation. Together they form a perfect example of what might be called Parisianization or universalization through denial of difference. The great consecrating nations reduce foreign works of literature to their own categories of perception, which they mistake for universal norms, while neglecting all the elements of historical, cultural, political, and especially literary context that make it possible to properly and fully appreciate such works (154).

It is clear that Casanova's (2007) understanding of the universal is not, as Achugar accuses, universality in its ultimate definition as a sort of universal aesthetic value, but rather, as literary value determined by the perceptions and values of the consecrating authorities (hence her use of the example of the Nobel jury), which are imposed onto other literatures for the perpetuation of the hierarchy and the 'manufacturing' of literary universality (354).

While Casanova's understanding of literature as imaginative texts may work for this particular period, it has been critiqued, in a historical dimension, for its inability to account for the literature of antiquity, both European and non-European (Beecroft 2008, 89); in an anthropological dimension, due to different cultural understandings regarding the meaning of literature (Prendergast 2004, Montaldo 2010 and Ganguly 2012); and, in a disciplinary sense such that literature can also be stretched as a concept to include religious texts, music, performance art, video poetry, or even cinema (Achugar 2006 and Moraña 2006)[32]. One of the possible explanations for Casanova's decision to examine imaginative texts and especially the novel is, as Fritz Strich argues, because it is more difficult for some literary genres to enter into international diffusion than others. Strich argues that because translation is an indispensable principle for the supranational distribution of texts, genres like lyrical poetry are more difficult to translate and are consequently less globally popular than genres like the novel whose themes,

[32] Many of these concerns have been addressed by Alexander Beecroft's conception of literature as verbal art. Like Casanova, Beecroft also describes the process of literarisation, but with the help of Sheldon Pollock (who also developed the term "literarisation" concurrently Casanova). However, he draws a distinction between literisation and literarisation. The 'literization' of a language is in a basic sense its transferral from a purely oral language to a written language (generating an alphabet, orthography, etc.) (Beecroft 2015, 150). The 'literarization' of a language, refers to the aesthetic development of the language (dictionaries, grammars, rich lexicon, etc.) so that it might produce verbal art of the written variety (Beecroft 2015, 150). It is in this sense then that '[o]nce a vernacular has been literized and literarized—that is, made available for written literary production—it remains actually to produce literature, and particularly works of literature that will make the case for the vernacular as a literary language' (Beecroft 2015, 159). It is precisely because Beecroft is not dealing exclusively with this particularly international period in literary history that he proposes his use of the term 'literature' as 'verbal art'—that he considers as subsuming Casanova's—to develop his model which would be applicable to all historical and global contexts as well as being inclusive of "texts" which do not traditionally fit within the more erudite or Western conceptions of the term.

plot, forms and prose are more easily translated into different languages and cultures (Strich 2013, 44). For example, the difficulties in translatability of literary genres such as lyrical poetry, in which much is lost in translation, is an evident and obvious factor determining the circulation of certain genres over others. However, less evident is how the tastes for particular genres such as the novel over the short story in literary regions like Europe also plays a role. This, unfortunately, is an area of research which Casanova does not explore, rather she is more concerned with how the norms and tastes of the consecrating authorities of the European nations has an impact the evaluation of foreign texts.

One question arises in this context then, regarding the significance of the short story genre in Latin America, compared to Europe, where the genre has never been granted the same status as the novel. A litmus test for this could be the Nobel Prize for Literature which apart from having a predominantly European purview, has also overwhelmingly been awarded to novelists and only once to an exclusive short-story writer, the Canadian Alice Munro in 2013, and in what was deemed by some as a controversial move, awarded to the singer songwriter Bob Dylan in 2016. Considering Latin America's literary subordination in respects to Europe, it is, as such, conceivable to trace connections between material, publishing, and symbolic factors in accounting for this distinctive feature. The dedication to short fiction may have arisen out of numerous conditions of the literary field, such as the reliance on literary magazines and small-scale publishing for much of the 20th Century, the periodisation of literature in this region according to generations, and the recourse to generational short story anthologies to make new writers visible and publishable. The genre consequently develops a significant history in Latin America, granting it greater symbolic credit through its most renowned practitioners such as Augusto Monterroso, Jorge Luis Borges and Julio Cortázar, and the response of the field in regard to this area with the establishment of short story prizes and critical and theoretical corpuses surrounding the genre. Casanova's emphasis on the study of the literary trajectories of authors and their works will later be useful for this research to analyse how these anthologies, despite having received considerable attention domestically, have not received much critical attention beyond their nation, region, or linguistic sphere, and question the role which the symbolic positioning of genres like the short story hold in the different literary spaces.

2.2.4 The structure (or system?) of world literary space: Moretti and Casanova

While Goethe is viewed as the historical starting point of discussions surrounding world literature, Alexander Beecroft (2008) maintains that two common theoretical starting points for both Casanova and Franco Moretti's theories are Immanuel Wallerstein's paradigmatic

world-system theory and Fernand Braudel's concept of *économie-monde* (87). This seems to be the case especially for Moretti, as while summarising Wallerstein's world-system as it applies to capitalism, in his oft-cited essay 'Conjectures on World Literature', Moretti (2000a) applies the same model to his conception of world literature as a system:

> international capitalism is a system that is simultaneously *one*, and *unequal*: with a core, and a periphery (and semiperiphery) that are bound together in a relationship of growing inequality. One, and unequal: *one* literature (*Weltliteratur*, singular, as in Goethe and Marx), or perhaps better, one world literary system (of inter-related literatures); but a system which is different from what Goethe and Marx had hoped for, because it's profoundly unequal (55-6).

Using his methodology of distant reading, an analysis of historical and literary critical studies rather than the novels and authors themselves, Moretti (2000a) concluded that there was always a compromise between the foreign form (his example being the Western novel) and local materials (the local cultural milieu) (60). He later acknowledges, however, that considering the variable influence of the West across the rest of the world as well as the heterogeneity of global cultures, it is not surprising that the world literary system would be a system of variations (Moretti 2000a, 64). It is from this realisation that literature functions as one at a global level, that Moretti adopts two historical metaphors to describe the forces at work in cultural history, which create this hierarchy of inequality in the world literary system. The first metaphor is that of the *tree* which describes a diversifying force, and the second the *wave*, which is a unifying force.[33] In this sense, world cultural history oscillates in an evolutionary way between these two mechanisms of uniformity and diversity. The modern novel is nothing other than a case study[34] which acts as a wave, carrying with it the collective symbolic hegemony of the West (but predominantly Anglophone and Francophone traditions), which attempts to make uniform the literary world system, and yet encounters resistance and is transformed by the tree branches of local cultures[35]. In a contemporary sense, waves of innovation are carried by commercial trends and markets and trees represent the forms which nation-states cling to for their own (oftentimes outdated) notions of identitary authenticity.

Despite Moretti's occasional allusions to the unequal system of symbolic hegemony, neatly divided into centre, periphery, and semi-periphery, there is very little inroad made into

[33] 'The tree describes the passage from unity to diversity: one tree, with many branches: from Indo-European, to dozens of different languages. The wave is the opposite: it observes uniformity engulfing an initial diversity: Hollywood films conquering one market after another (or English swallowing language after language) (Moretti 2000a, 67).

[34] According to Christopher Prendergast (2004) and Efraín Kristal (2002), Moretti (in 'Conjectures...') overstates the significance of the novel as a model or rule, as the same conclusions cannot be drawn for other literary genres. However, they misinterpret Moretti's use of the novel as '[a]n example, not a model; and of course my example, based on the field I know (elsewhere, things may be very different)' (Moretti 2000a, 58, and Moretti 2003, 73).

[35] 'Think of the modern novel: certainly a wave [...] but a wave that runs into the branches of local traditions, and is always significantly transformed by them' (Moretti 2000a, 67).

the reasons that the West, in a literary sense, maintains such an elevated position and is the predominant origin of forms. In the growing polemic surrounding Moretti's intervention, Efraín Kristal (2002) in 'Considering Coldly . . . ' argued for a (more utopic) conceptualisation of the world literary system, where Europe does not have a monopoly over predominant forms, but instead where forms are studied in their movement in several directions from centre to periphery, from periphery to periphery, and sometimes nowhere (73-4). However, Moretti (2003a) argued in response, that in the case of the European novel 'hardly any forms 'of consequence' don't move at all; that movement from one periphery to another (without passing through the centre) is almost unheard of; that movement from the periphery to the centre is less rare; but still quite unusual, while that from the centre to the periphery is by far the most frequent' (75-6). Moretti (2003a) argues, basing his conclusion on the work of Even-Zohar, that due to the greater amount of resources at the centre, writers at the centre are more likely to produce innovative forms than those on the periphery (76-77).

Despite Moretti's explanation, it only further begs questions regarding the kind of resources he is indicating whether they be economic or commercial, publishing or distribution resources and the nature of the connection between these material resources and the resulting artistic and symbolic creativity. Furthermore, there arises the difficulty in accounting for those somewhat miraculous (in this conceptualisation) formalistic innovations occurring in peripheral spaces without these material resources. As Mabel Moraña (2006) argues,

> [i]n regard to Moretti's proposals, the trees and maps don't discover the logics of the *forest*: the complex relations and variables between literary institutionalism and nation-states, in other words the relationship of groups of trees with a material and symbolic territoriality which contains it[36] (328).

Many questions such as these go unexplored, and Moretti (2003a) has so far only offered an argument from probability, stating that '[t]he model proposed in 'Conjectures' does not reserve invention to a few cultures and deny it to others: it specifies *the conditions under which it* [innovation] *is more likely to occur*' (77).

Whilst Beecroft (2008) is correct in stating that Casanova and Moretti's models describe (albeit using different lexicon) a form of Wallersteinian centre and periphery model (88), Anglophone and Francophone letters for Moretti and what Casanova terms the literary Greenwich Meridian, this power game is understood in different ways. Casanova's use of the term Literary Greenwich Meridian relates directly to this concern, put simply it is 'the criteria of the literary present' (Casanova 2007, 353), that is, her conceptualisation of a globally

[36] 'En cuanto a las propuestas de Moretti, los árboles y mapas no llegan a descubrir las lógicas del *bosque*: las relaciones complejas y variables entre la institucionalidad literaria y los estados nacionales, o sea la relación del conjunto de árboles con una territorialidad material y simbólica que la contiene' (Moraña 2006, 328).

orientating literary point of reference, analogous to the way in which time zones are organised in reference to Greenwich Mean Time (a concept which will be explained in more detail below). As such, while Beecroft's may be an accurate assessment of Moretti's theorisation, the same is not necessarily true for Casanova's theory. Speaking to Moretti's use of Wallerstein's terminology, Casanova differentiates her terms from world-systems theory by preferring 'world structure' for a number of reasons. The hierarchical structure of world literary space is characterised by Casanova as resulting from the unequal distribution of literary resources, the unequal literariness of languages, the unequal concentration of material resources in the production and distribution of literature, all of which have a bearing on the autonomy of a national literary space, its symbolic capital, and its consecratory authority. Firstly, while a system for Casanova implies direct interactive relations between all elements within the system, which might be the case for ancestral rivalries between national literary titans such as England and France, this may not necessarily be the case for all relations within the international space. Rivalry is relational, between nations that define themselves in relation to one another and in direct competition with one another, but competition is also structural or generalised due to the unequal global structure of power and the collective *illusio* of the Greenwich Meridian of literature (Casanova 2011, 129). Thanks to the Greenwich Meridian of literature, Casanova (2005) maintains that the structure of the literature-world is 'characterized by objective relations, which can operate outside of any direct interaction' (81).

In understanding this concept, it is useful once again to look at how Casanova implicitly relies on Bourdieu's model, and particularly here on his concept of the *illusio*, which he describes as the substructural belief in the literary game: '[t]he struggles for the monopoly of the definition of the mode of legitimate cultural production contribute to a continual reproduction of belief in the game, interest in the game and its stakes, the *illusio*—of which the struggles are also the product' (Bourdieu 2017, 227). Casanova (2005) explains this important interaction in her model in the article 'Literature as a World' when she states: '[l]iterary space in all its forms—texts, juries, editors, critics, writers, theorists, scholars—exist twice over: once in things and once in thought; that is, in the set of beliefs produced by these material relations and internalized by the players in literature's Great Game' (82). This second understanding of a structure over a system acknowledges that whilst direct interaction between the literary Greenwich Meridian and the least endowed literary region might be quite restricted, the very hegemonic structure and the *illusio* which determines the symbolic value of a literature (e.g. its out-datedness, anachronism or modernity) makes its presence felt, nonetheless.

Related to this conceptual difference between system and structure, Casanova (2005) argues, that within Moretti's argument, forces struggling against the system are considered anti-systemic, or they struggle from a position 'outside' the system, while in her world structure it is precisely the literary struggles which constitute, change, unify, and drive the expansion of the world literary structure (81). In other words:

> [l]iterary space is not an immutable structure, fixed once and for all in its hierarchies and power relations. But even if the unequal distribution of literary resources assures that such forms of domination will endure, it is also a source of incessant struggle, of challenges to authority and legitimacy, of rebellions, insubordination, and, ultimately, revolutions that alter the balance of literary power and rearrange existing hierarchies (Casanova 2007, 175).

The categories which Moretti adopts from world-systems theory which divide the world into a spatialised hierarchy of centre, periphery, and semi-periphery, while present in Casanova's work can be understood less as theoretical or typological conceptual terms and more as terms which have become a common taxonomy for discussing hegemony and subordination. Nevertheless, to further nuance her model, Casanova (2007) adds to the global complexity unified "national" spaces within nations which demonstrate a considerate level of autonomy in the absence of political independence, such as the region of Catalonia in Spain, Quebec in Canada, and Martinique, the overseas region of France in the Caribbean (104 and n.49 393). Nevertheless, while Casanova acknowledges the existence of intra-national spaces, she does not sufficiently explore the structures of regional spaces separate to linguistic spheres, such as Latin America or the Caribbean (a concern which will be discussed further in section 3.1.1).

Aside from the obvious spatialised aspects in the formulation of a literature-world loosely organised around linguistic and national boundaries which contribute a spatial dimension to the inequality in world literary space, Casanova (2007) argues that a 'temporal law' further constructs inequality by the correlation between antiquity and capital. The temporal law maintains that '*it is necessary to be old in order to have any chance of being modern or of decreeing what is modern*' (Casanova 2007, 89). In other words, for Casanova, a fundamental aspect of this structural hierarchy is organised around the antiquity of literary traditions which are claimed by the national community. In this sense, the vernacularising and nationalising of literatures in Europe when oral histories were literarised and they were defined and appropriated by the nation, were phases in the accumulation of literary capital to bolster the nobility of national patrimony in a bourgeoning competitive world literary space. Casanova (2007) proposes that, similar to Greenwich Mean Time, the arbitrary line which all time zones are measured in relation to and which organises the *real* world, the literature-world has its own Greenwich Meridian of literature which determines the present of literature or the literary modern (88). Once again, this Literary Greenwich Meridian exists both in *thought*, through the

illusio regarding what represents the global modern or the "world" which writers project[37], and in *things* as it constitutes and transforms literary production through structural relations to the rest of world literary space.

This is why Casanova (2007) relies as much on the history (evidence of *things*) and testimony (evidence of *thought*) to demonstrate Paris' centrality as capital of capitals and prescriber of the literary Greenwich Meridian during its uncontested period of the 19th Century (90). Through a series of processes of literary and linguistic revolt, French unseated Latin as a cosmopolitan and eventual global language of domination, even to a certain extent becoming denationalised and representative of culture and artistic production more generally[38]. The *illusio* of the centrality of Paris and its capacity to define the Literary Greenwich Meridian, is supported in Casanova's (2007) detailing of appraisals of the capital by writers such as Victor Hugo (24 and 88-9), Georg K. Glaser (25), Danilo Kis (27), Paul Valéry (27), Octavio Paz (28), Juan Benet (28), Rubén Darío (32-3), Gertrude Stein (88); recognition of the unique role of its literary milieu in the formation of writers such as Samuel Beckett (128), James Joyce (128), Alejo Carpentier (232-3), and again Rubén Darío (96); and its mediation in the consecration of some of these and other writers such as William Faulkner (131), Jorge Luis Borges (128) and the writers of the Latin America literary Boom: Julio Cortázar, Mario Vargas Llosa, Carlos Fuentes and Gabriel García Márquez (166).

As was suggested above, despite the literary resources and capital being associated with the nation, they are also associated with language. The adoption of classics into the canon of

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[37] Instead of positing an actual yet unseen literature-world, the Latinamericanist and world literature theorist Mariano Siskind (2014) hypothesises the "world" as a purely discursive space, produced through the projections of cosmopolitan desire by marginal writers, which they use to imagine non-nationalistic strategies toward literary modernisation. Despite Siskind's theorisation of this space within strictly discursive parameters, it, nevertheless, bears similarity with the *illusio* of the literary world and its geographic assemblage formulated by Casanova:

> the signifier "world" that enabled this fantasy exists only as the discursive instance that assures the imaginary fullness of a cultural-political identity that organizes its discourse around master signifiers of universal equality and justice. In other words: the world does not exist, or rather, it does not preexist the acts of imagining it, naming it, and acknowledging the ways in which it constitutes *my* cosmopolitanism. Throughout this book, the "world" in world literature and ideas like "the production of the world" should be understood as the phantasmatic projections of cosmopolitan desires onto a variety of a priori undecidable geographical assemblages that may or may not coincide with the territoriality of existing conventional institutions of national or regional sovereignty. The "world," then, is the imaginary ground where Latin American cosmopolitan writers work through the traumatic aspects of the question of modernity, inscribing their modernist subjectivity in their universality' (Siskind 2014, 10).

[38] In the earlier period of contestation and codification revolutionaries such as du Bellay (1522-1560) challenged Latin with French and encouraged an appropriation of classic texts into French. Later François de Malherbe (1555-1628) attempted to liberate French from purely imitating these written languages and affirm its distinctive oral uniqueness and Claude Favre de Vaugelas (1585-1660) contributed to French's *literarisation* by defining the standard "proper speech" in Court as the model for writing (Casanova 2007, 57-62). And in the 17th and 18th centuries, during the long reign of King Lois XIV, the French language continued to grow in dominance and spread throughout European Courts as the language of civility and diplomacy (Casanova 2007, 67-8).

national literatures, Cervantes in Spain, Shakespeare and even *Beowulf* in England, Dante in Italy, granted the very national languages an associated credit, or literariness (Casanova 2007, 17). This idea continues to perpetuate the *illusio* that European languages are more literary languages than those which lack this patrimony, showing how the temporal law applies to both national and linguistic dimensions. Casanova (2007) maintains that the literariness of languages which she describes as 'the power, prestige, and volume of linguistic and literary capital', also contributes to the literary capital of texts produced or translated into them (21). In this sense, for writers lacking literary resources 'critical recognition and translation are weapons in the struggle by and for literary capital' (Casanova 2007, 23).

In regard to this point, Casanova relies on the political sociologist Abram de Swaan's argument that the centrality of a language can be evaluated by the quantity of polyglots who speak it—a selection which Casanova argues also rests on a specific *illusio* relating to linguistic prestige[39] (2013). However, for Casanova (2007) (modifying this argument), the literariness of a language is not measured by the number of writers it has or the number of readers it has (this would lead to a model where a greater population of writers and readers would be equal to a greater literary capital), but rather literariness is measured by the number of 'cosmopolitan intermediaries' such as publishers, editors, critics, translators, who circulate texts into languages and out of them (21)[40], and dependent on a 'professional milieu' of cultivated publics and press, a competitive publishing industry, and an interested and literate bourgeoisie (15). As Casanova (2013) elaborated later: '[t]his is why the dominant language is also the one favoured in all translations, both in projects translating into the language in question as well as those translating from it into another one' (380).

In similar terms, the Latinamericanist Jean Franco (1969) comments of this kind of literary dependence between Europe and Latin America, at both the economic and literary level: '[a]lthough at first sight economic dependence may seem alien to literary culture, the two cannot be altogether separated. An 'under-developed' country is not only economically under-developed but has fewer schools, poorer universities, more limited publishing facilities'

[39] In her article 'What Is a Dominant Language?' Casanova (2013) argues that the practical (not absolute) inequality among languages can be explained, in part, due to the *illusio* generated around prestigious languages: '*"Prestige comes from the Latin* praestigium, *meaning, according to Larousse, "imposture, illusio," or "illusio produced by magic or a spell," thus "ascendancy, enticement, attraction, charm. It is a sort of power based on illusion"*. It becomes clear that all world languages have been affected by this difference […] There is a dominant language if (and only if) speakers believe in the difference' (379-80).

[40] And once again when Casanova (2007) states: '[t]ranslation, like criticism, is a process of establishing value [...] Critics, like translators, thus contribute to the growth of the literary heritage of nations that enjoy the power of consecration: critical recognition and translation are weapons in the struggle by and for literary capital' (23).

(357). In this sense, Casanova also inscribes material or politico-economic factors, similar to Bourdieu's field of power, such as past colonialism, publishing power, and other factors such as dictatorship which contribute to the autonomy of a particular national literary space[41].

An additional factor in the composition of literary spaces, and also determinate of a particular national literary field's capital along with its antiquity and linguistic capital, is its autonomy. While the vernacular stage of literary development in Europe represented an autonomisation of the literary space in so far as writers were freed from the constraints of Latin and the politico-religious influence of the Catholic Church, the connection between the people, the nation, and its literature brought about by the 'philological-lexicographic revolution' and the Herder effect, contributed to another type of constraint on literary autonomy: the national cause or identity[42] (Casanova 2007, 69). It is in this sense that Casanova continues to build on and expand Bourdieu's literary model. As was described above, for Bourdieu, writers can be categorised according to their position in the literary field as either heteronomous writers (subject to external principles) and belonging to the sub-field of mass production, or autonomous writers (beholden only to themselves or the demands of art) who belong to the subfield of restricted production. These positions in the literary field have disparate commercial outcomes, as literature belonging to the subfield of mass production is synonymous with popular literature, and that belonging to the subfield of restricted production, despite being more innovative, is commercially less successful (at least initially).

Casanova appropriates these terms to create poles to classify world literary space into autonomous or heteronomous spaces. Autonomous spaces are where writers can create literature free from the demands of national or popular themes or even the concerns of political realities. In literarily endowed spaces, authors experience a greater literary autonomy, as a literary national character has already been long established and all writers are no longer demanded to fulfil this political function. This sort of literary freedom is an advantage for the most literarily endowed spaces, or dominant literary spaces, which also act as loci of

[41] 'For a national literary space to come into being, a nation must attain a true political independence; but because the newest nations are also the ones that are the most vulnerable to political and economic domination, and because literary space is dependent to one degree or another on political structures, international forms of literary dependency are to some extent correlated with the structures of international political domination' (Casanova 2007, 81).

[42] 'To the extent that it was the ultimate consequence of the enterprise inaugurated by du Bellay and the humanists against the supremacy of Latin, it can be understood as a first step in the direction of autonomy for European literary space as a whole. Having succeeded in escaping the influence and domination of the church, it remained for writers—this would be the work of the eighteenth and, especially, the nineteenth century—to free themselves first from dependency on the king, and then from subjection to the national cause' (Casanova 2007, 69). And also: '[w]ith the advent of this new politico-literary pole, constituted in opposition to the autonomous pole, the whole of world literary space came to be structured around two antagonistic sources of attraction' (Casanova 2007, 105).

consecration. Heteronomous spaces, on the other hand, or dominated spaces, are where literature is strongly beholden to various (thus hetero-) religious, political and commercial demands, and also the expectations and evaluation by the dominant literary spaces and capitals (Casanova 2007, 114). This is especially the case with later entrants into connectivity with the rest of world literary space, such as decolonised nations, who in attempting to compete at an international level by creating space for themselves (separate from their coloniser), create a distinct national literary identity (Casanova 2007, 221). Writers from the newest literary spaces incorporated into world literary space seek to establish a unique national literary identity which requires a discussion of popular and national themes, what Casanova calls a *functionalist aesthetic*. It is only later, once a certain literary space has been formed, that a literature with greater freedom from national constraints can develop (Casanova 2007, 200).

As such, it is possible to read and understand the content of literary texts in relation to their place in world literary space, and their participation in or abdication of this nationalist function. Once again, Casanova is borrowing from Bourdieu's theory of fields when she chooses the typologies of dominant and dominated, highlighting the foundational inequality that arises through international competition (Casanova 2005, 80 footnote). As such, in a critical field which Casanova (2011) understands as having descended into binary oppositions between *great* and *small* as conceived by Kafka, *mature* and *immature* as conceived by T.S. Eliot, *young* and *ancient* by Mauss, *minor* and *major* by Deleuze and Guattari (133), she makes clear that her description of national literary spaces ought to be understood as a continuum:

> it is not sufficient to imagine a simple binary opposition between dominant and dominated literary spaces. One would do better to speak of a *continuum*, for the many forms of antagonism to which domination gives rise prevents a linear hierarchy from establishing itself (83).

She also considers median spaces as a middle ground within this continuum, which she defies relationally as literary spaces which have neither the same level of literary autonomy as the dominant but more literary prestige and autonomy than the dominated (Casanova 2007, 277). It is in this category that Casanova (2007) places small European nations and linguistically dependent regions such as North America and Latin America (282).

It is in this respect that the Argentinian scholar Graciela Montaldo (2010) criticises Casanova's argument. for creating a model where each literary space must occupy its designated place in this unequal structure, and for only focusing on this vertical trend of autonomisation in her analysis (125). Ganguly (2012) similarly argues that the structures of the Casanova's world literary space uncritically place French literature as always universal and all other literature as caught up between these polarities of heteronomy and autonomy (257). However, as much as it might appear as though world literary space is on a continued linear

track toward increased autonomy and that the world structure is fixed, Casanova (2007) argues that world literary space is a place of unceasing struggle at the international and national levels, and that even if the unequal distribution of literary resources naturally favours the reproduction of the same hierarchies, it is the very struggle which disrupts and rearranges those existing hierarchies (175). To support the idea that the profound inequality of literary space is not an immutable structure, she uses the example of Latin America which she defines as a remote literary space at the commencement of the 20th Century, but which by the middle of the century was a region with a global literary recognition (Casanova 2007, 184-5), and which now has a number of internationally celebrated authors, bestsellers, and Nobel Prize winners. Thus, despite the challenges which dominated literary spaces experience, the possibility of increasing a nation's literary prestige and its autonomy exists.

Furthermore, it must be clarified in respect to Ganguly's critique, that in Casanova's model the centre as much as the periphery is subject to the polarities of heteronomy and autonomy. Casanova (2007) uses the examples of certain nationalist writers, academics, and critics from dominant literary spaces who strengthen the national pole due to their artistic conservatism: 'within spaces having the greatest endowment of literary resources, one encounters writers (often academics if not also academicians) whose work lags years behind that of their compatriots; as believers in the eternal nature of conventional aesthetic forms, they go on endlessly reproducing obsolete models' (101). A contemporary vestige of the durability of the national pole can be argued today with the growing concern regarding France's national identity and the republic's future, demonstrated in such literary texts as Houellebecq's *Soumission* (2015) and Sansal's *2084: la fin du monde* (2015), written in the light of an increasing rate of Muslims immigrants and recent acts of terror by Islamic extremists. As such, even in dominant literary national spaces, France included, the national pole or political pole remains powerful[43].

Additional to the heteronomous pole, Casanova adds the commercial pole in her sketching of the contemporary state of world literary space, as another force conspiring against literary innovation and autonomy. The commercial pole exerts its force through a concentration of publishing control in international publishing corporations more interested in short term profitability, increased number of titles, and the promotion of homogenous reading publics

[43] Further rebutting Ganguly's claim, alongside the constant tension between heteronomous and autonomous poles at the national level which Casanova affirms (2007), she also cites some exceptional examples—such as the impact of the Nazi occupation of France during the Second World War, and the dictatorships of Salazar in Portugal and Franco in Spain—, as demonstrative of this reduction in autonomy, but also of the precarity of a dominant space's autonomy (194-5).

across the globe (Casanova 2007, 169-71). These changes to the conditions and objectives of production, Casanova (2007) maintains, have a profound effect on the autonomy of all literary spaces (both the dominant and the dominated) as well as the content of books (169-171). In this regard, Casanova (2007) criticises what has commercially become known as 'world fiction'[44] or 'world literature' which Casanova considers denationalised texts which circulate across the globe in translation which repeat 'tested aesthetic formulas' and are 'designed to appeal to the widest possible readership' (171). A much earlier and far less sinister reading of this kind of world fiction is given by Albert Guérard's (1940) when he defines world literature as the bestsellers of today as well as the perennial good-sellers, or in other words, an understanding of world literature as the canon of all the world's "best" literature enjoyed ideally by the whole world but in a practical sense mostly by the West.

Similarly to Casanova, however, Pedro Ángel Palou, inspired by other 'peripheral' writers in his situation such as Dubravka Ugrešić, is also critical of the current state of literature on a global scale. For Palou (2006), the commercialisation of literature (of which he recognises Spanish publishing houses are among the global leaders), has led to a lack of aesthetic criteria (314). Commercial world literature largely produced in centres where this commercial pole has taken hold, for Palou (2006), produces and repeats themes, modes and content (314). While the commercialisation and marketing of "world literature" by transnational publishers might seek to create collections of denationalised authors and texts for a homogenous reading public, in a paradoxical sense at a national level, the commercial pole also acts in favour of the traditional national divisions of the literary world by creating reading publics within national spaces and functioning as an 'avatar' of the national pole (Casanova 2007, 169). In dealing with the question of national literature and the cultural industry in the increasingly globalised world, Juan Poblete (2006), in line with George Yúdice (but also Casanova, Moretti and Bourdieu), argues that

> [f]ar from being a finite or predetermined group of texts (with certain forms, themes and styles), national literature is a varied group of practices (some written, others not) which are the result of the labour of multiple agents in a circuit which includes material production (discursive representation on the part of the authors, and publishing-commercial on the part of the publishers), circulation (promotion and distribution) and consumption/reading[45] (289).

[44] Within this body of literature, Casanova (2007) considers 'novels of academic life by internationally known authors such as Umberto Eco and David Lodge, for example, as well as neocolonial sagas (such as Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy*) that adopt all the familiar devices of exoticism [...], updated versions of mythological fables and ancient classics that place a recycled "wisdom" and morality within the reach of everyone and books that combine travel writing with aspects of the adventure novel' (Casanova 2007, 171), although a very recent and intense manifestation of this phenomenon is undoubtedly Paulo Coelho.

[45] '[L]lejos de ser un conjunto finito o predeterminado de textos (con ciertas formas, temas y estilos), la literatura nacional es un conjunto variado de prácticas (algunas escritas, otras no) que resultan de la labor de múltiples agentes en un circuito que incluye la producción material (representacional discursiva por parte de los autores y

Poblete, in a sense, describes the mechanisms at work within the commercial/national pole where there are a variety of actors and machinery at play, from the individual writers, to editorial marketing and distribution as well as how readers receive works geared at their particular national sensibilities.

These increasingly complex interplays and intersections of the political and commercial worlds into the literature-world make the contemporary world literary structure increasingly complex, more so than the periods of the 19th and early 20th centuries which Casanova details in her analysis. She goes on to specify how particularly the commercial pole has had an effect on more established literary spaces,

> [z]ones of dependency can no longer be identified solely with literarily deprived national spaces. They can also now be observed in the oldest national fields, where the appearance and consolidation of an increasingly powerful commercial pole has profoundly altered publishing strategies, affecting not only patterns of distribution but also the selection of books and even their content (Casanova 2007, 169).

Palou (2006), in response to this state of affairs, and in agreement with Ugrešić, professes his belief that it is the periphery which in its position of greater autonomy from commercial aesthetics, modes and themes, can create an original literature as yet undiscovered by the West (314), clearly a nod to Borges' 'El escritor argentino y la tradición' (1957). While Casanova (2009) does not go as far as to provide predictions regarding the future of literary innovation, she does make a similar suggestion that oftentimes the most dominated writers are those who are the most creative in their search for autonomy[46].

Nevertheless, even the forces of the commercial pole emphasise the conflict and hierarchies inherent to the literature-world. This is fundamental to Casanova's model, as she argues that the literary world needs to be interpreted as 'the product of antagonistic forces rather than as the result of a linear and gradually increasing tendency to autonomy' (2007, 109). These antagonistic forces, in brief, are the *centrifugal* (national) force which works to enclose national literary spaces from each other, the *centripetal* (international) force which opens up national literary spaces to extra-national form and aesthetic innovation, and the commercial forces which threaten literary autonomy by transforming the literary landscape of production, dissemination and readership. In addition to all of the publication and discourse machinery

editorial-comercial, por parte de los editores), la circulación (promoción y distribución) y el consumo/lectura' (Poblete 2006, 289).

[46] 'Confronted with these strange forms of domination, writers—at any rate the most lucid ones, that is to say often the most dominated and, often because of this, the most innovative—have developed a set of (aesthetic, theoretical, linguistic) strategies, all of which are ways of waging a literary struggle against these forms of literary dependence' (2009, 128).

mentioned above, writers are also influenced and participate in these heteronomous and autonomous forces.

2.2.5 The agents of the literature-world

Within Casanova's model, writers are key agents within this competitive and relational structure. They can be classified according to their responses to their unique situations and also in relation to the kind of space they inhabit. In median and dominant spaces, national and international writers inscribe the same poles that structure the boarder world literary space within their own national fields (Casanova 2007, 108). This is a theorisation which arises from Bourdieu's (1993) construction of the space of literary and artistic positions: '[t]he literary or artistic field is a *field of forces*, but it is also a *field of struggles* tending to transform or conserve this field of forces' (30). For Casanova, "national" writers valorise a national conception of literature (local aesthetics and norms or out-dated forms) which contributes to the closing-in of their national literary space. This national pole is globally conceived by Casanova (2007) as a centrifugal force directed towards the division of literatures along essentialised differences by which a self-enclosed national literary space can be conceived and sustained (108-9).

Opposed to this national pole are "international" writers who valorise an autonomous conception of literature unencumbered by national concerns and open to international modes of innovation and modernity (Casanova 2007, 108, 280). It is this category of writers which theorists such as Mariano Siskind (2014), have further developed the study of world literature through his conceptualisation of cosmopolitanism and the "world" in world literature. Siskind (2014) characterises these cosmopolitan writers as those who sought modern aesthetic forms "elsewhere" beyond their national literatures:

> [w]hether "elsewhere" was France, a general idea of North Atlantic and Mediterranean connections that they called "Europe" or "*Occident*," or a vaguely defined space of conceptual universality dominated but not exhausted by European or Western culture, this signifier of exteriority was a blank screen upon which cosmopolitan writers projected their aesthetic desires and their longing to participate in the actualization of modernity, a historical task open to anyone with a modern aesthetic sensibility (8).

Casanova does not theorise this category as fully as she should, instead focusing on practical case studies of agents whom she considers as participating in various ways in this literary sensibility. Nevertheless, she does explore the effects of this literary disposition at the macro-level, in how it affects the literature-world. These writers, through their internationalising outlook and literatures strengthen the international pole, a force which Casanova (2007) considers the centripetal forces that work at a global level to continue the unification of world literary space and time (109).

However, the situation is altogether different in dominated literary spaces where the "national" author is, in fact, somewhat paradoxically—as Casanova (2007) acknowledges—, working for the independence of his or her national space, by carving out its own distinctive literary and cultural identity (279). In this respect, the "national" writers of the dominated space can represent the first generation of a new literary space, the 'fomenters of the first literary revolts' who, by defining a unique literary space, create the possibilities of conformity with this tradition, à la "national" writers, or revolt as is the case with "international" writers (Casanova 2007, 327). It is in this sense, that other literary critics, such as Ángel Rama (2007 [1984]), considered the impact of *novelas transculturadoras* (transcultural novels)—namely those by Rulfo, Arguedas, García Márquez and João Guimarães Rosa—in how they harmonised the apparent contradiction between the universal form and the particular local content, creating a popular national and regional aesthetic. These texts did not isolate themselves entirely through an exaggerated literary specificity, nor deny their particularity in favour of cosmopolitan integration, they instead formulated a literary strategy based on a synthesis of the two, the product of which function to both give character to Latin American letters, as well as be a sign of its literary modernisation acceptable and laudable in the most important centres of the literature-world. A number of writers would perpetuate the installation of this tradition and cultural horizon for some time until its gradual degradation and eventual pronouncement of death by a series of polemics at the end of the 20th Century, most forcefully by the appearance of el Crack and *McOndo* in 1996, a process which will be discussed in the case study chapters.

Despite Casanova's central literary and intellectual position in Europe, Casanova positions her analysis on the side of writers on the extremities of world literary space and details a number of case studies which demonstrate the alternative paths which writers have taken to triumph on a global level—hence, the majority of her case studies concern a vertical ascent in autonomy. The following categories invariably apply to her category of 'international' authors as they all look beyond their national literary space and make profound changes both within and beyond these spaces. *Assimilation* is an option for writers from predominantly literarily impoverished regions who instead of choosing to contribute to the creation of their own national space choose to assimilate themselves into a more dominant space by writing in another language or self-translating (Casanova 2007, 207)[47]. *Differentiation* is the route chosen

[47] In this category of assimilationists, Casanova's (2007) case studies include: V.S. Naipaul (Trinidad to England), Henri Michaux (Belgium to France), E. M. Cioran (Romania to France) and later in her specific discussion of the Irish case, George Bernard Shaw (Ireland to England).

by writers who manufacture a distinctive national literary identity in order to form a separate literary space from the coloniser or linguistic power, and gather literary credit to enter into global literary competition. They achieve this through a variety of ways: such as Herderian methods of auto-ethnology[48] (Casanova 2007, 223); importing literary metrics, expertise and techniques from closer to the Greenwich Meridian of literature (Casanova 2007, 232); or creating linguistic difference through a distortion of the language (Casanova 2007, 284)[49]. The final category of writers are the *revolutionaries*, who transform, renew, or destroy the literary order by undermining the forms and codes accepted at the Greenwich Meridian of literature and what is considered modern and defining new parameters and hierarchies in the process (Casanova 2007, 326). For Casanova, the revolutionaries of world literary space *par excellence* are James Joyce and William Faulkner, two of the most influential literary figures of the 20th Century, whose modes and styles were adopted for local literary purposes across the globe and even of particular importance to the writers of the Boom in Latin America, as Gerald Martin (1989) has argued.

However, for some critics, Casanova appears to be circumscribing authorial motivations as simply a search for visibility, global fame or the desire to enter the pantheon of universal literature 'as if his/her vision of the world would not also be deeply affected and motivated by a protest before the lived and observed injustices of his/her nations and in Latin America in general'[50] (Vidal 2006, 251). Hernán Vidal (2006) details the great implicit and explicit concern which Latin American cultural (and literary) scholars in the United States have had with the frustrated history of Latin America and how they have attempted through various waves of research to position themselves politically on the side of the oppressed (215). As such, in response to this apparent narrowing of authorial motivation which he interprets in Casanova's theory, Vidal (2006) proposes a hermeneutics of Human Rights which would analyse in the history of humanity the moments of liberty and persecution through an analysis

[48] 'In much the same spirit as the great populist and national surveys of folklore in Europe conducted in the wake of the "philological revolution" of the nineteenth century, intellectuals and writers in countries created by decolonization in North and sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America began to construct a literary heritage in the twentieth century, this time on the basis of a new version of the German model, reshaped by ethnological research and devoted to measuring, analyzing, and converting into written form popular practices that until then had been deprived of national and cultural recognition' (Casanova 2007, 226).

[49] In this differentiationist category Casanova's case studies include: Latin American literature (Rubén Darío, Arturo Uslar Pietri, Alejo Carpentier, Octavio Paz, Mário de Andrade); Spain (Juan Benet); the African continent (Mouloud Mammeri, Mouloud Feraoun, Kateb Yacine, Daniel Olorunfemi, Ngugi wa Thiong'o); The United States (Gertrude Stein) and Canada (Michel Tremblay in the Québécois community); and, Ireland (John Millington Synge).

[50] '[C]omo si su visión de mundo no estuviera también profundamente marcada y motivada por la protesta ante las injusticias vividas y observadas en sus naciones y en Latinoamérica en general' (Vidal 2006, 251).

of written texts as symbolic manifestations or chronicles of the experience during these cycles of history (226). Gabriela Montaldo (2010) similarly critiques both Casanova and Moretti stating that their models treat literariness as the only purpose or strategy of literature (119)[51]. However, as was mentioned above, writers beholden to political struggle and concerned with discussions of national themes and identity, are those classified by Casanova as "national authors", those authors beholden to a numerous and varied gamut of heteronomies placing extra-literary demands on their work: whether they be political, human rights, or concerns around national/regional identity.

While Casanova places an overwhelming emphasis on international authors and in particular the literary revolutionaries who create texts defined by their autonomy (perhaps the cause of this critical confusion), in regard to this question of political literature, she occupies less of her book to analyse authors who demonstrate particular political or national preoccupations. However, to purport that Casanova's model reduces *all* literary interventions to strategic literary innovation and advancement is to misinterpret the fundamental Bourdieusian categorisation between heteronomous and autonomous writers, which Casanova clearly adopts. For Casanova (2007), within less autonomous literary spaces, concerns regarding national identity permeate the literary sphere via national authors concerned with how the nation is represented in text and, in attempting to define a national identity through literature, contribute to the understanding and narrative of the nation even if this means contradicting or criticising them (192). In Casanova's description of the onset of national literary spaces (which largely relies on European and post-colonial case studies), in which the national narrative is a substantial creative force or "duty" affecting the creative position-takings of authors, Casanova does not openly discuss what it is that supports the continuation of national literary concerns once a literary national identity has been established. Casanova (2007) does explain, however, that '[t]he national writer manages to prosper in every part of the world only through the reproduction (and the consolidation in many forms, particularly commercial ones) of poles that are not merely national but nationalist, conservative, traditional' (280). It can be deduced then that for Casanova, this very national identity discourse (and sometimes regional) has been and continues to be a central preoccupation for many writers in

[51] 'En los textos normativos—más que teóricos—de Casanova y Moretti se tiene la impresión de que ambos leen la literatura y los textos de los escritores sobre su propia práctica, como si la *literalidad* fuera la única estrategia de la literatura' (Montaldo 2010, 119). For Sánchez Prado (2006b), an example of this very narrow interpretation of literary motivation is the way which Casanova treats the author Alfonso Reyes: '[p]ara autores como Reyes, la literatura no era una estrategia de incorporación al mercado internacional, sino un intento de afirmación de ciudadanías culturales' (31).

world literary space, including in Latin America, precisely because the national narrative becomes a popular genre through which the nation understands itself, or in other words, a continual literary incarnation of national identity discourse.

In regard to Casanova's treatment of authors in her work, however, despite having borrowed considerably from Pierre Bourdieu's theory of fields, Casanova places very little emphasis on the *habitus* of the particular author in relation to their position-takings within their literary space—something which could have further prevented the above misreadings regarding authorial intention. It is an area of great importance, as the very motivations behind literary creativity and strategy are left largely unexplored in the exposition of her method in *The World Republic of Letters*. In respect to this, therefore, a great number of questions can arise regarding what leads an author to pursue the assimilationist, differentiationist or revolutionary route, or take up predominantly political or national concerns in their narration, and the bearing which authorial *habitus* has in mediating this. Nevertheless, in her book-length study of Franz Kafka, *Kafka, Angry Poet*, Casanova (2015) explored in great depth some fundamental elements of the author's *habitus*, such as his intellectual marginality (100), his clash with paternal authority (102), his bureaucratic career and political *habitus* (108-9), and his complicated identity as a germanised-Jew in Prague favourable to Eastern Judaism but ambivalent toward Western Zionism (112-22). However, if we are to read *The World Republic of Letters* in a valid fashion (measuring it by its purported aims and not our desire for exhaustive and infinitesimal detail), then we should acknowledge that it is a theoretical work intended to prove the existence of the literature-world via the ubiquitous inductive evidence from the historical development and unification of literary spaces, the laws and *illusios* of this unequal structure, and support for these through the testimony of writers from across the globe. Casanova acknowledges the limited nature of her work in discussing all of the literary geographies she has mapped in her world structure in greater detail, and this is precisely why the world literature critical project must necessarily be a collective one: to develop theoretical models analogous to the concrete realities which we study as literary critics.

Conclusion

As such, Casanova's theory and methodology, as detailed in this chapter, can be understood more completely, and responses can be given to some of the critiques made of her model through a greater appreciation of its Bourdieusian roots. This is particularly evident in respect to the significance of the *illusio* and *habitus* given primacy in Bourdieu's *Rules of Art*, and to a less overt extent in Casanova's Literary Greenwich Meridian and recourse to authorial

testimony, but also rigorous study of *habitus* in works such as *Kafka, Angry Poet*. Toward the end of *The World Republic of Letters*, Casanova (2007) dedicates a chapter of the Irish case study, as an exemplary case study to provide an outline of her process and the breadth and depth of what is demanded by her methodology (304). Although not to the same extent as the Irish case, Latin America represents another of the regions which is given considerable attention in Casanova's work. Now that Casanova's model has been detailed, it is important to analyse what position Latin American literary space, its authors and their development is accounted for within Casanova's theorisations, as well as critically explore how Casanova has been understood and responded to in this academic space.

Chapter 3: Casanova and Latin America, Latin America and Casanova

3.1.1 Latin America in Casanova

Casanova's account of Latin American literary history is not an ordered nor a complete account, but rather draws from a few specific periods as case studies to strengthen her arguments relating to the various literary contexts and strategies of authors across the globe, as if to demonstrate (via induction) the existence of the literature-world and her understanding of its laws, structures, and a variety of literary strategies. This analysis brings her to describe Latin America's literary chronological ascent from an impoverished literary region, to the creation of a distinct literary identity, leading into the complex literary period of the late 20th Century.

At the beginning of Casanova's (2007) account, she draws on the work of Antônio Cândido to describe a literarily impoverished region, in large part due to material factors such as high rates of illiteracy (and consequent limited readership), and modest diffusion due to a lack of publishers, libraries, magazines and newspapers (which consequently complicated the possibility of literary professionalisation) (16). By once again relying on Cândido, Casanova (2007) asserts how in some literary spaces which are relatively backward in comparison to the Greenwich Meridian of literature, Latin America included, anachronistic literary forms and styles may still be celebrated (100). She uses the example of naturalism in narrative fiction, which in Latin America saw particular use throughout the 1930s and 1940s and which had since been abandoned by literary innovators of more literarily modern spaces. As is evident in Latin America's historic identity discourse, the region has inevitably defined itself (and has been defined) relationally to Europe. It is in this same sense, for Casanova (2007), that ethnographic literary styles such as naturalism or *costumbrismo* attempt to define Latin America's cultural identity and literary difference not through aesthetic differentiation but by the very representation and content which depicted an exotic continent (100).

Casanova (2007) argues, that the beginning of Latin America's literary modernisation, or approximation to the Greenwich Meridian, came by way of the Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío (1867-1916), who despite hallowing from the peripheral region of Central America, by appropriating the literary avant-garde in Paris was able to 'renovate' Spanish letters (96-7). As Sylvia Molloy (1972) concurs from a Latin American perspective, 'Rubén Darío's poetry was the first serious attempt to give Spanish-American literature the right to occupy a space

among Western literatures'[1] (66). In terms of form, Darío applied the metaphors, sensations, synaesthesia, and musicality of the French poetic vanguards of the Parnassian and Symbolist poets, and incorporated them into his Spanish poetry (Orrego Luco 1921). Within Casanova's (2007) model, however, far from only celebrating pure aesthetic innovation such as Casanova's case studies of Joyce, Beckett and Faulkner, this type of appropriation and renovation (which Casanova also details in the cases of Danilo Kis, Georg Brandes, Octavio Paz and Juan Benet), is celebrated as a robbing of literary wealth from more dominant regions, a literary act which functions to accelerate literary time and contributing to the literary prestige of their own national literary spaces (326). It is in this sense, that she summarises Darío's "renovation" comparatively with the Dane writer Georg Brandes:

> [t]hey were not so much revolutions as an attempt to bring literature up to date. They imported to the regions that until then had been far removed from the Greenwich meridian upheavals that has already occurred in the center and that made it possible to measure literary time. Moreover, they gave these regions the assets they needed to enter world competition at once by offering them access to the latest aesthetic innovations—in each case through gigantic diversion of literary capital. Though the authors and critics behind these modernizing movements could not themselves be hailed by Paris as innovators, they contributed powerfully to the unification of literary space by introducing a measure of autonomy in their regions through the model of Parisian modernity (Casanova 2007, 99-100).

For Casanova, Darío, through his appropriation of the most modern literary forms and innovations in Paris, brought Spanish-American letters closer to the Greenwich Meridian of literature, closer to literary modernity and, in so doing, further enriched and ennobled the literariness of the Spanish language. Furthermore, the influence of the Parnassian and Symbolist poets and their motto "art for art's sake" helped renovate Spanish-American poetry, not merely through formalistic appropriation, but also through a broadening of the space of works, such that a more autonomous poetry outside of the realist, national and anachronistic aesthetic demands placed upon literature became possible. This would have the effect of autonomising the poetic genre much before the narrative one, which for the proceeding decades continued to combat the mimetic duty or representational quality of the text in respect to the national culture or setting.

One such aspect of Darío's trajectory which Casanova passed over, however, is his scaling of the literary hierarchies within Latin America. Prior to Darío's arrival in Chile and during his time in Nicaragua and El Salvador, Rubén Darío was already acquainted with classical literature and the work of recent classics such as Victor Hugo through his association with the Salvadoran poet Francisco Gavidia (1864-1955). However, it was in the intellectually

[1] 'La poesía de Rubén Darío […] fue el primer intento serio por darle a la literatura hispanoamericana el derecho a ocupar un lugar entre las literaturas occidentales' (Molloy 1972, 66 [as cited in Guerrero 2007, 23]).

active environment of Chile that he was introduced to modern French poets such as Stéphane Mallarmé, Paul Verlaine, Theodore de Banville, Sully Prudhomme, as well as other notable literary figures of time including Émile Zola, Edgar Allan Poe, and Oscar Wilde. The few years which Darío spent in Chile (1886-1889), were the beginning of his developments of the poetic style which would define Pan-Hispanic *modernismo*. As Nicaragua was a literarily underdeveloped and politically unstable region, it could not provide the same internationalising publication and dissemination machinery which economically and literarily more advanced national spaces such as Chile, where he published *Azul* (1888), or Argentina, where he published *Prosas profanas y otros poemas* (1896), could offer.

Casanova (2007) is aware of the paradoxical nature of Latin American literary space. She states: '[s]till today the special interest of the Latin American case resides in the concentration of literary capital not only within a national space but within a continental one as well' (Casanova 2007, 234). While she demonstrates an awareness of this paradox in *The World Republic of Letters*, she does not interrogate further how this regional space is structured in relation to its constitutive national spaces: is Latin American literature all literature produced in these national territories, or is it a separate category of international authors who transcend their national frontiers and operate at the supranational and prestigious category of Latin American authors? In this sense, Casanova mostly appears to treat Latin America as a unified and intelligible region, rather than breaking it into its constitutive nations, as she does with her references to writers and regions within other continents, such as Africa and Asia. However, in a later work, in which Casanova (2009) theorises the potential space of European literature, she explored further the category of supra-national structures within the world literary space:

> [a]side from the national units, which are relatively autonomous entities, we also find intermediate, supra-national structures, which manage to accumulate resources on a linguistic or cultural basis. These are linguistic areas, linguistic-cultural areas and supra-national areas such as, for example, the Hispano-American space. Each is organized according to a hierarchy, and it reproduces the same structure of domination as the world space, only on a smaller scale, and thus perpetuates the opposition between one or several dominant centres, and dominated regions less endowed with specific capital (127).

What Casanova theorises as such, is an intermediary space which functions not so much as a totality of the literature produced in the Spanish-speaking nations of Latin America, but instead, a selective and exclusive literary region of constructed linguistic and cultural unity. While Casanova does not interrogate the nature of this space beyond the national dependence in regard to Spain and Portugal (and Europe more broadly), this modelling does permit a consideration of the geoliterary inequality and dependency within the region itself—giving

greater form to this elusive regional literary space which remains largely undefined in her studies[2].

Later in her analysis, Casanova turns to Latin America's narrative production, to highlight a particular example of literary revolt and demonstrate the increasing autonomy of the region in general terms. She cites Alejo Carpentier's letter 'América ante la joven literatura europea' (America in the face of young European literature) (28 June 1931), and even Miguel Ángel Asturias' development of 'realismo mágico' (magical realism), as calling for a genuinely Latin American expression or sensibility in response to the tradition of imitative literature dating from the 19th Century until approximately the 1940s (Casanova 2007, 222-3). Casanova (2007) considers these intentional acts of literary rebellion, suggesting that in median spaces such as Latin America at this time are part of 'the process of enrichment [which] operates by diverting a central patrimony in various ways, through the importation of canonized texts and literary techniques, the designation of new national literary capitals, and so on' (223). This kind of enrichment and importation of literary techniques would, in the case of Carpentier, be related to his dialogue with the surrealist movement in Paris during the 1930s, an aesthetic which he characterised in the prologue to his nouvelle *El reino de este mundo* ([1949] 2008), as artificial in light of the genuinely marvellous reality which inspires the real marvellous narratives of Latin America[3]. The creation of *lo real maravilloso* (the real marvellous) or *realismo mágico* (magical realism) would, within a few decades, culminate in the so-called Spanish-American literary Boom with which it became associated. It would come to entertain a global readership through translation, receive canonisation in Paris and across the globe. However, while magical realism would even be considered a new literary instrument elsewhere around the globe[4], yet it would still contribute to a particular understanding of the identity of the continent which would later come to be theorised as a *macondismo* fundamentalism.

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[2] This work will attempt to more clearly define this in-between literary space in its modern 20th Century form in Chapters 4 and 9.

[3] While not being reductive of Carpentier's literary influences, as clearly his narrative assimilations were varied and ambitious in their ethnography, musicality, and experimentation. However, the influence of surrealism on Carpentier can be conceived as a simultaneous assimilation and rejection of this technique in order to renovate Latin American letters, as Casanova has maintained. Anke Birkenmaier (2006) argues that '[n]o había, por tanto, contradicción entre la renovación de la cultura cubana intentada por Carpentier y otros en los años cuarenta y su contacto con el surrealismo francés. El distanciamiento carpenteriano del surrealismo en su famoso prólogo a *El reino de este mundo* fue, más bien, nominal, un gesto retórico que sirvió para formular una estética explícitamente latinoamericana que, sin embargo, se había desarrollado en diálogo con el ambiente intelectual francés' (20).

[4] It is in this respect that one can understand the specifically literary meaning behind Homi Bhabha's famous pronouncement regarding magical realism was 'the literary language of the emergent postcolonial world' (cited in Hart and Ouyang 2005, 1).

Casanova (2007) argues, that this represents a moment of revolt in Latin American literature against European letters and therein a proclamation of literary autonomy. A generation of authors—Borges, Asturias, Carpentier, Rulfo, Juan Carlos Onetti—were at this time beginning to escape the national and regional constraints, as well as more general aesthetic novelistic constraints on their work (Casanova 2007, 325). However, the obvious must be restated, that the Spanish-American literary Boom—which was the global commercial success of many varied literary figures from across Spanish America—was not reducible to magical realism, but instead is a commonly mistaken conflation with this literary style exhibited most archetypically in the Colombian Nobel Laureate (1982) Gabriel García Márquez's bestsellers, as well as his Postboom followers, such as the oft-cited Laura Esquivel and Isabel Allende. Casanova (2007) makes this abundantly clear, highlighting the strategic role of publishers in the packaging of the Boom authors as representative of 'regional stylistic unity' and the 'product (or so it was supposed) of a common Latin American character' (234-5). Despite the commonplace inaccurate conflation between the Boom and magical realism, this nevertheless functioned to fix in global circulation a singular Latin American narrative character, something necessary within Casanova's model for global recognition, but which *McOndo* and a whole series of generational proposals would later attempt to address at national levels as well as at the level of Latin American literary space.

Beyond this historical moment in the literary autonomisation of the Latin American literary space, Casanova (2007) adds only a few short remarks regarding its contemporary state:

> [t]oday one observes the continuing growth of a literary space on an almost hemispheric scale, with intellectuals and writers engaging in dialogue and debate across the border of their native countries, defending political and literary positions that are invariably both nation and continental (235).

Despite its significant and wide-ranging contribution, Casanova's research, unfortunately, does no account for the profound literary and structural shifts beyond the Boom of the 1960s and 1970s. However, after this period, Latin America experiences enormous changes in the political-economic, cultural, and literary worlds. In a purely material sense, Latin America experienced profound economic and political transformation due to the adoption of development ideologies and neoliberalism. Numerous countries experienced the rule of harsh dictatorships and repressive regimes, or even civil wars, as well as profound sociocultural change brought about by globalisation, among many other unique changes relative to localities and histories. From a literary perspective, these social, political and economic changes were also accompanied by parallel literary transformations having the effect—at least in the Southern Cone in particular, where dictatorships were most common during this period—of

fracturing many literary spaces between domestic production, which suffered under censorship and unstable publishing conditions, and the external production, spearheaded by the bestseller success of literary exiles who had fled to mostly Europe and the United States. Added to these structural political conditions, are the shifting literary and commercial politics and mechanisms brought about by the *bestsellerism* of the Boom and Postboom, the editorial balkanisation of the region, increasingly political literatures and the use of allegory, irony and parody in social critique (Nemrava 2014), and not long after, an increasingly intermedial literature in response to the growing influence of popular culture such as music, cinema, and television.

This selective history of the Latin American case study illustrates how Casanova uses evidence from a variety of histories and settings to demonstrate, via induction, the existence of her theorised world literary space, the pronouncements she makes regarding its structures, and the strategies which authors have employed to confront their literary contexts. However, while it must be noted that it is by no means the task of this thesis to attempt a similarly ambitious analysis of the periods not covered in *The World Republic of Letters*, both previous to and after Casanova's largely 20th Century historicising, nevertheless, the question remains whether Casanova's model can be applied to those literary periods with the room for augmentations possible within her developing theory and methodology. It is in this respect that it is worth noting some of the contestations which critics from the Latin American context have raised in regard to Casanova's treatment of the region.

3.1.2 Omissions and gaps

A number of Latin American critics have been correct in noting a number of information gaps which, depending on the magnitude of omission, in the best of cases present possible unexplored routes, and in the worst of cases eschew Casanova's argument and the validity of some of her conclusions. These unexplored routes and Casanova's particularly French perspective on world literature, in part, cause her to develop an incomplete history of Latin American letters and present a partial perspective on the development of national literatures in Europe.

While Casanova's history of the literisation and literarisation of European languages is both informed and useful in understanding her argument (based on Anderson's), of how literatures developed alongside nationalistic struggles, it does more to present the case for how the French language became the language of literary modernity rather than to provide a more nuanced interpretation of history, more attentive to highlighting the very competition inherent to the world literary structure which Casanova equally affirms at other time periods. Casanova

omits Anderson's important discussion of how the republicanism of Spanish-American countries[5] predate African, Asian or even European conceptions of nationhood, a fact which could represent a further nuancing of Casanova's narrative of Latin America's literary development. Furthermore, as Sánchez Prado (2006b) rightly asserts, an even earlier origin of the development of vernacular languages—on which Casanova places great emphasis on du Bellay's *La deffence et illustration de la langue françoyse* (1549) as a prime example—should be Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* (1303-4), which predates du Bellay's by a little over two centuries. The postcolonial critiques which suggest that this origin ought to consider extra-European, pre-Columbian and Chinese literature (Ette 2015, 339), seem even more incapable of understanding what Casanova's, perhaps improperly worded, *meaning* is here. As has been noted, Casanova is not detailing the universal history of literary production nor is she constructing a theory which would be capable of explaining this (as Alexander Beecroft building off Moretti, Casanova, and Damrosch has), but rather, she details the specific history which have led to Paris's centrality: the French language's vernacularisation, nationalisation and artistic significance in the eras of the 18th and 19th centuries. Despite Dante's proclamation not being parallel to the development of the nation-state (which is the reason why Casanova dismisses this as the origin), there can be no denying that at this time France was not the literary forerunner in the bourgeoning European literary competition.

It is also in this respect, that Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters* does not detail the very literary innovation occurring in other parts of Europe in this time period which would work to give greater complexity the structural process described by Casanova. For example, it was in Italy that Petrarchan poetry developed during the Renaissance and spread forthwith throughout the world, and it was in Spain that the picaresque novel has its origin with Cervantes' *Don Quijote*, published in 1605. Furthermore, Casanova omits the fact that the Spanish language began its vernacularising thrust far prior to French, with Antonio de Nebrija's grammar published in 1492. These omissions sketch a distorted picture within Casanova's structure, which she describes as inherently competitive and yet, in the struggle to make her case for the centrality of the French language in literature and the consecrating power of Paris, does not sufficiently narrate the complexity of the competitive development which did, in effect, lead to this state of affairs in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.

[5] Anderson (2006) explains that as the territories which later became the separate 18 Spanish-American republics had basically been units of colonial administration for centuries, a conception of the nation was already present in a nascent sense and later transform into republican fervour with increasing anti-colonial sentiment which culminated in the creole independence movements of the 19th Century.

These kinds of omissions are repeated in regard to the history of Latin American letters. Casanova begins her analysis with Rubén Darío, something which Gustavo Guerrero (2013) and Françoise Perus (2006) have noted diminishes the significance of the literary production prior to this specifically Parisian connection[6]. Despite this point, Guerrero (2007) does acknowledge that Darío should be considered the beginning of Latin American letters' international reception, but, however, that this is an altogether different moment to the origins of Latin American literature in general. In leaving out a number of key developments before Latin America's literary internationalisation through Darío, Casanova overlooks significant areas of her analyses of the development of European national spaces, their reaching back in time to ennoble their literatures, all which was occurring in similar sense in the Americas.

It must be stated, however, that even if these literary histories are not referenced in Casanova's analyses, this invaluable historical work can be assimilated into Casanova's well-founded theorisations to further complicate the Casanovian account of Latin American letters. For example, Casanova (2007) uses the case studies of Greece and Mexico (as well as highlighting how this may also be applicable to other nations such as Egypt and Iran) as examples of spaces which reach into a discontinued history to reclaim and add to their cultural or literary patrimony (235-45). For Latin America, Casanova (2007) cites Carlos Fuentes' consideration of the continuity of the continent's identity from the antiquity of the pre-Columbian civilisations put forward in *El espejo enterrado* (The Burried Mirror), as an attempt to similarly gather capital from the past for the cultural and literary ennoblement of Latin America (241).

In a similar fashion, in the 19th Century, Andrés Bello fixed Chile's literary origins in the epic poem *La Araucana*, written in the 16th Century by the Spaniard Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga (1533-94). Bello (1883) even compared this text to the *Odyssey*, the *Iliad* and *Aeneid*, an act which appears to affirm Casanova's temporal law, as well as enact the appropriating of literary patrimony through the construction of parallels between one's own literature and that which holds universal literary credit. Furthermore, Andrés Bello acted as a preeminent foundational figure for Chilean and Latin American letters long prior to the literary internationalisation through Darío in the 20th Century. He worked towards the literarisation of

[6] Perus (2006) lists the colonial chronicle tradition by the Spanish colonisers, the "hidalguización" (or creolisation) of Spanish letters which were the attempts made by colonisers to differentiate their narration from the oral language and the narration of the Conquista, and the literature of the independence processes which attempted to appropriate national themes and traditions such as the oral *gaucho*, *llanero* or indigenous traditions for the consolidation of the nation, all which represent a significant literary tradition which cannot be denied (168-9).

American Spanish through his *Gramática de la lengua castellana: destinada al uso de los americanos*[7] (Grammar of the Castilian Language. Intended for the use of Americans) (1847); the development of a regional literature through his poetry[8]; and, the construction of a literary milieu in 19th Century Chile with his contributions to the educational and publishing sector[9]. Work like this not only fills lacunas in the Casanovian account of the region's literary development, but could provide explanations for the inequality within the Latin American literary space due to the varying grades of literary antiquity, production, innovation and infrastructure between literary nations such as Mexico, Argentina, and Chile, in particular the two former, which have traditionally been the spaces with the great symbolic credit, when compared to other more peripheral spaces.

Further to these historical omissions, Casanova's analyses are limited to only a few Latin American authors whose works she uses to clarify certain literary activities and positions. It is in this vein that Mabel Moraña criticises Casanova's model for, in effect, choosing the literary case studies which best support her argument—such as Rubén Darío, Octavio Paz, the writers of the Boom—and leaving aside those who she claims would contradict her paradigm, such as Rulfo, Arguedas and Onetti. While, unfortunately, Moraña does not clarify in what way she would consider these authors irreconcilable with Casanova's model, Ignacio Sánchez Prado (2019) has similarly argued that the organisation of the world-system between central

[7] In *Gramática de la lengua castellana: destinada al uso de los americanos*, Bello reaches into the peninsular patrimony of the Spanish language of the Americans through extensive citation of historically significant writers, especially Cervantes, and even contemporary Spanish writers. However, he simultaneously provides a modern linguistic *descriptive* defence of the linguistic specificity and diversity of the Spanish of the Americas, disestablishing a hierarchical understanding of linguistic diversity between peninsular and American Spanish, such that: 'Chile and Venezuela have as much right as Aragon and Andalusia to have their occasional divergences tolerated, when they are supported by the universal and authentic use of educated persons' (Bello 1998d, 102). In so doing, Bello, through his Grammar and other essays, not only attempted to retain linguistic ties with peninsular Spanish, the language of Cervantes, and other older literary figures which endow the language with literary credit, but also standardise and literarise the Spanish of the American republics, to facilitate regional commerce, dialogue and unity, and arguably the creation of Latin American literary space.

[8] In the same way that the German neo-classicists like Goethe challenged the dominion of French through the translation of Latin and Greek classics into German and the appropriation of their forms for their own creativity (returning to one of Casanova's cases), Bello, through his poetry—specifically works like 'La alocución a la poesía' ('Allocution to Poetry', 1823) and 'Silva a la agricultura de la zona tórrida' ('Ode to Tropical Agriculture', 1826)—praises the agricultural specificity and wonder of the Americas, on the one hand, but on the other hand, utilises the poetic metrics considered universal patrimony, such as those of the Greeks and the Romans, to ennoble the literature of the Americas.

[9] Bello was the founder and rector (1843-1865) of Chile's first university, La Universidad de Chile, one of the fundamental infrastructures essential to the building of a national 'professional "milieu"' (Casanova 2007, 15) of a cultivated public, teachers, literary academics and critics, and writers, all which develop and ennoble a national literary space. In fact, in Bello's inaugural lecture as rector, he made clear this national end: '[a]ll of the paths that the work of its faculty and students must follow converge on one center—our country' (Bello 1998c, 132). Notable among Andrés Bello's other contributions to the Chilean intellectual environment, is the creation of his newspaper *El Araucano*, which within a bourgeoning print media culture, fostered intellectual debate and discourse further creating this environment and establishing him as a preeminent public intellectual.

modernism and peripheral (magical) realism by Moretti and others such as the Warwick Research Collective (2015) is contested by 'writers of Latin American transculturation and rural modernisation'[10] such as Juan Rulfo (138). These critiques not only suggest that Casanova and a number of these theorists are not arguing *a fortiori* to demonstrate better the validity of their models, but also, that they are not supporting their research with the materiality and praxis necessary for reliable theory. If this were the case, then Casanova would not be arguing using the least favourable case studies, and by assimilating them into a study thereby constructing a more formidable and reliable model, but would instead be culpable of selecting those authors which are the recognisable figures of the Latin American corpus within her own national space and thus work best to demonstrate a particularly French interpretation of the literature-world. However, this is the nature of the kind of positive evidence in an inductive case for the existence of the literature-world, apparent exceptions and anomalies would naturally need to be explored once a theoretical edifice has been constructed, or else no theoretical edifice would ever eventuate.

Sánchez Prado (2006b) also argues, in his reading of Casanova's model, that one of its blind spots is the literary creativity which finds its way not only into cosmopolitan regional circulation but also into the United States and Europe without prior "discovery", recognition and distribution from the centre, 'the formative process of peripheral literature and its passage through non-European readership channels cannot be described starting from a model which always requires reference to France'[11] (29). However, this is only the case if one interprets her model as prescriptive of certain literary trajectories, such that the centre and Paris, in particular, is the only locus of proclamation, rather than merely one very powerful among many capitals, involved in the complex international mechanisms of literary recognition. While it is true that almost—but not—all of Casanova's examples lead back to Paris, this is once again in relation to supporting her claim that Paris was, for the majority of the periods covered in her history, the most symbolically significant capital of capitals, which even the most sceptical critic could admit was true for much of the 20th Century. Even Guerrero (2013) has acknowledged, to Casanova's credit, that Latin America has historically had a tendency to understand itself preferentially in its relationship to France over Spain[12], something which Casanova's detailing

[10] '[E]scritores de la transculturación y de la modernización rural latinoamericanas desafían esta idea' (Sánchez Prado 2019, 138).

[11] '[E]l proceso de formación de la escritura periférica y su paso por circuitos de lectura no europeos no pueden ser descritos desde un modelo que requiere siempre la referencia a Francia' (Sánchez Prado 2006b, 29).

[12] 'Me refiero a la idea de que el campo literario reproduce el mismo modelo político que hace de la influencia de la ilustración francesa un factor decisivo en nuestra independencia de la Península y que permite a Francia

of World literature through a *French Connection* appears to ascribe to[13] (a critique which will be discussed further in Section 3.2.2). However, Casanova could have further complicated this structure by providing more case studies of literary recognition apart from any Parisian involvement, such as with her case study on the Trinidadian writer V.S. Naipaul, whom she considers an assimilationist writer for seeking exclusively English recognition. However, the presence of exceptions opens up her model to the possibility of further examples of writers who have carved their own literary trajectory and who only later, perhaps, are celebrated in the literary capitals of the dominant regions of the literary world.

Such could even be argued to be the case precisely with Juan Rulfo, who as early as 1957, long before his later association within the region as precursor to the innovations of the Boom, was recognised by Roger Caillois as an important addition to his *La Croix du Sud* collection. This catalogue, founded by Caillois in 1945 within the leading French publisher Gallimard, had the intention—in their view—to discover and translate for the French reading public the most notable and innovative voices from Latin America. It was in this collection which authors such as Adolfo Bioy Casares, Jorge Luis Borges, Alejo Carpentier, José María Arguedas, Ernesto Sábato, and Lidia Cabrera would be published in France. Casanova emphasises throughout her theorisation how translation is a significant mechanism in the unification of world literary space, and particularly for writers from less literarily endowed nations, it functions as an opportunity to seek boarder audiences by being translated into a language of greater diffusion and symbolic currency. It is for this reason that in Casanova's (2007) model the literary history often overlooked, such as those mechanisms external to the author's text, or 'the process of consecration and *littérisation*—authorized by critics and carried out by translator—is always passed over in silence, forgotten or simply ignored' (142).

However, in Rulfo's case, despite amassing enormous significance across Latin American literary space (even being a fundamental influence on García Márquez's work), his novel and short story collection were largely unrecognised in the French capital for a number of decades, largely due to what has been considered by Gustavo Guerrero as a poor original

realizar, en nuestros países, el alto destino que le asigna la *traslatio imperii* de Roma y su condición de nueva patria de todos los latinos' (Guerrero 2013, 113).

[13] In passing, Casanova (2007) does acknowledge this ascent to Paris in the developing literary milieu at national levels through the establishment of literary magazines with a close connection to the French capital: '[a]lmost from the beginning foreigners came to Paris to demand and proclaim political independence for their homelands while at the same time inaugurating national literatures and arts […] Organs of the émigré press calling for national independence in their various homelands proliferated, among them *El Americano* (founded in 1872), which championed nationalist causes in Latin America, *La Estrella de Chile*, and *La República Cubana* (1896), organ of the Cuban republican government established in Paris' (31).

translation into French of his short story collection *El llano en llamas* (The Plain in Flames). The Venezuelan scholar and editor Gustavo Guerrero (now the director of Gallimard's Spanish collection for the series *Du Monde Entier*) explained the continual editorial attempts to introduce Rulfo to the French reading public as follows:

> Severo Sarduy attempted it before me. In 1993, he published *El gallo de oro* and other texts for cinematic adaptation, but they didn't work. It was very decontextualized. I was working in Gallimard as a reader at that time. It hurt me very much that that text hadn't helped reawaken interest in Juan Rulfo in France, but I didn't get discouraged. Some years later, when we decided to relaunch *El llano en llamas*, the idea came about to ask for a preface from Jean Marie Le Clézio. That French writer, who had lived some years in Mexico, is very loved in France. With the book recently published, his name attracted many people. And soon, of course, Rulfo's short stories were valued in their own right and they prevailed among readers[14] (Guerrero 2006).

As is evident in Guerrero's response, Rulfo, who had already been recognised among Latin American scholars and writers (including those already valued in Paris), had not yet received literary recognition in France, a place where Caillois, the Cuban editor Severo Sarduy and even Guerrero himself—as active participants and imbuers of literary value—desired his celebration, due to the collective belief or *illusio* that recognition in Paris was merited for a writer of such quality and standing within Latin America and beyond. In this sense, a recognition of Juan Rulfo's parallel linguistic and international recognition, as well as a decades-long, but eventual, recognition in French literary circles need not necessarily deny Casanova's model, but adequately shows the sometimes tumultuous journey which writers experience when translated into different contexts and languages despite having already achieved success in other literary spaces, as well demonstrating the significant role of editors and translators in the international literarisation of authors and texts.

Another marginal figure in Casanova's work is the Argentinian Jorge Luis Borges, an omission which a number of Latin American critics have criticised (Sánchez Prado 2006b, Guerrero 2013). In Casanova's (2007) *The World Republic of Letters*, Borges is cited only a few times as either an example of an author celebrated in France (128), an international author according to her typology (280), and translator of authors (specifically Hart Crane, E. E. Cummings, Robert Penn Warren, and William Faulkner), in order to modernise the literary creativity of his national and linguistic literary space (135). In relation to this scarce analysis of one of the most prominent figures in 20th Century literature, critics such as Ignacio Sánchez

[14] 'Severo Sarduy lo intentó antes de mí. En 1993, publicó *El gallo de oro* y otros textos para cine, pero no funcionó. Salió muy descontextualizado. Yo trabajaba en Gallimard como lector en ese entonces. Me dolió mucho que ese texto no hubiera ayudado a despertar de nuevo el interés por Juan Rulfo en Francia, pero no me dejé desanimar. Algunos años más tarde, cuando decidimos volver a lanzar *El llano en llamas*, surgió la idea de pedir un prefacio a Jean Marie Le Clézio. Ese escritor francés, que vivió años en México, es muy querido en Francia. Recién publicado el libro, su nombre atrajo a muchísima gente. Luego, por supuesto, los cuentos de Rulfo se valieron por sí solos y se impusieron entre los lectores' (Guerrero 2006).

Prado and Gustavo Guerrero have argued that both Casanova and Moretti are incapable of accounting for a writer such as Jorge Luis Borges who, despite having fascinated French intellectual circles, was highly critical of the thematic expectations dictated by Europe which he understood as post-war attempts to re-define European coloniality/modernity in the light of the alterity of the rest of the world (Guerrero 2013, 117-8). It is precisely because of this 'collapse of a modern-colonial paradigm'[15], as Sánchez Prado (2006b) puts it, that culturally and politically marginalised subjects, Borges included, can intervene to such an extent in the centre, he adds, 'Borges does not enter into literary modernity. He destroys it'[16] (33).

Nevertheless, in Casanova's chapter on revolutionaries, in which she details the case studies of William Faulkner and James Joyce and the special role which they have had in reducing the distance that separates writers in dominated spaces from the Greenwich Meridian and the establishment of new parameters and hierarchies, she adds that Borges is a necessary addition to this category. She explains in a footnote: '[h]ere I propose only a very partial study of a few heretical genealogies. To the list would have to be added in particular the name of Jorge Luis Borges, recognized as a master by a great many novelists both in the center and on the periphery' (Casanova 2007, 399). In this sense, despite not qualifying her conclusion, apart from an acknowledgment of global significance among writers, Casanova conceives of Borges as a revolutionary figure, and although she does not make it explicit, it can be understood that, much like her other two prominent revolutionary figures in Joyce and Faulkner, Borges also contributed to the creation of a more *present* present, through a distortion and renovation of the literary Greenwich Meridian or destruction of literary modernity as we knew it (as Sánchez Prado rightly affirms), which in turn has provided writers all the world over with new tools in their literary creativity and struggle.

3.2.1 Casanova in Latin America

The reception of these world literature theories and methodologies has been in many senses critical, and Latin American critics have participated significantly in responding to these theories that take Latin American literatures as quasi-paradigmatic case studies by pointing out their theoretical issues, inherent biases, and methodological problems[17]. I have already

[15] '[A]gotamiento de un paradigma moderno-colonial' (Sánchez Prado 2006b, 33).

[16] 'Borges no ingresa a la modernidad literaria. La destruye' (Sánchez Prado 2006b, 33).

[17] One notable exception to this generally contestatory critical reception among Latin Americanists is Par Kumaraswami and Antoni Kapcia's recent book *Literary Culture in Cuba: Revolution, Nation-Building and the Book* (2012) which resembles an application of Casanova's theory and methodology within the historical and national parameters of Cuba's revolution from 1959 to the present.

discussed some of the critiques made by Latin American critics in regard to Casanova's unexplored understanding of literature and in relation to her purportedly uncritical aesthetic/universal hierarchisation of literature. While I dedicated part of the previous chapter to a comparative analysis of Casanova's, Moretti's and Beecroft's models, I will be dealing here with the reception of Casanova's theory and methodology in a Latin American critical context, in regard to three particular aspects.

Firstly, Latinamericanists have raised theoretical concerns with Casanova's model: that by purporting to construct a global literary space, Casanova actually details a particular French perspective on the development and structure of world literature.

Secondly, many Latin American critics have been critical of the reduced significance and relevance of political and economic hegemony in the determination of Latin America's literary subordination, criticising Casanova's separation of the politico-economic and literary worlds.

Finally, Latin American scholars have expressed their concern with the continually assumed roles within global literary criticism: theoretical and model building reserved for the Euro-American academies, and mere commentary and correction on the part of scholars on the periphery—a critique which concerns the broader debate on epistemological geographies and the decolonial option.

3.2.2 Theoretical concerns

I have already presented the cultural relativist critique made by the Uruguayan critic Hugo Achugar (2006) regarding Casanova's understanding of universal and valorisation of a "Western" understanding of universal literature and literary figures (as underpinned by Western aesthetics and modernity). Essentially, Achugar claimed that what is considered universal is decided by the dominant and is not in the strict sense universal, but rather that literatures seen from a particular cultural perspective are *universalised* and everything else is measured according to that standard. I have also pointed out that this critique aligns as much with a number of Casanova's critiques as with her own critical position-taking on the side of the less dominant literary nations.

Nevertheless, this critique of Casanova has additional, more convincing, standpoints. One example is the Venezuelan critic Gustavo Guerrero's (2013), who despite acknowledging that while Casanova is critical of the ethnocentrism and exoticism that are a part of the tastes which dictate what is valued and consequently celebrated in the literary capitals, critiques Casanova's naïveté for not recognising that, instead of detailing a genuinely "global" literary

network, she has only detailed the Latin American literature which has had a specifically 'French Connection', by drawing on writers and works which have coincided with the French capital. Notwithstanding the fact that Casanova managed to provide an ambitious bibliography of literatures from such distant and varied territories (including Latin America, the Caribbean, The United States, Canada, Eastern Europe, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Japan and, the Indian sub-continent), nevertheless, Christopher Prendergast (2004) rightly notes, that 'the study of 'world literature' [...] can't mean *all* the literatures of the world' (footnote, 9). Ottmar Ette (2015) frames Casanova's theorisation as a kind of centralisation and hierarchisation in one's own image:

> [e]verything is judged from one single point, dominated by one single logic. The world is transformed into an extensive territory which is situated in time and space before a single centre and oriented towards a single and "naturally" European modernity, which, in turn, ought to function within the same values and criteria, within the same forms and (even more so) norms […]. *The World Republic of Letters* is an extremely centralised state, only capable of recognising one time, one space, one modernity and one norm[18] (339).

The majority of authors referenced in Casanova's work have a connection, either explicitly or implicitly through their affirmation or rejection of European models; through their adoration of Paris; or for either having lived or having been celebrated in Paris and more broadly Europe.

In one sense, this distinctly Parisian and European connection is understandable, as Casanova's concern is with detailing the mechanisms of world literary space (not solely national literary spaces), whose hegemons have been defined as the literary nations of Europe and Paris, the capital of capitals, and determined the paths to international diffusion, recognition and universal consecration. Furthermore, she is most especially concerned with the strategies of international authors who have sought and received wider reading publics in these centres and beyond their national spaces. However, in another sense, as Prendergast (2004) argues, Casanova's very hypotheses regarding the literature-world skews the picture in favour of the centrality of Europe; 'the inclusions and omissions, as well as the distribution of emphasis in the discussions, constantly return us is one way or another to the shores of the *Vieux Continent*' (footnote, 9). In brief then, the question of whether it is even theoretically possible to 'put oneself in the position of "the world" and look and read from there'[19] (Montaldo 2010, 120), is critiqued by revealing the very partial and culturally specific purview

[18] 'Todo resulta enjuiciado desde un solo punto, dominado a partir de una sola lógica. El mundo se convierte en un extenso territorio que debe situarse en el tiempo y en el espacio ante un único centro y que debe orientarse hacia una única y, "naturalmente", europea modernidad, la que, a su vez, debe funcionar bajo los mismo valores y criterios, bajo las mismas formas y (más aún) normas […]. La *République mondiale des Lettres* es un estado sumamente centralizado, sólo capaz de reconocer un tiempo, un espacio, una modernidad y una norma' (Ette 2015, 339).

[19] '[P]onerse en el lugar de "el mundo" y mirar o leer desde allí' (Montaldo 2010, 120).

of Casanova's case studies (a critique equally applicable to Moretti, or perhaps even Damrosch's claim regarding world literature as a perspective for the reader). As Sánchez Prado (2006b) has correctly recognised, all the world literature theories in recent times have unknowingly posited a specifically national perspective of world literature, as was described by Moulton (and Étiemble[20]): 'every world literary system is based on a cultural positioning à la Moulton which places in the foreground the critical interests of a certain national or linguistic perspective'[21] (30). Thus, more than trace world literature, Casanova's study unknowingly replicates an understanding of world literature as defined by her European and particularly French criticism. This was something which Casanova (2008) eventually would come to concede, that in her attempt to respond to the pure criticism of the French critical tradition, she would inadvertently replicate a similar universal conception as seen from the French perspective:

> In other words, I realise today that I was—how could I have purported to escape?—a product of the structure which I had described: to be spontaneously and resolutely inclined, by the mere fact of my French identity, to meddle in the affairs of the literary universal[22] (xvi).

Paradoxically, Guerrero (2013) argues that Casanova, despite having unknowingly represented a very central European reference list of internationalised authors, by denationalising the capital of Paris, has not allowed her study to examine fully the specifically Parisian mediation in the canonisation of texts and authors, due to a singular French Parisian perspective, taste and evaluation. This kind of reflexivity would require an ethnographically conscious deconstruction of the Eurocentric literary values and the Parisian publishing, editorial and critical machinery, as contributing and mediating the recognition a number of generations of Latin American writers (Guerrero 2013, 116). As a consequence, Guerrero (2013) argues that a change of perspective is needed to go 'beyond the myth of universal essence, [which] would permit a redescription of France and its society, with its peculiarities and characteristics, in the framework of the strategies, logics, and beliefs which feed its

[20] In Étiemble's analysis of a number of European and non-European lists of *Weltliteratur*, he concludes that all represent the fact 'Simply, that, victims of their own particularisms, of the idols of their tribe, we still have a long way to go before we are ready to shoulder the task that Goethe assigned to us a century and a half ago: to hasten the dawn of world literature [*Weltliteratur*]' (Étiemble 2013, 99).

[21] '[T]odo sistema literario mundial se basa en un posicionamiento cultural a la Moulton que pone en primer plano los intereses críticos de cierta perspectiva nacional o lingüística' (Sánchez Prado 2006b, 30).

[22] 'En d'autres termes, je me rends compte aujourd'hui que j'étais—comment aurais-je pu prétendre y échapper ?—un pur produit de la structure que j'avais décrite : je veux dire spontanément et résolument encline, du seul fait de mon identité française, à me mêler des affaires de l'universel littéraire' (Casanova 2008, xvi).

relationships of power and coloniality with Latin America'[23] (120). While this is something which Casanova (2008) recognised in the preface to the second French edition of *Le République mondiale des lettres*[24], this nevertheless, remains an important area of inquiry.

Elsewhere, Guerrero (2007) illustrates this point by citing the example of Rubén Darío, in particular, as a figure which, despite his significance for Spanish letters, was largely unknown during his time in Paris, in part due to the very culturally determined horizon of expectations within the French critical establishment[25]. Guerrero (2007) cites at length the only French critic to comment briefly on Darío's poetry, Valery Larbaud, in which he also addresses Latin American writers in general, revealing some quite explicitly exotic literary demands:

> I would say to them that in good measure, in effect, it is desirable to frequent the most distinguished thing of Paris, and that elite is most especially its literature, without a doubt. But that they also think a little of their readership, we are not asking for poems from the Latin Quarter nor notes which suggest they have been written on the terrace of a café in the boulevard style. We demand of them visions of tropical villas, white and voluptuous cities of the Antilles, villas of convents in the heart of the dark Andes, the greenish perspectives of avenues touched by gusts of the warm air of Mexico and Buenos Aires; the lives of farm-hands and *gauchos*, a beautiful cowboy silhouette from the frontier provinces of the Argentinian Republic, and accordingly, the spectacle of nature, the exotic note, the sadness, the melancholy and as well as the boredom which is given off by certain landscapes of the Andes[26] (24).

According to Guerrero (2007), France cannot be depoliticised as Casanova appears to do, but rather needs to be understood through its relations of power and coloniality with the rest of the

[23] '[M]ás allá del mito de la entidad universal, [que] permita redescribir Francia y a su sociedad, con sus particularidades y características, en el marco de las estrategias, lógicas y creencias que alimentan sus relaciones de poder y colonialidad con América Latina' (Guerrero 2013, 120).

[24] Casanova (2008) states: 'Et si j'ai pu décrire l'espace français, notamment du fait d'une entrée précoce des joueurs sur la scène internationale, comme l'un de ceux où l'investissement collectif en matière littéraire est le plus grand et dans lequel la croyance est le plus solidement enracinée, c'est aussi que, dans ce pays, la littérature demeure un enjeu collectif central, démesuré à bien des égards, passionnel et d'une puissance qui a sans doute peu d'équivalents dans le monde. La littérature continue d'incarner socialement, en France, l'une des formes d'ambition les plus légitimes et les plus hautes, d'être considérée comme l'une des réalisations de soi les plus achevées et les plus enviées. Et en cela j'ai conscience d'avoir perpétué une forme de conviction très nationalement marquée' (xvi).

[25] Guerrero also develops this kind of research in his article 'La Croix du Sud (1945-197) . . .' (2018a), in regard to the singular context and impact of the postwar French publishing and social science in the development of a collection of Latin American literature within the Gallimard publisher but separate to the already existing section *Du monde Entier*, a decision which had profound effects for the way in which Latin American literature would be mediated. This will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

[26] 'Yo les diría de buen grado que, en efecto, es deseable frecuentar lo más distinguido de París y esa elite es sobre todo la de las letras, sin duda alguna. Pero ya que ellos también piensan un poco en su público, no les pedimos poemas del Barrio Latino ni notas que dejen comprender que han sido escritas en la terraza de una café a la moda de bulevar. Exigimos de ellos las visiones de villas tropicales, blancas y voluptuosas ciudades de las Antillas, villas de conventos en el corazón de los Andes negros, las verdegueantes perspectivas de avenidas acariciadas por ráfagas de aire tibio de México y Buenos Aires; la vida de estancieros y gauchos, una bella silueta de vaquero de la provincias fronterizas de la República Argentina, y por lo tanto, el espectáculo de la naturaleza, la nota exótica, la tristeza, la melancolía y asimismo el tedio que se desprende de ciertos paisajes andinos' (Valery Larbaud cited in Guerrero 2007, 24).

world and especially in Latin America's context as an important voice in the rediscovery and redefinition of Latin American identity[27].

Darío's experience is significant here, as he was largely ignored in Paris (something which Casanova alludes to[28]), a space which as Guerrero clarifies has its own cultural specificities determining its tastes and horizons of expectation of foreign literature, expectations and tastes to which Darío's poetry did not conform or satisfy. Speaking of Darío's unsuccessful time in Paris, Guerrero (2007) explains, that even then 'nobody cares much about the revolution which proposes to adapt the elegant prosody to the Spanish metric, or the transgressive and cosmopolitan desire to break with a poetic tradition made out of patriotic song and never-ending odes to the agriculture of the torrid zone'[29] (24). Further entrenching these expectations, Larbaud's editorial selections and translations for French reading public, would conform to these demands: for example *Visión de Anáhuac* (published in French as *Vision de l'Anahuac* in 1927) by Alfonso Reyes, *Los de abajo* by Mariano Azuela (published in France as *Ceux d'en bas* in 1930), and *Don Segundo Sombra* (published in France with the same title in 1932) by Ricardo Güiraldes. As such, this commentary by Larbaud on the French horizon of expectation regarding Latin American letters highlights the force with which foreign authorities participate in the definition of Latin Americanness—and in particular during the 20th Century, through the establishment of what can be referred to as a *macondismo* fundamentalism, which will be discussed further in the next chapter—and indeed, what constitutes Latin American literature as perceived from their own national perspective.

Throughout her model, Casanova (2007) is critical of the mainstream, popular or national critics who judge works according to their own ideas about the purposes of literature, and as has been noted, she acknowledged that '[t]he power to evaluate and transmute a text

[27] This type of elucidatory work is anticipated by the Latinamericanist Sylvia Molloy in *La diffusion de la littérature hispano-américaine en France au XXe siècle* (The diffusion of Spanish-American literature in France of the 20th century) (1972), which analysed the mediation of French publishing in Latin American literature in the first half of the 20th century, a study which invariably included such notable editorial figures as Valery Larbaud and Roger Caillois. Guerrero, for his part, is aware of the need to investigate what David Damrosch recognised in his introduction to *What is World Literature?* (2003), that '[a] culture's norms and needs profoundly shape the selection of works that enter into it as world literature, influencing the ways they are translated, marketed, and read' (26). It is in this vein that Guerrero (2016) has proposed a similar study for the second half of the 20th century, 'Medet-Lat France 1950-2000' which, situating itself within these discussions on world literature, seeks to provide historical material to provide more solid foundations for such theoretical proposals on world literature.

[28] In her comparison of Georg Brandes and Rubén Darío, Casanova (2007) states that while modernising writers such as these contributed to the modernisation of their spaces of origin as well as the global unification of world literary space they 'could not themselves be hailed by Paris as innovators' (99-100).

[29] '[A] nadie le importa mucho la revolución que supone adaptar la prosodia gala a la métrica española, o la voluntad transgresiva y cosmopolita de romper con una tradición poética hecha de cantos patrióticos y eternas odas a la agricultura de la zona tórrida' (Guerrero 2007, 24).

into literature is also, and almost inevitably, exerted according to the norms of those who judge it' (154). This kind of issue, identified as much *by* Casanova of other critics, *in* her own analyses by Guerrero, is equally noted in other studies, such as the Warwick Research Collective's (2015) methodological approach, which Ignacio Sánchez Prado (2019) critiques: '[t]he problem moreover is that its methodological base […] can read the system but not the very materiality of the literary records of the unequal development and combined in specific cultural contexts'[30] (140-1). As is evident, more work needs to be done to analyse how these very tastes and norms which inform these judgements by the most symbolically powerful sectors of the canonising mechanisms decide which works deserve international, global diffusion or universal recognition, and the role which political and economic hegemony have in these relationships. This understanding of the location of literary reception and the specific cultural horizon of expectation, in regard to foreign literatures, is precisely what this thesis is seeking to add in the contextualisation of local and global understandings of Latin American letters in the reception of anthologies like *McOndo*.

3.2.3 Re-materialising the literature-world

One of the fundamental claims of Casanova's model is that the literature-world exists relatively independently from the politico-economic world. The critique of this claim by a number of Latinamericanists can be interpreted as attempts to reintegrate a material foundation for power relations, and diminish Casanova's construction of a specifically symbolic and literary form of domination.

Based on the conclusion by Braudel regarding the disparity of political power and cultural prestige in Europe throughout the centuries, Casanova (2007) argues that the literature-world cannot simply be reduced to political and economic power relations:

> [i]n the sixteenth century, though Venice was the economic capital of Europe, it was Florence and the Tuscan dialect that prevailed in the intellectual sphere; in the seventeenth century, though Amsterdam was now the great centre of European commerce, it was Rome and Madrid that triumphed in the arts and in literature; in the eighteenth century London became the centre of the world economy, but it was Paris that imposed its cultural hegemony (10-1).

An acknowledgement of this historical incongruence between economic and political power, and cultural and literary hegemony, led Casanova (2007) to conclude that the literary world's 'boundaries, its capitals, its highways, and its forms of communication do not completely coincide with those of the political and economic world' (11). However, while literary prestige

[30] 'El problema más bien es que su metodología de base […] puede leer el sistema pero no la materialidad misma de los registros literarios del desarrollo desigual y combinado en contextos culturales específicos' (Sánchez Prado 2019, 140-1).

is not necessarily associated with the most economically or politically powerful nations at a global level, at additional substrata such as within nations themselves, it is even common for there to be rivalry between political and economic capitals and cultural capitals, for example between Madrid and Barcelona in Spain, or São Paolo and Rio de Janeiro in Brazil (Casanova 2007, 247).

However, it is in relation to this structural politico-economic relative autonomy which Casanova, according to Sánchez Prado, deviates from Bourdieu's understanding of the cultural field, which always operates within and is subordinate to the field of power. While Casanova's model rightly details the tangible linguistic hierarchy in the literary world due to unequal colonial relationships, according to Sánchez Prado (2006b), these appear to be more historical legacies which the field of power imprinted onto the literary field at its origin and autonomisation. Put simply, Sánchez Prado (2006b) criticises Casanova for overstating the autonomy of the literary space: '[f]or this partial reading of Bourdieu's concept of autonomy, Casanova completely leaves out the relationship between politics and literature instrumental for the comprehension of certain dynamics in the literary world'[31] (27).

For example, while Casanova (2007) briefly notes the political engagement of the highly respected figures of the literary Boom, such as Julio Cortázar in Cold War politics and in particular the Cuban revolution (325), she does not explore this delicate and seemingly contradictory equilibrium according to her model's antinomy between politics and autonomy, between writers like Cortázar and Gabriel García Márquez, who were at once passionately engaged in public political life and yet producers of highly autonomous literature. By returning to Bourdieu, as Sánchez Prado suggests, it is possible to understand this twofold politico-literary game as illustrated by the discussion of the paradoxical and two-dimensional character of the literary intellectual:

> [i]ntellectuals are paradoxical beings who cannot be thought of as such as long as they are apprehended through the obligatory alternative between autonomy and commitment, between pure culture and politics. This is because intellectuals are constituted, historically, in and through their overcoming of that opposition. [...] Intellectuals are two-dimensional figures who do not exist and subsist as such unless (and only unless) they are invested with a specific authority, conferred by the autonomous intellectual world (meaning independent from religious, political and economic power) whose specific laws they respect, and unless (and only unless) they engage this specific authority in political struggles. Far from there existing, as is customarily believed, an antinomy between the search for autonomy (which characterizes the art, science or literature we call 'pure') and the search for political efficacy, it is by increasing their autonomy (and thereby, among other things, their freedom to criticize the prevailing powers) that intellectuals can increase the effectiveness of a political action whose ends and

[31] 'Por esta lectura parcial del concepto de autonomía de Bourdieu, Casanova deja completamente por fuera relaciones entre política y literatura instrumentales para la comprensión de ciertas dinámicas del mundo literario' (Sánchez Prado 2006b, 27).

> means have their origin in the specific logic of the fields of cultural production (Bourdieu 2017, 340).

In search of clearly defined categories of writers who either contribute to literary autonomy or literary heteronomy (international or national writers), Casanova's theorisation misses an important and necessary nuance which Bourdieu's does not, that the cultural capital which writers and proclaimed intellectuals exert can be used to engage effectively in the political sphere, without necessarily exchanging or diminishing their cultural capital, but as overcoming this antinomy. In fact, Gabriel García Márquez (and before him Pablo Neruda) is a significant figure in this respect, who while he was not considered a typical public intellectual figure like some of his contemporaries (such as Mario Vargas Llosa or Carlos Fuentes), his political association with Leftist politics and the Cuban revolution nevertheless gained him readers and further international cultural credit across the world. However, while these incursions into politics might be significant in the promotion of these works for the time periods in which they occur, it remains doubtful that the politics of these authors, over and above the esteem of their works themselves, would be what carried an author into the future, especially when one considers that, with the passage of time, writers are gradually abstracted and universalised from their spatial and temporal contexts, which become further and further removed from that of their readers.

François Perus[32] (2006) and Abril Trigo[33] (2006) further claim this point, each arguing that this literary hierarchy can only be understood with recourse primarily to the economic and political hegemonic relationships across nations particularly due to colonialism and its vestiges in coloniality, and that a purely cultural or literary reading of this cultural hegemony (which they claim Casanova proposes) mystifies its very economic and political foundations. To further add to this point, Jean Franco (2006) provides some examples not solely of the obvious way in which political and economic factors impact on the literary world, such as the impacts which coups, dictatorships, and neoliberalism have had on local publishing, but, also that the literary world responds to the political world and is equally subject to its forces. Franco (2006) argues that during the Cold War, the United States utilised the norms of democracy and cultural liberty to compete in a global battle for cultural influence. More than represent a struggle within the literary world structure, Franco argues this demonstrates how the very weapons used in this

[32] 'La condición colonial—y sus secuelas—es ante todo, y pese a grandes diferencias en el tiempo y en la forma, *desgarre*, en los hechos y en todos los órdenes de la vida' (Perus 2006, 150).

[33] 'De acuerdo con este modelo, la desigualdad estructural y los conflictos endémicos que atraviesan el mundo moderno son desplazados de lo político y lo geopolítico a lo estrictamente literario, mistificando la hegemonía cultural, literaria y artística occidental como "modelos y recursos" útiles para la emancipación del escritor cosmopolita y para la modernización de las literaturas retrasadas' (Trigo 2006, 96).

political stand-off were invariably also cultural and literary (189)[34]. And while Casanova acknowledges the contemporary polycentric nature of world literary space she does not outline as clearly as she should the material, political and economic factors which are still continually at play and intersect constantly with the literature-world—after all, the literature-world Casanova defines is a parallel and overlapping world, not an isolated one nor a completely independent one.

While Casanova (2007) does not demonstrate the political and economic foundations for literary inequalities in any of her case studies and the extent to which this very material hegemony continues to have an impact on literary production today, Casanova does acknowledge more generally that the global political and economic structures of power between dominant regions and dominated regions are at least reflected in the literary world structure. Casanova (2007) explains that:

> [t]he external forces exerted upon the least endowed literary spaces today assume the forms of linguistic domination and economic domination (notably in the form of foreign control over publishing), which is why proclamations of national independence do not suffice to eliminate outside pressures. To one degree or another, then, literary relations of power are forms of political relations of power (81).

In a sense, then, Casanova seems to confirm Jean Franco's argument. However, what is left of the autonomy of the literary world which Casanova describes, once literary relations of power must be considered in terms comparable and parallel to political structures of power? Is Casanova's theory in effect meeting the demands of critics such as Perus, Trigo and Franco after all, and as Gabriela Montaldo (2010) criticises—quite conversely—merely reproducing 'material hierarchies in literary analyses'[35] (2010, 125)? In short, yes and no.

Casanova has managed to articulate a synthesis between the critical temptation to collapse all interactions in the literature-world into the political-economic, as well as avoiding the opposite problem, which would be to suggest the total autonomy of the literature-world. It is worth noting that Casanova and Bourdieu develop their critiques from Marx and his materialist dialectic, however they have far surpassed this at times limiting materialism. While Casanova (2005) argues for the relative independence of the literary world from the political or economic world, to which so often analyses are reduced, she maintains that domination can

[34] 'Se trataba de una batalla por la influencia proseguida con diversas armas—por medio de exposiciones, becas, traducciones y revistas subvencionadas por la CIA y por el Centro de Relaciones Interamericanas. Los Estados Unidos, así, pretendían imponer una hegemonía alternativa, creando focos culturales en Nueva York, Washington y Los Ángeles no solamente rivalizando París, sino también imponiendo su versión de lo universal (en arte, el estilo internacional). No se trataba de una lucha dentro de la república de las letras sino un esfuerzo intencionado de uno de los grandes poderes, que quería rebatir el centro cultural de París para instalarlo en los Estados Unidos' (Franco 2006, 189).

[35] '[L]as jerarquías materiales en los análisis literarios' (Montaldo 2010, 125).

take different forms: *linguistic* (related to the centrality, prestige and colonial legacy of a language, etc.), *literary* (in terms of production and publication mechanisms, the temporal law, as well as the hegemony afforded to the opinions of the centre, etc.) and *politico-economic* (national or international political struggle as well as structures of economic dependence, coloniality etc.). For Casanova (2005), two of these forms of domination, the linguistic and the literary, are often obscured such that only the most obvious form of politico-economic domination can be perceived (86). In this sense, then, Casanova does not exclude the significant and numerous interventions of the politico-economic world into the literary world and, whilst acknowledging the many convergences between the two, stops short of reducing all literary inequality to political and economic factors.

This important separation makes it possible to understand such a complex region as Latin America, with its paradoxical development, as Alfonso de Toro (1991) questioned:

> the cultural level does not correspond with the economic, nor the economic with the social, nor either of these with the political. I mean that while Latin America already at the beginning of the [last] century boasts of a great poetry, and later in the 50s a period of essayistic and novelistic hyperactivity develops, the fields of science, economics, technology, industry and politics remain underdeveloped or at a modest stage of development[36] (453).

For De Toro, Latin America's literary and cultural development is distinct from its development (or underdevelopment) in other areas, something exemplified in Latin America's modernism, vanguard, and postmodern literary movements, carried out during periods of industrialisation and modernisation (which areas of Latin America are still yet to reach), along with the almost miraculous task of the global consecration of authors such as Pablo Neruda, Jorge Luis Borges, Alejo Carpentier, Augusto Roa Bastos, Gabriel García Márquez and Mario Vargas Llosa, all who hailed from economically developing nations at the time. De Toro's examples demonstrate the applicability of Casanova's separate worlding of these spheres (literary, political, economic) and their inherent interconnectedness in the Latin American case study.

Nevertheless, there remains an insistence, as Daniel Nemrava typifies (2014), that literary periods such as the Boom and Postboom, for example, must be understood in relation to the politico-economic periods they inhabit—the Cuban Revolution for the Boom and the rise and fall of dictatorships during the Cold War for the Postboom—as these directly and fundamentally influence the literary strategies of authors (63). On balance then, while more

[36] '[E]l nivel cultural no tiene correspondencia con el económico, ni el económico con el social, ni éstos dos con el político. Me refiero a que mientras Latinoamérica ya a comienzos de siglo goza de una hiperactividad ensayística y novelística, permanecen los campos de la ciencia, tecnología, industria y política en el subdesarrollo o en un modesto desarrollo' (De Toro 1991, 453).

nuance could be incorporated into these case studies in order to understand how this complex interplay and overlap of linguistic, literary, politico-economic domination/struggle is manifested in the text or the life of a particular author, Casanova rightly avoids the error of reducing all inequality to economic and political factors, and allows the critic the possibility of understanding this inequality in a literary sense depending on the specific contextual circumstances.

3.2.4 Methodological critiques

Jean Franco (2006) raises a methodological contention when she criticises both Moretti and Casanova for devaluing close reading, and for having claimed through their models to have overcome this fundamental heuristic method for literary studies. Franco (2006) states: '[w]hat I wish to highlight the most in Moretti's and Casanova's essays is not only the fascination with constructing a system or a global structure but also the devaluation of close reading'[37] (183), a critique also made by Sebastiaan Faber (2006). It must be clarified, in response particularly to Jean Franco, that methodologically, Casanova and Moretti's models differ substantially. While Franco provides no explanation as to why she considers Casanova's model as devaluing or overcoming close reading, it is possible she is referring to the emphasis that is placed on the model or the theory over and above the analysis of specific texts. In a similar vein, the cultural studies critic Mabel Moraña (2006), claims that their models overlook the textual particularities specific to texts in favour of a "global" outlook which, rather than focus on internal elements, only analyses a text's capacity for negotiation and participation in the global market (for Moretti), or its proximity to the literary modern (for Casanova) (328)[38]. Moraña (2006) maintains, that this implies that 'Casanova's as much as Moretti's proposals are perceptions which not only *constitute*—construct *ideologically*—the object of study, but which replace it'[39] (329). For Moraña, Moretti and Casanova's models both construct and replace the traditional object of study of literary criticism, the text, with the study of the structure or system, or in

[37] 'Lo que más me interesa señalar en los ensayos de Moretti y Casanova es no sólo la fascinación por construir un sistema o una estructura mundial sino también la desvalorización de la lectura detallada (close reading)' (Franco 2006, 183). Sebastiaan Faber (2006) also raises this critique, albeit with stronger language (against Moretti's model in particular), he claims that 'el abandono del *close reading* tal como lo concibe Moretti me parece un error fatal porque le privaría a la disciplina de uno de sus pocos fundamentos sólidos de legitimidad: una noción propiamente humanística del rigor' (Faber 2006, 126).

[38] 'Ambos sacrifican la especificad de cada texto, sus modulaciones formales y temáticas, el tema de los privilegios lingüísticos que son candentes en el área latinoamericana, y la historia de la recepción de las literaturas estudiadas, para privilegiar más bien el estudio del acceso de esa producción a una universalidad eurocéntrica y ahistorificada' (Moraña 2006, 328).

[39] 'Tanto la propuesta de Casanova como la de Moretti son percepciones que no sólo *constituyen*—construyen *ideológicamente*—al objeto de estudio sino que lo reemplazan' (Moraña 2006, 329).

other words, generate highly formalistic models which themselves become the objects of study and where texts are merely used to prove or disprove claims made by this theory.

The World Republic of Letters appears to confirm this assessment. There is, after all, a scarcity of close textual analysis in the book, of the kind we are accustomed to in literary studies. This is problematic, at least in so far as Casanova has missed the opportunity to elaborate on how her specific methodology executes close reading differently to other methodologies, as one tool among a broader toolkit, rather than being the only and central tool which it represents for exclusive close reading practitioners.

On the one hand, it is possible that this devaluation of close reading exists only in appearance and not in actuality. If we are to consider the multifaceted aims of Casanova's work, then it is possible to understand which sections answer this methodological contestation. The first part of Casanova's analysis represents an ambitious case for understanding literature as a world, and a detailing of its history, structure, laws—in other words, her theorisation. The second section of her book is an application and development of her theorisation through a number of case studies organised into her typologies of authors and literary strategies. Ultimately, all of this theorisation is brought together in her analysis of the Irish case study at the conclusion of this second section, in which she states—in some senses anticipating critiques from those literary spaces she has treated in less detail—:

> [s]ince a precise and detailed description of every literary space is impossible in a work of this scope, however, and in order to avoid an overly abstract description [...] I propose instead to devote a separate chapter to the Irish case, which may serve here as a paradigm, in the Platonic sense, that will give some idea of what it would have been necessary to do to give a complete account of each of the cases already discussed (Casanova 2007, 304).

This chapter on the Irish case study, along with her texts which most intentionally expound her theorisations and methodology (the English-language preface, introduction, conclusion and additional articles), as well as the close reading apparent in *Kafka, Angry Poet*, is the suitable territory for determining whether close reading is in effect devalued, or not, by her methodology.

What they reveal is that the practice of close reading is one tool among many in Casanovian literary methodology. While she employs this fundamental method in her analysis of interviews, essays, language, narrative devices, as well as national/non-national themes, and the exposition of formalistic influences across the world, these are not seen as self-sustaining. Instead, as was detailed in the previous chapter, Casanova, similarly to Bourdieu, while critical of deconstructionist methods of close reading, creates a methodology which works internally and externally with macro and micro perspectives on the text, the writer, and world literary space. As such, none of these aspects of analysis—whether they be close reading or the literary

contextualisation—ought to be disavowed in a sound execution of Casanova's methodology, but rather, all of these levels and dimensions of analysis interact in a mutually informing back-and-forth process. On the other hand, whether Casanova's methodological stance is interpreted as a devaluing of close reading or a "revaluing" of external evidence, to the level which close reading analysis continues to hold, is perhaps a matter of perspective, as these critiques of Moretti and Casanova appear to suggest.

The case is, however, different for Moretti's criticism which is altogether more radical in its position-taking. This is because, as opposed to Casanova's methodology, in his essays, Moretti proposes a division of labour between the micro level analysis for national literary research, arguing that the study of world literature should be solely dedicated to second-hand research or 'distant reading'. In response to Faber's and Franco's critiques, then, it must be clarified that Moretti's methodology has not *overcome* close reading but instead places it as the indispensable material of the national literary scholar, whose work, in turn, becomes the material of the world literature scholar, who analyses it using the world-literature conceptual tools. Moretti's division presents some further problems because, as Beecroft (2008 and 2015) argues, this division of labour between national-literature specialists and world-literature specialists inscribes a centre-periphery model onto the task of literary criticism, where the former work on the raw materials (the primary source texts) in the periphery, in order for world literature scholars to perform their labour of analysis, synthesis and of the secondary material at the core.

Nevertheless, after having composed his ambitious *An Ecology of World Literature* and becoming aware of the laborious task of accounting for the diverse universe of literary works within disparate (and difficult to demarcate) cultural communities across space and time, Beecroft (2015) acknowledges—quite poignantly—that 'the mission I here propose for my own work risks reinscribing the very division of labor I criticize in Moretti's model' (35). Beecroft proposes a similar, yet less hierarchical, solution than Moretti's[40]: a sharing of labour among all specialists of different languages and time periods. He optimistically proposes that '[s]uch a sharing of labour holds out, I believe, the possibility of world literature, unhyphenated, as a coherent field of study; taking as its object not a world-literary system, but

[40] The risks associated with such an ambitious task as conceiving of literature on a global level and taking into account the diversity across space and time of a variety of literary mediums are undoubtedly many and varied. This is something which Moretti had recognised much earlier as the problem befalling contemporary literary studies in regards to the dual problems of the 'great unread' and the scale of all the world's literary production, problems which for him became the *raison d'être* for his new method (See: 'Conjectures on World Literature', 2000a and 'The Slaughterhouse of Literature', 2000b).

rather, and simply, the literature—the verbal artistic production—of the world' (Beecroft 2008, 100). In this sense, Latinamericanists, as much as those engaged in any other field of study, have a part to play in demonstrating the limitations, omissions, theoretical and methodological issues of these models from the perspective of Latin American critics and literatures, but also in the honing of world literature theories and methodologies, or even the development of new methods for use across the globe.

In the same way in which Goethe's optimism for *Weltliteratur* was tempered by Georg Brandes' highlighting of the linguistic hierarchy of the literature-world, Beecroft's critical optimism must confront the reality of the structures of dominance in the academic world, particularly in terms of language. For example, Sánchez Prado (2006b) and Nora Catelli (2017) have highlighted how, while literature might circulate globally and become world literature, not all analyses of texts at the national level from which they originate will circulate at broader international levels or in various languages. In reality, as much as in Moretti's model or Beecroft's, any attempt at world literary analysis limited to the critical works which are *in translation*, or which the critic can access through their knowledge of other languages, will essentially only provide a partial perspective. As such, Sánchez Prado (2006b) concludes that 'the inequality in the field of literary critique is analogous to that of literature itself'[41] (21). This limitation manifests itself in both Moretti and Casanova's models, for depending on the critical work of only a small number of Latinamericanists: Jean Franco and Doris Sommer in Moretti's case (Sánchez Prado 2006b, 20), and, Antônio Cândido and a number of anecdotes from Latin American authors in Casanova's case (Perus 2006, 147-8).

This argument introduces the much broader debate regarding the epistemological centrality of the Western academy in relation to Latin America. Echoing critiques made by postcolonial critics, such as Roberto Fernández Retamar[42], and decolonial critics, such as Walter Mignolo[43], Sánchez Prado (2006b) questions the Latinamericanists "traditional" role as

[41] '[L]a desigualdad del campo de la crítica literaria es análoga a la de la literatura misma' (2006, 21). This is also something which Bourdieu (1988) has put forward: '[t]he structure of the university field reflects the structure of the field of power' (40).

[42] In *Para una teoría de la literatura hispanoamericana*, Fernández Retamar (1975) argues that the theoretical enunciations from coloniser or the neocoloniser prevail across global thought as both universally applicable and neutral. He argues, form a postcolonial standpoint, for the need to demystify the apparent universality of these enunciations and demonstrate their very regional partiality.

[43] Walter Mignolo, along with Roberto Fernández Retamar, continues the elucidatory work of identifying the mechanisms of coloniality and through decolonisation develop distinct and plural epistemologies distinct from the decidedly narrow and singular Eurocentric perspective. It is from this perspective that Mignolo details the lot of the Latinamericanist: '[u]na de las consecuencias de "nuestra (latinoamericanística) experiencia" sería la de emplear la actividad teórica en una tarea de descolonización en lugar de buscar una teoría que capture la esencia de literaturas coloniales' (Mignolo 1991, 100-1).

merely responding to theoretical enunciations generated in the centre (with its own biases, misreadings and blind spots) and applied to the rest of the world: '[w]hy should we Latin Americans produce responses to literary theories and critiques configured in the centre, instead of articulating our own proposals?'[44] (8). Mabel Moraña[45] and Abril Trigo (2006) also stress this point, that 'the laws of the transnational academic market oblige us all—and especially those of us who work from or on the periphery—to get involved in the proposed topics, models and agendas. To enter into the game, a game which reproduces the game of world literature'[46] (89). When one considers Sánchez Prado's analogy between the inequality of the literature-world and the critical field, it is possible to understand these critics' objection[47]: Western *theory* travels, like Western *form*, with ease across the academic world. Regardless of whether it be received, celebrated, critiqued, or rejected, it circulates. On the other hand, theoretical enunciations from the periphery can remain trapped in their language, be interpreted as parochial in focus without international applicability, or perhaps never be produced out of a routine application of Western theory in peripheral settings. As Catelli (2017) states: '[w]e are peripheral, let us agree upon this. The proof is there: the bibliographies, the indices, the citations. We will not find ourselves or will very rarely find ourselves in them' (22-23).

Nevertheless, the framing of these Latinamericanist critiques in terms of the circulation of theory between the Global North and the Global South are suggestive of certain critical encampments or dispositions. Catelli (2017) argues that the reception of French structuralism

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[44] '¿Por qué debemos los latinoamericanos producir respuestas a teorías literarias y críticas configuradas en el centro, en vez de articular nuestras propias propuestas?' (Sánchez Prado 2006b, 8).

[45] Mabel Moraña adds in her own words and by way of conclusion to her article 'Post-scriptum', 'el tema de la literatura mundial que nos ocupe puede ser visto como un elemento más, sin duda significativo, que remite a la compleja red de intereses, reacondicionamientos, pugnas y negociaciones dentro del mundo globalizado, donde las áreas culturales luchan por su diferenciación y liderazgo, y compiten por sus campos de influencia' (Moraña 2006, 326).

[46] '[L]as leyes del mercado académico transnacional nos obligan a todos—y muy particularmente a quienes trabajamos desde o sobre la periferia—a involucrarnos en los temas, modelos o agendas propuestos. A entrar en el juego, en un juego que reproduce el juego de la literatura mundial' (Trigo 2006, 89).

[47] It does not escape my critical gaze that *América Latina en la "literatura mundial"* (Sánchez Prado 2006a) both acknowledges this conundrum while at the same time replicates this tendency, whose purpose it is in the words of the editor, to 'proponer una instancia latinoamericana de debate respecto a enfoques recientes sobre el tema, particularmente los articulados por Franco Moretti y por Pascale Casanova' (Sánchez Prado 2006b, 8). While in this volume from 2006 Sánchez Prado identifies an issue with the very presupposition of this edited volume, in his most recent edited volume *Pierre Bourdieu in Hispanic Literature and Culture*, Sánchez Prado (2018) reframes this concern away from a dynamics of unequal theoretical power relations to a more equal relation of interlocution, dialogue, and critique (in greater harmony with Beecroft's less hierarchical model for the future of world literature criticism). The introduction underscores this shift in perspective: '[b]y speaking of Bourdieu "in" Hispanic literature and culture, as opposed to Bourdieu "and" Hispanic literature and culture, the book focuses not on his purported influence on our field, which would validate undesirable divisions of intellectual labor that consider the field of Spanish as a mere recipient of theoretical discourse. Rather, the book focuses on the circulation of Bourdieu's concepts in the theoretical and practical research agendas within the Spanish field, in a relation of interlocution, dialogue and critique' (Sánchez Prado 2018, 5).

and post-structuralism in Latin America (but also the United States) represented a kind of euphoric and inclusive cosmopolitanism, when compared to the reluctant and confrontational cosmopolitanism of Spanish criticism (21). She illustrates this point in relation to the euphoric reception of Roland Barthes in Argentina:

> [t]he Argentinian uses of Barthes, which are also scenes of translation, do not refute him but vitalize and amplify him: they are inclusive and serve to reflect on the national, the popular, on language, the narrative tradition, the gaze, the city and even the essence of literature [...] There is the Barthes of Beatriz Sarlo [...] There is the Blanchotian Barthes [...] There is Barthes through the use of whom Argentinian literature reveals itself: José Luis de Diego [...] We include ourselves among all of those readers and users of Barthes, and we in turn revitalize him. We act as true cosmopolitans, without justifying our intrusion in a scene that does not belong to us. Paul de Man, a peripheral European, exclusive and melancholic, rises up against Roland Barthes; we, euphoric and inclusive Americans, amplify him (Catelli 2017, 24).

And Barthes is not the only example of this. Catelli (2017) has highlighted the receptivity of French theory in Latin America, where Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Claude Lévis-Strauss were translated into Spanish before they were even translated into English and available to the English-speaking majority of the United States academy[48] (this Anglophone process which has in turn been detailed by Emily Apter (2013)). However, even in the United States academy, these theoretical and methodological models have established themselves, perhaps most forcefully by way of the cultural studies turn. The generally negative reception which Casanova provoked in Latin American criticism, appears to suggest a shift in the receptivity of French theory away from this inclusive and euphoric perspective to a more confrontational one.

As Guillermina de Ferrari (2012) argues, this suspicion, and in some cases rejection, exemplified in the decolonial tone of Fernández Retamar, Mignolo, Moraña, Trigo and Sánchez Prado, appears to be premised by the 'automatic rejection of all debate which does not arise from one's own ranks'[49] (25). This very reasonable conclusion, 'that it is preferable to understand a region from an autochthonous theoretical framework, arisen and developed in that same region'[50] (Faber 2006, 137), can, nevertheless, be taken to be symptomatic of critical ethnocentrism. Despite the reasonableness of such a perspective, that the best equipped critics

[48] It is worth noting that while Bourdieu was also 'a full-fledged part of the reception of French critical theory in translation' (Sánchez Prado 2019, 7), his influence mostly in the Argentinian, Brazilian and Mexican academies did not facilitate a more inclusive or euphoric reception of Casanova's Bourdieusian theory among Latin American critics. This could in part be explained by his less significant reception in Latin America when compared to Foucault, Walter Benjamin, Althusser and Gramsci's work. As Mabel Moraña (2014) explains, '[n]ingún proceso similar tuvo como objeto la obra de Bourdieu, cuyo impacto es más individualizado, tentativo y ocasional que el de los autores mencionados' (19). After all, as Moraña (2014) notes, "Bourdieu es más invocado que leído", making him a somewhat invisible pillar sustaining swathes of the humanities and social sciences in the Latin American academy (13).

[49] '[R]echazo automático de todo debate que no surja de las propias filas' (de Ferrari 2012, 25).

[50] '[D]e que es preferible comprender una región desde un marco teórico autóctono, surgido y desarrollado en esa misma región' (Faber 2006, 137).

to elaborate theories and models are those of their particular cultural or linguistic region, in practice it has been more the exception than the rule[51], and in theory, it is implicit of an ethnocentrism which does not appraise the explanatory value of a theory or model based on the applicability and soundness of its ideas and concepts, but rather, on the genus or locus of its enunciation. In other words, the theories and methodologies proposed by Casanova and Moretti, despite the well-founded and well-informed criticism by Latinamericanists and beyond, cannot be logically dismissed due to the origin or nationality of their proponent. This would represent, at best, a genetic fallacy or, at worst, *argumentum ad hominem*. As such, all extraneous issues aside, when considering this perfectly legitimate critique by these Latin American critics regarding the structural roles of criticism in global theory, there nevertheless appears to be a self-defeating contradiction between the euphoric reception of the academic waves of deconstructionism and cultural studies in Latin American criticism—which, quite paradoxically, also have their origins in the French academy—, and the rejection of these most recent models on the basis of their foreign origin.

Responding, in part, to these debates—allow me to open a brief parenthesis—there has been a recent trend in a number of areas, from political ontology to world literary theory, to put forward interpretations which do not necessarily study these theories and their interpretations *on* Latin America as a case study, but pronounce theory and commentary *from* Latin America. I am referring to the work being done by Carlos Morreo and Eugenia Demuro (2018) on the theorisation of a Latin American political ontology, in which Latin America is not treated as a geographical location in which Western political categories and concepts are applied and misapplied, but a critical vantage point from which to generate a unique political theoretical perspective. In a similar fashion but in the area of world literature theory, Marta Puxan-Oliva and Annalisa Mirizio (2017) have stated in the introduction to the Latin American special issue for the *Journal of World Literature*, that contexts are not places which only participate in world literature analyses from an 'auto-ethnographic standpoint', but instead 'as places from where we think critically' (7). Both these interventions attempt to overcome the perennial issue rightly pointed out by Ignacio Sánchez Prado, that Latin America continues to be made the case study for foreign theory, rather than being a place from which theory itself is pronounced.

[51] In these categories one could put the very innovative and groundbreaking theories developed in Latin America such as Fernando Ortiz's transculturation, Ángel Rama's theorization of the lettered city, Néstor García Canclini's theorisation of cultural hybridisation, and the Decolonial critique of Walter Mignolo, Aníbal Quijano and Arturo Escobar, among others.

However, the implicit philosophical problem with these theories is that they appear to be predicated on the very complicated and problematic idea of Latin American specificity and an accounting for this vantage point in an ontological sense. This proposal, as such, is either contradictory or not truly literary nor political, but philosophical. If we approach the former interpretation, one can notice the paradox in, on the one hand, putting forward a postmodern critique of the geography of epistemology, and on the other hand, proposing a metaphysical (hence their use of ontology) conceptualisation of Latin Americanness, which is undercut by the very postmodern thinking which understands identity as being constructed at the social level, and not a human understanding of a deeper metaphysical reality. In the latter interpretation, these critics would be proposing the possibility of understanding a category of being and seeing which is specifically Latin American, an assertion which while could be considered, perhaps, on a sociological level (as has been done and been the subject of fervent debate for centuries), however to posit this on a metaphysical level is inherently problematic as it would require inductive or deductive proofs to satisfy this conceptualisation. In fewer words, this kind of proposal, while attractive, remains problematic, either in how it is self-refuting, or highly unlikely to be demonstrated. In making these critiques, I am aware of how it appears that I am holding these proposals to a higher philosophical account than any of the world literature theories I have detailed. This is not to be misunderstood as partiality, but a recognition of the philosophical grounds of the proposals of this sort which, as has been shown, have created the conditions for their own dismissal. Contrariwise, Casanova and Moretti's proposals are theories of a social and literary nature and thus rely on evidence in these fields for their approval mostly via induction.

Parenthesis closed, and we can return to the issue of Moraña and many others' critique of Casanova's and Moretti's methodology and its apparent devaluing of close reading, and how this critique can be positioned within broader debates and dispositions between the Global North and the Global South. Moraña is, in one sense, correct in stating that both Moretti's and Casanova's models are just that, models, and that, in a sense, they risk becoming self-referential and self-sufficient models of analysis which would devalue the supposed centrality afforded to the text in close reading analysis. However, more than a criticism of these world literary model's specific methodological proposals, this is a criticism of theory more generally, something which Daphne Patai and Wilfrido H. Corral (2005) have called 'theory's empire'. As such, the issue with Moraña's critique is that it is self-defeating, as it can equally be applied back onto cultural studies or deconstructionist close-reading methodologies, as Patai and Corral do. Corral's (2013) argument is consistent with the critiques raised by all the other Latin

American critics in this subsection, only in one sense more radical: 'it must be admitted that in Spanish America we are always "responding" to various empires (the postmodernists, subalterity), *imitating* cartographies for which, paradoxically, we have invented everything except the interpretation'[52] (37). Corral (2013) then like Moraña, argues that wave after wave of theory has demonstrated the inefficacy of relying on theoretical paradigms which impose narrow readings and end up becoming purely self-referential and self-sufficient criticism, the only difference being one of consistency: that is, that Corral includes Moraña's cultural and subaltern studies among the list of theories which remain to be overcome. Patai and Corral (2005), instead, intended to create a space for the criticism of theoretical orthodoxies through open discussion and logical argumentation (7), with the view to 'redeem the study of literature as an activity worth pursuing in its own right', open up renewed hermeneutic possibilities, as well as 'acquire a much more realistic sense of the place of theory' (13).

Corral is not alone in professing a return to more traditional forms of literary analysis, and a critique of the impact which cultural studies has had on literary criticism. Santiago Castro-Gómez (2003) and Néstor García Canclini have also been critical of the lack of theoretical and epistemological reflexivity in such disciplines as literary studies, which 'become stagnant in the routine application of a methodology poorly disposed to question theoretically its own practice'[53] (García Canclini 1997, no page). The Spanish critic, Eduardo Becerra makes a very similar critique of close reading and the continued "colonisation"[54] of cultural studies. Becerra (2015) argues that what critics such as Faber, Franco and Moraña fail to recognise, is that the monopoly of their methodologies—cultural studies, discursive analysis, deconstruction—are responsible for the subordination of literature, through the positioning of literary criticism solely within broader multidisciplinary discourses; which in short have reduced written and published texts to expressions of high culture and representative of power, oppression and hegemony. Even Pascale Casanova (2015) weighs in on these debates in her analysis of Kafka's work, when she criticises how through psychological and biographical interpretation 'over time, an almost total superimposition of the person of Kafka onto his

[52] '[H]ay que admitir que en Hispanoamérica siempre estamos "respondiendo" a varios imperios (las postmodernidades, la subalternidad), *imitando* cartografías para las cuales, paradójicamente, hemos inventado todo menos la interpretación' (Corral 2013, 37).

[53] '[S]e estancan en la aplicación rutinaria de una metodología poco dispuesta a cuestionar teóricamente su práctica' (García Canclini 1997, no page).

[54] Moraña (2003) herself refers to the colonisation and political task of cultural studies when she states: 'Si bien ya es evidente que los estudios culturales han triunfado en la tarea de colonizar el estatuto de las humanidades y las ciencias sociales, queda aún por probarse su verdadera capacidad de intervención e interpelación política. Esto permitiría saber, una vez desmontada la modernidad, qué hacer con sus fantasmas' (430).

fictions has occurred' (214), resulting in misreadings and historically inaccurate conclusions about the political opinions of the Prague author[55]. Casanova (2015) argues, that this problematic kind of interpretation,

> entirely in keeping with the habits of 'close reading' that prevail in literary studies—a close reading that finds all the elements supposedly adequate for the comprehension of a text within the confines of that text itself—has, paradoxically, the same assumptions at its origin as political criticism […]. [J]ust as pure criticism always assumes that writers are apolitical and 'purely' interested in 'pure' literature, political criticism reduces the narrative to the author's presumed message which is supposedly delivered directly by a narrator always identified with the author and through a narrative always understood as 'realist' (214).

As such, even in these models, texts are constructed ideologically in how they participate, or are seen to participate, in pre-existing discourses of power relations, whether they are between the sexes, race and identity politics, or numerous other debates. Texts which are approached from these specific standpoints are equally *constituted* and, in some cases, *replaced* by the broader discourse into which the cultural studies critic, for example, wishes to intervene into.

Furthermore, while the merits of close reading as a fundamental tool for the literary critic are not to be denied, its sheer popularity and unquestioned status is responsible for a narrowing of the methodological autonomy of literary critics, especially when used in service of other ideological or extra-literary discourses. As Becerra (2015) argues,

> [t]he problem arose when this reading began to be generalised and be vindicated as the only one possible, converting criticism into the mechanical application of theoretical recipes without allowing the original text to point at the possible causes and the limits of interpretation. The trip from the texts to their meaning is inverted here: the meaning is already given in the selection of the type of reading or interpretation, the text loses all singularity and is rendered subservient to theory, which returns time and time again to expose and underline its foundations in each reading part of an incessant back-and-forth trip[56] (no page).

Thus, for critics like Becerra, the default close-reading position of the literary critic—the analysis of texts solely as participants in broader discourses of power, identity and alterity—imposes readings and meanings onto texts, rather than allowing texts to suggest their very meaning and the very tools which are necessary to understand and analyse this meaning.

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[55] Casanova (2015) uses the example of the fictional character Karl Rossmann in *Amerika*, a character whose lack of sympathy or interest in workers' demonstrations is equated with Kafka's own views on the issue. Despite the fact that, as Casanova shows, Kafka fought with great passion for workers' rights during his time at the Workers' Accident Insurance Institute for the Kingdom of Bohemia, as well as Casanova's interpretation of one of Kafka's narrative devices in which the '[…] narrator does not, as every reader accustomed to the codes of the naturalist story believes, embody the viewpoint of the author […] but rather, the perspective which Kafka wishes to condemn' (208).

[56] 'El problema surgió cuando esta lectura comenzó a generalizarse y a reivindicarse como la única posible, convirtiendo la crítica en la aplicación mecánica de esas recetas teóricas sin que el texto original señale los causes posibles y los límites de la interpretación. El viaje desde los textos hacia su sentido se invierte aquí: el sentido está ya dado en la elección de la forma de leer e interpretar, el texto pierde toda singularidad y se vuelve subsidiario de la teoría, que vuelve una y otra vez a exponer y subrayar sus fundamentos en cada lectura en un viaje de ida y vuelta incesante' (Becerra 2015, no page).

Eduardo Becerra's critique of close-reading's recipe-like theoretical application, implies that this methodology, which has come to be perceived as a neutral or non-theoretical standpoint, is actually applied to texts which, in a sense, are not suited or do not solicit an analysis of this sort and rather end up imposing certain readings of the texts. This, of course, generates an obvious tension, how to interpret what kind of theoretical model (or not) best functions to reveal the meaning of a text? Implicit in this question is the idea, very much contrary to the epistemology of close reading, that there is meaning within a text to be discovered (perhaps authorial, perhaps even a meaning unbeknownst to the author and proper to the text itself), other than the meaning which is given to the text by the interpreter. Similarly to Corral, Becerra proposes that 'perhaps the time has come to vindicate certain reconstructions and restitutions: reconstruction of the subject, of form, of meaning, and all of the literary instances demolished by the culturalist epistemology'[57] (Becerra 2015, no page), or in other words, returning to more traditional methods of literary analysis.

However, without the proper methodological reflexivity in this regard, this return to basics or more traditional methods of literary analysis proposed by Corral and Becerra, could become "pure" criticism in disguise, and consequently weigh up the merits of a text on the immanent characteristics (structure, prose, voice, etc.) in a vacuum, and project its own 'aesthetic categories upon texts whose history is much more complex than it is willing to acknowledge' (Casanova 2007, 352). It is in response to this conundrum that Bourdieu (2017) had already proposed a solution, a process of *double historicisation*, that is a 'reconstruction both of the space of possible positions […] in relation to which the historical given (text, document, image, etc.) to be interpreted is elaborated, and of the space of possibles in relation to which one interprets it' (309). In other words, in order to avoid the issue of immediate understanding, or as has been discussed here, the concerns surrounding the construction of the very object of study through the critic's own parameters, Bourdieu proposed the study of a text through its position-taking within the space of possibilities, as well as a an evaluation of the analytical or theoretical categories of the critic and their relation to the field.

Conclusion

In the crux of this very complicated debate, riddled with theoretical and philosophical contradictions, I propose the suitability of exploring the theoretical and methodological

[57] '[Q]uizás sí haya llegado el momento de reivindicar ciertas reconstrucciones y restituciones: reconstrucción del sujeto, de la forma, del sentido y de todas las instancias literarias demolidas por la epistemología culturalista' (Becerra 2015, no page).

proposal of Casanova through this specifically Bourdieusian methodology her practice shares—not as exceptions to the issues surrounding what Bourdieu (1998) calls the 'scholastic bias' (137)—, but equipped with models intended to be analogous to the real world they attempt to understand, growing models developed through open feedback loops between text and theory, and reflexive critical practices intended to secure the reliability of this methodology. After all, this is precisely what Casanova's theory and methodology are intended to be: the internal and external analysis in a back-and-forth symbiotic relationship, which ought to neither exclude nor devalue either kind of reading. A generative model, in the same sense as Bourdieu's, and which similarly has the capacity to reveal meaningful interpretations of not only the theorised structure, but also literature and its authors.

While many Latinamericanists have critiqued the locus of enunciation of such theories and question them as part of the European coloniality of Latin America, as well as finding omissions and bringing up methodological disputes, I argue that this does not imply that Casanova's model requires discarding, but rather augmenting. A genuine use of Casanova's theory would require a correction of errors or gaps, complication and nuancing of simplifications, and the exploration of typical and atypical case studies grounded in the sociohistorical and literary realities, all which contribute to improving a generative model which has considerable explanatory validity and which, as I have argued, must be understood in light of how it builds on Bourdieu's thought. It is in this respect that Sánchez Prado (2019) argues—echoing Beecroft—that by taking account of the very materiality and singularity of authors, we can remedy the apparent blind spot of many of these ambitious theories by exploring

> the way in which world literature operates in practice, not as a construct which goes from the general to the particular or as waves of influence from the centre to the periphery, but rather as a constellation of individual practices, in concrete sociohistorical situations[58] (150).
>
> The recognition of these materialities would give us a collective, mobile and necessarily incomplete vision of world literature which, however, would be richer than the attempts at systematization which we have seen until now[59] (158).

Even critics of Casanova's theory, such as Ignacio Sánchez Prado (2019), have acknowledged that Bourdieu's theory of fields has much to lend to the Wallersteinian model of the world-system in world literature theories and methodologies (155). As such, one of the clearest

[58] '[L]a forma en que la literatura mundial opera en la práctica, no como un constructo que va de lo general a lo particular o de olas de influencia del centro a la periferia, sino como una constelación de prácticas individuales, en situaciones sociohistóricas concretas' (Sánchez Prado 2019, 150).

[59] 'El reconocimiento de estas materialidades nos daría una visión colectiva, móvil y necesariamente incompleta de la literatura mundial que, sin embargo, sería más rica que los intentos de sistematización que hemos visto hasta ahora' (Sánchez Prado 2019, 158).

developments may very well be a reclamation of the Bourdieusian character of Casanova's theorisation from the very materials which are presented in this study.

Far from reinscribing the centrality of the Euroamerican intellectual block, I wish to appropriate Casanova's theory as part of this collective world literature work from my particular position as a Latinamericanist. As such, this work will contribute to test and expand Casanova's generative model of analysing the literature-world by particularly focusing on contemporary Latin American interventions, in particular the *McOndo* anthology. As was noted in the introduction to this thesis, Michael Wood's (2004) question has been a central concern from the beginning of this research and predates my decision to use Casanova's theory, which became relevant as the research project progressed. This is why I have undertaken a mixed methods approach, analysing the short stories and significant texts (prologues, prefaces and interviews) with close textual analysis but, also analysing from a macro perspective the positioning of texts and authors within national and international fields of cultural production, the literary space of works and their possible courses of action, explorations of authorial *habitus* and the impact of structural *illusios*—all theoretical and methodological additions from Bourdieu and Casanova which provide the conceptual framework for a more complex understanding of a text, its context, and the authorial intent within the world literature paradigm.

Part 2: Context
Chapter 4: Latin American literary space

4.1.1 Latin American literary space or the Latin American literature-world

The *McOndo* anthology affirms and continues to suggest the existence of Latin American literary space as a field of circulation and recognition above and beyond the national field and as a supranational category of select writers who have attained a level of international recognition. However, this structure is not of a recent making, but is evident from the early days of Latin America's differential literary identity, from Andrés Bello and the literature of the 19th Century, through the first waves of internationalisation of the region's literature, and especially, into recent literary periods defined as the Boom and Postboom.

As a macro-level contextualisation for *McOndo*, this second section will begin to analyse the numerous ways that the existence of this structure is affirmed in its development through three recent major stages: Latin America's narrative internationalisation in the first half of the 20th Century; the Boom of the 1960s; and the Postboom of the 1970s and 1980s. Like Casanova's development of the parallel political and literary chronologies of the various intersecting cultural fields of Prague at the end of the 19th Century in *Kafka, Angry Poet* (2015), my historical analysis necessarily explores the parallel political and literary worlds of Latin America as well as their constant overlaps. To these well-established literary periodisations, are added the interaction within the literary structure at the national level, regional editorial inequalities, and those exogenous to them by way of extra-literary hegemonies and forces at play within and beyond all of these: such as the political pole, the commercial pole, as well as the role of literature in broader discursive-symbolic debates regarding Latin American authenticity. All of these points will later represent the indispensable 'background knowledge' à la Charles Taylor (1993, 47), for the close reading analysis of both the prologue and the short stories of *McOndo*.

That is, as Charles Taylor (1993) recognises, the critic typically finds himself or herself at a distance or as an outsider to their object of study. In order to understand the position-taking of a text or an author, therefore (and avoid the illusion of immediate understanding), it is necessary to understand the 'unformulated background knowledge' of the time (Taylor 1993, 47), in order to reconstruct not only what the authors knew, but also what they did not know: two significant inquiries into understanding the space of possibilities available in the minds of

the Latin American authors of the late 20th Century. The response of *McOndo* in respect to this, will be outlined in separate additional chapters in the following case study section (Part 3)—analyses which, consistent with Casanovian international literary criticism, will in turn further inform the post-*McOndo* macro-context (Part 4).

4.1.2 Development of the Latin American cultural field

Since the so-called "discovery" of the New World in 1492, Latin America, as an imagined region, has developed its own distinct character through a well-studied[1] process of cultural agglomeration, via foreign, but increasingly local discourses. In the 19th and 20th centuries, debates regarding how to understand Latin American identity developed to form a considerable 'Latin Americanist discourse', defined by critics like Eugenia Demuro (2012) as 'a recurring obsession to define Latin America' (15)[2]. Notably, in these earlier discussions there are geographic and cultural dimensions to how each of these proposals localise Latin American authenticity. The Argentinian Domingo Faustino Sarmiento did so between the polarities of the centre and the region, for Sarmiento the locations of civilisation and barbarism respectively. The Cuban intellectual and independence fighter José Martí defined the region as 'nuestra América mestiza' (our mestizo America), the hybrid progeny of European and indigenous peoples, although despite this, unlike Sarmiento, Martí emphasises a rejection of the former and an embrace of the latter as Latin America's authentic patrimony. The Uruguayan essayist José Enrique Rodó defined Latin America via affirmation and negation, through an affirmation of Latin America's cultural kinship with Western civilisation, and rejection of United States' utilitarianism through the Shakespearean metaphors of Ariel and Caliban, respectively. While many of these earlier formulations were generated around binaries, there began, with Martí in particular, a consideration of Latin America through its *mestizaje*, which took various forms such as in José Vasconcelos' conception of *la raza cósmica* (the cosmic race), Fernando Ortíz's theorisation of transculturation, and in the literary realm, with Ángel

[1] Two of the most significant studies in this area which have mapped the development and understanding of the concept of Latin America are Edmundo O'Gorman's *La invención de América* (2001) and Walter Mignolo's *The idea of Latin America* (2008).

[2] Some of the most cited thinkers in this corpus include Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (*Facundo: civilización y barbarie*, 1845), José Martí ('Nuestra América,' 1891), José Enrique Rodó (*Ariel*, 1900), José Carlos Mariátegui (*7 Ensayos de intepretación de la realidad peruana*, 1928), José Vasconcelos (*La raza cósmica*, 1925), Fernando Ortiz (*Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*, 1940), Octavio Paz (*El laberinto de la soledad*, 1950), and Roberto Fernández Retamar ('Caliban,' 1974 [1971]). Demuro (2012) rightly notes a paradigmatic shift in these discussions towards the end of the 20th Century with the rise of greater critical frameworks with which to question European or Occidental perspectives on Latin American history and identity: here she cites the work of Néstor García Canclini, Walter Mignolo, Aníbal Quijano, Mabel Moraña and Enrique Dussel (15).

Rama's analysis of transcultural narratives. Beyond the essayistic tradition, in the literary and narrative spheres, too, was the question of Latin American identity interrogated, primordially in the national setting, however, increasingly with the elevation of these discourses to a new literary category and circulation.

In response to dominant national literary narratives established during the romanticist period, especially popular toward the end of the 19th Century, there arose an equally national literature which sought to provide a counter-narrative of the mostly urban or creole representations of the nation developed up to this time, through the narrativisation of the regions (as opposed to the cosmopolis) and the indigenous (as opposed to the creole). It was during the first half of the 20th Century that many writers in these regional and indigenous genres rose to international prominence[3]. Writers such as the Venezuelan Rómulo Gallegos (*Doña Bárbara*, 1929), the Colombian José Eustasio Rivera (*La vorágine*, 1924) and the Argentinian Ricardo Güiraldes (*Don Segundo Sombra*, 1926), further explored provincial themes and depicted the diverse regions and rural communities which were also to constitute the national imaginary, and became both instant classics, not only in their respective national spaces, but significantly as representative of a regional narrative. Later, these themes would naturally invoke indigenous experiences and perspectives such as in novels by the Peruvian José María Arguedas (*Los ríos profundos*, 1958 and *Todas las sangres*, 1964), the Guatemalan Miguel Ángel Asturias (*Leyendas de Guatemala*, 1930 and *Hombres de maíz*, 1949), and the Cuban Alejo Carpentier (*El reino de este mundo*, 1949 and *Los pasos perdidos*, 1953).

While these texts presented largely national imaginaries and landscapes, they were among the first novels from Latin America to be celebrated in Europe, and translated into other European languages, largely by way of consecration through the French capital and namely through the prestigious publisher Gallimard, milestones which would begin to generate Latin American literature as a canon of works and a space of circulation in its own right. Gustavo Guerrero (2018a) explains that during the mid-century the foundation of *La Croix du Sud* by Roger Caillois

> constitutes, in this sense, an advanced party and an inaugural proposal: it is one of the first attempts to elaborate and disseminate a certain idea of Latin America not only in regard to the

[3] Like many things in Latin America, the development of this style was not equal across the region, with the indigenous novel flourishing particularly in countries such as Peru over nations like Argentina, perhaps in part due to differing rates of indigenous population, the former being a nation somewhat mapped onto the pre-Columbian Incan Empire, and the latter a nation which largely decimated its indigenous population in the so-called "Wars of the Desert" of the 19th Century.

> French but also European public, thanks to the influence Paris still enjoys as the great showcase of the literatures of the world[4] (284).

As such, unlike the isolated attempts by figures of literary vanguard which inhabited the French field such as Rubén Darío or Vicente Huidobro, whose literary interventions were either more significant for their spaces back home or did not accomplish the universal impact which was intended in the capital of capitals[5], these novels collectively represent a significant stage of development in the internationalisation of Latin American letters. More specifically, the cultural and geographic *differentiation* apparent in these first literary exotic representations of Latin American life, landscapes, and peoples, satisfied the European expectations of exoticism—literature which further perpetuated the alterity and otherness of Latin American cultural identity seen from a European vantage point[6]—, a literary and aesthetic legacy which the writers of the Boom would inherit and struggle against. It is in this sense, that the Latin American cultural field is constituted, to begin with, as a kind of nationally derived panchoric ecology. Much like the example which Beecroft (2015) develops regarding the collating and anthologising of a panhellenistic culture out of the discrete *poleis*, so too, Latin America has and will continue to be—as will be seen in the case of the Boom and the Postboom—collated, anthologised, and imagined beyond the region itself by way of the mediation of foreign cultural and literary apparatuses, leading to a prevalent form of cultural orthodoxy known as *macondismo* (which will be explored in relation to all of these stages at the culmination of this chapter).

4.2.1 The Boom

If the internationalisation of numerous Latin American novels in the first half of the 20th Century could be posited as the development of the Latin American literary canon and the beginnings of a supranational category of recognition, then the Boom of the 1960s can be said

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[4] 'La colección de Caillois constituye, en este sentido, una avanzadilla y una propuesta inaugural: se trata de uno de los primeros intentos de elaborar y difundir una cierta idea de América Latina no solo de cara al público francés sino también europeo, gracias a la influencia de la que aún goza París como gran vitrina de las literaturas del mundo' (Guerrero 2018a, 284).

[5] As was detailed in the previous chapter by Casanova and Guerrero, Darío's intervention was less significant in Europe than it was in Latin America. Huidobro's universal aspirations are much less that of a renovator as that of a literary revolutionary, defined as much through his manifestoes predating the French surrealists and Dadaists to which he was often compared, and his development of a new poetic form to which he alone was the exponent, *creacionismo*. However, while the impact of the French vanguard would be international, Huidobro's one-man *creacionismo* movement rather than canonising him internationally, would convert him into '[e]l iniciador de la poesía moderna en nuestra lengua' (Paz 1987, 14), as Octavio Paz describes.

[6] The somewhat paternalistic yet undeniably differentiationist function of the *Croix du Sud* was summed up in a preface cited by Guerrero (2018a) in which Caillois states: '[u]n pueblo no confiere a su literatura un alcance mundial sino a partir del momento en que deja de vestir su propia cultura con ropa prestada y logra sacar del espesor de sus deseos, sus miserias y sus virtudes, el único estilo capaz de expresarlo plenamente' (292).

to be its realisation. As has been mentioned previously, the most undisputed decade of the Boom, the 1960s, saw writers from across the region reach an unprecedented level of global circulation and popularity, as well as critical consecration. Despite the enormous amount of critical attention surrounding this phenomenon, it has been a contentious moment in Latin American letters, with perhaps the only thing seemingly agreed upon by critics being its existence. *What*, however, the Boom was—whether a purely commercial explosion in popularity, an editorial marketing strategy, or a period of aesthetic "maturity"—, remains contested.

In his memoir, *Historia personal del boom* (1972), José Donoso describes the difficulties faced by writers of his Spanish-American generation (born during and around the 1920s) in carving their own literary destinies, as well as his personal experience of the Boom. Donoso was, after all, considered by many, including Carlos Barral, as the fifth member of the core of the Boom[7]. While Donoso's memoir is not of a rigorously historical nor academic nature—Donoso (1972) himself clarifies, 'all that I say is tentative, anecdotal, personal testimony, impression, approximation'[8] (96)—, his account can be used as a guide, complemented with other sources. In fact, this very personal testimony, from a Casanovian perspective, provides great insights into the unformulated background knowledge, and the kinds of problems which writers of this generation faced, and the strategies they took to confront them.

Donoso (1972) begins his personal history recounting the literary context during the 1950s, and how writers of his generation were expanding their literary horizons and breaking down the boundaries between the nation and the world through their reading of international writers[9] and commitment to international concerns. This global concern is a characteristic naturally of the international writer: those who for Casanova contribute to the centripetal or unifying forces of world literary space. However, the centripetal force of these international writers challenged by the traditional and canonical national writers from the *criollista* and *regionalista* aesthetics which (in words that resemble Casanova's) Donoso (1972) describes 'intended contrary to this to reinforce those boundaries between region and region, between

[7] When asked in an interview regarding who he considered to be the principal members of the Boom Barral responded: '[b]ueno, pienso claramente en Cortázar, pienso en Vargas Llosa, pienso en García Márquez, pienso en Fuentes, pienso en Donoso: los demás serían como una segunda fila, ¿no?' (Barral in Rama 2008, 290).

[8] '[T]odo lo que digo es tentativo, anecdótico, testimonio personal, impresión, aproximación' (Donoso 1972, 96).

[9] While Donoso's literary purview was predominantly English literature to begin with, citing with some frequency Virginia Woolf and produces a long list of writers which inspired his generation of writers: Sartre, Camus, Gunther Grass, Moravia, Lampedusa, Durrell, Robbe-Grillett, Salinger, Kerouac, Miller, Frisch, Golding, Capote, Pavese, Joyce, Kafka, Thomas Mann, and Faulkner (Donoso 1972, 21).

country and country, and make them impregnable, hermetic'[10] (23). For Donoso, this aesthetic conservatism, internalised as much by writers and critics of the time, reinforced a fixed sense of national and regional identity which was seen as pure, self-contained and corruptible by outside influence.

Donoso's Boom counterparts confirm this same experience in their own territories. Speaking from a local literary perspective, Carlos Fuentes similarly described in *Geografía de la novela* (1993) that Mexican literature during the 1950s had to respond to three literary dogmas: realism over fantasy, nationalism against cosmopolitanism, and political commitment against formalism. And from a more regional Latin American perspective, Mario Vargas Llosa (1996) decried the first wave of Latin American literary internationalisation in the regionalist novel, specifically naming and shaming Gallegos, Eustasio Rivera, Güiraldes, Arguedas and Asturias, among others. He blamed these writers for germinating a literary "infection" regarding which only a discovery of Sartre and "modern literature" could protect the Latin American writer

> from provincialism, immunize him against rustic views, make him feel dissatisfied with that local colour, superficial literature with its Manichean structures and simplified techniques [...] which was still our model and which repeated, unwittingly, the themes and fashions of European naturalism imported half a century previously[11] (Vargas Llosa 1996b, 132).

In these citations, Donoso, Fuentes, and Vargas Llosa separately describe the strength and pull of the centrifugal forces at work in the region's "traditional" literature, and the judgement and expectations of the critical establishment which ensured the consolidation of identities and perpetuated the isolation between Chilean, Mexican and Latin American letters from the literary innovations being developed across the globe. In the strongly nationalistic atmosphere within Latin American countries at the time, it is no surprise that writers of the Spanish-American literary Boom were perceived, in Donoso's (1972) terms, as 'cosmopolitans, snobs, with a tendency towards the foreign and aesthetics, [...] traitors to the naïve eyes of the times'[12] (27).

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[10] '[I]ntentaban al contrario reforzar esas fronteras entre región y región, entre país y país, de hacerlas inexpugnables, herméticas, para que así nuestra identidad, que evidentemente ellos veían como algo frágil o borroso, no se quebrara o se escurriera' (Donoso 1972, 23).

[11] 'What could these works offer to a Latin American adolescent? They could save him from provincialism, immunize him against rustic views, make him feel dissatisfied with that local colour, superficial literature with its Manichean structures and simplistic techniques—Rómulo Gallegos, Eustasio Rivera, Jorge Icaza, Ciro Alegría, Güiraldes, both Arguedas, even Asturias after *The President*—which was still our model and which repeated, unwittingly, the themes and fashions of European naturalism imported half a century previously. Apart from stimulating us to move away from a regionalist literary framework, we realized, albeit secondhand, through reading Sartre that narrative had undergone a revolution, that the range of its themes had diversified in all directions and that the modes of narration were both freer and more complicated' (Vargas Llosa 1996b, 132).

[12] '[C]osmopolitas, snobs, extranjerizantes, estetizantes, [...] traidores ante los ingenuos ojos de entonces' (Donoso 1972, 27).

Donoso (1972) is clear on who is to blame: 'the critical *establishment* produced an *establishment* in the novel'[13] (29). For Donoso (1972), the significant Chilean *criollista* tradition and the significance of the classic continental regionalist works which first internationalised the Latin American novel, were seen as the 'only models' ('modelos únicos') or the 'necessary points of reference' ('necesarios puntos de referencia') imposed by '[n]ot only the schools and universities, but also publishers, journalism, [and] timorous literary criticism'[14] (20). Creolist and regionalist critics contributed to this state of affairs by judging the quality of novels based on their mimetic veracity, or in other words, for their ability to authentically depict the autochthonous reality that was capable of differentiating Latin America from Europe and the rest of the world but also differentiating Latin American nations from each other.

As was noted in the previous chapter, the political development of the newly independent Latin American republics was linked in many senses to its literary development and differentiation. In Chile, Andrés Bello performed a key role in this process, as has been noted, through the legitimation of American Spanish (through his Grammar) and the establishment of a professional milieu and mechanisms for its development (through higher education institutions and literary press), processes through which many Latin American nations also developed (to varying degrees). In this same period of the mid-19th Century, *La Sociedad Literaria* was founded, whose president José Victorino Lastarria promoted a dehispanicisation of language and literature in Chile, further spurring on this postcolonial differentiation. This republican fervour, so urgent and widespread in the post-independence period (and particularly towards the end of the 19th Century for Chile during the Wars of the Pacific), would into the 20th Century manifest itself through critics, writers, and readers who favoured a national literature in isolation from the rest of the world. These texts would service the nation by fixing the national character through archetypical figures such as the *campesinos* or the *huasos* (e.g. Alberto Blest Gana), sailors and port workers (e.g. Salvador Reyes), depict the unique local landscape (e.g. Mariano Latorre), or provide intimate and social vignettes through an increasingly socially committed realist literature (e.g. Manuel Rojas). This extra-literary demand on literature in regard to the nation and its cultural identity, demonstrates the significant force of the national pole in Chilean literary space and how these extra-literary demands are not imposed from without but internalised by the very players of the literary game

[13] '[E]l *establishment* crítico produjo un *establishment* en la novela' (Donoso 1972, 29).

[14] 'No sólo los colegios y las universidades, sino las editoriales, el periodismo, la crítica literaria timorata' (Donoso 1972, 20).

and predicated on their understanding of how it ought to be played. However, it must be made clear that while the force of the national pole has here been described through the Chilean case study, this pole has been widespread across the Latin American literature-world, as Latin America's identity discourse and particularly its *macondismo* doxa (which will be discussed further) highlights.

Prior to the Boom, this isolation was not solely experienced in regard to Europe and the rest of the world, but also between national spaces within Latin America. Latin American literary space was and continues to be internally structured along national literary fields, such that many writers of the Boom have noted how they only began to see themselves as Latin American once they became aware of their imagined collective identity beyond the region. These established literary traditions also commercially restricted the circulation of Spanish-American literatures as, according to Donoso (1972), '[t]he idea remained in the mind of distributors that the Spanish-American novel continued to be static in the same position as before, in the time of *costumbrista* and *criollista* isolation, and that it could not interest internationally'[15] (84). This perceived literary impoverishment, further perpetuated by the establishment of self-enclosed and self-referential national literatures, would be reinforced further through the economic decision-making of local publishing industries, where the circulation of literature was restricted to national spaces for their protection from foreign competition. This would be further affected by conservative foreign publishers, which due to local restrictions and tariffs on literary imports and the obvious substantial costs and small return involved in shipping books across the Atlantic, invested little into transforming a growing homogenisation in literary production which was in line with the well-established literatures of the day: national *criollismo* and realism.

From an aesthetic dimension, it was this self-referential and 'impoverishing mimetic criteria' which according to Donoso (1972) 'was what put more obstacles than anything else in front of the novel, as the quality of a novel could only be appreciated by the inhabitants of that country or the region described'[16] (25). The balkanisation of states was so severe that José Donoso (1972) described how '[n]obody knew, in each country, what was being written in

[15] '[P]ersistía en la mente de los distribuidores la idea de que la novela hispanoamericana seguía estática en la misma posición que antes, en la época del aislamiento constumbrista y criollista, y que no podía interesar internacionalmente' (Donoso 1972, 84).

[16] 'Este empobrecedor criterio mimético [...] fue lo que más trabas puso a la novela, puesto que la calidad de una obra sólo podía ser apreciada por los habitantes del país o de la región descrita' (Donoso 1972, 25).

other Spanish-American countries'[17] (30), and literature needed to be circulated interpersonally through friends and travellers[18] (94), experiences comparable decades later in the formation of the *McOndo* anthology. It was within this isolated paradigm that writers '*[d]idn't even consider the question of distributing or selling in other countries*'[19] (Donoso 1972, 34). This was especially the case for emerging writers interested in publishing for the first time, an experience frustrating enough at the national level: an ordeal of self-funding, debt, editorial resistance, the task of selling copies himself, and the fear of critical reception, all which Donoso describes in detail in his memoir (1972). However, fortunately for Donoso, with the favourable review of the Chilean critic Alone's 'all-powerful'[20] weekly literary critique of his first collection of short stories *Veraneo* (1955); subsequent Municipal Prize for Short Story in 1956; inclusion in Enrique Lafourcade's generational anthologies[21]; and increased journalistic attention, he began his literary trajectory with considerable local success. But Donoso's internationalisation would not have been possible, he confesses, without the broadening of his literary horizons afforded him through his travel, congresses and the literary and personal influence of early members of the Spanish-American literary Boom[22].

At the beginning of the 1960s, Carlos Fuentes was the first among the members of the

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[17] 'Nadie sabía, en cada país, qué cosas se estaban escribiendo en otros países hispanoamericanos' (Donoso 1972, 30).

[18] Donoso lists that it was via this method of *chasquis* (messengers) that he was able to get access to *Los pasos perdidos* (Alejo Carpentier), *El llano en llamas* and *Pedro Páramo* (Juan Rulfo), *La ciudad y los perros* (Mario Vargas Llosa), *Sobre héroes y tumbas* (Ernesto Sábato), *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (Carlos Fuentes) and the works of Julio Cortazar (Donoso 1972, 94).

[19] '*Ni si quiera se planteaba la cuestión de distribuir y vender en otros países*' (Donoso 1972, 34).

[20] '[T]odopoderosa' (Donoso 1972, 31).

[21] The Chilean *Generación del 50* was named and promoted by the Chilean writer Enrique Lafourcade in his *Antología del nuevo cuento chileno* (1954). In the prologue to the anthology Lafourcade (1954) characterised the young authors he anthologised as middle-class, university educated, and with a cosmopolitan outlook many of which spoke a foreign language or had foreign descent. This polemical move by Lafourcade divided critics regarding the existence or non-existence of this self-defined generation and the characteristics which supposedly unified them. In the prologue to a subsequent anthology, *Cuentos de la Generación del 50*, Lafourcade (1959) summarised the judgments made of the group: 'principalmente, se les negó. De plano. No venían a renovar nada. Eran prolongaciones lánguidas de movimientos intelectuales foráneos. Escribían mal. Además, pornográficos' (10).

[22] Worth mentioning in this regard, is the Congreso de Intelectuales (Congress of Intellectuals) in Concepción in 1962 organised by the Spanish professor Gonzalo Rojas, where Donoso was exposed to a rich international critical perspective, in attendance were Pablo Neruda, José María Arguedas, José Miguel Oviedo, Augusto Roa Bastos, Pepe Bianco, Mario Benedetti, Carlos Fuentes, Claribel Alegría, Alejo Carpentier and a number of other researchers. Donoso describes how at this congress he felt a collective concern with the lack of inter-American literary circulation, which determined for him the need to stop thinking solely within national constraints and begin thinking of the millions of Spanish readers across the globe (Donoso 1972, 44). Despite his familiarity with many literary giants of the Western canon such as Henry James, Proust and Faulkner, it was upon reading other Latin American from his generation that Donoso received his first stimulus from writer to writer, to write with greater formalistic freedom (Donoso 1972, 53). For example, Donoso (1972) highlights the impact which Alejo Carpentier's *Los pasos perdidos* had on the concluding chapter of his first novel *Coronación* and its unexpected departure from realism through its narration of a character's descent into madness.

Boom to internationalise his literature in the United States with his novels *Where the Air is Clear* (1960), *The Good Conscience* (1961), *The Death of Artemio Cruz* (1964), and *Aura* (1965), translated and published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux (FSG), and through the help of his literary agent Carl Brandt. Through his growing international standing, Fuentes was able to personally assist Donoso to publish *Coronación* in translation in the United States in 1962 with the publisher Alfred Knopf (which earned him the William Faulkner Foundation Prize), at the time the leading publisher of Latin American Literature in the United States. Fuentes was also instrumental in another of Donoso's novels, by helping him to publish *El lugar sin límites* (1966) with the Mexican publisher Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, one of Mexico's most prestigious independent publishers. This publication outside of his native land was a symbolic leap for Donoso (1972), who described its significance in the following way: '[t]o publish in Spanish outside of Chile meant, at least symbolically, a liberation: to stop depending on the monopoly of Chilean business and taste, and acquire a certain autonomy'[23] (112). This was the kind of liberation from national entrenchment that many writers of the Boom would seek in their self-imposed exile to more autonomous literary spaces (such as Mexico for Donoso), or spaces which afforded greater ease in circulation (such as Spain for a number of them). Donoso describes how outside of Chile he

> found a broadening of horizons, a greater perspective and some good opportunities to live more dignifiedly, write and publish [...] continuous contact with writers and publishers from all over the world [...] [and represented a chance] to discover the most recent publications, the newest tendencies [...] to be close to all of the most recent literary waves[24] (Donoso in Piña 1976, 52).

This autonomy was also experienced in terms of the changing economic conditions for his writing—while in Chile he had to self-publish *Veraneo* and go into debt to publish *Coronación*—, as once his international reputation had been established, upon his return to Chile in 1981, he was perhaps Chile's only professional writer living almost exclusively from his creative work (Donoso in Piña 1976). Donoso's experience of self-imposed exile in the literary centre afforded him greater literary autonomy aesthetically, as he was able to escape Chile's asphyxiating aesthetic paradigm which Donoso (1972) described as 'the most remote and then the most static country in the continent' (60), and also provided the conditions for his insertion into greater international spaces which facilitated his visibility, internationalisation, aesthetic autonomy and economic viability to pursue his literary passion.

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[23] 'Publicar en castellano fuera de Chile significaba, por lo menos simbólicamente, una liberación: dejar de depender del monopolio de la empresa y del gusto chileno, y adquirir cierta autonomía' (Donoso 1972, 112).

[24] '[E]ncontré una ampliación de los horizontes, una mayor perspectiva y algunas buenas oportunidades para vivir más dignamente, escribir y publicar' [...] permanente contacto con escritores y editoriales de todo el mundo [...] [y significó la oportunidad de] conocer lo último publicado, las nuevas tendencias [...] estar cerca de toda la actual marea literaria' (Donoso in Piña 1976, 52).

These literary realities are indicative of the structure of Latin American literary space during this formative period. When perceived from the outside, Latin American literary space has often been conceptualised as a unified totality, however, akin to Moulton's understanding of the distinction between *World Literature*—those works considered the canon of world literature as perceived from a national perspective—, and *Universal Literature*—all of the world's works of literature—, here, also, we must distinguish between Latin American literature—those works read, recognised, and canonised internationally as works belonging to the Latin American canon—, and Universal Latin American literature—all the works of literature belonging to the national territories which make up this imagined region. So, while to a certain extent we can speak of a fractured Latin American literary field, as the national differences and differentiations as well as structural factors continue to segregate the national spaces from which authors arise, those authors who rise to the category of Latin American author, achieve their status via foreign but also regional consensus and appear to work to unify conceptions of this fractured whole much like Beecroft's theorisation of panchoric literary ecologies. Furthermore, as Franco Moretti has theorised (2000b), the 'blind canon makers' (readers, critics, etc.) decide those works which will constitute the small percentage of canonical works, of which the other 99.5 percent of 'great unread' works will be excluded from this category (Cohen 1999). This process can be said to occur as much for World literature (in the way that Moretti applies it) or national literature (as Cohen does), as for intermediary supranational spaces, such as the Latin American literary field in which certain authors are permitted entry into this selective category of literature, and the great majority are not.

In his seminal essay 'El *Boom* en perspectiva' (The Boom in perspective), Ángel Rama (2008) attempts a comprehensive analysis and problematisation of the Boom; discussing its definition, which novels and writers may be said to comprise it, dating its rise and fall, and its effects on literary markets, aesthetics and writers themselves. Rama (2008) interrogates the competing definitions of the Boom via numerous journalistic, commercial, critical, and authorial commentaries which have generated vague and uncertain conceptualisations of the Boom, while at the same time confirming its undeniability. In assembling the numerous divergent critical accounts within this debate, Rama (2008) paints a multifaceted and nuanced view of the Boom as a product of various complex interrelated factors: the novelistic experimentation from the 1940s and 1950s and into the most cited decade of the 1960s; the growth and tastes of a greater and popular readings public within Latin America; the role of local, international, and multinational publishers and prizes; the editorial procedures of re-publication and increased print-runs of commercially successful authors; the definition of a

Boom generation and a "common aesthetic"; increased international circulation and translation; the professionalisation of authors; and the increased visibility of authors due to fame and their role as writer-intellectuals. While in *Historia personal del boom*, Donoso (1972) downplays the role of the publishing and marketing industries in the success of the Boom, the role of the publishing industry as a central protagonist in this history cannot be dismissed, and nor can the context of international politics which contributed to the global interest in the region, two significant contextual transformations which constitute the indispensable background knowledge for understanding the *McOndo* anthology.

4.2.2 The authorial vocation and the political pole

Among the many competing factors that attempt to account for the sudden popularity of Latin American literature internationally and especially in translation, the effect of the Cuban Revolution cannot be understated. The Cuban Revolution, Castro's alignment with the U.S.S.R. during the height of Cold War tensions, the escalations of geopolitical strains with the armament of the Caribbean nation with Soviet missiles, and the Bay of Pigs disaster, all increased attention both in the press and in the academy, contributing to a scholarly urgency to better understand the entire region. In the Unites States particularly, this period sees the rise of Latin American research centers and university departments, in part, as responses against the growing Latin American centrality of Cuba and the revolution's cultural headquarters Casa de las Américas[25] (Cohn 2012). These faculties would also have a role in the rise of the Boom in the United States, not solely as sources of literary appraisal, but also as the writers of the Boom would accept visiting and teaching positions at prestigious private U.S. universities (despite their generally Castro-aligned political convictions)[26]. The increased presence of Latin American writers in the U.S. was parallel to their increased circulation and visibility in the publishing world. As Deborah Cohn (2012) has highlighted, following the Cuban Revolution, other publishers (e.g. Dutton, Harper and Row, Pantheon, and FSG) began entering the, until then restricted, market for Spanish literature in translation, dominated by Alfred A. Knopf.

[25] 'That Cuba, in large measure because of the activities of Casa de las Américas, became a cultural center within Latin American only heightened the concern of public officials and private cold warriors alike. Thus, the State Department and the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) established a number of subsidies and centers to support both the study of the region and Latin American artistic endeavors, as did private organizations such as the Rockefeller, Ford, and Carnegie family philanthropies' (Cohn 2012, 27).

[26] Carlos Fuentes taught at Columbia, Dartmouth, Harvard, Princeton, and the University of Pennsylvania; Vargas Llosa at Columbia and UC Berkeley; Cortázar at Berkeley; and Donoso at Columbia, Dartmouth, Princeton, and New York University as well as teaching in the famous International Writer's Workshop at the University of Iowa between 1965-1967.

So, while the political context to the Boom may have contributed to the literary attention which the region experienced at the time, this politicisation would have unexpected effects on literary production. Put differently, there is an apparent contradiction in the interplay between the seemingly oppositional poles of literary autonomy and heteronomy which during the Boom come together through aesthetic development precisely during one of the most highly politicised periods in Latin American literary history. Nevertheless, in some senses, in spite of Casanova's own insistence that political concerns have adverse effects on the literary autonomy of a space, Casanova (2007) argues that the Boom—while occurring during a politically charged atmosphere—, 'represents the beginning of a proclamation of autonomy' (325). In particular, she cites Julio Cortázar who, notwithstanding his political activism as a supporter of the Cuban and Nicaraguan Revolutions and member of the Russell Tribunal, professed a belief in the aesthetic freedom of literature and whose public political commitment was not overtly reflected in his highly creative literature[27] (Casanova 2007, 325-6).

Cortázar was not alone, as during this period some of the most respected writers associated with the Boom and beyond used their public profiles for activism and political agendas (in particular taking advantage of prize acceptance speeches), consequently forging for themselves, and future literary generations, a political dimension to the Latin American literary vocation. In Pablo Neruda's Nobel Prize acceptance speech, he opposes Vicente Huidobro's famous claim that the poet is a "little god", emphasising instead a humble communitarian effort alongside the working-class to bring about social change[28]. Similar tones of political responsibility and activism are also found in Mario Vargas Llosa's famous acceptance speech for the Premio Rómulo Gallegos in 1967. The speech, entitled 'La literatura

[27] Casanova cites a letter which Cortázar wrote to Casa de las Américas, a national institution with publishing capacities which in many senses represented the cultural arm of the Cuban Revolution: '[w]hen I came back to France after these two trips, there were two things that I understood better. On the one hand, my personal and intellectual involvement in the struggle for socialism . . . On the other, my work as a writer followed the orientation that my way of being impressed upon it, and even if at a given moment my work reflected this involvement, I did it for the same reasons of aesthetic freedom that currently lead me to write a novel that takes place virtually outside of time and historical space. At the risk of disappointing the catechists and partisans of art in the service of the masses, I continue to be this "cronopio" who writes for his own personal pleasure and suffering, without the least concession, with "Latin American" or "Socialist" obligations understood as pragmatic a priori assumptions" (Cortázar in Casanova 2007, 325-6).

[28] In the heavily Marxist tones for which he was also well-known Neruda (2014) stated: '[e]l poeta no es un "pequeño dios". [...] No está signado por un destino cabalístico superior al de quienes ejercen otros menesteres y oficios [...] Él cumple su majestuosa y humilde faena de amasar, meter al horno, dorar y entregar el pan de cada día, como una obligación comunitaria', and shortly later he continues: '[e]xtendiendo estos deberes del poeta, en la verdad o en el error, hasta sus últimas consecuencias, decidí que mi actitud dentro de la sociedad y ante la vida debía ser también humildemente partidaria [...] Comprendí, metido en el escenario de las luchas de América, que mi misión humana no era otra sino agregarme a la extensa fuerza del pueblo organizado, agregarme con sangre y alma, con pasión y esperanza, porque sólo de esa henchida torrentera pueden nacer los cambios necesarios a los escritores y a los pueblos'.

es fuego' (Literature is Fire), outlines the historical inequalities, injustices, and exploitation, which the region has faced and which, according to Vargas Llosa (1996a), 'offer us exemplary material to reveal in fictions, in a direct or indirect way, through facts, dreams, testimonies, allegories, nightmares or visions that reality is imperfectly made, that life must change' (73). He goes on to proclaim, once again crystalizing the calling of the author as political and social activist, that '[o]ur vocation has made writers the professionals of dissatisfaction, the conscious or unconscious subversives of society, rebels with a cause' (Vargas Llosa 1996a, 73). It is worth noting that Vargas Llosa presented himself as candidate for the Peruvian presidency in 1990, in one sense taking this political vocation further than any other member of the Boom. Likewise, Gabriel García Márquez in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, aside from further entrenching the marvellous history and realities of life in Latin America[29], provided a long and horrifying description of the harsh living conditions for the majority of those Latin Americans who experience poverty, dictatorships, disappearances, genocides, forced adoptions, civil wars, and more. However, despite this devastating panorama, García Márquez insists on the writer's duty to continue dreaming of a utopic reality:

> [f]aced with this awesome reality that must have seemed a mere utopia through all of human time, we, the inventors of tales, who will believe anything, feel entitled to believe that it is not yet too late to engage in the creation of the opposite utopia. A new and sweeping utopia of life, where no one will be able to decide for others how they die, where love will prove true and happiness be possible, and where the races condemned to one hundred years of solitude will have, at last and forever, a second opportunity on earth (García Márquez 2014, no page).

These speeches, while mindful of the harshest realities experienced in Latin America, are nonetheless steeped in euphoria and utopic visions of the future, sentiments which Néstor García Canclini (2004) has identified as representative of this aesthetic moment in Latin American cultural production[30].

Casanova (2007) uses Cortázar's letter, as well as citations of Alfonso Reyes and Carlos Fuentes, to claim that the very emergence of the debate surrounding artistic liberty and political commitment in Latin America 'is a significant indication that this process of autonomization was then under way' (325)[31]. However, Casanova does not enter into a discussion of these

[29] García Márquez details a long list of events taking place in Latin America's history which demonstrate the continents magical character, supporting the illusion that surrounded García Márquez's literature: that his magical realist stories were not fantastic imaginings but tales inspired by life in the exotic continent.

[30] 'In the 1960s, art worked as a herald of utopia, trying to include in the present a future that seemed feasible' (García Canclini 2004, 13).

[31] José Joaquín Brunner (1992) describes this autonomisation at the level of the broader cultural field in Latin America as beginning before the Boom, when between the 1920s and 1950s: '[é]ste [campo cultural] supera su posición subordinada respecto de la esfera política. Ahora empieza a ser el continente de un moderno sistema intelectual, con una desarrollada división y organización del trabajo cultural, al mismo tiempo que se profesionalizan las posiciones y funciones de ese campo. El escritor aristócrata da paso al autor que vive de sus

literary figures or their works, and how they find themselves in-between (or perhaps overcoming) this apparent antinomy between the political and the autonomous poles. However, as has been noted, Pierre Bourdieu, in his discussion of the author-intellectual, accounts for this kind of double interaction in the literary and intellectual world, when he describes this figure as both paradoxical and two-dimensional[32]. In a similar fashion then, the authors of the Boom, who themselves became in many senses public intellectuals or political commentators, did not do so without credibility, but as figures endowed with the autonomy and symbolic capital associated with their standing in the literary world. This is what makes the speeches of Neruda, Vargas Llosa, and García Márquez so notable, as their political engagement was not in isolation or marginal to their literary work, but from the platform of their literary work they intervened into other sectors of Latin American public discourse. This consolidation of the political vocation of the writer or two-dimensions of the author (intellectual and creative), would be rejected in the *McOndo* anthology and in many ways by the broader generation who in their own aesthetic moments looked upon these utopic dreams as fantasies and obstacles to their literary autonomy.

4.2.3 Publishing and the commercial pole

While Donoso (1972) acknowledges the Cuban Revolution as a unifying commitment among many writers and intellectuals during the Boom (58), he accounts for the success of the Boom predominantly through its aesthetic triumph over the aforementioned literary schools and their critical advocates[33]. He is not alone. Carlos Fuentes (1969) also put forward an aesthetic explanation through his concept of *la nueva novela hispanoamericana* (The new Spanish-American novel) in his book of the same name, and his framing of the Boom continued to remain largely aesthetic even in his subsequent work[34] (Fuentes 2011). The aesthetically innovative works of the Boom are well-studied and acknowledged (see: Shaw 1994 and Shaw

obras o de una ocupación intelectual; el ensayista da paso al sociólogo; el abogado se separa del político; la universidad supera su adscripción estamentaria' (293-4).

[32] See Bourdieu (2017) on the paradoxical nature of Intellectuals, section 3.2.3.

[33] '[E]sta nueva literatura de experimentación, esta nueva literatura ‹‹difícil›› era la forma más contundente de rebatir el romanticismo costumbrista o cargado de una fuerte colaboración social de las novelas inmediatamente anteriores; era anular para siempre el clisé que contraponía lo ‹‹vital››, que debía ser lo nuestro, a lo ‹‹intelectual››, que debía ser lo extranjero, lo estetizante, lo tabú' (Donoso 1972, 70).

[34] In the section entitled '*El boom*' of Fuentes' *La gran novela latinoamericana* (2011), he puts forward his understanding of the achievements of the Boom: '[e]n resumen, creo que fueron cinco sus principales aportaciones. En primer lugar, un puñado de buenas novelas. En seguida, el boom internacionalizó a la novela latinoamericana. Quebró las estrecheces de los géneros que entonces se imponían a la ficción (rural, urbana, indigenista, etc.). Por ello, personalizó extraordinariamente el quehacer narrativo. Y por ultimo, creó un Mercado interno e internacional para nuestra literatura' (295).

1999): from the Faulknerian and Joycean-inspired magical realism of Gabriel García Márquez's novels; to Cortázar's experimental fantastic short stories and formal restructuring in novels such as *Rayuela* and 62: *Modelo para armar*; to Carlos Fuentes' narrative experimentation with narrators and perspectives in novels such as *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*; José Donoso's narrative exploration of psychology and madness; or Vargas Llosa's total novels such as *La casa verde* or *Conversación en la catedral*. Shaw's book, *Nueva narrativa hispanoamericana* (1999), in particular, was a significant attempt to tabulate the characteristics of the Boom novels mostly in terms of aesthetic turns or narrative devices and themes[35].

However, Herrero-Olaizola (2000) argues that, far from downplaying the role of the publishing industry in understanding the Boom, it is the 'aesthetic programme' (324) and marketing of especially Seix Barral within the cultural field which must be interrogated. Through literary prizes such as the Premio Biblioteca Breve (founded in 1958) and a calculated selection of Latin American authors to introduce into Spain and the rest of Europe—as well as back to Latin America—, Seix Barral went from a small publisher within the restricted field of production to the large-scale production of bestseller literature at the height of the Boom. Although Ángel Rama (2008) argues that it was not solely Seix Barral who used this cultural norm but a number of independent editors including many from Latin America—Losada, Emecé, Sudamericana, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Era, Joaquín Mortíz, Nascimento, Zig Zag, Lumen, Anagrama, etc.—, it can be stated unreservedly, that the publishing house which most successfully implemented this was Seix Barral (274). Donoso (1972) was aware of this fact, and had suggested that both the writers and the publisher combined had inaugurated the success tantamount to the Boom: 'in the same way that the Premio Biblioteca Breve de Novela of 1962 "launched" Mario Vargas Llosa, it's just as fair to say that Mario Vargas Llosa "launched" Seix Barral'[36] (79-80).

Paradoxically, however, the unparalleled commercial success of the authors which Seix Barral chose to publish (such as Mario Vargas Llosa and later Gabriel García Márquez), did not grossly modify Seix Barral's identity from a publisher of innovative literature to purely popular literature. This could have been the case, according to the rules of Bourdieu's cultural field—seeing that according to Bourdieu's axiom that the cultural field is "an economic world

[35] Shaw's (1999) proposed a systematic thirteen point definition of *la nueva novela*, which highlighted its themes, narrative and formal devices, such as: the emergence of metaphysical over committed literature, mythologisation over observation, irrationality over reality, an anti-romantic yet erotic sentiment and style, abandonment of linear and chronological narrative structures, the employment of multiple and ambiguous narrators, and so on.

[36] '[A]sí como el Premio Biblioteca Breve de Novela de 1962 ‹‹lanzó›› a Mario Vargas Llosa, es igualmente lícito decir que Mario Vargas Llosa ‹‹lanzó›› a Seix Barral' (Donoso 1972, 79-80).

reversed" where symbolic capital and economic capital are not compatible—as the publisher's literature increased in popularity it would, according to this structure, begin to lose its symbolic capital. Ángel Rama (2008) also speaks about this curious paradox in generous terms, defining these editorial intentions as cultural over commercial when he argues that these publishers, not concerned with commercial gain, were chiefly concerned with the promotion of a literature to a newly identified readership capable of appreciating the complexities of the newest narrative experimentation from these writers (274-5). Rama is correct in noting that Seix Barral did not "sell-out", or in other words, exchange its symbolic capital for economic capital. Instead, the publishing house exemplified an astute selection and powerful accumulation of a whole library of authors, a successful combination which balanced consecratory power and commercial success (Herrero-Olaizola 2000).

By taking the comparison further, Seix Barral's dual character appears to parallel a similar duality of the Boom's singularity as innovative aesthetics (Fuentes' *nueva novela*) and bestseller success (hence the name Boom, an onomatopoeic description of the explosive popular success of these authors) (Herrero-Olaizola 2000). Through this dual and seemingly contradictory character, the Boom must be understood as a unique moment in Spanish-American letters which complicates the traditional categories of cultural and popular publisher. It is a paradoxical period during which the high-brow becomes popular—two effects which will have profound impacts on Latin American literary markets in the Postboom era and beyond. The 'long shadow of the Boom' ('la larga sombra del *boom*'), as Gustavo Guerrero calls it (2018b), takes many forms, from the commercial editorial desires to replicate its success (with so-called minibooms, boomerangs, and boom juniors being heralded in the 1990s), to the enduring mythology surrounding Barcelona[37], the literary credit which continues to endow as much the authors of the Boom as well as their publishers (such as Seix Barral but later Tusquets, Grijalbo Mondadori, Anagrama, etc.), or in more discursive senses, persistent horizons of expectation regarding Latin American literature and cultural authenticity, all of which will be both reckoned with, and in some cases fortified, in the Postboom era.

[37] Dunia Gras Miravet (2000) has argued—making use of Casanova's theorisations—that Barcelona represented the literary capital of the Boom *par excellence*, a location for formal and informal networking and literary activity which for some facilitated their process of internationalisation, a literary dependency symptomatic of the difficult situation of the literary market in Latin American nations (445) . This is confirmed by members of the Boom, for whom Seix Barral and Barcelona, became the extra-continental point of 'linking' ('vinculación') which would remediate Latin America's literary balkanisation (Donoso 1972, 81), a city comparable to the attraction of Paris for previous generations of writers evidence by the flocking of Spanish-American writers to the Catalonian capital (Vargas Llosa 1998, 182). The mythology surrounding the city continues to be prevalent today, highlighted by the testimony of writers such as the Argentinian Rodrigo Fresán, who has lived in Barcelona for decades.

4.3.1 The Postboom

From a political standpoint, if the Boom has be characterised by the euphoria and promising visions of the future associated with the potential of the Cuban Revolution especially during the 1960s, the Postboom can be conversely associated with a general disenchantment with these promises due to the deterioration of the aura surrounding the revolution, the rise of dictatorships, and the commercialisation of Latin American literary space and production, chronologically associated with the decades of the 1970s and 1980s. These largely politico-economic factors had profound effects on Latin American literary space; changes apparent in a heightened political imperative continuing from the Boom but which increasingly permeated the literature; the popularisation and commercialisation of Latin American literature particularly of exiled writers; and the strengthening of a *macondiano* Latin American identity fuelled by the popularity of works, which propagated and confirmed exoticised foreign horizons of expectation. As will become evident, in this period both the political pole and the commercial pole compete with increasing intensity against the autonomous pole of literary production.

4.3.2 The political and literary worlds

Almost from the very beginning, the Cuban Revolution advanced a cultural image which would both legitimise and promote the continuation of its social and economic transformations. To assist with the amassing of cultural capital in the Revolution (particularly with the approval of the West), Fidel Castro hosted visits from intellectuals and cultural figures from across the region and the world, such as Jean Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir in 1960. The revolution also hosted congresses, such as the Tricontinental Conference (Havana 3-14 January 1966) and the Cultural Congress of Havana (5-12 January 1968), which invited intellectuals from across the world to support a collective Third-World struggle against imperialism, in particular United States neo-colonialism (See: 'Llamamiento de la Habana' 1968). In domestic politics, Castro also placed cultural figures such as Alejo Carpentier, Lisandro Otero, Roberto Fernández Retamar, and Abel Prieto in positions of institutional political power. But the Cuban "Cultural Revolution" is perhaps best illustrated in the founding of the most significant cultural institution of the regime, Casa de las Américas, founded only four months after the end of the fall of the Batista regime.

Originally conceived as a publishing house, Casa de las Américas came to embody Cuba's continental cultural revolution, awarding prizes across literary genres (essay, short

story, novel, poetry, and theatre) and to artists across the continent, with juries made up of prominent Latin American intellectuals and artists such as those of the Boom, all which had the effect of endowing both the associated artists and the institution with symbolic capital. The most popular writers of the Boom were also invited to launch their books at the "Café Conversatorios" (Conversation Cafés) hosted at Casa de las Américas, and the publishing house also bought the rights to republish Cortázar's *Rayuela* (1968), Fuentes' *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (1987), Vargas Llosa's *Los cachorros* (1968), and various works by García Márquez. With the help of local and international artists, writers, and intellectuals and through these strategies during the 1960s, Castro's "Cultural Revolution" sought to make Cuba the locus of a Leftist revolutionary avant-garde and cultural capital of the Latin American artistic hemisphere.

However, as Daniel Nemrava argues, a significant downfall for the Cuban Revolution which became apparent was the implicit problem with the utopic dream of Marxist revolutionary thought. As Nemrava (2014) argues, Marx and Lenin created a model in which the state was intended to be of a provisional nature, to give way to a total restructuring of society. However, the appropriate moment for the dissolution of the State was never clarified. The consequence of this uncertainty was the prolongation and self-preservation—even to certain totalitarian extremes—of *La revolución*. This implicit idea had obvious repercussions for intellectual and creative liberty, with Fidel Castro (1961) famously pronouncing to an audience of intellectuals in 1961: '[w]hat are the rights of revolutionary or non-revolutionary writers and artists? Within the Revolution, everything; against the Revolution, no rights at all'[38] (no page). While these words can be understood as overstated and typical of Castro's extravagant rhetoric, their meaning would, in fact, be executed by the government with the imprisonment of the poet Herberto Padilla for his "counterrevolutionary" literature in 1971. It was this controversy which would attract global attention and condemnation, as well as signal the deterioration of the utopic aura surrounding the revolution.

The tensions created within Cuban literary space by the revolution's powerful "with us or against us" stance and demands that intellectual and creative work be in the service of the revolution, ultimately worked against the revolution's cultural priorities in large part due to its affront on liberty. As Nemrava (2014) also highlights, in spite of Castro's desire that the cultural production of the nation accompany the broader revolution, the literature directly

[38] '¿Cuáles son los derechos de los escritores y de los artistas, revolucionarios o no revolucionarios? Dentro de la Revolución, todo; contra la Revolución, ningún derecho' (Castro Ruz 1961, no page).

proceeding the overthrow of Batista avoided the topic of the revolution altogether, with a resurgence of the historical novel (e.g. Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Alejo Carpentier). The 1970s saw the *quinquenio gris*, a five-year literary drought during which Cuban literary space showed little signs of life. And in the 1980s and 1990s there emerged a literature dealing with the revolution but written by a disenchanted younger generation, something which, in many senses, signified the revolution's failure to effectively co-opt a younger demographic with its nationalist discourse (e.g. Jesús Díaz, Senel Paz, Wendy Guerra, Ronaldo Menéndez), but was also symptomatic that the regime's efforts in the cultural sphere—at least in literary art—was failing to generate a formidable literature of and for the revolution. Internationally, not only would literary exiles (such as Reinaldo Arenas and Guillermo Cabrera Infante) undermine the revolution, but even its early supporters would challenge the attacks on freedom of expression that the Castro government was demonstrating in its responses to counterrevolutionary thought or expression, such as in the infamous *Le Monde* letter[39]. As both Nemrava (2014) and Donoso (1972) recognise, the Padilla Affair was a significant factor in the disintegration of the Boom and represented the beginning of the end of the uncritical celebration of the Cuban revolutionary myth.

Nevertheless, while the utopia of the Cuban Revolution may have lost some of its aura in the aftermath of the Padilla Affair, the onset of oppressive U.S. supported Right-wing dictatorships in Central and South America, and the spread of neoliberalism, reaffirmed the importance of the revolution as the only alternative to U.S. imperialism in the minds of an increasingly dominant Leftist intellectual atmosphere (Nemrava 2014, 21). In the 1960s, during the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution in particular, the militant left of the Latin American academy was similarly caught up in the revolutionary euphoria and utopic dreaming of the writers of the Boom, palpable in the speeches from Neruda, Vargas Llosa, and García Márquez, cited earlier. During this time Latin American theorists (including Fernando Enrique Cardoso, Andre Gunter Frank, Aníbal Quijano, among others) contested the modernisation theory of development dominant in United States academies and effectuated by President John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress. These so-called *dependentistas*, or Dependency Theorists, interpreted modernisation theory as being underpinned by Western epistemological universalism and as a developmental formula which, instead of developing the periphery, was

[39] In response to the Padilla Affair, a letter to the Cuban government signed by a total of fifty-four writers and intellectuals (including Boom authors, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beaurvoir, Susan Sontag, Juan Goytisolo, and Italo Calvino), was leaked to the French newspaper *Le Monde* and subsequently circulated by anti-Castro media as an open indictment, despite the signatories' caveat that they were and remained supporters of the Cuban Revolution (Gordon-Nesbitt and Fornet 2015).

overwhelmingly at the service of the centre (Moraña, Dussel and Jáuregui 2008, 319). These theories were in large part inspired by the myth of the Cuban Revolution, its social reorganisation and its symbolic confrontation with the neocoloniser of the North through its alignment with the U.S.S.R., which represented a tested path for the autonomous reorganisation of the nation-state (Moraña, Dussel and Jáuregui 2008, 320).

In Chile, during Pinochet's military regime, while the political Left was relegated from public to private discourse, the reorganisation of the intellectual Left occurred through a collective denouncement of the regime by the Catholic Church, those in exile, increasingly in political parties, and in both independent and state universities (Joaquín Brunner 1992, 317-8). In his memoir *Tránsitos* (2013), Alberto Fuguet describes how in the early 1980s a regrouped intellectual Left countered the "official" intellectual field at the state-run Universidad de Chile, and how during this time the School of Journalism acted as a communist refuge: '[w]hile the whole country was ruled by the strong fist of Pinochet, there, in that school, Communism was king' (195). He also recounts his personal experience of this politico-cultural conflict in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Grenada in 1983, when he was pressured by a mob of Communist Youth to burn a U.S. flag, reportedly singled out as *the gringo* associated with the "*putos americanos*" (fucking Americans) (Fuguet 2013, 191-98). Toward the end of the century, the legalisation and resurgence of Leftist political parties; the tremendous support for the "NO" campaign in the 1988 plebiscite; the peaceful transition to democracy; the success of consecutive Centre-left *Concertación* governments (1990-2010), would further legitimise the predominance of the Left in intellectual and public discourse, a voice which had for so many years been suppressed, but which with these political transformations returned with full force.

This anti-imperialist spirit was not only sustained within Latin America by Left-leaning university faculties and increasingly in public media channels (rival newspapers and radio stations), but also by way of literary and intellectual exiles and their interactions in the cultural field. After seeking exile, the Uruguayan Eduardo Galeano and the Chilean Ariel Dorfman would become expatriated representatives of the Left in institutions across Europe and the United States, valued as much for their intellectual and creative works. Added to the political activism of the Boom in the 1960s, their interactions from the 1970s onwards would further shape perceptions of Latin American identity as intensely political and anti-imperialist, and continue to cement the political imperative of the Latin American literary vocation[40]. From an

[40] Both Galeano and Dorfman insist on a social dimension to their literary vocation, Galeano wrote in 1977: '[t]o arouse consciousness and reveal the true reality: can literature lay claim a better role in these times and in these countries of ours? [...] Our destiny as Latin American writers is bound up with the necessity for profound social

intellectual standpoint, Eduardo Galeano's seminal anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist book *Las venas abiertas de América Latina* (2006a [1971]) (The Open Veins of Latin America), became a standard of the Latin American Left and attained extraordinary international recognition (it was translated into over a dozen languages, republished numerous times, and to date has sold over one million copies). An intellectual and literary figure such as Ariel Dorfman, likewise, contributed to discourses of Latin America, especially in United States media where he is a regular contributor and commentator for many of the country's major newspapers[41]. In the musical domain of the cultural field, political exiles such as the folk bands Inti-Illimani and Quilapayún[42] globally popularised *la nueva canción chilena* (The New Chilean Song), and along with the Argentinian Mercedes Sosa toured and released their albums in Europe, attaining large international profiles for a music which similarly incarnated a spirit of protest and social activism[43]. In all of these areas, from the intellectual, to the musical, artistic production is increasingly committed to political imperatives, becoming weapons in a cultural and ideological battle waged both on the ground and from afar.

4.3.3 Mixing politics and aesthetics

As has been argued, while the Postboom can be largely defined politically as related to the rise of dictatorships in the region, and chronologically in the decades of 1970 and 1980, some prototypical Postboom texts breakdown this academic dating: such as Manuel Puig's novel *La traición de Rita Hayworth*, which was published in 1968. As such, despite the apparent suitability of the political definition of the Boom, chronological or historical time does not necessarily correspond to literary time, as Casanova has argued. Notwithstanding the similarly complicated task of defining the Postboom, as was already made clear in regard to

change' (18). And Dorfman similarly stated from a personal standpoint: '[t]alent entails responsibility. I have the power of the word, I don't want to misuse that. I feel I must speak out' (Dorfman in Fuguet 2013, 235).

[41] While most of Dorfman's politico-literary activism takes the form of the essay, his play *Death and the Maiden* (1990) similarly takes up these topics, portraying the trauma of a tortured former political prisoner and this woman's reencounter with her jailor. The play was even staged on Broadway and later turned into a film by the same name (1994) directed by Roman Polanski and starring Sigourney Weaver and Ben Kingsley, demonstrating the significance of this expatriated and exiled political voice within the U.S. cultural context.

[42] Quilapayún, a folk group which had supported Salvador Allende's political campaign, released the album 'El pueblo unido jamás será vencido' (The people, united, will never be defeated') (1975) in France during their 15 year-long exile, the title song which became an anthem of Chilean resistance to the coup and was made internationally successful by another Chilean folk group Inti-Illimani.

[43] I mention in passing some of the most politically charged songs of these artists such as Mercedes Sosa's (1979) 'Como la cigarra', and in the cases of Inti-Illimani and Quilapayún, to begin with, songs which were filled with revolutionary hope such as 'El pueblo unido jamás será vencido' (Quilapayún 1975) or 'Venceremos' (We Shall Win) (Quilapayún 1977), but gradually discouraged sentiments apparent in 'La muerte no va conmigo' (Inti-Illimani 1985) and 'En libertad' (Inti-Illimani 1987).

the Boom, Nemrava (2014) argues that Latin American critics (such as José Miguel Oviedo, Donald Shaw, Daniel Blaustein), propose an understanding of the Postboom as a postmodern response to the Boom. This somewhat simplistic division between literary modernity/Boom and literary postmodernity/Postboom, while useful to aesthetically demarcate the fissure between these two literary moments, has been problematised by both De Toro (1991) and Nemrava (2014), who recognise the literary contributions to postmodernity from before the Boom (Jorge Luis Borges, Augusto Roa Bastos), during the Boom (Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel García Márquez, Cortázar, and Vargas Llosa), and in the Postboom (Manuel Puig and Antonio Skármeta). Confronted with this difficulty, Nemrava and Blaustein highlight the response of the Postboom in largely aesthetic terms, via an assimilation or variation of the models proposed by the so-called *nueva novela*.

The Cuban Revolution acts as the central catalyst for this politicised literary period from the 1960s and which continues into the 1980s, decades during which the region experiences many more political flashpoints: the Mexican student protests and governmental repression of 1968; the election of Salvador Allende in 1971 and his military overthrow in 1973 at the hands of General Augusto Pinochet; the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua at the end of the 1970s, and the military dictatorships in Central America, Argentina, Chile and Brazil. The very chronological association of the Postboom with events in the political world—the crisis of the Cuban revolution and the rise of dictatorships—reveals the increasing overlap between the political and literary worlds during this period. Presented with this unique politicised context, Daniel Nemrava (2014) describes one of the dilemmas facing writers at this time:

> [a]s a consequence of the political pressure of the time, the Latin American writer was faced with two dilemmas which appeared with the Cuban Revolution: become politically committed, adapt their very work to the political and market circumstances, or remain at the margins in an autonomous, independent world, and defend aesthetic values[44] (22-3).

Narratively, this tension would be a balance or an imbalance between *discursiveness* and *storytelling*, the *representative* and the *aesthetic* function of the text and, the *political* and the *imaginative* (Nemrava 2014, 12). Drawing on Jiri Travnicek, Nemrava (2014) further illustrates these two possible extremes between politicised discursive literature and autonomous imaginative literature:

> [w]here the text succumbs to fabling, it can convert itself into a simple story based on intrigues. Where it succumbs to discursiveness, the novel runs the risk of falling into didacticism and

[44] 'Como consecuencia de la presión política de aquel momento, el escritor latinoamericano estaba enfrentando dos dilemas que había aparecido con la Revolución cubana: comprometerse políticamente, adecuar la propia obra a las circunstancias políticas y al mercado, o mantenerse al margen en un mundo autónomo, independiente, y defender los valores estéticos' (Nemrava 2014, 22-3).

> proclamation, converting the protagonists into "puppets for ideas" and the background argument to philosophise, in the best of cases, or, in the worst, to transmit only ideologies. Whenever the ideological stance of the author prevails, that is to say, the authoritarian enunciation instead of the authenticity of the experience/life-lesson, the creative potential in meaning is weakened and the narrative features are converted into a camouflaging ornament[45] (13).

In other words, an excess of narrativity might appear "light" for its avoidance or simplification of the complexities of the "real world" (a Marxist charge laid against the escapism of magical realism), while on the other hand, an excess of discursiveness may eschew the creative potential of the text for reducing the story to its ideas or its ideology (Nemrava 2014). As an aside, the above cited words from Nemrava echo Casanova's (2007) model in which literary autonomy is oppositional (even in established literary spaces) to the national and regional political demands and mimetic (cultural or testimonial) criteria, or alternative heteronomous constraints (81).

Aesthetically speaking, while the Boom saw the rise of the so-called *nueva novela hispanoamericana* (for Fuentes and Shaw, for example), and a concentrated period of literary development and experimentation which held alongside, but generally not within the narrative, a political conviction publicly proclaimed as part of their authorial and intellectual persona, the situation was, in some notable cases, different for the Postboom. The Postboom responses to the social and political realities of the time, as well as the dilemma of political activism versus artistic liberty—which becomes a fundamental dichotomy of this period—, are marked by a balance or imbalance of these two extremes: *imaginative narrativity* (emphasis on story and the invention of worlds), and *discursive reflexivity* (emphasis on ideas and capturing the "real" world) (Nemrava 2014, 12). As such, during the Postboom narratives begin to define themselves against the totality, erudition and universality of the novel of the Boom, in favour of greater cultural mimesis.

As Antonio Skármeta (1979) once lucidly described, if the Boom can be characterised by Cortázar's search for transcendence; the degradation of reality through grotesque allegory by Donoso; the total illumination of history via mythical hyperbole by García Márquez, then the literature of the Postboom defined itself in contrast as 'anti-pretentious', 'programmatically anticultural', 'sensible to the banal' as literary inspiration, and not a 'reorganiser of the world

[45] 'Donde el texto sucumbe a la fabulación, puede pasar a convertirse en una historia sencilla basada en intrigas. Donde sucumbe a la discursividad, la novela corre el peligro de caer en lo didáctico y proclamativo, convirtiendo a los protagonistas en "perchas para ideas" y el argumento en el trasfondo para filosofar, en el mejor de los casos, o, en el peor, para transmitir sólo ideologías. Siempre que prevalece la postura ideológica del narrador, es decir, la enunciación autoritaria a cambio de la autenticidad de la experiencia/vivencia, se debilita el potencial creativo de significación y los rasgos narrativos se convierten en un ornamento de camuflaje' (Nemrava 2014, 13).

in a coherent aesthetic system [...] [but] simply a presenter of it'[46] (81), ideas also expressed by the Argentinian Mempo Giardinelli[47] (2014). In response to the anti-mimetic and experimental literature of the Boom, the discursive narration typical of the Postboom is overwhelmingly realist in form with an increased politicisation, not merely rhetorically (as it largely was during the Boom), but also narratively. This is made evident particularly in the most discursive genre of this period: *testimonial* literature[48], made famous by writers such as Rigoberta Menchú, Claribel Alegría, Giaconda Belli, Haroldo Conti, Rodolfo Walsh, but also, with arguably greater commercial and narrative accomplishment, in the work of Antonio Skármeta, Manuel Puig, and Isabel Allende.

This negotiation of politics and aesthetics was for writers of the Postboom, as Mempo Giardinelli expressed, a frustrated search for greater aesthetic autonomy and an attempt to write *against* politics, referencing another Argentinian writer Ricardo Piglia. And yet, despite this desire for literary autonomy, Giardinelli (2014) speaks of the inescapable slippage of politics into their narrative works:

> [t]oday we attempt to take politics out of our fiction, we try to stop it from irrupting into our pages. We have respect for politics: we practice it, we have suffered it and *because of it* we have exiled ourselves. And that is precisely why we do not want it to infiltrate out works. We want our fictions to be only that: an expression of the imagination, pure invention. And nevertheless, this is impossible for us, and I would say that this constitutes our daily conflict: I myself, as a writer, that even though I usually demand that politics not enter into my works, it almost inevitably filters in. And I will add that in Latin America—and particularly in Argentina—we continue to write today in order to rid ourselves of fear, to defeat it. For this reason, I would complete Piglia's formulation and say that we write *not only against politics, but also against fear and forgetfulness* (224).

This unintentional politicisation of narratives demonstrates the forcefulness of the political pole during this period in Latin American literary space, a responsibility felt most especially by writers in exile who—perhaps unlike their literary peers back home—had escaped the more forceful constraints placed on literary production as much material (censorship, repression), as

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[46] 'La narrativa más joven, pese a toda la estridencia de su compejo aparato verbal, es vocacionalmente antipretenciosa, progrmáticamente anticultural, sensible a lo banal, y más que reordenadora del mundo en un sistema estético congruente de amplia perspectiva, es simplemente presentadora de él' (Skármeta 1981, 81).

[47] Giardinelli (2014) speaks of how '[p]ostmodern writing abandons certain now classic attributes of a Borges, Cortázar, and García Márquez type of writing' (221), against the prosaic 'wordsmithing' (221), the dazzling of the reader, and the recourse to magical realism and the real marvellous, in favor of simplicity, orality, and representation: '[t]oday, forms and structures seem more simple and compressed (minimalist), in the same way that the contents tend to be more rooted in recent memory, in a shared life experience with the reader. There is a return to realism, and to the oral quality revealed by the strong presence of detective literature as a vehicle for describing our societies' (222).

[48] As Emil Volek (2005) explains, testimonial literature became an obsession particularly to Latinamericanist faculties in the U.S. academy in their postmodern study of culture and the subaltern: '[o]ver time and step by step, a huge imaginary edifice was constructed around this not so literary and not so ideological pure genre. In the strictly select canon of *Testimonio*, a pristine "subaltern" was endowed with special agency of authority and truth, expressing his/her "people's" undiluted will and creating, by the way, a new thrilling model of "non-literary literature" and challenging the tired elite Modernist high culture of the past' (191).

symbolic through the establishment of "official" history. In Nemrava's study of Manuel Puig's *Beso de la mujer araña*[49] (1976), Mempo Giardinelli's *Luna caliente*[50] (1983), and Antonio Skármeta's *El cartero de Neruda*[51] (1985), he highlights the literary strategies of these Postboom authors in responding to this aesthetic(narrative)/political(discursive) dilemma. According to Nemrava (2014), these writers of the Postboom meet the challenge of narrating the "real" world, power, politics, violence, and terror via a 'discourse charged with eroticism or sexuality, through which the political reality is transmitted'[52] (41).

A similar metaphorization, between rape and political repression, is also evident in Isabel Allende's *La casa de los espíritus* (1982), which, adding to this union, questions the inevitable consequences of such a violation. Allende's novel traces the history of the Trueba family line from its humble origins to its ascent to landed power, in a symbolic recreation of Latin American (but particularly Chilean) history, comparable to the Buendía family in García Márquez's *Cien años de soledad*[53]. In the final two chapters of the novel, however, there is a general departure from the magical realism of the early part of the novel, returning to a quasi-testimonial/chronicle form of realism to narrate the events of the beginning of the military coup. During these chapters, Alba, granddaughter of the patriarch Esteban Trueba, is captured,

[49] In *El beso de la mujer araña*—a narration made up of mostly dialogue—, Nemrava (2014) interprets the sentimentalisation of the Left-wing revolutionary Valentín by his homosexual prison-mate Luis Alberto Molina as Puig's political discourse subtly communicated through the encounter and relationship established between the two very different characters. This sentimentalisation represents an alternative to the violence of the Right-wing regime and the Left-wing revolution, as it imagines a society free from paternalistic laws, totalitarianism, and prejudicial stereotypes which underpin both these political propositions (50).

[50] Mempo Giardinelli adopts the genre of the detective novel in *Luna caliente*, to narrate the serial crimes of Ramiro—beginning with the rape and attempted murder of a young girl: Araceli—during the time of the so-called *Proceso de Reorganización Nacional* (1976-83) in Argentina. Nemrava (2014) highlights the "metaphorisation" of the political and sexual trope between the sexual crimes of Ramiro and the crimes of the Argentinian state during the Dirty War: 'los protagonistas se convierten en víctimas tanto de la violencia sexual/del estado como de la crueldad que deriva del erotismo/de la dictadura de lo cual no pueden escapar' (55).

[51] Skármeta's novel reads as a chronicle of the interactions of a regional postman Mario Jiménez with Pablo Neruda, and the postman's romantic conquest of Beatriz González: the woman who has requested the chronicler/narrator tell the story of her lover and his suspicious disappearance by secret police after the coup. Both Shaw (1999) and Nemrava (2014), highlight how this novel establishes a political discourse via the subtle symmetries between the political background and the romantic story in the foreground. The pre-Allende period, characterised as sexually repressed and conservative is foregrounded by Mario's wooing of Beatriz; their first romantic liaison occurs quite symbolically on the night of Allende's election a connection which Skármeta draws between Allende's liberal politics and the freedom of the sexual revolution; and the end of this sexual liberation and Mario and Beatriz's relationship is brought about by Pinochet's conservative dictatorship and the forced disappearance of the postman. While the most discursive format of the Postboom is generally considered testimonial literature for the adoption of first-person narration and unquestioned authority with which events are presented, Skármeta presents the nouvelle as a more complicated meta-literary experiment.

[52] 'Las novelas escogidas las caracterizan un rasgo común: el discurso cargado de erotismo o de sexualidad, a través de la cual se transmite la realidad política' (Nemrava 2014, 41).

[53] The two novels, *La casa de los espíritus* and *Cien años de soledad*, are commonly compared due to the great number of similarities in story, style, genre, and even characters, generally to either praise or detract Allende's work.

imprisoned, tortured, and raped by those responsible for the military uprising, targeted for her relationship with Miguel, a Leftist guerrilla fighting against the military junta. In this way, Alba's experience of capture, imprisonment, torture, and violation is symbolic of the greater nation's similar experience during the coup and military dictatorship. Alba's pregnancy after these traumatic events, a child with an uncertain paternity—'the daughter of so many rapes or perhaps of Miguel' (Allende 1985a, 368)—which, like Giardinelli's fatalism in *Luna caliente*, questions whether as a nation it is possible to transcend the historical, social, cultural, and temporal fracturing of such an event which cannot be relegated to the past but continues to endure in the present and in the future. Once again highlighting the polarisation of Chilean society, Allende questions whether the post-dictatorial Chile is the child of Miguel the Leftist guerrilla or the offspring of the coup, something that remains a relevant issue today considering Chile's current constitution remains a merely amended form of the Constitution of 1980 which was composed by the dictatorship regime.

As such, the artistic dilemma simply put by Nemrava (2014) between political compromise and the defence of artistic autonomy and aesthetics (22-23), is overwhelmingly responded to by these major writers of the Postboom along the lines of the former, expressing similar perspectives on the literary vocation to intellectuals of the time (e.g. Dorfman and Galeano), as well as the figures of the Boom. Similarly to Pablo Neruda, the exiled Chilean author Antonio Skármeta (1981) emphasised the role of literature as communitarian and democratic (in light of the rise of Pinochet), highlighting the need for its popular consumption as opposed to the restricted readership of the erudite of previous generations (78). He highlights, in particular, the social responsibility of literature, which while narrating the most challenging realities, revitalises a utopic spirit and creates a national self-consciousness: '[a] book read by the people from which it is made is a communitarian act, in it is confirmed their identity; [in it] tensions towards dreams and ideals are kept in mind; and [in it] the grandeur of the day-to-day scene so at risk is valued'[54] (Skármeta 1981, 89). In this same vein and with words strikingly similar to Ariel Dorfman, Chile's most commercially successful literary export (and exile), Isabel Allende (1985b), has also emphasised the importance and responsibility of wielding the "power of the word": 'we writers are interpreters of reality [...],

[54] 'Un libro leído por el pueblo de que está hecho es un acto comunitario, en él éste confirma su identidad, se mantiene en la conciencia la tensión hacia sueños e ideales, se valora la grandiosidad de la escena cotidiana en condiciones de riesgo' (Skármeta 1981, 89).

we know the power of words and we are obliged to employ them to contribute to a better destiny in our lands'[55] (Allende 1985b, 451).

Within this highly politicised historical context of the 1970s and 1980s, in which Left-wing artists were exiled or executed, cultural and literary production consequently became increasingly politicised. In dealing with the discursive/narrative dilemma and their profound political vocation, the literary strategies of Postboom exiles encompassed diverse genres from the historical novel, romance novel, and chronicle/testimony, to create a literature which balanced narrative creativity and discursive intervention. This recourse to genre is consistent with the simpler narrative form of the most popular Postboom literature, something in contrast to the demanding, capital "L" Literary and experimental narratives of the *la nueva novela hispanoamericana*. Nemrava (2014) highlights the aesthetic reasons for this transformation in novelistic production and how the return to realism (in its varied genres) can be interpreted as one of the literary strategies of these authors to reconcile their political reality and their relationship to the Boom.

Despite producing a literature which, according to Casanova's typology, would amount to a heteronomous literature—beholden to a number of extra-literary influences such as politics and commercial demands—, this innovative literary strategy, at once political and literary, did not prevent the creation of a praiseworthy narration. However, the success of exiled narrative voices, when the world demanded texts from these politically visible nations, contributed to the rise of the commercial pole in Spanish publishing, oriented increasingly toward commercial profit since the Boom. And these additional commercial factors, which can also be considered as belonging to the long shadow of the Boom, cannot be overlooked. Nor should be understated.

4.3.4. The commercial pole from the Boom to the Postboom

The deterioration of the Boom is explained in commercial terms, by Ángel Rama (2008), as the result of the unattainable standard of critical and commercial success which *Cien años de soledad* represented as the central novel of the Boom[56]. Latin America's literary production and market were profoundly altered in the proceeding Postboom period, through a transformation of markets from restricted to popular reading publics, the establishment of

[55] 'Los escritores somos intérpretes de la realidad […], conocemos el poder de las palabras y estamos obligados a emplearlas para contribuir a un mejor destino de nuestra tierra' (Allende 1985, 451).
[56] *Cien años de soledad* is treated practically unanimously as the central novel of the Boom (Blaustein 2009, Donoso 1972, Gass 1987, Hart 1999, Lindstrom 1994, Rama 2008, Swanson 1995, among others).

successfully-tested commercial aesthetics and genres (such as García Márquez's magical realism), the editorial reconquest of Latin America by Spanish publishing, all which have a bearing on the increased influence of the commercial pole and the literary autonomy of future writers.

These transformations to Latin American literary space had equally significant effects on national literary spaces in the region. This editorial formula referred to by some as the 'Alfaguarización' of literary markets (Barrera Enderle 2002)—although made popular by the all the most successful Spanish conglomerates Planeta, Grijalbo, Sudamericana, and Alfaguara—established the precedent that the international success and literary consecration and circulation of Spanish-American authors rested on a double-crossing of the Atlantic, firstly to be successful and consecrated in Spain, to then be exported to the rest of the Spanish-speaking world. Once successful in Spain, then these writers would be more easily linked to European publishers for translation and consecration in other languages and literary capitals, especially for the Boom: Paris. The obsession of Spanish publishers with the Boom and its related figures along with numerous other factors[57], according to Eduardo Becerra (2014) and Jorge Eduardo Benavides (2008), led to the almost total disappearance of "new" Latin American writers in the Spanish publishing scene of the 1970s and 1980s—a repetition of the circumstance which befell writers of the Boom in respect to the first wave of internationalised Latin American novels from the regional and *criollista* traditions before them. This is without the obvious exception of the few writers who gained considerable global success, such as Isabel Allende, Laura Esquivel, Antonio Skármeta, whose works were further popularised through the film adaptations of their work: *Life Water for Chocolate* in Mexico (1992), *The House of Spirits* in the U.S. (1993) and *Il postino* (1994) in Italy. As such, not only the translation of these works, but also their adaptation to film, suggest a certain 'vogue for exoticism' highlighted in the book industry by Pascale Casanova (2007, 121) of publishers with neoimperial ambitions, especially from the United States, who were interested in capitalising on the rise of new postcolonial literatures.

In Chile, the military coup of 1973 and the ensuing political persecutions, tortures and disappearances, book burnings and publishing controls, the forced exile of citizens (and a number of literary figures particularly from the 1950s generation), and anti-intellectual climate

[57] Jorge Eduardo Benavides (2008) and Eduardo Becerra (2014) speak of a number of domestic Spanish factors such as the political atmosphere of transition from the Franco regime (1939-1975) and an aesthetic concern for contemporary Spanish identity; to the economic crisis of Spanish publishers to the disappearance of many independent publishers and conglomerisation of many under the powerhouses of Alfaguara and Planeta.

had serious publishing, commercial, and aesthetic repercussion on Chilean literary space. The result was a fracturing of Chilean literary space between *external* production, carried out by exiled or self-exiled writers in more stable and central literary environments like Spain, and *internal* production which struggled against its own literary invisibility[58]. As a result of this economic precarity, toward the end of the Allende presidency and into the dictatorship, publishers became more cautious, with print runs reduced (to around a thousand copies per edition); a requirement that authors finance their own publications; and growing reliance on well-known authors for their established readership and greater promise of selling success over untested unpublished authors (Díaz Eterović and Muñoz Valenzuela 1986). This editorial precaution was summed up by two writers affected during this period, Ramón Díaz Eterović and Diego Muñoz Valenzuela (1986), as understandable: '[i]f bread doesn't even get put on the table of so many countrymen, books even less so'[59].

As such, due to this international publishing scenario and added to the internal issues of publishing uncertainty and dictatorship, the only "new" writers which circulated at both national and regional fields were those who had crossed and returned from the Atlantic in published form, such as the Boom and Postboom exiles analysed above, something which produced the idea that no new literature was being written in Chile[60]. The manager of Grijalbo in Chile during the 1990s, Felipe Muñoz (1997), commented on this scenario and the effect which the phenomenon of the *nueva narrativa chilena* (New Chilean Narrative) in the late 1980s and early 1990s had in transforming this disadvantage:

> [u]ntil that moment the list of most sold books in the country were monopolised by foreign authors or by Chileans who published from Spain (Isabel Allende, José Donoso and to a lesser extent Jorge Edwards). For that reason the emergence of new and young authors awakens the attention of the media, readers and editors[61] (93).

However, the appearance of writers in the late 1980s and early 1990s which were promoted

[58] Added to this division during the military dictatorship, Chilean literary space was domestically divided into two fields, the official and the unofficial literary production: firstly, that literature which counted with the support or the unconcern of the dictatorship and granted pride of place in publishing, commercial, and critical senses, and secondly, that literature which did not count with the support of the dictatorship and experienced purging, censure, critical silence, and whose only options were self-publication and limited print runs (Brunner, Barrios and Catalán 1989, 147).

[59] 'Si el pan no llega a la mesa de tantos compatriotas, el libro menos aún' (Díaz Eterović and Muñoz Valenzuela 1986).

[60] This sentiment was even held by the Chilean author Antonio Skármeta when commenting on his own exile: 'the literary production of three Latin American countries—at least—has been carried out for a number of years in migration. Such is the case of Argentina, Chile and Uruguay' (Skármeta 1981, 87).

[61] 'Hasta ese instante las listas de libros más vendidos en el país eran monopolizadas por los autores extranjeros o bien por los chilenos que publicaban desde España (Isabel Allende, José Donoso y en menor medida Jorge Edwards). Por lo que esta irrupción de autores nuevos y jóvenes despierta la atención de medios de comunicación, lectores y editores' (Muñoz 1997, 93).

collectively through short story anthologies[62], and later as *la nueva narrativa chilena* (by Planeta under the hallmark Biblioteca del Sur), still restricted this literature to national circulation consigning the majority of these upcomers to the position of "national" authors[63]. With the phrase and the idea of *la nueva narrativa*, more than necessarily market each author individually, Planeta could successfully group together a whole catalogue of authors and sell them as belonging to an exciting and "new" Chilean literary moment—a function in the service of the centrifugal national force.

Implicit in this slogan ("The New Chilean Narrative"), is a mixture of nationalism ("Chilean") and a consumerist concern for newness ("The New") determining the values of these texts based on these aspects, rather than on the fundamentally important "Narrative" (Bianchi 1997 and Olea 1997)[64]. In fact, the authors considered part of *la nueva narrativa* in the popular press, were overwhelmingly those with contracts with the commercial publishers employing this strategy, Planeta and Alfaguara (Bianchi 1997, Espinosa 1997, and Vargas 1997), to the exclusion of writers with independent publishers and who were also gaining considerable critical attention such as Damiela Eltit [65], Pedro Lemebel (Olea 1997) or writers

[62] The short story genre was particularly significant for Chile's domestic half of the Postboom generation. The very first short story anthology published by Ramón Díaz Eterović and Diego Muñoz Valenzuela, *Contando el cuento: Antología joven narrativa chilena* (Sinfronteras, 1986) was also foundational for this literary generation, making its intentions apparent in the prologue: '[c]on esta antología, que como todas puede adolecer de limitaciones, creemos, junto con la Editorial Sinfronteras, estar contribuyendo a llenar el vacío que afecta a esta generación en materia de publicaciones y difusión' (Díaz Eterović and Muñoz Valenzuela, 1986, no page). In the prologue to the anthology the editors (and contributors) identify this generation of authors between 17 and 35 years of age, with common literary and popular culture influences, a broad and international reading interest, lack of a direct association with local literary forefathers (as many of them were exiled or self-exiled such as José Donoso, Antonio Skármeta and Poli Délano), and profoundly affected by the trauma of the coup and dictatorship. And while acknowledging the heterogeneity of the group they also attempt to map some of the strongest themes of this *nueva narrativa chilena*: from nostalgia; a concern with adolescence, first loves and sexual awakening; fear, alienation and isolation identified in the treatment of sex, drugs and consumerism; as well as some writers who protest with discontent the social realities of the country (particularly through testimony).

[63] This national projection by Planeta was enough for writers with international ambition, such as Alberto Fuguet, to seek those publishers, namely Grijalbo Mondadori, which could promise this jump across the Atlantic (Guerrero 2018, 108).

[64] This commercial reading of the *nueva narrativa chilena* was advanced early on by the critics Soledad Bianchi (1997) and Raquel Olea (1997). Bianchi argues that comparable to the way in which the local publisher Zig-Zag promoted the Generación del 50, since 1987 Planeta executed 'realizaba una verdadera campaña comercial con el fin de comerciar (sí, valga la redundancia) e instalar una narrativa chilena' (Bianchi 1997, 32). Planeta launched a number of new local authors with its series 'Biblioteca del Sur' in 1987, a bold technique which was subsequently followed by other multinational commercial publishers such as Alfaguara and Grijalbo Mondadori generating what was referred to as a "miniboom". Biblioteca del Sur was an attempt to reinvigorate Chilean readership's interest in domestic Chilean authors implemented by publishing and marketing upcoming writers such as Jaime Collyer, Carlos Franz, and Alberto Fuguet, as well as republishing works from exiled writers such as Ariel Dorfman, Antonio Skármeta, Poli Délano and Fernando Alegría (Bianchi 1997, Olea 1997). This tactic of re-edition was something which Rama had noted contributed to the concentration of works during the Boom, a successful formula in putting forward a literary phenomenon.

[65] Nevertheless, some critics recognise this kind of innovation in the work of Damiela Eltit (Avaria 1997, Cánovas 1997) who while belonging to this *nueva narrativa chilena* in terms of a "generation" due to the group's strong

publishing overseas for example Roberto Bolaño (Avaria 1997, Fuguet 1997c), further highlighting the nationally-centric commercial imperatives of the appellation, as well as the fissure between internal and external Chilean literary production.

These commercial shifts in editorial policy, seen as much at the national and international level of production, made necessary in many ways due to global market transformations and in addition to the effects of the Boom on the Latin American book market, had the result of transforming works of literature into consumer goods (Nemrava 2014). The commodification of literature at this time is made apparent, for example, in the advent of "Best seller" columns in weekly newspapers, mapping the changing "rakings" of literature week-by-week like musical charts or box-office statistics, or even the value of commodities in the economic pages of the very same newspaper. As Alberto Fuguet (1997c) recognised, '[l]iterature stops, to all appearances, being *under*'[66] (121), something which editors such as Carlos Orellana Rivera (1997) have argued Fuguet played a crucial role in[67]. During this time the influence of the commercial pole, particularly seen in the authority given to these "Best Seller" list, is so pervasive that: authors want to write bestsellers, critics review bestsellers (even if at times against their will)[68], and readers want to read bestsellers. As Bourdieu (2017) argues in *The Rules of Art*, '[a]n enterprise moves closer to the 'commercial' pole the more directly or completely the product it offers on the markets responds to a *pre-existing demand*, and *in pre-established forms*', a shift in policy which leads to shorter production cycles for quick and continuous success (142). The reliance of these increasingly commercial publishers on the assured bestseller success of the Boom and Postboom writers, whose literature conforms

affiliation with the commercial publishers Planeta, Grijalbo and Alfaguara, and popular success, also represented a figure on the sidelines, much to the alarm of certain critics like Soledad Bianchi: '¿[s]erá posible entender la narrativa chilena actual—me pregunto—sin considerar los textos de Damiela Eltit, siempre provocadores, siempre densos, e insumisos a la facilidad y al mercado?' (1997, 29).

66 'La literatura deja, en apariencia, de ser under' (Fuguet 1997c, 121).

67 The editor of Planeta Carlos Orellana Rivera (1997) reflected that various editions of Fuguet's *Sobredosis* sold-out at an alarming rate and he was converted him 'en una suerte de celebridad literaria; más que eso, en algo así como el escritor fetiche de la joven generación' (47). In fact, Carlos Orellana Rivera (1997) even went on to argue that while there were signs of new literary voices emerging towards the end of the dictatorship—Carlos Franz published his novel *Santiago cero* in 1989 and Jaime Collyer had published his first novel *El infiltrado* in 1989—it was Fuguet's publication of *Sobredosis* only a few months after the return to democracy that transformed the feeling of literary stagnation prevalent during the dictatorship and consolidated a the common perception that the end of the dictatorship would signal a cultural eruption.

68 Despite his critical convictions the conservative literary critic Ignacio Valente was unable to ignore the local bestseller success of Alberto Fuguet's *Mala onda* and felt obliged to review it in his weekly column: 'Los cuatro libros más leídos en Chile durante febrero han sido, al parecer, obras de ficción y, más exactamente, novelas de autores chilenos. Sin desmedro de mis reservas particulares, el hecho general me complace, por lo que significa de éxito y difusión para nuestra narrativa [...] de la tercera novela más leída en febrero, *Mala onda* de Alberto Fuguet, hablaré poco, entre otras razones porque sólo pude leerla hasta la mitad. Se me hizo insoportable. Grandes serán las tragaderas que necesita un crítico literario, y creo que las mías lo son, pero no llegan a tanto como para terminar esta bazofia' (Valente 1992).

to an established demand which they themselves generated, demonstrates these editors increasing departure from the autonomous pole which was their original cultural priority. During this climate, as the Chilean writer Damiela Eltit (1997) states, 'the bestseller is confused with the specifically literary'[69] (58), such that the measure of literariness in a literary space increasingly dominated by the force of the commercial pole is no longer evaluated qualitatively through the "narrative" but quantitatively in terms of its popularity, and measured through commercial success in sales rates and rankings.

Many of these commercial aspirations are manifested in the highly domestically successful Chilean short story anthology *Cuentos con walkman*, published by Planeta Biblioteca del Sur and edited by none other than Sergio Gómez and Alberto Fuguet (1993). Inspired by similar popular culture supplements in neighbouring Argentina (such as the magazine *Clarín*), and intent on expanding into new and younger reader markets, a team of journalists[70] at *El Mercurio* (Chile's major conservative newspaper), together with Fuguet and Gómez founded *La Zona de Contacto* (*The Contact Zone*) in 1991. In trying to accommodate *La Zona* within the already established sections of *El Mercurio*—which covered many subjects from literary reviews (in the arts section *Artes y Letras*) and restaurant, lifestyle, popular music, television and cinema (covered in the supplement *Wikén*)—*La Zona*'s central editorial focus was to be unique: creative writing.

If Fuguet's early works, such as *Sobredosis* (1990) and *Mala onda* (1991), were considered by some critics, such as Rodrigo Cánovas (1997), as a fracturing of Chilean cultural traditions with the assent of the North American referent, then the "fuguetitos" in his writing workshop at *La Zona* were also considered by many—rightly or wrongly—to share the same political and literary sympathies as their literary mentor[71]. This sentiment against the established national cultural orthodoxy is also apparent in the prologue to *Cuentos con walkman*:

> [t]he literary context in which *Cuentos con walkman* appears is characterised as more modern than post. Local literature continues to be beclouded by being well written and nothing else. It

[69] '[E]l best seller se confunde con lo específicamente literario' (Eltit 1997, 58).

[70] Iván Valenzuela, Felipe Bianchi and María Olga Delpiano.

[71] This may be true to some extent as Fuguet had represented for some younger writers a discovery within the space of possibilities, as the Chilean writer and participant in *La Zona de Contacto* Pablo Illanes (2016, personal interview) noted in my interview with him: '[p]ara mi generación Alberto era como una posibilidad—y particularmente *Mala onda*—de leer por placer y no por obligación. Alberto escribía libros que uno quería leer en el colegio y que no te daban porque te seguían obligando a leer lo clásicos. Cuando leí *Mala onda*, fue una de las primeras veces que yo sentí placer al leer algo. Sentía que la narrativa era más cinematográfica. Por eso para mí participar en *La Zona* era muy importante, sabía que me acercaba más a ese universo'.

> continues to be rural, enclosed within interior courtyards, guesthouses, corvi[72] apartments and provincial cities[73] (Fuguet and Gómez 1993, 14).

The youth culture presented in the stories and articles of *La Zona de Contacto*, the supplement from which the anthology *Cuentos con walkman* was formed, was deemed to be those of the *barrio alto* (the upper class) and not representative of the majority of urban or provincial subjects and experiences, something which the editors would address in the prologue to *Cuentos con walkman*[74]. Alfredo Sepúlveda—a writer who began his literary career in Alberto Fuguet's writing workshop in *La Zona de Contacto*—even remarked that some within the political Left suspected that *La Zona* was an insidious political attempt by *El Mercurio* to attract and co-opt a younger readership from the middle and upper socio-economic strata[75] (Sepúlveda 2015, personal interview). Conspiracy theories aside, however, the editors make the pop cultural and commercial imperative of these stories clear: '[t]hey are not *underground* nor vanguard, nor marginal. They are consumer stories. They welcome being consumed. They make you want to read them. They are relatable, fast, consumable and entertaining stories'[76] (Fuguet and Gómez 1993, 14).

It is in this sense, that a further complication arises in Casanova's insistent primacy of the national space as the territory for literary struggles, when one considers the complex relationship between writers and the nation in an increasingly globalised literature-world. It is in response to this tension, that Juan Poblete (2006) attempts a valuable testing and extension of Casanova's theorisation, aware of how the notion of the national author can be further problematised in a world where '[w]e have passed from self-contained identities to processes of interaction, confrontation, and negotiation with others'[77] (290). He analyses the trajectories and literary contributions of three Chilean authors (Pedro Lemebel, Alberto Fuguet, and

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[72] CORVI or 'Corporación de la Vivienda' (Housing Corporation) was instrumental in the 'Plan Nacional de Vivienda' (National Housing Plan) executed by the Carlos Ibáñez del Campo government (1952-1958) to build around 30,000 dwellings across the country.

[73] 'El contexto literario en que aparece *Cuentos con walkman* se caracteriza por ser más moderno que post. La literatura local sigue empañada en estar bien escrita y nada más. Continúa rural, encerrada en patios interiores, pensiones, departamentos corvi y ciudades provincianas' (Fuguet and Gómez 1993, 14).

[74] Fuguet and Gómez (1993) state: '[l]o que aquí se cuenta son historias vitales sobre vidas levemente aburridas; son la vida de ciertos jóvenes, de ciertos solteros. No pretende ser el gran espejo de Chile ni abarcar todo un espectro social o moral. Esto no es sociología ni hay, aunque algunos crean lo contrario, presunción alguna' (12).

[75] Alfredo Sepúlveda (2015, personal interview) was aware of this conspiracy regarding *La Zona*: 'siempre se elaboro una suerte de teoría de la conspiración de la profunda izquierda que *El Mercurio* había creado *La Zona de Contacto* para empezar a lavarle el cerebro a los jóvenes, disfrazándose de izquierda o disfrazándose de buena onda sin serlo'.

[76] 'No son ni *under* ni vanguardistas ni marginados. Son cuentos de consumo. Invitan a ser consumidos. Dan ganas de leerlos. Son historias cercanas, rápidas, digeribles y entretenidas' (Fuguet and Gómez 1993, 14).

[77] 'Hemos pasado así de las identidades autocontenidas a los procesos de interacción, confrontación y negociación con los otros' (Poblete 2006, 290).

Francisco Ibañez-Carrasco), concluding that, seen from a national perspective, each is fundamentally concerned with understanding Chile's identity at the crossroads of the culture of globalisation, and yet, their narrativisation of the globalisation of culture each can be read as distinct responses mediating the global and the national[78]. It is in this sense then, that a more complex and internationally mediated understanding of the national identity, as well as Casanova's typologies of international and national authors, must be demanded of her theory. These writers, cited by Poblete, whilst concerned with national identity, unlike Casanova's (2007) archetypal national writers, do not 'turn their back on the wider world and devote themselves to literary conservatism, to closing off aesthetic and political borders' (279). Instead, they discuss the national, but precisely in light of contemporary changes to international forces which are invariably both local and global—as will become evident in the analysis of the *McOndo* short stories in Chapter 6. As such, the understanding of national identity and what conforms or not to national criteria, must be understood, not in isolation, but rather, mediated (relationally) by global structures and the intentional processes of national differentiation.

Returning to the regional panorama, the commercialisation of Latin American literary production is further intensified at this time by the growing conglomerisation of Spanish publishers into the hands of multinational publishing companies. The expansion of three competing enormous media corporations (Grupo Planeta, Random House, Santillana) for the editorial market and their purchase of small and medium size publishers, reduced the presence of genuinely independent publishers, per se. Publishers that had accumulated cultural capital and a reputation for distribution of quality literature such as Plaza & Janés, Seix Barral, Caballo de Troya, and even Tusquets, were taken over by one of these conglomerates and continued to operate as subdivisions within the broader structure of the commercially-focused publisher. During the 1990s and 2000s, the situation is further internationalised through a series of international mergers and purchases, the most significant being the purchase of Grijalbo by the Italian publisher Mondadori (forming Grijalbo Mondadori, publisher of *McOndo*). Its later merger with German publishers Random House and consequent purchase of Alfaguara and Santillana, along with the merger with English publishing giant Penguin, resulted in the formation of the largest publishing house in the world: Penguin Random House.

[78] Drawing in part from the creative tensions identified by Antonio Cornejo Polar within the national literary frame (oral/written, elitist/popular, hegemonic or counter hegemonic), these contemporary writers, for Poblete (2006), face additional tensions regarding the question of national identity in an increasingly globalised world, leading to 'mezclas inestables de globalismos localizados, localismos globalizados y formas de resistencia y aceptación' (277).

Despite the increasingly dominant duopoly of the Spanish literary market by Planeta and Penguin Random House, a small exception of independent and cultural publishers has not forfeited autonomous ideals in an ever-commercialised sector, and continued the model of publishers as literary discoverers, with a few even appearing to replicate the model set by Seix Barral[79]. The most important of these are Anagrama—founded in the 1980s by Jorge Herralde and responsible for the publication of writers such as Roberto Bolaño—and in the 2000s Páginas de Espuma—which has since published a growing list of significant authors of recent generations such as Andrés Neuman, Ignacio Padilla, Jorge Volpi, Edmundo Paz Soldán, Juan Carlos Méndez Guédez, Ronaldo Menéndez, and a more recent wave of writers in Guadalupe Nettel, Antonio Ortuño, and Samanta Schweblin. Anagrama, in many ways, followed the original editorial line of previous cultural publishers, such as Seix Barral: searching for new and literary authors from Spanish America and even creating the Herralde Prize for Novel which in the late 1990s resurged editorial interest in Latin American literature with the rewarding of Jaime Bayly for *La noche es virgen* in 1997 ,and Roberto Bolaño in 1998 for *Los detectives salvajes*[80]. The awarding of the prize to Roberto Bolaño—who in the proceeding years would become the only literary figure since the Boom to reach a comparable height of combined commercial and critical success—, had the effect of also ennobling Anagrama, reminiscent of the reciprocal success of the Premio Biblioteca Breve and Vargas Llosa in 1962. The cultural dominance of Anagrama parallels the commercial domination of Planeta and Alfaguara (then Penguin Random House), in that it exerted its own kind of specifically literary domination, or as the Mexican Crack writer Pedro Ángel Palou (Rivera Garza et al. 2018, 262) has called it, an "*Anagramización*" of the Latin American literary field[81]. The effects of this

[79] The great difference being that the symbolic credit being amassed by these small to medium publishers is not expanding their share of the literary market, instead, owing to the increasingly monopolised dynamics of the global book industry, once promising authors are uncovered by these smaller publishers, large-scale publishers are responsible for their internationalisation. As Ana Gallego Cuiñas (2017) states: '[a]hora la cartera de la literatura latinoamericana la tiene en España Alfaguara (Bertelsmann) y las novedades pasan por editoriales independientes […] Con toda probabilidad, podemos pronosticar que unos cuantos novísimos autores del siglo XXI que han dad el salto a la Península—previa exhibición en Frankfurt o no—a través de una editorial independiente serán (re)producidos por grandes grupos dentro de unos años' (59-60).

[80] Other literary Spanish literary prizes were also awarded to Spanish-American writers around this time—The Premio Planeta went to the Cuban Zoe Valdés in 1996 and the Uruguayan Carmen Posadas in 1997, the Premio Alfaguara 1998 was co-awarded to the Cuban Eliseo Alberto and the Nicaraguan Sergio Ramírez, and the Premio Bibilioteca Breve to the Mexican Jorge Volpi in 1999 and the Argentinian Gonzalo Garcés in 2000—creating the sense that another generation of Latin American writers was at hand, quaintly labeled by some as the "boomerang" or "boom jr".

[81] 'Hubo un instante—que yo creo que fue dañino—que yo llamaría de "Anagramización" de la literatura latinoamericana. Tú podías publicar ya fuera en sellos independientes o en las grandes transnacionales pero no estabas consagrado, la única posibilidad de consagración pasaba por publicar en Anagrama. Y Anagrama, como cualquier otra editorial, tiene un gusto determinado. Entonces definía un gusto que terminaba por imponerse, porque de todas maneras lo que se reseñaba en *El País* como literatura latinoamericana, lo que se compraba en

Anagramización, as Palou puts it, were that the tastes of this publishing house were particular and due to their position became a significant aesthetic imposition on the literary field for writers in search of international consecration. These small publishers, and notably the recent transferral of publishing rights of Roberto Bolaño's works from Anagrama to Alfaguara, suggest the continued survival of independent capital "L" literary publishing within an increasingly commercialised paradigm, and yet further suggests their role as discoverers of critically significant authors, as well as the ability of commercial publishers to capitalise on their recently consecrate discoveries.

4.4.1 *Macondismo*

By way of conclusion to this chapter and macrocontext, the development and evolution of the phenomenon of *macondismo* will be explored throughout the periods covered thus far, to reinterpret this brief (and mostly recent) history of the Latin American literature-world. The periods of the Boom and Postboom are not solely literary interactions with political, national, or autonomous forces, but also the significant identitary debate highlighted at the beginning of this chapter. As was outlined briefly, in Latin America the term *mestizaje* (Spanish) or *mestiçagem* (Portuguese)[82] has been used to denominate the historical, racial and ethnic hybridisation between Spanish, Portuguese, and particularly local indigenous peoples, and the creation of hybrid cultures as a result of these mixes. *Mestizaje* has for over a century been discussed and celebrated in the Latin American essay and has become, according to Antonio Cornejo Polar (1994), 'the most powerful and widespread conceptual resource with which Latin America interprets itself'[83] (368). While the discourses on Latin American identity were mostly developed within the region's essayistic tradition, nonetheless, the region's creative

los otros países como literatura latinoamericana era lo que se publicaba en Anagrama. Yo creo que ese fenómeno hizo un poco de daño porque lo único que importaba era quién fue o no finalista del premio Anagrama. Yo hablo de daño porque se pretendía hacer creer que Anagrama no funcionaba como las otras editoriales. Por ejemplo, está muy mal visto ganar un premio de cualquier nivel del grupo Planeta, incluso el Alfaguara, pero no está mal visto ganar el Anagrama. Curiosamente, el premio Herralde es igualmente dado a autores de Herralde, no es que alguien venga de Random House y gane el Herralde. Entonces utiliza los mismos mecanismos de publicidad, mafiosos y mercadológicos de las otras editoriales comerciales pero tiene el aura de la editorial seria' (Palou in Rivera Garza et al. 2018, 262).

[82] Despite for quite some being considered an inclusive and celebrated referent of cultural specificity and regional belonging, the terms has been progressively critiqued intersectionally. The valorisation of hybridity has come in a variety of forms but has in some formulations appeared an ambitious argument for collective cultural identity (and homogeneity) to the obfuscation of Latin America's racial problems. There is evident in some formulations a continued implicit valorisation of Whiteness (creoleness) and a devaluation of indigeneity and late recognition (if at all) of blackness within this concept of *mestizaje* or Latin Americanness.

[83] '[E]l más poderoso y extendido recurso conceptual con que América Latina se interpreta a sí misma' (Cornejo Polar 1994, 368).

works have held a similarly central position in the definition of *latinidad*, as has been mentioned, in the first wave of internationalisation of the Latin American novel, but most especially through the Boom and Postboom. The incomparable level of international popular and critical success of the Spanish-American Boom and Postboom literature, in particular the aesthetics of magical realism, contributed to what some critics have argued to be a *macondismo* orthodoxy. This was identified by critics, such as José Joaquín Brunner[84] and Néstor García Canclini[85] during the 1990s, as a fundamentalist way of understanding authentic Latin American identity through the particular vision of cultural hybridisation reflected in this literary corpus. Later, this *macondismo* orthodoxy would be one of the central contestations of the *McOndo* anthology and other simultaneous literary interventions at the turn of the century.

While both Brunner and García Canclini emphasise the Boom and Postboom as the origins of *macondismo*, Emil Volek (2009) connects its development with prevailing ideas in the history of Latin America's identity discourse, speaking of cycles of *macondismo*. Volek (2009) highlights four anchors which have over these cycles developed and sustained the constitution of a 'master narrative' or 'myth' of *latinidad* up to its modern incarnation (72, 75). The first support is the exaggeration of Latin American identity through a *valorisation of difference*, defining itself in respect to or in negation of Spain (historically), Europe (more generally), and the United States (most recently). As has been highlighted, this sentiment is evident in the oppositional models used by a number of intellectuals to characterise Latin American identity in respect to Europe and the United States (particularly José Martí, see: Volek 2006), and can be seen as akin to Casanova's category of *differentiationist* narratives and authors. The second support is the former's inverse, the exaggeration of Latin American identity through a *devaluation of similarity*. This sentiment is manifested historically in Martí's (2010) comments that 'there is too much imitation'[86] (137) in Latin America, and claim that Latin American reality is so different and so unique that it is unintelligible for Europeans and

[84] The Chilean sociologist José Joaquín Brunner (1992) defined *macondismo* as an exoticised attitude towards Latin America arising as a response to the question of Latin American modernisation and associated with the elevation of the explanatory value of literature in response to this problem (52). For Brunner (1992), *macondismo* arises as a product of the narratives which we tell ourselves and the belief that these texts constitute Latin American reality, especially when they are consecrated with foreign acclaim (52). The result is a recourse to this metaphor and signifier to understand the mysterious and unintelligible essence of Latinamericanness in the light of the failure of the categories of Reason (science, politics, etc.) to explain it.

[85] Later, and in a similar vein to Brunner, Néstor García Canclini (2001) began speaking of a Macondista fundamentalism as a particularly dominant way of understanding Latin America (both within and beyond the region) as represented by varying works of the magical realist corpus, most especially for the Argentinian/Mexican critic, the works of Alejo Carpentier, Gabriel García Márquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, Isabel Allende, and the Mexican Laura Esquivel (79-80).

[86] '[S]e imita demasiado' (Martí 2010, 137).

Americans[87]. More generally, this sentiment is still perceived in a cultural criticism and resistance to globalisation and U.S. economic/cultural imperialism. Added to these supports, which mirror and differentiate Latin American identity in a relational way, is a phase of *recognition* through the inflation of the value placed on foreign appreciation, from the regional narratives of the 1920s, to the Boom and particularly magical realism. The fourth support of the *macondismo* myth is, in fact, the very *deflation* and questioning of this master narrative's value[88], evident in the criticism and continued anxiety regarding Latin America's "true" identity in light of this proposal via difference, in which intellectuals such as José Joaquín Brunner, Néstor García Canclini and Volek can be placed, as well as writers such as Alberto Fuguet and Sergio Gómez with their anthology *McOndo*. These four pillars of support, evident in Latin America's history—*the exaggeration of difference*, the *devaluation of similarity*, the *inflation of equivocal* (foreign) *recognition*, and the *deflation of self-recognition*—, are for Volek the latent structure which underpin *macondismo*.

Nevertheless, all three critics appear to agree that the Boom and magical realism as a genre have been the most recent and forceful manifestations of this *macondismo* master narrative. After all, the literature of magical realism functioned as a revolutionary artistic method which spurred on the kind of *regionalismo* and *indigenismo* implicit in prominent thinkers of the Latin American intellectual corpus (e.g. Martí, Mariátegui), through an artistic exploration and valorisation of archaic and pre-modern as well as the culturally marginal indigenous, Afro-Caribbean, or mestizo communities (Volek 2009, 68). For Volek (2009), the work of Asturias, Carpentier, Arguedas, and even Rulfo used 'the aesthetics of magic realism […] as an instrument for discovering and revealing the aesthetic and human values of marginal ethnic cultures' (68). He is not alone in making this assessment. The Cuban critic, director and founding member of Casa de las Américas, Roberto Fernández Retamar (1976), explained—reflecting in part on magical realism—that Latin America's *authentic* literature is inevitably influenced by modern Western norms (but is not totally European), and is also enriched by aboriginal cultural heritages (but is not totally autochthonous) (26). For Retamar, the aesthetics of magical realism and Latin America's new novel, neatly reproduce the same sort of hybrid

[87] 'Ni el libro europeo, ni el libro yanqui, daban la clave del enigma hispanoamericano' (Martí 2010, 137).

[88] According to Volek (2009), the fourth pillar of support in this *macondismo* myth, is, in fact, generated out of a questioning of the other three: 'it does not surprise us, then, that an equivocal recognition from abroad, the self-imposed mask, and the self-induced deception, assumed glibly by the industrial production of the magic realism after García Márquez's signal achievement, have provoked doubts about the legitimacy of some such identity adopted in the name of the difference for the difference's sake' (75).

space which the mestizo inhabits, a kind of transcultural narrative as was described by Rama[89]. In so doing, then, these narratives, and in a special way magical realism, unite themselves with Latin America's collective identity narrative, *mestizaje*, which the region has used to understand itself, and through this important association becomes a canonical and authentic literary expression and way of reading Latin America within the region.

It does not escape my critical view that, notwithstanding their differences in analysis in method and result, both Rama and Fernández Retamar's conclusions find affirmation in Moretti's conjecture that the peripheral novel is made up of foreign form and local content. In fact, this kind of comparison can be taken even further and provides a key example for understanding Volek's argument regarding the link between Latin America's identity discourse and literature's role in it. Beginning with Carpentier and Asturias, Latin America's literary differentiation through its appropriation and renovation of European norms (Breton's *marveilleux*[90]) and incorporation of its own unique patrimony (Latin America's oral traditions, myths, and marginal cultures), greatly contributed to the region's struggle for literary emancipation through this developing narrative technique known as magical realism[91]. However, of the two writers, Carpentier would forcefully combine his literary pronouncements with ontological and cultural meaning. Carpentier's (2003) own preferred term, *lo real maravilloso* (the marvelous real), he presented as an ontological explanation of Latin American everyday reality, a uniqueness evident in all aspects of life from its geography, architecture, history, and literature. For Carpentier (2003), it was Latin America's 'baroque spirit', emanating from its centuries of cultural hybridisation or *mestizaje*, which gave it its unique identity and authentic narrative marvelousness[92]. Nevertheless, the magical realism of Asturias and the *real maravilloso* of Carpentier would merely mark the starting point of this aesthetic development, one which would see its culmination and crowning in the work of Gabriel García Márquez.

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[89] Magic realism as a transcultural narrative, as Ángel Rama (2007) defined it, combined vanguard modernist European techniques with traditional local oral traditions.

[90] In Carpentier's (2008) prologue to his novel *El reino de este mundo*, he criticises the 'premeditated' and 'artificial' surrealism of the European surrealists in contrast to the genuine and autochthonous marvelous from the Latin American continent.

[91] Independently of one another both Miguel Ángel Asturias and Alejo Carpentier began speaking of *realismo mágico* and *lo real maravilloso* respectively in 1949 when referring to contemporary Latin American letters. Although there are antecedents, such as the German art critic Franz Roth's use of the term.

[92] '¿Y por qué es América Latina la tierra de elección del barroco? Porque toda simbiosis, todo mestizaje, engendra un barroquismo. El barroquismo americano se acrece con la criolledad, con el sentido del criollo, con la conciencia que cobra el hombre americano, sea hijo de blanco venido de Europa, sea hijo de negro africano, sea hijo de indio nacido en el continente […]. Con tales elementos en presencia, aportándole cada cual su barroquismo, entroncamos directamente con lo que yo he llamado lo "real maravilloso"' (Carpentier 2003, 347).

As such, both within Latin America and the wider world, *Cien años de soledad*'s popular and critical canonisation transmuted a simple story into a 'heuristic instrument for the interpretation of Latin American reality' (Volek 2009, 67). As Volek (2009) (along with others[93]) argues:

> [f]or many readers of García Márquez, what was perhaps intended by him as a satire and exorcism of certain Latin American realities, became Latin American *reality as such* and turned, in their mind, into a revelation, embellishment, and even justification of that supposed state of affairs there: in other words, Macondo changed into *macondismo*. Phenomenology and artistic playfulness were interpreted as ontology: certain *vision* of Latin American reality (*the marvellous real*, coined by Alejo Carpentier), combined with certain poetics and aesthetics (*magical realism*), was viewed as the Latin American reality as such (67).

However, this was only the beginning of the enormous influence which magical realism would have on Latin American identity. For Volek (2009), *Cien años de soledad* is situated between the early revolutionary (and *differentiationist*) texts of writers such as Asturias, Carpentier, Rulfo and Arguedas; and 'the new magical realism' (68). It is in this second wave of magical realist fiction that the *macondismo* orthodoxy achieves its most forceful and pervasive positioning:

> [i]n its *light*, postmodern version, the new magic realism is all about fantasy, eroticism, and humor, and is spiced with only tiny dosages of reality, or such that do not upset the new framework of the genre. It is *this* Macondo that *has become* Latin America for our times. Due to the self-assurance, charm, and diligence of Isabel Allende and her followers, this new magic realism has turned into a full-fledged cultural industry. It offers Latin America (including Hispanic culture in the U.S.) reduced to *kitsch* and packaged for export (Volek 2009, 68-9).

The experimentation which counted with popular and critical reception alike, inaugurated a new genre and cultural industry[94]. As was mentioned above, the simpler narratives of the Postboom (as opposed to the demanding literature of the Boom) were accounted for by Nemrava (2014) in aesthetic terms, however, a commercial explanation in which writers sought literary existence through an adaptation of their work to the themes and styles of the prevailing commercial brand of magical realism, appears equally convincing. Aside from the well-known controversy surrounding Isabel Allende's apparent rewriting of *Cien años de soledad* with her novel *La casa de los espíritus* (1982), Pedro Luis Barcia (2007) has highlighted a number of parallels between García Márquez's novel and a whole series of Postboom novels by the Colombian Gustavo Álvarez Gardeazabal (*El bazar de los idiotas*, 1974), the Mexican Manuel

[93] This line of argument has also been presented by critics such as Gesine Müller (2019, 53-4) and Mariano Siskind (2012): 'Macondo is the mediation between the idiosyncratic hyper-localism of the Colombian tropical forest and the general situation of the continent. Macondo is the village-signifier that names the difference of Latin America, and later, perhaps of the Third World at large' (854).

[94] Ángel Rama (2008) in his prophetic essay 'El *boom* en perspectiva', had already made some remarks regarding the impact of the establishment of literary brands (like magical realism) and the commercialisation of the literary field: '[s]e producía para el lector la prodigalidad peculiar del mercado consumista, donde determinados temas y determinados tratamientos adquirían el carácter de marcas acreditadas, imponiéndose fuertemente sobre la competencia de otros productos que, dadas las leyes del sistema, procuraban más parecerse que distinguirse' (298).

Echevarría (*Redoble muy largo*, 1974), and the Argentinian María Granata (*Los viernes de la eternidad* 1971, and *Los tumultos* 1974) (492-3). Another such direction was taken up in the popular rise of women writers such as Marcela Serrano, Carmen Boullosa, Laura Esquivel, and Isabel Allende, whose emphasis on the romantic narrative plot has been unfavourably compared to the *light* bodice rippers by Corín Tellado for their employment of this attractive bestseller formula (Aínsa 2012, 56-7).

The increased commercialisation of this literary genre and the image of Latin America which it represented would further perpetuate a particular identitary narrative[95]. As the editor of Planeta Biblioteca del Sur, Carlos Orellana Rivera (1997) put it, 'a novel like *The House of Spirits*, or even *Paula*, have taken the aura of "Chileanness", the perception of that ineffable notion that is national identity, to more readers in the world than all of the Chilean novels which have appeared in the 20th Century'[96] (51). This is equally true for how Latin American identity is constructed, in how those national authors those who attain an international reputation are used to interpret not only their national origins, but the regional narrative and cultural reality. And while, in the Postboom literary period, Isabel Allende's and later Luis Sepúlveda's global magical realist bestsellers continued Latin America's global literary popularity, once again similarly to those internationalised *regionalista* and *indigenista* works of the early 20th Century, the cultural narrative exported to the world was decidedly one of Latin American exoticism. A significant example in how international publishing and readership affirmed the aesthetic and identitary narrative it desired from Latin America is the example of Luis Sepúlveda's internationalisation. Sepúlveda's novels, *Un viejo que leía novelas de amor* (1988) and *Mundo del fin del mundo* (1992), were first published with very little success by the Chilean publisher Emisión. However, when these texts were "discovered" by French and German publishers, he began to enjoy vast international reading publics, and gained, in turn, those local reading publics he was unable to conquer originally (Orellana Rivera 1997).

[95] The success of magical realism within Latin America but also its successful transformation into a global literary mode—as demonstrated by its adoption by such well-renowned authors as Salman Rushdie and Haruki Murakami, as well as its appropriation by more peripheral literary space—all served to ennoble Latin American letters. These are the signs of a region no longer totally reliant on foreign formal and aesthetic innovation (as it was for Darío's *modernismo*), but capable of generating its own instrument of literary emancipation through differentiation in magical realism, literary tools at the disposal of the entire postcolonial world as Homi Bhabha proclaimed (in Hart and Ouyang, 2005,1). Nevertheless, notwithstanding this global impact, the regional impact was quite different when one considers that the kind of literary tool which (especially the new) magical realism represented was without a doubt one for literary differentiation, through its capacity to imagine an exotic *macondista* Latin America.

[96] '[U]na novela como *La casa de los espíritus*, o aún *Paula*, ha llevado el aura de "lo chileno", la percepción de esa noción inefable que es la identidad nacional, a más lectores en el mundo que todas las novelas chilenas juntas aparecidas en el siglo XX' (Orellana Rivera 1997, 51).

Once the seemingly imperceptible ideology of *macondismo* is revealed to be hiding in plain sight, it becomes possible to recognise the extent to which this ideology has been sustained both within and beyond the region. Not restricted to the literary realm, during the 20th Century and now into the 21st, *macondismo* is something that the region has come to embody and, in some sense, use to its advantage, manicuring its global image as a mysterious and marvellous continent through the promotion of folkloric and eco-tourism, the marketing of folkloric and indigenous imagery and local craftwork, all for the promotions of tourist industries and consumption (Morales 2002). Colombia's relationship with magical realism is—unsurprisingly—particularly significant, and many examples of *macondismo* abound, such as Colombia's 2014 global international tourism campaign "Colombia is Magical Realism", accompanied with imagery of lush virgin rainforests, beaches, exotic animals, farmers, and women in traditional folkloric dresses. Another notable example is the television series *Narcos* (Season 1 and Season 2), produced by the Colombian television production company Dynamo in a joint venture with U.S. television streaming service and global producer Netflix. This series follows the rise and fall of the most notorious Colombian drug cartels (Pablo Escobar and the Medellín cartel, and the infamous *caballeros de Cali*) and appears to reiterate the ontological understanding of Latin American marvellous (and dangerous) exceptionality[97]. As Jorge Volpi[98] (2009) and Adriana Sara Jastrzębska[99] (2012) have argued, this transition from Macondo to Medellín, or from magical realism to *narco novela* (Narco novel) is nothing less than a mutation of *macondismo* exoticism, still representing a mysterious, exotic, and undecipherable Latin America.

For Volek (2005), the result of the triumph of *macondismo* is also evident in both local and foreign intelligentsias (he highlights in particular the role of U.S. Latinamericanism as 'the true heir of *macondismo*'), which both embraced, with renewed enthusiasm, the analysis of

[97] In the prologue to the first season the viewer is informed: '[m]agical realism is a literary style incorporating fantastic or mythical elements into otherwise realistic fiction. Colombia is where it began. And anyone who's spent real time here knows why. It's a place where the bizarre shakes hands with the inexplicable on a daily basis' ('Decenso' 2015).

[98] Volpi (2009) states: 'Si acaso la literatura latinoamericana© no ha desaparecido del todo, se debe a la pervivencia de esta lacra social que se ha transformado en su nueva—y acaso única—marca de fábrica. A la fórmula América Latina = realismo mágico© se opone en nuestros días América Latina = novela del narco©' (187).

[99] '[S]e realizó en la literatura colombiana una transición del realismo mágico al realismo violento o narcotremendismo, un metafórico viaje de Macondo a Medellín, pero, en nuestra opinión, no tiene rasgos de ruptura respecto a la tradición garciamarquiana [...] El ciclo de fundación, desarrollo y apocalipsis de Macondo sigue vigente, subyace por debajo de las imágenes de la actualidad violenta, dotando el narcotremendismo literario de trascendencia, de un significado que va muchho más allá de intentos de satisfacer la curiosidad morbosa del público internacional' (Jastrzębska 2012, 183).

identity under the spell of *macondismo* fever, aided with the tools (and the fervour) of the wave of Cultural Theory (195). Other foreign examples of the triumph of *macondismo* include the awarding of the Nobel Prize for literature to Gabriel García Márquez in 1982, a clear example of literary consecration, and discursively a highly regarded form of foreign recognition which contributes to the legitimacy of the *macondismo* master narrative[100]. As is evident in the Nobel committee's pronouncement of his success, García Márquez's contribution was not seen in purely aesthetic or even national terms, but in a cultural, identitary and regional sense: 'for his novels and short stories, in which the fantastic and the realistic are combined in a richly composed world of imagination, reflecting a continent's life and conflicts' ('The Nobel Prize in Literature 1982'). This kind of latinisation from above is also something in which voices endogenous to the region, such as Latin American literary critics and academics partake in. Comments by important critics such as Ángel Flores (1955), who even before García Márquez's ascent, declared that in magical realism Latin America had found its own authentic and civilised expression, also recognise the extra-literary significance of this literary genre as representative of Latin America more broadly. Even the incessant verbal nods to the Boom by critics, journalists and writers alike—such as Postboom, Mini-Boom, Boom Jr., Boomerang, Baby Boom—continue to emphasise the centrality of this literary period and by association the genre which eclipsed all others in defining Latin American cultural identity.

Conclusion

Once a certain way of understanding identity is legitimised and international markets and products are constructed on this ideological edifice, the ability to challenge this hegemony with additional heterodox perspectives and modify understandings of cultural identity are restricted, having significant consequences for artistic autonomy. As García Canclini (2000) explains, in regard to cultural hybridity and the consolidation of authentic and homogenous cultural narratives,

> [w]hen an identity is defined through a process of abstraction of traits (language, traditions, certain stereotyped behaviours) these practices tend to be detached from the history of mixes which formed them. As a consequence, a way of understanding identity is established and

[100] Critics such as Ángel Rama (2008), and José Joaquín Brunner (2014b) have recognised the paradoxical way in which the global editorial market 'made it possible to finally recognize our identity more profoundly [...] The writers of the Boom generation reached their momentum—entered orbit, one might say—only from the instant they were recognized by the outside world, where the echo would arrive that established their "identity operations" before our very eyes' (109). Rama (2008) for his part would argue appropriating the words of Julio Cortázar: 'finalmente, ¿qué es el *boom* sino la más extraordinaria toma de conciencia por parte del pueblo latinoamericano de una parte de su propia identidad?' (268-9).

> heterodox ways of speaking a language, making music or interpreting traditions is rejected. In summary, the possibility to modify culture and politics is put to an end[101] (10-11).

Despite the challenges associated with critiquing Latin America's dominant cultural narrative, Volek clarifies, philosophers, historians, critics, and writers eventually begin to dismantle *macondismo*, citing, in particular, the efforts of José Joaquín Brunner, Néstor García Canclini, Jorge Larraín, Jesús Martín-Barbero, and Beatriz Sarlo, in their attempts to provide—in Brunner's (2014a) own words—'a different vision in regard to Modernity in culture—or the sum of cultures that is Latin America' (16). What was once a Latin American avant-garde, would no longer remain identical in its position-taking—'whenever there is change in the universe of options that are simultaneously offered for producers and consumers to choose from' as Bourdieu (1993) has made clear—, turning it into an institution and market successful literary style, and later into an effect of parody (30-1).

In the literary world, the dismantling of *macondismo* takes an almost generational proportion with writers in the 1990s in Mexico with the Crack manifesto and the *Moho* magazine, the so-called Mutant Generation (Generación Mutante) in Colombia, and individual writers such as Jaime Collyer, would—each in their own unique way—reject the aesthetics of magical realism and the ideology of *macondismo*[102]. The Crack manifesto and the *McOndo* anthology were among the most outspoken attacks to the magical realist decadence and the symbolic heart of *macondismo*: the village of Macondo at the centre of Gabriel García Márquez's *Cien años de soledad*. But there is more! The deflation of *macondismo* also seems to come to light by way of a rejection of the political vocations of the Boom and Postboom representatives, its formal and experimental narration (except for the Crack movement), and represent a common postmodern sentiment, that—in the words of the Mexican critic Christopher Domínguez Michael (2005)—:'[i]t's time to come to terms with the fact that the party is over and the price paid for having won a place in World Literature translates to the end of our exceptionality and the status which magical realism, false or real, came with'[103] (no page). The global status which was bestowed on Latin American letters upon its sudden and explosive entry into the canons of World Literature via the Boom (and particularly García

[101] 'Cuando se define a una identidad mediante un proceso de abstracción de rasgos (lengua, tradiciones, ciertas conductas estereotipadas) se tiende a menudo a desprender esas prácticas de la historia de mezclas en que se formaron. Como consecuencia, se absolutiza un modo de entender la identidad y se rechazan maneras heterodoxas de hablar la lengua, hacer música o interpretar las tradiciones. Se acaba, en suma, obturando la posibilidad de modificar la cultura y la política' (García Canclini 2000, 10-11).

[102] These isolated interventions which nevertheless held much in common in their critique of *macondismo* will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 8.

[103] 'Es hora de asumir que la fiesta terminó y que el precio de haber ganado un lugar en la literatura mundial se traduce en el fin de nuestra excepcionalidad y de los fueros que el realismo mágico, falso o verdadero, conllevó' (Domínguez Michael 2005, no page).

Márquez's magical realism), appears to be an unrecoverable exceptionality. While this exceptionality or differentiation was in many senses necessary for its regional literary struggle—as Casanova (2007) maintains: '[i]n order to struggle against dependency it is necessary to create a distinctive identity and in this way, by laying the basis for rivalry and competition, form a literary space' (221)—, however, the vogue of Latin American literature in many senses came and went with the Boom, as the world came to discover Latin America, the mysterious and exotic cultural enigma was crystalised and the curtain fell, leaving writers of the newest generation to attempt to break free from this genre and ideology (which some of the most popular of the writers of the Postboom resigned themselves to), and burst back on stage to redefine Latin American literature on their own autonomous terms.

Now that the context into which *McOndo* intervenes and defines itself in relation to has been outlined—namely the literature and figures of the Boom and Postboom; the influence of the political pole on literary vocations and narratives, and the influence of the commercial pole on publishing realities (balkanisation, *aflaguarización*), literary style (magical realism, testimonio), and cultural identity (*macondismo*)—it is possible to analyse closely the position-takings of the editors and the writers involved in this anthology, as much in the prologue as in the short stories, so as to better inform understandings of this polemical anthology, but also the literature and literary figures of this end-of-century period.

Part 3: Text
Chapter 5: The *McOndo* prologue

5.1.1 Reading the *McOndo* prologue

In considering the critiques and evaluations of the *McOndo* anthology I am conscious to situate my own work not solely as just another commentary on *McOndo*, but also to bring light, through my methodological and theoretical approach, onto how this work has been in effect *produced* by the artistic space and its authentic position-taking within Latin American letters. As Bourdieu (1993) warns:

> [t]he production of discourse (critical, historical, etc.) about the work of art is one of the conditions of production of the work. Every critical affirmation contains, on the one hand, a recognition of the value of the work which occasions it, which is thus designated as a worthy object of legitimate discourse (a recognition sometimes extorted by the logic of the field, as when, for example, the polemic of the dominant confers participant status on the challengers), and on the other hand an affirmation of its own legitimacy. All critics declare not only their judgement of the work but also their claim to the right to talk about it and judge it. In short, they take part in a struggle for the monopoly of legitimate discourse about the work of art, and consequently in the production of the value of the work of art. (And one's only hope of producing scientific knowledge—rather than weapons to advance a particular class of specific interests—is to make explicit to oneself one's position in the sub-field of the producers of discourse about art and the contribution of this field to the very existence of the object of study) (35-6).

According to Bourdieu, this process of critical self-consciousness is fundamental to the question of a whole series of debates within literary studies: from the question of the canon and what constitutes it, to the apparent attempts to deconstruct the canon. Bourdieu (1993) rightly concludes, that even if this discourse is critical, it may ultimately achieve nothing other than continue to 'take part in a struggle for the monopoly of legitimate discourse about a work of art' (36), contributing to the establishment or modification of the canon and the text's positioning within it.

Aware of this critical effect, as well as the role of discourse in the production of a work, I have become conscious of the implication of two questions which were central at the onset of this research. Firstly, *how* it is that the pan-Hispanic short story anthology, *McOndo*, which was published only once over twenty years ago, and coedited by two authors relatively invisible outside of their national sphere, can continue to be a reference point for contemporary Spanish-American authors, and be considered a canonical text in the recent history of Latin American letters? In this sense, *McOndo* appears paradoxical, as despite the overwhelmingly negative reception *McOndo* received in both journalistic and academic criticism, particularly of the claims made by the editors in their infamous prologue 'Presentación del país McOndo', the

anthology enjoys widespread recognition among the literati at the level of Latin American literary space. While on the one hand, there is the obvious failed commercial success of the anthology (having only a restricted publication in Chile and Spain, and two editions in 1996, the year of publication), on the other, its critical reception of the prologue and the stories was similarly negative. The stories were criticised as light (Sepúlveda 1996); mediocre literature (Aguilar 1996); and lacking in innovation (Gutiérrez Mouat 1998). And over time, the criticisms became increasingly personal, even defining the authors themselves as rebels without a cause (Palaversich 2000), neoliberal apologists (Hertel 2008), or writers who incarnated 'the cultural logic of Latin American neoliberalism'[1] (Fornet 2005, 14). Nevertheless, as Bourdieu had already made clear, one of the side-effects of criticism surrounding a work of art or a text, even if it be negative, is that this necessarily draws symbolic capital to it, increasing its prominence in discourses and situating it within the canon, in effect producing the work of art within the space of works[2].

This process of the position-taking and the production of *McOndo* within the space of works requires further analysis, one which demands a close reading of the *textual* and *paratextual* materials which reveal these position-takings and the literary, identitary, political, and commercial concerns they respond to (generally outlined in the previous chapter), and which represent the unformulated background knowledge tacitly referred to throughout the prologue and indispensable if our intention is to account for it coherently. Within the context which I have outlined in the previous section, the *McOndo* anthology can be analysed through its relational positioning to these varying concerns and influences; from the desires for literary existence, visibility, and autonomy, to the political and commercial realities these authors faced (whether these realities be actual or apparent). The prologue is the central component in this chapter, as it represents a kind of metaliterary discourse—in a similar fashion to Donoso's Boom memoir—, representing a rich territory to explore how Fuguet and Gómez perceived their literary context, as well as to identify their own unique solution to their literary predicament. The controversial reception of the anthology, in large part due to the prologue, can also be analysed within the literary context I have outlined, in order to expose the (mis)interpretations of *McOndo* as well as Alberto Fuguet's role as its central ideologue, and the overall production of *McOndo* in the literary field.

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[1] '[E]ncarnan la lógica cultural del neoliberalismo latinoamericano' (Fornet 2005, 14).

[2] 'One of the difficulties of orthodox defence against heretical transformation of the field by a redefinition of the tacit or explicit terms of entry is the fact that polemics imply a form of recognition; adversaries whom one would prefer to destroy by ignoring them cannot be combated without consecrating them' (Bourdieu 1993, 42).

However, this is not solely a textual exercise, as many of these paratextual features belong to different domains—from the historical to the symbolic—which, by analysing them together in their specificity and how they contribute to the totality, it is possible to construct a much broader and more detailed picture of the anthology in its context. In this way, this analysis also looks at *McOndo*'s *history* as seen through Fuguet's interventions prior to *McOndo*; the anthology's *organisation* and *design*, such as the role played by the publisher Grijalbo Mondadori, as well as the selection of authors; and the editors' use of *symbols*, such as the intentional satirising of signifiers like Macondo[3]. The discourse surrounding the anthology, particularly the polemic reception and critiques used to dismiss the newest entrants into Latin American literary space carried out by local and foreign critics alike, can also be reinterpreted within broader discourses and expectations regarding Latin America's "authentic" identity and narrative, as well as ideas regarding the role of the author, and "proper" literary procedure.

The second question concerning this research from the outset has been: *if/whether McOndo* can be considered a key text in the internationalisation of this generation of authors. While the first question is clearly of concern in Chapters 5 and 6 of close reading analysis of the prologue and stories, this second question is properly related to the broader context which can only be effectively investigated *through* this micro-analysis and by way of returning to the macro-perspective in Chapters 7 (The Trajectory of the *McOndo* authors) and 8 (The Canonisation of the *McOndo* anthology).

The *McOndo* prologue is a paratext with a varied and hybrid structure. It is a mix of testimony, essay, manifesto, and op-ed (and fiction), and it engages in a number of diverse tasks. On the surface, the anthology appears (and has typically been read) as a generational statement. And this chapter will show the various elements which combine to generate this reading: from the identification of generational birth dates; the highlighting of the problems which this generation faces; and a series of position-takings in respect to literary and cultural discourses such as magical realism and the role of the author, *macondismo* and Latin American cultural identity broadly-speaking. However, the polyvalent form of the prologue has led to multiple readings and at times misreadings—ones which have (mis)produced the work. As such, to escape these pitfalls, the prologue must be read through the context outlined in the previous chapter as well as through its multifaceted and multipurposed nature, and by considering how the reception and critiques of the anthology have also contributed to its

[3] Macondo being the village at the centre of Gabriel García Márquez's novel *Cien años de soledad*.

production in the literary field, making possible a more thorough and accurate reading of the positioning of *McOndo*.

5.1.2 Defining the "McOndo generation"

Similarly to the prologue to *Cuentos con walkman*, and along with other anthologies in Chilean literary space cited in the previous chapter, in *McOndo*, Fuguet and Gómez, replicate the characteristics of the generational anthology by demarcating the birth years of their literary generation, by identifying the problems they collectively face, by highlighting both literary and extra-literary commonalities, and by making tentative projections about the future of these writers. These issues are fundamental, as they are indicative of the background knowledge which as literary historians we must attempt to understand in-context in order to not misrepresent, diminish, or pass over the motivations for this literary intervention.

The most obvious of these generational acts is the editorial choice for a common age for writers sought for the anthology. In the prologue, Fuguet and Gómez (1996) loosely explain the birth range which they used to select authors: born between 1959 and 1962, a range which the editors' comment would 'serve as a sieve and delimit a common experience'[4] (16). Yet, only seven of the participants were born during these years and, as the editors themselves acknowledge, the other eleven were born afterwards[5], making the actual generational birth range between 1959-1971, or generally the 1960s. With this apparent conflict in mind, the Argentinian critic Ezequiel de Rosso (2014) argues, that far from acting as solely chronological filters, the reference to these dates encapsulates the politico-literary ideology that Fuguet and Gómez propose on behalf of their literary generation (79). As the editors state, '[w]e decided on a range that would be from 1959 (which coincides with the eternally referenced Cuban Revolution) until 1962 (which in Chile and in other countries is the year in which television arrives)'[6] (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 16). For de Rosso (2014), these years represent two symmetrical movements: politics and mass media, referring to the gradual mass mediation of politics as well as the increased intermediality and depoliticisation of literature, something

[4] '[Q]ue nos sirviera de colador y acotara una experiencia en común' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 17).

[5] The writers born within this age range include Juan Forn (1959-), Martín Rejtman (1961-), David Toscana (1961-), Rodrigo Soto (1962-), Sergio Gómez (1962-), Martín Casariego (1962-), and Gustavo Escanlar (1962-2010), and those born afterwards are Rodrigo Fresán (1963-), Jordi Soler (1963-), Naief Yehya (1963-), Alberto Fuguet (1964-), Santiago Gamboa (1965-), Jaime Bayly (1965-), Edmundo Paz Soldán (1967-), Ray Loriga (1967-), Leonardo Valencia (1969-), with the youngest integrands being the Spaniards José Ángel Mañas (1971-) and Antonio Domínguez (1971-).

[6] 'Nos decidimos por una fecha que fuera desde 1959 (que coincide con la siempre recurrida revolución cubana) a 1962 (que en Chile y en otros países, es el año en que llega la televisión)' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 16).

which—as will be explored in greater depth in this and the next chapter—the editors consider recent Latin American literature (including *McOndo*) to represent.

Aside from the suggestive meaning behind the generational birthdates, the prologue further testifies to how the political pole has gradually been superseded by the commercial pole of influence in the second half of the 20th Century. The editors polemically claim that:

> Latin America is, inevitably, MTV Latina, that amazing consensus, that tide which colonises our conscience through cable, and which is becoming the most accomplished example of the Bolivarian dream, more concrete and effective when we speak about unity than hundreds of treaties and international forums. By the way, let's say that *McOndo* is MTV Latina, but in paper and print[7] (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 18).

Here, the early 19th Century Bolivarian dream of Spanish-American unity is satirically treated as accomplished, not through political channels or even in any official sense, but through the creation of a cultural consensus and common experience made possible through the construction of a Spanish-American market and audience, which for the editors *McOndo* (they hope) will represent a comparably unifying artefact. It is as though, for the editors of *McOndo*, the anthology represents the opening of a new channel of Latin American literature at a regional level, one not populated and dominated with the omnipresent (and ageing) figures of the Boom and Postboom and their followers, but a new generation of young writers writing for a new reading public. Symbolically, not only do these dates attempt to announce the existence of a "new" literary generation, but also their character, through the identification with mass media culture: defining them on this point at a greater distance from the High culture which the literature of the Boom had represented, and as a continuation of the Postboom incursions into mass media, but with an increasingly depoliticised ethic.

However, this generational demarcation is seen in contrast to the very caveat of the editors in the prologue which pre-empts its *misreading* as a generational treaty or manifesto: *McOndo* '[d]oesn't even represent its participants. It's our idea, our trip out. We know many will read this book as a generational treaty or as a manifesto. It doesn't go that far. We may be pretentious, but we don't have those pretentions'[8] (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 13). Nevertheless,

[7] Latinoamérica es, irremediablemente, MTV latina, aquel alucinante consenso, ese flujo que coloniza nuestra conciencia a través del cable, y que se está convirtiendo en el mejor ejemplo del sueño bolivariano cumplido, más concreto y eficaz a la hora de hablar de unión que cientos de tratados o foros internacionales. De paso, digamos que *McOndo* es MTV latina, pero en papel y letra de molde' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 18).

[8] 'No representa sino a sus participantes y ni siquiera. Es nuestra idea, nuestro volón. Sabemos que muchos leerán este libro como un tratado generacional o como un manifiesto. No alcanza para tanto. Seremos pretenciosos, pero no tenemos esas pretensiones' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 13).

the predominance of this collective reading in the reception to *McOndo* is evidenced by comments by some writers in the anthology such as David Toscana[9], who stated:

> I wasn't pleased with the prologue [...], because it seemed like a manifesto of the authors appearing in the volume. The majority of us writers didn't agree with it. It's one thing to be invited to an anthology and another that they write a prologue that makes it appear as though all of this has to do with you [10] (Toscana as quoted in De Rosso 2014, 79, n.22).

The imprecise interpretation that *McOndo* represents a collective movement is apparent in early critiques directed towards the anthology and its "generation", "movement", or "genre" by both national critics (Bianchi 1997, Olea 1997), and foreign critics (Hargrave and Smith Seminet 1998, Palaversich 2000), as well as being perpetuated by foreign print media in the United States (Mac Margolis 2002, Laporte 2003) and even in Australia (Freeman 2006, Vaccari 2006). This confusion is even apparent in Palaversich's (2000) collective condemnation of the "Macondistas", a term which she vaguely claims 'has been employed to denote Fuguet and a young group of writers who share the same aesthetic-ideological project'[11] (62). Palaversich unfortunately fails to clarify or mention the writers who she considers belong to this supposed collective project and specifically which critics, apart from her, utilise this term. As Rodrigo Fresán (2004), one of the Argentinian authors involved in the anthology, stated:

> [o]ne of the biggest misunderstandings […] is to think that *McOndo* is about a generation or a sect and not what it really is: a very useful and revelatory anthology. And as years have gone by—for better or for worse—*McOndo* has become something else: a prologue[12] (58).

Despite this affirmation by the editors in the prologue and the distancing of certain authors included in the anthology after its publication, *McOndo* has been consistently misread as a generational statement and the announcement of a new movement or sensibility, something which has been criticised by important critics (Becerra 2014, De Rosso 2014).

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[9] David Toscana has perhaps more than most participants in the anthology a reason to have been displeased with his participation. Not because he has not benefited from his inclusion, he has, as will be shown in Chapter 7, but because he was credited (incorrectly) in the prologue as the one who suggested the idea of forming *McOndo*: 'David Toscana, representante de México en Iowa, leyó el libro y tuvo la idea de armar un *Cuentos con walkman* internacional' (12). In my interview with Alberto Fuguet (2015), however, he clarified that it had, in fact, been proposed earlier by Felipe Muñoz, editor of Grijalbo in Chile, prior to Fuguet's trip to Iowa. And in my interview with David Toscana (2016), he commented that what appeared in the prologue was not his recollection of the events. It is possible to speculate on the possible motives for this fiction. Perhaps Fuguet and Gómez realised the backlash they would receive if they were to admit that this was a project in a sense *commissioned* by a commercial Spanish publisher. Or perhaps by drawing in David Toscana into the origins of the anthology's development, they hoped that the generational character which they appeared to be attempting to generate would have greater credibility.

[10] 'A mí no me agradó el prólogo del primer libro, porque parecía un manifiesto de los escritores que aparecían en el volumen. La mayoría de los autores no comulgábamos con el mismo. Una cosa es que te inviten a una antología y otra que te prologuen y hasta que hagan parecer que todo eso tiene que ver contigo' (Toscana as quoted in De Rosso 2014, 79, n.22)

[11] '"Macondistas" es el nombre que desde hace poco se ha empezado a emplear para denotar a Fuguet y a un grupo de escritores jóvenes que comparten el mismo proyecto estético-ideológico' (Palaversich 2000, 62).

[12] 'Uno de los malentendidos más grandes […] es el pensar que *McOndo* se trata de una generación o una secta y no de lo que realmente es: una antología muy útil y reveladora. Y con el correr de los años—para mal o para bien—*McOndo* se ha convertido en otra cosa: en un prólogo' (Fresán 2004, 58).

The immediate assumption that the editors' collective pronouncements communicated throughout the prologue with the use of the first-person plural *nosotros* represented those included in the anthology, as if though those included were signatories of the "manifesto", have further perpetuated a misreading of this anthology as a collective movement. As Edmundo Paz Soldán (2016) noted in my interview with him: '[i]t was a very combative prologue, very visceral, which in that moment ended up turning us into somewhat of a McOndo generation, even though it was never a collective project of the fifteen writers, in other words, we never signed the prologue, so to speak'[13]. It is important to state that my interviews with both the editors and the majority of participants have confirmed—like this quote from Paz Soldán suggests—that the participating authors had not read the prologue, nor did they necessarily know that the anthology would have such a combative tone[14] (Fuguet 2015, Gómez 2015, personal interviews). Similarly, David Toscana expressed that 'I didn't see the prologue until I received my copy'[15], Martin Rejman (2016, personal interview) stated: 'I don't even remember the prologue. I read it when it came out'[16] and the same is the case with Naief Yehya (2015, personal interview). Equally, Leonardo Valencia (2016, personal interview) stated: 'I never read the prologue by Alberto Fuguet and Sergio Gómez, they never sent it to me. They never said "look, this will be the prologue" before the publication of the anthology'[17] (Valencia 2016, personal interview). And while Santiago Gamboa understood that the anthology would be a response against *costumbrista* and magical realist styles, he acknowledged that in respect to the other stories included and the prologue: 'I didn't know absolutely anything'[18] (Gamboa 2016, personal interview). Rodrigo Fresán and Juan Forn admitted to knowing a little more about the anthology than any of the other participants (likely due to their working relationship and friendship with the editors, especially Fuguet). Fresán (2016, personal interview) stated: 'Alberto asked for a story for an anthology and that is all […] [He] also commented the title

[13] 'Era un prólogo muy combativo, muy visceral, que en ese momento nos terminó convirtiéndonos un poco en la generación McOndo, aunque nunca fue un proyecto colectivo de los quince escritores, o sea no firmamos el prólogo por decirlo así' (Paz Soldán 2016, personal interview).

[14] Sergio Gómez stated: '[y] ninguno de los autores conoció el prólogo antes de que se publicara el libro' (2015, personal interview), a fact which my interviews with Naief Yehya (2015), David Toscana (2016), Edmundo Paz Soldán (2016), Rodrigo Fresán (2016), Leonardo Valencia (2016), have also corroborated.

[15] 'Yo no conocí el prólogo hasta que recibí mi ejemplar' (Toscana 2016, personal interview).

[16] 'Ni me acuerdo del prólogo. Lo leí en el momento en que salió' (Rejtman 2016, personal interview).

[17] '[N]unca leí el prólogo de Alberto Fuguet y Sergio Gómez, o sea nunca me lo enviaron. Nunca me dijeron, "mira este va a ser el prólogo" antes de la publicación de la antología' (Valencia 2016, personal interview).

[18] 'Yo no sabía absolutamente nada' (Gamboa 2016, personal interview).

(which I found funny), but I didn't read the prologue before the book came out'[19], and Forn (2016, personal interview) for his part, assumed that all of the writers had knowledge of the title beforehand: '[e]ven though we hadn't read the prologue, we all knew the title of the anthology before it came out'[20]. Rodrigo Soto (2016, personal interview) echoed Paz Soldán's sentiment, when he reflected: '[w]ithout a doubt the prologue was controversial for some and not for others […] It also had the tone of a manifesto, of which I would say that I don't know to what extent I can participate in a manifesto without knowing it'[21].

Unfortunately however, this misinterpretation—which has not been aided by the collective generational tone of the prologue—is still pervasive and in need of correction today, as not only the literary press, but even critical studies, continue to reference a "McOndo generation" or movement (some examples include Billard 2009, Taylor 2010, Lorenzi 2011, Maier 2011, González Echevarría 2012, López-Calvo 2017), rather than viewing *McOndo* as one particular intervention (mostly represented by the two editors alone) within the generation of writers born in the 1960s and appearing in the 1990s. Nevertheless, this does demonstrate the force with which this anthology erupted into Latin American literary space and acted as a central flashpoint with which a number of authors from this generation would be understood. In a sense, while the text itself does and does not put forward a literary generation, we can see confirmed Bourdieu's assessment that the text is as much produced by these external agents (critics, academics, etc.), as it is by the direct agents who compose it (the writers). As such, while the editor's mixed messaging had little to justify it as a collective literary movement, the critical interpretations of the work *made* the McOndo generation what it became based on a misunderstanding, highlighted even in the frequent comparison to a genuinely collective literary movement which appeared almost simultaneously to *McOndo* in Mexico: the Crack Manifesto (which included Jorge Volpi, Eloy Urroz, Ignacio Padilla, Pedro Ángel Palou, and Ricardo Chávez Castañeda).

Furthermore, while these comments from the majority of participants in the anthology and the admission of the editors themselves demonstrate that the prologue truly was an editorial idea and project and that the participants were not signatories before the fact. This, however,

[19] 'A mí Alberto me pidió un cuento para una antología y eso es todo […] Alberto también me comentó el título (que me pareció muy gracioso), pero no leí el prólogo antes de que saliese el libro' (Fresán 2016, personal interview).

[20] 'Aunque no habíamos leído el prólogo, todos sabíamos el título de la antología antes de que saliera' (Forn 2016, personal interview)

[21] 'Sin duda el prólogo fue controvertido para algunos y no para otros […] También tenía un tono de manifiesto, de lo cual diría que yo no sé hasta qué punto uno puede participar en un manifiesto sin saberlo' (Soto 2016, personal interview).

does not exclude the possibility of partial or complete agreement with the arguments therein after the fact. While some writers who I interviewed (namely Toscana, Gamboa, Soler, and Valencia) expressed a certain displeasure—but not complete rejection—at being grouped under the label of McOndo, for their misrepresentation in or disagreement with the "manifesto" they never signed, other writers (namely Yehya, Soto, Rejtman, Paz Soldán, Forn, Fresán), agreed to different extents with the identitary, aesthetic, and literary claims of the prologue, the particularities of which will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 7 on the trajectories of the authors involved.

5.2.1 Identifying collective problems, and position-takings

Aside from establishing the generational birth dates, the prologue also highlights collective problems and attitudes that—despite the inclusion of Spanish authors in the anthology—relate specifically to the generation of Latin American authors which Fuguet and Gómez set out to define. As such, in the same way that the editors' dating of the generation represents an ideological act, the very identification of common ideological problems and their position-taking in response to them can equally be interpreted as acts contributing to the building of a generational anthology. One of the primary tasks in the construction of their literary generation is the identification of these collective *problems*, the most significant of which Fuguet and Gómez outline as: the effects of magical realism and the *macondismo* ideology on this generation of writers, but also the balkanisation of national literary spaces.

5.2.2 Balkanisation and the question of the nation

Beginning with the structural publishing realities, the editors recount the challenges of creating their pan-Hispanic anthology: citing editorial bureaucracies, the struggle to find emerging writers, the limitations of communication technologies, and the Latin American publishing scenario (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 13-14). In highlighting these difficulties, Fuguet and Gómez identify the very national literary balkanisation of Latin America, meaning that regional-level circulation was only really possible through the Spanish literary capitals (a situation explained in the previous section[22] as resulting primarily from the editorial monopoly of Spanish publishers such as Planeta, Grijalbo, and Alfaguara which had been historically

[22] The editors also identify the double-crossing of the Atlantic which was necessary for authors to attain a Latin American circulation, also explored in the previous section: '[s]i uno es un escritor latinoamericano y desea estar tanto en las librerías de Quito, La Paz y San Juan hay que publicar (y ojalá vivir) en Barcelona. Cruzar la frontera implica atravesar el Atlántico' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 13).

concerned with fragmenting literary distribution in the Americas according to national spaces). The editors, and even the Mexican participant Naief Yehya, explain the extent of this literary isolation, their personal experience of it, and, in a sense, the effect on their attitudes towards literary recognition:

> [w]e had contacts in countries such as Argentina, Spain, and Mexico, but more in the form of friendships. The rest of the continent was an unknown virgin territory [...] [w]e didn't know a single name in many of the countries we called upon. [And] [w]e came across instances in which the books of certain literary stars were not available in the neighbouring country[23] (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 14).

> My vision around the year 2000 was that I thought it was important to take notice—for the first time with great bitterness—that as a Mexican I didn't read Salvadorans unless they were sold in Spain, unless I received the book from Spain, or arrived in Mexican bookshops through Spanish publishers. Not to mention Ecuadorians, Colombians, etc. We knew the big names of course, but the *living* literature, the literature that we should have been discussing, commenting, and integrating into a globalised and Americanised common Latin American experience, didn't matter or wasn't on the table. And it wasn't on the table because it couldn't be conceived, because there weren't channels of distribution, because there were enormous cultural barriers between nations. So, I didn't know what was happening in Peru, and much less what was happening in Paraguay, I didn't know if Bolivia even really existed if it was an invention of some mystical-realist[24] (Yehya 2015, personal interview).

As Fuguet, Gómez, and Yehya describe, the hyperpresence of the Boom and Postboom bestsellers was still a reality, meaning that even the rising literary stars of particular national spaces struggled to escape the national balkanisation which Spanish publishing had imposed[25]. As is recounted in the prologue, Fuguet and Gómez (1996), along with the help of Grijalbo Mondadori, struggled against these established boundaries in search of their literary generation, making use of any means of communication available (mail, fax, DHL, phone, e-mail, Internet) and—much like for the writers of the Boom—relying on *chasquis* (messengers) for circulation, or, as they describe: 'friends, enemies, foreign correspondents, editors, journalists, critics, rock

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[23] 'Los contactos existían, pero más a nivel de amistad en países como Argentina, España y México. El resto del continente era territorio desconocido, virgen […] No conocíamos siquiera un nombre en muchos de los países convocados [y] [n]os topamos con panoramas como que los libros de ciertas estrellas literarias no estaban disponibles en el país fronterizo' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 14).

[24] 'Un poco de mi visión en el año dos mil era que me parecía importante darme cuenta—por primera vez con una gran amargura—que yo como mexicano no leía salvadoreños a menos de que se vendieran en España, a menos que de España me mandaran un libro, o llegaran a las librerías de México con editoriales españolas. Olvídate de ecuatorianos, colombianos, etcétera. Conocíamos a los grandes santones por supuesto, pero la literatura *viva*, la literatura que deberíamos estar discutiendo, comentando, integrando a una experiencia común latinoamericana globalizada o americanizada, no importaba o no estaba en la mesa. No estaba en la mesa porque no se podía concebir, porque no había canales de distribución, porque había unas enormes barreras culturales entre las naciones. Entonces yo no sabía qué pasaba en Perú, mucho menos qué pasaba en Paraguay, no sabía ni siquiera si existía realmente Bolivia o era una invención de algún místico-realista' (Yehya 2015, personal interview).

[25] Nevertheless, it must be stated that this dominated status was not equal across the whole of Latin American literary space. Historically, spaces such as Argentina and Mexico, acted as intermediary capitals within Latin America whose publishing industries flourished in the industry's downturn during the years of the Civil War and early years of the Franco dictatorship. The relative centrality of these publishing centres was established before the takeover of Spanish multinationals and continued such that, for example, Planeta Biblioteca del Sur had its main offices in Buenos Aires.

stars on tour, flight assistants, [and] vacationing backpackers'[26] (14). This is because, as the editors themselves confess, the search for literary peers was the primary purpose of *McOndo*: '[t]he true desire of *McOndo* was to build a network, to see if we had peers and confirm we were not alone in this'[27] (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 20).

However, there is a manifestly deeper literary desire behind this longing to overcome this structural balkanisation, as well as encounter one's literary peers, and that is to transcend one's national literary space. Unlike the specifically domestic intervention of *Cuentos con walkman*, *McOndo*—by its very organisation and the discourse it intervenes into—represents an anthology with an international projection. It must be noted that it was due to the commercial success of *Cuentos con walkman* that Fuguet and Gómez attracted the attention of another Spanish publishing giant with greater international and commercial ambitions, Grijalbo Mondadori. As Gustavo Guerrero (2018b) has recently argued, '[t]he different internationalising strategies of the emerging generation cannot be understood without taking into account this problem of the Latin American market as spaces reduced, disconnected, and restricted to their scarce reading publics'[28] (111). Felipe Muñoz, an editor for Grijalbo in Chile, who was described by Sergio Gómez as someone who 'knew more about business than literature'[29] (2015, personal interview), proposed a plan to Alberto Fuguet to publish an anthology like *Cuentos con walkman* but on an international scale[30]. The anthology would

[26] '[R]ecurrimos a todo lo imaginable: amigos: enemigos, corresponsales extranjeros, editores, periodistas, críticos, rockeros en gira, auxiliares de vuelo, mochileros que salían de vacaciones' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 14).

[27] El verdadero afán de *McOndo* fue armar una red, ver si teníamos pares y comprobar que no estábamos tan solos en esto' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 20).

[28] 'Las distintas estrategias de internacionalización de la generación emergente no puede entenderse sin tener en cuenta esta problemática de los mercados latinoamericanos como espacios reducidos desconectados y cerrados sobre sus escasos públicos' (Guerrero 2018b, 111).

[29] In response to a question regarding the role which the publishing manager of Grijalbo Mondadori Felipe Muñoz played in *McOndo*, Sergio Gómez explained: '[l]a época cuando se publican *Cuentos con walkman* y *McOndo*, es diferente a la actual. Recién comenzaba o volvía a comenzar el tema editorial, por lo tanto, la figura del editor como lo conocemos ahora todavía recién se formaba. Yo hablaría más bien de gente responsable, que muchas veces poco o nada aportaba. En el caso de *Cuentos con walkman* el libro lo llevamos a la única editorial que hacía algo en esos años, Planeta. Allí recién estaba a la cabeza como editor don Carlos Orellana Rivera, un viejo editor recién llegado del exilio, una muy buena persona, pero que poco sabía o se enteraba de la literatura joven y menos la entendía. Carlos fue mi primer editor, pertenecía a otra época y venía a terminar su carrera en Planeta después de dirigir revistas de exiliados. Con Fuguet no se llevaban muy bien, conmigo un poco mejor. Desgraciadamente, Carlos falleció hace algunos años. Sobre *McOndo* la situación fue distinta porque Grijalbo Mondadori no tenía editor y en su reemplazo el responsable era un joven gerente, Felipe Muñoz, quien se enamoró de la idea. Como era un tipo vital, que sabía más de negocios que de literatura, se involucró con nosotros y hasta el día de hoy es un buen amigo' (Gómez 2015, personal interview).

[30] In response to a question regarding the relationship between *Cuentos con walkman* and *McOndo*, Alberto Fuguet shared how the idea for an international *Cuentos con walkman* came about: '[m]e acuerdo que todo surgió en el lanzamiento de un libro *Sangre azul* de un chico de *La Zona de Contacto* y ahora un amigo mío, Alfredo Sepúlveda. Un libro inspirado que tenía mucho que ver con las cosas que había publicado él justamente en *La Zona* y *Cuentos con walkman* en específico [...] Se me acerca Felipe Muñoz que representaba a la editorial

provide a sampling of new narrative voices from across the Spanish linguistic subspace (with authors from Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, Spain, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay), and would be published in both Santiago and notably Barcelona, the city which had been the literary epicentre of the Boom. Whether Grijalbo Mondadori, by approaching Fuguet and Gómez to create an anthology of writers generally unknown beyond their national frontiers, was trying to trigger another literary Boom through a repetition of Seix Barral's successful formula in the 1960s (to discover new voices and introduce them to Spain and then rest of the Spanish-speaking world), remains a very relevant question, and a legendary history which in all likelihood was well-known to the commercially-minded editor[31]. What is significant—and in part confirms Fornet's (2005) critique that *McOndo* incarnates the cultural logics of neoliberalism—, is that the traditional order of literary production from author to editor is here reversed, as it is the editor who proposes the project to Fuguet and Gómez, and not the other way around. This is something which Casanova (2007) also argues is consistent with the rise of the commercial pole:

> [t]he new organization of production and distribution, together with the emphasis at all levels upon immediate profitability, favours the transnational circulation of books conceived for the mass market [...] To some extent this trend is due to the changed role of editors, whose traditional function of choosing among the manuscripts that come to them has given way to a tendency to initiate and conceive projects: a growing share of the books published today are commissioned by the publisher (171).

Judged on the metrics of the commercially minded publishers, the fact that *McOndo* sold very little and received very little positive reception, all point to a failed venture. However, as will be seen in subsequent chapters, there is much to credit *McOndo* for in terms of the significance

Grijalbo, en Santiago. Grijalbo en aquel entonces publicaba a García Márquez en España y tenía—tal como Alfaguara o Planeta—sucursales en distintas partes de América Latina [...] Y me dijo "Oye, deberíamos hacer algo." Pero dije que no podía porque tenía un compromiso en ese momento con Planeta, yo estaba terminando *Por favor, rebobinar* [...] Y ahí me dijo que podríamos hacer una especie de *Cuentos con walkman* internacional. Y eso fue más o menos lo que me dijo, y me ofreció lo siguiente: "me interesa mucho lo que estás haciendo, me parece increíble lo que pasó comercialmente con *Cuentos con walkman*, estoy feliz ahora publicando a Alfredo Sepúlveda—¿no te dan ganas de hacer un *Cuentos con walkman* internacional?" Y ahí lo pensé, lo pensé y lo pensé, y le dije perfecto' (Fuguet 2015, personal interview).

[31] The Spanish literary context after the climax and stagnation of the Boom, and most especially the prolonged domination of the figures of the Boom in the Spanish publishing market, Yehya's so-called 'grandes santones' (big names) (2015, personal interview), contributed to the distorted perception inside the peninsular market that Spanish America had not produced new writers or innovative works since that now distant time (Becerra 2014). As such, in the eyes of commercial Spanish publishers, there existed a vacuum for new Latin American authors which in some sense was ready to be filled with new writers whose works could be "discovered", republished and introduced into local and broader international circulation—clearly aware of the privileged status which works published by Spanish editing enjoys among Spanish-American readerships also mentioned by Naief Yehya in the above quote. Furthermore, the presence of different publishing divisions across the Americas would facilitate this process, as it did with Grijalbo Mondadori's foothold in Chile. By consequence of this context, the introduction of these new foreign narrators is then largely understood in reference to but with distance to the Boom and additionally interpreted in respect to the Spanish authors which were included in the anthology.

of its interventions and the impact it had on the editors, writers, and the visible rise of this generation of Latin American writers.

These concerns with the balkanisation of Latin American literary spaces obviously relate very closely to the broader issue of the forceful influence of the national pole in these spaces, an issue which *McOndo* similarly addresses. Aside from the very organisation of the anthology, in the prologue there is an evident attempt to present these authors beyond the national category, by drawing these parallels across the Atlantic, but also as defining themselves beyond the categories of national literatures, preferring instead to be identified as '*escritores hispanoamericanos*' (Spanish-American writers):

> [w]hat we want to offer the international public are different stories, more grounded if you like, from a group of new Spanish-American writers that write in Spanish, but who don't feel they are representatives of any ideology or even their own countries. Even so, they are intrinsically Spanish-American. They have that prism, that way of situating themselves in the world[32] (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 18-19).

This attempt to create international links, as well as move beyond national categorisation, demonstrate the profoundly international position-takings of the *McOndo* anthology not necessarily as anti-national statements like Ludmer's '*antipatriotas*' (anti-patriots) (2010, 161), but as a means to catapult their work into a supranational category. Gustavo Guerrero (2018b) notes, that in *McOndo*

> the Spanish-American participates here in the construction of the position of the young writer as a foreignizing or supranational opportunity, which permits them to enter and leave the nation by way of the Greater Mother Land, situating themselves in a transnational space where they want to belong to the latter without representing the former […] The *Spanish-American* or the *Latin American* represent, in this way, not only an international literary gesture which aspires to a reconquest and renovation, but the instrument of a curious foreignization which makes it possible to create distance and manage the complicated links of a Fuguet with Chile, a Fresán with Argentina [33] (160).

As Guerrero suggests, the cases of Fuguet and Fresán are exemplary here, as both their first novels shook-up long-standing conceptions of *the national* which, coupled with the effect of their enormous local commercial success, meant that, in a sense, they were too large a success for the national field to contain, and began to transcend the invisible yet persistent frontiers into the supranational literary space of Spanish-American or Latin American literature. As

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[32] 'Lo que nosotros queremos ofrecerle al público internacional son cuentos distintos, más aterrizados si se quiere, de un grupo de nuevos escritores hispanoamericanos que escriben en español, pero que no se siente representantes de alguna ideología y ni siquiera de sus propios países. Aun así, son intrínsecamente hispanoamericanos. Tienen ese prisma, esa forma de situarse en el mundo' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 18-19).

[33] '[L]o hispanoamericano participa aquí en la construcción de la postura de joven escritor como esa instancia extranjerizante, o paranacional, que permite descalzarse y entrar y salir de la nación por la Puerta de la Patria Grande, situándose en un espacio transnacional donde se quiere pertenecer a esta sin representar a aquella […]. Lo *hispanoamericano* o lo *latinoamericano* representan, de esta suerte, no solo una seña literaria internacional que se aspira a reconquistar y a renovar, sino el instrumento de una curiosa extranjerización que permite marcar distancias y administrar los complicados vínculos de un Fuguet con Chile, de un Fresán con la Argentina' (Guerrero 2018b, 160).

such, the putting forward of a new national literature which challenged longstanding parochial and *costumbrista* traditions in Fuguet's novels, and the creation of literary peers in *La Zona de Contacto* and *Cuentos con walkman*, is replicated at the Latin American level with *McOndo*'s search for literary peers with popular recognition in their nations, and their collective contestation of the region's longstanding identity narratives, in order to facilitate their chances of being recognised and circulate in this international field.

And yet, in *McOndo*, there are obvious tensions within the anthology's structure regarding the place of the nation. Alongside this explicit desire to transcend national identification (and the thematic and structural constraints which this entails), the anthology is still organised along national lines with all of the stories being curated under the subheadings of their authors' nationality. This, along with numerous other features of Latin American literature of the 1990s—which have been well detailed by Guerrero (2018b)—demonstrate the complex relationship between author and nation, and how the conceptual terms critics have thus far employed (post-national, trans-national, etc.), seem to fall short of defining this current paradigm. Nevertheless, rather than accusing the editors of not taking their denationalising sentiment to a fuller extent, this organisation of the anthology can also be reinterpreted as a demonstration of the regional ambition of the proposal. It is a way of highlighting their efforts to confront the regional balkanisation which they all experience, as well as suggest the continental level which they seek to enter and be read at.

An additional tension with the national question is the inevitable national context through which foreign works are assessed and mediated. The inclusion of Spanish authors in the anthology—whether or not this could be further interpreted as a condition imposed by the publisher, or a calculated cultural statement on *hispanidad* on the part of the editors—is nonetheless justified in the prologue as owing to the aesthetic synchronicity felt with the authors across the Atlantic:

> Spain, meanwhile, is included because we feel very close to certain writers, films and an aesthetic which comes from the peninsula [...] The new Spanish authors are not only part of the cosmic brotherhood but are very close cousins, that while they might speak strangely (in fact, all of them speak strangely and use unique words and slang) they are in harmony[34] (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 19).

The preeminent Spanish critic for *El País*, Ignacio Echevarría, would use this aesthetic commonality to criticise both a large number of the Spanish-American *McOndo* participants,

[34] 'España, en tanto, está presente porque nos sentimos muy cercanos a ciertos escritores, películas y a una estética que sale de la península [...] Los nuevos autores españoles no sólo son parte de la hermandad cósmica sino son primos muy cercanos, que a lo mejor pueden hablar raro (de hecho, todos hablan raro y usan palabras y jergas particulares) pero están en la misma sintonía' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 19).

as much as the Spanish writers at the time. In his article entitled 'Estilo internacional' (International style), Echevarría commented on the themes apparent across the stories as being akin to those which were made famous at the beginning of the 1990s by Ray Loriga and José Ángel Mañas[35], which also made a sudden and polemical appearance like that of Fuguet and Gómez's novels in the wave of *la nueva narrativa chilena*. While this aesthetic likeness could have aided in classifying them in a new local setting, it would, in fact, indirectly work against the majority of those writers who perhaps best incarnated this Generation X-style, as in Spain, this generation had already experienced its rise and fall with Loriga's *Lo peor de todo* (1991) and *Héroes* (1993), and Mañas' *Historias del Krónen* (1994). Nevertheless, Echevarría's critical significance would have a hand in the consecration of those few authors more distant from this style whom he spared from his negative review, all of whom have since found a literary home in Spanish literary space: Leonardo Valencia, Santiago Gamboa, and Rodrigo Fresán (the trajectory of these writers will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7).

5.2.3 The problem of *macondismo* and the response of *McOndo*

If *Cuentos con walkman* as a local Chilean anthology could be considered a challenge to Chilean cultural traditions within the national paradigm, *McOndo* enacts a similar intervention, but at the supranational level of Latin American literary space. Another problem that the editors diagnose on behalf of their literary generation is the predominance of magical realism and its associated *macondismo* cultural fundamentalism. This concern is first communicated through the anonymous anecdote which has been revealed to be Fuguet's own experience at the Iowa International Writing Program[36]. If we are to give greater coherence to the prologue, it is, in some senses, necessary to explore this anecdote and the background knowledge of this experience which is presented in the prologue as the moment of inspiration for the *McOndo* anthology.

This writing programme—which Fuguet attended on the recommendation and with the assistance of José Donoso in 1994—was where Alberto Fuguet met the writers David Toscana

[35] '[N]o se trata aquí de una cuestión de localizaciones, sino, más ampliamente, de ademanes narrativos, de recurrencias tonales, temáticas, argumentales (intimismo, sentimentalismo, juvenismo, coloquialismo, costumbrismo; ingenio, desinhibición, ausencia de vibraciones políticas, sociales, morales). De ello puede dar una idea el hecho de que, junto a Casariego, los otros dos representantes españoles sean Ray Loriga y José Ángel Mañas' (Echevarría 2007, 177).

[36] Not to be confused with the first and most prestigious U.S. writing programme the Iowa Writers' Workshop (a 2-year residency founded in 1936), the international workshop referred to in the prologue is also hosted at the University of Iowa and is a writing residence for emerging creative writers from across the world for short term periods (around 3-4 months).

and Charlie E. Feiling (1961-1997), participants from Mexico and Argentina respectively. Both in the prologue and in Fuguet's essay 'I am not a magic realist' (1997b)—a kind of English-language adaptation of the *McOndo* prologue—, there is an obvious excitement regarding the possibility of publishing in the Unites States and taking advantage of the recent popular wave of success of Latin American and Latino literature[37]. The excitement described in these three Latin American authors upon being approached by the editor of the prestigious literary magazine *The Iowa Review* (1979-), would later be crushed when only one of the authors' stories would be accepted, and the other two rejected, according to Fuguet and Gómez (1996), for lacking magical realism, and because their cultural representation of Latin America did not conform to a North American horizon of expectation (11). This rationale for rejection, Janet Hendrickson (2014) has rightly considered, can be related to Casanova's 'vogue for exoticism' which she identified U.S. publishers as especially perceptible to.

Unsurprisingly, Alberto Fuguet was one of the authors rejected, along with Charlie E. Feiling. However, David Toscana's (1995) story, 'The Real Story of Don Manuel', would be selected for translation and publication in *The Iowa Review*[38]. While this would not be to any apparent conformity to the magical realist aesthetic, as the story does not employ this style, the *McOndo* editors' fears regarding the force of the *macondismo* orthodoxy seemed to be confirmed in this act, as the historical setting, rural location, centring around a Mexican cantina, themes of political corruption and references to the Mexican revolution in Toscana's story, all appear to conform to this foreign horizon of expectation. While it is not sufficient to prove the reasons for Toscana's editorial selection entirely, there is evidence that the program, while attempting to celebrate multiculturalism, harboured somewhat exoticised views of foreign cultures, something which might lend further credence to the editors explanation regarding the reasons for Fuguet and Feiling's rejection.

The Iowa International Writing Program has been critiqued by a few Latin American writers for its cultural exoticisation. Fuguet, in his 'I am not a magic realist', criticised the

[37] In the prologue to *McOndo* the three writers are excited and '[s]e dan cuenta que, sin esfuerzo ni contacto alguno, van a ser publicados en ‹‹América›› y en inglés. Y sólo por ser Latinos, por escribir en español, por haber nacido en Latinoamérica' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 11). And in 'I am not a magic realist', Fuguet (1997b) states: '[t]here seemed to be a Spanish-language wave that I wanted to ride on my South American board. I couldn't believe my luck. I figured that all I had to do was get someone to translate something I wrote, and then my work would speak for itself'.

[38] Toscana's story centres around the reunion of a group of childhood friends at a Mexican cantina (Lontananza) for the funeral of an old acquaintance, Don Manuel, a lonely drunkard rumoured to have participated in the Mexican revolution. The story appeared in the first edition of *Historias de Lontananza* (1997), later replaced with another story 'El nuevo' (The New Guy) in subsequent editions entitled *Lontananza* (2003) and also translated and published in *The Iowa Review*.

organisers for suggesting participants wear their "native outfits" to some of the programme's events: '[s]o, following this suggestion, I went down in an MTV Latino T-shirt (sent to me by a VJ friend), baggy shorts and a pair of Birkenstocks. The coordinators were disappointed, to say the least' (1997b). Rodrigo Fresán similarly noted this odd request when he attended: '[f]or one of those [parties], they ask you to come with the traditional dress of your country, but I didn't attend. Furthermore, what is the typical dress of Argentina? A cowboy outfit? A tango outfit? Naked? Who knows!'[39] (2016, personal interview). Martín Rejtman, another Argentinian participant in *McOndo*, also had a similar experience[40] in the year 2000 at the Iowa International Writing Program. At the screening of one of his films, which Rejtman describes as having 'nothing to do with what is understood as typically Latin American', he was openly criticised by an academic in the audience who questioned 'why his film didn't have anything to do with *desaparecidos*' (Rejtman 2016, personal interview). This criticism demonstrates the well-diagnosed problem in some sectors of the North American academy and public expectations of politically themed and ideologically discursive creative production from Latin American artists.

While not employing the specific term *macondismo* throughout the prologue, the editors further decry this orthodoxy and propose their own dissenting stance in respect to it. In particular, they criticise what they call the '*esencialismos reduccionistas*' (reductionist essentialisms), or narrow and reductive essentialisms about Latin American cultures which are exported to the world not least through the literature of magical realism but also a variety of media, in particular the folkloric (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 16-17). Alexis Candia (2006) compares the cultural metaphors of Fuguet and Gómez's McOndo and Brunner's concept of the 'espejo trizado' (shattered mirror), finding clear similarities in their articulation of this problem and the thought of the Chilean sociologist. One such example, is the editors' critique of the orthodoxy of *macondismo* prevalent in the thought of academics and critics across the world, something also emphasised by Brunner (1992) in regard to the role played by foreign

[39] 'En una de esas [fiestas] te piden que vayas con el traje típico de tu país, pero no asistí. Además, ¿cuál es el traje típico de Argentina? ¿de gaucho? ¿de tango? ¿desnudo? ¡Qué sé yo!' (Fresán 2016, personal interview).

[40] Rejtman's full anecdote is as follows: 'Yo lo que hice en Iowa fue trabajar en el guion de una película, estaba en ese momento trabajando más en el cine que en la literatura. E incluso proyecté una película para toda la gente allí. Una película que no tienen nada que ver con lo que se entiende por lo típico latinoamericano. Y después de la proyección de la película hubo una sesión de preguntas y respuestas. Y uno de los profesores de la universidad que participaba en la organización del programa de escritores internacionales me hizo la primera pregunta y me preguntó por qué mi película no tenía que ver con los desaparecidos [...] Me pareció increíble que un profesor universitario crea que cualquier película que sea de Argentina tenga que hablar de desaparecidos. Es como parecido al asunto del realismo mágico para los escritores latinoamericanos. La idea que el escritor latinoamericano tiene que escribir algo mágico' (Rejtman 2016, personal interview).

critical acclaim in the construction and perpetuation of this orthodoxy. For Fuguet and Gómez (1996), this takes the form of a valorisation and preservation of interpretations of the continent's identity as exotic, paradisiacal, indigenous, folkloric, and politically Left-wing (17), a claim which will be explored further in section 5.2.5.

However, aside from these *macondismo*-associated symbols, the illusion created by magical realism is the true monolith which the editors set out to breakdown, a literary style which the main critics of *macondismo* (Brunner, García Canclini, and Volek), consistently argue is the most recent and forceful manifestations of this master narrative. Beginning with the very title of the anthology, 'McOndo', the editors use this satirical play-on-words as both a tribute and an irreverent ironising of 'Saint Gabriel' García Márquez and as 'something of a warning about the perception which exists about Latin Americanness'[41] (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 16). In this respect the editors present an apparent antithesis to Macondo and the *macondismo* vision of Latin American cultural identity:

> [t]he name (registered trademark?) McOndo, is of course, a joke, a satire, a quip. Our McOndo is as Latin American and magical (exotic) as the real Macondo (which, by the way, is not real but virtual). Our country McOndo is bigger, overpopulated and full of pollution, with highways, subways, cable TV and slums. In McOndo there are McDonald's, Mac computers and condominiums, five-star hotels built with laundered money and gigantic *malls*[42] (Fuguet and Gómez, 1996, 17).

As such, the editors construct an opposition between Macondo and McOndo, implicitly communicating a series of binaries which juxtapose these two visions of Latin American identity: the unreal myth of Macondo and the real McOndo, the rural and the urban, the traditional and the modern, the past and the present (and future) of the continent: a binary opposition which (it must be noted), can be seen as equally reductionist.

And in effect, a number of critics have argued that McOndo represents an equally reductionist discourse on Latin American cultural identity intended to do away with Macondo. Affronted with this supposed acceptance of neoliberal culture, critics such as Centa Reck[43]

[41] '[A]lgo de llamado de atención a la mirada que se tiene de lo latinoamericano' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 16).

[42] 'El nombre (¿marca-registrada?) McOndo es, claro, un chiste, una sátira, una talla. Nuestro McOndo es tan latinoamericano y mágico (exótico) como el Macondo real (que, a todo esto, no es real sino virtual). Nuestro país McOndo es más grande, sobrepoblado y lleno de contaminación, con autopistas, metro, TV-cable y barriadas. En McOndo hay McDonald's, computadores Mac y condominios, amén de hoteles cinco estrellas construidos con dinero lavado y *malls* gigantescos' (Fuguet and Gómez, 1996, 17).

[43] The critique leveled against *McOndo* by Centa Reck (2002) can be understood as a reactionary *macondismo* response: 'Las palabras nos han permitido construir realidades, sin otro escenario que la grandeza de nuestro espíritu, que no se permite sucumbir a la simplista concretud, de conformarse con reemplazar los montes y las fieras que en ellos habitan, ni la magia que se desprende del halo de nuestra irracionalidad cuando roza con las sinrazones de la opresión y el maltrato, por una selva salvaje de celulares, McDondald's, Malls, jeringas cargadas de doping y jergas animaloides'.

(2002) and Diana Palaversich[44] (2005), for example, critiqued Fuguet especially for privileging a First world McOndo Latin American experience over the underdeveloped, poor, indigenous, and marginalised Macondo of the majority of the continent. Palaversich (2005) in particular made an influential early case for the characterisation of *McOndo* as an ideological-aesthetic project representative of postmodern neoliberalism. Her critiques in *De Macondo a McOndo: Senderos de la posmodernidad* (2005), in particular, continue to be among the most cited in reference to *McOndo* (see *McCrack* by Brescia and Estrada[45] 2018). However, this toing and froing between affirming one side of the binary and rejecting the other, and vice versa, continues the stagnation of critical views, merely encamping positions by continuing to emphasise Latin American identitary exceptionality and demand literary-political activism (or sociological representation) on the part of artists, or the opposite. As such, notwithstanding these *macondismo* critiques, the very ambiguity of the prologue regarding this question must be reaffirmed.

In their criticism of *macondismo*'s reductionist essentialisms, the editors of *McOndo* make clear that '[w]e are not unaware of the exoticism and diversity of culture and customs of our countries'[46] (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 16). In fact, in their critique, they highlight the conservative bias of *macondismo* ideologues towards a selective hybridity as understood in historic *mestizaje*, reminding those thinkers: '[and] what of the bastard, the hybrid? [...] To fear bastard culture is to deny our own mestizaje' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 17). As was outlined earlier, major titans of Latin America's identity discourse (Martí, Vasconcelos, etc.), privileged the authentic Latin American hybrid of indigenous and European settler identities, the *mestizo*, as the symbolic embodiment of the region's authentic identity. However, for Fuguet and Gómez, this *macondismo* perspective which is underpinned by a valorisation of Latin American heterogeneity and hybridity, contradictorily authenticates *historic* hybridisation or *mestizaje* and excludes *contemporary* hybridities as inauthentic expressions of Latin American

[44] Palaversich (2005) exposes this binary in taking Fuguet, in particular, to task: 'Fuguet sólo privilegia su país McOndo mientras que desprecia, por no ser parte de su realidad personal, el Macondo subdesarrollado, pobre, indígena o marginado que sigue siendo el Macondo mayoritario en Chile y en el resto del continente. De esta manera, la actitud soberbia de Fuguet [...] lo emparenta con la de los gobiernos neoliberales que venden al público doméstico y extranjero la imagen de una infinita capacidad de consumir [...] [y] borran la pobreza, el desempleo y otros infortunios que desde hace siglos afligen a la región' (36).

[45] In their introduction to the volume, the editors acknowledge the particular import of two early evaluations of *McOndo*: 'Junto con estas fuentes primarias, es menester construir un archivo crítico al que llamamos *McCrack*. Aquí citaremos la mayoría de los libros esenciales dedicados al tema. El de Jorge Fornet, *Los nuevos paradigmas. Prólogo narrativo al siglo XXI* (2006), y el de Diana Palaversich, *De Macondo a McOndo. Senderos de la postmodernidad* (2007), trazan las líneas del campo' (Brescia and Estrada 2018).

[46] 'No desconocemos lo exótico y variopinto de la cultura y costumbres de nuestros países' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 16)

cultures. The McOndo metaphor thus proposes that what be considered authentically Latin American not remain frozen in time by a cultural conservatism, but reflect the realities of the porous cultural boundaries and the inevitable cultural transformation and hybridisation which have and continue to take place across Latin America through globalisation.

Contrary to what a number of critics have maintained, despite the establishment of the polarities of McOndo and Macondo on the part of the editors, Latin American identities are considered in a less conservative and more genuinely pluralistic sense in the prologue to *McOndo*. This is made especially apparent in the vertiginous symbolic list of high-brow and popular culture[47], Left and Right political representation[48], and "authentic" Latin Americans and Americanised "sell-outs"[49] all surrounding the nucleus phrase 'Latin America is […]' ('Latinoamérica es […]') (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 18). This extremely varied list is not in the prologue to strengthen the Macondo/McOndo binary nor replace Macondo with McOndo, it goes further than an either/or dilemma. Instead, the *McOndo* prologue *pluralises* what constitutes Latin American identities through a presentation of Latin America as *all* of these constitutive elements. This pluralism and hybridity are something which Sergio Gómez highlighted in my interview with him and Alberto Fuguet also explored in a proto-*McOndo*-manifesto entitled 'MacOndo' (1993):

> what we intended to say is that the authentic is relative. The authentic is not *huasos*, nor horses, nor cows—without denying their existence—, but the authentic is the mix of all those things. And if there is something which can be used to refer to Latin America it is that mix, the hybrid. Here everything is hybrid, here you can find guys wearing Air Jordans but that don't have a

[47] The editors counterpose elements of high-brow and popular culture, including the Festival de Cine de la Habana and the Festival de Viña (a popular international music festival which has staged artists from the Backstreet Boys to Cat Stevens); Julio Cortázar and Manuel Puig; Juan Carlos Onetti and Corín Tellado (a Spanish writer of popular romantic fiction); *Vuelta* (a Mexican literary magazine founded by the Nobel Prize Winner Octavio Paz) and sensationalist tabloids; Borges and telenovelas, *Chapulín Colorado*, *Siempre en Domingo*, Televisa, MTV latina and CNN en español, and in some senses as synthesis of these two: Mario Vargas Llosa.

[48] The editors also list symbols of political significance, such as the two significant treaties of the time, the controversial NAFTA (or North American Free Trade Agreement between Canada, the United States, and Mexico), and Mercosur (a trade bloc which, while accepting of neoliberal principals, can be interpreted as an attempt to mitigate the negative effects of neoliberal globalisation/imperialism through regional economic unity); Borges (whose opinions on democracy and dictatorships were to say the least, controversial), and Subcomandante Marcos (former leader and spokesperson for the anti-capitalist Zapatista Army during the Chiapas uprising of 1994).

[49] To this list Fuguet and Gómez counterpose pseudo-Latin American figures or Latin American sell-outs with "authentic" and canonised Latin American cultural representatives, such as the canonised indigenous music of candombe, vallenato, Mercedes Sosa, and tango music (Carlos Gardel), with the popular music of Ricky Martin, Selena, Magneto, Soda Stereo, Verónica Castro, Lucho Gatica, Julio Iglesias; the ancient city of Macchu Picchu with the eclectically European Colón Theatre in Buenos Aires (synonymous with European culture from Opera, to classical music, and ballet); the Banana Republics (First developed in reference to Honduras, it is now a political term used for small countries whose economies are dependent on agricultural exports and tourism), and Miami (home to enormous Latino communities as a result of various waves of Latin American migration).

> cent to dress themselves from the waist up, that hybridity is the true Latin American identity[50] (Gómez 2015, personal interview).
>
> But there is another Latin America and, definitely, another Chile that needs to be narrated, exported and shared. Those who stay stuck on *huasos*, maids and rosaries can keep doing it. But those who don't write about the new *huasos* with mobile phones, of kiwis and their *four-wheel drives*, of malls and the discos at the edge of the Pan-American highway, are missing out on great material. Because that is also Chile[51] (Fuguet 1993).

As such, this highlights how the editors' concern has not been so much with the existence or non-existence of these cultural traditions or the complete rejection or erasure of the Macondo cultural metaphor, as some critics have framed it, but, instead, they express a common concern with the monopolisation of interpretations of Latin American identity in foreign perception, imaginings that do not reflect their experience nor understanding of a globalised, heterogeneous and hybridised Latin American contemporary reality, all that which they *truly* consider *also* to be authentically Latin American.

Once again it is possible to interpret this heterogeneous understanding of contemporary Latin American identity through the sociologies of a number of thinkers of this time. In his book *Un espejo trizado: ensayos sobre cultura y políticas culturales* (1988), the Chilean sociologist José Joaquín Brunner argues that Chile has no single identity but rather is made up of a plurality of identities and at times differing perspectives on that very collective identity, territory, or nation. This understanding of a cultural grouping, not as homogeneous, but rather, as a stage for a plurality of identities and perspectives which make up a heterogeneous whole, is no doubt equally or even more applicable to Latin America as a regional imagined community. Brunner (1988) writes, '[m]ore than a national identity there exists among us a culture of the *plurality of identities*. More than a nation we are a territory of opposing national images, an idealisation of our projects, and competing utopias'[52] (61). Exemplified as much in

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[50] '[L]o que nosotros pretendíamos es decir que lo auténtico es relativo. Lo auténtico no es huasos, ni caballos, ni vacas—sin desconocer que están—, sino que lo auténtico es una mezcla de todo eso. Y si hay algo que se puede usar para referirse a Latinoamérica es esa mezcla, lo híbrido. Acá todo es híbrido, aquí podís ver un tipo que está vestido con zapatillas Jordan pero no tiene ni un peso para vestirse de arriba, esa cosa híbrida es la verdadera identidad latinoamericana' (Gómez 2015, personal interview).

[51] 'Pero hay otra América Latina y, definitivamente, otro Chile que necesita ser escrito, exportado y compartido. Aquellos que se quedan en los huasos, las nanas y los rosarios pueden seguir haciéndolo. Pero quienes no escriban de los nuevos huasos con celular, los de los kiwis y las four wheel drive, de los malls y las discos al borde de la Panamericana, se estarán perdiendo un gran material. Porque esto también es Chile' (Fuguet 1993).

[52] The full quote reads: '[n]uestra identidad "chilena" está hecha, en realidad, de mitos y fragmentos ideológicos, de deseos frustrados y ruinas inconscientes, de retóricas entreveradas que nos construyen una "memoria" y denuncian "olvidos" o "represiones" que se cuelan por entremedio de la malla de las palabras y los símbolos. Está hecha por historiadores más que por la historia y, de allí en adelante, por los proyectos que soñamos y aplastamos, por las voluntades de poder que nos habitan como país [...] Más que una identidad nacional existe entre nosotros una cultura de la *pluralidad de identidades*. Más que una nación somos un territorio de imágenes nacionales contrapuestas, una idealización de nuestros proyectos, una competencia de utopías' (Brunner 1988, 61).

Brunner's metaphor of the '*espejo trizado*' (shattered mirror), in Fuguet and Gómez's tall list of cultural symbols, and their competing utopias of Macondo and McOndo, is a nuanced appreciation of Latin America's complex cultural present. The very naming of their prologue which makes reference to a *país* ('Presentación del *país* McOndo'), which in this context can be taken to mean either land or country, continues to make the point of the prologue as a proposal of a new national or regional narrative. The emphasis by the editors on McOndo—which has been interpreted by critics as a reductionism of Latin American identities—, highlights the editors' desire to pluralise Latin America by putting their contemporary lived experience on the cultural horizon of international audiences through an overcoming of the reductive metaphor of *macondismo*, which is both perpetuated within and beyond the region.

5.2.4 Giving up the ghosts of Macondo

Logically, as McOndo defines itself in relation to Macondo, it cannot do away entirely with its reverse in order to exist, and has the result of unintentionally perpetuating the very *macondismo* which the editors wished to problematise. This is what Emil Volek (2009) describes as the fourth support of the *macondismo* myth: that is, how the very *deflation*, questioning, and problematising of this master narrative actually serves to perpetuate it. In a sense, then, as much in the prologue as in how this has been interpreted—and produced by discourses surrounding it—, *McOndo* represents both an antithesis and a synthesis to the *macondismo* nationalism/regionalism. As such, by being interpreted by criticism as a challenger to this dominant narrative, *McOndo* has been 'designated as a worthy object of legitimate discourse' (Bourdieu 1993, 35), something which validates and legitimises its position within the Latin American literary canon, a process which will be discussed further in Chapter 8. Nevertheless, like all antitheses, it retains its referential status in regard to the original dominant thesis of *macondismo*, something which, even the prologue attests, is harder to cast off than the editors seem to suggest, and leads them into the problem of defining themselves and their sensibility in strictly derivative terms.

Aside from this obvious problem, the editors attempt to highlight how their vision of a McOndo Latin America is similarly marvellous, in some senses undermining their very own critique of Latin American exoticism. One such example, is how the editors emphasise Latin America's specificity and exoticism as evidenced by the region's turbulent political history.

> In our McOndo, like in Macondo, everything can happen, of course in ours when people fly it is because they are in a plane or they are high on drugs. Latin America, and in some senses Spanish America (Spain and all the Latino USA) is as magical realist (surrealist, crazy, contradictory, awesome) to us as the imaginary country where people ascend or predict the

> future and men live forever. Here dictators die and the *desaparecidos* don't return (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 17).

As such, far from replacing the marvellous realities of Macondo with a mundane McOndo, Latin America's historical political volatility, narco-democracies, corruption, dictatorships, revolutions, and *desaparecidos*, are presented as demonstrative of the region's marvellousness, as a place stranger than fiction, as Alberto Fuguet (2001) stated elsewhere: 'Latin America is quite literary, yes, almost a work of fiction, but it's not a folk tale' (69). And to a less overt extent, in the final lines of the prologue, the editors also claim that the bastard culture which they define within the McOndo metaphor and present as unifying of a whole literary generation and a whole generation of young adults, 'isn't gratuitous. It might even be magical' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 20). The Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier (2003, 2008), extending the *macondismo* argument formulated by thinkers before him (Martí, Rodó, Vasconselos, etc.), had posited that Latin America's ontological marvellous reality issued from centuries of *mestizaje*. Fuguet and Gómez's reformulation, consequently, resembles a vindication of the most recent evolution in this process of *mestizaje* or contemporary hybridisation, which has for them, had similarly marvellous consequences. This is also apparent in Fuguet's very words, that Latin America is 'a work of fiction' but not a folk tale, in a sense, challenging the privileged status of the folkloric and folk tales (*macondismo*) in understanding the 'soul' of the people, in the Herderian logic, and considering Latin America as both a *fiction* (as in a construct), as well as a product of a multitude of *fictions* about this people.

Further parallels can be seen between Fuguet and Gómez's proposal and García Canclini's seminal work in *Culturas híbridas*. García Canclini argues that upon contact in the 15th Century between what came to be defined as the "New World" and the "Old World", the "primitive" customs of the New World were understood in contrast to the "modern" cultures of the Old World. From this moment of contact and mixing, for García Canclini (2009), the coexistence of both temporalities, that which is imagined as ancient and that which is imagined as modern, is what defines Latin American societies: a state of *multitemporal heterogeneity*[53]. In a similar way, in his essay 'Magical Neoliberalism', Fuguet (2001) states: 'Latin America is [...] a volatile place where the 19th Century mingles with the 21st. More than magical, this place is weird' (69). This point by Fuguet—while recognising transformations due to contemporary hybridisation resulting from the recent acceleration in globalisation,

[53] 'Los países latinoamericanos son actualmente resultado de la sedimentación, yuxtaposición y entrecruzamiento de tradiciones indígenas (sobre todo en las áreas mesoamericana y andina), del hispanismo colonial católico y de las acciones políticas, educativas y comunicacionales modernas. Pese a los intentos de dar a la cultura de élite un perfil moderno, recluyendo lo indígena y lo colonial en sectores populares, un mestizaje interclasista ha generado formaciones híbridas en todos los estratos sociales' (García Canclini 2009, 71).

neoliberalism, and the universalisation of popular culture and technologies—is also consistent with Latin America's *macondismo* discourse which continues to insist on Latin America's exceptionality, marvellousness, and unintelligibility.

As has been made evident, one of Fuguet and Gómez's main prerogatives in the prologue is their discursive intervention into Latin American identity discourse. As such, 'Presentación del país McOndo' does not conform to the standard conventions of a literary prologue, being that there is scarce reflection given to the narrative, technical, or aesthetic proposal of this generation, as has been noted by de Rosso (2014)[54]. Apparent in the editors' desire to pluralise understandings of Latin American identity, is a concern with representation and international cultural misunderstandings. This concern even takes the form of moralising this issue of literary representation, consistent with the associated use of realism in the majority of the stories (as will be seen in the next chapter): '[t]o sell a continent as rural when, the truth of the matter, is that it is urban (not to mention that its overpopulated cities are a total chaos and don't function), is to us an abhorrence, lazy, and immoral'[55] (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 18). Instead of providing an affirmative definition of what would constitute a McOndo aesthetic, the editors choose a common 'anti-magical-realist sensibility' (Fuguet 2001, 69) as a unifying tendency to rethink recent Latin American literary production applying an inherently derivative and negative definition (after the fact) to whole swathes of artistic production or even cultural realities.

This is precisely what Alberto Fuguet does in his essay 'Magical Neoliberalism' and his memoir *Tránsitos* (2013). For example, Fuguet adds to this McOndo aesthetic the film *Amores perros* (2000) and he claims that earlier authors similarly concerned with popular culture and the urban—such as the Argentinian Manuel Puig and the Colombian Andrés Caicedo—represent proto-*McOndianos* (2001). This negative identification of a McOndo sensibility is eventually seen in its ultimate conclusion in Fuguet's most recent essay on *McOndo* in his literary memoir *Tránsitos* (2013), in which he states:

> [b]ut in regard to the question that I'm always asked: yes, I was right. McOndo won. That's it. And so what. Call it by any other name but this present is McOndo. With the exception of shameless frauds or artisans that work with fantasy genres, I think almost everything that is written (good or bad) from here and in this language possesses a McOndo DNA. Even if they

[54] De Rosso argues: 'En efecto, el prólogo de McOndo se desentiende de toda reflexión sobre la técnica literaria, sobre el lenguaje específico de la literatura para definir el alcance de la nueva narrativa latinoamericana. Es a partir de esta ausencia que Fuguet y Gómez definen tanto a los amigos como a los enemigos. Se trata de diferenciarse del "realismo mágico" como tendencia unificadora para pensar la literatura latinoamericana. El horizonte sobre el que se establece la diferencia es, claro, el de los temas y motivos del "realismo mágico"' (De Rosso 2014, 81).

[55] 'Vender un continente rural cuando, la verdad de las cosas, es urbano (más allá que sus sobrepobladas ciudades son un caos y no funcionan) nos parece aberrante, cómodo e inmoral' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 18).

> don't know it or it doesn't appear that way. I won't name names. Not anymore. I think to use the word McOndo is—perhaps—a mistake. But: we live in this land and we create in this land. Some do it better than others; some get it and others don't understand, but we are all from here[56] (409).

The consequence of defining a McOndo aesthetic from a negation of magical realism rather than an affirmation of a distinct form, style, or otherwise, is that everything begins to appear to conform (to a greater or lesser extent) to this aesthetic, hence Fuguet's appropriation of almost all literature produced in the region as having a McOndo DNA. Curiously, this is, in some senses, comparable to the similarly slippery concept of magical realism, which has experienced huge disputes regarding its definition (see Parkinson Zamora and Faris 1995), and which has similarly presented the problem (mostly abroad) of classifying any recourse to the fantastical within Latin America fiction as magical realism. And yet, as will be noted in the next chapter, there are a number of themes which characterise the narratives of *McOndo* which continue to be read in the literature of the subsequent generation. Ana Gallego Cuiñas (2017) not only recognises a persistence of the Boom referent in the literature of the generation of the 1970s[57], but also *McOndo* in an aesthetic sense (in some ways supporting Fuguet's DNA claim), by noting the recurrence of foreign characters or foreign localities, the emphasis on the private over the public sphere, the lack of local terminology (when compared to the Boom), fragmented narratives, the emphasis on the present, predominantly first person narrators and relating all of these themes comparatively: 'like McOndo' ('como McOndo') (54-56).

Lastly, alongside these cultural and identitary interventions, the editors pronounce the end of this fundamental historical discourse in recent narrative production, claiming that, for their generation of writers, '[t]he great issue of Latin American identity (Who are we?) seems to have given way to the great issue of personal identity (Who am I?)'[58]. While this statement might be interpreted as an undermining of their very arguments in this identity discourse, this statement can be more appropriately understood as an altogether separate operation within the prologue. Thus, this statement does not detract from their intervention into Latin America's identity discourse to both destroy cultural clichés and pluralise understandings of Latin

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[56] 'Pero a la pregunta que siempre me hacen respondo eso: sí, tenía razón. McOndo ganó. Eso, ya. Y qué, además. Llámenlo de otro modo pero este presente es McOndo. Con excepción de chantas sinvergüenzas o de artesanos que trabajan géneros de fantasía, creo que casi todo lo que se escribe (bueno o malo) por estos lados y en este idioma posee un ADN de McOndo. Incluso si no lo saben o no parece. No apostaré por nombres. Ya no. Sí creo que utilizar McOndo es—quizás—un error. Pero sí: en este país vivimos y en este país creamos. Unos lo hacen mejor que otros; unos captan y otros no entienden, pero sí, todos somos de acá' (Fuguet 2013, 409).

[57] Her study includes Alejandro Zambra, Daniel Alarcón, Yuri Herrera, Gabriela Wiener, Iosi Havilio, Juan Sebastián Cárdenas, Lina Meruane, Ariana Harwicz, Valeria Luiselli, and Carolina Sanín.

[58] 'El gran tema de la identidad latinoamericana (¿quiénes somos?) pareció dejar paso al tema de la identidad personal (¿quién soy?)' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 15).

American cultures. Instead, this statement relates to the editors' identification of a shift in vocation for this literary generation and directed towards a disavowal of the constraints which politics and national/regional cultural demands place on their literary autonomy. By simultaneously questioning the historic identity discourse and trying to have the final word in this debate, Fuguet and Gómez demonstrate a desire to contribute to this debate (by destroying cultural clichés), as well as put an end to this extra-literary demand for political or national engagement in exchange for greater artistic autonomy.

5.2.5 The anti-political vocation

While much has been made of the cultural metaphors of Macondo and McOndo, there is a clear preference of some critics (Palaversich 2000; Riofrío 2013), to emphasise *McOndo* as an ideological proposal. It is in this sense that it is important to explore the political position-takings of the prologue, and the politicisation on the part of critics of the ideas presented therein. In particular it is important to understand the supposed anti-political stance which has been in many ways misunderstood or misrepresented, and which a macro-perspective as well as an understanding of the literary vocation of these authors can further elucidate.

As has been discussed, the politically-charged decades of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s fortified the political pole in Latin American literary space, in part through the figures of the Boom, who consolidated the political extra-literary vocation of the author, and further emphasised in the Postboom, through an increasingly inescapable political narrative theme or tone. The local and international success of this literature contributed to the critical expectation that literature serve this extra-literary function, even among literary critics who would demand a compromised literature which would continue to serve anti-imperialist, globophobic or general social critiques. In this line of argument, critics, such as Diana Palaversich, have condemned not only the construction of the apparent reductionism of the Macondo/McOndo opposition—and the *McOndiano* partiality to the First world Latin American experience to that of the impoverished and marginal—, but also, the apparent political apathy of the writers. Palaversich (2000) claims: '[t]he lack of interest in the socio-political situation which affects their respective countries—and which don't even figure as background onto which the narrated events are sketched out—is apparent in the prologue and in almost the entirety of the stories'[59] (61). Once again, the question of representation arises, suggesting that the problem with

[59] 'La falta de interés por la situación socio-política que afecta a sus respectivos países—y que ni siquiera figura como trasfondo sobre el cual se perfila lo narrado—es aparente en el prólogo y en la casi totalidad de los cuentos' (Palaversich 2000, 61).

McOndo, is that it does not represent what is deemed the common—and by consequence, the "genuine"—Latin American experience of the impoverished and marginal Macondo.

This politicised interpretation of the *McOndo* prologue, even permeates the very language which critics have used to describe the so-called "Macondistas", affecting in turn how they are understood. These terminologies, that until this study have been employed without extrapolation, must be analysed to understand better the intentions of the writers themselves. This politicisation by a number of critics of McOndo is linguistically signalled by the use of the term "Macondista", a word containing the suffix "–ista", which in the Spanish language is used to denote someone who follows or professes a principle or ideology, for example a "*marxista*" (Marxist/Marxism) or a "*fascista*" (fascist/fascism). As such, critics who use this term, such as Palaversich (2005), apply a name to the *McOndianos* which benefits their politicised reading of the *McOndo* prologue, by further characterising it as an ideological and political project (47).

However, the term which the editors themselves utilise, "McOndiano", reveals quite a different meaning and intention. It is noteworthy that the suffix –ano/anos in the Spanish language is used for the generation of proper demonym adjectives (through the adjectivisation of nouns), such as "*latinoamericanos*" (Latin Americans) from *Latinoamérica*, or common demonym adjectives, such as "*ciudadanos*" (city-dwellers) from the Spanish word for city: *ciudad*. Thus, the use of the demonym "McOndiano" reemphasises the editors' vision of McOndo as a virtual *territory* further evidenced by the various references in the prologue to McOndo as a country or territory[60] (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 11, 14, 17). Thus, through this interpretation, the editors' intentions are revealed to be less ideological and more cultural-cartographical, as McOndo is presented as both a *cultural metaphor* and a *territory*, and readers are introduced to the *McOndianos*' experience of inhabiting this contemporary Latin American territory (hence the title of the prologue 'Introduction to the *Land* of McOndo').

As such, McOndo must be understood as an entirely more complex concept that just an ideological stance reduced to neoliberal political convictions. It is possible to understand the multilayered meanings of McOndo, both in the prologue and the writings of its principal proponent, as a *cultural metaphor* for contemporary Latin American reality ('this present is McOndo'), as a *literary aesthetic* ('almost everything that is written (good or bad) from here and in this language possesses a McOndo DNA'), and a *territory* ('we live in this country and

[60] Fuguet and Gómez (1996) make reference to McOndo as a country or territory in the title 'Presentación del país McOndo' (11), '[s]alimos a conquistar McOndo y sólo descubrimos Macondo' (14), and again when they write '[n]uestro país McOndo es más grande ...' (17).

we create in this country [...] some get it and others don't understand, but we are all from here') (Fuguet 2013, 409). Similarly, as has been noted, in an early article 'McCondo' published in the magazine *Mundo Diners*, Alberto Fuguet (1993) had already presented many of these ideas: McOndo as a cultural metaphor or the 'other Latin America' in respect to the Garciamarquian Macondo; a literary aesthetic to combat the mythical Macondo with a narrative representation of the McOndo reality; and finally, a present and future territory[61].

Similarly, once again, to Fuguet and Gómez's stance in the prologue to *Cuentos con walkman*, in *McOndo* they identify how writers appear to be rejecting the political or nationalist themes of former decades and a fundamental shift in their literary vocation. In *Cuentos con walkman*, the very fact that Gómez and Fuguet (1993) felt the need to clarify their narrations as not belonging to some Herderian conception of the writer as emanation of the people[62], indicates the very Herderian psyche or background knowledge of the time, highlighting the concern that their anthology would be read—by some ('*algunos*')—as a mirror of the people ('*el gran espejo de Chile*') (12). In *McOndo*, once again in a comparison to the writers of the Boom and Postboom, the editors claim, '[i]f a few years ago the dilemma for the young author was between taking up the pen or the rifle, now it seems the most anxious thing about writing is choosing between Windows 95 or Macintosh'[63] (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 15). In what the editors pose as the "old" dilemma, the writer was faced with the decision about whether to write or fight: essentially between literary escapism (or perhaps even literary activism), and revolutionary action, even though by the popular Postboom, literature was no longer so High-brow and functioned in some cases as a form of political testimony and extra-literary activism. In the second and "new" dilemma, this conundrum is presented as irrelevant, replaced by a consumer concern between selecting the superior computer and word processor. As such, and

[61] In the article, Fuguet decries how the folkloric and the indigenous exoticisms continue to capture the not only foreign interests but also local ones, a concern with foreign expectations which as de Rosso (2014) argues sustains the whole *McOndo* prologue (82). Just as in the prologue there is a latent desire to transcend national literary spaces—Fuguet and Gómez (1996) describe the authors in *McOndo* as 'un grupo de nuevos escritores hispanoamericanos que escriben en español, pero que no se siente representantes de alguna ideología y ni siquiera de sus propios países' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 18-19)—, similarly, in Fuguet's early article, he expresses an urgency that Latin American and Chilean letters transcend the themes which continue to repeat themselves: insular, folkloric, and *criollista* narratives. And much like the prologue to *McOndo*, this article affirms the literary duty to combat the mythical Macondo with a narrative representation of the McOndo reality, once again in order to educate '[l]os países consumidores de cultura' so they may 'dejar de vernos como lugares exóticos y empezar a leer historias que registren el choque, que exploren nuestras influencias de España pero también de Miami, que delaten que, culturalmente, estamos tan al día como ellos, que más que isla somos parte del todo' (Fuguet 1993).

[62] 'Lo que aquí se cuenta son historias vitales sobre vidas levemente aburridas; son la vida de ciertos jóvenes, de ciertos solteros. No pretende ser el gran espejo de Chile ni abarcar todo un espectro social o moral. Esto no es sociología ni hay, aunque algunos crean lo contrario, presunción alguna' (Fuguet and Gómez 1993, 12).

[63] 'Si hace unos años la disyuntiva del escritor joven estaba entre tomar el lápiz o la carabina, ahora parece que lo más angustiante para escribir es elegir entre Windows 95 o Macintosh' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 15).

as de Rosso (2014) has recognised, the editors highlight two recent processes in Latin American literary space. Firstly, they incarnate the gradual individualisation of narration, evident in the decline of the social fresco or total novel. Secondly, they point to the diminished importance of the political in the public sphere, replaced by the increased predominance of the mass media (de Rosso 2014, 81). These two themes are not only apparent in the stories of *McOndo* but also across a whole series of narrative voices which emerged during this period in Latin American literary space[64]. In other words, according to Fuguet and Gómez, the new generation of writers presented in *McOndo* reject the political vocation of the Latin America writer incarnated and consolidated both in deed and in written word by the figures of the Boom and Postboom, in favour of a literature more autonomous from this extra-literary demand.

In Palaversich's overly political reading of the anthology, she interprets this political disavowal as far from an act of political dissociation but, unsurprisingly, precisely as a political act, one in favour of the *status quo* of mainstream neoliberal politics. Palaversich (2000) interprets the so-called Macondistas' political disavowal as resulting from their comfortable position within this new society: '[t]hey form part of the social and literary establishment and are comfortably situated within the current socio-political system of the country' (70). When comparing *McOndo* and its proponents to more marginal writers such as the homosexual and indigenous-Chilean author Pedro Lemebel[65]—particularly through this political-economic Marxist lens—, the *McOndianos* comparatively appear to be social conformists, neoliberal apologists, sell-outs and propagators of the "system". And in the absence of a clear political voice, Diana Palaversich (2005) even risks speculating on Fuguet's private political convictions—of which she is obviously not privy—criticising his public political silence in regard to neoliberalism[66] (38). However, to demand that, irrespective of their social

[64] A great number of simultaneous yet unconnected manifestations of a similar sentiment in this generation of writers will be discussed in greater detail in how they pertain to the canonisation of the *McOndo* anthology in Chapter 8.

[65] Lemebel, for his part considers Alberto Fuguet a Chilean neoliberal narrator ('narradores neoliberales') *par excellence* who subscribe to a North American model of literature (Lemebel 2005, 26-7), and in his own literature (published predominantly under independent labels) prefers to critically juxtapose the multitemporal heterogeneity of Chilean society with a strong emphasis on the less well-off or in Santiago, those from South of La Plaza Italia. For a useful comparative analysis of the treatment of the city within the understanding of *lo propio* (your own) and *lo ajeno* (the foreign) in Alberto Fuguet and Pedro Lemebel's work, see Agustín Pastén's essay 'Neither Grobalized or Glocalized: Fuguet or Lemebel's Metropolis' (2005).

[66] 'Aunque me parece equivocado acusarlo de derechista y de ser cómplice de los cómplices de Pinochet por su posición social privilegiada y por no expresar explícitamente su postura política, creo que es importante repetir que Fuguet siempre se ha mostrado más dispuesto a criticar a la izquierda que a las políticas neoliberales de Chile que no han cambiado ni con la elección presidencial del socialista Ricardo Lagos' (Palaversich 2005, 38). This absolutist critique has been nuanced by Héctor Hoyos (2015) in his comparative analysis of the treatment of the global(isation) in the figure of the supermarket in the work of Fuguet, Damiela Eltit, and César Aira, showing

positioning, all writers must be vocal social agitators and cultural critics, is to continue to emphasise that literature serve political and social ends, above any creative or artistic ones. Furthermore, the assumption that any silence on the part of authors in regard to neoliberal politics must imply a support of the "system" is simplistic to say the least. Why must all literatures be considered by political criticism as social treatise? Casanova (2015) also challenges this assumption by comparing the opposed, but equally problematic, assumptions of pure criticism and political criticism, for the former, that all writers are apolitical and interested only in pure literature, and for the latter, that the narrative directly represents the author's political stance (214). In returning to *McOndo* then, this critique highlights how certain critics have read the representation of contemporary life in the prologue to *McOndo* as a celebration of neoliberalism, arising from what de Rosso (2014) describes as 'a prejudicial position, that if no condemnation of what is "wrong" in the neoliberal world is found, then it is assumed automatically that it is celebrated'[67] (120). The absence of an overtly critical tone in the prologue and the stories, is sufficient for Palaversich to label *McOndo* an example of neoliberal narration, evidently advancing a reading of their position-taking which favours her critique and easy straw-man-like dismissal of their propositions.

Similarly, for Jorge Fornet (2005), both *McOndo* and the Crack movement 'incarnate the cultural logic of Latin American neoliberalism'[68] (14). Fornet explains that the international reception sought by these writers can be understood as one of the effects in the literary world produced by the advanced neoliberalism in the two countries which give rise to these sentiments, Chile and Mexico respectively. While on the one hand, Fornet is right, the international literary ambition of the *McOndo* and Crack writers can be interpreted as a result of neoliberal economics which facilitated the commercialisation of Latin American literature through its entry into world literary space during the Boom. Notwithstanding this argument, to reduce the concerns raised in the prologue as mere excuses for opportunistic commercial

how *Mala onda* (1991) can be read less as an unambiguous celebrations of neoliberalism, but rather as containing implicit cultural critiques.

[67] '[U]na posición prejuiciosa, que si no encuentra condena para lo que "está mal" en el mundo neoliberal automáticamente asume que se lo festeja' (De Rosso 2014, 120). Lígia Bezerra (2012), drawing on Palaversich, also advances this unambiguous reading.

[68] Fornet (2003) states: 'Puede parecer, no sin razón, que tanto McOndo como el Crack son puro juego, formas de coquetear con el mercado y de adquirir visibilidad a las que ni siquiera sus creadores terminan de tomarse en serio [...] Tal vez no sea azaroso que esos dos focos de reconocimiento hayan surgido en países que sea han insertado de modo paradigmático en el proceso de globalización. Chile es el sitio donde con más éxito se ha experimentado el proyecto neoliberal, al punto de convertirse en una especie de vitrina del neoliberalismo. México, por su parte, fue pionero en suscribir un Tratado de Libre Comercio con los Estados Unidos. Si se me permite este momentáneo reduccionismo, me inclinaría a decir—parafraseando a Jameson—que ambas tendencias, la de McOndo y la del Crack, encarnan la lógica cultural del neoliberalismo latinoamericano' (14).

viability, as Fornet appears to do in this claim, is to misinterpret the specifically literary concerns of the prologue and the Crack manifesto as mere disguise for hidden commercial interests. On the other hand, however, the *McOndo* and Crack writers are not alone in having these intentions, after all, the Boom writers are not only envied by their peers (the detractors of the Boom which Donoso makes constant reference to in his memoir), but also future generations of writers, who naturally also covet the same level of circulation, readership, and recognition for their works.

In fact, as was mentioned above, the editors' criticism of *macondismo* can also be interpreted as a sharp criticism of the cultural legitimacy of the Left in Latin America. Fuguet and Gómez (1996) argue that

> [t]here exists a sector of the academy and travelling intelligentsia that want to *sell* to the world not only an ecological paradise (Santiago's smog?) but a peaceful land (Bogotá? Lima?). The most orthodox think that Latin Americanness is the indigenous, the folkloric, the Leftist. Our cultural creators would be people who wear ponchos and sandals[69] (17).

By arguing that the academy and particularly the Left have facilitated the marketing of Latin America through the region's exotic branding is a reversal of this neoliberal argument back onto these very critics. In their attempts to preserve Latin American cultures from the encroachment of globalisation, critics have participated in the mechanisms of cultural and literary differentiation which Pascale Casanova outlines as, at their root, profoundly nationalist or regionalist sentiments. What Fuguet and Gómez point out, however, is that this defence of cultural specificity in the face of the supposed homogenisation of markets resulting from neoliberalism (fears of McDonaldisation come to mind), the Left have participated in the commercialisation of Latin America in the rest of the world. The results of this are, perhaps, most evident in the explosive success of many Postboom texts within a Left-leaning political paradigm: such as the magical realist novels of Isabel Allende (especially *La Casa de los espíritus*), the folkloric works of Laura Esquivel (such as *Como agua para chocolate*), the wondrous ecologies (and ecocriticism) of novels like *Un viejo que leía novelas de amor*, by Luis Sepúlveda. In this sense, the editors of *McOndo* invert the anticipated neoliberal criticism reflecting it back onto local and foreign Latinamericanist critics with Left-leaning politics who have inadvertently capitalised Latin American identity through the promotion of its marvellousness.

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[69] 'Existe un sector de la academia y de la intelligentsia ambulante que quieren venderle al mundo no sólo un paraíso ecológico (¿el smog de Santiago?) sino una tierra de paz (¿Bogotá? ¿Lima?). Los más ortodoxos creen que lo latinoamericano es lo indígena, lo folklórico, lo izquierdista. Nuestros creadores culturales sería gente que usa poncho y ojotas' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 17).

Beyond the narrow Manichean interpretation of politics and literature in which politico-literary activists hold the moral high-ground leaving all other writers morally compromised, or viewpoints which reduce a literary desire for international readership to commercial profiteering, it is important to underline that there is much more than merely politics and commerce which motivates this literary generation—in fact, from a disciplinary standpoint, these readings continue to exert a mercantilist, economic, or politicised monopolising force over literary studies. Fuguet and Gómez's identification that politics is no longer a central literary concern for these writers is further indicated by the very testimony of the authors included in *McOndo*, which my interviews with them have revealed, and which will be the explored in greater depth in Chapter 7. For example, when asked about their perspective on the role of the author, the majority stressed personal literary convictions over any political or social commitment. The Ecuadorian author Leonardo Valencia (2016, personal interview) expressed a desire that his literature be read more deeply than just an interpretation of Latin American or national cultural representation, the very subject of his literary essays in *El síndrome de Falcón* (The Falcón Syndrome) (2008a). Rodrigo Fresán (2016, personal interview) expressed he sees his literary commitment as exclusively writing good stories in the best possible way. David Toscana (2016, personal interview) expressed his literary commitment to composing beautiful prose. The Argentinian filmmaker and writer Martín Rejtman (2016, personal interview) disavowed the grand understanding of literature as a social or even personal portrayal, instead claiming he believes in literatures' dedication to understanding the unknown. Edmundo Paz Soldán (2016, personal interview) also expressed this, along with his desire that literature be a laboratory of forms, subjectivities, relations, poetics, aesthetics, and language. The Argentinian Juan Forn (2016, personal interview) spoke of his literary duty to his readers, to provide them with the best literature he is capable of writing. And finally, the Costa Rican Rodrigo Soto (2016, personal interview) highlighted that his work is driven to explore human emotions and their contradictory character. These personal literary position-takings, while diverse, are representative of an almost generational reaction against the traditional political role or even an understanding of the author as an agent responsible for social transformation prevalent and incarnated by many successful writers during the Boom and Postboom periods. As such, this literature, freed from political duties, is once again a way in which the editors continue to define their generation antithetically to these more politicised literary periods.

Conclusion

As is apparent from the above discussion, the editors of *McOndo* executed a number of strategies in order to identify a literary generation, despite their first (sincere or feigned) hesitancy. Some of the common literary concerns apparent in the prologue are the literary balkanisation of Latin American literary space, *macondismo* or the exotic horizons of expectation outside of Latin America, which have a considerable bearing on literary production, the aesthetics of magical realism which international markets appear to demand, and finally, the expectation that literature and authors themselves be politically committed. As the editors themselves clarified in the prologue, that one of the fundamental purposes of *McOndo* was a discovery of their literary peers, the editors begin by constructing this literary generation by identifying its shared birth range and by highlighting significant dates for their common lived experience: the Cuban Revolution (symbolic of the politicised period in Latin American history), and the arrival of television (symbolic of the onset and importance of mass media), a generational act which is further consolidated through the production of the McOndo generation in criticism, as the quote from Bourdieu at the beginning of this chapter highlighted.

As has been outlined, the political and the commercial poles have been fundamental to the definition of this generation, something that Fuguet and Gómez enact through the rejection of the former and recognition of the later, not least through their allegiance with the commercial Spanish publisher Grijalbo Mondadori, but (as will be seen in the next chapter), to some extent in their stories also. Beyond an identification of common literary problems and position-takings, which propose McOndo as an anti-magical realist *aesthetic* and antithetical *cultural metaphor* to Macondo, the editors also highlight McOndo as a common *territory* in which these writers and a whole generation of young adults inhabit and predominantly consume a McOndo Latin American culture. It is in this sense that McOndo as a land, represents a new national narrative, a way of understanding Latin American nations and Latin America more broadly which, once recognised as such by readers, has the power to transform conceptions of these identities in the minds of their inhabitants. The editors conclude their 'Introduction to the Land of McOndo' by outlining the generational unity which comes from inhabiting this land:

> underneath the heterogeneity something appears to unify all of these writers, and a whole generation of young adults. The world became smaller and we share a similar bastard culture, which has inevitably brought us together without seeking it. We have grown up glued to the same television programs, admired the same films, and read everything worth reading, in a synchrony that deserves to be considered magical. All of this brings, clearly, a similar position

> in respect to literature and a sharing of unifying fields of reference. This reality is not gratuitous. It might even be magical[70] (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 20).

While the *McOndo* prologue sets itself a number of tasks, this chapter has been guided in seeing how all of these diverse operations contribute to the identification of a literary generation for the purposes of creating literary visibility for themselves and remedy the literary problems which they encountered. In this sense, the editors' words of clarification in denying this was their intention, are contradicted by the very prologue that they present. Through the identification of the generational birth range, the highlighting of common literary problems and collective responses, as well as the grouping of these writers (and a whole generation of Latin Americans)—like it or not—under a similar bastard culture (McOndo), the editors are executing some of the fundamental strategies of a generational anthology and the proposal of a new regionalism. The success of this execution can be measured in how much attention it received, the critical and journalistic consensus that this did in fact represent a collective movement (despite the fact that it was not), and the eventual canonisation of many of its individual members and the anthology in its own way also (areas which will be explored in more depth in Part 4: The Post-*McOndo* Context).

As such, all in all, a literary-strategic perspective can elucidate the intervention of the editors through the *McOndo* prologue. Pascale Casanova (2007), in speaking of writers' search for literary autonomy, argues that 'the writers who seek greater freedom for their work are those who know the laws of world literary space and who make use of them in trying to subvert the dominant norms of their respective national fields' (109). To claim—as much of the negative aura surrounding *McOndo* has done—that *McOndo* represented nothing other than an *ad hominem* parricide of Gabriel García Márquez, is an attempt to discredit what Marcelo Rioseco has called 'a legitimate act of defense' (2010). I argue for a more complex strategic interpretation, that through the problematisation and desacralisation of Macondo as the symbolic embodiment of *macondismo*, their simultaneous insurrection and insertion into Latin America's cultural identity discourse, quasi-establishment of a new literary generation, as well as the appropriation of the cultural capital of the Nobel prize-winning figure of García Márquez, the editors' satirically subvert this symbolic capital and consequently gain widespread literary visibility for themselves, and (as will be discussed in greater detail in

[70] '[D]ebajo de la heterogeneidad algo parece unir a todos estos escritores, y a toda a[sic] una generación de adultos recientes. El mundo se empequeñeció y compartimos una cultura bastarda similar, que nos ha hermanado irremediablemente sin buscarlo. Hemos crecido pegados a los mismos programas de televisión, admirado las mismas películas y leído todo lo que se merece leer, en una sincronía digna de considerarse mágica. Todo esto trae, evidentemente, una similar postura ante la literatura y el compartir campos de referencia unificadores. Esta realidad no es gratuita. Capaz que sea hasta mágica' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 20).

Chapter 8) their entire literary generation. In other words, it is through the diagnosis of these aesthetic and identitary problems which Fuguet and Gómez make clear their position-taking: an assertion of literary autonomy from the centrifugal forces which would continue to perpetuate long-established cultural and aesthetic forms as well as authorial roles in Latin American literary space.

This strategic procedure has been looked at with suspicion on the part of traditional critics, some who shortly after its publication considered them within the logics of neoliberal capitalism (Palaversich and Fornet), and others who with posterity see *McOndo* as 'ideological opportunism'[71] (Major and Miles 2010, 7), or nothing other than 'journalistic copy and sound bites'[72] (González Echevarría 2012, 117). The error in all of these criticisms is captured in Casanova's (2015) caveat in *Kafka, Angry Poet*, when after detailing, at great length, the progressive politicisation of the German-speaking Jewish writers of Prague, she explains that this

> galloping politicization […] does not in any way mean that we should confound the literary world with the political, or feel justified in superimposing the one on the other […]. [T]he political transformations I have just described mean that we have to take account of the progressive overlapping of political and literary spaces (177).

In other words, rather than reduce this case study to purely political or commercial phenomena or transformations, we must take account of these and see them in their interactions *with* the literary space—hence the emphasis on political and commercial transformations in the previous chapter—, something which will become more apparent through an analysis of how these debates relate to the very literature (the stories) in *McOndo* in the next chapter. Furthermore, as Bourdieu notes in the quote at the beginning of this chapter, even though many critiques, including these, have attempted to discredit *McOndo* and its significance, they have instead brought further attention and *produced McOndo* as a canonical work (which other works must reference), further solidifying it as essential to understanding the literature of the

[71] In the prologue to the special issue anthology 'Los mejores narradores jóvenes en español' for the magazine *Granta*, the writers and editors Aurelio Major and Valerie Miles (2010) criticise the attempts made at literary visibility evident in *McOndo*, Crack, and the Nocilla movement in Spain: 'en un empeño muy concreto para encontrar la puerta de entrada al reconocimiento de los centros del poder literario, es decir, para sobrevivir como escritores, se han enarbolado variopintos manifiestos desde hace casi dos decenios que emulan los procedimientos y estrategias del oportunismo ideológico' (7).

[72] Roberto González Echevarría (2012) perpetuates a Boom comparativism which would relegate any literary work a failure unless it attaints the combined commercial and critical success of *Cien años de soledad*: 'A larger problem for the new writers is that while rebellions against authority make good journalistic copy and sound bites, they have to be accompanied by significant literary works to have a lasting impact, and none of those involved in MacOndo [sic] or the Crack has yet published a work that comes close to *Cien años de soledad* in terms of quality or reception' (117).

broader literary generation, and their position-takings in respect to the Boom and Postboom, magical realism, and the changing role of the author in Latin American literary space.

Chapter 6: The *McOndo* stories

6.1 *Historias personales de* McOndo

Having analysed the prologue to *McOndo*, explored its (mis)readings, and the literary problems and corresponding position-takings, it is appropriate to analyse the short stories themselves, as well as their authors—so often overshadowed by the ideological discourse which the prologue provoked as well as by the polemical figure of Alberto Fuguet—, in order to bring new light to these stories and the anthology in general. Firstly, this will require a collective exploration of the narratives themselves, comparatively with the claims of the prologue as well as in respect to each other, that is, in how they conform or not to the characterisation of these texts and their authors as *McOndianos*. In other words, an evaluation of their proximity or distance from what could be considered a McOndo aesthetic, through an appreciation of their individual literary position-takings. While the macro-perspective has given greater coherence to our interpretation of the *McOndo* prologue, as it provides us with the indispensable background knowledge for understanding where these pronouncements were indeed coming from, in regard to the stories, this is only partially effective. This is so because the great variety of stories, authors, and spaces represented means that the task of the critic is greatly multiplied, hence the tendency of the majority of readings of the anthology to be a collective one. While acknowledging this limitation, it is still possible to attempt to bring new perspective onto the stories on a variety of fronts.

One way to evaluate the relative proximity of these stories to a supposed McOndo *aesthetic* is by analysing whether they inhabit the *land* of McOndo—which can be seen through the settings of the stories—, and if they represent aspects of the McOndo *cultural metaphor*—which can be appreciated in their treatment of cultural phenomena. As such, a number of elements which appear common to many of the stories—narrative devices, linguistic options, and thematic decisions—will be a guiding criterion to understand the apparent and relative aesthetic unity of these texts. Nevertheless, given that these narrative voices are inherently and unmistakeably heterogeneous (discursively, narratively, and prosaically), it is reasonable to set out to identify aesthetic similarities not for the purpose of glossing over these individual literary contributions[1], but to understand them further through their commonalities and disparities, and

[1] By way of a brief caveat, as a consequence of the anthologisation of these short story texts, as well as the forceful prologue, critics who have read beyond the prologue have tended to privilege a collective reading of the stories,

their individual position-takings within their particular spaces of possibility. The singularity of each literary position-taking will be appreciated in *how* each of these writers has made their unique intervention within the Latin American space of possibilities also, in regard to how they deal with the question or magical realism and politics.

As the editors in the prologue state that they struggled to find appropriate candidates for their anthology[2], we can only speculate as to the degree of selectiveness which they may have employed when choosing from their sample (specifically, we only know of the choice not to include the Cuban Zoé Valdés, noted by the editors themselves[3]). However, one way we can inquire into *why* these stories were even selected, can be demonstrated in the editorial interventions which mediated David Toscana's inclusion.

> I already had a series of short stories written that I was going to put in *Historias de Lontananza* which I suggested when Alberto invited me, and he didn't like any of them. And around then I had another story, which in the end I have never published in any other place but here, which has the same tone, the same idea of failure, the same characters, the same prose which I use, with the difference that they were younger, and it had certain references to pop culture. And so,

as well as interpreted them through the prism of the prologue. This attempt to find unifying thematic or aesthetic traits in relation to a prologue which was written in isolation from all the participating authors, is, in some senses, a questionable starting point. Questionable if we are attempting to read from the prologue to the stories, in how they each support this paratext. But this is problematic considering that most of the authors involved in the anthology did not know each other and had not discussed nor agreed on a collective literary proposal or sensibility. Notwithstanding this fact, critics have either ignored this question or consequently attempted characterise this literature as a collective intervention and define it in their own terms, most often ideological. Leonardo Valencia and Juan Forn expressed this very concern in how the prologue determined how the stories were interpreted:

> [e]l prólogo—y esto lo dice Jean Gennette—marca una pauta de cómo debe ser leído este libro. De la misma manera en *McOndo* el prólogo funciona como paratexto que dirige la lectura, y por consiguiente, creo que pocos críticos escaparon del prólogo. Y eso sí me chocó un poco porque yo sentía que no me estaban leyendo, o sea que me estaban juzgando desde una mirada ya prejuiciada de antemano (Valencia 2016, personal interview).

> Había una característica que tenían todos los escritores que estaban en la antología y eso era que escribían sobre gente de su generación y ambientaban sus historias por lo general en el presente. Y ya vivíamos en el principio de la era global donde todo ya estaba bastante colonizado por lo norteamericano, todos teníamos teléfonos inalámbricos, tarjetas de crédito y disquerías con discos de todas partes del mundo, y esa clase de cosas. Razón por la cual basta que cualquier cuento tenga solo esas características para que Fuguet le ponía el molde que quería y podía convertirlos en algo más parecido de lo que eran. Yo te garantizo que si hubiera tenido otro título la antología se hubiera inclinado en otra dirección por completa, y no se vería el perfil norteamericano ni anti-realismo mágico de manera tan nítida (Forn 2016, personal interview).

Contrariwise, another critical approach is possible.

[2] 'Poco a poco, comenzó a aparecer eso que sabíamos que existía, aunque estaba oculto en auto-publicaciones de segunda o ediciones de pocos ejemplares. De alguna manera comprobamos que el fenómeno editorial joven en Latinoamérica es irregular, a veces mezquino y en la mayoría de los casos, sufrido. La mayoría de los textos que recibimos eran ediciones feas, publicadas con esfuerzo y con poca resonancia entre sus pares / El criterio de selección entonces se centró en autores con al menos una publicación existente y algo de reconocimiento local. Esta opción algo severa descalificó a ciertos autores y países de un brochazo' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 14-15)

[3] 'En todo caso, en un principio pensaban incorporar a la cubana Zoe Valdés, pero fue desechada porque superaba la edad y porque su estilo les pareció "criollista". "No pudo entrar aunque su relato fuera superior a algunos de los que sí quedaron. La idea era no meter folklorismos", señala el autor de *Mala onda*' (M. Soto 1996, 93).

> that one was accepted, the story 'La noche de una vida difícil'[4] (Toscana 2016, personal interview).

In the editorially sanctioned text which was finally accepted, we can identify a number of narrative devices, references, and tropes which are not only akin to Fuguet and Gómez's early texts, and also those of the 'fuguetitos' of the *Zona de Contacto* and *Cuentos con walkman*, but are equally indicative of the so-called McOndo aesthetic which Fuguet at times has spoken about and which the writers of the stories in *McOndo* can be seen to approximate or be distant to in regard to each particular narrative device.

As such, David Toscana's story, 'La noche de una vida difícil', in many senses can be seen to resemble an exemplary McOndo story: centring around disaffected young adults inhabiting the city of Monterrey, and with a prose which includes the most references to popular music than any other story in *McOndo*, splashed with uses of English, local slang, and devoid of overt political discourse. These characters can be said to inhabit as well as live immersed in the land and culture of McOndo: they are urban-dwelling rock musicians who dream of "making it" big. Not only are the characters obsessed with popular culture, the lead character Roberto was at the point of career take-off with his previous band 'Los Bribones', but he—considering himself a serious rock musician—, unlike the rest of his crew, was unwilling to sell-out to the *macondismo*-type commercialised Tex-Mex music which was fashionable at the national level:

> [h]e had already forgiven that they kicked him out of the group and that they would be willing to sacrifice him for the sake of performing on TV. But at the same time, he considered them traitors for having forgotten about rock to sell themselves to a Tex-Mex music producer. He felt sorry for them just imagining them in their shiny suits, white boots, unbuttoned shirts to show how the sweat runs down their chest, Texan hats, wide belts with buckles that look like gladiator shields, forced to use weird moustaches and needing to say in every interview how they cried when they found out about Selena's death[5] (Toscana 1996, 211).

As such, not only do these characters appear to inhabit McOndo, live and breathe a McOndo cultural lifestyle, but even appear to share a critical rejection of exoticised cultural nationalisms akin to the *McOndo* critique of the regional *macondismo*.

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[4] 'Yo tenía compuesto una serie de cuentos que yo iba a meter en *Historias de Lontananza* que los sugerí cuando me pidió Alberto, y ninguno le gustó. Y entonces tenía otro cuento, que finalmente no he publicado en ningún lugar más que aquí, que tenía el mismo tono, la misma idea del fracaso, los mismos personajes, la misma prosa que uso, con la diferencia que eran más jóvenes y había ciertas referencias a la cultura pop. Y entonces, ese sí entró, el cuento 'La noche de una vida difícil' (Toscana 2016, personal interview).

[5] 'Había terminado por perdonarles que lo echasen del grupo y que estuvieran dispuestos a sacrificarlo a cambio de una presentación en la tele. Pero al mismo tiempo los consideraba unos traidores por haberse olvidado del rock para venderse a un promotor de música tex-mex. Sentía lástima por ellos solo de imaginarlos con trajes dorados, botas blancas, camisas desbotonadas para mostrar cómo corre el sudor por el pecho, sombreros texanos, cintos anchos con hebillas que parecen escudos de gladiadores, forzados a usar bigotes enrarecidos y teniendo que decir en cada entrevista que lloraron al enterarse de la muerte de Selena' (Toscana 1996, 211)

And yet despite this conformity with the McOndo sensibility, this story is also an anomaly, and can also be read as an ambiguous critique of the anthology in which it is presented. In my interview with David Toscana (2016, personal interview), cited above, he explained his ambition to be included in *McOndo* (after meeting Alberto Fuguet in Iowa), but explained that after all of his other stories from his short story collection *Lontananza*[6] were rejected by Fuguet, in order to be included in the anthology, he submitted a story which he rightly suspected would accord with the *McOndiano* style which he sensed the editors were after. As such, while 'La noche de una vida difícil' appears to aesthetically belong in *McOndo*, Toscana confessed in another interview that this story was at once a 'debut and departure'[7] (in Brescia and Bennet 2002, 354), an experiment far from his literary convictions for the sake of seizing the opportunity to be included in this international anthology. In other words, this story, while being an archetypical presentation of the McOndo style, both pays homage to the plight of *McOndo* and the McOndo author, as well as ironises both of these. In this context, Toscana could be foretelling a similar fate of tragic failure for the *McOndo* writers as for Roberto in his story, outcompeted and outsold by writers willing to satisfy the reigning local and national cultural paradigm, rather than attempt to bring about cultural and artistic change through a welcoming attitude towards global popular culture.

This story is also, then, revelatory of the editorial selection, that is, the space of (the restricted) possibilities which was available to the *McOndo* authors. Not only were stories rejected on the grounds of magical realism—as the editors admit[8]—, but also for not conforming to a predetermined aesthetic parameter. As such, in this story we can see a list of obvious aesthetic parameters and themes which are evident (to greater and lesser extents) in all of the *McOndo* stories: realism, anomic young adult protagonists, urban setting, representation of popular culture, absence of political discourse or the national referent, and use of foreign languages (mostly English). As such, the broad space of possibilities in Latin American letters of the time, and the narrow space of possibilities permitted entry into *McOndo*, is made patently

[6] Stories centering around the Mexican cantina Lontananza, of which 'The Real Story of Don Manuel' has already been mentioned.

[7] The full quote reads: '[e]l cuento de *McOndo* fue un experimento del momento, incluso fue un cuento que no pensaba publicar hasta que vi que se ajustaba a ese perfil de *McOndo*. Pero yo lo había dejado como un experimento, después lo archivé. Y mi busca va más bien por otro lado. Creo que se relaciona más con elementos tradicionales que con los de la cultura *pop*. En *McOndo* me rechazaron todos mis cuentos de *Lontananza* porque no eran Mcondianos [sic] y fue cuando saqué éste que tú mencionas. Pero fue debut y despedida en este tipo de tema' (Brescia and Bennet 2002, 354).

[8] When detailing the criterion of selection for the stories the editors highlight: '[p]odían versar sobre cualquier cosa. Tal como se puede inferir, todo rastro de realismo mágico fue castigado con el rechazo, algo así como una venganza de lo ocurrido en Iowa' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 15).

clear. If writing *criollismo* and *costumbrismo* is rejected in the majority of the writings of Zoe Valdés and David Toscana, if magical realism is rejected in an outright act of vengeance and statement of aesthetic convictions, then the McOndo aesthetic begins to take form in negation to these styles and themes, and in affirmation of the resulting aesthetics of Toscana's included text: 'La vida de una noche difícil'.

Based in large part on an identification of these themes, the literature in *McOndo* has often been compared to and on occasion dismissed as reformulations of earlier literary proposals, from the literature of the Postboom such as Antonio Skármeta[9] (Fornet 2005), and even the Chilean realism of the *Generación de los 50* (Gutiérrez Mouat 1998 and Palaversich 2005). This has led critics such as Palaversich (2005) to accuse Fuguet and Gómez of either ignorance, or a deliberate reconfiguration of Latin American literary history to present themselves as non-canonical innovators, or the *novísimos* (the newest ones) (46-7). A critique which local Chilean critics such as Ricardo Gutiérrez Mouat (1996) and Soledad Bianchi (1997) also argued, claiming Fuguet and Gómez, as well as *McOndo*, represented a kind of posturing novelty. However, as Ezequiel de Rosso (2014) has rightfully identified, this critical response to 'accuse of ignorance and banality texts such as the 'Introduction' [to *McOndo*], is the typical response of critics before all manifestoes'[10] (85): to dismiss these "new" voices as in actual fact nothing innovative at all.

Evident in these critiques is an operation of the logic of the literary field which Bourdieu explored in *The Rules of Art*—something of which these critics appear to unaware. For Bourdieu (2017), and equally Casanova, literary spaces are temporalised—or in other words literary history is made—through the struggle of new authors to exist in respect to those established authors who already do exist and continue to perpetuate their dominance in the market. It is thus part of the logic of literary space that the newest authors be considered "new" in respect to those "old" writers which they depend on for their own definition through differentiation (157). He argues:

> [t]he new heretical entrants who refuse to enter into the cycle of simple reproduction, based on the mutual recognition of the 'old' and the 'new', and break with the current norms of production in defiance of the expectations of the field can usually only succeed in imposing

[9] Jorge Fornet (2005), has even questioned: 'the curious thing about Fuguet's success is that his ideas have very little novelty' (9), claiming that his Chilean Postboom compatriot Antonio Skármeta had already argued similar points through his narratives and discursively through his oft-cited essay 'Al fin y al cabo...' (1981), which had already defined his Postboom generation's rejection of the aesthetics of the Boom (García Márquez's Magical Realism, Fuentes and Vargas Llosa's total novels, and Cortázar's transcendental literature), and confronted and incorporated popular cultures, sex, drugs, and the chaos and contradiction of Latin American urbanity into their works.

[10] '[A]cusar de ignorancia y banalidad a textos altisonantes como la "Presentación", es el gesto característico de la crítica frente a todos los manifiestos' (De Rosso 2014, 85).

> recognition of their products by virtue of external changes. The most decisive of these changes are the political ruptures, such as revolutionary crises, which change the power relations at the heart of the field (thus, the 1848 revolution reinforces the dominated pole, determining a provisional shift of writers towards 'social art'), or the appearance of new categories of consumers who, having an affinity with the new producers, guarantee the success of their products (Bourdieu 2017, 253).

Some of the external changes in the Latin American field of power which have contributed to the recognition of these newest writers have already been explored in the previous chapters: the disillusionment of the utopic attitude during the 1960s with end of the aura surrounding the Cuban Revolution as well as the rise of oppressive right-wing dictatorships in the 1970s and 1980s; the implementation of neoliberal capitalism; and, the cultural effects of globalisation. The effects on Latin American literary space have also been considered, most notably in the rise in dominance of the political pole in literary production during the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, and its steady substitution as governing pole (resulting from numerous factors both literary—Boom and bestsellerism—and economic, such as neoliberal structural adjustment) and the rise of the commercial pole through popular culture. This can be seen as much by the hyperpresence of the writers of the Boom and Postboom, the publishing dominance of commercial publishing houses such as Planeta, Grijalbo Mondadori, and Alfaguara, and the generation of new categories of readers at the local level, as was demonstrated by the *nueva narrativa chilena*, and which, on the one hand, *McOndo* attempted to generate at the Latin American level.

As such, in relation to these macrotransformations, it is possible to understand the various micro-level position-takings in the *McOndo* stories: from the political disavowal, the increased recourse to popular culture for the construction and connection with new categories of consumers, to the choice of setting, and the selection of language and idiom. Contrary to the claims of the chorus of critics cited above, while these elements might not be considered innovative or "new" (in a traditional aesthetic sense), they nonetheless represent and incarnate a unique literary moment in Latin American literary history, historicising Latin American literary chronology and, in turn, becoming canonical.

6.2 Politics and Pop Culture

As was noted in the aforementioned critiques, when compared to the Postboom, the literature in *McOndo* has been questioned as uncreative particularly in their treatment of popular culture, something which de Rosso (2014) has shown to be false[11]. Nevertheless, these

[11] Ezequiel de Rosso (2014) has been one of the few critics to comparatively analyse the relationship of the *McOndo* narrators and their literature to popular culture with those of earlier periods, analysis which reveals some

references to popular culture in the *McOndo* stories have had the effect of positioning these characters, and by association these authors, within broader debates regarding the place of mass media in literature and extra-literary political discourses surrounding the globalisation of culture.

For some critics, this further justifies the labels of apathy and neoliberal apology which were discussed in the previous section. For example, as has been mentioned, Diana Palaversich's concern for the representation of Third World Macondo, leads her to conclude that the majority of *McOndo* texts uncritically represent the experiences of a privileged sector of society revealing a so-called postmodern neoliberalism. However, critiques such as these fail to acknowledge the political ambiguity of these in-text pop cultural references, as de Rosso (2014) clarifies: '[t]hose who are excluded in that recognition cannot stop seeing *McOndo* as an exhibition of the banality of "the lives of youth". Those who, on the other hand, understand the reference, perceive a celebration of those references'[12] (92-3). As such, while Palaversich's interpretation sees these references as a celebration of neoliberalism, on the other hand a conservative critic such as Ignacio Valente (1992) interprets them as ephemeral banality, evident in his review of Fuguet's *Mala onda*[13]. Critics who have labelled the writers of *McOndo* neoliberal ideologues for their supposedly uncritical stance with which they represent their contemporary experience and consumer culture, also only rely on a surface reading of the text, which as Amar Sánchez (2001) argues, have a 'tendency to assimilate these texts to the world they represent', essentially forgetting that 'in literature, meaning follows paths more complicated and challenging than a merely linear reading would allow' (215). Thus, how can

notable differences. Firstly, de Rosso (2014) argues that while for the writers of the sixties and seventies popular culture represented a kind of counterculture or rebelliousness, in the stories of *McOndo* popular culture has entered the mainstream and is no longer considered a rebellious act, but rather an inescapable fact of contemporary experience (85). Secondly, de Rosso (2014) argues, while the characters in the literature of La Onda were *consumers* of popular culture, some of the characters in the stories of *McOndo* are also *producers* of popular culture (85). Further to this second point we can consider the very pop cultural careers of the writers: Fuguet and Gómez pop cultural *Zona de Contacto* and *Cuentos con walkman*, the simultaneously literary and screen careers of a number of the writers such as Jaime Bayly and Martín Casariego in terms of their film and television screenplays, and Alberto Fuguet, Ray Loriga and Martín Rejtman's screenwriting, directing and producing of a number of films in each of their nations. And while almost all of the writers have some connection to print and media journalism, there are also talk show hosts among them, Jaime Bayly with his late night talk show *Bayly* on MEGA TV in Miami and distributed in the United States, Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Peru and Costa Rica; Jordi Soler who was a radio presenter and producer for Radio ROCK 101 (1990-95) and Radioactivo 98.5 (1996-2000), and to a lesser extent the late Gustavo Escanlar who during 2003-2006 co-hosted the show *Zona Urbana* and later from 2006-2008 was a co-host of *Bendita TV*.

[12] 'Quienes se ven excluidos de ese reconocimiento no pueden dejar de ver en *McOndo* una exhibición de la banalidad de "la vida de los jóvenes". Quienes, por el contrario, registran el reconocimiento, perciben una celebración de las referencias' (De Rosso 2014, 92-3).

[13] 'Fuguet se especializa en lo más tonto que el alma adolescente pueda albergar, rindiendo un culto desproporcionado a lo más efímero de la moda juvenil del día' (Valente 1992, 5).

we understand the relationship between pop culture and politics in the literature of *McOndo* as position-taking within the space of works available to these authors generally, and in the *McOndo* anthology specifically?

In the prologue to *McOndo*, the change in dichotomy from pen/rifle to Windows 95/Macintosh for authors of this generation was symbolically used to highlight a generational attitude against the politicising forces of expectation on their literature. As such, in the prologue there is an overt rejection of the Boom and Postboom literary vocations which would render writers spokespersons for their nation and whose literature must represent their national cultures as emanations of the people. Instead, the prologue emphasised literary autonomy through a disavowal of revolutionary or even politico-literary activism through literature (even though paradoxically, for the *McOndo* prologue and texts, they appear to be presenting and evoking their own national and regional narratives, as will be seen). Consistent with this idea, there is a clear absence of political overtone in the stories of *McOndo*: in other words, *McOndo* is not as discursively political or even testimonial like some of the literature of the Postboom and which some critics have evidently come to expect of Latin American letters. Sergio Gómez's comments shed some light on the shift in the conception of the authorial role which this generation experienced:

> [i]n the seventies—years in which I didn't write—I think there was a lot of research based on asking and challenging oneself about the role of the author. One of the big things that changes in the nineties is to not ask yourself that question. We realised that the role which was given to the author, to literature, or to artists was quite false: that idea of changing the world, something which isn't realistic […] And that is interesting, because if I remember what I thought in that time, the role of the author was much more basic: we wanted to tell good stories and that someone by your side would read them as good stories, would be interested in the story, that they would stand out, would provoke them, or move them. It wasn't about changing the world, nor changing the country, or changing anything. It was almost about changing an emotional state, nothing more[14] (Gómez 2015, personal interview).

And yet, apparent equally in Gómez's statement about authorial vocation, as well as the stories themselves, there is a disavowal of the grand cultural or national narratives of the past: from the foundational literature which attempted to capture the landscape or sociological realities and put forward a national identity, to the idealistic or political allegories of other eras. While works such as these have their place in their respective national canons and represent an

[14] 'En los años setenta—años en que yo no escribía—yo creo que mucha investigación se basaba en preguntarse y exigirse cuál era el rol del escritor. Una de las grandes cosas que cambia en los noventa es no hacerse esa pregunta. Nos dimos cuenta de que ese rol que se le daba al escritor, a la literatura o a los artistas era bastante falso: eso de cambiar el mundo, no tiene un sentido real […]. Y eso es interesante porque si yo recuerdo lo que yo pensaba en esa época, el rol de escritor era bastante más básico: queríamos contar buenas historias y que alguien que estuviera al lado tuyo las leyera como buenas historias, que le interesara la historia, que llamaran la atención, que los provocaran, que los emocionaran. No era ni cambiar el mundo, ni cambiar el país, ni cambiar nada. Casi era cambiar un estado emocional, nada más' (Gómez 2015, personal interview).

indispensable part of the foundation (and continuation) of national literary spaces, by contrast, the writers of *McOndo* appear to resist this kind of ambition, focusing, as was stated in the prologue, on the private lives of individuals, on the simple goal of being read and understood as narratives, and eliciting some emotional response from their reader.

In *McOndo* the stories are largely episodes, memories, or moments with very limited narrative development of the story or its internal chronology and are most often narrated in the first person. The stories include a divorcee's nocturnal drives through an unnamed city (Forn 1996); an elderly homosexual man's recounting of his selective biography (Fresán 1996); a struggling artist's wandering through life bewildered as much by his romantic relationship as by his very friends (Rejtman 1996); an international student's letter to his girlfriend back home confessing his infidelity (Paz Soldán 1996); the traumatic traffic accident and carjacking of a upper class young woman (Gamboa 1996); a tourist being led on a wild goose chase with a hustler sex-worker (R. Soto 1996); a Chilean fleeing his homeland to the U.S.-Mexico border to escape from a life crisis, his family, and reassess his life (Fuguet 1996); a salacious dialogue between two acquaintances about their mutual friends whose wedding they have just attended (Gómez 1996); a group of young advertising consultants who listen to stories of their bosses' romantic escapades with a mysterious woman (Valencia 1996); a young man recalling his run-ins with a series of people from across the globe (Casariego 1996); the recollections and musings of a hypersomniac (Loriga 1996); the homosexual awakening of a Madrilenian nightclubber (Ángel Mañas and Domínguez 1996); the mystical sex ritual of a married couple (Soler 1996); the night of a young band's final concert and break up (Toscana 1996); the transient "rock star life" of a talk show actor (Yehya 1996); the back-and-forth drama of a closeted homosexual relationship between Peru and Florida (Bayly 1996); and a journalist's sexual/journalistic experiment in his weekly newspaper column (Escanlar 1996). The narrative intimacy and episodic focus of many of these narratives place greater focus on storytelling than on story-*setting*, and, as such, resist being read as social portrayals or overtly politically committed national commentaries of the naturalist tradition. This, however, does not mean that politics cannot be read in these stories, but that the imaginative or storytelling quality appears predominant over the discursive or descriptive/representational aspects of the texts.

Sergio Gómez acknowledged this problematic surface reading of the texts as uncritical of the contemporary world and lifestyle they represented, but he notes the possibility of an alternative political critique:

> Chile was entering the contemporary world. And in some way these books [*Cuentos con walkman* and *McOndo*] represented that entrance to the contemporary world. One could put it

> like that, and it probably was an uncritical entrance, but that is just reading the surface, because deep down I now realise that it is indeed critical[15] (Gómez 2015, personal interview).

In response to these surface readings which interpret this lack of political overtone in *McOndo* as an apathetic or apolitical stance, Amar Sánchez and Daniel Noemí[16] have provided a deeper political context for reading the political in these stories. Amar Sánchez (2001) argues that evident in these stories written in the post-Pinochet, post-Argentinian military dictatorship, and Fujimori eras '[a]ll possibility of utopia has ended; indeed, *the non-place is the opposite of utopia*' (214), citing the French critic Marc Augé[17]. For Amar Sánchez (2001), through their mediatised outsider-characters the stories of *McOndo* 'define the political moment in which they are produced: hostile cities where they no longer belong; the lonely individualism of subjects—eyes fixed on a screen or shut off from the world by the music of a walkman—illustrate a landscape in the aftermath of disaster' (214). In this political reading of the *McOndo* stories, it is what is not apparent in the stories—the assumed background knowledge—which gives the critic a clue regarding the political discourse of the texts: the state of hopelessness. A number of the stories confirm this through the presence of numerous anomic or outsider characters—for example, Equis in 'El vértigo horizontal' (Forn 1996), Willi in 'Señales captadas en el corazón de una fiesta' (Fresán 1996), the artist in 'Mi estado físico' (Rejtman 1996), Pablo in 'La verdad o las consecuencias' (Fuguet 1996), Roberto in 'La noche da una vida difícil' (Toscana 1996), the protagonist of 'La gente de látex' (Yehya 1996), Felipe in 'Extrañando a Diego' (Bayly 1996), and the journalist in 'Gritos y susurros' (Escanlar 1996). What has been mistakenly interpreted as a celebration by some critics, ought to be understood as an implicit evaluation of the meaninglessness and impossibility of utopia in the aftermath of macroeconomic and political transformations of recent history.

On this last point, the Mexican author Naief Yehya's story 'La gente de látex' is significant, as while on the surface through its portrayal of the life of a television star Yehya's story can be read as among the most mass medial in *McOndo*, on a deeper level it is also among

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[15] 'Chile estaba entrando en el mundo contemporáneo. Y de alguna forma estos libros [*Cuentos con walkman* y *McOndo*] representaban esa entrada al mundo contemporáneo. Uno podría decirlo así, pero una entrada poco crítica, probablemente, pero eso es leer sobre la superficie, porque en el fondo hoy en día yo ya me doy cuenta que sí es crítica' (Gómez 2015, personal interview).

[16] In a similar vein, Daniel Noemí (2008) has argued that they portray and problematise contemporary social interaction through a 'visualización visceral y traumática de la realidad' and '[i]ndican y apuntan a la transformación del mundo y la Sociedad y desde ese trabajo, donde la violencia y el sexo, la historia y las drogas, el fracas y el exceso, permiten pensar alternativas para lo político y la política' (95).

[17] Jonatán Martín Gómez (2015) has studied how Alberto Fuguet in particular creates characters experiencing periods of existential transition as well as situating them in physical spaces of transition or non-places in both his narrative and filmic production. He also notes how Alberto Fuguet has engaged directly with Marc Augé's theory of non-places in essays.

the most critical of the role and influence of this kind of mass media in society. His story, while to begin with appears to be a typical celebration of a child's dream of fame come true, ends up chronicling the monotony, emptiness, and fickleness of working in the world of show business:

> [a]s a kid I always wanted to live in hotels. I dreamt about the glamour of tours, planes, the highway and the anonymous asepsis of recently disinfected bathrooms. My dream came true [...] But in a short time this life of activity and freedom appeared for what it really was, a repetitive and monotonous cycle, traversed continually by the same people. The latex people[18] (Yehya 1996, 215).

The so-called 'latex people' ('gente de látex') are, for the protagonist, the paid actors on popular Mexican talk shows which exploded in popularity during the 1980s (much like *The Jerry Springer Show* in the United States). Here the rock n' roll glamour coveted by the failed Rockstar wannabes in other stories from 'Señales captadas en el corazón de una fiesta' by Fresán (1996) and 'La noche de una vida difícil' by Toscana (1996), is ironised in Yehya's story. In all his travelling around Mexico, the unnamed television dramatist in the story spends days bunkered in his hotel room watching television and taking drugs, and is rushed—at his own reluctance—through the repetitive daily transit from airports, to hotels or movie sets (Yehya 1996, 215-18). As such, by entering the world of celebrity Yehya narrates the vanity and fakery of the mass media world by stripping back the latex and false glamour masking the dream of celebrity. The lifestyle and work of the latex people is exposed as a low-budget production, scripted and performed by second-rate talk show actors in order to satisfy the guilty pleasure and hunger for scandal and drama of great numbers of television viewers. While these shows present themselves as "real-life" *telenovelas* used to expose the "real" controversies, scandals, and drama of "everyday" citizens, the reality in Yehya's story is revealed to be just as much an illusion as the coveted life of celebrity. As such, the numerous instances of commercially successful aspirants in Yehya's, but also Toscana's (with Roberto's failed music career) and even Bayly's (with Felipe's pitiable pursuit of his successful and unkind lover Diego) stories, who are either unsuccessful, miserable, and despondent, are anything but celebrations of modern times.

Beyond the political reading of these texts, however, it is possible to interpret a literary-strategic purpose behind these pop cultural references. While these references to popular culture might, in some senses, appear as plain exhibitionism or political statements to some, from a literary-strategic perspective facilitated by Bourdieu and Casanova's analysis, they can

[18] 'Desde niño siempre quise vivir en hoteles. Soñaba con el glamur de las giras, los aviones, la carretera y la asepsia anónima de los baños recién desinfectados. Mi sueño se cumplió [...] Pero en poco tiempo esta vida en movimiento y libertad se presentó como lo que en realidad era, un circuito repetitivo y monótono, recorrido continuamente por la misma gente. La gente de látex' (Yehya 1996, 215).

be read as directed towards the construction of new categories of readers, or 'a whole generation of young adults'[19] through their shared experience of a similar bastard culture (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 20). In the same way in which, through references to high-brow culture, a writer constructs a restricted cultured readership by assuming their reader's comprehension of symbols of great cultural capital, consequently alienating those readers incapable of understanding them, so too with references to young adult subculture (and increasingly mainstream popular culture), this literature also constructs a particular readership among those acquainted with those references. This particular use of the language of young Latin American adults, as well as references to contemporary young adult lifestyle and culture in the stories of *McOndo*, are seen in particular through references to international consumer brands[20], international popular music[21], and television/film[22]. As de Rosso (2014) has argued, 'the texts in *McOndo* assume a reader knowledgeable in the ways of contemporary youth culture, someone who does not need an explanation of who Ned Flanders is [...] or what a Big

[19] '[A] toda a[sic] una generación de adultos recientes' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 20).

[20] References to international consumer brands identify the consumption patterns of characters with a preference for American food from McDonald's and Burger King (Rejtman 1996 62, 68; Bayly 1996, 230), Coca-Cola (Toscana 1996, 208; Bayly 1996, 228, 234) and Gatorade (Fuguet 1996, 111); and numerous references to international clothing brands such as Nike (Toscana 1996, 203) which in some cases highlight the class of these consumers, with the wealthier characters of Bayly's (1996) 'Extrañando a Diego' having a preference for Calvin Klein (232), Armani (236), Gap (233), and shopping in Soho (233).

[21] International popular music is also widely referenced across the stories in *McOndo*, emphasising the universal experience of global consumption, something which the character in Fresán's (1996) 'Señales captadas en el corazón de una fiesta' alludes to: 'No importaba la distancia y menos aún la diferencia de idiomas. La *Wild Wild Life* era la misma aquí, allá y en todas partes' (36). Other references include: songs by Velvet Underground and Nico, The Kinks, Randy Newman, The Pet Shop Boys, and David Byrne and Talking Heads (Fresán 1996, 35-36), Genesis (Rejtman 1996, 62), Dire Straits (Rejtman 1996, 62; Toscana 1996, 206), Bob Dylan (Fuguet 1996, 130; Mañas and Domínguez 1996, 182), Freddy Mercury (Mañas and Domínguez 1996, 183), Smashing Pumpkins (Soler 1996, 199), Jimmy Page and Michael Jackson (Toscana 1996, 202, 204), Sting, Madonna, REM (Bayly 1996, 224, 228, 234), and Tom Waits (Escanlar 1996, 252). Much like *Cuentos con walkman* (1993), the characters in these stories demonstrate a preference for international popular music over local music with only two references to Hispanic music: Selena (Fuguet 1996, 110; Toscana 1996, 211) and Julio Iglesias (R. Soto 1996, 99).

[22] References to international television and cinema are presented as constitutive of this contemporary young adult lifestyle in which the characters waste time watching television or *zapping* (Forn 1996, 26; Fresán 1996, 43), use it to exercise (Rejtman 1996, 65) or learn how to cook (Fresán 1996, 51); watch *Videomatch* (Escanlar 1996, 242), Letterman (Bayly 1996, 230), Clutch Cargo and the Simpsons (Toscana 1996, 202, 205), the Discovery Channel and MTV Europe (Fuguet 1996, 112); are up-to-date with film and celebrity culture, demonstrated especially in Sergio Gómez's (1996) story 'Extrañas costumbres orales' in which there are references to '*Obsesión*' (136), '*topgan*' (143), 'doctor chivago' (143) '*rita heygour*' (134), '*yeremy airon*' (136), '*ton cruis*' (139), '*greis keli*' (141) and '*Omar charif*' (143); but elsewhere there are references to Tim Burton (Fresán 1996, 47), Steven Spielberg and horror director Wes Craven (Escanlar 1996, 253, 250), Stanley Kubrick (Valencia 1996, 161), and even Marilyn Monroe (Bayly 1996, 233). Consistent with the references in *Cuentos con walkman*, the frequency of international pop culture references is contrasted with the diminished reference to Hispanic cultural symbols of which there are very few: '*Siempre en domingo*' (Toscana 1996, 203), a reference to Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar (Escanlar 1996, 250) and the film *El lado oscuro del corazón* (Escanlar 1996, 250, 254).

Mac is'[23] (92). So when, for example, in Gustavo Escanlar's (1996) story, 'Gritos y susurros', the main character describes his look as 'very Don Johnson' (241), or in Jaime Bayly's (1996) story, 'Extrañando a Diego', when Diego is described by his lover as 'Brando (forty years ago)' (224), these are references which those complicit readers acquainted with the Hollywood icons will receive.

Clearly, however, this is not entirely new literary territory, as has been noted, the narratives of *McOndo* in this sense are an end-of-century culmination of this tradition (La Onda, Manuel Puig, Andrés Caicedo, etc.), rather than the expression of something entirely innovative. Nevertheless, as Amar Sánchez (2001) highlights, the narratives in *McOndo* are different in that, unlike the texts of these precursors—written during the Boom and Postboom and consistent with the formal experimentation of this period—, they do not manifest the same *avant-garde* intentions (210). There are of course some exceptions which, if we are to consider the proximity and distance of these texts to a McOndo aesthetic along a spectrum, there are those stories from which pop cultural references are entirely absent, such as Paz Soldán, Soler and Valencia's; or texts like Fresán's in which there is an altogether more aesthetic use of musical references than a typical McOndo cultural code[24]; and those whose texts appear to confirm this codified use of popular culture, most especially those by Toscana, Gómez, Bayly, Fuguet, and Mañas and Domínguez. And yet, as will be seen in the next chapter, even Toscana's use of these pop cultural codes would be betrayed by his later authorial admissions rejecting these kinds of narrative devices. The greater majority of the texts in *McOndo* are narrative texts with the *story*, over the formal *storytelling*, in mind, as such, in representing personal experiences of Latin American contemporary realities, the majority of these authors make varied references to popular culture which function, in a literary sense, as codes—McOndo codes, if you will—for recognition by a broader generation of readers who share the so-called 'similar bastard culture' mentioned by the editors in the prologue, and are capable of understanding these stories on the same (popular) level. It thus, also functions as a construction of a reading public, a market in which to be received and circulate, and indeed exist in the literary world.

While these references can have multiple interpretations—on the one extreme, as merely mundane cultural exhibitionism, and on the other, as a celebration of neoliberalism, but

[23] 'Los textos de *McOndo* postulan un lector sabio en los modos de la cultura joven contemporánea, alguien que no necesita que le expliquen quién es Ned Flanders [...] o qué es un Big Mac' (De Rosso 2014, 92).
[24] For a thick reading of Fresán's aesthetically driven musical references and how they relate to the story 'Señales captadas en el corazón de una fiesta', see: J. Andrew Brown 'An Archaeology of Digital Aesthetics' (2012).

also as a literary strategy—, they can also be interpreted as a postmodern questioning of traditional understandings of Latin American identity and culture when read in respect to the contribution of the prologue to this cultural debate. As Amar Sánchez (2001) highlights,

> [i]n this way, McOndo's insistence on urban culture, on Latin America's belonging to a globalized world, on the similarities of its mass and social codes with those of the First World, seems to be an explicit response to the dominant tradition. We can consider these narratives as the products of a double-edged strategy. One the one hand, they are heirs to a narrative that considers its link with mass culture as tension, appropriation, and difference. Nonetheless, these texts can no longer pretend to distance themselves from the culture that invades them—a culture that serves as the primary mode of access to experience (217).

The critical reception by some critics, which interpreted *McOndo* as an unambiguous celebration of neoliberalism and foreign culture, highlights the predominance of the *macondismo* fundamentalism or dominant tradition within which historical international influences considered "lo ajeno" are treated with suspicion. This knee-jerk response is in many senses understandable, as Latin America, as part of the Global South, has for centuries attempted to differentiate itself for its own cultural preservation, an identity and existence only further endangered by the threat perceived in globalisation by the Global North. As an aside, paradoxically, this defence is maintained despite the obvious fact that many historic cultural identifiers considered "lo propio" are unquestionably privileged and considered authentic despite their foreign or partially foreign origin: such as European heritage, the Spanish language, and historical racial *mestizaje*, precisely the argument which the *McOndo* editors make in the prologue.

As such, when interpreted through this debate, it is in this sense that the texts which employ this pop cultural codes appear to support the postmodern, hybridised, and pluralised view of Latin American identity presented in the prologue through the consideration of the Macondo/McOndo dichotomy. While the texts themselves overwhelmingly portray a more McOndo reality rather than the plurality of the vertiginous list of references in the prologue, this highlights how this generation of writers have positioned themselves within the space of works. The writers in *McOndo*, like many writers of previous generations and theirs too, also could have chosen other paths within the space of possibilities: to write about the countryside, the wilderness and threats from it or to it, the social and political issues of their time, and so on, but not within this anthology. Instead, and in part because of this editorial filter, the texts themselves position themselves through differentiation to this tradition, not merely through representation, but through questioning what constitutes "lo propio" (your/one's own) and "lo ajeno" (the foreign) in an increasingly globalised world, and in response to the dominant tradition in Latin America which has favoured cultural differentiation through a valorisation of "lo propio" over "lo ajeno". As such, the function of mass media in the literature of *McOndo*

must be understood as both a literary position-taking (in respect to their precursors), but equally, a response to the cultural and literary conceptualisation of Latin America. This question is similarly manifested in the locality which these texts choose to represent, contributing an urban imaginary, which according to Amar Sánchez (2001) is a natural fit: '[n]arrative linked to mass culture is by definition urban [...] the city is the ideal arena for the signs of mass culture to reign supreme' (211). As such, the *McOndiano* rejection of magical realism and their introduction of mass media culture into their fiction, represent both an aesthetic and literary-strategic accomplishment in their own literary identification and position-taking, which, looked at from the macroperspective, makes clear the appearance of a new literary temporality. There are differences between these texts and the texts of the Postboom which they have so often been equated with, as well as differences between the *McOndo* stories themselves, however, overall in the majority of the stories, there is an emphasis on *story* over and above an aesthetic concern with *storytelling*, and also a *narrative* emphasis on individual stories or brief episodes over a centrality on *setting* itself.

6.3 McOndo cities

Related to this question of the McOndo conceptualisation of *lo propio* and *lo ajeno*, is the question of the location of culture. Evident in the established binaries of Latin America's identity debate—such as foreign/autochthonous, regional/cosmopolitan and the place of the province and the centre—, are spatialised dynamics regarding the location of Latin America's authentic identity. This question of the location of identity is similarly apparent in Latin America's literary production. Within the narrative expression of this debate, the province appears as a dominant identifying territory, over the city[25]. As Josefina Ludmer has argued, '[t]erritorial imagination in Latin America has a history, which in the 20th Century constitutes the classics: Borges with the edges, Rulfo with Comala, Onetti with Santa María, García Márquez with Macondo'[26] (2010, 122).

Furthermore, the history of Latin American letters has demonstrated the durability and orthodoxy of rural imaginaries: from Andrés Bello's 'Silva a la agricultura de la zona tórrida'

[25] Owing to the significance of this spacialised discourse, I have decided to identify two distinct tendencies which are apparent in the *McOndo* stories and which relate to this discourse, firstly, the treatment of the city and urbanity in Section 6.3, and secondly, the treatment of the national framework through its deterritorialisation through travel and foreign setting in Section 6.4.

[26] 'La imaginación territorial en América Latina tiene una historia, que en el siglo XX constituye a los clásicos: Borges con las orillas, Rulfo con Comala, Onetti con Santa María, García Márquez con Macondo' (Ludmer 2010, 122).

(1823), the national *criollista* traditions, the internationalised regional novels of the 1920s (Gallegos, Güiraldes, Azuela, and Rivera), to the bestseller novels of the Boom and Postboom such as *Cien años de soledad* and *Un viejo que leía novelas de amor*. The projections in particular of those literatures which were met with international recognition and critical and commercial success—such as the telluric literature in the first period of the 20th Century, and certain writers and texts of the Boom and Postboom—, only further established this rural connection. So even while the Boom and Postboom had a great quantity of urban texts, these could not escape the framing of Latin American identity within the rural landscape as part of the governing *macondismo* cultural metaphor. While this point may seem at odds with my argumentation, the fact remains that despite the predominance of urban texts during this period, García Márquez—among the least urban writers among the authors of the Boom—was elevated as the preeminent figure of Latin American letters of the Boom (and ever since), further perpetuating this mistaken generalisation and supporting the *macondismo* fundamentalism. There is, indeed, a spacialised dimension to *macondismo* additional to the valorisation of indigenous and folkloric cultures within Latin America's self-definition explored earlier. These texts not only interrogated *how* to write, by placing emphasis on accuracy of representation and imaginative storytelling, but also engaged with and were appropriated as patrimony for extra-literary discourses on particular nation's or the broader region's authentic cultural reality.

This rural identitary orthodoxy had been challenged on many levels by social and traditional realism since the 1930s (in Chile by the *imaginistas* and increasingly from the Generation of the 50s), and even further by the writers of La Onda, Boom and Postboom writers who narrated predominantly urban realities. However, as is evidenced by the prologue to *McOndo*, this provincial theme remained powerful even to this end-of-century generation. As was mentioned in the previous section, the editors expressed a frustration with the valorisation of the rural over the urban, even going as far as to moralise this exotic differentiation (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 18). Notwithstanding the increased prevalence of urban literature from the second half of the 20th Century, the prologue to *McOndo* demonstrates how this question was still not settled, and the city was in many senses still in need of reclamation, not as a Trojan horse suspected for its welcoming acceptance of international cultures, but as representative of a genuine experience of Latin American contemporary reality, even amidst the polyphony and heterogeneity of a globalised world.

Consistent with this idea, is the privileging of contemporary urban narratives by the editors in their selection of stories of *McOndo*. Nevertheless, the treatment of the urban question, its representation, and obfuscation is dealt with in different ways by the writers in

McOndo. Urban Latin American settings such as Buenos Aires (Rejtman 1996), Bogotá (Gamboa 1996), Santiago (Gómez 1996), Guayaquil (Valencia 1996), Monterrey (Toscana 1996), Lima (Bayly 1996), Montevideo (Escanlar 1996), and La Habana (R. Soto 1996), are backdrops for the events of some of these stories. As such, the prologue to *McOndo* and to some extent the stories also, are presented as a contestation of the rural Macondo and an introduction to the urban land of McOndo, much like the prologue's taking up the question of the geographical location of Latin American identitary authenticity and questioning the governing metaphor for Latin America. Nevertheless, this urban setting cannot be considered to be serving a national end in the same sense as the criollistas' description of Chile's flora and fauna, or García Márquez's town of Macondo as a symbol for Latin America. As the editors themselves state about their reading of the stories, these writers disavow the nationalist demand, demonstrating the fading importance of national cultural representation and differentiation through literature:

> [t]he stories in *McOndo* are centred on private and individual realities [...] It would appear, when rereading these stories, that these writers were less worried about their public potential and for a long time have retired themselves to their private quarters. They are not social frescoes or collective sagas[27] (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 15).

The emphasis on telling private and individual stories renders mostly unnecessary any kind of description of place or society, with some authors not even identifying any location other than *an* apartment or *a* house (Paz Soldán 1996; Gómez 1996), hotel rooms (Yehya 1996; Fuguet 1996), or just *a* city where the actions of the story take place (Forn 1996; Fresán 1996).

To resist defining the city and instead favouring a more unidentified space for narration, is something which Josefina Ludmer (2010) has recognised as a fundamental denationalising shift in the Latin American literature of the 1990s: '[t]he name of the city can even be left out (as can the narration or the subjects of those fictions) and disappear, and so the trajectory, crossing of frontiers and vertigo are those of any city or those of "a city"'[28] (130). In Juan Forn's (1996) el 'El vértigo horizontal', '*the* city' ('*la* ciudad', emphasis added, 24)—far from being a straightforward setting—is used as a metaphor to express the emotional complexity of the protagonist's trauma. The insomniac, Equis (in English, X), is plagued by his ex-wife's final words and wish that he be by her side after she awakens from the cancer operation which, as the story eventuates, she does not survive. Equis only experiences relief from this regret and

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[27] 'Los cuentos de *McOndo* se centran en realidades individuales y privadas [...] Pareciera, al releer estos cuentos, que estos escritores se preocuparan menos de su contingencia pública y estuvieran retirados desde hace tiempo a sus cuarteles personales. No son frescos sociales ni sagas colectivas' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 15).

[28] 'El nombre de la ciudad puede llegar a vaciarse (como pueden vaciarse la narración o los sujetos de las ficciones) y desaparecer, y entonces el trayecto, el cruce de las fronteras y el vértigo son los de cualquier ciudad o los de "una ciudad"' (Ludmer 2010, 130).

anguish—and here enters the symbolic importance of the city—while crossing the indiscernible line which divides the city and the countryside. It is in this sense, that Forn (1996) illustrates this frustrated and failed love through the metaphor of the city: '[t]he border which separates love from disgrace is indiscernible. The border which separates the city from the countryside is just as indiscernible, everywhere'[29] (30). The final interactions show the complicated limbo-like existence of a "couple" which, with reluctance, choose not to be together despite having once been deeply in love and maintaining a close understanding of one another, of which there are a number of examples: '[s]he still knew his taste better than him', and once again; 'she said, reading his mind, as always'[30] (Forn 1996, 29). Equis' unrequited *eros* love for his ex-wife is at odds with her selfless *agape* care for him: '[m]ore than his ex, she was like his younger sister: the one who had cared for him until she left home in search of her independence'[31] (Forn 1996, 29). And Equis is only relieved from the anguish surrounding this tragedy when he traverses the interstice between the city and the countryside, in some sense, inhabiting the same kind of limbo which defined their final moments together.

The city in this particular story is not functioning solely as a setting for the narrative events, nor is the setting being described for the establishment of a distinct, differentiated cultural and natural phenomena like the *criollista* literature of previous generations. Instead, the setting has been given a further narrative purpose for understanding the emotional dimension of the story. Consistent with this, the majority of the texts in *McOndo* do not construct narrative cartographies of the city in the Flaubertian sense, nor in relation to a collage of cultural associations or stereotypes such as Baudelaire's Paris or Galdós' Madrid (as Amar Sánchez 2001 notes). David Toscana's (1996) 'La noche de una vida difícil', is one of the only stories with this kind of narrative description by way of a brief flâneurian episode with Roberto's wandering through the Macroplaza at the heart of Monterrey, and later past a number of local monuments[32]. Similarly, in 'Sólo hablamos de la lluvia' (R. Soto 1996), the Costa Rican protagonist is led on a cat-and-mouse game through the historical district of (what could

[29] 'La frontera que separa el amor de la desgracia es indiscernible. La frontera que separa la ciudad del campo es igual de indiscernible, en todas partes' (Forn 1996, 30).

[30] The full quotes read: 'Ella pidió la comida por los dos, sin mirar siquiera el menú. Ella seguía sabiendo sus gustos mejor que él mismo' and 'Ella quería saber, ahora, con quién había pasado él la Nochebuena. / Él dijo que prefería no hablar de eso, básicamente porque no quería enterarse con quién la había pasado ella. ‹‹Tonto. Estuve en casa de mamá. Me quedé a dormir ahí››, dijo ella, leyéndole la mente, como siempre. Y le acarició apenas la mano' (Forn 1996, 29).

[31] 'Más que su ex, parecía su hermana menor: la que había cuidado de él hasta abandonar el hogar en pos de su independencia' (Forn 1996, 29).

[32] Monuments such as the Fuente de Neptuno, la estatua del obrero, Faro del Comercio, the Catedrál Metropolitana de Nuestra Señora de Monterrey, the Casino Monterrey, and the Banco Mercantil (Toscana 1996).

be assumed to be) La Habana in taxis and by foot, and from nightclubs, cheap hotels, and even to the prostitute-hustler Lourdes' modest bedsit.

These two exceptions aside, the stories in which the city of location is specified lack any stereotypical or characteristic signifiers, with only passing mentions of a suburb such as Flores to identify the setting as Buenos Aires, famous streets of Santiago or Mexico City, or a plaza in Montevideo[33]. Other cities are identified by a passing mention of location, but there are little descriptions of these cities[34], as though, in some senses, these writers assume there is nothing to be gained from describing these settings which, like all cities, share so much in common. Dacal, a publicist in one of the stories, describes how he found very little difference between his native Guayaquil and Caracas during his work visits: 'I didn't feel much difference between Caracas and Guayaquil, save the size of the first'[35] (Valencia 1996, 161). As such, as Amar Sánchez (2001) has argued:

> [t]he world has become a virtual space, it is just a mediating image: in this way, phrases such as "strange cities," "empty streets," and "mere images" have emerged. Cities have lost their uniqueness, their cultural or tourist charm; they have become just like everything else which is crossed by mediating experience. There are no longer spaces defined or perceived through their signs; a new space replaces the real. If the representation of the city in texts necessarily implies an attempt to interpret the relationship between human beings and society, or a reading of the outcome of that interaction, the McOndo writers appear to have been[sic] severed this link (212).

Commenting on Valencia's short story collection *La luna nómada*, similarly set in Guayaquil and Quito, the Ecuadorian critic Wilfrido H. Corral (2006) responded to traditional national critics who demanded more local colour from Valencia's work, arguing that:

> [i]t is precisely the lack of local colour which makes Valencia one of the most valuable narrators of the moment; the city runs through these stories like a ghost or antidote against folklore. The cities are centres of excess and individualism. In this sense Spanish-American cities are no

[33] In 'Mi estado físico' there is a mention of a famous suburb in Buenos Aires clarifying this as the setting for this story: '[n]os encontramos en un video bar de Flores' (Rejtman 1996, 61). In 'Amor a distancia', while the setting is established as Berkeley university, the narrator's Cochabambian origins are identified firstly, via the mention of a few famous sites, and later more explicitly, when commenting on the city's boringness (Paz Soldán 1996, 74). In 'Extrañas costumbres orales', Santiago is identified via references to the streets Pedro de Valdivia and Eliodoro Yáñez (Gómez 1996, 133). While the setting for 'La mujer químicamente compatible' is the house of the protagonist Vancouver, Mexico City is identified as the broader location through a reference to La Avenida de los Insurgentes (Soler 1996, 198). In 'Gritos y susurros' Montevideo is first identified as the setting with a mention of La Plaza de los Bomberos (Escanlar 1996, 247), and later the suburb Parque del Plata.

[34] In 'Sólo hablamos de la lluvia', the location is only inferentially identified by a series of references, firstly to Lourdes' first love, a drug addict sent from Venezuela to here ('aquí'), '[l]as doradas playas del Caribe' (R. Soto 1996, 95-6), and also some description of the 'arquitectura colonia' (98) including the Hotel Continental, a possible renaming of the famous Hotel Nacional de Cuba, judging by its description. Rodrigo Soto has confirmed however, that '[n]unca se dice que es Cuba. Yo escogí no hablar de Cuba para que no se leyera en clave política estrecha, porque no era esa la historia que me interesaba' (2016, personal interview), further evidence of this generation's attempt to distance themselves from politicised readings.

[35] '[N]o mucha diferencia se me hacía entre Caracas y Gayaquil [sic], salvando el tamaño de la primera' (Valencia 1996, 161).

> different to any other, and that is one reason why it would not be necessary to identify or specify them[36] (496).

The absence of any culturally specific or representative description of place highlights, firstly—as Amar Sánchez (2001) also argues—, a questioning of the link between society and the individual, something consistent with the generally anomic and outsider nature of the majority of the protagonists, and a link also severed in the prologue through the revocation of grand narratives or social frescoes (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 15). And secondly, this lack of national representation also highlights the fragmentation of traditional conceptions of the national (defined through differentiation), or even the possibility of conceiving national identities as a result of the globalisation of territories and identities and the increasingly difficult possibility of differentiation.

However, when characters do experience the city in a way more accessible to the reader, they do so principally through screens and technologies, or their associations with space are profoundly mediated, lending further credit to the interpretation of these texts as highly mediatised forms of narration. For example, rather than experiencing the cities they frequent first-hand, high-flying characters, such as the successful publicist Dacal in 'Pulsión', finds solace in his favourite films and television commercials as well as the TV shows he keeps up with in Caracas, Mexico, and Buenos Aires (Valencia 1996, 162). A similar bunkered existence which was already noted of the protagonist in Yehya's (1996) 'La gente de látex'. Other characters experience the city not from ground level, but from a distance such as the vertical vantage point of their room with a view to the city down below. In 'Pulsión', Dacal describes the city of Guayaquil which exists *down below* ('allá abajo') always in respect to this vertical dimension[37] (Valencia 1996, 162). In 'Extrañando a Diego', Felipe's recollection of Lima is from the *nice view* ('linda vista') possible from his boyfriend's Miraflores apartment[38] (Bayly 1996, 234). And in 'Gritos y susurros' and 'Extrañas costumbres orales', Montevideo and Santiago are described as beautiful cities from the viewpoint of an apartment[39] (Escanlar 1996, 252; Gómez 1996, 137).

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[36] 'Es precisamente la ausencia del color local lo que hace de Valencia uno de los más valiosos narradores del momento; la ciudad recorre estos cuentos como un fantasma o antídoto contra el folclore. Las ciudades son centro de exceso y de individualismo. En ese sentido las ciudades hispanoamericanas no se diferencian de ninguna otra, y ésa es una razón por la cual no sería necesario identificarlas o especificarlas' (Corral 2006, 496).

[37] '[M]iraba por la ventana y veía sus calles, allá abajo, todavía bajo la última luz de la tarde, sabiendo que dentro de poco se oscurecerían' (Valencia 1996, 162).

[38] 'Fui a la ventana. El mar negro, el morro, la cruz iluminada que hicieron cuando vino el Papa. Linda vista. Cuando me voy de Lima, ésa es la imagen que más extraño' (Bayly 1996, 234).

[39] In 'Gritos y susurros', the narrator states 'fuimos a mi apartamento. Montevideo, desde un octavo piso, a veces, puede ser una ciudad perfecta' (Escanlar 1996, 252), and in 'Extrañas costumbres orales', Flora comments on the

Additionally, there are also a number of characters in the *McOndo* stories who observe the city through a car or train window, such as Equis in 'El vértigo horizontal' (Forn 1996), the main character in 'Sólo hablamos de la lluvia' (R. Soto 1996), Pablo in 'La verdad o las consecuencias' (Fuguet 1996), and Clarita in 'La vida está llena de cosas así' (Gamboa 1996). These examples suggest how in the *McOndo* narratives '[n]othing can be seen or imagined in the city unless it is *through* a mediating form' (Amar Sánchez 2001, 213). In narrations like these, the visual and sonic stimuli that the observer experiences through the glass pane of the window, recreates the gaze of the spectator before a TV screen (Amar Sánchez 2001, 213). As such, like Amar Sánchez argues, the city is not experienced in a first-hand way, but observed from the television screen, the hotel room, apartment, or the train or car window, something that has the effect of transforming the city into a virtual space viewed by the protagonist and in turn by the reader.

Nevertheless, it is in this respect in particular, that some of the texts enter political discourse in their representation and perspective on issues such as social inequality and the geographical manifestation of the binary between Third World Macondo and First World McOndo. For example, Pablo, the protagonist in Fuguet's 'La verdad o las consecuencias', makes observations from a train window on seeing the colliding-yet-divided urban stain of El Paso and Ciudad Juárez. This image leads him to reflect on the spacialised economic divide back home:

> [t]he old people on the train peer through the window and watch horrified the spectacle of the Third World lying in wait so few meters away. El Paso can be one of the strangest cities in the world. It's as if Santiago were two countries, Pablo thinks. On one side of the Mapocho, the United States. On the other side, Mexico. La Vega is Ciudad Juárez and Providencia the USA. But that contrast falls short. This is much more[40] (Fuguet 1996, 120).

Pablo's unsettling realisation of the comparable spacialised economic divide in his native Santiago, compared to the magnified example before him, highlights the profoundly fragmentary nature of the 21st Century Latin American city: Santiago is understood as two countries divided, Providencia, an Americanised First World, and La Vega, a threatening Third World 'lying in wait' ('acechando', Fuguet 1996, 120). While the realities of this divide are not the representative prerogative of these stories, this remains an important political allusion. As Josefina Ludmer (2010) has argued, '[t]he Latin American cities of literature are territories

beauty of Santiago seen from the apartment: '[s]ino fuera por ese hotel que está al frente—dijo Flora—. La cordillera se ve rosada ¿Qué ciudad del mundo puede ofrecer un espectáculo así?' (Gómez 1996, 137).

[40] 'Los ancianos del tren se asoman por la ventana y miran aterrorizados el espectáculo del Tercer Mundo acechando a tan pocos metros. El Paso puede ser una de las ciudades más raras del mundo. Es como si Santiago fuera dos países, piensa Pablo. A un lado del Mapocho, Estados Unidos. Al otro, México. La Vega es Ciudad Juárez y Providencia es USA. Pero ese contraste queda corto. Esto es mucho más' (Fuguet 1996, 120).

of strangeness and vertigo with cartographies and trajectories which mark zones, lines and limits, between fragments and ruins'[41] (129-130). The social positioning of the characters within this spatialised socio-economic divide is identified through the abovementioned gaze from above, within, and *here*. These divisions limit their experience of the city in some cases leading to the near erasure of unfamiliar territories in the minds of the protagonists, such as Felipe's view of Lima as the restricted barrio alto of Miraflores: '[i]t had to happen. Lima (or the few streets which my friends and I call Lima) is too small'[42] (Bayly 1996, 228). Here, while acknowledging in passing the spacialised economic division of Santiago and Lima, in some *McOndo* stories, characters are dislocated in other sectors allowing for a repositioning of this gaze and also a narrative which not only alludes to this social divide but chooses to narratively explore it. It is in this sense that some of the stories of *McOndo*, while consistent with the prologue in their questioning of the possibility of national narratives[43], in other ways highlight an unambiguously conflicted relationship with the modern city and their positioning in it.

The city as virtual space, a fragmented cartography, and an unsettling habitat, are ideas made especially apparent in Santiago Gamboa's story 'La vida está llena de cosas así'. In this story, Clarita, an upper-class young woman, experiences a series of misadventures, including a car abduction, which take her away from the safety of her wealthy suburbia and to 'the *other* side of Bogotá' ('al otro lado de Bogotá', emphasis mine) (Gamboa 1996, 84). Those distant parts of the city that she had only seen on television she is introduced to through these events:

> I had been two times through *that* zone towards the Red Ballroom of the Hotel Tequendama, but from *there* to *over there*, never. Not even the Cathedral or the Palace of Justice. I knew them from having seen them on television [44] (Gamboa 1996, 86, emphasis mine).

The use of words like 'the *other* side', '*that* zone', and '*over there*' which Clarita uses to describe those parts of Southern Bogotá, highlight the spacialised dimension of social and class division: '[t]he South was for me the lion's den'[45] (Gamboa 1996, 87). To a lesser extent, in Rodrigo Soto's (1996) story, 'Sólo hablamos de la lluvia', the protagonist, a Costa Rican tourist, is dislocated not only on a national level but also through this economic dimension. Like many of the prostitute Lourdes' past clients, the protagonist of the story also falls for her

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[41] 'Las ciudades latinoamericanas de la literatura son territorios de extrañeza y vértigo con cartografías y trayectos que marcan zonas, líneas y límites, entre fragmentos y ruinas' (Ludmer 2010, 129-30).

[42] 'Tenía que ocurrir. Lima (o las pocas calles que mis amigos y yo llamamos Lima) es demasiado chica' (Bayly 1996, 228).

[43] '[N]o se sienten representantes de alguna ideología y ni siquiera de sus propios países' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 19).

[44] '‹‹Yo había estado dos veces por esa zona yendo al Salón Rojo del Hotel Tequendama, pero de ahí para allá nunca. Ni siquiera la Catedral o el Palacio de Justicia. Los conocía de haberlos visto en televisión››' (Gamboa 1996, 86).

[45] 'El sur era para mí la boca del lobo' (Gamboa 1996, 87).

charms and is taken on a humiliating (and unsuccessful) game of cat-and-mouse. His panic, embarrassment, and self-pity expressed throughout the story are as much about the scenario as about his unease with the territories he is traversing: from the 'semi deserted streets, flanked by old buildings of colonial architecture', which sadden him and cause him to panic ('What am I doing here?'[46]), to the harsh atmosphere of Lourdes' modest bedsit apartment (R. Soto 1996, 97-8, 104).

Returning to 'La vida está llena de cosas así', Clarita is affected by the particularly bleak and frenzied image of Bogotá before her. She is dizzied and frightened while driving among the darkened buildings in disrepair and the shanties made of plastic and canvas; the narrow, unsealed streets full of pot holes and lined with rubbish and rubble; the industrial workshops and fruit stalls; and the loitering and public drinking by the shoeless and shirtless locals[47]. For Clarita, this trip from her limited experience of the city through malls and fine restaurants, hotels and country clubs, to the dizzying chaos of the South with its poverty, poor dwellings, disrepair, and desperate locals, would end up being nothing other than traumatic: eventually seeking counselling from a psychiatrist in Boston (Gamboa 1996, 84). Nevertheless, in this example one can see the vulnerability of this virtual threshold through which Clarita constructs and perceived the virtual city represented by the glass windscreen of the car. In the story this virtual screen is both physically and figuratively shattered via the frantic carjacking by a group of locals in order to rush a labouring mother in a critical state to the nearest hospital:

> [o]n both sides, the windows of the car became a mosaic of hands begging, offering her stolen necklaces, cigarettes and packets of Kleenex [...] While she desperately pressed the pedal, she felt an army of hands banging against all of the windows of the Alpine. Stop! Stop! Clarita also screamed in panic: Go away! Leave me alone! The men struggled to open the doors until one of them lifted a brick and shattered the back window[48] (Gamboa 1996, 86-7).

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[46] 'Calles semidesiertas, flanqueadas por viejos edificios de arquitectura colonial [...] Las calles me devuelven la tristeza que inadvertidamente se instaló en mi pecho. ¿Qué hago aquí?' (97-8) and '¿Qué estoy haciendo aquí?' (Gamboa 1996, 101).

[47] 'Los edificios se oscurecieron, la calle se hizo más estrecha y Clarita comenzó a ver basuras y tenderetes en todas las esquinas. Vio las busetas cambiando de carril, las carretillas de fruta, los gamines empujando carros de balineras y sintió mareo [...] Avanzó dos esquinas mirando con aprensión los talleres de mecánica, las tiendas, los edificios desconchados, la gente descalza con el torso desnudo, los grupos de dos o tres sentados en las entradas de las casas tomando cerveza y aguardiente, oyendo radio.

Una vez más dobló a la derecha y el paisaje volvió a sobrecogerla: la calle destapada, con cráteres llenos de agua que hacían golpear los bajos del Alpine contra el suelo [...]

Pasó al lado de una montaña de escombros y vio un muro de ladrillo a medio construir que terminaba en una casa de lona y plásticos; en la esquina, en un hidrante abierto, varias mujeres llenaban galones de agua y una cuadrilla de niños descalzos revoloteaba alrededor' (Gamboa 1996, 86-87).

[48] 'Por los lados, el vidrio del carro se convirtió en un mosaico de manos que le pedían limosna, que le ofrecían cadenas robadas, cigarrillos y paquetes Kleenex [...] Mientras le daba con desesperación al pedal sintió un ejército de manos golpeando contra todos los vidrios del Alpine. ¡Pare! ¡Pare! Clarita también gritó de pánico: ¡Váyanse! ¡Déjenme! Los hombres forcejearon para abrirle las puertas hasta que uno de ellos levantó un ladrillo y pulverizó el vidrio de atrás' (Gamboa 1996, 86-7).

In Gamboa's story the harsh realities of the poorest of urban sectors is not only alluded to (like in Fuguet's story) but also represented, albeit through the eyes of a privileged and naïve young woman, a perspective which Diana Palaversich (2005) has accurately framed as the fears which the First World McOndo has of the Third World Macondo[49] (43). However, there is more to be said, in the same way in which national identities to José Joaquín Brunner are at this time heterogeneous and metaphorically part of a cracked mirror, so too the shattering of glass and Clarita's virtual spectatorship is intruded upon and modified by the reality of the clamouring needy. Far from present the McOndo cultural metaphor apparent in the prologue as a utopia, the editors had already drawn attention to the disfunctions and problems with Latin American urbanism in the prologue, a problem dealt with in quite vivid detail in Gamboa's story, in contrast with the majority of the *McOndo* narratives.

The McOndo cities in the stories are not complete cartographies nor narrative depictions, there is a distance or detachment taken from the reality of Latin American cities with some stories staging their events in hotels, apartments, and unnamed places, over and above archetypical locales or cities defined through a series of cultural symbols. When the city does feature, it is rarely in a vivid sense, usually only identifiable through a passing suggestion with narrative descriptions generally lacking fixed cultural or symbolic connotations or references. The city is not felt or experienced in a concrete embodied way, the mass media penetrates even the way in which the protagonists gaze upon, remember, and experience the city they inhabit. More than being experienced, the city is viewed by these spectators from above, afar, and mediated through screens. It is in this sense that many of the stories attempt to transcend the national demand to literarise their cities or nations, further highlighting how these authors disavow the extra-literary demand to give their stories local colour, authenticity, or differentiation, as Corral highlighted and celebrated in Leonardo Valencia's work. The city is not narrated in a realistic sense, but through the narrative constructs a virtual imaginary which in some of the stories is recognised as a conflicted and contested space, fragmented into sectors where the First World McOndo coexists (conflictively) alongside the Third World Macondo, consistent with the multitemporal heterogeneity which Latin American sociologists theorised toward the end of the 20th Century.

[49] 'En un nivel metafórico se podría decir que este cuento, que contrasta con el resto de la colección, describe las pesadillas de las clases altas y el miedo que el McOndo del Primer mundo tiene del Macondo del Tercero' (Palaversich 2005, 43).

6.4 Travel and the (de)Territorialisation of the nation

Related to this theme of the urban and the kind of ways in which the city is perceived, experienced, and traversed in the *McOndo* stories, is the theme of travel and the denationalisation of narrative setting[50]. This emphasis on travel and movement is clearly apparent in the location-driven narrative of 'Mi estado físico' in which numerous paragraphs in the text introduce, first and foremost, the new location for this section of the story, emphasising the constant movement of the protagonist through space, in this case, Buenos Aires (Rejtman 1996)[51]. And yet, while the territories are in large part identified as Latin American cities, there are also a number of stories which highlight the permeability of national space through travel both regional and in some cases international. As Josefina Ludmer (2010) has argued:

> [t]oday not only do new territories and divisions of the world appear but also other forms of territorialisation [...] Globalisation produces spacialisations that belong as much to the global as to the national, the regional and the local. Some borders collapse, are strengthened, or others appear; the issue of territory as a parameter of authority, rights and sovereignty has entered a new phase[52] (124).

Aside from the already discussed globalised cultures at the urban centres of these nation-states, this new phase that emphasises the transnational nature of the end-of-century Latin American nation-state is also apparent in the stories through an increased interconnectedness both within the region and with the rest of the world.

Characters travel between different nations due to tourism, the internationalisation of commercial transactions, and the growth of multinational business. In 'La verdad o las consecuencias', the main character Pablo meets an Argentinian traveller Adrián who backpacked through South America for six months[53] (Fuguet 1996, 122). In Gustavo Escanlar's (1996) 'Gritos y susurros', the Uruguayan newspaper begins an expansion in Miami to gain a

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[50] Through his narratological analysis of the *McOndo* stories, De Rosso argues that one of the central themes of these stories is that of travel (2014, 88), something which he also relates back to the editors' pronouncement in the prologue: '[e]n estos cuentos hay más cepillado de dientes y excursiones al campo (bueno, al departamento o al centro comercial) que levitaciones, pero pensamos que se viaja igual' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 19).

[51] In 'Mi estado físico' (Rejtman 1996), there are various opening paragraph lines which introduce the setting: 'Dejo el taller mecánico', 'Cuando llego al departamento' (61), 'En los monitores del video bar', 'En el Mac Donald's', 'En el baño del Mac Donald's' (62), 'En la discoteca' (63), 'En la esquina de Rivadavia y José María Moreno', 'Vuelvo a casa' (64), 'Voy a lo de Lisa' (66), 'A la noche, en casa' (67), 'En la cola de la caja', 'Cuando vuelvo al taller mecánico', 'Doy vueltas por la ciudad' (69).

[52] 'Hoy no solo aparecen nuevos territorios y divisiones del mundo sino otras formas de territorialización [...] La globalización produce espacialidades que pertenecen tanto a lo global como a lo nacional, lo regional y lo local. Caen algunas fronteras, se refuerzan o aparecen otras; la cuestión de territorio como parámetro de autoridad, derechos y soberanía ha entrado en una nueva fase' (Ludmer 2010, 124).

[53] 'Adrián vivió un tiempo en Chile y se quedó pegado en el valle del Elqui. Recorrió Sudamérica. Seis meses de vagabundeo. En Bolivia, en un pueblo llamado Tarija, conoció a Stephanie, una gringa de Massachusets [sic], que estaba mochileando' (Fuguet 1996, 122).

readership in the United States' Latino community (241), and the protagonist also recently travelled to Rio de Janeiro to cover the Carnival (251). Dacal, the successful publicist in Leonardo Valencia's (1996) 'Pulsión', travels from Guayaquil to Venezuela, Mexico, and Argentina for his work in the creative department for a multinational advertising company (161). In this final example, Dacal's work is as much a result as well as an instrument of neoliberal market processes, founded on the need to advertise and sell consumer products across numerous national territories. While the Costa Rican protagonists in 'Sólo hablamos de la lluvia' (R. Soto 1996) travels to Cuba under what appears as less mercantilist circumstances—'[t]hat Saturday we had gone out to navigate the city after a week of meetings'[54] (94)—, the main character seeks the sexual services of Lourdes, a local prostitute. In this example, Lourdes' business appears to be mostly sustained by sex tourism, having had two extended affairs with a Spanish sociologist and the Venezuelan heir to an immense family wealth, as well as 'Frenchmen, Gringos, Germans with money-filled pockets and the naiveté to spend them with her'[55] (R. Soto 1996, 96). As such, even Lourdes' sex work represents an unincorporated example of the effects of globalisation and the commodification of the female body in the neoliberal globalised paradigm.

Aside from their participation in this global neoliberal structure, these characters negotiate their positioning in these territories in disparate ways. While in the first instance, Dacal is hardly dislocated by his travel and notices little difference between the cities he visits and his hometown Guayaquil—no doubt impacted by his preference to withdraw to the familiar comfort of hotel rooms. The case is vastly different for the Costa Rican who, in a few key ways, is dislocated and lost in his experiences of the urban jungle of the Cuban capital. The protagonist's unfavourable descriptions of the city and distaste for the "typical" comfort of international hotel chains (and their displaced presence as a North American artifice in Cuba), is at odds with Dacal's comfort within the confines of his hotel room, in other words, unlike Dacal he does not find comfort in the non-places. However, not only is he deterritorialised through his foreignness, but he is further dislocated from his own sense of self through his mistaken identity, as, by a strange coincidence, he is mistaken for a man of same-sex attraction for the supposed similarity between Costa Rican Spanish and the accents of homosexuals in Cuba (R. Soto 1996, 101). While these texts suggest a greater interconnectedness between Latin American nations through the mobility of people and capital, the cultural ignorance of

[54] 'Ese sábado habíamos salido a navegar la ciudad después de una semana de claustro' (R. Soto 1996, 94).

[55] '[F]ranceses, gringos, alemanes con buenos dólares en los bolsillos y la mejor candidez para gastarlos con ella' (R. Soto 1996, 96).

the characters of other Latin American nations as well as the definition of these characters along national lines highlights the continued significance of national categorisation and the cultural balkanisation of these territories within the Latin American region.

This idea was similarly articulated in the prologue, when Fuguet and Gómez (1996) recognised the issue of the balkanisation of national fields. As such, there exists an unsurprising parallel: in the same way in which Latin American writers were balkanised and divided into their national spaces, and, in some senses, through outside intervention (namely Spanish publishing), were able to be packaged collectively and exist at a regional level as Latin American writers, so too, while at the local level national discourses of belonging continue to reign, it is through the latinisation from above carried out by international academies and commercial industries that the Latin American cultural bloc is in many senses propagated. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the anthology's organisation according to *national* literary space also incarnates this contradictory tension with the simultaneous *regional* ambition of the collective project, something which is entirely consistent with the stories in which the national context and the primacy of national identity over regional association is still apparent. As Gustavo Guerrero (2018b) has argued:

> [t]he predictions which announced in the nineties the close end to the system of the Nation-state and the dismantling of its political, economic and social structures were not achieved or, in any case, have still not been achieved. The nation-states remain standing in Latin America, like in many parts of the planet, and have not been replaced or subsumed by those vast transnational assemblages which were supposed to be their heirs in the era of globalisation. Furthermore, the immense majority of art and literature which is produced and consumed, keeps having as its cultural context the national framework and only a small part enters in the dynamics of the global markets[56] (174).

Thus, significant to this question of national space, its boundaries and its definition, the narratives of *McOndo*, in which characters travel *within* the region of Latin America, at once highlight the permeability of nation-states in the context of end-of-century globalisation problematising the nation-state as a self-contained and independent territory, and yet, simultaneously do not depart from the nation as a principal context or referent for narrative creativity.

However, while this national paradigm continues to reign, it is the stories which explore territories *outside* the region of Latin America that further disrupt nationalist orthodoxies and

[56] 'Los pronósticos que anunciaban en los años noventa el cercano fin del sistema de Estados-nación y el desmantelamiento de sus estructuras políticas, económicas y sociales no se cumplieron o, en cualquier caso, aún no se han cumplido. Los Estados nacionales siguen en pie en América Latina, como en muchos otros lugares del planeta, y no han sido remplazados ni subsumidos por esos vastos conjuntos transnacionales que habrían de ser sus herederos en la era de la globalización. Además, la inmensa mayoría del arte y la literatura que se produce y se consume, sigue teniendo como contexto cultural los marcos nacionales y solo una pequeña parte entra en las dinámicas de los mercados globales' (Guerrero 2018b, 174).

the expectation that literary production be about the nation. There are a number of stories which highlight the mobility of Latin American characters throughout the world but in particular the pull and centrality of the United States. It would be an overstatement to argue that the increased prevalence of the United States territory signifies a supersession of European literary centrality as it had been for most of the previous century[57]. Nevertheless, the significance of United States literary space as an important site of recognition, circulation, and internationalisation through translation for Latin American authors has only increased since this time, something which would further be highlighted in the intentions apparent in *Se habla español: voces latinas en USA* (Paz Soldán and Fuguet 2000) to establish a space for Spanish reading publics in the United States[58]. Nevertheless, it could be said that a number of the stories in *McOndo* are symptomatic of and further spurred the possibility of exploring the United States as a specifically narrative territory for Latin American writers. In fact, in an interview with the editors soon after the publication of the anthology, Fuguet and Gómez spoke of their unaccomplished desire to include in *McOndo* a Latin American writer of a similar literary disposition who lived in the United States[59].

Alberto Fuguet's short story, 'La verdad o las consecuencias', is set almost entirely in the Southern American states of Arizona and New Mexico, as the protagonist Pablo road trips his way from the Grand Canyon to El Paso and to the curious Southern American town Truth or Consequences. Pablo's trip is as much physical as it is emotional, as he uses this so-called "parenthesis" to confront a life crisis and make peace with both his past and his present in order to, as he states at the end of the story, begin 'facing the truth, assuming the consequences'[60] (Fuguet 1996, 132). This trip that Pablo has used to disappear, be lost, or simply roam freely from his nation, in a sense, deterritorialise himself, is nevertheless interrupted a number of times by reminders of his national identity, emphasising the inevitability of national identity and how national culture and identity are deterritorialised through subjects and via media.

[57] Let us not forget that José Donoso, Julio Cortázar, and Mario Vargas Llosa, despite living extended periods in Europe, also travelled to the United States to teach university courses. The political and academic interest in the region within the United States, as well as the early translations into English of writers of the Boom and Postboom (beginning with Alfred Knopf and continuing with Farrar, Straus and Giroux), such as Carlos Fuentes and José Donoso, highlight the important role which this space had in the internationalisation of previous generations.

[58] This anthology which will be discussed further in the following two chapters.

[59] Marcelo Soto (1996) notes this editorial desire in his review of the anthology and interview with the editors: '[o]tro fracaso para los editores es no haber podido incluir a un escritor chicano, que viviera en Estados Unidos y que escribiera en español. Había varios, pero todos hacían algo muy parecido a Isabel Allende' (93).

[60] '[E]nfrentando la verdad, asumiendo las consecuencias' (Fuguet 1996, 132). It must be noted that in this title, Fuguet is making reference to the party game Truth or Dare, that is, the game in which one must confront the truth of their past in sharing some humiliating aspect of their life, or choose to accept a dare from the other players and accept the consequence.

While travelling, Pablo first encounters his native Chile through the mediation of a BBC travel program which presents Chile through its historic colonial cities, architecture (including contemporary), interviews with children of *desaparecidos* as well as with the pop star Pablo Herrera (Fuguet 1996, 115). Furthermore, while lodging at the Club Congress in Tuscon, Pablo notices the presence of a 'latino' (Fuguet 1996 116, 118, 119), who is only later identified as an 'argentino-latino' (120), and finally an 'argentino' without a hyphen (123) once the two first meet, speak, and become acquainted on their way to Ciudad Juárez. It is while trying to re-enter the United States that the inescapability of their national identities becomes further apparent, as both Latin Americans are rejected at the immigration office on the grounds of their nationality: '[t]he guard said that he couldn't let them enter. If they had been American yes, but drunk Argentinians was a bit much'[61] (Fuguet 1996, 124). As comfortable and at-home as Pablo felt in the United States, his national heritage continues to define him, and continues to be a way in which he defines others.

In 'Amor a distancia', Edmundo Paz Soldán creates a story about a relationship stretched by distance between a character who has left his native Cochabamba for his studies in Berkeley, and his girlfriend who has stayed behind. The obvious autobiographical details of this story from the Cochabambian origin of Paz Soldán and the narrator, to their studies at Berkeley University (where Paz Soldán completed his doctorate), only serve to deepen the metaliterary layers of the letter. They cause the reader to speculate on the truth of the narrator's indiscretions only to relieve and yet again reassert doubt in the reader's mind[62]. Nevertheless, despite the straight-forward romantic reading of this story[63] (later included in Paz Soldán's *Amores imperfectos* published in 1997), there is a certain extent to which a more territorialised reading can be made, specifically as an answer to this question of national allegiance. In the same way in which the narrator sees himself seduced by the temptations of American women, so too he is tempted by the offers of the world, or the United States in particular. This attraction leads him to question whether it is even possible to love just one woman, or in this interpretation, just one nation. In words which could easily be interpreted for both readings:

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[61] 'El guarda dijo que no podía dejarlos ingresar. Que si fueran americanos sí, pero argentinos borrachos era como mucho' (Fuguet 1996, 124).

[62] 'Pero acaso algún rato te venga la duda, y me confrontes y me pidas que te diga con toda sinceridad si hay algo autobiográfico en ese cuento. Y yo recordaré el momento en que lo escribí, este momento, las once de la mañana en mi habitación, Cristina todavía durmiendo en mi cama, con la respiración acompasada y lejos de mí y del mundo, el perfecto cuerpo desnudo, la perfumada piel canela, y recordaré haber hecho una pausa antes de terminar de escribir el cuento, una pausa para admirar el hermoso cuerpo desnudo, y te diré sin vacilación que no, ese cuento no tiene nada autobiográfico, ese cuento es una ficción no más, todo lo que se relaciona conmigo es, de una forma u otra, ficción' (Paz Soldán 1996, 77-8).

[63] For a close reading of this story from its romantic and geographic dimension see: Caamaño (2010).

'[m]y friends say that in reality I am not in love, if not I would not be capable of doing what I do. However, Viviana, I think I have gotten passed the stage of the Maniquean division of the world, I think I can love you very much, and perhaps even more than before, at the same time that things are happening here'[64] (Paz Soldán 1996, 76). The narrator's love of other women, or here *nations*, does not mean that he loves Viviana, or Bolivia, any less, as those who profess the monogamy in relationships or monoidentity in relation to the nation might and continue to impose a Manichean division between patriots and turncoats. It is this ideology or out-dated myth of the national-popular[65], as a homogenous community, which is just as false as the monogamy which the narrator and his girlfriend pretend to upkeep:

> [w]e have created a relationship which is far beyond our reality, and neither one of us wants to be the first to destroy that image [66] (Paz Soldán 1996, 75).
> I'm not naive, and you probably aren't either, but the truth is that we are trapped by our own images of what we want to but cannot be [67] (Paz Soldán 1996, 77).

Paz Soldán's story questions traditional ethnocentric nationalism and instead acknowledges the migrant's transnational identity by begging the analogical question: why must we only love one nation? How can one *only* love one woman, how can one *only* love one nation?

In my interviews, Edmundo Paz Soldán, but also other writers like Naief Yehya, have also acknowledged their literary generation's particular relationship with the cultural giant of the North, and the problem with the traditional framing of this debate along Manichean lines:

> [f]or a long time there has been a discourse from the Latin American Left that rejects the United States, for the fact that it is the empire. But that discourse does not take into account that a good part of the subjectivity of urban generations in Latin America are mediated by cultural products which come from the United States as much through cinema, television, and now through the internet. I think that diagnosis was done well by *McOndo*[68] (Paz Soldán 2016, personal interview).

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[64] The full quote reads: '[m]is amigos dicen que en realidad no estoy enamorado, si no no sería capaz de hacer lo que hago. Sin embargo, Viviana, pienso que ya he pasado la etapa de la visión maquinea del mundo, pienso que puedo ser capaz de amarte mucho, y acaso aún más que antes, al mismo tiempo que suceden las cosas que suceden aquí' (Paz Soldán 1996, 76).

[65] Here I am making reference to José Joaquín Brunner's (1990) discussion on the construction of national-popular myths used to give a unifying foundation to the heterogeneity of nations which in reality are varied in class, race, history, ideology, and further complicated through the deterritorialisation and decentring of culture in recent times.

[66] 'Hemos creado una pareja que está muy por encima de nuestra realidad, y ninguno quiere ser el primero en destruir esa imagen' (Paz Soldán 1996, 75).

[67] 'No soy ingenuo, y probablemente tú tampoco lo seas, pero lo cierto es que estamos atrapados por nuestras propias imágenes de lo que queremos pero no podemos ser' (Paz Soldán 1996, 77).

[68] The full-quote is: '[p]or mucho tiempo ha habido un discurso de la izquierda en Latinoamérica que rechaza a Estados Unidos, por el hecho de ser el imperio. Pero ese discurso no toma en cuenta que buena parte de la subjetividad de las generaciones urbanas en Latinoamérica está mediada por productos culturales que vienen de los Estados Unidos tanto a través del cine, como a través de la televisión, y hoy a través del internet. Creo que ese diagnóstico lo hizo bien *McOndo*. Creo que fue una generación muy consciente de la forma en que los medios impactan e influyen en nuestra subjetividad. Lo que quizás faltó—pero no sé si es algo que tienen que hacer los escritores necesariamente aunque algunos sí lo hicieron pero no tantos—es tener una mirada más crítica sobre esa cantidad de información tecnológica que llega y que media en la subjetividad de las nuevas generaciones y que llega de los Estados Unidos' (Paz Soldán 2016, personal interview).

> I think our relationship with the United States, at least for my generation from the sixties, is quite schizophrenic. From my point of view, which will always be inclined toward the Left, I see the United States with its negative imperial burden intervening in international politics […] But on the other hand I also see the positive. The opposite also occurs, like in a gravitational field, if you put an enormous ball on a flexible surface which deforms with its weight, as Einstein posited, the space is modified. The United States is a giant which establishes a magnetic cultural field that causes everything to come here, especially to New York[69] (Yehya 2017a).

Not surprisingly, considering Paz Soldán and Yehya's comments, in addition to this narrative-territorial exploration, the United States is used as a modern, civilised, and pop cultural signifier. In 'La vida está llena de cosas así', the United States is used as a signifier of Clarita's family wealth, as she seeks treatment for the psychological trauma not in her native Colombia, but in Boston no less, a city home to a number of respected universities from Harvard to Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Gamboa 1996). In 'Extrañas costumbres orales', Flora's father is said to have fled Chile to New York before the coup, and despite his time there, Flora comments he was never civilised[70] (Gómez 1996, 139). In 'Extrañando a Diego', Jaime Bayly (1996) makes use of cultural codes which only frequent travellers to Miami or even locals could interpret for their symbolic weight, for example, Felipe and Diego dine at *Larios on the beach*, a luxurious restaurant on Ocean Drive (229). And in 'La verdad o las consecuencias', while Pablo and Adrián are in Ciudad Juárez, Pablo states: 'I'm not going to stay here. Let's go back to civilisation'[71] (Fuguet 1996, 123), suggesting they return to the United States instead of spending the night in Ciudad Juárez. There is an appraisal in the stories (and in the author's acknowledgements) which runs contrary to Rodo's (1900) critical characterisation of the United States as an undesirable Caliban (in his essay *Ariel*), acknowledging the less Manichean perspective on the United States within a more complex understanding the relationship of acceptance and denial, appraisal and critique of the (pop) cultural giant of the North[72].

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[69] 'Yo creo que nuestra relación con los Estados Unidos, por lo menos de mi generación de los sesenta, es bastante esquizofrénica. Desde mi punto de vista, que estará siempre inclinado hacia la izquierda, veo a Estados Unidos con su carga negativa de imperio que interviene en la política internacional […]. Pero por otro lado también está lo positivo. También sucede lo contrario, como en un campo gravitacional, si pones una pelota enorme en una superficie flexible que se deforma con su peso, como planteó Einstein, el espacio se modifica. Los Estados Unidos es un gigante que establece un campo magnético cultural y hace que todo venga acá, y sobre todo a Nueva York' (Yehya 2017a).

[70] 'Tú sabes que él ha vivido siempre en el fundo, al interior de Rancagua, nunca se civilizó, a pesar de esos años en Nueva York' (Gómez 1996, 139).

[71] '[N]o me voy a quedar acá. Volvamos a la civilización' (Fuguet 1996, 123).

[72] Nevertheless, there are notable exceptions to this trend apparent as much in the literary and authorial sense in writers such as Santiago Gamboa. He stated in my interview: '[l]a gran mayoría de autores de *McOndo* tienen una relación literaria con los Estados Unidos—tanto que de hecho muchos están en la próxima antología de Fuguet: *Se habla español*. A mí me invitaron a participar en *Se habla español*, y yo les dije que no tengo ningún tipo de relación con Estados Unidos. Yo vivo en París y habito otro mundo' (Gamboa 2016, personal interview). In the prologue to *Se habla español*, the editors Paz Soldán and Fuguet noted that '[p]ocos autores convocados no

Fuguet's (1996) description of the United States, in particular the non-places of hotels, contribute to an understanding of the United States' relationship with popular cultures and media. The hotels and hostels in the towns Pablo visits are decorated and styled full of Western and Cowboys and Indian style[73], kitsch remnants of the successful golden age of Westerns. The town Truth or Consequences is as much symbolic of the moral resolution of the story, as is apparent in the final lines of the story quote above, but also of the United States' unapologetic acceptance of popular culture. As noted in 'La verdad o las consecuencias', the inhabitants of this ordinary Southern American town decided to rename their town Truth or Consequences as part of a publicity stunt organised by an NBC Radio Show. Previously named Hot Springs, it was the first town to change its name to the title of this popular quiz show as part of a contest to host the 10th anniversary episode in 1950. This is seen in complete contrast with the higher capital "L" Literary motivations behind a similar example of the French town, Illiers, which also changed its name to celebrate the centenary of Marcel Proust's birth in 1972, renaming the city Illiers-Combray, after the city's literary double in Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* (In Search of Lost Time).

In the autofictional short story 'Extrañando a Diego' (Bayly 1996), Felipe and his movie star boyfriend Diego enjoy a leisure holiday in Key Biscayne in Miami. During the time in Miami (which is approximately half of the story), there is little description of place to introduce or familiarise the reader with this foreign location. Bayly's first-person romance-driven narrative avoids social commentary and instead treats the United States as a holiday playground for these wealthy characters' enjoyment, not unlike the malls or nightclubs of Lima's wealthy suburbs. One of the main differences, however, is that while in South Beach and Fort Lauderdale Diego and Felipe feel comfortable expressing their sexuality in public, at the beach, restaurants, gay nightclubs and bars, however, while in Lima, Diego and Felipe meet in secret or "blend in" as heterosexuals for fear that they will be publicly identified as gay and suffer both public and private repercussions. At one point, Diego comments on Felipe's gay short story suggesting 'that I keep writing, but never publish those things: it would be a fucking

conocían o, al menos, no tenían algún lazo (directo, indirecto, literario, cinematográfico) con *America* (ya saben qué América). Dos contestaron: *no tengo nada que ver con USA, y espero no tenerlo*' (2000, 14). Santiago Gamboa, as he confirmed in my interview with him, was one of these two writers who rejected the editors' offer.

[73] 'The Riverbend Hostel es un oasis vaquero, un lugar de culto entre europeos carentes de espacio vital. El hostal tiene caballos y canoas y viejos cowboys a cargo, además de indios navajo y hopi. A un par de millas de distancia, los dueños tienen un sitio en las montañas donde hay una kiva y a la puesta del sol, todos participaron en una ceremonia india. Esto se lo contó Adrián' (Fuguet 1996, 129).

scandal, Felipe, all of Lima will hate you, your family would never speak to you again'[74] (Bayly 1996, 231), and Diego fearing also for his own career: 'kept shouting at me, telling me to leave him alone, that I was going to ruin his acting career if people found out about us'[75] (Bayly 1996, 237). Furthermore, while in Peru, both characters present themselves in such a way to disguise their homosexuality: '[w]e greeted each other in passing, a handshake, what's up, Nico, hello, Felipe. Both of us all macho. So that no one would suspect'[76] (Bayly 1996, 235). As such, the United States is presented by Bayly in this story as a more liberal setting for his character's sexual expression: unsurprising when one considers Bayly's personal rebellion against his family's more traditional views on sexuality[77].

As Josefina Ludmer (2010) has argued, '[i]f the urban island in Latin America is the fiction of a territory that can be deterritorialised, abandoned and destroyed, then literature is no longer a manifestation of national identity. It is a way of territorialising the setting and the stage of other subjectivities or identities and other politics'[78] (135). Juan Forn went as far as to suggest that *McOndo* anticipates the recent international and deterritorialised narratives of Latin American authors:

> [i]n a certain sense, *McOndo* anticipates a kind of Latin American literature that is international, extraterritorial, all authors below fifty to which the nation of origin doesn't matter because they always end up living somewhere else, generally in a central location (some European or North

[74] '[Q]ue siguiera escribiendo, pero que nunca publicase esas cosas: sería un escándalo del carajo, Felipe, todo Lima te odiará, tu familia no te hablaría más' (Bayly 1996, 231).

[75] 'Siguió gritándome, diciéndome que lo dejase tranquilo, que iba a arruinar su carrera de actor si la gente se enteraba de lo nuestro' (Bayly 1996, 237).

[76] 'Nos saludamos de paso, un apretón de manos, qué tal, Nico, hola, Felipe. Muy machitos los dos. Como para que nadie sospechase' (Bayly 1996, 235).

[77] As an aside, the exploration of homosexual eroticism and masculinity in this story as well as Fuguet's 'La verdad o las consecuencias' has been explored to some extent (see Billard 2006; Billard 2009), but must be emphasised as a relatively common theme across a number of the stories, with male main characters of same-sex attraction in 'Señales captadas en el corazón de una fiesta' by Fresán and 'Peter Pan W.C.' by Mañas and Domínguez, and both a female and a male character of bisexual attraction in 'Extrañas costumbres orales' by Gómez and 'Gritos y susurros' by Escanlar, respectively. Palaversich and Billard have been the only critics to explore the incidence of homosexual themes in some of these *McOndo* stories. Nevertheless, Palaversich considers this once again as demonstrative of the *mainstream* style of the *McOndo* texts, affected by the omnipresence in broader society of discourses on same-sex attraction and concerns with HIV/AIDS. The very personal significance of the appearance of these texts could not be fully appreciated by the majority of critics and readers, however, until much later, when Alberto Fuguet publicly 'came-out' as same-sex attracted in the build-up to the publication of his novel *No ficción* (2015b). This public revelation is something which, in some senses, demands renewed attention on Fuguet's *habitus*, broadly-speaking, as well as this literary stratagem in particular, and clearly holds out potential for a re-reading of his works through this queer perspective. However, the acceptance of quite a number of texts with homosexual and bisexual characters suggests this was quite an autonomous territory within the space of possibilities of the *McOndo* anthology which had, now we know, an editor with similar but closeted sexual attraction.

[78] 'Si la isla urbana en América latina es la ficción de un territorio que se puede desterritorializar, abandonar y destruir, la literatura ya no es manifestación de identidad nacional. Se trata de una forma de territorializar que es el sitio y el escenario de otras subjetividades o identidades y de otras políticas' (Ludmer 2010, 135).

> American university) and write from there. But that is a global phenomenon which is happening in all cultures, not only in ours[79] (Forn 2016, personal interview).

Predictions *grosso modo* aside, in the *McOndo* stories these characters' travel, be it within the region or beyond Latin America, underscore how modern Latin American nations are made more complex, and what constitutes the national is continually negotiated in the context of extra-national as well as globalised forces. These writers, in particular those who have highlighted the interconnectedness of Latin America and the rest of the world, reach out towards the world, deterritorialising Latin American literature in some way so that their literary settings need not always conform nor represent the national setting nor carry the nation on their narrative shoulders.

6.5 Language

The *McOndo* short stories further engage and disengage with the national pole as well as in response to the shifting paradigm of the commercial pole in their use of language. It is through these writers' use of language that a literary game or balancing act becomes evident. As has already been shown, these writers do not completely depart from their particular territories either physically or referentially, and yet they reach out to the world through popular culture, urban settings, or through travel both regional and global. This tension between remaining grounded in the nation and reaching outwards is similarly expressed linguistically. The prose and lexicon grounds many of the stories within national spaces, with the display of unique aspects of sociolinguistic diversity. And yet, despite this, at times, they also tend towards the global through the use of more standardised forms of Spanish, resulting in part from editorial/commercial reasons, but also through the inclusion of foreign language most clearly by way of loan words. It is through these literary choices, which also function alongside and through the other themes which have been presented, that these writers continue to redefine literature's relationship with the nation as increasingly unstable and hybridised.

The increased influence of the commercial pole in the last decades of the 20th Century as well as the publishing dominance of Spanish editors had a noteworthy effect on idiomatic position-takings in Latin American literature. One of the most prominent Spanish literary critics of this period, Ignacio Echevarría, has, a number of times, described how Spanish

[79] 'En cierto sentido, *McOndo* anticipa una especie de literatura latinoamericana internacional, extraterritorial, todos autores menores de cincuenta años donde no importa el país de origen porque siempre terminan viviendo en otra parte, generalmente en algún lugar central (alguna universidad europea o norteamericana) y escriben desde allí. Pero eso es un fenómeno global que está pasando en todas las culturas, no solo en la nuestra' (Forn 2016, personal interview).

publishing mediated this idiomatic shift which Latin American writers began conforming to in order to gain widespread literary circulation:

> what there is, is a circuit of literary circulation in which Spain acts as an authentic capital. Additionally, it is a radial circuit that always connects from Spain and does not create internal connections between Latin American countries. The writer who wants to attain visibility then, must put themselves forward in a market in which one of the tacit condition is a relatively standard language, which does not differentiate [...] What has been lost is the national outlook, their own community as the first zone of resonance for a writer, something that ought to be very natural. It is something quite strange, it is as if a footballer would first desire to belong to the national team before a [local] team. It is exactly this process, and not to play well in a local team to advance and be chosen for the national team and then enter the international leagues. But here we skip that step. There is a kind of expropriation of the linguistic as much as the referential immediate contexts of the author. It is not only a marketing operation nor a submission to the dynamics of the market. Cultural globalisation also has an influence[80] (Echevarría 2011, no page).

As such, the problem with Spanish-American literature, for Echevarría, has been that in order to ease the communicational needs of Spanish publishing as a publishing centre for the Spanish linguistic subspace, writers have begun to write in a Spanish *interlingua*, a standardised Spanish more and more distant to the Spanish spoken in their respective national territories (Echevarría 2007a, 24). This concern, that language, the very fundamental material for the writer's experimentation, is responding to commercial demands for better "exchangeability" (2007a, 24-5), reveal Echevarría's critical tastes for two types of literature being produced in Latin America which Spanish publishing appeared at the time to be overlooking: namely localist narratives and experimentalist literature. These two areas—in a broad sense—also correspond with Echevarría's rejection of the globalised (pop) culture which is referential to these so-called international authors: the national writers, due to their differentialising attitudes towards national culture and protectionism in the face of the encroachment of foreign culture, and the experimental writers, for the lightness and ephemeral insignificance of such cultural references which would temporalise their works and prevent them from attaining a greater historical transcendence.

It is in this respect, that it is possible to understand Ignacio Echevarría's earlier critique of *McOndo* published in *El País* (2007b). The review rails against the anthology on the grounds

[80] '[L]o que hay es un circuito de circulación literaria en el que España actúa como auténtica metrópoli. Además es un circuito radial que conecta siempre desde España y no crea conexiones internas entre los países latinoamericanos. El escritor que quiere alcanzar visibilidad tiene, entonces, que postularse en un mercado en el cual una de las condiciones tácitas es una lengua relativamente estándar, que no particularice [...] Se ha perdido el horizonte de lo nacional, de la propia comunidad como primera caja de resonancia de un escritor, algo que debería ser muy natural. Hay algo raro, es como si un futbolista primero quisiera pertenecer a la selección nacional antes que a un equipo [local]. Es exactamente este proceso, y no de jugar bien en un equipo local pasas a que te capten en la selección nacional y entonces entras en las ligas internacionales. Pero aquí nos saltamos esa casilla. Hay una especie de expropiación del contexto inmediato tanto lingüístico como referencial del escritor. No es sólo una operación de marketing ni de sometimiento a las dinámicas del mercado. La globalización cultural también influye' (Echevarría 2011, no page).

that it represents an international style ('estilo internacional'), rather than the cosmopolitanism it supposedly dresses itself up as. This international style, which Echevarría compares to the identical (and ordinary) architecture of beach resorts across the world, is to Echevarría similarly apparent in the *McOndo* literature in which 'the concept of culture is being displaced by that of software and communication by that of the Internet'[81] (Echevarría 2007b, 176). In other words, the stories of *McOndo* lack the localism represented both linguistically and culturally which a critic like Ignacio Echevarría valorises. Furthermore, the very clear international ambitions of the editors in the prologue seem to incarnate the very issue which Echevarría criticises: to leap into the international football leagues of literature before being *chosen* (dixit Echevarría 2011: 'que te capten en la selección nacional', no page) for this international circulation. While Echevarría is able to recognise the complicated and unfavourable state of Spanish-American letters in its hegemonic dependence on Spanish publishing, he appears to be constrained by a restrictive view of literary decorum which in effect creates this *illusio*: that writers must first succeed in their homelands before being "chosen" to circulate at the upper echelons and greater capitals of the literary world. Nonetheless, on this point, he does show the capacity for nuance, stating that Latin American narrative 'isn't comprised of the sum of national narratives, but instead by a biased selection of them, which isn't realised with representative criterion, by no means, nor by exclusive criterions of commerciality or quality, but by criterion, above all, of interchangeability'[82] (Echevarría 2007a, 26-27). However, this interchangeability—returning to his former point—, is no doubt in part made possible through the dissolution of the very national linguistic differences which Echevarría so valorises. It is curious to note, that Echevarría utilises language and structures very similar to Bourdieu's and Casanova's, and yet, because of his critical convictions and lack of critical reflexivity, is incapable of sympathising from the author's perspective regarding this disjunctive in Spanish-American literary space, and essentially ends up reinforcing the conservative notion that literature must be a true emanation of the people, and that writers must conform to predetermined and unequal paths to literary consecration.

[81] '[E]l concepto de cultura va siendo desplazado por el de software y el de comunicación por el de red' (Echevarría 2007b, 176).

[82] '[N]o estaría constituida por la suma de las narrativas nacionales, sino más bien por una selección interesada de ellas, que no se realizaría con criterios representativos, ni mucho menos, tampoco con criterios exclusivos de comercialidad o de calidad, sino con criterios, sobre todo, de intercambiabilidad. Conforme a ello, lo que colocaría a un determinado narrador en el circuito de la narrativa latinoamericana sería, antes que nada, su traducibilidad al idioma propio de esta entidad específica—la narrativa latinoamericana—que no alude tanto a una comunidad como a un mercado y que, en cuanto tal, carece propiamente de identidad' (Echevarría 2007a, 26-7).

Nevertheless, in relation to Echevarría's claim that the stories in *McOndo* incarnate an international style devoid of linguistic particularity, the stories render a rather different account. As De Rosso (2014) has argued, both the stories and the prologue attest to this linguistic diversity:

> far from being comprised of an "international style", the language in *McOndo* is typically localist, and precisely because of that it is international. The movement is, of course, similar to the Boom, but one must remember that here it is about a segmentation along local languages that in turn produces the same effect in Spain (the primary objective of *McOndo*) and in Latin American countries[83] (94).

Once again, the ambitious nature of the anthology as a collection and its national division, for better or for worse, functions to highlight the decidedly international purview of voices sampled from many of the countries in the region. In the stories of *McOndo*, the use of nation-specific lexicon, slang, or even grammatical variation is apparent in some stories more than others. The stories which most demonstrate these kinds of localisms (listed in full in separate footnotes below), are those by Sergio Gómez (1996) (*pololo*, *queque*, *paco*, etc.)[84], Alberto Fuguet (1996) (*huevón*, *restorán*, *hartas*, etc.)[85], David Toscana (1996) (*no mames*, *recámara*, *pinche*, *güey*, etc.)[86], Jaime Bayly (1996) (*depa*, *carro*, *cacharse*, *guachimán*, etc.)[87], and Gustavo Escanlar (1996) (*auto*, *tranqui*, *capaz que*, *morocha*, *minita*, etc.)[88]. Rodrigo Soto

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[83] 'Así, lejos de constituirse en un "estilo internacional", la lengua de *McOndo* es típicamente localista, y justamente por eso es internacional. El movimiento es, claro, similar al del *boom*, pero debería recordarse que se trata aquí de una segmentación por lenguas locales lo que produce a la vez el mismo efecto en España (objetivo primordial de *McOndo*) que en los países latinoamericanos' (De Rosso 2014, 94).

[84] Examples in Gómez's (1996) 'Extrañas costumbres orales' include: 'pololo' (135), 'queque' (136), use of definite article before proper noun as in 'La Panchita' (137) or 'el Oscar Peña' (140), 'Color concho de vino' (138), 'puteó' (138), 'chuchear' (139), 'departamento' (140), 'milico', 'paco' y 'carabinero' (141), 'marrueco', 'conchita' (146), 'living' (147).

[85] Examples in Fuguet's (1996) 'La verdad o las consecuencias' include: 'bencina' (110), 'huevón', reflexive form of the verb tincar typical of Chile used to express an impression '[n]os tincaba que te habías ido para allá' (111), 'restorán' (112), '[e]res el condoro de la familia', 'hartas cosas' (113), use of Argentinian voseo and slang such as 'Che, qué quilombo' (119), '¿Vos?' / ¿Sos de Chile?' (120), 'guita' (cash) (122), 'pedo', 'che', 'fifa', 'guachada' (127), 'pibes' (128), 'boludo' (129).

[86] Examples in Toscana's (1996) 'La noche de una vida difícil' include: '[n]o mames' (201), 'poner los moños' (201), 'recámara' (202), 'nomás' (202), 'charola' (bandeja) (202), 'pinche' (202), 'De Efe' (202), 'joto' (gay) (203), 'güey' (203), 'alrevesado' (204), 'jeta' (204), 'cheve' (204), 'pedo' (204), 'charro' (204), 'Telebizca' (Televisa) (204), 'chanales' (204), 'ojete', 'puto', 'cabrón', 'chingadera' (205), 'Órale' (210), 'pinche', 'chingazos' (210), 'tacos de trompo' (211), '*chicaniza*', '*cacarizos*', (212).

[87] Examples in Bayly's (1996) 'Extrañando a Diego' include: 'chorreado', 'rotoso', 'boletería' (223), 'blue jean' (224), 'putamadre', '[t]e jalo' (225), 'depa', 'churrísimo' (226), 'cojudos', 'pose', 'putísimo', '[n]o se hizo la estrecha', 'carro', 'cachado', '[h]uevadas', 'no te di bola', '[m]e cagué de risa' (227), 'hembrita', 'tirarse', 'cacharse', 'nomás', 'embalada', 'súper', 'estaba hecho una pinga conmigo', 'jalaba coca', 'cojudeces', 'durazo' (228), 'mujerón', 'llorando sus penas', 'pinga' (229), 'cagues', 'conchudo', '[n]i cagando', 'potito', 'poto' (230), 'me dijo estoy hecho leña, Felipe' (232), 'putear', 'demasiada concha', 'tal por cual', 'chucha', 'chotear' (232), 'troncho', 'pesista' (233), 'guachimán' (235), 'calato' (236).

[88] Examples in Escanlar's (1996) 'Gritos y susurros' include: 'pedo', 'auto', 'tranqui', use of Uruguayan Vos pronoun and conjugation '¿[c]ómo andás de laburo?', '¿qué mierda hacés vos en esa agencia, gordito?' (242 and 255), 'bancando' (242), 'no tenía un mango', 'morfar', 'bolichón rasca', 'chivito', 'mozos', 'coge', 'enchastra', 'jermu' (243), 'bronca', 'capaz que', 'pajeen', 'massini', 'cañones', 'palmitas' (244), 'alfajores', 'milhojas',

(1996) also demonstrates this lexical variation to a lesser extent in his story, particularly when Lourdes asks the narrator about his home country, leading the protagonist to speak about his country's culture and language: '[w]e say ‹‹pura vida›› and okey, chuncke, cachivache and chaparrón'[89](96). And in the prologue, in reference to the inclusion of Spanish authors in the anthology, the editors highlight that despite the linguistic variation from nation to nation which makes each person sound different, there exists a linguistic harmony: 'perhaps they speak strangely (in fact, they all speak strangely and use particular words and slang) but they are in tune with each other'[90] (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 19).

In a number of the stories, there is also an employment of *voseo*, the informal second-person singular address, in its numerous varieties in American Spanish. In Fuguet's (1996) story, the Argentinian *voseo* is expressed when Adrián uses both the Argentinian pronoun (*Vos*) and morphological uses such as: *tenés* (121), *pagás*, *mirá*, *conocés* (122), *podés*, *sabés* (123), *contá*, *pensás* (126). The Argentinian authors Martín Rejtman (1996, 65) and Juan Forn (1996, 25, 29-30) also use verb conjugations in this specific register in their stories. And lastly, Gustavo Escanlar (1996) utilises the Uruguayan *voseo* in the dialogues of the story—'¿[c]ómo andás de laburo?' and '¿qué mierda hacés vos en esa agencia, gordito?' (242)—, even in its abbreviated oral form '[v]o, esto es igual' (251). While this form of informal address exists in most American variations of Spanish, in Argentina it has been literarised, having been granted grammatical recognition very early, whereas in most other Latin American nations where it exists it remains a strictly oral form. This is the case with the Chilean *voseo*, which continues to exist principally in oral speech with a continued (and slow) transition into written language. This issue is apparent even in *McOndo*, in how the Argentinian authors (except Fresán) have utilised the Argentinian *voseo* in their stories, and yet Gómez's story, that entails a dialogue between two Chilean friends exclusively uses the standardised informal form of "tú". In this sense, in not using the *voseo*, Gómez's story is consistent with its disuse in written Chilean Spanish, however, it is equally possible that Gómez may be further highlighting the pretentiousness of this upper-class pair something linguistically signalled in their preference for *tuteo* over the *voseo* form, as it has been historically associated with Chile's lower classes.

'chajá', 'cagada', 'bebota', 'gata', 'buena pinta' (245), 'bichicomez', 'junaba', 'zafaba', 'boliche de trolos', 'chongos', 'taladros' (247), 'pibe', '[r]ecagando' (248), 'cuarentaipico', 'crack', 'sopre' (249), 'turf', 'a las piñas', 'peleíta', 'pilchas', 'changa', 'lompa', 'lucas' (250), use of 'Vo' abbreviated form of vos in Uruguay, 'morocha' (251), 'anfetas', 'merca', 'la minita' (253), 'depto' (254), 'no sé qué puta', 'chanta' (255).

[89] 'Decimos ‹‹pura vida›› y okey, chuncke, cachivache y chaparrón' (R. Soto 1996, 96). Rodrigo Soto (1996) also uses other Costa Rican words such as 'salonero', 'guaro' (96), 'bobo' (102), and 'discotheque' (97).

[90] '[A] lo mejor pueden hablar raro (de hecho, todos hablan raro y usan palabras y jergas particulares) pero están en la misma sintonía' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 19).

Fuguet's story is significant in this regard when analysed in this linguistic dimension as well as in relation to his other work. Fuguet's style of narrative is distinctively dialogue-heavy and in many senses reclaims the language and jargon of his generation, something which brought about the ire of conservative critics early in his career. In his first short story collection, *Sobredosis* (1990), Fuguet uses the *voseo* extensively in its verb morphological form throughout his dialogues, especially in the story 'Pelando a Rocío'. While both *Sobredosis* and Fuguet's first novel *Mala onda* were both published with Planeta Biblioteca del Sur, it was only the latter which was the subject of more extensive linguistic revisions, as Fuguet (2013) mentions in *Tránsitos* the difficult experience he had with the 'neutralising' of the language of the novel: '[t]hat novel, *Mala onda*, ended up being a success, even though I didn't have a good time when it came to editing it (an Argentinian editor wanted to transform Matías into a Porteño; [and] a Chilean writer who was an editor at the time wanted to neutralise the colonial language)'[91] (79). It is very likely that Fuguet, having written *Mala onda* in the same language as *Sobredosis*, was pressured to standardise his text by avoiding the *voseo* he had exhibited in his earlier work, and in so doing, give his work a more communicable Spanish capable of transcending the borders of Chilean literary space, and be more readable in both Argentina (where Planeta had its main offices in the Southern Cone), and perhaps even in Spain (something which has had a lasting effect on his writing).

In 'La verdad o las consecuencias', Fuguet's (1996) Chilean character Pablo does not employ the *voseo* with Adrián his Argentinian travel companion (even though the Argentinian uses it with Pablo). And when Pablo converses with his brother Antonio over the phone there is no trace of the *voseo* in its most common form (in verb morphology), instead there is one instance of the almost unused pronominal manifestation when Pablo says to his brother: '*[v]os* te abanicas en todo' (emphasis mine, Fuguet 1996, 112). One can only speculate regarding the reasons for taking a particular path within this space of linguistic possibilities; however, it is very probable that just as in Fuguet's early novels, the commitment to represent the widespread Chilean *voseo* was abandoned in favour of a more communicable and standard Spanish grammar.

As such, and contrary to Echevarría's first assessment, these stories not only highlight the clear differences in lexicon between American Spanish and Iberian Spanish, but also the differences between the Spanish spoken from a number of countries within the region. The

[91] 'Esa novela, *Mala onda*, resultó un éxito, a pesar que no la pasé bien a la hora de editarla (un editor argentino quería transformar a Matías en porteño; [y] un escritor chileno que estaba de editor quería neutralizar el lenguaje colonial)' (Fuguet 2013, 79).

inclusion of unrecognised vocabulary still not a part of the *diccionario de la Real Academia Española* (which is the case with a number of the above cited words), or use of grammatical forms which exist largely in the oral realm of language such as the Spanish *voseo* (with the exception of Argentinian Spanish), are linguistic devices which territorialise of this literature within national frameworks and readerships. As such, as De Rosso (2014) has identified, rather than writing in an internationally receptive language or a standardised global written Spanish, these texts call upon nation-specific readerships:

> the reading of *McOndo* is a curious experience in that a specific and local reader is constructed for each story (those who feel that the enunciator which speaks in a *between-us*, in which the cultural references and the use of language are one's own, without the possibility of translation) and at the same time a reader for whom all the other uses of language are curious, if not incomprehensible [92] (93).

Rather than departing their linguistic particularity for the sake of linguistic communicability in the *interlingua* Echevarría identifies, the language of these stories—quite contrary to Echevarría's assessment—acts as a differentiation and appraisal of nation-specific oral Spanish demonstrating the linguistic richness of the Latin American continent they pretend to exemplify in the representative ordering of the *McOndo* anthology.

Nevertheless, this linguistic differentiation appears in the most dialogue-heavy stories, being that these forms are generally accepted in oral rather than written communication, and as such, in part due to a lack of dialogue, other stories have fewer instances of these oral nation-specific vocabulary or grammatical forms, the latter being forms of second-person address. This is particularly the case in the more strictly prose stories 'Señales captadas en el corazón de una fiesta' (Fresán 1996), 'Amor a distancia' (Paz Soldán 1996), 'Pulsión' (Valencia 1996), and 'La mujer químicamente compatible' (Soler 1996), which also happen to be some of those most distanced from reality and concerned with literary or metaliterary experimentation. Fresán's (1996) story is presented as the 'optional biography' of the main character Willi, an elderly homosexual man who imagines his own alternative life story (60). Soler's (1996) story takes the form of a journal entry with shifting narrators taking as its starting point a mystical reference to a French alchemist Calvadós and his magical secret to finding a sexually compatible partner; the only story with a quasi-fantastical element in it, elements which, as will be shown in the next chapter, Soler will continue to draw upon in his future works with greater recurrence and intensity. And Paz Soldán's (1996) story takes the form of a letter/short story,

[92] '[L]a lectura de *McOndo* es una experiencia curiosa en la medida en que se construye un lector específico y local para cada relato (aquellos que sienten que el enunciador habla en un *entre-nos*, en el que las referencias culturales y los usos de la lengua son los propios, sin posible traducción) y a la vez un lector para el que todos los otros usos de la lengua son curiosos, si no incomprensibles' (De Rosso 2014, 93).

in which everything which is recounted is determined (and questioned) as ultimately being fiction. As such, in contradistinction to the stories explored above, these stories are written with an undoubtedly literary Spanish, and with the exception of Fresán's story which has numerous references to popular culture (a usual intertext for Fresán's work), the other stories, including Valencia's, have the least references to popular culture. Furthermore, their narrative forms are perhaps the most ingenious in their application of not only storytelling, but their use of mystery and enigmas to drive the action: such as Valencia's use of the mysterious woman referred to as *farfalla,* Soler's mystical references, the confessions in Paz Soldán's metafictional text, and Fresán's enigmatic narrator. As such, while these texts may lack the most characteristic elements of a McOndo aesthetic (references to pop culture, etc.), they nevertheless harmonise in other respects (resistance against grand narrative or national fresco), and perhaps most importantly, represent texts with a prosaic and literary maturity capable of lending greater literary credit to the anthology.

While it is beyond the scope of this work to speculate on each of the intentions of the authors' use of language, it is curious to note that these stories are those which most approximate the Spanish interlingua which Ignacio Echevarría identified and criticised. As an aside, which will also be taken up further in the next chapter on the trajectory of the *McOndo* authors, it is also significant to note that among this group of writers are the those who have made Spain, and more specifically Barcelona, their permanent place of residence: Fresán and Valencia since 1999, and Soler since 2013. If we recall Echevarría's critical tastes, it comes as no surprise that he vindicated the stories by Fresán, Valencia, and as well as Gamboa in his general dismissal of the *McOndo* anthology in 1996. However, it does appear contradictory when one considers that these are in fact the stories which best demonstrate the very international linguistic style which he criticises in his review. As will be discussed in the next chapter, Echevarría's review would have immediate effects for some of those whom he favourably vindicated, namely Santiago Gamboa. Furthermore, and to a certain extent confirming Echevarría's concern, he not only unwittingly promoted those texts most exemplary of the style he wished to critique (obviously emphasising other more literary aspects to their stories), but as Ana Gallego Cuiñas (2017) has recognised, the most recent wave of Latin American authors to be published in Spain (those of the following generation) seem to demonstrate this style to an even greater extent. She notes:

> the newest novels of today are obscene, impure and lewd, and barely incorporate local terminology (like *McOndo*). The exception is Yuri Herrera […] [But] the Colombians Cárdenas and Sanín, the Peruvian Alarcón, the Chileans Zambra and Meruane, the Mexican Luiselli, and the Argentinian Havilio, to the contrary, deploy a very literaturised language—splashed with

> one or two Americanisms—and reproduce a normative Spanish-language which dilutes the ‹‹Latin American›› identity of the novel over the linguistic base, even though the majority situate their narrations in their countries of origin[93] (54).

While the use of nation-specific language in a number of the stories in *McOndo* appears to address a national end through the vindication and the differentiation of these language-cultures, the use of foreign language in the *McOndo* stories, especially English, adds another internationalising dimension to the complex issue of cultural and national identity which has been a central theme throughout the stories. There are a number of English loan words from products or brands such as McDonald's (Rejtman 1996, 62, 68; Bayly 1996, 230), Burger King (Bayly 1996, 230), Alpine (Gamboa 1996, 81), Jeep (Fuguet 1996, 120), American Express (Gamboa 1996, 83), Kleenex (Gamboa 1996, 86), Nike's *Just Do It* logo (Toscana 1996, 203), Wal-Mart (Toscana 1996, 212), and Gap (Bayly 1996, 233). This is also especially clear in the case of music references, with Rodrigo Fresán and David Toscana's stories being those with the most musical references. In Fresán's (1996), there are references to songs such as 'All Tomorrow's Parties' by Velvet Underground and Nico (1967), 'Party Line' by The Kinks (1965), 'There's a Party At My House' by Randy Newman (1983), and 'Left To My Own Devices' by Pet Shop Boys (1988) (35). While Fresan's quotation of song lyrics are translated into Spanish throughout his story, Toscana quotes (and misquotes) them throughout the story in their English original[94]. Nevertheless, these words are used, in some senses, less for their meaning than for what they represent (or in Fresán's case as intermedial references to read the story in greater depth, which perhaps explains his translation of them[95]), in terms of the readership which was explored above.

More everyday instances of lexical loaning, in which the Spanish word is replaced by an English stand-in, are fewer, but still of note, in how they reinforce the international and cosmopolitan dispositions of these authors. These appear sometimes italicised and other times

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[93] '[L]as novísimas novelas de ahora son obscenas, impuras y procaces y apenas incorporan terminologías locales (como *McOndo*). La excepción es Yuri Herrera […] [Pero] Los colombianos Cárdenas y Sanín, el peruano Alarcón, los chilenos Zambra y Meruane, la mexicana Luiselli, y el argentino Havilio, por el contrario, despliegan un lenguaje muy literaturizado—salpicado de algún americanismo que otro—y reproducen una lengua castellana normativa que diluye la identidad ‹‹latinoamericana›› de la novela sobre la base lingüística, aunque la mayoría sitúa sus narraciones en sus países de origen' (Gallego Cuiñas 2017, 54).

[94] This quoting and misquoting of the original song lyrics is a typical experience of many non-English speakers who consume English-language music. This phenomenon is referenced in the very story when the owner of the family restaurant requests of the band that they refrain from singing modern songs full of curse words and sex to which one of the players suggests that if he doesn't speak English then he has nothing to worry about (1996, 206). Despite this, the characters mistakenly sing the Rolling Stones songs 'Sympathy for the Devil' singing the chorus as '‹‹Pleased to meet you / Hope you get my name››' when the lyric should be '‹‹Hope you guess my name›› or ‹‹Hope you guessed my name››, and later another Rolling Stones song 'Angie' when one of the characters sings '‹‹With no lovin' in our souls / And no money in our course' (1996, 210) when the lyric should be '‹‹And no money in our coats››'.

[95] See: J. Andrew Brown 'An Archaeology of Digital Aesthetics' (2012).

uniform with the Spanish text and are especially present in the stories by Fresán[96] (1996), Fuguet[97] (1996), and to a lesser extent Bayly[98] (1996) and Escanlar[99] (1996). The way in which some of these loan words are italicised and some not underscores the gradual assimilation of these foreign words, firstly into common oral use, and then through literary standardisation which these stories begin to enact. The recourse to English in narrative works is a contested practice especially among national critics who interpret such interventions as either damaging to the purity of the Spanish language, demonstrative of a primitive vocabulary, or a celebration of Anglobalisation, none of these alternatives necessarily being the case. What these authors demonstrate in their use of English throughout their stories, is an openness to the effects of linguistic contact on parlance as much as they are on tastes, culture, and life in general. These stories, which have recourse mostly to English, with the exception of a few stories[100], show the linguistic porosity of Spanish at the turn of the 21st Century necessarily related to the rise of English as a global *lingua franca* and its predominance in global popular culture.

Unlike the interpretation of some critics, the use of language in the *McOndo* stories does record the varied forms of Spanish represented, in a sense, putting forward the polyphony of Spanish*es* which share so much in common and yet continue to differentiate themselves in less obvious ways through the diverse use of local lexicon and the *voseo* register. And yet there is still evidence that oral forms which have not received formal or institutional standardisation, such as the Chilean *voseo*, continue to be left out of written texts perhaps in part due to this lack of recognition or even perhaps to no forfeit the possible exchangeability of the text. As such, many of the texts in *McOndo* mark a negotiation between the orality and specificity of their national variations of Spanish and a Spanish standard *interlingua* by not overusing or overstating the linguistic national character and maintaining a level of exchangeability within the Spanish linguistic subspace which would facilitate the process of internationalisation within this immense literary field.

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[96] Examples of English loan words in Fresán's (1996) story include: '*party-animal*' (35), '*original*' (36), 'Fashion' (36), '*normal*' (41), '*look*' (42), '*grunge*' (42), '*Flashback Ladies*' (42), 'jackets' (54), '*prestige*' (58).

[97] Examples of English loan words in Fuguet's (1996) story include: 'shock' (109), '*self-service*' (110), '*rest-area*' (110), 'downtown' (114), 'look' (114), '*fuck you*' (118), 'lobby' (119), '*viewing car*' (120), 'Jeeps del *Border Patrol*' (120), '*mall*' (125), '*teepee*' (129), '*marshmallows*' (130), '*sorry*' (130), and even the phrase '*Just trying to change the world*' (131).

[98] Examples of English loan words in Bayly's (1996) story include: '*overdressed*' (233), '*straight*' (235), 'OK' (238).

[99] Examples of English loan words in Escanlar's (1996) story include: '*groupie*' (243), 'show' (243), 'crack' (249), 'turf' (250), 'stablishment (sic)' (252).

[100]

Additional to this problematising of the national through English loan words, there are less prominent idiomatic reclamations interpretable in the stories by Leonardo Valencia and Sergio Gómez by way of other languages, namely Italian and French. In 'Pulsión' Valencia's (1996) use of the Italian *farfalla* (meaning butterfly but also used as a euphemism for vulva) acts as a kind of curious key for the story—driving the mystery as much for the reader as for Dacal's followers in the story. This small incursion of Italian is given greater coherence when one considers Valencia's vocal rejection of the national pole in his work (see: *El síndrome de Falcón*), as well as the importance of Italy as a setting in his work (his first novel *El desterrado* (2000) was set in Mussolini's Italy), stemming from an appreciation of his Italian cultural and linguistic heritage. Another idiomatic incursion is the quite unusual frequency of French loan words which intersperse Sergio Gómez's 'Extrañas costumbres orales'. The use of French is, in some senses, temporally misplaced if we consider Gómez's text one of literary realism, as while perhaps in the later part of the 19th or earlier part of the 20th centuries the aristocratic class may have employed French in everyday parlance, throughout the 20th Century this is much less common and its use has perhaps been replaced with English, but without the same cultural capital attached. The rise of popular culture had natural consequences in the linguistic domain, something which a number of the stories attest to through the use of English brand words, music and lyrics, as well as English movie references, as has was noted. Gómez (1996) could have used more common English words rather than their French equivalent—closet ('*dressoir*', 136), marvellous ('*marveilleux*', 137), fantasy ('*fantaisie*, 146), etc.—which may have passed unnoticed (particularly as it would have suited the tone of some of the other stories), but his deliberate use of French spotlights the strangeness of this practice in a unique way. It is possible then to further interpret Gomez's decision to use French in his story about strange oral practices as not only a reference to the gossiping about the mutual friend of the protagonists, Flora and Silvio, but also on the one hand as a social commentary on the practice, very common in Chile, of using English loan words, or even as a narrative metacommentary, as a conservative questioning and satirising of the use of English loan words in Spanish-language literature (consistent, as will be seen in the next chapter, with Sergio Gómez's provincial authorial *habitus*).

Conclusion

In considering these *McOndo* stories comparatively, each with the other, as well as in respect to, through, and against the prologue, as they appeared within the context of the political and literary macrotransformations, these stories can be given greater and fresh coherence.

While the selection of stories by Fuguet and Gómez present largely urban and unpolitical, pop cultural, each of these stories navigates a series of fundamental artistic dilemmas in their own unique way: how to deal with the question of politics in literature, how to communicate and generate new groups of readers, how to treat the setting within a narrative, how to write. Each writer provides a (provisional) answer to these questions within the restricted space of possibilities afforded by the editorial selection in *McOndo*. In other words, while each of these texts are to be understood as quite separate and unique narrative contributions, their editorial curating by Alberto Fuguet and Sergio Gómez allows us to interpret them as to their proximity to those claims, as well as the ways in which they create distance, subvert, or ironise the very goals of the anthology in which they are included.

One of the clearest examples of this is David Toscana's story 'La noche de una vida difícil'. The text can be read as a McOndo text *par excellence* on the one hand for being the chosen text after a process of editorial rejection and eventual acceptance, and on the other hand, for its employment of narrative devices and themes which have been understood to incarnate the McOndo sensibility: lack of overt politicisation, urban cartography, musical and pop cultural references, and use of English. But knowledge of the Toscana's uneasiness with these very aspects of his story and Fuguet's editorial gatekeeping both belie this apparent harmony between prologue and text. This harmony among the stories and with the prologue appears on many levels and is likewise also contradicted by some of the stories in other respects.

While the texts are more personal than social in their outlook and focus over and above any national, social, or representational commitment—they generally employ a first-person narrator and focus on a particular episode in the life of the protagonist—, the majority of the texts do not depart from the national referent either through setting or language. For example, while the majority of the stories have urban settings, their treatment of setting is more narratively—rather than geographically or discursively—focused. That is, the emphasis is less on narrativising a McOndo cosmopolis, as it is on assuming the fact of an urban existence in *a* city and narrating from there. And yet, while the depiction of the urban is deliberately limited, there are nevertheless stories such as Gamboa and Fuguet's, which permit the narrative gaze to assume a quasi-sociological perspective, even politicising this commentary to some extent, once again in apparent contradiction with the pronounced disavowal of politics and national identification in the prologue, but paradoxically confirming the multitemporal heterogeneity in Fuguet and Gómez's understanding of the McOndo socio-cultural present. Other stories are political in other ways, such as through discursive critiques on the glamour of commercial success, or the general melancholy of modern life, through outsider or anomic characters

disillusioned with the political utopias of the past and with little hope placed in the future. And yet these authors have both confessed, and it is equally evident in their stories, that politics is for them relegated to the private realm, seeking greater autonomy for their creativity from this dated expectation—somewhat paradoxically—, like the Boom writers.

In other respects, while the language and idiom employed by the texts are very much nationally-specific—with uses of local vocabulary and grammatical phenomena like the *voseo*—, there is nevertheless evidence of deliberate linguistic choices tending toward a more global outlook: the openness to English loanwords, the choice of common Spanish forms such as *tuteo* over the Chilean *voseo* in Fuguet and Gómez's stories, as well as the choice of certain writers to avoid localisms almost altogether for a more standardised *interlingua*. Consistent also with the conflict apparent in the prologue regarding the desire to be Spanish-American, and yet, unable to leave behind the national label, there are stories which appear to create distance from the national referent through the deterritorialisation of their characters, and enter into dialogue with this specific issue. This is similarly evident in the use of pop cultural references which many of the texts employ, but some quite markedly do not, making this also a point of discord throughout the stories. However, while these references are overwhelmingly of an international (mostly North American) category—signifying the depreciation of the local and an opposite openness to global influence—, these McOndo codes are nevertheless used to generate specific popular reading publics and communicate a McOndo-like perspective on Latin American contemporaneity.

In the aftermath of the *McOndo* polemic, academic criticism and journalism alike produced collective and generational readings of the *McOndo* texts and their authors, grouping them as "macondistas" and generating loosely defined characteristics of a McOndo aesthetic. Equally, the opposite perspective which would maintain that these writers are such disparate voices that they hold little in common, betrays the evidence in the texts before us as well as the evident editorial prerogative and process. While there are many areas which are common to some of these writers—literary vocation, narrative devices (use of pop culture, English), themes (urban and young adult), a questioning of the national and welcoming of the global—, each text and author can be read to hold a unique position in proximity and distance to each of these themes, devices, position-takings which in many senses were curated by the editors in a restricted formulation of the space of possibilities. It is as though each anthology constructs its own restricted space of possibilities through which texts are permitted entry, but this does not generate a textual uniformity, but manifest a great variety of authorial strategies to both fit in

(or appear to fit in), as well as express creative autonomy, a unique narrative voice, and set out on individual literary trajectories.

These trajectories, and how the *McOndo* anthology had a place or not within them, is the subject of the next chapter. After returning from a micro-analysis of the texts in question (the prologue and the stories), it is possible to give greater coherence to these authors' trajectories and even make it possible to evaluate the kind of impact (when and how it has occurred) of participation in *McOndo*.

Part 4: Post-*McOndo* Context

Chapter 7: The trajectory of the *McOndo* authors

This passing back-and-forth from the macro perspective, which contextualised *McOndo* in respect to recent literary and cultural history and unformulated background knowledge (Chapter 4), and informed the micro-analysis of the anthology's position-takings both in its (in)famous prologue (Chapter 5), and the less studied yet important stories (Chapter 6), consequently allows for an informed return to macro-analysis to elucidate aspects of the post-*McOndo* Latin American literary context. It goes without saying that this chapter does not intend to provide a panoramic description of this enormously varied and rich literary moment in the terms and concepts utilised thus far, this is, without a doubt, a collective task for a whole range of critics. Instead, by narrowing the focus, I will develop two major areas which have been underexplored: firstly, the *trajectories* of the authors and editors involved and the potential effects of the anthology on some of these, this will be the subject of this chapter. Secondly, the *canonisation* of the anthology in the decades after its publication, which will be analysed in Chapter 8.

Both of these topics will respond to one of the preliminary questions at the outset of this research (as noted at the beginning of Part 3), that is, if and whether the *McOndo* anthology can be considered a key text in the internationalisation of this generation of authors. What will become apparent in this chapter in particular, is that *McOndo* has had a varied impact on the trajectory and specifically the internationalisation of the participants, and even its editors. In the next chapter, *McOndo* will be considered in light of the separate, yet shared, struggle of a number of writers from this generation, showing how, in some senses, it focalised and visibilised these discourses at a regional level. The second part to the next chapter will also consider some of the most significant contributors to *McOndo*'s canonisation, from the generational metadiscourse, the critical corpus it attracted, to its representation in and impact on subsequent generational anthologies. This Part 4, as such, will take into analytical view the ways in which *McOndo* has been *produced* externally, that is, through the varied trajectories of its authors and in its process of canonisation.

The evaluation of the authorial trajectories not only arose out of the Bourdieusian and Casanovian roots of this study, but also to explore more methodically a claim which was made by a number of authorial interviewees. A few writers interviewed for this research suggested

that a significant factor in *McOndo*'s vindication has been the sustained writing careers, and in some cases, noteworthy success, of a significant proportion of those participants in the anthology. As Leonardo Valencia[1] suggests, in his nuanced valorisation of the anthology,

> *McOndo* as an anthology seems and still is interesting to me, because it was very revealing [...] It was an anthology to discover and, in reality, I think it was a pioneering anthology. There is not argument about that. We can take issue with the prologue, but the selection of authors, the different varieties it has—because all the authors are very different—in that sense Fuguet and Gómez were truly very lucid. They knew how to detect different forms of writing and made the right choice in writers who have continued to publish. The problem was to try and subject them to a discourse[2] (Valencia 2016, personal interview).

While Valencia is right that *McOndo* is, in some sense, vindicated by the continued success of those authors selected, at the same time, we must not allow this fact to obscure a more complex reading which shows how the success of certain participants over others can, in part, be attributed to a variety of factors both personal and structural, such as the macro-level unevenness across the national literary spaces within Latin American literary space, the mediation of overseas reception, and personal *habitus*. These are factors on which Casanova's world literary criticism is capable of shedding light, and yet, as will be seen, there is an extent to which Casanova's authorial typologies of national/international author, or of literary differentiation, assimilation and revolution, are not entirely appropriate and require nuancing, or perhaps even complete reapplication not to authors but in relation to discrete works (to be discussed further in Chapter 9). This section will begin, as such, by organising the trajectories of authors from those who saw their trajectories *impacted* by the anthology in some way or another (Fuguet, Paz Soldán, Toscana, Gamboa, Soler, Escanlar); and in contrast, those whose trajectories were either relatively *unimpacted* or *unbenefited* for various reasons, some of them relating to the asymmetries between their respective national literary spaces (Fresán, Forn, Valencia, Soto, the Spanish authors); and lastly those whose trajectories have an *ambiguous* relationship with the anthology (Gómez, Yehya, Rejtman, Bayly). As will be seen, by adopting a macro-perspective, the disproportion of success in the participants of *McOndo* in many senses replicates the unevenness of Spanish-American literary space, barriers not totally unsurmountable but which must be taken into account.

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[1] Another author to recognise this was Santiago Gamboa (2016, personal interview): '[n]o sé si Fuguet y Gómez hicieron un estudio muy sesudo, pero es cierto que de todos esos jóvenes autores una parte importante lograron hacer una obra literaria, a pesar de que en ese momento nadie conocía a nadie'.

[2] '*McOndo* como una antología me parece y me sigue pareciendo interesante, porque fue muy reveladora [...] Era una antología para descubrir y en realidad creo que fue una antología pionera. Eso no se lo puede discutir. Podemos discutir el prólogo, pero la elección de los autores, las distintas variantes que tiene—porque los autores son muy distintos—en eso sí Fuguet y Gómez realmente fueron bastante lúcidos. Supieron detectar distintas escrituras y acertaron con autores que han seguido publicando. El problema fue querer someterlas a un discurso' (Valencia 2016, personal interview).

For the second part of our analysis, in Chapter 8, it becomes apparent that the positioning of a text is determined by a twofold process: firstly, it is positioned by authorial or editorial design through the position-takings of the literary agents involved; and secondly by reception, in how the anthology has been received, (mis)understood, critically produced and eventually situated in recent Latin American literary history. This second kind of positioning is in large part external to the text and its creators and is mediated by a whole range of mechanisms and agents of the literature-world structure, all which can be given greater coherence by returning to the macro-perspective informed with the interpretations of the previous chapters. While these two areas, the literary canonisation of the anthology and the trajectory of the authors in *McOndo*, are at times alluded to in the literature and commented upon by the authors themselves, they have yet to be explored in a methodical way and rarely including the reflections of the authors themselves in this way. What will become evident in this chapter is the strange dual positioning of the *McOndo* anthology as both a typical and an atypical text for analysis with Casanova's world literary theory and methodology. While many of the areas of this congruence or incongruence will come to light in this chapter, a more conclusive analysis of the theoretical and methodological consequences of such a case study will be dealt with explicitly in Chapter 9: Informing World Literature Theories and Methodologies.

As was outlined in the first methodology chapter, Pascale Casanova's use of the word *trajectoire* emphasises the structural factors at play in an author's development in accounting for an assessment of their literary path, an analysis which takes into account and reconciles both internal (the works, the authorial *habitus*) and external modes of analysis (the structure, the professional milieu). As such, like Bourdieu, Casanova places an emphasis on the authorial *habitus* (seen particularly in her case study of Kafka as much in *The World Republic of Letters*, and in greater detail in *Kafka, Angry Poet*), or in other words, the authorial sense of identity, as having a determinate effect on their literary position-takings, and by consequence, their trajectory. To more *fully* execute this method of structure/*habitus* analysis with all participants and editors of *McOndo* would require a much more extensive work. So, while this section will offer some solid groundwork, nevertheless, like much investigation, these readings ought to be considered provisional, interpretation which will require more and sustained research, especially when acknowledging the unfinished state of the majority of these authors' *œuvre*.

7.1.1 The *transformed*

7.1.2 Alberto Fuguet

Alberto Fuguet's early life is marked by two international dis/re-locations defining to his *habitus*: his early childhood migration to the United States; and his return to Chile at the age of 12 in the 1970s. In Fuguet's "literary cartography", *Tránsitos* (2013), he recalls that his interest in reading began at primary school in Encino where there was a strong reading culture among his peers, and that Fuguet used to read in English 'to be the same as the rest' (24). This desire of assimilation or to "fit in" is entirely understandable as a young first-generation migrant. For Fuguet (2013), Chile was 'the country of my parents' and at this stage his 'perfect Valley English of Encino' had far surpassed his Spanish, which during this time he was only exposed to at home (27). This transnational childhood would have an effect on the way in which Fuguet would see himself and shape his profound desire, as an outsider, to fit in, even upon his return to Chile:

> I was made in the USA, born in Chile, came back as an infant, ate Geber, Wonder Bread, Count Chocula, Chef Boyardee. I watched *The Brady Bunch*, *The Partridge Family*, *Mr. Rogers*. I grew up in suburbia, California, L.A., San Fernando Valley, Encino.
>
> I didn't live in a latino barrio or ghetto.
>
> All my friends were jews[sic]. We didn't speak Spanish. I didn't. My parents spoke to us in Spanish. Then we went back. They took me back.
>
> To Chile. To Pinochet's Chile. Black and White post 9-11 Chile.
>
> I had to learn Spanish, had to turn myself into a Chilean, a Latin American.
>
> I had to learn to hate the US.
>
> To not be a gringo.
>
> I couldn't. I wouldn't.
>
> I didn't know how (Fuguet 2013, 193).

While in California, Fuguet was the Chilean outsider, not even finding commonality among the Latinos of the U.S., but assimilating himself through English language and literature. However, upon his return to Chile, he was a second-language Spanish speaker and labelled a "gringo", who once again only desired to belong. While Fuguet eventually managed to conquer Chilean Spanish (to the weakening of his English dominance), with the perceptiveness and distance of an outsider, he felt that belonging and being Chilean and Latin American was more than just linguistically determined, but was associated with United States-hatred, something which his personal *habitus* sympathetic to U.S. culture would not allow him to betray in his process of turning himself into a Chilean and a Latin American.

This is something which became especially apparent to him while studying journalism at the Universidad de Chile during the mid-eighties, a university department which, despite the regime, was overwhelmingly Left-wing in ideology. Fuguet (2013) recalls that, during this time, the pervasive "us versus them" anti-American spirit among his peers was directed not toward the U.S. government or any particular president, but toward Americans and American

culture, '[f]rom ketchup, music, movies to its foreign policy [...] Americans were the real problem: *they* were [the] ones that voted for Reagan, *they* saw those movies, ate that food' (195-9). During this time of military dictatorship—when Chilean democratic and civil rights were suspended; when citizens were pursued, tortured, exiled, or disappeared; when censorship and curfew reigned, and neoliberal reforms were introduced—, hatred towards the regime, as well as the United States (which had aided its rise and continuation in power), represented acts of sovereign resistance for many Chileans. This political context further set Fuguet apart politically as the Americanised Liberal "gringo" reluctant to reject those Americanised parts of his identity[3]. Fuguet's position as a hybrid outsider, which in many senses was forced upon him (and in others encouraged), and his personal desire to belong on his own terms, are central constitutive parts of his *habitus*, as he himself states, '[s]o I guess I became a writer not because I wanted to tell stories—I became one in order to survive, fit in' (2013, 27). With this in mind, Fuguet's attempts to alter the understanding of Latin America's cultural identity to acknowledge those increasingly Americanised aspects through the metaphor of McOndo, can be interpreted as not only discursive and literary battles, but also a personal one, as Fuguet's refusal to disavow his Chilean/North American hybridity.

The social and literary route which Fuguet takes in response to this context and his place in it, is also that of the provocateur: as much an intentional position-taking *by* Fuguet as well as the image produced by social and literary criticism *about* him. Fuguet's earliest works defined him in this way during the peak of the so-called *nueva narrativa chilena*. In this time, as has been noted in Chapter 4, Fuguet was considered a leading emerging voice toward the end of the dictatorship, a signal to many the possibility of a post-dictatorial cultural eruption (Orellana Rivera 1997). For Orellana Rivera (1997), Fuguet was converted into 'a kind of literary celebrity; or more than that, something like a fetish author of the young generation'[4] (47). This success, and image gained initially through his short story collection *Sobredosis*, were to be further confirmed through his first novel *Mala onda*, which gained the ire of the most prominent literary critic in Chile: Ignacio Valente[5] (1992), who described in his review

[3] Much in the same way in which Casanova (2015) characterises the increasingly contradictory dual membership of Germanised Jews in Prague during the escalating tribalism of the two extremes (German xenophobia and Zionism) in *Kafka, Angry Poet* (78), in the polarised society of dictatorial Chile, various poles marked how people defined themselves (and others in turn): from anti-American to pro-American, Allende or Pinochet supporter, socialist or (neo)liberal, progressive or fascist.

[4] '[E]n una suerte de celebridad literaria; más que eso, en algo así como el escritor fetiche de la joven generación' (Orellana Rivera 1997, 47).

[5] Ignacio Valente, pseudonym for the Opus Dei priest Father José Miguel Ibáñez Langlois, was the highest critical authority in Chile, and heir to the conservative critical dynasties of two other critics from *El Mercurio*: Omer Emeth (from 1906-1936) and his successor Hernán Díaz Arrieta (Alone) (from 1939-1978).

how he could not even bring himself to finish the novel, claiming that it was 'rubbish' and 'the worst wave of the current Chilean novel'[6] (5), similar to earlier vitriolic critiques he had made of *Sobredosis*[7]. However, these scathing reviews, by one of the most conservative literary judges in the country, worked in Fuguet's favour, after all, infamy is still fame and he became recognised as one of the *enfant terribles* of Chilean literature, an identity which would follow him even to his introduction to the U.S., when Nicole LaPorte (2003) described him as an 'Eminem-like celebrity' in the *The New York Times*. Aided by this image and infamy, Fuguet's work had an altogether different reception among the youth of that generation. According to the Chilean author Pablo Illanes (contributor to *La Zona* and to *Cuentos con walkman*), *Mala onda* was a meaningful work for his generation of writers. In my interview with Illanes he explained:

> [f]or my generation Alberto was a sign of what was possible—particularly *Mala onda*—, to read for pleasure and not by obligation. Alberto wrote the books which you wanted to read at school but which they wouldn't give you because they kept making you read the classics. When I read *Mala onda*, it was one of the first times I took pleasure in reading something[8] (Illanes 2016, personal interview).

For Illanes and some of his peers, Fuguet's literature not only engaged them as readers in ways which they had not experienced[9], it also represented a widening of the space of possibilities within the Chilean literary field.

Prior to these literary and polemical successes, Fuguet's first tentative literary entrance, through his anonymous chronicles under the penname Enrique Alekán, deserves renewed focus in understanding his authorial *habitus*. In 1989, Fuguet had generated a journalistic sensation through his chronicles in the weekly column 'Capitalinos'[10] in *El Mercurio*'s *Wikén* supplement. Aside from the usual mystery surrounding an anonymous columnist, Fuguet adopted this Doppelgänger to pass commentary (and judgement) on Chilean society at the time

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[6] '[B]azofia' and 'la peor onda de la novela chilena actual' (Valente 1992, 5).

[7] '[U]na frecuencia tan persistente de garabatos, de obscenidades, de giros coprolálicos y de adjetivaciones y metáforas de orden sexual, que en muchos años de lectura de toda clase de libros, no recuerda una concentración 'escatológica' del calibre de esta, al menos en Chile' (Valente 2008[1990], 131).

[8] 'Para mi generación Alberto era como una posibilidad—y particularmente *Mala onda*—de leer por placer y no por obligación. Alberto escribía libros que uno quería leer en el colegio y que no te daban porque te seguían obligando a leer lo clásicos. Cuando leí *Mala onda*, fue una de las primeras veces que yo sentí placer al leer algo' (Illanes 2016, personal interview).

[9] In an interview in the mid-nineties, Sergio Gómez had expressed a similar concern for the future of the Chilean literary public critiquing particularly the emphasis placed on consecrated authors or classics within school curriculum, arguing that: 'Para un adolecente salido de los hornos de cuarto medio, la historia literaria chilena termina con Alberto Blest Gana. Justamente con quien debería empezar. Actualmente, la insoportable *pesadez* que significa resistir las lecturas de la enseñanza media es la mejor vacuna para que un lector joven no tome nunca más un libro' (Gómez 1994b, 12). Gómez's concern was Pablo Illanes' reality, the reading of foundational Chilean literature such as *Martín Rivas* was not inspiring to this new generation who far from looking back into their nation's history of literature for inspiration looked closer to their contemporary surroundings.

[10] 'Capitalinos' featured in *Wikén* from the 9th of June 1989 and the 4th of May 1990.

of the transition to democracy[11]. However, while the column began as an anonymous review of bars and restaurants, Fuguet (2013) found himself increasingly 'overexposed' in this column, which he described as 'a kind of extremely autobiographical chronicle/diary of my life'[12] (61). Fuguet even presents his decision to end the Alekán saga as a matter of life or death (at least in a psychological sense), describing his growing confusion about his own identity: 'I, on the one hand, didn't exist and Alekán dominated the world. One of us would have to go'[13] (Fuguet 2013, 64). By revealing himself as the author behind Enrique Alekán and burying this figure with the compilation of these chronicles in *La azarosa y sobreexpuesta vida de Enrique Alekán* (Fuguet 1990), Fuguet seized the literary existence which Alekán has gained and which he sought, promptly publishing *Sobredosis* in that same year (which won the Premio Municipal de Literatura in 1991), and shortly after, his first novel *Mala onda*. After years in the private writing workshops of Antonio Skármeta and José Donoso, Alberto Fuguet had finally "graduated" from these creative incubation chambers to exist in his own right in the public and exposed literature-world.

So, while, on the one hand, it is apparent that Fuguet's *habitus* is inclined to reconcile his hybrid identity through his literature as well as pursue a provocative path, a third and paradoxical aspect to Fuguet's *habitus* becomes apparent: fear. This aspect manifests itself in a number of ways. Fuguet's fear of not belonging, or not belonging on his own terms, led him to amplify his voice through polemics which part of him would have rather avoided: '[t]here is something in me that would have liked to be less impulsive when I was younger, more tranquil, go unnoticed or be invisible'[14] (in Lujan Picabea 2014). Accompanying this, was the fear of public and critical reception, evident as much in his critiques and resentment toward the academy, by his own admission[15], as well as the curious Alekán saga. Even the confrontation of this fear is evident in the advice which he would give the young writers of his writing workshop at *La Zona de Contacto*. One such participant, the Chilean writer Alfredo Sepúlveda (2015, personal interview), recalled that Fuguet would repeat like a parrot the dictum "si no

[11] The writer Marco Antonio de la Parra (1998) even described Fuguet writing as Alekán 'quizás el mejor cronista del período de la transición propiamente tal' (no page).

[12] '[U]na suerte de crónica/diario de vida en extremo autobiográfica' (Fuguet 2013, 61).

[13] 'Yo, por un lado, no existía y Alekán dominaba el mundo. Uno iba a tener que desaparecer' (Fuguet 2013, 64).

[14] In an interview for *Revista Ñ*, Alberto Fuguet spoke about his yearning, with a part of him, to go unnoticed: '[p]ero hay algo en mí que hubiera querido ser menos impulsivo de más joven, más quieto, pasar más piola o invisible' (Lujan Picabea 2014).

[15] 'Me da curiosidad. Todos mis libros, creo, me han dado curiosidad: cómo serán recibidos o, más bien, cómo se insertarán en la tradición, cómo dialogarán con los otros libros y con los posibles lectores. Igual uno no sabe nada: uno se lanza desnudo a una piscina sin agua. El primero—*Sobredosis*—pensé que sería acogido y aplaudido; *Missing* pensé que sería destrozado y me quemarían en la plaza pública' (Fuguet 2013, 164).

duele no vale," (If it doesn't hurt, it has no value). Alberto Fuguet has continually blurred the lines between fiction and non-fiction through his strongly autofictional style, apparent in a variety of ways through his novels *Por favor, rebobinar* (1994), *Tinta roja* (1996), *Las películas de mi vida* (2003), *Missing: Una investigación* (2009), and most recently *No ficción* (2015b) and *Sudor* (2016). And yet, running along all of these bold provocations and exposures, is apparent an equal and opposite tension of the fear of not existing, the artistic impulse which has driven him to pursue his passions, at times literary, other times filmic and discursive, in spite of these inhibitions.

Cuentos con walkman, along with his novels *Mala onda* (1991), *Por favor rebobinar* (1994), and *Tinta roja* (1996), certainly gained Fuguet a level of prominence and literary recognition in Chile and in some neighbouring nations, however, the artistic impulse of an international writer like Fuguet naturally seeks wider recognition. *McOndo* represents a turning point, in which Fuguet attempts to step out of the national framework and into broader regional circulation, a personal urgent and necessary passion which would identify him above all others as the anthology's central proponent. There are several clues as to why this is the case, not least because Fuguet is one of the writers rejected in the anecdote, and the term McOndo was coined by him, as is evidenced both in what I have considered here the proto-*McOndo*-prologue 'McCondo' (1993), and in his second novel *Por favor, rebobinar* (1994) when a character expresses similar sentiments as appear in the prologue[16]. This very personal fight explains Fuguet's continued contribution to the ever-growing discourse surrounding the anthology as well as his traumatic recollection of the critical backlash. He regularly gave interviews in Chile, Argentina, Spain, and the United States in which he discussed and defended the anthology's purpose and aims, and his essays and articles further solidified his status as *McOndo*'s principal ideologue. Two of his essays on *McOndo* were published in English, drawing the much-desired reception of North American readers and critics, perhaps not only to do battle with the academy which in Fuguet's eyes needed to update its horizon of expectation, but also as a means of drawing critical attention to himself and his work[17]. The impact of these English-language

[16] One of the characters in *Por favor, rebobinar* says: 'Quiero hacer una saga, pero sin caer en la fórmula del realismo mágico. Puro realismo virtual, pura literatura McCondo. Algo así como *La casa de los espíritus* sin los espíritus' (Fuguet 1995, 139).

[17] In 1997 Alberto Fuguet published 'I am not a magic realist' (*Salon*), the English-language rendering of 'Presentación del país McOndo' as was noted in Chapter 5, and in 2001 he published the article 'Magical Neoliberalism' (*Foreign Policy*), a clarificatory article which also works as an attempt to develop and extend the *McOndo* aesthetics beyond the literary realm and put forward McOndo as a chief metaphor for understanding Latin American contemporary reality, but equally, a literary self-introduction for Fuguet through this very polemic and these North American periodicals.

articles is evident in the sudden "discovery" of *McOndo* in Anglophone and mostly North American newspapers, with journalistic articles consequently appearing in the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Guardian*. This media attention would ultimately reach its apogee in Alberto Fuguet's appearance on the cover of *Newsweek* in 2002 with a series of articles dedicated to his growing reputation as a new voice of Latin American literature. The tagline of the Newsweek cover (Margolis 2002)—'Latin Literature's New Look: Goodbye, Magical Realism. A Generation of Gritty, Street-Smart Writers Is Making Waves'—, continued to produce "Fuguet's *McOndo*" as a parricide of García Márquez's magical realism and its legacy, and characterise Fuguet as a figurehead to the changing literary times.

Fuguet, as such, clearly committed himself to becoming the principal spokesperson for the book, not only in Chile, but also abroad, consequently linking his own personal literary trajectory with that of the anthology. Considering Fuguet's persistence in promoting the discourse around the anthology, as well as his own authorial persona along with it, it is unsurprising that many of the critiques mostly levelled against the prologue were largely directed towards him. In my interview with him he mentioned the impact which the reception of *McOndo* had on him:

> [t]he book has never been republished, and I haven't allowed it [...] Because I felt that they [the academy] were *badmouthing* it and that it was a mistake to my career [...], as if all the good that came out of *Cuentos con walkman*, *McOndo* worked against. And so much so that I shut up for almost eight years, I didn't publish a novel between 96' and 2003. And I was only seen in a slightly different light when *Newsweek* put me on their cover [in 2002] because of *McOndo*. "*Fuck McOndo*" was basically my attitude [18] (Fuguet 2015, personal interview).

Whether this negative reception did a disservice to his career, as he suspects, is a difficult question to answer, although Fuguet is certain it damaged his symbolic credit in the academy[19], to the extent that he would never attain the repute of more critically respected Chilean authors such as Damiela Eltit, or currently Lina Meruane[20]. Although to be clear, even if Fuguet held

[18] 'El libro nunca se ha vuelto a publicar, y yo no lo he permitido [...] Porque sentía que lo estaban *badmouthing* y que era un error de mi carrera [...] como que todo lo bien que me había ido con *Cuentos con walkman*, *McOndo* me jugó en contra. Y tanto si que yo me quedé callado casi durante ocho años, o sea yo no publiqué una novela entre el 96' y el 2003. Y sólo yo cambié un poco de parecer cuando *Newsweek* me puso en la portada [en 2002] a partir de *McOndo*. ‹‹*Fuck McOndo*›› básicamente era mi actitud' (Fuguet 2015, personal interview).

[19] Evidence of this was apparent in my interview with Eduardo Becerra (2016, personal interview) when he noted that while compiling his anthology *Líneas aéreas* and seeking advice on who to include, one of his first academic informants (which he chose to not name) suggested that under no circumstances he should include Alberto Fuguet: '[e]se académico me contesta que le parece una idea extraordinaria, que me puede dar información, etcétera. Y al final del mensaje me dice, "si me permites un consejo, sólo un consejo, por supuesto no quiero presionarte nada, yo sinceramente creo que habría una persona que en ningún caso incluiría en esta antología: Alberto Fuguet' (Becerra 2016, personal interview).

[20] 'Como acto algo esquizofrénico, quizás, en vez de callar, seguí haciendo cosas que no debí: *Cuentos con walkman* y estar en la "Zona de Contacto" (nuestro pecado: "las tres V: vodka, Vitara, Vitacura"), escribí en *Mundo Diners* y la *Rock and Pop*, edité y armé *McOndo* (error, error, error; toda posibilidad de acercarme al

out this hope, he was never really on this kind of trajectory, more typical of writers from the field of restricted production such as Eltit and Meruane, and he himself is also responsible for not engaging as beneficially as he might have with the academy capable of canonising him (as will be explored further in Chapter 9). However, in the same way in which Ignacio Valente's damning review of *Mala onda* ultimately contributed to the novel's success, Fuguet's oppositional reputation in regard to the Boom and negative characterisation as the "patricide" of García Márquez from the perspective of the Latin American critical establishment, was used to market him in the United States as the irreverent new kid on the block. This, coupled with his aesthetic acceptance of influence from North American authors such as Bukowski and Easton Ellis, no doubt facilitated his entrance into the United States field of reception. In this sense, Fuguet's trajectory parallels that of Danilo Kîs (Casanova 2007, 113-5), another writer who refused to accept the aesthetic national canon which he had inherited, accepting foreign influence to, in turn, create the conditions of a more autonomous literature.

A quote from the review of *The Movies of My Life* which appeared in men's lifestyle magazine *Details* would accompany Fuguet's works either in the 'Praise for...' section of the book and at times even on the front cover, as it also appears on the Spanish cover of *Cortos* (2005): '[t]he Latin American literary establishment won't prod Alberto Fuguet with a ten-foot pole, but the kids addicted to MTV Latino can't keep their hands off him . . . he's the closest thing they've got to a rock star'[21]. This assessment from the outside—with all its obvious exaggeration—continued to affirm Fuguet's image for foreign readers as a pop-cultural renegade within what is characterised as a conservative critical environment, despite the fact that part of Fuguet's rejection was also in Latinamericanist academies outside of Latin America, such as in the U.S. and Australia, and that he has consistently published his novels with the biggest mainstream commercial publishers such as Grijalbo, Alfaguara, and in recent times Penguin Random House, all editors rather of the literary mainstream.

If Alberto Fuguet's fate was, in some sense, linked to the *McOndo* anthology, in spite of the original critical backlash which it endured and the damage to his career it may have had during that time, its eventual canonisation, apparent now, has in turn also canonised its

mundo de Damiela Eltit o, ahora, a Lina Meruane, se vino abajo; adiós Nueva York, adiós pasajes a Barcelona) (Fuguet 2013, 55).

[21] 'El establecimiento literario latinoamericano no se le acerca a Alberto Fuguet ni con un palo que mida diez metros de largo, pero los jóvenes adictos al MTV Latino no se pueden pasar de él . . . es para ellos lo más cerccano a una estrella de rock' (Fuguet 2004).

principal editor and ideologue. Despite Fuguet's misgivings about this fact[22], notably, Fuguet has reflected on how the three anthologies which he has coedited (*Cuentos con walkman*, *McOndo*, and *Se habla español*) had their own hidden agenda: a strategic means of publishing and drawing critical attention in between his own individual literary projects:

> I see the three anthologies as ways in which I released new books between my own books without publishing myself. I think that all three are closely related to me and that with all three I am the ideologue, as conceited as that sounds. They are related to topics which at that moment were important to me, are still but less so, and which in that moment seemed pressing; that it was worth it to go out into the street and speak about them. They were urgent. And they were clearly about supporting me. In other words, the three anthologies had their *hidden agenda*, which was to support my body of work. In the sense of giving weight, a *critical mass*—as much in sales as in academic or ideological terms—to my own literature[23] (Fuguet 2015, personal interview).

As such, however negative the publicity he may have received due to it, *McOndo* had an enormous effect on Fuguet's internationalisation, gaining him access (as has been noted) to the most commercial and internationalising publishers in Spain, but also an important personal and strategic incursion into the North American market and critical consciousness, aims consistent with the hidden agendas of his anthologies[24] that their negative reception seemed to endanger.

After *McOndo*, Fuguet's incursions into the United States became possible: the New York publisher St Martin's Press translated Fuguet's *Mala onda* as *Bad Vibes* (1997a); he co-edited the aforementioned anthology *Se habla español: voces latinas en USA* with Edmundo Paz Soldán; his presence intensified with the simultaneous Spanish and English release of *Las películas de mi vida*/*The Movies of My Life* (2003), published by Alfaguara and Rayo/Harper Collins respectively, as well as the translation of his second short story collection *Cortos* (Alfaguara, 2004), also published by Rayo/Harper Collins as *Shorts: Stories* (2005) in New York. And yet, while Fuguet has yet to have another novel translated and published into English in the United States since these, within Latin American literary space he has continued to circulate with tremendous success, gaining widespread praise for his novel *Missing: Una*

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[22] Fuguet is fearful that of all of his works *McOndo* will be the one to be remembered: '*McOndo* nunca volverá a editarse, aunque sea en una edición de lujo, con cuero de avestruz. Está en mi testamento, en las instrucciones de lo que ocurrirá con mis libros a futuro. Me daría entre asco, pena, rabia y frustración que *McOndo* sea el único libro que me sobreviva' (Fuguet 2013, 407).

[23] 'Yo veo que las tres antologías son maneras en que yo tenía de hacer libros nuevos sin publicar entre libros míos. Creo que los tres son súper cercanos a mí y que con los tres soy el ideólogo, aunque suena pedante. Los tres tienen que ver con temas que en ese momento me eran importante y que todavía lo son pero son menos. Y que en ese momento me parecía que eran presurosos; que valía la pena salir a la calle y hablar de ellos. Eran urgentes. Y tenían que ver claramente con apoyarme a mí mismo. O sea, las tres antologías tenían su *hidden agenda*, que eran apoyar mi obra. En el sentido de darle un peso, un *critical mass*—tanto de ventas tanto académico como ideológico—a mi propia literatura' (Fuguet 2015, personal interview).

[24] Burkhard Pohl (2000) has highlighted how *McOndo* but also other anthologies such as *Líneas aéreas* represent a type of 'antología programática de una nueva narrativa latinoamericana que se publica en España', a tendency which Pohl argues has the result of 'revalorizar el papel de España como mediadora de esas literaturas hacia América Latina y Europa' (44).

investigación (2009), and gaining greater international circulation especially with his last two novels, the second of which, *Sudor* (2016), was published simultaneously in Chile, Argentina, Peru, Colombia, Mexico and Spain[25].

And while he has not achieved the cultural or critical status that he covets (or at least coveted) of writers such as Eltit or Meruane, he continues to be a successful author within Chile and is increasingly circulating across numerous Latin American countries and Spain. With the benefit of this ascent, Fuguet recognises the role which anthologies played in his literary beginnings as *tools of survival*: 'I'm not into anthologies, I don't read them, they don't particularly interest me, I don't know if they have value and I think that I wouldn't do them again. They were tools of survival'[26] (Fuguet 2015, personal interview). The fact that Fuguet no longer sees the value or need for these literary tools of survival shows the kind of literary credit which he has come to enjoy, in part as a result of them. Fuguet no longer spaces his personal narrative publications with anthologies, but rather, with an ever-expanding list of his sole-authored non-fiction chronicles or memoirs beginning with *Primera Parte* (2000), and continuing very consistently with *Apuntes autistas* (2007), *Cinépata (una bitácora)* (2012), *Tránsitos. una cartografía* (2013), *Todo no es suficiente (La corta, intensa y sobreexpuesta vida de Gustavo Escanlar* (2015), and recently *VHS (unas memorias)* (2017). This shift in his publishing strategy continues to add to his literary credit in between the publication of his novels, and increasingly nowadays, films[27], clear signs of his accomplishment of greater artistic success.

7.1.3 David Toscana

Apart from Toscana's debut and departure in the land of McOndo through his story 'La noche de una vida difícil', his *œuvre* and his own convictions lie quite distant to the McOndo urban and contemporary landscapes, focusing his narratives largely in rural and historical settings. The novel *El último lector* (2013 [2004]), for example, illustrates a forsaken and

[25] Fuguet (2015, personal interview) draws an interesting career parallel between the internationalisation of his work from *McOndo* to his most recent novel *Sudor*: '[c]on *Sudor* estamos hablando de algo muy distinto, totalmente a lo contrario. ¿Dónde *Sudor* va a aparecer en América Latina, qué países? Mientras que en *McOndo* era ¿qué países vamos a meter a este libro? ahora es al revés.'

[26] '[Y]o no soy una persona de antologías, no las leo, no me interesan, no sé si tienen valor y creo que no las volvería a hacer. Fueron herramientas de sobrevivencia, herramientas políticas, herramientas de amistad, herramientas de conexiones' (Fuguet 2015, personal interview).

[27] A self-confessed cinephile, Fuguet has written and directed a number of documentaries (*Locaciones: Buscando a Rusty James,* 2013), short films (*Las hormigas asesinas,* 2004, *2 horas*, 2009), and feature length films (*Se arrienda*, 2005, *Velódromo*, 2010, *Música campesina*, 2011, *Invierno*, 2015, *Cola de mono*, 2018, *Siempre sí*, 2019).

drought-ridden town in which the inhabitants suffer dehydration and hunger, intestinal worms, and are at the mercy of a corrupt rural police force and governors uninterested in their town's development: experiences of Palaversich's so-called "Third World Macondo". Further to these geographical and thematic differences, Toscana makes significant meta-narrative comments via the reflections of the character Lucio, the owner of the ostracised bookshop in the town. The judicious bookshop owner categorises books along normative lines (not unlike Borges'): the good literature he keeps, and the bad literature he condemns to the cockroaches in his overflowing basement. In some senses, like Toscana, Lucio has a conservative concern with prose and story-telling: rejecting recent North American and Spanish influence, the pretentious modernity of writers who have recourse to codes which serve only as decorations, the use of redundant language, and excessive use of dialogue (and the use of parentheses and dashes in particular). To conflate a character's voice with the author's is generally a risky critical assumption often deployed unthinkingly[28], however, Toscana (2016, personal interview) volunteered in my interview with him that he agrees with his character Lucio[29] in regard to his criticism of decorations or (McOndo style) codes in literature:

> [i]n *El ultimo lector*, for example, even my character has a diatribe against these decorations which I mention. Why appeal so often to cinema, why appeal to pop culture, to popular music, why make references when the writer himself ought to have the capacity to say what they want to say without having to borrow from elsewhere. So yes, I feel that contemporary literature is very influenced by cinema, the language of the contemporary novel is very influenced by that everyday nature[30].

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[28] While it is understandable that with the rise of autofictional literature, particularly since the Postboom, that the recurring issue of associating the rhetoric and discourse of the characters in a work is equated to that of the author, this is not always necessarily the case. This kind of erroneous conflation is made apparent in David Toscana's anecdote in my interview with him, when he described how while discussing his story for *McOndo* during a visit to a United States university, *he* was accused by a Chicano student as offending his culture due to the main character's disdain and punitive comments towards Tex-Mex music.

[29] The omniscient narrator in *El último lector* clarifies Lucio's opinions on this matter at two different stages of the novel:

> Le parece que una novela se ensucia menos cuando un lector come encima de ella que cuando el autor menciona la marca de los pantalones de un personaje o de su perfume o de sus gafas o corbata o del vino francés que bebe en tal o cual restaurante; las novelas se manchan con la sola mención de una tarjeta de crédito, un automóvil o la televisión (Toscana 2013, 60).

> Sólo entregaba la novela de inmediato a las cucarachas, sin importar lo atractiva que le estuviera pareciendo, cuando el autor recurría al cine para darse a entender. Dos semanas atrás condenó una novela por este motivo: Al tomarla de la mano, James le sonrió como Peter O'Donohue en *El valle de las gaviotas*, la cual Mary Anne había visto al menos diez veces en la enrome pantalla del cine de la calle Ocho. ¿Yo cómo voy a imaginar esa sonrisa? […] No merecen llamarse escritores, piensa, si en vez de tomarse el trabajo de describir una sonrisa, un peinado, una mirada, una actitud, prefieren enviarme a ver una película (Toscana 2013, 130-1).

[30] 'En por ejemplo *El último lector* hasta mi personaje tiene una diatriba en contra de estas decoraciones que yo menciono. Para qué recurrir tanto al cine, para qué recurrir tanto a la cultura pop, a la música de masas, para qué hacer referencias cuando el propio escritor debería tener la capacidad para decir lo que quiere decir sin pedir préstamos. Entonces, siento que sí, la literatura contemporánea está muy influida por el cine, el lenguaje de la novela contemporánea está muy influida por esa cotidianidad' (Toscana 2016, personal interview).

This position appears in contrast to the use of popular culture as a common code between narrator and reader identified by de Rosso (2014, 92) in many of the stories in *McOndo*, including Toscana's own story. However this is a positioning which, since his participation in *McOndo* and experiment with 'La noche de una vida difícil', David Toscana has avoided—considering them rather unliterary devices.

What is clear, therefore, is that at the point of the publication of *McOndo* in Toscana's literary trajectory he was still undecided about his personal literary aesthetic, evident in the testing and rehearsing of his writing within the space of possibilities: '[i]n that time this text ['La noche de una vida difícil'] was one among many other unpublished texts where I was searching and practising various things'[31] (Toscana 2016, personal interview). The opportunity for him, as a provincial writer—as he puts it—, to publish in an international anthology was so great that he risked misrepresenting his literature for the potential strategic advantage:

> [f]or me, a provincial, Mexican, from Monterrey who hadn't published anything other than a novel called *Las bicicletas* (1992), to be told that you are going to be in a book which will be everywhere, of course, I was willing to sell my soul to the devil to be there! And it's not as if I regret it […] Perhaps I would have liked to participate with another story, a more Toscanian story. But I also understand that those Toscanian texts didn't have a place in this anthology[32] (Toscana 2016, personal interview).

Now that Toscana is at a point of having discovered his own narrative voice and consolidated his literary convictions, it is understandable that he would wish to historically revise this aesthetic departure. When speaking of his story in *McOndo* Toscana said:

> I don't plan on publishing it anywhere else. If one day my complete works appear, I hope they are incomplete. Now, I have clear more or less what I understand as literature, how prose should be, which topics should be covered and how, which cultural references you can make in the text and which not. And now that I have more clearly defined the aesthetic that I want to pursue, I think that text no longer belongs to my universe [33] (Toscana 2016, personal interview).

Were we to look no further than the text itself Toscana's inclusion in the anthology would appear rather harmonious, but when analysed from the macro-perspective it is revealed to be a most anomalous inclusion. It is also a pivotal moment of Toscana's discovery of non-belonging

[31] 'En otra época este texto ['La noche de una vida difícil'] era uno entre muchos otros textos inéditos donde yo estaba buscando y ensayando varias cosas' (Toscana 2016, personal interview).

[32] 'Para mí, un escritor provinciano, mexicano de Monterrey, que no había publicado más que una novela que se llama *Las bicicletas* (1992), que te dijeran que vas a estar en un libro que estará por todo el mundo, ¡pues claro, estaba yo dispuesto a venderle al diablo mi alma para estar allí! Y tampoco es que me arrepiento […]. Quizás me hubiera querido estar con otro texto, un texto más toscaniano. Pero también entiendo que esos textos toscanianos no tenían cabida en esta antología' (Toscana 2016, personal interview).

[33] 'No pienso publicarlo en otro lugar. Si un día aparecen mis obras completas, espero que sean incompletas. Ahora, más o menos ya tengo claro qué entiendo por literatura, cómo debe ser una prosa, qué temas se tratan y cómo se tratan, qué referencias culturales puedes hacer dentro del texto o no. Y ahora que tengo más claramente definida cual es la estética que quiero manejar, creo que ese texto ya no pertenece a mi universo' (Toscana 2016, personal interview).

and thereafter intentional differentiation and distancing from this kind of contemporary literature, a path not unlike Gómez's or other writers included in *McOndo* such as Jordi Soler.

7.1.4 Jordi Soler

Jordi Soler's literature, like a number of the *McOndo* contributors, demonstrated a number of early generational themes which would have likely convinced Fuguet and Gómez of his suitability to be included in *McOndo*. His first novel, *Bocafloja* (1994), which was published by Grijalbo, centres around a young radio presenter "rockstar" Johny Bocafloja who lives a life of sex, drugs and rock and roll in Mexico City. This theme is at least partially explored in his short story 'La mujer químicamente compatible', with its focus on the sexual fantasy of the protagonist and his unhappy yet obliging partner, but also the passing references to radio and 1990s rock band Smashing Pumpkins. Nevertheless, the story's other more fantastical trope is indictive of the literary direction that Soler has taken since his participation in *McOndo*.

In the story, Soler creates the figure of a French mystic by the name of Calvadós who had formulated a theory of relationships based on alchemy through which to discern romantic, sexual, or lifelong compatibility. This interest with history and the present, and with occasional recourse to the inexplicable or fantastical in isolated moments or as fundamental bases for his novels, is distinct when compared to the majority of his *McOndo* co-contributors. This is a theme, which, he acknowledged, separated him from some of the other contributors (as much in *McOndo* as in *Se habla español* in which he was also included in), and which he attributes not to aesthetic experimentation but to his Macondo-style upbringing:

> [t]here are somewhat delirious events that appear in both stories, and in almost all of my novels there is always a scene like that which cannot be explained. It's very likely because I grew up in the countryside surrounded not by doctors but by a shaman, all of my childhood I either took advantage or I was fearful of the witchcraft which was around, I would see people levitate, that sort of thing. But in the end, all of this went against what *McOndo* was precisely meant to be about, and yet they end up with a writer who has a connection to Macondo[34] (Soler 2016, personal interview).

These themes, which appear to distance Soler's stories from that which the *McOndo* anthology had attempted to put forward, are themes which at this nascent stage he would eventually develop in his future works including a trilogy set during the Spanish civil war *Los rojos de ultramar* (Alfaguara, 2004), *La última hora del último día* (RBA, 2007), *La fiesta del oso*

[34] 'Hay eventos un poco delirantes que aparecen en los dos cuentos, y en casi todas mis novelas siempre hay una escena así, que no se puede explicar. Seguramente porque crecí en el campo rodeado no con un doctor sino con una chamana, toda mi infancia estuve o aprovechando o aterrorizado por las brujerías que había, veía gente levitar. En fin, todo esto era en contra de lo que iba McOndo precisamente. Y luego les llega uno de los cuentistas con un cable hacia Macondo' (Soler 2016, personal interview).

(Mondadori, 2009); his fictionalisation of the life of the French author Antonin Artaud in *Diles que son cadáveres* (Mondadori, 2011); a creative distortion of History through the story of a descendent of Moctezuma who is discovered in Spain and alters the balance of power in Spain and its ex-colonies in his novel *Ese príncipe que fui* (Alfaguara, 2014), the picaresque historical novel *El cuerpo eléctrico* (Alfaguara, 2017), and the fantastic (almost magical realist) stories of *Usos rudimentarios de la selva* (Alfaguara, 2018).

Notwithstanding the numerous ways this trajectory could be understood, one possible clue into understanding this shift is Soler's provincial *habitus* and the literary autonomy he gained through greater distance from his native home. Soler's early provincial upbringing does not feature in his first novel and instead finds harmony in a newly discovered social identity as a Mexican City urbanite and, in a literary sense, consistent with the forceful pop cultural and contemporary urban themes of literature during the 1990s, not solely in Mexico but across Latin America and Spain. As such, his first novel appears, much like Sergio Gómez's (as will be seen) or even Toscana's in his story 'La noche de una vida difícil', as an acceptance and use of the current aesthetic paradigm, which in his later work once more established and more certain of his literary conviction he would eventually move beyond. In my interview with Jordi Soler, while reflecting on these transformations in his literary themes and settings, he noted this reclamation of his somewhat fantastical or Macondiano childhood:

> I suppose that as a writer as you publish books you begin understanding not only what your books are about but also about life, and what one has to tell. *Bocafloja* was my first novel. Then I was already a *chilango*[35], from Mexico City, so I had become an urbanite [...] But later, since I have lived in Europe for around 15 years, I have vindicated my jungle-like past, my childhood, and I have incorporated it. All of my concern with my past has something to do with my age but also the geographic distance which I have with that past. Since I went to live in Ireland, I have thought that that infancy was a fantastic infancy that ought to serve me to keep building my novels, it was here that I discovered that. In Mexico I was a *chilango*, I was even embarrassed of being a kid from the countryside, but now I feel at peace with that past[36] (Soler 2016, personal interview).

Therefore, Soler's provincial social identity while obscured in his first novel's forceful incarnation of the urban experience and contemporary narration while he lived and wrote in Mexico City, is vindicated upon greater distance from Mexican literary space through his

[35] Chilango is a pejorative slang demonym used instead of 'defeños' or 'capitalinos' to speak of the inhabitants of Mexico City.

[36] 'Supongo que como escritor en la medida que va pasando el tiempo y va publicando libros, vas entendiendo de qué se trata no solo tus libros sino la vida, y lo que hay que contar. *Bocafloja* fue mi primera novela. Ya era entonces un chico chilango, del D.F., entonces yo me transformé en un urbanita [...] Pero luego ya, desde que vivo en Europa desde hace quince años, he reivindicado mucho mi pasado selvático, mi niñez, y lo he incorporado. Toda mi preocupación por mi pasado tiene que ver con la edad que voy cumpliendo pero también por la distancia geográfica que tengo de ese pasado. Desde que me fui a vivir a Irlanda, me pareció que esa infancia era una infancia fantástica que debería servirme para seguir construyendo mis novelas, pero fue aquí que descubrí eso. En México era chilango, me daba hasta vergüenza ser un niño de pueblo, pero ahora me siento bien con ese pasado' (Soler 2016, personal interview).

migration first to Ireland and later to Spain, where he begins to explore numerous other literary avenues including a vindication of his childhood, precisely through the provincial or fantastical nature of that past. It is by distance to the identity which he had forged in Mexico City that he is able to return to his very singular origins, a vindication of his childhood that would take the form of a continued use of the fantastical or inexplicable in his literature as well as a returning to the territory of Veracruz and his hometown of La Portuguesa in a number of his novels from *Los rojos de Ultramar* (Alfaguara, 2004), La *última hora del último día* (RBA, 2007), *Usos rudimentarios de la selva* (Alfaguara, 2018), and as well as his forthcoming novel (Soler 2016, personal interview). It is as though the space of possibilities available in the national field were limited—quite paradoxically—in two ways: the impossibility of *not* writing magical realism (or those narrative devices, regional themes, the mysterious or the fantastical which are invariably interpreted in and beyond Latin America as magical realism and which held the promise of certain international success[37]); as well as the impossibility of writing magical realism (responding to the urgent and visceral rejection of theses worn-out recipes by many of his contemporaries).

As is evident from his early trajectory, like Alberto Fuguet, Soler had already begun his narrative career with commercial publishers such as Grijalbo Mondadori prior to his participation in the *McOndo* anthology. As such, *McOndo* was for Soler, much like many of the other contributors, a hopeful transition into international circulation: 'I participated because of the excitement of being in a project outside of Mexico, which would transcend the frontiers of my country'[38] (Soler 2016, personal interview). Despite this, he acknowledges that he did not see his career benefit in any clear way as a result of his participation: 'but the reality is that it hasn't given me anything [...] [n]obody remembers I participated in *McOndo*, which is natural because as you go on publishing books on your own they begin to pay attention to your books, not your prehistory'[39] (Soler 2016, personal interview). Despite being his first international venture, Soler would gain international exposure and entrance into greater Spanish-language circulation through his lived presence in Europe and Spain, where he has lived in Barcelona

[37] In relation to this mistaken foreign horizon of interpretation: '[d]e hecho, hay tres libros míos en donde recupero esa parte de mi infancia pero que en Francia están inscritos en el realismo mágico. Aunque yo todo el tiempo me defiendo diciendo que es el realismo puro y duro, no tiene nada de magia, solo estoy simplemente reproduciendo lo que me pasaba de niño' (Soler 2016, personal interview).

[38] 'Participé por la ilusión de estar en un proyecto que saliera de México, que trascendiera las fronteras de mi país' (Soler 2016, personal interview).

[39] '[*McOndo*] fue mi primera aventura internacional y por eso es un libro al que le tengo cariño, pero la realidad es que después no me ha aportado absolutamente nada [...] Nadie se acuerda que participé en *McOndo*, como es natural porque luego vas publicando libros en solitario y ya le ponen atención a tus libros, no a tu prehistoria' (Soler 2016, personal interview).

since the early 2000s, along with a successful number of novels consistently published by large commercial publishers such as Grijalbo, Alfaguara, and later Penguin Random House. His exploration of what could be described as McOndo aesthetic tropes only feature in an early part of his literature, notably his urban pop cultural bestseller *Bocafloja*, but eventually discovering a literary path unique in its combination of more fantastic and unconventional forms of realism to that of many of his literary co-contributors in *McOndo*. His recent incursions into narrative styles which could easily have been confused as an anachronistic application of magical realist forms from previous decades, nevertheless, suggest an unconcern with the polemic which deterred many writers of this generation from autonomously—somewhat paradoxically—exploring more fantastic aspects of narrative creativity beyond the Macondo and McOndo binary.

7.1.5 Edmundo Paz Soldán

Unlike Toscana and Soler, Edmundo Paz Soldán's encounter with *McOndo* would have an opposite and transformative effect on his literary trajectory. During his literary origins Paz Soldán occupied two very peripheral literary spaces, first in Bolivia, and secondly as a Spanish-language author in the United States while conducting his doctoral studies there. While at Berkeley University during the 1990s, Edmundo Paz Soldán had largely remained unaware of the contemporary literary production within Latin America (confirming his peripheral positioning as well as the balkanisation of the region), and instead had largely developed his literature in relation to the Latin American classics or the prominent figures of the Boom: Augusto Monterroso, Vargas Llosa, García Márquez, and especially Borges[40]. Even the story which Edmundo Paz Soldán contributed to *McOndo* can be read as similarly *literary* in its themes. The first-person narrator of 'Amor a distancia', having half-heartedly confessed to his infidelity, and after pausing to reflect on the naked body of his newest lover—making metafictional reference to the very story the he is writing and featuring in—assures his long-distance partner: 'I will tell you without hesitation no, that story is not at all autobiographical, that story is just another fiction, everything which relates to me is, in one way or another,

[40] Some of Edmundo Paz Soldán's early stories resemble Garcíamarquian hyperbole such as in 'El museo de la ciudad' (2016c), when a community's obsession with recording and memorialising its own history turns their entire town into a museum, an irony also apparent in 'Cuento con dictador y tarjetas' (2016a). In 'Dochera' (Paz Soldán 2016b), one of his most celebrated stories about a writer of crossword puzzles, Paz Soldán takes up fundamental metaphysical and metaliterary questions such as the construction of language and meaning in a story in the tradition of Borges in 'Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius' (1940).

fiction'[41] (Paz Soldán 1996, 78). To an extent, the story questions an assumption made of autofiction—that the narrated must have been inspired by the author's lived experience—, pressing on this assumption by intentionally blurring the lines between fiction and reality, and furthermore experimenting with Borges' tradition of apocryphal and self-conscious texts.

However, in response to my question regarding the suitability of 'Amor a distancia' within the broader panorama represented in the prologue and the other stories in *McOndo*, Edmundo Paz Soldán expressed that it was through his participation in *McOndo* that he became acquainted with his literary contemporaries, and that his literature was as a result from then on also influenced by them:

> [o]ften when we speak of influences we speak of Faulkner, of Borges, of the great classics, but the paradox for me was that by reading the peers of my generation and since *McOndo*, they helped me a lot to try to narrate the landscape of my generation. So from then on other stories came about and for my book *Amores imperfectos* I began writing stories more in that vein of trying to capture that landscape. If you read *Amores imperfectos* it's divided in two parts; the first part has short stories very much like my more Borgesian first stage, and the second part has stories which are more contemporary, more urban, more from the landscape of the Bolivian middle class. So yes, on the one hand my story 'Amor a distancia' in that moment was a kind of exception to the rule, but after discovering the writers of my generation it increasingly became a more important part of my writing[42] (Paz Soldán 2016, personal interview).

As Paz Soldán explains, this literary transformation from Borgesian to *McOndiano* aesthetics was already apparent in some of the stories he published in *Amores imperfectos* (2011). 'Tiburón' is one such example—which follows the legend of a young Cochabambian womaniser of the same name—, a story riddled with references to music, popular culture and popular brands; elements which highlight an increased concern with capturing urban Latin American contemporary and young adult experiences. It is in this way that his encounter with Alberto Fuguet and similar writers of this generation, such as Rodrigo Fresán, was akin to (only in some sense) to how Casanova (2015) describes Kafka's encounter with the Yiddish stage actor Yitzchak Löwy, an encounter which gave Kafka a starting point, 'a realistic option, a course of action and a programme' (119) for his literary intervention. Similarly, for Paz Soldán, the encounter with Fuguet, Fresán, and the literature of his contemporary peers revealed to him

[41] '[T]e diré sin vacilaciones que no, ese cuento no tiene nada autobiográfico, ese cuento es una ficción más, todo lo que se relaciona conmigo es, de una forma u otra, ficción' (Paz Soldán 1996, 78).

[42] 'Muchas veces cuando hablamos de influencias hablamos siempre de Faulkner, de Borges, de los grandes clásicos, pero la paradoja para mí fue que yo a partir de las lecturas de los pares de mi generación y a partir de *McOndo* me ayudaron mucho a intentar también narrar el paisaje de mi generación. Entonces de ahí salieron otros cuentos y para mi libro *Amores imperfectos* comencé a escribir cuentos más en esa onda de tratar de captar ese paisaje. Si tu lees el libro *Amores imperfectos* está divido en dos partes; la primera parte son cuentos breves muy parecidos a mi primera etapa más borgianos, y la segunda parte son cuentos más contemporáneos, más urbanos, más del paisaje de la clase media boliviana. Entonces sí, por un lado mi cuento 'Amor a distancia' en ese momento era como una especie de excepción a la regla de lo que yo escribía pero después de descubrir a los escritores de mi generación se convirtió cada vez más en una parte más importante de mi escritura' (Paz Soldán 2016, personal interview).

the politico-literary struggle which he would dedicate his energies toward for some years, a commitment which earned him the unofficial title of spokesperson—rightly or wrongly[43]—for the McOndo 'generation', 'aesthetic', and 'movement'.

As the only participant of the *McOndo* anthology residing in the United States with a public and accessible profile, thanks to his academic work (Naief Yehya evidently did not have the same accessibility), the North American media relied on Paz Soldán's commentary[44]—converting him into the unofficial spokesperson—when attention regarding the anthology grew as a result of Fuguet's sudden U.S. fame. Similarly to Fuguet, in a variety of interviews and articles, Paz Soldán also defended the literary intentions of writers in *McOndo* for aesthetic autonomy and more specifically how this manifests itself in their narrative representation of contemporary experiences and their generational moment, positions which only further associated him with the *McOndo* anthology, his friend Alberto Fuguet, and the aesthetics associated with these two[45]. This concern was, as such, something which both Edmundo Paz Soldán defended rhetorically, as well as something which he contributed to in part with his academic works[46]. However, it is through a series of novels which Edmundo Paz Soldán

[43] When asked about his acceptance of the title of '*portavoz*' (spokesperson) for *McOndo*, Edmundo Paz Soldán (2016, personal interview) stated that he could not consider himself a spokesperson for a group that does not exist (speaking of the so-called *McOndo* generation or group), however, he did clarify and defend his stance alongside certain arguments put forward in *McOndo*. Consistent with this, it is worth noting that Paz Soldán is the most cited participant of *McOndo* after Alberto Fuguet in print media. This is especially notable when compared to the almost complete silence of other participants including the co-editor Sergio Gómez. During this early period Paz Soldán is cited or referenced in relation to *McOndo* in articles in the United States by Sebastián Rotella for the *Los Angeles Times* (2000), Marc Margolis for *Newsweek Magazine* (2002), Nicole Laporte for the *New York Times* (2003), Robin Dougherty for the *Boston Globe* (2004), and much later in articles in the Australian Press by Andres Vaccari (2006), John Freeman (2006), and Pico Iyer (2010) for *The Australian*. He also is interviewed alongside Alberto Fuguet for the *Barcelona Review* (Miguel Esquirol Ríos 2005) and published his own article in this magazine entitled 'El escritor, McOndo y la tradición' (Paz Soldán 2004b).

[44] Naief Yehya was already living much of the year in the United States at this time but due to Edmundo Paz Soldán's publicly accessible profile as an academic at Cornell University, he was the obvious choice for commentary when *McOndo* entered the journalistic scene in the United States.

[45] In an interview with Kelly Hargrave and Georgia Smith Seminet (1998), Paz Soldán explained: '[g]racias a McOndo me he dado cuenta que hay un grupo de escritores hispanoamericanos jóvenes, conscientes de pertenecer a una tradición pero a la vez dispuestos a innovar, a buscar una nueva estética para reflejar la cambiante realidad de nuestras sociedades. A través de *McOndo* también he podido vincularme con otros escritores con similares inquietudes y problemas. En general, un escritor sudamericano sabe lo que está pasando en la literatura norteamericana pero no tiene una buena idea de lo que está pasando en los otros países sudamericanos. *McOndo*, en ese sentido, ha permitido superar un poco ese desconocimiento. Comparto la idea general del prólogo, pero difiero en ciertas cosas. Estoy de acuerdo en que es necesario romper cierto monopolio del realismo mágico para representar nuestra realidad. Gabo [Gabriel García Márquez] y sus seguidores le han dado mucha fuerza a nuestra literatura, pero a la vez, acaso sin quererlo, han vendido una imagen exotizada de Latinoamérica. *McOndo* sugiere que no todo es Macondo, y que en una realidad tan multiforme como la nuestra hay espacio para múltiples y muy diversas estéticas' (24).

[46] Paz Soldán has written a few articles which focus on the Macondo/McOndo divide and his friend Alberto Fuguet: 'Escritura y cultura audiovisual en *Por favor rebobinar* de Alberto Fuguet' (2002), 'Between tradition & Innovation: The New Latin American Narrative' (2004a), 'McOndo en Macondo: los medios de masas y la cultura de la imagen en *El otoño del patriarca*' (2009), compiled and prologued a collection of Alberto Fuguet's short

demonstrates the force of the literary influence which participating in *McOndo* and reading his contemporary literary peers had on his narrative production.

During this "McOndo stage" of his literary career, Paz Soldán focuses in part on narrating his generation's cultural landscape, although stops short of narrating their "geographic reality", by creating the fictional town of Río Fugitivo (based on his hometown of Cochabamba) which features in a number of his novels: *Río Fugitivo* (Alfaguara, 1998), *Sueños digitales* (Alfaguara, 2000), *La materia del deseo* (Alfaguara/Santillana, 2001) and *El delirio de Turing* (Alfaguara, 2003). However, Paz Soldán's literary production is far from a straightforward imitation (bordering on parody) seen in Toscana's McOndo story, as while he begins to explore this newfound (for him) contemporary narrative style and connects his narrations with aspects of the McOndo aesthetic, his narratives retain a distinct character.

Paz Soldán's narratives are neither uncritical—entering more overt political territory, such as with the graphic designer Sebastián's role in the altering of photographs for the dictatorship in *Sueños digitales*—, nor do they employ mass media as mere symbols, but as rich areas of literary experimentation. In novels like *Sueños digitales*, for example, while references to popular culture and mass media can continue to be interpreted as cultural codes much like the stories in *McOndo*, Paz Soldán does not abandon a deeper narrative inquiry into form and broader artistic debates. Andrew J. Brown (2007) has highlighted how Paz Soldán's novels fuse themes from Borges' and Philip K. Dick's fantastic and science fiction literature, adding to these mass media codes hidden homages to these two master figures. And Jonatán Martín Gómez (2014) has also demonstrated how Paz Soldán's *Sueños digitales* explores the artistic debate between reality and fiction, the real and the virtual, by simultaneously integrating and questioning the effects of mass media and technoculture in this puzzle, contributing a nuanced response to the polarity which Umberto Eco inaugurated between apocalyptic and integrated intellectuals. Furthermore, in *Sueños digitales*, Sebastián puts forward a similarly hybrid interpretation of Latin American cultural identity through the 'seres digitales' (digital beings) which he creates using Adobe Photoshop:

> [t]he head of Laeticia Casta and the body of Subcomandante Marcos. The head of Diego Maradona and the body of Anna Kournikova. Trosky and Salma Hayek. Margaret Thatcher and Vargas Llosa. Jennifer López and Ralf Finnes. President Montenegro and Daisy Fuentes. Mother Theresa and Tuto Quiroga. Joan Manuel Serrat and Shakira. Cameron Diaz and Andre Agassi. Eduardo Galeano and Arantxa Sánchez-Vicario (Paz Soldán 2001, 36).

stories in *Juntos y solos: antología arbitraria* (2014) for the Universidad Diego Portales, and recently published an article entitled 'Por favor rebobinar: a veinte años de *McOndo* y *Se habla español*' (2018) on *McOndo* and *Se habla español* in *McCrack: McOndo, el Crack y los destinos de la literatura latinoamericana* (Brescia and Estrada 2018).

This extensive list of celebrities resembles the vertiginous list of local and international, Left-wing and Right-wing, High-brow and Low-brow icons in the *McOndo* prologue as symbols of a heterogeneous and multifaceted Latin America (a parallel which Martín Gómez (2014) has also identified).

While the reclamation of contemporary culture occupied Paz Soldán for this "McOndo stage", it was after all only a stage, and has been followed by a series of other periods with analogous reclamations: the Spanish-language literature in the United States for one, and the science fiction genre as another. Paz Soldán's anthology with Fuguet *Se habla español* (2000), as well as his novels *Los vivos y los muertos* (Santillana, 2009) and *Norte* (Mondadori, 2011), can be interpreted as attempts to reconcile his place in the United States as a Latin American author as well as as a territory for Latin American narrative exploration. And most recently, his intervention into the science fiction and speculative genres in his novel *Iris* (Alfaguara, 2014) and the short story collection *Las visiones* (Páginas de Espuma, 2016), joined with his literary passions for metaphysical or metaliterary inquiries, appear to be ennobling this genre gaining an increasingly significant reputation in Latin American letters. Each of these projects appear to be working in a series of growing critical areas, with the reclamation of Spanish as a literary language occurring in the United States at the turn of the century, and most recently with the vindication and increasing academic attention on the science fiction genre in Latin American literary criticism.

It is in this respect, that Edmundo Paz Soldán's *habitus* as a writer *and* critic is worth considering, not in order to reduce his creative works as the mere strategic-literary machinations according to academic vogues, but as a demonstration of the range of his literary creativity and deep understanding of the fields (literary and academic) in which he is operating. While Paz Soldán may resist being labelled a spokesperson for *McOndo*, his service to the anthology through his commentary, critical and creative work, make him a pseudo-stand-in for Gómez, Fuguet's co-editor who was largely absent from any discussions concerning the anthology in its aftermath. Edmundo Paz Soldán filled this absence, so much so, that for a discussion commemorating 20 years since *McOndo* at the Feria Internacional del Libro Guadalajara, Alberto Fuguet and Edmundo Paz Soldán were invited to speak for a roundtable discussion (Andalón 2016). This replacement was acknowledged by Alberto Fuguet (2015) himself in my interview, when he stated:

> [a]nd *Se habla español* I did with the person which I should have done *McOndo* with, Edmundo, but I didn't know him then. He is more McOndo than anyone, more McOndo than even me, the one who was most interested in the ideology, the topic, the most intelligent, the most academic.

> And basically, I not only became friends with him, but Edmundo became a spokesman while Sergio ended up staying quiet [47].

As such, the quasi-co-editor position of Edmundo Paz Soldán in regard to *McOndo*, whether accidental or sought, contributed to his replacement of Gómez for Fuguet's third and last anthology *Se habla español: voces latinas en USA* (2000), for which he was also a more appropriate choice for his connections within the United States field and greater international profile. But on an individual level, the encounter with his literary peers, notably Alberto Fuguet, started Edmundo Paz Soldán on an alternative literary path to which his origins were suggesting, and coupled with this notoriety, successful and well-regarded narratives with his own unique innovations and contributions, Paz Soldán stands out among the cohort of writers to benefit most from his inclusion in the anthology.

7.1.6 Santiago Gamboa

The sole Colombian contributor to *McOndo*, Santiago Gamboa, while critical of some of the claims of the editors—much like Toscana—affirms the accuracy of Fuguet's anecdote of editorial rejection as something which many in their generation experienced. Gamboa himself commented on a similar conflict to the anecdote at the beginning of the prologue when he was attempting to publish his urban noir novel *Perder es cuestión de método* (Norma, 1997) in the Italian market. Gamboa describes how it became clear that the publisher associated both Latin American, but especially Colombian literature, with García Márquez, a tradition with which his urban noir novel shared little in common[48]. This experience suggests the *macondiano* horizon of expectation which, even at the end of the 20th Century, associated Latin American literature *tout court* (and especially Colombian literature) with Gabriel García Márquez and the Boom. In response to this panorama, Gamboa (2016, personal interview) noted how his generation had to fulfil a 'pedagogical role' in educating international readers and editors about

[47] 'Y *Se habla español* la hice con la persona con la cual debería haber hecho *McOndo*, Edmundo, pero no lo conocía. Es más McOndo que todos y quizás más McOndo que yo, el que más le interesaba la ideología, el tema, el más inteligente, el más académico. Y básicamente no sólo me hice amigos de él sino Edmundo se volvió un *spokesman* mientras Sergio terminó quedándose callado' (Fuguet 2015, personal interview).

[48] When commenting on Fuguet and Gómez's opening anecdote to *McOndo* he stated: '[l]as anécdotas preliminares son correctas, todos las vivimos. Yo también. Cuando un primer libro mío *Perder es cuestión de método* fue considerado para una traducción en Italia, a la editorial italiana no le gustó porque no le parecía que eso fuera literatura latinoamericana. No le parecía que eso fuera literatura colombiana, mucho menos. Porque para ellos la literatura colombiana era García Márquez. Entonces una historia que trascurría en la ciudad, una novela negra como es *Perder es cuestión de método*, les parecía muy raro. Que es algo que Fuguet y Gómez cuentan en el prólogo de alguna manera. Sí, ese choque lo vivimos todos' (Gamboa 2016, personal interview).

Latin America through its contemporary literature[49]. While *McOndo* had taken up this pedagogical role in an incendiary fashion particularly for the academy, Gamboa speaks of this education occurring in the publishing space, in which international intermediaries such as editors and translators needed to be educated on the value of these new fictions to shake up longstanding national frames of reference regarding what constituted Latin American narratives.

While foreign reception and expectations would continue to be mediated by the Boom authors, the impact on Colombian authors would, in some senses, be double—both regional and national—through their shared nationality with arguably the most successful and central member of the Boom: Gabriel García Márquez. Orlando Mejía Rivera and Adriana Jastrzębska[50] (2012), have noted the significance of García Márquez and his 'Macondo aesthetic', and in how it constructed an 'epistemic paradigm' within Colombian literary space, which they argue continues to be predominant even today[51] (Mejía Rivera 2001, 36). The result of this paradigm was, according to Mejía Rivera (2001), that a whole generation of writers known as *la generación perdida*[52] (The Lost Generation) were unable, narratively, to escape reference to this predominance, and their symbols and narratives were inevitable filtered by it, never really finding an authentic voice of their own. However, the next generation, which Mejía Rivera (2001) labels 'la generación mutante' (The Mutant Generation)—i.e. Santiago Gamboa, Jorge Franco, Mario Mendoza, and Héctor Abad Faciolince—, was capable of assimilating García Márquez as *another* classic among many (like Homer, Joyce, Proust, Balzac, etc.), and represents a literary liberation from the Macondo archetype and the anguish of this imposing national tradition (36).

Gamboa was able to publish his first novel *Páginas de vuelta* (Norma, 1995) as part of this new wave of narrators in Colombia who were seen as the literary renovators after a Postboom period of literary stagnation, a context and arrival comparable to the appearance of

[49] 'Es decir, a mi generación le tocó asumir casi el rol de pedagogía hacia los lectores y los editores del resto del mundo, que Latinoamérica era diferente y por lo tanto la literatura de la nueva generación era diferente también, diferente a la del *boom*' (Gamboa 2016, personal interview).

[50] In an essay entitled 'De Macondo a Medellín: viaje de ida y vuelta', Jastrzębska (2012) analyses the novels of Fernando Vallejo, Héctor Abad Faciolince, Nahum Montt, and Juan Gabriel Vásquez, to conclude: 'la evolución de la literatura colombiana desde el paradigma magicorrealista al narcotremendismo actual no supone ni ruptura, ni negación de la herencia garciamarquiana. La supuesta polémica es un diálogo, una transformación creativa, con tintes de ironía postmoderna, de un proyecto aún vigente. Macondo sigue existiendo en el imaginario literario nacional, sirviendo de una de las claves interpretativas de la realidad actual' (185).

[51] 'La estética macondiana ha construido el paradigma epistémico de la narrativa colombiana y sigue predominando hasta la actualidad' (Mejía Rivera 2001, 36).

[52] Mejía Rivera (2001) cites Collazos, Moreno Durán, Fayad, Cano Gaviria, among others.

the *nueva narrativa* in Chile also during the 1990s. However, the question of how to transcend national circulation was one which concerned Gamboa and one which necessarily, at the time, also required the mediation of Spanish publishing[53] (Gamboa 2016, personal interview). However, because the editors of *McOndo* had stipulated that contributors have at least one publication, Gamboa was able to participate and circulate for the first time in Chile and Spain with the commercial publisher Grijalbo Mondadori. This introduction into Spanish literary space, even if it was through a commercial and critical failure such as *McOndo*, would prove to be of immense significance for Gamboa's literary trajectory, as he details in the following anecdote following the negative Spanish reception of *McOndo*:

> [s]o when [*McOndo*] was published in Spain there appeared a review penned by the great critic of that time Ignacio Echevarría. And it was a terrible critique. It was more or less a critique of the anthology as Latin American literature for export […] But incredibly for me in the last paragraph he salvaged a few writers, and there he saved me. And this was extraordinary, but not only for me, but also for the then editor of Mondadori, a publisher with prestige in Spain at the time. That same editor called me the Monday after the publication of that review and asked me to send him everything I had written up to that time. I sent him the manuscript of my new novel which was almost finished *Perder es cuestión de método* and a copy of my first novel *Páginas de vuelta*. He read them very quickly and told me he would publish my new novel and that from that point on he was going to publish everything of mine[54] (Gamboa 2016, personal interview).

As Gamboa acknowledges, in his review for *El País*, Ignacio Echevarría had suggested that not all these authors deserve to be tainted with the same brush of being light, mass mediatised, or linguistically standardised, and in fact spared three of the writers from this charge, claiming Rodrigo Fresán, Santiago Gamboa, and Leonardo Valencia merited special attention[55].

Citing this anecdote at length allows us to see quite a few significant aspects of the structure of Spanish linguistic subspace at work, as well as how Gamboa's trajectory manoeuvred itself within it. Firstly, the significance and impacts of critical consecration by a respected critic such as Ignacio Echevarría cannot be understated, as it launched Gamboa as a

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[53] 'Yo creo que para mí hubiera sido muy difícil publicar en España. Porque yo ya había publicado en Colombia, pero no tenía editor en España. En esa época era muy importante publicar en España' (Gamboa 2016, personal interview).

[54] 'Entonces cuando [*McOndo*] salió en España apareció una crítica firmada por el gran crítico de ese momento Ignacio Echevarría. Y era una crítica terrible. Era más o menos una crítica de la antología como literatura latinoamericana de exportación […] Pero increíblemente para mí en el último párrafo rescata un par de escritores, y allí me salva a mí. Y esto para mí fue extraordinario, pero no solo para mí, pero también para el editor de Mondadori en esa época, una editorial de prestigio de aquel momento en España. Ese editor me llamó el lunes siguiente a la publicación de ese artículo y me pidió que le mandara todo lo que hubiera escrito hasta ese momento. Le mandé el manuscrito de mi nueva novela casi terminada *Perder es cuestión de método* y una copia de mi primera novela *Páginas de vuelta*. Los leyó muy rápido y me comunicó que me publicaría la nueva novela y que a partir de esa me iba a publicar todo' (Gamboa 2016, personal interview).

[55] He concludes his review that notwithstanding the former criticisms 'no todos admiten ser hilvanados con el mismo cordel, y varios hay que reclaman una atención especial, como "Señales captadas en el corazón de una fiesta", del argentino Rodrigo Fresán; "La vida está llena de cosas así", del colombiano Santiago Gamboa, o "Pulsión", del ecuatoriano Leonardo Valencia' (Echevarría 2007b, 177).

referent for readers who were guided in their selections by such established critics. But perhaps more importantly, and in relation to the previous point, Echevarría's endorsement had repercussions for the decision-making of editors, as is demonstrated by the quick and unhesitating publishing of Gamboa's works by Grijalbo Mondadori. Secondly, and in regard to the context of Spanish publishing, the vindication of Gamboa and others as distinct from the association of the majority of *McOndo* participants and the quickly-worn Generation X-styled narratives of their Spanish counterparts, helped to endorse these few as more distinctive original voices, once again attractive to both readers and especially editors as it provided them with the possibility of establishing a new literary "product". And thirdly, by achieving this jump from national circulation to circulation at the linguistic subspace, his introduction to other European languages and markets through translation was facilitated by Spanish publishing's close links with other European presses. *Perder es cuestión de método*, is an example of this, as we can see a kind of domino effect resulting from its consecration in Spain[56]. Evidently, this structure would have a continuous effect on the dissemination of his future works, as since then, the majority of his works have been translated into French and on occasion other European languages (Italian, Greek, German, Czech, Romanian, Swedish, Portuguese), and recently has had three of his novels *Necrópolis* (La otra orilla, 2009), *Plegarias nocturnas* (Mondadori, 2012), *Volver al oscuro valle* (Literatura Random House, 2016) translated also into English with the New York based publisher Europa Editions.

7.1.7 Gustavo Escanlar

Like Fuguet, Escanlar also began his journalistic and literary career with controversy. In 1987, he penned an infamous letter to the editor of *Aquí*, in which he criticised the Left-wing cultural orthodoxies, an idea similar to the *macondismo* fundamentalism criticised later in the *McOndo* prologue. While Fuguet took similar aim at the *macondismo* fundamentalism he identified around him in his essays, manifestoes and articles, he did not go as far as Escanlar in all-out *ad hominem* attacks and nor did he confine his discursive interventions to the national field. The letter, and other articles, take aim at the two most successful and significant

[56] Once it is published by Grijalbo Mondadori in 1997, it is promptly translated into French and published by Métailié in 1999 and into German in 2000 with Wagenbach, and is subsequently republished in Spanish in a number of edition with Seix Barral in 2003, and after in Mexico with Almadía in 2014, by Penguin Random House in 2014 and Debolsillo in 2014. This reaffirms the idea that Spain continued then, as it does now, to remain a significant gatekeeper to the internationalisation of Latin American literature in translation, as was identified by Ana Gallego Cuiñas. Gallego Cuiñas (2018) astutely notes how 'en muchas ocasiones el primer paso que ha de dar un escritor de América Latina para ser traducido—y entrar en el circuito internacional—es ser publicado en España, que sigue ejerciendo de *gatekeeper* de la literatura ‹‹latinoamericana››' (4).

Uruguayan figures of the Boom and Postboom—Mario Benedetti[57] and Eduardo Galeano[58]—, for their association with this forceful cultural paradigm. His own positioning is apparent in his denouncing of the squashing of alternative national discourses, such as his own vision of the "*other"* Uruguay experienced in the underground, punk and anarchist countercultures he associated with[59] (2008b, 9-11), and which he narrated in his controversial first collection of stories *Oda al niño prostituto* (YOEA, 1993).

These parallels are not uncommon in this generation, as will be developed in greater detail in the next chapter. However, the singularity of the case of Gustavo Escanlar lies in his embrace of the claims of *McOndo*, a commitment which very few other participants demonstrated. In *Todo no es suficiente*, Fuguet (2015a) shares a noteworthy anecdote about the first contact which was made between the two:

> one day there arrived, to the offices of *El Mercurio*, where I worked at the time, an envelope addressed to me with *Oda al niño prostituto*. This must have been around 1993 or 1994. On the first page there was a dedication: *For a Mac-brother found by chance in the mall (in the book shop of the mall)*[60] (172).

Fuguet (2015a) speculates—quite justifiably—, that the anonymous mailer was Escanlar, and even goes so far as to suggest that it could have even been Escanlar who subtly inserted the powerful parody of the "Mac" or "Mc"-Ondo into Fuguet's mind: 'maybe the Mac—that dedication—comes from him? maybe; I don't know how to respond or what to say, but it's possible that the true inventor of McOndo is Escanlar and not me' (175). Being a reader of not only local but also neighboring works of literature and newspapers, it is likely Escanlar had read Fuguet's early works and recognised a certain affinity. It is also possible that he had read Fuguet's recent essay 'MacOndo' which appeared in the magazine *Mundo Diners* in 1993,

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[57] This first opinion piece fixed Mario Benedetti as Escanlar's archenemy throughout his career, in a general sense for his support and incarnation of the cultural paradigm he criticised of Uruguay.

[58] Throughout his career Escanlar also aired a public ire toward the intellectual and writer Eduardo Galeano, whom he characterised as selling an ideologically charged literature which presented a simplified Manichean version of history (speaking specifically of *Espejos. Una historia casi universal*), and for the apparent hypocrisy in his monetary success incongruent with Galeano's critiques of capitalism, according to Escanlar: '[E]l loco ha fijado una obra y se ha hecho millonario con los dólares que tanto desprecia' (Escanlar in Fuguet 2015a, 118).

[59] Escanlar's rage was perhaps fueled by his anticipation that Uruguay would experience a *destape cultural*—à la 'El destape' in Post-Franco Spain—and disappointment that even after the dictatorship and return to democracy the cultural canon continued to represent '*más de lo mismo*' (Escanlar 2008c, 67). In a much later essay entitled '35 años de cultura: más de lo mismo', Escanlar (2008c) evaluates with the benefit of time how the cultural and artistic landscape was transformed during and after the dictatorship for performance arts, literature, criticism, and popular song. His reluctant conclusion however is that: '[p]arece mentira, pero el panorama cultural no ha cambiado demasiado en todo este tiempo. Si bien hoy se vive un pluralismo mucho mayor, también es cierto que las tendencias culturales dominantes siguen siendo las mismas que hace 35 años. Más o menos maquilladas, pero las mismas' (69).

[60] '[U]n día llegó, al diario *El Mercurio*, donde yo trabajaba entonces, un sobre a mi nombre con *Oda al niño prostituto*. Este debió ser el año 1993 o 1994. En la primera página había una dedicatoria: *Para un mac hermano encontrado casualmente en el mall (en la librería del mall)*' (Fuguet 2015a, 172).

around the time when Escanlar sent Fuguet his collection of stories. Irrespective of the historical details however, and putting aside Fuguet's clear strategic intentions in sharing the inception of McOndo with Escanlar[61], there is a further commitment to the cause in Fuguet's (2015a) recollection of their first encounter the year of the publication of *McOndo*:

> he said that they were going to kill us and that he would be a defender, perhaps the most ardent, including if I decided to run from that monster […] "You didn't have to choose me for *McOndo,* but you did. This will damage my life, but it will give it more meaning. Now they are really going to hate me here", he said. "You got me out of here. I admire you and now you admire me, I am achieving it"[62] (175).

In this quote, Escanlar's desire for greater literary transcendence become apparent, suggesting that literature, for Escanlar, represented something more important than what it appears to be, especially when one considers that for all appearances his literary career was sidelined by his later journalistic and television careers until his untimely death in 2010. While the extent of Escanlar's support would not be great in a discursive sense (it mostly came by way of a mutual promoting of each others' works in each of their countries), the mere existence of a writer like Escanlar, which clearly excited Fuguet[63], justified a number of the discursive and literary/aesthetic claims of *McOndo*.

This explains, in part, why Escanlar was included in *McOndo*, but also why he made a reappearance in Fuguet's last short story anthology *Se habla español*, whereas other writers from (but also more distant to) *McOndo*, like David Toscana, were not included. These anthologies can be said to have benefited Escanlar directly via the introduction to a large commercial Spanish publisher like Grijalbo Mondadori. Until that moment, Escanlar had only published his two short story collections with local publishers YOEA and Aymara Editorial, but it was with Grijalbo Mondadori Barcelona that Escanlar made his biggest (individual)

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[61] Fuguet reflects on this kind of assessment in another section of his biography, when he asks himself where his interest in Escanlar arises from, even considering the chance it might spring from self-interested motivations. When commenting on the homage he paid Escanlar upon his death, Fuguet states: '[a]l parecer, fui uno de los pocos que escribió a favor, con cariño, con respeto y fijándome en que se había silenciado un escritor con una voz muy potente. Quería resucitarlo, no tengo claro por qué o quizás sí: mi típica megalomanía, mi deseo de establecer un planeta literario, un país McOndo, mi obsesiva necesidad de hacer algo así como justiciar literaria: apoyar al outsider; ver arte donde otros ven basura; entender que lo que no suena a veces es más profundo que lo que resuena en exceso' (Fuguet 2015a, 50).

[62] '[É]l me dijo que nos iban a matar y que iba a ser un defensor, quizás el más acérrimo, incluso cuando yo quisiera huir de ese monstruo […] ‹‹No debiste elegirme pero me elegiste para *McOndo*. Eso dañará mi vida pero le dará más sentido. Ahora sí que me van a odiar acá››, me dijo. ‹‹Me sacaste de acá. Yo te admiro y ahora tú me admiras, lo estoy logrando››' (Fuguet 2015a, 175).

[63] Alberto Fuguet (2015a) writes about his discovery of Escanlar during the days of *La Zona de Contacto*: 'Por un tiempo, en los años noventa, fui un fan de Escanlar. O, al menos, un fan de la *idea* de Escanlar. O de la idea de que existiera alguien como Escanlar […] Leer a Escanlar por primera vez fue algo impactante: no parecía latinoamericano, no parecía escritor. Más que escribir, parecía que lo suyo era música industrial; más que narrar, daba la impresión de estar vomitando y jalando al mismo tiempo. Por eso mismo, porque sentía que no había nadie ni remotamente parecido, lo invité a participar en un par de antologías […] donde siempre era el mejor o, al menos, el más freak, el más eléctrico' (77).

international leap with his first and most successful novella *Estokolmo* in 1998, largely thanks to his initiative in contacting Fuguet, a writer with the connections and the projects capable of internationalising a Mac-brother's trajectory. Nevertheless, after this initial jump, and in spite of his inclusion in *Líneas aéreas*, Escanlar's few works would afterwards only circulate in Uruguay and Argentina[64].

While the parallels between Alberto Fuguet and Gustavo Escanlar are numerous, making them analogous *figures* in their respective national spaces of Chile and Uruguay, nevertheless, there is an extent to which Escanlar's career *trajectory* appears to resemble more closely that of Jaime Bayly. Escanlar had, and continues to have, a highly conflictive reputation within Uruguay, but this is less as a result of his literary persona, as it is to his journalistic and television one. There is an extent to which, like Bayly, his literature has experienced a gross overshadowing due to his media celebrity. This is apparent in Fuguet's chronicle on Escanlar and the outrage, shock, and surprise which some of his interviewees expressed upon hearing about the project, on top of the fact that many of the 24 participants preferred to remain anonymous (keeping themselves at a distance from the controversial figure)[65]. His obituaries are also suggestive of his lost narrative legacy: '[e]l periodista Gustavo Escanlar murió' ('The journalist Gustavo Escanlar died') (*El Observador* 2011). The question remains however, what Escanlar's true motivations were: whether this overshadowing truly represents—perhaps like Bayly and Rejtman, as will be discussed shortly—the diminished significance of the literary world for Escanlar, or whether the *production* of his *œuvre* by the Uruguayan cultural field have, in effect, constructed this only in appearance.

It could be said that Escanlar, in many senses, outcompeted Fuguet in the provocative and attention-grabbing game, a tactic which may have brought a modest national fame to Escanlar, but which set him on a path of self-destruction and the marginalising of his own literary contributions[66]. And yet, there are attempts—and whether these are further machinations of opposite structural reformulation of Escanlar's work is up for debate—to

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[64] These works include: the collection of crime chronicles *Crónica roja* (Aguilar, 2001); the novella *Dos o tres cosas que sé de gala* (Librería Linardi y Risso, 2005); *La alemana* (*Factotum*, 2009) a rewriting of the previous novella but published in Buenos Aires; and the collection of his journalistic *oeuvre* in *Disco Duro* (Editorial Fin de Siglo, 2008a), published by the weekly magazine *Búsqueda* to which he was a regular contributor.

[65] 'Ese hombre tomaba pichí. Era un fascista, un drogadicto, un degenerado' (Fuguet 2015a, 59) said one of Fuguet's participants (Fuguet 2015a, 59) no doubt reacting against Escanlar's involvement with the right-wing magazine *Búsqueda*, his on-air antics on his television shows *Zona urbana* and *Bendita TV*, open bisexuality, and shameless flaunting of his infidelity and drug use.

[66] This is the opinion which Ignacio Bajter holds of Escanlar when he states: '[n]adie habla de los libros de Escanlar por el hecho de que los libros fueron un apéndice en su papel de payaso, diría: en su mal ejecutado papel de bufón […] No creo que su muerte súbita e inesperada mejore su literatura' (cited in Fuguet 2015a, 80).

reposition Escanlar's literary contribution away from his negative public persona, evident most clearly in the collecting of Escanlar's stories in *grandes éxitos, un cuento y una despedida* (2013) by Sergio Olguín[67]. Causes aside, however, Escanlar's distancing from the literary world is apparent in a similar, yet more complicated, and even paradoxical fashion to other contributors in *McOndo*, such as Yehya, Bayly and Rejtman. While his polemical trajectory had begun before *McOndo*, it found a genuine affinity and expression in Fuguet's McOndo project, capable of benefiting his literary career for some time before his entry and production in the world of television eventually distanced him from the literature-world.

7.2.1 The *unimpacted* and *unbenefited*

Unlike the authors explored above, a number of writers involved in the anthology experienced little to no impact in their literary trajectory either in an aesthetic, commercial, or vocational sense, writers we could categorise into those who were unimpacted or unbenefited from their inclusion in *McOndo*. In this category we can consider the trajectories of Juan Forn, Rodrigo Fresán, Leonardo Valencia, Rodrigo Soto, and the Spanish authors in *McOndo*.

7.2.2 Juan Forn

The oldest participant in the anthology, Juan Forn, had his greatest commercial success early in his career with *Nadar de noche* (Planeta, 1991). This collection of short stories, along with Fresán's *Historia argentina* (Planeta, 1991), began to characterise a sense of literary renewal much like Fuguet and Gómez had done in Chile, or the Mutant Generation in Colombia. Off the back of this success, and likely thanks to his editorial connections[68], in 1992 Juan Forn edited his own anthology of Argentinian authors which was released by the prestigious Spanish publishing house Anagrama, *Buenos Aires: una antología de nueva ficción argentina* (1992).

In the introduction, Forn (1999) explains that this anthology arose out of a visit by Jorge Herralde (editor of Anagrama in Spain) to Buenos Aires in 1988, upon which he discovered

[67] In the preface to the collection Olguín (2013) states: '[a]ntes de comenzar a leer a Gustavo Escanlar hay que olvidarse de lo que se conoce de él: de sus apariciones en televisión, de sus opiniones sobre la cultura uruguaya, de sus peleas mediáticas, de la furia que le despertaba la estupidez y de la furia de los bienpensantes. Olvídense del personaje Escanlar, del objeto de odio Escanlar, de la estrella Escanlar. No porque él fuera otra cosa, ni porque fingiera un tipo que no era, sino porque su obra literaria merece el respeto y la admiración desde otro lugar. Aquí hay un escritor en serio, señores, que también provocaba y escandalizaba a esos seres razonables, moralistas, enfermos de patriotismo y buenas intenciones' (7).

[68] Juan Forn's early career in the literature-world began as a literary advisor for the literary magazine *Emecé* during the 1980s, and he later became the editorial director of Planeta Biblioteca del Sur in Argentina from 1989 until 1995.

the divorce between Latin American authors and Spanish reading publics and set out to remediate this lacuna through this anthology. While the anthology has not attracted the same international critical attention as *McOndo*[69], *Buenos Aires* introduced into the Spanish literary field a number of voices which have since received canonical recognition across Latin American literary space and Spain in their own right: Ricardo Piglia, Fogwill, Ana María Shua, César Aira, Alan Pauls, and Rodrigo Fresán are among those included. As such, greater attention to this anthology is deserved as a significant mechanism in the literary internationalisation specifically of these Argentinian authors.

However, contrary to the international trajectories of these authors, Forn has remained largely within his Argentinian field for reasons both professional and personal. During the 1990s, Forn redoubled his energies in literary media founding the literary supplement *Radar* for the magazine *Página/12* which he directed until 2002—a potential professional explanation—, the same year he suffered a pancreatic coma that nearly killed him—a very substantial personal explanation. As a result of this illness, and upon medical advice, he moved to the coastal town of Villa Gesell, a move to the province which ran concurrent with his literary provincialisation away from publishing with large commercial publishers to smaller ones specifically for literary-ideological reasons[70]. This conviction, toward a more autonomous route away from the influence and trends dictated by the commercial publishers, is also apparent in his story in *McOndo* (and the novel which developed from it: *Puras mentiras*, 2001), and was further fuelled by the stigma associated with the anthology, something which would trigger his departure from the so-characterised young-adult and Anglo-friendly texts of the McOndo sensibility:

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[69] While similar claims are made by Forn in this prologue as appear in *McOndo*, there are a key number of elements missing which have meant that this anthology has not attained the same level of recognition as *McOndo*. Firstly, while *McOndo* put forward a generation of writers, *Buenos Aires* brings together authors from three different generations (from those earliest born in the 1930s, and the youngest contributors being Juan Forn, Alan Pauls, and Rodrigo Fresán); secondly, Forn's prologue, while diagnosing a number of issues confronting these writers (like those identified by *McOndo*), rejects the assumption that this selection of authors would imply an aesthetic claim, highlighting and critiquing this common reading of anthologies and the assumed role of prologues/introductions in tracing these commonalities, and furthermore, unlike *McOndo* very much leaving the analysis of aesthetic likeness to the academic and literary critics (Forn 1999). The anthology, by not drawing attention to itself, acted plain and simply as a literary introduction of Argentinian writers into Spanish literary readership, a straightforward literary strategy of a different nature to the provocative and regional path taken by *McOndo*.

[70] 'Ya no creo en las multinacionales. Están en una crisis absoluta, son enormes elefantes que ya no saber avanzar ni girar [...] Hoy las condiciones de trabajo las imponen los reyes del marketing y todos esos estúpidos que estudian administración de empresas para dirigir editoriales. El resultado es que de los quince libros que publica al año cada multinacional, doce son de figuritas de la tele o estrellas mediáticas. Casi no hay literatura. Tiene más gracia publicar en editoriales chicas. Yo ya tuve mi momento de pequeño *bestseller* literario. Ya lo probé. Lo que me gusta hoy es que el libro sea digno, que el editor lo cuide, lo quiera tanto como lo quiero yo, y que haga lo posible para que llegue a manos de los lectores. El resto es azar' (Guerrero 2012).

> I think that the text that I had written for *McOndo* worked with another class of registers, so the criticisms largely weren't a concern for me. But obviously for years to be in *McOndo* was a kind of stigma. For that reason I wanted to dissociate myself from the youth and Anglo-American-friendly themes which did not correspond to my literary tastes nor with my professional work in the literary supplement *Radar*[71] (Forn 2016, personal interview).

Consistent with these convictions, his most recent novel *María Domecq*, was published by Emecé in 2007 and is in many senses confirmation of how far from the land and aesthetic of McOndo Forn's work has distanced itself: being a novel which—while not abandoning a certain autofictional style—deals with the discovery of a lost familial history the romance behind the real Madame Butterfly, the subject of which the opening section to the novel deals in great (almost academic) detail with the literary transmutation of this romance through a variety of literary mediums from anecdote, nouvelle, operetta, short story, vaudeville, and Puccini's famous opera[72].

Nowadays, Forn's narrative output has slowed, mostly due to the interruption of his health issues forcing his early and provincial retirement, as well as his increased focus on journalism and translation. He has positioned himself as a chronicler in his weekly column *Página/12*, and as a translator of authors such as Yasunari Kawabata (*País de nieve*, Emecé, 2003), John Cheever (*Bullet Park*, Emecé, 2006), Hunter Thompson (*Mescalito*, Seix-Barral/Emecé, 2007), and Paul Auster (*Diario de invierno*, Seix-Barral/Emecé, 2016) in the Argentinian market. In other words, while Forn's early narrative success, connections with Spanish publishing and early intervention into the Spanish cultural field with his anthology, all represented notable opportunities of national transcendence, he nevertheless has returned to where he began, as an important figure within the literary professional milieu of Argentinian literary and Spanish-linguistic sub-spaces. Whether he will be reclaimed and produced as a celebrated Latin American author in spite of his retirement from those multinationals most capable of internationalising his work, or whether he will be at risk as Jorge J. Locane (2019) notes of how in the contemporary paradigm it would seem that 'the more local and autonomous

[71] 'Pienso que el texto que yo había escrito para *McOndo* trabajaba otra clase de registros, entonces las críticas no me preocuparon mayormente. Pero obviamente durante años estar en *McOndo* fue una especie de estigma. Por eso yo me quise desmarcar de esa temática juvenil y *angloamerican-friendly* que no cuadraba con mi gusto literario ni mi trabajo profesional del suplemento literario *Radar*' (Forn 2016, personal interview).

[72] 'En esos veinte años desde 1885 hasta 1905 y saltando por tres continentes, una pequeñísima anécdota de la vida portuaria japonesa se convirtió, en diferentes manos, en nouvelle francesa, operetta europea, cuento norteamericano, vaudeville atlántico y, por fin, gran ópera italiana. En ese itinerario, el personaje fue cambiando diametralmente de signo, desde su hierático materialismo inicial (símbolo del traicionero Oriente a los ojos occidentales) al lírico romanticismo que la convirtió en heroína por excelencia del rubro inmolación por amor' (Forn 2007, 18).

literature becomes, the greater the risk of solipsism and the incapacity to intervene in the public sphere'[73] (534), remains to be seen.

7.2.3 Rodrigo Fresán

At the beginning of their careers, Fuguet and Fresán were characterised as occupying similar positions in their respective national literary spaces. Unlike Fuguet, who has always been published by large commercial publishers such as Planeta Biblioteca del Sur, Grijalbo Mondadori, Alfaguara and nowadays Penguin Random House, Fresán, since his earliest publications, has attracted the attention of prestigious publishers including Anagrama and Tusquets. His first short story collection was originally published in Argentina with Planeta Biblioteca del Sur in 1991, and shortly after his introduction into Spanish literary space by way of Juan Forn's anthology of new Argentinian fiction, Anagrama (1993) republished Fresán's short story collection. This insertion into Spanish publication continued with his first two novels *Esperanto* (Tusquets, 1995) and *La velocidad de las cosas* (Tusquets, 1998), both originally published in Buenos Aires but soon after republished in the Spanish divisions of these multinationals in 1997 (Tusquets, Barcelona) and 2002 (Mondadori, Barcelona), respectively. This second novel, in particular, propelled Fresán into Spanish-American literary circulation across multiple countries and gained him international literary recognition as a unique voice in the new wave of Spanish-American fiction reaching Spain and the rest of Europe.

Tusquets' catalogue of literary figures of the Boom (Vargas Llosa, Cortázar, Borges, Octavio Paz), granted associated literary capital to those newly discovered authors published within their catalogue such as Fresán, a connection which would be used to market him as the Argentinian heir *par excellence* to Cortázar and Borges[74]. While Anagrama, since the 1980s, struggled to "discover" and internationally promote the new literary talent already highly

[73] '[C]uanto más local y autónoma deviene la literatura, tanto mayor puede ser el riesgo de solipsismo y la incapacidad para intervenir en la esfera pública' (Locane 2019, 534).

[74] His books are promoted with the favorable reviews of noteworthy international writers and reviewers who make clear comparisons to his literary predecessors further ennobling his literature. Some such examples are the following two:

> 'Como Borges y Cortázar, Fresán habla y escribe acerca de todo: de sus obsesiones y de su existencia, desdoblándose siempre en autor y actor que invoca a Proust, pero a un Proust estallando con la furia jubilosa de Céline' (Nelly Kaprièlian, *Les Inrockuptibles* (Francia) in Fresán 2009, back cover)

> 'Rodrigo Fresán es un escritor maravilloso, heredero directo de Adolfo Bioy Casares y Jorge Luis Borges, pero con su propia voz y de su propio tiempo, con una fértil imaginación, atrevido y dotado de una visión tan divertida como profunda' (John Banville, 'Praise for *El fondo del cielo*', Amazon).

regarded in different literary spaces (such as Ricardo Piglia in Argentina), its annual prize between 1983 and 1996 had been exclusively awarded to Spanish writers with the exception of Sergio Pitol in 1984. However, since its awarding of the Premio Herralde to Roberto Bolaño in 1998 for *Los detectives salvajes*, this prize—similarly to the consecration/autoconsecration of Vargas Llosa and Seix Barral in 1962 with the Premio Biblioteca Breve—confirmed Anagrama as among the leading publishers of new literary tendencies. Since this period, the publisher's catalogue of authors, as much as its awarding of its annual prize, has become increasingly international, and even authors such as Roberto Bolaño begin to be quoted on covers, back covers, and inside covers, as voices of literary consecration of their literary peers, Fresán included.

As such, in recent times Fresán has enjoyed the fruits of his concerted and individual literary efforts with increasing recognition abroad. In France, almost all of his works have consistently been translated under a number of different reputable publishing houses, such as Gallimard, Passage du Nord-Ouest, and Seuil[75], eventually leading to him being awarded the Prix Roger Caillois in 2017. In English, his literary internationalisation has been slower, only first being translated into English with his novel *Jardines de Kensington*[76]. However, in recent times, his novels *La parte inventada*, *El fondo del cielo* and *La parte soñada*, have been translated by Open Letter Books as *The Invented Part* (2017), *The Bottom of the Sky* (2018), and *The Dreamed Part* (2019) respectively, the first of which received the Best Translated Book Award in the foreign novel category in 2018. The rate and constancy with which both Open Letter and Seuil are translating Fresán's novels into English and French respectively, are positive signs, not only for the near future (such as for Fresán's third part of his trilogy *La parte recordada*, 2019), but also for the future of his *œuvre*. As such, the singularity of Fresán's case in *McOndo*, is that the anthology would have little effect on his upward trajectory: he had already begun establishing a literary readership in Spain through a highly prestigious publisher, and, as such, his career depended less on this jump into the international leagues, as he states:

[75] *Historia argentina* (1991) (*L'homme du bord extérieur*, Autrement, 1999); *Vidas de santos* (1993) (*Vies de saints*, Passage du Nord-Ouest, 2010); *Esperanto* (1995) (*Esperanto*, Gallimard, 1999); *La velocidad de las cosas* (1998) (*La Vitesse des choses*, Passage du Ouest, 2008); *Mantra* (2001) (*Mantra*, Passage du Nord-Ouest, 2006); *Jardines de Kensington* (2003) (*Les jardins de Kensington*, Seuil, 2004); *El fondo del cielo* (2009) (*Le fond du ciel*, Ed. du Sud, 2010); *La parte inventada* (2014) (*La part inventée : roman*, Seuil, 2017); *La parte soñada* (2017) (*La part rêvée : roman*, Seuil, 2019).

[76] This novel, first published in the United Kingdom with Faber & Faber would also later be republished by Farrar, Straus and Giroux and translated by Natasha Wimmer in the United States, the duo in part responsible for the global launching of the Chilean Roberto Bolaño. Nevertheless, Fresán's works would not receive the same commercial consecration which Bolaño's had under similar circumstances.

'[i]n that time I wasn't an unknown author […] I was already someone' [77] (Fresán 2016, personal interview).

The lack of importance that *McOndo* held for Fresán shows the kind of literary privilege which he had already experienced and expected to experience during his literary trajectory, as much resulting from structural factors as personal ones related to his *habitus*. One major structural factor is that Argentinian letters remained distinct and untouched (internally) from the magical realist or *macondismo* literary paradigm, and the disadvantages which came with that—a determinant factor in this being the singularity of Borges-Cortázar's *fantástico rioplatense* (River-Plate fantastic genre)—, removing this obstacle somewhat from Fresán's trajectory. Another factor, related to this, is the comparably higher literary standing of Argentinian letters in comparison to much of the rest of the literary region. This is evident as much in the existence of a formidable literary and publishing milieu, the continued global canonisation of figures which would both ennoble the space and provide marketable points of comparison, and even evident in the fact that Jorge Herralde sought to discover new Latin American voices first in Argentina before any other space. These—coupled with Fresán's indifference to the McOndo debate—positively mediated Fresán's international trajectory, as he was not interpreted as reactionary, like his *McOndo* co-authors, but as evolutionary in his creativity within this respected tradition before him.

These structural factors do not detract from his unique literary voice, but rather give us a context to understanding the external mechanisms beyond his narrative ability and literary *habitus*, both which have allowed him to attain the current and growing success he enjoys, symbolically and commercially, especially when compared to those who participated in the anthology but for a number of reasons had not benefited. This can also in part be understood through an awareness of Fresán's standing within this literary milieu and respected literary space, a positioning which is fundamental to his *habitus*:

> [m]y parents were a typical marriage of the *intelligentsia* of the sixties in Buenos Aires and there were always many writers in my house. My father worked on a book with Borges and on a book with Cortázar even[78]. During one of the many divorces and separations of my parents my mother was married for a time to Francisco Porrúa, the editor of *Rayuela* and *Cien años de soledad*. Through that connection, I remember that Gabriel García Márquez was in my house

[77] At two points in my interview with Fresán (2016) he noted his different starting point when compared to the rest of the participants in the anthology: '[y]o en aquel entonces no era uno de los escritores desconocidos, estaba publicado en Anagrama y con Tusquets Editores. La función supuestamente evangélica del libro no me afectaba en ese sentido'. And again when he stated: 'Fue un gusto participar y sigue siendo un gusto haber participado. No tengo nada de arrepentirme. También tengo que decirte la antología no me significó nada en términos profesionales. Yo ya era alguien, incluso en España ya estaba editado. No conseguí traducciones o ediciones por participar en *McOndo*. Sí creo que algunos escritores en España fueron editados a partir de su participación en *McOndo*, o se lo leyó por primera vez en España' (Fresán 2016, personal interview).

[78] Juan Fresán was a graphic designer who worked on book cover designs with these notable Argentinian authors.

> in 1967 when *Cien años de soledad* came out. There was a certain awareness that I would end up either doing journalism or advertising, which are the two side-careers to literature in Argentina. My parents always gave me books, they never gave me a football for example, so there was no doubt nor any worry from my parents when I became a writer[79] (Fresán 2016, personal interview).

Fresán's lifelong immersion in the literary game, and specifically the *porteño* literary aristocracy, fixed within him a high literary *habitus* which would continue to serve him in his career, having lived, breathed, and inhabited the literary world from his early days, allowing him to take advantage of the structures around him and maximise his chances of succeeding in his trajectory.

7.2.4 Leonardo Valencia

A similarly unconventional literary path developed quite apart from *McOndo* is apparent in Leonardo Valencia's literary trajectory, who, like Soler and Fresán, also lives in Barcelona. Valencia hails from the coastal Ecuadorian city of Guayaquil and, much like comparably peripheral and later international writers (such as Charles Ferdinand Ramuz to cite another example from Casanova), was drawn to a greater literary capital in order to survive and produce in the literary world. His literary starting point is substantially more peripheral than Soler's or even Fresán's, as Mexico and Argentina outperform Ecuador (and most other Spanish-American literary nations) in the scale and scope of its publishing industry and their history of literary recognition within the region and globally. This structural reality can even be experienced acutely at a micro level in how it relates to the authorial *habitus*. While in Fresán's upbringing the choice and viability of a literary career were facilitated by his *habitus* formed within a literary aristocracy, in contrast, Valencia's circumstances conspired against his *habitus* to become an author:

> [f]rom my adolescence I was interested in literature. I wrote without knowing which was an author's path. When I wanted to take up literary studies, after already starting a law degree, which was my dad's profession, he didn't support me in my career change [...]. Having decided to abandon my legal studies, but without the opportunity of family support, I searched for a job to make ends meet, and that is how I ended up as creative editor for an advertising agency, McCann-Erickson. My project was to maintain myself and, with my savings, leave Ecuador and take up literary studies [...]. But I continued working in advertising and I didn't see the possibility of leaving, I didn't know how to do it. I kept writing, of course. My perspective was clarified when, due to the same advertising work, I was offered a job in Lima, and it was there where I understood what dedicating oneself to writing entailed. I owe very much to the

[79] 'Mis padres eran un matrimonio típico de la *intelligentsia* de los sesenta en Buenos Aires y siempre habían muchos escritores en mi casa. Mi padre hizo un libro con Borges y un libro con Cortázar incluso. Entre uno de los primeros de los múltiples divorcios o separaciones de mis padres, mi madre estuvo casada un tiempo con Francisco Porrúa, el editor de *Rayuela* y *Cien años de soledad*. Por esa conexión, me acuerdo que estuvo Gabriel García Márquez en mi casa en 1967 cuando salió *Cien años de soledad*. Había una consciencia que yo terminaría haciendo periodismo o publicidad, que son las dos actividades laterales a la literatura en Argentina. Mis padres siempre me regalaban libros, nunca me regalaron un balón de fútbol por ejemplo, entonces nunca hubo una duda ni tampoco una preocupación de mis padres cuando me hice escritor' (Fresán 2016, personal interview).

> environment in Lima during the 90s to consolidate my literary vocation. I had to break also with advertising, which is an enormous tomb of artistic talent, and it was then when I left for Barcelona and where I could take up literary studies[80] (Valencia 2016, personal interview).

Despite this uncertain direction, Valencia was able to transfer to Quito and later to Lima for his advertising work, where, in the Peruvian capital, he was exposed to an active literary scene with writers of his generation[81]. It was here in Lima, and not Ecuador, where Valencia would have his first literary publication with the independent publisher Kaime Campodónico of his first and only short story collection *La luna nómada* (1995), and where he would write his first novel *El desterrado* (Debate, 2000). This collection would prove to be a rich source of literary circulation for Valencia, with stories from this collection being published in anthologies in Spain, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and in France, a process of anthologisation[82] which began with Alberto Fuguet's fortuitous discovery of *La luna nómada* in a bookshop in Quito where Valencia himself had provided copies of his book.

It was from here that Valencia pursued an increasingly common literary route through the academy by studying his doctorate in Barcelona, the city where he lives since 1998 and where he has worked as an editor, creative writing teacher (at La Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona), and currently as director of the private creative writing institute Laboratorio de Escritura. Valencia is among the authors in *McOndo* who have published the least number of fictional works—he has published the novels *El desterrado* (Debate Madrid, 2000), *El libro flotante de Caytran Dölphin* (Funambulista Madrid, 2006), *Kazbek* (Funambulista Madrid, 2008b), and *La escalera de Bramante* (Seix Barral, 2019) —most of which have not circulated

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[80] 'Desde la adolescencia me interesó la literatura. Escribía sin saber cuál era el camino de un escritor. Cuando quise tomar estudios literarios, habiendo iniciado ya la carrera de abogacía, que era la profesión de mi padre, él mismo no quiso apoyarme en un cambio de carrera [...]. Decidido a abandonar los estudios de Derecho, pero sin la posibilidad del apoyo familiar, busqué un trabajo meramente alimenticio y así fui a parar como redactor creativo en una agencia de publicidad, McCann-Ericksonn. Mi proyecto era mantenerme y, con mis propios ahorros, salir de Ecuador y realizar estudios literarios [...]. Pero seguí trabajando en publicidad y no veía las posibilidades de irme, no sabía como hacerlo. Seguía escribiendo, por supuesto. El escenario se me aclaró cuando, por la misma publicidad, me ofrecieron un trabajo en Lima, y fue allí donde comprendí lo que implicaba dedicarme a escribir. Le debo mucho al entorno limeño de los 90 para afianzar mi vocación literaria. Tenía que romper también con la publicidad, que es una enorme tumba de talentos artísticos, y fue entonces cuando me marché a Barcelona y pude realizar estudios de literatura' (Valencia 2016, personal interview).

[81] In my interview Leonardo Valencia cites a number of writers including Iván Thays, Mario Bellatín, Patricia de Sousa, Eduardo Chirino, and Carlos Humalayos.

[82] 'Farfala' was published as 'Pulsión' in both *McOndo* (Grijalbo Mondadori Barcelona, 1996) and *Antología del cuento latinomaricano del siglo XXI: Las horas y las hordas* (Siglo XXI Mexico and Buenos Aires, 1997); 'El ideograma' was published in *Cuento ecuatoriano de finales del siglo XX: antología crítica* (Libresa Quito, 1999); 'Belfegor' was published in *Líneas aéreas* (Lengua de Trapo Madrid, 1999) and later also translated for *Les bonnes nouvelles de l'Amérique latine* (Gallimard Paris, 2010); 'El ojo del cíclope' was published in *Cuento ecuatoriano contemporáneo* (UNAM Mexico, 2001); 'La sangre de Kálister' was included in *Bogotá39* (Ediciones B Bogotá, 2007); and 'Insuperable capítulo seis' was included in *Pasión de Papel: Cuentos sobre el mundo del libro* (Ediciones Páginas de Espuma Madrid, 2007). Some of his other stories have also appeared in the anthologies *El arca: bestiario y ficciones de treintaiún narradores hispanoamericanos* (Sangría Editora Santiago de Chile, 2007) and *Ecuador cuenta* (Del Centro Editores Madrid, 2014).

outside of Spain, although his novel *Kazbek* (2009) was edited by the prestigious independent Argentinian publisher Eterna Cadencia and was able to circulate in Mexico and Argentina. His few works have been celebrated for his prosaic and narrative talent and for their narrative reflections and explorations of literature itself, which he identified in my interview with him as one of his central literary vocations:

> I'm very interested in the literary essay, literary thought. In that sense for me authors such as Borges, Cortázar, Vargas Llosa, Lezama Lima and Fuentes, are decisive. Authors that are thinking through literature. I feel a part of that tradition, writers who think literature, that's the type of writer I am interested in being[83] (Valencia 2016, personal interview).

Aside from his historical and extra-national first novel, *El desterrado*, and his reflections on the search for a new form of narration in his nouvelle *Kazbek*, Valencia has perhaps best demonstrated his commitment to literary thought and a progressive literature in his novel *El libro flotante de Caytran Dölphin* (2006). The novel centres around the protagonist Iván Romano who is the owner and critic of the only copy of the lost novel *Estuario*, written by Caytran Dölphin, a writer who mysteriously disappeared after publishing this single work. After publishing his novel, Valencia, together with the digital artist Eugenio Tisselli, created the website libroflotante.net through which readers have been able to submit their own apocryphal fragments of *Estuario* or comment on those fragments included by Romano in Valencia's novel. As such, this digital phase of the work becomes a 'process of collective creation where the reader is an active participant', essentially to emphasise 'the idea of floating: that which is suspended, instead of being fixed. That is the floating condition of all fiction: to open possible and inexhaustible worlds'[84] (Tisselli and Valencia). In addition to the themes of the nomad, the deterritorialised, the frequent use of pairings of protagonists, a prose mostly free of localisms, Valencia also explores the literary form questioning authorship, interpretation, and the endless possibilities of narrative worlds not unlike one of the greatest of literary innovators of the 20th Century with similar concerns and interests: Borges. The publication of his most recent novel *La escalera de Bramante* (2019) with Seix Barral seems to confirm his trajectory as a high literary author worthy of attention beyond the national spaces of Ecuador and Spain.

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[83] 'Me interesa mucho el ensayo literario, el pensamiento literario. Para mí en ese sentido autores como Borges, Cortázar, Vargas Llosa, Lezama Lima y Fuentes, son decisivos. Autores que están pensando en la literatura. Yo me siento en esa tradición, escritores que piensan la literatura, ese es el tipo de escritor que a mí me interesa ser' (Valencia 2016, personal interview).

[84] '[U]n proceso de creación colectiva donde el lector es un participante activo' and later they state 'Esta es la idea de los flotante: aquello que está suspendido, en vez de estar fijo. Esa es la condición flotante de toda ficción: abrir mundo posibles e inagotables' (Tisselli and Valencia).

An additional complementary facet of Leonardo Valencia's literary vocation and trajectory is his essayistic work *on* literature, the author and particularly the novel, which he has developed in conferences, newspaper articles, and published in his two collections of essays: *El síndrome de Falcón* (Paradiso Quito, 2008a), and most recently *Moneda al aire* (Turbina Quito, 2017). The first includes the much-cited title essay, as well as others such as '¿Cuánta patria necesita un novelista?' (How much nationhood does a novelist need?), where he staked his own position-taking on the issue of the 'game of identities' placed on what an authentic Ecuadorian writer had, could, or ought to write (Valencia 2008, 192). In the first essay, Valencia develops his term 'el síndrome de Falcón' (The Falcón Syndrome) which he uses to diagnose the internalised expectation in authors—conditioned by numerous external factors such as critics and the national markets—to have a nationalist agenda, he describes this affect:

> that the writer feels irresponsible for not putting forward the postcard picture of their country, their city, a slang or speech but not as an intimate working of his artistic conflict, but rather as a simple nod, a simplifying code, like emphasising the feature over and above what they want to say [...] That self-censorship or anticipated lack of talent or success in the artifice I call, jokingly, the Falcón Syndrome: the Ecuadorian writer carries, like Falcón, a secret and undeclared agenda for their literature. Whatever transgression to that unwritten rule was seen as a hallucinatory desertion, a bourgeois digression or a cosmopolitan pretension[85] (Valencia 2008, 170).

This contestation, which Valencia puts forward in his native Ecuador, is equally applicable, as he acknowledges[86], at the various other national levels of Latin American nations, as much as for Latin American authors at the supranational level, both being discourses which he and a number of other writers of this generation such as the Crack and *McOndo* have consistently problematised (as will be seen in the next chapter), suggesting that his involvement in *McOndo* and exposure to the experience of his generation of writers also influenced his stance and position-taking on this issue. While Ramuz sought to conceal his origins in order to assimilate fully into the Parisian literary scene of the early 20th Century (as detailed by Casanova 2007,

[85] '[Q]ue el escritor se sienta irresponsable por no dar la postal de su país, de su ciudad, de una jerga o de un habla pero no en función estrecha con su conflicto artístico, sino como un guiño fácil, una contraseña simplificadora, como enfatizando el rasgo por encima de lo que quiere contar [...] A esa autocensura o manera anticipada de falta de talento o logro en el artificio la denomino, un poco en broma, el *síndrome de Falcón*: el escritor ecuatoriano carga, como Falcón, una agenda secreta y no declarada para su literatura. Cualquier transgresión a esa regla no escrita fue vista como una deserción alucinada, un desvío burgués o una pretensión cosmopolita' (Valencia 2008a, 170).

[86] 'Durante mucho tiempo, en Latinoamérica, parecía darse una especie de compromiso o exigencia por representar simbólicamente lo que se ha denominado como una cuestión de identidad. Una identidad delimitada con un término preciso: identidad latinoamericana. Cuando surgían casos aislados que no respondían a este esquema, más aún, al no representar el aire de familia de sus respectivos países, lo normal era tener una actitud escéptica sobre la validez de esa obra' (Valencia 2008, 171). Later Valencia also states: '[a]l escritor de un país latinoamericano le resultó insoportable tener que encontrarse, en vísperas del siglo XXI, con que Latinoamérica tenía que ser una cantera de historias fabulosas y exóticas' (Valencia 2008, 186).

217-9), Valencia's critique, coupled with his relocation to Barcelona, must be understood not as means of assimilation but as strategic means of freeing his literature from the bonds of national and regional horizons of expectation.

These essays were polemical interventions themselves, coming after his inclusion in *McOndo*, and which he put forward at conferences in Ecuador and were published in the form of articles in Spain. When read in the context of his extra-national texts, profoundly literary *œuvre*, prose devoid of localisms or cliché references[87] (also apparent in his short story in *McOndo*), one can understand Valencia's narrative and discursive struggle as predominantly one for literary autonomy. His literary and essayistic works are attempts to make literature independent from those extra-literary demands, concluding against the old idiom that language (or the nation for that matter) is the home of the writer, instead reaffirming that which is more properly of literature by its very nature: imagination (Valencia 2008, 201). And yet, because of the noise made by the *McOndo* anthology and how the manifesto-like prologue affected the reading of the stories, to begin with Valencia was grouped as a *McOndiano* writer by local critics who, Valencia argues, incarnated a conservative nationalist spirit:

> I remember in my country there were a lot of responses from the typical point of view of suspicion before someone who begins to make a name for themselves outside and who within the country is kept at a distance. They wanted to accuse me of being a frivolous writer who wrote about super modern things when in reality they had never read the story and they didn't even know the anthology[88] (Valencia 2016, personal interview).

This was not only Valencia's experience, but also an issue which Alberto Fuguet, and numerous other authors such as the Crack writers, would confront in the aftermath of their problematising of this critical conservatism apparent both within their nations and in foreign academies, the benefits of which are being experienced at a macro-literary level[89] by these authors and younger generations as will be discussed in the next chapter. As such, then,

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[87] Valencia decries the "guardians" of national literatures who seemed to cause him to question his use of language in his early literary career: 'Cuando empecé a escribir cuentos me incomodaba utilizar determinadas locuciones de Guayaquil o de Quito porque sentía implicadas en ellas historias que no me interesaba abordar en ese momento en lo literario [...] ¿Por qué debía estar obligado a utilizar una de ellas? Y si no las utilizaba, ¿por qué se debía sospechar de su ausencia? Me preguntaba: ¿dónde está ese supuesto guardián?' (Valencia 2008, 195).

[88] 'Me acuerdo que en mi país hubo mucha reacción desde el punto de vista de la típica actitud de desconfianza ante alguien que empieza a ser conocido afuera y hacia dentro lo mantienen a distancia. Entonces a mí me querían acusar un poco de ser un autor frívolo que hablaba de estas cosas súper modernas cuando en realidad nunca habían leído el cuento y ni siquiera conocían la antología. (Valencia 2016, personal interview).

[89] In my interview Valencia (2016) reflected with some optimism regarding how writers have gained greater literary independence in recent times: 'América Latina ha dejado de interesar al mundo como interesaba antes. Y yo creo que esto [*McOndo*] fue uno de los últimos momentos en que todavía se podía hablar de un discurso latinoamericano. Después vinieron autores como Jorge Volpi que hablaba del fin de la literatura latinoamericana. Y ahora los lectores leen autores latinoamericanos pero por sus obras y no por su país, no creo que se pongan a leer a un autor ecuatoriano para que les hable de su país, no. La gente va y lee a un autor porque habla de lo que quiera. Entonces lees a Bolaño no porque vas a descubrir Chile sino porque habla sobre México, o habla sobre Alemania. En ese sentido sí se ganó esa independencia, esa mirada al autor no por su país.'

Valencia, in some senses, benefited through *McOndo* in defining him as the international author which he sought to become, at least in the eyes of the national critics of Ecuador. And even though this was based on a misunderstanding, he has been able to correct this error through a series of essays and works, of his profoundly literary convictions and further crystallise his authorial identity. As Casanova (2007) describes, '[f]or writers from nationalized spaces'—here she cites Danilo Kîs, Henri Michaux, Samuel Beckett, and James Joyce—'exile is almost synonymous with autonomy' (110), so too for Valencia, faced with the external and increasingly interiorised expectations of national representation, he chose to exile himself for the sake of his exploration of his native literary home: the imagination.

7.2.5 Rodrigo Soto

The Spanish Central American nations have not counted with the same literary heritage, structural economic or editorial mechanisms, professional milieu, nor as much international critical attention in order to internationalise their literatures, when compared with the rest of Latin America. It would be reductive to suggest that the structural literary asymmetry between Spanish-American national letters explains the largely national circulation of many Central American writers, nor account for those writers who have managed to transcend these frontiers: Rubén Darío, Miguel Ángel Asturias (Nobel Prize for Literature 1967), Augusto Monterroso (Premio Prínicipe de Asturias 2000), or Sergio Ramírez (Premio Cervantes 2017). Nevertheless, it does represent a significant obstacle to global or even regional internationalisation, of which only a few narrators have been able to overcome during this literary period[90]. However, the only Costa Rican participant in the *McOndo* anthology, Rodrigo Soto, found himself unbenefited through his inclusion, in part, pointing to the persistence of this geo-literary situation, and most significant, when we consider how much more advanced his literary career was compared to his *McOndo* co-contributors at the time. These facts appear to confirm the relative peripherality of the Central American literary spaces when compared to other more dominant spaces in the region from the Southern Cone or its (relative) literary giant to the north: Mexico.

Prior to his inclusion in *McOndo*, Rodrigo Soto had already attained early success in his native Costa Rica through the publication of two short story collections, three novels, and a book of poetry, making him among the most published contributors to *McOndo*. He had also

[90] Those whose work counts with the most recognition include: the Honduran-Salvadoran Horacio Castellano Moya (1957-), the Guatemalan Rodrigo Rey Rosa (1958-), the Costa Rican Carlos Cortés Zúñiga (1962-), and the Honduran Roberto Quesada (1962).

begun gaining modest recognition early in his career when his first short story collection won the Nation Short Story Prize Aquileo J. Echevarría when he was only 21 years old, and he was also a finalist for the Casa de las Américas Short Story Competition in 1992. This same year he was included in the Latin American short story compilation *16 cuentos latinoamericanos*[91] (1992). The expected impact of inclusion in an anthology such as this—which republished stories by Cortázar, García Márquez, Skármeta, Monterroso, Ramírez, Alfredo Bryce Echenique, Benedetti, among others—or even in one like *McOndo*, were naturally high—as Rodrigo Soto explained in my interview with him—, precisely because of his positioning as a Central American writer:

> [t]o understand what it meant to participate in an anthology of an international level, you have to put yourself in the situation of a Central American author. A project that might give some visibility beyond the four blocks where you live is very good. The other attraction was the publisher, Mondadori, because even though I didn't know the editors I knew the publisher, and that was significant. The dream of transcending boundaries and becoming an international writer is always there, it's a latent expectation, one which only with the years you begin to give up little by little, understanding that things aren't heading that way. But in that time, I had that hope for my literary trajectory[92] (Soto 2016, personal interview).

The hope which Rodrigo Soto pinned upon his inclusion in both of these anthologies, and later the anthology *Líneas aéreas*, is evidently a hope of becoming an international author, a trajectory which a number of South American and Mexican writers of *McOndo* experienced, as has been shown above.

A further impediment is also the diminished attention that has historically been paid to Central American letters in foreign literary criticism and academia—once again compared to the rest of the region such as Mexico, the Caribbean, and South America—, a shortage which according to the critic Alexandra Ortiz-Wallner (2012) in recent times has improved but has

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[91] This anthology appears to be a curious venture between CERLAC (Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean) and a number of local publishers (Aique in Argentina, Ática in Brasil, Norma in Colombia, Farben in Costa Rica, Andrés Bello in Chile, Piedra Santa in Guatemala, CIFCLI in Mexico, Nueva Nicaragua, Inca in Peru, Huracán in Puerto Rico, Taller in The Dominican Republic, Ekaré in Velezuela) attempting to introduce these enormously successful writers to a new young adult readership, a sector of the readership market seemingly discovered by publishers during the 1990s. This intention is as much signalled in the subtitle to the anthology *16 cuentos latinoamericanos: antología para jóvenes* but also in the prologue by Antonio Cornejo Polar (1992) in which he states: '[c]iertamente, al margen de la edad cronológica, esa con la que siempre mienten los calendarios, la narrativa de los sesenta y la posterior (a la que algunos críticos prefieren denominar como *postboom*) fue y sigue siendo una narrativa joven: desprejuiciada, algo o mucho anárquica, incapaz de ocultar sus pulsiones más íntimas, a veces inclusive desgarbada como suelen ser los adolescentes despreocupados [...] En este sentido, no puede ocultarse el segundo acierto de la antología: cuentos desde los sesenta con asunto que de una u otra manera aluden a la adolescencia y a la juventud' (10).

[92] 'Para entender lo que significaba participar en una antología de clase internacional tienes que ubicarte en la perspectiva de un autor centroamericano. Un proyecto que le dé alguna visibilidad fuera de las dos cuadras donde vives es buenísimo. La otra cosa era la editorial, Mondadori, y aunque no conocía a los editores conocía la editorial y eso era relevante. El sueño de trascender las fronteras y hacerse un escritor internacional siempre está allí, es una expectativa latente, a la que solo con los años uno va renunciando poco a poco y entendiendo que no va por allí la cosa. Pero en aquel entonces esperaba eso de mi trayectoria literaria' (Soto 2016, personal interview).

nevertheless existed[93]. When one considers the role of criticism in the production of literature, this diminished critical and editorial interest in Central America demonstrates, to some extent, how the literary unevenness across Latin American literary space is continually reproduced, particularly when compared to the clear interest and confidence which Jorge Herralde placed in the new Argentinian narrators he promoted through *Buenos Aires*. This kind of geographic asymmetry also manifests itself in many multinational anthologies, in how in their selection, there is, on occasion, an imbalance which favours the inclusion of numerous Mexican and Argentinian writers (most commonly), an intermediate number of authors from Andean countries, and only a few if any Central American or Caribbean writers. This could be as much interpreted as mediated by the interests of the target country's readership, as well as the development of literary spaces in which writers have greater visibility within their national spaces through a rich literary culture. While this unequal selection could, perhaps, be defended by arguing the correspondence of these numbers to the sizes of the populations in each of these respective countries; this is not always the case when these anthologies are able to include more authors from the small island nations of the Caribbean (Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Puerto Rico) than Central American authors[94]. As such, while circulation in a collective project like *McOndo* made it possible for some writers to introduce themselves to new readerships, foreign criticism, and open up the possibility of publishing or being translated as an individual author, Soto's incursions into Latin American literary circulation during the 1990s never progressed beyond those initial short story anthologies.

There is some correspondence here between Soto's experience and the case of the early 20th Century Guatemalan author Enrique Gómez Carrillo, in how even though the latter had published close to two dozen works and several thousands of columns of journalism, their impact did not 'carry beyond the bars of our cage' (Gómez Carrillo in Casanova 2007, 184). This is analogous, in so far as Soto was among the most published of the authors included in *McOndo*, and yet, due to the inequalities between regions and nations within the Latin American literature-world, his trajectory faced a comparable (but not equivalent) level of

[93] 'A pesar de que la literatura y la cultura centroamericanas no han formado parte de las grandes tradiciones de estudio dentro de las academias universidades nacionales, (latino)americanas o europeas, considero y defiendo que sus textos, temas y problemáticas se están construyendo como objetos de estudio relevantes e imprescindibles' (Ortiz-Wallner 2012, 12-13).

[94] This is as much evident in the selections of *Antología del cuento latinoamericano del siglo XXI: Las horas y las hordas* (1997) as in *Líneas aéreas* (1999). The inclusion in particular of several authors from Cuba in *Líneas aéreas*, is perhaps a direct response to the growing editorial and academic interest in the state of Cuban letters after the repression and censorship of the *quinquenio gris*. Which might lead one to question why there was not a similar interest in Central American letters when one of the fundamental purposes of this anthology was to call attention to the absence of these new literary voices.

invisibility beyond his national field as Gómez Carrillo's had decades earlier. As such, while a number of the authors included in *McOndo* were or have since been able to publish with publishers with symbolic capital, such as Anagrama, Tusquets, and Seix Barral, and others with big commercial publishers, such as Planeta, Grijalbo Mondadori, Alfaguara and Penguin Random House, Soto has been forced to rely on local university publishers for most of his career[95]. Only on three occasion has Soto had works published overseas, namely through independent publishers in Spain such as his nouvelle *Gina* (Periférica, 2006), the novel *El nudo* (originally published in Costa Rica in 2004 but republished by Periférica, 2011), and most recently his short story collection *Otros reinos* (ZUT Ediciones, 2012). By noting the dates of these publications, as well as their standing as small to medium size publishers, it is possible to conclude that there exists a considerable time-lag in the this Central American passage from national author to international author, a level of circulation which Soto is only beginning to attain but which many of his *McOndo* co-contributors from other parts of the Americas have sustained and advanced for a number of years. If, as Casanova (2007) states of Latin America's literary development in general 'thirty years later virtually the opposite was true, the continent in the meantime having become one of the best recognized of the dominated spaces' (185), this was not the case for all spaces within Latin America, especially as has been noted here, for the Central American subregion.

7.2.6 The Spanish authors (Mañas, Loriga, Casariego, Domínguez)

The writers of the so-called Spanish *Generación X* or as it was commonly known at the time the "Generación Kronen", which often includes writers such as José Ángel Mañas, Ray Loriga, and Martín Casariego (among many others), comprised of a series of young writers who began publishing during the 1990s (much like their Spanish-American co-contributors in *McOndo*). They were identified as producing a literature of neorealism or 'dirty realism' akin to the Beat Generation of the United States, hence the reference to Douglas Coupland's *Generation X: Tales for an accelerated culture*. This Spanish literary generation came to be defined most poignantly in the aftermath of José Ángel Mañas' nomination for the Premio Nadal in 1994 for his hugely popular first novel and instant cult classic *Historias del Krónen*:

[95] Rodrigo Soto published his first novel *La estrategia de la araña* (1985) with Editorial Universitaria Centroamericana and has subsequently published *Mundicia* (1992, novel) and *Domocles y otros poemas* (2003, poems) with Editorial de la Universidad de Costa Rica; and *Floraciones y desfloraciones* (2006, short stories), *Pingüinos, camellos y ornitorrincos* (2009, essay), *El laberinto encendido* (2010, poems), *Las sombras de Lisandro* (2011, novel), *Aquí las noches se hacen largas* (2015, novel) with Editorial de la Universidad Estatal a Distancia.

a kind of anti-*bildungsroman* similar to Fuguet's disenchanted novel of youth *Mala onda*. However, by being only 23 years of age at the time of this novel's publication, Mañas' success[96] represented the commercial potential of fictions of youth (as well as fictions *by* youth) and as a result publishers manoeuvred to capitalise on this growing readership by publishing a whole series of similar novels during the 1990s. Nevertheless, the sudden explosion in success, and equally sudden fall from commercial climax of many of the writers—alongside the lack of positive critical recognition they received—, has led to a characterisation of this literary period as a lost and forgotten generation, as it was portrayed in the documentary entitled *Generación Krónen* (Destino, 2015) by the sociologist Luis Macha.

However, there are a few key reasons why the Spanish writers included in *McOndo* did not gain by being published in this anthology. As Martín Casariego commented in my interview with him:

> I think this is an anthology which wasn't as important for me as it was for other people. And I have the sensation that it was more important outside of Spain than in Spain. In Spain it did not have any repercussions, nor much significance [...]. It's not an important book for my career; I don't think it made me known in America at all. And in Spain I don't think it has much relevance. Mañas is known for *Historias del Krónen*, me for my books, Ray [Loriga] for his books, but it hasn't been a result of *McOndo*[97] (Casariego 2016, personal interview).

The reasons that *McOndo* remained an insignificant moment in the career of these Spanish writers can be understood within this local literary context in which they had begun writing and positioning themselves, and the nature of their inclusion in comparison to their Spanish-American co-contributors.

One of the reasons that can be considered is geographical. The editorial jump from national to international circulation in the capital of capitals of the Spanish linguistic-subspace, Barcelona, which many of the Spanish-American writers in *McOndo* considered significant[98], was for the Spanish writers, once again, just another publication within their national literary

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[96] In a piece entitled 'Un (casi) Nadal en medio de los noventa', José Ángel Mañas reflected on what this nomination meant for him at this young age, and what this also meant as a defining moment for his broader generation: 'Puedo decir, sin ánimo de exagerar, que a partir de ese momento mi vida cambió. Ese manuscrito que había enviado al premio se publicó en febrero de ese mismo año. Se titularía *Historias del Krónen*. Se convirtió, rápidamente, en una novela generacional y, poco a poco, en un auténtico *bestseller* que a finales del 94 llevaba vendidos cien mil ejemplares y empezaba a convertirse en un fenómeno social. Se habló de ‹‹literatura Krónen››. De ‹‹juventud Krónen››. De ‹‹generación Krónen››. Incluso se hizo una película que fue de las más taquilleras del año siguiente' (Mañas 2011, 9).

[97] 'Yo creo que esto es una antología que para mí no tuvo la importancia que podía tener para otra gente. Y yo tengo la sensación que fue más importante fuera de España que en España. En España no tuvo ni mayor eco, ni mayor importancia [...]. No es un libro importante para mi carrera; no creo que me haya hecho conocido en América, para nada. Y en España creo que no tiene una relevancia mayor. Mañas es conocido por *Historias del Kronen*, yo por mis libros, Ray [Loriga] por sus libros, pero no ha sido a partir de *McOndo*' (Casariego 2016, personal interview).

[98] As Jordi Soler (2016, personal interview) described: 'Como sabes, los escritores latinoamericanos deseamos publicar en España, es el tic colonial que tenemos'.

field. And while, in some senses, it could have represented a jump to a bigger commercial publisher, the authors involved, namely Casariego, Loriga, and Mañas, already had publications with various different publishers of symbolic and commercial significance including Anaya, Destino, Planeta, and Plaza & Janés. As Casariego highlights in the quote above, the literary recognition which these Spanish authors had gained was a result of their own works and not as a consequence of their participation in *McOndo*. In fact, for his own part, José Ángel Mañas highlighted *McOndo* as just another form of the neorealist punk-like literary aesthetic emerging around the world at the time[99] (Mañas 2011).

Furthermore, the Latin American specificity of the controversial claims and problems identified in the prologue which both overshadowed the stories and directed readings of the stories through the force of this paratextual material (title, prologue, etc.), were even further removed from the literary realities of the Spanish authors. In other words, the majority of the concerns that defined the anthology in critical and literary discourses, were distinctly Latin American: issues with being read in comparison to the Boom, the brand of magical realism, the tropicalisation and exoticism of the *macondismo* fundamentalism, the balkanisation between national literary fields, and the political pole—consequently having the effect of being largely excluded from analyses of *McOndo*. These concerns were largely irrelevant to the specifically domestic literary reality which was arising for these young Spanish writers. While the situation of these Spanish writers in respect to the significance of their local literary tradition, for example, the so-called *Edad de Plata* and its subsequent decadence during the Spanish revolution and dictatorship is comparable to the situation in many Latin American nations, the point of the prologue was less a transatlantic plight as it was a specifically Latin American one[100]. As such, even though the Spanish-American authors found and positioned

[99] 'Otro estudio de Germán Gullón [...] insiste en la supuesta bipolarización actual, y equilibra algo la balanza, intentando reconciliar a todo el mundo en la acogedora Casa de la Literatura. El neorrealismo de Gullón es ya un concepto más en sintonía con lo que está ocurriendo en el mundo: a su mención de Welsh se le podría añadir los Caníbales italianos, el posrrealismo americano y los autores suramericanos de la recopilación *McOndo*, pertinentemente vilipendiada por los numantinos de rigor' (Mañas 2011). Mañas preferred not to be involved in this research, suggesting all he had to say on the anthology was this cited brief mention of *McOndo* in his compilation of essays and articles on the period, *El legado de los Ramones*.

[100] The so-called Silver Age of Spanish Letters in the first third of the 20th Century until the Spanish Civil War in 1936 was a period of celebrated literary renewal by a diverse generations of writers from the *generación del 98* such as Miguel de Unamuno, the *novecentistas* inspired by the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, and the *generación del 27* with writers like Jorge Guillén and Federico García Lorca. In response to these worn literary styles and impoverished literary structures resulting from dictatorships as much in Spain as in Spanish-America, these authors simultaneously yet independently produced literatures with similar literary themes, also influenced by the return to democracy, neoliberalism, and the rise of popular culture. As such, there exists a fascinating parallel often overlooked between the *McOndo* rejection of magical realism both as experimental form of the Boom and its decadence during the Postboom, and the similar rejection on the part of the Spanish authors of the

themselves alongside their literary-aesthetic allies in their intervention into the Spanish peninsular field, while this may have aided the Spanish-American writers in being understood in this national field, this made little difference to how the Spanish writers were *already* understood. This is evident in the review by Echevarría referenced above, in which he simply notes, in passing, the aesthetic likeness between the Spanish-American and peninsular contributors. In other words, if the writers in *McOndo* felt their stories had been largely overshadowed or misrepresented in the prologue, the Spanish authors to whom many of the discussions were unconnected were even further silenced.

Thirdly, while the Boom may have cast a shadow over the writers of subsequent generations and crystallised foreign horizons of expectations both cultural and literary most especially for Latin American authors, Spanish writers nevertheless were also impacted by the successes of the Boom, as their local readership, as well as editorial catalogues, increasingly favoured the newest waves of foreign authors. As Martín Casariego explained in my interview with him:

> I think the anthology had more resonance for Spanish-American authors than for Spanish ones [...]. The very origin of the anthology is Spanish-American. Something which they mention in the prologue; that you're in fashion not for what you write, but because it is assumed you are going to write a type of literature. And for me that also affected me a little more distantly because the entire Boom was Spanish-American[101] (2016, personal interview).

What Casariego is referencing here, is how the Boom was, above all, a consecration across the world of authors from Spanish America and not Spain. The result of which would be the stagnation into repetitive formulas, themes, and styles which had gained recognition decades prior, but which continued to be published in Spain due to the commercial viability of such fictions. As such, it is possible to understand why Spanish publishing (through Anagrama, Tusquets, and Grijalbo Mondadori) was becoming (again) intent on "discovering" the newest Latin American literary voices, using the vehicle of anthology to introduce a series of authors into the Spanish literary field. The result was the resurgent publishing ubiquity of Spanish-American authors referred to as a 'babyboom' or 'boomerang' in media channels, or even 'El tercer descubrimiento de América' ('The Third Discovery of America')[102], which was also

literature of the *Edad de Plata* (Silver Age), and the subsequent stagnation of literary production during the dictatorship years.

[101] 'Yo creo que la antología tuvo más resonancia para autores hispanoamericanos que para los españoles [...] El mismo origen de la antología es hispanoamericano. Algo que cuentan en el prólogo; que estás de moda no por lo que escribas, sino porque se supone que vas a escribir un tipo de literatura. Y a mí eso también me pilla un poco más lejos porque todo el *boom* fue hispanoamericano' (Casariego 2016, personal interview).

[102] This is the title of an article by Tomás Eloy Martínez for *El País* (1998) in respect to his participation as part of the jury for the Premio Alfaguara 1998, in which he highlight the great number of Spanish-American authors shortlisted, a survey so rich that the award was conferred, quite exceptionally, to two authors in the same year: the Nicaraguan Sergio Ramírez for *Margarita, está linda la mar* and the Cuban Eliseo Alberto for *Caracol Beach*.

promoted through a number of literary prizes such as the Premio Herralde given to Bayly and Bolaño in 1997 and 1998, respectively, as well as the Biblioteca Breve prize awarded to the Mexican Crack author Jorge Volpi for his novel *En busca de Klingsor* in 1999. Much like during the Boom years, when authors such as Borges were published alongside a younger generation of writers such as Vargas Llosa, and the back catalogues of established authors, such as Cortázar, were republished (as was identified by Rama 2008, 297), this 'babyboom' took advantage of this period of literary invisibility, as a rich back catalogue of "undiscovered" authors such as Ramírez, Piglia, Elena Poniatowska of previous generations appeared alongside the literature of younger generations, once again amplifying the scale of the literary phenomenon in Spain. As such, once again due to the influx of Spanish-American writers into peninsular circulation, the desire of local presses and readers alike for Spanish-American literature continued to sideline the development of similar—yet less exotic—narratives by Spanish authors.

When considering the diminished impact of the anthology on the Spanish contributors, the only real exception is Antonio Domínguez, and even then, only to a limited extent. Domínguez is the co-author of the story 'Peter Pan W.C.' with Mañas, and at the time was the only unpublished writer in the *McOndo* anthology. However, while in this sense, Domínguez was perhaps the only Spanish writer with the potential to benefit from his inclusion, he nevertheless explained in my interview with him that:

> [u]nfortunately, due to the editorial conditions in Spain, I had to leave the country and make a living by other means. And so after that I became a university lecturer, a path which took me away from fiction to some extent. I have returned to fiction and published a novel, but always without success and with lots of difficulties[103] (2016, personal interview).

So, while his main profession is as a literary professor at the Université du Québec a Montréal, only much later has Domínguez been able to begin a modest literary career by publishing a pulp-fiction espionage series entitled *El hombre de los 21 dedos* (co-authored with Mañas), and a novel *Los círculos* (2010) with the small independent publisher Saymon Ediciones. As such, despite the fact that Domínguez's career had the most to gain compared to his Spanish co-contributors, he still did not capitalise symbolically nor commercially through his co-authored participation in *McOndo*, and the trajectories of the other contributors had already

By refering to this as the third discovery of the Americas we can assume he is referring to Christopher Columbus' first "discovery", and with the second "discovery" being the Boom.

[103] 'Por desgracia, por las condiciones editoriales en España, me llevaron a tener que irme fuera del país y buscarme la vida de otra manera. Y entonces después me convertí en profesor de universidad, un camino que me alejó un poco de la ficción. He vuelto y he publicado una novela, pero siempre sin éxito y con mucha dificultad' (Domínguez 2016, personal interview).

begun before their involvement in the anthology, an involvement which made very little impact.

7.3.1 The *ambiguous* cases

To this list of authors who were unbenefited by their inclusion in the *McOndo* anthology, we could additionally consider those authors whose careers shifted in trajectory, distancing or reorienting themselves from the literary path they appeared to be on, in exchange for an alternative route, owing to greater and lesser extents to their inclusion in the anthology.

7.3.2 Naief Yehya

A similar experience to Soto's peripherality and time-lag is evident in Naief Yehya's trajectory, however, this case is more paradoxical owing to his origins from the more literarily established space of Mexico and his residence in the global literary capital of New York. Yehya's literary origins date to his time at the Universidad Autónoma de México, where he studied civil engineering and where he began attending the literary workshop of Huberto Batis, at that time the assistant editor of the supplement *Sábado* in the newspaper *Unomásuno*. Yehya's first literary incursions are polemical, namely through the manifestoes which he and Guillermo Fadanelli edited together in the late 1980s[104]. One such manifesto was 'La literatura a la que estamos condenados' (The literature to which we are condemned, 1989a), in which they criticised the current state of Mexican literature, scrutinising the most corrupt literary forms of the time according to the authors: folklorist, traditionalist, and magical realist literature. After the attention-grabbing polemic which ensued from their joint literary manifesto, as well as their own literary magazine *Moho*, they both began publishing their own fiction.

Yehya's first novel, *Obras sanitarias* (Grijalbo, 1992), narrated with dark satire a totalitarian society obsessed with the human waste of its citizens. His second and third novels *Camino a casa: Un día en la vida de un joven mexicano* (Planeta, 1994) and *La verdad de la vida en Marte* (Planeta, 1995), positioned him within the bourgeoning space of literature of youth. As such, it is unsurprising that he was selected to contribute to the *McOndo* anthology through the editors' and his mutual connection with Grijalbo, but furthermore, because they inhabited comparable positions in their respective national spaces. However, since the early 2000s, after the publication of his short story collection *Historias de mujeres malas* (Plaza &

[104] The intervention of this magazine will be discussed in greater detail in the subsequent chapter.

Janés, 2001), he has published little in the creative sphere, focusing more on his journalistic work as foreign correspondent to various media channels in Mexico, Spain, and the United States[105], and as cultural essayist through numerous works of non-fiction, covering topics from cinema, popular culture, pornography, war and propaganda, and technoculture all which have not circulated beyond Mexico[106], with the recent exception of his first book in English: *Drone Visions* (2020). However unlike Valencia, whose essayistic work has lent greater literary credit to his work, Yehya's essayistic work is centred on other areas of interest—technology and society—, which were significant in drawing him to New York[107] (over the literary reasons for this), and which have distanced him from the potential literary trajectory he could have pursued had he not dedicated himself to these separate academic interests, much like Antonio Domínguez. Only recently with his novel *Las cenizas y las cosas* (2017b), has Yehya entered a broader international circulation outside of Mexico[108], mystifying Ignacio Echevarría in his review 'Naief, por fin'[109] (2018), on the apparently 'incomprehensible' reasons for this delay.

Let us recall here Casanova's (2007) commentary that the Anglophone centres of New York and London represent the leading contenders against Paris as the global capital of capitals (164). The significance of New York's consecratory capacity is legendary for Latin American literature, as much apparent in the role which the Alfred A. Knopf and FSG played in the circulation and consecration of Latin American authors of the Boom in their English

[105] Yehya publishes in *La Jornada Semanal*, *La Razón, Literal*, *Letras Libres* and *Zócalo*.

[106] Yehya has published a number of book-length essays on these areas with a number of important Mexican publishers: *El cuerpo transformado: cyborgs y nuestra descendencia tecnológica en la realidad y el la ciencia ficción* (Paidós Mexico, 2001); *Guerra y propaganda* (Paidós Ibérica, 2004); *Pornografía: sexo mediatizado y pánico moral* (Plaza & Janés, 2004); *Tecnocultura: El espacio íntimo transformado en tiempos de paz y guerra* (Tusquets, 2008); *Pornografía: obsesión sexual y tecnología* (Tusquets Ensayo, 2012); and, *Pornocultura: El espectro de la violencia* (Tusquets Ensayo, 2013).

[107] In my interview with Naief Yehya (2017a), he explained how he was drawn and fascinated by New York for its evolving culture and how it related to his essayistic rather than his creative work: '[e]n Nueva York encontré muchísimas cosas, es decir, yo ya estaba muy interesado en mi trabajo ensayístico, de investigación, de búsqueda, de reflexión que involucraba la cultura y la tecnología, la tecnocultura. Entonces para mí Nueva York era como la Meca en esos temas, como la cresta de la ola, era un lugar donde había que estar [...]. Todos los días había cosas que ver y descubrir, la vida cultural estaba cambiando y yo me sentía muy afortunado de poder participar en un poco de todo eso. Y continuamente escribía de lo que sucedía aquí para mi público en México. Trataba de ver el fenómeno desde un punto de vista privilegiado que me permitía ver un poco como las olas de cambio avanzaban de Nueva York y como iban llegando a las Américas y en particular a México.'

[108] The novel was published by Penguin Random House, first as an e-book and later in print distributed online by Amazon and available in Mexico and Spain.

[109] Echevarría posits that 'Naief Yehya constituye un nuevo ejemplo de esa disfuncionalidad del sistema editorial en castellano que muchas veces, por razones para mí incomprensibles, nos priva de conocer y de acceder a autores que a mi juicio reúnen todos los requisitos para circular internacionalmente sin incurrir en grandes riesgos' (Echevarría 2018, 27).

translations; the role of FSG in Roberto Bolaño's similar trajectory in the early 2000s[110]; and the rise of Latino authors such as Junot Díaz or Giannina Braschi, or Latin American authors such as Valeria Luiselli, Samanta Schweblin or Alejandro Zambra, all who have found great success passing editorially through New York City. Writers from across the world are drawn to different literary capitals, with Paris, Barcelona and New York representing particularly important points of settlement even today[111]. However, despite the status of New York City as, in some senses, the *new* capital of capitals of world literary space, Yehya has not positioned himself in the dominant English-language literary scene of the city since he moved there in 1992, nor has his work passed through this capital like many of the authors mentioned above. Instead, he has relied on his national literary space back home and occasionally focused on the limited subfield of Spanish literature in the United States.

As Casanova (2007) states, 'in trying to characterize a writer's work, one must situate it with respect to two things: the place occupied by his native literary space within world literature and his own position within this space' (41). The space of Spanish-language literature in the United States has closer connections, in many senses, with the Spanish-American publishing world than the United States Anglo-dominant publishing world (with the exception of Latino Literature written predominantly in English). This would characterise it, then, as among the most peripheral spaces within Latin American literary space, an already dominated area itself. As such, Yehya's experience, while apparently paradoxical, is peripheral in two senses: he is geographically distant from the editorial space most capable of sustaining his literary career: Mexico; and he is linguistically distant from the dominant literary space he inhabits *in vital sense* (the United States), and chooses to inhabit *in a literary sense* an even more peripheral space of Latin American literature in Spanish in the United States.

Consistent with this difficult literary positioning, it is unsurprising that Yehya's narratives draw inspiration from his own life, intentionally ironising (with comical effect), themes of career failure, imposture, and plagiarism in stories such as 'El continente de los elogios' (The continent of praise), or recently his novel *Las cenizas y las cosas* (Ashes and Things). In the first story, Yehya paints a demoralising portrait of the Spanish-language literary

[110] Sarah Pollack (2009) has written a comprehensive analysis of Bolaño's success and consecration through his United States reception in her article 'Latin America Translated (Again): Roberto Bolaño's *The Savage Detectives* in the United States', as has Wilfrido Corral (2011) in his book *Bolaño traducido. Nueva literatura mundial*.

[111] This fact is even reflected in the trajectories of some of the authors of *McOndo*, as has been noted, Jordi Soler, Leonardo Valencia, and Rodrigo Fresán all live in Barcelona since the turn of the century, Santiago Gamboa was living in Paris during the 1990s, and Edmundo Paz Soldán and Naief Yehya live in Ithaca and New York City respectively.

scene of the United States[112], and in *Las cenizas y las cosas*, he delves deeply into the vain introspection of an author and his repeated literary stumbling[113]. As such, by having identified these themes and by returning to Yehya's (1996) story in *McOndo*, 'La gente de látex', the story can be interpreted on another level—that is, in how it represents a metaliterary commentary on his literary space—through a series of parallels. For example, the main character's self-described vocation is almost artistic in its concern, not solely, with entertainment, but the emotional growth of the spectator[114] (217-8). The structure of the world of television can also be compared to the increased influence of the commercial pole on literary spaces, which transforms both of these worlds into a 'system of survival where the only ones who survived were those who had the best agent'[115] (Yehya 1996, 219). Related to this, the role and influence on the success of the Boom authors through the literary agent Carmen Balcells is well studied, and the recent rise of Andrew "the jackal" Wylie further attests to this commercialised paradigm within the literary world. A further example, is when the talk show "actor" criticises the so-called "phenomena"—'the people who actually came to expose their miseries'[116] (Yehya 1996, 219)—, as inauthentic and for taking over the market. This comment could be either interpreted as a criticism of authors who similarly came to expose their miseries in the form of testimonial literature, or perhaps even as an act of self-deprecation, considering the recent tendency toward autofiction to which some of Yehya's work clearly belongs. As such, the latex people, in their storytelling and acting on these talk shows, are a metaphor for the kind of impostor writers which Fadanelli and Yehya criticised, or even the "impostor

[112] In 'El continente de los elogios', a depressing picture of the field of Spanish literature in the United States is depicted, in which small editions of poetry and stories are largely self-published and circulated among a small group of Spanish-language literati. Nevertheless, the struggling protagonist is approached for help by an up-and-coming unpublished writer Hilario Méndez, who, without any trouble whatsoever, publishes a magical realist novel, and a second novel (written in a week) with Anagrama and in English translation with Penguin.

[113] In *Las cenizas y las cosas* (Yehya 2017b)—once again—, there is another struggling writer at the centre of the novel, this time Niarf Yahamadi, who is invited to inaugurate an auditorium in his honor in the mysterious Mexican town of San Ismael. Throughout the novel he experiences a long list of misadventures and misfortunes from his disastrous visit to San Ismael; his unintentional adaptation of a popular Mexican cinema hit which he has never seen or heard of; and the interruption and jeopardizing of his long-waited U.S. publishing takeoff by the September 11 terrorist attacks.

[114] 'Creía que mi labor no era solamente de entretenimiento, sino también hasta cierto punto educativa. Llegué a pensar que era mi misión, sentarme frente a los ojos del mundo, confesando las pasiones más aborrecibles, los entusiasmos más vergonzantes y los crímenes más horrendos. Mi trabajo era, como me había explicado mi agente, colaborar en una cruzada terapéutica que podía servir para ayudar a muchas almas torturadas' (Yehya 1996, 217-8).

[115] '[U]n sistema de supervivencia donde sólo sobrevivían quienes tenían a los mejores agentes del negocio' (Yehya 1996, 219).

[116] 'Los programas se llenaban de fenómenos, que era como llamábamos los profesionales del medio a las personas que realmente venían a exponer sus miserias' (Yehya 1996, 219).

syndrome" which many authors face themselves when writing, ideas which Yehya elaborated on in my interview with him (2015, personal interview)[117].

In Yehya's trajectory, the contradictions and complexities of the literature-world are made visible[118], such that, a number of conditions associated with literary consecration, for example, his presence in the United States among others, have not facilitated his internationalisation, which has only just begun through the publication of his latest novel in Spain and recent publication of his first non-fiction work in English. This significant factor, coupled with Yehya's distance from the creative literary world, for some time contributed to the considerable time-lag in his literary internationalisation. And yet, in recent times, owing in part to *McOndo*'s canonisation, as well as his connections with writers and critics of his generation which actively participate in the U.S. literary academy, have brought Naief Yehya closer to these consecrating circles and may have increased effects on his trajectory. His inclusion in the *Nuestra América* (University of South Florida, October 2016) conference and subsequent collection *McCrack*, for his participation in *McOndo* (the other three invited writers were Edmundo Paz Soldán, Cristina Rivera Garza, and Pedro Ángel Palou), is so far indicative of this.

7.3.3 Martín Rejman

While Naief Yehya's distancing from his own literary trajectory came by way of a pause from creative publishing and toward essayistic work, Martín Rejtman's career has always been split between narrative publications and his work in the film industry. Rejtman's very first short story collection *Rapado* (Planeta Biblioteca del Sur, 1992), as well as its adaptation to film—writing the screenplay and directing the production in 1996—, would both highlight Rejtman's artistic style: a realist, minimalist, and seemingly anti-political story, the film version which would inaugurate what has come to be considered the birth of the *nuevo*

[117] '[L]a idea es que el personaje principal es un impostor que está recorriendo y trabajando en el circuito de los *talk shows* ofreciendo su talento para falsificar las experiencias. En cierta manera yo veía la literatura un poco como eso mismo, nuestras búsquedas literarias también eran una forma de impostura, de tratar de desentrañar lo que los otros querían, lo que los otros veían. Era una manera de apropiarnos de otros discursos, de otras formas de ver el mundo y hacerlas nuestras aunque sea por un momento, aunque sea por un *show* o por un libro e interpretarlas' (Yehya 2015, personal interview).

[118] It is worth investigating further the existence and structure of the Spanish literary subspace within the United States and how this liminal space has had a long fought existence but has yet to develop into a formidable and advantageous literary space for the writers who inhabit and participate in it, making it a peripheral subspace operating within a globally powerful literary language, influential publishers, and from leading literary capitals such as New York.

cine argentino[119] (Campero 2009). Consequently, he has gained moderate recognition within both the Argentinian film industry and Argentinian literary space, producing 6 feature length films[120], and 4 short story collections[121]. Arguably his most successful film to date has been *Silvia Prieto* (1999), for which he was nominated for the Best Original Screenplay category in the Argentinian Film Critics Association Awards, and earned the prize for the same category at the Nantes Three Continents Festival that same year in France. It was also accepted at the Sundance Film Festival and other festivals in Berlin and San Francisco. Narratively his most successful work is the short story collection *Velcro y yo* (1996) which, while originally published with Planeta Biblioteca del Sur, was after his inclusion in *Líneas aéreas* published by Lengua de Trapo in 1999, and much later reedited by Random House Mondadori in 2011, giving it an even wider reception. Mondadori would also then publish his most recent short story collection *Tres cuentos* (2013), highlighting a growing interest from the enormous commercial publisher with Rejtman's short stories, and perhaps (only speculatively) his future works.

Despite these seemingly balanced artistic trajectories, in my interview with Martín Rejtman, he commented how his literary career holds less importance to him than his filmic career:

> I am also a strange case because literature is one of two of my careers, I work in cinema and literature. As such, I'm not so picky with my career as a writer. I don't take such careful steps because it honestly doesn't matter to me as a career. I never go to the Feria del Libro de Argentina, ever. I think the last time I went was the year 1994. I'm not interested. I have very few writer friends, I don't go to book launches, I never launch my own books, I don't participate in the literary world. It's not a world I am interested in being in. I worry more about my career as a film director [122] (Rejtman 2016, personal interview).

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[119] 'Un joven director elegía un tono lacónico consistente en una puesta en escena mínima, con planos más bien alejados, unidimensionales, despojados de profundidad, con economía narrativa, mediante el cual se desarrollaba una película cuyo tema era social e históricamente irrelevante, y dentro de la cual no se despliega ningún énfasis. Los protagonistas no emitían juicio alguno, no eran utilizados por el director para vociferar un enunciado con sentido político sobre temas de actualidad. Era un cine del presente y su final no concluía nada. El joven director se llamaba Martín Rejtman; su película, *Rapado*, y al devenir de lo que inauguraba se lo denominó "Nuevo Cine Argentino"' (Campero 2009, 23).

[120] Rejtman is both screenwriter and director of his films *Sistema español* (1988), *Rapado* (1996), *Silvia Prieto* (1999), *Los guantes mágicos* (2003), *Entrenamiento elemental para actores* (2009), and *Dos disparos* (2014).

[121] His short story collections include *Rapado* (Planeta Biblioteca del Sur, 1992), *Velcro y yo* (Planeta Biblioteca del Sur, 1996, Lengua de Trapo, 1999, Random House Mondadori, 2011), *Literatura y otros cuentos* (Interzona latinoamericana, 2005), and *Tres cuentos* (Mondadori, 2012).

[122] 'También soy un ejemplo particular porque la literatura es una de mis dos carreras, manejo el cine y la literatura. Por tanto, no soy tan *picky* con mi carrera como escritor. No doy pasos tan cuidados porque no me importa tanto sinceramente como carrera. Yo no voy nunca a la Feria del Libro de Argentina, jamás. Creo que la última vez que fui fue en el año 1994. No me interesa. Tengo muy pocos amigos escritores, no voy a presentaciones de libros, nunca presento un libro mío, yo no participo en el mundo literario. No es un mundo donde a mí me interesa estar. Me preocupo más de mi carrera como director de cine' (Rejtman 2016, personal interview).

Rejtman publishes his short stories periodically with little concern for how they will be received or where they will circulate, concerning himself more with his true passion: cinema. While for Fuguet cinema became a periodic refuge from the trying times of his literary career after the *McOndo* anthology, for Rejtman, cinema has always been his ultimate passion. Further evident, as has been mentioned, by his decision to work on a film script rather than a more narrative project while at the International Writing program in Iowa. Rejtman's distance from his literary trajectory is a result, then, of his greater passion for cinematic creation, which while related, in part, through its narrative dimension in scriptwriting, represents for Rejtman a different artistic world apart from the literary one in which he occasionally and nonchalantly participates.

7.3.4 Jaime Bayly

When compared to the other contributors in *McOndo*, Jaime Bayly appeared to be on a highway of literary consecration from early on in his career, much like Rodrigo Fresán. He had not only published two novels with the prestigious Spanish editor Seix Barral (*No se lo digas a nadie*, 1994 and *Fue ayer y no me acuerdo*, 1996), but was also aided by Mario Vargas Llosa as much privately, by recommending him to Seix Barral, as well as publicly, by way of reviews of his work[123]. His novels, similarly to Fuguet's, made waves in part due to their controversial reclamation of middle-class young adult popular culture, linguistic verisimilitude, aspects gaining him popular success but little literary credit. Bayly's blurring of the lines between his protagonists' and his own life through his deeply autofictional style (many of Bayly's early characters are upper middle-class men from conservative families who express bisexual attraction and live generally between Lima and Miami), further added intrigue to his texts as an extension and aggrandisement of his authorial persona in Peruvian literary space, where he is known as *el niño terrible* (the terrible child).

However, unlike Fuguet, Bayly's narratives had an additional fundamental ingredient which would bring him further ephemeral success, and that was his critique and confrontation of sexual moral norms through his forceful narrative reclamation of homosexual and bisexual experience[124], a literary strategy which Fuguet would execute decades later. This social

[123] Mario Vargas Llosa provided a notable review of Bayly's first novel, commentary which has accompanied many of his novels ever since: '[e]sta excelente novela describe con desenvoltura y desde dentro la filosofía desencantada, nihilista y sensual de la nueva generación' (Bayly 1994, inside cover).

[124] By this point I do not mean to suggest that this was an original contribution, these kinds of reclamations of sexual expression had numerous antecedents in mostly the field of restricted production, such as is the case with Pedro Lemebel in Chile, but even authors such as Manuel Puig. However, the Bayly phenomenon can be

reclamation through narrative is what some have claimed led to Bayly's controversial awarding[125] of the Permio Herralde in 1997 for *La noche es virgen*. Bayly's confessions conformed to a broad readership politically supportive of the reclamation of the homosexual and bisexual minority struggle occurring across the West and in Latin America during the 1990s, and contributed to the generation of the readership and the queer fiction genre. Nevertheless, the unliterariness or repetition of Bayly's novels is a criticism which has accompanied his literary trajectory since its early days both in Peru[126] and abroad[127]. Suggestive of Bayly's positioning in Latin American literary spaces, is his exclusion from the numerous important short story anthologies of this generation of Latin American writers: *Antología del cuento latinoamericano del siglo XXI: las horas y las hordas* (1997), and *Líneas aéreas* (1999), and the anthology for which he would have been a most obvious inclusion, but was also excluded from: *Se habla español: voces latinas en USA* (2000). This is perhaps equally apparent—although to a lesser extent—in an editorial sense, in how since those early publications with Seix Barral, Bayly's publications have since been with commercial publishing houses. His invisibility in these spaces of recognition are further suggestive of Bayly's divergent literary trajectory away from this internationalising "literary" group, and insertion into more consumable and popular readerships, or as it would later become, viewership.

understood as the reclamation of this sexual politics at a popular commercial level through the vehicle of the generation's young adult narratives.

[125] Ana Torres (2006) describes this division within the critical reception of this conferral as based on the lack of literariness of the novel: '[e]l 3 de noviembre de 1997, un jurado en España otorgo por unanimidad el XV Premio Herralde de Novela a La noche es virgen del peruano Jaime Bayly. El publico hispanoparlante en ambos continentes acogió esta nueva y esperada novela de Bayly muy favorablemente, lo cual provoco excelentes resultados para la editorial Anagrama. La primera y segunda edición se agotaron en diciembre de 1997 y la tercera siguió la misma suerte en enero de 1998. Cuando menciono al público, no me estoy refiriendo a la critica necesariamente. Esta, una vez mas, se vio dividida en cuanto a la apreciación de esta novela. Algunos le dieron la bienvenida como si se tratara de otra "obra maestra" y otros, sin quitarle sus reconocidos y obvios logros expresaron una vez mas su decepción en cuanto al tratamiento de su estructura.'

[126] Gustavo Faverón Patriau (1998) commented early in Bayly's career that '[l]as novelas de Jaime Bayly tienen, ciertamente, una favorable acogida pública, pero carecen en sí mismas (me aventuro a pensar que también en la intención de su autor) de cualquier ansia de perdurabilidad: no ostentan la inevitable audacia estética que es requisito de cualquier intento creativo, y que resulta muy diferente de la falaz audacia social de desnudar chismes y exponer pecaminosas trastiendas'.

[127] In a review of *Los últimos días de "La Prensa"*, Ilan Stavans (1997) writes the following critique: '[b]ut the novel is impossibly shallow and perfunctory, mainly because Bayly seems content in parroting a particular Peruvian type without a reason to justify his enterprise. No attempt at multifaceted narratives is ever made; no exploration of the background and mendacity of the cast is undertaken. And so, one wonders, is Los ultimos dias de "La Prensa" nothing but anodyne entertainment, kitsch for kitsch's sake? […] But so far, Bayly remains a spoiled brat, a practitioner of what has come to be known as the literature of laugh-and-run. What a pity, for he is obviously well equipped for more' (352).

From 2006-2009, and then again from 2011 to the present, Bayly has been a popular and controversial talk show host for his self-titled show on the Florida/Puerto Rico-based channel *MegaTV*. The show has a wide-ranging audience, being broadcast in Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, Costa Rica, Mexico, and the United States. And it has also not been without its controversies, mostly by way of on-air spats with producers, guests and his on-air quitting in 2009, largely consistent with Bayly's provocative and attention-grabbing *habitus*. Even his attempted candidacy for the presidential race in Peru in 2010 was described as just a big joke and a 'publicity stunt' (Miller 2011). Bayly's work, as much literary as in television, seems to feed and depend on his authorial and journalistic persona and the controversies which he generates and in which he becomes embroiled. While this infamy has made Bayly a constant talking point, in his repetition of themes coupled with the continued self-referential focus owing to his growing celebrity as a talk show host (i.e. *El niño terrible y la escritora maldita*[128], 2016), it has started to make him look more like a literary television personality who sells as a result of his mass media fame, rather than a writer focused on mass media, marking a certain distance from the majority of the writers, *stricto sensu*, involved in the anthology.

7.3.5 Sergio Gómez

As is evident from Alberto Fuguet's trajectory, Sergio Gómez conceivably had a similar amount to gain through his involvement in the *McOndo* anthology. Nevertheless, for a number of reasons, in part related to his *habitus*, he was unable to capitalise commercially or literarily in any lasting sense. Hailing from the provincial town of Temuco, Sergio Gómez studied law and literature at the Universidad de Concepción. Caught between the worlds of academia and journalism, Gómez chose to pursue a career with *El Mercurio* in Santiago where he met Alberto Fuguet, although the academy remained a recurrent setting in Gomez's literature. While to begin with, for the literary critics at the time attempting to understand the so-called *nueva narrativa chilena*, Fuguet and Gómez demonstrated notable commonalities seen as definitive of this "new" turn[129]—seen especially in their respective first short story collections and novels

[128] This novel is a direct narrativisation of Bayly's much commented on marriage to Silvia Núñez del Arco, an aspiring young female writer twenty years his junior.

[129] In some of Gómez's work the urban contemporary setting features strongly, such as in his short story collection *Adiós, Carlos Marx, nos vemos en el cielo* (1992). Broadly speaking the stories in *Adiós, Carlos Marx* narrate the lives of various disenchanted protagonists in their very personal wanderings through contemporaneous Chilean life set mostly in the universities, streets, bars, cinemas of Concepción (with the exception of one story set in New York). The *bildungsroman* novel *Vidas ejemplares. Una novela* (1994a, Planeta) also has much in common with Fuguet's *Mala onda* (1991) for its depiction of a lost generation of youth in Post-Dictatorial neoliberal Chile, in

Fuguet's *Sobredosis* (1990) and *Mala onda* (1991) and, Gómez's *Adiós, Carlos Marx, nos vemos en el cielo* (1992) and *Vidas ejemplares: novela* (1994a)—, with the benefit of time, and especially apparent after *McOndo*, some fundamental divergences emerge in terms of literary aesthetics, authorial vocation, and commercial success. These divergences identify Gómez firmly within the category of a provincial national author, a literary path taken not as a result of external factors but understood on account of his internal authorial *habitus*.

In *El labio inferior* (1998, Seix Barral), Gómez invents the provincial Southern Chilean town of Vertiente Baquedano, a mysterious fictional town more akin to Rulfo's Comala in *Pedro Páramo* than to the Santiago prominent in the fictions of *Cuentos con walkman* or even that of many of the urban narratives of his literary peers. Gómez explained this move away from the insistent urbanity of the McOndo cultural metaphor and to the province as resulting from his origins: 'I feel that I come from the province so for me in that sense I'm more interested in provincial themes'[130] (Gómez 2015, personal interview). Gómez's social mobility from the province to the city, from Temuco to Concepción and then to Santiago, is reversed in his literature where to begin with his writing is predominantly urban or semi-urban in setting, set in Concepción and Santiago, and ends up recognising the province as a defining territory both personally and literarily (much like Jordi Soler's narrative trajectory)—exemplified particularly in his use of Vertiente Baquedano. Gómez would continue to return to this country setting of Vertiente Baquedano through the detective genre in the novels *La mujer del policía* (Alfaguara, 2000), *La obra literaria de Mario Valdini* (Lengua de Trapo, 2002), *Patagonia* (Kailas, 2006) and *La felicidad de los niños* (Suma, 2015). Analogous to the provincialisation of Gómez's literary settings, is his very provincialisation within the literary space itself, as while to begin with his literature showed potential signs of expansion—being published with commercial (Alfaguara) and prestigious publishers (Seix Barral)—, his recent works are mostly edited by small local publishing houses.

This is perhaps also in part due to Gómez's selection of genre. Unlike Argentinian literary space, Chilean letters never developed a science fiction or fantastical literary tradition, and likewise the detective novel has traditionally occupied a very limited and undervalued place compared to the commercial and popular success the genre has and continues to enjoy in

which characters such as the pyromaniac taxi driver Pedro Pablo who burns down the homes of his former friends while listening to Cat Stevens. Both texts are also often suggested as being Chilean variations of Bret Easton Ellis' *Less than Zero* (1985).

[130] 'Y siento que yo vengo de la provincia entonces a mí me interesan temas mucho más provincianos en ese sentido' (Gómez 2015, personal interview).

European and North American readership[131]. Sergio Gómez himself acknowledged this literary reality, and how Chilean literary space has an overwhelmingly realist tradition, resulting in the hindered development of these literary genres: '[i]f something characterises the Chilean novel it is the prolonged persistence of themes, literary figures, styles, plots, from *Martín Rivas* until today [...] There is no science fiction novel, there is no fantastical narration, [and] none or very little crime novel'[132] (Gómez in Aguirre 1994, 53). And while there are notable exceptions to this claim, Gómez still pursues his literary passion for the detective genre despite knowing the limited market for his work and the undervalued symbolic capital.

And yet, Gómez's career simultaneously takes a more pragmatic and less artistic attitude to his literary decision-making evident in his turn to another undervalued yet commercially profitable genre: children's fiction. His most famous work in this genre is the popular children's detective series *Quique Hache: detective* (Alfaguara, 1999), but he has also published numerous stand-alone children's novellas[133]. The success of these works along with *Quique Hache*—ten books of which are included in Chile's national curriculum[134]—, goes some way to explain Gómez's continuation in this popular literary domain. Before reaching this stage in his writing career, Gómez had worked to support his literary vocation, firstly in journalism at *El Mercurio*, and later working as an editor for a number of publishers, from Planeta (where he worked for ten years) to independent houses such as Norma. However, since his peculiar incursion and unexpected success in children's literature, he has become a professional writer dedicating himself exclusively to writing. He stated in my interview with him: 'children's literature is what has given me a little more economic solvency because I publish many children's books, something which was just a coincidence'[135] (Gómez 2015, personal interview).

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[131] The only real exceptions to this in Chilean literary space is the literature of Ramón Díaz Eterović who successfully established a noir detective series with his detective Heredia, and other isolated examples such as some of Roberto Ampuero's novels. However, the recent national success of Dan Brown-style thrillers such as *Logia* (Planeta, 2014) by Francisco Ortega, or works of conspiratorial history such as the non-fiction trilogy *Historia secreta de Chile* (2015, 2016, 2017 Sudamericana) by Jorge Baradit, suggests the nascent signs of a potential market for detective-styled fiction in Chile which Gómez may have the opportunity to capitalise on in the future.

[132] 'Si algo caracteriza a la novela chilena es la persistencia prolongada en temas, figuras literarias, estilos, tramas, desde "Martín Rivas" hasta hoy. No hay novela de ciencia-ficción, no hay narrativa fantástica, nada o poca novela negra' (Gómez in Aguirre 1994, 53).

[133] *La verdad según Carlos Perro* (Anaya, 2004), *Eugenio Praz el fantasma. Ataque al inframundo* (Norma, 2005), *Yo, Simio* (Anaya, 2006), *El canario polaco* (Ediciones SM, 2007), *El escapista* (Ediciones SM, 2009), *Los increíbles poderes del señor Tanaka* (Ediciones SM, 2013), *Jim* (Planetalector, 2014), and the comic *Ella entró por la ventana del baño* (Ocholibros, 2012).

[134] See: Ministerio de Educación Gobierno de Chile, 'Sergio Gómez.'

[135] '[E]l tema infantil es lo que me ha dado un poco más de solvencia económica porque publico muchos libros infantiles, algo que fue una cosa de casualidad no más' (Gómez 2015, personal interview).

As such, when seen from the macro-perspective, where Gómez's and Fuguet's trajectories may have appeared comparable at their literary onset, Gómez's literary provincialisation and transition into genre fiction through his detective and children's literature was at odds with the popular young-adult genre of the time, a space which Fuguet has continued to develop in novels such as *Missing (una investigación)* (2009), *Aeropuertos* (2010), and recently *Sudor* (2016). The result was that Gómez forewent the literary visibility and credit he may have gained through continued literary intervention in more visible and valorised genres within the space of works, a negative impact of his incursion into minor genres, something he admitted to being aware of in my interview with him (Gómez 2015, personal interview). However, what Gómez lost in symbolic capital he exchanged for economic capital by contributing to the growing and profitable commercial market in children's literature, and in exchange, this has afforded him greater economic solvency and the freedom to pursue his calling to write detective fiction, even if these exist only by way of small-scale publishers with restricted print runs. Far from having any grandiose plans of literary transcendence, either universally or even necessarily internationally, Gómez admits that '[m]ore than transcendence I would like to have the ability to continue publishing the detective stories which I am writing'[136] (Gómez 2015, personal interview).

This provincial *habitus* is also useful in considering Gómez's general indifference to the struggle of McOndo. While in my interview with him he demonstrated his support of the claims of his and Fuguet's prologue (Gómez 2015, personal interview), it is clear from his silence during the critical backlash—Gómez unlike Fuguet did not write or comment on the anthology after its publication aside from the few newspaper interviews as part of the marketing of the anthology within Chile (for example, M. Soto 1996)—, that the debate was of little concern for his literary and discursive position-taking, evidenced further in his turn from the urban and young adult fictions, in some sense, characteristic of the *McOndo* texts.

Conclusion

Within the bounds of what is currently accessible and measurable, it is clear that the *McOndo* anthology has had greatly varied effects on its editors and participants. Notwithstanding the obvious specificities of each particular authorial disposition, position-takings, and trajectory, it is possible to conclude that certain writers were transformed, to some

[136] 'Más que transcendencia me gustaría tener la facilidad de poder seguir publicando los policiales que estoy haciendo' (Gómez 2015, personal interview).

extent, through their inclusion in the anthology either vocationally, aesthetically, or commercially; others were unimpacted or altogether unbenefited in their trajectory through their inclusion; and others' trajectories in relation to the anthology appear altogether ambiguous.

In the cases of the two editors, Fuguet and Gómez, this transformation is largely of a vocational and commercial nature, but in quite opposite senses for these two writers. For Fuguet, despite some difficulties, *McOndo* has afforded him success at an international level through his fiction and through strategic incursions into discourses, lending him both symbolic and economic capital and uniting his fate with that of his most infamous anthology—such that one cannot think of *McOndo* without necessarily thinking of Fuguet, and vice versa. The canonisation of this anthology (as will be discussed in the next chapter) would then directly benefit his own career. And yet, Gómez would not capitalise in either of these two senses, but his participation would have the opposite effect via a negation of these themes and discourses, and return to narratives and genres closer to the provincial home, so to speak. This kind of reaction is evident in other writers too, such as David Toscana and Jordi Soler, whose experience of *McOndo* was that of a discovery of their aesthetic rejection or transcendence of the so-called McOndo sensibility. Or conversely, in the case of Edmundo Paz Soldán and Gustavo Escanlar, who took inspiration from the McOndo discourses, debates, and narratives to propel their narratives and their authorial trajectory into new and successful territories (with different results in either case). The literary trajectory of the Colombian writer Santiago Gamboa is a unique case, as it was directly as a result of his inclusion in the anthology that he received the favourable reception in Spanish literary space, which would then permit him to develop an international career including numerous international publications and translations.

And yet, not all writers were directly or indirectly affected in these ways through their inclusion in the anthology. This is the case in particular with the disparate trajectories of authors from Argentina, especially Rodrigo Fresán, who has gained a considerable status in Latin American literary space and recognition in French and English translation, and writers such as the Central American Rodrigo Soto or even the Mexican New-Yorker Naief Yehya, whose careers have experienced a time-lag of internationalisation when compared to their literary peers. A similar lack of impact is apparent in the careers of the Spanish writers, whose inclusion in the anthology was less significant for a number of reasons, and Juan Forn, who not only already represented an important literary and editorial figure in Buenos Aires, but, for personal and professional reasons, has purposefully marginalised himself from the literary centre. The evaluation of the influence of *McOndo* is harder to determine but appears much less in the

trajectories of authors such as Jordi Soler and Leonardo Valencia, who, while discovering their own unique literary passion and direction, were neither influenced aesthetically nor benefited commercially from their inclusion in *McOndo*. They both represent, but especially Valencia, essentially solitary literary figures treading a uniquely autonomous literary path through a combination of genres and experimentation quite disparate to their peers, highlighting the truly varied character of the anthology despite first impressions.

Naief Yehya, who like Edmundo Paz Soldán also lives in the United States, was unable to capitalise like Paz Soldán did in the growing discourses surrounding the anthology, in part due to his distance from the academy, but also because of his paradoxical peripherality in arguably one of the major capitals of world literary space: New York. Naief Yehya, Martin Rejtman, Jaime Bayly, and Sergio Gómez, also represent ambiguous cases insofar as they all benefited to some degree through their inclusion, and yet intentionally choose (or for a time chose) to remain at a distance from the literary present to dedicate themselves to side-passions (in the cases of Gómez and Yehya), or by sidelining literature itself (in the cases of Rejtman, Bayly, and to some extent even Escanlar through his television career).

While it may be considered obvious that the sustained writing careers of many of the participants would have an impact on the canonisation of the *McOndo* anthology as a significant end-of-century moment in Latin American letters (as a confirmation of the editorial selection), the opposite also comes into view: the extent to which as well as *how* the anthology had an important impact on the trajectories of some of these writers. As such, when we speak of the impact which a literary moment such as *McOndo* may or may not have on those involved, it is immensely valuable to approach these extra-literary analyses armed with as much macro and micro-perspectives when applying and adapting Casanova's methodology. It is through this methodology that the very nuanced, complex, and disparate influences which have played out over the twenty or so years since the anthology can be more fully appreciated and contextualised, and can begin to explain the process of *McOndo*'s canonisation.

Chapter 8: The canonisation of the *McOndo* anthology

While world literature analyses (as much from the Global North as from the Global South) continue to elevate the novel as an exemplary case study[1], conversely, however, *McOndo*'s (initial) negative reception, anthological genre, and "disbandment", represent an *a fortiori* case study for the further elucidation of the complex structure of Latin American literary space as described in the Casanovian sense. As was advanced in Chapter 5, the editors' apparent curating of a "McOndo generation" created a series of misreadings in the critical reception and production of the anthology. Irrespective of their caveat, their identification of a generational birth range, common literary problems and collective responses, as well as the grouping of these writers under a new cultural metaphor (McOndo), all suggested a generational pretence. This contradiction was evident, as much, in the anthology itself, as in the waves of critical reception, the first of which emphasised the generational tone, and subsequent ones which seemed to question this original thesis' validity altogether with a greater awareness of the distancing of its participants. Nevertheless, just when *McOndo* as a generational statement seemed to be diminishing, the anthology has been vindicated in a number of ways leading to its canonisation, the process and factors of which will be explored in this chapter.

There are a number of factors that can considered. One has already been detailed to some extent in the previous chapter: the vindication of the editorial selection of authors in *McOndo*, owing to the successful individual writing careers of many of the participants. Added to this are others, including: the recognition of the *McOndo* writers by their intergenerational literary peers, by the Boom generation, and by the subsequent generation; the canonisation of *McOndo* through the critical corpus which has generated around it; and lastly, through other anthologies whose references to *McOndo* for their own definition have continued to canonise the anthology. While many other factors could be considered as contributing to *McOndo*'s canonisation, these are among the most paradigmatic.

[1] As much seen in critics such as Moretti's (2000a) elevation of the novel as a preeminent case study, or for example, Gesine Müller (2018) who has affirmed Gabriel García Márquez's *Cien años de soledad* unquestionably represents 'a model case for tracing canonization processes' (224), and while she traces the texts' South to South reception (in India, China and The Arabic World), she nevertheless appears to reaffirms the centrality of the novel in world literature analyses.

8.1.1 *McOndo* and its peers

Contrary to the critiques and negative reception which it originally received, *McOndo* has been granted credibility, and with that canonical credit, via the isolated literary responses to the Boom and Postboom across the Latin American literary field, which, once focalised and unified (or monopolised) by *McOndo*, have been capable of confirming its canonicity. All of these isolated responses, as Jorge Volpi (2011) put it, highlighted 'a profound malaise in the region'[2], and are defended by Edmundo Paz Soldán (2009) as a collective response to a cultural incongruence between what was projected as authentically Latin American in culture, and literature, and the everyday realities in the region:

> Macondo is a recognisable allegory and at the same time more and more distant: for the new generations of young people in Latin America, saturated by Internet, cinema and television, it is hard to recognise it as their world, and the writers of the new generations distance themselves from it, sometimes elegantly, other times in visceral, rupturist, and parricidal ways[3] (266).

These responses—which were at times collective and other times individual—were only visible at the national level for quite some time, however, with the generational spotlight which *McOndo* (and other movements such as the Crack) fixed, these national interventions can be seen to be cannibalised into a regional discourse in close relation to the ideas made in the prologue as well as aesthetic trends (such as the rejection of magical realism). As these writers inherited a context in which the international circulation and success of Latin American writers was not only structurally limited due to the balkanisation of the region, but was editorially mediated by the narrow horizon of expectations of the prevailing cultural identitary discourses outside of Latin America, this experience gives greater credibility to the anecdote at the beginning of the *McOndo* prologue, not as an isolated example of editorial ignorance, but as exemplary of the struggle that emergent writers in this literary period confronted. *McOndo*, in this way, functions as a catalyst for the historicising of this literary period and a recent generation of writers, perhaps seen most patently in the mistaken general appellation of a "McOndo generation", when, as has been shown, not all writers (even those within the anthology) agreed with all that this signified.

The Mexican writers Ricardo Chávez Castañeda, Jorge Volpi, Eloy Urroz, Pedro Ángel Palou, and Ignacio Padilla put forward the Crack Manifesto at a press conference in July of 1996 to launch their six recently published novels. Alongside *McOndo*, the Crack manifesto

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[2] '[U]n profundo malestar en la región' (Volpi 2011).

[3] 'Macondo es una alegoría reconocible y al mismo tiempo cada vez más distante a las nuevas generaciones de jóvenes en América Latina, saturadas de Internet y cine y televisión, les cuesta reconocerlo como su mundo, y los escritores de las nuevas generaciones se distancian de él, a veces de manera elegante, otras de forma visceral, rupturista, parricida' (Paz Soldán 2009, 266).

represented a similar yet distinct generational reaction symptomatic of what Volpi and Paz Soldán highlighted above. The differences between the Crack writers and the *McOndo* proposal are well understood, and include: the location of enunciation (Mexico and Santiago/Barcelona); the projected reception (Crack being national and *McOndo* Latin American); the genre of the proposals (novels versus short stories); aesthetic differences (*McOndo*'s aesthetic openness to popular culture and Crack's valorisation of the canon); and their perspective on the role of the author (*McOndo*'s vision of the writer as pop cultural creator and the Crack's aspirations to being *letrados*[4]). They nevertheless share some common proposals such as the rupture with the Postboom and *macondismo*, a questioning of magical realism (Regalado López 2014, 434-437), and the rejection of the political commitment of literature. In the manifesto, Ignacio Padilla made these oft-cited remarks in defining the group's aesthetic and political position-taking:

> [t]here is, instead, a simple reaction against exhaustion; weariness that the great Latin American literature and the dubious Magical Realism have been converted, for our literature, into tragic-magichism; weariness of the patriotic speeches which for a long time have made us believe that Rivapalacio wrote better than his contemporary Poe, as if proximity and quality were one and the same thing; weariness of writing poorly in order to be read more, but not better; weariness of the *engagé*; weariness of the letters that circle like flies over their own corpses[5] (Padilla in Chávez Castañeda et. al 2017, 26).

Padilla's emphasis on the 'weariness' provoked by the success of magical realism and its bestsellerisation during the Postboom, the influence of the national pole, and the call to politically committed literature, are all critiques which the Crack manifesto shares with *McOndo*. The simultaneous appearance of these two literary polemics, *McOndo* in March of 1996 and Crack in July of the same year, (in time) gave credit to each other's proposals, in that they were not merely a few disgruntled and opportunistic writers trying to enter the space of works for their own interests, but rather, represented a sentiment shared with a large number of writers from across Latin American literary space, and which these polemics visiblised.

[4] The autonomous literary ideas of a *letrado* are captured precisely in the so-called 'Postmanifiesto del Crack (1996-2016)' in which Pedro Ángel Palou makes clear his opinion of literature as 'inutensilios', '[y] los llamo así—como el poeta portugués llamaba a los poemas—pues a pesar de sus incalculables beneficios, el arte de la novela no debe buscar, a pesar de todo, otro fin que el de su propio arte. Como decía Lawrence: la moral, la metafísica del escritor, debe supeditarse a la obra de arte, debe supeditarse a su forma, y nunca al revés a riesgo de terminar escribiendo un panfleto con rostro de novela' (in Chávez Castañeda et al. 2017, 65).

[5] 'Ahí hay más bien una mera reacción contra el agotamiento; cansancio de que la gran literatura latinoamericana y el dudoso realismo mágico se haya convertido, para nuestras letras, en magiquismo trágico; cansancio de los discursos patrioteros que por tanto tiempo nos han hecho creer que Rivapalacio escribía mejor que su contemporáneo Poe, como si proximidad y calidad fuesen una y la misma cosa; cansancio de escribir mal para que se lea más, que no mejor; cansancio de lo *engagé*; cansancio de las letras que vuelan en círculos como moscas sobre sus propios cadáveres' (Padilla in Chávez Castañeda et. al 2017, 26).

Despite fundamental aesthetic differences, the Crack authors, such as Ignacio Padilla and Pedro Ángel Palou, have spoken of the value of both movements and their common and necessary struggle:

> There are those who think that we invented all of this to draw publicity, but we aren't that intelligent. Others think they have understood us as deciding to liberate ourselves from the heavy shadow of our illustrious grandfathers of the Boom, but we are not that dumb. The *McOndo* anthology, the Crack manifesto, and everything that has happened recently with the new Latin American novel thanks to or perhaps in spite of Crack and *McOndo*, were natural, necessary, and spontaneous phenomena which have surpassed us, and it's for that reason that they continue to be valid[6] (Padilla 2004, 137).

> I think that *McOndo* and Crack more than influence were—and not because they asked for it—a diagnosis of a situation which was obvious not only in Mexico, but in many countries in Latin America[7] (Palou in Rivera Garza et al. 2018, 255).

Further to these appraisals of *McOndo* by these Crack authors, Jorge Volpi has contributed the most to discourses surrounding the *McOndo* anthology and the Crack manifesto. In particular, he has added further weight to their collective criticism of magical realism in the micro-story 'El profeta de América Latina'[8] (The Prophet of Latin America) (2008), as well as exonerating *McOndo* and Crack from the misguided nationalist critiques which both proposals received in his essay 'El fin de la narrativa latinoamericana'[9] (2004). However, it is with the benefit of time, that Volpi (2009) has provided some valuable reflections on how both of these texts shared the task of "demolishing" long-held interpretations of the region and its literature which have benefitted Spanish letters in so far as writers now experience greater literary autonomy:

> between the first edition of *Cien años de soledad*, in 1967, and the appearance of the *McOndo* anthology and the ‹‹Manifiesto Crack››, in 1996, there are almost 30 years: the period of incubation, apogee and decadence of Magical Realism© understood as the principal writing model of Latin America [...]. As is natural in an epidemic cycle, during the following decades Latin American writers sought to distance themselves as much as possible from the magic and

[6] Padilla compared the two phenomena in his essay entitled '*McOndo* y el *Crack*: dos experiencias grupales' given at the Encuentro de Sevilla summit in 2003: '[h]ay quienes piensan aún que nos inventamos todo esto para acarrearnos publicidad, pero no somos tan listos. Otros creen haber entendido que decidimos liberarnos de la pesada sombra de nuestros ilustres abuelos del *boom*, pero no somos tan tontos. La antología de *McOndo*, el manifiesto del *crack*, y todo cuanto ha ocurrido recientemente con la nueva novela latinoamericana gracias o a pesar del *crack* y de *McOndo*, fueron fenómenos naturales, necesarios y espontáneos que nos sobrepasaron, y es por eso que siguen siendo válidos' (Padilla 2004, 137).

[7] Pedro Ángel Palou stated in a recent interview to commemorate the 20 years since the *McOndo* anthology and the Crack manifesto: '[y]o pienso que *McOndo* y el Crack más que influir fueron—y no porque lo hayan pedido—un diagnóstico de una situación que estaba de alguna manera patente no sólo en México, sino en muchos países de América Latina' (Palou in Rivera Garza et al. 2018, 255).

[8] In 'El profeta de América Latina', Volpi (2008) posits the rediscovery in the 4th millennium of a single copy of Gabriel García Márquez's *Cien años de soledad* in the post-apocalyptic ruins of the Harvard University library, which in this distant future is interpreted as a sacred text said to have been written by the last prophet and "inventor" of Latin America and the cult of the Buendía, a religion which the narrator of the story parallels in prolificacy to the spread of Islam.

[9] In 'El fin de la narrativa latinoamericana', Volpi (2004) cites at length and responds to a fictitious article ('Fifty years of Hispanic literature 2005-2055: an impossible canon' by the professor of Hispanic literature Lucius J. Berry) which predicts the death of Latin American literature—and by extension the disappearance of Latin American studies departments—due to the process of post-national narratives inaugurated by both *McOndo* and Crack in 1996.

> the supernatural, convinced that any fantastical temptation might be observed through the opaque prism of Magical Realism©.
>
> It can be said that in these days the demolition work begun by *macondos*, *cracks* and other writers has finally finished taking shape: in Latin America, Spain and including other countries nobody thinks any longer that Magical Realism© is the only form of expression used by the narrators of the region, nor that this is a direct transposition of the insane everyday life of our countries[10] (203).

McOndo, as such, has been framed by some of the most prominent writers of the Crack Manifesto as contributing to the same end: the freeing up of literary production from the very real impacts on literary creativity and autonomy which magical realism had fashioned through its monopoly on horizons of expectation.

In Colombia the writers of the so-called 'Generación Mutante' did not represent a literary collective in the sense of the Crack writers, instead, critics such as Orlando Mejía Rivera identified them as an aesthetically coherent collective. Some of the features of this group's literary aesthetic, which Mejía Rivera identified in his breakthrough study *La generación mutante. nuevos narradores colombianos* (2001), share formal and thematic aspects with both the Crack and *McOndo* proposals: a remythologisation of the past; the hybridisation of popular culture and the urban; ideological scepticism and critical irony; rejection of national or regional themes; perspective on the author not as 'grand' but as palimpsest (in the Borgesian sense); and a literature mediated by the onset of digital technologies. Further to this aesthetic likeness, Gamboa (2011) has contributed to highlighting the call to attention which *McOndo*, Crack, and the broader generation of writers collectively raised in European, and particularly Spanish publishing, by not yielding to the tastes of those audiences nor their literary stereotypes, and by so doing, eventually transforming their understanding of Latin America[11].

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[10] 'Por otro lado, entre la primera edición de *Cien años de soledad*, en 1967, y la aparición de la antología *MacOndo* [sic] y del ‹‹Manifiesto del *Crack*››, en 1996, median casi treinta años: el período de incubación, apogeo y decadencia del realismo mágico© entendido como modelo preponderante de escritura en América Latina [...]. Como es natural en cualquier ciclo epidémico, durante las décadas siguientes los escritores latinoamericanos buscaron alejarse lo más posible de la magia y lo sobrenatural, convencidos de que cualquier tentación fantástica sería observada bajo el opaco prisma del realismo mágico©.

Puede decirse que en nuestros días la obra de demolición emprendida por *macondos*, *cracks* y otros escritores al fin ha terminado de fraguarse: en América Latina, España e incluso otros países ya nadie piensa que el realismo mágico© sea la única forma de expresión de los narradores de la zona, ni que éste sea una transposición directa de la enloquecida vida cotidiana de nuestros países' (Volpi 2009, 203).

[11] In his article 'De los noventa para acá' for *El País*, Santiago Gamboa discusses the Crack manifesto, *McOndo* along with other anthologies of his Latin American generation such as *Líneas aéreas* and *Bogotá39* to highlight how writers of his generation did not conform to European and Spanish tastes and stereotypes but contributed to correcting those erroneous horizons of expectation: '[a] pesar de que en los noventa aún se percibía como necesaria la "bendición" editorial europea—sobre todo española—, no se escribía para ellos y sus estereotipos. Si con el tiempo fueron leídos en Europa fue porque las editoriales europeas y sus lectores cambiaron, comprendieron que América Latina había cambiado' (Gamboa 2011).

As was briefly noted in the previous chapter, before Naief Yehya's participation in *McOndo*, Yehya and Fadanelli founded the magazine *Moho* (Spanish for mould) in the 1980s. During this period, Yehya (2018) describes as much a sentiment of disenchantment with the Boom as with the recent literature of La Onda, the latter, which they deemed to have become more of a mercantilist publishing label over any persuasive aesthetic movement. It was during this time that they published 'La literatura a la que estamos condenados' (Fadanelli and Yehya 1989a), a self-proclaimed act of literary terrorism, in which they read novels from the 1970s onwards to determine the existence of a contemporary Mexican literature. The result of their unforgiving survey led to the manifesto 'Moho, principios básicos' (Mould, basic principles) (Fadanelli and Yehya 1989b) in which they bemoaned the state of Postboom Mexican letters, rejected the followers of García Márquez's magical realism, as well as the followers of Cortázar, who they viewed as producing a pretentious pseudo-intellectual literature. Their conclusion, quite controversially, was that it was impossible to demonstrate the existence of a contemporary Mexican literature. This controversy, for better or for worse, nevertheless, permitted their entry into Mexican literary space (as contemporary Mexican writers) when Grijalbo published both of their first works, an irony which does not escape Naief Yehya (2015, personal interview). As such, beyond the clear common position-taking as anti-magical realists and the attempt to transcend the influence of the Boom (rather than revive it in the sense of Crack), Yehya has acknowledge that *Moho* was attempting to identify and map the existence of a contemporary narrative at the Mexican national level, something which *McOndo* later attempted at a Latin American level[12] (Yehya 2018, 44).

By contrast, in a less incorporated fashion several, similar proposals formed in the Southern Cone in different national spaces during this time, which further lend credibility to the *McOndo* anthology's claims made at the regional level. In Argentina, Juan Forn's (1999) prologue to *Buenos Aires* had already highlighted a number of similar issues including: the ignorance of Spanish publishing in regard to Spanish-American literature; the balkanisation of Latin American literary fields; and, in a similar vein to *McOndo*, the prejudicial expectation by foreign readership that Latin American literature represent 'South American politicised tropicalia' (‹‹tropicalia politizada sudaca››) (9). In neighbouring Uruguay, Gustavo Escanlar had waged his own confrontation with the leading Uruguayan figure of the Boom, Mario

[12] '*McOndo* no trataba de ofrecer una propuesta generacional ni estilística ni era un manifiesto ni esbozaba la idea de un grupo literario. Hasta la fecha sigo sin conocer a varios de los autores. En cambio se ofrecía como una prueba irrefutable de que la literatura del sur del continente existía, es decir que habían hecho a nivel continental lo que Fadanelli y yo intentamos en "La literatura a la que estamos condenados" pero sin la mala leche' (Yehya 2018, 44).

Benedetti. Not only did Escanlar maintain an ongoing feud with this potent figure, he also criticised—as was noted in the previous chapter—the so-called "Humungous beast called Official-Traditional-Leftist-Culture"[13], which Escanlar later lamented had lasted well into the 21st Century as a dominant cultural discourse (2008b). Even in Chile, Jamie Collyer had published a number of articles[14] calling for his generation of Chilean writers to begin addressing international audiences in all of the Spanish linguistic subspace, instead of solely a national audience. Leonardo Valencia, as was also mentioned in the previous chapter, contributed to discourses with his essays 'El síndrome de Falcón' and '¿Cuánta patria necesita un novelista?', both presented first at conferences in Ecuador and later published in Spain. And as was discussed in some of the previous chapters, the anthology *Cuentos con walkman* (1993) had also already put forward a wide sampling of young voices similarly interested in a so-called 'virtual realism'[15] over any magical realism which Fuguet and Gómez both rejected here and in *McOndo*.

In Central America and the Caribbean, writers such as Carlos Cortés and Mayra Santos Febres also joined voices with the chorus of diagnoses and position-takings evident in their generation across Latin American literary space, and which bear important similarities with those proposed in *McOndo*. In an oft-cited essay provocatively titled 'La literatura latinoamericana (ya) no existe' [Latin American literature does not exist (anymore)], Carlos Cortés (1999) argues that the supra-Latin American narrative (or, the Boom) introduced and fixed in global reception a unified yet reductive understanding of '*la* literatura latinoamericana' (*the* Latin American literature), obfuscating the plurality of '*las* literaturas latinomaricanas' (Latin American literature*s*)[16] (60). Cortés, similarly to the editors in the *McOndo* prologue, highlights the enduring debate regarding Latin America's identity and, in particular, points to the predominance of *macondismo*—not his wording—in how since the Cuban revolution and through the literature of the Boom Latin American became a 'reading effect' ('efecto de

[13] 'La mastodóntica bestia llamada Cultura-Oficial-Tradicional-De-Izquierda' (Escanlar 2008b, 11).

[14] Collyer's first provocation was the article 'Casus belli: todo el poder para nosotros' (1992a), followed up shortly after the polemic was generated by 'El guante sobre la mesa' (1992b).

[15] 'Lo único claro de esta supuesta "nueva generación" es que viene después de las otras. Después del golpe, de la caída. Son post-todo: post-moderno, post-*yuppie*, post-comunismo, post-*babyboom*, post-capa de ozono. Aquí no hay realismo mágico; hay realismo virtual' (Fuguet and Gómez 1993, 14).

[16] 'El *boom* creó ‹‹la›› literatura latinoamericana en el mundo, en singular, pero borró ‹‹las›› literaturas latinoamericanas, en plural, y fijó una tradición canónica de cómo debe leerse, entenderse e interpretarse lo latinoamericano. Entre 1960 y 1990, esta narrativa marcó un paradigma que sigue parcialmente vigente. Un paradigma literario, un hito sociocultural y una ideología de la literatura' (Cortés 1999, 60). It is in this singular and unified sense that Cortés proclaims the end of Latin American literature, however this does not imply the end of Latin American literature*s*, which he argues continue to this day in an increasingly pluralistic sense and which 'ponen en crisis cualquier concepto integrador, jerárquico, polifónico, polisémico o totalizante' (Cortés 1999, 61).

lectura'): a powerful cohesive principle appropriated both within and beyond the region (1999, 59). Added to this significant point of convergence which the *McOndo* editors had already critiqued in their prologue, is Cortés' (1999) added affirmation of the balkanisation of Latin American literary space (62), the questioning and renunciation of narrative commitment to Latin America's collective identitary debate in this contemporary literature (62), and a recognition of the tropicalised foreign literary tastes and horizon of expectations arising from the supra-Latin American narratives (64).

In what reads as a personal memoir and obituary for magical realism, in 2005 Mayra Santos Febres had already assumed a collective voice ('nosotros') when she spoke of the generational response of the *nuevos narradores latinoamericanos* in her article 'Mc Condo [sic] o la muerte del realismo mágico' (Mc Condo, or the death of magical realism) (2011). In her brief overview of the so-called new Latin American narrative, Santos Febres (2011) appropriates the metaphor of McOndo to highlight three main narrative strategies common to her generation of writers. Firstly, she highlights a disconnect between the enthusiasm of the rest of the literary world with magical realism (she cites Salman Rushdie, Toni Morrison, and Ben Okri), and the supersession of this style in Latin America. In a sense, she amplifies the reach of the McOndo "project" using it as a label for this generational response: '[i]n that way, in looking to escape from Macondo, we found Mc Condo'[17] (Santos Febres 2011, 187). She goes further in delineating this collective response by identifying a distancing from literary *costumbrismo*, in the more traditional sense, or even committed *populismo* literature, forms whose end were extra-literary in nature, in how they contributed to Latin America's literary differentiation or social causes, a demand which Santos Febres (2011) also argues her generation have abandoned[18] (188). And finally, Santos Febres acknowledges a questioning (but not denying) of national identities[19], a dialectic between the nation and the region (or world) which is also apparent in *McOndo* through the representations of local linguistic variation in the stories, the inclusion of Iberian Spanish contributors, and the apparent incongruence between the Latin Americanist emphasis of the prologue and the division of the anthology along national lines, all discussed in the previous chapters. These narrative features,

[17] 'Mientras deudos internacionales seguían hablando del pensamiento de "lo real maravilloso" [she cites Rushdie, Morrison, and Okri], nosotros ya experimentábamos con otras fórmulas narrativas que buscaban ir más allá del boom y del realismo mágico. Así, buscando escapar de Macondo, hemos dado con Mc Condo' (Santos Febres 2011, 187).

[18] '[H]emos abandonado el tema de la identidad diferencial, es decir, de la búsqueda de características que nos hacen distintos' (Santos Febres 2011, 188).

[19] '[N]uestras narrativas montan y desmontan las identidades nacionales. Las deterritorializan, deslenguan, las sitúan en otras partes, pero no las niegan, no pueden negarlas' (Santos Febres 2011, 188).

that are similarly presented in the *McOndo* prologue, are framed, rightly or wrongly, by Santos Febres as a generational response, contributing to the vindication of the anthology's once polemical claims through a broadening of who is considered to partake in them. These ideas she confirmed also in my interview with her (2019), in which she highlighted the role of a number of the *McOndo* and Crack authors in the pluralising and autonomising of Latin American letters[20].

The volume of essays collected in *Palabra de América* (Seix Barral, 2004), presented on the occasion of the I Encuentro de Autores Latinoamericanos[21] (2003), has been considered one of the major turning points in the recognition, in an open sense, of *McOndo* as well as Crack as important currents in Latin American literature[22] (Alvarado Ruiz 2016, 78). In his paper presented at the congress, Fernando Iwasaki (2004) criticised the lack of Spanish literary reception in recent years, such that the newest Spanish-American writers were largely unknown to readers whose interests included mostly magical realist and politically committed literature[23] (117). Being a Japanese Peruvian settled in Spain, Iwasaki has had to deal with more than his share of stereotyping[24], and, as such—also in a similar fashion to the *McOndo* prologue—, he

[20] 'El proyecto de nuestra generación ha sido el de abrir la cosmovisión de lo que se pensaba que era un escritor latinoamericano y de los temas que debía tratar. Estoy absolutamente de acuerdo con que los proyectos literarios no tienen que ser ideológicos. Eso sí, mi intención cuando escribo es insertarme y fortalecer la cultura de los diálogos propios de las sociedades abiertas. Yo tengo mis ideas como persona civil, pero literariamente no me da la gana de que la literatura se tenga que declarar de izquierda para que sea respetada. La izquierda también ha metido la pata y ha perpetrado mucha censura. Me interesa que la literatura explore sus límites por donde el escritor quiera explorarlos.

Tampoco me da la gana de que la literatura latinoamericana sea exclusivamente configurada por el proyecto criollo, es decir, por "representantes de la alta cultura criolla y patriarcal". Los escritores del *boom*, tanto en poesía como en novela, eran todos hombres blancos. Había escritoras latinoamericanas, pero operaban en una esfera separada. Y toda esta gente que yo te menciono—Paz Soldán, Sergio Gómez, Alberto Fuguet, Iwasaki, Volpi, Rosa Beltrán, Nettel, Rita Indiana—y yo estamos bien comprometidos en incluir, en el mismo nivel a escritores y a escritoras, a negros, criollos, garífunas, nativoamericanos de todas las etnias, a gente de la comunidad LGBT, como tú lo has visto en las antologías. Me parece que, de esta manera, el proyecto generacional ha sido bien exitoso porque se ha multiplicado el rostro de lo que se conoce como la literatura latinoamericana' (Santos Febres 2019).

[21] Aside from Roberto Bolaño and Guillermo Cabrera Infante, the writers from this generation present at the congress included: Fernando Iwasaki, Rodrigo Fresán, Ignacio Padilla, Mario Mendoza, Santiago Gamboa, Jorge Franco, Iván Thays, Edmundo Paz Soldán, Gonzalo Garcés, Jorge Volpi and Cristina Rivera Garza.

[22] An additional turning point is however also the awarding of the Premio Biblioteca Breve to Jorge Volpi's novel *En busca de Klingsor* in 1999, the year the award was reinstated after a long pause since 1972.

[23] Iwasaki argues that the Boom fixated Spanish reading interests in Latin America, but fixed them in particular on certain recurring themes: '[e]n cualquier caso, el ‹‹boom›› latinoamericano le proporcionó al gran público español las pautas para leer una literatura que transcurría en lugares exóticos, gobernados por dictadores extravagantes y donde la miseria más abyecta consentía verdaderos agujeros negros en la realidad. Por eso la literatura latinoamericana atrae esencialmente a dos tipos de lectores: a los que buscan realismo mágico y a quienes prefieren una literatura con credenciales revolucionarias' (Iwasaki 2004, 117).

[24] 'Ser un escritor peruano de apellido japonés y vivir en Sevilla, me ha permitido descubrir horrorizado que el personal me relaciona antes con Fujimori que con Ribeyro, malentendido que sólo he podido atajar presentándome como nipón' (Iwasaki 2004, 122)

critiques the academy and literary criticism in general for its narrow understanding of what constitutes Latin American literature:

> not only does the average Spanish reader have prejudices or preconceived ideas about Spanish-American literature, [...] many critics and university academics define ‹‹Latin Americanness›› based on national identity, social conflict, the indigenous threat or the threatened ecosystem, and when they don't find said ingredients in a Mexican, Chilean, or Argentinian novel, they deny immediately its Spanish-American nature[25] (Iwasaki 2004, 119).

Also in this important volume, the Colombian author Jorge Franco (2004) speaks of the kind of transformation of the Latin American author in respects to their time and their engagement (or non-engagement) with politics and social commitments through their literature, echoing the tendency, highlighted in *McOndo*, of personal stories free of political discourse over communal or total stories with overt extra-literary pretences[26] (39-40).

As such, the literary balkanisation that many of the writers of this generation attest to is paralleled in many ways by the discursive balkanisation of many of the shared propositions of this generation, which were met with equal resistance in many of their local national territories, and could only be brought together with the increased literary visibility which the Crack manifesto and *McOndo* anthology attracted at a regional level. Owing to this balkanisation, the full measure and scale of the rejection of magical realism and Postboom lightness and bestsellerism, the rejection of the influence of the national pole and desire for international transcendence, the rejection of explicit political commitment through literature, which appear to be common to many writers of this generation, would not be known long after *McOndo*. *McOndo*, therefore, is not only vindicated by the existence of these metadiscursive generational commonalities, but in the anthology's reception, it is possible to see how it was that *McOndo*, to a certain extent, cannibalised these other discussions generating a regional statement, this being the reason for the use of the appellative "McOndo generation".

Although *McOndo* was never a popularly recognised literary movement in reading publics of the United States, the anthology and its rhetoric were afforded a subtle popular platform and affirmation—long after its journalistic peak—by way of the Latino author Junot

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[25] '[N]o sólo el lector español de a pie tiene prejuicios o ideas preconcebidas sobre la literatura hispanoamericana, [...] mucho críticos y especialistas universitarios definen lo ‹‹latinoamericano›› en función de la identidad nacional, del conflicto social, de la némesis indígena o de los ecosistemas amenazados, y cuando no encuentran dichos ingredientes en una novela mexicana, chilena o argentina, le niegan fulminantes su naturaleza hispanoamericana' (Iwasaki 2004, 119).

[26] '[U]na de las razones más decisivas para que la literatura de hoy haya tomado rumbos diferentes: la desaparición de la utopía. Con ella se fueron los sueños, los ideales políticos y sociales, los compromisos que no sean estrictamente literario o estético, a pesar de que en lo más íntimo seguimos soñando con un mundo mejor y una sociedad más justa [...] Y si bien puede argumentarse que una buena porción de nuestra literatura actual se basa o toca a fondo los problemas sociales que nos agobian, no se ve en estos textos otra intención que la de contar nuestra realidad, sin asumir posición alguna, de la misma manera que se cuentan una historia de amor, la historia de un crimen, o la historia de una casa' (J. Franco 2004, 39-40).

Díaz's novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2009). In Diaz's enormously successful Pulitzer Prize winning novel, the narrator Yunior appropriates the terms Macondo and McOndo to explain the fall from usage of an old Dominican counterspell called *Zafa*: '[i]t used to be more popular in the old days, bigger, so to speak, in Macondo than in McOndo. There are people, though, like my tío Miguel in the Bronx who still zafa everything. He's old-school like that' (2009, 7). While this reference would altogether escape the average reader due to the largely critical and academic sphere in which the McOndo discourse has existed, it nevertheless functions as a gesture to the cultural debate made visible by the *McOndo* anthology and presented in the binary of the Macondo and McOndo cultural metaphors. To add to this reference, Junot Díaz admitted that when writing his prized novel, he had in mind the creation of a synthesis between these two reductive and yet relevant sides of the Latin American identity binary, trying to put García Márquez's Macondo and Fuguet's McOndo on the same page[27]. This affirmation of McOndo, as much discursively as in the very style of the novel, which combined elements of the tropical exoticism and at times the fantastical with urban settings and pop cultural intertextuality, would lead critics such as Ignacio López-Calvo (2013) to associate Junot Díaz with 'the contemporary urban world of Alberto Fuguet's and the *McOndo* groups' prose' (410).

These numerous interventions by the authors of this generation in attempting to define their own specificity, is the kind of metadiscourse which De Rosso has explained is a sign of the self-consciousness of the literary field[28] (2014, 75). This self-consciousness would trace the character of this generation, like *McOndo* had, in largely negative terms, that is, in what it is not rather than an affirmative position regarding what it is. This is as much evident in the continued references to the Boom as well as this generation's numerous rejections of established traditions, from the political duty of the author to national or regional literary differentiation. However, these metadiscourses and polemics nevertheless highlighted a necessary call to attention, as Becerra (2018) has argued: 'the defence and vindication that their novels and stories be read starting from a "different" horizon of expectation, distinct from the paradigms which defined the great narratives of the past, whose works continued to amass a

[27] 'So this book was an attempt to put Macondo and McOndo on the same page, in the same sentence, sort of to prove that you can't write the American experience, our American experience, by banning one set of passports in the process of privileging another' (Díaz 'Author Q&A').

[28] 'Esta expansión de los metadiscursos, esta atención de los contemporáneos a sus contemporáneos señala un desarrollo de la autoconsciencia del campo literario, pero también habla de un malestar, de una necesidad por definir algo que se percibe como nuevo, aunque no se lo pueda nombrar' (De Rosso 2014, 75).

notable cultural capital'[29] (61). This metadiscourse, which was generated out of the most polemic and visible moments of this generation's appearance—*McOndo* and Crack—, would be accompanied by parallel academic discussions evaluating these claims. So while Fornet (2005) may well claim that '[o]utside of these two points of interest is found almost all of recent literature'[30] (Fornet 2005), this acknowledgment does not deny, in my view, that there remain quite marked commonalities between numerous additional and isolated literary interventions.

Nevertheless, despite Jorge Fornet's affirmation, we must also consider the fundamental contribution of the academic criticism which surrounds *McOndo* which have similarly contributed to its canonisation. I refer here to the corpus of works which examine the anthology and its pronouncements, its writers, the stories and novels, the literary context in which it arises, among a number of other aspects. It is important to mention the contribution of a number of critics which have contributed to the development of this *McOndo* archive[31] many of which are cited in this work, along with my own work in this thesis (in a necessary act of critical self-awareness). Aside from these critics who deal with *McOndo* more closely, the very fact that *McOndo* and Crack become necessary reference points in critical works analysing this literary period, is also a sign of their importance in understanding contemporary Latin American literature more generally.

And yet, while it is undeniable that Alberto Fuguet, through his controversial persona and metadiscursive interventions, played an indispensable role in *McOndo*'s process of canonisation, there is also an extent to which his mismanagement of academic relations hindered its reception and even greater (conceivable) canonisation. In the wake of the *McOndo* polemic, both locally but also within Latinamericanist critical circles (through which *McOndo* mostly seemed to circulate), Fuguet appears to have experienced a kind of critically repellent

[29] '[L]a defensa y reivindicación de que sus novelas y cuentos fueran leídos a partir de "otro" horizonte de expectativas, ajeno a los paradigmas que definieron la gran narrativa del pasado, cuyas obras seguían atesorando un capital simbólico notable' (Becerra 2018, 61).

[30] 'Pero desde luego, lo demás no es silencio. Fuera de esos dos focos de atención se halla casi toda la literatura actual' (Fornet 2005, 14).

[31] A long but not exhaustive list of critics who have worked and written on *McOndo* include: Ana María Amar Sánchez, Ramón Alvarado Ruiz, Eduardo Becerra, Lígia Bezerra, Sarah Booker, Pablo Brescia, Henri Billard, J. Andrew Brown, Juan E. De Castro, Adélaïde de Chatellus, Verónica Cortínez, Ezequiel de Rosso, Wilfrido H. Corral, Ricardo Cuadros (Ricardo Gutiérrez Mouat), Rosa María Diez Cobo, Oswaldo Estrada, Jorge Fornet, Ana Gallego Cuiñas, Gustavo Guerrero, Christian Gundermann, Rafael Gutiérrez Giraldo, Kelly Hargrave and Georgia Smith Seminet, Janet Hendrickson, Ricardo Hernández Delval, Antoinette Hertel, Emilse Hidalgo, Ignacio López-Calvo, Rita de Maeseneer, Linda Maier, Jonatán Martín Gómez, Natalia Navarro-Albaladejo, Daniel Noemí, Francisca Noguerol, Rory O'Bryen, Raquel Olea, Diana Palaversich, Edmundo Paz Soldán, Burkhard Pohl, Catalina Quesada-Gómez, Tomás Regalado-López, Marcelo Rioseco, and in a necessary act of critical self-awareness, my own work including this thesis.

aura. This is particularly evident in the anecdote shared by Eduardo Becerra when preparing his anthology *Líneas aéreas*, and noted when discussing Fuguet's literary trajectory in section 7.1.2. This kind of attempted censure irrespective of Fuguet's rising media presence, narrative and discursive prominence, represents quite a forceful expression of critical gatekeeping which, while difficult to measure, is symptomatic of the strained relationship which Fuguet has maintained with the academy (particularly the U.S. one) since his early career.

The ways in which this frustrated relationship has affected *McOndo*'s trajectory is especially apparent when comparing the Crack movement's slightly healthier relationship with academia. While a factor in this is the ungrouped nature of the *McOndo* intervention compared to Crack, Alberto Fuguet's reputation produced in critical works and in the wake of the *McOndo* polemics, likely also had an impact. As has been noted, the I Encuentro de Autores Latinoamericanos in Seville was a turning point in the recognition of this generation, a summit which Fuguet (owing to his own habitual anxieties) decided not to attend:

> I was almost there at Seville. I wanted to go, see friends, escape the Santiago winter and be a few days shut away in a medieval building. I was invited in fact. All expenses paid. But in the end, I said no. And the reason was to avoid confronting Bolaño. He terrified me […] I said to myself: for what. Why go and be a victim of some unnecessary bullying[32] (Fuguet 2013, 303).

While this summit still included other participants in *McOndo* such as Rodrigo Fresán, Santiago Gamboa, and Edmundo Paz Soldán, Fuguet's absence was a considerable missed opportunity—and notable absence in the volume—to further ennoble *McOndo*[33]. Secondly, while Alberto Fuguet always resisted republishing *McOndo*—originally to suppress the critical backlash and now to foment an aura of exclusivity around it[34]—, the Crack group (in spite of local backlash) did republish their interventions through the book *Crack. Instrucciones de uso* (2004) in Mexico and in Spain with Grijalbo, and *Manifiesto Crack y posmanifiesto del Crack* (2017) with the University Press of La Universidad Veracruzana. Furthermore, the Crack movement has also had critical works exclusively dedicated to its interventions, further

[32] 'Yo casi llego a Sevilla. Quería ir, ver amigos, arrancarme del invierno santiaguino y estar unos días encerrado en un edificio medieval. De hecho, me invitaron. Todo pagado. Pero al final dije no. Y la razón fue tener que enfrentar a Bolaño. Me daba pánico […] Me dije: para qué. Para qué ir a ser víctima de un bullying innecesario' (Fuguet 2013, 303)

[33] Fortunately for Fuguet, Edmundo Paz Soldán's critical reading of his *Por favor, rebobinar* and Rodrigo Fresán's *Mantra* in his intervention highlighted the 'mass media saturation' ('saturación mediática') present in their novels and drawing attention to a central aspect of what could be considered the *McOndo* aesthetic, and further associating Paz Soldán's name with *McOndo* (Paz Soldán 2004c, 148-166), further consolidating his position as Sergio Gómez and here Fuguet's *McOndo* stand-in, as mentioned several times before.

[34] '¿Y por qué no lo publico de nuevo? Porque me parece sexy, me parece divertido. Al principio era para tratar de ocultarlo, y ahora parece que es como *cool*. O sea, no quiero publicarlo, no, punto' (Fuguet 2015, personal interview).

producing the canonisation of the manifesto, and its authors[35], while *McOndo* has yet to receive this kind of specific research attention, sharing the limelight mostly with other contemporary movements or its Crack cousins: such as in Nemrava and De Rosso (2014), or *McCrack* by Brescia and Estrada (2018). As such, by comparing these trajectories, *McOndo*'s consecration, while remarkable, was to a certain extent hindered by Alberto Fuguet's reputation and his attitude toward the academy, but also by missed opportunities which have been demonstrated as effective strategies in the canonisation of, for example, the Crack movement.

8.2.1 The anthologisation of the so-called "McOndo generation"

Notwithstanding the above recognition that *McOndo*'s reception in the academy has been less positive than its Crack cousins', it is evident that there has been a subsequent anthologisation of the writers of this generation as well as a dependence on the groundwork laid by *McOndo*, recognitions that further transform it into a necessary reference point in terms of the selected authors, the generational birthdates, the themes identified, and some of the polemical discourses it instigated. More specifically, the ever more numerous anthological trend of this generation has been marked by a gradual anthologisation of the *McOndo* authors, and a McOndisation of the discourses presented in these anthologies. Three anthologies warrant particular attention in this regard: *Líneas aéreas* (1999), *Se habla español: voces latinas en USA* (2000), and *Les bonnes nouvelles de l'Amérique latine: Anthologie de la nouvelle latinoaméricaine contemporaine* (2010).

The first continues the introduction of this generation of authors into Spanish literary space, the second into United States literary space, and the third into French literary space. These three spaces—Spanish, American, and French—could be described as a *triumvirate of international reception* for Spanish-American authors, or in other words, indispensable spaces of circulation and recognition for the internationalisation and consecration of their works, as much for the Latin American literature-world as the literature-world more broadly. The significance of these spaces is well studied; Spain, for its ability to internationalise circulation across Spanish-American nations, but also as an entry point into European circulation through translation. France, for Paris' longstanding position as capital of capitals of world literary space and a cultural field with significant literary influence on additional European spaces and languages. And the United States, as the increasingly significant point of academic critical

[35] Namely *La "nueva narrativa" en los años noventa: el manifiesto crack en la teoría-crítica latinoamericana* (Sabo 2015) and recently *Historia personal del Crack: entrevistas críticas* (Regalado-López 2018).

reception, a principle centre for dominant the Anglophone linguistic subspace, and with a growing *illusio* as the new centre of world literary space.

8.2.2 Flying into Spain (again)

Líneas aéreas (1999) is the outcome of the I Congreso de Nuevos Narradores Hispanos celebrated at La Casa de América in Madrid[36] in 1998 and the work of the recently established independent Spanish publisher Lengua de Trapo (founded in 1995). Much like an earlier anthology by the same publisher, *Páginas amarillas* (1997), which brought together 38 Spanish authors, *Líneas aéreas* was similarly conceived as a guide (hence the reference to the yellow pages of the first anthology) to the new Spanish-American fiction. This congress and its associated anthology would be considered with posterity as a moment of generational encounter and self-awareness: Jorge Volpi (2009) has even suggested it as the 'official birth of the new generation of Latin American writers'[37] (152). As such, while the Congreso de Intelectuales of 1962 represented a moment of generational self-consciousness for the writers of the Boom, this trend appears to be replicated for this generation in the I Congreso de Nuevos Narradores Hispanos[38].

Líneas aéreas has a different positioning in the literary field to *McOndo*, however, it does not avoid paying homage to this anthology in its very make-up, selection, and prologue. It is similarly organised along national lines, but further expands the panorama provided by *McOndo* by taking as one of its principal prerogatives the thorough representative sampling of voices from *every* Spanish-American nation (Becerra 2016, personal interview): with 72 authors from across the region including the Caribbean and even the United States. While the editors of *McOndo* had relied almost entirely on letters, phone calls, and fax, and with a field

[36] Ramón Alvarado Ruiz has noted an interesting comparison between one of the symbolic focal points and institutions of the Boom and Latin American letters, namely Casa de las Américas in La Habana, and how this literary generation is in many senses launched from a similar institute Casa de América, however this time with an increasing association with Spanish writers (Alvarado Ruiz 2016).

[37] This is confirmed as much by critics such as Ramón Alvarado Ruiz (2016), Gustavo Guerrero and Fernando Iwasaki (2010), Eduardo Becerra (2016, personal interview), as well as participants in the congresses such as Mayra Santos Febres (2016, personal interview) and Jorge Volpi (2009): 'Para mí, el nacimiento oficial de la nueva generación de escritores latinoamericanos—pomposa y burda manera de enunciarlo, pero así suele figurar en los programas—ocurrió en Madrid, en 1999 [sic], en el congreso organizado por la editorial Lengua de Trapo y la Casa de América de Madrid; después de aquel encuentro un tanto improvisado y felizmente turbulento, se reprodujeron decenas de citas similares' (152).

[38] This trend has appeared to continue with the summit and subsequent anthology *Bogotá39* in 2007, instrumental in the linking and promotion of writers of a new generation born during the 1970s: Alejandro Zambra, Andrés Neuman, Carlos Wynter Melo, Gabriela Alemán, Daniel Alarcón, Eduardo Halfón, Guadalupe Nettel, Juan Gabriel Vásquez, Rodrigo Blanco Calderón, Rodrigo Hasbún, Santiago Roncagliolo, Wendy Guerra, Junot Díaz and many more. Its sequel, some 10 years afterwards with *Bogotá39* 2017 suggests the establishment of a congress/anthological trend in the bringing together and promotion of the newest literary generations.

of writers almost completely unknown at the regional level, Becerra could depend on the groundwork of previous anthologies (*Buenos Aires*, *McOndo*, and *Las horas y las hordas*), as well as the Internet and e-mail, to find a greater sample of authors of this generation. The positioning of its editor within the academy—as literature professor at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, and at the time editor of the Spanish-American collection of Lengua de Trapo—, might also explain the less ideologically-primed selection and presentation. *Líneas aéreas* is fundamentally different to *McOndo* in this area, in that it is organised "from above" by a publisher and academic and, as such—while this cannot constitute the sufficient cause—, it was much more likely to be a rigorously researched and planned project, evidenced in its exhaustive selection, and its more conventional, balanced and critically nuanced prologue.

Over and above putting forward an ideological or literary position-taking itself, like *McOndo* had, Becerra writes a conventional prologue which both contextualises and introduces the writers and texts. It is through this contextualisation that *Líneas aéreas* demonstrates its debt to *McOndo* via various references or affirmations of its claims, such as when Becerra (1999) clarifies its selection as neither specifically Macondo nor McOndo, but rather opting for a representation of the plurality of the region's literary production[39] (xix). Despite this clarification and his recognition of the obvious pitfall to such a reductionist binary, Becerra (1999) does, in actual fact, endorse *McOndo*'s polemical claims in his prologue:

> [h]owever, despite these very accurate clarifications there is a certain agreement, which I share, regarding the validity of the ideas of Fuguet and Gómez as a sign of a necessary insistence to overcome the existing stagnation of certain Latin American landscapes that the very literature assisted in forging some time ago[40] (xxii).

Becerra's (1999) valorisation of the anthology does not end here, as he also attempts to account for some of the broad commonalities in experience and narrative across this group of writers which replicate some of those identified in the prologue to *McOndo*. In terms of the experiences of these writers, Becerra (1999) highlights the balkanisation of Latin American literary spaces (xxiii) and their almost collective critique of the 'tropicalisation of Iberian literary tastes' (‹‹tropicalización del gusto literario ibérico››) (xxii), concerns which were identified at the I Congreso de Nuevos Narradores Hispanos. In regard to this point, Becerra (1999) communicates this concern in terms not unlike those theorists who developed the concept of *macondismo*, such as Brunner and García Canclini. Becerra (1999) highlights the role of the

[39] See prologue section entitled 'Ni Macondo ni McOndo: los mundos plurales' (Becerra 1999, xix-xxv).

[40] 'Sin embargo, a pesar de estas certeras matizaciones hay un cierto acuerdo, que yo comparto, acerca de la validez de las ideas de Fuguet y Gómez como signo de una insistencia necesaria en superar el anquilosamiento existente de determinado paisaje latinoamericano que la propia narrativa ayudó a forjar tiempo atrás' (Becerra 1999, xxii).

Boom and the Cuban revolution in the construction of imaginaries, consequently becoming international ways to conceive of Latin America mediating the narrative production which both would succeed internationally, through a confirmation of this bias, as much as the struggling of the narrative production domestically, which would deny this myth[41] (xx-xxi). Beyond this significant discussion on the issue of *macondismo*, Becerra (1999) also maps some of the literary commonalities of this large and diverse selection of writers, choosing to highlight in particular four areas which *McOndo* had equally accentuated in the prologue and in the stories: the negation of the magical realist style (xxi), the disappearance of the total, national or regional novel and replacement with the narrativisation of individual experience (xxiii), the increased urbanity but also no-place of Latin American settings with an absence of cultural specificity (xxiii), and the U.S. cultural referent (xxiii).

The connection between the two anthologies is further evidenced in the selection of authors; as out of the 13 possible Spanish-American writers included in *McOndo*, 11 were included in *Líneas aéreas*[42]. This is no coincidence, as Eduardo Becerra (2016) acknowledged in my interview with him, that his first informant regarding which authors to include in the anthology was Alberto Fuguet, for the obvious reason he had already begun this pioneering work in *McOndo*. The continued anthologisation of the writers of *McOndo* in this anthology and subsequent ones suggests the particular way in which anthologies map, curate, introduce, and consecrate via their exclusivity, by considering those included as worthy of being read, and in this case, worthy of being circulated and labelled as belonging to the new Spanish-American fiction. This lends credit also to the specific importance given to the short story in the Spanish linguistic subspace, affirming the genre as an indispensable part of literary consecration through participation in these projects.

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41 'Como se ha afirmado en alguna ocasión, una de las consecuencias más destacables del fenómeno *boom* fue la de construir una imagen de América Latina a partir de la cual las miradas a ese territorio se congelaron para las décadas sucesivas en una serie de estereotipos que aún hoy parecen gozar de buena salud. Esa complicada ecuación, la fascinación por una América a un tiempo mágica y revolucionaria—relación que sin duda es producto de las conexiones que en su día se dieron entre la Revolución Cubana y el *boom*—[...]. El emblema que mejor representaría esta cosmovisión americana es Macondo, espacio elevado a la categoría de patria del realismo mágico y por extensión casi de la América Latina entera. De las reflexiones de los nuevos narradores se desprende de inmediato y de forma constante la evidencia de que el territorio creado por García Márquez continúa constituyendo una presencia asfixiante para escritores y escritoras que, convencidos de la necesidad de recorrer nuevos caminos, siguen sintiéndose en la obligación de reivindicar para su obra espacios distintos' (Becerra 1999, xx-xxi).

42 Those authors included are Gustavo Escanlar, Rodrigo Fresán, Alberto Fuguet, Santiago Gamboa, Sergio Gómez, Edmundo Paz Soldán, Martín Rejtman, Jordi Soler, Rodrigo Soto, Leonardo Valencia, and Naief Yehya. The only two Spanish-American authors from *McOndo* that did not appear in *Líneas aéreas* are Jaime Bayly and David Toscana.

As such, this anthology, like with *McOndo*, would also have the effect of enabling the publisher, Lengua de Trapo, to discover and secure the publication rights to begin building a catalogue of Spanish-American authors to introduce to the Spanish market. This was clearly a new direction for Lengua de Trapo, as prior to *Líneas aéreas*, they had only published two writers hailing from the Americas: the Argentinian Isidoro Blastein (1933-2004), and the Argentinian-born Asturian Manuel García Rubio (1956-), not quite the contemporary authors they were searching for at this time. After *Líneas aéreas*, this catalogue briefly expands to include works by a number of authors involved in the anthology, such as Sergio Gómez and Patricia de Souza, among others[43]. Nevertheless, the anthology's major contribution is its symbolic act as a moment of generational self-consciousness, over and above the commercial and publishing reward for the publishing house, whose success was quite uneven[44]. The effect for *McOndo*, on the other hand, would be a continued affirmation of their editorial selection, some of their polemical claims, and the common literary themes or authorial predicaments facing this new generation.

8.2.3 Coming to America

The second major anthology which warrants analysis in respect to *McOndo* is *Se habla español: voces latinas en USA* (2000), which can be interpreted as a continuation of a number of the polemics and themes of *McOndo*[45] with a strategic position-taking within the United States literary field. This anthology continued to give a literary platform to the Latin American writers of this same generation, those born around the decade of the 1960s, with only the

[43] Venezuelan Juan Carlos Méndez Guédez (*El libro de Esther* 1999, *Tan nítido en el recuerdo*, 2001), the Peruvian Patricia de Souza (*La mentira de un fauno,* 1999), the Argentinian Martín Rejtman (*Velcro y Yo* (1999), the Uruguayan Daniel Mella (*Derretimiento*, 1999), the Cubans Ronaldo Menéndez (*El derecho al pataleo de los ahorcados*, 1999, *La piel de Inesa* 1999, *De modo que esto es la muerte* 2002, *Las bestias* 2006, *Río Quibú* 2008) and Karla Suárez (*Silencios* 1999), and the Chilean Sergio Gómez (*Buenas noches a todos* 2001, *La obra literaria de Mario Valdini* 2002), are among the writers included in *Líneas aéreas* who went on to publish with Lengua de Trapo.

[44] Only a few of the numerous writers involved in Lengua de Trapo's early years are able to successfully internationalise their literary trajectories. One such example would be Patricia de Souza who wins the Lengua de Trapo prize for her novel *La mentira de un fauno* (1999), and later three of her subsequent novels are published in Spain: *El último cuerpo de Úrsula* (2000) is published by Seix Barral in Barcelona, *Sabat mater* (2001) by Debate in Madrid, and *Electra en la ciudad* (2006) by Alfaguara Madrid. A contrary example would be Sergio Gómez, who while he was also awarded the Lengua de Trapo prize for his novel *La obra literaria de Mario Valdini* (and his short story collection *Buenas noches a todos* was also republished), these were the beginning and the end of his incursions into Spanish literary circulation.

[45] Debra Castillo (2005) notes how she is not alone in recognising this relationship between *Se habla español* as a kind of sequel to *McOndo*, which a number of critics and writers such as Gustavo Faverón Patriau and Ricardo Armijo have also recognised (also Trelles Paz 2009 a few years later). However, these have not explored the commonalities in a methodical or comprehensive fashion.

exception of a few writers[46]. Seen from this strategic perspective, Alberto Fuguet's three anthologies intervene at multiple levels of world literary space: at the national level with *Cuentos con walkman*, linguistic or regional level with *McOndo*, and international level with *Se habla español*. They all represent, as much, the desire of the editors to make themselves visible and circulate within these literary fields, as well as, the desire to execute their own literary contestations within each space. As such, in the same way in which *McOndo* can be read through the previous position-takings in *Cuentos con walkman*, *McOndo* represents a valuable guide for interpreting the intervention of *Se habla español* within the still nascent market for Spanish literature in the United States.

Both Fuguet (2015, personal interview) and Paz Soldán (2016, personal interview) have clarified that one of the aims of the anthology was to correct the mistakes which *McOndo* had committed: '[i]t tried to be that which *McOndo* had not been: inclusive, panoramic, comprehensive'[47] (Paz Soldán 2018, 26). As such, *Se habla español*'s selection is developed in respect to *McOndo*'s shortfalls as a greater synthesis of the generation: roughly doubling the number of contributors from eighteen to thirty-five, representing fifteen different nations[48],

[46] The only participants in *Se habla español* who were not born within the generation range established in both *McOndo* and *Líneas aéreas* are Giannina Braschi (b. 1953), Rosina Conde (b. 1954), Homero Carvalho (b. 1957), Rodrigo Rey Rosa (b. 1958), and Ricardo Armijo (b. 1959). Braschi was perhaps excused from this generational limit by the editors for the significance of her narration of the Latino experience of New York in her poetry collections *El imperio de los sueños* (Anthropos, 1988, Yale University Press, 1994), and her critically successful novel *Yo-Yo Boing!* (Latin American Literary Review Press, 1998), considered one of the first—if not the first—novels written in Spanglish. A similar justification could be deduced for Ricardo Armijo, who, at the time, was a notable figure in the Latino literary scene of Chicago up until his premature death in 2007. Rosina Conde, while not a Latina author, was, at the time and continues to be, an important narrator of the border between the United States and Mexico. Homero Carvalho (b. 1957) is the winner of a number of Bolivian short story and novel prizes and was also included in *Las horas y las hordas,* but aside from Edmundo Paz Soldán, he is the only Bolivian participant in *Se habla español*. And finally Rodrigo Rey Rosa (b. 1958), like Braschi, is a "pseudo-member" of this generation of writers. But he also lends symbolic capital to the anthology, in particular, as at this stage of his trajectory he was already a recognisable literary figure internationally when compared to the editors or any of the other contributors in *Se habla español*.

[47] Both Fuguet and Paz Soldán appear to shift central responsibility for the anthology to their co-editor. Fuguet stated in my interview that Edmundo played a role in convincing him to do another anthology after the terrible and traumatic reception of *McOndo*: '‹‹*Fuck McOndo*›› básicamente era mi actitud. Y traté—porque Edmundo me convenció—de ver si podíamos balancear el daño de *McOndo* con *Se habla español*, incluyendo mujeres, cosas así' (Fuguet 2015, personal interview). And Paz Soldán (2018) has stated elsewhere, that '[t]res años después [de *McOndo*], Alberto Fuguet me propuso armar otra antología. Quería aprender de los errores de *McOndo* para el nuevo proyecto [...]. Así nació *Se habla español*, una antología de treinta y seis autores, entre los que se encontraban Álvaro Enrigue, Mayra Santos-Febres, Lina Meruane, Rodrigo Rey Rosa, Mario Bellatín, Alejandra Costamagna, Ignacio Padilla y Pablo Brescia. Procuraba ser aquello que *McOndo* no había sido: incluyente, panorámica, abarcadora' (25-6).

[48] The nations represented in the anthology include: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Puerto Rico, the United States, and Uruguay.

including six women writers[49], authors from the Crack manifesto[50], the so-called 'Generación mutante'[51], *La Zona de Contacto*[52], *Líneas aéreas*[53] , Latino writers from the United States[54], and, unsurprisingly, writers also from *McOndo*[55]. However, the anthology is both generational and thematic, in how it brings together authors writing in relation to the United States referent, but in which each writer in this diverse sampling takes a distinct position in respect to this governing theme. The editors identify this theme in the prologue as they also do in the e-mail callout for submissions here cited:

> [t]he idea is to show the diverse aspects of what today constitutes the Latin American experience in the United States; just as one cannot speak of Latin America without necessarily including the United States, nor can one speak of the United States without showing its great Latin American side[56] (Paz Soldán and Fuguet 24/1/2000).

Although *McOndo* is never explicitly mentioned in this e-mail invitation nor in the prologue, Fuguet and Paz Soldán, in asking their potential contributors to reflect on their experience of the United States, were inviting these authors to answer the charge that had been laid against the writers included in *McOndo* as uncritical celebrators of U.S. culture. The stories provide the answer, as Paz Soldán (2018) later reflects: '[t]he United States that appears in the stories of *Se habla español* is more a desolate and hopeless land than the promised land. Clearly, the United States occupies an important space in our imagination; that doesn't imply in any sense its idealisation'[57] (27). In this sense, *Se habla español* is as much responding to the critiques levelled against *McOndo*, through a pluralising of its authorial selection, but also, its definitive purpose is born out of a desire to enquire after and respond to a critique made of the authors included in *McOndo*.

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[49] Giannina Braschi, Rosina Conde, Alejandra Costamagna, Lina Meruane, Silvana Paternostro, and Mayra Santos Febres.

[50] Ricardo Chávez Castañeda, Ignacio Padilla, and Jorge Volpi.

[51] Jorge Franco Ramos.

[52] Alejandra Costamagna, Lina Meruane, and Alfredo Sepúlveda.

[53] Ángel Lozada, Ronaldo Menéndez, Roberto Quesada, Celso Santajuliana, Mayra Santos-Febres, Iván Thays, and Santiago Vaquera-Vásquez.

[54] Within this somewhat slippery category one could place writers such as Junot Díaz, Ernesto Quiñónez, Giannina Braschi, and even the chicano writer Santiago Vaquera-Vásquez.

[55] Aside from the two editors Alberto Fuguet and Edmundo Paz Soldán the other writers also in *McOndo* include Gustavo Escanlar, Martín Rejtman, Jordi Soler, Naief Yehya.

[56] 'La idea es mostrar los diversos aspectos de lo que constituye hoy la experiencia latinoamericana en los Estados Unidos; así como ya no se puede hablar de Latinoamérica sin incluir necesariamente a los Estados Unidos, tampoco se puede de los Estados Unidos sin mostrar su gran rostro latinoamericano' (unpublished e-mail by Paz Soldán and Fuguet, 24/1/2000).

[57] 'El Estados Unidos que aparece en los textos de *Se habla español* es más una tierra de desolación y desesperanza que el paraíso prometido. Evidentemente, Estados Unidos ocupa un espacio importante en nuestra imaginación; eso no significa en ningún momento idealizarlo' (Paz Soldán 2018, 27).

When analysing the prologue to *Se habla* español through *McOndo*, further discursive parallels, continuations, and extension become apparent. The prologue, 'El monstruo come (y baila) salsa' (The monster eats [and dances] salsa), includes a critique of the Western novelistic and cinematic traditions, citing writers such as Robert Stone, Joan Didion, and Lawrence Thornton, and films such as *The Treasure of Sierra Madre* and *Romancing the Stone*. These texts are criticised by the editors as representing Latin America, and what constitutes Latin Americanness, from a foreign perspective as 'a marvellous, exotic, eccentric, exuberant and, above all, [a] dangerous place'[58] (Paz Soldán and Fuguet 2000, 17). In this sense, *Se habla español* extends the critique of *macondismo* begun in *McOndo* and takes aim at those cultural tropes constructed via processes of 'latinization from above' in foreign entertainment industries (Laó-Montes 2012). The salsa which the North American monster consumes and dances is one fashioned in its own imaginary *from above*—as part of the vogue of exoticism—, and not arising from the cultures it represents. However, before they could be accused of hypocrisy, Paz Soldán and Fuguet (2000) embrace (with self-conscious irony) the positioning of their anthology in respect to the United States as a reversal of this ethnographic trip, complete with stereotyped gaze, by narrating the experiences of the Latin American 'lost/trapped/seduced in the depth of the United States', for them, an equally 'marvellous, exotic, eccentric, exuberant and, above all, dangerous place'[59] (17). As such, while in Fuguet and Gómez's anthology the cultural metaphor of Macondo is confronted with McOndo, so too, *Se habla español* engages in a stereotype *contra* stereotype debate, this time by provincialising the United States through an appropriation of its own problematic methods of exoticisation which Latin America have been subject to for much of the region's history. Irrespective of the legitimacy of such forms of argumentation, it is apparent that provocation is also a theme in the prologue to *Se habla español*, even if it was not executed to the same success as in *McOndo*[60].

[58] '[U]n lugar maravilloso, exótico, excéntrico, exuberante y, sobre todo, peligroso' (Paz Soldán and Fuguet 2000, 17).

[59] 'Ése fue uno de los puntos de partida de la antología. El viaje al revés. Turned around. Flipped. Buscar, en tono de comedia o drama, de aventuras o de thrillers, al latinoamericano perdido/atrapado/seducido en las profundidades de los Estados Unidos—un lugar maravilloso, exótico, excéntrico, exuberante y, sobre todo, peligroso—' (Paz Soldán and Fuguet 2000, 17).

[60] A further polemic arose surrounding the delicate issue of identity politics in the United States due to the subtitle of the anthology '*voces latinas en USA*'. The controversy can be understood as an oversight, as arising from two different uses of the term *latino/latina* in Latin America and the United States. While in Latin America, the term is shorthand for *latinoamericano/a*, this is not the case in the United States, where the term has a long and politicised history. As such, an anthology of this kind with the subtitle '*voces latinas*' was deemed misleading by reviewers who, according to the established (yet minority) Latino literature, were likely expecting a volume more like *Growing up Latino: Memoirs and Stories* (Augenbraum and Stavans 1993), which brought together accepted Latino voices such as Sandra Cisneros, Oscar Hijuelos, Jesús Colón, Óscar "Zeta" Acosta, and Gloria Anzaldúa. In a similar fashion to *McOndo*, *Se habla español* was also embroiled in a controversy, questioned by critics for

Furthermore, *Se habla español* extends the *McOndiano* cultural discourse surrounding Latin American identity by similarly emphasising the importance of the U.S. referent, but also offers a complementary perspective to *McOndo* of the latinisation of the United States. While *McOndo* did not contextualise its intervention into Latin America's intellectual or literary tradition (except via its rejection of magical realism)[61], Paz Soldán and Fuguet situate *Se habla español* into the Latinamericanist literary tradition concerned with the United States (citing Fuentes, Donoso, Allende, Puig, etc.), as well as its identitary discourse (Martí and Rodó). They present their discursive intervention as a continuation of this tradition—acknowledging that Latin American and United States cultural identities are understood relationally[62]—but they hybridise the Manichean division characteristic of Martí and Rodó's accounts of the United States through stories which represent the U.S. side of inter-American hybridisation: '[m]ore than focusing on *us* and *them*, the majority of these texts explore what of ‹‹them›› is in ‹‹us››, and what of ‹‹us›› is in ‹‹them››'[63] (Paz Soldán and Fuguet 2000, 21). There exists a complementarity in how the McOndo cultural metaphor accounts for the recent hybridisation, or more specifically the Americanisation of Latin American cultures, and how inversely, *Se habla español* accounts for the other side of this globalisation: the latinisation of the United States. This interculturality and increasing hybridisation in the United States is well known and studied by sociologists and anthropologists such as Néstor García Canclini, Carlos Monsiváis,

their apparent incapacity to "authentically" narrate the United States for not having been born in the United States (Larios Vendrell 2001), or, for not having gained sufficient lived experience of the nation (Campos 2002). This kind of critique is perhaps best illustrated in this phrase by the critic Javier Campos: '[l]a verdadera literatura hispana en Estados Unidos (narrativa, poesía, teatro, ensayo, testimonio) la han estado escribiendo desde hace décadas chicanos, cubanos-americanos, puertorriqueños, distintos escritores de España, Portugal, Brasil y América Latina que han pasado muchos años absorbiendo lentamente ese mundo hispano y que poco tiene que ver—curiosamente—con la coca cola, las hamburguesas ni las papas fritas o los tacos de *Taco Bell*, como sugiere la contratapa de *Se habla español*' (Campos 2002, 164). A similar controversy—oftentimes lacking important nuance—over who has the right to write authentic Latino stories, has been the criticism of the mass marketing and bestsellerisation of Jeanine Cummins' *American Dirt* (2020), described by some critics as 'trauma porn' of Mexican migrants (Schuessler and Alter 2020).

[61] This is a critique which Leonardo Valencia made of the prologue in my interview with him: '[e]l prólogo parecía proponer que la modernidad entraba con esta antología, cosa con la que no estoy de acuerdo. Daba la sensación de que recién nosotros hubiéramos empezado a ser híbrido, cosa que no es verdad. Eso ya venía de mucho antes. O sea, ya Octavio Paz había hablado en la década de los cincuenta de esta hibridación y esta mezcla, esta relación con Estados Unidos y con las otras culturas del mundo entero; Manuel Puig ya había publicado su novela desde los años sesenta y hablaba de la cultura mediática; y Vargas Llosa publica todas estas novelas que son una mezcla de muchas cosas incluso radioteatro también desde los años sesenta y setenta' (Valencia 2016, personal interview).

[62] '[A] estas alturas, ¿qué es América Latina? ¿Estamos hablando de Latinoamérica o de la parte latina de América? Sea lo que sea, una cosa está clara: no se puede hablar de Latinoamérica sin incluir a los Estados Unidos. Y no se puede concebir a los Estados Unidos sin necesariamente pensar en América Latina' (Paz Soldán 2000, 19).

[63] 'Más que centrarse en un *ellos* y un *nosotros*, la mayoría de los textos explora lo que hay de ‹‹ellos›› en ‹‹nosotros››, y de ‹‹nosotros›› en ‹‹ellos››' (Paz Soldán and Fuguet 2000, 21).

and George Yúdice, as a result primarily of South to North migration and evidenced by the impressive growth of the Latino population, the growing ubiquity of the Spanish language and Latin American cultures. This takes place as much in the very content of the stories (which require further inquiry in future studies), as well as the growing narrativisation of the United States as a literary imaginary, which the editors of the anthology also attest[64].

While the attempt to incorporate the Latino literature of the United States as part of Latin American literature more generally was an unaccomplished goal for *McOndo*[65], it began modestly in *Líneas aéreas* with the inclusion of the Chicano Santiago Vaquera Vásquez, continued with greater force in *Se habla español*, and was further consolidated in 2007 with *Bogotá39*, which included Daniel Alarcón and Junot Díaz among the most promising of the up and coming Latin American writers. This is how the scholar and writer Ilan Stavans has also interpreted *Se habla español*'s position-taking in the United States: 'I always thought that in doing this anthology Fuguet and Paz Soldán wanted to insert the Latin American in the context of Latino Literature in the United States, and put Latino literature in the United States in Latin America'[66] (Stavans 2017). The opposite task of considering the production of literature in Spanish in the United States as Latino literature has been harder to recognise. The critic Debra Castillo (2005) has proposed the use of a new term 'the "new" Latino authors' to speak of these writers of Latin American heritage who choose to write in Spanish over English, and recently the writer and critic Naida Saavedra (2018) has been promoting the use of the appellative (and hashtag) 'New Latino Boom' to highlight the continuation and rise in popularity of this phenomenon, including by way of the critical monograph *#NewLatinoBoom* (2020). However it is still something which a whole series of independent publishers, magazines and bookshops, as well as writers such as Paz Soldán—namely through *Se habla español* and his novels *Los*

[64] 'En la segunda mitad del siglo XX, la disminución de la influencia del modelo europeo fue acompañada por el aumento de la presencia del modelo norteamericano. Habrá siempre un París para los escritores latinoamericanos [...], pero ahora se abren paso, como nuevas capitales del imaginario, Nueva York [...], Miami [...], la frontera méxico-estadounidense [...]. Habrá más novelas, cuentos, crónicas, poemas y ficciones digitales ambientada en los Estados Unidos. Espacios urbanos poblado de (y reconfigurados por) mexicanos, cubanos, puertorriqueños, dominicanos y centroamericanos no merecen menos' (Paz Soldán and Fuguet 2000, 17).

[65] In a newspaper review and interview with the editors of *McOndo*, the journalist Marcelo Soto (1996) comments: '[o]tro fracaso para los editores es no haber podido incluir a un escritor chicano, que viviera en Estados Unidos y que escribiera en español' (93).

[66] 'Yo siempre pensé que al hacer esta antología Fuguet y Paz Soldán querían insertar lo latinoamericano en el contexto de *Latino literature in the United States* y meter *Latino literature in the United States* a Latinoamérica' (Stavans 2017).

vivos y los muertos (2009), and *Norte* (2011)—, are contributing to forge, and despite its efforts and important contribution to problematising this issue, it remains unresolved today[67].

While conceived as an anthology to counteract the negative press which *McOndo* had received, *Se habla español* does not deny this anthology, but instead, represents a continuation and an extension of some of the discourses presented therein. Similarly to *McOndo*, *Se habla español* takes issue with the exoticisation of Latin America and engages the United States in a stereotype versus stereotype discursive game, narratively partaking in the literary latinisation of the United States. Whilst *McOndo* was invested in representing contemporary Latin American experiences in their national socio-cultural realities mediated by the United States referent, *Se habla español* narrates the converse side of this equation through narrative accounts of the latinisation of the United States, proposing a complementary account of this end-of-century inter-American fusion. Furthermore, it is worth remembering that one of the motivations for creating the *McOndo* anthology was Alberto Fuguet's anecdote of editorial rejection in the United States. If within the Latin American literary context *McOndo* and Crack had been—as Brescia and Estrada (2018) state—'[p]oetic and politico-literary gestures. [That] seem to say "We are here," "Look at us"' (12), *Se habla español* does this within United States literary space, presenting a varied sampling of the texts of this post-magical realist generation, as if to respond only a few years after the Iowan rejection jeering: "we are here, *anyway*, look at us!".

8.2.4 Latin American writers coming home to Paris

Published sometime later, the third anthology which makes quite explicit reference to *McOndo* is the French anthology *Les bonnes nouvelles de l'Amérique latine: Anthologie de la nouvelle latinoaméricaine contemporaine* (2010). There are three elements to this anthology which vindicate certain aspects of the *McOndo* anthology, firstly, the selection of authors, secondly, the prologue by the editors Gustavo Guerrero and Fernando Iwasaki, and lastly, the preface written by none other than Boom novelist Mario Vargas Llosa.

[67] Drawing on the work of the linguists Yásnaya Aguilar, Cristina Rivera Garza (2018) suggests one of the reasons for this is that once the Spanish-language crosses the border into the United States it experiences a conversion from the powerful colonial language that it is in Latin America to a 'lengua ch'ixi', or a language without an army or state support: '[e]l español, la lengua impuesta por la conquista y una experiencia colonizadora de al menos 300 años, es sin duda una lengua con Estado y ejército dentro de los territorios que conocemos como Latinoamérica [...]. Y sin embargo, una vez que el español cruza una de las fronteras más dramáticas y poderosas de nuestro mundo globalizado sobre los hombros y en las bocas de los migrantes indocumentados (y no), el español se convierte también en una lengua sin Estado y sin ejército. Una lengua ch'ixi' (53).

The anthology selected 32 authors born between 1960 and 1979 of which four of the authors included were involved in the *McOndo* anthology: Rodrigo Fresán, Alberto Fuguet, Edmundo Paz Soldán, and Leonardo Valencia. This might appear to be a small number, especially when considering the 11 authors which *Líneas aéreas* had included, but on balance, when comparing these proportions in respect to the total whole of contributors there, is little difference: the *McOndo* participants represent around 12.5% of the authors in *Les bonnes nouvelles*, compared to 15% in *Líneas aéreas*. Of the authors included in *Les bonnes nouvelles*, only 12 of the 32 writers already had works translated into French, and only four of those had had works translated and published by Gallimard prior to their anthologisation: Ignacio Padilla, Rodrigo Fresán, Álvaro Enrigue, and María Fasce. This highlights one of the key differences between this and the other anthologies, such as *McOndo* and *Líneas aéreas*, in that it is not an anthology of discovery, but a culmination of critical consensus[68]. This is something which Gustavo Guerrero commented on in my interview with him when speaking of the purpose of the anthology which was launched for the prestigious French publisher's centenary:

> [t]o renovate the Latin American landscape for the French field, and at the same time, do it in such a way that the very Latin American critics and readers would recognise themselves in the selection. That is, we wanted to do something that would be representative of the Latin American moment. We weren't discovering these authors ourselves, what we were doing was trying to compose an anthology where the national, and even global, Latin American valorisations would be reflected with fidelity[69] (Guerrero 2016, personal interview).

While both *McOndo* and *Líneas aéreas* had included authors early in their career, by contrast, in *Les bonnes nouvelles*, these same authors are very much advanced in their careers and circulating in different Spanish speaking countries, different languages, and with a number of works under their arm (just as an example, Ignacio Padilla at the time had already published 15 works).

In their prologue 'Un nouveau siècle, une nouvelle génération' (A new century, a new generation), Guerrero and Iwasaki similarly define the clear generational dimension to this anthology in selecting authors born from the 1960s onwards, much like *Líneas aéreas* and

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[68] Gustavo Guerrero (2016) mentioned in my interview with him that he and Fernando Iwasaki selected authors on three major areas of critical consensus: '[y]o veo como tres circuitos por los cuales circula la construcción canónica: uno, el circuito de los propios escritores, el segundo sería el circuito de la edición y de ventas que es importante también y tiene que ver con públicos, y el tercero es el de la academia y los críticos universitarios. Y lo que hicimos Fernando y yo en la antología fue tratar de conseguir el grupo de autores que estuviera en intersección entre esos tres circuitos. Reconocidos tanto por sus pares como por la academia; reconocidos por las editoriales y por los públicos lectores que hubieran podido alcanzar'.

[69] 'Renovar el paisaje latinoamericano para el paisaje francés, y al mismo tiempo hacerlo de tal manera que los propios críticos o lectores latinoamericanos se reconocieran en la selección. Es decir, quisimos hacer algo que fuera representativo del momento latinoamericano. No estábamos descubriendo nosotros a los autores; lo que estábamos haciendo era tratando de componer una antología donde las valoraciones nacionales, incluso globales, latinoamericanas se reflejaran con fidelidad' (Guerrero 2016).

McOndo had done before it. Nevertheless, unlike *McOndo*, which defined its dates in reference to political and commercial milestones (1959 with the Cuban Revolution, and 1962 with the arrival of television in much of Latin America), *Les bonnes nouvelles* defines the generational birth range in more literary terms[70]: born while Jorge Luis Borges received the Prix Formentor (1961) and the best titles of the Boom were published (Guerrero and Iwasaki 2010, 13). In this way, *Les bonnes nouvelles* packages these authors in respect to the Boom, citing Cortázar, García Márquez, Cabrera Infante, Vargas Llosa, and Fuentes, all who were translated and published by Gallimard in their lifetime, who benefited from literary consecration in the Parisian capital of capitals[71], and who would serve as literary referents knowledgeable to a French reader of the Latin American canon (and more specifically Gallimard's canon of Latin American literature). It is as though the editors are reminding the reader of the richness of literary tradition from this region that commanded global attention during the 1960s and 1970s in particular, and which the anthology appears to insist this recent generation of writers similarly deserves.

Nevertheless, the editors disambiguate this reference from any misunderstanding that would present these newest writers as passive or servile in respect to their Boom forebears, instead, highlighting how the literary canon which had gained Latin American entry into world literary space, would be questioned and, in some senses, rejected by these writers. Prefaced by this assessment, *McOndo* is introduced by Guerrero and Iwasaki (2010) as one of the most provocative propositions of this generation:

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[70] The anthology is marked by a more deeply literary character than *McOndo*, *Líneas aéreas*, or *Se habla español* before it as, unlike these, *Les bonnes nouvelles* makes specific note of the very genre of the anthology, the short story, noting the history and significance of its tradition in Latin America and considering these writers 'les héritiers de cette longue tradition' (Guerrero and Iwasaki 2010, 14) of: Borges, Ulsar Pietri, Onetti, Monterroso, Carpentier, Rulfo, Arreola, Bioy Casares, and Denevi Ribeyro. The editors go on to clarify their commitment to the genre: '[n]otre anthologie veut rendre justice à la nouvelle, bien que cela suppose l'injustice de ne pas inclure d'autres excellents spécialistes du genre bref. Nous regrettons également d'avoir dû laisser en dehors de cette sélection de merveilleux écrivains qui n'ont pas particulièrement pr
atiqué le genre de la nouvelle' (Guerrero and Iwasaki 2010, 20-1). So while in *Se habla español* important novelists such as Jorge Volpi and Giannina Braschi would be included by way of fragments from their novels *En busca de Klingsor* and *Yo, Yo, Boing!*, respectively, in *Les bonnes nouvelles* novelists of great standing who the editors felt should have been included (perhaps Jorge Volpi), are inevitably (and reluctantly) excluded. This point appears to further suggest that for *McOndo*, *Líneas aéreas*, and *Se habla español*—in which these kinds of generic discussions or strict generic parameters are altogether absent—the short story is the narrative choice principally due to its short form and capacity for anthologisation, and not for aesthetic reasons related to short story genre, important in *Les bonnes nouvelles* and other anthologies such as *Pequeñas resistencias* (2002).

[71] Gallimard was founded in 1911 and represented for Latin American writers an instrumental force in their global canonisation. Historically, Gallimard has published the work of some of the most highly regarded and commercially popular Latin American writers, generation after generation, from the period of the early 20th century (Ricardo Güiraldes, Gabriela Mistral, Rómulo Gallegos, Alejo Carpentier, and Jorge Luis Borges), the Boom (José María Arguedeas, Julio Cortázar, Carlos Fuentes, Pablo Neruda, Juan Carlos Onetti, and Mario Vargas Llosa), and the Postboom (Manuel Puig, Antonio Skármeta, Tomás Eloy Martínez, Sergio Pitol, César Aira, and Laura Esquivel).

> [t]hat is how the Chileans Alberto Fuguet and Sergio Gómez understood it when editing their defiant prologue to the short story anthology *McOndo*. Their pioneering arguments were the foundation of subsequent re-elaborations and developments by other narrators [...], all who warn in different ways that the label ‹‹Latin American››, like an old *registered trademark*, has been converted as years have gone by into a burden for the conquest of a new literary autonomy[72] (15).

Guerrero and Iwasaki continue their appraisal of the *McOndo* anthology as a precursor by highlighting the means through which this generation of writers has been able to internationalise their literary diffusion: highlighting the role of literary congresses and anthologies, among which *McOndo* is the earliest text they cite. As such, the kinds of dismissive criticisms that *McOndo* had received early in its appearance from a variety of fronts are here interpreted in light of the continuous polemics and claims which this generation of writers has produced and which *McOndo* had inaugurated, seen from a literary-strategic perspective, as a passionate struggle for literary autonomy. This struggle for literary autonomy is not solely apparent in these generational pronouncements, according to Guerrero and Iwasaki (2010), but also highlighted through their narration, through texts which deride and parody the utopias, political commitment, or the national obsessions of previous literary generations, and even the very collective discourse of a Latin American identity (18-19). These literary commitments which disengage from differentiationist or extra-literary political or social discourses, were also highlighted in *McOndo*, further vindicating what were once controversial claims and are now recognised generational markers. As such, *McOndo* is now being produced as an early and important anthology for this generation, but also a symbol for the autonomisation of Latin American literatures.

There are constant references to the Boom across the generational pronouncements at this time, from *McOndo*'s parody on Macondo to the Crack's re-rendering of the onomatopoeia ‹‹boom››, the catch-phrases used to promote this generation such as Carlos Fuentes' (2011) appellation *boomerang*, or as is apparent in *Les bonnes nouvelles* as a way to mediate how these writers will be read. As such, it is, in some senses, fitting for Boom authors to support the writing (however parricidal it might appear) of these younger literary generations. There is an extent to which this acts as a kind of sanctioning of their literary entrance into the canon. There are a numerous examples of this, from the closing address by Mario Benedetti at the I Congreso de Nuevos Narradores Hispanos in Madrid (conference which would lead to *Líneas*

[72] 'C'est ainsi que l'ont compris les Chiliens Alberto Fuguet et Sergio Gómez en rédigeant l'audacieux prologue de l'anthologie de nouvelles *McOndo*. Leurs arguments précurseurs ont servi de base à des réélaborations et développements postérieurs de la part d'autres écrivains [...], tous font remarquer de différentes manières que le cachet ‹‹latino-américain››, comme une vieille *marque déposée*, est devenu, avec les années, un frein à la conquête d'une nouvelle autonomie littéraire' (Guerrero and Iwasaki 2010, 15).

aéreas), or Guillermo Cabrera Infante's address at the I Encuentro de Autores Latinoamericanos in 2003, as well as his prologue to the anthology *Palabra de América* (2004) which would come from that congress. Carlos Fuentes even gave the writers of the Crack manifesto extensive attention and praise in a chapter of his book *La gran novela latinoamericana* (2011). This kind of sanctioning address is also replicated in *Les bonnes nouvelles*, by way of a preface written by Mario Vargas Llosa.

In his preface to the volume entitled 'Amérique latine une et multiple' (Latin America, one and multiple), Mario Vargas Llosa introduces these writers to the French reading public by sketching some common stylistic trends, as well as some general literary dispositions among the cohort, many of which were identified previously by *McOndo* as part of broader generational literary approaches. Firstly, he identifies the rejection of magical realism and the return to realism as a significant trend among this generation of writers[73]. As was detailed in the previous chapter, this was something which was evident in the isolated literary production at the national level but which *McOndo* was able to visibilise at an international Latin American level and identify very early on as a generational response.

Secondly, Vargas Llosa similarly highlights the disappearance of a social realism which intended to provide a cartography or snapshot of society at large with an evident extra-literary political discourse. Instead of these politicised social frescoes, Vargas Llosa (2010) underscores this recent literatures' concern with narrating individual experiences: '[t]he notion of reality which these writers practice encompasses all of the domains of human experience, including the most secret intimacy, as well as the displays and flights of fantasy'[74] (8). This idea had already been captured in *McOndo*'s bold pronouncements that the historic Latin American identity discourse around the question "Who are we?" had been replaced by an individual yearning to understand "Who am I?", as well as their claim that the old revolutionary dilemma between writing or fighting had also been abandoned in favour of less politically discursive texts.

Thirdly, Vargas Llosa (2010) highlights an almost complete disappearance of the province as a setting for these stories, and the legitimation of Latin America as experienced

[73] '[L]e fameux ‹‹réalisme magique›› qui, pendant tant d'années, sembla accaparer la littérature produite en Amérique latine, a perdu de la vigueur parmi les nouvelles générations d'écrivains qui, maintenant, chacun avec son style particulier et sa thématique propre, retournent au réalisme et refusent les sujets fantastiques. De fait, dans cette anthologie seules deux nouvelles pourraient être rattachées au ‹‹réalisme magique›› et, même ainsi, en élargissant beaucoup les frontières de ce concept vague jusqu'à les confondre, ou peu s'en faut, avec celles du réalisme' (Vargas Llosa 2010, 8).

[74] 'La notion de réalité chez ces écrivains embrasse tous les domaines de l'expérience humaine, y compris la plus secrète intimité, ainsi que toutes les parures et les envolées de l'imaginaire' (Vargas Llosa 2010, 9).

through the city: '[a]n urban Latin America, of cities and citizens, in which in many cases the rural world is not even mentioned and, when it is, it is treated as a distant reality of uncertain and vague existence'[75] (9-10). *McOndo* had argued this in more forceful normative terms suggesting it was immoral to export as the authentic understanding of Latin Americanness a purely rural imaginary in order to 'maintain the status-quo of the stereotype and how the portrait (of Spanish America) for export ought to be or not'[76] (Hahn in Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 19).

Lastly, and perhaps Vargas Llosa's boldest claim, situates the narrative proposal of this generation of writers as cosmopolitan and even universal in its reach, over and above a commitment to cultural and literary differentiation at either the national or regional level. Vargas Llosa (2010) states:

> [t]he Latin America that these stories express is not exotic, nor picturesque, it does not want to stand out for its local colour. The Latin American is confused in many respects with the rest of the world. The dramas, situations, passions or tragedies which their characters live through have a common denominator with those which women and men from other latitudes experience and concern more than the geographic circumstance the human condition in general [...] The provincial perspective has been definitively laid to rest. Latin America has integrated itself into the rest of the planet through its writers[77] (9).

As such, the overall contribution of the literature of these writers can be understood as a culminating process of literary modernisation. These writers, as both Vargas Llosa and the editors of the volume highlight, are heirs to a local tradition which, to begin, with sought to differentiate itself from the other world literatures with a focus on those cultural, geographic, or linguistic aspects which most represented their uniqueness. However, once Latin American literature had acquired a global identity and Latin American writers had gained their 'citizenship certificate inside the World Republic of Letters'[78] (Guerrero and Iwasaki 2010, 15) thanks to the Boom and Postboom, these writers could begin dismantling the very Latin American structure which had allowed their participation in the literary world through a series of extra-literary provocations, manifestoes, essays, and movements, as well as their narrative production. Their concerns were, as Vargas Llosa states, no longer national or provincial.

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[75] 'Une Amérique latine urbaine, de villes et de citoyens, où très souvent le monde rural n'est même pas mentionné et, quand il l'est, il s'agit d'une réalité lointaine, d'une nature incertaine et floue' (Vargas Llosa 2010, 9-10).

[76] '[M]antener el status-quo del estereotipo de cómo debe o no debe ser el retrato (de Hispanoamérica) para la exportación' (Hahn in Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 19).

[77] 'L'Amérique latine exprimée dans ces nouvelles n'est pas exotique, ni pittoresque, et ne se détache pas par sa couleur locale. Ce qu'il y a là de latino-américain se confond en bien des aspects avec le reste du monde. Les drames, les situations, passions ou tragédies vécues par leurs personnages, ont un dénominateur commun avec ce qu'éprouvent les hommes et les femmes d'autres latitudes, et concernent, plus que la circonstance géographique, la condition humaine en général [...] La vision provinciale est restée définitivement enterrée. L'Amérique latine s'est intégrée au reste de la planète à travers ses écrivains' (Vargas Llosa 2010, 9).

[78] '[D]roit de cite dans la République mondiale des Lettres' (Guerrero and Iwasaki 2010, 15).

Instead, the very logics of globalisation and the universal literature from which they found nourishment (Vargas Llosa 2010; Guerrero and Iwasaki 2010) had appeared to permeate their literary vocations and production, not to see themselves closed-off from the world, but as citizens in a global literary structure with the capacity to seize the opportunity to take part in the literature-world beyond their confining national or regional literary space. As writers of this generation had already claimed, Vargas Llosa seems to be suggesting that the quality of such a literature ought not be measured for its capacity to inform the reader about Latin America, but by being read as an autonomous text read for its own sake and in what it tells us about the human experience[79].

As Gustavo Guerrero (2016, personal interview) commented: '[a]nthologies are like canonical moments in a determined context, one cannot underestimate their importance'[80]. Aware of this fact, along with the various workings of the prologue and the foreword by Mario Vargas Llosa, *Les bonnes nouvelles* is undoubtedly a canonical moment for the writers of this generation included in the anthology. However, it can also be interpreted, as I have done so, as contributing to the canonisation of the *McOndo* anthology as a pioneering work for the discovery and definition of this generation of Latin American writers, and as representation of a generational catchcry for literary autonomy.

8.3.1 *McOndo* recognition in other generational anthologies

As these anthologies that have been analysed above suggest, in responding to their unique literary circumstances, *McOndo* created visibility, gave form, and facilitated the

[79] By way of a necessary nuance, it does not escape my attention that this kind of authorial endorsement does also present its own problems. The identity of these writers is still mediated and understood in relation to the Boom, something which the editors were well aware of: '[l]a presencia de Mario Vargas Llosa se presta a una interpretación compleja, como la misma presencia del Boom en los años noventa [...] Porque si por un lado uno quiere que Vargas Llosa ayude a presentar a estos jóvenes escritores, por otro esto significa que estos jóvenes escritores son incapaces de presentarse a si mismos' (Guerrero 2016, personal interview). This mediation and their presentation as Latin American writers also appears to collapse the cosmopolitan and universal desires of the author's texts, once again situating them within their regional literary landscape. Nevertheless, this kind of presentation is undoubtedly an immensely valuable form of literary consecration, not to mention that later that year Mario Vargas Llosa would be awarded the Nobel Prize for literature: a double edged sword as, once again, attention would be focused more on the writers of the Boom, but also lend more credibility to their canonising endorsements. However, irrespective of this obvious problematic, in this area, the *Les bonnes nouvelles* anthology, merits further praise. The organisation of the anthology is consistent with the claims of the prologue, in that the tradition of organising authors along national origins has been transcended, allowing for an interpretation of these text not through a national prism, but through the particular narrative universes they create. The disappearance of the representative dimension to the selection of authors also suggests to the reader that *Les bonnes nouvelles* contains a selection determined more by critical consensus over the need to provide an exhaustive and representative sampling of the many voices in the literary continent.

[80] 'Las antologías son como momentos canónicos en un contexto dado, no hay que subestimar su importancia' (Guerrero 2016, personal interview).

internationalisation and canonisation of this generation of writers born around 1960 and 1975. However, the literary strategies and successes of the polemic anthology would not only be of service to authors of this generation, but also represent new tools for literary existence for future generations who, facing similar situations—issues, for example, of literary existence and visibility which each generation appears to combat, as has been shown—, would have recourse to these tools of entering the literature-world[81].

The 21st Century sees a rapid acceleration of the anthologisation of authors under collections of a thematic nature, but increasingly of a generational nature and produced *from below* by the authors themselves, in some senses, re-enacting the self-declaring principle of the *McOndo* anthology. This is as much apparent at the national level, in Chile for example, where Óscar Contardo has edited two anthologies of authors born during the 1970s: *La era ochentera: TV, pop y under en dictadura* (Planeta, 2015), and *Volver a los 17: recuerdos de una generación en dictadura* (Planeta, 2013). At the Latin American level, the anthology *Bogotá39* (2007) modified slightly the generational birthdates which had until then been established by numerous anthologies, placing 1968 as the arbitrary birthdate of their generation of 39 writers under 39 years of age. Another anthology, organised and edited by the Peruvian author Diego Trelles Paz, is *El futuro no es nuestro: nueva narrativa latinoamericana* (Eterna Cadencia, 2009), also for the generation of Latin American writers born in the 1970s. This anthology would eventually enter United States literary space in its English translation *The Future is Not Ours: New Latin America Fiction* (Open Letter, 2012), a feat which none of the previous

[81] However, while *McOndo* is the beginning of this generational self-awareness and the crystallising of some common literary problems and dispositions, it is also a unique phenomenon which brings to a close an era in Latin American literary history due to the arrival of newer and more efficient tools of literary communication and dissemination. Leonardo Valencia recognised how:

> Y luego llegaron otras [antologías] que circularon a través de internet, antologías digitales que iban difundiéndose, y se produjo un momento acelerado. Entonces en ese sentido, creo que *McOndo* sirvió un poco como el último momento para dar a conocer escritores antes de un cambio de era en la comunicación de los materiales literarios (Valencia 2016, personal interview).

This change naturally came through the development of popular e-mail servers (which were used for the organisation of *Líneas aéreas*) and the Internet; two media and communication platforms that transformed the way in which this generation and future generations of writers would become connected, become self-conscious at international levels and promote their literature. It is a well-established fact, that still bears repeating, that nowadays with the onset of social media these writers have more direct and instantaneous access to each other, their readers, and their critics from across the world, transforming as much how literature is circulated and promoted but also in some cases how it is generated, notably in the case of what has been explored by some as twitterature (see: Chimal 2018, and Rivera Garza 2004). As such, *McOndo* can also be recognised not only for what it has inaugurated, but for what it closed, an era of pre-Internet, pre-email anthologies at the close of the 20th century.

anthologies here studied have been able to achieve, despite an early suggestion for *McOndo*[82]. So too, in the United States, particularly since 2010, as Brescia (2018) notes, a number of anthologies have been published in Spanish, such as the cross generational mapping of *América Nuestra: antología de narrativa en español en Estados Unidos* (Tres Aguas, 2011), *Sam no es mi tío: veinticuatro crónicas migrantes y un sueño americano* (Alfaguara, 2012), and recently, of the generation of writers born in the 1970s, *Estados hispanos de América: narrativa latinoamericana made in USA* (Sudaquia Editores, 2016).

Nevertheless, despite the technological and communication advances made possible by Internet and social media, the newest generations of authors continue to face some of the same problems that were made visible by *McOndo*, and define their projects in respect to the *McOndo* model, as is apparent particularly in *El futuro no es nuestro* (2009). In the prologue, Diego Trelles Paz (2011) makes reference to a whole series of academic and generational anthologies which his anthology builds upon, however, he recognises in particular the impact which *McOndo*, as well as *Líneas aéreas* and *Se habla español*, had on his generation of writers:

> [w]ith all of its precisions and deficiencies it is, however, important to stress an unquestionable fact: *McOndo* as much as *Líneas aéreas* and *Se habla español* were able to give form to a generation of Latin American (and Spanish) writers that, with their own perspective, although with varying success, wrote and described a literary world already distant from the limiting frontiers of the national, and whose fruitful approach toward other artistic formats and genres opened the spectrum of fiction for all whom, attentive and expectant, came behind them[83] (19).

Trelles Paz situates the legacy of *McOndo* (and these other notable anthologies) as significant, not only to that generation of writers, but of value to his generation in how they broadened the artistic space of possibilities. This is something which he is not alone in identifying, with a number of writers from his generation, including the Peruvian Santiago Roncagliolo[84] and the

[82] In a journalistic interview with Marcelo Soto (1996), Alberto Fuguet commented: '[e]ste libro se hizo pensando en el extranjero. La idea es que llame la atención. Ya hay interés en traducirlo al alemán y al inglés' (93), a desire that was never, in fact, realised.

[83] 'Con todos sus aciertos y defectos es, sin embargo, necesario recalcar y saludar un hecho incuestionable: tanto *McOndo* como *Líneas aéreas* y *Se habla español* consiguieron darle forma a una generación de escritores latinoamericanos (y españoles) que, con una mirada propia aunque con distinta fortuna, consiguió escribir y describir un mundo literario ya alejado de las fronteras limitantes de lo nacional, y cuyo acercamiento fructífero hacia otros soportes y géneros artísticos abrió el espectro de la ficción para todos los que, atentos y expectantes, veníamos detrás' (Trelles Paz 2011, 19).

[84] Santiago Roncagliolo has, in a similar vein to Diego Trelles Paz, commented positively on the impact of *McOndo* on the space of works: '[c]uando yo estudiaba en la universidad, todos querían ser Borges. Ahora supongo que éramos un montón de gente bastante absurda, chicos de 17 años con pretensiones de escribir sobre toda la sabiduría occidental. Pero en realidad no sabíamos que se podía escribir otra cosa. McOndo representó el descubrimiento de que se podían narrar historias más cercanas a nuestra experiencia sin sentirnos culpable al respecto. Y el libro se llevó las críticas que ya no nos hacen a nosotros' (Roncagliolo in Navarro-Albaladejo et al. 2006, 246).

Chilean Álvaro Bisama[85] expressing similar evaluations. However, despite these gains, Trelles Paz (2011) identifies a number of persistent issues such as extra-literary demands increasingly from the market[86], the constant comparison back to the Boom[87], and the balkanisation of national literary territories within Latin American literary space[88], issues which similarly concerned the editors of *McOndo* (25-26). As such, *El futuro no es nuestro* pays homage to the *McOndo* anthology, as well as highlighting some of the ways which *McOndo* is being rethought and vindicated by authors of the next generation after its original backlash: as a work which announced and was symptomatic of a globalised influence on narratives, as well as the autonomisation of literary creativity.

El futuro no es nuestro, however, in enacting aspects of the generational anthology, shows development in the genre by having learned from *McOndo*'s mistakes. Firstly, while the *McOndo* prologue was criticised by some as not establishing itself in respect to the Latin American literary tradition it inherits, *El futuro no es nuestro* has a healthier relationship with its literary forebears acknowledging (rather than rejecting) the formative influence of the Boom (Trelles Paz 2011, 26). Put simply, Trelles Paz positions their intervention more appropriately as a continuation rather than a complete rupture. Secondly, *El futuro no es nuestro* is more authentically generational and collective than *McOndo* in that it was a collaborative project online bringing together 63 authors from 16 countries before coming together in its book form—unlike *McOndo*, whose idea and polemic were exclusively of the editors. Despite the nature of the generational anthology, this newer generation reject the literary-staging or

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[85] The Chilean author Álvaro Bisama has commented on how while *McOndo* seemed to be the most fallacious controversy of the 1990s, it has become true: '[l]a mejor falacia literaria de la década pasada fue el término *McOndo* que la dupla Fuguet/Gómez patentó con cierta sorna punk y que los puristas leyeron como un gesto de parricidio contra García Márquez y cía. Lo interesante es que McOndo era más que un movimiento, una marca, un logo que daba cuenta de una intuición que después de leer las obras de Bolaño, Bayly, Fresán y el mismo Fuguet, se ha vuelto cierta: la globalización ha cambiado para siempre el imaginario latinoamericano y las escrituras que se hacen cargo de él' (Bisama 2003).

[86] 'Queremos que nos lean, sí, pero sin los incentivos ni condicionamientos extraliterarios impuestos por los intereses del mercado que estigmatizan y simplifican nuestras propias diferencias' (Trelles Paz 2011, 26).

[87] 'Queremos que nos lean, cierto, pero sin permitir que pongan sobre nuestros hombros ese pasado literario estupendo y, sin duda, formativo, de los escritores del *Boom*, nuestros queridísimos monstruos del aprendizaje' (Trelles Paz 2011, 26).

[88] '[C]ombatir el aislamiento editorial interno en el que está sumida la región (la imposibilidad que tiene un ecuatoriano o un uruguayo para leer en un libro impreso a un paraguayo o a un guatemalteco)' (Trelles Paz 2011, 25). It seems obvious but is worth noting, that this barrier between national and international circulation is one which every generation and every individual author who covets international circulation will encounter during their career, highlighting the inherently hierarchical structure of literary space-time between the old and new entrants, as Bourdieu had identified (2017). It is also probable that the national framework will continue to conspire against this transcendence as long as literary spaces continue to be read, marketed, and understood through the nation, making circulation at the supranational level of Latin American literary space an exclusive privilege only for those of greater recognition and reading appeal, and which will be mediated by both commercial conditions and the previous encounters with the so-called Latin American literature.

commercial marketing of themselves in the way the Boom and *McOndo* had done previously: '[t]he window is open now: without onomatopoeias nor sticky prefixes. Without the marketing of the rock stars nor the ultra-cool pose of the writer that looks-but-doesn't-look at the flashes of the cameras'[89] (Trelles Paz 2011, 27). There is an awareness of the perspective of the literary critic apparent in this prologue in how it fulfils the function of a paratext for position the anthology in a broader literary and generic tradition, carefully details the stories and some of their major common themes, and what this proposal is to be interpreted to mean. Compared to the journalistic and punchy tone of Fuguet and Gómez's prologue, the prologue to *El futuro no es nuestro* is expressed with a calculated and nuanced language typical of an academic *habitus* akin to Becerra's prologue (explained perhaps in part by Trelles Paz's experience as professor of Spanish-American literature at the University of Binghamton in New York).

This anthology, along with others such as those intervening into United States literary space[90], have undoubtedly learned from the controversies of the past resulting from *McOndo* and *Se habla español*—evident in the latter with the disuse of the term "Latino/a" in describing the contributors and texts now presented as "literatura en español" (Literature in Spanish) or "narrativa latinoamericana" (Latin American narrative). While these anthologies develop in respect to *McOndo* and other anthologies of this generation, they in so doing, both build upon their work and pay homage to their efforts and impact both overtly, through a written recognition of their significance, but also less obviously, in their very existence in replicating an anthological model which was deemed—in the end—to be a successful means of visibility, entering circulation, and gaining literary canonisation. Whether these anthologies will be remembered or even canonised in the same way as the *McOndo* anthology, without the kind of critical corpus and generational symbol which it became due in part to the essential canonising ingredient of *controversy*, is yet to be seen, but remains somewhat doubtful.

Conclusion

Beyond the oft-cited editorial selection of *McOndo*, there are numerous other factors which have contributed to the anthology's canonisation, the most significant of which I have

[89] 'La ventana está abierta ahora: sin onomatopeyas ni prefijos pegajosos. Sin el *marketing* de las estrellas de rock ni la pose del escritor ultra *cool* que mira-pero-no-mira el destello de los *flashes*' (Trelles Paz 2011, 27).

[90] Anthologies already mentioned, such as *América Nuestra: antología de narrativa en español en Estados Unidos* (Tres Aguas, 2011), *Sam no es mi tío: veinticuatro crónicas migrantes y un sueño americano* (Alfaguara, 2012), and *Estados hispanos de América: narrativa latinoamericana made in USA* (Sudaquia Editores, 2016), which have, at the very least, not generated polemics in identity politics by avoiding terms like Latino which caused problems for anthologies such as *Se habla español* and *Growing up Latino* (See: Stavans 2017).

explored in this chapter. The controversial proposals of the *McOndo* anthology assisted in making visible common problems across the region, as well as some broad approaches to literature which this generation of writers had developed in isolation from each other. As such, *McOndo* is one of the early and the first truly regional interventions into these issues that were being raised across Latin America predominantly within national frameworks. The academic attention, whilst originally quite negative, has also contributed to its canonisation as a watershed moment in Latin American letters, which focused attention and functioned as instruments in the promotion and internationalisation of some of this generation's literary voices. Nowadays, the polemical claims of the prologue appear, in some senses, less controversial, and can be interpreted, as this work does, particularly in the previous chapters, as literary strategic methods with a variety of ends.

McOndo is additionally consecrated as the first anthology to bring together authors from this new literary generation, one which it also assisted to define, as Edmundo Paz Soldán (2018) recently stated: '[a] couple of decades have passed since those anthologies and we the writers who began publishing in the nineties became, the great majority without wanting to, part of the McOndo generation or the Crack generation'[91] (28). The subsequent anthologies and conventions which have not only drawn from *McOndo*'s selection but also taken as points of discussion its concerns such as the I Encuentro de Escritores Latinoamericanos in Seville, and its collection of essays *Palabra de América*, or the *Our America* colloquium at the University of South Florida in 2016, and the subsequent publication of papers in *McCrack* (Brescia and Estrada 2018), continue to vindicate it from its original backlash and enshrine it as an indispensable text of the recent Latin American literary canon. Added to this are the numerous voices from this literary generation, the next, as well as from the Boom, that continue to affirm some of its central pronouncements, as well as positively evaluate its impact in retrospect.

As such, while *McOndo* never represented a literary movement per se, the anthology itself as a text, and especially its prologue, are without a doubt a canonised moment in Latin American literary history. However, what does this mean? How can an anthology, such as *McOndo*, or a prologue penned by Fuguet and Gómez, enter into a canon when it is not a narrative text, nor did it have a popular reception? This is part of what could be considered the contradiction of the *McOndo* canonisation, as well as the call to answer this question of what

[91] 'Han pasado un par de décadas desde aquellas antologías y los escritores que comenzamos a publicar en los noventa nos convertimos, la gran mayoría sin quererlo, en parte de la generación *McOndo* o la generación del Crack' (Paz Soldán 2018, 28).

constitutes canonisation which will be discussed further in the next and final chapter. However, Paz Soldán (2018), once again, offers a useful perspective which could serve as a measure of this continually referenced canonical moment:

> *McOndo* had a kind of sublime negative effect which permitted it to be a channel through which necessary things for literature at that moment were discussed [...] *McOndo* promised more than it accomplished; but in spite of that, it remains there, something which has been left for dead a thousand times and still manages to reappear[92] (28).

[92] '*McOndo* tuvo una suerte de efecto negativo sublime que le permitió ser el canal a través del cual se discutieron cosas necesarias para la literatura de ese momento [...] *McOndo* prometió más de lo que cumplió; pese a ello, sigue ahí, algo que se da por muerto mil veces y se las ingenia para reaparecer' (Paz Soldán 2018, 28).

Part 5: CODA

Chapter 9: Informing World Literature Theories and Methodologies

On the one hand, the question at the heart of this thesis has been what can world literature theories and methodologies—more specifically, Casanova's—, inform about *McOndo* and the end-of-century Latin American literature? On the other hand, the secondary and no less significant aim has been to evaluate the usefulness and effectiveness of Casanova's theoretical and methodological instruments in analysing this end-of-century temporal and spatial context, works, and authors. This second aim responds to the consideration by a number of world literature theorists, practitioners, and commentators that more collective work needs to be done in this emerging theoretical space (Beecroft 2008, 2015; Casanova 2005, 2007; Moretti 2000a, 2003; Sánchez Prado 2019), and developed in series such as *Latin American Literatures in the World/Literaturas latinoamericanas en el mundo* edited by Gesine Müller with De Gruyter[1]. In that vein, my intention has been to provide a specifically Latin American case study from which with concrete sociohistorical, material, and literary examples, inform this growing theoretical and methodological space.

As will be explored herewith, Casanova's methodology has been executed mostly according to the way it was outlined in the early methodology chapters, and as expounded in *The World Republic of Letters* and tested in *Kafka, Angry Poet*: a back-and-forth macroscopic and microscopic analysis of literary spaces, to construct a historical and authorial genealogy of literary periodisations and developments, in order to inform better our close reading of texts and authorial position-takings. Having begun through a contextualisation of the methodological and theoretical tools at hand in this thesis, proceeded through an analysis of the case study anthology, its context, the prologue and the stories, and returned once again to the macro-level context to analyse the state of contemporary Latin American letters in respect to its intervention, the process of microscopic and macroscopic analysis has been conducted. As such, it is now worthwhile, in a process of critical reflexivity—in the Bourdieusian sense—, to *return* to theory and methodology *sensu stricto*, before concluding this work.

[1] This series has been a fruitful source of research on Latin American literature informed by world literary studies, and to date includes five volumes: *Re-mapping World Literature* (Müller et al. 2018); *Landscape's Revenge* (Yurgel 2018); *De la literature latinoamericana a la literature (latinoamericana) mundial* (Locane 2019); *World Literature, Cosmopolitanism, Globality* (Müller et al. 2019); and *Literatura latinoamericana mundial* (Guerrero et al. 2020).

To this end, this chapter will surmise and speculate. Firstly, this will be done by surmising and evaluating the implementation of this theory and methodology, essentially clarifying the procedure which has been executed in order to uncover new interpretations of these texts and contexts. In other words, outline what has been done and how it is different to Casanova's approach. And secondly, consider the augmentations and changes to theory and methodology that have had to be employed, and may need to be considered for future studies, in order to make sound conclusions.

9.1.1 Casanova's theory and *McOndo*

As was explored at the beginning of this thesis, there is an extent to which Casanova's criticism has been amplified by the controversies which have surrounded it since its pronouncement, and the apparent demand to be critical of her intervention (a clear example of how critical works, much like fictional works, are constructed and canonised via their reception). However, as Catelli (2017) has argued, critical receptions continue to appear polarised between what she calls euphoric inclusive cosmopolitans and reluctant confrontational cosmopolitans. Against the grain of the mainstream confrontational reception of Casanova's work, it has been my intention to approach the theory and methodology from a more middle-ground perspective: neither blinded to its problems by a euphoric inclusivity, nor denying its benefits by close-minded confrontationism.

In Casanova's theoretical and methodological model, the critic's own parameters need not be forced onto the literary case studies, swaying a conformation to a predetermined plan, argument, or ideology. Instead, it holds the capacity for mutually informing processes between the text and theory proper to a grounded theoretical model. As such, this procedure does not undermine one for the sake of the other, which often is the case in the routine application of theory onto texts without regard for the applicability of this method, but instead, upholds the proper autonomy of each: the model and the text. Owing to this critical autonomy, this research has placed greater emphasis and to some extent departed from Casanova's procedure, in a number of ways, which point to the flexibility of her model when faced with new and specific analytical parameters. For example, in this study there has been greater recourse to a number of areas which Casanova diminished in her own case studies but which nevertheless underpin her theoretical basis on Bourdieu: namely, his concepts of *habitus* and *illusio*, which were explored principally in the analysis of the trajectory of the authors

This is apparent in the recourse to authorial *habitus*, and how the social identity of an author (while explored less in *The World Republic*, and in more detail in *Kafka, Angry Poet*)

affects not only their literary trajectory (such as was shown with Fresán and Valencia), but also in some cases their literary projects (such as was demonstrated with Fuguet, Gómez, Soler, Paz Soldán). This *habitus* is as much apparent in the early formation of an author, seen in the highly literary upbringing of an author such as Rodrigo Fresán, when compared to the familial resistance which Leonardo Valencia encountered during his personal literary pursuit. In another respect, Alberto Fuguet's authorial dictum "si no duele no vale" (If it doesn't hurt, it has no worth), a motto he would convey during his writing workshop at *La Zona de Contacto*, would also manifest itself quite personally in his own writing. This is most apparent in the numerous works of autofiction in which can be perceived a continual overlapping of his character's familial and intimate lives and his own: most especially seen in *Missing: una investigación*, *No ficción*, and *Sudor*, but also perceptible through an interpretation of *McOndo from* the perspective of this *habitus*, that is, seeing this socio-cultural reclamation as a personal plight for the recognition of his way of being Latin American.

However, the *habitus* is also constituted through the macro-level *illusio* regarding the imbalance in literariness of Latin American spaces. This literary credit or lack thereof—which is conditioned as much by material as by symbolic factors (the latter belonging to the realm of *illusio*)—of a particular space, affects the relative opportunity for internationalisation available to authors. This is apparent in the example of the anthology *Buenos Aires*, in which Carlos Barral approached Juan Forn in search of literary voices in Argentina for his anthology, an idea no doubt predicated on the belief that a nation such as Argentina, with its rich literary history and milieu, would have numerous voices of interest for Spanish and later Latin American readership. Even *McOndo*'s production within Chilean literary space, where the popular formula of the anthology had been tested through *Cuentos con walkman* (and earlier successes), and the generational marketing of *la nueva narrativa chilena* had been greatly effective, are suggestive of the *illusio*, no doubt present in the minds of Grijalbo Mondadori, that Chile would be an ideal field to propose a similar project at a continental level. The fact that this process of discovery or generational projection was not executed in spaces such as Costa Rica and Ecuador meant that these writers had to depend more on the internationalising opportunity afforded in *McOndo* and subsequent anthologies, with evident varying results. As such, the disparate trajectories of authors from richly literary spaces such as Argentina, in the case of Rodrigo Fresán and Juan Forn, when compared to writers from more dominated spaces such as Leonardo Valencia in Ecuador or Rodrigo Soto in Costa Rica, highlights the unevenness and competition within Latin American literary space, inequalities based and perpetuated as much by material as by symbolic factors.

The importance of the exploration of *habitus* also becomes apparent in the assessment of the trajectories of authors such as Alberto Fuguet, Sergio Gómez, Jordi Soler, and Edmundo Paz Soldán. A number of the position-takings within the *McOndo* prologue are more closely related to Fuguet's *habitus* than Gómez's. The rejection of the politicisation of their literature can be related to Fuguet's reaction against his highly hostile and politicised years at university, in which his politics and identity did not conform to the Left-wing ecology at the Universidad de Chile within the broader context of the Pinochet Dictatorship (from which he also felt alienated). *McOndo*'s reclamation of a more plural conception of Latin American identity through an acceptance of the authenticity of contemporary, and particularly United States hybridisations of Latin America, can also be related to Fuguet's *habitus*, as a personal as much as a regional battle to have his hybrid identity as an Americanised Chilean vindicated as a modern and legitimate way to be Latin American. These battles were not only much less personal for Sergio Gómez at the moment of the publication of *McOndo*, but his contribution to these debates debuted and ended with *McOndo*, a mantle which was taken up by Edmundo Paz Soldán.

Paz Soldán's discovery of his literary peers gave his literary creativity further meaning, as it situated itself within much of the generation's reclamation of contemporary realities, and their narrative exploration of mass media and technology. Nevertheless, his wilful and circumstantial approximation to *McOndo* had the effect of converting him into somewhat of a spokesperson for *McOndo*—rightly or wrongly—, particularly due to his positioning in the United States academy, but also because of his academic and literary investment into the bourgeoning analysis of *McOndo* and the broader generation. As such, it appears as though Edmundo Paz Soldán's *habitus*, of which his academic formation is a constitutive part, facilitated his strategic positioning within these important debates. Due to his knowledge of the literary and academic games he was able to use his critical significance to increase his prominence within this generation's metadiscourse, as well as allowing it to inform his work aesthetically until the natural exhaustion of this style. His success has also been demonstrated in his ability to detect and pre-empt emerging literary concerns and trends, from the increase in the narration of the United States in Spanish, and the rise in popularity and credit of the speculative genre.

The second concept which required greater attention in this study, compared to Casanova's implicit use of it throughout her work, is the *illusio*, and how the very autonomous and heteronomous forces, in particular the national pole, enter the very psyche of the author and critics of this time. The *illusio*—simply put, the belief in the literary game and the value

of its stakes—, is altogether apparent in the emergence of the generational metadiscourse in which the literary game and its competing camps begins to be exposed. Firstly, through the isolated nationally staged interventions from *Moho* to *Cuentos con walkman*, and secondly, through the regionalisation of this discourse to generational proportions beginning with congresses and notably through *McOndo* and the later anthologies analysed in the previous chapter. One of the principal concerns of a number of these interventions was the parochial nationalism and the established regional horizons of expectation (such as *macondismo*) through which their works were being interpreted. As such, these writers were combating an *illusio*, particularly significant since the Postboom—but a constant throughout Latin America's literary history—, that one of their duties as authors was that their literature put forward the nation, in other words, to reinforce the social and extra-literary functions of a text to the nation, as Valencia diagnosed with his Falcón Syndrome. The extent and continued effects of this *illusio* are apparent when one considers the critical reception of many of these interventions and particularly of *McOndo*, such as in Palaversich's call to represent the Third World Macondo, and Echevarría's criticism of the apparent lack of local linguistic verisimilitude. The metadiscourses surrounding the emergence of this literary generation highlight their desire to be read and interpreted on their own terms, obviously in contradistinction from the Boom and Postboom, but also through the very autonomy which sought distance from these parochial national contexts and greater proximity to international and universal literary recognition.

Despite the considerable push to autonomy within their creative texts and metadiscourses, there is an extent to which a number of the *illusios* during this time continue to persist or are replaced with newer more powerful paradigms. One such *illusio* has been promulgated by the rise in influence of the commercial pole on literary production. This is apparent in the spread of Spanish publishing empires (such as Planeta, Grijalbo Mondadori, and Alfaguara), and their incursions into Latin American territories during the 80s and 90s, and the concentration of large swathes of publications with a high level of visibility in recent times within Planeta and Penguin Random House. The *illusio* produced are twofold, firstly, there is an increased association between commercial success and literary value. This in turn has the effect of perpetuating a long-standing second and related *illusio*: the belief that those texts circulating at the international level, usually those texts published in Spain which are permitted simultaneous circulation across numerous national spaces, are interpreted as of greater literary value than those solely circulating at the national level or only within neighbouring spaces. As such, there is an extent to which the internationalising thrust of this generation of authors, and their eventual consecration at this level has, in fact, participated and benefitted from the *illusio*

that international success and, specifically the double-crossing of the Atlantic, is both a sign of literary value, as well as necessary for entrance into Latin American literary canonisation.

It is here that Casanova's (and Beecroft's) theory and methodology is in contradistinction from many models which continue to insist on the study of world literature, such as Damrosch's claim that world literature is literature that gains in translation, and which tend to focus exclusively on those internationalised texts. Casanova and Beecroft's models analyse texts within the fields or ecologies in which they circulate, allowing for more complex and multilayered analyses of texts across space and time. Casanova's assessment of the complicated and polycentric structure of contemporary world literary space is further understood and nuanced through the significance of reception in distinct national spaces. This is apparent in the various instances of literary conquest traced by the strategic anthologies either side of *McOndo*: *Cuentos con walkman* representing the conquest of national literary circulation, *McOndo* incarnating the dream of Latin American circulation back-and-forth across the Atlantic, and *Se habla español, Líneas aéreas*, and *Les bonnes nouvelles*, representing the longing for recognition within the triumvirate of Latin American literary consecration in the literary fields of Spain, the United States, and France. As such, there appears less to be a particularly dominant literary capital per se, as much as there is an increasingly polycentric significance of Barcelona and Madrid (or even Germany through Bertelsmann, who own Penguin) for canonisation within the Spanish linguistic subspace, and Paris and New York, for consecration into the most significant literary languages of world literary space.

And yet, while there is an extent to which there has been a shift in the global canonising potential of Paris through the rise of New York City, as a new global capital of capitals—seen particularly for Latin American writers through the phenomenon of Roberto Bolaño—, nevertheless, while the flocking of numerous Latin American writers to New York City might resemble, in part, the attraction which Paris historically played for literary and artistic creativity during the 20th Century, presence and participation in that milieu are not sufficient for literary success, neither there nor back home. The experience of Naief Yehya is significant in demonstrating this; his work narrativises the experience of the disheartening panorama of Spanish-language literary production in the United States. His very trajectory has not been impacted greatly by inhabiting this purported capital of capitals, which confirms that taking advantage of one's presence in a literary capital is a complicated affair. Unlike Rubén Darío's 'renovation', noted by Casanova (2007, 96-7) and problematised by Gustavo Guerrero (2007)—when he acknowledged Darío's contribution to Latin American letters but noted his comparative invisibility in Paris—, literary reformations of this kind may be a thing of the past,

owing to Latin America's approximation to the literary Greenwich Meridian thanks to the international book industry and the work of cultural publishers who translate works with considerable cultural capital from the rest of the world into the Spanish linguistic subspace.

The situation is also different owing to the distinctive structure of the potential, yet unprofitable, space of Latin American letters in the United States, a space with a modest mostly small-scale publishing industry and minor literary milieu, all which struggle for the construction of a literary readership in Spanish among the almost 60 million Latinos and Hispanics in the United States. Further conspiring against the consolidation of this subnational space, is the strategy of relying on success in their countries of origin, intermediary capitals such as Barcelona, Buenos Aires or Mexico City, or the option of linguistic assimilation by writing in English, as is the case with many Latino authors who have been the most successful within the space. All of these strategies are attempts to compensate and rebut their literary nonexistence within a developing space which, perhaps, should be considered to belong firstly to the Latin American literary field, before its properly geographical (but not necessarily literary) location within the United States.

9.2.1 Extensions to theory

9.2.2 The canon, canonisation structures, and the canonicity of a work

However, there are areas of theoretical and methodological augmentation bearing less resemblance to the Bourdieusian foundations of this work, and which nuance the fixity of aspects of Casanova's model. In rereading, rethinking, and reanalysing the canonisation of the *McOndo* anthology in the context of what theories and methodologies such as Casanova's have offered, the very concept of the canon and canonisation must re-enter the discussion.

As has been established, the traditional understanding of a literary canon as a list of works has been altogether reformulated by the rise of world literature as a heuristic method in which the very process of canonisation is critically assessed. Nevertheless, the question regarding which works are considered canonical still appears to linger when one begins to take notice of the works which are typically analysed through these processes, in effect further producing their canonisation[2]. Furthermore, how to conceptualise canonisation, the ways it is produced and how it can be measured is an enduring question, particularly when concerning

[2] There are numerous examples of this, from Moretti's (2000b) study of Arthur Conan Doyle in 'The Slaughterhouse of Literature', Damrosch's (2003) focus on *the Epic of Gilgamesh*, or even Casanova's book-length analyses of two of her revolutionaries of the 20th century in *Samuel Beckett. Anatomy of a Literary Revolution* (2006) and *Kafka, Angry Poet* (2015).

texts outside of the common understanding of the canon of world literature, i.e. the short story anthology, over the most archetypical and well-studied example of the novel.

These processes of canonisation highlight the structural dimension, that is, how literariness is imparted onto texts through structural processes of valorisation by a literary milieu, evaluations mediated, in turn, by social, cultural, religious, philosophical, historical, factors—in Beecroft's sense, how literature interacts with its ecology. However, consistent with the mutually informing back-and-forth analysis of the micro and macro levels of this methodology, it is possible, then, to also posit and highlight the *canonicity* of a text, in other words, a literary or canonical value, not present in an ontological sense, but interpreted as specific position-takings within this broader structure of cultural mediation and literarisation, that work in favour of its canonisation. This is already evidenced in the particular canonical value given to the novelistic genre over other artistic and literary genres such as the short story or theatre. Here I am not referring to a so-called "timeless" quality interior to specific works[3], but instead, to their *timely* quality, that is, in their textual capacity to generate the kind of reception favourable to their canonisation via extra-literary processes.

This conceptualisation of the quality of canonicity, allows for a further nuancing of the very understanding of canonisation, beyond the concept of a single universal canon, to an appreciation of the very multiple canons and respective valorisations and processes of canonisation, which responds to the need to historicise literary developments in multiple spaces. This is already acceptable in the literature when we speak of multiple canons at different strata of world literary space, say for example, national canons, or linguistic and regional canons, and the ever-problematic world literature canon. It is well known that the level of canonisation which we can speak of for one text, may not be the same in another region, so too, specific genres, such as the short story—while undervalued in many regions of the literature-world—, has a prestigious historical tradition in Latin America. Nevertheless, this category is complicated by a text such as the *McOndo* anthology, whose appearance, polemic, prolonged discourse, and presence, as well as continued reference and impact, all suggest its canonisation at the level of Latin American letters, but can be questioned when one considers that despite being an anthology of short stories—a highly valued genre—, it has been its prologue which has attracted the most attention over the very narrative texts themselves. As such, with this in mind, in addition to the region-specific *spaces* of literary canonisation, it is also appropriate to posit the variety of *kinds* of literary canonisation. Here, I do not mean simple

[3] In André Malraux's sense. See Allan (2009).

generic kinds—in the sense of novelistic or short story which I consider relating more to internal dynamics particular to each artistic field—, but rather, quite a precise mode of canonisation, but one not without its own history.

There is an extent to which the *McOndo* intervention bears resemblance to the very essayistic and ideological interventions across literary space and time, from the early calls for literary vernacularisation and linguistic emancipation studied in Casanova's (2007) conceptions of world literary space, from Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* and du Bellay's *La deffence et illustration de la langue françoyse*, to Beckett and Joyce's 'Dante . . . Bruno. Vico . . . Joyce'. Casanova (2007) states:

> [a]bove all, the Irish embrace of Dante reveals the extraordinary continuity of the formation and unification of world literary space. At a distance of almost six hundred years, Joyce and Beckett reactualized a founding text that constituted the first specific call for emancipation, the first revolt against a dominant order (then represented by Latin). Like du Bellay, who had also invoked him as the inventor of non-Latin poetical forms, Joyce and Beckett, finding themselves in a homologous position, made Dante and instrument of their own liberation (330).

In the same way in which Dante was not the inventor of non-Latin poetical forms, as he was characterised by du Bellay, but rather, the voice which reached the ears of the world in its specifically essayistic call for emancipation, for those lyrical poets and the like who were already experimenting in Tuscan or even Neapolitan vernaculars, similarly so, *McOndo* was not the first, but instead, the culmination and the most regionally vocal intervention into a number of issues raised by this generation of writers, a pronouncement calling for a different kind of emancipation, specifically a cultural, political, and literary one, a regional expression akin to the autonomising ideas in Borges' 1957 essay 'El escritor argentino y la tradición'.

It is in this sense, that the *McOndo* anthology represents both a typical and atypical case study for world literary theories and methodologies. On the one hand, *McOndo* contradicts many of the ingredients which one would consider typical for the canonisation of a text: from the absence of a substantial formal or aesthetic innovation, to its lack of commercial success. As was detailed in the previous analysis chapters, the themes and concerns which can be traced across these heterogeneous stories present themselves more as a culmination of already established explorations of urban experiences, pop culture and mass media, and language. And in terms of the commercial success, *McOndo* cannot be considered anything other than a failure, having only been edited twice in the same year, had little repercussion in the public sphere, and had mostly been read by critics and literary peers—although this precondition for canonisation suits a more mercantilistic sense of literary canonisation within the paradigm of influence of the commercial pole. Furthermore, *McOndo* does not even represent a text in the same class as what we consider the majority of canonised texts to be: mostly novels but at times

short story anthologies such as Borges' *Ficciones* or *El Aleph*. *McOndo* is an anthology of which its prologue has drawn more attention than its stories.

However, on the other hand it is typical, in that it can be conceived, as it has been here, as a strategic publication seeking to put forward a generational statement to make visible and identify the generation's works through the creation of a polemic and metadiscourse. *McOndo*, in that sense, confirms many of the inner workings and laws of literary space which Casanova had identified, and yet it resists being conceived as being canonised in the same way as most texts. In grappling with this contradiction, it is thus necessary to recognise that the canonisation of *McOndo* is a specifically symbolic and discursive kind, in the same sense as Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia*, du Bellay's *The Defense and Illustration of the French Language*, or Borges' 'El escritor argentino y la tradición'. *McOndo* is a work which will not stand alongside, but, *beside* the celebrated novels and short story collections within the annals of the Latin American literary canon, but this does not mean that it did not, in effect, like many of these significant texts, historicise and temporalise Latin American literature. *McOndo* is one of the first signs at the regional level of this generation's intentional expression of autonomy, an autonomy which is expressed in an urgent and necessary opposition to their literary contexts and predecessors in order to distance themselves from those enduring parochial horizons of expectation. It is an anthology which concentrated a discourse around this issue largely out of the polemics which it generated. In one sense, we can speak of *McOndo*'s canonisation as owing to this polemic, a kind of canonisation via infamy, rather than positive acclaim, which—for its impact of contributing to the consolidation and understanding of this generation and its proposals—benefits *McOndo* in the long run, as an indispensable text for the periodisation of this moment in Latin American literary history.

9.2.3 Authorial typologies

Casanova's typologies of author, which attempt to fix the ultimate positioning of authors as either national or international (and within this second category differentiationist, assimilationist, or revolutionary), appear, from the perspective of this research, as in some senses problematic.

Part of this problem spurs from the question of time, as when the critic has at their disposal an author's complete *œuvre*, their extra-literary reflections and complete trajectory, it is conceivable to make more generalised conclusions about their ultimate literary struggle, as Casanova has done with a few figures from Kafka to Beckett. Nevertheless, when dealing with incomplete trajectories, for the most part, as well as incomplete archives of extra-literary

commentary or reflections (usually in the form of letters, or journals), theoretical and methodological modifications are required.

However, just because there is a current lack of archival and historical material to make these kinds of general conclusions about contemporary literary history, it does not mean that the critic is entirely ill-disposed to make more specific assertions about an author's intentions. One of the benefits of this synchronous perspective is that there is little temptation, on the part of the critic, to make generalised or fixed arguments due to the obvious reason that the future works of an author are yet unknown. As such, without the temptation to construct a unifying narrative (if a unifying narrative is always applicable), the critic may even be better positioned to take account of the very nuance and polyvalence of each author's position-takings. In such circumstances, I argue Casanova's *authorial* typologies could be more appropriately applied as typologies of *works*, highlighting the flexibility or variety of an author's struggle(s), rather than fixing an ultimate, unified, and life-long authorial intention (at least for the time being).

For example, the ways in which Alberto Fuguet's interventions in the *McOndo* polemic, as well as through his U.S.-centred narratives, such as *Las películas de mi vida* and *Missing: una investigación*, can be related to personal reclamations of his Americanised Latin American identity, there are a different kinds of interventions apparent in his most recent filmic (through his film *Invierno*) and narrative (*No ficción*, and *Sudor*) autofiction, which he used to intervene (on his own terms) into the bourgeoning field of LGBT fiction. Similarly, Edmundo Paz Soldán's literary trajectory can be understood as quite multifaceted: beginning with a period of influence from Borges and the recent classics of Latin American literature, into a McOndo phase of literary production, then into a period in which the United States as a literary territory and contested space of circulation appears as an urgent struggle, and recently his incursions into science fiction. In this sense, we can see how the varying character, aesthetics, discourses, and polemics of these particular works actualise distinct literary struggles throughout their authorial trajectory. Alberto Fuguet's earliest works, such as *Mala onda* and *Sobredosis* can be read as national works intent on distorting out-dated conceptions of the national popular with the forceful proposition of a renewed perspective, a conception which was met with critical rejection, but which nonetheless was commercially successful enough to modify conceptions of the Chilean national present. But this does not make him an exclusively national author.

There is an extent to which this polyvalence is a result of the very evolution of an author's literary awakening, formation, and maturity, as they begin to find their own narrative voice or literary vocation more generally. The case studies in the thesis add further nuance and appear to dispel altogether a persistent myth of the completely formed author, an idea, in part,

generated from the unifying and generalised reading of an author's literary works. The examples, here analysed, have present authors in the very process of developing their authorial interventions and struggles, whether they be multiple or single, in regard to genre, politics, aesthetics, cultural discussions, personal vindications, or only some, all, or even none of these.

Key examples of this are the narrative evolutions of David Toscana, Jordi Soler, Sergio Gómez, and Edmundo Paz Soldán. Early in their careers, the two Mexicans experimented with narrative themes and codes which could be considered a part of the McOndo aesthetic. However, in later publications, and including through extra-literary commentary on Toscana's part, they have distanced themselves from this contemporary sensibility concerned with the rise of narratives of young adults in urban settings and interspersed with pop cultural intertext. It is as though, for Toscana and Soler, their early texts were attempts to assimilate their writing to broader tendencies apparent in Mexican letters and across the region, a narrative position-taking which they both would later revert. For Toscana, this would be by way of a discovery of his more profoundly held commitment to the primacy of narrative prose rather than recourse to codes for the communication of emotions, ideas, images, or actions. And for Soler—particularly through his debut novel *Bocafloja*—, this can be interpreted, to some extent, as an assimilation of style, a presentation of an urbanised self, one which would be superseded upon his move to Europe, which was instrumental in the vindication of the importance of his provincial childhood, resulting in his recent narrative exploration of history, the province, and the fantastical style.

Similarly, throughout Sergio Gómez's trajectory, there are signs of development, particularly in regard to genre, which point to the case for considering an author's trajectory in and through its evolution. While Gómez was associated early in his writing career with the *nueva narrativa chilena*, and later through his association with Alberto Fuguet—as contemporary urban writers concerned with young-adult literature—, upon the discovery of his passion for the detective genre he has focused his literary production in this space, as well as returned to the setting of the province, something which he puts down to his real-life provincial origins. Similarly to Toscana's, Gómez's writing passed through a period of experimentation with contemporary urban style—a kind of ascent of influence from North American writers such as Douglas Coupland and Bret Easton Ellis—before discovering a more deeply-held literary vocation and passion for the detective genre. Edmundo Paz Soldán's trajectory, on the other hand, appears somewhat reversed, in how to begin with his literature developed the areas of metafiction and paradox, influenced by Borges and a number of writers from the Boom. And yet, after his encounter with his contemporary literary peers, he discovered and explored a

different literary style which assimilated him with texts concerned with accounting for the experiences of a contemporary urban Latin America at the crossroads of its most recent globalised, mass mediatised, and pop cultural realities.

However, if the unfinished state of the works of these authors may be one issue, this is not resolved entirely through the natural death of any given author. Even if we were to consider the entire *œuvre* of the only deceased contributor to *McOndo*, Gustavo Escanlar, there is an extent to which, while he has finished his own process of production, this very work has still not finished being produced. This is evident in its critical re-evaluation by recent anthologies (*grandes éxitos, un cuento y una despedida*, 2013) purporting to reclaim his literary quality away from his polemic public persona. In responding to the infinite curiosity and thirst for knowledge of the investigative mind, the very provisional nature of texts and their authors must be retained so as not to fall into fixist or immobile analyses.

Furthermore, what becomes apparent from these comparisons, is that the typical application of these typologies appears predicated on a singular national framework or perspective, over and above a multi-perspectival one. In other words, could not the differentiationist and the assimilationist approaches be considered two sides of the same coin? That is, to differentiate one's literary identity is a form of assimilation to local colour, style, influence, and assimilation to a foreign sensibility, conversely, be considered differentiation from a national tradition. These distinctions are important because they afford greater complexity at the moment of characterising an authorial position-taking as propelled out of negative (in terms of negation) or positive forces (in terms of affirmation). In this sense, owing to the strongly negative definition of the McOndo proposal, it is possible to understand this not exclusively as an assimilation into foreign form or ideology, but more properly a differentiation from national traditions, quite a distinctive procedure.

And these typologies must not be reduced solely to national traditions either, why not generic, aesthetic, or political also? That is, for example, Alberto Fuguet's apparent assimilation into queer fiction is framed in his own sense as quite singular, not as a collapse into genre (like Gómez's into children or detective fiction), but a bringing into higher literary discourses these popular generic themes. When asked in an interview after his publication of *No ficción* if he considered himself a gay writer, he responded: 'I consider myself a gay guy who writes. I hope to be diverse. Not stay static'[4] (in Gómez Bravo 2015). Even reviews of

[4] 'Me considero un tipo gay que escribe. Espero ser diverso. No quedarme pegado' (Fuguet in Gómez Bravo 2015, 85).

Sudor have emphasised this point, suggesting that '[b]ut to say that it is queer literature, as some have insinuated, is silly. It's like saying that *Moby Dick* is a book about whales. *Sudor* is a great and ambitious novel, which breaks moulds and doesn't take prisoners'[5] (Edwards 2016). As such, at this stage in Fuguet's career—as much as in others—, it is clear that he is aware of the rules of the literary game, and attempts—both narratively and discursively—to avoid being categorised into genres which might diminish his literary standing, or characterise his work as static, something which would render his literature repetitive and less worthy of attention (something which, as has been shown, Jaime Bayly's literature has experienced). Similarly in Edmundo Paz Soldán's case, it is possible to see his narratives set in the United States as much as forms of assimilation into Latino Literature, but also, as a form of differentiation even within this field, owing to his insistence on the building up of the Spanish-language splinter of this tradition.

These case studies illustrate a number of extensions and modifications which appear as significant alterations to Casanova's theory when dealing with this context and time. Firstly, anthologies appear to shift the typical theorisations of canonisation used in World literature theories, which have a tendency to argue from the most obvious and basic examples of literary canonicity: the novel. These kinds of case studies, far from *a fortiori* arguments, deal with the most paradigmatic example, no doubt because it has most captivated global letters in the last few centuries. However, examples such as the *McOndo* anthology, provide a contradictory case study: typical, for how it plays and manipulates the literary game; and atypical, for its canonisation, which appears to contradict the standard acceptance of canonisation through favourable criticism and in recent times, commercial success. As such, it is possible to envision how this theory can be expanded to account, not only for the structural mediations of the canonisation process (the external analysis), but also those elements of a text which facilitate its canonisation, that is, the canonicity of the text (the internal analysis). Furthermore, in dealing with the incomplete trajectories of many of these writers who are still alive and producing literature, the critic is left unable to create reliable generalised and unified readings of an author's work. In circumstances such as these, the critic is able to account for the very polyvalence of a writer's work, predicated on the fact that the vocations of writers are neither entirely narrow nor predetermined, but are seen to be in a process of evolution, through which the author gradually discovers their literary vocation. And moreover, the truly

[5] 'Pero decir que es literatura gay, como algunos han insinuado, es una tontería. Es como decir que Moby Dick es un libro sobre ballenas. *Sudor* es una novela grande y ambiciosa, que quiebra moldes y que no toma prisioneros' (Edwards 2016).

multiperspectival interpretations of different position-takings can be rethought beyond the traditional categories of the nation of origin, or the normative genre, but as multidirectional, affording greater complexity in these accounts.

9.2.4 Theorising the structure of Latin American literary space

A fundamental question in this research, which can also be elucidated through world literary theories, is the question of the structure of Latin American literary space. It is important to recall that Casanova's (2005) conception of the literature-world and its hierarchy is multifaceted, stating that literary, linguistic, and politico-economic domination takes many forms that 'overlap, interpenetrate and obscure one another to such an extent that often only the most obvious form—political-economic domination—can be seen' (86). Consistent with this warning, it is possible to see how many arguments attempting to account for Latin American literary space have overstated one or another of these three forms of domination, and which, as a result, are incapable of assimilating the often contradictory-seeming cases of Latin American literary production and the structure of this space.

Out of Mariano Siskind's (2014) arguments—theorisation clearly predicated on Benedict Anderson's discursive work—, that the 'world' in world literature is a purely discursive space generated out of the cosmopolitan desires of international authors, one could perhaps maintain that other territories, such as Latin American literary space, similarly represent authorial projections. This discursive claim certainly takes into view those acts of discursive worlding which are endogenous to Latin American literary space. As has been shown in this thesis, the exogenous interlocutors in the discursive debate were readily identified by whole swathes of isolated yet generational movements by writers of the 1960s from *McOndo*, to the Crack, and even by writers such as Carlos Cortés. In his essay 'La literatura latinoamericana (ya) no existe', Cortés highlighted the role which the literature of the Boom played as a reading effect in the construction of a cohesive and marketable global identity for the region. These could be considered two sides of the same literary-discursive construction of a Latin American cultural imaginary akin to Casanova's *illusio* of the place of Latin American letters within world literary space, and yet, alone, by considering this as a largely discursive reality, these explanations are incapable of taking into account the ways in which these authorial perceptions and (re)actions are made to interact through the material publishing realities.

Moving away from these discursively defined explanations, Ana Gallego Cuiñas (2018, 3) argues that the largest conglomerates publishing Latin American literature (Planeta and

Penguin Random House), challenge the possibility of considering this space as a Bourdieusian field, and instead highlights the need to substitute it with William Marling's (2016) term: "transcultural market" (4). That is, similar to the critiques made by Latinamericanists attempting to collapse Casanova's autonomous literary structure back into political and economic explanations, in Gallego Cuiñas' commercially centred analysis, the "Latin American" is a 'device', a 'good', and

> not the conjunction of a language and an abstract cultural ideation, but a product which in the 21st Century is subordinated to a neoliberal logic pierced by two poles of force which overlap each other in the market: the large conglomerates (global mode of production) and the independent publishers (local mode of production)[6] (3).

While it may seem more necessary than ever to bring to analyses profound evaluations of the ways in which the global neoliberal capitalist market is transforming the literary world, to claim that this advanced mercantilist structure does away with abstract cultural imaginaries or cultural ideations, which have a profound impact on what is allowed to succeed and circulate within these commercial apparatuses, is to deny the very non-material aspects to this inequality: from the symbolic realities, *illusio*, and linguistic hierarchies.

Alexander Beecroft, in his analysis of the global literary ecology, provides perhaps one of the most astute ways to consider Latin American literature within the global/world literature paradigm: as a world unto itself. That is, building on the work of Abram de Swaan, Beecroft (2015) hierarchises linguistic dominance on a scale from the dominant world languages (English and French), Regional World-Languages (Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Arabic, Chinese, Hindi/Urdu, Malay/Indonesian), Major National Languages, Minor National Languages, Minority Languages, to Endangered Languages (259-79). Beecroft (2015) theorises the structure of these linguistic spaces of Regional World-Languages as worlds in and of themselves, that is, he makes a distinction between regional worlds and the global world:

> I identity these languages as regional world-languages (with a hyphen between world and languages), because their role is less that of languages *of* the world, in the way that English and French truly cover the planet, than languages *that constitute* worlds. The populations that speak these languages are vast enough, geographically proximate enough, and interconnected enough that the Hispanosphere, Lusosphere, Sinosphere, and so forth function as worlds unto themselves (269).

While not yet achieving the same level of global currency as English or French, these regional world-languages, nevertheless, present enormous national or regional spaces of linguistic dominance in the greater global strata. They are, as it were, worlds within worlds, competing in a unified sense in the upper strata and constituted by polycentric competition in the internal

[6] '[L]a ‹‹latinoamericana›› no es la conjunción de una lengua y un ideario cultural en abstracto, sino una mercancía que en el siglo XXI está subordinada a una lógica neoliberal atravesada por dos líneas de fuerza que se superponen en el mercado: los grandes conglomerados (modo de producción global) y las editoriales independientes (modo de producción local)' (Gallego Cuiñas 2018, 3).

sphere between national spaces. Keeping in mind Beecroft's simple theoretical solution, the obvious issue is that—despite attempting to explore certain aesthetic factors—, he largely collapses his analysis of global dominance into a linguistically determined panorama.

Considering Latin American literary space as a world in itself, constituted by its linguistic significance, is perhaps the model most assimilable within Casanova's theoretical conceptualisation. Let us recall, that even though Casanova appeared to treat Latin America as a unified conglomerate of national spaces in *The World Republic of Letters*, in other research (Casanova 2009), she has highlighted how regional spaces, such as Europe or Spanish America, should be considered supra-national structures which also accumulate symbolic capital on a cultural and linguistic basis. Nevertheless, greater form can be given to this theoretical claim, by considering it both within Casanova's theory more greatly, but also, through the analyses and discoveries of this thesis.

In *The World Republic of Letters*, the contemporary literature-world is characterised as increasingly polycentric in its hierarchical make-up, with various literary capitals vying for centrality, literary authority, and publishing control. As Casanova (2009) states of these supra-national structures,

> [e]ach is organized according to a hierarchy, and it reproduces the same structure of domination as the world space, only on a smaller scale, and thus perpetuates the opposition between one or several dominant centers, and dominated regions less endowed with specific capital (127).

As such, this polycentric structural reality is similarly evident in the Latin American literature-world, which like the literature-world is also made up of regions, nations, and capitals which struggle for literary significance. A clear example of this, is the disparate positionings of the region of South America and its formidable national canons, Nobel Prized authors, and literary titans, when compared to regions such as Central America and the Caribbean, which continue to struggle for a more creditable place either within or alongside Latin American letters, and which can be understood as much through material as by symbolic (*illusio*) factors. These *illusio* have a significant impact on the trajectories of authors from these nations where there are those who, due to geographical advantage, are raised in literarily privileged centres, whereas others remain more distant from centres capable of mediating their internationalisation.

Furthermore, the linguistic inequalities apparent in the literature-world manifest at a different, yet comparable, scale in the Latin American field. This is evident in the ever-problematic case of Portuguese literature, or even more distantly for that matter, the French literature of the Caribbean and their relative invisibility within Spanish-American usages of the term "Latin American", both which demonstrate how Spanish dominates as a "world" language

within the Latin American literature-world, in the same way in which English and French dominate in world literary space. The case of the English literature written by Latinos in the United States, is yet another example of how Spanish is dominant within the Latin American literature-world, requiring a dependence of these authors circulation in this space via either translation or publication in some heritage space or capital. This is also apparent in the linguistic choices of the writers of *McOndo*, and the debates surrounding the use of an international Spanish *interlingua* (highlighted by Ignacio Echevarría), and similar discussions concerning Global English in the literature-world[7].

And yet, even if Spanish-language literature is unquestionably dominant in this region, the literature of these various national literary spaces permitted circulation within the region, are not all considered Latin American literature, per se, because the way that it is conceived suggests that the Latin American literary space is less than the sum of its national parts. This is because, much like in the literature-world where not all the world's literature is considered "world literature", but only a selection, it appears that what has constituted Latin American literature, historically, is not the whole universe of Latin American literatures, but once again an exclusive selection. The same process of transmutation of literary value in the universalisation of the most celebrated authors of the literature-world (one might think of Shakespeare, Kafka, etc.), and which has had the complementary effect of denationalising these authors from their national and spatial-temporal contexts, also operates in the Latin American literature-world[8]. Here, the writers who most successfully internationalise may reach the heights of this former universalised list (evidently, such as Borges), but may also transcend their national category and—owing to their genuine global not merely region success—, be canonised as titanic forms of regional identification, expression, and importance, like those of the Boom: Cortázar, García Márquez, Fuentes, and Vargas Llosa.

[7] Alexander Beecroft (2015) maintains that while the dominant position of English appears assured, he acknowledges the complexity of predicting the direction which the global ecology take: '[w]ill English literature remain under the control of its historical native-speaker communities, or will a kind of Global English takes its place as a rootless lingua franca?' (260).

[8] Casanova (2009) makes a similar claim in her interrogation of the possibility of "European literature" as a space in the making and one which also cannot be considered as simply a sum of the national literatures which constitute it: '[a]s we know, the European literary capitals are national resources, dependent on national languages and school systems, which rely exclusively on national institutions for their inventory, maintenance and reproduction. Measuring and evaluating the volume of a capital that has been so well maintained by each of the national spaces in Europe should not, in terms of national logic, be a big problem. But this is true only if we are content with a 'multinational' definition, in which the national spaces are simply set side by side. But when we speak of 'European literature' we are, in fact, speaking about the potential appearance of a new political-literary entity that cannot be reduced to a simple sum of all the national literary heritages, but which would instead assemble all of the European literary resources into a whole, thus 'denationalizing' them, as it were (124).

Casanova (2009) argues that one of the reasons to consider European literature as a 'space in the making' (123), is that the regional space lacks the material conditions for its production, that is:

> there are still few specific literary authorities, very few publishers, writers, literary award juries […] that claim as their sole identity the fact of belonging to Europe, as well as by the fact that anthologies of European literature […] are not widespread or required reading in the various school systems of the European Union (123).

Comparatively, however, by considering the context of Latin American letters, these kinds of institutes do exist, such as the Casa de las Américas in La Habana, as well as La Casa de América in Madrid, and which have functioned as centres of Latin Americanisation during the Boom (as was discussed in Chapter 4), and for the generation of the 1960s respectively (as was discussing in Chapter 8). Added to these cultural centres, one could consider the reliance of Latin American internationalisation on the Spanish peninsular publishing industry as also fulfilling this function. That is, while Seix Barral, Anagrama, Grijalbo, and Alfaguara also represent publishers of local Spanish material, their curation and exclusive (and numerous) lists of Latin American authors effectively function as the production of this regional space in the making. Furthermore, Casanova highlights the role which anthologies play in imagining and producing this so-called European literature—something evidently lacking—, but which in Latin America is something which the *McOndo* anthology in fact executed and which numerous other anthologies have continued to actualise (*Líneas aéreas*, *Se habla español*, *Bogotá39*, and *El futuro no es nuestro*).

It is in this sense, that is it possible to understand the positioning of the writers studied closely in this anthology not as entirely canonised Latin American authors, but as on that trajectory, a process, similarly, *in the making*. This was made apparent in the stories of *McOndo*, in how they resisted (in large part) cartographical mimesis, geographical representation, or local colour of their nations. They similarly rejected (for the most part) overt politicised themes of a local nature (although at times making conscious references to inequality), but generally designing stories with individualistic content over social and politically mindful concerns. The use of language was also key here, whether it was via nods to the influence of English on everyday speech through the use of loan words, or the use of a Spanish *interlingua* more exchangeable across the Hispanosphere, two trends which suggested the desire to diminish the specifically national character of the text, in some ways, pre-empting the process of denationalisation usually conducted in the production of the work in its reception. Equally important is the role which international publishers (most especially Spanish) and translation into other European, but especially English and French, hold for this

process of denationalisation, a stage which a number of the authors in *McOndo* appear to be progressing through. And discursively also, this generation of writers, through their self-conscious cultural and literary metadiscourse, have been capable of bringing to light long-standing prejudices, horizons of expectation, some with the intention of demolishing the very category of Latin American literature altogether, others with the intention of regionalising their trajectory.

Let us recall that *McOndo*, as a regional intervention, placed emphasis on this Latin American reception and recognition. As the prologue states:

> [w]hat we want to offer an international public are different stories, more grounded if you like, from a group of writers that write in Spanish, but that don't feel they are representatives of any ideology or even their own countries. As such, they are intrinsically Spanish-American. They have that prism, that way of situating themselves in the world[9] (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 18-19).

Nevertheless, these authors still appear to be in a certain limbo: pushing against the centrifugal forces of the national pole, but still not being recognised alongside genuine "Latin American" authors of the pedigree of the Boom[10]. But even if few of the writers of this generation have achieved this level of denationalisation and regional consecration, this does not suggest that this regional world has ceased to exist, even though some, like Carlos Cortés (2015) continue to affirm this[11]. Just because Latin American letters appears to be progressing through an increasingly fragmented publishing present, does not mean that 'from the external, foreign, other, outside gaze' (Cortés 2015, 29), the production of Latin America identity and existence has ceased.

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[9] 'Lo que nosotros queremos ofrecerle al público internacional son cuentos distintos, más aterrizados si se quiere, de un grupo de nuevos escritores hispanoamericanos que escriben en español, pero que no se siente representantes de alguna ideología y ni siquiera de sus propios países. Aun así, son intrínsecamente hispanoamericanos. Tienen ese prisma, esa forma de situarse en el mundo' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 18-19).

[10] However, in this intermediary position we can consider not only the writers still producing their works but also those who, though coveting a universalist trajectory, fell short back into their national space to be assured of their canonical perpetuity, such as José Donoso in Chile. It might be seen as inconsistent that after having spent much of his career seeking to transcend the various aesthetic and commercial limits to his literary trajectory by his international influences, self-exile, aesthetic innovation, association with the Boom, that Donoso would return to Chile in 1981 and seek reacceptance in his national space, noted particularly in an interview with Silva (1990). Nevertheless, it is this kind of halfway internationalisation "tightrope" which writers seeking to make the significant leap from regional Latin American canonisation to global canonisation navigate. Donoso chose the safer alternative, to reinsert himself into a space which would welcome him as a successful Chilean literary export. It is as though faced with his fears and the reality of his trajectory as a deterritorialised international success, Donoso sought more assured canonical perpetuity by returning to his national literary space.

[11] 'Latinoamérica ya no existe: vivimos la emergencia de las literaturas nacionales y hasta regionales […] La perspectiva ha pasado del totalizante y excluyente boom—necesariamente restringido—pasamos al zapping. Hace 20 o 30 años había unos pocos escritores que vendían 50 mil ejemplares, ahora hay muchos autores que venden 5 mil ejemplares. ¿Esto es malo? No, porque por un lado han reaparecido escritores que se consideran en la actualidad puntos de referencia. A la vez esto provoca una fragmentación del espacio público de la literatura: ya no nos leemos casi entre nosotros, porque es imposible. […] Las novedades literarias llegan tan rápido como desaparecen, por lo tanto dejan de serlo […] ¿Qué es la literatura iberoamericana actual? Cada quien lee y dice su propia respuesta' (Cortés 2015, 24-5).

As such, there is a clear analogous (yet scaled) comparison that should be drawn between the literature-world and the Latin American literature-world. While in the literature-world the most universal authors are not consecrated merely through the mediation of the capital of capitals from the top down (although this helps), but through an almost global reception across space and time in the increasingly polycentric literary globe (See: Müller 2018), similarly, the canonisation of authors as *Latin American authors*, over and above the category of *internationally circulating national authors*, similarly rests on an international kind of reception and process of denationalisation. What constitutes Latin American literature is, of course, then mediated through a number of canonising processes in which the exteriority of the system plays a decisive part in determining what is consecrated inside the system (such as was demonstrated with the Boom but also noted in the prologue to *McOndo*[12]). As such, in response to the many claims regarding the end of Latin American literature (suggested in articles by Volpi and Cortés), there is an extent to which this is only the end of a certain Latin American *narrative*, suggesting the very likely probability that in the future, as Latin American authors triumph at the global level, new parameters, characterisations, cultural imaginaries, and horizons of expectation will (once again) be constructed around Latin American literature. Beecroft's (2015) study of Panhellenic and Panhuaxia cultural identities as panchoric constructions are suggestive of how these identities are 'constructed by and for literary texts' as well as mapped 'onto earlier periods', and remain highly problematic categories for critics (66-7).

It is in this sense, that the very Latin American literature-world also represents, in some key ways, a supra-national *panchoric* structure. While Beecroft (2015) developed his panchoric ecology largely in reference to the ancient Panhellenic and Panhuaxia case studies, he clarifies that his ecologies are 'best seen as complementary rather than as succeeding one another in a preordained chronological sequence' (71). The Latin American literature-world, thus, could also represent a certain nationally constituted panchorism, defined by the 'the construction of a space of shared culture out of a collection of related but distinct local cultures and the creation of new cultural objects […] designed to speak across those local cultures and, in the process, homogenize them to some extent' (Beecroft 2015, 98-99). The most forceful of these discourses which has been outlined in this thesis is the *macondismo* fundamentalism prevalent

[12] In realising the difficulties the editors faced when attempting to form the anthology, this led them to question the very existence of the imagined community of Latin America which they, in some sense, wanted to capture through the anthology, noting that '[l]legamos a pensar que América Latina era un invento de los departamentos de español de las universidades norteamericanas' (Fuguet and Gómez 1996, 14).

throughout Latin America's identitary discourse, and even into its most successful periods of literary exportation: the Boom and Postboom. This way of understanding Latin America serves as a direct example of this kind of panchoric homogenisation, especially seen in the Boom, which was even characterised by Cortázar in the following way: 'what is the Boom if not the extraordinary awareness by the Latin American people of a part of their own identity?[13] (in Oviedo 1973). However, while Beecroft's panchoric case studies appear as homogenisations constructed *post factum*, the writers of the Boom consolidated this regional *illusio* through their very thoughts and actions. This is equally evident in Carlos Fuentes' response to José Donoso when the Chilean suggested he had lifted some stories Donoso had shared with him about Luis Buñuel's sisters, he responded: '[d]on't be stupid, it's all the same who uses those stories, remember that all of us Latin Americans are writing different parts of the same great novel' (Donoso in P. Donoso 2019, 417). And as has been noted, even the writers of the generation of the 1960s have engaged in this discourse, even if in attempting to demolish these existing conceptions or homogenisations.

It is in respect to these complex and very real interactions that Ignacio Sánchez Prado (2019) has rightly affirmed:

> [t]he Bourdieusian method, which implies the material recounting of the actually existing literary fields, is a useful complement to the Wallersteinian/Jamesonian method of the world-system and singular modernity, because it permits an understanding of how processes that intervene from outside in and from above to below in cultural spaces operate in friction with the forces which arise from below and from within[14] (155).

Within a Bourdieusian-Casanovian model it is possible to understand and take into critical view these internal and external factors and their interactions. From the canonicity of a text to its process of canonisation, from the varying levels of literary context in distinct literary fields of production and reception and authorial position-takings in respect to their individual *habitus*, from the varied material forms of literary mediation (political, economic, publishing) to the symbolic and cultural forms (literary, linguistic, and cultural hegemonies), which are fundamental to proceeding in grounded sociohistorical applications of world literature theories and methodologies.

[13] '¿[Q]ué es el *boom* sino la más extraordinaria toma de conciencia por parte del pueblo latinoamericano de una parte de su propia identidad?' (Oviedo 1973).

[14] 'El método bourdieusiano, que implica un recuento material de los campos literarios realmente existentes, es un complemento útil al método wallersteniano/jamesoniano del sistema-mundo y la modernidad singular porque permite entender como los procesos que intervienen de afuera hacia adentro y de arriba hacia abajo en los espacios culturales operan en fricción con las fuerzas que provienen desde abajo y desde adentro' (Sánchez Prado 2019, 155).

9.3.1 Extensions to methodology

9.3.2 Interviews

As was made apparent by the Latin Americanist critiques regarding the lacunas and omissions in Casanova's literary history, and in particular her description of Latin American literature, more historical, material, and sociological work needs to be conducted in order to provide a firm foundation of research from which to pronounce theoretical models. Added to this were the critiques of Casanova's superficial treatment of the complex contemporary state of world literary space in the Post-Cold War era, suggesting that more historical analysis was equally required on this front in order to make sound theoretical conclusions for contemporary literature. This is precisely why in my research I have endeavoured to create new primary source material through my interviews with authors and editors involved in these projects, which inform the historical circumstances and origins of these anthologies, the reflections of the authors on their circumstances, the proposals of their generation broadly-speaking, as well as their own literary commitments. As a result, these interviews were instrumental in dispelling a number of persistent (and at times contradictory) misunderstandings regarding the *McOndo* anthology.

Firstly, there was the misunderstanding that the writers had agreed to the prologue and, as such, the anthology was symbolic of a broader so-called "McOndo movement" or "McOndo generation", matched, in a contradictory sense, by the suggestion that the prologue only represented the views of the editors. The interview data, while confirming the fallaciousness of the former—as none of the contributing authors had read the prologue before its publication—, in terms of the latter, suggests a more nuanced interpretation. The interviews have revealed that, in respect to the prologue, each writer agrees or disagrees with certain elements, and coupled with an analysis of the stories, it has been possible to appreciate how each writer negotiated the narrow space of possibilities permitted entry into *McOndo* whilst retaining their unique character. For example, the combative tone against magical realism and Latin American exoticism was important to a number of the contributors such as Naief Yehya, Edmundo Paz Soldán, Rodrigo Soto, and Leonardo Valencia, but entirely irrelevant to Rodrigo Fresán, who never felt literarily delimited nor defined by this genre. By interviewing the participants, the distancing of certain authors in the aftermath of *McOndo*'s critical reception is interpreted as an urgent attempt to forge an individual literary identity in the context of a growing criticism which was beginning to read into these pronouncements the creation of generations and movements which did not—in actual fact—exist, seen as much in the

appellations of a "McOndo movement", "McOndo generation", or even Palaversich's reference to an indefinite group of so-called "macondistas."

One of the specific questions in regard to the participant's agreement or disagreement with the prologue to *McOndo*, was related to the issue of the social or political commitment of an author in their literature. In this respect, the interviews highlighted a change of perspective in how these writers understand their literary vocation. In contrast to the profoundly social and political commitments of much of the Postboom, these writers demonstrated diverse commitments of a literary nature treating their work as an exploration of human issues such as emotion, the unknown, or prosaic and formal development, as well as the fundamental process of improving their own narration and storytelling. In no way did these writers consider their literary production as fulfilling an extra-literary commitment to the cause of the poor, the oppressed, or the marginalised, in the same way which writers of the Postboom such as Isabel Allende, Galeano, Dorfman or Luis Sepúlveda had.

A further insight which the incorporation of this interview method into the broader methodology assisted in developing, was the reflections of the authors on their own narrative and career trajectory in respect to *McOndo*. The anthology, for David Toscana, represented such an important stepping stone to internationalisation that he was even willing to submit a story which he suspected would conform to the style and character of the rest of the anthology, even though its style did not represent his literary passions at the time nor the ones he developed into the future. The interviews also revealed the impact which the anthology had on the career trajectories of authors, aesthetically, for Edmundo Paz Soldán, through his discovery of literary peers, but also editorially, for Santiago Gamboa, through his positive review in *El País* and immediate intervention into Spanish literary space as a result. While the interviews highlighted different areas of impact on the careers of some of the authors either aesthetically, vocationally, or in a publishing sense, they also demonstrated the virtual indifference of other authors, such as Juan Forn and Rodrigo Fresán; and, at the same time, confirmed the diminished effects of the anthology on authors of smaller literary spaces such as the Costa Rican Rodrigo Soto, and in addition—and for very different reasons—, the Spanish authors included in the anthology.

In terms of interview praxis, I employed what Jack Douglas (1985) calls the principle of indirection[15] (137) as a means to encourage truthful self-disclosure. However, while I have little reason to doubt the veracity of the entirety of my interviews, one of their inherent

[15] 'The whole interview situation is an indirect encouragement to self-disclosure. Setting the scene, slowly building-up intimacy, using warmth, all of these are general strategies and tactics for indirectly encouraging self-disclosures of whatever it is you are studying' (Douglas 1985, 137).

challenges methodologically is the potential for false statement on the part of the informants, not necessarily by way of intentional subterfuge, but perhaps impacted by memory, self-presentation, desired biography, or even what could be termed a "white coat hypertension"—if you will—, or in other words, an anxiety toward academic inquiry. This final factor could most certainly be applied to my interview with Alberto Fuguet, who, despite being interviewed by an unassuming PhD student from a foreign university, raised his guard quite immediately against the potential attacks from the "academy" which had evidently hurt him in the past. This very issue was broached very early in the interview when I made reference to the *McOndo* prologue in order to formulate a question, Fuguet's response and the ensuing conversation is quoted at length below:

> AF: I sometimes lose my patience with academics because I feel: why do you believe everything I say? Just because something is written down doesn't mean necessarily that it's true.
>
> TNV: So, could you clarify the truth here?
>
> AF: I think I won't clarify it because I think that it is like explaining that in springtime there is pollen. I think *it's a given*. The *McOndo* prologue wasn't written in order to lie, but I don't know if everything it says is true. I haven't reread it for twenty years. And you can quote whole phrases and I could say to you: "*really?"*. You can say things that I have said, and I'll say to you "yes" and it turns out to be a lie, in other words, you can deceive me entirely with this interview, do you understand?
>
> TNV: Does that worry you?
>
> AF: Not at all. What does it matter? It has happened.
>
> TNV: Did it used to worry you?
>
> AF: No. Well, I think at one stage it worried me, it annoyed me, I regretted it. *Fuck, Fuck, Fuck, Fuck, Fuck, Fuck, Fuck academy, Fuck USA* basically. I mean the worst was when McOndo became almost a *dirty word*. But nowadays I think it's no longer a *dirty word* [16] (Fuguet 2015, personal interview).

[16] AF: Yo a veces pierdo la paciencia con los académicos porque siento: ¿por qué tú crees todo lo que yo he dicho? No porque algo está escrito significa necesariamente que es verdad.
TNV: Entonces me puedes aclarar la verdad aquí.
AF: Pienso que no lo voy a aclarar porque encuentro que es como explicar que en primavera hay polen. Me parece que *it's a given*. El prólogo de *McOndo* no fue hecho para mentir, pero no sé si todo lo que dice es verdad. O sea, yo no lo he vuelto a leer en veinte años. Y tú me puedes citar frases enteras y yo te podría decir: "*really?*". Tú puedes decirme cosas que yo he dicho, y yo te voy a decir "sí" y es mentira, o sea, tú me puedes engañar entero con esta entrevista, ¿me explico?
TNV: ¿Eso te preocupa?
AF: Nada. ¿Qué me importa? Ha pasado.
TNV: ¿Te preocupaba?
AF: Tampoco. O sea, creo que en algún momento me preocupó, me molestó, me arrepentí. *Fuck, Fuck, Fuck, Fuck, Fuck, Fuck, Fuck academy, Fuck USA* básicamente. O sea, lo peor fue cuando McOndo se volvió casi como un *dirty word*. Pero hoy me parece que no es un *dirty Word* (Fuguet 2015, personal interview).

Fuguet was right in noting that not everything is true in the *McOndo* prologue, for one, Toscana noted that *McOndo* was not his idea[17], and Fuguet himself provided more details regarding the origins of *McOndo* as the brainchild of business-savvy editor from Grijalbo Mondadori Felipe Muñoz. However, rather than completely put into question all of Fuguet's disclosure in my interview—which, owing to the candid nature of many of his comments throughout the interview including some of these, suggest that Fuguet's initial inhibitions were perhaps put aside early on—, I would like to highlight how this response further evidences fear as a constitutive aspect of Fuguet's *habitus*, but also, to show how his resentful and suspicious attitude toward the academy (owing to his negative experience of them since his early career), impacted his ability to negotiate with this significant group of the professional milieu capable of canonising his work.

9.3.3 From the Macroscopic to the Microscopic, and back again.

Despite the critiques levelled at world literature theories and their supposed devaluing of close reading analysis, Casanova's methodology was shown to be, instead, an ordered back-and-forth method between external macroscopic analysis of literary spaces, and internal microscopic analysis of texts and authors. As was noted in Chapter 2, as *The World Republic of Letters* is mostly dedicated to proving Casanova's thesis regarding the existence of a separate literature-world, and a detailing of its origins, history, development, laws and structures, there was little direct close reading apparent (an aspect so indispensable to her analysis), although there was evidence of it having been conducted throughout. It is easier to appreciate how this close reading analysis is actually valued, in the significant place it holds in her book length analysis *Kafka, Angry Poet*. As this thesis in effect implements and develops Casanovian analysis in the Latin American context, there has been a focus on close reading analysis, as much of the extra-literary position-takings through non-narrative texts, essays, memoirs, and articles, as well as the short stories and the prologue which constitute the very *literature*—per se—of analysis. However, as Casanova (2006) highlights in regard to the mutually informing structure of her own method for interpreting texts:

> [b]y its very nature, it requires the critic to continually shift perspective, to change lenses, as it were—one moment looking to clarify a view of the whole by what might seem to be an insignificant detail, the next to explicating the most particular aspect of a work by taking a detour through what might appear to be observations of the most general sort (351).

[17] '[D]ice en el prólogo que yo le comenté eso, pero no tengo recuerdo de esto, solo tengo recuerdo de que lo leí en el prólogo' (Toscana 2016, personal interview).

And in the various themes which were explored in the *McOndo* short stories—pop culture and politics, urban settings, (de)territorialisation, and language—, it is possible to interpret these as internal evidence of the very external struggles occurring at the broader level of their generational concerns.

As was discussed in Chapter 6, the *McOndo* stories inherit a recent literary tradition from the Postboom which from the perspective of many writers had fixed the political and commercial expectations of their texts, evidenced as much in the critical reception of their texts for their lack of political or social commentary. And a number of the *McOndo* texts did appear to build upon and extend the mass media influences on their literature and suggested the increased significance of the commercial pole. However, by taking into perspective the predicament which many of these writers faced in existing literarily in their national spaces, it is possible to interpret these recourses to mass media not simply as meaningless or mundane references to contemporary culture, or as suggestive of neoliberal celebration—which is the way they were interpreted by sectors of Latin American criticism. Instead, they can be interpreted in a literary sense as a way to develop a reading public similarly versed in the popular bastard culture of these authors through the use of McOndo codes.

Furthermore, there are stories in *McOndo* which can benefit from being interpreted through this very literary context that has been established. In other words, this contextualisation informs a singular reading of the text generated out of this back-and-forth macroscopic and microscopic analysis. In this sense, a story like 'La gente de látex' can be interpreted in a variety of ways, for example, via a politicised reading as a post-utopian political critique of mass medial culture and the illusion of celebrity. However, it is equally possible, in light of the literary context, that Yehya's story is also a meta-commentary on the literary world. In the story, the protagonist, who is an actor in "reality" television programs, highlights a concern for the commercialisation of the literary market (evident in the significance of having an editor), the establishment of aesthetic trends (notably the increased emphasis on the relating of lived experience rather than acting), and the figure of the actor (or writer) as an impostor who appropriates these circumstances for their mass media/literary existence. As such, what could at first glance appear as a story altogether dislocated from the literary world, through a close reading of Yehya's *œuvre* and his contextualisation within the recent literary past, it is possible to interpret the particular literary workings and reflections of this text.

Another context that was explored as significant to the interpretation of the McOndo proposal and the stories was the spatialised dimension to Latin America's identity discourse. This discourse has since its beginning had a spatialised dimension in which *macondismo*

posited quite forcefully the authenticity of the rural landscape, as much through imaginative literature by way of generations of *costumbrista*, regionalist, and indigenist literature, but also through its essayistic tradition. The stories of *McOndo* build upon the urban narrative traditions which, in their time, represent a kind of counterforce in this debate. In the stories of McOndo, however, the city is not portrayed as a characteristic locale or symbolic of the national popular identity, but as a denationalised platform for the staging of the narrative events. The exploration of extra-national territories in the stories, in particular the United States, but also other Latin American nations, also highlights the deterritorialised narration or post-national narratives evident across many of this generation's writers.

In this sense, another example of how the close reading analysis is uniquely informed by Casanova's macro perspective analysis of literary context, history, and authorial *habitus*, was made apparent in Edmundo Paz Soldán's story in *McOndo*. In 'Amor a distancia', a story about an international Bolivian student who writes to his girlfriend from his university dorm, Paz Soldán develops a metaphor for this crisis of national allegiance in a globalised and deterritorialised existence with what is presented as the facade and out-dated view of monogamous relationships. As such, it is as though reflecting on the extent to which writers of this generation depart from the national referent, as much in their local narrations and through their internationally set stories, question the national-pole and the traditional task of the author to carry and put forward the nation, a nationalistic fidelity compared to the romantic monogamous fidelity in the story. The fact that the protagonist cannot resist the temptation to give himself over to the allures of foreign women, speak to this generation's cosmopolitan tastes and commitment over what is considered by many of them as an out-dated and constricting tradition.

Similarly, in Gómez's story 'Extrañas costumbres orales', the uncanny use of French over the more obvious choice of English-language loan words in the conversation between the two characters, can be interpreted from two perspectives. It could, like Yehya's story, be interpreted in a political or sociological sense, that is, as a commentary on Chilean society, class hierarchies and snobbery. However, when taking into view the question of language (discussed in Section 6.5), and the internal authorial predicament of choosing between an exchangeable Spanish interlingua and localist linguistic verisimilitude (purified or impurified by foreign loan words), we can interpret Gómez's story as a narrative exploration or even satirisation of this question. These "strange oral customs", of employing foreign and generally English-language loan words (mostly gained from globalised American popular culture), are

defamiliarised by Gómez—a provincial author—, in a text which subtly questions the device used by many writers of his generation.

In *The Rules of Art*, Bourdieu (2017) analyses the structure of social space which Gustave Flaubert constructs in *Sentimental Education*, as a socioanalysis by the author himself of his very own social space and the literary field at the time. For Bourdieu (2017), '[t]he sentimental education of Frédéric is the progressive learning about the incompatibility between two universes, between art and money, pure love and mercenary love' (20), in which the protagonist Frédéric must choose—like spaces of possibilities themselves—between the three women he desires[18]. However, through this seemingly entirely romantic trope, Bourdieu (2017) is able to uncover a profound commentary on the literary field itself, that is, through the casket with silver caps which appears throughout the story and represents, as much the space of possibilities of romantic love, as simultaneously—via metaphor and metonym—, the artistic choices before authors at the time[19]. In the stories by Naief Yehya, Edmundo Paz Soldán, and Sergio Gómez that I have analysed, we are able to see how they have similarly been able to narrativise decidedly literary concerns in outwardly seeming romantic, mundane, or tragic plots, via metaphorical or metonymical devices, the very dilemmas, struggles, and space of possibilities available to authors of their generation and positioning.

As such, by approaching certain texts from a renewed perspective of the context, and armed with the literary analytical tools of Casanova's Bourdieusian analysis, it is possible to interpret more strictly literary position-takings within these texts and how they relate to their literary field. Furthermore, the interview data gathered for the purposes of this study both inform the historical circumstances surrounding these anthologies, but also quite importantly, make up for the kind of critical material which are already available to critics studying other

[18] Madame Arnoux, the wife of an editor of an art magazine, and art curator; Madame Dembreuse, a banker's wife; and Rosanette, a worldly demimonde. For Bourdieu (2017), '[t]hese three feminine figures represent a system of possibles, each of them defining herself by opposition with the two others (20) […] Placed between the women who buys love and the one who sells it, between two incarnations of bourgeois love, the good match and the mistress, complementary and hierarchized, moreover, as the *monde* and the *demi-monde*, Frédéric affirms a pure love, irreducible to money and any objects of bourgeois interest, a love for a thing which, after the fashion of the pure work of art, is not for sale and is not made to be sold. Just as a pure love is art for the sake of the art of love, art for art's sake is the purest love of art' (23-4).

[19] 'This it is that the sale at auction telescopes in an instant the whole story of the casket with silver caps, which itself condenses the whole structure and story of the confrontation between these three women and what they symbolize […] He can thus produce a representation of a wholly essential region of the social space which at first seems absent: the literary field itself, which is organized around the opposition between pure art, associated with pure love, and bourgeois art, under its two forms, mercenary art that can be called major, represented by the bourgeois theatre and associated with the figure of Mme Dambreuse, and minor mercenary art, represented by vaudeville, cabaret or the serial novel, evoked by Rosanette' (Bourdieu 2017, 24).

time periods, and which in this time period are yet to be considered and, in some senses, it is possible to doubt will ever be released[20].

Conclusion

This research, through a developed application of Casanova's theory and methodology, has been able to enact a series of tasks related at once related to the macro and micro levels of analysis. In detailing the space of works into which *McOndo* intervened, it was necessary to articulate the significant context of the Boom and Postboom within the theorisations of Casanovian analysis. Theoretically, these articulations were underpinned strongly by major structures of world literary space defined by Casanova, notably: the heteronomous and autonomous poles; economic, editorial, and linguistic factors of publishing control; the advancement and collision between the political-economic and literature-worlds. However, this case study was further informed through a greater execution of aspects of Bourdieu's theorisations which had been obscured or passed over in Casanova's analysis, for example, the concepts of *illusio* and *habitus*. This positioned *McOndo* in respect to these periods through the various position-takings of the prologue but also those which were apparent in a significant proportion of the stories. The diverse authorial trajectories were understood, thus, through these principal structures and through a reclamation of these concepts to understand the structural and individual impacts of literary *illusio* and *habitus*.

However, as was stated above, this study seeks an application of Casanova's theory which balances a confrontational attitude and a celebratory attitude toward theory. As such, in employing this theory in a self-reflexive manner, it is as much of benefit to understanding the Latin American literary context and these texts and authors in particular, but also in proposing the areas in which this theory and methodology need extension or improvement. In terms of Casanova's theorisation, there is an extent to which her recourse to the treatment of authors as belonging to discrete typologies, broadly speaking between national and international camps, cannot be applied here with the same certitude. This is as much because the very nature of synchronous literary analysis is very often dealing with the incomplete works of an author. Consequently, to define a specific unifying and ultimate authorial vocation or commitment is

[20] Here I am referring to the fact that it has been commonplace throughout the 20th century for critics to gain access to extra-literary material by way of private journals, correspondence, notes, early editions of works, and annotations, of authors after an allotted time since their death. All of these resources make up rich archives from which to base further conclusions about a writer and their work. However, with the digitalisation of many of these means of authorial reflection and communication (through e-mail, the digitalisation of the editing process, etc.) it begs the question whether critics of the future will ever have access to material of this kind. This potential only further justifies the importance of gaining these extra-literary commentaries while it is still feasible to do so.

problematic. As such, in circumstances such as these, I put forward the possibility of interpreting particular works through these typologies, in how they internally suggest desires of national recognition, foreign recognition in a particular national space, or elsewise. This nuanced analysis, which resists (at least for the time being) a unifying and ultimate explanation of an author's work, is also consistent with how these case studies have dispelled the myth of the completely formed author (in part generated by these anachronous analyses).

Another aspect of theoretical modification is the call to problematise further our conceptions of canonisation. While there is an advanced explanation of the structures and processes of canonisation apparent throughout Casanova's theorisation, there is an extent to which *McOndo* complicates once more this issue. Firstly, because of the very genre it represents, and secondly, because of the canonisation it has experienced in spite of its negative reception both from commercial and critical perspectives. As such, it is necessary to rethink an additional dimension to this largely external aspect of the study of canonisation to explore the internal elements of a particular work's *canonicity*. It is possible to consider how a work positions itself, makes the right kinds of references, creates the right kind of polemic, satirised or used the symbolic credit of other writers and literatures in order to make itself visible, create space and eventually act in favour of its of canonisation. It is in this way, in which *McOndo* can be articulated as a text which demonstrates and complicates a number of these external and internal workings, through its contradictory canonisation, and yet stands out as a significant intervention into Latin American literary space, which has the result of historicising a particular moment in the region and this generation's push to autonomisation.

The third area of theoretical development has been that of detailing the structure of the Latin American literature-world. The consideration of this regional space, not as the sum total of the universe of literature composed in the region, but as an exclusive selection, replicates the structures already well-studied in the universalisation of certain figures in the literature-world, and the process of denationalisation which they experience. A balanced recognition of the assemblage of mediating factors in this literary consecration are also essential to a study which vindicates the autonomy of the literature-world as parallel, yet distinct, from the economic-literature world, while not limiting the critical vantage point to solely literary phenomena, but cultural, social, political, and material explanations. It is in this way that the Latin American literary space can be conceived as a scaled literature-world unto itself, with its own polycentric structure of struggle and domination, and which has been imagined and produced—via panchoric and homogenising processes—, as a regional totality, and which in

all likelihood will continue to be (re)produced in new and creative ways, both internally and externally.

The application of Casanova's methodology into this contemporary Latin American literature also highlighted methodological elements which bear further consideration for future applications. In response to the criticisms levelled against a number of the world literature theories regarding their apparent devaluing (or outright abandonment) of close reading analysis, this literary methodology, is not treated as the only tool at the literary critic's disposal, but an essential instrument within an elaborate and demanding methodology. As such, the close readings of texts in the anthology, from the prologue to the stories (as well as interview data), is informed quite directly by the analysis of the literary context, the authorial *habitus*, and the *illusio*. This procedure can reveal particular readings of the texts in how they respond to their literary context and past, but also, how they appear to encapsulate hidden literary discourses in themselves. Furthermore, the *McOndo* anthology, its claims, and the relation of these to its participants has, since its appearance, been riddled with misunderstandings and misinterpretations. In this sense, an indispensable tool in Casanova's methodology was necessarily the creation of additional extra-literary commentary targeting specific areas of contention: from the extent of involvement of the participants, to their agreement or disagreement with the prologue, to their personal literary convictions and position-takings, etcetera. Therefore, the interview data which has been gathered for this research has also functioned within this broader methodology to inform as much readings of the text and their contexts.

In conclusion, then, the ultimate question surrounding the acceptability of this theory and methodology in the Latin American context, or whether the Latin Americanist should rely solely on theoretical and methodological proposals which arise from one's own ranks, has been answered. Answered through the ways in which this analysis has shed light on recent Latin American literary history, not from an exclusively aesthetic mapping, or political interpretation, but from a specifically literary account of the interventions, waves, evolutions and revolutions occurring at the end of the 20th Century. It has also been vindicated through the elucidatory work it has been able to provide in regard to the *McOndo* anthology, articulating it within the inner workings of a Latin American literature-world with various distinct literary interventions. And while there have been changes and extensions, as much to the execution of the methodology as well as to the theory, this only serves to demonstrate how this theory has a capacity for overall development and flexibility, to properly suit the temporal and spatial specificities of the case studies concerned.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

The aims of this thesis have been twofold: firstly, to explain *McOndo* in the most holistic and coherent way possible. The second aim has been to evaluate the efficacy of Casanova's Bourdieusian theory and methodology through its praxis in this concrete—and at times paradoxical and unorthodox—case study of *McOndo* in the Latin American literature-world.

To begin, this required an evaluation of the field of research theories and methodologies of world literature. Casanova's theory was understood more completely through an exploration of it through its Bourdieusian roots (notably in relation to the concepts of *illusio* and *habitus*), as well as by responding to persistent critiques which have been levelled against her theorisation. In this regard, a number of potent criticisms of her theory and methodology from Latin Americanists were explored in relation to her work, demonstrating, in some instances, how these critiques were misguided (such as in Casanova's apparently fixist and immutable hierarchical structure, her apparent devaluing of close reading, or purported uncritically universal perspective on literature), and in others highlighting productive and necessary additions to the world literature project (such as the importance of critical (ethno-)reflexivity as well as the need for concrete material and sociohistorical work in order to provide a firm and reliable foundation from which to produce literary theory). Bourdieu and Casanova's theorisations were both seen to be position-takings within the space of possibilities of their own disciplinary contexts. Similarly in this research, I have attempted tread a middle ground, equidistant from a euphoric inclusive cosmopolitanism and a reluctant confrontational cosmopolitanism that has characterised the reception of foreign theory in recent times in the Latin American critical field. I have sought to explore what these theories and practices can reveal in the Latin American field, as well as what the case studies can provide to improve these theorisations and methodologies.

Both Pierre Bourdieu and Pascale Casanova—through their ambitious theoretical models and methodologies grounded in practical analogies and with the possibility of development—attempted to evade the problem of the illusion of immediate understanding (noted in Section 3.2.4). This issue, often unnoticed or unthought, has been a significant problem for the *McOndo* anthology since its inception. Apparent in the editors themselves, who believed their sampling to be representative of contemporary Latin American literature

instilled with a McOndo DNA, and equally or more evidently in the production of the anthology through its distorted criticism: from critics who read *McOndo* as a collective manifesto representative of all involved, or those who constructed its sentiment as neoliberal, entirely apolitical, and understood as simply commercial manoeuvring. These interpretations erred, not solely as a result of not reading *closely* enough, but also for not engaging the *McOndo* intervention within a proper context (that is, its position-taking within the regional context and history it imagined from the Boom, Postboom, and *macondismo*), as well as by not being sufficiently self-reflexive to notice that, even through close reading practices, the anthology has been constituted by some critics' own parameters (seen most particularly in Palaversich's early and long-standing politicised interpretation).

This more grounded analysis, invested as much in the historical macro-perspective as with the micro-perspective of texts and authorial testimony, revealed a number of things. Such as the anthology's inception in the mind of the editor Felipe Muñoz (Grijalbo Mondadori) rather than David Toscana or even Alberto Fuguet; the opportunity and the importance which the anthology represented in the eyes of many of the participants faced with similar predicaments across the region (balkanisation, horizon of expectation, *macondismo*, etc.); the authors' own literary convictions and the shift from the Boom and Postboom to a relegation of politics to the private sphere. It has also allowed for a more complex account of these authors as not only either *McOndianos*, nor conversely as so heterogeneous that any collective reading is by consequence reductive, but instead an appreciation of these authors' unique and negotiated position-taking within the narrowed space of works afforded in the *McOndo* anthology, which, at times, affirm and belie (to some extent) the very anthology they comprise. This was also made apparent in the stories which negotiated in individual ways common themes of politics, popular culture, urbanity, the nation, globalisation, and language, as well as through a macro-perspective of the authors' trajectories, through an evaluation of the impacts (or lack thereof) of participation in the *McOndo* anthology.

This return to the macro-perspective, not only affirmed but gave greater form to the polycentric and asymmetrical structure of Latin American literary space, through an evaluation of the divergent career trajectories permitted in these uneven structures, in part, owing to significantly determinant *illusios* and *habitus* which were brought to the foreground in this development of Casanovian analysis. It also revealed how the anthology made considerable impacts in the aesthetic and commercial trajectories of authors, such as in Toscana's rejection of prose decorated with McOndo codes, what at first glance appears as a perfectly suitable inclusion can be read as a significant experiment and decisive moment in Toscana's discovery

of his own authentic form against any so-called McOndo aesthetic. Edmundo Paz Soldán's discovery of his literary peers and next literary vocation (through the exploration of contemporary, mass media and technological narratives), can only really be appreciated from a macroperspective capable of noting the significance of *McOndo* in this formative shift. And Santiago Gamboa's direct procurement of publishing contracts in Spain through his inclusion and favourable review, further highlight the continued significance of a peninsular professional milieu and the mechanisms of European publishing and translation, as well as prevailing *macondismo* fundamentalisms seen especially in his truncated translation into Italian. Furthermore, it was also possible to consider more fully the *habitual* investment which Alberto Fuguet had in the anthology (to an extent to understand his disillusionment upon its negative reception), that is: the McOndo metaphor as a personal struggle to have his particular identity legitimised as an authentic way of *being* and *seeing* Latin America. As well as Sergio Gómez's absence as owing, in part, to his provincial *habitus* and his replacement with an internationalising author, such as Edmundo Paz Soldán, willing to negotiate the academy in *McOndo*'s name, and with the commitment and knowledge of the rules of the academic game which both Gómez and Fuguet lacked. And lastly, *McOndo*'s process of canonisation demonstrates its significance as likely the most vocal of the national and regional metadiscourses of this generation, as much seen in its ability to cannibalise those other discourses, receive constant reference in studies of the generation (leading to the problematic appellation "McOndo generation"), but also its impact and canonisation through other anthologies such as *Líneas aéares*, *Se habla español*, *Les bonnes nouvelles de l'Amérique latine*, and *El futuro no es nuestro*.

And lastly, in a process of critical reflexivity, the methodological tools and theoretical concepts which have been deployed in this thesis were evaluated, both insofar as they were able to provide deep reflection on the case study in question, but also to speculate on those areas where improvements and adjustments are due, made possible by being a growing and grounded model. Consistent with the internal and external modes of analysis in Casanova's theory, it is possible to posit, not only that a text's canonisation is solely produced by readers and those mechanisms of the professional literary milieu, but also, in part, due to internal elements which provide a certain degree of canonicity, that is, *timely* qualities which—under certain circumstances—might facilitate its canonisation in a particular locality and temporality, such as was demonstrated with *McOndo*. Furthermore, there was a shift from Casanova's application of general authorial typologies to a consideration of typologies of works, in an appreciation of the varied and multifaceted character of these authors' ongoing *œuvre*,

trajectories which have described these authors in a process of discovery of their authorial vocation(s) and at times numerous positionings, rather than generating unitary and generalised readings of their supposed *ultimate* intention. Casanova's largely passing theorisation of the Latin American supranational category was more fully developed through her theory and with Beecroft's concept of panchoric ecologies, which allowed for the theorisation of a Latin American literature-world, that is, a regional world structure with its own hierarchy and inequalities, struggles and capitals, and constructed out of processes of homogenising discourses and *illusios*. In a methodological sense, the importance given to authorial testimony was accounted for in this research through the production of a corpus of authorial interviews and close reading of extra-narrative material (essays, prefaces, etc.), and this back-and-forth mutually informing analysis revealed new interpretations of some of these *McOndo* texts, such as Yehya, Gomez's, and Paz Soldán's, as deeply hidden authorial reflections on some of the most pressing literary questions of their generation.

Far from wanting to have the last word in explaining *McOndo* nor of important concrete applications of Casanova's theory and methodology, it is my hope that this research may provide some applied or theoretical groundwork for some fruitful and necessary areas of future research, as much in terms of the literary production in the Latin American literature-word, as of the collective work facing world literature critics. One such direction could be similar applications of Casanova's theory and methodology on other times and spaces within Latin American literature, especially of those authors whose work and trajectory were considered by some Latin American critics as unreconcilable with these theorisations. Another area of research could include a more comprehensive analysis of the internal hierarchies within this regional literature-world, more specifically, the complicated place of the Spanish-language and English-language Latino literature written in the United States, as, to a certain extent, diasporic narratives, but also territorialised as the beginnings of a subnational space within the Latin American literature-world. Theoretically, a deeper exploration on the part of experts on Bourdieu and Casanova's theories, has the potential to reveal further areas of convergence (or divergence) additional to those identified in this research. And building off Sánchez Prado's assessment that the asymmetries of the literary world are analogous to those of the academic world, it is feasible to apply Casanova's theory in this space also, to posit the existence of an academic literature-world and evaluate how Casanova's toolkit may be of benefit in existing analyses of the hierarchies and inequalities of the global academy.

Over 20 years have passed since the publication of the *McOndo* anthology and it continues to be shrouded in a number of persistent misunderstandings. Until now, despite its

status as an oft-cited moment for this generation of authors, there have been no in-depth monographs dedicated to exploring the authentic intentions and implications of the *McOndo* anthology, and many critical commentaries continue to perpetuate long-standing and at times inaccurate criticism. In regard to Casanova's work, while considered an important and citable voice, there have been very few rigorous examples of Casanovian praxis in the Latin American field to truly elucidate its benefits and limits and progress from specific concrete examples toward more developed heuristic methods. The findings in this thesis, however, as much of *McOndo* as of the Latin American literature-world more generally, demonstrate Casanova's theory and methodology as an advantageous and fruitful choice in the literary critic's toolkit. On the other hand, the *McOndo* case study, for its differentiation from the genre *par excellence* of many world literature studies (the novel), and for its paradoxical canonical status, may even be said to represent an argument *a fortiori* for Casanova's theory. In other words, its mutually informing back-and-forth micro and macro level analysis, combination of sociohistorical (e.g. theory of fields, etc.) and traditional literary methods (e.g. close reading), and its critical reflexivity, have been shown to account for spaces and times distant from the Theoretical Greenwich Meridian from which this theory was formulated, making it a valuable theoretical analogy for the study of historic and contemporary literary art.

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