

NOTES

CHAPTER 1

1. Demetrio Estébanez Calderón provides the following definition of *novela negra*: Name given to a narrative subgenre (related to the detective novel) that arises in the U.S. in the early 1920s, and in which authors attempt to reflect, with a critical consciousness, the world of gangsterism and organized crime, a product of the violence and corruption of the capitalist society of the time (760). In his excellent study of Spanish crime fiction, Joan Ramon Resina clarifies that *novela negra*, like the English language category crime novel, may include both detective-centered and criminal-centered narratives (*El cadáver* 109). In its broadest current usage, the *novela negra* is understood by contemporary novelist Santiago Gamboa as encompassing in American terms, all the varieties of crime fiction (Secret Histories). While my focus in this study is on the hard-boiled discourses that have predominated in the Spanish-speaking world in recent decades, my usage of the category crime fiction is in keeping with the parameters laid out by Stephen Knight in *Crime Fiction, 1800–2000* (xii).
2. Among the most elaborate of such homages, we might recall the Catalan writer Maria Aurèlia Capmany's 1972 novel *El jaqué de la democracia* (The Morning Coat of Democracy, or *El chaqué de la democracia* in Castilian translation) with its coded but prominent invocation of Dashiell Hammett, as well as appropriations of Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe character by Argentine Oswaldo Soriano in *Triste, solitario y final* (1973) and Uruguayan Hiber Conteris in *El diez por ciento de vida: el test Chandler (Ten Percent of Life)*, (1985). Paco Ignacio Taibo II offers one of his many such tributes with his short story *Mi Amigo Moran. Notas para una novela de canallas y villistas escrita por Dash Hammett* (My Friend Moran. Notes for a Novel about Scoundrels and Villistas Written by Dash Hammett), included in his 2006 collection *Sólo tu sombra fatal* (Only Your Fatal Shadow).
3. Readers interested in detailed critical commentary on the Spanish detective canon should consult the excellent studies by José F. Colmeiro (1994) and Joan Ramon Resina (1997), the latter of which focuses extensively on the novels of Manuel Vázquez Montalbán. In this introduction, I am indebted to Colmeiro and Resina as well as to historical surveys by José R. Valles

- Calatrava (1991) and Salvador Vázquez de Parga (1993). In English, the pioneering study of Spanish detective fiction is by Patricia Hart (1987). While scholarship on Spanish American detective fiction is less plentiful, Jorge Lafforgue and Jorge B. Rivera (1996) and Hubert Pöppel (2001) provide useful overviews of the genre in Argentina and Colombia, respectively, while Ilan Stavans (1993, 1997 in English), Vicente Francisco Torres (2003), and Persephone Braham (2004) provide the most complete coverage of Mexico. Braham's study also deals with Cuba, as do monographs by Leonardo Padura Fuentes (2000) and Stephen Wilkinson (2006). In 2003, Clemens A. Franken Kurzen published the first monographic study of contemporary Chilean detective fiction.
4. Julian Symons judges that He had read Vidocq, and it is right to say that if the *Mémoires* had never been published Poe would not have created his amateur detective (34). In *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, Auguste Dupin passes judgement on his Parisian predecessor: Vidocq, for example, was a good guesser, and a persevering man. But, without educated thought, he erred continually by the very intensity of his investigations (204). A namesake of the Parisian detective, Francisco Vidoc, features as a morgue director in *El día del hurón* (Day of the Ferret), a 1997 *novela negra* by Mexican writer Ricardo Chávez Castañeda.
 5. Valles Calatrava writes that Spanish crime literature shares the same basic genre traits; there are, then, no special differences in construction with respect to novels of this type written in other nations (86); and it is not possible to speak rigorously of the existence of a Spanish school of *novela negra* writers (114). Vázquez de Parga's general assessment in the introduction to his 1993 study is as follows: in this field, as in many others, Spain has behaved up through the present as a cultural colony of the Anglo-Saxon countries and, to a lesser extent, of France. . . . in Spain, although there exists a long tradition of readers and aficionados of the detective novel, there is no generalized praxis of writing. There are isolated, concrete specimens of the genre with widely varying intentions, specimens of every type and level spread throughout the course of twentieth century, but they have never constituted the nucleus of a Spanish detective novel (*La novela policíaca* 10). Novelist Vázquez Montalbán, for his part, was insistent and emphatic in denying the existence of any Spanish autonomy in interviews and essays such as *Sobre la inexistencia de la novela policíaca en España* (On the Non-Existence of the Detective Novel in Spain). Colmeiro, while acknowledging the discontinuity and heterogeneity of Spanish production, disagrees with Valles Calatrava and Vázquez Montalbán and asserts that it is possible to distinguish certain characteristics shared by different Spanish detective series (*La novela* 264 5).
 6. Patricia Hart largely echoes Vázquez de Parga in her dismissive characterization of the imitative production of the early twentieth century: To find a genuine detective work of the time, one must look to the serials, the dime novels and theatrical productions . . . the vast majority of the works of

- detection written in Spain in the early part of the twentieth century were set in places outside of Spain that the reading public found exotic, and the writers themselves frequently used English-sounding pseudonyms (22-23). She adds: During the forties, the few Spaniards who wrote detective novels, again usually under English-sounding names, set their tales outside Spain almost exclusively, finding that readers still preferred foreign locales for detectives. These books were aimed at the popular taste, were frequently little more than reworkings of American or English plots, and contributed little to the development of a truly Spanish detective novel (25).
7. Vázquez Montalbán is one of many who unequivocally denied the literary value of this production: The Spanish detective novel has no literate tradition. In the past it was a consumer literature: the famous kiosk novels, paralleling other serial novel collections. . . . In Spain there is no tradition of writers approaching the detective story with dignity or assimilating the Anglo-Saxon puzzle novel of a certain quality, like that of Holmes, or French novel of the criminal underworld. There are no Spanish writers devoted to this literature, and Spanish literary culture has remained impervious to those influences, considering them a lesser genre literature (*Sobre la inexistencia* 50).
 8. González Ledesma vindicates the largely forgotten producers of the Spanish popular novel as having contributed untold millions of dollars to the national economy through the exportation of books to America (*La prehistoria* 14).
 9. The research of Lafforgue and Rivera suggests that Sherlock Holmes may have arrived in translation earlier in Argentina than in Spain. They cite the publication of three of Doyle's Holmes tales by *La Nación* in 1898 and 1899 (119). An anecdote told by Donald Yates in an early article on Spanish American detective fiction suggests a relationship between the fervent Anglophilia of the Argentine cultural elite and the unusual prestige of the detective genre in Argentina. According to Yates, when a midwestern visitor to Victoria Ocampo's house in the mid-1930s expressed surprise at finding an entire wall of English detective novels in her library, Ocampo responded, Of course. . . . The only language in which detective stories *should* be read is English! (228). Translated volumes of the Holmes novels, for the benefit of somewhat less cultured readers, also began to appear in Santiago de Chile as early as 1902.
 10. Joan Ramon Resina considers Pedrolo's *Es vessa una sang fàcil* the first Spanish novel written in the U.S. hard-boiled style (48), but Pedrolo himself had this to say about the novel's classification: It has a crime and all the amenities of the genre, yes, but it isn't a detective novel in the usual sense. I was attracted by the possibility of introducing into a detective text all the apparently marginal elements that explain the characters in ultimately psychological terms (quoted in Fuster). In a 2003 interview, Colmeiro cites Fuster's *De mica en mica s'omple la pica* (*El procedimiento*, 1972) and

- Vázquez Montalbán's *Tatuaje* (1974) as the first true *novelas negras* written in Spain (Diálogo).
11. Andreu Martín: I like to say that I learned to read (to read Catalan and to discover the emotion concealed in the pages of a book) with a formidable collection of detective novels published in Catalan in the 1960s, *La Cua de Palla*, edited by a magnificent writer named Manuel de Pedrolo (Interview).
 12. Colmeiro suggests that the Spanish public became familiar with the aesthetics of the *novela negra* more through film noir than through the literature itself. He notes that film noir was also, however, subject to censorship and that films seen by Spanish audiences were often cut or deceptively dubbed (*La novela* 131 n.8). Valles Calatrava cites the reception of these films as one of three primary phenomena defining consumption and production in the detective genre in Spain between 1939 and 1975, which are firstly, the appearance of a popular literature with an acceptable technical and aesthetic level; secondly, the printing and reading of many translations of foreign crime stories; and, finally, the enormous influence of American film noir on our current writers (106). In a 2006 lecture, novelist José Luis Muñoz described 1950s-era film noir as the school of his generation: our culture was cinematic before it was literary. On the other side of the Atlantic, Juan Sasturain recalls that in 1947 Buenos Aires publisher Direzan decided to published translations of *The Maltese Falcon* and *The Big Sleep* in order to capitalize on the success of the film adaptations directed by John Huston (1941) and Howard Hawkes (1946).
 13. The Nota del autor that precedes Taibo's novel alludes to the frequent travels in which he has distinguished himself the primary international promoter of the *novela negra*: Originally, *Adiós, Madrid* was born as a program for Televisión Española, and later it became the ninth novel in the Héctor Belascoarán saga. It was written between 1990 and 1992, begun in Gijón, Spain, continued in Mexico City, Madrid, Acapulco, Havana, Madrid again and the Ranon airport, then rethought on a bus trip to Toluca using notes made on a Delta flight to New York, and falsely finished in Saltillo, Coahuila before being completed twice in Mexico City. Maybe this explains why it didn't want to come out and why it's so full of *nostalgia* and *distance* (italics in original, 11).

CHAPTER 2

1. In the article already cited in Chapter 1, Cole Swensen offers a reading of the detective tale as a cultural construct that successfully dealt with urban identity problems and particularly with the redefinition of the body by urban experience. She concludes that the city, as a language, recreates the human body by . . . adamantly foregrounding its surface. In this way, we have a new body that was not there before the city created it by being the perspective from which or context within which such a body is important,

- is inevitable. Contemporary urban bodies *are* different than their non-urban predecessors, and an ongoing interest in the detective genre is an outgrowth of an attempt to find and inhabit this new body, as well as to mourn the passing of the old one (italics in original, 39–40).
2. The most useful studies dealing with Mexican detective fiction and available in English are Ilan Stavans's *Antiberoes. Mexico and Its Detective Novel*, Amelia S. Simpson's *Detective Fiction from Latin America*, and Persephone Braham's *Crimes Against Persons, Crimes Against the State. Detective Fiction in Cuba and Mexico*.
 3. According to Cynthia Duncan, pre-1960s Mexican detective writers generally imitated the narrative model of classical foreign detective fiction while ridiculing or at least mildly subverting its ideological premises. These texts, she writes, obviously do not defend the same values found in classic examples of North American and European detective fiction. They do little to assure their readers that all is well in the world. The individual cannot be sure that the law will protect him if he is innocent, nor that it will punish him if he is guilty. There is a randomness to the whole process of crime and punishment that is unsettling. The detective is not the infallible character he is in classical texts; he is, instead, incompetent, impotent, or disinterested in the abstract notion of justice. It is difficult to be sure that good triumphs over evil as these narratives draw to a close, for the boundaries between the two categories are often indistinct and arbitrary (206).
 4. As Duncan and other critics note, the terms *policíaco* and *policial* are favored in Spanish over *detectivesco* to categorize crime novels in general, even in cases such as this in which policemen are routinely vilified. Where the police of the classic whodunit are frequently stupid or incompetent, states George Grella, the American police [in the hard-boiled novel] are brutal and degraded (111). Taibo, who is credited with having coined the term *neopolicíaco*, defines as one of its primary characteristics the characterization of the police as a force of chaos, of the barbaric system, willing to drown the citizens in violence (La otra novela policíaca 38).
 5. José Sablich has observed that the *novela negra* was distinguished from the problem novel by its reliance on popular discourse and on short sentences, few adjectives and the minimum of description necessary to sustain the action (164). In *El género negro*, Mempo Giardinelli characterizes hard-boiled language simply as brutal and stark (13).
 6. In an interview done during a walking tour of Mexico City, Taibo told Joyce Gregory Wyels: I have a very democratic view of the city. . . . I like it from the bottom. I like small people, small stories; I like common people very much (quoted in Wyels 26).
 7. The standard U.S. private eye seeks to enforce his personal vision of moral justice by waging a solitary war against some sinister alliance of criminal, police, and government forces. The moral view is Manichaean. Chandler and Ross Macdonald have been particularly explicit in portraying their private eyes as romantic heroes adapted to the degraded metropolis of the

Naturalists and the muckrakers. In hard-boiled fiction, capitalists are so often blamed for pervasive social corruption that, in George Grella's words, a quasi-Marxist distrust of the wealthy becomes a minor motif (111). Yet the class antagonism and the political disenchantment evident in hard-boiled fiction never resolved itself into a coherent challenge to prevailing cultural logic largely because, as Dennis Porter suggests, the ideology of the form prevented it. By adopting the mode of heroic adventure, Hammett and his successors committed themselves to the populist individualism implicit in it. Incompatible, for example, with the socialist collectivism of the Naturalists, heroic individualist narrative affirmed instead a radicalism of nostalgia for a mythical past (181). The basic ideology is still, as other critics have agreed, bourgeois, and the narrative formula has proved adaptable even to the ends of writers such as Mickey Spillane, whose politics Hammett would have abhorred.

8. Porter observes that Hammett established early on the model for the hard-boiled view of urban society. The cityscapes of his early writings are represented as perverted fiefdoms of the owners of capital and of those strong-arm men who support them and live off their greed. . . . The big house, that enduring symbol of social stability through hierarchical order in the British tradition, takes in Chandler the form of the Sternwood mansion (*The Big Sleep*) or the Grayle house (*Farewell, My Lovely*). That is to say, it is the outward manifestation of mere wealth without social responsibility or a prescribed social role. The ostentatious luxury of the decor serves chiefly to point up the ironic contrast with the moral corruption of the inhabitants (198).
9. The homage is obvious when we recall that Taibo had already quoted the closing sentence of *La busca* as an epigraph in the second Belascoarán novel, *Cosa fácil* (1977). *La busca* together with its sequel *Mala hierba* (*Weeds*) from the following year are credited by critic E. Inman Fox with providing the most realistic description of a city in all of Spanish literature (193). John Dos Passos praised them as 'the true Baedeker to that seething maze of rebellious, unkempt, louse-bitten, soaring life that was Madrid' (73).
10. Chilean scholar Martín Hopenhayn presents his similar conclusions very eloquently in another article from 2002: 'Two specters are haunting the Latin American metropolis: drugs and violence. There is no shortage of reasons for this, given that Latin America has the fastest urban growth rates in the world of any region in the world, combined with dynamics that are easily associated with increases not only in drug abuse but also in violence: the worst income distribution on the planet, which doesn't seem to have improved even during the economic reactivation of the 1990s; a young population that for the most part feels excluded from politics and employment and for whom the channels of social mobility are more uncertain than ever; the growing gap between increased image consumption and decreased consumption of material goods, which is to say, ever more empty hands and ever more eyes filled with advertised products; and a spreading 'existential rootlessness,' consisting of changes in values and territories and of the precariousness of employment, all of

- which leads people to live with less ground to stand on and less future to behold (70).
11. My reliance in this book on homicide rates to compare levels of violence prevailing in various countries reflects the relatively greater accuracy of these statistics in comparison with measures of other forms of social violence. Spanish researcher Juan Avilés Farré states: International comparisons of known crimes are problematic due above all to the fact that the percentage that they represent in comparison to the number of crimes actually committed varies considerably from country to country. The same is not true in the specific case of homicide. Because of its gravity and the improbability of it going unnoticed, homicide is the best basis of comparison between countries and between historical periods (131).
 12. In *Todo lo que debería saber sobre el crimen organizado en México (Everything You Should Know About Organized Crime in Mexico)*, the Instituto Mexicano de Estudios de la Criminalidad Organizada offers an extensive and detailed substantiation of the thesis that the central cause of the explosive growth of delinquency [in recent decades] is that in Mexico crime has been organized, promoted and protected from within the state (16).
 13. For a critique of Marcos's contribution to the novel, see my article *Muertos incómodos: the Monologic Polyphony of Subcomandante Marcos*.
 14. Vicente Francisco Torres recalls in particular the vivid urban portrait offered in *Ensayo de un crimen*, Rodolfo Usigli's *sui generis* novel of 1944. Though classifiable neither as a classical mystery novel nor as hard-boiled, Usigli's tale of an aristocratic would-be murderer stands as a testimony of life in Mexico City in the late 1930s and early 1940s . . . Despite the fact that critics have emphasized the novel's depiction of such distinguished locales as the terrace of the Hotel Reforma, Lady Baltimore, El Patio, Sanborns de Madero, el Café París . . . it has gone unremarked that Usigli also registers less *chic* sites, such as a gay bar on Santa María la Redonda . . . a semi-clandestine dive on Correo Mayor where clients drank anisette and smoked from a *narghileh*, and, most impressively, the Leda cabaret . . . where artists went in search of excitement and inspiration [and where] elegant people mixed with workers, prostitutes and pimps (Torres 31). Though affinities between Usigli's novel and the hard-boiled genre have been alleged, his mapping of the city lacks the latter's programmatic interest in locating the occult bases of criminal power. For an original reading of Usigli's novel in relation to the post-revolutionary Mexican culture, see Fernando Fabio Sánchez.
 15. On the origin of this term and its adoption in Spanish, see Birkenmaier (491-92) and De Ferrari (33-34).

CHAPTER 3

1. In *Delightful Murder*, Marxist genre historian Ernest Mandel offers one of the clearest interpretations of classical detective fiction as the epitome of

bourgeois rationality in literature (25–26). By Mandel's account, the common ideology of the original and classical detective story in Britain, the United States, and the countries of the European continent remains quintessentially bourgeois. Reified death; formalized crime-detection oriented toward proof acceptable in courts of justice operating according to strictly defined rules; the pursuit of the criminal by the hero depicted as a battle between brains; human beings reduced to 'pure' analytical intelligence; partial fragmented rationality elevated to the status of an absolute guiding principle of human behaviour; individual conflicts used as a generalized substitute for conflicts between social groups and layers—all this is bourgeois ideology *par excellence*, a striking synthesis of human alienation in bourgeois society (47).

2. For a thorough account of the historical relationship between the rise of organized crime and the origin of hard-boiled detective fiction in the U.S., see chapter 4 of Mandel's *Delightful Murder*.
3. In his 1990 study, Hilfer proposes a categorical distinction between the detective story and the crime novel. By his account, the central and defining feature of the crime novel is that in it self and world, guilt and innocence are problematic (2). In the absence of a detective, Hilfer proposes, the crime novel relies on four alternative models of protagonist: the murderer, the guilty bystander, the individual falsely suspected of a crime, and the victim (3–6). The inclusion of both detective-centered and non-detective-centered variants within the Spanish-language category of the *novela negra* dictates the refusal of Hilfer's distinction in this study.
4. Recent press reports advise of an ongoing surge in criminal violence in Central America. Fifteen years after peace accords put an end to civil war in El Salvador, it has become Latin America's most violent country and one of the three most violent in the world (Dalton Cárceles). Salvadoran researcher Janeth Aguilar describes a state delegitimized by its inability to control crime and a society mired in anarchy and chaos (Dalton El Salvador). Similar trends in neighboring Guatemala led Rigoberta Menchú to declare during a recent unsuccessful presidential campaign that 'violence has us on our knees, and that organized crime, corruption and narco-trafficking are forces incrustated within the state. Yolanda Pérez Ruiz, former president of the Colegio de Abogados y Notarios de Guatemala concurs: 'There is no longer any area of the Guatemalan state that is not penetrated by crime . . . the Guatemalan state is already a failed state. A state of near total impunity reigned in 2006, when of 5,885 homicides reported in a population of about twelve million, only 2 percent were investigated and only .5 percent ever brought to trial, with many of those tried acquitted for lack of valid evidence (Elías). Misha Kokotovic's article 'Neoliberal Noir' offers an overview of contemporary Central American Crime Fiction in light of this current crisis.
5. According to Juan Carlos PÉrgolis, author of a monographic study on Latin American plazas, 'The Plaza de Bolívar, the *place* of Bogota, is a symbolic

- space; it gives the current identity of the city, at the same time as it explains its history; it represents the Nation and its institutions, it is the Plaza of Colombia (italics in original 90).
6. Pérgolis distinguishes between three urban models that have marked the historical development of Latin American cities: the *continuous city*, characteristic of our settlements during the colonial period and the Republic, up until the early years of the Modern Movement in Architecture (in Colombia, approximately the 1930s); the *discontinuous city*, belonging to modern urbanism and valid, in many cases, up through the present, and the current tendency toward the *fragmented city* (9). Pérgolis associates the latter model with atomization of everything, multiplicity of images and the lack of an apparent cohesive structure [impeding] comprehension of any supposed totality (15). He proposes that any reading of the contemporary city requires adoption of the aesthetics of the fragment, valuing each element in itself (15), since the dispersive principle governing the functioning of the contemporary metropolis is the same as that governing postmodern cultural production in general: The utopia of totality, characteristic of modern thought, broke down, exploded into the heterotopy of fragments playing on top of unstable structures (39).
 7. Although less iconic a figure than the hard-boiled private investigator, the hard-boiled investigative reporter has nearly as long a history. According to Rex Burns, the first hard-boiled story featuring a newspaper reporter as investigative protagonist appeared in *Black Mask* in 1934 (200).
 8. This memorably awful tableau recalls comments by David Trotter regarding the prominence of death by drowning in hard-boiled sub-genre. Since hard-boiled novels try harder than their classic counterparts to make an inaugural mess, they frequently favor floaters to more effectively disrupt the conversion of matter into sign. They [drowning victims] are, as everyone must know by now, hard to fingerprint and thus to identify. They evade the very technique which first associated detection (and detective stories) with the romance of scientific reason, of power/knowledge (25).
 9. Though I will not have occasion to consider it here, García Márquez's *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* provides a very useful counterpoint to *Perder* and to Vallejo's *La virgen de los sicarios* in its literary treatment of the corpse. My article "Open Up a Few Corpses" deals extensively with the role of the autopsied cadaver as a figure of the disintegrating social body and of the text itself.
 10. In *Powers of Horror*, Julia Kristeva provides us with perhaps the most potent theoretical framework for understanding detective fiction's deployment of the cadaver and its ritual containment of the threat it represents: that of utter indifferentiation, insignification, and the terminal suspension of subjectivity. Her study opens with a sweeping consideration of the threat of abjection of the subject by the cadaver, that border that has encroached upon everything. Kristeva writes: "The corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life. Abject.

It is something rejected from which one does not part, from which one does not protect oneself as from an object. Imaginary uncanniness and real threat, it beckons to us and ends up engulfing us (3-4). It is, in this sense, detective fiction's futile and thus incessant task to subdue the abject that, for Kristeva, simultaneously beseeches and pulverizes the subject (5).

11. A comprehensive study of perceptions of Bogota directed by Armando Silva and published in 2003 confirms the broader research mentioned earlier in this chapter. The theme of insecurity is perhaps the strongest imaginary manifested in the cities of Latin America, and Bogota is no exception (Silva 84). When in the year 2000 social scientists asked city residents to name the feelings that Bogota inspired in them, fear was the most frequent response, and municipal studies during the same period found that almost no one considered the city safe (Silva 53, 87). Despite a sustained and considerable decline in crime rates, the perception of danger has not eased (Silva 87). Another study conducted by other researchers during the second half of the 1990s concluded that 73 percent of Bogota residents were afraid of the city (Silva 118).
12. In *La ciudad de Mr. Hyde*, Mendoza summarizes this notion already so prevalent in his novels. There is one city governed by the law, by reason, and another very different one governed by pleasure, instincts, vice and boredom with ourselves. One is the city of Dr. Jekyll, the solar city of freshly showered people leaving for work, and the other the city of desire, that of Mr. Hyde, the lunar city that conceals the greatest secrets and perversions. The people we live, work and socialize with are in reality many more than we know, each one multiplies herself, subdivides himself, proliferates and can only show one part of him or herself, a single being, perhaps the most predictable and dullest one. But the other beings are there, lurking, waiting for the opportunity to emerge and conquer a city that incites them, conceals them and shelters them in its seductive shadows. And although the city is designed to sustain an argument for identity, it is multiplicity that ends up imposing itself. As the following discussion will show, themes of psychic fragmentation, multiplicity of selves and otherness within are played out constantly on the urban geography of Mendoza's novels.
13. I was interested to find that when Mendoza offered a personal summary of the memorable achievements of contemporary Latin American novelists in a 2003 conference paper titled *Fuerzas centrífugas y centripetas*, (Centrifugal and Centripetal Forces) the first of twenty specific references he made was to Parra's *Nostalgia de la sombra*. Supporting the perception of a strong affinity with his own characters, Mendoza professed enthusiasm for the spiritual exile of Eduardo Parra's triggerman (132).
14. Silva explains that in the early 1990s El Cartucho was a zone of extreme social destitution where thousands of indigents gathered in a bleak scenario of crime and drugs (252). The area became well known as a center of drug and arms trafficking, as well as a gathering point for recyclers and gangs of thieves. In an interview, Mendoza recalls reading about conditions

that inspired him to spend months getting to know El Cartucho before writing *Scorpio City*. Around 1993 and 1994 I saw reports by non-governmental organizations that talked about 185 murders in the Calle del Cartucho, in other words 185 crimes in 100 yards, in hardly a block. That's a record like all our records, a bloody one, a record of crime and injustice, and it seemed incredible to me that no one had written about it. . . . This was something that hadn't happened anywhere else, and I told myself that I needed to write about it, to develop my contact with the leader of El Cartucho. . . . It was hard to enter the underworld, and I spent about a year and a half interacting with those people, getting to know what the conflicts in the zone were, immersing myself in preparation for a novel and warming up the motor for a story until one night in a conversation the perfect plot came to me. The dialogue that I narrate in the novel, it's a conversation with the character of Celia. That's how I heard about a policeman who tried to denounce social cleansing groups and got eliminated in a bad way. I thought that was a great plot, and it was just what I was waiting for (Interview Bernal).

15. Colombian journalist and novelist Laura Restrepo stated in an interview in 2001: The future is what we are living in Colombia . . . the worst things that are happening in Colombia are the result of the juxtaposition of certain atavistic cultures with the attempt to carry out a politics of globalization, of domineering capital in conflict with archaic structures. . . . Colombia is a laboratory of the future, the situation of Colombians will spread rapidly throughout the world unless the current dynamic changes, and I think that following the attack on the World Trade Center this is much more clearly understood. Fernando Vallejo, Colombia's most vociferous herald of doom, heartily concurs: Colombia is the vanguard of disaster. The same thing will end up happening everywhere in the world (quoted in Hermoso).
16. Dashiell Hammett's *The Dain Curse*, published the same year as *Red Harvest* (1929), involved a Californian religious cult. A Druze cult as well as zodiac signs feature as prominently in *Las doce figuras del mundo*, the first detective story coauthored by Borges and Bioy Casares and published under the pseudonym H. Bustos Domecq in *Sur* in 1941.
17. In interviews, Mendoza has recognized his affiliation with an aesthetics of the grotesque (Interview *Acción*) and a degraded realism, which some critics have also called dirty realism (Interview Bernal).
18. This is an argument I first presented in an essay titled *The Detective is Dead. Long Live the Novela Negra!*
19. The protagonist of Mendoza's 2004 novel *Cobro de sangre* (Blood Vengeance) is a man whose Communist parents are killed by the Colombian army and who takes revenge years later by becoming an urban guerrilla and killing the general responsible in a bombing attack in Bogota. He then assumes a false identity and works for a year as a literature teacher, dedicating his free time to producing a sensorial map of Bogota that expands in

Borgesian fashion and begins to fill his whole apartment. When his true identity is discovered, he is jailed for seventeen years, and upon his release he lives briefly as a vagabond but is forced into a violent confrontation with his former comrades before the novel ends with a scene of Buddhist-inflected rebirth. A number of stories in Mendoza's *Una escalera al cielo* (A Stairway to Heaven, 2004) also center on incidents of urban violence (*La fiesta*, *Historia en la habitación 804*, *Ésta es tu noche*, *La prueba*, *Cuento de navidad*, and *El bailarín*).

20. In his indispensable survey, Pöppel examines a number of other Colombian novelists have worked in variants of the *novela negra* genre. Among the very few who have developed series featuring a single investigator protagonist are Gonzalo España, who writes about a federal prosecutor based in a fictional city called Alcandora, very reminiscent of Barrancabermeja. Other crime novels set in Bogota, which I find far less interesting than those examined in this chapter, include Juan Carlos Rubiano's *Tres exóticas aventuras de Ray López—detective privado* (Three Exotic Adventures of Ray López Private Detective, 1996), which alternates between horror fantasy and crude detective farce, and a hard-boiled novella by Rodrigo Argüello, *Trancón sobre el asfalto (Vida y obra de un asesino nato)* (Traffic Jam on Asphalt [Life and Times of a Born Killer] 1999). In this text, categorized somewhat grandly by the author as *picaresca negra*, a professional criminal narrates a relatively inconsequential adventure, and the narrative has little to offer beyond clichés, a few stray literary references, and a pair of pornographic set-pieces involving prostitutes. On the whole, Argüello traipses listlessly over the territory plowed by Mendoza, and the text's only possible interest here is in its reiteration of certain hard-boiled features previously discussed, for example, the casually cruel infliction of male voyeurism on female bodies: I look at her shamelessly. I undress her with my gaze: I touch her, I excite her, she gets uncomfortable (39). In Argüello's climax, his narrator commits a triple murder and finishes off a female victim, the girlfriend of a rival criminal, in a sequence recalling the misogynistic sadism of Mickey Spillane: the little lady who's fallen on her ass on the asphalt looks at me in horror. Through the miniskirt and the blouse she's wearing, I confirm that she's got very nice thighs and great tits. I hope they're not implants. I aim the revolver at her. She drags herself backward asking me not to kill her. I shoot her right between her two tits. Then I let her have one in each thigh (85). It would be hard to find a clearer example of the macabre delight in violence for which Abad Faciolince denounced Colombian crime fiction (Entrevista). Curiously, this passage closely parallels the climactic sequence in Emilio Maillé's film *Rosario Tijeras*, which opts to play up the execution of the titular *sicaria*, despite Jorge Franco Ramos's discrete omission of this incident in the novel. See my article *Rosario Tijeras: Femme Fatale* in Thrall, forthcoming in the *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos*.
21. As my previous comments have indicated, the denunciation of violence in Mendoza's narrative seems inseparable from a considerable degree of fascination

with it and with a certain artistic pride in representing an extremely dangerous city. In an interview published in 2007, Álvaro Antonio Bernal asked Mendoza what distinguished Bogota from other megacities, and Mendoza answered that it is the vertigo or adrenaline rush produced by proximity to death. Vertigo. Nowhere else in the world is death as close by as in Bogota, and the figures and statistics still show that we're one of the most violent cities in the world, although the city has changed. . . . Only by reflecting on death can one understand the full dimension of what it is to be alive, so nowhere else in the world do people feel as alive as here. I think that's the great lesson of living in Bogota. In *La virgen de los sicarios*, a novel I will discuss later in this chapter, Fernando Vallejo's semi-autobiographical narrator describes feeling a comparable exhilaration and pride upon hearing news of a major political assassination while living abroad in Switzerland (a country that seems to be identified as the anti-Colombia in a certain Colombian imaginary). When they killed the candidate I told you about I was in Switzerland, in a hotel with lake and television. Kolombien' they said on the TV and my heart skipped a beat. . . . The rumble on the dais went all round the world and caused the name of my country to ring out. I felt so very, very proud of Colombia . . . You,' I said to the Swiss, 'are practically dead. Observe the images before you: that is life, pure life' (*Our Lady* 40–41).

22. My view of *La virgen de los sicarios* is close to that expressed by Ana Serra in a 2003 article that reads the novel as a parody of the testimonial genre. Serra praises *La virgen* as ultimately a forceful denunciation of the violence in which Fernando is caught up: [T]he text manages to bring the *sicarios* near to the reader even as it mounts a devastating, although indirect, critique of violence. . . . Despite being literally enamored of the *sicarios*, Fernando/Vallejo comes to disapprove of their violence in the novel. . . . [T]he text's parodic use of testimony and violence, which cannot be wholly digestible or explicable, reproduces the characteristics of the phenomenon of the *sicariato* more forcefully than any other text (66, 73, 74). This is also the view taken by Geoffrey Kantaris in his comments on the discomfort and moral panic inspired in the spectator by Barbet Schroeder's film adaptation of the novel: the film operates desensitization as defetishization, an emptying out of our stock moral responses towards violence . . . the film is elaborating a radical critique of the systemic production of violence.
23. Fernando's apparently ambivalent attitude toward violence, as evident in his tolerance of the actions of the *sicarios* and his recommendation of mass extermination as a solution of Colombia's problems, has elicited less than favorable reactions from a number of critics. Jean Franco writes warily: Unless we read irony into the account, the viewpoint is misogynist and racist. . . . The question is whether he [the narrator] is deliberately forcing us to face the 'fascist within' or whether he expects our complicity (225). Mario Correa Tascón characterizes *La virgen* both as a great work and as a racist treatise that compares well with Nazi prayerbooks, while Gabriela

- Polit Dueñas evaluates Fernando's discourse as 'laded with a profound neo-Fascism' (133). Rory O'Bryen agrees that the narrator's voice 'may legitimately said to be fascist' (201), and he cites Vallejo's acknowledgments that Fernando's voice is nearly indistinguishable from his own in order to conclude that 'in such a light one cannot help taking [the novel's] fascistic discourses at face value' (196). The release of Barbet Schroeder's film provoked even more vociferous condemnation from Colombian journalists, such as Germán Santamaría and Martha Ligia Parra. The intensity and volume of critical labor already exerted both against *La virgen* and in defense of it seems to confirm Rossana Reguillo's qualification of the novel as 'already canonical' (42).
24. In her 2004 study *Ciudades escritas*, Luz Mary Giraldo offers a comprehensive survey of Colombian urban narrative in the second half of the twentieth century, contemplating the *novela negra* as one prominent component. A number of Giraldo's conclusions with regard to the general trajectory of change in representations of the city prove complementary to those essayed here. At the end of this century, the city has been represented as an anomalous, disintegratory, destructuring, alienating and chaotic entity (58). Later in her study, Giraldo adds: 'As our century draws to a close and certain models dissolve, cities express the crisis of the subject, pulverization of [social] relations and the degradation of values. What was a solemn or desired place or a form of conceiving of culture comes to be seen in a conflictive and skeptical manner. . . . Life in the cities changes vertiginously, giving rise to heterogeneous places brimming with unanswered questions. The memory of an ideal past or the reference to a model is replaced by the relationship to the current world, which presents the most extreme forms of a civilization marked by massification, anonymity, quotidian violence, the immediatist communication favored by the media, capitalist consumerism and the new culture' (131-32).
25. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Colombian novelist Héctor Abad Faciolince not only named the *sicaresca* but also speaks forcefully against it. He explains his own refusal to write about the *sicarios* as follows: 'For very vital and direct reasons, because my own most important relative was killed by *sicarios*, I've never felt any fascination with them. I've felt exactly the opposite. I've felt repulsion. It seems to me that Colombian literature developed a taste for these thugs and that some of the narratives partially justified them. It's as though the victims were of no interest and the interest of Colombian literature had centered for a long time on the executioners, on the aggressors. The novel that I'm now finishing and that I hope to publish in October [*El olvido que seremos* 2006] is precisely the reverse of the picaresque novel; a novel about a victim of the *sicarios*, which seems to me a more interesting and valuable life' (Interview Orrego).

CHAPTER 4

1. In Argentina 1880 represents not only a historical break, with the definitive establishment of the state, political and legal unification, and entry into the world market. It also represents a literary break, because it introduces a group of young writers (average age thirty five: President Julio A. Roca is thirty eight) who form something like the cultural coalition of the new Argentine state. They are not professional men of letters, but rather the first university writers in Argentina and at the same time state civil servants. The cultural and literary coalition of 1880 is thus a state coalition, perhaps the first (Ludmer 11).
2. Lafforgue and Rivera's *Asesinos de papel* includes a good deal of information on Borges's unfavorable assessment of the U.S. hard-boiled novel. In various interviews, Borges denounced the hard-boiled writers for their reliance on sadism, violence and pornography, for their sloppy narrative construction and for their vulgar pretention to realism (Lafforgue and Rivera 47-48, 126-27). Borges resolutely defends values such as narrative order and intellectual ingenuity on which the classical detective model was founded. Comments published in *Borges oral* in 1979 reiterated this criticism. At present, the detective genre is realistic and violent, a genre of sexual violence as well. In any case, it has disappeared. The intellectual origin of the detective story has been forgotten (79).
3. In *Asesinos de papel*, Lafforgue and Rivera identify a group of scarcely known Argentine translators and writers who were truly professional producers of the genre literature sold in the numerous kiosk collections of the 1950s and '60s (85). Eduardo Goligorsky, mentioned in Chapter 1 as one of the most prolific of these specialists, published under numerous pseudonyms and alternated translations with pseudo-translations, reaching a wide public and earning, by his own account, an unusually steady income for an Argentine fiction writer of the 1960s. Lafforgue and Rivera quote Goligorsky's recollection that around 1960, in the heyday of the Argentine hard-boiled pulp collections, print runs of hard-boiled novels fluctuated between ten and thirty thousand copies. The writers most proficient in the genre formula might need only a week to turn out a 128-page novel for which they were paid eight thousand pesos (24). According to Néstor Ponce, 'The growth of the market . . . facilitated the appearance of professional writers with different levels of dedication to the detective genre. This professionalization illustrates the concrete possibility of the incorporation of new social sectors into the republic of letters' (*Diagonales* 152). As Giardinelli observes, print runs of thirty thousand copies today would make Latin American publishers green with envy (Introduction xxviii). In the mid-1980s, Jorge Lafforgue calculated the average print run for Argentine novels at between two and three thousand (165).
4. As mentioned in Chapter 1, one of the most prominent of these publishing initiatives was the *Serie Negra* introduced by Editorial Tiempo Contemporáneo

in 1969. This was the best coordinated collection of foreign hard-boiled writing yet published in Argentina, and it was edited by a young writer who has since come to be considered one of Argentina's most important living novelists, Ricardo Piglia. Rodolfo Walsh was among the collaborators who provided more careful and complete Spanish translations than those afforded hard-boiled novels in earlier kiosk collections.

5. Writing in collaboration with two other novelists, Saccomanno produced the first of five novels published under pseudonyms in the *Colección Catín* (Lafforgue and Rivera 29). Along with the better known titles by Puig, Soriano, Martelli, and Martini, Julio César Galtero also published the hard-boiled *El jefe de seguridad* (Head of Security) in 1973, while Walsh issued another of his nonfiction investigative texts, *El caso Satanowsky* (The Satanowsky Case).
6. Historian David Rock writes that while a number of small guerrilla groups surfaced in Argentina during the 1960s, more effective guerrilla operations of kidnapping, assassination, robbery, bombing, and occasional assaults on security forces began in 1970. By the end of that year, three separate Peronist guerrilla groups had appeared, along with the increasingly formidable Trotskyite Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP), later redefined as Guevarist (352–53). Counterrevolutionary groups reacted to the guerrilla offensive by adopting extralegal tactics of their own. The coming of the guerrillas in mid 1970 immediately injected a vicious dialectic into the country's conflict-ridden politics. In April 1970 an extreme right-wing group, reputedly composed of off duty police, known as *Mano* (Hand), attacked the Soviet ambassador in retaliation for the kidnapping [of the Paraguayan consul] in Posadas. Counterterrorism escalated rapidly, and by the end of 1970 *Mano* and other clandestine right-wing groups conducted their own series of kidnaps, abducting students or union militants of Peronist or leftist affiliation. Most of these victims simply vanished without a trace, and the few to reappear spoke of torture. By the early months of 1971 one such 'disappearance' occurred on average each eighteen days (Rock 355). As insurgent forces persisted and grew during the following years, with the Peronist guerrillas uniting under the name of Montoneros, 'the three armed services were drawn steadily into a war on subversion.' Each blow struck by the guerrillas was matched in kind by clandestine groups on the right, and torture became a standard technique in the police interrogation of suspects (Rock 356). When both the Montoneros and the ERP persisted in their violent activities following the return to power of Juan Perón in 1973, the Peronist state orchestrated its own campaign of counterterrorism through the Alianza Anticomunista Argentina, or Triple A, thought to be run through the federal police (Rock 360). Following Perón's death, the government of his widow Isabel Perón took an additional step toward the abolition of constitutional guarantees in November 1974 when it declared a state of siege in order to allow the army more latitude in responding to the unrelenting campaigns by the guerrilla forces.

7. In her comments on *Los asesinos*, Amelia Simpson (55–56) focuses rather too generously on Martini's intercalation of references to Monroe's abusive objectification by the mass media as a critical complement to his depiction of the more radical objectification enacted by her murderer. While this critical discourse is certainly present in the text, it seems to me strongly overpowered by the impact of Martini's first-person narration of the fantasy of the bloody killing of the world's most beautiful woman, first proffered on the opening page of the novel. Although clearly condemning his narrator for moral and political reasons, Martini succumbs to the same genre trap as Collazos when he depends for dramatic and commercial effect on the scenes depicting the beating, rape, mutilation, and humiliation of the actress who personified culturally dominant male fantasies of female sexuality at mid-century. As imagined by Martini in chapter 23 of *Los asesinos*, the murder of Marilyn Monroe is preceded by a photo session narrated over several pages in which she is said to undress and pose willingly in the most provocative positions imaginable for the general's camera before his lust culminates in violence. I cut her throat, her arms, her face, intones Martini's general. Her breasts, her belly, her legs. Her back, her buttocks, her shoulders. The blood came out in spurts (255). Throughout the novel, Martini continues to activate this fantasy by having the general consult photos of the corpse.
8. Colmeiro explains as follows the novel's betrayal of its advertised genre of novela policial: the absence of a detective or policeman unraveling the criminal intrigue, and the lack of a punishable crime . . . point toward an antidetective novel. . . . The detective language is only another appropriated language serving as a model for the protagonists and as a structural framework in the novel (187). *The Buenos Aires Affair* is certainly one of the most critically examined novels discussed in this study. At the time of this writing, a keyword search for Puig and Affair in the electronic version of the *MLA International Bibliography* turned up more than twenty entries. In *Manuel Puig ante la crítica: bibliografía analítica y comentada (1968–1996)*, Guadalupe Martí-Peña cites a number of additional sources that don't appear among the MLA search results (104–09). Among the critics who have dealt most directly with the question of the relation of *The Buenos Aires Affair* to detective genre, Juan Armando Epple calls it an anti-detective novel (45) and René A. Campos a pseudo-detective novel (194) or noir novel (200). Lucille Kerr, who offers a careful analysis of the dispersal of detective agency and of truth in the novel, writes that Puig's novel deforms that model [of the detective genre] in an apparently parodic reworking of its conventions. Yet, as in his other novels, the inventive operations through which that 'deformation' is effected also regenerate and raise up' the form (138). Marta Morello Frosch finds that *The Buenos Aires Affair* resembles less a detective novel than a crime movie . . . without detectives (153).
9. Celeste Fraser Delgado offers another cogent analysis of the novel's evocation of this double repression. She writes that one chain of substitutions in

the novel's discourse replaces the 'pervert' with the militant, as proscribed sexuality and proscribed sexual activity exchange places throughout the novel. . . . *The Buenos Aires Affair* takes place against the backdrop not only of the *cordobazo*' but against the escalating moral campaigns of the military regimes. Within this context, the queer sexuality repressed by the engineers of middle class national formation return in the form of a forgotten crime covered over by the representation of a false crime. Puig, by unmooring violence from any isolated act, unsettles the mechanism by which classic detective fiction disavowed the complicity of social relations and the discourses that sustain them in the production of 'crime' (66, 70). In Néstor Ponce's view, Puig transgresses the norms of the genre by utilizing the codes of the detective novel, but without writing a properly generic text . . . the political traverses his work and in *The Buenos Aires Affair* relates it unquestionably to the hard-boiled and its sampling of the social mosaic. The novel not only observes violence as an individual phenomenon, but also insists on the social motivations of the crimes (authoritarianism within the family, phallocracy, the imposition of stereotypes) (*Compartir la vida misma* 300 01).

10. For many years, wrote Borges, in books now happily forgotten, I tried to copy down the flavor, the essence of the outlying suburbs of Buenos Aires. Of course, I abounded in local words; I did not omit such words as *cuchilleros*, *milonga*, *tapia* and others, and thus I wrote those forgettable and forgotten books. Then, about a year ago, I wrote a story called *La muerte y la brújula*, which is a kind of nightmare, a nightmare in which there are elements of Buenos Aires, deformed by the horror of the nightmare. There I think of the Paseo Colón and call it rue de Toulon; I think of the country houses of Androgué and call them Triste-le-Roy; when this story was published, my friends told me that at last they had found in what I wrote the flavor of the outskirts of Buenos Aires. Precisely because I had not set out to find that flavor, because I had abandoned myself to a dream, I was able to accomplish, after so many years, what I had previously sought in vain (*The Argentine Writer and Tradition* 175 76).
11. In a 1991 article to which I will refer repeatedly, José Pablo Feinmann summarized the historical circumstances to which Martini's novel alludes: the political climate in which *El cerco* is conceived is that of the Triple A, an extreme-right organization accused of having committed two thousand murders, that of the Guevarist guerrilla tactics of the extreme left, that of the military coup plotters awaiting their moment to strike (as they finally did in March, 1976) and that of the government of María Estela Martínez de Perón, whose strong man was the sinister José López Rega [Minister of Social Welfare in her government], the instigator of the actions of the Triple A (*Estado policial* 145).
12. Tizziani does not use Marxist language in the novel, but certain passages make very clear the nature of Cairo's resistance to labor through crime. Traveling on the subway in a car full of commuters, the fugitive reflects further on his

- failure to escape the system altogether, as he stares at his fellow passengers and realizes that after years of trying to escape their fate, he remains a sheep like them, only now with a mark on his ear. On further reflection, however, the dejection of the commuters reinforces his determination to avoid their fate (88). A passage in which Cairo recalls the regimentation of daily activities in jail evokes even more vividly Foucauldian notions of the disciplining of bodies in time and space. He recalls that he had few fixed habits before being arrested, but that in jail he discovered that what broke prisoners, along with the guard's baton and the solitary confinement cell, was the routing of repeating the same movements day by day with compulsive chronometric regularity (43). This passage describes in detail relentless, rigid routines of sleep, eating, washing, and machine work in a shop.
13. The Academia Argentina de Letras defines *lunfardo* both as a synonym of thief and as a jargon originally spoken in Buenos Aires at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by criminals, immigrants, and other marginal groups before becoming integrated more generally into popular Argentine speech (373).
 14. This according to etymologies cited by José Gobello in his *Nuevo Diccionario Lunfardo*.
 15. In 1993, André Gunder Frank delivered a very bleak assessment of the deterioration of Argentina's relative position in the world economy over the course of the century. During this century, concluded Frank, and especially in its second half, Latin America in particular and most of the Third World have been increasingly marginalized in the world economy and to a large extent in world politics. . . . [P]erhaps the most dramatic and recent increase in marginalization or the accelerated process of Africanization is that of Latin America. The greatest relative, if not absolute, pauperization is that of the country that was once the richest and most promising, Argentina (28–29). By Frank's account, Argentina went from providing 3 percent of world exports in 1928 to .3 percent in 1990.
 16. In *Estado policial*, Feinmann recounts how director Adolfo Aristarain accentuated the political reading of the story. In the sequence in which Mendizábal walked to receive his assignment, Feinmann points out that Aristarain included details such as a sign reading Military Zone and that the Peña character wore a military haircut. In the film, as Mendizábal receives his assignment from a man behind a desk in an office, the camera picks out a statue of a grenadier sitting on the desk. According to Feinmann, those elements underscore one of the essential lines of the film: Power as criminality (151).
 17. Amelia S. Simpson's reading of *Últimos días* focuses more on the corporate capitalist and bureaucratic aspects of the story. The hard-boiled themes of organized crime and the bureaucratization and depersonalization of society are central to Feinmann's novel. . . . Feinmann uses the organized underworld to represent a society in which violence is naturalized. . . . While the criminal nature of the business is indicated, in every other way the setting

- resembles that of any corporate executive office (140, 142). Simpson observes that Feinmann portrays a social system of organization that defines individuals as interchangeable, expendable units . . . creating an image of the endless repetition of impersonal murder, which is equally an image of the infinite perpetuation of the patterns of the corporate system (144).
18. David Rock notes that by the time the Argentine army intervened decisively against the ERP in Tucumán in early 1975, during the presidency of Isabel Perón, the armed forces were well on their way to organizing the mechanisms of clandestine repression that would be fully activated following the 1976 coup. The three armed services were now on full war footing; supported by the state security police (*Coordinación Federal*), each formed espionage networks and clandestine operational units. These forces, which soon dwarfed their adversaries, imposed repression by the use of unchecked, random, indiscriminate violence that struck without warning or warrant. The definition of *subversion* was broadened and became increasingly capricious, encompassing the mildest protest (363). Following the coup, Rock writes, these clandestine networks and units accomplished a definitive repression of dissent by sowing terror on an unprecedented scale. The last phase of the guerrilla war was its bloodiest and most terrifying; all due process of law was overturned; military patrols infested the country; thousands vanished into the prisons and police torture chambers. During the previous six years the guerrillas' victims had numbered at most two or three hundred; the price now exacted in retaliation, mostly through disappearances,' was at least 10,000. The repression quite deliberately it seemed, was arbitrary, uncoordinated, and indiscriminate, which intensified its powers of intimidation (367-68).
 19. *Últimos días* was reprinted by Seix Barral as recently as 2006, and the Buenos Aires newspaper *Página/12* produced its own edition for sale at kiosks as part of a collection of Feinmann's complete novels in 2007. Feinmann's first novel has also proved extraordinarily productive of film adaptations. The first of these, as mentioned in a previous note, bore the novel's original title and was released in Argentina in 1982. The second was a misbegotten English-language U.S.-Argentina co-production directed by Héctor Olivera (*Two to Tango*, 1988), and the third was a France-Cuba co-production that screened on French television in 1995 (*Les Derniers jours de la victime*). *Ni el tiro* also claims the very unusual distinction of having received two English-language film adaptations in less than a decade: Héctor Olivera's *Play Murder for Me / Negra medianoche* (1990) and Juan José Campanella's *Love Walked In / Ni el tiro del final* (1996).
 20. Although Sasturain explains that he wrote a preliminary version of *Manual de perdedores* between 1972 and 1975, most of the final text was first published in brief serial installments in the newspaper *La Voz* between January and May of 1983. In 1985, the Buenos Aires publisher Legasa reissued the first of *Manual's* two stories in book form. *Manual de perdedores 2*, which

followed it in 1987, opens with a chapter numbered 65, picking up exactly where the first story left off in chapter 64. Two later editions of *Manual*, one published in by Barcelona's Ediciones B in 1988 and another by Sudamericana in Buenos Aires in 2003, integrate both parts under the shared title.

21. *Lunfardo* terms are sprinkled throughout the narrative and inflect the speech of various characters. Etchenique speaks as follows. Se piantó del Argerich porque lo quisieron amasijar. Por suerte yo le dejé un chumbo ayer a la tarde. Liquidó a uno y al otro lo encanaron. Rajó en el taxi y después se afaná la pick up (440). Or, approximately: He scrambled from the Argerich because they tried to off him. Good thing I left him a piece yesterday afternoon. He wasted one of them and they busted the other. He split in a taxi and then boosted the pickup.
22. In *Los que aman, odian*, Adolfo Bioy Casares and Silvina Ocampo spun a classical murder mystery around the cadaver of an Argentine translator of English detective novels apparently killed in her library amid unrevised translations. Uncertainty over the authorship of a text found with the body and which may either be a suicide note or a piece of a translation complicates the enigma of her death and further enhances the novel's self-referential irony. For a reading of this novel in conjunction with Pablo de Santis's 1998 *La traducción*, see my article "Translators Slain at Seaside."
23. As Etchenique performs as hard-boiled detective, he reflects intermittently on his identification with the role. When he walks through a door with his gun drawn, he realizes that he's doing what a detective does, and that therefore he is a detective (101). When he speaks, delivering an approximation of a Philip Marlowe sermon, he feels himself almost, but not quite, a finished character (153). Later, as he levels with the police inspector at the end of the first part of *Manual*, Etchenique points out that they are complying with a narrative convention, since the characters always sit down in the final chapter to tie up loose ends (189). Throughout the novel, Etchenique recalls his readings of Hammett, Chandler, Spillane, Charles Williams, and others, and he reminds other characters of the stipulations of the genre code, as they goad him about his studiously literary and quixotic behavior: Still playing Mike Hammer? (216) Just before she is abducted, the young leader of *la pesada* enunciates one of the most forceful denunciations, calling our attention again to production of a fictional reality through the act of writing. She informs Etchenique that what he is doing is literature, and that no one will believe what he is doing unless someone writes it down (304).
24. In a 2005 interview, Sasturain acknowledges a shared generational project without wholly endorsing Taibo's formulation of the *neopoliciaico*. In the early 1970s, my generation started writing, the older guys like Piglia and Soriano and the ones my age, Martini, Feinmann, Battista, a bunch of them. In Spain: Manolo Vázquez Montalbán, Juan Madrid, Andreu Martín; in México: Paco Ignacio Taibo. They all write detective novels.

Why? The theories come later. Paco talks about the Latin American *neopoliciaco*. The detective novel of generation of 1968, of the youth uprisings, that finds in the detective novel a way to testify to the convulsive, pre-revolutionary situation in our countries. The detective novel was the critical realism of our time. There's something to that, he could be right. What's certain is that one writes what one has read and one makes movies on the basis of the movies that one's seen and liked. We belonged to that generation that reread Hammett, Chandler, Kane [*sic*], McBain, that reevaluated them and discovered that they were really good writers. Those were our models for writing (*Escribo aquello que he leído*). Earlier in the same interview, Sasturain describes his effort to imagine a Buenos Aires detective as an initiative of cultural decolonization.

25. The military junta of 1976 appointed José A. Martínez de Hoz as Minister of Economy, and his team of extreme market economists presided over the transformation of the Argentine economy (see Rock 368-74). With regard to the radical economic reforms undertaken by the Menem administration, Alejandro Portes and Bryan R. Roberts observe: As has been pointed out by various observers, no other Latin American country witnessed such a fervent implementation of the free-market model as did Argentina during the years of Carlos Saúl Menem's presidency (42).
26. In *El género negro* Giardinelli's introductory assessment of the genre's possibilities is boldly exaggerated but indicative of the enthusiasm shared by a significant community of Latin American writers beginning in the 1970s: Today the *novela negra* permeates daily life; it has the greatest possibility of surveying the political and social conflicts of our time; it penetrates in millions of homes throughout the world by means of cinema and television . . . and it has exerted a notable influence on almost all the great modern writers, in all languages and every genre (13). An introduction written for a 2004 guide to Latin American mystery writers shows Giardinelli's enthusiasm to be unflagging: There is increasingly more textual evidence that demonstrates how the detective novel has exerted an extraordinary influence on modern Latin American narrative. As we have seen, that influence comes primarily from the hard-boiled North American novel. In spite of a strong influence also from the French hard-boiled novel, there is that element of 'North-Americanness' at the heart of the majority of texts written by Latin American authors of what has come to be called the Postboom era.' This literature is characterized by graphic realism, the crudeness and authenticity of the dialogue, and even the possibility of dramatic representation as seen in North American narrative (xxvii); one can say that the hard-boiled genre has had a revolutionary influence on all Latin American narrative (xxxiv).
27. I have already referred to one of Piglia's critical essays on the subgenre, as well as to his role as director of the influential *Serie Negra* series of hard-boiled translations between 1969 and 1976. He also served as editor for a second series, *Sol Negra*, between 1990 and 1992, and he has edited

anthologies of detective stories for Editorial Jorge Álvarez (1969), CEAL (1979), Clarín/Aguilar in 1993 (*Las fieras* [The Beasts]), revised and expanded for Extra Alfaguara in 1999), and Planeta (1999). In general, Piglia's understanding of the *novela negra* follows from that of the *Contorno* group. Piglia's short story *La loca y el relato del crimen* has been reproduced in various anthologies of detective fiction since 1975, when a jury made up of Borges, Marco Denevi, and Augusto Roa Bastos awarded it a prize (consisting of a trip to Paris!) in the Primer Certamen Latinoamericano de Cuentos Policiales (Lafforgue and Rivera 37). Many critics have commented on Piglia's play with certain codes of detective fiction in his first and most critically acclaimed novel, *Respiración artificial* (1980), but not until 1997 did he write a hard-boiled novel. The 2000 Planeta edition of *Plata quemada* that I refer to here announces that forty-three thousand copies of the novel were sold during its first three years in print, and we may suppose that many thousands more have been sold since on the strength of Marcelo Piñeyro's successful 2000 film adaptation.

28. Renzi's role as Piglia's fictional alter ego has been widely discussed by critics, and *Plata quemada* provides a particularly concrete confirmation of this identification when, in conversation with Silva, Renzi mentions that he lives in November 1965 at the same hotel where Piglia himself elsewhere recalls having lived after moving to the city in March 1965 (Speranza 117). Another important aspect of Renzi's fictional characterization is his employment as a crime reporter for the *El Mundo* newspaper, a job previously held by Roberto Arlt, whose relevance to the analysis of *Plata quemada* has been studied particularly well by Sandra Garabano. Renzi is also instrumental in the adulteration of the verisimilitude of the chronicle through introduction of the discourse of tragedy. This strategy for the subversion of testimonial realism is very comparable to that devised by García Márquez in *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*, which also fictionalizes the author's biographical relationship to real events and emphasizes the logic of tragedy as one of multiple strategies for undermining the narrative authority of an apparently meticulous historical reconstruction.
29. The symbolic weight of Alto Palermo Shopping in the imagined geography of the Buenos Aires of the 1990s is not to be underestimated. Opened in 1990, at the beginning of the Menem era, Alto Palermo Shopping strove to situate itself as the primary site of luxury consumption in the prosperous Barrio Norte and its location at the Bulnes subway stop (where *Plata quemada* begins) and at the intersection of two major avenues, Santa Fe and Coronel Díaz, made it a new reference point in urban geography. As the mall's Web site still proclaims, Its unbeatable means of access make it the city's reference point and meeting place. Sponsorship of foldout maps of the city's subway system gave Alto Palermo Shopping the exclusive privilege of advertising not only on the back of the map but also on the system map itself. The mall's logo featured so prominently by the Bulnes station on the map as to stand out above all other urban features.

30. The significance of this gesture has received ample attention in critical discussions of the novel. See, for example, Page (35–39) and Selnes.
31. For discussion of a related tendency in Mexico, see Marcie Paul's *The Search for Identity: The Return to Analytic Detective Fiction in Mexico*.

CHAPTER 5

1. Like so many other writers mentioned in this study, Tasis was also a translator of novels from English, and although his own detective fiction was cast in the classical ratiocinative mode, he later contributed Catalan translations of hard-boiled novels by William P. McGivern and Dashiell Hammett to Pedrolo's *La Cua de Palla* collection (Hart 67).
2. The various histories of Spanish detective fiction provide conflicting dates for the first edition of *Es vessa una sang fácil*. The date given by Craig-Odders (18) and Fuster (Manuel de Pedrolo) is 1954, while Valles Calatrava (105) and Vázquez de Parga (*La novela policiaca* 248) indicate 1958.
3. With regard to the family's difficult position following the father's death while fighting on the Republican side, Patricia Hart observes: As far as social criticism goes, *Joc Brut* treads carefully but effectively. A novelist publishing in Catalan in the sixties had to tread with care, but in spite of this, Pedrolo makes his point about the misery of the widows and families of the Republican cause who lived in postwar Catalunya (55). She mentions the scene of the mother's humble death at the washing sink of a house where she worked as a particularly poignant example of Pedrolo's concern for the indignities endured by the working class and especially those stigmatized by their identification with the Republican cause.
4. In his 1984 response to questions posed by Patricia Hart, Pedrolo declared himself at age sixty-five a partisan of Catalan independence and a heterodox Marxist (Hart 65). Hart summarized the basic concern transmitted from Pedrolo's novels to the Spanish *novela negra* as a class-consciousness that sees the amassing of private riches as one of the highest evils (58), but Marxist discourse per se is far more evident in the novels Vázquez Montalbán published during the transition to democracy.
5. In *Es vessa*, Pedrolo identifies his protagonist Joan Roig as a reader of cheap popular novels, including those of Luis del Val and Joaquín Belda (108). In the novels Pedrolo wrote during his tenure as director of *La Cua de Palla*, references to genre codes become more explicit. As the protagonist of *Joc Brut* prepares to commit murder, he reflects: Like everyone else, I had read detective novels and I knew or thought I knew that the police often need only a few faint traces in order to discover the criminal (56). As he prepares to disinter a cadaver with the help of his collaborators, the detective of *Mossegat-se la cua* also reflects on the possibly literary inspiration for their actions: Undoubtedly we'd all read too many novels, but the fact was that we'd allowed ourselves to be carried away by our imagination, and there we

- were (62). One of the detective's assistants is an aspiring writer (72), and more than one peripheral character involved in the detective's pursuit of Berta Llonc through Barcelona comments on the novelistic quality of his activity (125) When the detective oversteps his legal powers and forcibly interrogates the medical student, the scene recognizes its derivation as cinematic: It sounded like one of those jokes you see in the movies, but I was serious (132).
6. Avilés Farré contextualizes this trend as follows: Spain experienced a rise in public insecurity between approximately 1970 and 1990, which fits in with a pattern common to Western countries. The interpretation of this rise isn't simple, since it occurred in the countries that have been studied following a long decline in criminality which appears to have reached its lowest point in the middle of the twentieth century. In contrast, crime statistics stabilized during the 1990s (138).
 7. For a very succinct sketch of the economic and cultural transformations undergone by Spain during the 1960s and early '70s, see Colmeiro (*La novela* 165). Colmeiro emphasizes increasing prosperity, improvements in education and a general trend of cultural modernization through capitalist consumerism, though within the limits of an anachronistically authoritarian political system.
 8. The sequence of the Carvalho series is somewhat unsettled by the fact that the character first appeared in a rollicking non-genre novel, *Yo maté a Kennedy*. *Impresiones, observaciones y memorias de un guardaespaldas* (I Killed Kennedy. Impressions, Observations and Memories of a Bodyguard, 1972), belonging to the subnormal phase of Vázquez Montalbán's writing. (For an overview of this literary program of subnormality, see chapter 2 of Colmeiro's *Crónica del desencanto*.) Although the novels in which Carvalho appears as a private detective retain some continuity with the fictional biography established in *Yo maté*, the more extravagant attributes, such as the identification of Carvalho as John Kennedy's assassin, are usually forgotten. *Tatuaje* is thus the first *novela negra* in a twenty-two volume series that includes mostly novels but also a number of story collections.
 9. In *Barcelonas*, Vázquez Montalbán adds: From the vantage point of el Tibidabo the whole of the city's past becomes clear. Closest to the sea is the darkness of Mont Tàber and the old city around the port; beyond the old walls is the bourgeois grid, the Eixample and further out are Pedralbes and el Tibidabo itself, signs of the wealthy bourgeoisie's attempts to escape across the hills. Finally you see, like a virus that destroys identity while spawning class menace, the growth of the industrial districts, first harmonized within a human scale then frenzied, with new neighborhoods appearing like boils, closing horizons in a city which loses its name where the dormitory towns begin, forming ghettos for an immigrant population that was produced and reproduced without every really knowing where it was (33-34). This overview of social geography is developed patiently throughout the Carvalho series.

10. Among Spanish detective writers, Eduardo Mendoza has been the most enthusiastic in exploiting the picaresque, which he recognizes as a native precursor to modern detective fiction. (See Colmeiro, *La novela* 204-05). Mendoza incorporated detective elements in his influential 1975 historical novel *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta* (*The Truth about the Savolta Case*, 1975) and devised a fusion of picaresque and detective fiction in a series of novels beginning with *El misterio de la cripta embrujada* (*The Mystery of the Haunted Crypt*, 1979). Although these novels are set in Barcelona, the giddily parodic nature of the series discourages me from considering it here. Recent critical studies of Mendoza's novels are compiled in *Eduardo Mendoza: A New Look*, edited by Jeffrey Thomas Oxford and David John Knutson.
11. In his comments on this passage, Joan Ramon Resina remarks on Vázquez Montalbán's treatment of history as aesthetic spectacle, and he also suggests that the reference to three centuries in the history of a city with history creates expectations that the series as a whole disappoints, since Carvalho's historical perspective seems bounded by the Civil War. The gaze is dehistoricized and flattened as it takes in a city that seems to have sprung from the ember of the Civil War with no significant past and no other horizon that that imposed by that event (*El cadáver* 174).
12. In *The Detective Novel in Post-Franco Spain*, Craig-Odders provides useful synopses for all but the last three of the Carvalho novels (41-58). Another overview, extending through the end of the series, is available in Susana Bayó Belenguer's "The Carvalho Series of Manuel Vázquez Montalbán: A Passing in Review."
13. In chapter 3 of *Crónica del desencanto*, which comprises one of the most comprehensive critical overviews of the Carvalho series, Colmeiro writes:

part of Carvalho repudiates the collective dememorization of the present. . . . The city is the privileged depository of memory and the visible guarantor of a collective identity that it conserves within itself. . . . The city appears as a place of memory in which the urban landscape of houses, the layout of the streets, and the configuration of neighborhoods are a permanent reminder of a collective historical memory based on the resistance and survival of a city defeated time and again. An entire poetics of memory is inscribed on the geography of the city across which Carvalho travels daily, crossing from upper- to lower-class neighborhoods. The old neighborhood [bordering the Ramblas] represents the historical memory of a city that resists forgetting and the center of gravity that attracts Carvalho to it like a magnet. Significantly, Carvalho's office is located there, as is Charo's home. In the old Barrio Chino of his childhood, Carvalho senses the presence of a memory that dignifies the sordidness and poverty of the environment (189).
14. In *La novela policiaca española*, Colmeiro traces Vázquez Montalbán's use of self-parody and a self-reflexive irony in the tradition of Cervantes and documents his meta-fictional relationship to the *novela negra* genre (180-81).

In *Crónica del desencanto*, Colmeiro adds: The intertextual saturation of the Carvalho novels increases the impression of literariness and fictionality of the whole narrative cycle and calls the reader's attention to the fictional nature of the series, at the same time as it diminishes the pretension to mimetic reproduction of immediate reality (167). In later volumes, such as *Sabotaje*, Carvalho not only alludes to previous cases but also cites the titles of previous novels, and he generally displays, like Don Quijote, a growing awareness of his status as a character in a popular literary fiction. This excess of internal intertextuality underscores the construction of the narrative according to previously existing models of representation, reappropriated elements of a second-degree fictional order that are very symptomatic of the postmodern era (*Crónica del desencanto* 168). In the same study, Colmeiro concludes that throughout the series, Anecdotal realist referentiality and metaliterary self-referentiality are constantly superimposed in a perilous balance (174).

15. In Resina's damning assessment, Catalanness assumes the function of a negative mark . . . appearing again and again in direct relation to sinister events. The historical violence institutionalized in the ideology of centralism here receives justification as a legitimate defense against the cunning of an irresponsible or frankly criminal collectivity (*El cadáver* 107). Resina makes this argument in chapter 4 of *El cadáver en la cocina*, and he reiterates it in his forward to Craig-Odders's *The Detective Novel in Post-Franco Spain* in response to Vázquez Montalbán's protests of innocence. In this latter text he insists that the frequent attributions of sociological and political realism to the Carvalho series ignore the extent to which the epistemological claims of the series hinge on a set of axioms. One of these axioms identifies economic privilege with moral failing and unmitigated evil. . . . Another related a priori is the ethnic identification of the social elite in a post-ethnic society which emerges from a long period of denationalization. (xi). The same criticism, at least with regard to the significance of class, would be applicable toward much of the *novela negra* canon.
16. In *Shades of Green: The Police Procedural in Spain*, Craig-Odders writes: with few exceptions, the genre did not gain prominence in Spain until the 1990s. Just as the hard-boiled novel emerged much later in Spain than its North American counterpart, subsequent to the political and social liberalization that began in the late 1960s, the police procedural also appeared much later. The relative scarcity of the police novel in Spain also correlates directly to the long standing public perception of the paramilitary police system as the corrupt enforcer of fascist rule under Franco which was reflected in the negative portrayal of the police typical to the detective novels of the post-transition years (103). This article provides an up-to-date account of the emergence of the Spanish police procedural. In her conclusion, Craig-Odders cites eloquent proof of the social significance of the police procedural novel when she reports that Lorenzo Silva, another of the genre's most successful practitioners in the last decade, has received the Silver Cross of the

Guardia Civil from Spain's Minister of the Interior in recognition of his contribution to redeeming the image of the national police force from residual infamy of the Franco years (118).

17. For critical commentary on Juan Madrid's novels, see especially Hart (159–71), Craig-Odders (*The Detective Novel in Post-Franco Spain* 71–75, 80–81 and 128–30), and Colmeiro (246–57).

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