THE PRESS, THE WRITERS AND THE TRUTH: INFLUENCES AND EFFECTS OF THE JOURNALISTIC DISCOURSE IN 20TH CENTURY LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE

by

JUAN GARCIA OYERVIDES

B.A., Universidad Finis Terrae, 2011

M.A., University of Colorado Boulder, 2013

A thesis submitted to the

Faculty of the Graduate School of the

University of Colorado in partial fulfillment

of the requirement for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Spanish and Portuguese

2020

This thesis entitled:

The press, the writers and the truth: Influences and Effects of the Journalistic Discourse in 20th Century Latin American Literature

written by Juan García Oyervides

has been approved for the Department of Spanish and Portuguese

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Peter Elmore

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Leila Gómez

Date_____

The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.

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IRB protocol # _____

IACUC protocol # _____

García Oyervides, Juan (Ph.D., Spanish)

The press, the writers and the truth: Influences and Effects of the Journalistic Discourse in 20th Century Latin American Literature

Thesis directed by Professor Peter Elmore

This dissertation explores the relationships between journalism and literature and their effects in the production of truth within the Latin American literary tradition. I examine works by Roberto Arlt, Martín Luis Guzmán, Elena Poniatowska, Hector Aguilar Camín and Vicente Leñero to explain how they position themselves within their controversial attitudes as counterhegemonic narratives that dispute the representation of historical or fictional events.

Dedicado a Tristán y a Chu May Paing,
por hoy y para siempre.

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1.INTRODUCTION

1.1 STATEMENT OF TOPIC

In Mexico, journalists continue to be persecuted not only for the nature of their reportages, but also because of their criticism of politicians. In October of 2019, journalist and historian Sergio Aguayo Quezada was sentenced to pay more than 10 million pesos for his criticism of the former Governor of Coahuila, Humberto Moreira. In his ruling, magistrate Franciso José Huber Olea Contró argued that Aguayo Quezada's *opinion* column accounted to a violation of the *estándar de malicia efectiva* ("El periodista Sergio Aguayo"), a standard that aims to prevent the reporting of *false information* with the intent to produce harm. Olea Contró's understanding that a person's opinion could be considered *false* is not only a problem for Aguayo Quezada. It is also a significant example of how the division between commentary and information pieces extends beyond the interest of journalism's normative ethics (Herrera Damas and Maciá Barber 186), and how a writer's safeguard under these theoretical and somewhat arbitrary generic differentiations is not always effective[1].

In my dissertation I study a series of Latin American literary works from the 20th century that reflect upon the conditions, modalities and opportunities for the practice of journalism and literature. These works include: Roberto Arlt's diptych *Los siete locos* (1929), *Los lanzallamas* (1931); *La sombra del caudillo* (1929) by Martín Luis Guzmán; *La noche de Tlatelolco* (1971) by Elena Poniatowska, *Los periodistas* (1978) by Vicente Leñero; and *La guerra de Galio* (1990) by Hector Aguilar Camin. I have chosen the aforementioned books by Argentinian and Mexican writers for two distinctive reasons. 1) They instantiate the relationship between literature and journalism in Latin America, insofar every author in this corpus was considered a novelist and a journalist, and these works exemplify the impossibility of dissociating these

experiences. 2) They are narrative works that criticize, document or divulge truthful accounts, from a fictional or nonfictional platform.

All the books in this corpus offer a glimpse into the historical appreciation of the lettered community in Latin America, of the press as a political instrument and of the formation of truth as a multilayered problem that called for their intervention. This corpus addresses a violent and highly politicized process of cultural transformation in the region during the 20th century. Although *La sombra del Caudillo* is not exactly a fictional account of the assassination of Francisco Serrano, and *Los siete locos/Los lanzallamas* does not identify a specific historical referent, they offer a significant reflection on the ongoing processes of political realignment and modernization in the first decades of the 1900s. *La noche de Tlatelolco* makes its own historical referent self-evident within its title, the killing of the students in 1968, and *Los periodistas* and *La guerra de Galio* take the forceful takeover of Mexico City's newspaper *Excélsior* in 1976 as a constitutive element of their own plotlines. All of these accounts enjoyed controversial success not only by the number of copies sold, but also by the ways they were received and contested by the public, or the government. This is evidenced by the public polemic between Poniatowska and Luis González de Alba, which I introduce in the second chapter, and Regino Díaz Redondo's *La gran mentira. Ocurrió en Excélsior* (2002), which responds, at least in part to Leñero's accusation in *Los periodistas.* Arlt's and Aguilar Camin's fictions, on the other hand, thematize the issue of dissenting forms of reading and the challenges of interpretation in their own plotlines. All of these novels are derived from or integrate multimodal productive frameworks into their construction, which extends beyond journalism, with a particular emphasis in the relationship between literature and theatre in *Los periodistas*, *Los siete locos/Los Lanzallamas* and *La sombra del Caudillo*. Finally, all these novels reflect upon the gendered construction of

the public sphere -with Poniatowska being the only one that emphasizes and reclaims a space for feminist and female voices along the way.

Although my dissertation addresses the historical conditions that contextualize the practical relationship between journalism and literature in these books, my aim here is not to trace the representation of journalists in these narratives, but the representation of the relationship itself. I have tried to approach this relationship through a repertoire of motifs, themes and problems produced by the synchronicity of the practices and not so much to define their nature or generic affiliation. These texts' intermediality and self-reflexivity call for the examination of the means through which narratives produce information and persuade their audiences, but they also delve deeply into the issues associated with the authorial stance. In this corpus, the authors reflect on events of social and historical relevance and inquire about Latin America's cultural understanding of truthfulness. I show how these narratives organize this combination of nation-specific political developments and transhistorical cultural trends to articulate a robust critique of the institutional and material practices of censorship, gendered exclusion and the misrepresentation of socio-political dissent. Such a critique underlies the foregrounding of the relationship between journalism and literature in the books making up the corpus of my dissertation.

1.2 MEDIA DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA

What we know is that language is a power and that, from public body to social class, a group of men is sufficiently defined if it possesses, to various degrees, the national language

-Roland Barthes

The history of the media in Latin America follows two parallel historical developments, the technical and cultural influence of the United States through capital investments in advertisement, and the local governments' political interest in expanding and controlling media outlets and industries. Argentina and Mexico are significant examples of how media developed throughout the region because of the size of their national populations, the historical relevance of their economies, and the early adoption of new technologies -such as modern presses, film, radio and television. Furthermore, these countries contributed to the general development of the media sphere in the continent by establishing culture industry powerhouses that exported their media products to other Spanish speaking countries, generating a network of cultural influences that shaped popular sensibility through media.

Argentina may be described as the first Latin American country to develop a mass market for cultural goods, such as journals and novels. It was also one of the first to develop film and radio industries and markets for such products. Because of the relative stability brought about from the 1880s to the 1930s, Argentina was able to successfully incorporate new media technologies and tendencies into its own cultural markets. The country was favored by the political continuity established by the oligarchy and the political exclusion of the popular masses (Milanesio 1), but also by the economic growth and global market inclusion favored by the expansion of agricultural production after the Conquest of the Desert. As many critics have pointed out, European immigration and exponential growth of the urban population significantly changed the city of Buenos Aires into a metropolis comparable to New York, London and Paris at the turn of the century. This transformation began in the city in the last decades of the 1800s, which saw an increase in the technical development of its industry, that included the press and

communications (Espósito 73). Such processes continued to develop during the first decades of the twentieth century, undergoing a sharp uptick in the decade of the 1920s (Juarez 209).

Before the turn of the 20th century, Argentina, and especially Buenos Aires, had a significant cultural market where journals served as mediums for the transmission and negotiation of popular sensibility. As Fabio Esposito has pointed out, by 1880 the emergence of the "popular novel", published by the numerous *folletines* served a growing population that had interest in these types of fiction. "En la década de 1880 la magnitud del público lector permite reconocer dos circuitos de lectura claramente diferenciados entre sí en cuanto a materiales de lectura agentes y circuitos de distribución, y procedencia social de los consumidores." (23) According to this critic, the decade of 1880s marked a significant increase in the number of libraries, bookstores and school enrollment, which favored the continued growth of a public for newspapers, magazines and popular literature in the years to follow.

Although the government established an economic strategy based on agricultural exports, Argentine integration in the world economy allowed the flow of people and merchandise between the South American country and Europe. This exchange favored the early emergence of movie theatres in Argentina during the early 20th century (Finkelman 6). However, for the first couple of years, film still served as an elite form of entertainment that didn't completely appeal to the masses. Later, with the introduction of radio in the 1920s, a multi-modal mass public that started to overcome the linguistic difficulties posed by illiteracy and the linguistic crucible of Buenos Aires at the beginning of the turn of the century (111). With the continued import of movies from Hollywood and the introduction of the technology needed for radio stations, Argentina decidedly entered the sphere of cultural influence of the United States. Most of the quality movies shown and appreciated in the country originated in the USA, and although

Argentina finally developed a significant film and radio industries of their own, they were modeled after the American models established for these new media.

These conditions of industrial, demographic and economic growth in combination with the political stabilization of the country allowed many Argentineans, and intellectuals in particular to access and create new outlets for organizing and reaching new audiences. The influential magazine *Sur* served as a platform for established authors and an international hub for intellectual engagement with other intellectuals in Europe, the United States and Latin America since its foundation by Victoria Ocampo in 1931. The emergence of intellectual associations such as the *Sociedad Argentina de Escritores* (1928), the *Academia Argentina de Letras* (1931) and the *Asociación de Intelectuales, Artistas, Periodistas y Escritores* (1935) allowed these groups to expand and protect their rights at the same time they sought to increase their political participation and establish new venues for communication with the public (Nallim 68-9).

In Mexico, however, the introduction of radio technology and the production of a national radio industry closely happened under the auspice of nationalist initiatives put forth by the Mexican "cultural revolution" and the activist governments of the 1920s and 1930s. This process of expansion and nationalization of the mass media was contextualized by the cultural expansion of the USA which operated by creating advertisement industries and markets for such industries in Latin America during the first decades of the 20th century. From the 1950s onward, the level of government purchases of advertising space in the newspapers became a sign of influence and a problematic means of control over these outlets.

Unlike Argentina, Mexico was, at the beginning of the century, a predominantly rural country where illiteracy and deficient educational institutions made most of the country unable to participate in a widespread cultural market. However, with the arrival of the radio, this changed

quickly because the government -then the PRN (Partido Revolucionario Nacional)- identified the expansion of radio with its own propagandistic expansion, in order to generate national consensus and popular recognition of the party as a national institution and authority:

> The broadcasting practices that slowly mature over the course of the 1920s were shaped by three major historical developments originating in the nineteenth century: US expansionism in Latin America, the rise of consumer product marketing and mass advertising, and the rise of an increasingly activist Mexican state. (25)

During the 1920s, radio expansion was still limited although it is estimated that in 1926 there were as many as twenty-five thousand radio sets in operation (31). However, thanks to the initiatives of the government and the consolidation of a telecommunications oligopoly, radio technology completely changed the way in which Mexicans received the news, and with them, their own idea of the country and the role of the government -specially, the embodiment of the Revolutionary program of the Partido Revolucionario Institutional.

> Of Mexico's estimated 69 million persons in 1979, family clusters averaging seven individuals to a dwelling unit divided the population into approximately 10 million family households, 95 percent of which had a radio in daily use. Some 6 million television sets are in daily use; approximately the same total as the number of daily newspapers sold. With one adult in three not functionally literate, a majority of Mexicans hear the news rather than read it (Alisky 51).

This development in visual and audio technologies was accompanied by a diversification of the outlets available for the country's print culture. According to John Mraz, "A number of periodicals opened up new opportunities for photography in the press, but *Hoy*, *Mañana* and

Siempre! Seem to have been the most important, and they were probably as popular as their US and European counterparts, *Life*, *Picture*, *Post* and *Vu*" (153).

Before the 1920s, the Mexican publishing industry was still in an early stage of development, ailed by irregular distribution channels and a significant concentration within the capital: "In the early twentieth century there were at least 2,579 newspapers in Mexico, of which 579 were sold in Mexico City. Most were published irregularly and distributed erratically" (*Latin American Adventures* 118). Although media concentration continued to be a problem ailing the expansion of print culture throughout the 20th century, the creation of PIPSA under president Lazaro Cárdenas in august 21, 1935, ended the private monopoly of the paper production industry that drove up the prices, leaving many newspapers out of business. Additional changes within the industry such as increased advertisement revenue and technological advancements in printing technology allowed the newspapers in the country to continue growing at a significant rate: "Dailies grew from 44 in 1931 to 256 in 1974. These increases far outstripped the standard rise in population. Between 1940 and 1970, Mexico's population grew by around 165 percent. In the same period, the total number of publications had increased by 250 percent; the number of current affairs publications by 400 percent; and the number of dailies by 250 percent" (Smith 27).

Before the turn of the 21st century, the situation had changed radically with the government and the media moved into a more open and participatory environment, where according to Sallie Hughes: "A cluster of publications within the Mexican press had forced open a space for public debate and deliberation in the mid-1980s, and then widened the public sphere in the 1990s as society became more participatory and demanding" (4). Hughes cites, among other challenges, the increased civic activities produced and facilitated by activist non-

governmental organizations such as *the Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos* in the early 1990s (8).

Joseph Chappell Lawson has identified the development of Mexico's print media as an important indicator for the evaluation of the government with the public sphere, particularly because of its vanguard position in the transformation toward independence, its influence on the country's political and financial elite, and its growing relationship with civic movements in recent years (63). Although the changes in this relationship are still subject of controversy, recent research has offered a more nuanced image of this relationship by offering evidence of the limitations of state influence and limitations pertinent to the reach of the media outlets themselves.

Journalists and writers that lived and worked through these changes saw their opportunities for financial independence expanded by the development and diversification of the cultural markets, and the multiplication of media outlets -print and otherwise. The increased oversight of the government, however, as well as the institutionalization of censorship practices negotiated through the leadership and enforced by increased governmental surveillance (Gonzalez de Bustamante 147) allowed journalists and writers the space and the motivation to reflect on how these changing conditions were affecting their own work.

1.3 AUTHORS, REPORTERS AND WRITERS

"No hay suplicio ninguno comparado al que padece el periodista en México"

-Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the changes in the market development and political landscape not only altered literature as a discrete discipline, it also brought about changes to the institutionalization of journalism as a discipline and with it, changes to the roles and expectations that society placed on journalists. The turn of the 20th century in particular appeared to inaugurate a century of crises regarding the roles these figures sought to play in the public sphere and the cultural market. Roland Barthes' influential disquisition about the rise of the author-writer in contemporary western societies -a synthesis of two ideal models, the artistic oriented *author*, and the pragmatic *writer*: "reality is never anything but a pretext for it (for the author to write is an intransitive verb)" (145) whereas "the writer, on the other hand, is a transitive man, he posits a goal (to give evidence, to explain, to construct) , of which language is merely a means; for him language supports a praxis, it does not constitute one" (147). Similarly, Raymond Williams explains that "literature" came to be valued in opposition to the everyday activities of the bourgeois experience, as a "special and indispensable kind of cultural practice" (145), of self-cultivation within the realm of the bourgeois aesthetics, where artistic production "is a kind of production which has to be seen as separate from the dominant bourgeois productive norm: the making of commodities" (153). Both Barthes' epistemological differentiation and Williams' explanation of the historical specificity of the multiple modes of writing practices have proved influential in contemporary analysis of the relationship between journalism and literature as disciplines, discourses and identity markers for their practitioners, with Gonzalez arguing that:

> Although their aims are virtually opposite-journalism seeks to communicate verifiable facts, while narrative fiction seeks to organize facts into aesthetically coherent wholes-the distinguishing traits of both discourses are first and foremost

> conventional and historical. By this I mean that during a given historical period there are differences between narrative fiction and journalism, although these are determined by convention and by prior stages of their interplay of difference and resemblance (Novel and Journalism 45).

This tension between the different social functions of the two traditions and the increased perception of their irrevocable intertwinement led multiple discussions about emerging aesthetic and ethical practices for writers.

From a historical perspective, the rise of yellow journalism in the US and sensational practices in Latin America motivated the professionalization of the trade through its formal institutionalization in the continent's universities. In the United States, the first school of journalism was created in 1908 at the University of Missouri, and within four years 30 American colleges and universities were offering journalism courses (Shepard 143), with the notable foundation of the Columbia School of Journalism in 1912, established with the assistance of Joseph Pulitzer. In Latin America, Argentina was the first in the region to open two such schools in 1901. Because of financial constraints, Argentina's *Escuela de Periodismo* and *the Instituto Grafotécnico* were not able to start operating until April and May of 1934, respectively (Nixon 14). However, they remained the only two professional schools in the region until the 1950s, when Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru opened their own professional schools.

From an ethical perspective, however, the issue of reliability could be said to have inaugurated the 20th century in regard to the journalistic sphere, and particularly, in relation to the role of the reporter and their role in society, itself predicated on the development of different modes of expression sustained by the diversifying public sphere. These processes of professionalization of the reporters was at least partially motivated by a rise in awareness of and

concern for the writers' reliability, namely, their value as authoritative sources of information. While the expansion of professional schools sought to expand the technical capacities and overall knowledge of journalists, the growing concern for reporters' reliability highlights the public's mistrust and, perhaps more notably, the journalists' own preoccupation with their ability to influence their readers in any meaningful way. This is noticeable in Pulitzer's famous appreciation of the journalistic enterprise but also in the creation of the journalist's creed in 1914, by Walter Williams, and its attribution to the journalists as "trustees of the public" (Shepard 143).

In Latin America, the aesthetic concern brought about by the growing influence of the reporter was famously articulated by numerous *modernistas*. These tensions between the roles of the reporter and the literary writer became a constant discussion in the debates about style and the effects of the market dynamics on artistic practice. Manuel Gutierrez Nájera's "Su majestad el periodista", published in *El mundo* on August 23, 1896, "la misma pluma con la que anoche dibujó la crónica del baile o del tetro, le servirá para trazar hoy un artículo sobre ferrocarriles o sobre bancos. Y todo esto sin que la premura del tiempo le permita abrir un libro o consultar un diccionario" (168). Ruben Darío's appreciation of journalism with artistic potential in "El periodista y su mérito literario": "Hoy, y siempre, un periodista y un escritor se han de confundir. . .Ahora, si os referís simplemente a la parte mecánica del oficio moderno, quedaríamos en que tan solo merecerían el nombre de periodistas los reporters comerciales, los de los sucesos diarios y hasta estos pueden ser muy bien escritores que hagan sobre un asunto árido una página interesante, con su gracia de estilo y su buen por qué de filosofía" (147).

The modernist discussion about the potential effects that the rise of the modern informational aesthetic of the reportage was not ambivalent about the significance or the

potentialities that journalism presented for their own generation. The value of this signs however was not homogeneous among them, besides the symbolic condemnation of monetization and reification of the artistic practice, and their integration with the popular consumer markets developing in the region. In Susana Rotker's opinion, the chenges propiciated by material and cultural modernizing projects pushed them to seek out new ways to modernize their own trade: "Los letrados de la era patricia iban hacia su extinción como categoría, los políticos comenzaron a encarnar el discurso del Estado y los escritores debieron replantear el modo de inserción de la literatura en una sociedad donde el valor de intercambio en el mercado y la noción de utilidad eran premisas esenciales" (55).

Around the 1960s, the emergence of new journalism during a period of crisis in North American fiction renewed the debates from the aesthetic perspective. Norman Podhoretz's influential piece "The Article as Art", published in Harper's magazine in 1958, offered the following criticism about what some critics considered the downfall of the novel and the subsequent rise of discursive genres: "the prestige of the novel cannot account for the fact that so much good writing about precisely those experiences which are closest to the heart of life in America and which we would suppose to be the proper province of fiction-experiences involving the quest for self-definition in a society where a man's identity is not given and fixed by birth-has been done in our day not in novels but in discursive pieces of one kind or another" (128). The piece ends with the consideration that a sense of pragmatism has settled in the taste of the American public for literature:

> Yet the fact remains that our sense of beauty today is intimately connected with the sense of usefulness. . .I would suggest that we have all, writers and readers alike, come to feel temporarily uncomfortable with the traditional literary forms

> because they don't seem practical, designed for use, whereas a magazine article by it nature satisfies that initial condition and so is free to assimilate as many useless, non-functional elements as it pleases. It is free, in other words, to become a work of art (136).

In Latin America, a series of political transformations led to a more politicized take on this transformation. According to Pablo Calvi "It was a central mandate of the genre to focus on the objects of reportage, and not on the reporters, in order to contribute to social advancement on different fronts. Authors, and sometimes even the protagonists of these narratives, assumed a secondary role, subordinated to class and national interests." ("Latin America's Own" 70).

In recent years, the substantial number of studies of the contemporary Latin American chronicle highlights a realignment of these parameters, and perhaps yet another shift in contemporary dynamics of consumption. Sierra Caballero and Lopez Hidalgo argue that, in the first decade of the 21st century, the increased success in the publication of chronicles of literary value are evidence of a renewed interest from the public in the sinuous relationship between journalism and literature.

> La revitalización de la crónica a cargo de esta nueva generación tiene lugar en un contexto de cambios y crisis radical del oficio del periodismo. Esto es, la literatura de no ficción tiene lugar como alternativa en un tiempo y contexto marcado por la concentración y degradación de la actividad periodística (924).

For Jorge Carrión, editor of the often-cited collection of chronicles *Mejor que ficción* (2012), the contemporary interest in the genre stems from the flexibility if offers for the writer, and the sense of proximity it offers to the reader to the narrated events. Furthermore, he argues that the authorial stance, particularly in relation to the use of the chronicle as a means of political

denunciation and symbolic resistance to the discourses of political and economic hegemonic groups is a significant value of the contemporary chronicles: “En la distancia del cronista se cifra también la posibilidad de su independencia. El testimonio personal es siempre una alternativa al relato corporativo o político. . .El cronista trabaja en contra de la versión oficial, contra el comunicado de prensa, contra la simplicidad de cualquier marca.” (19)

1.4 STUDIES ON LITERATURE AND JOURNALISM

Recent research on the relationship between journalism and literature have taken multiple forms over the years, showing a wide variety of approaches, from author specific, to genre based studies, including a diverse body of disciplinary traditions, from sociology, communication, political science to history, journalism, media and literary studies. In my view, the literary field has developed at least two parallel approaches in the last 30 years or so in the American and Spanish academes. In the United States, studies like Anibal Gonzalez’s *Journalism and the development of Spanish American Narrative* (1998) and Pablo Calvi’s Latin American Adventures in Literary Journalism have focused on political interpretations regarding this relationships, or perhaps more precisely, in the political implications that resulted from the interactions between these two modes, with both critics paying particular attention to how they served as a vehicle for the region’s modernization and integration in the world context by privileging one particular westernized world view over indigenous ones, with Calvi offering the following summary:

> In essence, literary journalism provided the narrative framework for a full integration of a young Latin America and its nations into the world market, sealing the erasure of the pre-Columbian cultures as part of this process; it also

> played a role in the development of open, popular, democratic systems to rise in the region, particularly after the passing of laws protecting secret, universal, and compulsory male suffrage in the mid-1910s. Finally, between the 1930s and 1970s, literary journalism played at first an indifferent-if not supportive-and later fiercely antagonistic role vis-à-vis the development and consolidation of bureaucratic authoritarian regimes in the subcontinent. (10)

Calvi, perhaps more so than Gonzalez, associates the development of journalistic practices with the development of democratic impetus within the region. Similarly, Tania Gentic explores the democratizing effects that the development of news markets, particularly journals had on the conformation of transatlantic subjectivity. Critics and proponents of the effectiveness of these democratizing effects have continued to provide further nuances to the degree of success by emphasizing the role that writers plated as they constantly took opportunities to reflect on the various modernization and industrialization processes in the region, and the effects these practices had on their relationship with their trade and the transformation of their potential publics. As Viviane Mahieux notes, canonical authors who worked simultaneously as journalists and writers saw their influence as well as their experiences circumscribed by those of the urban metropolis in Latin America, Europe and the United States: "all interacted with the avant-gardes of their respective cities while earning a living by writing regular columns for the popular, or middlebrow, press. They wrote from. . .cities with an innovative art scene and a strong press industry" (4).

Genre based approaches to the studies of these relationship, including the studies of the Latin American *crónica* and later the emergence and consolidation of testimonio frame the interactions between journalism and literary practices within the context of a developing political

landscape. Susana Rotker's *La invención de la crónica* (1991), Andrew Reynolds' *The Spanish American Cronica Modernista, Temporality and Material Culture* (2012) and Viviane Mahieux's *Urban Chroniclers in Modern Latin America* (2011) offer analyses of the connections established by early 20th century authors whose novel approach to literary practices were changed adapting to new modes of experience facilitated by the various degrees of modernity in urban and lettered strata of Latin America. As Reynolds explains, these conditions not only affected the nature of the work but the identities of the writers themselves as cultural agents of production and change:

> The creation of the Spanish American cultural producer at the turn of the twentieth century is attached to an interest in the world of letters from a young age, an interest that for *modernista* authors implies an extensive participation in the journalistic sphere. This attachment to the written world through journalistic prose writing, editorial management, the reporter's newsbeat, international travel, the intersection of highly literature such as poetry and the newspaper pages and the dissemination and consumption of renowned literary figures through the newspaper all shaped what it meant to be a writer and poet (17)

Spanish academia and journalism studies in Latin America show a prevalent approach regarding the generic hybridization of these practices with a particular emphasis on their disciplinary differences and convergences, such as Juan J. Pintado's *Texto híbrido, entre ficción e información: ¿Periodismo o literatura?* (1998), which examines the work of 20th century Latin American novelists in the Spanish newspapers. Pinado's approach to this relationship "con la hipótesis de explorar, en principio, grados de literariedad. . .con el fin de conocer mejor los rasgos distitntivos de los textos hibridos" (4). Albert Chillon's *Literatura y periodismo: Una*

tradición de historias promiscuas (1999) explores historical examples of this relationship from a linguistic framing, focusing on the contributions these two practices exert on the ways communicative systems operate, and ultimately, on their constructions of sense-making models available to journalists and writers. Ultimately, Chillon's proposes the designation of two different modes of enunciation, enunciación facticia, "propia de los enunciados de vocación veridicente" (38) and enunciación ficticia "característica de los enunciados de vocación fabuladora" (39). He continues to develop this differentiation in *La palabra facticia* (2014).

Researchers from both academes have tackled the complex issue of designating the vehicles, modes or models through which the interactions between journalism and literature produce a sense of urgency, immediacy and relevance in their readers. I have chosen to identify this phenomenon with these two practices' pursuit of *truth*. In my reading of Latin American literature of the 20th century, I find a recurrent inclination in the authors' work to identify and emulate emerging codes of veridiction as vehicles for formulating, validating and authenticating their narratives as truthful. Within an ever-changing context of political and mediatic realignments, this pursuit has taken multiple forms.

All of the selected works exercise some form of immanent critique, as they recognize themselves to be a part of the widespread system of cultural production and consumption which includes these two modes of writing and extends beyond their intersection. Therefore, I will examine their self-reflexivity and intermediality as a necessary condition and complementary expression of their political interventions. In my view, the uses of journalism guide the novels' critique toward an examination of authorship, and the historical evolution of its social conditions and political restrictions, as well as the revaluation of its epistemological implications. Not only are these novels questioning their means and modes of communication, but they are also

reflecting upon the authors' liminal condition as author-writers in the Barthesian struggle to "neutralize the true and the false" (146) and to "say at once and on every occasion what [they] think" (148).

1.5 TRUTH AND ITS FORMS

"The opposite of infamy, in sum, was not honor but the truth" -Pablo Piccato

Ultimately, what brings together literary and journalistic practices in my study is the ways in which they have interacted in the writers' pursuit, reflection and criticism of truth and its platforms. Truth and its absence, in the history of letters and western philosophy at least, has always been linked to power. The relationship between these two and discourse has been the subject of multiple analyses.

Hana Arendt provides a slightly different, but still pertinent approach to what she defines as factual truth, in her analysis of the relationship between truth and power. For Arendt, truth "is never given nor disclosed but produced by the human mind" (297). With this assertion, Arendt is not reducing the material implications of truth within society, but setting up the philosophical differentiation between "rational truth" and "factual truth", which could be succinctly explained as the difference between the scientific consensus, understood as universal, and political consensus built on discussion and popular agreement[2]. Arendt's analysis focuses on factual truth's disputability, its relevance within democratic modern societies, and its vulnerability to manipulation:

> Factual truth. . .is always related to other people; it concerns events and circumstances which many are involved; it is established by witnesses and depends upon testimony; it exists only when it is spoken about, even if it occurs in

> the domain of privacy. It is political by nature. Facts and opinions, though they must be kept apart, are not antagonistic to each other; they belong to the same realm. But do facts, independent of opinion and interpretation, exist at all? (301)

Arendt's assertion that truth is made up by a combination of facts and their supporting opinions, although grounded in a series of philosophical arguments, is meant to be taken as plain language. In this sense, factual truth is not a transcendental entity, but a social and political phenomenon that exists and is accessible to all members of a given community. Arendt, however does establish a differentiation between the means through which different strata of the society gain access to this truth by separating the educated individuals, who reach truth through formative experiences, and the uninformed, who although similarly convinced, arrive to conclusions through persuasion (302). In this regard, Arendt notes that, just like opinions, factual truth is subject to the dynamics of rhetorical and political deceit. In Arendt's view, "A teller of factual truth, in the unlikely event that he wished to stake his own life on a particular fact, would achieve a kind of miscarriage. What would become manifest in his act would be his courage or, perhaps, his stubbornness but neither the truth of what he had to say nor even his own truthfulness. For why shouldn't a liar stick to his lies with great courage" (308). Arendt's concern is primarily focused on the potential and actual dangers of mass manipulation in the second half of the 20th century. In this regard, she identifies the risk of image manipulation in the propaganda machines of totalitarian regimes, but also within the media driven liberal societies. In all, Arendt's approach establishes a philosophical differentiation between truth and power, seemingly in a oppositional stance with each other. However, she links the two of them by pointing to the rise in relevance for certain societal actors: "Outstanding among the existential modes of truthtelling are the solitude of the philosopher, the isolation of the scientist and the artist, the impartiality of the

historian and the judge, and the independence of the fact-finder, the witness, and the reporter" (310).

Truth should also be understood as a discursive element within the dynamics of power, for which exists a given form of politics according to each society where it circulates. According to Michel Foucault: "Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse it harbors and causes to function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true from false statements, the way in which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures which are valorised for obtaining truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true" (13). This conception of truth is not a universalizing one, but it also refrains from asserting that truth is merely situational or contextual, because it has a material expression which is socially constructed. Also, from this perspective, truth is a matter not of moral philosophy, but of political economy -part of the circulation of relationships between the state and the subjects (citizens, intellectuals, etc). This means that it is not outside the dynamics of power, but it belongs to it:

> truth is centered on the form of scientific discourse and the institutions which produce it; it is subject to a constant economic and political incitation (the demand for truth, as much for economic production as for political power): it is the object, under diverse forms, of an immense diffusion and consumption (it circulates in apparatuses of education and information whose extent is relatively wide within the social body, notwithstanding certain strict limitations); it is produced and transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses (university, army, writing, media...);

> lastly, it is the stake of a whole political debate and social confrontation ('ideological" struggles). (13)

This description centers Foucault's conception of truth and its circulation, demand and production as part of the socio-political struggle for power and legitimacy. His definition of truth is also tied to the uses and opportunities it presents for the intellectuals as bearers of specific knowledge, which can be sued in opposition to state politics of power and control.

> There is a battle 'for truth', or at least 'around truth' - it being understood once again that by truth I do not mean 'the ensemble of truths which is to be discovered and given acceptance', but rather 'the ensemble of rules according to which true and false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true'; it being understood also that it's not a question of a battle 'in favour' of truth but of a battle about the status of truth and the economic/political role which it plays. (13-4)

Once more, this view of truth as a discursive construction, whose specific role is matter of struggle allows us to understand that the writers/intellectuals use of truth and claims for truth fit within a dynamics of power, and that these acts are not unmotivated, but part of a discursive strategy that presents the voice or the figure of the writer with a specific ethical or epistemological value -that of the bearer of truth.

What these discussions about truth, its formation, dissemination and contention have in common is not only the need for human intervention, rather the extent to which such interventions can alter these complex systems. The issue of serious risk or consequence for the truth-teller, or truth writer in this case, bears special significance, as well as the alignment of these risks with a particular objective or cause. The ways in which the representation of the

conditions that propitiate the speaker's involvement, and the reflections by Latin American writers on their own involvement with their specific context

One way in which literary scholars initially addressed the issue of truth and its representation was in the form of rhetorical devices. Its discursive nature makes it perceptible in the moment it's mentioned, invoked or evaded. Ronald Weber's *The Literature of Fact: Literary Non-Fiction in American Writing* (1985) and David William Foster's "Latin American Documentary Narrative", from 1984, are early examples that sought to address the expansion of the representational repertoires in the Americas that stemmed from the combination of experimental innovation in literature, and the political and humanitarian crises that plagued the second half of the twentieth century: "What distinguishes these works is not their fundamentally documentary nature, which routinely prompts libraries to classify them as nonfiction. Rather, all have authors who are important novelists, all display a high degree of novelistic interest, and, most significant, all overtly involve the difficulties of narrating a segment of Latin American reality" (Foster 41). These early entries in the pursuit of a novel generic definition led literary scholars to focus on the ways these texts related to extraliterary elements by studying their framing, their authors' affiliation and their relationship with the writing processes. Under these premises, the problematic relationship between fact and fiction was solved by dichotomy, but in line with Arendt's preoccupation with the overwhelming power of opinion in the process of transforming reality.

Within the specific context of Mexico, and Latin America, Ignacio Sánchez Prado and Beth Jorgensen have pointed at the role within the discursive practice of nonfiction writing as "una forma de pensar la historia desde el archivo y los restos discursivos del pasado como forma de contravenir las narrativas hegemónicas" (Sánchez Prado 427). In line with Beth Jorgensen's

study of nonfiction, Sanchez Prado suggests this practice as a historical example of how contemporary writers in Mexico have tried to solve Barthes' challenge about the lettered community's exercise of the power of language. Jorgensen's study of nonfiction confronts the general assumption the relativizing argument that "all verbal representations of the world are linguistic" (11). Jorgensen's analysis brings a renewed attention to the composition of documentary, nonfiction narratives and concludes that: "the nature of the facts and the evidence presented in a text and privileged documents or other resources that are used to support a particular claim to truth are fundamental components that must be determined for each work studied. Published documents of many kinds, interview material, photographic images, personal notes and journals, and the workings of memory all serve as evidence for the agenda or the interests that an author consciously or unconsciously defends" (25).

My research aims to contribute to the specific reflection on the modes of writing and their relationship to these regimes of truth. The following analysis of Latin American books builds on the research done to date by taking into account the importance of the relationship between journalism and literature and their ability to capture the fragmentary composition of socio-political life. At the same time, I consider the aforementioned models for addressing and analyzing the corollary of attitudes towards truth embedded within these narratives.

1.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

In the first chapter, "Staging the Truth: Sensationalism and the Narrative Avant-garde in Latin America" I discuss Roberto Arlt's *Los siete locos/ Los lanzallamas* and Martin Luis Guzman's *La sombra del caudillo* as cultural objects that explore the dynamics of popularity and fame as indexes of both a crisis of intellectual sociability, and a critique sensationalist practice in Mexico and

Argentina at the turn of the 20th century.

Following Martin-Barbero's inquiry on the socio-historical relevance of Latin American mass media, I show how these novels constitute an exploration of the emerging complexities of social life in parallel with the rise of mass culture in the Mexican and Argentine socio-cultural landscapes, particularly in the emergence of new technologies of reproduction and communication, and the parallel development of persuasion techniques which catered to the taste of a new popular urban public.

In the second chapter, "Documenting the truth: the challenges of documentary writing in Elena Poniatowska's *La noche de Tlatelolco*", I approach Elena Poniatowska's rendering of the Tlatelolco massacre in 1968 as a significant but highly polemical milestone in the cultural production of documentary literature in Mexico. In order to do so, I first examine the coverage of the student movement in the print press, following the editorials and opinion pieces of Mexico City's newspapers including *Excélsior*, *El Heraldo*, *El Universal* and *El Día* . In my revision of these dailies, I discuss some of the rhetorical devices used by the print press to represent the student movement. Most notably, I address the emergence of an idealized notion of studenthood and youth under the term "el verdadero estudiante". I discuss the implications of this particular trope and its relationship to the nationalistic ethos and rhetoric that permeated the Mexican press. I further explain how Elena Poniatowska's *La noche de Tlalelolco* follows the author's journalistic effort to render the process that led to the Tlatelolco massacre under an alternative approach to that set up by the print press and in doing so, it sets up an alternative authoritative discourse that relies on the affective involvement of tits interviewees and other participants of the movement, and it ultimately incorporates and expands the notion of documentary practices.

The third and final chapter, Finding the Truth in Fiction/Nonfiction: Regimes of Veridiction and Masculinity in *Los periodistas* and *La guerra de Galio*, I posit that *La guerra de Galio* and *Los periodistas* incorporate the forceful expulsion of Julio Scherer García and his group from Mexico City's *Excélsior*, in July 8th 1976, to explore the relationship between discursive truthfulness and hegemonic homosocial masculinity. Under these models, the moral stature of the speaker and the empirical veracity of their speech become supplementary traits in the construction of truth as well as tools for the narrators' pursuit of their own legacy. I explain how the construction of the narrator's moral character is built on a series of supportive and adversarial relationships with other male figures, particularly in their roles as social influencers. Finally, I show how these novels present and confront different regimes of masculinity in order to construct a variety of authoritative figures with divergent moral qualities. In *Los periodistas*, these processes are set against the local history of Excelsior's change of leadership in 1976 whereas *La guerra de Galio* relies on the relationships of tutelage and apprenticeship between its male protagonist and other central male figures in the novel.

1.7 NOTES

1. In January 2016 Sergio Aguayo published a column titled “Hay que esperar” for Mexico City’s newspaper *Reforma* where he criticized the Mexican state’s protection of corrupt polititians, using Humberto Moreira Valdés detention in Spain as an example. The piece lead with the following phrase: “Humberto Moreira se enfrenta, finalmente, a una justicia: la española, que con ese acto muestra que las instituciones mexicanas son virtuosas en la protección de los corruptos.” (Aguayo Quezada). After the difamation lawsuit demanded the payment of moral damage and a formal apology from the journalist. That same year, Aguayo was cleared but the decision by the Mexico City court was reversed in October 2019, resulting in Aguayo’s legal responsibility to pay for moral damages “por abuso del derecho a la información y de la libertad de expresión” (Proyecto 377). According to Reporteros sin fronteras, the judge’s decisión “interpretó y aplicó de manera dolosa e inadecuada el Estándar de Malicia Efectiva. Dicho estándar tiene que ser aplicado a géneros periodísticos de información que por su propia naturaleza implican un contenido de “hechos”. En este caso concreto se trata de una “columna de opinión”, tal como lo ha establecido la SCJN, el estándar de Malicia Efectiva solo se puede aplicar en la difusión de hechos y no de opiniones, ideas y juicio de valor” (El periodista Sergio Aguayo).

2. More recently, Bruno Latour has similarly brought up the issue by invoking Heidegger’s disquisition about the difference between things and objects into what Latour called matters of fact and matters of concern. This differentiation ultimately has led Latour to work on a decades long project on the different regimes of truth, which he has called modes of existence (Biography 287).

2. STAGING THE TRUTH: SENSATIONALISM AND THE NARRATIVE AVANT-GARDE IN LATIN AMERICA

The following chapter discusses Roberto Arlt's *Los siete locos/Los lanzallamas* and Martin Luis Guzman's *La sombra del caudillo* as cultural objects that explore the dynamics of popularity and fame as indexes of both a crisis of intellectual sociability, and a critique sensationalist practice in Mexico and Argentina at the turn of the 20th century. These novels address the connection between literature and sensational journalism by underscoring the latter's tropes and style.

The objective of this chapter is to examine the metanarrative and intermedial[1] reflections displayed by these novels in correlation to the process of cultural modernization in Argentina and Mexico. This perspective highlights how the internally constructed critique of the *culture industries*[2] by the novels adds complexity to their socio-political themes[3]. Following Martin-Barbero's inquiry on the socio-historical relevance of Latin American mass media, I posit that at the heart of these metafictional reflections, lies a crisis of intellectual activity and the emergence of the problematic dynamics of fame and popularity. This is to say that these novels provide a narrative exploration of the emerging complexities of social life in parallel with the rise of mass culture in the Mexican and Argentine socio-cultural landscapes, particularly in the emergence of new technologies of reproduction and communication, and the parallel development of persuasion techniques which catered to the taste of a new popular urban public.

I will analyze the work of these authors by examining some of their most renowned books, Martin Luis Guzman's *La sombra del Caudillo*, and Roberto Arlt's *Los siete locos/Los lanzallamas*. These works were published in their final form by the end of the 1920's. Guzman's novel first appeared separately in different publications[4] and Arlt's sequel to Los siete locos was

published in 1931. Both works exemplify distinct variants of what it meant to write narrative fiction in a highly volatile socio-political context and the pressures of the booming consumer cultural markets. Similarly, the books are key works of Latin-American Modernist fiction that manifest a negative evaluation of the socio-political dynamics within their own countries, and the effects that journalistic practices played in shaping public opinion. They also present a narrative exploration of the disparate power dynamics of government sponsored cultural interventionism and the effects of unprecedented growth in mass media culture.

As media theorist Martin-Barbero discusses the relationship between *mass media* and the *massification* of society, he starts by rejecting folklorist and condescending approaches to popular culture: "To perceive popular culture from the perspective of mass does not necessarily imply alienation and manipulation. It is a new condition of existence and struggle. Mass society is a new mode of operation of hegemony" (*Communication* 230). Following Walter Benjamin, Martin-Barbero "is concerned with transformations in experience and not just in aesthetics. . .interested in studying the changes produced by the dynamic convergences of the new aspirations of the masses and the new technologies of reproduction" (47-8). By recognizing the social dynamics brought about by technological innovation, we may better understand the broader implications of those changes. In my approach, I'll address the representation of mass journalism and its aesthetics -sensationalism- and the shifting paradigms of social prestige-the dynamics of fame and infamy -through the analysis of the lettered protagonists of these novels.

Popular journalism in Latin America was one of the earlier cultural arenas where the growing popular classes were incorporated through a symbolic integration into the public sphere (Wechsler 287, Reynolds 97, and Martin-Barbero 26). However, this incorporation was often derogatory, scandalous and utilitarian. As Francine Masiello points out, writers and journalists

alike found a narrative solution in the melodramatic representation of urban delinquents: "it plays with appearances and deceptions; it juxtaposes the superficiality of the visible world with the realm of feelings; and it insists on the perversity of gender relations as the sine qua non of fiction and the language of the state" (271). By focusing on the abject subjects of crime, this particular expression of journalism highlighted a perceived moral contrast between the spectators or readers and the characters it introduced.

The rise of sensationalism in the West and its effects on urban metropolis modified, at the beginning of the 20th century, the way in which the urban public perceived itself. The term *sensationalism* is typically used to name a popular practice of journalism that favors the coverage of crime by means of graphic depictions of its effects and violence, with a particular emphasis on personal details (Navitski 36, Pizarrosso 50). In a broader sense, sensationalism is also understood as a melodramatic, modern aesthetic that appeals to the popular demand for graphicly explicit content (Gripsrud 87, Masiello 271). As such, it is necessary to understand that sensational journalism is a specific way of presenting events which cannot be separated from its commercial or exploitative purposes. Because sensationalism makes use of the latest technological development, it also varies from one media platform to another. This has different manifestations on various media such as the yellow press at the end of the 19th century in the United States or the Mexican and Brazilian silent crime re-enactments at the beginning of the 20th century. As Rielle E. Navitski explains, these two media, the print press and the film, "rendered spectacularly visible the social tensions of modernization" (viii). Along these lines, Joseph B. Entin traces the origins of sensational press to the tabloids aesthetics of the early 1900s in the US: "In format and style, the tabloids were characterized by the abbreviation of information, a terse and colorful tone, and the extensive use of visual images. . .the tabloids

provided a graphic, virtually theatrical, view of urban society" (15). Namely, with an increased demand for immediate information by the urban public, along with increasing competition for the attention of such readers, the popular press favored the use of large, highly visible headlines as well as illustrations. Like the yellow press of the 19th century, this shift in the technologies of news production allowed for the intensification and expansion of news circulation, at the same time facilitating a change in the way these growing audiences were persuaded to consume them. The cultural significance of this new format is marked by the fact that it was also a response to the public's demand for more immediate and appealing forms of information.

Parallel to a change in these technologies, there was a growing demand for more immediate forms of communication. Navitski explains this process as a need for sense-making that permeated across different media in Mexico:

> At a moment when public violence pervaded everyday life, melodramatic rhetoric aided audiences in making sense of violent events, which they were encouraged to interpret through a matrix of popular narrative conventions with both thrilling and reassuring effects. Newspapers and magazines sensationalized criminality and violence by adapting narrative tropes familiar from serial literature, detective stories, and serial films (37)

Sensationalism, therefore, highlights the link between a certain mode of public address and the technical development of the cultural market as well as a rising demand. From the penny press in the 1830s in the US to the rise of the Nota Roja in Mexico[5] at the end of the 19th century, all of these changes in the way newsworthy events were presented modified the relationship that existed between news producers, readers and the platforms that mediated their

exchange. This is what Ben Singer points out in his analysis of the sensationalist press in the US and its effects on the journalists and writers´ self-perception.

According to Singer, sensationalism and urban modernity are two interconnected phenomena that showcased the radical changes of society during the early 20th century. These phenomena propelled the emergence of the journalist as a figure of social value, although a very problematic one. The value of journalists came from their epistemological peculiarities and the ways in which this particular form of knowledge transmission (sensationalist writing) affected the general public.

> Beyond the commercial logic of sensationalism. . .these representations, in their superabundance and intensity, seem to convey a critical fixation, a sense of anxious urgency in documenting and dissecting an awesome social transformation.. . .It was a culture that on some level had not yet fully adjusted to the sensory upheavals of urban modernity; or at least, it was a culture that for some reason felt a strong need to represent itself as such. The images of modern chaos were those of social observers who were feeling the "shock of the new" firsthand (90 Singer).

Singer's analysis is relevant because it allows us to establish a link between the act of witnessing and writing, one that presupposes an epistemic privilege in the journalist and which is continuously claimed and used by 19th century writers in North and Latin America. However, as Pablo Piccato points out, Latin American sensationalist writings, such as the aforementioned Nota Roja were historically limited in the advancement or formulation of any elaborate socio-political agenda by the co-optation of a powerful Mexican State (64).

Nota Roja designates a popular trend in Mexico's journalistic culture which according to Piccato began in the late 1920s, when "newspaper readership and journalistic innovations in crime news, characterized by a graphic and assertive style. . .created and nurtured a broad and engaged public" (Murders of Nota Roja 195). Piccato goes on to describe the overall style of the nota roja as one in which "headlines played with words, conveyed moral outrage, and summarized crimes in brutally direct terms, characterizing victims or criminals in sardonic and memorable ways. . .however, attention to context and production will remind us that people from all walks of life read the nota roja, not as escapism but as a peculiar form of engagement necessary to navigate the dangers of everyday life in the city" (222-3). Recent historical criticism of the Nota Roja has highlighted its influence as in shaping both the public's' perception of what and who was considered criminal, particularly in its representation of working women as delinquents (Santillán Esqueda 399) on one hand, and an appealing platform that elicited the readers to get involved in the resolution of actual crimes (Murders of Nota Roja 206).

At first sight, Guzmán's *La sombra del Caudillo* and Arlt's *Los siete locos/Los lanzallamas* could be said to be at odds with each other regarding the protagonist's relationship to these changing cultural conditions. In a way, Ignacio Aguirre's struggle to resist the influence of the Caudillo and his media apparatuses is what drives the plot of the novel. At the same time, Arlt's protagonist, Remo Erdosain, embraces the aberrant possibilities of technological progress -he even celebrates them through a perverse sense of technophilia. This apparently differentiated perspective may explain why some critics tend to read Guzman's novel filtered by the idealization of the past (Glantz 110) whereas Arlt's diptych may be seen as a visionary, if also somber, representation of "a society of the future" (Sarlo 51). The former focused on the inheritance of corruption and personalism still plaguing the Mexican political landscape; the

latter, envisioned alternative futures governed by technocrats and radical demagogues. It is clear that both writers are interested in representing the struggle triggered by these radical changes in technology and their effects on society. Furthermore, I argue that their views intersect beyond the thematic coincidence by addressing the complex dynamics of fame and infamy, namely, the conditions and processes under which an anonymous figure becomes known by the public, underlined by a narrative inquiry of the emerging techniques and technologies of persuasion.

It is important to recognize that for these authors, both the social and the technological aspects of changing cultural arenas are intertwined. It is in the relationship between the two that they envision the problematic effects of popular journalism. From Mexico to Argentina, the arrival of newer and more efficient technologies of communication made it easier to engage the public, and at the same time introduced the question of how to incorporate them in the civic and political life of each country.

My work aims to provide further evidence of the specific effects that cultural modernization and technological development had on the literary field. In doing so, I follow a critical trend that stresses the relationship between literary production and the consumer market development[7] as a key aspect to expand our understanding of influence circulation and the role of competition in Latin America's cultural spheres.

Aníbal González has pointed out the problematic relationship that existed between journalism and literature as they developed at the beginning of the 20th century in Latin America. For González, this development highlighted the "relationship between journalism and literature in terms of an antagonism or an opposition" (6). The competitive nature of this relationship, as explained by Gonzalez, recognizes a history of exchange between the two modes of discourse[8]. On the one hand, journalism provided a means through which writers became independent from

partisan politics while stimulating writer's reflections about the commodification of their work. This historical transformation, which started in the late 19th century in Latin America, also allowed writers to reach a wider readership. In this sense, Arlt and Guzman were not an exception among their peers but rather, good examples of a trend that was spreading at the turn of the century and that affected several generations of writers – from iconic modernists such as Ruben Darío and González Nájera, to Jorge Luis Borges. What these two writers particularly point out is the specific direction that this literary introspection was taking in the 1920s. This specificity comes from their aesthetic reflection on the effects that mass journalism had on the writers' self-perception and their creative responses to the explosive growth of the cultural media as an industry. For Arlt, as well as for Guzman, these changes in the market introduced different forms of reading and writing that called for an examination of their own roles as writers (Juarez 211).

2.1 SENSATIONAL PRESS IN LATIN AMERICA

Nineteenth century Latin American journalists were not shy about judging seemingly irrelevant events in order to extract a moral teaching out of them. As a number of critics have explained, there was a trend in the portrayal of violent crimes styled by a moralistic male-centered worldview, which dominated the pages of the newspapers at the end of the Porfiriato (Melchor, "Replicante"; *Staging* 51). The rise of such a trend called for a re-evaluation of the role of reporters, and newspaper industry as a whole, as an editorial of a Mexican newspaper, *El imparcial*, dated March 6th 1896 shows:

> La prensa ya no tiene esa misión casi divina, doctrinaria y sagrada, que la obligaba a tomar la entonación magistral y la frase altisonante y pomposa para el

> asunto más baladí. . . El reportero es el cazador que recoge y lanza la noticia aún fresca, cuando el suceso es palpitante. Ya no se le pide un estilo de maestro, sino buenos pies, un ojo avisado e investigador (qtd. in Melchor)

Although this prescription may itself seem "altisonante y pomposa" to present-day readers, it is interesting to note the contrast that it suggests between the remote origins of *writing* and the seeming simplicity and proximity of having "buenos pies" and "un ojo avisado e investigador". The value of this particular form of witnessing is that it implies both the establishment of a certain aesthetic principle governed –in appearance- by chance and violence, and the emergence of a particular sensibility, a subjective experience and interpretation of the loss of a given social order.

> In Mexico, multiple actors including journalists, lawyers, jurors, witnesses, suspects, and victims, argued what constituted the truth. The state played a part in the process but did not control it. . .Their debates might have not always led to a judicial sentence, but they achieved some degree of validation in the court of public opinion (*A History of Infamy* 5)

This perception boomed at the end of the 19th century and expanded beyond the popular press. In Latin America, the meta-critical analysis of what it meant to write was also taken up by a generation of *modernista* intellectuals who had close relationships with the developing journalist circles throughout the region.

Although the modernist learned much from journalism, they were also deeply troubled by it. They were perturbed by the power journalism as an institution had over their lives and by the symbolic implications of journalism for literature as it was understood and practiced during the

19th century. . .a concern with journalism's effect on the writer's capacity to express themselves through writing (Gonzalez 86-7).

The idea that intellectuals in general, and writers in particular, were paramount to some degree as social and cultural mediators was also at the core of the critiques enacted by the Ateneo de la juventud, in Mexico. According to Clara M. Parra, these young thinkers characterized themselves as "custodios" or custodians of the cultural sphere in the first decade of the 20th century (305). Guzman's stance at the Ateneo continued to influence his work for years, as he continued to interact with former members, such as Alfonso Reyes.

Latin American societies had very disparate processes of modernization and industrialization throughout the 20th century. This is especially noticeable in the cases of Mexico's and Argentina's media development[9]. The history of the media in Latin America follows two parallel historical conditions, the technical and cultural influence of the United States, and the local governments' political interest in expanding and controlling media outlets and industries.

Before the turn of the 20th century, Argentina, and especially Buenos Aires, had a significant cultural market where journals served as platforms for the transmission and negotiation of popular sensibility. As Fabio Esposito has pointed out, by 1880 the emergence of the "popular novel", published by the numerous *folletines* served a growing population that had interest in these types of fiction.

> En la década de 1880 la magnitud del público lector permite reconocer dos circuitos de lectura claramente diferenciados entre sí en cuanto a materiales de lectura, agentes y circuitos de distribución, y procedencia social de los consumidores. (23)

The decade of 1880s marked a significant increase in the number of libraries, bookstores and school enrollment, which spurred the continued growth of a public for newspapers, magazines and popular literature in the years to follow.

The Argentinean government established an economic strategy based on agricultural and meat products exports, which relied on the country's integration in the world economy, and allowed the transit of people and merchandise between the South American country and Europe. This exchange favored the early emergence of movie theatres in Argentina during the early 20th century (Finkelman 6). Film quickly became a popular form of entertainment for the masses between the 1910s and 1920s. Later, with the introduction of radio in the 1920s, a multi-modal mass public started to emerge, overcoming the linguistic difficulties posed by illiteracy and the linguistic crucible of Buenos Aires at the turn of the 20th century (111). As Beatriz Sarlo explains, there was a boom of radio *aficionados* which included members from beyond the upper and middle classes: "radio enthusiasts of different social backgrounds and economic means would choose from a wide variety of products. . .that were as inexpensive as the era's mass-market paperbacks" (108).

With the continued import of movies from Hollywood and the introduction of the technology needed for radio stations, Argentina decidedly entered the sphere of cultural influence of the United States. Most of the quality movies shown and appreciated in the country originated in the USA, and although Argentina finally developed significant film and radio industries of its own, they were modeled after the American models established for these new media. "In Buenos Aires. . .emerged a reconfiguration of North American models of genre, cinematography and style, capable of articulating the fantasies and anxieties of the Argentinean mass public" (Karush 44).

Unlike Argentina, Mexico was, at the beginning of the century, a predominantly rural country where illiteracy and weak educational institutions made most of the country unable to partake of a widespread cultural market. Armando Bartra asserts that by 1910, as much as 75% of the Mexican population didn't know how to read (305). There was, indeed, a significant change by the 1940's, mainly as an effect of mandatory primary instruction which originated in the Constitution of 1917. Still, there was a decidedly generational disparity between literate and illiterate populations, where "the majority of those under twenty-five had learned or were learning to read and write" (305), nevertheless, technical development was underway:

> in the final decade of the nineteenth century, developments in print technology, including the introduction of linotype and rotary press facilitated new economies of scale. . .The growth of mass-circulation dailies-in spite of low literacy rates, especially outside the capital- displaced an earlier model of politically oriented journalism, instead focusing on informing readers about current events (Staging 40)

This development, as limited as it was, had great influence in the evolution of mass media in Mexico, as early examples of radio shows followed on the models set up by the print press.

The arrival of the radio in the Mexican 1920s was highly successful in disseminating sensationalism and other popular practices that originated in the growing urban environment. According to Joy E. Hayes:

> As radio broadcasters (along with the recording industry) began to draw on these [popular musicians and theatrical] performers, they also admitted the theatricality, melodrama and sentimentalism of the urban theater into radio's program forms. . . Radio also incorporated the periodic quality and serial "flow" of newspaper

> content, providing new installments of information and entertainment on a weekly, daily and even hourly basis" (xvi)

At the same time, the Mexican government -then the PRN (Partido Revolucionario Nacional)- aligned the expansion of the radio with its own propaganda needs, in order to generate national consensus and popular recognition of the party as a major institution (xvii). In contrast, Argentinian radio industry was both free of foreign ownership and had very limited interference of the state until 1928 (Karush 62).

Whereas Argentinean early radio incursions and later development were fueled by the emergence of a private market of enthusiasts, in Mexico, the introduction of radio technology and the production of a national radio industry followed a nationalistic impulse initiated by the Mexican "cultural revolution" and the activist governments of the 1920s and 1930s. This process of nationalization of the mass media was also marked by the cultural expansion of the U.S., and the early reticence of the Mexican government to align with its American counterpart. As early as the mid-1920s, "government regulations were in place that gave the Mexican state significant control over the medium and institutionalized a mixed system of state and commercial broadcasting. These regulations limited the role of U.S. corporations in Mexican radio" (Hayes xiv). This contentious relationship between the early radio producers in Mexico and the US also occurred in the early days of the film industry[10]

By the late 1910s, Mexico had been producing a number of successful films that directly competed with Hollywood products. Films like El automóvil gris and La banda del automóvil, released in 1919 in Mexico were successful examples of the influence of imported films of the late 1910s. These films reproduced the visual conventions of violence that dominated foreign serial films, including iconic scenes of public executions which "pervaded Mexico's sensational

visual culture during and after the militarized phase of the Mexican Revolution" (Staging 32). In Argentina, film industry development was intimately related to the rise of Tango and was also heavily influenced by Hollywood, as most of Gardel's appearances on film were not Argentine productions, "they were made by Paramount and filmed in France and the United States" (Karush 55). In both countries, writers and intellectuals established an intermodal dialogue initiated by what Miriam V Garate calls a *estética da lente*:

> na medida em que o desenvolvimento da linguagem fílmica orientou-se de imediato predominantemente em direção ao narrativo, o qual implicou um intenso aproveitamento de fontes literárias, instaura-se uma discussão sobre o caráter bem-sucedido ou não dessas transposições. . .e comportando uma questão de caráter mais amplo, que de certa forma engloba ou inclui as anteriores, instaura-se uma reflexão sobre as possibilidades e impossibilidades inerentes às linguagens visual e verbal, sobre suas respectivas propriedades específicas, limitações e potencialidades (197).

Regarding the print press, it is important to recognize that, just as it happened in the United States at the end of the 19th century, the emergence of sensationalism in Latin America intersected with social and technological changes. Sensationalism in Latin America developed along with strong competition from a variety of publishers, as was the case with Argentine newspapers La Razón, Crítica and El Mundo.

> Con la fundación de La Razón en 1905 y de Crítica en 1913, un nuevo periodismo se consolida en el campo cultural argentino: se trata de una prensa moderna, dirigida y escrita por periodistas profesionales que, en poco tiempo, logra diferenciarse de los diarios finiseculares al particularizarse como práctica,

> regularizar sus modos de financiación y separarse formalmente del Estado y de los partidos políticos (Saítta 245)

During the first decade of the 1900s, Mexican newspapers such as Gaceta de Policía or El Imparcial began introducing new technologies that allowed them to satisfy a growing demand for visual materials. However, these processes of renewal often brought them closer to the State's sphere of influence than they did in Argentina. After the Revolution, Mexican newspapers El Universal and Excélsior were replacing Porfirian-era subsidized publications. However, they kept in place some of the conventions which were started by earlier news outlets.

The present review of the emerging mass media in Mexico and Argentina highlights the difficulty to differentiate the specific influence of any one given media technology while, at the same time, emphasizing the complex relationship of mutual influence between these technologies. It also presents a glimpse of how Latin American countries were experiencing the development of multimodal sensationalist practices that quickly expanded beyond the print press, and how this development served as a catalyzer for social practices that were already in place, but that were brought to the attention of an expanding range of audiences that included readers, viewers and listeners. As Andrew Reynolds points out:

> The repetitive reproduction of visual newspaper imagery together with the textual images repeated almost daily in the periodical editions create a world of new knowledge founded on the specific historical and modernizing forces of the transforming technological and cultural spheres of Spanish America and abroad (97).

This evidence suggests that, although there exists a clear relationship between the development of sensationalism in the US and Latin America, there are also some significant

differences that may help us understand localized effects on the Mexican and Argentinian literary traditions. For the latter region, this is a phenomenon that is rooted in the last decade of the 19th century, but becomes visible during the 20th century, through which it continues to develop and diversify. Furthermore, the economic and cultural tensions between the two regions were paramount to the early dynamics that allowed the development of film, radio and -to some extent- the popular press.

In Mexico and Argentina, spectators were getting used to a visual culture that privileged violent depictions of bloody, scandalous events while at the same time, the entertainment industry was reaching a far greater audience than ever. However, the political situations in these two countries couldn't have been more dissimilar. By the time these novels were published, between the year of 1926 and 1929, Mexico and Argentina were living two very different socio-political realities. However, both Martín L. Guzman and Roberto Arlt were professionally engaged with these practices of both artistic production and criticism, and through their distinctively different styles addressed the same basic question: what does it mean to write on this changing stage?

2.2 SPECTACULAR POWER IN LA SOMBRA DEL CAUIDLLO

In Martín Luis Guzmán's *La sombra del caudillo*, the questioning of writing as an intellectual, artistic and political practice bears great significance. The modernizing process that was undergoing the country in the author's absence was accompanied by a change in government structures and civic culture, even before the armed conflicts of the Revolution were over. During those first decades of the 1900s in Mexico, there was a reconfiguration in the relationship that news outlets held with the government and its institutions. This rearrangement translated into a

rather ambiguous interdependence where both media and the state collaborated and influenced each other. According to Novitski, "as early as 1907, police and journalists staged and photographed reconstructions of crimes and accidents, producing visual documents with both forensic and commercial uses (34). The varied instances where this kind of interaction took place make it difficult to identify the extent to which such representations constitute truthful reconstructions and therefore, as it was the case with sensational journalism, this cooperation further emphasized the presentation of content over its truth-value.

As he arrived in Spain and started his career as a writer, Guzman had a brief incursion in film criticism. He pioneered, alongside his friend Alfonso Reyes film reviews through a series of pieces which were published in the weekly *España* under the pseudonym *Fósforo* (Keizman 204). Although short lived, this exploration allowed Martin Luis Guzman to reflect on the aesthetic principles that differentiated the movies from other forms of media. At the same time, it demonstrated the writer's interest in the issues of intermedial persuasion, as he became interested with the effects that certain modes of storytelling had on the public. This initial preoccupation with the new language of mass appeal also had political implications, which were later addressed by Guzman in *La sombra del caudillo.*

Martin Luis Guzman was a central figure in the post-revolutionary era in Mexican intellectual landscape. He became involved with politics early in his career, when he was elected to talk in front of the Porfirio Díaz as a representative of the Mexico City Student Society, in September 1908 (Cifuentes-Goodbody 34). That same year, he joined the ranks of Mexican newspaper *El imparcial* (Abreu Gomez 300) and in 1909, he was appointed to work in the Mexican Consulate in Phoenix, Arizona. Back in Mexico, in 1911, he joined Antoino Caso and Pedro Henríquez Hureña's Ateneo de la Juventud, and the pro-Madero Partido Liberal

Progresista. During the Decena Trágica, between February 9th and February 18th, Martin Luis Guzman participates in the foundation of *El honor nacional*, "diario que en aquellos días se decía a decir la verdad de lo que ocurre" (301), where he publishes brief pieces to publicize the plot to remove Francisco I Madero from the presidential office (24). 1913 is also the year where he joins the armed movement of the Mexican Revolution, and 1914, the year he starts following Pancho Villa. This period of his life will be decisive, since this experience informs Guzman's major books, besides *La sombra del Caudillo*, *El águila y la serpiente* and *Memorias de PAncho Villa*.

Martin Luis Guzman starts writing *La sombra del caudillo* during his second exile in Spain, after having founded the Mexico City journal *El Mundo* in 1920, and a short-lived tenure in the Chamber of Deputies in 1922. In 1925, he arrived in Madrid seeking to escape from Alvaro Obregon's regime, after publicly supporting Adolfo de la Huerta instead of Plutarco Elías Calles to become the next president. "Though he had left his country and lost control of his newspaper, Guzman continued to be a journalistic presence in Mexico City through the end of the 1920s" (Cifuentes-Goodbody 70). He also continued to write for other newspapers in Madrid, San Antonio and Los Angeles.

There is wide consensus on Guzman's fine craftsmanship. Sophie Bidault, Mark Millington and Yvette Jimenez de Baez's review of *La sombra del caudillo* point out the structural balance of the novel. Fernando Moreno and Rafael Olea Franco discuss the process of "decantación" that differentiates the two versions of the novel as a process "orientadas por una intencionalidad estética y composicional" (513). Bidault's reading insists on a dualistic composition devoid of ideological structure, and states that "*La sombra del caudillo* es otra novela de la revolución que carece de sistema ideológico" (549). Mark Millington, on the other hand, places the ideological and political reflection in the peculiar role of its intellectual

character, Axkaná Gonzalez: "One of the fundamental questions which emerges from a reading of Guzman. . .is the extent to which there could be anything like a public intellectual in Mexico in the 1920s and 1930s" (36). However, he still asserts that "most intriguingly, for an intellectual character and politician, Axkaná articulates no political philosophy or ideology" (39).

Guzman's novel presents the story of General Aguirre, a minister that finds himself at odds with the will of El Caudillo, a powerful political figure, by becoming an opposition candidate for the presidential election. This challenge to the official candidate becomes the source of his misfortune, and Aguirre is finally killed after he and his followers are publicly accused of attempting a coup. Written and published abroad, Guzman's narrative was heavily influenced by his experience in exile and the debates going on in the foreign press about post-revolutionary Mexico[11]. Luis Guzman's depiction of the early post-revolutionary regime highlights the fleeting popularity of its protagonist, and the abrupt ending of his political career and indeed, of his life in the hands of a depersonalized but all-powerful political figure. At the same time, the recurring presentation of all political activities as staged events highlights the spectacularization of the political space in Mexico at the time.

Luis Leal has identified the historical background of the plot between Alvaro Obregon and Elias Calles' periods as presidents. His reading of the novel as a roman-a-clef leads him to assert that the novel mirrors the historical assassination of Francisco Serrano: "Es una exacta pintura del hecho histórico ocurrido el tres de octubre de 1927. . .del fusilamiento de catorce prisioneros políticos sobre la carretera de Cuernavaca a México, en un lugar llamado Huitzilac" (16). This reading has proven to be very influential, as it immediately identifies the novel and its previous version in the journals, as a direct political intervention of the writer in national politics.

Antonio Pineda Cachero has also identified the novel's concern with the asymmetrical power dynamics already established in the 1920s by Plutarco Elias Calles' propaganda machine (358), years before the formation of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional.

Guzman's novel circulated widely. First, amongst urban readers in Mexico City and Mexican expats relocated in the southern cities of the US. Right before it completed its publication in the journals of El Paso and Los Angeles -on August 1929-, its novelistic form began to circulate as a book in Mexico and Spain. The two versions have multiple differences between them but retain a series of traits that highlight the significant duality of the two male protagonists. Bruce-Novoa´s introduction to the journalistic version of the book highlights the differences in both style and structure and provides some analysis about the structural differences between the two. Regarding the characters' development, one of the most important differences between these two versions is the removal of the protagonists' backgrounds and the backstories shedding light on how they got their current positions. For Aguirre, success came from his social and amatory prowess; for Axkaná, it was through bribery and forgery.

These changes produced significantly different versions of the two protagonists, particularly when it comes to their integrity. As it has been noted, the changes also denote Guzman's acute awareness of the different narrative possibilities of the book and the journal serial, as well as their adaptation to cater to different audiences.

The first version, which appeared in the journals, presents Aguirre and Axkaná as formidable social actors that aim to insert themselves into the political spheres of the Mexican elites, but whose political success happens by mere chance. In this version, Aguirre is welcomed to his role as a minister under a morally reprehensible light, as a lazy, cruel and abusive man who

had no military victories in the army and who had yet to show any political success as a minister:

> Falto de grandes hazañas guerreras, durante la revolución había cobrado desde luego, por sus lances con mujeres, amplísimo renombre. Se contaba de él multitud de historias. . .alcanzó a tener doce novias a un tiempo. . .Ya en México. . .las habilidades de Aguirre se armonizaron a maravilla con su presencia varonil y su carácter mujeriego y licencioso, para encumbrarlo a grandes saltos (12)

In both versions of the text, Aguirre's characterized by his condition as an outsider, and appreciated because of those characteristics that appear to belong to a different sphere, other than politics. Whereas the journalistic version offers a heightened sexuality and physical cruelty as Aguirre's signature traits, the second version highlights his courage and loyalty. Although these traits have seemingly opposed moral values, they both are also codified by the gendered precepts that define Aguirre as a deeply masculine and virile character.

Similarly, Axkaná's background story and his ascent to power is presented as a fraud, made possible by the character's money and the work of a group of pistoleros, coordinated by his inept political operator. The initial plan for his election campaign was based on falsifying documents and votes. Axkaná provided the financial back up for the plan:

> Transigía con la necesidad de que los candidatos se apoderaran subrepticiamente de los papeles electorales, puesto que era seguro que los contrarios tratarían de hacer lo mismo; consentía, por idéntica razón, en que se instalaran las mesas con todas las ventajas del fraude; convenía en fabricar los votos, supuesto que era público y notorio que nadie votaba; y admitía, por último, como cosa legítima, el empleo de la violencia, sin más límite que la violencia de los enemigos (25)

Although these two backstories reveal a different characterization of the protagonists' moral personas, they retain a key trait of their personalities: Aguirre's passivity and Axkaná's ideological emptiness. This representation is highly relevant because of their symbolic value within the novel and the socio-political critique of the novel. Axkaná and Aguirre are the archetypal representatives of a new generation of politicians whose youth and potential for success is crushed under the weight of history and corruption. Unable to circumvent the political stages of post-revolutionary Mexico, they end up dead or in exile. Their banishment from these stages further symbolizes the failure to break away from traditional political practices, represented by El Caudillo and Catarino Ibáñez.

Critics have established several links between the two protagonists, Aguirre and Axkaná, and the technological advancement of society by explaining the symbiotic relationship between their characters and the recurrent representation of imported technological goods available in the Mexican market. Such exercise focuses particularly in the relationship between Axkaná and Aguirre, and the vehicles they use (Campbell 600). A further layer of symbolism arises from the characters' relationship with spectacle, and more precisely, with the roles they play in the different spectacular stages they inhabit: the rallies, the congress and the newspaper.

In addition to its complex historical background, the novel explores the problematic dynamics of fame and focuses its most explicit critique in the murky relationship between the press and the state. This is particularly evident in the journalistic version of the story, specifically in the brief cycle devoted to Axkaná's election process. This version also displays a pronounced sardonic tone which mirrors the sensational discourse it criticizes. However, the critique permeates through Guzman's revisions of the text and remains strong in the final version of the book.

The idea that *La sombra del caudillo* accentuates the theatricality and dramatic nature of the story comes from a structural aspect of the narrative, which has been previously identified as a principle of duality. This form of reading the novel highlights the contrasts between the two protagonists, as well as between the antagonists, by means of clear-cut differentiations of moral character, their activity or passivity, and their gender. This duality continues beyond the moral and gendered aspects of the novel and is further emphasized by the abundant references to dramatic and theatrical figures, where Aguirre is the "actor" in a "tragedy" that unfolds in front of the spectator, Axkaná.

This idea is highly relevant because it adds a meta-narrative dimension to the novel that continues and extends beyond its political themes. As others have noted, this novel relegates the political discussions and even the ideological perspectives of its characters and focuses on the performative dimension of all political activities, the stages of power (Jiménez de Baez 327) and the political ceremonies (223). Such emphasis on the act of displaying identifies the theatricality of every one of these interactions, were the public's perception is signaled by a consistent emphasis on prestige and admiration.

The first notable public interaction in the novel comes on Chapter IV, in the first book. "The Banquet in Chapultepec" begins precisely by stating that Aguirre's self-centeredness makes it easy for him to become desirable as a potential political leader: "Porque Aguirre, que sabía darse a desear para que su prestigio creciera, hizo que sus admiradores y partidarios lo aguardasen más de una hora" (Guzmán 27). This mention would be hardly relevant if it wasn't because it initiates a parenthetical set-up that concludes with the character's perception of the whole situation as a play, with Aguirre as its protagonist, and Olivier Fernandez as its director.

> Olivier Fernández sentía el contacto de los resortes que estaban preparando la obra y se entregaba a la fascinación de creer que la obra era cosa suya. . .todos participaban de la misma vibración, hasta Axkaná. Este, actor y espectador, trataba de penetrar la esencia de aquellas emociones, que también a él lo alcanzaban (33).

The thematic language in this particular chapter portrays the whole situation as a staged event. This scene initiates a series of public gatherings that most ot the time include the exhibition and promotion of a politician.

The Mexican newspaper *El Universal* published "Vísperas de una elección", on July 29th, 1928, as the first part of Axkaná's electoral episode which also includes "Las elecciones de Axkaná", "Recursos de una Democracia", "Una junta computadora", and "En el cine San Hipólito". The latter installments were published on August 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th respectively. Although this group of episodes did not make it into the final version, they offer numerous examples of the criticism that Guzmán directed to the staged democratic processes. This particular episode starts when the narrator summarizes Axkaná's political incursion in the following terms:

> Seguro de que en México no existía la voluntad cívica del pueblo, ni tampoco el instrumento que la expresa -el voto-, dejó el sendero que primitivamente se había trazado y practicó por fuerza, durante unos días el supremo arte electoral de nuestra República. Se hizo maestro en la técnica de la simulación, en la del fraude, en la del tumulto (La sombra del Caudillo Version Periodistica 24)

Shortly after, Axkaná's political operator, "El Chato Méndez", describes the electoral process in the following terms:

> El arte de las elecciones, señores, es arte de documentación. . .Pues no hay otro camino. Si se imagina usted que en México puede serse concejal, o diputado, o gobernador o presidente por otro medio que el de los expedientes electorales falsos, su persona no sirve para estas luchas. Aquí hasta los candidatos sin contrincantes tienen que fraguar hechos y papeles. (24)

The accusations in the voice of the narrator are now explicit and illustrate a clear relationship between the forgery of official documents and the real political consequences of those actions. Although the criticism is hardly veiled, the connection that it establishes between falsification and political power is mediated by financial interests of the operators and the wealth of the political entrepreneurs such as Axkaná. Effectively, Axkaná buys his seat in congress. Whether this was an actual practice at the time in Mexico is not as relevant as the fact that it was indeed a perceived issue by the lettered community and critics such as Guzman. What's more, it is particularly interesting that Guzman decides to change the focus of his criticism from the disorganized dynamics of the political positions as something to be purchased, to an emphasis on institutional, government sponsored manipulation. From the journalistic version to its final book form, La sombra effectively portrays the systematization of political influence and interference and its establishment as an impersonal and administered experience that is profoundly disconnected from all forms of democratic procedures.

In the following chapter, "Recursos de una democracia", the text introduces a complementary process of falsification, this time in the hands of the press. The episode starts when Axkaná's political rival, Teódulo Herrera, finds out that El Diario had declared him the victor. "Usted, amigo Herrera, aquí lo sabemos muy bien, no ha ganado las elecciones ni cosa que lo valga. Pero El Diario, por razones muy mías, quiere darle a usted el triunfo y se lo dará.

En septiembre, se lo garantizo, lo veremos arrellanarse en las curules de la Cámara de Diputados" (30).

The idea of the staged electoral process is further emphasized by the farcical kidnapping of a group of *directores de casilla*, who were in charge of counting the votes during the election. For this farce or "comedia" as is described in "Una junta computadora", recruited one of the directors to stage the kidnapping of the other nine. "Cañizo se prestó de buen grado a hacer la comedia de su secuestro y fue a reunirse con los otros nueve prisioneros en los calabozos de la Comisaría" (34).

The final episode of this series culminates poignantly inside a movie theatre. There, the falsification of documents reaches its climax. Since the original directors have already been kidnapped, Axkana's political operator designates new directors, "los verdaderos presidentes de casilla" (36). Additionally, the documents they were set to tabulate, were far removed from what the novel describes as original: "Los papeles de que el Chato iba a servirse en la computadora no eran en realidad sino una simulación del expediente, falso asimismo, que se guardaban en casa de Axkaná. Auténticos -auténticos dentro de la falsificación- sólo tenía allí aquellos documentos que por fuerza hubo de traer a fin de que en ellos se estamparan ciertas firmas. . .De hecho, a las ocho de la mañana todo estaba concluido, si bien, en apariencia, las labores de la junta que debía reunirse a las nueve, todavía no empezaban" (36). Ultimately what Axkaná's electoral process displays is the impossibility to differentiate between what's real and what's simulated in the public discourse of the press and politics. By highlighting every aspect of the political process as a simulation and a farce, this episode is focusing on the flawed nature of the epoch's system of popular representation.

Even though the final version of the book does not include this series of episodes, it does address the staged nature of politics, particularly in relationship to mass media and journalism. On chapter 4th of the 6th book, "El gran diario" presents the staged insurrection by Aguirre's group precisely as a directed effort by the government, in collaboration with the newspaper: "Propiamente, El Gran Diario no afirmaba nada por su cuenta: tres líneas tan solo y, luego, una declaración oficial y dos larguísimos boletines con cada párrafo entre comillas. Era, pues, manifiesto que el diario no contaba lo que sabía, sino aquello que le obligaban a contar" (211). Shortly after reading, the narrator describes Aguirre's perception of the event in the following terms: "Muchas monstruosidades había visto, hecho y ayudado a hacer en la Revolución, pero todas ellas -los robos, los saqueos, los raptos, los estupros, los asesinatos, los fusilamientos en masa, las más negras traiciones- no valían, juntas, lo que esta sola. . .Una imagen lo agitó un momento: la de Pancho Villa. Con ser-pensó-monstruoso su asesinato, éste de ahora, el mío, va a ser aún más monstruoso, más cobarde e innoble" (214)

While the journalistic version of the novel highlights the corruption of influential individuals and their deforming consequences on the Mexican public sphere, the final version foregrounds one single staged political and military intervention as the absolute negation of the country's readiness to support its own public sphere. The assassination of Aguirre and his followers is as much a political comment, as it is a cultural one, grounded in the disproportionate influence that mass media wielded at the time. At the same time, it is a recognition of the managed nature of that power by the established political power of the central government. Although in effect there's only one episode that describes this situation, the effect of the staged political life in Mexico reverberates throughout the novel and finds a multiplicity of platforms, among which the press is an exemplary one.

2.3 ARLT'S SPECTACULAR SOCIETY

> "The spectacle cannot be understood as a mere visual excess produced by mass-media technologies. It is a worldview that has actually been materialized, a view of a world that has become objective." Guy Debord

Los siete locos and *Los lanzallamas* are the two parts of a novelistic project by Roberto Arlt which narrates the misadventures of the protagonist Remo Erdosain. The first part, *Los siete locos*, was published in 1929 and it follows Erdosain as he moves around the city of Buenos Aires. Erdosain's eccentric personality and his desire to become an inventor allow him to become a prominent member of the Astrologer's secret society -a subversive group composed by a variety of misfits. Over the course of the novel, Erdosain develops an increasing delusional self-regard that is significantly tied to an abundance of references to mass media. As the character's inner psyche is laid bare through an omniscient indirect narrator, he alienates himself from all other characters and muses over the nature of human relationships, societal norms of conduct and discipline. Through his actions, we perceive an apparent disconnect between the character's inner sensibilities and his radically anti-social activities. However, what I'd like to emphasize here is the particular representation the novel provides for the protagonist's self-perception and the reflection on the dynamics of fame and infamy as associative influence networks of prestige.

Beatriz Sarlo and Carolina Miranda have emphasized the effects that cultural and technological development of Buenos Aires had on popular urban experience and what these changes meant on a symbolic level. Sarlo identifies the relationship between the demographic explosion of the city and the rise of populist and democratic cultural dynamics, particularly during the first half of the 20th century. For Sarlo, there's a dialectic relationship between

economic inclusion and cultural intervention of the popular strata, which is at the heart of emerging practices and commodities, such as the newspapers and magazines: "Una cultura que se democratiza desde el polo de la distribución y el consumo " (19). Similarly, Carolina Miranda highlights the influential effects of urban and technological development in the city of Buenos Aires:

> New technology and machinery transformed peoples' relation to their city in that they alter time and space creating futurist utopias about the speed of means of transport, illumination and the new, huge closed space as an alternative high street or market. . .The Argentina of the 1920s and 1930s was characterized by the rise of new readership; magazines, newspapers and serialized publications which catered to a lower and lower-middle readership a popular, socially, ideologically and politically stratified new readership. " (30-1).

Recently, critics have focused on the political discourse of the secret society, led by the Astrologer and supported by Erdosain, as a symbolic expression antagonistic to the Argentine status quo. Beatriz Pastor and Christina Civantos highlight the demagogic motifs in the discourse of the characters, as a way in which Arlt portrays the failure of anti-liberal movements, of the early 20th century in Argentina. According to Pastor, "La ruptura del orden establecido a través del acto simbólico liberador, de la entrada en el lumpen, o de la huida definitiva (la muerte) no conducen más que al aislamiento" (32). This reading in particular focuses on the moral wreckage of political enterprises and highlights the symbolism of the secret society as a form to criticize the failure of political anti-liberal associations in Argentina at the time. In addition, Civantos' approach is also concerned with identifying the novel within the polemics of social and revolutionary art, by including a form of linguistic resistance to the oligarchic claims to a moral-

aesthetic correspondence in literature (112). Following Civantos' reading, it's possible to affirm that by denying the identity of moral precepts and aesthetic proposals, Arlt's work offers a commentary that highlights the presentation of ideas in the political sphere, rather than the ideas themselves.

Other studies have looked at Arlt's journalistic writings as a way to elucidate the social aspects of the critique that his novels enact. Laura Juarez, Andrea Pagni, and Rita Gnutzmann's works point out to the need to understand these two aspects of Arlt's work, journalism and literary narrative, as complementary to each other. For Juarez, the link between these two models gives room to formal experimentation and signals a broadening, multimodal conception of artistic production in which Arlt was participating: "estos escritos podrían pensarse como un lugar de experimentación literaria donde Arlt ensaya, por una parte, los modos de su narración en los treinta. . .y también, como un espacio donde reaparece la mirada del dramaturgo y las inquietudes de la representación" (217). Sarlo's influential *Technical Imagination* presents a line of inquiry that combines Arlt's aesthetic expression and a conception of modernity that is unequivocally anchored on a renewed perception of public spaces: "In the urban environment, he discovered the beauty of what was public and the beauty of what was corrupt" (40). Accordingly, for Sarlo, one of the main topic in Arlt's novels is how technological and technical motifs and lexicon provide a platform through which society can be re-imagined:

> *Los siete locos*, and especially *Los lanzallamas*, are science fiction stories in which a society of the future is not so much portrayed as conjured. These two novels, instead of depicting and describing that society in the present, depict and describe its potential (52).

Years before he started to write *Los siete locos,* Roberto Arlt was a well-established journalist. In 1925, he joins Conrado Nalé Roxlo's emerging magazine Don Goyo, where Arlt ends up publishing 21 short stories (Borré 129). A few years later, in 1927, Arlt joined *Crítica*'s Friday crime section (139), where he gained access to criminal life in Buenos Aires. He later joined El Mundo, where his Aguafuertes porteñas began to appear on August 15th, 1928. The themes of these texts was, in principle Buenos Aires and its inhabitanats[13]. However, the nature of the content was as variable as their extension. Within the manifold of themes and topics, three stand out, as they expanded and contributed to the themes Arlt explored in his fictional writings: transgressive activities such as crime, murder and estafas; collective and individual marginality, alternative communities, alienated individuals, criminal organizations; and the various apparatuses of modern spectacle, the movies, theatre, press, novels and their effects on the public. Many of these columns were also embedded with a significant self-reflexive dimension, through which Arlt presented a particularly critical vision of the behaviors and social types of the Argentinean capital, as well as the role of writers. One such example is "El escritor como operario", part of a series of columns that appeared in 1930, with which he sought to respond to a reader's request to Arlt to publish a series of books that young people should read. In his answer, Arlt exposes the naivety of the reader and questions the utility of the literary practice. His language, as well as his ideas were clear and straight to the point:

> Si usted conociera los entretelones de la literatura, se daría cuenta de que el escritor es un señor que tiene el oficio de escribir, como otro de fabricar casas. Nada más. Lo que lo diferencia del fabricante de casas, es que los libros no son tan útiles como las casas, y después... después que el fabricante de casas no es tan

> vanidoso como el escritor. . .Todos nosotros, los que escribimos y firmamos, lo hacemos para ganarnos el puchero. Nada más. (Obra Completa 520)

Arlt's criticism is directed toward the literary endeavor, rather than to any one group or individual. The problem he points out is precisely the merchantilization for the work of the writer as an inevitable consequence of the development of the Argentinean culture industries, and the material progress that sustained it. Arlt recognized this flaw under moral terms which included his own work. He knew this was a necessary practice to survive as a writer. "La gente busca la verdad y nosotros les damos verdades equivocadas. . .Es doloroso confesarlo, pero así es" (520). He identifies himself, and the rest of the intellectual community as partaking in the communal self-deluding which made up the majority of the cultural market. This belligerent and pessimistic tone was another constant in Arlt's Aguafuertes.

My reading of the novel focuses on the individual experiences of the science enthusiast, Erdosain and his problematic relationship with fame and infamy. The protagonist's interest in studying and following people who became known for their violent deeds is highlighted by the novel's constant preoccupation with virulent, anti-liberal political rhetoric. The Astrologer is another main character in the novel who is also attracted by the radical actions of criminal and anti-liberal groups such as the Ku Klux Klan in the United States and the Bolshevik revolution in Russia. However, the narrator privileges Erdosain's personal struggle by focusing on the construction of the protagonist as an spectator of himself, and of his persona as a collection of appropriated experiences. These extreme experiences of isolation and radical social action intertwined is both a proof of Dostoievski's influence on Arlt's work and the particular inflection of modernity in Arlt's own writing project[12]. Like many other writers in Argentina who grew up

at the beginning of the 20th century, Arlt relied on poor, amateur translations from European works.

A second influence that has been noticed by the critics is Arlt's interest in the starting film culture in Buenos Aires[13] . Rose Corral's analysis explains the centrality of film in Arlt's most known novels, particularly in *Los siete locos* and *Los lanzallamas*:

> En la trama, por los efectos que produce el cine en algunos personajes. . .en sus ensoñaciones, fantasías o deseos de otra vida, menos estéril o vacía que la que viven. . .En otro nivel estaría la futura transformación de la novela que leemos en película, la que se dice filmará Barsut: se da una apropiación por los medios masivos, el cine y la prensa sensacionalista, de una historia que acabamos de leer. . .Otro nivel más de análisis lo constituye el programa revolucionario del astrólogo en el que destaca el cine como instrumento de manipulación ideológica. . .Por último estaría el plano de las imágenes, tanto en las percepciones de la ciudad. . .que se va conformando, en una suerte de enumeración caótica. . .así com en la espacialización y visualizacion de las emociones y afectos, trastocados por esta misma ciudad moderna. . .El cine expresionista alemán (con sus claroscuros), el cine soviético (en lo que se refiere sobre todo a movimiento de multitudes) son una fuente indudable del imaginario arltiano (101)

Arlt's novel presents Erdosain's experiences and egregious conduct in addition to a pronounced metafictional narrative to articulate a *spectacular* view of Argentinean society. The spectacle, following Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle*, should be understood as the complex addition of the development in the technologies of leisure and the effects of their exposure and assimilation by society. As it is the case with Debord's analysis, Arlt's aesthetic

exploration of this cultural phenomena offers a bleak image of urban modernity. This spectacular image of social relationships is what ultimately motivates the representation of Erdosain as a character who constantly imitates others to the extent of assimilating their lives, experiences, crimes, dreams and deaths. At the same time, the novel's narrative composition imitates and assimilates persuasive strategies from newspapers, film and political discourse, and in the process, it includes an associative framework that connects the language of the novel and the actions of its characters to publicly known transgressors, both individuals and associations. Ultimately, the addition of both the character and the novel's emphasis on these dynamics culminates in the portrayal of a consciously excessive retelling of the protagonist's death, which calls into question the particular value of the individuals' experiences and their perceived incompatibility with the changing structures of mass communication.

From the outset, the text presents the reader with an intense sense of dread (Carbone 26), that entwines both the expectation of calamity by the protagonist and the general presentation of the introductory event as a stage.

> Al abrir la Puerta de la gerencia, encristalada de vidrios japoneses, Erdosain quiso retroceder; comprendió que estaba perdido, pero ya era tarde.
>
> Lo esperaban el director, un hombre de baja estatura, morrudo, con cabeza de jabalí, pelo gris cortado a "lo Humberto I", y una mirada implacable filtrándose por sus pupilas grises como las de un pez: Glaudi, el contador, pequeño, flaco, meloso, de ojos escrutadores, y el subgerente, hijo del hombre de cabeza de jabalí, un guapo mozo de treinta años, con el cabello totalmente blanco, cínico en su aspecto, las voz áspera y mirada dura como la de su progenitor. Estos tres personajes. . .no respondieron al saludo de Erdosain (Arlt 21)

Here, the narrator takes the perspective of the main character to introduce a scene that can be readily associated with that of a grotesque trial. The disproportionate power relationship that the scene introduces makes the reader aware of Erdosain's powerlessness and lack of influence within the narrated world. At the same time, the cartoonish descriptions of his superiors - particularly that of the director- exacerbate the irrational sense of helplessness that will invade Erdosain throughout the books. He is placed at the center of an apparently absurd trial that promises to end with his obliteration. However, the novel appears to move away from this premise as the situation that initially got him under the scrutiny of his employers is easily solved in the next few chapters. However, this first scene clearly shows the general situation of helplessness that burdens Erdosain until the final pages of *Los lanzallamas*, while also displaying a complex self-awareness that affects his characterization and the novel as a whole.

Moreover, this form of representing Erodsain's interior life oftentimes reminds the reader that Erdosain's most important role is that of the consumer or spectator of himself. This is precisely what is noted at the end of his day-dreaming sequence, as he comes in the Astrologer's house for the first time in *Los siete locos*:

> Erdosain, gozoso en el ensueño, en parte hecho plástico, por los espacios de tiempo e imágenes reconstruidas a expensas del gran señor invisible, no quería detenerse ya en su entrevista con el millonario melancólico y taciturno que le ofrecía dinero para hacer prácticos sus inventos, sino que semejante a esos lectores de folletines policiales que apresurados para llegar al desenlace de la intriga saltean los puntos muertos de la novela, Erdosain soslayaba determinadas construcciones ininteresantes de su imaginación (50).

This idea is constantly rehearsed throughout the two novels and steadily intensifies as the narration progresses. As he walks with La bizca in *Los lanzallamas*, the narrator states: "Tiene la sensación de que "hay algo en él" que se aproxima insensiblemente al drama final. Erdosain sabe que contiene la necesidad del drama. Un drama definido terco, preciso, material. Sabe que aflojando su fuerza de voluntad en una mínima cantidad. . .toda su vida se volcaría en el drama" (265)

Such an intense repetition is difficult to oversee and points not only to the character's conception of his own life, but also to the novel's construction of the plot. The state is no longer only a metaphor to highlight the character's powerlessness but rather a dynamic model that shapes and supports the relationships between characters.

Soon after the first scene we begin to find out about Erdosain's twisted inner world, as he remembers a series of crimes and offenses that he has committed throughout the years, without any apparent reason. We see how Erdosain's wife leaves him after a melodramatic encounter with an officer who decided to rescue her from Erdosain's psychological abuses. And later on, the protagonist remembers his flirtatious encounters with a couple of girls, as he remembers them and re-tells them to Elsa and -in *Los lanzallamas,* to Hipólita.

Early in the novel, the embezzlement charge hanging over Erdosain is lifted thanks to a loan made by the Rufián Melancólico, a rich pimp and member of the Astrologer's secret society. "Erdosain recogió el cheque, y sin leerlo lo dobló en cuatro pliegos, guardándolo en su bolsillo. Todo había ocurrido en un minuto. El suceso era más absurdo que una novela" (62). The hasty solution of the initial conflict is significant because it reduces the relevance of the financial issue to a mere anecdote, and highlights the absurd nature of the workplace dynamic it introduces. Furthermore, the novel also presents the development of Erdosain's misfortunes as a

visual spectacle that is sometimes referred to as a play, comedy or a movie. Just as Erdosain leaves the office, he begins to wonder about the meaning of his life in the following terms:

> ¿Qué es lo que hago con mi vida?- decíase entonces, queriendo quizás aclarar con esta pregunta los orígenes de la ansiedad que le hacía apetecer una existencia en la cual el mañana no fuera la continuación del hoy con su medida de tiempo, sino algo distinto y siempre inesperado como en los desenvolvimientos de las películas norteamericanas, donde el pordiosero de ayer es el jefe de una sociedad secreta de hoy, y la dactilógrafa aventurara una multimillonaria de incógnito (25)

The origin of this self-questioning may have initiated because of a work-related situation -the embezzlement of 600 pesos- but it is because of the expectations and the language provided by the film industry that Erdosain is able to address his own situation. The configuration of Erdosain's psyche is based on a narrative strategy that displaces the value of work and its material repercussions -such as pay, firing, and social mobility- and introduces an economy of emotions and affects that begins to explain the abundance of dreams and memories in the novel.

Money, however, remains a constant motif throughout the novel. It appears repeatedly and its illicit appropriation is the motif that sets in motion the entire plot of the novel. However, money's only purpose in *Los siete locos* and *Los lanzallamas* is to be appropriated, multiplied and replicated. It is meaningful precisely because of its antagonistic relationship with the experience of happiness, which cannot be attained by Erdosain in any way. Money, as we see in the novel, can be borrowed, stolen, counterfeited and is also attainable through extortion and deceit. On the other hand, the protagonist goes a long way to appropriate what he sees as other people's sense of happiness -their possessions, dreams and even crimes. This is precisely what he does with Barsut's apartment, when he moves into the same pension after his kidnapping; he also

takes in *El mudo*'s dreams of moving to a cabin in the mountains and working in a mill; and it is also what he does when he replicates the murder of a young girl which he commits in the last chapters of *Los lanzallamas*. Regardless of how unsuccessful these instances seem to be, they are significant because they are portrayed as the protagonist's intention to reproduce them, following the same logic as one would follow to reproduce or duplicate money. At the same time, the perceived failure to faithfully replicate the events and experiences themselves introduce the questioning of both the value systems we use to validate experiences and their forced subjection to the logic of mechanical reproduction. Each of these episodes offers distinct evidence of this dialectic of originality and reproduction that supports the general questioning of the novel about the spectacularization of society. Together, they provide a narrative framework that explores the perceived incompatibility or resistance posed by the immaterial nature of lived experiences, emotions, dreams and hallucinations and their reproduction.

Soon after the kidnapping of Barsut by the Astrologer's group, Erdosain moves into what had been Barsut's apartment, apparently without realizing he'd start living there

> Erdosain se detuvo asombrado frente al nuevo edificio en el que se encontraba el departamento al que se había mudado. . .¿En qué circunstancias dejó su casa por la pensión en la cual hasta hacía algunos días vivía Barsut?. . .¡Hasta había alquilado el mismo cuarto que ocupaba Barsut! (*Los lanzallamas* 36-7).

The relevance of this action is emphasized by the commentator's note in the footnote of the same page: "Erdosain se mudó a la pensión en la cual vivía Barsut más o menos dos días después del secuestro de Éste. . .ni por un momento se cuidó de ocultar su dirección" (37). Erdosain's decision to move into Barsuit's old apartment is not a small detail in this novel. It is because he moves to this new address that he meets La Bizca; this place is also the space he inhabits during

the practically all of *Los lanzallamas*. Precisely because Erdosain has a complicated relationship with Barsut, his decision carries more a particular weight. This event inaugurates a complex network of associations between the protagonist and other characters in the novel, particularly in the way Erdosain reconfigures or refashions his self-image using other character's experiences as points of references and vehicles to explore and represent his own emotions.

In a novel that emphasizes a variety of techniques and technologies of material reproduction as much as it highlights the importance of dreams and delusions, it is necessary to take note of the effects that the appropriation, and repetition of certain experiences produce on the protagonist. This further highlights the equivocal parallel in how money and experiences circulate through the novels. It is important to note that although the same experiences are recreated by different characters, these reiterations are always different from each other. Unlike money, whose production and accumulation follows a linear logic and whose value is guaranteed by its institutional relationship to the State, experiences have a decidedly different dynamic in these novels. The differences between these repetitions are insistently presented as such. In *Los lanzallamas*, for instance, there is a recurrent dream of settling down with a woman in a mill by an unnamed riverbank. This apparently naive, bucolic expectation of the future is shared by Remo Erdosain and Emilio Espilia. The novel highlights this issue through a footnote:

> El comentador de esta historia le llamó la atención a Erdosain sobre la analogía que tenía su sueño de vivir en un aserradero a la orilla del agua, con el deseo de Emilio Espilia, que también deseaba encontrarse en esa situación; y entonces Erdosain le contestó que era muy posible que en alguna circunstancia Emilio le hubiera narrado ese sueño, que él, involuntariamente, asimiló (*Los lanzallamas* 248).

The use of the footnote is particularly interesting because it highlights both the repetition and unintended assimilation of the scene at the same time that it presents the appropriation as something that Erdosain does not notice but willingly confesses to a third party, in this case, the commentator. Its appropriation by Erdosain is not showcased as an illicit transgression, because it is removed from the legal framework and the market dynamics which are decidedly concerned with rules and, more importantly, with the concept of ownership and originality. It is also particularly telling that it is Remo, not Emilio, who repeatedly imagines himself in that situation, first with Luciana Espilia and later on with La Bizca. Erdosain not only appropriates this dream but also modifies it accordingly as he continues his affective exploration with different female characters in the novel.

At the same time, it is undeniable that *Los siete locos* and even more so *Los lanzallamas* bring into play the effects of technical reproduction of such experiences as a way to complicate this apparent difference between the reproduction of experiences and objects. The pursuit and denial of originality and the reflection on the concept of property lies at the heart of this endeavor. Erdosain's accumulation of experiences again brings about a parallel with the accumulation of capital enacted by other characters of the novel. The parallel, however is further complicated by the influence of the media as we see in the final episodes of *Los lanzallamas*, when we learn about Erdosain's suicide.

Fame, or the quality of being known and recognized publicly, destabilizes this seemingly fitting parallel precisely because, in the novel, it is presented as both the result of appropriated experiences and a means to the accumulation of wealth. At the same time, fame is presented as the opposite or at least, incompatible with self-recognition. This is particularly clear in Erdosain's reaction after he killed "La bizca" and his transformation at the end of the novel.

After murdering La Bizca in his room, Erdosain goes into the bathroom and looks into the mirror: "Entra al cuarto de baño y enciende la luz. Frente al lavatorio hay un espejo. El asesino, cerrando los ojos, lo descuelga del clavo. No quiere verse en ningún espejo. Tiene horror de sí mismo" (365). Once he finally kills the girl, Erdosain has in fact forcefully and decidedly confirmed his imagined association with criminal characters and killers. One in particular, the Talcahuano Murderer, who had become known around the end of *Los siete locos*, after he committed suicide as he ran from the police after killing a girl. Erdosain's association operates within a self-contained network of criminal references which radically alters his own perception and the novel makes this clear by changing the narrative perspective. The narrator loses access to Erdosain's inner thoughts and shifts to an external focalization that focuses on the description of his actions. This is also when the narrator becomes an active participant in the story and, not incidentally, it coincides with Erdosain looking at himself in the mirror for the first and only time in the novel. This rejection of his self-image continues and intensifies in the following pages to include representations of himself, such as the newspapers:

> Detalle extraño en esa última etapa de su vida: Erdosain se negó rotundamente a leer los sensacionales titulares y noticias que profusamente ilustradas ocupaban las páginas segunda y tercera de casi todos los diarios de la mañana y de la tarde. . . . La fotografía de Erdosain campeaba en todas las páginas con las leyendas más retumbantes que pudiera inventar la imaginación humana. . .Erdosain se negaba rotundamente, no sólo a leer, sino a mirar esas hojas de escándalo (366-7).

Arlt's style provides a highly visual representation of the characters' inner experiences. As José Amícola, Carbone and others have pointed out, Arlt's treatment of feelings and emotions render a highly visual composition that seems influenced by expressionist art and

film (Carbone 150, Amícola 163). Furthermore, the language used in the novel descriptions combines eccentric and grotesque characterizations embedded with a passing reference to contemporary and newsworthy acts of violence.

It is also possible to affirm that the novel presents a melodramatic plot, where the main conflict sets forth a multimodal reflection on the changing dynamics of persuasion. Namely, it provides a reiterative set of situations where the protagonist deals with the difficulty of identifying what moves him to imagine denigrating scenarios or attracts him to the most abject situations. On the other hand, the novels emphasize the problematic value of experience, where replication doesn't follow the precept of fidelity and where the acts and dreams become meaningful not because of their originality, but precisely when they're incorporated into a network of references and are subject to successive repetitions. However, the meaning of these replicated events is always problematic and uncertain.

Arlt's novel is a radical exploration of the ways in which modern society resists and incorporates the influences of mass media in general and mass journalism in particular. As such, it presents a third value system that does not conform to the norms previously laid out: the social value of fame and infamy. Fame can be attained by a variety of means, according to the novel. Fame is at the same time desirable and undesirable, beneficial and prejudicial to a number of characters in the novel. Erdosain's death is the clearest example of this. Before he commits suicide, Erdosain reflects on the issue by retelling the conditions under which criminals and war scientists came to be known publicly for their contributions to the history of annihilation and violence.

The problematic value of fame and infamy are also present in Erdosain's particular interest in science. Whereas it may seem incompatible at first, his two main scientific obsessions,

the copper rose and lethal gases, are deeply connected by the scientific and creative questioning of beauty and its appeal to the protagonist. This may be evident in the case of the rose, as it re-articulates the romantic motif of the blue rose, as a symbol of unique beauty and challenges it by a mechanical concept of mass producible, industrial beauty. However, Erdosain's fascination with deadly gases stems from a similar preoccupation, the idea that beauty may not only be mass produced, but that this form of reproduction sets up an inescapable game of appearances with deadly consequences. This is how he articulates the deadly beauty of phosgene in *Los lanzallamas*: "Son terribles. Parece que los hubiera inventado el diablo. . .hay gases lacrimógenos que corroen la conjuntiva, queman la pupila, horadan la córnea, provocando úlceras incurables. Y sin embargo, tienen la preciosa fragancia del geranio" (262).

A focused reading of these two novelistic projects shows a clear and consistent interest by Martin Luis Guzman and Roberto Arlt in the narrative use of the stage as a metaphor for orchestrated aspects of the social and private life at the end of the 1920s in Latin America. Although the authors wrote under very different social and political conditions, their novels highlight the relevance that both authors assigned to their own growing cultural markets, and the fact that both authors were particularly interested in reviewing or at least problematizing the various effects that social exposure to new media technologies had on people.

Furthermore, it is clear that both authors were at least concerned with the cultural changes that made it difficult to incorporate simulation as a principle of socio-political consequences. In Arlt's exploration of the relationship between beauty and dread it is possible to identify the singularization of a potent crisis for appearance and persuasion, whereas for Guzman, the co-optation of the media apparatuses by the growing Mexican state takes the center stage.

Additionally, both authors offer complementary explorations of the contemporary notion of fame and infamy. Namely, their stories highlight the problematic and deadly consequences that come with "being known". Social recognition, in these two novels is hardly identified as a positive notion, and yet, it is the main preoccupation for the protagonists of the novels. The emphasis on the mechanisms through which individuals become socially recognized or recognizable serves as the basis for their decidedly metafictional inquiry into what the role of the cultural producers, authors and writers play in the development and perpetuation of the rising society of the spectacle. The fact that both novels emphasize the role that the print press played during this historical period is both a consequence of the technological development of Latin America, and a critical response to the effects of the media's growing influence. Arlt and Guzman pose a narrative, artistic questioning about the cultural value of the press that will persist and develop throughout the 20th century.

In Guzman's case, it is possible to identify the political influence, coercion and repression at the end of the revolutionary cycles in Mexico. The degree to which this complex scenario affected Guzman's work cannot be overstated. Guzman's novel presents a set of political forces that exist and operate in opposition to each other. However, the configuration of power dynamics presented by the novel is hardly balanced. Instead, it presents the reader with the crushing defeat of an emerging political group of young individuals and the resulting victory of the anonymous but all-powerful shadow of el Caudillo. It is particularly notable that Guzman's characters also display a gendered social dynamic that determines their political roles as active or passive participants. This dynamic becomes incorporated into the characters composition to account for the dual protagonists' complementary roles as actors and observers in the political stages.

Guzman's exploration of the changing cultural dynamics that accompanied the development of the media industry also showcase the difficulty to grasp the changes in the techniques of public address used by political figures. The political content of these political discourses is always blurry or plainly absent. At the end of the novel, we do not know what the political platform of El Caudillo or Aguirre's group is. The reason for this lack of clarity or excess of ambiguity in their message is understandable as part of the novel's emphasis on political and power dynamics rather than on the ideological denotations of the represented political figures. This discursive void is filled by the symbolism created in the opposition of Aguirre and Axkaná and El caudillo and his candidate, Hilario Jimenez. The death and exile of Aguirre and Axkaná at the end of the novel, as well as their political ambiguity and ideological emptiness is a stark representation of socio-political life and the dynamics of political recognition in post-revolutionary Mexico, where personality cult and charismatic leadership, along with personal wealth are signaled as necessary traits to become a successful politician.

On the other hand, Arlt's notable preoccupation with the technical appropriation and reproduction of lived experiences offers a deep reflection on the interpersonal implications of the spectacularization of social life. Arlt's critical take on the media's radical integration with social interaction is further emphasized by the problematic recognition of its impact on the individuals' perception of themselves and their own desires. This emphasis is signaled by an alienating effect that permeates the entirety of the novel. *Los siete locos/Los lanzallamas* portrays a troubled individual whose own sense of self is in crisis. Erdosain's errancy and seemingly erratic behavior are the logical consequences of the Argentinean society's fascination with technological progress. What the novel ultimately presents is Erdosain's struggle to incorporate the media's influence and still retain a sense of individual identity.

The novel's particular exploration of the potential of experiences as an alternative value system, beyond the laws of the market and urbanity is also a problematic statement about the dynamics of social affiliation and interaction. Erdosain's constant and willing association with socially and morally reprehensible characters is a response to his perceived impossibility to exist under the current social molds and structures. The novel is not so much an apology of crime and antisocial behavior as it is a radical questioning of the morality of established social structures of work, kinship and fame. By introducing this parallel, the novel highlights alternative means of prestige building that incorporate certain techniques used by the mass media, but whose values run counter to the established norms of conduct and really question the full consequences of the public's continuous exposure to violence and crime narratives by the media, as well as the general notion of social decorum.

Although the development of the cultural market continued to grow in scope and complexity as the 20th century progressed, it is clear that it's emerging condition in the 1920s had a decisive impact in the way these two Latin American writers perceived the social and political dynamics, problems and possibilities that these changes would bring about in the coming years.

2.4 NOTES

1. An intermedial perspective requires us to recognize the meaningful particularities of the different media that interact and compete for the attention of the public. As Lars Ellerström states:

> If all media were fundamentally different, it would be hard to find any interrelations at all; if they were fundamentally similar, it would be hard to find something that is not already interrelated. Media, however, are both different and similar, and intermediality must be understood as a bridge between medial differences that is founded on medial similarities. (12)

Therefore, an intermedial approach calls for the recognition of the particularities of each semiological system, while assigning conceptual and historical value to their exchanges and interactions.

2. For the founders of the Frankfurt School, this totalitarian mode of cultural production was the result of a discursive transposition of the alienating logic of capitalist exploitation into the cultural spheres of society and leisure. Within this all-encompassing system, art still conformed a destabilizing cultural phenomenon that resisted total homogenization and opposed directly to other industrialized forms of culture. Following the most current discussions around the use of the term "Culture industry", it is important to recognize that the term continues to be valuable because it allows us to think of culture industries as : "places of condensation or interaction of multiple cultural webs, as crossroads of different areas of social production, made up of complex devices that weigh less than alliances, heavy machines of fabrication less than sinuous trajectories of circulation, and both appropriation stratagems and the logic of property" (Martín-

Barbero 28). For a wider review of the concept of culture industry today, see "Transformations in the Map. Identities and Culture Industries" by Jesús Martín-Barbero.

3. See De la Vega, Alfaro and Pastor, Beatriz comments on Arlt's work and Joel B. Pouwels, Horacio Legrás and Adela Pineda readings of *La sombra del caudillo*.

4. El estudio de las versiones periodísticas de La sombra del Caudillo, Bruce-Novoa señala que hubo por lo menos dos versiones periodísticas diferentes que aparecieron en *La Prensa* de San Antonio, Texas, y *La Opinión* de Los Ángeles, California (XLIII).

5. According to Pablo Piccato: "The nota roja was the journalistic genre with most readers in the country. . .Headlines used wordplay, conveyed moral outrage, and synthesized crimes in brutally direct terms, characterizing victims and criminals in sardonic and memorable ways" (A history of Infamy 63).

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7. See the works of Beatriz Sarlo, Anibal Gonzalez, Fernanda Melchor, Silvia Saitta among others.

8. Following Michel Foucault and Hayden White, Gonzalez's idea of discourse may be summarized as "the ways in which human language organizes knowledge" (7).

9. See Eduardo de la Vega, Salvador Albiñana and Horacio Fernandez for examples of Mexico's government sponsored cultural trends.

10. Aside from the market competition, Mexico and Argentina were subject to the eroticizing gaze of western producers in Europe and North America, which inevitably brought about outrageous stereotypes "Rudolph Valentino's famous tango performance in the 1921 film *The*

Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, the first of many Hollywood tangos, featured Valentino in a strange gaucho costume that included an Andalusian hat and a Mexican poncho". (Karush 54)

11. According to Joel B. Pouwels, "La sombra del caudillo was based largely on Guzman's experiences with the National Progressive Party immediately prior to his exile from Mexico in 1925" (220). As a consequence, both his experience in the country and his reflexive attitude towards the Mexican revolution were filtered through his distanced exile experience.

12. Rocco Carbone identifies Dostoievki's influence in Arlt within the framework of a broader aesthetic and ideological dispute between the groups of Boedo and Florida. This historical differentiation has been discussed by critics as an identity mark for Arlt's left leaning politics. "cabe añadir que ellos, a diferencia de sus compañeros 'estetizantes', miraban hacia la Rusia posrevolucionaria en tanto modelo de evolución social. . . reconocían sus paradigmas literarios en Tolstoi, Gorki, Andreiev, Dostoievski, Zola, Barbusse, Rolland. Para llevar a cabo las denuncias sociales que se proponían, adoptaron. . .los moldes del realismo decimonónico y del naturalismo zoliano. . .Consideraban la literatura como un instrumento de combate, por medio de ella pretendían agitar las conciencias del pueblo y promover la posibilidad de un mundo diferente. Por estas razones, centraron su interés en la ideología y se expresaron. . . a través de la narrativa. En definitiva, los boedistas respondían a una 'tradición cultural' que es posible calificar de internacionalista. . .los de Boedo dirigieron su atención preferentemente hacia los 'humildes' y las 'víctimas sociales', es decir, hacia los conflictos sociales de matriz urbana provocados por el aluvión inmigratorio." (El imperio de las obsesiones 28-29). For a focused study on Arlt's literary influences see James J. Troiano's "Literary Traditions in El fabricante de fantasmas by Roberto Arlt".

13. According to Ulises Petit de Murat, Arlt's personal acquaintance, in 1977 there was an episode where Arlt goes ahead and prepares a script for what he considers to be an experimental film, impossible to present at the time it was written: "En los primeros tres minutos del argumento, mi convicción de que no sería aceptada por ningún productor nacional y que no pasaría la más liberal de las censuras, tomó el carácter de convicción irreductible. . .El complejo análisis de un caso de incesto, las acechanzas de una criatura deforme, oscuros instantes de violencia física y mental. . .No era un film para esos tiempos de novelitas rosa, de muchachas debidamente pasteurizadas, de incidencias y galanes sometidos a una especie de constante neutralización" (Petit de Murat quoted in Corral 94).

3. DOCUMENTING THE TRUTH: THE CHALLENGES OF DOCUMENTARY WRITING IN ELENA PONIATOWSKA'S LA NOCHE DE TLATELOLCO

The morning of October 2nd, 2016, Mexican newspaper *Milenio* published an article by Luis González de Alba, former leader of the 1968 Student Movement, condemning the lack of historical awareness by contemporary participants of demonstrators in memory of the Tlatelolco Massacre. The article quickly turns into a more personal condemnation of Elena Poniatowska's role in the remembrance process of the event, complaining not only about her ability to truthfully represent the events of that day, but also denouncing what he considers to be Poniatowska's appropriation of the infamous date. Gonzalez de Alba unequivocally denounced Poniatowska's status as an unworthy expert on the topic of the Tlatelolco Massacre, and he insisted that Poniatowska's dedication of the book to his brother Jan Poniatowski is misleading, because it associates his death with the massacre, although Poniatowski's death was actually the product of a car accident. González de Alba's diatribe is both energetic and puzzling, not only because of the nature of the arguments against Poniatowska's credibility, but perhaps even more so because he chose this message to be his last words to the national public. Earlier, that same day, Gonzalez de Alba had shot himself in the chest, 48 years after the events that marked much of his personal and professional life.

Elena Poniatowska's *La noche de Tlatelolco* is perhaps the best-known representation of the 1968 student protest that ended in the Mexican military intervention at the Tlatelolco Plaza. Although Poniatowska's version remains a powerful rendering of those events, it has also been the subject of continuous and growing criticism by some of the participants who willingly supplied their own stories to the author of the iconic book (Gardner 497). Luis González de Alba was one of the most visible leaders of the movement, and undoubtedly, the most vocal critic of

Poniatowska's *La noche de Tlatelolco*. It has been widely reported that in 1997 González de Alba filed a lawsuit, demanding a revision of the book[1]. *La noche de Tlatelolco* was then corrected in 1998 by the publisher, Editorial Era. However, this did not end the former student leader's criticism of Poniatowska's book. In 2016, Gonzalez de Alba published *Tlatelolco aquella tarde* in direct response to Poniatowska's version of the events, where he noticeably states that Elena Poniatowska "miente con la verdad", alluding to the alleged manipulation of information, sources and process of narrative montage of certain events surrounding the massacre for aesthetic purposes. The book contains a collection of previously published articles and chronicles authored by Gonzalez de Alba. All of them revisit the events of the student movement and most of them address some aspect of Poniatowska's alleged inaccuracies related to the events.

However shocking or sensational this turn of events may appear, it is a significant example of the degree to which Poniatowska's book and its reception by the public has had a radical influence on people's lives, particularly on the lives of those directly involved with the student movement[2]. Although Luis Gonzalez de Alba's personal history went far beyond his relationship with Poniatowska, *La noche de Tlatelolco*, or even the Mexican Student Movement of 1968, toward the end of his life, he felt the need to go back to those events in order to refute not only the version that had been published, but also to dispute Elena Poniatowska's ability to speak on their behalf. What was at stake for Gonzalez de Alba went beyond the accuracy of Poniatowska's description of the events and focused on the controversial issue of the historical consequences of Poniatowska's decision to write *La noche de Tlatelolco* in the way she did. A major point of contention here is the formal dismantling of individual authorship, which is

perhaps the key argument for Gonzalez de Alba's statement, and the radical questioning of the authenticity of Poniatowska's reconstruction of the events.

The present chapter approaches Poniatowska's rendering of this event as a significant but highly polemical milestone in the cultural production of documentary literature in Mexico. In order to do so, I first examine the coverage of the student movement in the print press, following the editorials and opinion pieces of Mexico City's newspapers including *Excélsior*, *El Heraldo*, *El Universal* and *El Día*. In my revision of these dailies, I discuss some of the rhetorical devices used by the print press to represent the student movement. Most notably, I address the emergence of an idealized notion of studenthood and youth under the term "el verdadero estudiante". I discuss the implications of this particular trope and its relationship to the nationalistic ethos and rhetoric that permeated the Mexican press.

In the second part of the chapter, I explore *La noche de Tlatelolco's* construction as a document that registers the affective dynamics of the movement. I explore the contentious relationship it establishes with the prevalent representations of the students in the press. I posit that Poniatowska's book establishes an authoritative narrative based on individual experiences of belonging, solidarity and grief to challenge a priori definitions of political involvement in the narratives around the student movement. This process will highlight not only the formulation of facts or organization of sources, but rather how the book introduces its own interpretative framework around the roles, values and uses of documentary narratives, particularly in regards to the effects this approach has on the voices of the participants, including the author's own, as well as the reconceptualization of the books own subject of representation. The quest to find out what happened in Tlatelolco and what exactly was the Student Movement guides the anecdotes

contained in the book at the same time it serves as a formal challenge that Poniatowska sets herself to solve.

The history of the reception of the book and the public challenges that Luis Gonzalez de Alba made to Poniatowska's version of the Tlatelolco massacre serve as the incentive to revisit a book that has been key in the history of Latin American non-fiction. It also allows me to explore the book as a particular example of the challenges and effects of documentary writing. The historical challenge of *La noche de Tlatelolco's* assertions by Luis Gonzalez de Alba[3] go beyond the particular questioning of her accounts of the summer and early fall of 1968. The fact that *La noche de Tlatelolco* was edited and modified after his complaints presents a particular challenge to documentary literature, one that brings back previous intellectual discussions about the roles and ethical imperatives around documentary and testimonial writings (Beverly 11; Yúdice 16). This underlying discussion will help us understand how truth claims in non-fiction affect the extraliterary social terrains and what it means that well known literary works may be subject to change by legal means.

My intention here is not to discredit Poniatowska's work nor is it to challenge the historical and cultural relevance that the book has in Mexican literary history. My purpose is to bring attention to the limits and possibilities of documentary writing and the material, social and legal challenges it endures in order to present the author's own renderings of complex and controversial truths. Furthermore, while I do take Gonzalez de Alba's complaints as a starting point for this particular inquiry, I also approach his statements critically. However, the fact that his original critique continues to reverberate in the minds of some intellectuals and journalists today should invite further efforts to understand it and its lasting influence over a portion of the public opinion in Mexico.

Elena Poniatowska's *La noche de Tlatelolco* follows the author's journalistic effort to render the process that led to the Tlatelolco massacre under an alternative approach to that set up by the print press and in doing so, it sets up an alternative authoritative discourse that relies on the affective involvement of tits interviewees and other participants of the movement, and it ultimately incorporates and expands the notion of documentary practices. She does so by combining visual and oral representations of the events, in the form of photographs and oral testimonies, and by organizing them in a way that highlights the value of firsthand experience of the contributors themselves. By establishing a narrative framework that explores alternative formulas to the construction of textual authority, *La noche de Tlatelolco* produces an innovative platform that brings about new formal and ethical challenges. At the same time, it presents an alternative and transformative way to represent the wide range of participants involved in the Student Movement of 1968, in direct controversy with the tropes that dominated the print press at the time.

One way to understand how *La noche de Tlatelolco's* construction achieves this is through Nicholas Mirzoeff's concepts of *visuality* and *countervisuality* as constitutive cultural processes whose dialectical relationship render social power dynamics perceptible. "Despite its name, this process is not composed simply of visual perception in the physical sense but is formed by a set of relations combining information, imagination, and insight into a rendition of physical and psychic space (476)". Mirzoeff's explanation of these dynamics entails a cultural and aesthetic processing of the disproportionate power relationships that exist between the authority institutions, and the subjects governed by these institutions, people without evident access to any meaningful source of political power. In this sense, visuality refers to the

perceptible narratives that exist around social or political events and their relationship to supporting power structures or institutions.

In Poniatowska's own rendition of the massacre of Tlatelolco, countervisuality is expressed through a variety of narrative techniques and multimedial resources that acknowledge and build upon previous accounts of the massacre and offers a *counternarrative*. As others have pointed out before, "The student movement focused not on the antithesis of bourgeois and proletarians, exploiters and exploited, but on the opposition of power and powerlessness, authority and freedom" (Hodges and Gandy quoted on Harris 111). Elena Poniatowska's process to render this phenomenon perceptible, is what justifies this particular approach. In other words, Poniatowska's countervisual presentation should not only be identified with the argument of the book, or the historical event that motivates it, but rather as the material assembly of sources and their thoughtful arrangement that allow this alternative narrative of Tlatelolco to be articulated and validated under the cultural and political context where it originated. The inclusion of photographs, testimonies and other materials as a form of evidence in *La noche de Tlatelolco* draws from an installed tradition of graphic and written forms of representation in the reportage of both crimes and political events that ran parallel throughout the 20th century in Mexico.

It can also be affirmed that *La noche de Tlatelolco* advances an intricate questioning of sources of legitimacy and authenticity of documentary practices and, in doing so, it presents a precedent to critical discussions around these issues brought about by the critical theoretical apparatus surrounding testimonio. For Elzbieta Sklodowska, "lo que emparenta a Poniatowska con los discursos testimoniales es su aspiración a contrarrestar en testimonios desconocidos, asordinados o excluidos, la versión oficial de lo ocurrido. Pero -al contrario del testimonio etnográfico- aquí la conciencia subalterna no está privilegiada *per se* como fuente de verdad

única" (156). In Poniatowska's case, this official account of the events comes from the representation of the movement by national newspapers that followed the directives of the centralized government and President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz. Therein lies Poniatowska's urgency to face the critical problem of documentation and the documentary construction of *La noche de Tlatelolco* as a formal exploration that encompasses the entire book, one that exists in direct contention with the hegemonic representation under the direction of the Mexican government and supported by the national press.

The relationship of Latin American novelistic tradition and its various documentary forms is grounded on the mechanisms of power, and their written expressions and the formal emulation that literature, particularly novels, incorporated since the earlier days of the continent's literary history. Relevant discussions about these relationships have often been discussed as intertextual relationships between written works of literature and other written sources, such as legalistic files. From Roberto Gonzalez Echeverria's *Myth and Archive* perspective, there has been a growing tendency to incorporate non-literary forms of writing into the study of cultural circuits of influence and their relationship to power:

> Al no tener forma propia, la novela generalmente asume la de un documento dado, al que se le ha otorgado la capacidad vehicular de la verdad -es decir, el poder- en momentos determinados de la historia (32)

Although the generic classification of Poniatowska's book has been subject to much debate, it is clear that its relationship to truth and particularly its capacity to become a vehicle to counter institutionalized accounts of the massacre has rarely been contested.

> Las narrativas que solemos llamar novelas demuestran que la capacidad para dotar al texto con el poder necesario para transmitir la verdad están fuera del

> texto, son agentes exógenos que conceden autoridad a ciertos tipos de documentos, reflejando de esa manera la estructura de poder del periodo (32)

In this regard, it is essential to note that Poniatowska's rendition of the events surrounding the massacre of Tlatelolco pushes this reflection on the power structures of authority and their supporting narratives to the forefront of her project. Critics emphasis on the difficulty to determine Poniatowska's generic denomination (Chichilla 37; Unnold 26) may very well stem from this fact. Namely, that in *La noche de Tlatelolco* the pursuit of the students for a political platform coincides with the pursuit of the author for a befitting narrative platform.

3.1 THE MEXICAN STATE AND THE STATE OF THE MEDIA

Many critics have pointed out how *La noche de Tlatelolco* must be understood as a response to official discourses of the Mexican State and the print press (Chinchilla). This particular invitation stems from the book itself, as it strategically presents the print press effectively operating as a state apparatus, an industry that advances and develops the state driven political agenda above all else. In order to gain a better understanding of this relationship, it is necessary to at least look back into the beginning of the liberal turn of Mexican economic policy, at the beginning of Miguel Aleman's government and the successive construction of the Mexican Miracle[5] as part of the national myth of growth and progress. As Jaime M. Pensado shows, the economic miracle and the emergence of a corporatist and authoritarian state are difficult to divorce from one another (49). They are structural changes that produced the eclosion of social unrest and the emergence of movements that opposed the unjust and uneven development of the country.

In regard to the historical and cultural background of the late 1960s, it is important to note the complex relationship between the press and the Mexican State, as it continued to develop, following the *Cardenista* period. The expanding Mexican state's influence in cultural life was a necessary step in the newly formed PRI's (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) formula to produce a national culture, which involved the creation of institutional sources of national identity, as well as the sponsorship of media communications through paid advertisements, and the strengthening of existing links with the journalistic community: "During the presidency of Miguel Aleman and Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, the relationship between the press and the state was almost idyllic. The mana of pesos destined to periodicals flowed through strange sewers and circled the pyramid of directors, columnists, reporters, and assimilated intellectuals" (Illustrated Magazines 157). However, as the government's interventions on civil society were becoming more aggressive and apparent, the general public and intellectuals in particular were starting to feel a growing sense of disappointment alongside a growing perception of the government's inability to deliver on its own promises of the post-revolutionary regimes. At this point, notable intellectual recognition was often accompanied by a government-sponsored position, which further established the artists and intellectuals' social status. For journalists, however, this relationship with the state was more often a corporate, pre-established, relationship than an individual one, where agreements between the government and news outlets were arranged from the highest levels of the corporate ladder.

Benjamin T. Smith argues that most censorship in Mexico City was self-produced by editors and writers willing to conform to unspoken rules for what was publishable, where: "filtering out or framing of stories according to dominant convictions or discourses-was a commonplace" (44). Furthermore, these forms of structural censorship remained valid

throughout the 1940s and well into the 1970s, although more overt forms of government intervention diminished:

> certain assumptions about national progress, anticommunism, and journalistic practice remained fairly constant. But government intervention increased in frequency and sophistication over time. By the 1960s, left-leaning writers became increasingly common and the prominence of right-wing journalists started to wane. But at the same time, state censorship in the form of government bulletins, press offices, press monitoring, and spin doctors tried to complement and enforce dying traditions. Financial support for newspapers and journalists also increased markedly (45)

By the mid-1960s, Mexico was reaching the end of the Mexican Miracle, which made it financially difficult for the state to continue some of these practices. From the 1940s and 1950s, when the Mexican economic output had been growing steadily at a rhythm of 6% annually. This sustained growth allowed the PRI administrations to invest heavily in infrastructure projects, which in turn generated better connectivity both nationally and internationally. Miguel Aleman's government (1946-1952) initiated a trend of liberalization of the economy that favored the country's rapid industrialization. However, it is also recognized that the uneven distribution of these profits, added to the installed corruption of the government, generated an unsustainable growth model that produced noticeable social unrest by the mid-1950s.

Other well-known means in which the government influenced the media, and specifically the print press came in the form of controlling the raw materials, particularly paper supply through PIPSA (Productora e Importadora de Papel, Sociedad Anónima), which started to operate under president Lazaro Cárdenas del Río (1934-1940), and continued to operate until its

sale at the end of the 1990s. "Una característica peculiar de esta nueva entidad fue que el Estado se constituía en el monopolio mexicano para la compra de papel al exterior, y en el monopolio interno para su producción y distribución. Además, el Estado se reservaba, por decreto, el aprovisionamiento y distribución del papel destinado específicamente a los periódicos" (Zacarías 76).

Regardless of the State's meddling with the national press, this was a significant period for the creation and consolidation of photojournalism in Mexico. According to John Mraz and Alberto del Castillo Troncoso's research has highlighted the role of photographic coverage of the movement and highlighted the methodical construction and thoughtful manipulation of these images[9]. According to Mraz, the historical development of photojournalism in Mexico owes plenty to the early illustrated magazines like *Hoy*, *Rotofoto*, and *Siempre*!, particularly as precedents for the establishment of a visual culture. It was thanks to magazines like these that new trends in news coverage and the quality of the news market improved in Mexico (Looking for Mexico 153). However, both Mraz and Castillo Troncoso also note the degree to which various formats and expressions of photojournalism were not exempt from the profound and widespread collaboration with the Mexican government. Many of these magazines operated under the political sign of *presidencialismo* inasmuch as they dedicated a big portion of their space to presenting the social lives of current and former presidents (Looking for 157). Furthermore, these magazines and their authors, illustrators and photographers participated actively in the political national trend of pursuing a national identity: "The magazines collaborated enthusiastically in search for *mexicanidad*" (158), the cultural expression of Mexican exceptionalism that flourished in the 1950s and into the 1960s. President Adolfo Ruiz Cortínez, and later Díaz Ordaz, publicly praised and urged a deep sense of nationalism in the

newspapers and asked them to collaborate by providing both information and patriotism to the public.

In addition to the coercion exercised by the institutional means of control and pressure, the close relationships that the presidents had with several media outlets allowed the development of heavily biased and often orchestrated coverage of the news. *El Heraldo de México* maintained a particularly active relationship with Díaz Ordaz since its foundation in 1965. Its first number dated November 9 shows Díaz Ordaz reading *El Heraldo* with his official presidential photograph occupying almost half of the full front page. In it, Díaz Ordaz's message to *El Heraldo* leads the newborn outlet with the following statement: "Hago mis mejores votos porque este nuevo diario, tan avanzado en su técnica, corresponda a ella con un agudo sentido para captar y enfocar la noticia, un criterio lleno de probidad para comentarla, y un espíritu pleno de patriotismo para orientar a la opinión pública" (Díaz Ordaz en El Heraldo p1.)

Figure 1

Buenos Días, México

EL HERALDO DE MEXICO

La Iglesia Aclara Varios Temas que Trató el Concilio

Frente Común con Centroamérica Para Estabilizar los Mercados

Defensa de Precios de los Productos de Exportación

El Presidente Díaz Ordaz en EL HERALDO

Aumento de la Población a 114 Millones, en 35 Años

Estudiantes Chilenos Queman la Bandera de Argentina

Front page of *El Heraldo de México*, 9 Nov. 1965.

Castillo Troncoso has shown that this proximity between *El Heraldo* and the president came from its director's, Gabriel Alarcon, personal friendship with Díaz Ordaz. In a private letter between Díaz Ordaz and Alarcón, discussed by Castillo Troncoso, *El Heraldo's* director discusses the instructions he has received from different officials, including secretary of state Luis Echeverria and secretary of defense, Marcelino García Barragán, "para publicar algunas notas convenientes para aislar y condenar a los agitadores y para censurar los desplegados antipatriotas de otros medios de comunicación menos dóciles" (146)

By the time the student protest began, halfway through 1968, this cultural trend of pursuit of a national identity through the ideals of *mexicanidad* was already dying down as an artistic trend. However, numerous journalistic outlets continued to operate under the premise that the information they presented was relevant to the public good insofar as they advanced a patriotic notion of civility and order. The reports of the student movement, the demonstrations and ultimately the massacre of Tlatelolco, ultimately highlighted this trend[4].

The contextualization of the relationship between the print media and the state is doubly relevant, as it renders visible the material and political conditions that situate the emergence of *La noche de Tlatelolco* as a significant cultural product of its own time, at the same time it allows us to address the multiple connections that exist between Poniatowska's book and the press. The manifold nature of these relationships certainly begins with Poniatowska's own professional affiliation as a journalist, but they are also present in the composition of the book itself.

Numerous critics have pointed out journalism's various influences on *La noche de Tlatelolco*, particularly pertaining to its origins as both a collection of interviews, and the

culmination of a significant investigative process by Poniatowska. For Nathaniel Gardner, *La noche de Tlatelolco* uses the interview as a journalistic research tool, and it is the basis for Poniatowska's book (La noche de Tlatelolco ante su estructura 493). Juan Gelpi goes on to call *La noche de Tlatelolco* a *crónica periodística* (286), grounded on Poniatowska's previous experiences as an established journalist and interviewer, alluding to the fact that Elena Poniatowska had been an active contributor to high profile magazines through her interviews. As Beth Jorgensen points out, these experiences were fundamental to Elena Poniatowska's eventual incursion in the literary field noting that: "journalism has nourished in a significant and positive way her writing of novels and short stories; and the importance of the interview, her principal journalistic genre, both in her formation as a writer and as a discourse with its own intrinsic logic and interest" (The writing 1-2). Indeed, by the time Elena Poniatowska started collecting the materials that would ultimately become *La noche de Tlatelolco*, the author had already been an active contributor for *Excelsior*, where she started working in the social section in 1953, and then in *Novedades* next year, in 1954. As Poniatowska has commented on numerous occasions, these practical experiences were fundamental for her in her approach to writing and in lieu of any formal training prior to becoming a journalist[6]. Finally, for Yvonne Unnold and Carolyn Wolfenzon, the degree to which Poniatowska took advantage of her experience as a journalist is also visible in the conversational tone that is imprinted throughout some of the testimonies that make up *La noche de Tlatelolco.*

3.2 EL VERDADERO ESTUDIANTE

The mediatic representation of the students themselves was framed by condemnation and the use of denigrating language by some reporters. This language was commonly used at the time, the rhetorical and political implications had a particular effect on the public representation of the movement. Although it's nothing new to point out the noticeable biases of the press at the time, it must be noted that there was a multiplicity of factors that make these representations vary significantly, such as the expression of individual authors, the absence of authorial attribution in editorials and other front page materials, and the lack of credit attribution to photographs. Just as important, there was a wide variety of formats, journalistic genres and subgenres that make up the journalistic discourse and representation of the movement.

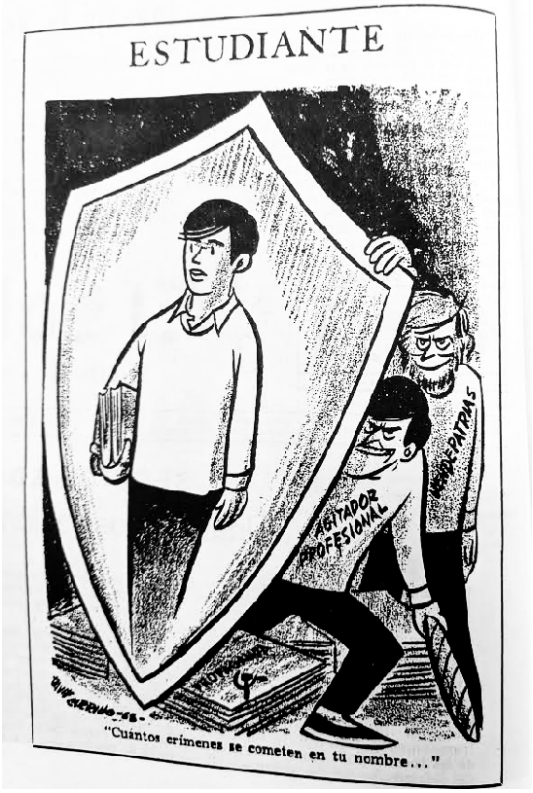
Here, I'll focus on the graphic and written commentary genres that appeared in El Sol, Excelsior, El Heraldo[7] as well as the *cartones* that David Carrillo produced for El Universal. The main reason for this is that I am mostly concerned with how journalistic discourse articulated a complex but clearly identifiable rhetorical edifice that was shared throughout the duration of the movement. This set of rhetorical devices included the utilization of common tropes as well as the establishment of a rhetorical ethos that associated the voices of journalists as mature commentators that enacted patriotic evaluations of social circumstances. Collectively, these voices took upon themselves the social imperative of safeguarding the best interests of the country in the eyes of the public. Although some reporters do include these self-referential inquiries into their news articles, nowhere is this more evident than in editorials, opinion pieces and other commentary texts that appeared in the print press at the time.

The first notable attitude that the press followed during the time of the student movement was a rhetorical impulse to present itself as categorical regarding the students, the movement and

adjacent issues. These rhetorical categorizations often involved a moral undertone that symbolically but meaningfully divided the students and other participants in the events as good or bad. On July 25th, 1968, *El Heraldo* commentator Elias Chavez G. offered an explanation for the incidents that culminated in the conflict between high school students and the *granaderos* group. Although Chavez G's explanation aimed to offer a broader view of the conflict, he could not avoid the derogatory use of language that plagued the print press. He insists on the difference between common students and the gang members who incited the violence, still he does so by calling the rebellious students "estudiantes fósiles", "desadaptados" and even "psicópatas pandilleros". Chavez G's reporting refers to a violent encounter that occurred on July 22nd 1968, when the riot police of Mexico City beat up a group of high schoolers who were fighting each other in the vicinity of the Ochoterena High School, which has been widely acknowledged as the incident that triggered the student movement.

What is readily noticeable in Chavez G.'s account is the way in which the press reacts to student violence by segregating and identifying the good and the bad students. This classification has nothing to do with academic performance, but rather, it is settled on the journalists' own valuation of what a good student should be, according to their role and perceived contributions to society's order. This differentiation is at the forefront of the paradoxical idealization of what the press will call el *verdadero estudiante*, and the disenfranchising of the students who were effectively involved with the movement. El verdadero estudiante would become a symbol for the idealized conception of a pacified youth that is willing to obey, learn and follow the principles of technocratic progress. David Carrillo's "Estudiante" shows how these ideals were supported by the aestheticized formulation of journalistic commentary, both written and graphic.

Figure 2



Carillo's cartón shows a group of agitators, labeled as communists and vendepatrias (literally, country sellers) as malign, older looking men who wielded the ideal student as a shield. The estudiante is shown dressing a formal uniform with a t-shirt, pants and a sweater, and holding a set of books under his right arm. The caption "Cuántos crímenes se cometen en tu nombre" is a soft-spoken condemnation of the martyrdom of the estudiante.

David Carrillo, "Estudiante", p. 2A El Universal. 29 de Julio 1968

Figure 3

El verdadero estudiante comes back a few days later in Carrillo's "Criterio unificado" to show the student's unified front against foreign intervention and communism. In this picture, two students identified as "UNAM" and "Poli" kick two older looking characters. One is identified with the label "agitador" and bears a popular communist symbol, the other one is identified as "agente extranjero".
David Carrillo, "Criterio Unificado" for El Universal, August 1st 1968

Only two days earlier, on July 23rd 1968, Ermilio Abreu Gomez, a journalist and member of the Academia Mexicana de Letras, stated in El Heraldo that: "Los estudiantes no pertenecen a ninguna determinada clase social, no son ni proletarios, ni burgueses. No son trabajadores ni capitalistas" (6A). The immediate reflection on the social affiliation of studenthood is telling of how Abreu Gomez placed the students as an oddity in a social and political landscape, one that is not subject to the established divisions of class. This

representation operated under the sign of idealized behaviors, which decidedly ignored the historico-material affiliations of the student activists. This meant the public disenfranchisement of the students in a way that would soon become the norm as the student movement developed in the following months, "No son hombres ni son niños. Son lo que son: jóvenes. Acaban de abrir los ojos a la realidad de la vida" (6A). Later in the same opinion piece, Abreu Gómez pointed at another widely spread conception at the time, namely that "hombres mayores" or grown adults, with whom he identified his own voice, and by extension that of the readers. He appeals to the public to their political and intellectual maturity to take up the task of making sense out of the expression of discomfort by the students: "Por eso los hombres mayores que observan estos hechos deben meditar con sumo cuidado en este fenómeno" (6A). Abreu Gomez's classification of the students as individuals in an intersticial state that manifested the stern hierarchies of the public arena and closed off the possibility of a robust intellectual articulation coming from the students. The privilege of understanding was exclusive to the previous generations of men.

Interestingly, the student movement is also historically framed by incorporation of college age individuals as full citizens, giving them the right to vote by amending Article 35 on Chapter IV of the Mexican Constitution. In the months immediately prior to the beginning of the protests, opinions in the newspapers had addressed this situation by commenting on the presidential initiative to expand the formal citizenship status to those 18 years old and above. Until December 1969, when the reform was passed and officially published, the voting rights applied only to Mexicans who were at least 21 years of age.

> La modificación quiere decir que, los jóvenes de dieciocho a veinte años podrían participar en las elecciones, e inclinar con su voto la exaltación en favor de determinada persona. La peligrosidad está en decidir si los jóvenes de dieciocho

> años y hasta los veinte, pueden asumir la responsabilidad de llevar a los puestos directivos del país a elementos que respondan al interés nacional. (Tardiff 1)

Guillermo Tardif and Abreu Gomez present this change as a potential danger and focuses the weight of the question on whether the students have the ability to become responsible enough to exercise the privilege of voting. Once more, the emphasis is placed on the risk to the nation's interest placed by the students' further involvement with the political system. The amendment was formally introduced for congressional review on December 20th, 1968, without any major public discussion and eventually passed one year later. This series of circumstances highlights the relevance that the student movement placed on mediatic representation, and the centrality of the media's representation throughout the duration of the movement.

These opinion pieces further elevated the students increasing integration into social civic practices as a significant change that risked the Mexican state's exceptional sense of political stability. Throughout the life of the student movement, the national press and the government insisted repeatedly on the impossibility of well behaved, national college students to be protesting, as they often portrayed this action as the work of outside forces, specifically communist international agents, against the government. This constitutive suspicion elevated the criticism of many newspapers to question every aspect of the movement, not only its claims but also and perhaps more importantly, the validity of its own membership and the nature of their affiliation as students.

A significant portion of this rhetoric came in the form of Mexican anticommunism. This discourse expressed a deep sense of nationalism, and a sustained virulence toward the students use of international communism iconography. According to Soledad Loaeza points out, this

generalized anticommunist rhetoric was already installed in the Mexican public sphere by the mid-1950s.

> Entre 1946 y 1958, el anticomunismo en México, como en otros países, se fundaba en una concepción extensiva e indiferenciada del comunismo, que en las denuncias de dirigentes políticos, empresariales y religiosos resultaba ser una categoría vaga. En ella quedaban incluidos líderes obreros, maestros, profesores universitarios y hasta libros, es decir, todo aquello que podía ser percibido como ajeno al orden establecido o favorable a un cambio social violento (135).

The prevalent and continuous representation of the students as bearers of an idealized immaturity and easy prey to political manipulation was not exclusive to the official media outlets. Other newspapers identified as bearers of more politically balanced content such as Excelsior and El Día (del Castillo Troncoso 141) constantly contributed to this endangered sense of Mexican ideals.

On July 24th, 1968, *Excélsior* posted an editorial that denounced the foreign media's representation of student conflicts in the UNAM: "Se afirma en la revista norteamericana que existen grupos de influyentes; que los estudiantes son delincuentes, ineptos en el trabajo escolar y responsables aun de asesinatos con participación en manifestaciones sangrientas" ("Otra campaña" 19 A). The journal quotes other unnamed sources that reportedly criticized and misrepresented the multiple educational systems in Latin America: "Otro articulista extranjero comenta: Las universidades en Iberoamérica son como campos de entrenamiento de agentes subversivos. Debe ser abolida la autonomía, o por lo menos limitada, para evitar mayores males a los pueblo" (19 A). Here, the editorial appears to side with the students as it denounces the international press opinions as attacks on the autonomy of Mexico's major university, the

UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), and as a defamatory message that is not only false, but ultimately threatens the international image of Mexico.

David Carrillo's cartón "Innoble Actitud", which appeared on August 7th in El Universal, shows how the press exercised this social imperative to defend the Mexican people from the foreign press attacks. The cartón shows a scandalized man reading the headlines of a made-up newspaper from the US whose generic title is "Noticias de USA". The paperboy rushes along the street in a busy city as he carries and distributes the newspapers. The headline for this fictional news outlet reads "Falsa información sobre México" and the image carries no additional captions. The cartón directs its scorn toward the foreign news market and criticizes the speed with which it fabricates and delivers false information to its gullible audience. Today, these accusations of the foreign press' fabricating information may seem hypocritical and lacking in self-reflection, but it was part of a constitutive ethos of journalistic discourse during the Díaz Ordaz regime.

Figure 4

Carrillo, David. "Innoble Actitud". El Universal [Mexico City] 7th August 1968: 2A. Print

The prevalent use of truthfulness and falsehood framed by an overt nationalistic impetus was not only common, but it was in fact the role that the press explicitly performed in those years. Hector Jimenez Guzman described this performative attachment to the presidential communicative guidelines as "siempre moral, paternal" and "aleccionador" (41). This nationalistic discourse was not limited to the condemnation of communist references during the protests, but it went on to include a reiterated attack on the international news coverage that the movement received. For many individual members of the press, this social imperative continued in the publications following the aftermath of the massacre[11].

The idea that outsiders and non-student groups were stirring the students involved a plethora of disparaging names, from Elias Chavez's "psicópatas pandilleros" to Carrillo's

"vendepatrias", in order to identify the dangers of the alleged interventions of professional, internationally funded, communist agitator groups whose only plan was to destabilize the country, but it also became prevalent image in the print press. On October 24th 1968, *El Heraldo*, *Excélsior*, *El Día* and *El Universal* all reported and repeated the message provided by the SEP (Secretaría de Educación Pública) that not only the violence, but the general disconformity was provoked and initiated by people other than the student themselves, with El Sol's editorial piece concluding: "De esto se desprende que hay intervenciones de extraños, interesados en agitar al IPN" (1). The identity of these "manos extrañas" was not a mystery to anyone in the press, as the editorial section of *El Sol de México* spelled out on July 29th, under the title "Una demostración de Barbarie":

> A la sombra de una manifestación estudiantil se produjo otra, de comunizantes y profesionales del desorden, que se dedicaron al asalto de autobuses, apedrear y robar establecimientos comerciales, injuriar y agredir a los transeúntes y provocar la represión de las fuerzas policiacas. El resultado del zafarrancho fue de numeroso heridos, dos camiones convertidos en piras, aparadores destruidos e incalculables daños y perjuicios para el vecindario. Desde luego hay que señalar y destacar que en la acción depredatoria de los manifestantes, hubo grupos de escolares azuzados por agitadores de etiqueta roja; pero que principalmente el desorden fue provocado por extranjeros de filiación comunista, en su mayor parte huéspedes ilegales en nuestro país y sobre quienes debe recaer con mayor rigor el castigo por las fechorías realizadas. Aparte sus pasaportes, unos auténticos y otros falsos, los motineros se identificaron plenamente como peones de ajedrez del marxismo-leninismo por sus arengas, sus excitativas de destrucción y los

> cartelones que hacían profesión de fe en favor del Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, Mao y demás apóstoles del odio y la anarquía (Una demostración 5A)

El Sol's editorial displays an abundance of epithets to identify the menacing evil posed by the foreign-born communists and the threat of contamination they posed for the Mexican students. Beyond the excessive use of bynames in which the editorial engages, the piece also displays a strong nationalistic undertone in assigning the blame of the destruction to the foreigners and by condemning all the international figures associated with communism as "apostles of hatred and anarchy". This verbal attack is followed by a praise of the action of the Policia Metropolitana (Mexico City's police force) and a passing but significant reference to the rule of law as an installed practice in the country: "Está realizandose una investigación a fondo que llevará al conocimiento de la verdad, para que con base en ella se apliquen las leyes vigentes en defensa del orden y del buen nombre de nuestro país. Cuando se abusa de la libertad para atentar contra ella es imperativo sancionar ejemplarmente a los enemigos de la estabilidad nacional" (5A). This editorial showcases a dynamic that not only aligns with the information presented by the authorities, as much as it establishes the explicit cooperation of the press in the upkeep of national stability. The explicit belief in the authorities and the government to "clarify the truth" spells out the nature of the press' duty to convince its readers that verification, or the process of establishing what constitutes the truthfulness of an event relies solely on the government, and any truthful account of the events should be aligned with this process and its findings. Furthermore, by presenting the abuses of the foreigners under ethical terms, the editorial legitimizes the actions of the government as morally good, and its own moral character as its supporter.

At the same time that the press committed itself to the moral reflection, it presented itself as the moral compass of the nation. In this role, it was its sworn duty to explain what actions constituted a valuable contribution to the country's stability and public good. In most matters related to the students' activism, these actions were constructed by the press as uncivilized expressions of violence. At the same time there was a constant idealization of the truly Mexican students in the form of the "verdadero estudiante". This was only possible by creating a divide between the material expressions of the students and the idealized notions that ignored the present in favor of *a priori* conceptualizations of studenthood and youth. Constant reflection on the subject led to a number of articles not only questioning the objectives of the movement as unclear or contradictory, but also to the point of questioning the students' own identities as such.

Numerous commentary pieces from Excelsior during the first days of the movement show the degree to which this rhetorical edifice of truthfulness dominated the discussions surrounding the students and cast continuous doubts on their academic affiliations. Although Excelsior has often been considered as one of the most balanced newspapers of the time in their coverage of the student movement (Del Castillo Troncoso 144), they were active participants and contributors in this collective representation of the student movement. The newspaper's multiple discussions about "el problema estudiantil" incorporated a wide range of terms pertaining to the semantic fields of truthfulness and falsehood to denounce the involvement and co-optation of the movement by expert provocateurs. Antonio Ortega, prolific contributor to Excelsior and to the coverage of the movement as a whole openly denounced the involvement of "estudiantes falsos" and pushed forward an impersonal claim in favor of the "genuinos estudiantes" in a first page article "Genuinos estudiantes puestos en libertad", published on July 29th. A few days later on July 31st, one of Excelsior's editorials was categorical in referring to the movement as a

"movimiento pseudo estudiantil" (¿Castrismo mexicano?). A few days later, Guillermo Jordán revisited the issue in an opinion piece titled "¿Qué es un estudiante?", where he pressed on with a social reflection on the value of studenthood and its various, if also abstract, contributions to the Mexican society. "La situación estudiantil", also authored by Ortega and published on August 1st[8].

The press' construction of this identitary inquiry around under the premise of identifying and condemning falsehood embedded the truth bearing guild and its discourse around this dichotomy with a social purpose. A truthful involvement was antithetical to the wellbeing of the nation, and therefore true actors could not be in disagreement, insofar as both had the same patriotic goal to maintain the social order and contribute to the collective ideal of nationhood. The rhetorical implication of this ethical mandate was the erasure of conflict and the equation of impartiality with a conciliatory approach to the conflict. The intertwining of these ethical and rhetorical principles is visible in Miguel Bueno's "Crisis de Juventud y Autoridad", published by *El Universal* on August 13th, 1968:

> Esta es, en síntesis, la apreciación de los sucesos, dicha con absoluta franqueza, sin compromiso, sin dogmas, sin prejuicios, apoyándonos en la realidad de los acontecimientos. No creemos que la verdadera juventud estudiosa sea culpable del desorden, cual lo prueba la forma inalterada en que llevaron al cabo sus manifestaciones. Tampoco la autoridad pública esté en posición de reprimirlas, como lo demuestra su autorización y respecto cuando se producen con el necesario orden, aunque en ellas se pronuncien denuestos- como aconteció hasta la saciedad- contra los más altos funcionarios del gobierno" (2A).

The idealization of the model student in the form of the "verdadero estudiante" brought along a similar semantic dispute with major implications, as the image of the "verdadera juventud estudiosa" became an abstract measure that was constantly forced upon the movement and the concrete individuals who participated in it. At the same time, the press continued to consolidate the activities of the government by depicting itself as a fair evaluator of its actions. This combination made little room for the inclusion of any form of localized discussion, since all events were represented as incidents that contributed to the construction of a grand moral epic.

This rhetoric was not exclusive to journalists but was in fact widely used by the government, perhaps most notably by President Díaz Ordaz himself. The clearest example of this may be his infamous speech "La mano tendida". This infamous speech was performed by Díaz Ordaz during a visit to Guadalajara on August 1st and subsequently reproduced and disseminated by all major newspapers on August 2nd. In it, Díaz Ordaz displays an unequivocal expression of this rhetorical edifice:

> Una mano está tendida: es la mano de un hombre que a través de la pequeña historia de su vida ha demostrado que sabe ser leal. Los mexicanos dirán si esa mano se queda tendida en el aire o bien esa mano, de acuerdo con la tradición del mexicano, con la verdadera tradición del verdadero, del genuino, del auténtico mexicano, se vea acompañada por millones de manos de mexicanos que, ente todos, quieren restablecer la paz y la tranquilidad de las conciencias. (Díaz Ordaz)

On that same day August 1st 1968, when the President was giving his speech to an enthusiastic public made up by PRI loyalists, a large group of students and other supporters marched on the streets of Mexico City, led by UNAM's chancellor Javier Barros Sierra.

Figure 5

Una Ordenada Manifestación

Un ejemplo de orden y cordura que pasará a la historia de los movimientos estudiantiles, fue la gigantesca manifestación que hicieron ayer aproximadamente cien mil estudiantes "en defensa de la autonomía universitaria, del civilismo y del Derecho".

Participaron en ella alumnos de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, del Instituto Politécnico Nacional y de otros centros de cultura superior, además de millares de personas del pueblo que se les unieron en su marcha.

Partieron de la explanada de la rectoría de la Ciudad Universitaria, encabeza por el rector de la Máxima Casa de Estudios, ingeniero Javier Barros Sierra, a las 16.30 horas, en un recorrido que duro más de cuatro horas.

Al salir del recinto de la Ciudad Universitaria, enfilaron por la Avenida Insurgentes entre los aplausos del público que los vitoreaba y les manifestaba su apoyo y simpatía.

Varios automóviles con alumnos encargados de regular el tránsito abrían la columna. Seguían alumnos de la Facultad de Medicina, encargados de prestar auxilio a quienes lo requirieran. →

Jubilosa, pero ordenadamente, marcharon ayer más de cien mil estudiantes universitarios y politécnicos, así como de planteles de educación superior, secundarias y primarias. Encabezan la columna, el rector de la UNAM, ingeniero Javier Barros Sierra, al centro, y los miembros de la Junta de Gobierno de la Universidad; el Consejo Universitario, los consejos técnicos, los directores, catedráticos e investigadores.—(Foto de Mario Padilla).

"Una ordenada manifestación". El Universal [Mexico City] 2nd August 1968: 1, 15ª

After the massive demonstration, the newspapers' coverage was almost entirely positive, albeit buried under the verbatim reproductions of Díaz Ordaz's address in Jalisco. It portrayed and emphasized the well-behaved nature of the demonstrators, as well as the public support they garnered as they walked.

These representations remained in line with the previous condemnations of unruly behaviors, as they explicitly valued the obedient and civil nature of the students, faculty members and other participants. María Luisa Mendoza, one of the few female reporters who wrote about the student movement authored a piece for El Día on August 3rd, remembering the demonstration:

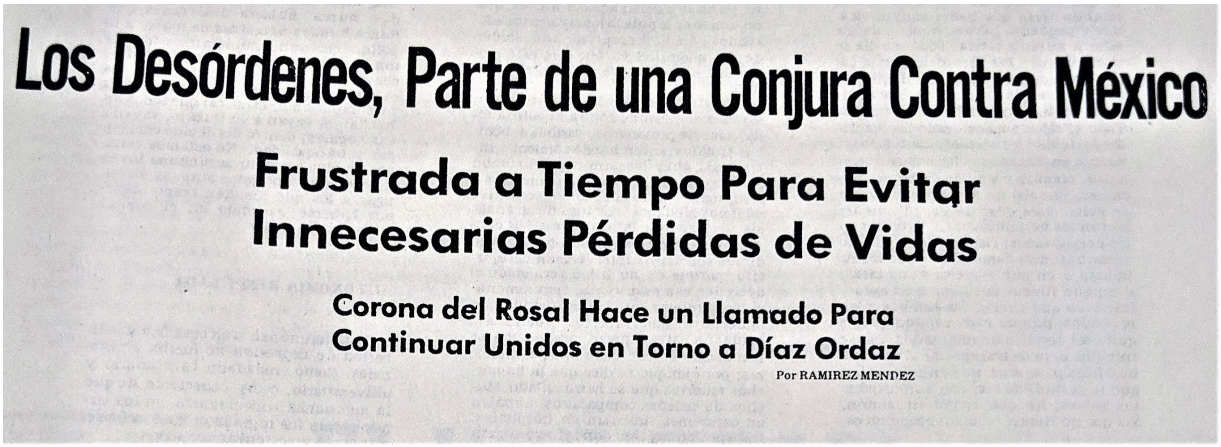
> Cuando un joven estudiante mexicano es capaz de dar la más idónea muestra de ejemplar ciudadanía. Cuando puede, a pie y con el brazo en luto, caminar muchos

> kilómetros en silencio, cuando es el mexicano que todos esperamos que sea el mexicano y demuestra así en el acto de grandeza autónoma que va a ser algún día ¡ya! La verdadera esperanza de la patria, volvemos a ponernos a esperar de ellos la salvación, después del humo de las granadas, de la sangre de sus corazones que baja en hilo por las escaleras de todas las universidades verdaderas (Mendoza 2)

What becomes apparent in the widespread use of this rhetorical edifice of truthfulness is not so much its conceptual emptiness, but the moral valuation associated with the demonstrator's agreeableness to conform and the radical condemnation of all expressions of dissent under the label of falsehood. In other words, it demonstrates how truth is constructed by the press as a social value, one that applies only to actions or entities that operate in the maintenance of the status quo. Truthfulness as a concept and the pursuit of truth as a practice were indeed present in the rhetorical corpus of the Mexican national press of the time, however, the understanding of truth was historically conditioned to describe social and political practices that not only aligned with the government's ideals, but also vocalized the public appreciation of social order.

The treatment of the students and the degree to which they had an agency during the moments previous to the massacre remains an important factor in the way the press continued to represent their involvement after the massacre in Tlatelolco. On the editorial sections of *El Heraldo*, *Novedades*, and *Excélsior* published on October 3rd, there were significant differences in the tone with which they describe the violent actions of the military and the government, but the three accounts insist on the inability of the students to direct or even articulate the purpose of the movement because of their youth and inexperience, and therefore, leaving them vulnerable to outsiders and anti-Mexican agitators. Some of these headlines were ultimately included in *La noche de Tlatelolco.*

Figure 6


Los Desórdenes, Parte de una Conjura Contra México

Frustrada a Tiempo Para Evitar Innecesarias Pérdidas de Vidas

Corona del Rosal Hace un Llamado Para Continuar Unidos en Torno a Díaz Ordaz

Por RAMIREZ MENDEZ

Alfonso Corona del Rosal was the Administrative Chief of Mexico City (Distrito Federal), appointed by president Gustavo Díaz Ordaz.
Headline for the Editorial section of *El Heraldo de México*, August 9th, 1968.

By following the print press' coverage and opinion pieces on the student movement, it is possible to identify a constant in the public narratives that framed the movement as a chaotic conflict that became a threat to national security and the nation's international prestige. In doing so, the press itself and its reporters appealed to a rhetorical ethos that apparently sought to uphold an ill-defined principle of truthfulness that produced a heavily biased appreciation of the events, and actively discredited the lack of agency and leadership of students in the movement. This self-proclaimed search for truth by the media was grounded on idealized notions that obscured all other forms of evidence, and that all public ideological expressions had to bear a universally intelligible message of progress, a constructive contribution to the opaque notion of post-revolutionary Mexican lifestyle. This series of processes involved an orchestrated and widespread aestheticization of the student as an icon of civility, one which could be defined as an innocent and law-abiding youth. As a group, they were represented as naive, and quick to fall

under the influence of foreign agitators that included international organizations and governments. Although further analysis is necessary to provide more details of the representation of students by the media at the time of the student movement, it is possible to use these initial findings to better situate *La noche de Tlatelolco* and its relationship to the parallel and competing narratives of the print press used to portray the student movement of 1968.

3.3 AUTHORSHIP AND AUTHENTICITY

The critical discussion around the issue of authorship in *La noche de Tlatelolco* and Gonzalez de Alba's accusations of misappropriation and misrepresentation stem from different approaches to the same narrative innovation, the complex handling of sources and decision to credit the contributions of her interviewees. Beth E. Jorgensen explains that Poniatowska's role in *La noche de Tlatelolco* is primarily editorial.

> Poniatowska casts herself in the text as an editorial figure and employs various strategies to efface her own individual presence. Nevertheless, she cannot wholly abdicate her mediating authority as the editor. The editorial figure is at once accessory and essential to the voices she records, and at once marginal and central to their story (The writing 82)

Jorgensen's argument summarizes the establishment of Poniatowska's authorial distance with the text and explains how this distance carries a symbolic meaning that is meant to both highlight and empower the voices it contains. The inclusion of multiple voices has been consistently attributed a democratizing effect, grounded on the recognition of the book as a political intervention but also as a legitimizing document for the individual voices represented (Ruisanchez 23; Foster 46; The Role of the Editor 81; Chinchilla 35; Harris 492).

González de Alba presents a different interpretation: "Y así fue Elena, repartiendo párrafos a distintos líderes estudiantiles con un sentido de justicia democrática de las voces: si ya había puesto un párrafo a Gilberto, le ponía otro al Búho, luego a mí. El permiso lo tenía de Raúl Álvarez, el último comunista que no creía en los derechos de autor y considera tierras comunales, el koljós de tierras colectivas, un escrito que varios comentan, pero solo uno escribe y trabaja" (Tlatelolco 35). As an active participant and important contributor to Poniatowska's book, Gonzalez de Alba challenged Poniatowska's decision to manipulate the individual narratives in the process of what he called "a sense of democratic justice". Indeed, González de Alba's claim is not only the opposite of the critic's appreciation, but it does in fact addresses the paradoxical nature of Poniatowska's collective narrative. On the one hand, the collection is an addition that build upon the number of interviewees and at the same time, it reduces the relevance of individual contributions to the larger narrative about the movement and the massacre of Tlatelolco.

One significant quality of Poniatowska's work is its quotational nature, namely, a text that is made up almost entirely by quoting other authors. Skladowska's reading of the book indeed notes that "Poniatowska hace hincapié en el hecho de que sus interlocutores no son solamente narradores/protagonistas, sino también autores" (Skladowska 163) and Jorgensen, once more, notes this significant relationship as she comments on Poniatowska's handling of the source materials as "respecting the authority of her many witnesses" (82).

. The relationship between authorship and quotational practices is not entirely antagonistic, but one of collaboration. It implies and makes possible the construction of a shared sense of responsibility and authority of the narratives they introduce. In Poniatowska's handling and recontextualization of the original quotations coexists the emphasis on the event itself over

its participants and an absolute reliance on the contributions of those individuals to build it. One additional and consequential implication of this process is the central role of the individual experiences. They are not only the evidence that sustains the narrative, but that which is the object of narration. In other words, the conceptual and formal authority of the student's voices in *La noche de Tlatelolco* is effectively staged at the front center of the narrative. As I've commented above, this can hardly be said to be in line with the journalistic practices at the time. If any relation between the two must be noted is one of contention and perhaps even antagonism.

In *La noche de Tlatelolco*, Elena Poniatowska presents the reader with a wide array of sources to build the narrative of the student movement. This intricate construction which includes not only the voices of the students, but also photographic evidence and written texts sets up a configuration that equates these modes of representation in terms of their documentary value (Gelpi 286, Chinchilla 33, Sklodowska 30). In other words, Poniatowska's narrative requires the reader to accept that the recollections of the witnesses and participants of the events are not only as valid as the photographs that introduce them, but in fact they belong to different materials subject to the same documentary effort. They are both valuable evidence of the events that take place within the book, regardless of their apparent differences. At the core of this narrative strategy lies a meaningful questioning of the processes and the values and purposes of documenting social changes equating the subjective recollection of individuals to those of allegedly verified or verifiable facts produced and organized by impersonal institutions such as the government, the police and the media. "Like many other testimonios, *La noche de Tlatelolco* contains its own self-critical gesture at the same time it makes a strategic claim to a kind of truth about the events it portrays" (*The writing* 76)

In 1951, Suzanne Briet, considered a founding figure in documentary studies, famously stated the following explanation of what constitutes a document:

> Une étoile est-elle un document? Un galet roulé par un torrent est-il un document? Un animal vivant est-il un document? Non. Mais sont des documents les photographies et les catalogues d'étoiles, les pierres d'un musée de minéralogie, les animaux catalogués et exposés dans un Zoo. Les documents sont recopiés. . .puis sélectionnés, analysés, décrits, traduits. Les documents se rapportant á cet événement sont l'objet d'un classement scientifique et d'un classement idéologique (7)

Since then, the idea that documentation is not only an isolated object with immanent documentary qualities, but rather an ideological expression that emerges from a complex set of practices, and which involves an imagined community of participants or interlocutors, has become a dominant interpretation for documentarians and documentary scholars (Buckland 806, Frohman 297). Furthermore, Briet's understanding of what constitutes a document also emphasizes the performative character of documentary studies and the role of the documentarian as an intellectual organizer of the information presented, rather than as the material author of the information itself. In other words, authorship in a documentary sense is directly tied with the recollection, organization and distribution of information as an inseparable process of its production, as such, authorship from a documentary perspective refers to all productive efforts involved in the material production of a given document, but also to the intellectual, ideological conceptualization of what constitutes the nature of the documented object. In Poniatowska's case, this active effort to document does not only occur in a formal dimension. Insofar as documentary practices imply a broad sense of self-definition, Poniatowska's documentary work

is further defined by its polemical relationship with adjacent narratives and embedded with and urges the reader to take a stance in front of the evidence. “In Tlatelolco, agency is not merely represented; agency formation is dialogic in nature, as Poniatowska’s and her interlocutors’ political consciences are molded and shaped by interactions with survivors, witnesses, government officials and other Mexican civilians (Macmannus50)

This concentrated effort to produce an active reader is itself a part of documentary works. “With the best intentions, documentary texts often manipulate their readers’ emotions, forcing them to judge or be judged, to accept the narrative at face value or risk moral opprobrium” (124). Samuel Steinberg’s analysis of *La noche de Tlatelolco* emphasizes the points of contact between photographic documentation and testimonio as narrative tools employed by the book, and explains the ways in which they reinforce each other’s interpellation of the reader:

> Testimonio and photography stage the truth of a moment past that cannot be refused. They both appeal to a similar conceit and place a similar demand upon us, the viewers, the listeners, to bear witness to the truth of an event

In calling attention to the photographic and testimonial modes of representation, Steinberg emphasizes these forms as cultural expressions that rely on their truth-claims. In this view, *La noche de Tlatelolco* articulates the visual and testimonial evidence in a controversial relationship with others’ accounts. In doing so, they pose a questioning of the validity of the press’ truth claim and its installed operation as an ideological state apparatus and invite further reflection about public opinion and its existence beyond popular media platforms. More specifically, they set up an alternative truth claim that does not rely on the prestige of the sources. Although the book does include the voices of well-known artists such as Rosario Castellanos and other intellectuals, the majority of the testimonies belong to the students and others who participated or

were affected by the movement. Institutional support is another key element of validation that undergoes avid criticism in *La noche de Tlatelolco*, as it happens with the inclusion of official communications or the print press' accounts of the events. The inclusion of these sources doesn't explain the events, rather, they emphasize the manipulation and misinformation campaigns that they brought. Instead, Poniatowska's narrative highlights the individuals' commitment and involvement with the represented events as a mark of *authenticity*. The voices that *La noche de Tlatelolco* seeks to place at the forefront are authentic, in the sense that they belong to the *real life* protagonists and participants of the event, and therefore they should command the same or greater weight than those of mere witnesses or informed commentators. This basic differentiation which focuses on the affiliation and exposition of the biographical details of the individuals as source of validity is also at the forefront of Poniatowska's narrative innovations. At the same time, it will become the center of Gonzalez de Alba's argument against her, namely the claim that her involvement with the movement was incidental and, to some degree, opportunistic. This apparent contradiction is why it's relevant to pay closer attention to how this idea of *authenticity* is understood and portrayed throughout the book.

Poniatowska inserts her voice into the narrative early on as an imaginary witness that is able to foresee the massacre but unable to intervene. The effect that this self-inclusion has is manifold, but it is aimed primarily at addressing the historical distance between her own experience and those contained in the book. On the one hand, it announces the catastrophic consequences that the student movement will have and that the reader will encounter in the second portion of the book. On the other hand, it establishes a particular pathos of defeat, sadness and mourning for the people who perished. This particular framing is not necessarily an

interpretative framework as much as it reinforces the relevance of the affective dynamics that sustain the narrative.

> Son muchos. Vienen a pie, vienen riendo. Bajaron por Melchor Ocampo, la Reforma, Juárez, Cinco de Mayo, muchachos y muchachas estudiantes que van del brazo en la manifestación con la misma alegría con que hace apenas unos días iban a la feria; jóvenes despreocupados que no saben que mañana, dentro de dos días, dentro de cuatro, estarán allí hinchándose bajo la lluvia, después de una feria en donde el tiro al blanco lo serán ellos, niños-blancos, niños que todo lo maravillan, niños para quienes todos los días son día-de-fiesta, hasta que el dueño de la barraca del tiro al blanco les dijo que se formaran así el uno junto al otro como la tira de pollitos plateados que avanza en los juegos, click, click, click, click y pasa a la altura de los ojos, ¡Apunten, Fuego!, y se doblan para atrás rozando la cortina de satín rojos" (13).

By offering a description of the students as children, "niños para quienes todos los días son día-de-fiesta" (13), Poniatowska adheres to a problematic but prevalent rhetorical image assigned to the students in the print press. Journalists, at the time of the student protests, made it clear that it was their role, as adults, to make sense of the students' actions, and consequently, called upon other "adult" figures to act as parents would to a troubled child (Gómez Arias). However, although Poniatowska does assign a degree of naivete to the representation of the students, the following portions of the book insists formally on the agency these young people had over their movement. By focusing on what it meant for some of the participants to go out on the streets, Poniatowska's rendering of the student movement accentuates the decisiveness and

the inconsistency of the narrative presented by the students themselves as a constitutive value of the movement itself.

The second introduction is a series of statements that share the space with the poem Memorial de Tlatelolco, by Rosario Castellanos, and the headings of many leading journals of Mexico City. Poniatowska's own words are divided in two parts. The first one is a brief statement that introduces the composition of the book and establishes the origins of most of the testimonies collected: "En su mayoría estos testimonios fueron recogidos en octubre y noviembre de 1968. Los estudiantes presos dieron los suyos en el curso de los dos años siguientes. Este relato les pertenece" (164). It is a message that doubles as a dedication message to the victims of the massacre, particularly to the mothers who suffered the loss of a child. "Aquí está el eco del grito de los que murieron y el grito de los que quedaron. Aquí está su indignación y su protesta. Es el grito mudo que se atoró en miles de gargantas, en miles de ojos desorbitados por el espanto el 2 de octubre de 1968, en la noche de Tlatelolco" (164). This brief introduction is quick to establish a connection between those who died and those who stayed, through the experience of loss and grief. Instead of any allusion to objective[7] evidence, the felt emotion of suffering becomes the evidence left behind by the massacre. Poniatowska's account of the massacre does not negate the value of journalistic representation, as much as it challenges the authenticity of those representations by confronting them with the affective, collective reactions of the people who were affected in its aftermath.

The problem of authenticity is not a new one, and it should remind the reader of George Yúdice's definition and discussion of testimonial writing. In short, that "testimonial writing may be defined as an authentic narrative told by a witness who is moved to narrate by the urgencies of the situation" (17). Although Yúdice's exploration of testimonial texts does not provide an

explicit explanation of this concept of authenticity, it is clear that such an idea is grounded on the biographical involvement and social commitment that the writers, or their informants possess. Furthermore, there is an moral undertone to the use of authenticity as an extraliterary value marker. The possession of this particular form of cultural capital has been notably discussed by John Beverly, Elzbieta Sklodowska, Margaret Randall and Doris Sommer among other critics.

In Beverly's influential "The margin at the Center: On Testimonio" he addresses the problematic notion of authenticity and how it is grounded on biographical and political differentiation of the subjects of testimonio, and the inherent power relations to testimonio as a particular literary expression. The theoretical argument for how this difference is overcome states:

> perhaps something like Mao's notion of contradictions among the people (as opposed to contradictions between the people as a whole and, for example, imperialism) expresses the nature of the narrator/compiler/reader relations in the testimonio, in the sense that there are deep and inescapable contradictions involved in these relations, contradictions that can only be resolved on the level of general structural change both on a national and a global level. But there is also a sense of sisterhood and mutuality in the struggle against a common system of oppression (21).

Beverly's definition is concerned with assigning a specific value to the literary writing known as testimonio vis-à-vis anthropological narratives that became popular during anthropology's imperial period[9], where the exploitation and exoticization of the informants is a tendency and the source of ethnographic texts and other derivative forms of documentary narratives. However, the nature of the inquiry into testimonial writing goes beyond the literary boundaries, as it sets up a

discussion centered around the authors as producers and the problems related to the material and cultural forms of ownership of the presented narratives. Needless to say, this approach and much of the surrounding debates of the 1990s on the nature of testimonio were responding to the testimonio's potential as a socialist or at least anti-capitalist form of artistic expression, as well as the present of its institutionalization through academic practice.

Both Yúdice and Beverly have contributed deeply to our current understanding of testimonial writing and highlighted the value of testimonio as a specific expression of cultural difference. Their explorations of testimonio's ability to visualize the power dynamics at play between prestigious and non-prestigious cultural producers, namely the intellectual writers and their interviewees, and the risks of reification of the latter's life in this particular form of cultural product.

A similarly framed discussion is prevalent in the association of *La noche de Tlatelolco* with its journalistic impetus: Nadia Mann similarly asserts that: "it conveys a sense of rawness and authenticity in its narration of the historical moment and traumatic event." (50) They have also laid the groundwork to solve these controversial relationships through a theoretical framework. However, in practice, there still remains a fact that individuals who previously collaborated with testimonio writers continue to bring forward claims of misrepresentation and misappropriation.

La noche de Tlatelolco is often read as some form of testimonial writing. However, Poniatowska's book does not fit popular definitions of *testimonio*. Such definitions often fail to account for the number of informants used by Poniatowska, as well as the fact that, as college students in the most prestigious universities of the country, many of the students who are represented in the book are highly educated[10] and they are therefore not easily assimilated under

the category of the oppressed, dispossessed or indigenous groups. A testimonial approach to *La noche de Tlatelolco* is better understood as Jorgensen describes it, the "explicit commitment to denounce repression and abuse of authority, to raise the consciousness of its readers about situations of political economic, and cultural terror, and offer an alternative view to official hegemonic view" (The writing 29).

In a similar fashion to Yudice and Randall's appreciation of testimonio as a performative endeavor, Briet's notion of documentation as a valuable and ideologically charged practice allows us to better understand how *La noche de Tlatelolco* presents its own version of the student movement without abdicating its socio-historical value as an authentic document. In a similar sense, Jorgensen has approached Poniatowska's role as an editor that highlights the voices of the students by erasing her own presence in the books fragments, What this implies is not the interchangeability of all of these terms where editor, compiler or documentarian all mean the same thing. Rather, this signals a shared code of production that underscores the positionality of the author as an organizational force, and a constitutive element of these modes of representation.

3.4 DOCUMENTING A MOVEMENT

The idea to analyze Elena Poniatowska's work under the light of documentation and documentary writing practices aims to bring this question beyond the generic classifications. I argue that Elena Poniatowska organizes the experiences following an affective framework that emphasizes the complex moral economy that took place during the student movement of 1968. This moral economy assigns value to the degree to which the individual's biography was touched by the movement, and with it comes the social distinction of belonging to it (Ahmed 35, Skeggs

77). By following this compositional framework, the document produced by Poniatowska constructs a participatory narrative based on the biographical involvement, in the degree to which the speakers' lives were changed by the events narrated in the book. This particular form of organization configures the affective experiences in the book as documents, and therefore, as valid sources of information into the transformative social and political event that was the student movement.

Building upon this established conception, it is possible to note that beyond the deconstruction of common tropes, *La noche de Tlatelolco* can be said to address more substantial categories of social organization, interpersonal relationships of belonging and ultimately, the politicization of the individual and collective bodies that make up the book. This is an affirmative proposition that Poniatowska's book that engages in direct controversy with the polarizing rhetorical edifice of the print press. By invoking a sense of authenticity in the document, *La noche de Tlatelolco* sets up an alternative validation of the veracity of the testimonial evidence that cannot be separated from the lived experiences of the participants themselves.

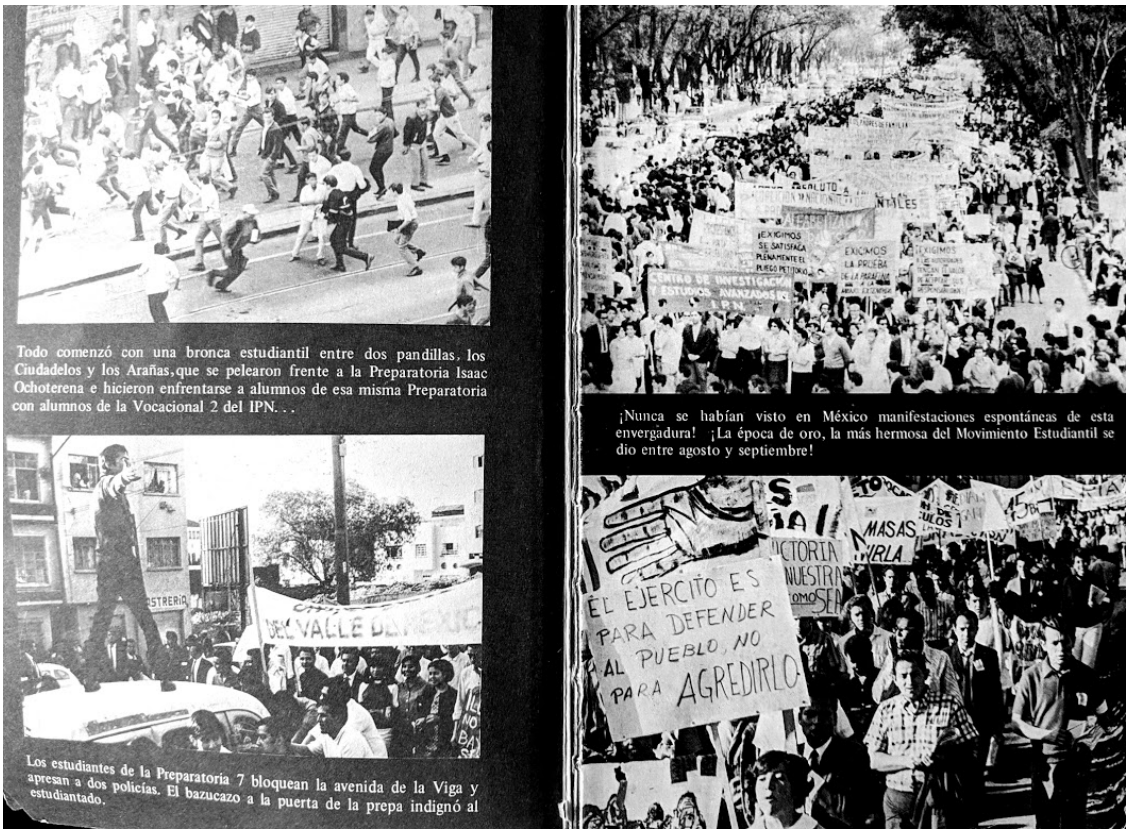
Following the formal disposition of the book laid out by the table of contents, the written portion of the book has three parts: "Ganar la calle", which talks about the student movement during the months prior to the massacre on October 2nd, "La noche de Tlatelolco", which addresses the deadly events of that day; and "Cronología", where the events are retold following a schematic and chronological order. However, as it has been noted in more recent studies of Poniatowska's project, the pictures included at the beginning of the book are a fundamental part of it, without which the full scope of the book cannot be properly understood (Gardner 2). The book is therefore composed of at least three different modes of representing the student

movement: the photo collection, the oral history and the chronology. This coalition of different modes to document the events that culminated in the tragedy of Tlatelolco.

The photograph collection, which opens the book also sets up the tone for the texts that follow. The 49 pictures included in *La noche de Tlatelolco* establish a dialogue with both forms of representing relevant events. From the outset, it is clear that *La noche de Tlatelolco* is interested in the massive and primordially collective nature of the student movement. The first four photographs of the collection highlight this very clearly by focusing on the passionate moments of gathering and collective display of solidarity in the streets of Mexico City. They also focus on youth contributions to the movement, being the main bodies represented in the pictures.

Here, both the elevated point of view and the heightened depth of field in the pictures emphasize the massive dimensions of the student movement. The decision to open up the book with these images shows an interest to portray it as a significant event that reached a massive audience and involved a great number of participants, while emphasizing the role of the youth as the initiators and main participants of the movement. Although the first picture confronts the reader with a chaotic image in which it is not clear what is happening, the caption is quick to clarify its relation to the origins of the movement both as a fortuitous event but also one initiated by a seemingly minor form of student rebellion. "Todo comenzó con una bronca estudiantil entre dos pandillas", reads the first accompanying sentence. Without any further details, the first

Figure 7



Spread of first pages, unnumbered, in *La noche de Tlatelolco.* Era, 1998.

image of this movement is one that could be interpreted as both violent and playful. The elevated perspective in the first photograph allows the viewer to perceive the multiplicity of individuals who are participating while at the same time obscuring the nature of the events by showing an undefined focus and a chaotic composition. The photograph automatically becomes the index of a larger event, whose proportions escape the frame of the picture. There are no identifiable groups in the picture, contrary to the assertion of the caption, but the use of school uniforms and the youthful faces of the participants suggests their academic affiliation as students.

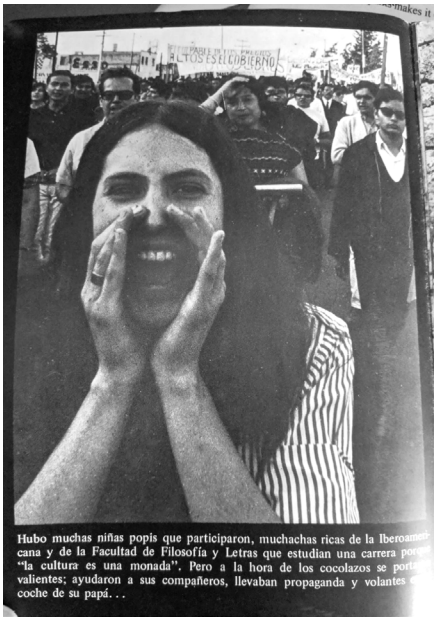
Even though the first photo aims to illustrate the origins of the movement[12], the following pictures do not present a linear timeline as a principle for their organization. Instead of following

a timeline of the events as an organizational principle, it appears that the pictures are organized around affective chronology that go from euphoria and joy, to solidarity and empathy, and end up with pain and mourning. This differentiation is not fortuitous. As Steinberg points out, the relationship between the photographs and the texts that follow are dialogical in nature as they respond to similar demands for indexes of truth within the text: "the photographic character of Poniatowska's writing is announced in these images, and, at the same time, these photographs assert the truth of the written text to follow. Finally, they are prefatory, an overture" (97). Even more so, these photographs operate as a visual table of contents, that organized by affective themes, inform the reader of the nature of the contents as well as the filter through which they should be interpreted.

In a similar fashion, the numerous quotations that make up most of the book may appear chaotic at first, but they soon reveal a similar organization. These themes are numerous and not neatly divided, since they show a variety of intersectional connections between them.

Although women do not present a cohesively organized theme in this introductory part of the book, they do have multiple, distinctive roles and their appearance should be noted explicitly, since their involvement is perhaps one of the most noticeable differences between Poniatowska's rendering of Tlatelolco and the print press' account. Women's role as participants, supporters and patrons of the movement is explicit and readily visible since the beginning. In many ways, their inclusion and placement at the forefront of the narrative allows Poniatowska to articulate numerous issues and situations regarding the student movement, starting with the broader question of who was involved with the movement and in what ways.

Figure 8



Woman yelling in front of a crowd. Unnumbered, in *La noche de Tlatelolco.* Era, 1998.

Figure 9

Mothers marching with banner: “Las madres mexicanas apoyamos a sus hijos”. Unnumbered, in *La noche de Tlatelolco.* Era, 1998.

Women in these introductory pages may not stand as a cohesive theme, since their appearances are spread out throughout the 31 pages that support the 49 photographs that make up this introductory section in the original Spanish version of the book. However, they allow the visual and textual discussion of key elements in the book, including patronage and class relations, but also affective relations between participants, issues of kinship and belonging, intergenerational discussions. Through this lens, expressions of joy, grief and even condemnation are central to the issue of the movement's makeup.

The 8th (Fig. 8) and 11th (Fig. 9) photographs are the first to focus on women's involvement. The focus of the 8th picture is the interaction between two middle aged women and a young man. The two women are shown reaching for their purses to donate money as the young man hands them a collection box that suggests his affiliation as a student of the IPN. The accompanying caption discusses the financial success that some of the *brigadas* achieved, by collecting up to two thousand pesos in one day. This interplay not only suggests that women contributed to the financial support of the students, but that it was indispensable for its survival. Furthermore, the peaceful interaction along with the emotionless faces of the represented subjects suggests that financial expressions of solidarity between the common people and the students was a common occurrence that carried no significant social stigma or indeed any other significant reaction by the surrounding public. By emphasizing the normality of this occurrence, the photo and indeed its placement within the collection presents the public's solidarity with the student as a matter of everyday life. The inclusion of this picture also should be read within the context of the public discussions that plagued the media's coverage of the events which insisted on large politically motivated donations from opposition leaders and other wealthy donors, along with foreign financial aid of extremist groups and communist governments. By highlighting the

people's contribution as a common occurrence, indeed as the only visual evidence of the financial support of the student demonstrations, the image openly contradicts the administered (top-down) view of the movement.

Significantly, the photograph 11th focuses on a fair skinned young woman who holds her hands around her mouth in a cheerful shouting gesture. In the picture she stands at the forefront of a significant group of people participating in a demonstration. She is followed by one older woman in what appears to be a group made up almost entirely by men of different ages. Her long dark hair, thick ring around the annular finger, striped t-shirt and manicured fingernails are the only visible characteristics that could indicate any sort of social class affiliation. However, the caption introduces the support of the movement by upper middle-class Mexicans, particularly wealthy young women or *niñas popis* associated with the Universidad Iberoamericana. The caption ends up challenging the speaker's stereotyped understanding of the *niñas popis* by stating that "a la hora de los cocolazos se portaron valientes; ayudaron a sus compañeros, llevaban propaganda y volantes en el coche de su papá" (*La noche* vii).

The representation of women, and particularly young women, allows the book to introduce the key element of solidarity with the movement across different social classes. These two initial pictures of women highlight the degree to which they were involved in the student movement and emphasizes a participation that may have gone unperceived by the account of other sources. For example, the press' coverage seldom identified any one woman as either a leader or representative of student activities. According to Viviana Beatriz MacManus' reading of *La noche de Tlatelolco*, "Poniatowska is careful to reflect the political consciousness of Mexican women; by pairing these testimonial accounts together at the beginning of the report, women's political subjectivities are not overshadowed by the men's histories of activism" (49).

By addressing the gendered nature of political participation, *La noche de Tlatelolco* actively undermines other accounts of the student movement, as its shifting focus from an exclusively male perspective implies not only a thematic differentiation, but perhaps more importantly, an ideological distance from the way journalists had sought to portray the movement as a confrontation between the students and the government. Here, Poniatowska moves away from the leadership based formulation which according to Lessie Jo Frazier and Deborah Cohen, "Leaders' accounts of the movement showcase as protagonists not only leaders but also the state; by emphasizing the period of state repression rather than the earlier formative process, these narratives further privilege state agency" (627). In *La noche de Tlatelolco*, the representation of female bodies does not ignore the political aspects of the movement, nor does it disregard the state's oppressive response. However, it does compel the reader to think beyond the immediate consequences, and to reconceptualize the meaning of who was an "active participant" in the demonstrations and the movement at large. Through the deeply affected eyes of the mothers who had lost their children.

The Picture 23 (See fig. 9) shows a small group of women carrying a poster that read "Mexican mothers support their children". One of them looks down and the other one, whose face cannot be identified looks away. Behind them, a larger group of young men walk while locking arms with each other. This focus on the complex relationship between motherhood and the student movement is developed further in the series of testimonies. In the collection of photographs, the support of the mothers comes in right after the two photographs portraying the army's early interactions with the students.

Figure 10

Movement leader, La Nacha, sitting with other known figures, El Búho and José Revueltas. Unnumbered, in *La noche de Tlatelolco.* Era, 1998.

Figure 11

Women demonstrating in front of the Cámara de Diputados. Unnumbered, in *La noche de Tlatelolco.* Era, 1998.

Furthermore, the inclusion of women and women's involvement with the movement also introduces a radical questioning of what exactly constitutes the chronological limits of the movement. By some accounts, including those of journalists and some researchers, the student movement ended with either the massacre of Tletelolco, on October 2nd, or with the official dissolution of the Comité Nacional de Huelga on December 4th of the same year. Poniatowska, instead, includes the first signs of mourning as the last picture of this visual index, and in doing so, she aims to include the remembrance of those who lost their lives, not as the aftermath of the movement, but as a constitutive part of it. Perhaps no other group of people was as affected as those whose family members were lost to the violence of that period.

Figure 12

Families grieving on Nov. 2 1968. Unnumbered, in *La noche de Tlatelolco.* Era, 1998.

The final photograph in the collection (Fig. 12) shows a small group of people praying in front of a temporary altar. In the picture, it is nighttime, and one man is shown placing a *veladora* alongside many others, surrounded by flowers, most notably, *alcatraces* or callas - associated with the dead in Mexico and other parts of Latin America. The women and men shown on the picture also exceed the framing of the photograph, as the scene is clearly cut out, which leaves the possibility for a larger crowd to be imagined by the viewer. In any case, the last visual evidence of this movement foregrounds those feelings of mourning as one lasting consequence of the movement. This image also installs a new aspect in the public discussions around *mexicanidad*, Mexico's own version of national exceptionalism, and which was typically used to instill a sense of progress and futurity whenever it was introduced. Here, *La noche de Tlatelolco* responds to that aestheticized idealization of Mexico by showing that, if the Mexican society is exceptional for any reason, it is so because of its tragic ritualization of political involvement, where politically active citizens are often subject to the strongest censure imaginable. Indeed, this may be what Carolyn Wolfenson aludes when she concludes that "En la escritura de Poniatowska los vencidos vuelven a perder porque ya estaba escrito. Sin embargo, no hay nada práctico que el mexicano pueda hacer salvo aceptar su pasado" (118).

The caption accompanying the last image talks about a vigil that occurred on November 2nd, a month after the massacre, on the Mexican Day of the Dead. "Muchos soldados nos vigilaban pero pronto se prendieron miles de veladoras y surgieron gentes de entre los árboles que comenzaron a rezar por sus hijos masacrados el 2 de octubre en Tlatelolco" (xxix). In combination with the text, the photograph presents the reader with an image of mourning and resilience by the survivors of the massacre, a group that extends beyond the direct participants to include the families of those who died on that day. Mourning is also a form of defiance, as

shown by the people's willingness to remember their deceased in spite of the state's intimidation. Finally, mourning is not only the consequence of the massacre, but a final and lasting form of involvement and an unquestionable evidence that one's life has been deeply touched by these events. The families and survivors have had their lives changed forever as a consequence of the massacre.

This photographic preface, itself a constitutive part of Poniatowska's book, guides the affective epistemology present in the oral testimonies. As María Terán has pointed out, the main body of Poniatowska's book is framed within two multi-modal chronologies, the photographic collection, and the summarized account that closes the narrative (79). In building the authenticity of her narrative, Elena Poniatowska offers a supporting structure for the multiple testimonies of the book that emphasizes its own contrast with linear and impersonal forms of organization. The first pillar that sustains these contributions is grounded on the photographic evidence, whereas the closing support offers a summarized, readily intelligible organization of the multiple events referenced throughout the complex system of quotations. The reader may also note that the organization of the oral testimonies doesn't follow any perceptible principle of unicity other than heir thematic arrangement. This is also not coincidental, since the first few themes are perhaps the more lasting innovations of the book.

In the first few pages, the testimonies discuss what belonging to the movement meant, "pero de veras" (15). Raul Alvarez Garín, Margarita Isabel, Luis González de Alba and Gilberto Guevara Niebla, all discuss what authentic commitment was for them and how their experiences belonged to such classification. "No es que yo me metiera al Movimiento Estudiantil" (14), begins Alvarez Garín, identified by the text as a professor of the IPN, jailed in Lecumberri Prison at the time. He goes on to identify the movement by emphasizing his genealogical adherence to

both the Institute and its belonging to the working class: “Allá nacieron mis hijos. Mi mujer también es del Poli. El movimiento lo tenemos dentro desde hace muchos años” (14). This seemingly improvised genealogy signals the degree to which his life experience makes him and his family incontrovertible members of this movement. Rather than dwelling on the causes and objectives of the demonstrations, the emphasis is once again placed in the personal commitment and motivation and indeed their personal toll on the movement’s participants. As he concludes, “Se trata de defender todo aquello en que creemos, por lo que siempre hemos luchado y antes de nosotros nuestros padres y los padres de nuestros padres” (14).

Similarly, Isabel narrates how she saw the students being taken away violently by the police, “esta invasión arbitraria nos hizo tomar conciencia y resolvimos unirnos a los estudiantes y ayudarlos, pero de veras, no sólo yendo a las manifestaciones agarrados del brazo o gritando en los mítines… Entonces constituimos una brigada de actores de teatro” (15). The translation of the felt solidarity into a concrete social platform is the material expression of commitment highlighted by Isabel’s testimonial contribution.

For Gonzalez de Alba, whose testimony completes this initial set, the emphasis lies in how his life was transformed by the movement: “Desde 1967 era yo el presidente de la Sociedad de Alumnos pero ahora ya soy vitalicio. . . A partir del 26 de julio, todo cambió. . .Yo no soy el mismo; todos somos otros. Hay un México antes del movimiento y otro después de 1968” (15-6). Here, the most meaningful evidence of the leader’s involvement with the movement is the personal transformation that it brought for them. It is important to note how La noche de Tlatelolco begins its most salient section of the book by discussing what constitutes true involvement. The ways in which these participants discuss their relationship with the movement is not only full of positive sentiments of pride but it is also significant that they all rely on the

description of how the movement transformed their own lives. This emphasis is key to understanding the approach that *La noche de Tlatelolco* uses to determine who is allowed to contribute to the collective history of the movement and to what extent. Unlike what I have discussed previously as a common action of the press, the construction of authenticity and veracity in *La noche de Tlatelolco* does not stem a priori notions of affiliation, but its construction readily emphasizes the voices, indeed the individual's self-construction as contributors, insofar as they have been exposed to the collective phenomenon that was the student movement.

It is not by accident that *La noche de Tlatelolco* starts with such explicit declarations on the nature of what involvement meant for its participants. These initial oral testimonies direct much of their attention to what validates involvement for this group of students, professors and other supporters of the movement. Although it may seem like it contradicts previous assertions of inclusiveness and openness in *La noche de Tlatelolco's* representation of the movement, it should be noted that González de Alba, Isabel and Alvarez Garín's testimonies all agree that neither class, ideology or professional affiliation nor indeed age or gender signify a limitation to what the student involvement was.

The book insists on this encounter of opinions and cultural attitudes through the representation of a series of personal discussions involving intergenerational differences. Such differences, although built on personal situations, are deemed essential to the construction of the book, whose own construction as a collection is given by the addition of numerous components. One such example comes early in the book, when it presents a series of statements involving young women and their claim for freedom around the dress code. Two female students, Gabriela Peña Valle and Vera Pomar Vermudez's voices intersect and clash with the voices of seemingly

older women, Mercedes Fernandez de Cervantes, Elsa Treviño de Zozaya, and Sofia Arrechiga de Toscano. The latter group are also mothers, and their views toward women's decorum are on the conservative end. As Fernandez de Cervantes claims, during an implied conversation with a younger woman, "Yo me moría antes que usar una falda así" (23). Two pages later, Pomar Bermudez interjects the intermittent dialogue with a bold message: "Mis viejos son unos asnos solemnes, y mis maestros también". (25) This staged intergenerational dialogue introduces the clear disagreement between generations in Mexico. Sexual liberation and increased agency for women is highlighted, if only momentarily and superficially. However, the interrupted conversation also highlights the constitutive problem of belonging. By discussing a seemingly unrelated topic, such as women's clothing and fashion, these groups of women are widening the conceptual notion of participation and involvement. Even though it would be suspect to say how these women participated in the organization of the student movement, what their interaction does is to refocus the scope of the student movement away from the political leadership and radically widens it to include broader, seemingly minor discussions on gender and sex. In a sense, what the student movement does is to allow these kinds of discussions to take place. On the other hand, it is also possible to affirm that the student movement would be incomplete and perhaps impossible to visualize without these relevant interactions.

The contentious nature of this interaction is readily challenged by one more participant who admits loving the new perspectives and attitudes that the new generation brings about. Luz Fernanda Carmona de Ochoa, and Yvonne Huitrón de Gutierrez, are introduced as "madre de familia", right after this discussion takes place. Their perspectives, more than settling the discussion as a matter of intergenerational differences, add another layer of complexity to it, by establishing their inability to act as the younger generation does. However, their desire to do so

still presents an alternative way of participating. Carmona de Ochoa states: "A mí me encanta la juventud de hoy, su moda, sus canciones, su libertad, su falta de hipocresía, su manera de enfrentarse al amor y de vivirlo" (25), and shortly after, Huitrón de Gutiérrez follows with a positive evaluation of what these changes have brought about for the newer generations:

> Todo lo hacíamos a escondidas y yo tengo la sensación de haber vivido así, a escondidas; logrando lo que deseaba a hurtadillas como cuando niña robaba la mermelada de la alacena de las conservas y cerraba bruscamente el armario con el terror de que alguien me hubiera visto… Por eso me gusta la vida de los jóvenes; prefiero mil veces la vida de mi hija a la que yo llevé. Sé que mi hija no me dice mentiras (26).

Particularly interesting is the fact that these two women, although they realize the difference in their upbringing, they also identify and express an emotional connection with the younger generations. They do not feel alienated from the transformation, rather, they seem to position themselves as beneficiaries of these changes too.

The nature of the relationship between these interrupted dialogues is essential to further understanding the message of *La noche de Tlatelolco*, as they present alternative forms of involvement with the movement beyond direct political activism. The affective relationships that stem from these discussions are once more, at the forefront of their discussions. At first sight, it can be said that the degree to which *La noche de Tlatelolco* introduces an innovative platform for the representation of the complex dynamics that sustain the Student Movement stems from the notable use of quotations from participants, observants and artistic commentators. In this regard, the book has been interpreted as a polyphonic construction, which stems from the variety and quantity of registers and voices included (Monsivais 445, Unnold 28, Cervera Salinas 51) and

which would eventually upend the historical negative of the government to engage the students through dialogue. *La noche de Tlatelolco* effectively stages a dialogue between the said participants and co-participants, and in doing so, it presents a collaborative construction of the movement along with the multiple and dissimilar narratives that sustain it.

Perhaps the most radical example of this broad portrayal of the openness of the movement, and indeed its biggest challenge, comes with the inclusion of Socrates Amado Campos Lemus. Campos Lemus was known to many inside the movement as a student leader who participated in many high-level discussions about the direction of the movement. He was also widely denounced as a traitor by many of the leaders, and indeed this is the main profile that is presented in *La noche de Tlatelolco*. His seemingly treasonous and forced confession was instrumental to the government's persecution of student leaders after the Tlatelolco massacre, and his public statements were widely publicized by all major media outlets at the time. However, Campos Lemus' testimonial contribution to the book is significantly limited, although not completely erased.

The book does not deny Campos Lemus's participation in the movement, since it does include a few testimonies by him that speak about his personal background and even his own evaluation of what he had done. His contributions, however, are contained within a thematic group of testimonies that is introduced in the voice of González de Alba: "De los comités de lucha no hubo nunca ningún aprehendido por ese tiempo, y de los doscientos delegados al CNH solo dos fueron detenidos. La causa fue una delación" (*La noche* 101). This opens up a series of testimonies that deal with delatory activities as treason, a morally reprehensible action with severe consequences for the accused. Soon after, Luis Tomas Cervantes Cabeza de Vaca, another member of the CNH recalls a scene of torture in which one of the soldiers conducting the forced

interrogation states: “No te hagas pendejo, tú portabas armas. Ya lo dijeron Ajax, Socrates y Osuna” (107). The torture scene resumes a few pages later with Cabeza de Vaca finally facing Camps Lemus, who tries to convince Cabeza de Vaca to cooperate with the interrogators. He then invites him to a staged confession that would implicate Cabeza de Vaca in a political scheme involving an alliance with opposition politicians. Cabeza de Vaca finally responds by confronting Campos Lemus: “No, no, Sócrates, no sé nada, y si tu lo sabías ¿por qué no lo denunciaste en el Consejo y lo dices aquí? ¿Qué te pasa? Mejor cállate.” (116). The consequences for Cervantes Cabeza de Vaca were significant and terrifying:

> Después de haberme dado lo que ellos llaman <<calentada>>, se me inyectó en los testículos una sustancia anestésica y se me hizo un simulacro de castración rompiéndome el escroto con una navaja o bisturí, cicatriz que aún conservo. Todo esto fue en la noche del 2 de octubre de 1968, hasta las seis de la mañana del dia 3… Todo por no querer hacer declaraciones en contra del Movimiento Estudiantil Popular ni en mi contra; declaraciones que serían una serie de mentiras en contra de la lucha democrática de nuestro pueblo (118).

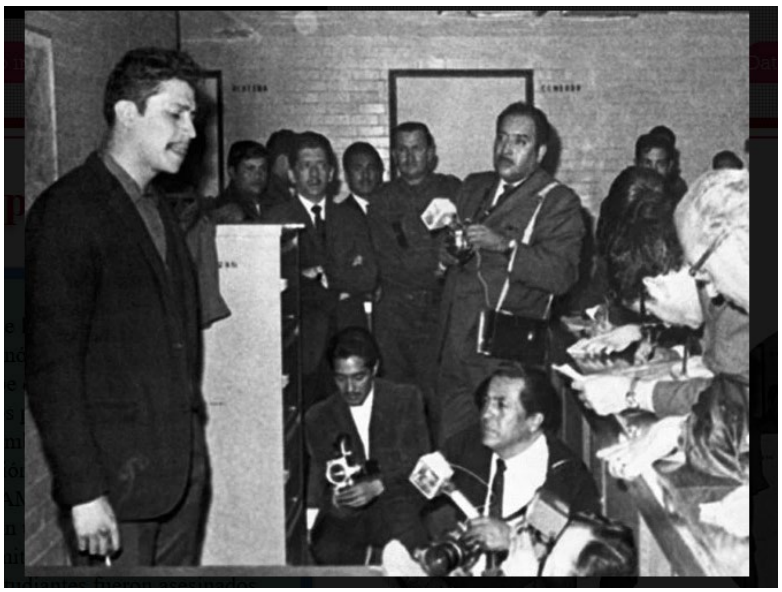
The torture scene is introduced as a direct consequence of Campos Lemus’ declarations. This scene highlights both the treasonous actions of Campos Lemus and the degree to which Cervantes Cabeza de Vaca became affected by the movement. Literally and physically marked by the scars of the interrogation, he is moved to highlight the serious consequences of his decision not to lie.

The division between true and false confessions is at the forefront of this series of testimonies. In a metanarrative sense, Cervantes Cabeza de Vaca’s statement inserts the possibility of a false confession, a fallacious construction of testimonial evidence that is not

entirely different from the other testimonies I have discussed here. However, the evident falsehood of Campos Lemus assertions about the nature of Cabez de Vaca's involvement is predicated on the violent nature of its production. By making it explicit that both of the student leaders faced the possibility of being executed by the army, the text is emphasizing the radical difference between a forced, staged declaration, and an authentic testimony that emerges from willing cooperation. In its framing, this anecdote seems to highlight the opposition between Campos Lemus and Cervantes Cabeza de Vaca, since it is indeed the representation of a contentious encounter between the two. However, it also highlights a deeper relationship between the two that ultimately allows Campos Lemus testimony to be included in the broader narrative. They are both brought together by and within the context of violent interrogations and staged statements.

When Campos Lemus first produced his statement in the Military Camp number 1 in Mexico City (Fig. 13), a few days after being detained in Tlatelolco on October 2nd, his statement was indeed a staged event presented to multiple media outlets. "En la ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, siendo las diecisiete horas con treinta y cinco minutos del dia cinco de octubre de mil novecientos sesenta y ocho, compareció el señor Sócrates Amado Campos Lemus" ("Revelaciones" Excélsior. p1.) Prefaced by the legal language around the relevance of his statement, Campos Lemus presented a lengthy statement where he touched upon a variety of issues pertaining to the Student movement. Some of them, entirely in line with what the government had been arguing, such as the existence of "grupos de choque", the underlying objective to destabilize the country, and the students' possession of a small arsenal.

Figure 13



Amado Campos Lemus faces the press in the Military Camp No. 1 on October 6, 1968.

After Cervantes Cabeza de Vaca's testimony, two other student leaders Eduardo Valle Espinoza and Salvador Martínez della Rocca continue to comment on Campos Lemus' betray. Right after their testimonies, Campos Lemus introduces himself: "Yo soy de la sierra de Hidalgo, de Zacualtipán, y mi papá es maestro. Se llama Homero. Desde abuelos y tíos viene esa costumbre de los nombres griegos. Por eso a mí me pusieron Sócrates". At the time Poniatowska is conducting her interviews, Campos Lemus still remained at the Lecumberri prison. He would be released in 1971, 2 years and 8 months after he was originally incarcerated.

> Esas gentes dicen que yo delaté, que <<marqué>> en el Campo Militar número 1, que yo estaba ligado al gobierno… Mire, cuando se vino el Movimiento Estudiantil yo ya tenía muchos años de militancia y de prestigio entre los estudiantes. Yo era una de las cabezas más visibles del CNH. Hablé en casi todas las manifestaciones. En Tlatelolco cuando empezó la balacera yo fui el que trató

> de detener a la gente; agarré el micrófono y grité: "¡No corran, calmense!" De esto hay cientos de testigos… (121)

Campos Lemus explains his involvement in similar terms as other student leaders here. In his testimony the evidence that justifies his belonging to the movement are grounded on his previous experiences, constituting a precedent that aims to counter the voices that judge him as an inauthentic member of the movement. On the other hand, Campos Lemus arguments are exceptional insofar they install the discussion of veracity and authenticity within the realms of discourse. Beyond his lived experiences and physical presence in the demonstrations, the emphasis of his defense lies in how his statements are construed in relation to the movement and its participants. It his construction as an orator, someone who has talked for the movement and in defense of the physical integrity of the demonstrators, that he's wielding as a main argument. Since the accusations are meant to brand his words as treasonous, it is only his own words that can disprove at least that he was an infiltrator for the government.

> Vamos a eso de las delaciones. ¿Usted cree que no hubo muchachos que no cantaron? Usted cree que un muchacho que jamás ha pasado por una situación semejante, loco de terror por todo lo que ha visto, presa de un nerviosismo incontrolable, expuesto a una tensión constante, sujeto a torturas, a amenazas no solo a él sino a su familia ¿usted cree que no canta? ¿Lo considera un coyon un asco, un delator? (122)

It is notable the omission of Campos Lemus' confession to the police, given the fact that it was readily available to Poniatowska at the time. Soon after the massacre Campos Lemus forced confession was made public by the army and widely publicized, occupying the first page on numerous newspapers, including *Excélsior*, *El día* and *El Heraldo*, on October 6th. However,

this infamous and arguably central confession is absent from *La noche de Tlatelolco's* own collection of journalistic coverage of the movement. What remains in the book, however, is Campos Lemus' contribution to the movement, as well as the hatred his own actions evoked in those who were implicated by his statements. His testimony belongs to the broader theme of treason and infiltration that severely damaged the movements public representation, and which brought bodily harm, pain and torture to many. In this regard, Campos Lemus involvement in the student movement, as discussed in this collection of testimonies is radically different from that of infamous instigator Ajax Segura.

Even though Campos Lemus is effectively represented as a traitor to the movement, the premise of the offense implies that he was indeed a significant part of it at some point. The inclusion of Campos Lemus' defense of his own actions instead of the fabricated account that was publicized in the press, marks a significant difference between the two platform's verification of the movement's participation. Even when Campus Lemus actions are questionable, the book does not erase or deny the biographical connection and lived experiences that Campos Lemus mentions. It is in fact, the apocryphal nature of his statements what is challenged by the adjacent testimonies. His own experience in jail is itself a constitutive element in the book and in its own depiction of the student movement.

Through this series of representations, it becomes clear that the compositional nature of *La noche de Tlatelolco* emphasizes a narrative reflection on the values that sustain their own narratives. Namely, they bring the issue of true involvement by showcasing a series of adjacent, equally relevant discussions and self-assertions by its collaborators on what constitutes their participation. The biographical proximity to the depicted events as well as the reflections elicited in the interviewees contribute to the creation of a deeply personalized documentation of the

breath of the movement. The contrast with the impersonal and grandiose epic narrative widespread in the print press. What I have termed here authentic involvement with the movement is presented in *La noche de Tlatelolco* more as a question than a fixed presupposition. This inquiry, however, is guided by a wide range of examples related to diverse effects on the biographical and affective experiences of the individual voices.

3.5 DOCUMENTING THE TRUTH

Critics have often defined the roles of documentary literature in their complex and historical relationship with journalism. Their ideals and ethical mandates remain related insofar as they could be described as being guided by similar ethical imperatives of transparency and veridiction. In the words of Anibal Gonzalez, "The ethical dimension is inescapable in any narrative that purport to communicate the truth, and a certain degree of a priori faith must be placed in the text so that it becomes coherent and credible. Documentary narratives, like journalism, are profoundly ethical in that their stories are built around moral imperatives; one of these is Thou shalt not lie" (124). However, this contemporary theory of documentary production encounters different expressions which are always conditioned by the historical circumstances of their production. In the latter half of the 1960s in Mexico, these conditions effectively manifested in the exploitation of the ideals of journalistic work. Although these ideals have not changed much since the origins of contemporary journalism, the material conditions brought about by the development of a strong presidential regime under the rule of the PRI in general and under Díaz Ordaz in particular.

Within the established Latin American tradition of documentary writing, Poniatowska's work has been placed under the broad classification of documentary narratives, a classification

that derives mostly from the practices involved in its production, from the use of oral history as a research tool, its journalistic commitment to build a truthful representation of the massacre. However, as Elżbieta Skłodowska points out, *La noche de Tlatelolco's* formal expression installs an important self-reflection that ultimately emphasizes its artistic contribution to the documentary genres: "Como editora autoconsciente repara más específicamente en los mecanismos escriturales y en la tensión entre el intento documentalista y la mediación ficticia" (159). While the documentary impetus points to the manner in which the text asserts its validity as the registry of the events, with the events themselves admitting the existence of different accounts, the fictional mediation and the self-reflective attitude that Skladowska mentions, bring the attention to the formal construction of this authoritative formulas. By highlighting this process, Poniatowska's book does not necessarily questions the validity of the testimonies or their producers, but it does invite the reader to pay attention to how this series of narrative mechanisms build up a truthful rendition of the events. As Ana María Amar Sánchez states:

> Aunque tienen como premisa el uso de un material que debe ser respetado (distintos "registros" como grabaciones, documentos y testimonios comprobables que no pueden ser modificados por exigencias del relato), el modo de disponer ese material y su narración producen transformaciones; los textos ponen en escena una versión con su lógica interna, no son una repetición de lo real sino que constituyen una nueva realidad regida por leyes propias con las que se denuncia la verosimilitud de otras versiones (475)

Indeed, Poniatowska's self-reflective imprint in *La noche de Tlatelolco* allows the book to position itself in direct controversy with other narratives about the student movement. Although

this is hardly new to say, what I aim to emphasize is how exactly the documentary mandate around veridiction is placed at the center of Poniatowska's book.

This very notion that a document, any document has a purpose stems from a common and generally accepted notion in documentary practice and information management. This purpose, in *La noche de Tlatelolco*, does not exist in a legalistic sense. It does not aim to discredit the journals information as much as it challenges its manipulation, its concerted effort to render invisible the hope and suffering of the students, family members and other people touched by the movement. It doesn't challenge the journalistic guild's overt allegiance to the government, as much as it challenges their ethical pretense in doing so.

The authorial stance and its own rhetorical ethos are displaced in the construction of the book, which has been widely acknowledged and commented on by the critics. It stems, not from the identity of the author as a producer of content, but rather as an organizing entity that guides the readers' experience through the multiple fragments that build up the reading experience. This procedure is sustained by the readily apparent fact that Poniatowska is not the author of the comments or the photographs that make up the bulk of the book. Rather, she appears in the book as both the collector of these materials and the one who provides the interpretative framework through the strategic disposition of these materials. The author's role goes beyond unbiased and objective organization of the materials. Although the expression of affective context has become the norm in award winning journalism, objectivity[13] and its pursuit has been the cornerstone for journalistic practice during the twentieth century (Jorgensen 306).

Poniatowska's book produces a counter narrative that relies on a heterogeneous composition of sources and narrative means. In it, different characters and their scattered narratives gain moral and political visibility based on their portrayals as victims and their

collective sense of solidarity with each other. This democratic impulse finds a formal expression in *La noche de Tlatelolco*, as it tries to shift the visual paradigm of political representation from one of individual protagonists to one of social-mutual recognition. However, as Jorgensen notes, this process cannot escape the need for an organizing entity that provides an intelligible form to the public's chaotic expressions: On the one hand the speaking subjects of the testimonies are collectively the authors of the activities of the student movement and the language of its verbal recreation. On the other hand, a single compiler-writer, Elena Poniatowska, has transcribed, organized and issued -authored-the history in written form (82). This process highlights the experiences of the students and other demonstrators, aspiring to become active members of the Mexican civic society, as much as it highlights the authority of the documentarian who makes this expression possible. *La noche de Tlatelolco* not only tries to counter the official discourse around the student movement of 1968, represented by the print media at the time, but in fact aims to provide a new way to represent and understand how civic involvement occurs in Mexico City at the end of the 1960s.

Aside from the inclusion of existing documents in her book, releases by the government, photographs, slogans, poems, other books and songs, Elena Poniatowska's sources of information are grounded on the students' self-identification, the self-representations of their leaders and the relationship to their supporters.

3.6 NOTES

1. Since Luis Gonzales de Alba first published his article "Para limpiar la memoria" listing the many changes of his book by Poniatowska, numerous sources have mentioned that Gonzalez de Alba sued Poniatowska in order to get these changes done. He notes in this article that: "Elena Poniatowska no da mucha importancia a sus referencias. Le importa el sonido general de la obra, no los detalles" and immediately discredits the general tone of the book by saying that "Es un lenguaje virtual inventado por Elena Poniatowska y que solamente ella habla. Lo cual es muy distinto".

2. With Hector Jimenez Guzman, I understand the movement to be: "la serie de acciones relacionadas con la huelga, las movilizaciones y revueltas estudiantiles que se verificaron entre los primeros días de agosto y los primeros días de diciembre de ese año, esencialmente en la ciudad de México" (17)

3. Gonzalez de Alba provides the following list of what he considers misappropriations and purposeful erroneous quotations.

> Los números sin paréntesis corresponden a páginas de La noche… donde hay material de Los días y los años, los números entre paréntesis corresponden a páginas de este último libro donde se encuentra el párrafo original: 19 (20), 27 (158), 32 (59), 34 (61), 41 (46), 48 (98), 52 (106), 60 (119), 63 (120), 64 (117), 70 (125-126), 76 (122), 77 (134), 81(146), 85 (150), 101 (152), 102 (153), 105 (154), 152 (143-145), 153 (184), 174 (184), 175 (183), 180 (190-191), 183 (185-186-192), 194 (192), 195 (192), 211 (191) y 236 (203). En total, 28 párrafos con más de 500 líneas, extraídos de Los días y los años, y entreverados en La noche de Tlatelolco, de los cuales ninguno, ni uno solo de esos 28, está correctamente

> atribuido a la persona que dijo en la realidad real esas palabras, y, además, en casi todos está cambiado el lenguaje hacia un sentido más cercano al que Elena cree popular. (Para limpiar la memoria. Nexos. Octubre 1, 1997)

4. There is an abundance of interviews where Elena Poniatowska is asked about the influences that her background as a journalist has had on her life and later writings, including those by CU Debate, Infolibre and Cima Noticias. See bibliography.

5. El proceso de internacionalización de la economía mexicana, que comienza a consolidarse con las estrategias del desarrollo estabilizador y con a segunda fase de substitución de importaciones (de bienes de consumo durable e intermedios), significara un crecimiento sostenido de la economía mexicana durante las administraciones de Ruiz Cortines, López Mateos y Díaz Ordaz, con un crecimiento paralelo de los medios de difusión. Pero el crecimiento sostenido, el milagro mexicano, resultaría altamente concentrador del ingreso y provocaría una fuerte dependencia del exterior. La concentración de la riqueza encuentra su paralelo. . .en la concentración y centralización de la propiedad y el control de los medios, en especial electrónicos." (Sanchez Ruiz 31)

6.Although the author herself has established a link between her earlier experiences with journalism and her work on *La noche de Tlatelolco*, it is important to note that there is a specific genre of journalism expressed through her book is investigative journalism. Investigative journalism, as it has been described by David Finklestein may be summarized as a goal, rather than as a specific format: "Political investigative journalism at its best strives to hold institutional masters to account, to fit parts of a large factual puzzle together to demand and provide transparency and accountability." (130)

7. Many of the cartones and some of the articles mentioned here were first found in Aurora *Cano's 1968: antología periodística*. See bibliography.

8. Although the relationship between objectivity and journalism exceeds the scope of this analysis, it is important to note that several codes of conduct for Latin American journalists, were already available and well known, according to Moises Ochoa Campos (14).

9. See "Anthropology as an Imperial Study". Nature 141, 699-700 (1938).

10. This is particularly true in the case of the Mexico City students, whose experience is at the forefront of Poniatowska's book. According to Soledad Loaeza, "En 1960, 40% del total de los alumnos inscritos en el ciclo secundario de todo el país se encontraban en la capital, aunque ahí vivía sólo el 14% de los jóvenes con una edad entre los 15 y 19 años. Los estudiantes inscritos en las instituciones de enseñanza superior de la ciudad de México representaban el 65% del total nacional, siendo que en esta ciudad habitaba únicamente el 11% de la población que entonces tenía entre 20 y 24 años de edad."

11. Hector Jimenez Guzman offers a brief catalogue of these titles, which include *El Gran Chantaje*, by Ruben Rodriguez Lozano and *Tlatelolco 1968*. *Díaz Ordaz tuvo razón*, by Gustavo de Anda. See Jiménez Guzmán.

12. The picture had originally appeared in Excelsior's front page on July 24th, as a part of the article "Zafarrancho, al Terciar la policía en un lío estudiantil". The original caption for the picture read "En medio de la pedrea y al ver que se acercaba la policía, este grupo de estudiantes huye a toda carrera de la zona donde se enzarzaron en pelea alumnos de una preparatoria particular y dos escuelas secundarias" ("Zafarrancho". 1p. *Excélsior*)

13. Following Loraine Daston and Peter Galison, I understand objectivity to be an epistemological principle that implies a specific ethical conduct which aims to reduce the

"hindrance to the acquisition of knowledge". As such, "In its negative sense, this ideal of objectivity attempts to eliminate the mediating presence of the observer" (83). Furthermore, this particular exception of objectivity "requires painstaking care and exactitude, infinite patience, unflagging perseverance, preternatural sensory acuity, and an insatiable appetite for work" (83). Daston and Galison, do not address journalism or literature specifically in their formulation of objectivity, but they do affirm that the principle of noninterventionist objectivity is better understood as an ideal, a set of principles that have less to do with the format of the texts themselves than with a particular impetus of knowledge, and the belief that such knowledge can be achieved.

4. FINDING THE TRUTH: REGIMES OF VERIDICTION AND MASCULINITY IN LOS PERIODISTAS AND LA GUERRA DE GALIO

In the summer of 1976, avid readers of Mexico City's newspaper *Excelsior* had been following the newspapers' public stand-off with the government since early June, when a group of *paracaidistas* (land-grabbers) settled in Excelsior's real estate development Paseos de la Taxqueña. The newspaper's investment was being jeopardized by groups of *ejidatarios* (communal farmers) who claimed the newspaper owed them money for the purchase of the land. After numerous published articles in Excelsior demanding the city's government to intervene, Excelsior turned to blame the invasion on a political conspiracy, supported by the federal government, against the interests of the newspaper. On the morning of July 8th 1976, readers found the last page of that day's issue completely blank. The blank page was the most visible sign of the internal struggle in the newspaper that culminated in the ousting of Julio Scherer García and his followers. Scherer García had stepped in the leadership in September 1968, at the height of the Student Movement demonstrations, and quickly led the newspaper to be recognized as one of the most important news outlets in Latin America. Although the newspaper itself never explained the meaning behind its blank page, Regino Díaz Redondo, who became the journal's new leader after the incident, has admitted his responsibility in stopping the *communiqué* that Scherer García and his group had prepared, denouncing the government's meddling in the newspaper's internal affairs. For Díaz Redondo and his allies, the publication of the announcement would have brought more problems with outgoing president Luis Echeverría Álvarez's administration (Díaz Redondo 36). Indeed, shortly after the arrival of Díaz Redondo's group to the leadership of the newspaper, the changes in its relationship with the Mexican

government became visible, at least from the editorial perspective.

In a few days, Excelsior's editorials completely changed their tone in commenting on the president and the federal government. On July 6th, 1968, Excelsior had sharply criticized the recent electoral process in Mexico after the uncontested election of José López Portillo as Mexico's new president, the 7th consecutive president from the PRI. "Si mal no se recuerda, una de las aspiraciones iniciales del presidente Echeverría era precisamente su esperanza en el fortalecimiento de la oposición, como parte indispensable en el juego de fuerzas que debe caracterizar a toda sociedad que aspire a ser democrática. Es evidente que esto no se ha conseguido" (6 Julio 1976 "Editorial. Confianza y Responsabilidad". Excélsior). By July 16th, the tone had changed completely, with the leading editorial commentary defending the PRI's victory as an expression of healthy democracy in Mexico: "Que un partido político se mantenga en el poder por años y años no es cosa que de suyo repugne a las exigencias de la democracia" ("¿Monopolio del Poder?").

Excelsior's blank page was meant to erase the inner struggles of the newspaper, however, in so doing, it also made apparent the precarious condition of the country's public sphere. It served as an opportunity for many intellectuals in Mexico to reflect on the relationship that the government had established with the press until then. For many journalists, the lack of coverage of this event by other newspapers proved the pervasiveness of the institutional censorship that impeded the democratic development of the country. Díaz Redondo's improvised act of censorship became a critical point in the development of a contemporary ethos of journalism and a cornerstone in the construction of the journalist/activist mythos in Mexican literature (Burkholder Introducción).

Los periodistas by Vicente Leñero (1976) and *La guerra de Galio* by Hector Aguilar

Camin (1991) are two novels that emerged from this event. Leñero's novel is itself a nonfictional narrative reconstruction of the final days of Julio Scherer García as the director of Excélsior. In it, Vicente Leñero's intradiegetic narrator and avatar relates the takeover of the newspaper from his perspective as a participant and a member of Scherer Garcia's close group of allies. The novel is divided into three parts: "Primera parte/Excelsior", "Segunda parte/El golpe" and "Tercera parte/Proceso". As each subtitle explains, the novel follows a progressive and linear narration focused on the journey of Scherer García's group of collaborators from *Excelsior*, through their expulsion from the leadership of the newspaper and into their first days in their new journalistic venture, the political analysis magazine *Proceso*. Many of the chapters stand out because they are modeled by distinctive discursive genres. In the second chapter, for example, Leñero's narrator tells how he was recruited by Scherer García, and the different roles he played in the administration, from occasional contributor to becoming the director of Lunes. The chapter stands out precisely because it is presented as an interrogatory, where an anonymous investigator questions Leñero's integrity and his responsibility for the fallout of Scherer García from the newspaper. The construction assimilates different materials, including *communiqués* disseminated by the cooperative, letters, excerpts from articles by multiple authors, interviews, and other discursive genres. These materials are used as models for the narrative as much as they are used as sources of the content discussed in the novel. The narrator's self-fashioning as a truth-teller and his association with Julio Scherer García remain at the forefront of this novel, as they guide many of the anecdotes and provide cohesiveness to Leñero's narrative experiment.

La guerra de Galio, on the other hand, relates the fictional story of the protagonist Carlos Garcia Vigil and his involvement with the newspaper *La Republica*, modeled after Leñero's *Excélsior* in *Los periodistas*[1]. Aguilar Camin's novel is narrated by Garcia Vigil's

former history professor, who accepts an invitation from Oralia Ventura, his pupil's former lover, to investigate the series of circumstances that led to his death. The book is the narrative journey of the anonymous historian to reconstruct the circumstances that led to his pupil's death and its connection to the Mexican guerrillas of the 1970s, and his turbulent experience as a journalist working for *La República*. In Aguilar Camin's novel, García Vigil never becomes the director of the newspaper and the narrator defines himself in direct opposition to the journalists of his own story. However, both *La guerra de Galio* and *Los periodistas* delve on the mythos of journalism as it had been imagined and experienced by a generation of male intellectuals who lived through the 1968 movement[2]. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it is at the basis of this mythos that one can identify the convergence of certain regimes of veridiction and masculinity -namely, the sum of social conducts and patterns of practice associated with these two forms of socially constructed identity markers.

In this chapter, I posit that *La guerra de Galio* and *Los periodistas* incorporate the events of July 8th 1976 to explore the relationship between discursive truthfulness and hegemonic homosocial masculinity. Under these models, the moral stature of the speaker and the empirical veracity of their speech become supplementary traits in the construction of truth as well as tools for the narrators' pursuit of their own legacy. Furthermore, the construction of the narrator's moral character is built on a series of supportive and adversarial relationships with other male figures, particularly in their roles as social influencers. In other words, the novel presents and confronts different regimes of masculinity in order to construct a variety of authoritative figures with divergent moral qualities. In Los periodistas, these processes are set against the local history of Excelsior's change of leadership in 1976 whereas I will examine how the narrators' self-representation as truth-tellers affects their relationship with other male characters, particularly

the protagonists of the novels they narrate, and their antagonist counterparts. In order to do this, I first explain the role that veridiction plays in the construction of each novel and their depictions of journalism as a localized form of bohemianism in Mexico City during the 1970s. Finally, I situate the construction of these homosocial relationships within the literary tradition depicting modern intellectual masculinity in Mexico's 20th century.

It is easy to note how *La guerra de Galio* and *Los periodistas* are two novels that place journalism at the forefront of their plots. Not only are these novels' built around a journalist protagonist, but they both explore the challenges and opportunities presented by journalism, seen as a form of organizing and articulating critical discourse and giving shape to public opinion. Because these two novels use Excelsior's take over as a crucial anecdote, their approach to journalistic tradition revolves around the crisis of independent journalism at the end of Luis Echevería Álvarez's populist government, in 1976. On the other hand, it is also noticeable that these novels identify journalism first and foremost with a mode of living, an ethos that permeates the work environments and social circles of newswriters, publishers, printers, editors and other members of that community. The prevalence of men in these circles is evident in both novels, where women are relegated to minor characters with little repercussion in *Los periodistas*, and subordinated, sexualized, supporting roles in the case of *La guerra de Galio*. Furthermore, the particular depiction of these circles shows the influence of European bohemianism[2] as an artistic discourse around cultural decadence and modernity.

4.1 BOHEMIAN JOURNALISM

In *Los periodistas*, the prevalence of journalists and their lives may seem obvious given the novel's own title. However, the novel introduces a particular characterization of journalism

as a profession and the spaces which journalists inhabit resemble the bohemian, European modernist questioning of the role of the artist in a modern society. Mary Gluck's analysis of 19th urban culture in Paris argues that bohemianism was an integral component of modernist culture. Although bohemian literary types changed over the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries[3], bohemianism and its literary formulations of popular characters were "engaged in the task of formulating an explicitly popular and performative vision of modernity" (110). Beyond the types themselves, which could hardly be transposed from the Parisian *fin de siecle* to Mexico City in the 1970s, bohemianism and its influence on these novels comes from the exploration of the margins of social bourgeois life[4]. Indeed, journalists in *La guerra de Galio* and *Los periodistas* do not replicate the errancy of 19th century bohemians, as much as they continue the literary and artistic tradition of urban, cultural and intellectual marginalities.

Unlike bohemians, journalists' lives in these novels are not a consequence of their rejection of established employment and the bureaucratic aspects of society; on the contrary, their work-related experiences and their sinuous relationship with political power are clearly established. Leñero's novel in particular offers a detailed account of the various technical roles that some of the characters played within the productive and organizational structures of *Excélsior*. At the same time, Leñero's novel begins with a series of gatherings, mediated by abundant consumption of alcohol, where the focus of the conversations revolves around the desire to adhere to or resist established political powers. Early in the book, a nameless voice replies to the narrator's assertion that under Scherer García and Hero Rodriguez Toro's administration, the corruption of the newspaper has been contained, unlike in many other newspapers of the capital.

No mames buey. Mira lo que me hace tu conciencia de mosquito. Uno vive de

> escribir y los pinches políticos de mierda tienen la obligación de soltarnos parte de lo que ellos se chingan. Quién puede vivir con los seiscientos o los mil pinches pesos que te pagan por un artículo. A mí no me vengan con purezas y mariconadas. El problema no está ahí. Si Julio o Miguel Ángel o don Hero no aprovechan la oportunidad, allá ellos, es su problema y eso no compone nada. No me digas que porque un pinche reportero de la fuente agarra su embute mensual ya se chingó el país. El país ya se chingó hace mucho, y el problema de la prensa es un problema de la capacidad profesional no de catecismo. (*Los periodistas* 31-3)

The conversation develops in a private salon in a restaurant near *Excelsior's* offices on *Paseo de la Reforma*. The restaurant on which this space is based was a glamorous location frequented by politicians and movie stars in the 1950s and 1960s (Peralta Gilabert 322). In the novel, the space is dominated by cynical conversations, political intrigues and rumors.

Within the Latin American literary tradition, the *modernista* experience of journalism produced a legacy of conflicted creativity, as writers in the early 20th century accessed newfound opportunities for financial independence through their work as journalists, supported by a growing market of news readers. This led to the problematic relationship with their own artistic production in relation to their work as *redactores* for different newspapers. According to Anibal Gonzalez, journalism affected literary practice in distinct ways, particularly in the relationship that journalists had with their own work as poets: "The second way in which journalism undermined the notion of the author was in its concept of texts as merchandise. The journalistic text was never written solely to satisfy aesthetic criteria; rather, it was tailored to what the editors of the newspaper or journal considered the public would pay to read about" (89).

The transformation of creative work, writing specifically under the productive demands of the consumer market provided journalists a degree of financial independence while it produced a particular kind of journalism, which was grounded on popular approval and demand. However, as I have discussed in previous chapters, the particular development of the print press in Mexico maintained a significant participation of the government in the ways newspapers acquired printing materials and in many cases, their information as well.

For the two factions in conflict in *Los periodistas*, the relationship between journalists and money is not one of refusal or indifference, but a given, constitutive part of their line of work. However, the conversations still revolve around the use and acquisition of money within a moral sense. Namely, the groups are not distinguished by who gets paid for their work and who doesn't but by the degree to which they value money itself and by the means they acquire it, particularly their willingness to take on bribes.

The aesthetic formulation of post-Tlatelolco journalism in these novels involves a topical pursuit for authenticity in the practice itself. The characteristic way in which these groups and individual journalists relate to their own trade becomes even more important insofar as it becomes a marker of their own identities. As Mike Sell has argued, bohemianism has also served as an aesthetic vehicle of the modernist ethos: "Those who live the bohemian lifestyle are most often noted for their passion for the unprecedented-the shocking, the outré, the newest import, freshest hybrid, hardest drug-but they are romantic in their lasting love for the antique-the first editions, dusty paste jewelry, forgotten vinyl records, passionate doomed love affairs" (41-2). In Sell's view, the use of bohemianism as an aesthetics highlights the historical consciousness of the represented groups of artists or artistically inclined characters:

> Regardless of where history is to be found, the bohemian assumes that authentic

> existence is historically conscious existence. To be bohemian is to be a memorialist. To remember in a certain way is to be authentic in a certain way. This combination of memory and authenticity is a hallmark of bohemian otherness and a wellspring for the critical-creative minority movements conventionally understood to be the avantgarde. (42)

Indeed, the link between bohemianism and journalism established in these novels is not circumscribed to any number of references to European bohemian culture. Rather, the novel establishes a parallel with this particularly eccentric form of cultural and artistic practice, where individuals and groups contribute actively to the formation of an intellectual circuit adjacent and removed from the prestigious and conventional circles of intellectuality. In both Aguilar Camin´s and Leñero's novels some of the contributors of the journals are themselves intellectuals who are indeed affiliated with prestigious centers of culture, such as universities or research centers. However, the novels emphasize the particular sense of freedom and precarity offered by their journalistic incursion which are not readily available through their work as established intellectuals. This is precisely the center of the unnamed narrator's introductory remarks in *La guerra de Galio*:

> Odio la noche. Su llamado condensa casi todo lo que he buscado apartar de mi vida: la irregularidad y el exceso, el miedo, las obsesiones que suspenden las certezas de nuestra convivencia civilizada, única sed de mi temperamento diurno, amante de la luz y del orden, y de las nobles geometrías que engendra la razón. (11)

Immediately after, the narrator establishes the simile between this chaotic imaging and the work of journalism:

> Desconfío pues, del presente y de su forma suprema, vacía por excelencia, que es el periodismo. He dedicado treinta años y doce libros a la historia colonial de México. Puedo decir que encontré ahí más explicaciones de los males presentes de nuestro mundo que en el registro de sus catástrofes cotidianas narradas por los periódicos, con su inmediatez desmemoriada y su exageración profesional. (11)

La guerra de Galio does not pay as much attention to the structural organization of the news outlet that seduces his pupil away from his job as a history researcher for the Museo de Chapultepec. Instead, it emphasizes the narrator's parallelism and presents a set of antinomies between historiography and journalism as two forms of intellectual production, seemingly at odds with each other. In the figurative presentation of journalism as a form of Dionysian trade, ruled by excess and irregularities, the narrator effectively separates this mode of writing further from his own association as a historian -Apollonian and luminous by contrast. The dialectical interplay established by the narrator is indeed symbolic but decisive for the construction of the novel itself, since the division of these intellectual practices models Garcia Vigil's experiences in between these two worlds. In other words, the narrator's recognition of journalism as a practice of intellectual merit carries with it a sign of moral impurity and a sense of decay. This comparison resonates with the modernist conceptualization where the commodification of writing practices is abhorred, as previously noted. On the other hand, history writing becomes the hegemonic intellectual practice, concerned only with the larger issues of Mexico, and requires its practitioners to remove themselves from the noise and worldliness required in journalism. While there's a contrast between honest and corrupt forms of journalism in *Los periodistas*, *La guerra de Galio* establishes the opposition between valuable and meretricious forms of writing -i.e. historiography *vis-a-vis* the newspaper.

Although *La guerra de Galio* seems to establish a clear distinction between these two practices, the ironic distance between the author and the narrator in the novel refocuses the object of the critique upon the absurdity of this differentiation. However, the nature of this decision is itself the problem that occupies the majority of the book. As I'll discuss later on, it is ultimately García Vigil's inability to decide, despite all his talents, what allows his characterization as the perennial promise of Mexican intellectuality and what ultimately drives him to his early death in a motel room. In Carlos Fuentes' reading of the novel, *La guerra de Galio*:

> encarna dramáticamente en el combate de dos elites: el gobierno y la prensa, la República y La república. Entre ambos se establece <<un correo interno de la élite del país>>, en el que las palabras son la realidad. Periodismo de declaraciones, más que de hechos, corresponsivo con una política de declaraciones también y de hechos que no coinciden con las palabras (Nexos).

The practice of news writing, reporting and publishing in *Los periodistas* remains a problematic practice whose consequences are at the core of what it means to be a journalist in these novels. *Los periodistas* takes place in the middle of a controversial change of leadership within Mexico City's *Excelsior*. The newspaper occupied a special place in Mexico, not only because of its prominence in reporting political issues but also because of its constitution as a cooperative business model. As an employee owned commercial enterprise since 1939 and until 1994, Excelsior was the only major newspaper in Mexico to follow this structure. The organizational composition of the newspaper is not a minor detail in Leñero's novel since the main plot of the takeover relies precisely on the fraudulent constitution of a voting majority of members which was used to push out Scherer García and his followers. Regardless, the novel maintains a sense of duality within the newspaper given by the workers' division of labor within

the cooperative. As the plot develops, the narrator oftentimes refers to the blue-collar members of the organization as "los talleres". This division sustains an important characteristic of the novel, and emphasizes the fact that, although journalism is continuously referenced as a trade, the novel assigns the protagonist role to the intellectual faction within the cooperative, characterized by their editorialist and managerial duties.

Intellect in *Los periodistas* becomes a sign of prestige and morality. It is a term that refers to the liberal bourgeoisie tradition of engagement within the public sphere, and of the inherent values of these practices: "En *Excélsior* cada quien es libre de elegir tema y tratamiento. Su propia firma lo avala, su crédito: la mayoría de nuestros escritores son intelectuales de prestigio a quienes es imposible manipular" (Los periodistas 42). On the other hand, manual labor and the work of technicians that sustain the material aspects of journalism are subject to doubt and manipulation:

"Por todos los departamentos del periódico, pero sobre todo en talleres -en linotipos, en formación, en rotativas-se comentaba con insistencia que la cooperativa terminaria perdiendo el fraccionamiento por culpa de la mala administración" (161). For Ignacio Corona, this characterization incorporates a series of tropes based on class and ethnic stereotypes to signal the author's disdain for the political manipulation of the working classes by president Luis Echeverría Álvarez's brand of populism: "Leñero implica que el gobierno no puede articular los intereses de la sociedad civil, aunque ello obliga a reflexionar sobre si lo pueden hacer los intelectuales en su papel de mediadores." (36)

Los periodistas further develops this separation between different kinds of journalism, derived from this ethical stance and notably, based on the degree to which they were able or willing to resist their cooptation through financial means. One notable example is the case of

journalist Jacobo Zabludovsky, a notorious Televisa TV anchor who has become the symbol for a particular vein of journalism that during the 20th century was a staunch ally of the PRI governments and the Mexican political establishment[5]. At the time, Zabludovsky was already an established voice in Televisa and his name was already associated with the political establishment. This perception was strong enough to drive some people to identify Zabludovsky's commentaries in direct relation to the PRI's official communications.

> Jacobo Zabludovsky aparecía en la pantalla y a manera de lacónico comentario emitía una frase de compasión por los ejidatarios despojados o un "ojalá se arregle esto" dicho con inconfundible parcialidad.
>
> Durante casi todas las noches de junio y principios de julio de 1976 Zabludovsky dedicó noticias y comentarios al caso *Excélsior* que los reporteros Reveles, Andrade y Vizcaíno refutaban desde el diario con sus informaciones. . .
>
> En la primera etapa de la lucha, la guerra de papel tuvo su documento más importante en un escrito de cinco cuartillas redactado por Samuel y Miguel Ángel y publicado el diecisiete de junio, donde *Excélsior* precisaba a la opinión pública toda su participación en la historia del ejido de la Candelaria hasta su transformación en el fraccionamiento Paseos de Taxqueña.Ninguno de estos documentos fue admitido por los diarios colegas como inserción pagada. Sistemáticamente se negaron a publicarlos, pero sí admitían en cambio los desplegados de los ejidatarios insistiendo en la revocación de la permuta" (153)

In the novel, Zabludovsky's name and actions are used within the same body of evidence as the government's denial to take action and to remove the *paracaidistas* who are unlawfully occupying the newspaper's terrains. His wide viewership and the problematic affiliation of his

network with the *priista* regimes invite Leñero's differentiated treatment of Zabludovsky. In this case, the confrontation is constructed by means of a rhetorical juxtaposition of the journalists' modus operandi. Whereas Zabludovsky's on screen commentaries build on malicious and misleading depictions of the events, the narrator's group of allies counters these allegations through reporting and documenting and bringing their findings to anyone who's willing to listen. Unfortunately for the narrator and his group, these pieces proved difficult to propagate given the unwillingness of *diarios colegas* [fellow newspapers]. Ultimately, this aims to characterize *Excelsior* as a principle driven newspaper, alienated from distribution mechanisms and systematically berated by the political establishment through the cooptation of influential figures of journalism. As this debate takes place in the public sphere, it becomes essential for the participants to present themselves as wielders of the factual evidence, but also to be explicit about their alliance and association to a rightful network of associations. For Zabludovsky's group, following Leñero's representation, this associative framework includes government officials and the construction of a seemingly righteous solidarity with the popular class, emulating the government's populist discourse. Leñero makes this very clear and although he insists that all this amounts to little more than a manipulative spectacle, he still goes on to construct a different claim for his own group. In Leñero's recollection of the events, he presents an associative framework that includes the rule of law, the documentation and verification of the accounts, and the prestige of the authors who sign and collect numerous accounts of infractions of governmental rules. In other words, Leñero's account provides a critical discourse whose own composition is represented as the antithesis of populist demagoguery.

4.2 VERIDICTION AND NONFICTION, LOS PERIODISTAS

Los periodistas is a narrative experiment that explores a multifaceted construction of its narrator's credibility. The origins of this credibility stems from the dual composition of the narrator's figure as both a nonfictional authorial voice within the book, and as the representation of the author's lived experience. In the process of presenting itself as a nonfiction book, *Los periodistas* demonstrates its own assemblage, a complex set of devices relying on documentation, first person testimonies and a particular emphasis in the use of given names as a way to validate these accounts. The presence of these mechanisms in the novel strengthen the authorial claim made by the author/narrator by presenting not one but over 300 potential witnesses[6] to his narrative account in addition to the strong moral compass of the narrator.

In its latest edition by Seix Barral, *Los Periodistas* includes a foreword by Julio Scherer García himself. In it, Scherer García cites Hungarian writer Imre Kertész's to comment on the seemingly inescapable risks of truth-telling and to signal Leñero's commitment to his own nonfictional enterprise: "¿La Verdad o mi Verdad? La Verdad ¿Y si no es la Verdad? Entonces el error, pero el mío" (Scherer García 4-5). He implies that Leñero, like Kertész, is aware of the intricate relationship established between the author and his work and perhaps more specifically, the personal investment required by the book's classification as nonfiction.

By the time *Los periodistas* was published, Leñero had already written several experimental novels in which a poignant social inquiry was tied to formal exploration, such as *Los albañiles* (1964) and *Estudio Q* (1965). These novels, like *Los periodistas*, presented plots centered around specific occupational trades and explored how certain individuals within these groups embodied the after effects of urban growth, technological and cultural forms of modernization, particularly what these changes brought about in terms of social marginalization, in *Los albañiles* (Medina Gonzalez 6), and individual alienation, in *Estudio Q*. The experimental

use of confessional and satirical narrative devices in these early novels (McMurray 60) are themselves formal vehicles that allowed Leñero to explore the psychological and sociological configurations of particular social groups through character compositions. Unlike *Los periodistas*, these characters as well as the novels they inhabited were entirely fictional.

Mary Ellen Kiddle (141) suggests that Leñero's sociological approach to creative practice stems from Leñero's interactions with Oscar Lewis, as he collaborated[7] with him in the writing of *Pedro Martinez* (1964), and Gabriel Medina Gonzalez notes that the author's preoccupation with social marginalization is a key element of his work related to character development (59). For Ana María Amar Sánchez, Leñero's approach to nonfiction crystalizes two different Latin American projects of literary renovation, epitomized by Julio Cortazar's experimental, self-reflexive approach and Rodolfo Walsh's pursuit of nonfiction as an interstitial space that respects and blurs the distinctions between different genres (*La ficción* 448). Although it is possible to disagree with Amar Sanchez's view of the Argentinean writers' work, her description of Latin American nonfiction as the incorporation of formal experimentation with a political purpose resonates particularly in *Los periodistas:* "puede pensarse a la no-ficción como un uso de las formas de reproducción mecánica y de sus técnicas. . .[donde se] organiza un espacio desmitificador, fracturado en la medida en que se juega siempre en los bordes, en los márgenes de las formas, de lo literario y lo político, de lo imaginario y lo real" (448).

Since the late 1980s, there has been wide academic interest to theorize nonfiction from a variety of perspectives. Eric Heyne in "Toward a Theory of Literary Nonfiction" (1987) argued that fiction and nonfiction narratives were fundamentally different. He traced the origins of this differentiation to the effects each narrative produced on the audience, rather than within the composition of the narratives themselves:

> In any event, we can never know purely on internal evidence whether the story is meant to be taken as true. Perhaps the teller is insane, in which case he may intend his story to be taken seriously, though our inclination is to doubt it. In that doubt lies a clue to the difference between fiction and nonfiction. It would not make sense to doubt a work of fiction (480).

Heyne's attempt to theorize this difference stems from the apparent crisis of generic definition he saw in the emergence of innovative emplotment techniques introduced in journalism:

> Critical attention to the New Journalism has succeeded in increasing our understanding and appreciation of particular works, but there remains a great deal of confusion about theoretical issues, such as the distinction between fact and fiction, the qualities of literary status in nonfiction, and the responsibilities of the author in turning history into art (480).

In order to facilitate such discussion, Heyne uses the term "factual adequacy" to denote the public's involvement in the hermeneutic challenge posed by the nonfiction genre: "a nonfiction text has factual status, but readers would have to resolve individually or by debate the question of its factual adequacy" (481). In other words, the generic definition itself is left to the devices of the public that receives and interprets the work and their own application of fact-checking protocols. This leaves the author with the primary responsibility of convincing the audience to interpret the author's words as truthful. The nature of the devices of persuasion and the reporting techniques may be different in each case, while the truth-claim remains constant.

The issue of factual adequacy is revisited and employed by Beth Jorgensen's recent analysis of nonfictional narratives in Latin America. Jorgensen, like Heyne has identified the crucial difference between fiction and nonfiction in terms of the effects they produce on the

reader: “While it is pointless to doubt the accuracy of a fictional narrative-or, for that matter, to believe in it-nonfiction, by making a claim to facticity, invites doubt. Doubt, in turn, may spur the reader to deploy his or her knowledge and competence in a process of verification of the narrative claim” (*Documents in Crisis* 16). This approach, however, is at odds with Jean Franco’s opinion that: “Only doubting Thomas saw and did not believe. In *Los periodistas*, the authenticity of this personal witness is guaranteed by the author’s description of physical sensations, memories and conversations which are all presented in the manner that they would naturally occur and be perceived by an observer” (Franco quoted in Schlickers 379). To be clear, this approach tasks the author with the duty to provide all necessary evidence for the reader to doubt and be convinced at the same time. In this process, the author sets up the evidence and the framing through which the evidence should be considered as sufficient.

Jorgensen goes on to explain that, although the destabilization between fact and fiction remains in contemporary theories, there are political and epistemological imperatives that drive nonfiction writers to negotiate, and to some extent, to control the flow and production of knowledge: “In the struggle for power that is the political imperative, narrative is an essential tool -or weapon-employed to a variety of ends. The exercise of power and privilege is defended and denounced, preserved and challenged through the stories that an individual or a community tells about its past” (14). Jorgensen concludes that “the appeal of nonfiction writing is not only what it promises to tell us or the skill with which its story is told, but the invitation extended by doubt to undertake a journey outside of the text in search of other sources and other textual remains or traces of the facts on display” (16-7).

Los periodistas places a significant emphasis on its own construction as nonfiction, in the words of its own narrator: “consideré forzoso sujetarme con rigor textual a los acontecimientos y

apoyar con documentos las peripecias del asunto porque toda la argumentación testimonial y novelística dependen en grado sumo de los hechos verdaderos, de los comportamientos individuales y grupales y de los documentos mismos" (9). While it is true that the novel's complex construction assimilates different materials, including *comuniqués*, letters, articles by multiple authors, interviews, and other discursive genres, the burden of curation and interpretation falls on the writer himself, and on to his literary avatar, the narrator. From the beginning, the ethos of the narrator becomes an essential part of the narrative that allows the reader to understand the multitude of comparisons that appear throughout the novel. It is this series of "comportamientos grupales e individuales" that make Leñero's narrative stand out beyond the copious documentary evidence it presents. The narrative ethos effectively emphasizes the differences in conducts, objectives and motivations by the two vying groups within the organization. In other words, *Los periodistas*' reconstruction of the events that led to the expulsion of Scherer García and his group implies the construction of the narrator as a bearer of a moral character that distinguishes him and his associates, which makes them incompatible with any other practice but their own vein of journalism. Interestingly, this construction of moral characters expands beyond those who tell the truth and those who don't. It represents these groups in regard to their trustworthiness and their ability to resist or reject the influence of money, sexual desire and other political interests in a way that is compatible with the novel's own definition of journalism.

The first notable instance of the novel's embrace of the nonfiction label in *Los periodistas* comes from its framing. As I noted above, the author/narrator insists that the truth of the events he is about to narrate can be traced and corroborated by documents and multiple witnesses. This novel's truth-claim, and indeed its own self-designation as nonfiction, invites the

reader to believe in the copious evidence offered by the narrator. It is an invitation to accept the narrative pact of Leñero's experimental nonfiction. Although Leñero underscores that his novel does not fictionalize situations, names or events, his innovative approach lays bare the mechanisms of the novel in order to portray a series of events that take shape because of the consistent moral guidance of the narrator's voice and his own unwavering commitment:

> Inútil pedir disculpas a quienes se consideren maltratados o mal comprendidos por el narrador autor. Inútil enmascarar con hipócritas advertencias los señalamientos contra quienes se apuntan las denuncias. El novelista se siente obligado a asumir con plenitud su relato y sólo apela a la complicidad de sus lectores (*Los periodistas* 9)

Such perspective is in line with Danny Anderson's assertion that Vicente Leñero's "novelas sin ficción" display a common characteristic where the narrative is led and organized by the narrator-character, in such a way that it is impossible to separate one from the other: "las estrategias para incorporar el discurso periodístico se derivan de las exigencias de la situación narrativa y la necesidad de respaldar la autoridad del narrador-periodista-cronista en esta situación" (64).

Leñero's narrator places an emphasis on the nature of his own discourse as truthful by emphasizing how it counters other discourses, other contents and other personalities. Leñero's designation of his own avatar under the rubric ´autor-narrador´ allows the reader to understand this brief preface as a fundamental part of the novel itself. As such, it lays out the general considerations for the readers and readily admits that not every reader will have the same interpretation of the narrated events. However, he also insists that his account is incompatible

with any form of hypocritical framing, and he'd rather accept the risk of the offense inherent in his text than to dilute it and therefore reduce its own truthfulness.

In this section, I'll look at key chapters that deal with the narrator's own credibility and that of his associates: "Uno/Insomnio" and "Tres/Interrogatorio, in the first part; "Seis/Ocho de julio", in part two; and "Siete/Guerra interna dentro del nuevo Excélsior", in the third and final part. These parts represent key moments in the development of the plot at the same time they offer plenty of evidence around Leñero's practice of nonfiction as a combination of documentary evidence and strong moral guidance by the narrator. In "Uno/Insomnio", the novel introduces Regino Díaz Redondo and his group, in an imaginary reconstruction of what the conspirators´ meeting would have been like from the burdened perspective of Díaz Redondo himself; "Tres/Interrogatorio" uses a interrogatory-like construction to introduce Vicente Leñero's history within Excelsior at the same time it stages a questioning of the narrator's honesty, and his relationship with Scherer García; "Seis/Ocho de julio" narrates the experience of the coup itself, including the chaotic emergency meeting[9] of Excelsior´s Cooperative Assembly, where Díaz Redondo and his group expelled Scherer García alongside his closest collaborators; finally, "Siete/Guerra interna dentro del nuevo Excélsior", originally titled "Los Inos. Regino, Bernardino y Juventino. Farsa en un acto, dividido en diez escenas", is the reportage that narrates the subsequent disarray in Excelsior, a few months after the takeover by Díaz Redondo.

"Uno/Insomnio" is the only chapter in the novel that does not conform to the introduction's bold claim about its documentary fidelity. Throughout the entirety of the chapter, there are no references to any form of documentary evidence used to construct the interiority of its anonymous protagonist. It is also the only chapter in the novel that is told from a perspective radically different from that of the narrator, as it presents an inner monologue with an

intermittent focalization through which the reader gets a glimpse of the shady dealings of an anonymous group.

The dialectic construction of moral characters in the novel involves the construction of their opposites, without which it is impossible to understand the narrator's veracity. Consequently, the first chapter of the novel is narrated from the perspective of an unnamed conspirator, whose monologue reveals a strong desire to take the role of the director for himself. Tormented by his consciousness, the voice of this man is literally and symbolically broken apart by the introduction of a second voice in parentheses and a marked use of the second person singular to communicate his own doubts. The anonymous voice begins by expressing his own self-appraisal in direct opposition to that of the director:

> con tu mediocridad
>
> tu orgullo herido
>
> La pesadilla de valer lo que vales: comparativamente poco si te mides con él en los diversos niveles del oficio: director, reportero; el reportero que no serás jamás hagas lo que hagas: lo sabes porque lo has intentado desde que eras un aprendiz de redactor, en el principio. Bien el principio. Bien. Una nueva carrera que tuvo al fin su premio: este puesto envidiable.
>
> Confórmate con él.
>
> Deberías conformarte. Cada quien tiene un límite. (*Los periodistas* 14)

If the introduction emphasizes the book's generic identity as nonfiction, the first chapter presents the moral backdrop against which the moral character of the narrator and his allies will be measured. Accordingly, this first chapter develops a torn inner world, filled with feelings of guilt, insecurity, anger, envy and regret. Right after the introductory display of literary courage

by the narrator, whose main characteristic is his willingness to take ownership of his own words, the reader has access to a strikingly contrasting figure. The anonymity and animosity of this character's words are quick to invite the distrust of the reader. In doing so, the narrative framework sets up a form of contrasting, dual construction of its male speakers. The references to this voice's plans to become the new director suggest the voice is that of Regino Díaz Redondo. However, this characteristic form of anonymity remains a definitory trait of Díaz Redondo and his group of supporters.

Furthermore, the voice in parentheses displays a tone of familiarity that frames the entire chapter and introduces an interesting but elusive parallel between parenthood and his work at the newspaper. Seemingly out of nowhere, the parenthetical voice refers to Díaz Redondo as if it belonged to his own father.

> nos sentimos horrible horrible horrible con el peso del mundo en las espaldas, según alude el tópico a la historia de Atlante, hijo de Zeus condenado a sostener el mundo sobre sus hombros
>
> (qué exacta parece la metáfora vuelta escultura griega en el museo de Nápoles ¿te acuerdas hijo mío?) (13)

This association with the titan Atlas, although questionable[8], introduces the complex series of relationships that call to the fore the issue of allegiance and treason that reverberates in the later pages of the novel. Although the Greek references never reappear in the novel, the closing image of this chapter refers to Díaz Redondo talking to his own son in a way that showcases his own guilt, regret and foretells the character's eventual treason. Right before the chapter concludes, it presents the meeting where the anonymous group states some of the reasons for their own betrayal: "que por errores múltiples, por orgullo, soberbia, por atender malos consejos y por mil

causas más que no vienen al caso ni puedo detallar, él se ha vuelto un obstáculo, un lastre, un serio impedimento para todos nosotros" (19). The entire chapter is pervaded by an underlying tone of irony and scorn, as the voice is quick to admit the perennial jealousy he's felt for the director and the meeting readily turns into a party of *groserías* and interjections: "Desgraciados, hijos de puta, pinches. Un brindis para que vayan y chinguen a su madre el director y sus socios" (18).

Leñero's initial presentation of Díaz Redondo and his group emphasizes the interplay between the motivations of the anonymous group and their opposition to the director's group by showing the former to be self-serving and greedy. The professed disdain for the work of Leñero's group of allies is nevertheless ancillary to the narrator's statement about who belongs to the group designated in the title of the novel. To explore the identities of *Los periodistas* and what defines them is a substantial piece of Leñero's own literary project within this novel.

The anonymous voices are at odds with the precise identities of the narrator's group of allies. Whereas the narrator offers the names, current and past roles of hundreds of minor figures in the novel, the conspirators are hardly ever identified. However, these nameless voices display a confessional, intimate tone in their utterances. This combination of truth-speaking without an identifiable speaker allows the novel to present the voices of the usurpers as truthful without inspiring confidence from the reader. The anonymous commentaries become ancillary to the veracity and transparency of Leñero and his group.

In chapter "Tres/Interrogatorio", the tone and form of the novel present a radical change. The chapter replicates the format of an interrogation, where the narrator responds to a series of questions from an unidentified voice that entice him to define his participation in the newspaper as well as to defend himself against accusations of collusion with Díaz Redondo's allies. This

chapter begins with the following question: “Explique usted, del modo más sucinto posible, cómo se infiltró en Excélsior, compañía editorial SCL, y al servicio de qué intereses trabajó durante el lapso comprendido entre febrero de 1972 y julio de 1976” (61). Throughout the chapter, the narration is interrupted by the same accusatory voice and its insistence on the narrator’s responsibility in the coup against Excelsior. There are questions about his religious and political affiliations: “Sin embargo, consta que usted estableció contactos muy sólidos con el clero y organizaciones paralelas desde su adolescencia. Repetidamente usted se ha declarado católico” (64). Any potential problems brought about by these questions are quickly resolved by Leñero who uses them to consolidate his background, his professional and personal history into a comprehensive entity that the reader would be able to trust.

The format for the images of a self-interrogation call forward an interplay of antitheses and oppositional dynamics that are characteristic of Leñero’s novels, and which Amar Sánchez has previously called “sistema confesional” (*Leñero: Confesar, contar, escribir* 230). As I’ve noted earlier, this interplay combines the use of documentary evidence with the formulation of a personal attitude toward truth, and indeed toward the evidence itself and the value of journalism across different characters. It is notable, for example, that the two chapters I have described so far, not only construct two different characters through different narrative structures, but the reaction of these characters to the construction itself is also telling. Whereas Díaz Redondo succumbs to self-pity and self-deprecation when confronted by what may be interpreted as his own consciousness, the narrator, on the other hand, withstands the insidious attack of a similarly antagonistic impersonal questioner.

Michel Foucault’s exploration of parrshesiastic discourse led him to define the parrhesiastes as “the one who uses parrhesia, i.e., is the one who speaks the truth” (Foucault 36).

Truth, in Foucault's parrhesiastic sense, is not a modern, Cartesian concept, related to the use of evidence beyond discourse. Instead, "such truth-having is guaranteed by the possession of certain moral qualities: when someone has certain moral qualities, then that is the proof that he has access to truth—and vice-versa" (Foucault 36). This understanding of parrhesiastic discourse is therefore inseparable from the parrhesiast own corporal experience of bodily risk and social exposure, it is an expression of the impossibility to separate the discourse of the one who speaks the truth and their own persona. It is, however, dependent on an exercise of freedom and an expression of duty: "in parrhesia, telling the truth is regarded as a duty. The orator who speaks the truth to those who cannot accept his truth, for instance, and who may be exiled, or punished in some way, is free to keep silent. No one forces him to speak; but he feels that it is his duty to do so" (Foucault 38). In this sense, Foucault's parrhesiastic truth-telling may be understood as an expression of freedom and duty, an expression of the morality embodied by the speaker which is transposed to the quality of the speaker's discourse. In other words, truth-telling is both a rhetorical device as much as it is the ethical commitment of the speaker of a self-designated social role, regardless of the risk these actions may invite.

Instead of suggesting a historical continuity between classical and contemporary forms of truth-telling, Foucault's idea of parrhesiatic speech allows us to understand the expectation of ethical behavior by those who have taken the role of truth-tellers. In other words, truth-telleres are not merely those who state true facts; but those whose judgement on people and events is morally and politically true. Such expectations were inseparable from the speakers themselves, since both the idea of truth-telling and the admissibility of anything as truth are socially constructed, the parrhesiastic actions call for an examination of both the object and subject of enunciation. In order to determine the truthfulness of any given discourse, spoken or written, the

parrhesiastic tradition identifies the qualities of the speakers with those of their statements. This pragmatic approach to truth telling from a social and ethical stance helps us understand why the novel produces such different effects in the degree of credibility and trustworthiness of Leñero and his group vis-a-vis the antagonistic anonymous group.

The novel progressively introduces the plot to expel Scherer García and his allies by showing how this group begins to experience increased scrutiny from the various boards operating within the journal's bureaucratic structure, under Díaz Redondo's guidance. One such committee was the *Comité de vigilancia*, a sort of oversight group that begins to exert more pressure on the administration of Scherer García and which ultimately implicates them in the mismanagement of the financial resources of the cooperative. In Chapter 2 of the Second part of the novel, "Malos consejos", one of Scherer García's sub administrators, Hero Rodriguez Toro, presents a report on the status of PEPSA in front of the general assembly of the newspaper. This report is mostly made up by the transcription of the meeting. However, this reporting is noticeably interrupted by an anonymous commentary from one of Díaz Redondo's fellow co-conspirators. Introduced as a transcription by Marta Sanchez, administrative assistant for the council and dated June 9th 1976, this report begins by confronting the two voices, that of Rodriguez Toro and the anonymous one noted in parentheses:

> Voy a hablar en una forma que espero trascienda. En primer lugar quiero decir a ustedes que nunca me he creído un buen administrador (ah carajo, ahora sí pásame un cigarro, a ver qué dice este cabrón). Les doy esa arma para que la emplee el que guste (de eso no te preocupes). Pero a partir de mi presencia aquí, desde septiembre de 1970, esta cooperativa no ha hecho más que ir hacia adelante. (*Los periodistas* 132-3)

Once again, the mode of address is noticeably different between the two represented voices. Whereas Rodriguez Toro's report is formal in its composition, as it is addressing the assembly, the parenthetical voice takes a personal, informal tone, emphasized by the use of expletives and epithets. Despite these apparent differences between the two voices, it is also clear that both are being truthful insofar they are admitting their own intentions. On the one hand, Rodriguez Toro admits his underwhelming performance as an administrator. On the other hand, the parenthetical confession is itself an unapologetic description of the voice's intentions to damage Rodriguez Toro and his group. Moreover, because of the spontaneity and crass nature of its language, the parenthetical voice could be perceived as "more truthful" than that or Rodriguez Toro's address. In a later passage of the same chapter, we see how the parenthetical voice becomes increasingly angry and frustrated by the details of the presentation and turns its attention to mentally harass a woman in the public:

> A partir de la presencia de Julio Scherer y mía, aquí, no ha vuelto a haber aumentos infames del quince por ciento parejo (no vengas a presumirnos, no somos tus borregos). A partir de entonces no hemos tenido mas que en el año de 1971, un desplome en el volumen de nuestras ganancias. Los resultados están al alcance de todos ustedes porque los tengo aquí a la mano y demuestran el avance extraordinario en la cooperativa. Pero aquí conjuntamente se ha desarrollado un problema psicológico muy curioso (ya me empezó a doler la cabeza otra vez, jijo, uta, anoche, qué nalgas tiene Ana María). (133)

This paragraph presents the simultaneous expression of truthful speech and material evidence on the side of Rodriguez Toro and the exercise of a crassly sincere opinion with which it is impossible to empathize. The reason for why these two modes of truthful speech produce such a

different reaction in the reader comes not only from the opposition between the two, but also from the underlying pragmatic approach to truthfulness incorporated in Leñero's novel. In this sense, although Rodriguez Toro is himself part of the established group of leaders who -in the opinion of many at the time- has not been performing as expected, the emergence of an alternative in terms of the management of the co-op is constructed as a moral negative and sustained by the documentary evidence of positive financial stability already achieved.

The differentiation between these two groups takes on a racialized tone when the conflict develops within the newspaper. Chapter "Seis/Ocho de julio" is dedicated to the emergency meeting called forward by the "Comité de Vigilancia" and Díaz Redondo. Early that morning, the director and his group began working on a statement to present in front of the newspaper's constituents in order to defend themselves from the accusations of mismanagement brought against them. In this context, Leñero presents the emergence of deep uncertainty which begins to overburden Scherer García's group, with a particular emphasis in the socio-racial division within the newspaper.

> Junto con expresiones apesadumbradas y frases iracundas se desbordan los informes de último momento; que ya ocuparon las primeras filas del salón; que andan repartiendo sombreros de palma para distinguirse de nosotros; que se hacen llamar la indiada -reparten volantes TE LLAMAN INDIO- porque alguien alguna vez, dicen, un reportero, los reporteros dijeron que los trabajadores de los talleres eran la pura indiada y ahora toman el apodo y se encajan los sombreros de palma con la inscripción 8 de julio para dar al conflicto la apariencia de una lucha de clases entre el proletariado de los talleres y la aristocracia de la redacción. Tramposos. (*Los periodistas* 211)

Leñero's description of this emerging racialization of the conflict is particularly interesting because it acknowledges the existence of the division and attempts to solve it by calling out the unfairness of the argument, rather than its falsehood by use of the final expletive "tramposos". According to Ignacio Corona, it is within this episode in particular that the dualistic construction enacted by Leñero throughout the novel evidences the underlying fissures of its own misrepresentation, insofar it becomes unable to differentiate its own discourse from that of the government's own rhetorical populism (34).

This chapter evidences the racialized construction of the narrator and his group as an adherent to the popularized antagonism between lettered and popular cultures. In the alleged self-designation of the manual workers as *la indiada*, Leñero establishes an insurmountable division between these two groups. This division plays out at a critical point within the novel, as it becomes the force that effectively pushes out the narrator and his group. The racial division is never resolved as the narration continues to focus on the trajectory of the intellectual *editorialistas* exclusively.

Ana María Amar Sánchez and Danny J. Anderson have pointed out the relevance that nonfiction has in Leñero's work as a novelist and playwright (Amar Sanchez 240; "Vicente Leñero" 5-6). More recently, Julie Ann Ward has argued that Leñero's work, particularly his documentary theatre, "emerged as an alternative source for reality in the face of unreliability and a lack of transparency from other sources traditionally associated with objective facts" (198). In her analysis of *Pueblo rechazado*, Leñero's first documentary theatre work, Ward points out the use of multiple sources and documents in the production of the play, including published newspapers articles as well as interviews and his own experience during his stay at Gregorio Lemercier's monastery in Santa María Ahuacatitlán, outside of Cuernavaca (202). The play,

which debuted in Mexico City on October 15th, 1968, continues to be read as Leñero's reaction to the untrustworthiness and lack of transparency of the Mexican public sphere.

The relationship between Leñero's documentary theatre and his novel *Los periodistas* goes beyond the similarities in their production process. In its first edition, chapter 7 of *Los periodistas* was in fact a "farsa panfletaria" titled "Los traidores". This farcical pamphlet is a script that presents the victory of Regino Díaz Redondo's group as the new board of directors for *Excelsior'*s cooperative. This script includes verbatim reproductions of documents from 1977 that discussed how the newspaper's new leadership struggled to maintain the organization as they pushed new ad-hoc practices to censor and bribe other members of *Excelsior'*s general assembly[6]. This farce, originally titled "Los Inos. Regino, Bernardino y Juventino. Farsa en un acto, dividido en diez escenas" was replaced in 1988 with an article that discussed the same events under a journalistic rubric (Los Periodistas 9). The original article appeared in Proceso on november 5th, 1977, under the title "Corrupción, malos manejos, riñas gangsteriles, protección policiaca…" (Redacción, "Corrupción", Proceso.com.mx) and its composition shares many of the documents used in Leñero's original farce. The fact that Leñero's approach to journalism and playwriting could be analogous and, to some extent, interchangeable, calls for a closer examination of his own conceptualizations of what it meant to write/produce.

It is unclear if this theatrical piece was ever set on stage, but it was published in 1985 by Editores Mexicanos Unidos in Leñero's collection *Teatro documental*. The inclusion of this piece in the collection is justified by a brief warning at the beginning of the text that reads: "Aunque la farsa se explica cabalmente en el contexto de la novela citada, el autor considera que tiene, de suyo, un valor autónomo como pieza de teatro documental, y en este sentido admite una eventual puesta en escena" (Teatro documental 29). The piece is divided in two parts, with ten

scenes total and an intermezzo. It shares many of the source documents with the reportage that replaced it, and the anecdotal information is largely the same. However, it represents a radical change within the original version of the book, not only because its format belongs to that of a play, but because it is the first instance in the novel, aside from the first chapter, where Díaz Redondo and his group have a voice. In a similar way to what happens in the first chapter, "Los traidores" presents a cartoonish image of the conspirators. However, it also portrays the chaotic division within the group, where the two factions, the *reginistas* and the *bernardinistas* clash violently, accusing each other of treason, corruption and deceit. The breakup within the new management and its representation does present significant changes between the two formats, with the final scene in Los Traidores showing both groups drowning in feces as they yell at each other. The reportage, on the other hand, maintains a sober tone and harsh criticism that states the victory of the *reginistas* within the power struggle at *Excelsior*, as they consolidate their alliance with the government: "Descanse en paz la justicia" (*Los periodistas* 363).

For the narrators of *La noche de Galio* and *Los periodistas*, any exploration into their discourse requires an examination of their own embodiment as either journalists or historians, that is, as examples of this rising figure of the specific intellectual. As Foucault reflected on the historical and political changes affecting the political function of intellectuals in the late 20th century, he theorized the emergence of what he called the specific intellectual: "Intellectuals have become accustomed to working not in the character of the universal, the exemplary, the just-and-true for all, but in specific sectors, at precise points where they are situated either by their professional conditions of work or their conditions of life" (12). He continued his description of these transformation as a way in which intellectuals were gaining a stronger connection with the working class: "I believe that they have really come closer to the proletariat

for two reasons: because it has been a matter of real, material, everyday struggles, and because they often came up, even though in a different form, against the same adversary as the proletariat, the peasants and the masses, namely the multinational corporations, the judicial and police apparatuses, property speculators etc" (The political function 12). However, as the reader of these novels will quickly notice, there is a significant difficulty with the application of the Foucauldian model, particularly as it fails to account for the racial and gendered positionality of said intellectual individuals, and the specific context of post Tlatelolco politics in Mexico.

Unlike Leñero's *Los periodistas*, *La guerra de Galio* is a fictional story that struggled to be considered as a literary piece independent from the origins of its plot. After the initial reception of the novel as a *roman a clef*, Aguilar Camín added an author's note on August 2007, which read: "Hay quienes se empeñan en decir, y se agravian por ello, que son los modelos reales, los personajes en clave de esta narración. Exageran su importancia y mi conocimiento de sus vidas. Aprovecho estas líneas para repetir que todos los personajes de *La guerra de Galio*, incluyendo los reales, son imaginarios" (582). In the latest editions of the book by Cal y Arena (2014) and Catalonia (2010), these words are followed by a short essay by Aguilar Camín reflecting on the experience of writing the novel and its situation as fiction. The essay continues addressing the public reception of *Morir en el Golfo (1985)* and *La guerra de Galio*:

> Se las juzgó novelas en clave que refieren hechos externos a sus páginas, historias secretas de personajes y acontecimientos de la vida pública que no habían sido reveladas. No puedo culpar de este malentendido a los lectores, porque el primero en buscar los ingredientes realistas o documentales como condimento de mi guiso fui yo. (583)

The following reflection by the author aims to disprove that his novels should be interpreted as

reworkings of real events. He goes on to attack the hermeneutic adventures of critics who insisted on finding the real-life models for some of his characters. Instead, Aguilar Camín, states that his novels, although based on historical and well documented events, should be seen primarily as works of fiction. In his own explanation, these works of documentary fiction have ran into unexpected issues, particularly, the readers' problematic acceptance of the novel as a truthful account of these events.

In spite of the author's own interpretation of his work, *La guerra de Galio* does offer a significant reflection on the construction of truthfulness, and more specifically, it offers a rich narrative representation of how the narrator's pursuit, recollection and reconstruction of the underlying truth of the events that led to his former student's death. To be certain, the concept of truth in Aguilar Camín's fiction refers to the narrative trope of inquiry, similar to that of the crime novel and the political thriller. In *La guerra de Galio*, the quest (or inquest) trope guides the development of the plot as well as the multiple metanarrative references that frame it. As the mystery of Garcia Vigil's death by his former teacher is revealed, the novel sets up a series of relations between the characters that emphasize the intellectual rivalry between the anonymous professor and Galio Bermudez. In many ways, the represented world in *La guerra de Galio* is vastly different from that of *Los periodistas*. However, they both stand out by their dedication to the representation of the underbelly of journalism and political power, as well as by their male dominated environments where the protagonist's own identity as a man is constantly dissected and deconstructed.

4.3 MASCULINITIES AT ODDS, LA GUERRA DE GALIO

Readers who approach *La guerra de Galio* are likely to quickly realize that the novel

itself is a metafictional narrative, and "to a large degree, a novel about writing" (Fenoglio Limón 116). In this novel, the narrator takes upon himself the reconstruction of Garcia Vigil's final years:

> Pero no me propuse la biografía de Vigil, sino -¿debo decirlo así?- la continuación estricta de su vida, de la única vida que era posible devolverle ahora y que en parte he vivido por él, la vida que quedó guardada en sus cuadernos, a salvo de su propia voluntad y de la mía, la vida que imaginó deseable a partir de la suya y que acaso la explica y la ilumina mejor que su más fiel relatoría. Hablo de su novela, que es ahora la nuestra. (24).

In the following pages, the historian turned novelist, explains how he pieced together the voluminous evidence left after Vigil's death: "Eran cuatro cajas de un metro cúbico cada una, con libros, borradores, recortes de periódicos, tarjeteros con fichas de la investigación y dos maletas de prolífica memorabilia: fotos, recados, cartas personales, folletos de viaje, fetiches" (*La guerra* 23). With this message, at the end of the introductory prologue, the narrator claims the responsibility of finishing the project as his own, in a way to pay tribute to his former pupil and presents their joint endeavor as an intellectual and affective pact.

Although Aguilar Camín has used this trope in other novels[10], such as *Morir en el Golfo*, the reconstruction of this archive is far more personal than in his earlier novel. According to Manuel F. Medina, Francisco Rojano Gutierrez's archive in *Morir en el Golfo*, whose study would reveal the conditions of his death "sólo contiene información que los organismos de poder han permitido circular a un determinado público" (26). In *La guerra de Galio*, Vigil's archive is far more personal, and the relationship that its study allows is one of familiarity, even one of mourning. For Ryan Lang, the novel is the narrator's literary monument to commemorate Vigil's

death (520). In this sense, *although La guerra de Galio* also presents a series of problematic relationships between the government and Vigil, the focus of this novel lies in the personal and professional relationships that Vigil's death reveals.

From this point on, the narrator effectively presents the story of Carlos García Vigil and his time as a columnist and occasional reporter for *La república*, a journey that drove him further from the narrator, and deeper under that of two competing figures: Galio Bermudez and Octavio Sala. In doing so, the novel presents the apparent incompatibility of two major modes of public discourse in Mexico: journalism and historiography: "journalist or historian, in a context where the option of jounrlaism suggests fundamentally a political affirmation and that of hitoriography (or literature) is bound to the priority of an ethical stance" (Infrapolitics 151)

Despite the critical concensus about the deep influence of the Tlatelolco Massacre in this novel (Fenoglio Limón 107; Ochoa-Solis 61; Zamora-Súchitl ix; Long 513) there is much to be discovered in Aguilar Camin's novel from its ironical distance, particularly in its approach to major topics that have been traditionally associated with the hegemonic discourses about the Mexican Revolution and the revolutionary ideologies of the second half of the 20th century: virile masculinity and the ideals of intellectual protagonism in the public national arena.

In the process of becoming a journalist, García Vigil meets Paola Samperio and Santoyo, two friends who would later join the armed guerrilla *Liga 23 de Septiembre*. Vigil abandons his emerging career as a scholar of the Mexican revolution after he is recruited by Sala to work for *La República*, and after Sala and his group of followers are expelled from the newspaper, Vigil continues to work for almost a year in the newly founded tabloid *La vanguardia*. In *La guerra de Galio*, the rift between the government and *La república*, which triggers the expulsion of Sala and his group from the newspaper, is the result of an editorial decision to provide wide coverage

to the insurgent armed movement, and their persecution by the Mexican Army in the country's southern region: "el viraje de La república hacia la cuestión guerrillera"(193). The political plot of the novel ends with Santoyo's death during a raid by the police in Mexico City - and the negotiated liberation of Paloma. Sala decides to expose Vigil's intervention to have her friend released in order to further incriminate the government and expose the country's corruption, Vigil abandons Sala and *La vanguardia* and goes back to a quieter way of life as a historian.

La guerra de Galio is a novel that, unlike *Los periodistas*, includes a significant number of women as major characters in its plot to the point that Vigil's life and the professor's novel is structured around their interactions with a few key women: Mercedes Biedma, Vigil's most desired lover whom he meets at the research institute in Chapultepec; Oralia Ventura, his more stable lover, who ultimately becomes an accidental executor for Vigil after his death and the person who contacts the professor/narrator to start working on Vigil's personal archive; Fernanda García Vigil, his daughter, with whom Vigil maintains a distant relationship until she becomes an adolescent; and Romelia, a young journalist who sleeps with Vigil in order to extract information from him and which she ultimately uses to help the opposition to expel him and Sala from *La república*. Although it is true that women are overtly sexualized in this novel, it is undeniable that they also play a major role in the development of the novel itself. And yet, these female characters remain an ancillary component in the representation of the main male character, which ultimately brings to the fore Vigil's own masculinity and the role this particular attribute plays within the novel and its represented world.

From the beginning, *La guerra de Galio* establishes the relationship between the main characters by articulating a series of tropes and images related to their gender identities and sexual activities. Out of these roles, I will focus on the use of homosocial relationships of

tutelage, particularly those involving Vigil as driving forces of the novel. By focusing on the relationship that Vigil develops with his mentor figures, the narrator, Galio Bermudez and Octavio Sala, it is possible to explore the novel's commentary about contemporary gender relations, and particularly its representation of homosocial relationships between intellectual men.

Apprenticeship and tutelage played a significant role in the formation of Mexican intellectual masculinity. In Adriana González Mateos' study of homosexual intellectuality, she points out the ingrained conception of platonic pederasty as a constitutive part of the intellectual tradition, that can be traced to the second half of the 19th century, particularly in modernist representations and practices of intellectuality such as José Enrique Rodó's *Ariel* and Mexico's Ateneo de la Juventud (Gonzalez Mateos 14-5). This model highlighted the quality of male to male intellectual relationships through mentorship as the basis for recognition *inter pares*. Briefly put, traditional performances of intellectuality and masculinity, at the turn of the 20th century, reinforced each other under the pretense that classical, non-American, models of culture would allow the development of an authentic Latin American educational, intellectual and artistic development.

Similarly, the *construction of masculinity* in Mexico is entirely related to the rise of public intellectuality because they are both related to the state-sponsored pursuit of *mexicanidad*, as an hegemonic expression of national identity. This institutional journey to identify modern symbols of Mexican modern identity involved the arts and certain public attitudes toward artists and their work as well. As González Mateos continues to explain:

> The Mexican revolutionary government had found its chosen artists in the muralists, who proclaimed their commitment to the revolutionary cause, defined

> their artistic practice as a kind of manual labor, and shaped their masculinity along machista lines, in harmony with the military masculinity then emerging as hegemonic.
>
> For these circles, virility meant an involvement with public and political affairs. This was the central characteristic of a masculine intellectual, someone who was ready to act as a militant. (36)

This *construction of masculinity* at the beginning of the 20th century as part of a larger political program in the pursuit of *mexicanidad* has received significant attention in recent years. Sociological and anthropological research have contributed to our understanding of the ways in which different organizations, scientists and policies coalesced to build up on the post-revolutionary ideals of mestizaje. The legal and scientific frameworks were complemented by a cultural policy and practice that has popularized certain ideals, if not entirely homogeneous, of masculinity in Mexico.

Matthew C. Gutmann identifies one of the most influential representations of masculinity in the Golden era of Mexican cinema. This period between the 1940s to the 1950s contributed to the popularization of influential images of masculinity. With the rise of popular artists such as Pedro Infante and Jorge Negrete, epitomizing characteristic traits of desirable masculinity. However, perhaps the most influential political representation of masculinity was derived from the figure of the president. Throughout its history, all Mexican presidents have been men, but more importantly, the presidency has been the most influential and visible example of the masculinization of politics in Mexico (Pateman 15). This socio-cultural phenomenon has impacted the public perception about women's lack of participation in public affairs in Mexico, and most Latin American countries (Barrera Bassols 313). As much as it contributed to

disseminate and normalize certain expectations about the public image of men in the political Arena. This is what Robert Mckee described when he stated that "nationhood is frequently constructed as a <<virile>> institution, a brotherhood of men, a key ideological factor to consider is the particular notions of sex and gender incorporated into texts that represent national culture" (xvii).

Literary explorations of intellectual masculinity are plentiful, and for the most part of the 20th century, they were tied to the construction of mexicanidad. As Mckee pointed out, the discourse around virility in literature developed in parallel with the cultural project brought about by the postrevolutionary regimes:

> This is not to say that Mexican masculinity was no longer under question. More than that, what had emerged as a cultural crisis and discourse of confusion during the porfiriato was now a veritable polemic. Its protagonists now acknowledged an essential ideological link between abstractions of masculinity, and male sexuality and of Mexicanness in their debates over national literature and national identity (117).

From Marin Luis Guzman's fiction, as I have discussed briefly in chapter 1, to Octavio Paz's *El laberinto de la soledad*, the first half of the Mexican 20th century is full with notable examples of how the history of the male representation has had a decisive connection with intellectual practice in Mexico. At the same time, they provide examples of how these reflections on masculinity and Mexican identity have not always provided univocal models for masculinity[10].

I do not argue here that Aguilar Camín sought to reignite the post-revolutionary debate about virile literature. Rather, I am interested in examining how *La guerra de Galio* problematizes the ideal formulation of hegemonic regimes of masculinity by focusing on the

sexual and intellectual activities of the male protagonist.

From Ana Amuchástegui's socio-cultural perspective, the construction of masculinity is "una serie de discursos y prácticas sociales que pretenden definir al término masculino del género dentro de configuraciones históricas particulares, diferenciándolo de las propias experiencias de los hombres, que no están reducidos a someterse a tal construcción y que manifiestan innumerables formas de resistencia" (175). From a literary perspective, Chris Harris' analysis of literary representations of various regimes of masculinity[11], distinguishing from different "patterns of practice " that coexist with hegemonic masculinity, such as complicit, subordinated and marginalized masculinities (647).

La guerra de Galio and *Los periodistas* are two novels where these public discussions on *mexicanidad* reverberate. The novels are clearly guided by a sense of national relevance and urgency that endows their respective plots with a sense of national transcendence, as they indeed present localized power struggles as symptomatic expressions of broader political intrigues affecting the country. In *Los periodistas*, Leñero is explicit about the national relevance of the Excelsior's take-over from the first lines of the novel: "El ocho de julio de 1976 el diario Excélsior de la ciudad de México sufrió lo que merece calificarse como el más duro golpe de su historia y tal vez de la historia del periodismo nacional" (9). Similarly, *La guerra de Galio* acknowledges the relevance of the struggle by establishing a clear analogy between the newspaper's affairs and national-political life, one which is hard to miss since the same chapter that introduces Octavio Sala, director of "La república", also introduces the Presidente de la República in a brief conversation with Garcia Vigil (*La guerra* 112). Although Aguilar Camin's novel does introduce a sense of irony that is not present in *Los Periodistas*, it does not deny the simile between the two men and their enterprises. Like this scene showcases, *La guerra de Galio*

introduces a narrative that not only emphasizes a series of rivalries between its male characters, but in doing so, it provides an example of the literary construction of different regimes of masculinity in modern Mexico. The narrative relationship established between the protagonists of the novels and other public masculine figures are notable because they establish a homosocial framework within which the voices, alliances and enmities that equate the outcomes of these relationships between men with the fate of the country. In this section I will focus on the relationship between Vigil and the narrator, and their own relationships with Galio Bermúdez.

Masculine rivalry abounds in these two novels. In Aguilar Camin's novel, the narrator, a former professor of the protagonist, Garcia Vigil, confronts his rival, another intellectual and fellow historian, Galio Bermudez. Like the narrator, Galio is a learned man who constantly reflects on the history of the country, but unlike the narrator, he is deeply involved in the bureaucratic apparatus of the state. From the beginning of the novel, the narrator identifies Galio in the following terms: "Galio Bermudez -mi rival, mi contemporaneo, mi vergüenza" (15). Although the narrator insists on Galio's characterization as a despicable character, he also recognizes his prowess as a thinker and his problematic ability to intervene in the public arena: "Se le había juzgado en los cincuenta la mayor inteligencia de México; eran fama pública su malignidad incesante y su proclividad a incurrir en la defensa de causas indefendibles -como la matanza de Tlatelolco- en nombre de criterios deleznables -como la hombría de bien o el principio de autoridad" (41). As the secretary of Wilebaldo Croix, an officer involved in the government´s anti-guerrilla efforts, Galio exemplifies an intellectual practice that is radically different to that of the professor/narrator. Whereas the narrator has retired from public life and has committed himself to college teaching and academic research, Galio has chosen to mobilize his own intellectual effort in the service of the political establishment. "Autor de un fallido

volumen sobre las constantes de la mexicanidad, Galio Bermúdez ahora solo publicaba artículos en un diario conservador de la Ciudad de México, donde ponía su vasta erudición al servicio de las más visibles adulaciones políticas" (41). In a sense, Galio and the professor exemplify forms of cynicism and disillusionment in post-revolutionary Mexico. The professor, disenchanted by the mundane affairs of the polis, has decided to ignore it and withdraws to the ivory tower of academia; Galio, the former rising star of Mexican intellectuals, embraced the bitter pragmatism of collaborating with the government. Although trained in the same discipline, their approach to the study and practice of history is vastly different. As Galio concedes early in the novel:

> Ése es el rastro que yo quiero ver, para eso me he mudado a los sótanos, para tocar la esencia de nuestra tranquilidad. Quiero tocarla con mis manos, apartar hasta el último velo de mi mirada. Y no por morbosidad como usted puede creer, sino por rigor. *Ostinato rigore*, exigía Leonardo. En México eso quiere decir, entre otras cosas, bajar a los sótanos, rehusarse como intelectual y como ciudadano a ser una de esas amas de casa que no pueden soportar la idea de que existe un rastro, pero quieren el filete pulcro y sin sangre en el supermercado. (79)

Galio offers a radical differentiation between these two modes of approaching history, and indeed, civil life in Mexico. Through the gendered parody of grocery shopping, he establishes the parallel between the housewife and the intellectual who remain ignorant by their own volition. To be sure, neither of these two figures is vilified in the way Regino and his group were in *Los periodistas*. On the contrary, these two men continue to offer their help and guidance to Vigil until the very end. In fact, despite the novel's insistence on Galio's lack of moral principles, the final part of the novel reveals a radical shift in his attitude when he helps Vigil to free Paola, and Octavio Sala, then at the head of *La Vanguardia*, disregards Vigil's pledge for

confidentiality and friendship, as he decides to publicize his meddling with the government.

In the context of post-Tlatelolco politics, *La guerra de Galio* points out the irony of intellectual activism and the overt idealism of the government-intellectual alliance. This criticism of political idealism, in addition to the ultimate failure of the Santoyo brothers, killed in different encounters with the government forces, has been interpreted by Filemon Zamora-Súchitl as a political statement regarding Aguilar Camin's own adherence to the long democratic transition during the second half of the 20th century in Mexico: "de esta coyuntura sale la guerra de Galio con el objetivo de revisar la historia inmediata, la de la generación del 68, para ajustarla a los nuevos tiempos, es decir, Aguilar Camín configura el pasado para legitimar el nuevo Estado" (3).

Despite sharing their professional affiliation and their interest in Vigil, the professor and Galio are indeed very different, not only in the nature of their intellectual practices but also in their own relationship with their mentee. The professor/narrator met Vigil during a history seminar when Vigil was in still college and helped him get a job as a history researcher in Chapultepec. After that, his interactions with Vigil became limited to occasional discussions about academic work and even more infrequent meetings for lunch. Galio and Vigil establish a strong but ambiguous relationship after they accidentally meet in a clandestine drag show. In the show, Galio was performing alongside the military officer for whom he worked:

> Del cuarto prohibido vieron salir, regando pétalos a su paso con unas cestillas de mimbre, a las dos flacas musculosas. Atrás, ondulante y apoteósico, caminaba el gordo monumental travestido en Mae West, una especie de "ballena en marcha real" (Vigil) multiplicada por el tamaño de la peluca platinada y una diadema tocada con plumas de avestruz. En medio de los silbidos y las risas, la concurrencia amplió el ambiente de la parodia haciendo venias y genuflexiones

> frente a esa reina monstruosa, reconociendo en ella una dignidad bufa que la homenajeada admitió recorriendo el pequeño espacio del departamento como quien impera una corte carnavalesca, haciendo saludos reales con la mano enguantada. Volaron puñados de confeti y líneas de serpentinas sobre hombros y cabezas. En medio de ese clímax sucedió: "atrás de la reina y su desfile grotesco", escribió Vigil, "pasó caminando Galio Bermúdez. Soplaba un espantasuegras como si fuera un pífano y saltaba en calzoncillos de un lado a otro -el saco puesto, los calcetines detenidos por ligas- como un fauno en el bosque de sus propias pesadillas realizadas. (*La guerra* 60-1)

The encounter between the two men is presented in a grotesque key, in order to highlight the degree to which Galio has become a servile follower of institutional power. However, the carnivalesque nature of this scene and the use of hypersexualized environment that contravenes hegemonic gender models, reveal an additional layer to Galio's own moral flexibility: the fluid gender expression of the most hateful intellectual. The revelation of Galio's involvement in the underground drag scene triggers a picturesque bonding experience that changes his relationship with Vigil, and the suggestion of Galio's homosexuality brings to the fore the novel's own depiction of the inescapable connection between the characters' intellectual and sexual activities. Galio is not *also* gay, but he is the *only* gay man in the novel. When his sexual expressiveness is revealed to be as instrumentalized as his intellect, the novel acknowledges his unparalleled , if also paradoxical, commitment to his own cause by submitting to the government's absolute dominance.

The use of gender tropes like the one mentioned above are abundant in the novel, and they are often mobilized to represent variants of the same gendered regime: the male intellectual.

Just as Galio and the professor compete for Vigil's attention, it is Octavio Sala the one able to capture it in a decisive way. As the director of *La republica*, Sala is portrayed as a charismatic and principled man, with a natural ability to navigate the political landscape. Because of this relentless commitment and his apparent inability to go against his own beliefs, he is ousted from his position as the head of *La republica*, a clear example of the novel's intertextual relationship with Leñero's *Los periodistas.* This series of "natural" abilities are introduced using an analogy of sexual attraction:

> La noción de omnipotencia indesafiable no es la que le asienta a Sala -dijo-. Sino la de supremacía natural. La idea del Billy Budd de Melville. ¿Has leído Billy Budd? Billy Bud no se propone ser ni ostenta su calidad como el handsome sailor del siniestro buque melvilliano. Simplemente es el marinero mejor, el más fuerte, el más valiente, el más alegre y el más solidario. El macho de la manada es desde pequeño el más fuerte y el más definido del hato. No hay voluntad ni premeditación en sus ventajas. Como no los hay en la belleza de Fiona, que no pretende atraer las miradas, tu deseo o el mío. Ella simplemente hace su efecto, a veces con una inconsciencia monstruosa. Lo mismo pasa con Sala. Su poder es como el de la naturaleza, que no sabe que estamos en ella (*La guerra* 139-40)

The simile established between Fiona's beauty and Sala's ability to lead other men is predicated on the apparent naturality with which they operate. Vigil's inability to resist the "efecto Sala" further highlights this representation. Aside from the promise of fame and recognition, this attraction is what drives Vigil away from his historiographical enterprise and into a profession despised by both of his mentors. It is also telling that Sala's charismatic personality is showcased in relation to the attraction he excerpts on other men – his ability to have them join and support

his cause.

Carlos García Vigil is a protagonist whose masculinity could be said to be in the process of becoming, while his achievements are defined both by the quality of his work, and his relationships with women. Trained as a historian, seduced by journalism, the narration is quick to identify García Vigil as a character in dispute with himself, but also as the object of affection and desire of the majority of the characters. Although the novel begins discussing the professional affiliation as the main dispute regarding the protagonist's belonging, this quickly turns to García Vigil as the object of women's sexual desire. From his ex-wife, Rafaela, to his first and second lover, Oralia Ventura and Mercedes Biedma. Oralia remembers Vigil in the following terms:

> Luego, en los momentos normales, pienso que Vigil estaba enamorado en realidad de todas nosotras y que su problema en la vida fue que nunca estuvo enamorado de sí mismo. O que se amaba a sí mismo en una forma amateur, la forma en que uno se enamora de alguien a los trece años, antes de enamorarse de veras. Su amor por sí mismo era un amor pasajero y trivial. Pero se había enamorado como adulto del mundo de la política y el periodismo, el mundo absurdo y absorbente de los hombres. Ese mundo lo fue envolviendo y amarrando como la más arpia de las mujeres. En ese matrimonio masculino con el mundo, las comparsas éramos la Biedma y yo, Romelia, que lo sigue adorando, y hasta las putas, profesor, que vaya usted a saber si antes de que le costaran la vida no lo ayudaron a vivirla (491)

Oralia's evaluation of Vigil's affective relationships points out the definition of his character by heterosexual promiscuity, but whose true love cannot escape homoerotic undertones, as his true love was indeed the world of men. Unlike Galio, whose sexual and

intellectual performance were both at the service of the same cause, however nefarious, Vigil dies without being able to achieve his own heterosexual fantasy, encarnated in the loss of Mercedes Biedma's body. Vigil's sexual activities are not only admired by his former professor, they also play a role within the character's process of coping with trauma, and their healing. Beyond the numerous lovers that Vigil encounters during the novel, there are particular instances where having sex is presented something Vigil does to find solace after receiving devastating news. For example, after Sala decides to expose Vigil's intervention to save Paola -longtime friend and former partner of his friend Santoyo.

Conclusions

Ultimately, *La guerra de Galio* presents a group of intellectual characters that embody different models of masculinity, but whose sexual behavior cannot be separated from their intellectual activities. These characters develop relationships with each other through a homosocial network of influence and resistance that allows them to negotiate and compete with each other. In the main character, this legacy is presented as both premature, promising and incomplete.

Los periodistas and *La guerra de Galio* are two novels that originated from the same historical event and in a way they are both responding to similar issues reverberating from this instance. In the process of retelling their own versions derived from the infamous takeover, they articulate this encounter from very different perspectives. Whereas *Los periodistas* exemplifies the characteristics and ethics of good journalism, embodied by its narrator and Scherer García, *La guerra* de Galio presents a significantly more ambiguous approach by showing the unsustainable character of idealized journalistic practice. In *La guerra de Galio*, the narrator's pursuit of truth in the form of a literary tribute to his dead student yields a complex network of

competing personalities whose identity is tied to the exercise of a particular expression of intellectual masculinity. In his sense, it becomes clear that Leñero's nonfiction retains a more idealized and ideological conception of the goals and practices of journalism as he equates its practice with the public good, in line with Anderson's (166) and Guerra's () evaluation of the novel.

Both novels present journalism as a male-dominated environment where overt sexualization of women is present. However, only in *Los periodistas*, this seems to have a decidedly negative connotation, since it is only the nameless conspirators who express their desire for the opposite sex in a way that it is inseparable from their treasonous attitudes toward Scherer García and his group. In *La guerra de Galio*, the sexual expression of García Vigil is emphasized by contrast to that of the professor, but also by Galio's own fluid identity allows him to mobilize both his sexual and intellectual activities at the service of the establishment. In this case, sex and more specifically, sexualized expressions of masculinity are not incompatible with intellectual merit.

4.4 NOTES

1. Hector Aguilar Camin has indicated that he took the anecdote from Vicente Leñero's novel. In an interview with *Proceso*, he stated: "Cuando leí en Los periodistas de Vicente Leñero su versión de la historia, lo que tomé para mi proyecto de novela fue la increíble eficacia dramática del *crescendo* de esa trama insuperable, que conduce de la discordia interna a una asamblea en la que con gran efecto teatral" (Redacción).

2. Vicente Leñero Otero was born on June 9, 1933, and Hector Aguilar Camín was born on July 9, 1946. Although they were born 13 years apart, their work have placed significant importance to the Student movement of 1968.

3. For a discussion on the history of the terms Bohemia and bohemianism, see Murawska-Muthesius."In the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, popular bohemia was to reconstitute itself several times according to the shifting patterns of popular culture and everyday modernity. In the 1830s, the bohemian artist used the theatrical costumes and gestures of the melodrama in order to give expression to his special conception of modernity. By the 1850s and '60s, he assumed the black frock coat and impersonal demeanor of the urban flaneur to signal his modernity. In the 1870s and '80s, the cultural type of the bohemian changed again, to be re-enacted as the androgynous figure of the decadent, who used the dramatic gestures of the hysteric to give expression to the public role of the artist in modern society. Finally, during the decades before World War I, the bohemian came to be associated with the figure of the Primitive, whose function was to radically recreate not only the cultural type of the modern artist, but also the aesthetic conventions of modernist art" (Gluck 23)

4. Unlike the vagrancy and statelessness of the bohemians, "A ubiquitous countermodernity, an imaginary land that was gypsy-like even in the peregrinations of its name, bohemia was defined by displacement. The concept of bohemia itself shared the condition of the vagabond, of he who has ni feu ni lieu, neither hearth nor home." (Cottom 186)

5. US news outlets such as the Wall Street Journal and Variety reports on Mexican's perception about Zabludovsky's relationship with the PRI are notable due to the absence of any such criticism by established media outlets in Mexico, with the exception of Proceso. See bibliography.

6. Leñero's "Índice de nombres" at the end of the novel actually lists over 460 names, but he also includes references to briefly mentioned historical characters, such as Karl Marx and Pablo Picasso among others.

7. Kiddle conducted an extensive interview with Leñero in 1975. I have not found any further evidence of this interview other than Kiddle's references to it and some excerpts included in the scholar's doctoral dissertation. See bibliography.

8. Leñero mistakenly names Atlas as son of Zeus, instead of the Iapetus.

9. As an employee owned cooperative, *Excelsior's* business meetings were open to all shareholders, who were also employees. Major decisions such as the election of the executive board of directors required voting from shareholders which usually took place during these general assembly meetings.

10. Aguilar Camín has confirmed his intentions of a loose relationship between these novels, in addition to *La conspiración de la fortuna* (2005) and *Las mujeres de Adriano*, whose protagonist would be the narrator of *La guerra de Galio*. See Enriqueta Cabrera.

11. Harris' approach is grounded on R.W. Conell's sociological and typological study Masculinities (2005).

10. Samuel Ramos' *El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México* (1934) is widely cited as the first attempt to study this intersection. Even from Ramos' prescriptive stance, there are numerous ways to develop a sense of mexican masculinity, albeit not all of them are *authentic* (108-9).

5. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of these books reveals a series of trends present throughout the 20th century in certain parts of Latin America. These trends include a constant preoccupation with what I have called the pursuit of truth which, as we have seen, in many cases includes the representation of the pursuit itself.

From the beginning, these works have also revealed the authors' concern with the various ways in which this pursuit is represented, and the degree to which the pursuit and the representation of the struggle to reach the truth gains a politicized value insofar it stands in conversation, opposition and negotiation with other representations of similar events.

The tensions invoked by these authors insistence to address the role of the media, and particularly the role that journalism has played in the formation and dissemination of certain events, allows us to perceive the intricate relationship that journalism and literature has had in the last century in Latin America. Furthermore, the coordinates of this relationship seem to point toward the production of certain ethical, political and aesthetic models through which these and other authors identify their own work.

Although the nature of these models of representation -including certain tropes and themes- show historical variations as the 20th century progresses, there appears to be an relentless presence of some of the region's obsessions: the overwhelming influence of political discourse, and indeed of political power and state sponsored violence; the relentress expansion of the media's influence within the cultural market, and indeed the public opinion; the manifold effects that the masculinization of the public sphere in determining or assigning protagonism to certain

political or social actors, and indeed relegating the overall participation of women and all other sexual minorities; the relative ease with which certain events, experiences and real lives can be erased by the multiple combinations of all these.

In this dissertation I have tried to bring the problems I have considered approachable and most pressing within this constellation. However, there are many others that could and should be addressed in the future. A preliminary list of these issues includes: the experiences of indigenous groups in relation to the expansion and centralization of the mediascape; the scarcity of information about smaller presses and alternative news outlets; the historical erasure of female reporters, intellectuals and political activists, save for notable examples of national and international fame. Some of these issues have been identified by other scholars in the fields of Mexican and Latin American history, politics and social sciences, and although there have been significant gains in the process, during the process of gathering information for this project, I consider these to be significant blind spots in the field in general and in my own practice as a researcher -weaknesses that I am committed to repair and improve as I continue developing my work.

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6.1 INTRODUCTION

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