UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Detective Fiction as a Cultural Form in Contemporary Latin American and Chicana/o Fiction: Crime, Corruption and Cites

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

in

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by

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The dissertation of Beatriz Asuncion Ramirez is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically.

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2021

DEDICATION

To my father, Luis Ramirez (1943-2015), may he rest in peace. His memory has motivated me to remain a strong, intelligent women.

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Beatriz Diaz Mena, who brought me to the United States in pursuit of the American Dream. Her hard work, as a waitress and single mother, has taught me resilience in the face of adversity.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Professor Rosaura Sánchez, Co-Chair

Professor Gloria Chacón, Co-Chair

Detective fiction, as established in Anglo-American traditions, posed a formula for portraying crime and justice. Since its popularity in the 19th century, Latin America and Chicana/o authors have developed their own forms of detective fiction to portray the realistic conditions of their respective cities. This dissertation employs an interdisciplinary framework that engages with hemispheric studies, literature studies, and cultural geography to explore the form and political commitment that Latin American and Chicana/o authors use to provide

counter-narratives of the city and their communities. Using the framework of hemispheric studies, I bridge Chicana/o and Latin American studies to explore detective novels in Santiago, Chile, Mexico City, Mexicali, and Albuquerque. I explore how social and geopolitical spaces inform the crimes and characterization of the detective in these respective spaces. Chapters one and two explores vigilante detectives and their nostalgic memory of earlier systems of democracy in their respective cities. Chapters three and four transition to the U.S.-Mexico border where Mexican and Chicana/o detectives define crime in terms of how their border cities' socio-economic conditions facilitate the production of crime vis-a-vis the trafficking of women and drugs. Lastly, Chapter five focuses on Chicano detective in Albuquerque to examine how city politics disenfranchise Chicano/a communities in the city. My dissertation concludes with reflections on the contributions that Latin American and Chicana/o authors bring to the detective genre. I consider how future scholarship can continue to bring together Latin American and Chicana/o detective novels by focusing on geopolitical spaces. I also reflect on how Latina/o detective novels can expand a hemispheric study of detective fiction in the "Americas."

Introduction

Setting the stage for Latin American and Chicana/o Detective Fiction

Classic detective fiction and mystery stories became a mass form of entertainment in the 19th century in the United States and England. Detective fiction and mystery stories, published for general audiences, gained further momentum with the rapid growth of newspapers, the establishment of public education, and the arrival of high-speed presses in the nineteenth century. Newspapers focused not only on conveying news items but also on short stories and poetry (Landrum 2). Mystery stories were especially popular and focused on the solution to a threatening situation, whereas detective stories had a stricter form that dealt with the unveiling of a crime solved by a detective (Landrum 2). For purposes of this dissertation, I will be focusing on the detective genre and how it has been developed by Latin American and Chicana/o authors in the 20th century. In some cases, the detective formula and its subgenres have provided different authors a social-political platform for analyzing a wide range of issues in their respective societies.

Detective fiction is commonly understood to encompass two different schools of thought that follow contrasting guidelines for writing detective stories. The classic detective genre, developed in the nineteenth century, focused on a mystery or crime solved by an amateur detective. Edgar Allan Poe's three short stories— "Murders on the Rue Morgue," "The Mystery of Marie Roget," and "The Purloined Letter"— set the guidelines that other authors would follow in writing the classic detective story (Landrum 4). Poe's detective character, Dupin, demonstrated that a brilliant detective could solve crimes from within his office, by using his intellectual capacity to deductively piece together clues provided in newspapers or by the police. The classic detective formula highlighted the investigative action, reasoned explanation, and the

detective's final conclusions about how the crime was committed. Influenced by Enlightenment and positivist thinking, the classic narrative introduced a non-professional detective, or private eye, hired by the police or a public individual to solve crimes like theft, kidnapping, murder, or other forms of local crime (Landrum 5). Poe's detective, Dupin, became the prototype of the detective whose power of deduction and ingenuity became conventions in subsequent detective stories.

The classic detective story also portrays the historical context of an urban 19th century in which crimes bring disorder to liberal societies. The resolution presented in classic detective stories usually restores the bourgeois social order and assumes that corruption is not inherent in society. These detective narratives favor an ideal society that favors bourgeois capitalist values. In view of an urban life plagued with the rise of poverty and crime in these industrial, modern cities, there is a need for policing and surveillance to provide the public order that primarily benefits the rich. The classic detective is usually an upper middle-class individual or aristocrat interested in investigating and finding explanations to crimes. The detective is interested more in the puzzle of the crime rather that the corruption ensuing society. The detective reinforces the bourgeois order through his characterizations and purpose to restore a society maintained by the bourgeoisie. At times, however, the detective's preoccupations are about outsmarting the police or reaffirming his abilities to solve mysterious crimes, which again show no interest in society. In cases where the detective and police work together, the relationship of these two is described as trustworthy where both justice and the law are uncorrupted.

American authors countered the classic detective formula by developing the hardboiled formula later in the 20th century. They used the hardboiled detective narrative to develop a realist approach to crimes that took place in the surrounding reality of urban life emerging in the United

States. The authors reacting against the classic formula sought to demonstrate real conditions and a social order that was inherently unjust. The hardboiled genre sought to demonstrate that crime was not a disruption of social order but an inherent part of it. The hardboiled story first appeared as a distinct style of adventure-narratives in pulp magazines (Landrum 11). As early as 1896, pulp magazines like *Argosy, Argosy- All Story Weekly,* and *Blue Book*, published different types of adventure, mystery, and science fiction stories for newsstands that reached the general public (Landrum 11). Nineteenth century technical and cultural changes such as the invention of wood pulp paper, yellow journalism, and increased adult literacy influenced the high number of readers that detective stories could reach. New modes of publication, the growth of the American press, and consumerism contributed to the dissemination of detective fiction among audiences walking along the streets and drawn to newsstands. The hardboiled detective story, in contrast to the classic detective story, shifted towards social realism, documentary realism, and detective biography. The hardboiled genre sought to portray the corrupt realities inherent in society.

Instead of focusing on the detective as a super intellectual with deductive skills that could solve mysteries behind closed doors, the hardboiled story centered its narrative on the types of crimes committed in cities and suburbs, while developing further the detective's persona. Carroll John Daly published his private eye series in dime novels, showing the detective hero wedged in between the legal authority on the one side and the criminal underworld on the other. He published some of his hardboiled stories in the *Black Mask* magazine that would influence Dashiell Hammett's work on the very same genre. These authors depicted a paid, professional detective that, at times, would be implicated in the corruption of the dominant society that he exposes. Prior to these stories, dime novels offering Western stories and depictions of the U.S frontier and plains had set the background for the free-range and adventure paradigms that had

entertained mass audiences. The rise of industrialization and the metropolis in America predisposed the detective hardboiled stories to city settings and characters representing government agencies, local policemen, and urban-city dwellers. Besides Dashiell Hammett who contributed to the development of the hardboiled formula, other North American authors who also contributed to the hardboiled stories were Raymond Chandler, David Goodies, and Peter Cheyney, and many others including women writers. Some of these authors used the hardboiled narrative as a series of exposés of city politics and gangster activities, commentary on postwar disillusionment, and promotion of literary naturalism that to them was more realistic. In some cases, for example, hardboiled stories in the 1920s and 1930s responded to the political and social changes of the Prohibition era and the Great Depression.

The hard-boiled formula focused on the development of the detective character and the action of the story. It described the detective's search for clues out on the streets, sites that at times, led to his fights with criminals. The hardboiled detective stories of Hammett and Chandler, for example, focused on materialism, greed, political corruption, and violence in the U.S. His detective, Philip Marlowe, is said to have demonstrated the reinvention of the courtly knight of medieval romance struggling desperately to hold the grail of justice and love above the seas of corruption (Nickerson 53). Marlowe fights the seas of corruption in distinct areas of Los Angeles, illustrating the geographical distribution of social classes that characterize the area. The hardboiled detective character changed from a wealthy aristocrat to an ordinary, working-class consultant. Hammett's hardboiled detective, Continental Op, exemplifies this character shift to a short, fat and middle-aged man who conceals extra-ordinary cleverness beneath his common place exterior (Nickerson 46). By the 1940s, the decline of pulp fiction and the rise of the paperback after World War II revolutionized the production of the detective story, changing its

distribution and purchase in addition to the genre's growth into a variety of subgenres and variations of the formula. In the 1950s, the new variations that emerged in the U.S gave rise to crime suspense, police procedural, film noir, American spy fiction, true crime, and noir. In addition to these genres, the diversity of authors expanded to include Black, Chicano/as, Native Americans, Jewish Americans, and other ethnic writers. I will return to the development of Ethnic American detective fiction following my discussion of how Latin American detective fiction emerged with its introduction of Anglo-American and European detective fiction.

The wide-spread popularity of detective fiction in the U.S. and Britain gained momentum in Latin America as well in the 19th century. Similar to its popularity in Europe and the U.S., detective fiction in Latin American also became popular entertainment for public audiences. The high interest of Latin American readers in translations of European and North American detective fiction delayed Latin American authors' participation in successfully publishing their own detective stories and gaining their own audiences (Simpson 6-10). The fact that there were few publishing houses in their countries also proved to be a problem for authors wishing to gain wide-distribution and popularity for their works. Nevertheless, several Latin American authors did in fact produce detective fiction and focused on critical assessments of the genre. Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares in Argentina, around the 1930s, popularized the classic detective genre not only by translating and publishing classic detective stories in the magazine *Seis Problemas*, but by writing their own stories that focused on parading and creating detectives who could outwit the classic detective characters from Edgar Allan Poe, Sir Author Conon Doyle, and G.K Chesterton (Simpson 4-5).

Latin American authors, in their respective countries, developed both types of detective formulas. Some authors aimed to provide stories that surprised and outwitted their audiences

with the classic formula, while other authors used the hardboiled formula to provide a socio-political critique of their respective countries. My dissertation will focus on two Latin American authors and their use of the hardboiled detective story to provide social-political commentary. Latin American authors interest in the hardboiled formula started around the 1940s and 1950s. They were especially influenced by later Spanish detective authors such as Manuel Vasquez Montalbán and Juan Madrid who emphasized themes of abuse of power by official institutions (government, police, etc.). A wide-range of scholars have noted the development of detective fiction in Argentina, Mexico, Cuba, Colombia, Chile, and Central America.[1] While this dissertation cannot provide an overview of each country, the thematic approach and its interest in the *novel negra* and *novela neopoliciaca* will facilitate a general understanding of detective fiction in Latin America, while avoiding monolithic generalizations of the genre in each respective country.

The hardboiled genre in Latin America has developed mostly around Latin American authors' beliefs that this formula was less elitist and more capable of representing socio-historical circumstances in their countries better than other genres. Latin American authors' use of *la novela negra* became a cultural form of the American hardboiled adapted to their own creative and political purposes. Since Taibo II's self-proclaimed *novela neopoliciaca* series, literary critics have also begun to draw connections between both *la novela negra* and *la novela neopoliciaca.* Persephone Braham in *Crimes against the State Crimes against Persons* defines *la novela neopoliciaca* as a subgenre whose detectives are vigilantes that expose themselves to the viciousness and corruption of society with a paradoxical mix of cynicism and idealism (xiii).

[1] Amelia Simpson's *Dectective Fiction from Latin America* explains the development of the detective genre in the River Plate, Brazil, Mexico, and Cuba.

Braham considers Manuel Vazquez Montalbán, Paco Ignacio Taibo II, and Padura Fuentes as authors whose detective narratives are *novelas negras,* or *novelas neopoliciacas*.

I consider *la novel negra* and *la novela neopoliciaca* as two subgenres that provide intertextual commentary on the American hardboiled, using the Latin American writers' own socio-historical circumstances. La novela negra and neopoliciaca provide reflections on the American hardboiled within their narrative stories and point out how their social realities are different. *La novela negra* is a term with more nuances in Latin American literary studies and even, recently, in Central America detective fiction.[2] Mempo Giardinelli traces the genealogy of both the classic and hardboiled formulas, demonstrating how they gain footing in the Latin American context. He remarks, "podemos afirmar una vez más que el género negro nació como una corriente interna, natural, dentro de la tradición realista de la literatura norteamericana" (Mempelli 32).[3] *La novela negra* addresses the city as a character, analyzes the detective character, describes the crime, and is cynical about institutional hegemonies like the State and local government. *La novela negra* reaffirms that society is inherently corrupt, questions the status quo, and indicts political institutions for exacerbating the inherent corruption rather than eliminating these circumstances. The civil wars and fights for independence in the mid-nineteenth to twentieth centuries provided the context for *la novela negra* to become a vehicle for political commitments and critiques of socio-historical and political situations in Latin America. *La novela negra,* itself, is a historical reflection and proclamation of those marginalized and oppressed under the corrupt conditions present in their particular society. Following *la novela negra*, Milos Kokotovic discusses the neoliberal noir and compares Latin

[2] See Kokotovic, Milos. "Neoliberal Noir: Contemporary Central American Crime Fiction as Social Criticism."*Clues: Spring 2006; 24,3*. *Literature Online.* 15-29.
[3] Mempelli states, "we can confirm once again that the noir novel was born as an internal, natural current within the realist tradition of North American literature.

American detective novels with Central American crime fiction; he notes that Latin American neoliberal noir novels "retain some degree of sympathy for the utopian projects of the revolutionary Left… [and] draw on a broadly leftist literary current of social criticism" (Kokotovic 16). The neoliberal noir novel underscores the economic policies that exacerbate the unequal and inequitable living conditions for those in the lower social classes in society. He also links the neoliberal noir genre to *la novela negra*, *la novela neopoliciaca*, and the narco-noir in the detective stories of Paco Ignacio Taibo II and Subcomandante Marcos in Mexico, Ramón Díaz Eterović in Chile, and recent Colombian authors Jorge Franco and Mario Mendo, Mario Mendoza, and Santiago Gamboa (15).

La novela neopoliciaca is a term coined by Paco Ignacio Taibo II to describe the adaptation of the hardboiled detective genre to the socio-political and historical conditions in Mexico. According to Braham, Taibo II, or also referred to PIT II, developed the detective genre because of his interest in the "genre's low status during a period when formalist experimentation was almost obligatory and left no room for storytellers and readers" (83). Maria Paz Balibrea-Enríquez adds that PIT II nationalized *la novela neopoliciaca*, stating "el neopoliciaco se construye como una novelística abiertamente política y denunciatoria, especialmente del Estado mexicano, y con ambiciones de romper las barreras obsoletas entre la literatura popular y la de élite, mientras defiende y se apropia explícitamente de la primera" (Balibrea-Enríquez 39).[4] PIT II's *neopolicaco* novels construct a leftist critique with socialist ambitions through a genre that indicts the Mexican government and corrects written history. PIT II uses *la novela neopolicaca*

[4] I provide my own translation: *La novela neopoliciaca* is constructed as a genre that is political and denunciatory, especially of the Mexican government, and it has ambitions in breaking the barriers that separate populist literature and elite literature, as it defends and appropriates the former. Braham, quoting critic Bruno Bosteels, recaps some of these political events, stating "The anarchist stuggles of the 20s, the student movement of 68, the reemergence of syndicalist stuffles in the 70s, the popular response to the earthquake of 1985, and the promise of a new left under Cardenas since 1988, are more than simply the background of Taibo II's stories" (84).

as a historical investigation of the Mexico's political past to provide a counter-narrative from the perspective of the oppressed, urban masses in Mexico City. While I acknowledge PIT II's original intent to coin *la novela neopolicaca* as a Mexican detective genre, his development of the genre compares favorably with *la novela negra.* Generally speaking, the hardboiled detective genre in Latin America (both *la novela neopoliciaca,* what could be termed neoliberal noir, and *la novel negra*) provides socio-economic and political critiques, specific to the author's country, that help us understand the uneven economic development of their respective countries. These subgenres allow us to explore (post) modernity and the specific political settings that motivate these authors to provide an alternative history from the point of view of the oppressed masses.[5]

At the start of the 21st century, *La novela neopoliciaca* became exhausted as a literary form. A new generation of authors decided to revitalize the genre with a focus on contemporary political issues in Mexico during Felipe Calderon's presidency (2006-2012).[6] The anthology *Sunny Places for Shady People: El Post-policiaco Mexicano* by Joseph M. Towle captures the development of the *post-policiaco* genre that succeeds *la novela neopolicaca*. According to Towle there are literary and historical shifts that result in the development of *post-policiaco* novels in Mexico. The literary moments that mark the establishment of the *post-policiaco* are PIT II's shift to writing historical fiction, the death of his two representatives Juan Hernandez

[5] I use the term (post) modernity to acknowledge that Latin American similarly to other countries did not follow the same modernization and economic development models that were successful in Europe and other First World countries. I also acknowledge that modernity is a widely debated term that encompasses not just the economic development of different states but is also tied to colonialism. Mignolo and Walsh in *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* proclaim the famous phrase "Coloniality is constitutive, not derivative, of modernity," which indicates Mignolo's contribution to Wallerstein's modern world system theory and Anibal Quijano's coloniality of power. These theorists expand on the role that the America's have in Europe's conceptionalization of a capitalist world-economy. Modernity functions on the colonization and conquest of indigenous lands and other racial groups in addition to presenting capitalism as a European phenomenon that the world participates in distinct positions of power (Mignolo *On Decoloniality* 24).

[6] Some of PIT II's *la novela neopoliciaca* narratives focus on the political unrest during the presidencies of Luis Echevarria (1970-1976), Jose Lopez Portillo y Pacheco (1976-1982). Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988). Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994), Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000), and Vicente Fox (2000-2006).

Luna (in 2010) and Rafael Ramirez Heredia (in 2006); and lastly Elmer Mendoza's award at Premio Tusquets in 2007 for his novel *Balas de Plata* (2008). Although PIT II began to focus on historical fiction, his final installment in the Belascoarán series, *Muertos Incomodos* (2005), marked the start of the *post-policiaco* genre as did Bernardo Fernandez (Bef)'s novel *Tiempo de Alacranes* (2005). Historically, Towle explains, "cuando Felipe Calderón del Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) ganó la presidencia y lanzó una campaña intensiva contra el narcotráfico para combatir la violencia, a saber, una guerra contra los cárteles de la droga dentro su país" (14).[7] Felipe Calderon began his presidency in Mexico with a hard campaign against drug trafficking and the drug cartels that resulted in an increase of violence, murder, and kidnapping. This new form of violence resulted in a new form of criminal behavior and a shift in society that motivated Mexican authors to expose the new realities in their respective states.

The *post-policiaco* genre conveys the socio-economic and political context that Mexican cities experienced in the late 20th century and the start of the 21st century. The post-policiaco narratives guides us through peripheral cities with different cultures in places like Sinaloa, Acapulco, and Ciudad Juarez among others. During this time, we witness the impact of neoliberal globalization and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on these geopolitical spaces. NAFTA, a neoliberal economic model that institutionalized a free market, the privatization of certain economic sectors, and the withdrawal of state social welfare programs and subsidies exacerbated the living condition for urban and rural dwellers who experienced uneven modernization and rapid urbanization (Gonzalez Gomez 38). Border towns in Mexico saw the urban growth of the maquiladora and other transnational industries that used the

[7] I provide my own translation: when Felipe Calderon, presidential candidate of the National Action Party, began his campaign against drug trafficking to combat violence and consequently a war against the drug cartels in his country.

Mexican region as a space with available cheap labor. These social conditions in addition to the violence of drug cartels inform the context of the realities that *post-policiaco* novels expose. The detective narrative of the *post-policiaco* transformed the previous features of the *neopolicaco* genre, while still maintaining some parts of its formula. Towle lists four emerging characteristics of the *post-policaco* cultural form, which are translated by Ruiz:

> 1) A Moveable Center: the crime, the detective, the plot, the action, and the suspense is no longer set in Mexico City but throughout greater Mexico and beyond national borders; 2) Everyday Violence: Activists and journalists working as 'detectives' are present in many of these fictional narratives, where often times the authors themselves are or were journalists themselves before turning to become writers of *la novela negra*; and 3) *Humor negro:* Theses narratives contain jokes, auto-critique, and making light of dark and sinister situations through a particular Mexican style of humor. (147)

The significance of the *post-policiaco* genre is that the cultural form decenters Mexico City as the major city of crime and corruption. This detective narrative draws our attention to other experiences in peripheral states of Mexico. While solving the crime is still part of the narrative, reporting the crime or exposing the criminal activities becomes more important. In this new reality of "everyday violence," the detective character is no longer the P.I. Other characters take on this role like journalists, everyday workers, and activists. Lastly, the new tone of the detective narrative brings to light the *post-policaco's* nationalist cultural form. Still, the detective narrative maintains some general characterizations that some would argue are also post-modernist. For example, in describing the *post-policiaco* published in northern states of Mexico, José Salvador Ruiz adds other characteristics:

> 1)the structural fragmentation, 2) the aesthetic of language, 3) the inclusion of more complex characters who are highly psychological, 4) the decrease of importance of the detective (and in other cases his disappearance), 5) the decentralization of the narrative spaces, and 6) the political denunciation that lies within the shocking images and chaotic situation in the novel. (Towle 147).[8]

[8] José Salvador Ruiz quotes Carpio Manickam, stating "1)La fragmentación estructural, 2) la estética del leguaje, 3) la inclusión de personajes mas complejos y altamente psicológicos, 4) la disminución de la importancia del detective

Some *post-policiaco* novels present fragmented narratives, different narrators, and narrative points of view that portray the chaotic experience of the city. The language, at times, varies in dialect depending on the region or state; some authors use Spanish and English interchangeably in the detective narrative. These literary elements match the realistic experiences of individuals living the chaos and crime in Mexico.

Chicana/o and Mexican American authors have also adapted the detective genre to illustrate their marginal positions in the U.S. These authors began to develop the detective genre as part of the emergence of multicultural literature movements spurred by the Civil Rights movement in the U.S. Ethnic American detective fiction generally encompasses the rise of detective fiction of authors of color in the United States in the last few decades of the twentieth century. Scholars have termed this as the rise of multicultural detective fiction, diversity in detective fiction, or ethnic detective fiction.[9] Most of these scholars argue that after the women's movement and the emergence of women's detective fiction, authors of color began to see the opportunity for publishing detective fiction with protagonists of their respective race. The works *Diversity and Detective Fiction, A Reference to Detective Fiction,* and *Contemporary Detective Fiction* trace ethnic detective fictions to critical debates about diversity, race, and multiculturalism in the 20th century. Although previous Anglo-American story collections published since the nineteenth century included African American, Mexican American, and Native American characters. These narratives provided a limited characterization of race and

(y en algunos casos su desaparición completa), 5) la descentralización de los espacios narrativos y 6) la denuncia sociopolítica implícita que se presenta mediamente la construcción de imágenes impactantes y situaciones caóticas" (Towle 147).

[9] See Klein, Kathleen Gregory. *Diversity and Detective Fiction*. Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1999.

gender in the mystery and detective stories. Since the focus of this dissertation is on Latin American and Chicano/a authors, I will only refer to the development of detective fiction for Chicano/a authors, including criticism of these authors.

Chicano/a and Latino/a literatures before the 1980s focused on realist fiction depicting issues of the Chicano/a movement, migration, identity, and civil rights. Ralph E. Rodriguez in *Brown Gumshoes* suggests that prior to the 1960s most Chicana/o and Latina/o narratives were oral and not written until Villareal's *Pocho* in 1959 that became the first written work. That however is not the case, since Americo Paredes' novel *George Washing Gomez* was written in the 1940s, but published later. Rodriguez focuses on the 1960s and 1970s, a period during which Chicana/o authors primarily sought to solidify a united identity. By the 1980s, this united identity became challenged by post-national ideologies of multiculturalism and difference. From the 1980s to 2000s, according to Rodriguez, this historical shift overlaps with the emerging detective fiction by Chicana/os. Prior to these years, Chicano/a authors had difficulties publishing or using this genre for two reasons: one, they had a limited readership; and two, the detective genre was not readily considered to be literature by some others.

Once women's and African American's detective works proved otherwise, Chicana/os began to write and publish in this genre; Rolando Hinojosa's detective novel *Partners in Crime* published in 1985 became the first Chicana/o detective novel. Other authors that used this genre included Rudolfo Anaya, Lucha Corpi, Michael Nava, and Manuel Ramos. These Chicana/o authors are also "those recently immigrated and those whose ancestors were among the first immigrants to California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas" (Sotelo 3). Their detective works, in the style of the hard-boiled, explored the criminality that speaks to the alienation and violence surrounding Mexican Americans both in cities and at the border. Sotelo's analysis of Chicana/o

detectives explores how these texts are "resistant texts" that foreground the representation of Chicano/a survivors of their historical circumstance (Sotelo 4). The majority of these Chicana/o authors are influenced by the historical context of the Chicano Movement in the 60s and 70s, that concerned itself with worker's rights, equal access to social services, and education (Sotelo 4). During the Chicano Movement, Chicanas also participated in the 1970s as they worked for women's rights in their communities and in cooperation with other women of color (Sotelo 4). The detective formula came to serve as a form of discourse for Chicana/o authors to discuss the "shifting political, social, cultural, and identitarian terrain of the post-nationalist period" (Rodriguez 5). Rodriguez outlines some of these authors' preoccupations, including the troubling times in the border relations of Hinojosa's Belken County, the ambivalence over nationalist politics in Corpi and Ramos' detective novels, the violence perpetrated against homosexuals in Nava's detective novels, and the metaphysical battles of New Mexicans in Anaya's detective novels (Rodriguez 5).

Chicana/o detective authors have also concerned themselves with the U.S.-Mexico border, much like other Mexican and Anglo-American authors. Rodriguez explains that Chicana/o detective fictions presents Mexican Americans feelings of living in a post- Treaty of Guadalupe 1848 world where they feel displaced, neither belonging on the U.S. more than the Mexican side of the border (6). In attempting to overcome this feeling of alienation, Rodriguez continues, Chicana/os imagined Aztlán as a mythic homeland to return to and a place to locate their roots (7). The Chicana/o detective reflects this "alienated, moral hero" who examines the world and its shaping discourses in the process of solving a crime (7). Alienation is a key term of analysis that for Rodriguez marks an opportunity for an evaluation that is crucial for a population whose identities are under siege (7). In addition to themes of belonging and identity, some

Chicana/o authors have also focused on how the U.S.-Mexico border has been shaped by socio-economic policies between the two countries. In some cases, the focus of these U.S.-Mexico detective crime novels has been the femicides in U.S.-Mexican border cities, but more often these novels are concerned with substance and human trafficking, and undocumented immigrants' journey across the border. Among some of the Chicana/o and Mexican American authors that have written detective fiction about the U.S.-Mexico border include Rolando Hinojosa, Alicia Gaspar de Alba, and Sebastian Rotella.

A Comparativist Study of Latin American and Chicana/o Detective Fiction

As previously noted, in the U.S., detective fiction began with narratives that followed the classic formula in the early 19th century, but by the 20th century authors began to interject and develop the hardboiled formula as an alternative to the classic formula. Latin American and Ethnic American detective fiction, following the increase of publication from European and white American authors, began to develop their own approaches to the detective genre. At the turn of the 20th century, we can see the rise of popularity of this genre for Latin American and Ethnic American authors. For Latin American authors, their historical realities influenced their use of detective fiction as a cultural form that exposed their experiences with dominant societies and authoritarian governments. As Caroline Levine notes, literature forms arise in relation to social structures (3). These authors' adaptation of the detective narrative became more than a preoccupation with aesthetics and experimentations with literary devices. Latin American and U.S. ethnic authors used this "low" cultural form to challenge official, nation-state narratives, while simultaneously legitimizing the genre as more than escapist and entertainment literature. Their use of this cultural form resisted and defied categorizations of national literatures and their

elitist conceptualizations of the national subject. I define cultural form along the lines of Caroline Levine who argues that "politics involves activities of ordering patterning, and shaping. And if the political is a matter of imposing and enforcing boundaries, temporal patterns, and hierarchies on experience, then there is no politics without forms" (3).

Some of the Latin American and Chicana/o authors that took up the genre of detective fiction did so with the intent of demonstrating that this "low" cultural form should be considered literature in addition to other established literary forms. Michael Groden, Martin Kreiswirth, and Imre Szeman explain in *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory: The Johns Hopkins Guide* that print literature has been defined as an advanced cultural form that "not only exemplified the national culture but also demonstrated its value and maturity in relation to other cultures" (358). In defining previous notions of national literature, they refer to print literature, stating:

> National literature, as defined in print and in schools, remained largely the product of the elite who continued to work in the verse forms derived from classical and courtly cultures (ode, sonnet, epic, lyric, romance) or who mediated the oral forms of the past and rural culture for middle- and upper-class audiences through scholarly editions, complete with learned instructions and notes. (358)

These elite notions of literature have a limited sense of what constitutes the nation as "national" literatures. For indigenous authors, as noted by Chacón, "national literatures are a segment of wider-European Spanish-language tradition that leaves out indigenous literatures that reference other linguistic universes" (5).[10] These debates about what constitute "national literatures" and what genres and cultural forms can be included in its canons bring to light how canonical

[10] Chacón forms part of the larger debate about literacy, what constitutes literature, and how the institution of literature endorses and validates power (8). More specifically, Rappaport (in addition to other scholars) observes the "implications of alphabetic and visual literacy to be inextricably entangled with an analysis of Spanish colonial domination and how writing and pictorial expression functioned as both a measuring stick of cultural hierarchy in a colonial world and as a vehicle for incorporating native peoples into a colonial project" (Rappaport 5). These scholars note how indigenous groups were discounted as literate, a national subject, or even a subject for their "lack" of literacy; Rappaport, Chacón and others intervene, decolonizing conceptualizations of what's an acceptable form or literacy that is inclusive of indigenous groups who were in fact 'literate' and maintained records.

literature legitimizes the nation-state, while marginalizing different groups that do not fit within its conceptualization of the nation-state subject. This dissertation considers how Latin American and Chicana/o authors have used detective fiction as a cultural form that exposes the hierarchies of power within literature by going against the canon. These authors provide a counter-narrative using a "low" cultural form to contest literary spaces and nation-state politics.

In *Detective Fiction from Latin America,* Jessica Simpson explains that the key to understanding Latin American detective fiction is its strict association with Europe and the United States (10). She traces the emergences of detective fiction in Latin America, both the classic and hardboiled subgenres, to its cross-continental connections with Anglo-American authors and British authors. She describes how Latin American authors went beyond these connections and developed both the aesthetic aspects and socio-political aspects of the genre, pushing social critiques that addressed their current socio-political and economic situations. In the same vein, Braham bridges some connections between the hardboiled detective novels of Cuba and of Mexico by noting their representations of modern conditions that "serve as a fulcrum for exposing the fissures and divergences that characterize modernity in two very different settings: post-1968 Mexico, and Cuba, in the heyday, then decline, of its modern Revolution" (x). According to Braham, the marginality of detective fiction allows it to "evolve into a tool for social criticism in a climate where the official press is unwilling or unable to perform this function" (x). *La novela negra*, *la novela neopoliciaca,* neoliberal noir, and *la novela post-policiaca* voice the different experiences of political and cultural oppression when the news or other official forms of journalism are no longer reliable. These subgenres flourish despite being situated in layers of marginality: its status as a low culture genre, its market value, and its geographical production. Simpson and Braham, in a way, see connections between Latin

American, European, and Anglo-American detective fiction. They've demonstrated the mobility and adaptation of the genre from Spain to Argentina to Mexico to Cuba; their analysis notes how these various detective genres cross disciplinary boundaries not just within Latin America but in the United States as well. As Braham notes, Mexican author Paco Ignacio Taibo II owes a "debt to Chester Himes, whose nightmarish ghetto, Harlem, prefigures the chaos of Mexican society under neoliberalism" (xi).

This dissertation considers how Latin American and Chicana/o authors, by adapting the detective genre, have made it into a moveable, cultural form. Just as Ruiz notes that the *post-policiaco* narrative has moveable centers in terms of the locations presented within the narrative, so too, on a larger scale has the cultural form of detective fiction traveled from major cities, nation-states, and across continents. Within the scope of this dissertation, Latin American and Chicana/o detective works exemplify that cultural forms do travel and as Levine notes: "they survive across cultures and time periods, over vast distances of time and space" (5). The mobility of detective fiction, as a cultural form, lies not only its hemispheric travels but also, as noted by scholars like Braham and Simpson, in how Latin American authors have adapted the hardboiled genre using different patterns, arrangements, and shapings to produce spatial conversations about marginalization, corruption, and oppression during the late 20st century to early 21st century. Braham's analysis of the socialist leanings of some Cuban and Mexican hardboiled detective authors post-1968 provides an entry to examining this particular genre through a historical and political analysis that allows for viewing detective fiction as a form with "ethicopolitical concerns" (Braham xii). This dissertation hopes to expand on Braham and Simpson's work by drawing further connections between Latin American and Chicano/a detective fiction.

To better understand detective fiction as a travelling form and its spatial conversations among Latin American and Chicana/o authors, I consider the framework of hemispheric studies to examine how Latin American and Chicana/o scholars viewed linkages between Latin American and Chicano/a literatures. Hemispheric studies, in this dissertation, lace the geographical analysis of authors in Santiago, Chile, and Mexico City, with that of authors in the U.S.-Mexico border, and Albuquerque, New Mexico. Bauer's essay is instrumental in tracing the "hemispheric turn" to a scholarly and methodological interest in literature and cultural studies. Prior to the "hemispheric turn," inter-American studies was an established field in Europe and the United States with scholars in the United States engaging in comparativist, hemispheric studies.[11] Bauer claims the hemispheric conception of American studies had originated with Berkeley historian Herbert Eugene Bolton (1870-1953) and his seminal 1932 presidential address to the American Historical Association (234). Bauer also indicates that, in the 1990s, scholarship on inter-American grew, and by the 2000s, literary and cultural studies "witnesse[d] a veritable explosion of scholarly activities in hemispheric studies" (235). Some U.S. literary and cultural studies scholars approached hemispheric studies through a methodology that was rooted in (multi) cultural studies and postcolonial theory. The 'discovery' of the hemisphere by American studies came at a time that when the discipline was turning away from U.S.-centered multiculturalism toward a trans- and post-nationalism approach during the 1990s (234). Their approach was more concerned with questions of race and ethnicity as well as the U.S.'s relations with its borders and with ethnic minorities (234). The "hemispheric turn" has become a methodology taken up in other subdisciplines in American and cultural studies: colonial studies,

[11] Among some of the scholars in the mid-twentieth century, Bauer notes Italian American Anotello Gerbi (234).

nineteenth-century, and twentieth-century American literature, and regional and ethnic studies (Bauer 235).

Hemispheric scholars have noted the challenges that this methodology presents in terms of Chicana/o, Latina/o and Latin American studies, which stem from how these disciplines conceptualize the nation-state, identity, modernity/colonialism, and imperialism, among other topics. For example, one of the differences that Bauer notes is Latin American intellectuals' notion of one cultural identity, stating, "they have typically attempted to theorize this cultural identity in opposition to, rather than in hemispheric unity with, the United States in the face of that country's aggressive hemispheric imperialism since the nineteenth century" (236). While this notion of one cultural identity is debatable, in what follows, I provide a brief overview of some of the conversations in Chicana/o Studies and Latin American studies that further explain their convergences and disconnections. By doing so, I hope to explore how these disciplines are in conversation with one another, and how they form interdisciplinary bridges towards understanding detective fiction as a cultural form important to the "Americas." I understand the term "Americas" as a historical and social construct that reveals geopolitical processes that involve networks beyond the nation-state.[12]

Some Chicana/o studies scholars assert Ramon Saldívar's claim that history constitutes Chicana/o literature; they agree that Chicana/o literature draws from the historical and lived experiences of Chicana/os. In Jesse Alemán's article, he considers how Chicana/o intellectuals, like Ramon Saldívar, the Recovery Project, and others, were defining Chicana/o literary canons and how the accessibility of this literary space included or excluded certain authors and their

[12] I understand the term "Americas" in the same way that *Chicano Nations* describes the "Americas" as less bounded by space (or grids on a map) and more as "an idea, or network, whose contours, meanings, and participants are constantly in flux (3)." *Chicano Nations* considers the "Americas" as a spatial term that emphasizes process over product (3).

works.[13] Alemán also accounts for how different methodologies and literary theories are taken up in Chicana/o literary criticism.[14] Thus, there is a debate about what methodologies in post-structuralism, historical materialism, and post-modernism can do for Chicano/a literature and its praxis. Chicana/o literature deals with the tenuous relationship between literature as a symbolic act and the real material conditions of Chicana/o history, lives, and identities (Alemán 29). Different scholars pose different approaches to how one can read and understand Chicana/o literature. For example, Alemán proposes a dialectics of difference as a solution. Other scholars consider Chicana/o literature beyond U.S. exceptionalism and alienation. There is also an interest in breaking down teleological national frameworks that box in 'national literatures' and Chicana/o literature within American literature. It is important to most scholars to re-write Chicana/os in national (literature) histories without this logic (Coronado 50). Coronado proposes a new entry beyond the plurality of textuality (novel, poems, etc) and instead seeks to trace the discursive (trans)formations of writing as a mode of searching for immanence (Coronado 54). This dissertation in a way traces the transformation of writing by Chicano/a detective authors whose purpose is to create a subgenre underlines a hemispheric intent to produce realistic stories of resistance against national boundaries and authoritarian, dominant societies.

On the other hand, Latin American studies has had an interest in its positionality within the European context of conquest and imperialism, and U.S. imperialism. Scholars from

[13] Alemán observes how Saldívar's book and the Recovery Project proposed by other Chicana/o scholars demonstrates how "Chicano/a literary history cleaved in two directions, one toward the past and the other toward the contemporary making" (26). Saldívar's book and the Recovery project suggest different methodologies and perspectives for understanding Chicana/o literature.

[14] Within debates about Chicana/o literary criticism, Alemán claims that Saldívar was the critic in between Bruce-Nova's aesthetic theory and Sommer's materialist critique (29). Saldívar's approach becomes imperative in Chicana/o literary criticism because argues for a dialectical relationship between the cultural form and history; as Alemán states: "For Saldívar, Mexican America's embattled history makes both the form and content of Chicana/o literature dialectical, not so much because literature reflects or interprets that history but because history constitutes our literature" (29).

Imannuel Wallerstein to Walter Mignolo concur that the modern world-system generated in the long sixteenth century depended upon the invention/creation of the Americas as a geographic and cultural construct (Lavander and Levine 4). Latin America's emergence required the erasure and subordination of indigenous populations (Lavander and Levine 5). Most important, the notion of Latin America was used in contradistinction to an Anglo-Saxon America, the latter represented by the United States (Lazo 1). A version of Latin American studies refuses to engage with the United States as an important site of migration, which results in overlooking the historical role of figures who moved in and out of cities such as Philadelphia, New York, New Orleans, and San Francisco (Lamas 8). Some Latin American scholars' reluctance to identify or engage with the United States arises from the U.S.'s aggressive hemispheric imperialism since the nineteenth century (Bauer 236). While it's easy to distinguish Latin American and Chicana/o studies and their approaches to the divergences and connections between the two fields, Ramón Saldívar's book, *Chicano Narratives* (1990), reminds us that "how Chicana narrative, like African American, feminist, lesbian, Third World, and other radical writings in general, takes for its point of departure, 'the right of formerly un or mis-represented human groups to speak for and represent themselves in domains defined politically and intellectually as normally excluding them'"(4). This dissertation links Latin American and Chicana/o detective fiction as a cultural form whose literary history and narrative formula represent "radical writings" that defy the nation-state, (national) literary canons, and dominant culture. Both Latin American and Chicana/o studies and literatures share a number of commonalities; they both interrogate dominant society and the role that the state has as a hegemonic power. In their detective works, these respective authors portray the diverse stories of marginalized populations in geopolitical spaces and expose their experiences and place within larger centers of society.

Some scholars have already encouraged or published comparativist analyses of how Chicana/o and Latin American literature can be more in conversation with one another. Some of these scholars, like Lamas, have delved in the Latin American and Chicana/o archive to locate Latin American individuals whose residency, even temporary, in the United States help us uncover unknown sites of the Latino communities in the nineteenth century (Lamas 8). Insley, similar to Lamas, traces the foreign relations between the U.S. and Mexico by focusing on U.S.-Mexico border crime fiction. These authors help shape a discursive map of global engagement in different parts of the western "American" hemisphere. Lopez, another critic, charts some of these movements through an analysis of Alicia Gaspar de Alba's *Desert Blood* (2005) and Martín Limón's *The Door to Bitterness* (2005) where characters find themselves disoriented and searching for unstable places, mobile sites, or unmapped territories across the U.S.-Mexico border (172). Mario Acevedo's *The Nymphos of Rocky Flats* (2006) and *The Undead Kama Sutra* (2008) also form part of Lopez's study where he notes that these novels "map a journey from the U.S.-Mexico border, to Korea, and finally to outer space, where U.S. xenophobia and paranoia are satirized for a primarily U.S. readership" (172). In another analysis, Lazo notes the "Latino continuum" across time and space, demonstrating that stories can be written between worlds simultaneously (226). Lazo tries to understand a continuum of authors "as representing an identity not entirely Latin American (in this case Cuban) and not entirely U.S. American" (212). For Lazo, identity can simultaneously occupy multiple spatialities, while inhabiting and crossing diverse temporal moments (Lamas 212).

Based on this scholarship, we can see how scholars have attempted to bridge Latin American and Chicana/o studies directly and indirectly. In some cases, these scholars trace the migration of authors and works between the U.S. and Latin America; they explore the multiple

spatialities of identity, both psychologically and materialistically. They turn to the archives and other cultural production to trace thematic and cultural connections to show how these cultural forms address common interests of identity, race, gender, and citizenship. More importantly, these two fields challenge the conceptualizations of the nation-state. They seek to resist the boundaries of literary canons and geographical containers that obscure the flux and mobility of people, ideas, and cultural forms into different entry points of analysis. This dissertation considers how the socio-economic and political situations of Mexico, Cuba, the U.S.-Mexico Border, and Albuquerque, New Mexico render certain social groups marginalized and oppressed, and in some instances murdered. While hemispheric studies have often tried to reproduce U.S. essentialism as a First World country and further marginalize Latin American countries, this dissertation does not privilege the U.S. in the "American" hemisphere nor does it aim to recolonize other racial and sexualized groups. Unfortunately, detective fiction tends to be patriarchal and in favor of the status quo. Nonetheless, this dissertation uses hemispheric studies as a spatial framework to interrogate how Latin American and Chicana/o detective fiction exposes the polemics of national literatures and their respective cultural form, modern and (post) modern societies, and the interrogation of corrupt governments and societies.

Organization of the Dissertation: Case studies of Ramón Díaz Eterović, Paco Ignacio Taibo II, José Salvador Ruiz, Rolando Hinojosa, and Rudolfo Anaya

My dissertation contains two sections: one focuses on Latin American detective novels, and another on Chicana/o novels set in the late 20th century and early 21st century. The first three chapters focus on how Chilean and Mexican authors adapt the detective narrative using the subgenres *la novela negra, la novela neopoliciaca*, and *la novela post-policiaca.* These authors present vigilante detectives striving to overcome organized crime and corruption of their

respective state. Their spatial knowledge and relationship with the city motivate their efforts of investigations in hopes of solving their respective cases. The detective Belascoarán, in contrast to the detectives Heredia and Nepantla, shows us the effort it takes to overcome the state's system of oppression; Heredia and Nepantla's attitude portray their discontent towards the state but remind us that a one-man revolution against the state is futile. These detectives teach us that socio-political and economic policies shape the city and exacerbate the production of crime. The novels intensify the Anglo-American hardboiled formula's premise of an inherently corrupt society by demonstrating that the state and its socio-economic policies create a reciprocal production of crime between society and itself. The detective's feelings about the status quo of their cities fuel their need to investigate and re-imagine a different city. Thus, these novels present counter-narratives to the state official histories of oppression in urban spaces. The city, as a spatial process, allows us to survey how the socio-economic and political policies in each respective state facilitate crime in society.

To better understand the function of the city in these detective works, this dissertation considers how cultural geographers –interdisciplinary scholars in urban studies, border studies, cultural geography, and literary studies—clarify and contextualize space as a process that assists us in understanding the city as a contested space in detective stories. Drawing on Henry Lefebvre's "claim to the city," the dissertation considers how Latin American and Chicana/o detective characters leverage and reclaim the city against the corrupting forces oppressing minority populations. The dissertation explores how Latin American and Chicana/o detective novels examine the various communities' political commitment and form of resistance to their experiences of history and political events. Space plays and important role in these detective works. Robert Tally Jr. in *Spatiality* traces how the term space has been used by literary scholars.

Literary critiques have used the term space, or time-spaces as a framework for understanding the mind and social spaces in literature. Space, in itself, poses difficulties in definitions and forms of categorizing analysis. This dissertation focuses on time-space through a materialist and literary approach in which time-space is a process of modernity or post-modernity. The novels' social spaces elucidate how the socio-economic and political policies in Chile, Mexico, U.S.-Mexico border, and some major cities in the U.S. southwest result in the exacerbation of inequalities and political oppression of minority groups in these respective places. David Harvey and Fredric Jameson's spatial theories on late capitalism inform this dissertation of how modernization projects have formed part of systemic forms of oppression reigning in the city. Similarly, these detective novels link various forms of oppression to particular spaces. One of the goals of the detective characters is to identify the solution to their cases, and in doing so, they discover that their cases are linked to particular spaces and to larger forms of capitalist corruption.

In Section 1, chapter 1, I consider Ramón Díaz Eterović 's detective series as incorporating elements of *la novela negra* and *novela neopolicaca.* Some of these characteristics include the hardboiled detective formula, indictments against the nation-state, and the detective's struggle with justice and saving his city. Díaz Eterović 's detective series shows a detective in a corrupt society but demonstrates that corruption is produced, at times, by the national government, itself. Influenced by all the censorship and oppression from Pinochet's military dictatorship, Díaz Eterović used the detective novel to provide a forum for representing the lack of justice present during the years of the dictatorship and after.[15] After the first four novels, with

[15] Díaz Eterović describes his interest in the genre, stating, "a un género que desde mis inicios como lector me resultó atractivo y por el deseo de testimoniar cierta situaciones marginales existentes en mi país, creando el discurso de un antihéroe descreído, pero con la ética y el valor suficiente para mirar la realidad sin concesiones" [to a genre that from my beginnings as a reader was attractive to me and because of my desire to report certain marginal situations existing in my country, creating the discourse of a disbelieving antihero, but with the ethics and enough courage to look at reality without concessions] (Guillermo Garcia- Corales and Pino 11). Díaz Eterović confesses his enjoyment for the genre as well as his need to use this popularized genre as a means to testify the marginal

the exception of *No Enamores a un Forastero* (1999), Díaz Eterović shows Heredia's stance towards the changes occurring in Chilean society, including his feelings towards the cases he takes as a detective and the changing image of the city.[16] The places and spaces presented in *Nadie sabe mas que los muertos* function as projections of Heredia's sentiments about being a vigilante detective in a state of exception. These places are forms of political meditations about the atrocities and lack of real justice in Chile. In later novels, Heredia expresses his opinions about different places, showing his contempt for both the political and neoliberal transformations of the city.

In chapter 2, I focus on PIT II's detective series featuring P.I. Hector Shayne Belascoarán. The series consists of five novels, one of which is co-written with Subcomandate Marcos from the Zapatista group in Mexico. His detective novels are influenced by his activism and denunciation of the Mexican state's political violence against the urban populace. They also reference important historical moments in Mexican history: the Mexican Revolution, the Tlatelolco Massacre of '68, Corpus Christi, and the implementation of neoliberalism in Mexico in the late 20th century. In this chapter, I explore how PIT II's *No Habra Final Feliz* presents a *neopoliciaco* detective faced with confronting an "ambiguous" system of state criminals. Los Halcones, the state's mercenary group, re-emerge in the city attacking Belascoarán to prevent

stories present in Chile. He characterizes his detective as a cynical antihero who simultaneously persists in confronting and finding the truth of the nation-state's crimes. Díaz Eterović 's novels present the dominant themes of violence, recovering the truth, "el Golpe de 1973," and the detective's confrontation with corruption and crime.

[16] In *Los Siete Hijos De Simenon*, a novel or two after *Nadie sabe*, Heredia proclaims his feelings for this hidden city: "Añoraba la ciudad, los viejos mesones, el barrio con sus olores y su gente" [I longed for the city, the old inns, the neighborhood with its smells and its people] (48). Díaz Eterović adds that Heredia "feels a growing nostalgia for … the past related to his young adulthood during the 1970s. He would like to see…a city that fostered a more harmonious and peaceful lifestyle…. One cannot ignore that Heredia's nostalgia is accompanied by a continuing protest against the influences of 'modernity' that affect a city like Santiago" (143). Heredia yearns for less commercialized world where modernization has not reinforced the neoliberal logic of consumerism and privatization.

him from uncovering the state's involvement in the death of Zorak, a stuntsman hired to train national mercenaries a few decades back. Belascoarán's relationship with the city and his urbanite wisdom allow him to defend the city against Los Halcones and deliver a counternarrative of the state's official accounts of history.

In chapter 3, *Nepantla P.I* captures the development of a *fronterizo* detective tasked to investigate a homosexual murder. Set in the U.S.-Mexico border, *Nepantla P.I* uncovers the transnational trafficking of women and substances, the corruption of the police, and the competing prostitution rings laying claims to the city. The production of crime hinges on the unofficial economies of the border and the neoliberal globalization policies that facilitate these processes. The novel addresses how sexualities and genders are commodified and fetishized. Unlike Heredia and Belascoarán, Nepantla proves to be an amateur detective whose "street smarts" and navigation of the U.S.-Mexico border characterize him as a *post-policiaco* detective who exposes the realities of the border: uneven economic development, exploitation of cheap labor, cartel violence, and the illegal trafficking of women and substances. *Nepantla P.I* is a *novela post-policiaca* that narrates a more general account of organized crime between the police and narcos in the neoliberal globalized city of Mexicali. The city is invaded by transnational corporations that even Nepantla refers to as "Behemot postmoderno" (104).[17] The city is an amalgamation of the urban underworld and transnational settlements that give the city its postmodern expression. These are derivative of the state's deficient modernization schemes and its economic dependence on First World economies. The novel presents a landscape where migrant workers, Mexicali's nightlife, and border residents are impacted by these neoliberal globalizing conditions, which result in the exploitation of sexualized bodies and wage-laborer in

[17] Nepantla makes this statement when he and 34-B interview the Wholemart manager about Emilio's murder.

the Mexican border region. The novel indicts the state's socio-economic and political practices, local police, and narco gangs for re-producing these crimes. *Nepantla PI* explores the border region and the social spaces the detective traverses to solve the detective case. The novel portrays a "multicultural borderland" where everyday lives are crisscrossed by the border zones that are pockets and eruptions of all kinds that present themselves (21).[18] Nepantla's detective story weaves his detective work and his everyday life, demonstrating the impact of the different social spaces present in the U.S.-Mexico border regions. In this chapter, I examine how *Nepantla P.I* by Ruiz illustrates how neoliberal conditions affect the U.S.-Mexico border through organized crime. The amateur detective's capacity for navigating the U.S.-Mexico border allows him to contest organized crime's commodifying of women's bodies.

Section 2 shifts focus to two Chicano authors' adaptations of the detective genre. Chicana/o detective fiction has primarily focused on using the detective genre to address identity, culture, and the Chicana/o Movement. Some of these detective works consider what it is like to be a Chicano/a, or minority group, within the U.S.'s dominant culture. Hinojosa's detective novel, on the other hand, focuses on the U.S.-Mexico border and provides another perspective, or the "Other" perspective of how liberal economies and substance trafficking affect the border. Set in the 1970s, prior to Ruiz's novel, we see a different war on drugs in the U.S. The novel also adapts the police procedural, unlike the hardboiled, to provide an optimistic analysis of the police. The novel suggests that it is the individuals within the system that are corrupt and not the state or its apparatus. Furthermore, Hinojosa's novels complement our readings of Chicana/o fiction because they present two distinctive adaptations of the detective genre. Sotelo describes

[18] Here, I use Jose Saldivar's interpretations of Renato Rosaldo's *Culture and Truth* (1993) as a postmodern vision that defines culture as "the everyday and the esoteric, the mundane and the elevated, the ridiculous and the sublime. Neither high nor low, culture is all-pervasive" (21). Saldivar emphasizes how culture should be a concept that should be used in term of everyday lived experiences and away from its elitist foundations (21).

that "Anaya and Hinojosa's transformations of the whodunit typify two poles of Chicano fiction, and two poles of its detective fiction" (Sotelo 8). These two poles relate the stylistic choice of using realistic fiction or supernatural, or "magical realism" in fiction (Sotelo 9).[19] Hinojosa's Buenrostro series emphasizes the material conditions of crime along the border, underscoring organized crimes and political institutions. Unlike Hinojosa, Rudolfo Anaya focuses on a spiritual assessment of identity rooted in the legacies of a land-based identity. Anaya's Baca series does not center on the socio-political and economic commentary like Hinojosa, but does emphasize the importance of New Mexico's geopolitical space.

Returning to Rolando Hinojosa in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, I consider his detective novel *Ask A Policeman* (1985). Hinojosa uses the police procedural to portray how the American and Mexican justice systems collaborate to apprehend border criminals. Chief investigator of the Police, Rafa Buenrostro, coordinates a team to decipher the border region's oblique spaces that function as the covert operations of narco gangs. In this chapter, I interrogate the social spaces transformed by crime and how collaborations between the U.S. and Mexican police units provide effective investigations that track border criminals. Lastly, Chapter 5 turns to Rudolfo Anaya's Sonny Baca detective series. Here, I explore how Rudolfo Anaya adapts the detective narrative in *Jemez Springs* (2005) to craft Chicana/o identity as a land-based identity through a consideration of space and time. I see the novel's use of sacred geography as a paradigm for understanding the role that the landscape plays in the detective narrative. Sonny's nemesis, Raven, challenges this land-based identity by threatening to destroy the city and humanity. *Jemez Springs* portrays the maturation of the shamanic detective who discovers the legacies of his cultural identity in order to preserve his identity and save the city from corruptive forces.

[19] Sotelo lists Tomas Riveras, Sandra Cisneros, Arturo Islas and Rolando Hinojosa as realistic authors, whereas as Miguel Méndez, Ron Arias, Ana Castillo, and Rudolfo Anaya are examples of "magical realism" (9).

Section 1: Latin American Detective Fiction

Chapter 1: Re-Claiming of Social Spaces in Ramón Díaz Eterović 's *Nadie sabe mas que los muertos*

Nadie Sabe Mas que los Muertos (1993), a Chilean detective novel, takes place in the transitional moment between the vote that ends Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship and Chile's return to democracy. Díaz Eterović 's P.I Heredia in this novel investigates the criminal organization of the state that allowed for the torture and deaths of those that opposed the Pinochet regime. In this novel, we see how the city affects Heredia, propelling him to consider the possibility of socio-political change. Heredia, similar to PIT II's Belascoarán, is centrally located in the state capital, in this case Santiago, Chile. Urban space is central to his investigations as he roams his neighborhood, searching for possible clues. Unlike other hardboiled detective novels of *la novela negra*, *Nadie Sabe Mas que los Muertos* does not include shoot-outs. The novel primarily describes Heredia's whereabouts in the downtown area of Santiago, Chile, where important historical, governmental, and business buildings are located near bars, restaurants, and other public spaces. The story's investigation focuses on places where Pinochet's henchmen tortured and killed many dissidents, like: Colonia Dignidad and other torture sites around Santiago. Heredia's whereabouts throughout the city and the narrative's focus on these torture sites point to the centrality of social spaces in the novel. The novel's exposé of these sites functions as a counternarrative to the Pinochet campaign of law and order during these years of torture and massacre. In this chapter, I focus on Heredia's vigilante role and his stance on the crimes committed by the Pinochet regime as he deals with his feelings about the past and the city during the current political climate. The torture of Chilean dissidents is revealed indirectly, however, in *Nadie Sabe Mas que los Muertos*, since Heredia's vigilante character

cares more about finding the son of Cancino, the murdered political prisoner by Pinochet's secret police, the DINA (Direccion de Inteligencia National [National Intelligence Directive]), than about trying to bring the ex-DINA torturers to justice. Heredia does not seek help from the police as he distrusts notions of justice in the current political climate. He feels more productive working outside the law and finding Cancino's son as a vigilante detective. The novel emphasizes the importance of historical spaces as it points to the competing political ideologies that transform cities and places over time. We see the detective determined to find Cancino's son; however, in the process, he struggles with his nostalgia and idealization of the old neighborhoods that he knows from before and that he now wanders through as he solves this case.

Literary scholars agree that Díaz Eterović 's novels deal with Heredia's utopian visions amid a changing city that, at times, seems to forget the crimes committed by the Pinochet regime. Scholars like Guillermo Garcia-Corales, Kate Quinn, Lilia McDowel, and Luis Valenzuela Prado discuss Heredia's view that Santiago and its urban spaces were ruined by the Pinochet regime. They note how Heredia's utopian and socialist ideals try to find remnants of memory, truth, and solidarity in a city destroyed.[20] Gilda Waldman and Mariana Ortega Breña characterize Heredia as someone who refuses to become part of the new political project after Pinochet's demise (125). These critics agree with what Díaz Eterović explains about Heredia's character in a 2008 interview with Audrey K. Bryant and Guillermo García-Corales: "Heredia clings to an ethical code whose values of solidarity, transparency, equality, truth, and liberty reflect an older and disappearing Chile" (143). Heredia is a detective whose contradictory

[20] Guillermo Garcia-Corales examines how the urban spaces affect the detective and claims that in *Solo in la oscuridad* describes places that are deteriorated (30). Kate Quinn gives an overview of the series via its historical settings, noting "how in an increasingly disorienting urban environment, memory becomes an anchor and a site of resistance for Heredia" (151). Lilia McDowel Carlsen argues that *Los Siete Hijos*, different from other novels, proposes a renewed utopian impulse by means of anarchism and archiving (226). Luis Valenzuela Prado states: "El presente artículo plantea una lectura sobre la novela *La oscura memoria de las armas* de Ramón Díaz Eterović a partir de una doble lectura sobre la ciudad y sobre la época en la cual se sitúa" (141).

feelings about the city arise from his nostalgia for the past and his outward lament for the failure of the socialist government of Allende. Pinochet in 1973 took over the presidency in Chile with his military coup after external and internal political factors worked together to create the conditions for the overthrow of Allende and the United Popular government.[21] Much like PIT II describes the city as a character in detective stories, Díaz Eterović also uses the city as an important element in Heredia's detective narrative. Kate Quinn focuses on *Los Sietes Hijos de Simenon* (2000), *El Color de la Piel* (2003), and other novels to point to Heredia's disillusionment with the neoliberal transformations of the city. *Nadie Sabe Mas que los Muertos* (1999), however, is different in that it precedes these novels and does not yet mention neoliberalism and the detective's discontent toward the city's capitalist logic. Instead, the novel focuses on the political climate and on the role of the city during Chile's transition to democracy.

As a vigilante, Heredia provides a counternarrative to the official narrative of the Pinochet government. Ana María Amar Sánchez develops the theory of "el perdedor" or "el antihéroe ético" in *El Ojo del Alma* (2001) to claim that the "loser or antihero" provides a different narrative than the official historical one (152). Heredia's function as a detective plays a role in helping voice individuals' accounts of what happened without being terrorized by the dictator. He works outside the realm of the authorities and their rules to combat their corruption. Cultural studies critic Luis Martín-Cabrera uses Agambe's theoretical framework, "the state of exception," to explain Heredia's melancholia as a result of the biopolitical power of the nation-state (Pinochet's regime) in which the nation-state kills without committing a crime, perpetuates impunity, and the confusion of implementing laws only to transgress them. Martín-Cabrera

[21] See "The System Collapses: Causes of the Military Coup" in *Politics in Chile: Socialism, Authoritarianism and Market Democracy by Lois Hecht Oppenheim*, 79-97.

focuses on Heredia's melancholic affects to rethink the detective's role in a state of aggression and action rather than political paralysis. Unlike Martín-Cabrera who develops this framework for understanding Chilean politics and Heredia's psychic life, I turn toward the spatial characteristics of places presented in the novel to reinforce how space and time activate the memory and true narrative of Pinochet's victims. Díaz Eterović explains, "This character [Heredia] activates a memory that is transformed into resistance and a search for the truth. He becomes a sort of witness of recent history who constructs himself from the literary codes of the hard-boiled novel and social novel" (141). Heredia's resistance to the official version of the state is to be found in his continued truth-finding about the nation-state's organized crime. In this chapter, I argue that Heredia's investigations on Godoy and Cancino expose the DINA's tortures of individuals deemed socialists and the transnational crimes that occurred in Colonia Dignidad. Díaz Eterović 's detective series presents a detective whose vigilante work is caught in the tensions on the one hand between overcoming the socio-economic and political corruption in Chile, and on the other, struggling to find solidarity in the city that will resist the official narrative of the state.

Before I provide examples for my arguments, I will first give a summary of the novel. *Nadie Sabe Mas que los Muertos* is Díaz Eterović 's third novel and one of two Heredia's detective narratives that focuses on the stories of individuals kidnapped and murdered by the Pinochet secret police.[22] In this novel, Heredia is called by Judge Cavens to help him reopen a famous case dealing with a prominent union leader named Alfaro Godoy. The recent discovery of Godoy's remains allowed Cavens to reopen this cold case after a few years. Heredia responds reluctantly to Cavens' request until the judge explains Daniel Cancino's similar case. Judge

[22] Heredia in *La Oscura Memoria de Las Armas* (2008) searches for the possible Villa Grimaldi torturers of a man named Gérman Reyes to convince them to testify against the crimes of the Pinochet Regime.

Cavens explains to Heredia that Cancino and his family disappeared and were murdered by the same individuals in Godoy's case. Seeing Heredia unconvinced, Cavens resorts to introducing Cancino's mother, Mrs. Solar, and informs him of Cancino's missing child who can potentially be found. Interested in finding the boy, Heredia decides to accept the case. He proceeds to study the files and information, learning that Judge Cavens is more interested in Godoy's case and the identities of the torturers. Eventually, Heredia finds Cayasso, one of the torturers who turned himself in. In the meantime, Judge Cavens reveals Cayasso's identity to the public and allows other ex-DINA members to track-down Cayasso and kill him.[23] This works in Cavens favor, because as he discloses at the end of the novel, Cayasso knew about his arrangement for his son to adopt Cancino's son, Fernando. Nonetheless, Heredia continues to search for information on Fernando using his contacts in the city. After interrogating witnesses and others who may be linked to what happened, Heredia connects all the criminals that tortured and killed Godoy and Cancino, and kidnapped Fernando in a web of organized crime at Colonia Dignidad. Heredia arranges for the torturers to kill one another and later confronts Judge Cavens about his illegal adoption of Fernando. He holds a meeting with the lawyer Mariano, Cavens, and Cavens' son. A few months later, Heredia learns of Cavens' death which does not come as a surprise considering that Cavens already had informed him of his cancer diagnoses. Cavens' death is a form of poetic justice considering that Cavens dies after he is confronted by Heredia and forced to reveal his crimes. The novel's final scene presents the city's celebration of Pinochet's failed referendum for re-election and Heredia's indifference to this political shift.

Heredia's refusal to help judge Cavens investigate Godoy and Cancino's torturers at the beginning of the novel shows his distrust towards the credibility of Chilean governmental

[23] The novel references Pinochet's law of impunity and anonymity for ex-DINA officers. In the novel, these characters kill Cayasso to prevent from being exposed.

institutions. In these meetings and conversations, Heredia constantly questions Judge Cavens' information about the case. He is skeptical about Judge Cavens' true intentions since he feels there isn't sufficient evidence to convict anyone. When the case first began, it brought renown to judge Cavens, and Heredia perceives that Cavens' current purpose is to regain popularity again. In addition to distrusting Cavens, Heredia does not trust the judicial process. As Cavens explains, "Acumulé las pruebas y solicité diligencias específicas al Servicio de Investigaciones. Nunca quisieron cooperar. Una mano misteriosa manejaba los hilos y sólo pude llegar a un punto en que me vi obligado a sobreseer el caso en forma temporal" (33).[24] Judge Cavens reinforces Heredia's notions that bureaucracy and governmental institutions do not work for the people. The department of investigations refused to help judge Cavens with a case that would reveal the names of ex-DINA torturers. As judge Cavens continues to try to persuade Heredia, the detective's skeptical reactions show that he is not aiming to fight Chile's political system. In the same scene, Heredia responds to Cavens: "—Su historia es similar a otra, y en todas ellas el dedo acusador apunta hacia el mismo lugar. ¿Que puede haber de diferente en la muerte de Alfaro? Hasta ahora no me ha dicho nada que justifique el sueño perdido" (33).[25] Heredia questions the validity of the case. He knows that politicians and institutions' act of justice is a performative act that doesn't solve any cases. Judge Cavens main concern with Godoy's case is redeeming his reputation after the case went cold. Thus, Heredia refuses to help the judge, knowing that real justice will not be achieved. He wants to work on a case that will not be caught in the web of political agendas that prevent real justice.

[24] Here, I provide my translation of the quote: I accumulated the evidence and requested specific proceedings from the Investigation Services department. They never wanted to cooperate. A mysterious hand was pulling the strings and I could only get to a point where I was forced to temporarily dismiss the case.
[25] Here, I provide my translation: His story is the same as the others, and in all of them the accusing finger points to the same place. What could be different about Alfaro's death? So far, you haven't told me anything to justify the lost dream.

Still, Cavens continues to try to convince Heredia that the case is different, providing new evidence to show that the case can be reopened.[26] He also admits that he needs the detective vigilante to find the identities of the torturers of Godoy and Cancino. He urges Heredia to investigate: "—… investigue por su cuenta y con sus métodos. Es un caso con mucha gente sucia, y usted sabe como tratarlas" (38).[27] Cavens suggests that a vigilante detective is needed in a case full of corrupt criminals and authorities. Cavens suggests that Heredia's vigilante work can find the real justice for this case. Nonetheless, Cavens is safekeeping his own criminal activity. He pretends that the law prevents him from investigating dirty, political criminals.[28] Judge Cavens argues that Heredia's services can make the difference that the case warrants. Heredia's response to judge Cavens demonstrates his awareness of his limitations in obtaining justice; he displays his exhaustion and disappointment at dealing with these types of corrupt authorities and other criminals, stating, "No he obtenido nada con verles las caras y dudo que en esta oportunidad las cosas sean de un modo distinto. Si desea escribir una novela y le hace falta un personaje idiota, recurra a otra persona" (38).[29] Heredia bluntly states that there is nothing to be gained by trying to confront these political criminals. He finds judge Cavens' request to be a condescending joke, stating he needs to seek another idiot for his detective novel. This side remark is a metanarrative element presented by Díaz Eterović to argue that detectives are not just a form of entertainment. The author defends his work and the novel as a substantial story with a meaningful message about justice that should be taken seriously.

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[26] Cavens insists that with the remains and the special archeologist, Heredia can trust that he has enough evidence for a prosecution: "Para que entienda que no estamos sembrando en el aire, Heredia—dijo el juez" (37). My translation: so that you will understand that we are not sowing in the air, Heredia—said the judge.

[27] My translation: go investigate on your own using your own methods. It's a case with a lot of dirty people, and you know how to deal with them.

[28] Ironically, Cavens is also commenting on his own dirty dealings to acquire Cancino's, although he has covered it up.

[29] My translation: I have gained nothing from seeing their faces and I doubt that this time things will be different. If you want to write a novel and you need an idiotic character, turn to someone else.

Ultimately, Heredia's detective narrative serves as an indictment of the impunity of the Pinochet government's crimes against humanity since 1973. In these scenes with judge Cavens, we learn the stance of the detective in Chile's changing political climate, his sentiments about Chile's history, and his inner struggle with his disappointment and prospects for Chile. In the same conversation, Heredia demonstrates his personal dilemmas with his work and Chilean society. He remarks to Cavens, "Llegó demasiado tarde. Tengo el pellejo cansado y el ánimo flojo. Olvide todo, deje a los muertos en paz. El pasado es menos duro si se le olvida—dije, convencido de que mentía" (38).[30] Heredia gives judge Cavens excuses for why he doesn't want to work the case: his old age and his disillusionment. While there is a hint of truth in what he says, Heredia actually refuses to assume the stance that most have taken: to forget the past and the crimes of the Pinochet regime. We can see here how melancholia and disillusionment can end the political agency of a detective. But, as Martin-Cabrera argues, Heredia's melancholy acts are a mode of negating the present corrupted by the state's pretentious argument to be a "new" democratic state that simultaneously imposes an erasure of the past and the victims killed by the Pinochet administration. Caven's reopening of the case of Godoy and of those tortured appears to be part of a political change, but, in reality, he only cares about his reputation when he demurs in supporting Heredia's desire to find Cancino's son. Heredia finally admits to himself that what he tells judge Cavens is a lie, because he still wants to find justice and salvage the memory of what has happened. Julia Solar, Cancino's mother, convinces Heredia that these victims should not be forgotten. Only then, does he agree to assist in the case. As disappointed and tired as he may be, deep down he refuses to be a complacent Chilean that forgets those victims whose deaths and disappearances are unaccounted for.

[30] My translation: You came too late. My body is tired, and my spirit is weak. Forget everything, leave the dead alone. The past is less hard if you forget it," I said, convinced that I was lying.

The new evidence introduced by Mrs. Solar allows Cavens to reopen the case years later. It plays an important role in convincing Heredia that there is enough evidence to find real justice. Cavens explains, "Un sacerdote de su barrio le había hecho llegar cierta información referente a su hijo…. Uno de los agentes que participaron en su captura se acerco a ese sacerdote y le pidió hacer llegar su confesión a los familiares" (28).[31] One of the ex-DINA agents, Cayasso, present in both tortures of Godoy and Cancino comes forward with information about those victims and what happened to them. As Cavens continues, "La confesión recibida por el sacerdote nos permitió llegar a unos terrenos próximos a Quilicura donde se encontraron nueve osamentas. El sacerdote hizo venir a ese hombre a mi oficina. Ratificó la confesión y concluido el trámite decidimos realizar la diligencia que nos llevó a encontrar los restos. Todos presentaban huellas de haber recibido torturas antes de morir" (29).[32] The novel references the area of Quilicura located north of Santiago where several historical and sociological sources indicate that many bodies were dumped in ditches of this community. Cathy Schneider describes how these bodies have turned the town into a "cementerio clandestino" with anonymous remains of individuals killed under Pinochet's orders.[33] For example, *carabineros* (the Chilean national police forces) kidnapped three militants of the Communist party and left their bodies in a distant ditch in the town of Quilicura (Schneider 180). The novel describes how Quilicura became a dumping ground for those that Pinochet deemed his political oppositions. This location like others

[31] My translation: A priest in his neighborhood had sent him certain information regarding his son…. One of the agents who participated in his capture approached that priest and asked him to send his confession to the family.
[32] My translation: The confession received by the priest allowed us to reach the area Quilicura where nine skeletons were found. The priest brought that man into my office. He ratified his confession and after the process was concluded, we decided to carry out the diligence that led us to find the remains. All remains showed signs of having been tortured before dying.
[33] see Schneider, Cathy Lisa. *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet's Chile*. Temple University Press, 1995, Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*. New Press, 2004, and Bruey, Alison J. *Bread, Justice, and Liberty: Grassroots Activism and Human Rights in Pinochet's Chile*. University of Wisconsin Press, 2018.

presented in the novel exemplifies how places bear witness to the atrocities conducted by Pinochet years ago. The novel references Quilicura as a historical site that archives Pinochet's genocide through the skeletons and remains that have turned this space into a clandestine cemetery. The remains and Cayasso's ratified confession provide substantial evidence that allows for the identification of the bodies and the possibility of justice for the victim's families. The case now provides an opportunity for Heredia to participate in the re-writing of "official" history by indicting the DINA and Pinochet's government for these deaths.

When Heredia considers Godoy and Cancino's case, finding Cancino's son is more motivating than finding the torturers' identities. Heredia invests his time in helping people rather than trying to overthrow the political system in Chile. Heredia remembers Mrs. Solar's comment that "—Olvidar es hacerse cómplice de esos crímenes…,"[34] and realizes that if he forgets and does nothing he becomes an accomplice to those crimes. Mrs. Solar's statement echoes the letter that Heredia reads from his friend Dagoberto Solís, a policeman introduced in the previous novels *La Ciudad esta Triste* (1987) and *Solo en la Oscuridad* (1992). The letter Heredia reads states, "¿Pero quien libra del horror a los que ven y no cierran los ojos con indiferencia? ¿Quien los libra del miedo? ¿Del desencanto adherido a los días? No tengo respuestas. Miro hacia atrás, al pasado y me veo partido en dos, inconcluso" (21).[35] Solís' words reveal that there are those that are indifferent to the horror felt in Chile. They are complacent in the face of others who are unable to live with the fear and death produced by the Pinochet regime. Solís' comments underline a policeman's ambivalence at the sight of those who try to avoid the horror by blinding themselves to the past. As Solís wonders who will help these people with their fear and

[34] My translation: to forget is to become an accomplice of those crimes.
[35] My translation: But who frees those people who don't look and close their eyes with indifference? Who frees them from fear? From the disenchantment attached to the days? I have no answers. I look back, to the past and I find myself torn in two, undecided.

disillusionment over the years, Heredia's ocupation as a detective also reveals his sense of a moral duty to care for those victimized by the Pinochet regime.[36] After his conversation with Mrs. Solar, Heredia thinks to himself, "¿Qué me había impulsado a tomar el trabajo? Tal vez habían sido las palabras de Cavens, la necesidad de ganar algunos pesos, o lo dicho por la mujer acerca del olvido (43).[37] He is conflicted with trusting Cavens and doubts the outcome of the case. Yet, the question of who answers for the horror and fear reverberate in his conscience. As he states, "Encontrarlo (Cancino's son) tendría que ser una respuesta lo suficiente clara como para seguir mirándome al espejo sin rencor" (43).[38] He finds solace in thinking about Cancino's son, proving to himself that someone could be accountable for the victims' torment. Some form of justice could be found in helping the victims.

Heredia's stance to advocate on behalf of the victims is also reinforced in the novel via his interactions and thoughts about the city of Santiago. Díaz Eterović characterizes a detective who simultaneously deliberates about his cases but also takes time to think about the city and its development. Díaz Eterović locates Heredia's office and apartment in the downtown area of Santiago, Chile on the Aillavillù street that overlooks the Mapocho River.[39] The Mapocho River is a famous landmark that historians and sociologists claim serves as a dividing line in Santiago

[36] Heredia also provides an update on what happened to his friend: "Lo habian dado de baja del Servicio de Investigaciones a causa de reiterados entredichos con agentes de la Central de Informaciones del Gobierno. Su buena hoja funcionaria lo había librado de una suerte peor. Jubilado, recibía una renta mensual que le permitía vivir sin sobresaltos y sentirse liberado de la sombra que rodeaba a muchos de sus antiguos compañeros" (21). My translation: He had been discharged from the Investigation Service due to repeated interdictions with agents of the Government Information Center. His good documentation had saved him from worse luck. Retired, he received a monthly income that allowed him to live smoothly and feel liberated from the shadow that surrounded many of his former colleagues.

[37] My translation: What pushed me to take the job? Perhaps it had been Cavens' words, the need to earn a few bucks, or what the woman had said about forgetting.

[38] My translation: Finding him (Cancino's son) may be a good enough reason to look at myself in the mirror every day.

[39] This location has a historical significance that dates back to the founding at the end of the 16th century. According to Emily Gilbert in "Transgressing Boundaries: Isabel Allende's Santiago de Chile," the city of Santiago emerged along a European style city plan when Spaniard Pedro de Valdivia founded Santiago in 1541 after arriving via the Mapocho River. He used the river as a reference point for mapping the city in a colonial grid system.

to reinforce socio-economic segregation. Heredia interacts with these different groups that are both low income and elite in the city. Francisca Marquez, in her sociological work on Santiago, notes that "In Santiago throughout the twentieth century, elite families were generally concentrated in only one area of growth that united the centre of town with the outskirts. At the other extreme of the social ladder, poorer groups tended to become concentrated in broad zones of poverty, particularly in the outermost and worst-equipped outskirts (de Mattos, 1997; Sabatini & Cáceres, 2001), either in the south or north of the Mapocho River" (87).[40]

Similar to how the Mapocho River functions as a larger border that divides the socio-economic classes in Chile, Plaza de Armas also functions as a smaller downtown area that consists of both elite and urban class dwellers in one area. The Moneda (the presidential palace) is located here and was famously bombed during the coup of September 11, 1973 with Allende inside. Again, we see how social spaces in the city reveal the heterogeneity of the population in political contest over the city. In *Nadie Sabe Mas que los Muertos*, Heredia draws our attention to these different aspects of the city: its historical buildings, places turned into archives, and the organization of the city and people. Some of the witnesses or informants he visits live in these different areas of the city; and as he goes to these places, the monuments or landmarks he passes invoke his feelings about the country's current political climate and its past.[41] Heredia's reflections primarily focus on pointing out the night life and the individuals who also wander the streets around him. During these walks, Heredia shows his idealism and solidarity with being part of the people and the underworld of the city.

[40] See the article, Márquez, Francisca. "Santiago: Modernisation, Segregation and Urban Identities in the Twenty-First Century." *Urbani Izziv*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2011, pp. 86–97., www.jstor.org/stable/24920580. Accessed 25 Jan. 2020. And the book: Perucich Vergara, Francisco. *Urban Design under Neoliberalism: Theorizing from Santiago, Chile* for a sociological analysis of the socio-economic development of the Santiago city.
[41] In the story, he travels to Temuco, el Paseo Alameda, San Antonia St, Morande St among others.

Heredia identifies with the city and its victims as he travels from site to site to gather information about Cancino's case. In this part of the story, Heredia goes to Caven's house to check for the missing information about Cayasso that the judge has refuse to present. Near the central location of Plaza de Armas, Heredia mentions the metro station called Mapocho Central. Heredia characterizes the Plaza de Armas and the Mapocho station by their busy environment, observing the crowds, vendors, and commercial posts that give life to these areas. He describes Mapocho station as follows: "La Estacion Mapocho, convertía en una feria de libros vanidades iluminaba la noche orillera, maloliente y caminosa que se extendia desde la boca de la calle San Antonio hasta el recinto de la Carcel Publica y sus entornos invadidos por las putas de San Martin y Hurtado de Mendoza" (53).[42] Heredia frequents this metropolitan area noting the similar social environment as Plaza de Armas where you find the underworld of prostitution, the Central Market, and the general public. He notes "los locales nocturnos que abrazaban a los transeúntes con sus luces multicolores"(53).[43] When he observes these places in the city, he feels a part of these spaces, stating: "Respiré ese aire que me pertenecía al igual que cada uno de los rincones del barrio, y con algo de esfuerzo abordé un bus que me servía para llegar a la casa del juez Cavens" (53).[44] Heredia breathes in the air of these places and immerses himself in the atmosphere as he travels around. His identification with the city makes him feel a part of it and its history.

In this urban and metropolitan area, Heredia observes the city with nostalgia for the past. His sentiments of nostalgia as he walks through El Parque Forestal and La Facultad de Derechos

[42] My translation: The Mapocho Station, turned into a vanity book fair, it illuminated the shore night, smelly and walkable that extended from the mouth of Calle San Antonio to the compound of the Public Jail and its surroundings invaded by the whores of San Martin and Hurtado de Mendoza.
[43] My translation: the nightspots that hugged those passing by with their multi-colored lights.
[44] My translation: I breathed that air that belonged to me just like each one of the corners of the neighborhood, and with some effort I boarded a bus that took me to get to judge Cavens' house.

and his thoughts of the past pose a claim to the city and its people. These memories are recalled after Heredia finishes talking to his friend Solís, who has opened a bar after being retired from the police force (115-116). Heredia later calls Solís over the phone to request information about "el Alemán," and the identities of some of the other torturers. Once the phone call ends, Heredia decides to take a stroll through El Parque Forestal. As he goes to the park, Heredia describes his memories of the past, stating, "La nostalgia se arrastró tras de mis pasos, y yo la dejé avanzar como a una culebra que de tarde en tarde nos entretiene con sus piruetas" (117).[45] As noted earlier, Heredia has a sense of duty towards the victims of the Pinochet regime. He is conscious of the fact that by forgetting the past, the victims can't find truth or justice. His walk in El Parque Forestal reinforces his characterization as a vigilante detective that doesn't solve his cases in his office but out in the city. El Parque Forestal in Chile is a large, narrow park that borders the Mapocho River from Plaza Baquedano to Estación Mapocho, a historical building and cultural center near the Puente Cal y Canto metro station.[46] His walk and recent phone call with Solís echo an earlier scene in the novel where "el recuerdo de Solís me provocó un vértigo que creció desde mi vientre y por largos segundos se instaló en mi cabeza" (21).[47] This vertigo and feeling of nostalgia force Heredia to deal with the tension of remembering a hurtful past and deciding what to do in the present. This scene foreshadows Heredia's discernment about Solís' statement, as he states, "¿Quien responde por el horror y el miedo?" (43).[48] Heredia is overwhelmed by this question and not knowing how to respond to the past. His police friend and his conscience remind him that something must be done about the horror invoked by the past.

[45] My translation: Nostalgia crept after my steps, and I let it advance like a snake that from time to time entertains us with its pirouettes.
[46] Other important buildings and locations are: Mercado Central, La Vega, and the Bellas Artes museum are some of the other major destinations located in or adjacent to Parque Forestal.
[47] My translation: Solí's memory provoked a vertigo that grew from my belly and for a few some seconds settled in my head.
[48] My translation: who responds for the horror and fear?

We can understand these horrors better through Díaz Eterović 's description of the house José Domingo Cañas, the torture house, where Godoy and Cancino were held hostage by the DINA. Díaz Eterović focuses on showing how the Pinochet regime's crimes extend from the local kidnappings of individuals in Chile to the transnational trafficking of children. Godoy and Cancino's case begins with their kidnapping and murder by ex-DINA officials in Jose Domingo Cañas that is located 10 kilometers from the Central Business District of Santiago, Chile. In the novel, Carmen Vega provides the information about the location where she, Godoy, and Cancino were held hostage. After recounting how she was kidnapped from the hospital, she explains her meeting with Daniel Cancino to Heredia, "Lo trajeron a la celda al día siguiente. Al parecer era de noche, porque nos dejaron a solas y pudimos conversar. Daniel dijo que estábamos en una casa de la calle Jose Domingo Cañas. Conocía el sector y algo había logrado reconocer cuando lo bajaron del vehículo en el que lo detuvieron. También me habló de su compañera" (97).[49] After being held hostage for about three to four days, Carmen learns from Cancino that they are being held hostage in a house filled with "celdas" and rooms where different political prisoners are tortured and then killed. Similar to Quilcura, "the clandestine cemetary," the Cañas House also becomes an archival space of death that evidences the DINA's crimes ordered by the Pinochet government.

The Jose Domingo Cañas house is a historical reference in the detective novel. The house, at 1367 Jose Domingo Cañas, is an actual former House of Torture of the DINA. More interestingly, Cancino who was part of the Partido Socialista would have known this sector that historians Peter Read and Wyndham describe as Chilean housing estates known as

[49] My translation: They brought him to the cell the next day. Apparently, it was night, because they left us alone and we could talk. Daniel said that we were in a house on Jose Domingo Cañas Street. He knew the sector and something he had managed to recognize when they got him out of the vehicle in which they stopped him. He also spoke to me about his partner.

poblaciones.[50] The Jose Domingo Cañas house, before being named the House of Torture, stood as a symbol of a *poblacion* which as Read and Wyndham state, "[*la poblacion*] offered the chance of an exciting workers' collective that was predicted by Che Guevara. Here was a chance to remake Chilean society in the Cuban-style of worker livings" (105-106). The novel shows us how the *poblaciones* allowed for the establishment of socialist collectives that were transformed and rebranded by the Pinochet regime as sites of terror. The Jose Domingo Cañas house becomes a site of contention between two political ideologies: the Pinochet neoliberal dictatorship and the socialist, possibly communist, *poblaciones* supported by Allende. The novel contains the historical reference as a means to make known an important historical site contested by opposing political ideologies and actors. This local house also serves as a space comparable to Colonia Dignidad, another form of "communal" and political society.

The detective novel also links Cancino's son's kidnappings to real occurrences in Colonia Dignidad during Pinochet's regime: local kidnappings, tortures, and murders. This site also has a contradictory history that recalls how the DINA collaborated with the Nazi refugee camp to traffic children. In the novel, Heredia learns about Colonia Dignidad from his love-interest Fernanda who is part of a Jewish detective group, seeking to apprehend any Nazis in Chile (155).[51] Fernanda and the group require Heredia's help confronting Kurtz, as Heredia explains to his cat Simenon the information they need,"…acerca del trafico de niños y su vinculación con

[50] Peter Read and Wynham recap the historical development of the area in the following: the "industrial unemployment following the decline of the saltpeter mines after World War Two, then rural and unemployment in the 1960s, brought large numbers of unskilled and semis-skilled workers to the capital. Generally, they settled in shanty towns (campamentos) anywhere there was available land, often enough on the edge of canals, but apt to be washed away during the Andean spring water melt. In answer to the mushrooming urban slums, President Frei in the late 1960s accelerated a program by which the state resumed or bought sizeable areas near the declining factories to establish official recognized encampments called poblaciones. Here the immigrants were settled with a minimun of state-provided amenities – perhaps half a dozen working taps, street lighting and communal ablutions, even if individual dwelling went unconnected" (105-106)

[51] Heredia originally meets Fernanda as Claudia and does not learn about her real identity and association with the Jewish group until much later in the novel.

los viajes de Kurtz al Brasil" (158).[52] The group wants to confirm the possibility that Kurtz has an operation involving the trafficking of children in Chile and in Brazil. A few scenes later, Kurtz explains his operation to traffic children in order to convert them into Nazis; he states,

> "—Un futuro para niños que de otro modo no serán otra cosa que masa amarga y estúpida. Los integramos a una gran causa. Los muros del comunismo no tardarán en caer y el capitalismo está podrido por la influencia del dinero judío—siguió diciendo Kurtz--. El mundo está desorientado, sin líderes y nosotros le daremos un destino poderoso" (166).[53]

Kurtz defends his colony of "Hitler Youth" in Brazil as an answer to the failure of two political ideologies: communism and capitalism. Kurtz believes that he is preparing a new generation of leaders that will bring a new type of world order once the previous ideologies fail. Kurtz and the DINA corrupt Colonia Dignidad by transforming it into a Nazi settlement whose Nazis whose neoliberal and racist logic condones the trafficking of children as a political power play that will bring world order. Basso Prieto similarly adds that in reality the Nazi-German settlement extended beyond Colonia Dignidad to nearby cities like Parral and San Manuel; he states, "los alemanes de la colonia se sintieron a sus anchas en el país. Siguieron extendiendo sus límites y pronto se convirtieron en un estado dentro de un estado" (7).[54] This idea that Colonia Dignidad became a "nation-state" of its own benefited the DINA who could work with the encampment to also establish its torture sites in the colony. These places show the horrors of the past in a

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[52] My translation: about child trafficking and its link to Kurtz's trips to Brazil

[53] My translation: A future for children who will otherwise be nothing but stupid and bitter dough. We integrate them to a great cause. The walls of communism will soon fall and capitalism is rotten from the influence of Jewish money," Kurtz continued, "The world is disoriented, leaderless and we will give it a powerful destiny."

[54] My translation of the quote is as follows: the Germans of the colony felt at ease in the country (Chile). They kept expanding and quickly turned a state within a state.
Basso Prieto further adds "En Dignidad nadie tiene documentos de identidad, nadie tiene acceso a la televisión abierta y lo único que se les muestran son videos manoseados de viejas películas germanas y noticias editadas donde se ve todo tipo de calamidades las cuales son exhibidas a los miembros del enclave con la voz tronante de Schäfer arengándolos después…"(7). My translation: In Dignidad no one has identity documents, no one has access to open television and the only thing they are shown are manipulated videos of old German films and edited news where all kinds of calamities are seen which are exhibited to the members of the enclave with the Schäfer's thundering voice haranguing them afterwards.

present that promises change. Colonia Dignidad is another historical site that the novel references to map the sites of corruption around Chile.

Heredia is caught in social spaces contested by political ideologies where people live in fear of opposing the official narrative of the Pinochet regime. While this makes Heredia melancholic and disillusioned, there are moments in the novel where he is more optimistic toward the city. There as spaces that represent the possible solidarity that can occur in the city against the oppression of the Pinochet government. After walking through El Parque Foresal, Heredia decides to go to the Facultad de Derecho to interrogate his former college friend Silva. At the Facultad de Derecho, Heredia stops by a statue and thinks about the significance of Domingo Gomez Rojas, a famous poet who brought the masses together. Heredia states:

> me senté en un escaño próximo al derruido monolito de Domingo Gomez Rojas, el poeta fallecido en la década de los años veinte, cuando la Federación de Estudiantes estremecía las calles de Santiago con sus gritos, y se cantaba el "Cielito Lindo" en honor de populachero "Leon de Tarapaca." Acusado de subversivo, castigado, y recluido en un manicomio, la voluntad del poeta fue derrotada entre esas paredes donde anotaba el paso de los días y algunos de sus versos mas feroces. Pensé que la vulgar injusticia se repetía y los restos de ese monolito próximo bien podían ser en honor de Daniel Cancino, u otro de esos muchachos que en los últimos años habían muerto a manos de los montones de sonrisas anchas que se volvían anónimos y oscuros después de contar las eternas treinta monedas de los poderosos. (118)[55]

Heredia sits near the monolith dedicated to Domingo Gomez Rojas deemed in the 1920s as subversive to the government. The Chilean government, at this time, was under popular unrest during “Las Marchas de Hambre” (the hunger marches) in 1918 that challenged the government’s authoritarian rule. Heredia recalls that in the twenties, people in Chile came

[55] My translation: I sat on a bench near the collapsed monolith of Domingo Gomez Rojas, the poet who died in the 1920s, when the Federation of Students shook the streets of Santiago with their shouts, and the “Cielito Lindo” was sung in honor of popular “Leon de Tarapaca.” Accused of subversive, punished, and confined in an asylum, the poet's will was defeated within those walls where he noted the passing of the days and some of his fiercest verses. I thought that the vulgar injustice was repeated and the remains of that nearby monolith could well be in honor of Daniel Cancino, or another of those boys who in recent years had died at the hands of the piles of wide smiles that later became anonymous and dark. to count the eternal thirty coins of the powerful.

together singing “Cielito Lindo” in opposition to the government. This stop by the monolith is one more example of how various locations in the city appeal to Heredia’s historical perspective and his quest for justice and solidarity. Heredia is drawn to moments in Chilean history where people came together, empowered to speak against the injustices of their government. However, Heredia also sees how the monolith can represent not just Domingo Gomez Rojas, but others like Daniel Cancino, who were targeted as subversive to justify their torture and murder by the government. Different parts of Santiago City thus evoke a sad sense of history but also recall moments of resistance as Heredia tries to find some hope for the future; some places in the city signal to Heredia opportunities where Chilean people have come together to overcome the oppression of the government.

The novel presents the opportunity for regained hope when Heredia finds out that a new government has been elected, which could bring a positive change. When he considers the current political climate, what stands out is his continued distrust of the government, even if the referendum has rejected Pinochet’s re-election. Heredia continues to maintain a skeptical stance, asking that Chileans interrogate the past and the promises of change in the present. Godoy and Cancino’s case force Heredia and the reader to deal with Chile’s past and the crimes committed by the government in 1973, but his current lived experience in the year 1989 forces him to confront the political changes occurring in Chile.[56] Martin-Cabrera sees this as time halted in spaces, like Colonia Dignidad, that are a matrix of a “new” democratic order. Yet there is a

[56] *Nadie sabe mas que los muertos* to *Solo en la oscuridad* encompass the year 1989 in Chile; Guillermo Garcia-Corrales analyzes "la ciudad deteriorada" depicted in *Solo en la oscuridad*, stating that Heredia “[esta] comprometido en una pesquisa desarrollada en las calles de Santiago de Chile y de Buenos Aires durante los ultimos dias del año 1989, y destinada a esclarecer el homicidio de la azafata Laura Suarez” (31). It would be interesting to track Heredia's stance about the societal changes occurring in Chile in these novels that show Chile's general election of Aylwin in *Nadie sabe mas que los muertos* and the continuation of his term in *Solo en la oscuridad* and how it affects Chile in the novel.

temporal as well as a spatial characteristic to Heredia's position as a detective. Heredia sees his social world as a façade that negates his melancholia. More importantly, the novel serves as a reproduction and a remarking of these places to reveal the hidden matrix that calls on one to confront the truth.

Heredia's distrust of the larger political changes in Chile resurfaces in a previous scene when he converses with Anselmo, his friend and owner of the newspaper stand in front of his apartment building. The following conversation with Anselmo shows the political conversation that begins when Heredia returns from one of his meetings with Judge Cavens:

> --Hoy no tengo animo para consumir chatarra política [Heredia]
> --Ya era tiempo de tener un poco de agitación política. ¿O no esta de acuerdo? [Anselmo]
> --No he dicho que este mal, solo que no me interesa. Y por supuesto, cuanto antes se deje oír el ruido de las botas, tanto mejor. [Heredia]
> -Y cual es su candidato? ¿El de la mayoría, el atleta o él que habla mucho? [Anselmo]
> --Mi candidato es Heredia. No promete nada y a nadie le pide que le crea. (16-17)[57]

Anselmo invites Heredia to purchase a political magazine to read more about the general elections occurring in Chile. Heredia consistently professes his disinterest and disbelief in the general elections that promise democracy and other political changes after Pinochet's regime. Historically, Pinochet's regime came to an end after the 1988 plebiscite vote that rejected his referendum to be re-elected as president another eight years. The referendum allowed for the election of a new Chilean president the following year. The candidates of those elections were Patricio Aylwin, Hernán Büchi, and Francisco Javier Errazuriz. Anselmo refers to these

[57] My translation: -Today I have no courage to consume political junk [Heredia]
- It was time for a bit of political turmoil. Or do you not agree? [Anselmo]
-I didn't say it's wrong, I just don't care. And of course, the sooner the noise of the boots is heard, the better. [Heredia]
-And what is your candidate? The one with the majority, the athlete or the one who talks a lot? [Anselmo]
-My candidate is Heredia. He does not promise anything and asks no one to believe him [Heredia]

candidates in the conversation as "el de la mayoría, el atleta, o el que habla mucho" (17).[58] Heredia responds with cynicism and instead responds sarcastically that he would choose himself as a candidate. According to him, he doesn't make false promises nor tries to persuade others to believe in him. Heredia's disillusion stems from his awareness that a political system or a system of corruption cannot be changed by one new president. Not only does political change have to occur but society as well has to confront the horrors of the Pinochet regime. The detective also seeks the end of corruption and impunity embedded in Chile's political system, regardless of new presidents and their platforms.

In another scene, Heredia's conversation with his cat Simenon and his gaze towards the city reveal the political activism that he desires for Chilean society. The scene begins as Heredia considers his solitude and his apartment. He states, "Estaba solo, con Simenon, algunos libros y mis recuerdos. Lo demás eran nostalgias señales de humo, y la ciudad con su aparente rostro nuevo, maquillado con carteles de propaganda política, consignas y declaraciones de libertad. Mucha goma líquida en las murallas, rayados, y contrarrayados" (45).[59] Similar to other hardboiled detectives, Heredia appears to be a lonely figure who lives with his cat and passes his time reading and listening to music.[60] Heredia again signals that nostalgia and his feelings about the city keep him company during his solitary moments. He describes his nostalgia as smoke signals that indicate the deterioration of what the past used to be: a different city and political climate. Yet, Heredia acknowledges that the political propaganda and vandalism on the walls

[58] My translation: the majority leader, the athlete, and the one that talks too much.
[59] My translation: I was alone, with Simenon, some books and my memories. The rest were nostalgic smoke signals, and the city with its apparent new face, made up with political propaganda posters, slogans and declarations of freedom. A lot of liquid rubber on the walls, scratched, and counter-scratched.
[60] Due to the scope of this chapter, I will not consider a deep analysis of Simenon. Literary critics have noted that Simenon is a figurative figure that represents Heredia's conscious and method for deliberating about his personal feelings and puzzling cases.

signal a political debate that before couldn't be present. Pinochet targeted any form of political opposition: hence, the case of Godoy and Cancino who politically opposed Pinochet. Heredia sees that people are resisting to believe in what he deems false promises. He admires the criticism and struggles that the language on the walls denotes to him about the political consciousness present in the city. Suddenly, Simenon interrupts Heredia's thoughts to ask him why he is surprised about this. Heredia's response points to one of the few positive reactions to the political climate in Chile. He responds, "Deja que fluya la esperanza, le respondí. ¿No te acuerdas de aquella noche del 5 de octubre de 1988? Hermoso fue ver a esa gente que se había apoderado de las calles, que cantaba…y se daba de abrazos" (45).[61] Heredia yearns for people to take ownership of their city and to re-claim it. During the plebiscite against Pinochet, Heredia witnessed the rally and celebration that brought people together. Still Heredia is unsure about the future but hopes to find solidarity and resistance towards political leaders that fail to fulfill the reforms they promise.

A few scenes later, this sentiment for solidarity is echoed again when Heredia sees a few guys writing graffiti on the walls out on the street. At this point in the story, Heredia has asked judge Cavens to let him interrogate Cayasso, the ex-DINA whose confession led the officials to find Godoy and Cancino. Heredia continues to investigate and brainstorm the case with Claudia (whose real name is Fernanda), a love interest he met at the start of the story. He talks to her on the phone, and then proceeds to look out the window at a mural in front of his building. He notes,

> Unos muchachos pintaban una consigna en contra del dictador, y podía observarlos como parte de una mala película de suspenso. Eran cinco. Dos vigilaban en cada extremo de la cuadra, un tercero trazaba algunas letras de color negro, y los otros dos las rellenaban con rápidos brochazos cargados de pintura roja. ¡Mierda de cabrones!, exclamé. Los observé trabajar hasta que terminaron el rayado y cuando se perdieron en la oscuridad sentí una especie de alivio. Les

[61] My translation: Let hope flow, I responded. Don't you remember that night of Oct. 5, 1988? It was beautiful to the crowd take over the streets; they danced…and they gave each other hugs.

> deseé que encontraran una taberna abierta donde beber unas cervezas y festejar la pequeña victoria. (60)[62]

Pinochet's mural, in front of Heredia's building, serves as a reminder of the horrible legacy the dictator left behind. The consequences of his regime continue to reverberate and be present in the city, even as a new election is underway. For Heredia, the five guys writing over the mural in black and red letters suggest a form of resistance and taking back ownership of the city. It is a form of political disobedience that Heredia celebrates and desires will return to the city.

Heredia solves the case of Godoy and Cancino by having Villaseñor and Escudero, two of the ex-DINA agents involved in the torture of Cancino and the trafficking of Cancino's son, kill each other. Heredia resolves the case when he returns Cancino's son to his grandmother, finding justice for Mrs. Solar and her family. The version published for the press and the public omits the full version that Heredia has discovered. Heredia evaluates his success in this case by knowing that he returned Cancino's son to his grandmother and by revealing the truth of what happened to Cancino and his son those years ago.[63] He prioritizes the victims over the judge, political institution, and the public. As we have seen, he continues to be skeptical of the political entities that gaslight the city. Cavens attempts to argue for his son to keep Cancino's son, but Heredia does not acquiesce. When Cancino's son refuses to go with his real family, Heredia tells him, "—Hay una verdad que te espera—le dije--. Ellos te quieren y están ansiosos de conocerte" (192). Heredia's focus lies in making sure that Cancino's son knows the truth about his parents

[62] My translation: Some boys were painting a slogan against the dictator, and I could watch them as part of a bad thriller. There were five of them. Two were keeping watch at each end of the block, a third was drawing some black letters, and the other two were filling them in with quick strokes loaded with red paint. Fucking bastards! I exclaimed. I watched them work until they finished the scratching and when they were lost in the dark I felt a kind of relief. I wished they found an open tavern where they could have a few beers and celebrate the little victory

[63] Judge Cavens knew Villaseñor, one of the torturers of Casa Domingez, who helped him "adopt" Cancino's son after his parents were killed. Villaseñor arranged the adoption with "El Aleman" (Kurtz) who faked the pregnancy and baby switch with judge Caven's son and wife. Cancino's son was trafficked by these groups and given to judge Caven's son.

and his family. Five months later, Heredia learns that judge Cavens dies. He attends his funeral without showing any sign of animosity for what happened with Cancino's son. He states, "compré un ramo de flores y asistí a su sepelio. Los discursos se revolcaron en cada lugar común imaginable, y cuando la fatiga se apoderó de mi animo, me despedí del juez con un par de palabras que nadie tuvo la oportunidad de escuchar" (195).[64] He brings flowers and says goodbye to the judge without any hatred towards him. His reaction to judge Cavens' reinforces Heredia's desire to help the victims instead of fighting the establishment. He consents to judge Cavens change of character at the end of the story.[65]

After he solves the case, the novel concludes with the results of the elections. Heredia continues to be skeptical of the political changes. He states, "En la calle me confundí con la gente, y a la vuelta de una esquina me encontré cara a cara con Anselmo. Se aprontaba a incorporarse a una de las columnas y en sus manos portaba un montón de panfletos que llevaban escrita la leyenda 'Gana la Gente'" (196). Heredia sees the streets filled with people celebrating the prospects of a new president. Anselmo carries with him pamphlets in support of these changes that propose that the people have won. In previous scenes, we have seen Heredia long for this type of solidarity. Yet, the ending of the story returns to Heredia's skepticism and realization that the present may be a new epoch but not a return to Allende's socialist city. The following conversation with Anselmo shows Heredia's reaction:

> --no escucha los gritos de la gente? ¡Todo volverá a ser como antes!
> --Todo, no.
> -- Como que no?

[64] My translation: I bought a bouquet of flowers and attended his funeral. The speeches wallowed in every imaginable commonplace, and when fatigue took over my spirits, I said goodbye to the judge with a couple of words that no one had a chance to hear.

[65] Judge Cavens, after arguing to keep Cancino's son, finally submits to Heredia's request to return the boy to Ms. Solaris. To this, Heredia reacts in the following: "Cavens cerro sus ojos y lo contemple hasta que el licor fue un buen recuerdo. Nadie estaba libre de errores, me dije, y tuve la seguridad de que Cavens cumpliría su promesa. Era la ultima oportunidad que tenia para no ser cómplice del olvido" (187). Heredia values judge Cavens' promise to return Cancino's boy, because it represents an opportunity for him to be truthful instead of forgetting the past.

> -- Nada es igual. Es otra la época y faltan muchos nombres que no se pueden olvidar—dije. (196)[66]

Heredia admits to some change. He explains to Anselmo that although this is a new period of political life, one that hopefully that will, reject reactionary politics. Some things cannot be reversed. His attention is drawn towards the victims, their deaths, and those individuals that are yet to be accounted for. Political candidates and institutions are performative; beyond the political performance of change, Heredia the detective is well aware that politicians and institutions betray. His skepticism about the future is evident in the novel.

[66] My translation:
--Don't you hear the screams of the people? Everything will go back to the way it was before!
--Not all.
- How not?
-- Nothing is the same. The time is different and many names are missing that cannot be forgotten — I said

Chapter 2: Leveraging the City in PIT II's *No Habra Final Feliz*

Paco Ignacio Taibo II's Belascoarán series introduces an urban detective navigating the streets of Mexico City. In *No Habra Final Feliz* (1981), he roams central locations of Mexico City during his investigations of the Halcones. As he faces the paramilitary group, Belascoarán begins to learn that he faces the systematic corruption of the nation-state. He describes the system as *el mal ambiguo,* and his fight against it as "[el] match simplificado Bakunin contra el Estado, al match simplificado Sherlock Holmes vs. Moriarty. En medio nada había, quizá ahí está la causa del juego con los malos ambiguos, porque en ellos, se fundían las dos versiones" (102).[67] *The neopoliciaco detective* explores *el mal ambiguo* and criminals like the Halcones whose crimes are commanded by the state. This poses a dilemma in the detective narrative: the detective faces a socio-economic and political system that can't be eliminated; it is a one-man revolutionary effort against the nation-state. Similar to Heredia's detective story, Belascoarán has to consider what course of action to take against the state and its system of corruption. David Geherin characterizes this as an absurd logic that drives *neopoliciaco detectives* to risk their lives only to see corruption remain (171).[68] Yet, the corruption the *neopoliciaco detective* confronts is not the inherent corruption of society but the corruption produced by the government and its mercenaries.

No Habra Final Feliz allows us to consider how Belascoarán leverages the city to battle Los Halcones and the state. The city plays an important role in the detective narrative that goes beyond the background setting for the novel. Belascoarán's investigations in the city, similar to Heredia's wanderings, function as a counternarrative to the state's dominant account of history

[67] My translation: the simplified match Bakunin against the State, to the simplified match Sherlock Holmes vs. Moriarty. In between there was nothing, perhaps there is the cause of the game with those who are bad, because in them, the two versions merged.
[68] Geherin also notes this characteristic in the hardboiled detectives Continental Op and Marlowe.

and events. The city as a space can be understood through its materiality, its representation, its abstract conceptualizations, and other various categories. Henry Lefebvre and David Harvey have models for understanding these categorizations of space.[69] Although some literary critics focus on temporal readings of detective novels, this chapter surveys the function of space and time in *No Habra Final Feliz.* An analysis of the city and the social spaces that the detective navigates assists us in understanding the power structures and urban contestations that the detective becomes involved in. PIT II's novel functions as a form of representational contestation through a counternarrative of the state's official accounts. The narrative elements, however, expose the relationship between the detective and the city.

Belascoarán is a modern flâneur that observes the status of the city (its processes) and navigates its criminal spaces. The socio-economic and political conditions that he sees reflected on the city lead him to nickname Mexico City "el monstruo." In *Regreso a la Misma Ciudad y Bajo la Lluvia* (1989), the sequel to *No Habra Final Feliz,* Belascoarán claims that the nickname hides the better definition of Mexico City as:

> the cave of lies, the cavern of cannibals, the city of prostitute on bicycles or in the black car of a cabinet minister, the cemetery of talking TVs, the city of men looking over their shoulders at their pursuers, the village occupied by label counterfeiters, the paradise of press conferences, the collapsed city, trembling, lovingly in ruins, its debris rummaged through the moles of God. (41)

Belascoarán describes "el monstruo" as a deteriorated space filled with cannibals, caverns, prostitutes, cemeteries, and imagery that denotes the urban underworld affected by the socio-economic and political policies of the state. Historically, the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) party invested time and money trying to develop the Mexican capitalist economy through

[69] David Harvey in "Space as a Keyword" categorizes space as abstract space, relative space, and relational space. Henri Lefebvre in *Production of Space* explains that space can also be categorized as perceived space, conceived space, and lived space. Still, both theorists see space as a process and as a production. Ultimately, David Havery considers a three-by-three matrix that includes some of Lefebvre propositions for categorizing space.

a First World model of modernization and urbanization: Import Substitution Implementation. The objective of ISI was to help the Mexican nation-state industrialize, promoting "la creación de una industria nacional basada en la empresa privada, pero incentivada y dirigida en muchas formas por las políticas estatales" (37).[70] The model was successful in developing the Mexican economy at the expense of the working class, peasantry, and indigenous communities. This uneven modernity led by the Mexican bourgeoisie's economic visions of profits resulted in the landscapes seen by the Mexican detective: debased social conditions of prostitution, commercialization of technology, forged merchandise, and more.[71] The novel shows us Taibo II's developed interest in the processes that have made the city what it is in addition to the absurd quest of the detective confronting the nation-state's crimes. Literary critic, Bruno Bosteels interprets the detective's absurd quest as a stubborn melancholic attitude trying to make up for the failures of leftist movements in Mexico. Belascoarán similar to Heredia must deal with his melancholic attitude towards the city and its crimes, while trying to find a solution to the crime. This attitude, for Bosteels, is not productive in terms of the detective's win against the forces of evil.[72] Yet, other critics, like Carlos Van Tongeren and Luis Martin-Cabrera, have shown that melancholia does not leave the detective politically paralyzed and without any form of resistance towards the nation-state.[73]

Belascoarán's historical investigation ties the present crimes of Los Halcones with their historical significance in Mexico City to demonstrate the continuation of corruption. The Corpus

[70] My translation: the creation of a national industry based on private corporations, but incentivized and managed in different ways by state policies.
[71] *No Habra Final Feliz* describes *los malos ambiguos* that in PIT II's later novel, *Muertos Incomodos*, re-emerge as the detective faces the nation-state's business deals to sell indigenous lands; he points to el Mal as the nation-state's systemic corruption and los malos as its agents Morales.
[72] For example, Bosteels in "Post-Leninist Detective" interprets Belascoarán's stubbornness to fight crime in *Cosa Facil* as the possibility of a "moral purity that can lead only to self-deception and disillusionment in the face of inescapable hardships and losses" (269).
[73] See *Comedia y melancolía en la narrativa neopoliciaca* by Carlos van Tongeren.

Christi Massacre occurred when students began marching around the university until they reached the streets, and "a burst of machine-gun fire rudely interrupted the demonstrators' singing" (Donald Clark Hodges et al 142). The Halcones, often referred to as the Falcons or the Hawks, opened fire on these students until the Federal Police joined "to cover the backs of the hawks by firing from cars" (Donald Clark Hodges et al 143). These students and others marched on the streets for various reasons: solidarity with the university's autonomy over the government and their general discontent with the Mexican government. Elaine Carey, among other historians like Hodges, comment that the Corpus Christi massacre was also an attempt at reviving the ideals and manifestations from the Tlatelolco Massacre (Carey 169). In the novel, Marina, Belascoarán's sister, recalls the Corpus Christi massacre, stating, "estaban un par de batallones de granaderos, renovados en los tres últimos años con jóvenes campesinos sin tierra de Puebla, de Tlaxcala, de Oaxaca, que habían venido a llenar los huecos de los desertores de 1968, que habían pasado el obligado periodo de embrutecimiento entrante…" (76).[74] Marina describes the recruitment of young, landless, field workers from Puebla, Tlaxcala, Oaxaca by the nation-state as soldiers to help the federal police; they are recruited to become part of the national police and Los Halcones. The government used these campesinos as weapons against student protestors who, in a way, sought economic reforms that could have benefited both groups. Donald Hodges et al in *Mexico Under Siege: Popular Resistance to Presidential Despotism*, affirm that the Mexican government has never been a democracy, claiming that it's an authoritarian power (16).

In this section, I consider Belascoarán's interactions with the city as he confronts the criminality of the state. *No Habrá Final Feliz* shapes its narrative amid conventional shoot-out

[74] My translation: there were a couple of grenade battalions, renewed with young landless peasants from Puebla in the last three years, from Tlaxcala, from Oaxaca, who had come to fill the gaps of the 1968 deserters, who had passed the forced period of incoming brutalization.

scenes and the criminals' hunt of the detective typical of hardboiled detective fiction. These scenes around the city demonstrate the normalized violence present in different spaces. We can see how Belascoarán reacts to these situations to find ways of battling Los Halcones. I focus on how Belascoaran leverages the city, as William J. Nichols states, "to navigate the illusions, lies, and fabrications perpetuated by those invisible elements [of the state]" (103). Those invisible elements, *el mal ambiguo*, the state, and its corrupt system fashion the city as a monster and a false reality. The urban landscape is not safe. It is a city exacerbated by socio-economic and political processes and policed by the corrupt individuals laying claim to the city as the state' executioners.[75] The city becomes a place where the production of over-layed criminalities against urban dwellers are hidden inside the official narratives of the state.[76] Belascoarán is a vigilante detective who seeks justice outside the law, because the law is corrupt. He observes the social processes that corrupt the city, searching for reform, justice, and truth. Braham sees this as an "intrachronicle" or an unofficial history of the Mexican people from a marginal position or political, economic, and social marginalization (84).[77] PIT II positions a detective whose commitment to saving the city rests in revealing the state's criminality: its violence against people and its impunity over the years. PIT II shows us through the Belascoarán series the extent of the state's authoritarian power through its covert operations and corruption of society. I argue that Belascoarán's investigations in *No Habra Final Feliz* lead him to leverage the city and its

[75] *No Habra Final Feliz* recalls the 1970s, a couple decades later. During the 1970s-1980s, the economic crisis in Mexico led to the implementation of a neoliberal economic model at the turn of the 21st century. The economic crisis included the devaluation of the peso, the state's international debt, and the oil crisis that affected the poverty and daily lives of Mexican residents. The state incited violence, as evidenced by the Tlatelolco Massacre, when protestors sought reforms and change from the government.

[76] Martin-Cabrera has a similar analysis of *Nadie Sabe Mas que los Muertos* in which places hide the nation-state's crimes against human rights; it is a hidden political agenda masked by propaganda of a "new" democracy.

[77] Braham states, "The detective novel functions as an intrachronicle: an unofficial, parallel history of the Mexican people; at a generic level, its outsider status (mirror the outsider status of the detective protagonist) enables Taibo to advance a critical agenda. Taibo employs abundant reference to actual history, news, and people" (84).

spaces to find alternative forms of resistance against a system that cannot be eliminated, but can be combatted.

An analysis of the novel, requires a brief summary of *No Habra Final Feliz,* the fourth novel in the series. The story begins when Belascoarán encounters two dead men dressed in Roman costumes in the bathrooms of his office building. On one of the men, Belascoarán finds a note that states "No te metas" (don't get involved); and then, on the following day, Belascoarán receives the picture of a second murder and an airplane ticket to New York. The anonymous killers seek to bribe Belascoarán to leave the city, but his curiosity to know why the criminals have involved him in the murder leads him to fight for his life. Throughout the story, Belascoarán investigates the identities of the two "Romans" and the reason behind their death. He learns that their names are Leobardo and "el amigo de Durango." These two were assistants to the famous stuntsman named Zorak in the 1970s. He also learns from his sister that Zorak was contracted by the Mexican state to train its paramilitary recruits in the '70s. By the end of the novel, Capitan Estrella, one of the current leaders of the Halcones, explains to Belascoarn that Leobardo and "el amigo de Durango" threatened to expose Los Halcones by hiring him to investigate the group. Belascoarán succeeds in killing Capitan Estrella and some of the members of the Halcones: however, the group proves to be an extensive state operation that Belascoarán fails to overcome. The novel ends with Belascorarán left for dead in front of his office building, only to be resurrected by PIT II in the following novel *Return to the Same City: A Hector Belascoáran Shayne Detective Novel* (1989).

Belacoarán's case in *No Habra Final Feliz* begins when one of his officemates, Carlos' the upholster, alerts him that there is a murdered man, in a Roman costume, lying in a bathroom stall of their building. This first scene sets the tone of apprehension, indicating that there is no

place for the detective to hide. Belascoarán responds to the news in a joking manner until Carlos leads him down the hallway. The narrator describes the scene of the crime, "Sentado en la taza del escusado, un romano con la garganta cercenada miraba hacia el suelo" (11).[78] The scene of the crime creates both a shock factor at the sight of a dead man sitting on the toilet, but also a humorous scene. However, the slit throat and the following description of how the blood runs down the man's costume reminds us of the severity of the situation. Belascoarán examines the body, retrieves an identification card, and rapidly tells Carlos that they need to leave the building. Belascoarán and Carlos briefly enter their offices and catch Gilberto Gomez Letras, the plumber, at the elevator. Belascoarán ensures that Gilberto does not set off the elevator as he and Carlos join him to make their escape from the building. The narrator explains, "La puerta del elevador se abrió, los tres hombres salieron a la calle, Gilberto tratando de convencer a sus compañeros de que le permitieran subir para conocer a la secretaria nueva" (13).[79] The novel combines a sense of comedy and despair as the detective begins the murder case. His office space and home are targeted from the beginning, leaving Belascoarán without refuge or safe place to be.

These beginning scenes expose the lack of a safe place for Belascoarán who has his own apartment. Belacoarán becomes a marginalized individual in the city as someone who rejected his upper-class status, denouncing his engineering title, and opting to be a vigilante detective forced to eat tortillas when he has no income. Without his home, Belascoarán's only space to turn to is the modern city. He joins the urban crowd economically oppressed by the government. Belsacoarán is a type of detective flânauer who, as Baudelaire states, is "[one] to be away from

[78] My translation: Seated on the toilet bowl, a Roman with a slit throat looked down at the floor.
[79] My translation: the elevator door opened, the three men went out into the street, as Gilberto was trying to convince his friends to let him go back into the building to meet the new secretary.

home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the center of the world and, yet to remain hidden from the world" (Tally 97). By being forced to meander the streets, Belascoarán feels both at home in the city but also a stranger to its modern façade. The city appears to be prospering with its monuments and urban design, but, in actuality, Mexico's modern city is one in which people face poverty, corruption, and violence. The modern detective forms part of the city he loves and hates; it is a city created by the state at the cost of the urban population. After finding the dead body in his office building, Belascoarán remains the rest of the night at the coffee stand across the street. The narrator explains, "El día anterior había montado guardia hasta las doce de la noche desde el café de chinos porque estaba seguro de que algo así iba a ocurrir, pero el sueño lo había vencido y se había tirado" (16).[80] Belascorán attempts to be vigilante by spying from the coffee stand across his office, yet he succumbs to sleep. He decides that within the city he can conceal himself to observe the criminals in action. Still, the crime that has occurred in his office building leaves Belascoarán's private space in jeopardy. He is displaced from his office and home as the criminals have demonstrated they can easily invaded Belascoarán's space.

The city plays an important social space that the detective constantly navigates. He has a certain relationship with the city that keeps him preoccupied even when he is not investigating cases. Prior to his current predicament, Belascoarán remembers: "llevaba dos meses de contemplación cuasibudista de las calles del centro de la ciudad, dando interminables paseos, hurgando en las vecindades, regateando en las librerías de viejo, viendo las nubes o el trafico desde la ventana de la oficina. Dos meses a la espera de algo en lo que mereciera la pena poner la

[80] My translation: the day before who stood guard until 12 a.m. at the Chinese's café stand because he was sure something like this was going to happen, but sleep overcame him and he fell asleep.

vida" (15).[81] Unlike other detectives that remain in one place (their offices), Belascoarán wanders the city as a space that he is a part of, going to libraries, contemplating the city from his window, and waiting for months for something worth putting his life at risk to investigate. In other words, his detective work brings purpose to his life. Ironically, his wish came true. Now, he finds himself constantly around the city seeking refuge or finding ways to confront criminals. He is forced into a vulnerable position in an urban city that can be violent but also leveraged to battle his assailants. As the narrator states, "Héctor decidió sumarse al torrente humano y ver si las ideas se ordenaban al ritmo del los pasos. Encendió un cigarrillo y comenzó a trotar por el centro de la ciudad" (16-17).[82] Belascoarán, unlike other detectives, deduces the puzzles of the case by walking throughout the city. As he meanders throughout the city, his reflections reveal its chaos. The city and its social spaces contain different functions for the detective and reader of the story.

Before Belascoarán continues to investigate further into the murders, the criminals offer him a bribe to forget this case; but instead he chooses to stay in Mexico City and find the answers to the death of the Roman and the other victims. Following his decision, Belascoarán continues roaming through the heart of Mexico City to think about clues that might give him more information. As he is walking, we get a glimpse of the chaos that occurs in the city. The narrator describes Belascoarán walking over to see a crowd gathering, stating: "[Belascoarán] Cruzo la Alameda mirando un globero y dos niños que lo seguían. Al llegar a Avenida Hidalgo se acerco a la bola que estaba contemplando como un corto circuito en el motor había incendiado

[81] My translation: He had spent two months in quasi-Buddhist contemplation in the streets of the city center, taking endless walks, rummaging through the neighborhoods, haggling in old-fashioned bookstores, watching the clouds or the traffic from the office window. Two months waiting for something worth putting his life at risk for.
[82] My translation: He decided to join the human stream and see if his ideas organized themselves to the rhythm of his steps. He lit a cigarette and started trotting through the city center

un panel de la policía" (17).[83] As the police panel burns, a person from the crowd also tells Belascoarán "[que] lastima que no volaron los culeros" (17).[84] Belascoarán's reflection also provides some insights into his views of the people in the city. When he stops to see how the crowd has reacted, Belascorán notes, "*Ah qué los mexicanos, mirones y malosos con la ley,* pensó cuando la panel estalló en medio de un bellísimo fuego de artificio. Los Mirones, que sumaban cerca de un centenar, aplaudieron y luego comenzaron a retirarse ante las miradas de odio de uno de los policías que traía un Máuser en las manos" (17).[85] Belascoarán doesn't disagree with the crowds response. His tone invokes a sense of complacency pointing to these events as normal occurrences. The conflicts in the city are represented by relations between the people and the police. The city urbanites mock the police as they threaten back with their guns and hateful stares. The novel describes the chaos of Mexico City as rooted in the conflicts between the urban populace and the police. The novel references the corruption of the police and the distrust that city people have towards official institutions. These urban conflicts are rooted in the history of Mexico City such as the Tlatelolco Massacre and Corpus Christie that PIT II directly recalls in this novel. Social spaces and places in *No Habra Final Feliz* function as part of the detective narrative as sites of information for the detective but also as important historical archives that explain the animosity between the city and state institutions.

Furthermore, the reference to Alameda Garden park also parallels the conflict between the state and the people via the ideologies it represents. The state of Mexico and its apparatuses enforce socio-economic and political policies that oppress marginalized folks in the city rather

[83] My translation: Belascoaran crossed the Alameda street at looking at a balloonist and two children who followed him. Upon reaching Avenida Hidalgo, he approached the crowd that was contemplating how a short circuit in the motor had set fire to a police panel.
[84] My translation: too bad that they (the policemen) didn't fly off.
[85] My translation: *Oh these Mexicans, lookers and bad with the law,* he thought when the panel exploded in a beautiful artificial fire. These on-lookers who numbered about a hundred, applauded and then began to retreat under the hateful gaze of the policemen who were carrying a Mauser in their hands.

than improve their living conditions. This is represented by the architecture and statues in the garden. The statue of Mexican President Benito Juarez and the several Greco-Roman statues signify the modern façade of Mexico City that aims to conceal the poverty and inequitable living conditions of those in the city. These statues show the conflicting ideologies of the state and the people' needs. President Benito Juarez was a president from a rural upbringing; he is considered to have indigenous roots. His political policies resisted foreign involvement in Mexico' development. In a way, he represents some of those people marginalized in the city who need social welfare. Yet, the Greco-Roman statues and the architecture of the garden conflict with what Benito Juarez represents; these structures memorialize the Mexican state's modernization projects that were influenced by models of First World countries. While the people ask for public service, the state invests in superficial appearances and policies that rarely improve the lives of majority of those in the city.

Returning to Belascoarán's case in *No Habra Final Feliz,* the murder of the Roman-dressed figures turns into a historical investigation of Zorak and Los Halcones. The novel again underscores the importance of knowing the violent history forgotten or unknown to the city. In order to recollect this history, Belascoarán has to put together different pieces of information from his friends and informants. First, he learns about Zorak during the funeral celebration of Leobardo and "el amigo de Durango" at a bar. A friend of Leobardo's explains that prior to working at a bar the victims had been assistants to Zorak, a stunstman hired by the state. Belascoarán leaves the funeral celebration and arrives at the reporter Mendiola's house a bit drunk. At Mendiola's place, that is next to a funeral home, both friends look out at the window at a funeral; that is when the detective asks the newspaper reporter who Zorak was. His friend, the reporter, educates Belascoarán on Zorak and his "accidental" death. His friends, scattered around

the city, provide another way of knowing how spaces archive history. In this case, Belascoarán's social spaces turn into spaces of investigation that reveal Mexico's violent past. Spaces informs of buildings and places archive history; but, as we see here, so do social spaces and the people that inhabit the city. Belascoarán's friends and informants are also reporters and newspaper stand employees that are urban witnesses and keepers of history. [86] It is in the city, walking and meeting with its dwellers, that Belscoarán pieces together the history that will lead him to understand why he has been involved in the murder and find justice for the victims.

In time Belascoarán encounters his pursuers who stalk his office building and trail him around the city. One instance occurs when Belascoarán and El Gallo (one of his officemates) leave their office building in the morning. They see the two shooters described as "personaje del traje gris" (the person in gray a gray suit) and "chamarra azul" (the blue jacket) cross the street and start shooting at them in front of newspaper vendors and others on the street.[87] These two are mercenaries that are part of the Halcones, the paramilitary group that Belascoarán learns killed Zorak. These two defend themselves, shooting back, and killing the two Halcones. The scene shows how the newspaper vendors, forced to view the shootout, display their indifference. First, the narrator notes that despite the flying bullets and the two dead men, the newspaper delivery men remain at the scene:

> La multitud de vendedores de periódicos, a pesar de la escuadra .45 en mano de Hector y el colt de Gallo, no había retrocedido después de la balacera, mas bien se acercaba lentamente creando un circulo en cuyo centro se encontraban los dos cadáveres y el detective, y en su periferia El Gallo tras la camioneta de *La Prensa.* Quizá porque vendían el mismo producto diariamente en letras de molde, quizá porque la sangre corría cada tercer día entre Donato Guerra y Bucareli en pleitos a

[86] In previous scenes, Belascoarán interrogates everyone he knows around his building about the dead Roman and only the newspaper stand boy, or "el tuerco," is able to verify that a couple men had picked up the body the next day.

[87] Some of the different people who witness this event are described in the following: "la legión de vendedores de periódicos," "una mujer con un niño en la brazo y un paquete de periódicos," and others (65-66).

> patadas, con botella o con navaja; quizá porque habían decidido que Hector y El Gallo eran los Buenos de la historia no tenían miedo. (67)[88]

The narrator describes the vendors' desensitized reaction to the deaths and shooting that occurred out on the street. Although they may be indifferent to the violence, this crowd perhaps view Belascoarán and El Gallo as the good guys. The image of the newspaper vendors surrounding Belascoarán in the middle of the scene also reinforces the public's solidarity with Belascoarán and El Gallo: they surround him, inspecting the scene without blaming Belascoarán for murder. Instead, they acknowledge his vigilante work. When El Gallo, shocked at killing one of the Halcones, asks Belascoarán if the man is dead, Belascoarán states, "Sí, lo mató y yo maté al otro, y se siente de la chingada andar matando gente, aunque solo sea para defender la vida" (67).[89] One of the newspaper vendors echoes this sentiment by stating, "Ellos fueron los que dispararon primero, nosotros lo vimos, jefe—"(67).[90] The shoot-out occurs in the public space where people are indifferent to the violence but show acknowledgement of Belascoarán's vigilante actions. This last statement by the vendor gives significance to the shoot-out as not just a moment of cinematic action. We are reminded that the detective doesn't like to kill. The scene also shows us how the city forms part of the battle between Belascoarán and the state. The vendors and other public figures in the city can be collateral deaths, witnesses, and even participants of the shoot-outs occurring in the city. The city's indifference reiterates the normalcy of violence on the streets. It would be a bit extreme to say as Nichols points out that this big Western-style shootout

[88] My translation: The crowd of newspaper vendors, despite the .45 squad in the hands of Hector and Gallo's colt, had not retreated after the shooting, rather it was approaching slowly creating a circle in the center of which were the two corpses and the detective, and in its periphery El Gallo after the La Prensa truck. Perhaps because they sold the same product daily in block letters, perhaps because the blood ran every third day between Donato Guerra and Bucareli in lawsuits with kicks, with a bottle or with a knife; maybe because they had decided that Hector and El Gallo were the good guys in history they weren't afraid

[89] My translation: Yes, he killed him and I killed the other one, and it feels like hell to be killing people, even if only to defend life

[90] My translation: One of the newspaper vendors echoes this sentiment by stating, "They were the ones who shot first, we saw it, boss--.

could clean the city and the system (104).[91] Still, Belascoarán's efforts and vigilante actions form part of a counternarrative and resistance to be complacent with the state's systemic corruption.

The city in *No Habra Final Feliz* becomes a leveraging space that gives Belascoarán hope that he can at least terminate the Halcones group. Marina and Carlos (Belascoarán's siblings) warn him that his pursuits to bring the Halcones to justice entail a larger operation against a group that is important to agents of the state like a future governor, or another government official's cousin, or even the president himself (122).[92] Carlos rhetorically asked, "Suponte que acabas con el grupito del Metro. ¿Vas a seguir con la Judicial? ¿Luegon con la Brigada Blanca? ¿Luego todito el campo militar numero uno? ¿Suena absurdo, te van a matar?" (105). [93] Carlos points to the absurdity of one detective vigilante pursuing the nation-state's apparatus; he is correct that Belascoarán will end up dead. Nonetheless, it isn't until he is attacked in the city again that he doubts his capabilities. One of the attacks occurs as two men, one with a rifle and another with a .45 caliber, follow him out on the street (107-106). During this attack, Belascoarán runs around the street until he reaches the street corner of Vertiz and Doctor Navarro where the gunshots wound a woman, while Belascoarán evades them (108). At

[91] Later in the novel, Belascoarán begins to consider that fighting the Halcones is more than a numbers game. He considers, "Si solo fueran 40, pensó Belascoarán. Si solo fueran 40, tendrían un limite: 3 que me eche yo, uno que se fumigo El Gallo, uno que quedo encuerado en el Desierto de los Leones y que latía a fuera de combate: 40-5=35. Con esta reanimante conclusión en la cabeza, se lanzo a recorrer nuevamente las calles" (102). He reasons that the enemy is a total of 40 Halcones' members that he is capable of killing. He becomes confident that he can triumph against the group. However, PIT II hints that the larger problem is the system of corruption and the state that has made permissible the mercenary actions of the Halcones since their employment a couple decades ago.

[92] Marina states, "Te das cuenta? Suponte que ahora encuentro al piloto del helicóptero del que se cayo Zorak, y que trae un contrato para trabajar con el futuro gobernador de Durango o de Puebla, y entonces resulta que el tipo fue el organizador de Los Halcones y no quiere que salte la historia … o suponte que Estrella es primo de Velázquez y los estaba reorganizando para que le sirvieran de guardia personal… O que eral las fuerzas privadas del futuro presidente…" (122). My translation: Do you realize? Suppose that now I find the pilot of the helicopter from which Zorak fell, and that he brings a contract to work with the future governor of Durango or Puebla, and then it turns out that the guy was the organizer of Los Halcones and he does not want the story exposed... or suppose that Estrella is Velázquez's cousin and was reorganizing them to serve as a personal guard ... Or that it was the private forces of the future president.

[93] My translation: Suppose you kill the Metro group. Are you going to continue with the Judicial? Luegon with the White Brigade? Then all the military camp number one? Sounds absurd, are they going to kill you?

the end of the shoot-out, Belascoarán describes the people accustomed to violence in the city. He states, "El sonido de los disparos que se negaba irse de los oídos, dos taqueros mirando a la mujer herida con aire de conocedores de la violencia, conocedores del pus de todos los días del DF" (108). Belascoarán describes how the shoot-out forms part of the normality of violence in the city. He describes violence as an infection that everyone knows. He explains that the shoot-out is part of the innate corruption, violence, and impunity that constantly invades the city. This helps us recall the earlier scene in Alameda Garden between the Mexican police and the city crowd. The violence present in the city can be interpreted as urban relations between the state and some of the residents it oppresses. Furthermore, Belascoarán becomes fearful of being injured and shot, stating "Por más que dijeran que el miedo estaba en la cabeza, tu sabias que el miedo estaba en el cuerpo, en la sabiduría del pellejo ante la muerte. ¿Todo será así de ahora en adelante?" (108).[94] Whereas in previous scenes, we see Belascoarán optimistic and determined to fight crime, he is now more aware of his vulnerabilities. Belascoarán has to admit that he is weak at the hands of the Halcones. The grand fight he seeks poses a threat that is beginning to scare him. The last half of the novel emphasizes an ordinary man, the detective, trying to fight a system of violence and corruption and using the city as a means to survive.

Belascoarán is aware that although Mexico City is desensitized and accustomed to violence, the city is also a place of refuge that can be leveraged by those that know how to navigate it. The novel presents the city as a multifaceted site that enables the detective to combat the Halcones pursuing him. Belascoarán has learned that the Halcones, originally organized in the 1970s are now, years later, reorganized as mercenaries and employees of the Metro Station. These *malos ambiguous* are scattered and hidden around the city. Belascoarán next confronts

[94] My translation: As much as they said that fear was in the head, you knew that fear was in the body, in the wisdom of the skin in the face of death. Will everything be like this from now on?

Melina, one of the new Halcones, at a hospital in Colonia Doctores, a little over a mile south of Alameda Gardens.[95] Colonia Doctores, originally named Hidalgo, was renamed because most of its streets are named after doctors. The area is also the site of Mexico's General Hospital, the Lucha Libre arena named "Arena Mexico," and other historical and cultural attractions.[96] This area is also known to be a hot spot for crimes in Mexico City. The novel shows us that even as Belascoarán travels around the city, he remains centrally located within a 5-mile radius in the heart of Mexico City. Belascoarán enters the city's district of doctors where he leads Melina into a hospital. The narrator explains, "Con una bata blanca comprada en El Tranvia, tienda de uniformes con amplios descuentos, Hector se transmute en el doctor Belascoarán, y entró al sanatorio con una sonrisa acartonada Digna de anuncio de pasta de dientes" (108).[97]

Belascoarán's image shifts from a detective to a doctor. He buys a uniform at the local store to integrate himself as part of this area of the city. The narrator's description of this image connotes a satirical tone at the way Belascoarán's big smile is worthy of a tooth paste advertisement. Belascoarán's performative act makes the scene humorous as he is able to trick and get away from Melina who is pursuing him. The scene's less serious tone also reinforces Belascoarán's confidence against these assailants. He is more capable of fighting the Halcones when he is in control of the situation and able to attack rather than when he is surprised and under attack. As he states, "Si no podía de aquí en adelante evadir el miedo, al menos iba a jugar con el" (109).[98] His statement again evokes a sense of playfulness with fear and his approach to dealing with the Halcones. The scenes provide an optimistic direction that paired with the

[95] The novel also references metro stops to map Belascoarán's whereabouts. In this case, the Colonia Doctores and the metro stop Doctores are two stops south of Alameda Gardens.
[96] Other landmarks in this area are: Porfirio Diaz's mansion, Centro Cultural Estacion Indianilla, Centro Medico Siglo XXI (IMSS).
[97] My translation: With a white coat bought at El Tranvia, a uniform store with deep discounts, Hector transmuted into Dr. Belascoarán, and entered the sanatorium with a stiff smile worthy of a toothpaste advertisement.
[98] My translation: If he couldn't evade fear from now on, at least he was going to play with it.

detective's use of the city convince the reader that Belascoarán becomes a more capable detective of fighting the Halcones, which provides some proof that the detective can survive and perhaps win against the forces of corruption and violence in the city.

Still, Belascoarán doesn't fully come to the realization of how to control his fear until a couple of scenes later in the novel. Once Belascoarán learns the whereabouts of Capitan Perro, who potentially leads him to Capitan Estrella (the other Halcones' leader), Belacoarán has a new sense of fear of being hunted and pursued in his office or the homes of any of his friends and siblings. Instead, Belascoarán looks to the city to find refuge again. First, he decides to enter a barbershop to rethink the controversy he is in. The narrator states, "Para poder pensar en cubierto, se había metido en una peluquería… Hector trató de colocarse en el principio de la historia, tras convencer al peluquero que no quería que lo pelara de casquete corto" (112).[99] At the barbershop, Belascoarán is able to settle down and think. He no longer feels the pressure of being pursued or the fear that prevented him from thinking clearly. The barbershop becomes a refuge where he again is disguised as a local city dweller doing the mundane task of getting his hair cut. More importantly, he is able to retrace the information he has to problem solve his next steps. He considers his precarious condition and the narrator reveals a renewed sense of fear: "…El miedo a no saber, el miedo a morir a lo pendejo" (112).[100] Here we see Belascoarán's detective characteristic: it is necessary to solve this puzzle and to find the information that involved him in this case. He cannot die ignorant. There is an ironic tone to his statement indicating that Belascoarán, a smart detective, can die from stupidity (*a lo pendejo)*. This also propels him to continue his search for answers and seek justice for the deaths of the victims.

[99] My translation: To be able to think undercover, he had gotten into a hairdresser ... Hector tried to place himself at the beginning of the story, after convincing the hairdresser that he did not want him to peel him in a short cap.
[100] My translation: the fear of not knowing, the fear of dying stupidly.

Belascoarán continues to deal with his fear as he roams the city, knowing that there is no safe haven where he can reside, while there is no specific point on the map for the detective, the entire city provides a space and the mobility for the detective to seek refuge and prepare against the Halcones. We continue to see Belascoarán's fear of being hunted by the Halcones. He describes this feeling in a series of images and sensations: "Ahora tenia un nuevo problema … y una nueva sensación, la de traer algún pájaro volando sobre sus espaldas, una como sombra, como nube, como aleteo que impresionaba las terminales nerviosas de la piel y las cercanías de la columna vertebral" (113).[101] He imagines his fear as a bird, a shadow, or a cloud that pursues him. This fear of the looming power that the Halcones and the nation-state have over people forces Belascoarán to think of how to combat his fear and the power of the Halcones and the nation-state. Even as fear instinctively makes Belascoarán act awkwardly as "un reflejo torpón que conduce los pies de un lado a otro de la ciudad," we see Belascoarán admit that the city is the space he goes to instead of hiding out in his office (113).[102] The city is a space for the detective to think, seek refuge, and ultimately leverage to attack the Halcones. He states, "En una ciudad de 14 milliones de habitantes, los asesinos por muchos que fueran, por muchos recursos que tuvieran, nunca podrían encontrarlo si no era él." (113).[103] Here, he implies that what makes him unique is the fact that he knows his way around the city. He could have countless assassins with special resources, but they would not be able to find him in the city.

Belascorán walks throughout the night finally finding some confidence in himself and his ability to leverage the city against the Halcones. The narrator explains Belacoarán's intimate

[101] My translation: Now he had a new problem ... and a new sensation, that of bringing a bird flying on his back, one like a shadow, like a cloud, like fluttering that impressed the nerve endings of the skin and the vicinity of the spinal column.
[102] My translation: a clumsy reflection that guides the feet from one side of the city to the other.
[103] My translation: in a city of 14 million inhabitants, the murderers, no matter how many they were, no matter how many resources they had, could never find him if it was not him.

knowledge of the city as a shield against the Halcones, stating, "Y paso la noche velando sus armas, como caballero a la espera del dragón, velando sus armas por las calles solitarias, por los callejones, por las taquerías de noche y día, y los VIPS y los Sanborn's y las paredes de tazu frente a los hoteles y los caldos de Mixcoac para los crudos, y las zonas de burdeles de atrás de San Juan de Letran, y los cabaretuchos de la colonia Obrera" (113).[104] The image of Belascoarán around the city "velando sus armas" evokes the presence of a soldier or heroic knight passing through the streets of the city. Here, Belascoarán is in Colonia Obrera that is adjacent to Colonia Doctores. He walks past the urban world with its local vendors, commercialized stores, hotels, brothels, and cabarets. He shows his determination to withstand the night and any attack. Van Tongeren interprets this scene as "[una] parodia del imaginario en torno a la militancia" (131).[105] In doing so, he claims that the urban space is not just a background but "empieza a entonarse súbitamente con la importancia del momento" (128).[106] He makes this observation at the start of the scene when the narrator informs us that Belascoarán has decided to plan an attack. Belascoarán makes this decision "…en medio de las luces del Palacio Nacional y la iluminación de la catedral, y con los metros cuadrados de piedra solitaria y fría del Zocalo de la ciudad de Mexico por testigo, Hector Bleascoarán Shayne, pasó a la ofensa" (113). The novel presents Belascoarán as a man ready to fight. Van Tongeren analyzes Belascoarán's militant image as a

[104] My translation: And I spend the night watching over their weapons, like a knight waiting for the dragon, watching over their weapons through the lonely streets, through the alleys, through the tacos by night and day, and the VIPS and the Sanborn's and the tazu walls in front of the hotels and Mixcoac wines for crude oil, and the brothel areas behind San Juan de Letran, and the cabaretuchos of the Obrera neighborhood

[105] Conciencia militante as filled with "luz, inspiracion, la magia" which oppose the military mind of organization and plans; the urban space is not just a background to march but "empieza a entonarse subitamente con la importancia del momento" and the contrast between the Belascoarán "velando las armas" with his desire to sleep, "dejando que el sueño se depositara en un recondito rincon de la cabeza, que fraguaba, fraguaba, fraguaba la ofensiva" (113-114). Van Turgene evidences his claim that parady and comedy in the novel "hace emerger la terquedad como productiva de humildes efectos materiales en el presente"(181). He reads the novel as portraying the melancholy of the Mexican left after 1968, while also showing that melancholy in the novel isn't regressive or immobilizing. The detective's melancholy is a motivation that can be read in the literary elements of comedy and parody in the novel.

[106] My translation: suddenly begins to be in tune with the importance of the moment

parody, dismissing the Mexican military by showing Belascoarán giving into sleep during his walk. Still, his internal fight to stay awake suggests his unwillingness to give up. Belascorán's actions take place in another important social space of the city. El Palacio Nacional, el Zocalo, the cathedral represents spaces of contests where the colonial authorities, the state, and the people have fought for justice and claims to this space. Belascoarán stands, not with a collective or activist group, but as a vigilante detective willing to fight and claim the city against the injustice and corruption of the nation-state and its mercenaries. He declares his fight against the Halcones (and government) in Mexico's most historic and political center, going from Colonia Obrera to the urban underworld again, passing the commercial buildings and city activities that define Mexico City: the VIPS and Sanborn's that are restaurants near commercial shops; taco stands where people eat, brothels, and bars. The spaces that Belascoarán passes in the city help characterize the importance of the city and his fight against the nation-state.

Belascoarán's offensive efforts unfold towards the last half of the novel where he leverages the city to attack the Halcones at the Metro station. Belascoarán's stakeout and strategies to face the Halcones and Capitan Estrella, one of its main leaders, shows his knowledge of the city and the people in it. Belascoarán knocks and enters a stranger's apartment to learn the Halcones' routine at the Metro Station where they operate, by telling the architecture student who lives there that he is doing a critical investigation. The narrator describes their interaction in the following: "El otro preguntó 'cuantos días?', Hector especificó que un par al menos, intercambiaron sonrisas y ahí murió" (115).[107] The student complies with Belascoarán's request without asking anything more than how long Belascoaran's stay will be. They exchange smiles and the detective continues on with his investigation. The student's willingness to let

[107] My translation: The other asked 'how many days?', Hector specified that at least a couple exchanged smiles and there he died.

Belascoarán stay in his apartment – even inviting him to a party he is hosting—demonstrates the detective's ability to gain the collaboration of this student who only asks for money for his drinks and bills. The student's apartment becomes a space that Belascoarán is able to leverage to gain more insights on the Halcones' activities. He studies how the Halcones go in and out of the Metro Station to determine the most opportune time to confront them on their turf.

At the Metro Station offices, the detective executes his plan to distract the Halcones and meet Capitan Estrella face-to-face. Belascoarán begins the distraction when the Halcones and Capitan Estrella arrive in their cars. He begins the assault by jumping into a bus, aiming a gun at the driver, and telling him to crash the red Ford that Capitan Estrella is in. The narrator notes the reaction by the driver, stating: "El chofer, quizá por la presión de la pistola en la sien o por el puro placer de chocar sin compromiso, había exagerado el celo profesional" (116).[108] The driver shows a professional zeal when Belascoarán demands him to crash the Halcones' car. He wonders whether the driver's enthusiasm was a result of the gun pointed to his head or the freedom of crashing a car without any consequences. The bus driver participates in Belascoarán's attack against the Halcones. In addition, Belascoarán's love interest, "la muchacha de la cola de caballo (the girl with the ponytail)," arrives in a Renault to take him to a different Metro Station in Tacubaya, so that he can sneak back into Capitan Estrella's office minutes later (116-117). This scheme to attack the Halcones at the entrance of the Metro Station and use a different Metro station to return and sneak into Capitan Estrella's office shows Belascoarán's precise maneuvers when he leverages the city against the Halcones. The metro station allows the free mobility for Belascoarán to trick the Halcones. It functions as a social space that involves movement rather than a contained space. As spatial theorists explain, social spaces are processes

[108] The driver, perhaps because of the pressure of the gun on his temple or the sheer pleasure of crashing without compromise, had exaggerated his professional zeal.

and material productions. The Metro Station signals a social space of covert operations that Belascoarán learned to infiltrate by using the transportation services and a car crash as a distraction.

It is worth noting that the Metro station as the cover for the Halcones' group provides an advantageous hiding space produced by the access to transportation all over the city. In an earlier scene, the Halcones explain to Belascoarán their occupations as the Metro station police where they receive higher orders from their leaders Capitan Estrella and Capitan Perro. These individuals have the dual advantage of being police authorities in the Metro and the impunity to murder individuals as mercenaries for the government. It gives them the freedom of authority to exercise power over the urban dwellers of the city. The metro's social space brings together the flow of the city where crowds of different backgrounds pass through: from indigenous vendors to upper-class white-collar workers. Crime and assaults are common in the stations and in the metros themselves. These agents integrate themselves in the perfect environment to mass with the city in one of its spaces of criminality. The Metro Station has long been a political issue for Mexican politicians. Diane Davis in *Urban Leviathan: Mexico City in the Twentieth Century* recaps the Metro network during the 1970s and its way of dispersing the urban growth in Mexico during the Echevarría to Díaz Ordaz presidencies, that have sought its expansion as part of Mexico's urbanization.

After taking the Tacubaya metro station to return to Capitan Estrella's office, Belascoarán learns the truth about the murders and his involvement.[109] He has an altercation with Capitan Estrella, shoots him, and leaves him dead in his office. Soon we find Belascoarán on the move again, fleeing to his apartment on Articulo 123 street with the help of his girlfriend, la

[109] Capitan Estrella reveals that Belascoarán was targeted by mistake: Don Leobardo and his friend threatened to expose the Halcones'murder of Zorak with the help of Belascoarán's investigation.

muchaca de la cola de caballo. At the end of the novel, *No Habra Final Feliz* fulfills its promise: Belacoarán does not get a happy ending. The novel illustrates how the detective is vulnerable to the forces of the state. While Belascoarán was successful in confronting Capitan Estrella at the Metro Station, this final scene shows us that the system of corruption ultimately triumphs over the vigilante detective. The Halcones shoot Belascoarán outside his apartment-office. He manages to avoid a couple of shots but when he tries to hide behind a newspaper stand a rifle shot sends him flying (125).[110] The narrator describes his fall and possible death: "Al caer al charco, estaba casi muerto. La mano se hundió en el agua sucia y trató de asir algo, de detener algo, de impedir que algo se fuera. Luego quedó inmóvil. Un hombre se acerco y pateo su cara dos veces. Se subieron a los coches y se fueron. Sobre el cadáver de Hector Belascoarán Shayne, siguió lloviendo" (127).[111] Lying in a puddle, as it continues to rain out on the street,

Belascoarán can barely move and save himself. One of the men approaches and kicks him twice in the face. The men leave implying that Belascoarán is dead. The scene echoes the warning the Capitan Estrella previously made to Belascoarán: "Ya me extrañaba que usted no hubiera picado mas alto" (120).[112] Capitan Estrella's statement hints as Belascoarán's misstep: not investigating higher authorities or the government involved in the deployment of the Haclones. His death is the result of not uncovering the organized crime behind the operations of the Halcones. In an interview, PIT II explains the ending of *No Habra Final Feliz*: "No lo maté yo, lo mató una novela. No había manera de sacarlo de la trampa en la que la propia novela lo iba metiendo y yo no quería ser injusto y hacer una novela de superhéroes en la que el personaje

[110] The narrator states: "Estaba a punto de cubrirse con la estructura de metal del puesto de periódicos cuando una descarga de escopeta lo prendió por la mitad del cuerpo haciéndolo saltar en el aire desgarrado, quebrado" (126).
[111] My translation: When he fell into the puddle, he was almost dead. The hand sank into the dirty water and tried to grasp something, to stop something, to stop something from leaving. Then he froze. A man came up and kicked his face twice. They got in the cars and drove off. On the corpse of Hector Belascoarán Shayne, it continued to rain.
[112] My translation: It seemed weird to me that you didn't investigate higher.

saliera indemne de una sociedad que no te deja indemne ni a ti ni a mi" (Argüelles 15).[113] PIT II claims that the detective narrative unfolds a trap that leaves the vigilante detective scathed. For PIT II, the novel reflects the damage that Mexican society inflicts on its residents. The author commits to the social reality of his respective society. This scene also shows us that what is important is not necessarily killing all of these entities but investigating and finding all the information necessary to leverage or determine a way to bring these groups to justice. Although at the end of the novel, the reader is led to believe Belascorán is dead; Taibo II's next novel resurrects Belascoarán based on popular demand. His audiences are unwilling to let the detective be defeated, showing us that Belascoarán's symbolic fights against the nation-state are essential to its readers. His vigilante action is deemed necessary as he has to go outside the law to fight a corrupted system by revealing its activities, a public statement that is as important– if not more than the actual shootings and killings themselves.

Belascoarán traverses Mexico City in *No Habra Final Feliz* in an investigation that unravels the systematic corruption present in Mexican society through a plot that suggests a reorganization of the Halcones. Although the detective vigilante attempts to challenge this systematic corruption and fails, the novel succeeds in exposing social conditions present in Mexican society. The novel's historical references point to the importance of material and social spaces as archives of Mexico's City's violent history. Literary scholars referenced in this chapter have interpreted Belascoarán's failed mission as a productive outcome for the detective narrative, acknowledging Belascoarán's ethical stance, regardless of his inability to overthrow the state. My contributions to readings of this novel are an analysis of the role of the city as more

[113] My translation: I did not kill him. The novel did. There was no way of getting him out of the trap the novel had put him in and I didn't want to be unjust to a superhero novel where the protagonist is left unscathed from a society that leaves neither you nor me unscathed.

than just a setting. I demonstrate how "el monstruo" is a nickname for Mexico City that encompasses a spatial understanding of how urbanization, history, and the corruption of the nation-state create the motivating conditions that fuel Belascoarán's vigilante character. While Belascoarán cannot overthrow the system of corruption, he demonstrates through his investigations and attacks in the city that it is possible to create spaces of contestation. Every shoot-out and every battle in the city represent an attempt to claim the city from the state and its corrupt agents by showing the city's residents that there are battles to be waged against the state that rules over the city and society. The final chapter concludes with the narrator's message to the reader about the city and those who wish to be heroic. The narrator states, "Aquella noche en que nada era nuestro ni volvería a serlo nunca. El país, la patria, se cerraba; botín de triunfadores a la mala, de cinismo enmascarado en la frase que ya nadie creía, y que solo era emitida para satisfacer a la costumbre. El país mandaba a la cloaca a los derrotados, a la noche sin fin" (125).[114] The somber mood and ominous imagery describe Mexico as a fallen city. It recalls the phrase "sí se puede" by the common crowds of workers, hoping to see reforms and changes to the corruption and crimes that pervade the city. Yet, the narrator recalls this important phrase in Mexican history to say that its true meaning is lost; people only say this and believe this out of tradition without really understanding its true revolutionary call to arms.[115] The story redefines

[114] My translation: That night when nothing was ours and would never be ours again. The country, the homeland, was closing; spoils of winners to the bad, of cynicism masked in the phrase that no one believed anymore, and that was only issued to satisfy custom. The country sent the defeated to the sewer, to the endless night.

[115] This message is echoed again in the narrator's rhetorical questions: "Ciudadanos porque no somos de lo peor que le queda a esta ciudad, y sin embargo, no valemos gran cosa. Ni somos de aquí, ni renunciamos, ni siquiera sabemos irnos a otro lado para desde allí añorar las calles y el solecito, y los licuados de plátano con leche y los tacos de nana, y el Zocalo de 16 de Septiembre y el diamante del estadio de Cuatemoc y las posadas del Canal Cuatro, y en esta soledad culera que nos atenaza y nos persigue. Y este miedo cabrón que no perdona" (125). My translation: Citizens because we are not the worst that this city has left, and yet we are not worth much. We are not from here, nor do we resign, we do not even know how to go elsewhere to yearn for the streets and the sun, and the banana smoothies with milk and the nana tacos, and the Zocalo of September 16 and the stadium diamond Cuatemoc and the inns of Canal Cuatro, and in this crap loneliness that grips and haunts us. And this fearless bastard that does not forgive. The narrator describes Mexicans as those who are not the worst in the city but also have not much worth. The narrator points to the complacency present that characterizes how people remain in a state of solitude and fear,

the criminal in terms of a system created by the state that it can manipulate across space and time. Belascoarán challenges the nation-state's official narrative, summoning the city and its readers to contest spaces and claim truth and justice in the face of the nation-state's criminality and impunity.

while violence and corruption continue. The crowd remains still without knowing how to leave and appreciate the value of the things that matter in the city from afar. PIT II criticizes the disillusionment of a city corrupted and the crowd that does nothing about this corruption and its fear of it.

Chapter 3: The Behemot City and the *Fronterizo* P.I in Ruiz's *Nepantla P.I*

Nepantla P.I by José Salvador Ruiz is a stand-alone detective novel about Brayan Nepantla, a neighborhood guy turned amateur detective in Mexicali, Baja California. Ruiz's adaptation of the *post-policiaco* genre forms part of a larger repertoire of *fronterizo* detective narratives written by both Mexican and Chicano/a authors. Among these Mexican and Chicana/o authors are Gabriel Trujillo Muñoz, Rudolfo Anaya, Lucha Corpi, and Alicia Gaspar de Alba who have published detective narratives with *fronterizo* detectives that investigate drug trafficking, human trafficking, prostitution, femicides, exploitation of cheap labor, and other crimes on the U.S.-Mexico border in the late 20th century and early 21st century. *Fronterizo* detectives specialize in solving crimes on the U.S.- Mexico border, displaying insights and techniques that enable the P.I. to navigate these geopolitical spaces. Similar to Díaz Eterović and PIT II, Ruiz's detective narrative focuses on the social realities and criminal activities linked to corrupt public officials. Ruiz uses the detective narrative as a cultural form to explore how larger socio-economic and political policies affect the criminal activity already present at the border. The *post-policiaco* genre allows for geographical mobility, as evident in how Mexican authors have shifted the setting of the narrative away from Mexico City. My analysis of the *post-policiaco*, in narrative form and plot, takes me from the southern Latin American cities of Santiago and Mexico City to the U.S.-Mexico border towns of Mexicali and Imperial Valley. Here, we see how rapid urbanization and the implementation of neoliberal policies have transformed these border towns. As part of the *post-policiaco* detective subgenre that emerged in Mexico, Ruiz's novel joins a new generation of Mexican authors who offer a wide cultural geographical understanding of the effects of Calderon's drug war across Mexico (2008-2010): going from Mexico City to Puerto Vallarta to Sinaloa to Mexicali. Martin Solares, Hilario Peña,

Carlos Rene Padilla, and Elmer Mendoza are other *post-policiaco* authors who experiment with new types of PIs and detectives that work in the northern Mexican border as well as throughout Mexico.[116] While *Nepantla PI* does not directly address the Calderon presidency, it does describe the political climate and narco spaces in Mexicali.[117]

The geopolitical expressions these authors bring to the *post-policiaco* genre remind us—just like the *neopolicaco* in Latin American—of the importance of the spatial components that drive the realities of these detectives. As José Salvador Ruiz explains, "La nueva literatura negra en Mexico no se hace en la capital. Hay que voltear a los estados. En especial, al norte. El Noir del siglo XXI es hijo de los extremos. Del calor, la violencia y algo de cerveza tibia. No busca conciliarse con la alta literatura ni demanda la aceptación académica" (Towle 149).[118] Nepantla is a *fronterizo* detective whose location along the U.S.-Mexico border positions him as part of a geopolitical space that he traverses continually. The U.S.'s push for neoliberal globalization is evident along the border where town populations' facilitate financial gain but once no longer economically useful are subsequently abandoned (Velez-Ibanez 7).[119] Those residing on the U.S.-Mexico border are objectified as labor, and even dehumanized, for the utility that they can provide. Jennifer Insley relates that "rapid population growth, an enormous drug trade, and

[116] Carlos Rene Padilla fashions a comic book-detective character in *Yo Soy Araña* (2019) and Martin Solar's *Black Minutes* (2006) focuses on a journalist-detective's project that leads a local police officer to unveil the historical corruption of his own unit.
[117] Some explicit references to Calderon in the novel include Pecas' character, Nepantla's journalist friend, who discusses his conspiracy theories about the government, stating, "Conspiracy theories about the current political climate include, for example, that AH1N1 was created by American pharmaceuticals with the approval of Calderon, and that "la guerra contra el narco fue planteada por los iluminati para desarmar el pueblo y así poder implementar el Nuevo Orden Mundial" (Ruiz 157). My translation: The war against drugs was raised by the Illuminati to disarm the people and thus be able to implement the New World Order.
[118] My translation: The new noir novel in Mexico is not written just in the capital. We have to turn to other Mexican states, especially in the north. The Noir of the 21st century is the son of extremes. Of the heat the violence, and lukewarm beer. It doesn't try to reconcile itself with high literature nor demand acceptance from academia.
[119] Nepantla's name has several meanings indicating neither from here or there as well as a space in between. I provide further discussion on the word Nepantla later in the chapter.

constant smuggling of people and goods have combined to create the perfect setting for the detective writing so popular in recent years" (38).

Nepantla P.I presents a *fronterizo* detective asked to investigate an alleged homosexual murder. Consuelo, the victim's brother, chooses Nepantla as the P.I. rather than entrusting the police with her brother's murder. This chapter includes four sections that survey the development of the detective genre as presented in *Nepantla P.I.* The first section provides an overview of the U.S.-Mexico border, Mexicali, and the socio-economic and political circumstances that create the criminal spaces of the border presented in the novel. Because of the scope of this dissertation, I briefly recap the urbanization in this border space as well as important issues of labor, migration, and human and substance trafficking. The second section explores the border crime in *Nepantla P.I.* The novel provides a view of the layers of criminal activities on the border and how the socio-economic and political issues at the border inform the types of crimes. The third section shifts to the characterization of Nepantla as a *fronterizo* detective. He is characterized as a simple migrant worker and an amateur sleuth. His characterization as an amateur detective follows shifts in *post-policiaco* conventions and allows Ruiz to present a network of informants and detectives. The final section, then, focuses on the spaces of investigation that enable Nepantla to inspect clues to Emilio's murder. Nepantla travels around the city's machista nightclubs, through the town's restaurants, and through border checkpoints. Sex trafficking and prostitution are the prominent crimes against women that Nepantla finds. The novel explores the commodification of sexualized bodies at the border by those involved in neoliberal globalized organized crime. The novel also maps the socio-economic conditions that link Mexicali to the Imperial Valley and make exploitation and trafficking of people possible. In the process the

amateur detective, Nepantla, finds a way to navigate the systems of corruption that allow him to intervene in the businesses of organized crime.

Before continuing with an analysis of the novel, I will provide a brief summary of the detective novel. *Nepantla P.I* is a story set in the border cities of Mexicali, Mexico and Imperial Valley, U.S. A woman named Consuelo contacts Nepantla, the detective, to help her investigate the death of her brother, Emilio. Consuelo distrusts the police who told her that her brother's death was a crime of homosexual passion. Consuelo and her mother don't think that Emilio was gay and want Nepantla to find out why he died. Nepantla, who has connections with the police, seeks more information about Emilio, learning that Perales, the head of the police, manipulated Emilio's case for his own benefit. Nepantla continues to investigate around both border cities, in strip bars, motels, and market places whose façade reflect the neoliberal globalization design of the U.S.-Mexico border region. Nepantla's investigations reveal that Emilio was not gay. In fact, he was investigating a prostitution ring in Mexicali and the exploitation of labor in the Wholemart stores located in Imperial Valley. Emilio's investigative endeavor challenges the transnational business tycoons and the local organized crime in Mexicali; he is beat up by the Wholemart corporatists and killed by the Mexicali's police and the Russian mafia, when he requests a prostitute from one of the prostitution rings and learns that his sister Consuelo works for them. During the altercation, Consuelo is drugged to forget the event until Nepantla solves the case. At the end of the story, Nepantla's sole achievement is the liberation of Consuelo, Emilio's sister, from the prostitution ring. Perales (the policeman), we find out, is killed, while we are left to assume that Dávila (his police partner) takes charge of the prostitution ring and the nightclubs in Mexicali. Nepantla's liberation of Consuelo demonstrates that Ruiz's detective does not bring any revolutionary changes to the border nor end the systematic economic

exploitation of women and migrant workers. Instead, the novel serves to alert readers to the needed intervention by vigilante detectives and other individuals in an environment filled with narco-gangs and corrupt policemen.

Section 1: Mexicali Border

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 ended the Mexican-American War and led to Mexico's loss of much of its northern territory to the United States. The U.S. acquired the current states of California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, Wyoming, and parts of Colorado with this treaty. By then, Texas had already been incorporated into the Union. The new border that was established between the U.S. and Mexico delineated Baja California, as the Mexican neighboring state to California, U.S. The Baja California peninsula was not ceded to the U.S. Baja California includes the capital city of Mexicali as well as other well-known cities like Ensenada and Tijuana. The economy of Baja California since the 19th century has been composed of agricultural and mining businesses. It has been a "crucial geographic nexus between Mexico and the United States" (Castillo-Muñoz 2). Migration has also played an important role as workers have traveled from other parts of Mexico to the border to settle in northern Mexico and to travel to the United States for other employment opportunities. For example, in the early twentieth century, "agribusiness and mining companies in the Southwest relied on local indigenous and Mexican labor, but when the scarcity of workers threatened production, managers recruited additional laborers from central Mexico, Japan, and China" (Castillo-Muñoz 2).

In the twentieth century, scholars and historians begin to report on the rapid urbanization of Baja California and other border towns in Mexico. Ganster states that the population Mexican

border states multiplied 3.9 times between 1950 and 2020 (135-136). Mexicali, like other border cities, has participated in the many U.S. and Mexico programs that have attracted workers and populations from around the world searching for better living conditions. Among these work programs were the Bracero Program that allowed migrant workers to cross into the U.S. to plant and harvest produce. Tourists programs also attracted visitors; for example, in the 1960s, the Programa Nacional Fronterizo (PRONAF) aimed to re-establish the reputation of the border region and raise awareness of its cultural riches (Ganster 177-178). The Mexican government has sought to make the border region culturally attractive to both Mexican and prospective U.S. tourists. As early as the Prohibition era, Tijuana and Mexicali became tourist hubs for Anglos in the United States, who visited the infamous red-light districts and gambling dens at the border (Castillo- Muñoz 3). By midcentury a pattern of twin cities had emerged all along the international boundary from Tijuana-San Diego on the Pacific to Matamoros-Brownsville on the Gulf of Mexico (Ganster 145). Over time, growth shifted from a large urban center in the U.S. twin city to a larger urban center on the Mexican side of the border due to higher population growth rates along Mexico's border (Ganster 145). The history of development in the Mexicali Valley saw the building of extensive lateral canals, irrigation ditches, rows of commercial agricultural crops (especially cotton), agreements on water rights, railroad tracks for transporting goods to markets, and so forth (Luna- Peña 87). Mexicali Valley's development into the "thriving" area it is today is not the product of a benevolent American corporation but instead produced by the dispossession of Indigenous lands and the exploitation of racialized labor, in particular Chinese labor (Luna-Peña 87).

The novel takes place in the early part of the 21st century, after Mexico and the United States signed the North Atlantic Trade Agreement (NAFTA).[120] This neoliberal economic model exacerbated the already present social issues at the U.S-Mexico border. *Nepantla P.I* describes this model by focusing on the effects of neoliberal globalization in the border towns of Mexicali and Imperial Valley. Neoliberalism changed political and economic practices around the globe after the 1970, in response to the declining model of embedded liberalism established in the 1940s and 1950s.[121] David Harvey in *Brief History of Neoliberalism* emphasizes that neoliberalism is a general theory that allows for entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework that is characterized by privatization, strong private property rights, free market, and free trade (2). Neoliberal economic practices shifted away from state regulation and support of social welfare and instead focused on economic profits. Neoliberalism also served as an economic and political model that would restored the elite classes, primarily in First World states.[122] Neoliberalism became linked to the globalization of capitalist economies, where the free market and world institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund established a competitive global economy. Transnational corporations prospered and international trade agreements like NAFTA created new forms of labor, production, and global capital. Globalization is a process that creates a single and undifferentiated field for world capitalists whose economic practices integrate various polities, cultures, and institutions of

[120] This new economic model transformed the U.S.-Mexico border by promoting a free market, privatization, public services cuts, and government deregulation. Neoliberal globalization created a First World-Third World dynamic that fueled Mexico's uneven development and its interdependence with the U.S.
[121] David Harvey in *Brief History of Neoliberalism* defines embedded liberalism as the political-economic organization that gave states the authority to intervene in industrial policy and set standards for social wage by constructing a variety of welfare systems (healthcare, education, etc) (10-11).
[122] Other states that also saw a small number of individuals rise as the wealthiest were Chile, Mexico, and Argentina. *Fortunes List* magazine included the names of the rising elite class in Mexico (Harvey 17).

national societies into emergent transnational or global society (Robinson 13); often times, these world capitalists work through transnational corporations seeking cheap, immigrant labor and lower costs of production in developing countries.

By end of the twentieth century, the border region became a precarious space filled with headlines about the establishment of NAFTA, the increase in femicides, and the violence carried out by Ciudad Juarez and Sinaloa drug cartels (Wright 720). Activists, political institutions, and scholars participated in protests and the denunciation of this violence. An investigation of the social spaces and processes tied to Emilio's case reveals that the embedded economies of the U.S. and Mexico have affected different populations residing in the U.S.-Mexico border. More particularly, the rapid urbanization and passing of the Border Industrialization Program that began in the 1960s facilitated foreign investment and the "foreign export-processing factories (maquiladoras) and global free-trade regimes" that increased the migration of women towards the border (Gaspar de Alba and Georgina Guzman 7). Narco-gangs among other mafias took advantage of the high rate of employed women in maquilas to create their own business commodifying women as sex workers. These economic changes are undoubtedly linked the femicides of "over five hundred women and girls brutally murdered on El Paso-Juarez border, and the thousands that have been reported missing and remain unaccounted for" (Gaspar de Alba and Georgina Guzman 1). Gaspar de Alba notes the stereotypes of calling these victims "maqui-locas" for women living *la vida loca*, a euphemism for prostitution (3). The logic of free trade and deregulation behind NAFTA impacted different border cities like Ciudad Juarez. Wright notes, "In 1994, one year after the news broke that women and girls were being hunted down in Ciudad Juarez, a group of women formed a new group called La Coordinadora de Organizaciones No Gubernamentales en Pro de la Mujer (the coalition of nongovernmental

organizations for women, hereafter 'the coalition'" (Wright 711). Mexicali, like other border towns, experienced a form of uneven development when First World countries established sweatshops that exploited cheap labor and transformed the Mexican border towns into economic spaces of poverty, as growing numbers of women migrated from the interior of Mexico by wishful narratives of economic prosperity. Kathleen Staudt notes, "violence against women is a global problem, and the scale and scope of global illegal trade and production contributed to the scourge as do urban size and growth, migration, inequalities, and anonymity in big-city life. As a high growth industrial region, northern Mexico became a magnet for people seeking a more prosperous life in a place of flaring contrasts between rich and poor in Juarez and El Paso" (13-14).

Section 2: Production of Crime in Nepantla P.I

Nepantla P.I interweaves the criminal activities of corporate, police, and government agencies in the border space. The novel explores the production of crime as a relationship between the state's macro- socio-economic and political policies and the social spaces it produces. Henry Lefebvre famously coined this reciprocal relationship, stating "(social) space is a (social) product" (30).[123] Lefebvre's complex analytical structure of the production of space specifies different levels and modes of space, given his analysis of the *relations of production* in terms of the divisions of labour and its organization in the form of hierarchal social functions (32). This Marxist underpinning brings to light how social spaces are influenced by socio-economic political policies and vice-versa. I use the term production of crime as a means to show

[123] Lefebvre explains that there are three interrelated levels in which (social) space is a (social) product in the following: "(1) biological reproduction (the family); (2) the reproduction of labour power (the working class per se) and (3) the reproduction of the social relations of production – that is, of those relations which are constitutive of capitalism and which are increasing (and increasingly effectively) sought and imposed as such" (32).

how this process involves criminal behavior by the state and corporate tycoons who are at the top of the hierarchy social function within these processes. The production of criminal space exposed in *Nepantla P.I* depends on a similar interrelated level in which the state, local police, and new social spaces contribute to the commodification of sexualities, illegal substances, and the exploitation of cheap labor. The novel describes the Behemot City, a monster similar to PIT II's Mexico City, that preys on the oppressed and marginalized urban populations.

The policeman Perales pins Emilio's case as a gay crime to hide his own criminal activities in transnational prostitution rings at the border. The novel focuses on how competitions and alliances between globalized prostitution rings form part of the production of crime at the border. Nepantla summarizes how the Russian mafia and the Mexican narcos have been business partners for the past two years. He explains,

> Al principio no habían tenido broncas con los narcos mexicanos porque habían hecho un pacto de colaboración. Los narcos mexicanos podían usar rutas para el trasiego de droga en Europa que pertenecían a los rusos y estos podían traer morras para cruzarlas al Otro lado. (195)[124]

The business partnership between the Russian mafia and the Mexican narcos relied on a peaceful use of transportation access for each of their product. The Russian mafia allowed the Mexican narcos to transport drugs around Europe, while the Mexican narcos allowed the Russians access to the border for them to cross prostitutes over to the U.S. This business partnership shows us how mafias collaborate by sharing spaces for their commerce. They take ownership of a city by controlling its roadways and access to its social spaces. The novel thus demonstrates that neoliberal globalization not only allows for the transfer of manufacturing enterprises across borders but also enables transnational

[124] My translation: At first, they didn't have fights with the Mexican drug traffickers because they had made a collaboration pact. The Mexican narcos could use routes for the transfer of drugs in Europe that belonged to the Russians and they could bring chicks to cross them to the Other Side.

of drugs and women trafficking. The novel emphasizes this transnational link, "el Otro lado" to reveal the center-peripheral and First World-Third World relations that economic theorists use to describe international economies and markets. The Russian and Mexican narcos participate in this transnational activity through their illegal commerce that thrives in the border region where unofficial economies and black markets are operational via the loose regulations stipulated by neoliberal economic policies.

The Russian mafia and Mexican narco businesses explored in the novel are also linked to socio-economic and political policies and institutions. Neoliberal globalization policies and their emphasis on free trade and privatization have been loosely applied at the U.S. border, allowing unofficial economies and black markets like those of the Russian mafia and drug cartels to thrive in this geopolitical space. With the passing of NAFTA in the early 2000s, uneven economic relations in the U.S.-Mexico Border transforming the Mexican side of the border into the U.S.'s backyard or dumping ground. The regulation of product, in the novel, is broadly defined and includes not only material products but women's bodies as well. Women are regulated as a commodity that also needs to be transported across the border. Nepantla informs us that the Russian mafia's expansion of their prostitution rings in Mexico led to a change in their business relations with the Mexican narcos; he states, "Pero hace unos meses los rusos empezaron a expandirse mas dentro de Mexico porque se ganaron el favor del nuevo mandamas de la Institución Nacional de Migración. Ya no había necesidad de usar a los narcos mexicanos y esto tarde o temprano causaría conflictos" (195).[125] The Russian mafia now saw an opportunity to cut the middle man, the Mexican narcos, and made a deal with the

[125] My translation: But a few months the Russians began to expand more inside Mexico because they won the favor of the new

Mexican National Migration Institution to be able to transport women into Mexico City. The novel exposes how government institutions are corrupt and susceptible to criminal activities. Furthermore, the novel points to government officials and politicians who are rewarded by these mafias with the commercial availability of women's bodies. As the narrator informs us, "Viridiana misma le comento que entre los clientes mas asiduos se encuentran distinguidos políticos" (Ruiz 62).[126] Viridiana, who is one of the strip dancers, tells Nepantla about the girls who are forced into prostitution and strip dancing. She shocks Nepantla when she explains that distinguished politicians are among the most relentless clientele.

Perales and Davila, the Mexicali police officers, incorporate themselves into the business of trafficking. Perales uses the murder of Emilio to stage the crime at La Coartada bar to incriminate Cabeza de Vaca, a Mexican narco. Nepantla explains, "aquí si entra Perales porque según el Sorullo, este bato es socio del Topolobampo y pues al eliminar a Cabeza de Vaca se quedan con La Libelula VIP los dos" (195).[127] Nightclubs serve as part of the distribution centers for the trafficking of women and drugs. By controlling these places, Mexican narcos and other criminals can also control the city. Perales seeks power by controlling the bar and joining the black-market figures in the control of various social spaces in the city. The novel describes *the complicated relations of production,* that includes the product (women and drugs), the distribution centers (nightclubs in the city), and the businessowners (mafia) and consumers (urban dwellers and politicians). Dávila, another police officer, joins the trafficking enterprise as

[126] My translation: Viridiana herself told him that among the most frequent clients are distinguished politicians.
[127] My translation: Here is where we find because according to Sorullo, this guy is an associate of the Topolobampo and then when they eliminate Cabeza de Vaca they stay with La Libelula VIP both.

a means to gain revenge on Perales. The trafficking of women enables the police to control the city and gain access to more power in the city.

Nepantla's primary investigation of Emilio's death leads him to study Mexicali's police unit and its procedures. He finds that the police criminalize gay men, whose sexual activities are included in the production of crime that hinges on the commodification of sexualities at the border. Perales, the lead police investigator, is presented as a homophobic, machista police officer. At the beginning of the novel, Nepantla discusses Emilio's case with Perales. Perales explains to him that Emilio had been at La Coartada, "[un] pinchi bar para maripositas como tu. [Emilio] Tenia un bat metido en el culo, estaba vestido de ruca, feo el hijo de la chingada, fuimos al bar y preguntamos al barman, o bar gay en este caso, y pues solto la sopa. Dijo que ese guey salió con un regular del bar" (17).[128] Perales details Emilio's case through a derogatory and homophobic lens. He describes La Coartada Bar as a locale for sissies like Emilio and Nepantla. The novel notes that gay and queer spaces are also part of Mexicali's urban underworld. Lionel Cantu's queer materialist paradigm stresses "the examination of the complex social conditions (divisions of labor, productions, distribution, consumption, class) through which sexual preference/orientation, hierarchy, domination and protest develop dialectically at a particular time and place" (28).[129] The complex social condition produced under neoliberalism enable

[128] My translation: a frickin' bar for sissies like you. Emilio had a bat stuck in his rearend; he was dressed like a female, ugly the motherfucker; we went to the bar to ask the bartender, or gay bar in this case, and by himself he spilled everything. H said that that guy left with one of the bar's regulars.

[129] Cantú's framework is useful in considering queer materialism because his methodology considers the interplay of space, culture, identity, and social conditions. More importantly, his use of the term queer refers to sexualized minorities as an attempt to acknowledge that gay and queer have a variation of meanings and translations between Spanish and English. He also recognizes that Queer Theory and Latino gay scholarship include wider debates that can limit our understanding of gender and sexualized identities. He states, "This literature [scholarly debate] exemplifies how a focus on "culture" limits our understanding of Latino masculinities and sexualities through a discourse of two cultures—the normative and the 'exotic'" (76). Cantú agrees with Maxine Baca Zinn's "Chicano Men and Masculinity" (1991) that argues for understanding Latino masculine roles and identities by examining "sociostructural factors that shape these identities rather than "cultural" differences between Latinos and non-Latinos" (81). I consider Cantu's approach to the extent that it helps us understand the character dynamics and

commercial sites to advertise and commodify sexualities under conceptualizations of hegemonic masculinities. The character Perales showcases the heteronormative, hegemonic masculinities in Mexicali's underworld that uphold capitalist, patriarchal systems of oppression. In labeling Emilio's case as "el culo floreado," Perales and the police make clear the machista harassment of queer and gay men by both the local police and the urbanites in the city (40). He claims to be "openminded" or accepting of different sexualities, but he contradicts himself by stating that queer and gay men should not do their thing openly, "[que] hagan su desmadre escondidos cabrón y que no hagan desfiles o abran sus bares en pleno corazón de la ciudad" (18).[130] Perales, like some men in the novel, projects the hegemonic gender norms in Mexicali's urban spaces that criminalize queer and gay men, groups that are already marginalized for their sexuality.

The novel also reveals that the police tactics not only rely on criminalizing and faking murder cases, they use commodified women as bribes to "buy off" individuals. Nepantla's initial investigations of the Emilio's case lead Perales to call his right-hand man, Dávila, to ensure that Nepantla does not meddle in the case. Dávila invites Nepantla to go to La Libélula VIP while giving him a ride home. Dávila is willing to follow Perales' orders, whatever they may be, knowing that "¡O te alineas o te chingas! Aquí no vengas con discursos de ética porque te carga la chingada" (32).[131] Perales taught Davila that ethics don't matter in the police force, instead their principles follow a neoliberal logic that ensures profits for themselves or for the narco-gangs. At La Libélula VIP, Dávila entices Nepantla with an international selection of strip dancers to encourage him to drop Emilio's case. He has Nepantla survey the women stating, "—

production of queer spaces in *Nepantla PI*, especially considering that the novel explores prostitution rings and the dominant heteronormative values in these spaces.

[130] My translation: make your madness hidden you bastard and do not do parades or open your bars in the heart of the city.

[131] My translation: Either you line up or you're fucked! Don't come here with ethical speeches because it will mess you up.

Pues esta igual, cual de todas? Hasta brasileñas témenos, la pura globalización, si usted ya sabe. Pero de todas formas no llegan las extranjeras" (55).[132] Dávila intends to bribe Nepantla into participating in the exploitation of women. He proudly exhibits an international array of table dancers in the club, and his capacity to offer them as exotic, international products. Dávila then calls Viridiana, his favorite strip dancer, upon noticing Nepantla's uncertain attitude about picking a woman for his dance. Once Viridiana comes over, Dávila orders Nepantla, "—Orale Nepantla, tócala para eso la traje, para que te olvides del caso y conozcas a mi amiguita. Si no soy celoso no te preocupes" (56).[133] Dávila presents Viridiana as a product he is willing to share. He wants to distract Nepantla away from Emilio's case, but the detective hesitates to follow Dávila's wishes.

Sexual trafficking is only one aspect of crimes unsolved at the border. *Nepantla P.I.* also explores the exploitation of cheap labor across the border. Nepantla's investigations lead him to learn about Emilio's interest in unionizing workers. This aspect of the detective novel opens up the case and offers new leads to crimes that happen along the border. In this case, it is the interest of "official" transnational corporations who wish to continue their exploitation of wage-labor that will determine the murder of Emilio. Before his death, Emilio had become interested in workers' rights. His friend, Daniel, recalls, "Desde que regreso de la Universidad se dedico a la organización laboral en lugares donde el sentía que había abusos. Trabajo en el campo por dos o tres años y después llego a la WholeMart" (102).[134] During his employment at WholeMart, he tried to unionize both American and Mexican workers by setting up an appointment with the

[132] My translation: Well, it's the same, which of all? Even Brazilians are afraid of pure globalization, if you already know. But the foreigners don't come anyway

[133] My translation: Hey, Nepantla, go ahead and touch her for that's why I brought her, so that you can forget about the case and meet my little friend. I'm not jealous, don't worry.

[134] My translation: Since returning from the University, he dedicated himself to organizing labor in places where he felt there were abuses. I work in the field for two or three years and then he began at the WholeMart.

United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) representative. The night that Emilio goes missing, Nepantla finds out that he had tried to meet with the UFCW representative to set up a recruiting meeting with WholeMart employees. However, Nepantla learns of the beating of the union representative, noting that "la golpiza al sindicalista americano había sido fraguada desde los Estados Unidos y llevada a cabo, utilizando la subcontratación típica de empresas transnacionales, por jóvenes pandilleros del Valle Imperial" (191).[135] The WholeMart company pays a gang from Imperial Valley to beat up the UFCW representative. We see again the full power that transnational corporations have across the border: they hire cheap labor to do their dirty work.

The prostitution ring rivalry between the Russian mafia and the Mexican narcos explains 34-B's findings about how Emilio died. It was the motel manager that confused the prostitution rings. Two clients at the hotel requested different prostitutes: one Mexican and the other Russian. Nepantla's friend 34-B explains the confusion, "Lo que ocurrió es que otro cliente del hotel si había pedido una rusa y el morro de la administración se equivocó al darle el número del cuarto. Al otro cliente le llevaron el producto nacional, a esa la había traído un ruso unos minutos antes" (202).[136] Nepantla responds by commenting on "el otro cliente que le dejaron el pito parado," while 34-B exclaims, "¡Aliviánate Pantla! Lo mas cabrón es que estamos por confirmar la existencia de esclavitud sexual aquí en la ciudad. ¡Puta globalización! ¿Nomás para eso sirve? ¿Para que ustedes puedan tener mas variedad de seguir tratando a la mujer como pinchi

[135] My translation: the beating of the American trade unionist had been forged from the United States and carried out, using the typical subcontracting of transnational companies, by young gang members from the Imperial Valley
[136] My translation: What happened is that another hotel customer had asked for a Russian one and the administration's nose was wrong when giving him the room number. The other client was brought the national product, that one a Russian had brought a few minutes before.

mercancía?" (202).[137] Nepantla attempts to joke about the man left without a prostitute, but 34-B instead points out that the global economy permits the use of women as merchandise. She provides a feminist perspective that reminds the reader about the severity of the exploitation of the prostitution rings and the socio-economic conditions at the U.S-Mexico border.

In order to check-out Viridiana's information, Nepantla calls KGB massages and asks for the prostitute Margot. At the hotel, Nepantla is surprised to see that Consuelo, who hired him to investigate Emilio's death, is works for the Russian mafia. He explains his reaction when he sees Consuelo enter the room: "La neta que no podía hablar, me quede helado cuando vi a Consuelo en la puerta, no solo porque yo esperaba encontrarme con la morrita que me sacaría de muchas dudas, sino también porque traía puestos unos shorts cortitos, zapatillas de tacón alto y una blusa escotada que empujaba las chichis hacia un bebe ausente" (210).[138] Consuelo enters the room hyper-sexualized with mini-shorts and her breasts almost exposed. The novel's plot twist unveils how Emilio is killed for attempting to expose the prostitution rings that Consuelo is a victim of. Consuelo is drugged and forced to forget about the incident in order to keep her ignorant and submissive to the prostitution ring. Still, Consuelo claims to remember the man Rashkovsky; she recalls him taking her to the hotel and later finding her arguing with Emilio when she did not go downstairs to give Rashkovsky the money (212). Nepantla pieces together what happened in the hotel room the night Emilio got killed. Rashkovsky shot Emilio after seeing him arguing with Consuelo and disposed of the body with Dávila. This gave Dávila the opportunity to inform Perales about Emilio's body, so that Perales could construct the case for "el culo floreado."

[137] My translation: Relieve yourself Pantla! The bastard thing is that we are about to confirm the existence of sexual slavery here in the city. Whore globalization! Is that just what it is for? So that you can have more variety to continue treating women as a little merchandise?

[138] My translation: The net that could not speak, I froze when I saw Consuelo at the door, not only because I expected to find the little girl that would get me out of many doubts, but also because she was wearing short shorts, high-heeled sneakers and a blouse. low-cut that pushed the chichis towards an absent baby.

Emilio's death represents the production of crime and the violence that ensues around Mexicali. It shows us how the police, narcos, and mafia invade different spaces around the city. In addition to giving Perales Emilio's body, Dávila ensures to make Perales a target for the Russian mafia. Before calling Perales to retrieve Emilio's body, Dávila accompanies Raskkovsky to dispose of Emilio's body. As Dávila drives towards the wastelands of the border, the narrator explains, "justo antes de internarse en uno de los tantos terrenos baldíos donde acostumbraban a abandonar este tipo de 'inconvenientes', que se percato de la oportunidad que representaba: tener un cadáver en la cajuela y un ruso detrás de el" (208).[139] Dávila realized that he had the opportunity to scheme a plan that would allow him to enact revenge on Perales. He kills Rashkovsky "[y] cercioró de trazar con su navaja un T en el pecho del ruso" (208).[140] Dávila follows the narco's tactics to send "a message" to their enemies by marking the bodies of their enemies. In this instance, Dávila makes Perales a target for the Russian mafia. The novel demonstrates how the production of crime leads to different forms of violence between the mafias and narcos trying to rule the city. Mexicali is characterized as a border town filled with desert wastelands that are the dumping grounds for the mafias and narcos.

Nepantla P.I has a similar ending to *Nadie Sabe Mas que los Muertos* and *No Habra Final Feliz*: the detective is unable to stop the production of crime in his city. Instead, the detective solves the case and saves one of the victims, Consuelo. The novel reminds us that a detective cannot enact a one-man revolution against the socio-economic and political system exacerbates the corruption and crime present in the city. Instead, Nepantla is successful at freeing Consuelo from Dávila and the Russian prostitution ring. Consuelo confesses to Nepantla that a

[139] My translation: On the way to the airport, he looked for some music in the car. It was at that moment, just before entering one of the many vacant lots where they were used to abandoning these types of 'inconveniences' (or bodies), that he realized the opportunity it represented: having a corpse in the trunk and a Russian behind him.
[140] My translation: and he made sure to mark a T across the Russian's chest.

"judicial" named Javier (or known to us and Nepantla as Dávila) told her she had two options: "la cárcel o sigo trabajando para él" (212). Dávila intimidates Consuelo into continuing her work as a prostitute. Instead of protecting her and being an honest policeman, he manipulates the situation to make a profit. Nepantla saves Consuelo by threatening to expose Dávila to the Russian mafia, stating, "A tus socios no les va a gustar saber esa información. Ya ves como son de impulsivos" (216).[141] Davila reluctantly agrees to let Consuelo go as long as Nepantla does not expose him. The novel shows us how the mafias and narcos have power over the city; their law and form of justice –mainly death—rules the city. Dávila fearing the mafia allows Consuelo to leave the prostitution ring. As Nepantla and Consuelo leave the hotel, he grabs a newspaper to cover Consuelo when he is able to read the title the article: "Acribillan al Comandante de la PGJE" (217). Nepantla states, "En ese momento comprendí que seria la ultima vez que sabría algo de Perales" (217). The deal that Nepantla makes with Dávila turns out to benefit the latter. The Russians kill Perales in revenge for the murder of Rashkovsky. Now, Dávila can continue managing the Russian ring, and, if he wants, ally himself with the Mexican narcos. The novel shows us how the production of crime continues regardless of the detective's case.

The story ends with Nepantla saving Consuelo and nothing more. This detective story focuses more on the social conditions to be found in the border of Mexicali by introducing the people that are most affected by neoliberal globalization and the social conditions it produces. We meet an amateur detective who proves to be effective with the help of 34-B and others who are quicker than he to draw connections among different pieces of information. As a *post-policiaco* novel, Ruiz's novel shows us how resistance to corruption can be found through the awareness of those most affected by it. This average migrant worker turned detective succeeds in

[141] My translation: Your partners are not going to like to know that information. You see how impulsive they are.

freeing Consuelo and revealing how her brother died. Ruiz's characters demonstrate that there are few individuals like Pecas, Jaime Concha, 34-B, and others who in collaboration can be leveraged to expose the corruption that is now chronic in the region.

Section 3: A Simple Fronterizo Detective

The murder of Emilio leads Nepantla to investigations the reveal violent crimes by the mafias, in conjunction with particular official socio-economic policies, and governmental institutions. The detective is a native from the U.S.-Mexico border with a green card, who works in the fields of Calexico. He is an everyday guy who lives with his mother, drinks with his buddies, and uses local "multipurpose" cafes as his detective office. Unlike other detectives, Nepantla is seen as a queer detective or at least one lacking evident masculinity and the numerous girlfriends that typically surround detectives. When he investigates, at times, he appears distracted and aloof to the clues or information being presented to him. 34-B, his female co-detective, constantly corrects him and gets him back on track. His knowledge of the border spaces allows him to reach out to others who can provide more information on the case. As a *fronterizo* detective he knows how to decipher and navigate border spaces to solve criminal cases. This *post-policiaco* novel includes a network of investigations rather than a single heroic sleuth, thus re-imagining the detective formula and genre. The novel features a group of informants and investigators that assist Nepantla: Emilio as a detective of workers' rights, 34B (the female detective), Sorullo (the journalist), Pocho Cop (American border police), among others. These collaborators are not officially linked, as in a procedural, where a police division works together to solve crimes. Nor is the novel like the *neopoliciaco* where the detectives like Belascoáran and Heredia are vigilantes who pursue criminals on their own. Nepantla's detective

network enables him to gain a sense of the larger socio-economic and political issues that facilitate the criminal activities he is investigating.[142] His network of different types of informants that form part of different social spaces along the U.S.-Mexico border will provide multiple clues that enable him to piece together different aspects of the production of the crime presented in the novel.

This *post-policiaco* novel presents a *fronterizo* detective whose name, Nepantla, indicates the detective's spatial meanders. Chicana scholars like Gloria Anzaldua and Pat Mora have used the meaning of the term nepantla to describe a sense of identity as being in a state of in-between-ness.[143] "Nepantla," as explained in Chicana/o and Latina/o studies, refers back to the usage of the Nahuatl word, which according to Pat Mora, means "place in the middle" (Mora 5). In the novel, Nepantla, the *fronterizo* detective, crosses the border often but identifies more as Mexican. He is constantly in spaces that denote an identity and cultural experience between the U.S. and Mexico. The term "nepantla" describes the borderspace and the historical material experience of being a Mexicali detective in this border space. The *post-poliaco* novel by tracing the movement of the detective across the U.S.-Mexico border, portrays the lifestyle of *fronterizo* residents who cross the border continually. This detectives' personal lifestyle is also unique. One of the first things we learn is that Nepantla likes to drink with his friends out on the street and still lives with his mother. He is not like other detectives who have their own offices or apartments, like Belascoáran or Heredia. Instead, as a divorced man, lives with his mom who constantly reprimands him, stating, "A ver si ya te vas largando a un departamento Brígido

[142] This contrasts with the following chapter where I explore how Hinojosa uses the police procedural to explore how investigative police units can decipher crime and solve cases.
[143] Gloria Anzaldua describes nepantla, stating "En este lugar entre medio, nepantla, two or more forces clash and are held teetering on the verge of chaos, a state of entreguerras. These tensions between extremes create cracks or tears in the membrane surrounding, protecting, and containing the different cultures and their perspectives Nepantla is the place where at once we are detached (separated) and attached (connected) to each of our several cultures" (56).

porque yo no soy criada de tus amigotes que nomas vienen a mear y a dejar sus pinchis cervezas por todas partes" (46).[144] In a way, he is characterized as an immature sleuth who likes to party and hang out with his friends. He is an ordinary guy from the neighborhood who becomes an amateur detective.

In addition to doing detective work, Nepantla is also a green card holder and a migrant worker. His work in the fields of Imperial Valley supplements his income since urban PIs have important jobs but with little to no pay. Nepantla's work in the fields connects him to a larger reality where people negatively affected by neoliberal globalization are striving to survive. As he leaves home to get to Imperial Valley, he observes the transnational city of Mexicali filled with "los paisas que vienen a brincar el cerco, las chinolas y otras especies que vienen a pasar la mota por encima por debajo del cerco; las transnacionales que quieren estar cerca del Otro Lado para ahorrarse en el transporte; los muertos que llaman "daños colaterales", entre muchas otras cosas mas" (35-36).[145] Mexicali is a landscape filled with the movement of border crossers, chinolas (or Sinaloenses) trafficking drugs, transnational sweatshops trying to save on transportation, and the dead that are killed in the region. Spatial theorists understand this movement as influenced by multilayered processes. Transnational corporations choose the border region as a space with available cheap labor and the possibility of increase surplus value. Nepantla crosses the border as a green card holder, whose binational status can be traced to the Simpsons-Rodino bill; he is a "descendiente de Simpson-Rodino, de esa amnistía que se aprobó en los ochenta para legalizar indocumentados" (37).[146] Nepantla became a legal U.S. resident as a migrant worker in

[144] My translation: Let's see if you're going to an apartment Brígido because I'm not the maid of your friends who just come to piss and leave their fucking beers everywhere.
[145] My translation: the *paisas* that come to jump the hedge, the *chinolas* and other species that come to pass the speck over and under the hedge; the transnational companies that want to be close to the Other Side to save on transportation; the dead that they call "collateral damage", among many other things.
[146] My translation: descendant of Simpson-Rodino, from that amnesty that was approved in the eighties to legalize undocumented.

American fields. Nepantla is a *fronterizo* detective sympathetic to the plights of undocumented border crossers and residents of border towns. He is cognizant of the particular spatiality of the U.S.-Mexico border that marginalizes people like himself.

Once Nepantla decides to investigate Emilio's death, readers become more aware of several contradictions: his aloofness, sexual preoccupations, and his lack of detective presence; yet, he maintains the "street smarts" to navigate the U.S.-Mexico border. Often times, Nepantla is aloof and absent-minded when interviewing informants or receiving information. In one conversation with Consuelo, he gets distracted when he remembers the agent Angelina Wild and almost gets an erection; Consuelo has to ask Nepantla if he was paying attention (42). In this same conversation, he also admits to find out anything about Emilio's death at La Coartada; he admits, "En realidad no pude averiguar nada, En cuanto le hice una pregunta al cantinero mando llamar a los guaruras y me sacaron del bar" (41). Unlike other detectives, Nepantla is not a fighter and is easily beaten up at the bar and unable to interrogate the bartender to learn more about Emilio's death. When he interrogates Perales and other informants, Nepantla also holds no masculine-detective credibility; Perales and the police view him as a "putito," or queer for lacking a strong masculine appearance (17).[147] Unlike other detectives, Nepantla's insecurities with women prevent him from acting out the dominant masculine, heteronormative values in Mexicali's underworld. Cantú considers the activo/passive theory of sexual orientation that elucidates how Nepantla's masculitnity is perceived by other masculine characters. Cantú states, "according to this [activo/passivo] framework, as long as Latino men maintain an activo (active) or dominant sexual script, their masculinity, as culturally defined, remains intact. The passive role is defined as feminine and is thus denigrated" (79). Nepantla's passive masculine attitude

[147] Perales greet Nepantla asking him "Ya se te quito lo putito?" (17). My translation: is your gayness gone?

toward Viridiana and other women illustrates why Nepantla is perceived as queer. Nepantla's unique detective characteristics subvert some of the typical detective characterizations that the author Ruiz challenge in his *post-policiaco*. This also allows Ruiz to bring in other characters that assist Nepantla in his detective endeavors.

Nepanlta's capacity to navigate the border space, collaborate with 34-B, and leverage his network of informants fit in nicely with the *post-policiaco* genre. As a native working-class detective from Mexicali, he connects well with the locals. For example, we see Nepantla be more successful interrogating the taxi driver outside Hotel del Norte rather than the hotel's staff. The Hotel del Norte staff quickly observes Nepantla's phony detective look and refuse to give him any information. However, the taxi driver is more willing to serve as a crime witness, reporting how the UWFC representative Emilio was to meet was kidnapped. Nepantla also informs us that being a *fronterizo* detective in Mexicali is difficult. Early in the novel, he explains, "Entre las ventajas que tiene un Private Eye como yo es que si ya de plano no das con el asesino puedes inventar una conexión con el narcotráfico y echarle la bronca a uno de los chacas que se dice pelean la Plaza, aunque aquí la Plaza esta bien repartida" (7).[148] The narco violence that marks the border makes it difficult to solve cases and find the criminals behind them. Similar to *la novela neopolicia*, in the *post-policiaco* novel, the criminal in the urban city is the larger hegemonic system instead of one culprit. Nepantla's dark humor also resonates with the *post-policiao* literary motifs. He sarcastically says that if he can't solve the case he can just blame any Mexican narco, since they are largely feared and rarely convicted. He also explains that although Mexicali may have rapidly urbanized, its uneven development results in phony skyscrapers. He

[148] My translation: Among the advantages that a Private Eye like me has is that if you already do not find the murderer you can invent a connection with drug trafficking and blame one of the chacas who are said to fight the Plaza, although here the Plaza is fine distributed.

states, "otra desventaja es que el edificio mas alto en la ciudad tendrá como siete pisos. No llegamos a rascacielos, si acaso a rascahuevos y aunque parezca una tontería, no lo es" (7).[149] The highest building in the city is seven stories tall, which amounts to nothing. As a *fronterizo* detective, Nepantla's investigations reveal the particular circumstances of Mexicali as part of the geopolitical space of the U.S.-Mexico border.

Section 4: Nepantla's Spaces of Investigations

Nepantla is a detective capable of navigating the U.S.-Mexico border, its culture, and spaces. Through the detective's investigations, *Nepantla P.I* maps the socio-economic conditions that pervade the Mexicali area and the Imperial Valley and provides a survey of the population. We see Nepantla's everyday life as a border resident meeting with different people that provide information relating to Emilio's case. First, he meets with Consuelo to gather more information on Emilio, but he cannot engage fully with the investigator as he has to go work in the fields of Imperial Valley. The novel reminds us that urban PIs have important jobs with little to no pay. Nepantla's work in the fields connects him to the social spaces where people affected by neoliberal globalization are striving to survive despite low wages. Nepantla's investigations and informants disclose various clues that point him in the direction of "businesses" exploiting and trafficking people and substances. Like Belascoarán, Nepantla proves incapable of eliminating the production of crime that controls the city. His reflections also reveal his resentment with how the production of crime alongside socio-economic and political conditions has created a (post) modern landscape in Mexicali. The novel takes readers through the uneven urbanization that has fashioned the city with a variety of building styles, including, old maquiladora buildings.

[149] My translation: Another disadvantage is that the tallest building in the city has about seven stories. We don't even get to skyscrapers, if anything they are egg-scrapers, even if it seems stupid, which is not.

Amidst urban areas dominated by an underworld are rural areas with dispersed settlements. Nepantla roams through the various areas as he searches for information on Emilio's case. The informants he meets in these various social spaces expose the interweaving layers of crime occurring in the city. The majority of these crimes occur in the night clubs and bars, sexualized sites and queer spaces in Mexicali's urban underworld. Sex trafficking and prostitution are the prominent crimes against women although new, especially young men, are also trafficked. Lionel Cantu et al's queer materialist paradigm stresses "the examination of the complex social conditions (divisions of labor, productions, distribution, consumption, class) through which sexual preference/orientation, hierarchy, domination and protest develop dialectically at a particular time and place" (28). Neoliberal globalization processes advertise and commodify not only maquila products but also sexualities under conceptualizations of hegemonic masculinities. These spaces of investigation and his network of informants allow Nepantla to piece together and solve Emilio's murder. The novel suggests that it's possible to solve crimes, even under different conditions, but finding justice remains almost impossible under a system of corruption.

The nightclubs and bars that Nepantla visits are sites for sexual trafficking that attract customers from both sides of the border. Nepantla's learns that Emilio's death is said to be linked to his visits to La Coartada, a gay bar in Mexicali. Perales describes La Coartada Bar as a space for gays and sissies like Emilio and Nepantla. Perales and the police label Emilio's case "el culo floreado," pointing to the machista harassment and sodomizing of queer and gay men by both the local police and the urbanites in the city, where heteronormative, masculine conceptualizations of identity and sexualities rule (40). Furthermore, La Coartada, as many other nightclubs, represents spaces of contestation between the Russian mafia and the Mexican narcos in the novel. There are, however, other divisions in Mexicali's underworld. Nepantla finds that

Perales uses Emilio's death as a way to create trouble for the Mexican narco Cabeza de Vaca who controls La Coartada Bar. Emilio's death at La Coartada makes Cabeza de Vaca a suspect and liable to lose La Coaratada bar. The bars and nightclubs prove to be centers where the production of crime proliferates in Mexicali. Sexualized bodies and illegal substances are sold for the Mexican narco's and mafia's profit. Instead of combating this illegal activity, the police reproduces these sales, hoping to gain power in the city. The police, like Perales, allows pejorative crimes that reinforce the criminalization of queer and gay men, groups that are already marginalized for their sexuality and gender.

La Libélula VIP, a stripclub in Mexicali, proves to be another space of organized crime and corruption. Perales and Davila appear to have more power and control of the operations of the stripclub since they are able to command the girls that work there. Perales commands Davila to take Nepantla to this strip club to bring him against meddling in Emilio's case. At the club, Davila presents the girls like a continental buffet that Nepantla can have. He states, "—Pues esta igual, cual de todas? Hasta brasileñas témenos, la pura globalización, si usted ya sabe. Pero de todas formas no llegan las extranjeras" (55).[150] Dávila wishes to bribe Nepantla into participating in the exploitation of women. He proudly exhibits the global array of table dancers at the club, and his ability to offer them as exotic, international products. Nepantla will return a few times to La Libélula VIP to interrogate Viridiana who explains the organized crime business that occurs at the club. As one of Dávila's favorites, Viridiana know well, his involvement with the trafficking of women. She states, "…enculado ahorita. Así andaba también cuando en el otro *bisnes* llegaron las rusas, pero pues allá el sabe que no se mezcla placer con negocios" (53).[151]

[150] My translation: Well, it's the same, which of all? Even Brazilians are afraid of pure globalization, if you already know. But the foreigners don't come anyway.
[151] My translation: he's infatuated right now. This is how he was also when the Russians arrived in the other business, but there he knows that pleasure and business are not mixed.

Dávila operates the business and enjoys selling women as commodities but hesitates to mix business with pleasure. The stripbar is a social space that appeals not only to the regular consumers or urbanites but to the police as well. Later in the novel, once Nepantla partners with 34-B, the latter again interrogates Viridiana and learns how the different prostitution rings function.

What passes as a strip club is a cover for transnational prostitution rings in Mexicali. Viridiana reveals that the two competing prostitution rings involve Mexicali narco-gangs and the Russian mafia. The narco men in Mexicali manage the women being trafficked from South America and Central America. They keep them in a mansion in Villafontana, east bound of Mexicali's metropolitan center. The house appears to be a secret brothel on the outskirts of Mexicali. The peripheral location, far from the city, allows rich corporate men and politicians the opportunity to visit the place in secret, avoiding the crowds to participate in these illegal activities. Some of the girls at Villafontana are also forced to work at La Libélua VIP on certain occasions. The owner of La Coartada and La Libélula VIP, Cabeza de Vaca, is able to advertise the Latin American prostitution ring that crosses several borders in these clubs. Later in the novel, during 34-B's interrogation with Viridiana, we learn more about the prostitution rings. Nepantla observes that 34-B gets Viridiana drunk: "Viridiana ya estaba bien peda y 34-B como si nada" (200). When his partner returns with Viridiana, Nepantla learns more about the competition: "lo que si es novedad es que esos masajes son competencia directa de los de Perales y su socio narco" (201). Women from Central America, South America, and Russia are being illegally transported to the U.S.-Mexico border space where they are sexualized and commodified, providing sexual services for those who frequent the nightclubs. The novel provides an exposé of how neoliberal globalization permits illegal transnational businesses that

allow narcos, the mafia, and corrupt policeman power over the city. The novel reminds us of the uneven development of the border region, stating,

> Nepantla subió al taxi y pronto se vio recorriendo el paisaje del llamado centro de la ciudad. Edificios viejos y graditeada, olvidados por los discursos modernizadores de los ayuntamientos, esperando su gentrificación. Vio el parque Niños Hereos que hacia de hotel de decenas de personas que vieran la forma de brincar esa malla metálica que dividía sus sueños y su realidad. El enorme edificio que en otros tiempos había sido ocupado por un banco y ahora alberga a mujeres que bailan en tubos y hombres que se derraman fantaseando con tenerlas en casa. (108)[152]

The postmodern façade of the city is composed of forgotten modernization projects that left old buildings and gentrification unfinished. In the path Niños Heroes, named after the cadets who fought for Mexico during the Mexican-American War, he notes the homeless who sleep there wanting for an opportunity to cross into the U.S. Modernization and dilapidated buildings point to these contradictions in Mexicali where the modern bank buildings have become strip clubs and failed financial transforms have left the city awry.

In addition to showing how illegal businesses prosper in the city, the novel also explores how neoliberal globalization has transformed the U.S.- Mexico border. Nepantla navigates these spaces and reveals that contact between tow societies have produced bicultural spaces. For example, The Donut Café is a border space that Nepantla uses as part of his detective work. The Donut Cafe in Calexico, U.S., is a place for a "coffee-donut-menudo-incometax-inmigracion-p.oboxes" that offers all kinds of services despite being a small site: que "pequeño mas lograba ofrecer todos los servicios necesarios para un mexicano de bajos ingresos del otro lado del

[152] My translation: Nepantla got into the taxi and soon found herself touring the landscape of the so-called center of the city. Old and graduated buildings, forgotten by the modernizing discourses of the city councils, awaiting their gentrification. He saw the Niños Hereos park that used to be a hotel for dozens of people who saw the way to jump that metallic mesh that divided their dreams and their reality. The huge building that in other times had been occupied by a bank and now houses women who dance on tubes and men who spill out fantasizing about having them at home.

cerco"(40).[153] The multipurpose cafe functions as Nepantla's imagined "despacho de investigador privado" (39).[154] His private office at the café fits in with a public place whose services are meant to help low income Mexicans in the U.S., some of whom prefer Mexican services that they are more familiar with. At this locale, you can find everything you need, there are "Los traficantes de humanos discutían nuevas rutas… Los burros entregaban las llaves de auto cargado de coca al narco…los desempleados… esperaban fuera del establecimiento para alquilar sus brazos… los viejos tomaban café, los filósofos tomaba una cerveza después de la ardua jornada laboral en los campos agrícolas del Valle Imperial" (39).[155] Nepantla sits with the latter. Once Consuelo arrives, he discusses Emilio's text messages to figure out what he was doing the day he died. Emilio's phone reveals encoded messages about his unionization of workers. Nepantla finishes his meeting with Consuelo and calls Sorullo, the police officer he shadowed while being an "aspirina."

The novel contrasts the Donut Avenue Café with the Kafka Cafe where Nepantla will hold two of his investigative meetings. But before that, he returns home after calling Sorullo who confirms that Perales was scheming something with Emilio's case. At home, Nepantla's mother upbraids him, yelling at him: for the trouble his friends cause her and for having to take revenge for him. Nepantla aspires to be a detective but he doesn't have his life in order. His mother reminds us that he is still an amateur who drinks with his friends and does not have a detective office of his own. Yet, he goes to meet Doña Vasques at the Kafka Café where she will ask him to drop Emilio's case. As he is waiting for her to arrive, Nepantla notices the difference

[153] My translation: small mas was able to offer all the necessary services for a low-income Mexican on the other side of the fence.
[154] My translation: private investigator office.
[155] My translation: The human traffickers discussed new routes ... the "donkeys" handed over the keys to a car loaded with cocaine to the narco ... the unemployed ... they waited outside the establishment to rent their arms ... the old men drank coffee; the philosophers had a beer after a long day's hard work in the agricultural fields of the Imperial Valley.

between the Kafka Café and the Donut Avenue Café. The Kafka café has an atmosphere that makes him envision himself as an "investigador de gabardina, sombrero y sobaquera entrando a un lúgubre bar de Nueva York donde se encontraría con un informante" (48).[156] He arrives in an upscale café feeling like an official detective, whereas at the Donut Café he was just another commoner drinking beer trying to conduct services for low income Mexicans. The Kafka Cafe, on the other hand, has "la gente [que] olía a clase media y asistía al café persiguiendo la charla y hacer a un lado el estrés; no venían en busca de trabajo con el fin de hacer tramites gubernamentales. El lugar pretendía un ambiente discreto con una media luz y de sus paredes colgaban cuadros con fotografías en blanco y negro" (49).[157] The Donut Café is a social space that characterizes the middle class along the border. At the café, the only service they seek is their café and the opportunity to relax and chat. Nepantla also notices that these individuals convey cosmopolitan impression "[que] pensó que los parroquianos eran neoyorquinos multiculturales bebiendo cervezas oscuras irlandesas o güisquis escoceses" (48-49).[158] The coffee shop draws our attention to how globalization is a process that can bring different aspects of the world into one locality. The Kafka Café characterizes a cosmopolitan middle class, whereas the Donut Café is a space for low-income individuals trying to find work. The two establishments demonstrate the alienation of workers from the Donut Café, while those in the Kafka Café "buy-in" to the neoliberal globalization logic.

Nepantla frequently crosses the border and in the process reveals how migration also shapes the social spaces in the U.S.-Mexico border. In his interviews with a few of his friends,

[156] My translation: Investigator in raincoat, hat and shoulder holster entering a dingy New York bar where he would meet an informant.
[157] My translation: the people with the scent of middle class and went to get coffee, chasing the talk and putting their stress aside; they did not come looking for the work required to get government paperwork in order. The place had a discreet atmosphere with a half light and paintings with black and white photographs hung on its walls.
[158] My translation: he thought that the patrons were multicultural New Yorkers drinking dark Irish beers or Scottish whiskey.

who serve as informants, he finds that the spatiality of the border is not just constituted by economic processes but by racialization and identity as well.[159] Nepantla's conversation with Pecas, his reporter friend, prompts him to get in touch with another friend Pocho-Cop who may be able to tell him more about Emlio's kidnapping prior to his death. Nepantla contacts his old high school friend, Enrique Garcia Ponce, alias el Pocho Cop, who tells him what happened during that call he made to Perales' office. Ponce represents the American border police that attempts to collaborate with the Mexican police force. While he should be a reliable ally, Nepantla focuses on correcting his friend's Spanish rather than analyzing the information being provided. In this instance, Nepantla tries to affirm his own Mexican identity by correcting Pocho Cop. It isn't until a few chapters later that he grabs "la libreta de apuntes y busco las preguntas que había preparado para el oficial" (182).[160] He becomes more intent in his investigations rather than letting himself be distracted. As the narrator states, "Esta vez, no hubo correcciones lingüísticas ni semánticas. Nepantla escuchó a su amigo sin interrupciones" (182).[161] Nepantla's treatment of Pocho-Cop also shows the tensions between Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, or Chicana/os at the U.S.-Mexico border. Nepantla's criticism of Pocho Cops' Mexican American identity teases those who are not in-tune with the Spanish language or Mexican culture. Individuals like Pocho Cop are ridiculed for being Americanized. At the same time, the U.S.-Mexico border also brings to light how Mexicans are also reproached for their nationality. Nepantla reflects on this when he passes through the border patrol checkpoints. He professes his Mexicanidad as a fronterizo detective who defends his nationalism in a border region where

[159] In chapter 3, when I discuss Chicano/a detective fiction, I expand on how Chicano/a identity is rooted in physical geography.
[160] My translation: the notebook and look for the questions I had prepared for the officer.
[161] My translation: this time, there were no linguistics nor semantics. Nepantla listened to his friend without interruptions.

Mexico is economically dependent on the United States.[162] Chicana critic, Gloria Anzaldua explains how the border can be a metaphor for the battleground of identities that individuals who have lived in the border region experience. Unfortunately, the detective novel does not convey the impact that the border has had on indigenous groups who have also been impacted by the border regions' historical conquests by conquistadors and the modern conflicts of imperialism between the U.S. and Mexico.

Nepantla's detective work along the U.S.-Mexico border reveals the different political spatial processes that impact the region. Besides his detective office in local restaurants, Nepantal is also a fieldworker in Imperial Valley. He interacts more with those individuals that perhaps attend the Donut Café. Nepantla's work in the fields connects him to the labor spaces where people affected by neoliberal globalization are striving to survive. We see how Nepantla characterizes these social spaces where low-income migrant workers harvest produce majority of the day; they keep themselves animated during this monotonous work by having deep conversations. Nepantla's characterization of field workers as needing forms of distraction leads him to compare them to "philosophers," stating,

> Al ir espulgando los surcos tenemos tiempo de pensar en un chingo de cosas, nomas al levantar la vista y ver que te falta un putero para cambiar de surco y todavía más para llegar al final del sembradío es desesperante. Una forma de combatir es desesperación es 'terapearte', pensar en otras cosas y cuando menos piensas ya estas comenzando otro surco y poco a poco te acercas al final de sembradío o al fin de la jornada. (147)[163]

[162] Nepantla also does this when he passes through Pete's kiosk at the border checkpoint. Pete was Nepantla's high school friend who became a U.S. citizen and joined the border patrol. When Nepantla crosses the border to work in the farm fields, he likes going through Pete's kiosk because he doesn't demean him, unlike other border patrol agents.

[163] My translation: As we clear the furrows, we have time to think about a shitload of things, just when you look up and see that you need a whore to change furrows and even more so to reach the end of the field is exasperating. One way to fight is despair is to "take care of yourself", to think about other things and when you least think you are already starting another furrow and little by little you are approaching the end of the sowing or the end of the day.

Field workers follow the monotonous job of plowing and harvesting rows of furrows. They become exasperated with how endless the job feels. These workers have to do "self-therapy" and distract themselves by thinking about other things. Some of those thoughts involve acquiring sex workers and going to clubs. Jane Aaron in *Gendering Border Studies* provides an analysis of bracero workers that helps contextualize migrant workers' patriarchal living conditions. Aaron notes that their migrant work questioned their masculinity; their new living conditions required that they perform "jobs" associated with women: laundry, cleaning, cooking etc. Thus, Aaron et al claims that braceros "employed a variety of means to recuperate patriarchal claims, in particular drinking with friends, socializing with women other than wives or girlfriends and distinguishing themselves from other Mexican migrants with regards to these two activities" (24). Nepantla participates in this social space where patriarchy and masculinity are reclaimed through the oppression of feminine/passive values.

After their hard work in the fields, some of these migrant workers find their compensation in the purchase of prostitutes from one of the prostitution rings in Mexicali. Men act on a perverted sense of entitlement on women's bodies. This social condition is facilitated through a neoliberal logic that promotes the exploitation of labor and women's bodies. The novel references this condition when Nepantla finds out from his friend Chore that "Masages KGB" (advertised in the newspaper) is another way of soliciting prostitutes from one of the prostitution rings. From this conversation at the farm fields, Nepantla learns that in addition to the advertisement of escorts at the clubs and bars, the business of prostitution also reaches larger audiences via ads in local newspapers. Nepantla, then, asks el Chore for the number to investigate if these services were in any form associated with Dávila and his prostitution ring. El Chore tells Neptanta, "No lo tengo güey, lo borre del teléfono. Pero nomas compra La Voz y ahi

en la seccion de clasificados vas a encontrar un chingo. Busca el que dice 'masajes KGB' y si quieres a la misma morra que yo me cogí pide a Ivanova" (148).[164] The newspaper *La Voz* appears again in the novel. The taxi driver first mentions the newspaper, revealing that it didn't run a story on the UFWC representative's kidnapping. Now, we learn that *La Voz* participates in the organized crime that links the mafia, the narco ring, and the police. As farm workers solicit sexual services from *La Voz*, they are not concerned with their alienation and participation in the commodification of women. They form part of the neoliberal globalization processes that perpetuate multiple forms of exploitation; in this case, it is the farm workers (exploited laborers) who purchase the use of women's bodies who are also another form of cheap labor. One marginalized group oppresses another marginalized group. This patriarchal system justifies men's hard work in the fields with the reward of women's bodies. Neoliberalism and the socio-economic conditions pin one group against another, maintaining a cycle that ultimately benefits capitalist tycoons. In addition, we see how men continue to objectify women as a reward for their cheap labor in the fields. As Chore states, "Gastas mas en comprarles tragos, una cena, una flor y todo ese pedo y a veces no sueltan nada y ya gastaste como mil pesos o mas" (147).[165] Prostitution seems to him a reasonable service since sometimes women are wined and dined but refuse to offer themselves; in the case of prostitution, he is guaranteed sex for pay.

Jaime's information about Emilio's investigations, Chore's information about the KGB Massages, and Pecas' information (told to him after Chore's information) about the Russian mafia ultimately motivate Nepantla to call Masages KGB himself to find out more about the

[164] My translation: I don't have it, dude, I deleted it from the phone. But just buy La Voz and there in the classifieds section you will find a shitload. Look for the one that says 'KGB massages' and if you want the same girl that I fucked, ask for Ivanova.
[165] My translation: You spend more to buy them drinks, a dinner, a flower and all that fart and sometimes they don't drop anything and you've already spent like a thousand pesos or more.

Russian and Mexican prostitution rings and who runs them. Yet, he still does not know what information Emilio may have acquired about the prostitution rings that might have led to his death. Nepantla proceeds to hack Emilio's phone logs and confirms that Emilio called Masages KGB (Perales' prostitution ring). He briefs 34-B on everything he has discovered and sets up a meeting with Pecas to try to piece all the information together.[166] Pecas is Nepantla's reporter friend. He tells Nepantla to meet him at "La Quinta Chingada" bar, located a few meters away from the border. As 34-B drives Nepantla to the bar, she does a detour to avoid the traffic on one of the streets, driving unto Calle Mexico "[donde] Fue inevitable pasar por la zona de bares y Men's clubs que pululan en esa calle con nombres onomatopéyicos como Guau-Guau o Miau Miau" (185).[167] The novel symbolically points to the commodification of women reinforced by the names of bars and clubs in the city. Nepantla and 34-B also drive pas "otra sucursal de La Líbelula y se imagino la presencia de Perales ahí monitoreando su nuevo negocio" (185).[168] As they near the bar, Nepantla notes that La Quinta Chingada "se encontraba sobre la misma calle que el Hotel del Norte en el llamado primer cuadro de la ciudad" (185).[169]. This drive to meet Pecas shows us the characterization of the area nearest to the border where the product mainly advertised is that of women's bodies. Once at the bar, Pecas begins to disclose more information that he has gathered. First, he tells Nepantla that his friend found out there was an operation ordered by a "judicial" to kidnap 'y darle una 'calentadita' a un gringo" in Hotel del Norte in Calexico (191). The transnational corporation knew of Emilio's unionization project; they hired

[166] 34-B is Nepantla's love interest. She is becomes involved in Nepantla's investigations. She foils his character and provides a feminist critique of Nepantla's detective characterization. An analysis of these two characters—although fruitful— is beyond the scope of this section's analysis.
[167] My translation: It was inevitable to go through the area of bars and Men's clubs that swarm in that street with onomatopoeic names such as Guau-Guau or Miau Miau.
[168] My translation: another branch of La Líbelula and imagined the presence of Perales there monitoring his new business.
[169] My translation: It was located on the same street as the Hotel del Norte in the so-called first square of the city.

"jóvenes pandilleros del Valley Imperial" to kidnap and beat the union representative (191).[170] More importantly, Perales doesn't commission this operation but someone else does. This time, it is the Wholemart chain that is involved. The novel shows us the spaces and various forms of crime that invade them, which involves the organized crime coordinated by the mafias, the police, and corporations.

[170] My translation: young gang members from the Imperial Valley.

Section 2: Chicana/o Detective Fiction
Chapter 4: Policizing the Border in Hinojosa's *Ask a Policeman*

Ask A Policeman (1998) by Rolando Hinojosa is the second detective novel in the two-book series set in Klail City, Belken County, near the Rio Grande in Texas. The police procedural follows the director of the Belken Homicide unit Rafa Buenrostro and the unit's case on the Gomez's narco gang. The story resumes the storyline from *Partners in Crime* (1985), set two decades earlier. In *Partners in Crime*, Buenrostro partners with Captain Lisandro Gomez Solis (referred to in *Ask A Policeman* as Lee Gomez) to investigate a murder that hints at the illegal activities of a drug trafficking gang. Buenrostro discovers Lee Gomez's involvement with the narco gangs and arrests him. Ten years later, *Ask A Policeman* focuses on Lee Gomez's escape from jail minutes before his trial in Belken County. Unlike *Nepantla PI* that focuses on the border during a shift to neoliberal policies, *Ask A Policeman* allows us to explore the conditions of late capitalism in terms of a liberal economy affecting a different border region. Hinojosa, a Chicano author, and Ruiz, a Mexican and Cachanilla authors use the cultural form of the detective narrative to envision different approaches to finding justice on the U.S.-Mexico border. In contrast to *Nepantla PI*, *Ask a Policeman* uses the police procedural to explore how drug trafficking crimes are solved through Mexican and American police units' successful collaboration. In *Nepantla PI*, we see how organized crime is supported by the police. *Ask a Policeman*, however, constructs a trust-worthy police units that collaborate effectively to apprehend border criminals. Lu Centina, the new Mexican police director, keeps her police unit honest and shares information with Buenrostro to bring criminals to justice. The police procedural reinforces the notion that collaboration and scientific methods within the police force can lead to criminals' apprehensions. The two police units work with each other across the border. The police procedural allows the reader to learn of crimes through an omniscient narrator

that follows the criminal activities or through the narrator's focus on the police units, their crime investigations, and group meetings. This modular structure highlights the investigations of the different police units to make the whole squad successful in solving the case (Winks 1126).

Ask A Policeman (1998) was written amid the Reagan and Bush administrations' highly publicized War on Drugs. Rodriguez points out that the War on Drugs is part of the book's textual memory (Rodriguez 19). The War on Drugs in America was pushed by Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and George W. Bush's presidential policies in the late twentieth century. These presidents criminalized the use of illicit substances such as marijuana, cocaine, opium, and heroin, among other pharmaceutical drugs in the United States. Their policies on drugs heightened the militarization and policing at the U.S.-Mexico border. In the border region, the War on Drugs meant stricter border policies that aimed to target the three stages of drug trafficking in the global arena: the international production of substances, their transit, and their national distribution in the United States (Eva Bertram et al. 11). Drug transits across the U.S.-Mexico border include the illegal crossings of drug runners and undocumented immigrants forced to transport drugs into the U.S. Theorists debate the periodization of this historical period (the 1960s-1990s) in terms of its economic and cultural characterizations. Fredric Jameson and Mandel characterize this time period when the novel takes place as late capitalist and postmodern.[171] Late capitalism refers to the economic period of advanced capitalist modes of production from 1945 to 1980.[172] As David Harvey explains, postmodernism is "the structure of

[171] These Marxist theorists attempt to define the period of late capitalism and postmodernity without homogenizing or generalizing actual historical periods that are complex.
[172] Jorge Larraín, in *Theories of Development: Capitalism, Colonialism and Dependence,* reviews these economic debates by different theorists who theorize the periods of economic development and analyze the different types of economies. Some theories debated during late capitalism include dependency theories (Cardoso), World Systems (Wallerstein), Unequal Exchange (Amin), Articulation of modes of production (Rey), among others.

feeling" sweeping after modernism: a new form of expression (39-41).[173] Following Fredric Jameson, Harvey sees postmodernism as the cultural logic of late capitalism (63).[174] These categorizations have influenced literary critics' readings of Hinojosa's KCDT series. More specifically, in *Brown Gumshoes*, Rodriguez argues that in a late capitalist period, "crime and disorder threaten to eclipse tradition and order" (14). The late capitalist period with "the powerful reach of social and economic forces" will bring on neoliberal policies after the 1970s and continue exacerbating social conditions well into the 2000s (Rodriguez 30). *Ask A Policeman* shows how the black market thrives on the late capitalist logic of trade and privatization that reaches its climax with the implementation of neoliberalism. In a *Brief History of Neoliberalism*, David Harvey considers former U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Paul Volker (of the U.S. Federal Reserve) as revitalizers of the U.S. economy in the 1980s using "a blend of policies to curb the power of labour, deregulate industry, agriculture and resource extraction, and liberate the power of finance both internally and on the world stage" (1). The Reagan administration endorsed this neoliberal shift by providing "the political backing for further deregulation, tax cuts, budget cuts, and attacks on trade union and professional power" (24-25). It endorsed Volker's monetarist "medicine" vis-à-vis neoliberalism for a sick and stagnant economy (24-25). The economic conditions of liberalism and later neoliberalism exacerbated economic inequality within the U.S. and abroad. Mexico's implementation of neoliberalism further exacerbated its uneven development and its economic dependence on the United States to an extent.

[173] See Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Blackwell, 1990.

[174] David Harvey defines postmodernism, stating that "[postmodernism] privileges heterogeneity and difference as liberating forces in the redefinition of cultural discourse. Fragmentation, indeterminacy, and intense distrust of all universal and 'totalizing' discourses are the hallmark of postmodernist thought" (9).

Extensive literary criticism exists to interpret Hinojosa's Klail City Death Trip novel series, including the detective novels *Partners in Crime (1985)* and *Ask A Policeman (1998)*. Saldívar's compilation of essays in *The Rolando Hinojosa Reader* provides various insights into understanding Hinojosa's dozen volumes or so of vignettes, portraits, and different narratives of those characters residing in Belken County (Rodriguez 14). Hinojosa's metanarrative of Belken City focuses on the region's social spaces various characters inhabit and their lives in Belken County. Rodriguez claims that the series is a "historical development of Texas and Mexico and covers roughly three generations of Mexicana/o and Chicana/o inhabitants: those born in the late nineteenth century who left Texas to fight in the Mexican Revolution of 1910; those born in the 1930s; and those who served in the Korean War (14). Chicana cultural studies scholar, Rosaura Sánchez, traces the intertextuality and character linkages within some of the series' five novels. She explains, "'el cronicon del valle' records the founding of the Texas Valley and the births and deaths in the principal extended family—la familia Buenrostro—through several generations, with references to settlements dating back to the 19th century" (79). Buenrostro's story begins before the detective series in other novels where we learn about him and his juxtaposition to his cousin Jehu Malacara. Sanchez characterizes Buenrostro as the "quiet one," noble, courageous, and helpful in other stories (90). The KCDT series' fragmentary framework references Buenrostro's childhood, work experience, education, and military involvement in vague instances that form part of the series' form. In addition to Buenrostro's character development, Sánchez also notes his family and friends' Chicano/a experience in the Valley. *Estampas, generaciones y semblanzas* describes the land feud between the Buenrostros and Leguizamons throughout three generations of Chicanos/Mexicanos in the Valley (89). In addition to internal conflicts, the series also shows the oppression of Chicana/os by Anglo-Americans with financial

and bourgeoisie power in *Mi querido Rafa.*[175] Jehu, Buenrostro's cousin, narrates his experience as a loan officer at Klail City Savings and Loan controlled by the Klail-Blanchard-Cooke family, since the early times of Mexican oil and Valley cotton as modes of surplus-value. As Sánchez observes in *Mi querido Rafa,* the pie is bigger than land-grabbing deals and agribusiness: "The Bank represents finance capital, investments, corporations, and corrupt practices" (90). Years later, from 1972 to 1990s, the Buenrostro detective novels expand the characterization of capitalist tycoons from earlier periods into the multi-national "racketeers" forcing their way into Belken County's modern economy (57). In *Ask A Policeman*, we continue to see the development of the spatial geography of the Texas Valley through the crime produced under a late capitalist logic that Rodriguez argues flattens out social relations and alienates one from the family and home (15).

In this chapter, I focus on the crime scenes and the criminal investigations that show us how spaces of corruption are mapped in the border regions in Belken County and Barrones. My analysis of *Ask A Policeman* considers how the late capitalist periods informs the social spaces narrated by the police procedural with specific references to how crimes occurring at the border are solved. I will need to integrate some discussion of *Partners in Crime* to elaborate on the continued story of the Gomez's family and their drug competitors. The cross-border criminal activity in *Ask A Policeman* hinges on the use of the Rio Grande river and surrounding properties to evade the police. The socio-economic conditions of late capitalism also reveal how border criminals establish their businesses on both sides of the border. In Belken County, the Gomez family members deposit their money and distribute their drugs, while in Barrones, they plan their operations and oversee several brothels and nightclubs. Rolando Hinojosa's *Ask A*

[175] *Mi Querido Rafa*(1981) includes letters from Jehu (cousin) to Rafa recovering from the Korean War.

Policeman provides an American perspective on how late capitalism's liberal logic drives crimes in the U.S.-Mexico border region. In a space easily traversed by criminals, the novel illustrates that the Belken Homocide unit can capture these individuals with advanced investigative tools. The police procedural reveals that although the border region's porous space can be beneficial to criminals, police units who collaborate with one another can take advantage of these same spaces to reveal the criminals, their motives, and their victims. In the novel the police units are a form of resistance against criminal activity induced by a late capitalist logic that stimulates the conditions that make possible the trafficking of drugs and humans. This logic creates new social values of commodification, cheap labor, social mobility, and wealth that corrupt individuals in society.

Before continuing with an analysis of the novel, I will provide a brief summary this detective novel. The action begins with Lee Gomez's brother and nephews coordinate his escape from jail to kill him and take over his drug business. Unaware of this family treason, Buenrostro continues to investigate Lee's escape and a series of new shootings and murders in Belken County. He collaborates with Lu Centina, the new Captain of the Barrones police, to solve these recurring crimes. The capture of some of Gomez's staff (Morales and the Quevedos) reveals to the police units Felipe Segundo's plan to reorganize his brother's drug operations with some South American dealers. Buenrostro realizes that Felipe Segundo and the twins have been responsible for the crimes in Belken County but, unfortunately, does not have evidence to arrest any member of the Gomez's family. Unaware that Lee Gomez is dead, Eduardo Salinas, his father (El Camaron), and El Barco Zaragoza attack the Gomez ranch because years earlier Lee Gomez tried to have Zaragoza killed to take over his product in *Partners in Crime.* Eduardo and El Barco Zaragoza mass murder everyone at the farm except for Jose Antonio Gomez, one of the twins (and nephew/son of Lee Gomez). Buenrostro follows the trail of clues, learning that

Eduardo Salinas is responsible for the Gomez's death and burned property. Jose Antonio sends the Belken police a suicidal video revealing his relationship with one of the suspects in the story, Mrs. Grayson. Buenrostro and Lu Centina turn their attention to Jose Antonio, who has been leading some of the crimes in Belken County. At the end of the story, Centina traces Jose Antonio's whereabouts in Barrones and puts together a task force to capture him in one of Gomez's strip clubs. This second installment in the series explores how non-corrupt police units can successfully investigate and apprehend criminals across the border. The border region's socioeconomic conditions allow the drug gangs' elusive criminal activity and the distribution of their drug product. The novel shows us that non-corrupt police collaborations across borders can track and apprehend border criminals.

Felipe Segundo Gomez and the twins' successful plan illustrates their use of the border region to dodge the Belken police. After escaping from jail, Lee Gomez and the two Mexican nationals drive in a VW van, heading down the old Military Highway towards the Rio Grande, to an area where they plan to have Gomez back to his ranch across the border. On the Military Highway, the driver "moved to the shoulder of the road and then drove straight into a cane field, gunning the motor as he did so" (4). Once inside the cane field, they abandon the truck; "they clambered up a small irrigation levee, walked down to a clearing, and the three sat on the ground under a shady mesquite tree and waited" (4). This get-away scene becomes a pattern of escape that these criminals continue to perform throughout the novel. They drive towards the highways adjacent to fields that they can hike across towards the Rio Grande River that borders Klail City, Texas, and Barrones City, Tamaulipas, Mexico. The mesquite trees and plowed fields conceal them as they get away to reach the other side of the border. The scavengers know how to navigate the "semiarid chaparral or savanna zone" of the Southern Texas region filled with

growing grasses, mesquite, and other thorny bushes, scrub oaks, and prickly pear cactuses (Spener 70). Like *Nepantla PI*, Hinojosa's novel shows us the importance of the land and its ecological setting in the border region.

A contemporary map of Texas and Tamaulipas shows us several border sister cities from Laredo, Texas and Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas to Brownsville, Texas and Matamoros, Tamaulipas. The Rio Grande Rivers acts as a squiggly border that separates two sovereign states and imaginary cities in *Ask A Policeman.* In contrast to *Nepantla PI* where the story depicted urbanized border towns, *Ask A Policeman* displays the blending of farms and towns that is characteristic of the southernmost portions of Texas. Gomez's ranch, neighboring the Rio Grande River on the Mexican side, is in a perfect location for travelling across the river. Lee's escape demonstrates one of many ways that the Gomez family easily movea across the border. In this case, Gomez flies across the river in a 210 Cessna that lands on a "landing strip half-hidden by a healthy sorghum crop" (4). Different types of sorghum plants can grow from 5 feet to over 12 feet tall. Their height shields the large airplane from sight, letting Gomez arrive at the ranch undetected. The Gomez ranch in Barrones is located 10 miles south of Klail City, allowing for the airplane's short air-travel time. Although Lee Gomez successfully escapes, his brother has bigger plans to take over Lee's business and properties. He murders his brother as soon as the plane lands. The Cessna crashes into the surrounding sorghum and sugarcane fields that "somewhat muffle" its crash (5). Not only does the landscape hide the appearance of border criminals but silences the airplane's crash. The story reveals how the landscape is leveraged by criminals to move between border cities.

After Gomez's escape, the Belken Homicide unit gets into action to investigate these border criminals. The Belken Homicide unit led by Director Rafa Buenrostro is composed of

three detectives named Sam Dorson, Ike Cantú, Peter Hauer, and the medical examiner, Henry Dietz.[176] The team continuously responds to the calls informing them of the criminal activity of Lee Gomez and his family. Buenrostro and his squad often gather in his office to review the details about the crime. However, the team does not know of Lee Gomez's death until they meet Morales later in the novel. The reader knows this before Buenrostro's team because of the novel's modular structure that includes different narrative perspectives in the story. In the squad room, Buenrostro's team focuses on finding Lee Gomez now that he has escaped. They investigate the VW van, the Lincoln, Silverado, and timelines of the criminals' actions. The unit also finds the culprits' Mexican national passports and the Barrones license plates of the automobiles. Buenostros directs detective Dorson to contact Lu Centina, the new Director of Public Order in Barrones, stating, "Tell her about Lee and the parking lot. We'll send her the prints from the Lincoln, and from the two dead nationals at the parking lot. Ask if a VW van's been reported missing on her side of the river" (11). The vehicles and the identities found at the crime scene inform the team that they are dealing with clues scattered between Klail City and Barrones. Without hesitation, Buenrostro sends information to Lu Centina, so that she can further investigate information on her side of the border. He shows a degree of trust towards Lu Centina having previously worked with Lee Gomez, her corrupt predecessor involved in drug deals. In addition to sending Lu Centina information, detective Hauer alerts the bridges at Jonesville, the two at Klail, and the one in Flora about Gomez's escape (11). The team prioritizes tracking Gomez's crossing across the U.S.-Mexico border. The novel shows us how the criminals and the

[176] The novel provides the omniscient narration of the crimes as they occur and then includes the narration of the team's crime scene investigations. Occasionally, the story will consist of the police reports that change the literary form of the novel. The Belken Homocide unit must also work with the Narco squad, the DEA, FBI, and the D.A. in cases that require each department's expertise. Throughout the police procedural, Buenrostro's detectives guide us through their investigative methods at the crime scenes and later in their group meetings at the police department. Their analysis of these criminal spaces shows us their expertise at reading and understanding how border criminals work.

police use different spaces as forms of confrontations and evasions. Given the border situation, the police units have to share information across the border to successfully capture border criminals. They have to navigate the geographical landscape that is also a geopolitical space where two nation-state authorities claim jurisdiction over crimes.

Buenrostro and Lu Centina's police forces collaborate to investigate the Gomez's crimes successfully. The novel highlights the new female director's honest approach to justice and investigation. The Barrones' mayor purposefully selected Lu as Lee Gomez's replacement because of her morals and high qualifications. Buenrostro informs Dorson that she was well educated, having attended Villa Mari Catholic High in Klail City. She married a Mexican American businessman who lived on the Texas side of the border, attended law school in Mexico City, and "worked herself up the federal civil service ladder" (23). Lu Centina's background attests to her experience as a cross border resident. She spent her childhood in Texas, and finished her education in Mexico City. She is familiar to with both border landscapes and has acquired the skills to manage the Mexican political system and bureaucracy. Her first actions as director were "to fire, phase out, and retire fifty city, state, and federal officers, who as Barrones newspaper put it, 'had been on the take since Christ was a child'" (23). She made sure to "cover living expenses on the border [that] were equitable for her special police force. Knowing some local and state and federal cops remained on the take was galling, but she meant to keep the new feds honest" (23). She also "ran eight-month evaluation reports on each of her agents, and this was not paperwork filed away" (23). Le Centina decreased corruption by implementing different methods that would remove corrupt officers, incentivize others with competitive pay, and use bureaucracy effectively to review her personnel. She demonstrates an internal check on the corruption that occurs within police units. With her team in check, her unit and Buenrostro's can

effectively combat the border criminals that smuggle drugs and individuals. Dorson and Buenostro arrive at her Barrones police department to review the information she has gathered from the shootouts downtown Klail City. She explains the use of her database to retrieve border residents' information. The Napoleonic code gives Centina "leeway" to conduct her investigations.[177] As long as she follows the codified laws in Mexico, Lu Centina can gather evidence without the many restrictions placed by the U.S. law system. Thus, Buenostro and Dorson admit that the invasion of privacy law forces them to use public records. Their "way around that" is to use city directories and tax rolls to search for individuals. Nonetheless, Lu's database includes one-thousand residents that assists in their search for the drivers that helped Lee escape (24). Buenrostro and Centina's surveillance strategy is a cross-border collaboration that expands their search and chances of identifying criminals. The novel shows how two honest transnational police networks can work together and use the border space against criminals. The border may seem elusive but these two police forces have strategies to collect tangible data on these criminals.

Another report by Dorson, in the meeting room at the Belken Police department, demonstrates the importance of transnational banking.[178] We've observed the physical transportation and crimes by Lee Gomez and his family; however, the wiring of money and their

[177] The United States follows a common law tradition that relies on legal precedents constructed from the bottom up, whereas in Mexico the judicial system follows a civil law or set of coded legal rules and statues applied by the judge in the top-down manner. For example, in the U.S court cases like Brown v. Board of Education or Roe v. Wade, those court cases have set precedent and new civil laws. In Mexico, the coded laws are difficult to change or amend through the practice of court hearings and judicial decisions.

[178] Following the meeting with Art Styles, the Belken Homocide unit continues to debrief the information they have on the Canadians, the missing accomplices, Daniel Valera, and Grayson. They don't know that these guys are dead. Buenrostro, then, plans to have Felipe Segundo identify the corpse that washed up from the Rio Grande. He wants to test the waters and see Felipe Segundo's reaction. He wants to let them know what the police has gathered and to give them the opportunity to "get the heat off" Lee Gomez (43). He wants Felipe Segundo and Lee Gomez to be off guard, since once the police believes he is dead, there can be no further investigation. Buenrostro brings in an ad for weapons. Dorson gives his report, after going to Barrones again.

transnational accounts reveal other forms of contesting spatial limits and challenging the police. Dorson's report covers Felipe Segundo's visits to Belken county's banks: he stops "first at Klail's Merchants' Bank, from there to Bishop's S&L, from there to an auto-parts store, a farm implements place, and finally to the GMC truck dealer on Bascom Road" (42). He drove out with a new Jimmy truck and crossed the river via the Jonesville bridge (42). Buenrostro is interested in knowing "If the dealer received the customer (Lee Gomez or Felipe Segundo), he's duty bound to report it under federal banking laws" (45).

One of David Harvey's conceptualizations of space is based on the capitalist modes of production. Similar to Sayak, he analyzes neoliberalism and its capitalist processes on a micro- and macro- level. His framework opens a lens to understanding social relations based on the small to large economic processes that affect people and vice-versa. Felipe Segundo, as a drug gang leader, forms part of an unofficial economic process that by-passes the law but when he opens himself up to macro-level processes. Sayak characterizes these unofficial social spheres as imbued with violence, patriarchy, and death. Overlaying these social spheres are also narco gang economic practices. Robert J. Bunker reviews narco gangs and cartels' economic activities, stating, "Ultimately, the goal is to use financial tricks and ploys, like small bank deposits and wire transfers, to legitimize drug proceeds by getting them into the U.S. and other country's financial systems" (18). More often, narco gangs and cartels' goal of capital accumulation is to return these gains to their own businesses of drug production, human trafficking, and even arms trafficking (18). Checking Gomez's bank accounts in Klail City and Barrones, enables the police to become aware of billions of dollars stored in small amounts in different banks. Other scenes that I will discuss later will also explore the trafficking of arms by the Gomez family.

Rodriguez interestingly argues that the novel presents the reification or "thinging" of values that objectify social relations based on capitalist logics that eliminate morals and values driving people's relationships. Sociologist Geoffrey Ingham argues that "all types of monetary systems are elaborate social structures comprising, on the one hand, those who literally 'make' or 'supply' money (sovereigns, mints, treasuries, banks) and, on the other, those who use (demand) it" (80).[179] He considers how different forms of money-stuff (coins, notes, bank loans and deposits) have their own distinct social conditions of existence that cannot be reduced to the functional role of money in either the 'economy' or for individual 'utility maximization'(80). Ingham provides a spatial analysis of banks and money beyond its influence of objectification argued by Rodriguez. Ingham shows us how banks and money are social processes that reveal social relations. In this case, Lee Gomez's establishment of several bank accounts across the border can be understood as contesting border spaces and corrupting them. Banks themselves become possible spaces of corruption. Gomez brings illicit money to be "stored" in these banks who then create client relations with criminals, offering them bank services such as loans, credit, etc. This in turn increases Gomez's capitalist projects and purchases. Soon, Felipe Segundo takes over these accounts from Lee Gomez. A new narco gang leader continues using the numerous banking networks across the border, concealing the large amounts of capital accumulated through criminal activities. Legal pressure, however, can be brought to bear on these accounts.

Ask A Policeman shows how Buenrostro uses legal pressure to force Belken County banks to stop cooperating with narco-gangs by complying with the police. The novel shows this

[179] Ingham argues that that this 'classical' Marxist emphasis on the social (class) relations of the production of commodities fails to grasp both the efficacy and relative autonomy of the development of the means and social relations of production of modern bank and state credit-money in the 'origins' of capitalism" (79). His spatial analysis considers the social role of money as a transformative power. He states, "The modern credit-money of capitalism's banking sector does not merely 'store' 'existing' value and 'transport' it through time and space – as for example Giddens argues in his theory of modernity (Giddens1990) – it adds a third dimension. Credit-money is created in the form of liquid promises to pay and involves the capacity for the creation of future value" (80).

susceptibility by banks when Dorson calls Bill Perry, the Vice President of Merchant's Bank. The banker, at first, is reluctant to provide information about the Gomez account. He cites bank policies that prevent him from disclosing information. Dorson threatens him by saying, "I imagine it is, but let's cut the crap, Mr. Vice President. Will you cooperate or not? It's as simple as that. I can come by with a subpoena and a federal banking officer, and I wouldn't be above bringing a reporter from the *Enterprise"* (46). Dorson threatens the Vice President through different angles: a legal subpoena and a public announcement on the *Enterprise.* The law functions to keep some form of order in society. In this way, the police succeed in making the bank comply. Furthermore, the police detective can call upon to maintain an ethos of legality that contests the narco-gang's corruption of Belken County banks. The media serves on the side of justice rather than hiding mafiosos' or narco gangs' criminalities at least in the novel. Buenrostro, in a later scene, praises the Vice President for his cooperation, he states, "I'll see to it that District Attorney Velancia hears of your bank's willingness to serve the cause of justice" (48). The D.A. is an empowered authority figure in Belken that influences political agendas benefiting different public and private sectors overseeing banks. Buenrostro insinuates that the bank has gained more from working with the police than by covering for the Gomezes. Gomez's bank accounts create competing power relations and spaces that can become corrupted through a logic of wealth and power, but by pressuring bank administrators Buenrostro surmounts the narco-gang monetary tactics. In this way, Dorson and the Homicide unit uncover the "three sizeable accounts with the S&L, a personal account, a business account, and a joint account" that the FBI was unaware about (50).

Critics of the police procedural note that breaks in cases often occur out of sheer luck. In this next part of the story, we find that Morales, one of Lee Gomez's farm hands, turns himself

in, revealing to the police units the full story of Lee Gomez's death and the consolidation of power by his brother. More importantly, these revelations lead Buenrostro into investigations that demonstrate to the reader his own network of crime fighters. Morales provides the map to where all the evidence of the Gomez's crimes can be found.[180] He reveals that Jose Antonio and Juan Carlos are Lee Gomez's sons. Morales continues, "The boys are born in Klail City, with the nuns at Mercy Hospital, and I know this because my younger sister, Tecla, was their nursemaid. She was a big, healthy farmgirl and she had milk enough for five babies, if it came to that. That's it; the truth. The boys are the sons of don Lisandro" (94). The twins are U.S. citizens living in Barrones, Mexico with their uncle Felipe Segundo. Their birth in Klail City allows Buenrostro to investigate with his aunt Aggie if this information is true. His aunt recalls the birth of the twins when she supervised Pediatrics at Mercy Hospital (99). The novel appears to show us how the characters and their families form historical networks in these areas. Aunt Aggie and Theo Crixell –as we will see later—form part of Buenrostro's familial network in Klail City that help advance his investigations in town; they provide service and advocate for justice. Beyond the detective series, we can see the wider portrait of Buenrostro's family and friends and their role in Klail City.[181] When Buenrostro calls Aunt Aggy, she insists that Blanca Gallardo, the twin's mother, was part of "the upriver Gallardos… [who] are not related to us" (114). Buenrostro and his family are a network of righteous individuals in Klail City that foil the Gomez family that turns spaces into corruption and crime. The Buenrostros serve their Chicano/a community, often times, against Anglo-American marginalization, while the Gomez brothers have allowed wealth

[180] Morales reveals to Buenrostro where he can find Grayson's airplanes and other bodies. He notes how "That job takes two hours or more because my cousin has to recover some of the big parts of the plane and buries everything in a big, big deep hole between the tall sorghum rows" (95). The geographical landscape again plays an important role in hiding the crimes of the Gomez family. The sorghum fields have allowed them to cross the border illegally, and it allows them to bury airplanes and bodies. The landscape of the border – the Rio Grande and its surrounding fields—are important landmarks that constitute spaces of crimes, violence, and death.
[181] The Buenrostros are one of the founding families that have fought for Tejano rights.

and power to destroy communities. In addition, the birth of the twins indicates the migration of U.S citizens into Mexico. National identity is in flux for those on the border between the U.S. and Mexico, as for Lu Centina as well.

Once Buenrostro finishes the interrogations with Centina, his wife Sammy Jo calls him to tell him that Theo Crixell, his cousin, was murdered at the Yacht Basin (104). This crime and its location expose how American consumerism contributes to the trafficking of drugs. Theo Crixell's death reiterates the familial networks in Klail City linked to Buenrostro. Earlier in the novel, Sammy Jo had recalled Theo as a prosecutor in the Lee Gomez case (59). When his family received multiple threats, he resigned for their safety. Prior to his resignation, Theo was Buenrostro's informant on the investigations done by the federal unit. He told Buenrostro of the "condos at Padre, the farm land in Belken County, some of which was used for airstrips from where they smuggled stuff in and out. Let's see, the Arabian horses I mentioned, the fighting roosters, other extensive land-holdings in Dellis County, and then the bulk of it in offshore money that Treasury weaseled out of some Caribban dictator or other" (60). As Buenrostro investigates locally, his collaboration with Theo allows him to see the larger picture of Gomez's properties and moneymaking outside of Klail City. Theo agrees that the feds' investigative methods are "part of the old tradition when Bill Bennet was drug chief in Washington and becoming an expert on drugs and morals. In short, knowing everything about everything. Yeah, I can see it now: We'll go after the big money, overseas laundering and so on, yeah. Big amounts of publicity" (60). The novel revisits the differences between local and federal police in the U.S. It shows that the local police do an honest job, whereas the federal police attempt to uphold its reputation for apprehending infamous drug traffickers. Its authorities' position imposes a certain stance where "no one disagrees with a higher-up in D.C" (60).

Buenrostro and Theo form part of a local, justice-serving network that gets interrupted by the federal police with its own political agenda. At the crime scene, some of the clues that the investigation team finds are the white jimmy, a Mazda, and the guest list to the yacht party. Dorson describes the mess left inside the yacht, noting the "Cocaine dust in the main room, and the smell of marijuana remained as strong as ever in the enclosed quarters" (108). The yacht party's consumption of cocaine and marijuana show the demand for drugs on the American side of the border. Rhonda and Winona have this yacht party every week (107). The guestlist for the yacht party outside of which Theo is killed shows Laura Grayson as a party guest (108). The yacht party is a space of American drug consumerism. This weekly social scene invites the upper middle-class individuals in Belken County to come to this space for debauchery where drugs heighten their get-together. Unfortunately, this crime scene does not give Buenrostro any evidence that the Gomez's are linked to Theo's death or the yacht party. At the funeral, Sammy Jo reminds us that Buenrostro has to wait for the twins to cross, "otherwise it remains a Mexican case" (124). Only one state can indict the Gomezes based on where the crime occurs.

Shortly thereafter, new crime occurs in Klail City, giving Buenrostro and his homicide unit several investigations to decipher. The crimes are coordinated by Felipe Segundo, but Buenrostro does not obtain any evidence that can lead to his arrest. The looting and shooting at the Flora Pawn Shop outside of Klail City provides another unsolved crime that shows the Gomez's ability to produce crime and escape the authorities. First, the narrator describes the crime, and then, the focus shifts to Buenrostro who gets the call from the Flora Pawn Shop. The reader finds out that three men crash into the pawn shop to steal cases of weapons and ammunition. These individuals chose the Flora Pawn shop that is located three miles west of Klail City but are still close enough to the river to escape into Mexico (126). As in the case of

Lee Gomez earlier in the novel, the same type of escape is undertaken. After looting the pawn shop, the criminals drive towards the highway for a quarter of a mile "and turned sharply onto the first dirt road on the left, toward the river. When the minivan came to a halt, the men in the back, still puffing from the exertion, dashed out of the backdoor on signal" (127). Then, they transferred all the weapons and ammunition into two Cessnas waiting for them; the whole process took 20 minutes (128). They finally leave the U.S. towards Mexico, travelling by airplane and swimming across the river. The narrator explains,

> The Mexican nationals pocketed the money and walked across a sugarcane field; from there, they made for the levee facing a farm across the river and sat down… they sat down and watched the Cessnas fly across the river into Mexico. Within a few minutes, the planes disappeared into a cloudbank. The men then removed their shoes, tied them together, and clamped their teeth on the shoelaces. Without a word, they dove in and swam across the Rio Grande. (128)

In a short amount of time, Gomez' men are able to flee the crime scene and travel into Mexico without being followed by the authorities. The novel shows us how easily these individuals are able to travel back and forth across the border. More importantly, they are able to hire American pilots to traffic weapons and substances, while their Latino hitmen swim back to Mexico.

When the Belken Homicide unit responds to the Flora Shop crime, the detectives find that as the Flora shop was being looted, a nearby liquor store was put on fire. Nearby residents took this opportunity to loot the store, and "Flora patrolmen drove there to prevent further thievery and possible injury to the thieves stupid enough to brave the fire" (130). By taking advantage of the situation to rob the liquor store, while the pawn shop created a form of distraction and took precedence over the looting of the pawn shop. The authorities see their main obligation as protecting these individuals from the fire rather than arresting them right away for looting the liquor store. At the pawnshop, Buenrostro notices that another crowd encloses the scene of the crime. The narrator describes how "the patrol men lined up, extended their arms,

grabbed each other's forearms and began walking forward. Most in the crowd cooperated, although the usual grouches yelled about their civil rights" (130). The crime that occurs at the pawn shop provides a view of the public's reaction to a crime and the crowd's response to the police. The criminal spaces produced hint at the chaos that ensues but also the police's aptitude to manage this chaos and do an effective job. Buenrostro observes the scene and notices the possible escape route. He tells Hauer to drive towards the river where he tracks the airplanes (132). While the criminals may be able to navigate the border, Buenrostro's knowledge of their tactics and escape patterns allows him to follow their activities.

In the meantime, the Homocide unit continues to find evidence to apprehend the Gomezes. Enrique Salinas, son to El Camarón visits Buenrostro to thank him for the release from prison of the ailing El Camarón.[182] Salinas, as readers learn, become a vigilante character who attains temporary justice by breaking the law, trespassing, and setting the barn on fire in addition to murdering everyone. Earlier in the novel, we learn that El Camarón is given a hardship release from prison based on Buenrosotro's recommendation letter to Texas Parole Board (54). El Camarón takes this opportunity to incite his son and El Barco Zaragoza to avenge him. Enrique justifies his actions as a vigilante but does not reveal the plan when he visits Buenrostro; the narrator explains, "True, the chief inspector would never approve of what Salinas wanted to do for him, but that didn't bother Enrique Salinas, A favor was a favor" (121). El Camarón believes that his son's mass murder at the Gomez's ranch will aid Buenrostro, since the former is still not able to apprehend the Gomezes. El Camarón, Eduardo Salinas, and El Barco Zaragoza plan and execute the attack on the Gomez's ranch. Like Buenrostro, El Camarón and El Barco Zaragoza

[182] El Camaron and El Barco Zaragoza still want revenge for Lee Gomez's betrayal ten years ago. El Camaron and El Barco Zaragoza lost their drug business, and El Camaron went to jail when Lee Gomez set them up. Buenrostro captured El Camaron in *Partners in Crime* and sent him to jail based on evidence planted by Lee Gomez.

have investigated the Gomezes, noting that the South Americans visiting the ranch had not been seen there or in Control for over a week (145). They conclude that the South Americans "were most likely transporting the product across the Rio Grande. And there'd be no dogs to worry about" (145). On the day of the crime, Eduardo Salinas studies the floor plan of the ranch, visualizing the different phases of his plan. He then sets out to the Gomez's ranch where he enters by crawling under an eight-foot electric fence. The narrator explains:

> thirty yards beyond [the electric fence] that, of a quarter-mile long mesquite grove would provide ample cover. After that, the sorghum and the sugarcane crops would cover him the rest of the way to the three main barns, and from there to the various sheds housing the cars, Jeeps, semis, tractors and farming equipment. After that, he had a clear shot to the main house, which was surrounded by thick hedges of pink and white oleander bushes. (145)

Eduardo Salinas sneaks inside the ranch through the covering of the mesquite grove, the sorghum and sugar crops. He studies the property noting the distance his hiding spot is from the barn and the house. The description also provides a general sense of Gomez's property: the drugs, cars, jeeps, Cessnas, and tractors. Inside the barn, Eduardo triggers an explosion by uncapping the diesel tanks and installing explosive devices on the tanks (147). Vigilantes are capable of uncovering information that Buenrostro and Lu Centina can't gain access to without a search warrant. Eduardo, as a vigilante, contests the spaces limited to both police forces. Yet, Eduardo's goal isn't to find justice through a judicial system but through violence and force. He kills Felipe Segundo and Juan Carlos (147). Although he escapes, at the end of the novel, we see how he is pursued by Lu Centina and the Barrones' police. The novel does not fully condone the vigilantes and favors the justice of the police.

A couple of days later, Lu Centina invites Buenrostro and his team to investigate the Gomez ranch. Their collaborative work shows us the simultaneous investigations of Lee Gomez and Eduardo Salinas' crimes. Morales shows the teams where to find all the evidence for Lee's

escape. As they gather this evidence, Buenrostro and Hauer discover Eduardo's tracks leading away from the ranch. Hauer first sees the tracks headed to the barn (152). He then "followed a second clearing and headed for a mesquite grove. The tracks were easy to follow on the plowed soil, and from there to the grove (152). The Mexican soldiers point out that there was another deep track some fifty yards away. Hauer and a federal follow these tracks to the other side of the fence that could be an empty pickup or good-sized van (153). Buenrostro and Haeur's tracking ability demonstrate their expertise in discovering criminals' actions even if they don't have definite information. In this sense, Eduardo Salinas mirrors the Gomez family as he is an American committing a crime in Mexico; yet, his vigilante actions are a reaction to the narco gang's initial violence on the border. These individuals do not see a divide between American versus Mexican crimes; instead, it is a criminal space created via trafficking and violence. The police units, on the other hand, cooperate with one another regardless of the setting of the criminal cases.

In the breakroom, Buenrostro and his team again brainstorm the criminal's identity and reasons for the massacre. As a team, the unit is capable of connecting the evidence and deducing the motivations of the criminal. We begin to see this collaborative space at the end of the crime scene investigation when Dorson states, "This looks like revenge. A payback of some sort. To quote Pete, who ruins a couple of tons of product?" (154). When they meet in the squad room, Buenrostro begins the debriefing: "This is what I've come up with. A shooter who leaves tracks and doesn't care to hide them. He also had a good-size area to cover in a short time. This points to a younger man. He acted alone but was driven there" (155). Each detective and team member provide a different perspective of the evidence and their observations of the crime scene. Among the different possibilities proposed, the team considers the premise of revenge. They consider

"the strongest families in the four-state area in Northern Mexico" (155). But ultimately, Hauer interjects, stating, "this goes back to the Kum Bak Inn when Lee Gomez stifled Zaragoza and his gang for the job there, and then betrayed them to us at Brinkman's Hotel. Felipe Segundo followed the same pattern when he turned in the Quevedos at the Flamingo" (156). The team now has another lead to follow. To them, the land and border region are decipherable. While for border criminals, the border region may appear to conceal their crimes, detectives working on both sides of the border can find evidence of their crimes. Their process shows the combined knowledge of charting criminal spaces and noticing the patterns border criminals leave behind.

One of the final crime scenes presented in the novel is Mrs. Grayson's burning house. The Belken Homicide police has its suspicions about her but experiences delays that prevent them from seizing Mrs. Grayson and Jose Antonio. Her case points to the limits of the police's examination of criminal spaces in Belken County and how bureaucracy limits the unit's progress in overlapping criminal cases. Mrs. Grayson, the pilot's widowed wife, was already a person of interest for the Belken police. She was involved in the yacht party incident that led to Theo's death and the use of illicit drugs. Haeur's second interrogation, prior to her house burning, is where he learns that she "admitted knowing the twins for over a year. They supplied coke at Gilbert's yacht party. Claimed embarrassment. Not as good a liar as she thinks" (174). The Belken police is able to link her to the Gomezes and their drug dealing, but before they can act upon this they receive a call that her house burned down. Five hours before, the unit received the video with incriminating evidence of Jose Antonio and Mrs. Grayson leading to the burning house. Her house exploded four times in a wealthy neighborhood. The unit notes that the explosions occurred in "an all-electric house with no natural gas" (182). In a later report, Dietz and an arson specialist agree that the walls and the floors had been lined with gasoline cans; the

house was obliterated in 12 to 15 minutes (184). Buenrostro's unit agrees that they wouldn't have had enough time to arrive at the scene before the house was decimated. Once they return to interview witnesses, they learn that "most people in that neighborhood use the weekends to go to Padre, to Barrones, or somewhere else in the Valley. Most of them are in their second marriage and they're DINKS" (186). This is a crime that occurs in Belken County similar to how the downtown, killing, the Flora Pawn Shop robbery adjacent to Klail City, and the attack on the yacht basin were carried out. Mrs. Grayson's house parallels the same social space as the yacht basin. Wealthy individuals in Belken County seem to be unaware of the Gomez's criminal activities. Some may even be consumers of the drugs that she has helped transport and sell. The Belken police has the technologies and resources to investigate but their bureaucracy and the Gomezes' mobility across spaces keeps them from apprehending them. Once the Belken police realizes that they have the video illustrating the events at Mrs. Grayson's burning house, Jose Antonio is on the run and Mrs. Grayson is already dead.

Jose Antonio's self-destructive behavior will lead to his arrest in Barrones. Two weeks after the fire, Lu Centina has Jose Antonio locked in a nightclub in Barrones. She calls Buenrostro to join them to apprehend Jose Antonio at the Salón Mexico, another nightclub that the "Gomezes own," where he is holding hostages. When they arrive one of the girls explains, "he's also holding the house musicians. They play, the women strip, and they go through some kind of dance routine whenever he's awake. He strips too and sits there, toying with his gun while they dance. Two or three hours of this and then it's back to bed. The owner is terrified" (192-193). Jose Antonio, since the incident with the barn, has transformed into a reckless criminal who just wants to produce violence and death. He drugs himself and torments the staff under lockdown. The police team no longer arrests a narco leader in business but a psychopath.

Lu and her gun-mate Elizondo go behind the curtains where Jose Antonio sits, followed by Buenosotro and Dorson who don't have guns (193). They storm in and the confrontation ends in a stalemate with gun pointed at each other (194). After keeping the gun pointed at Lu Centina for a while, Jose Antonio, "with a disarming smile, turned the gun toward himself, and shot himself above the left eye" (194). Yet, he doesn't die and Lu Centina arrests him. Eduardo Salinas remains on the run and Lu asserts that they will catch him. Buenrostro concurs that it should be easy. In this novel, border criminal spaces allow for the cooperation of the two national police units. Unlike in the Ruiz novel, the police is not corrupt. The detectives are the good guys fighting for justice, a less than realistic portrayal in today's political climate.

Chapter 5: Sacred Geography and the Shamanic Detective in *Jemez Springs*

Rudolfo Anaya's *Jemez Springs* is the final installment of the Baca detective series. Sonny Baca has for several years – and in three novels—investigated Raven's crimes around Albuquerque. This final book narrates Sonny's investigations of his nemesis Raven after learning that the New Mexico governor was found dead in the Bath House at Jemez Springs. After the events of the previous novel, *Shaman Winter* (1999), Sonny Baca is disheartened and ready for revenge. His fight with Raven resulted in the death of his spiritual guide and friend, Don Eliseo, and his wife's miscarriage. In *Jemez Springs* (2005), Raven's new call for multiple investigations involving the atomic bomb on Jemez mountain, and the loss of the cellular tower, and allow Sonny to decry the extent to which politicians will seek to profit from this national crisis. Conspiracy theories begin to float around the city, inciting fear and panic of al-Qaeda or some terrorist group. In the midst of this crisis, mayor Fox and Dominique (an ex-candidate to office) wish to privatize the waters in Albuquerque, including the Rio Grande. They plan to create a "Future City" a la Venice, that will market New Mexico as an emerging tourist site. The novel explores how the Pueblos, the Chicano/as in the region, and the Anglo-Americans lay claim to spaces in Albuquerque; more often, we see that the Indigenous Pueblos and Chicano/as communities are on the periphery of these New Mexico spaces that Anglo-Americans culturally dominate. Sonny's battles with Raven contest evil and interest in destroying the cultural legacy, identity, and these spaces that define Chicana/o identity in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Rudolfo Anaya is a distinguished Chicano author and is noted as a "vital resource for a better understanding of the relation of Mesoamerican cultural practices to Chicano/a identity" (Rodriguez 107). His repertoire of novels showcases the Chicano/a New Mexican identity through his use of myth, spirituality, and mystical experiences of his characters in stories like

Bless Me, Ultima (1972), *Tortuga* (1979), and more. He was among the first published Chicana/o authors like Tomas Rivera, Rolando Hinojosa, and Estella Portillo, who won the Quinto Sol Prize award from Quinto Sol Publications (González-T xxv). Literary criticism of Anaya's detective series has focused on the author's contribution to adapting the genre as a cultural, nationalistic articulation of Chicana/o identity. His detective series reworks the hardboiled formula to demonstrate that "the governance of the New Mexicana/o depends not on the laws of the State, but on a struggle between good and evil that is connected to rescuing the 'ways of the ancestors'" (Rodriguez 107). Fernandez Olmos calls this "religious syncretism," which is the result of combining, merging, and/or reconciliating differing belief systems (114-115). Fischer-Hornung points to Anaya's series as a historical detective series that explores the "spiritual coming of age" of the detective. Anaya focuses on New Mexican Chicana/o identity fashioned through its historical development, mixture of races and cultures and its continuation experience as an ethnic minority in the U.S. Southwest. Sánchez surveys "the construction of multiple temporalities" in the novels as "the tensions between historical and ahistorical, and between social reality and a dimension beyond the real" constantly involved in the detective series through its cyclical preoccupations with time and history (222). Generally, literary critics agree that Anaya's detective series lends itself to studies of Chicana/o identity and history through the adaptation of the hardboiled genre.

The Sonny Baca series maintains a detective plot that is carried over four novels: *Zia Summer* (1995), *Rio Grande Falls* (1996), *Shaman Winter* (1999), and *Jemez Springs* (2005). The novels develop their own distinct cases linked by the author's interests in Chicana/o identity, history, and metaphysical themes. Anaya blends different genres into the detective series emphasizing his socio-political preoccupation with Chicana/o culture and identity in New

Mexico. Sotero analyzes *Shaman Winter's* (1999) detective narrative through a cinematic lens, comparing it to Ian Flemmings' detective formula: an arch villain, beautiful women, high -speed car chases, violent confrontations, and the use of modern technology and a handsome detective (32). Anaya uses mythology and spiritual archetypes that critics note lead the author towards abstractions and universal claims of existence. Gonzalez-T adds, "when he writes of myths, of the spirit, he is addressing real affirmative *potentials* within existence, within people, centers of human energy who can affirm constantly" (Gonzalez-T xix). While Anaya does use mythology and spiritual motifs that can lead to universal ontological claims, the mythology and spiritual themes also characterize the cultural heritage of Chicana/os in New Mexico. In an interview, Anaya explains that he utilizes the Quetzalcoatl myth from the Aztecs to interrogate polarities and dichotomies in identity and collective memory (Gonzalez-T 426-427). Another significant part of Chicana/o identity lies in the role of New Mexico's geography. Fernandez Olmos explains that the landscape of the Southwest holds a "primal memory" that allows the author to "discover the 'essential symbols' of his writing. Setting is therefore more than simply a 'point of reference'" (Fernandez Olmos 18-19). Anaya's works address the spatial crossing of identity, culture, genre, place and time (vis-à-vis history). Davis-Undiano sees Sonny Baca as a *cultural* detective that "saves the world by learning about his own and the America's past" (Cantú 137). In the novel, *Shaman Winter*, "he demonstrates how that knowledge about the Americas as a historically complex and multilayered place is essential for confronting present urban-land-issues and environmental challenges (Cantú 137). Anaya explores how Chicana/os' cultural heritage and identity lie in the historical and spiritual foundations of ancestry: indigenous roots, Aztec myths, and familial generations who preserve these cultural beginnings.

This chapter includes three sections that survey how Rudolfo Anaya adapts the detective narrative in *Jemez Springs* to craft Chicana/o identity as a land-based identity through a consideration of space and time. The detective looks to recover and resist the erasure of history and the cultural legacy embedded in city and landscapes. I begin this chapter by focusing on Albuquerque's regional history and its geographical significance to Chicana/o identity. I reflect on the novel's use of sacred geography as a paradigm for understanding the role that the landscape plays in the detective narrative. The first section of this chapter analyzes Sonny's reflections about the landscape and the development of the modern city in New Mexico. His reflections provide contrasting views on how the landscape and the modern city are spaces of contestation. My second section turns to Sonny's investigations around the city and the shamanic spaces he inhabits. I explore how the production of crime in the novel is used to interrogate corruption of the city and individuals. I consider internal and external processes of corruption in the city that affect a number of individuals. I examine how the city reacts to Raven's crimes and survey their susceptibility to his chaos. I consider the shamanic spaces of confrontation between Sonny and Raven to discuss how Sonny Baca is a detective that resists the erasure of Chicana/o identity and notes its foundations in the sacred geography of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The final section focuses on Anaya's use of the detective narrative and how he blends other genres such as the mystery, the bildungsroman, and myth to emphasize Chicana/o identity and cultural heritage in Albuquerque. Anaya's use of different genres follows Sánchez's claims that "each generic mode of production is marked by its own cultural logic and attendant temporalities" characteristic of postmodern texts (224). Here, I emphasize how these genres and temporalities, although they pose contradictions, are Anaya's way of exploring how to "merge"

dichotomies, which allude to his metaphorical interests in the North/South and West/ East axes that need to reconcile the communal self with the egotistical self.

Albuquerque's Sacred Geography in Sonny Baca's Detective Series

Rudolfo Anaya's Sonny Baca series captures the historical importance of Albuquerque's landscape from precolonial times to its developed modern urban spaces in the 21st century. Several colonizations and recolonizations characterized the region as a space of multiple contestations between different ethnic groups. New Mexico has been a territory claimed by Spain, Mexico, and the United States, including the Confederacy of the United States during the U.S. Civil War. Albuquerque grew from small farms and ranch villages in the northern reaches of New Spain to the thirty-fifth largest city in the United States (Fernandez Olmos vii). In detective fiction, as I have demonstrated, cities and landscapes allow us to interrogate how the production of spaces influence criminal activity and the detective's mission. I continue to use the term *production of space* as a means of showing the different types of processes (material and cultural) that craft the city and its social spaces in the detective novel. Rudolfo Anaya adapts the detective narrative to include what Margarite Fernandez Olmos calls "pauses" throughout the detective plot (110). These pauses, often times, include Sonny's reflections through the omniscient narrator in the story. Sonny's pauses include reflections on the detective case, the city, and even conversations with his dog, Chica, or his spirit guide, Don Eliseo. In this section, I focus on Sonny's reflections about New Mexico's sacred geography characterized by the cultural hybridity and legacy of New Mexico's colonial past. Through these reflections, we learn that Albuquerque's sacred geography is a contested space marked by the transformation of the traditional landscapes by modernization.

Sonny characterizes New Mexico's sacred geography through his reflections on the pueblos and the historical significance of the landscape. Sonny embraces New Mexico's colonial past because he celebrates the hybrid cultures and identities it has produced. The environmental landscapes and pueblos represent a sacred geography that evidences the traditional values and origin stories that form Chicana/o identity for Sonny. New Mexico presents various spaces of contestation between identities and cultures that have laid claim to the area over time. New Mexico's colonial and settler colonial history consists of violence and the oppression of indigenous groups that the novel does not address. Instead, the novel, through Sonny's perspective, focuses on the result of mestizo identity from these colonial conquests and settler colonial encounters. Sonny's mestizo identity is rooted in the significance of ancestral knowledge passed on by the Pueblos of New Mexico. He expresses the importance of this cultural inheritance as he is in Jemez pueblo early in the novel. He contemplates the relationship of the land to New Mexico's ancestral past:

> In the land of the Zia Sun, in New Mexico, in the desert land the Aztecs called Aztlán, land the Americanos called the Southwest, land where the bones of the ancient ones were buried, where the wind whispered and crested desert sand into waves…in this land the ancestors had walked, crisscrossing the land that would one day be called America, the earth whose name they kept sacred in their stories and parables, a name with so much power that it could not even be carved into the sand stones of the desert. (54)

New Mexico here is designated as the land of the Zia Sun. It becomes a space beyond its national designation that encompasses a hemispheric space of ancestral knowledge. This ancestral knowledge gets passed down through glyphs and the Zia Stone where the "word became the center, a new awareness of the sacred" (54). The land holds the origin stories and myths from the ancestors that help define the cosmology of Sonny's identity. The narrator reaffirms that in "the desert mountains of the Anazasi, the Zia glyph was cut into the face of a rock, a sign etched so

deep that it became the center of the universe, the point around which the Earth rotated…" (55). Sonny characterizes New Mexico's sacred geography as a spatial monument that holds the glyphs, ancestral cosmologies, and histories that form part of Nuevo Mexicanos' Chicana/o identity.

The detective narrative considers a hemispheric framework for understanding the Chicana/o identity via an ancestral "New World" cosmology that merges with the national conquests and cultural encounters among the different races who came in contact over time in this American land. As previously quoted, in the land of the Zia Sun, Aztlan, and Southwest lies the possibility to conceptualize a land-based sense of belonging for mestizos and Chicana/os. Unfortunately, Anaya does not further discuss the function that Navajos, the Jemez Pueblo Indians, and other indigenous groups play in this land-based identity. Anaya uses the spatial category of "New World" to emphasize the synthesis of multiple heritages, or cultural networks and historical connections that reframe a homeland and sense of identity for mestizos (Cantú 131). The spatial category provided a land-based culture that did not have to be Aztlán, a place that may or may not have been set in the Southwest (132). New Mexico's sacred geography forms part of this "New World view" that Anaya underlines to "affirm relations among land, culture, and mestizo identity" (132). Davis-Undiano in "Land, the Southwest, and Rudolfo Anaya" further adds that "Anaya addresses the colonization of the Americas as an amnesia of the New World in relation to mestizo identity, so that the Americas' ancient cultures were covered over by the devastation of the Spanish conquest, even though their 'soul' was still connected to the land" (Cantú 131). Anaya attempts to recover the ancestral, indigenous cosmologies tied to the land via glyphs and stories of Chicana/o identity. He insists on understanding the synthesis of the multiple heritages in the Americas through the land and spaces of encounters that should also

be seen as spaces of contestation. In doing so, we can acknowledge the violence and displacement of the multiple Native American groups produced by Spanish and Anglo-Saxon colonization and mestizo settler colonialism. The land serves an important role as a space of contestation among cultures and racial groups that Anaya seeks to reconcile through Sonny's mestizo identity. Sonny must access the spirit of Albuquerque's landscape "through understanding and clarity, [and] the recognition of cultural traditions combined with courageous acceptance of the changes and provocations of modern times" (Cantú 62).

My analysis of Albuquerque's sacred geography as a contested space is linked to Sonny's road trip to Jemez mountain. This trip allows for Sonny's reflections on the landscape that reveal the tensions between the land's cultural and historical significance and the urban development of the area. Sonny's trip from Albuquerque to Jemez mountain, the site where the governor was found dead and a bomb has been planted nearby on a mountain. A contemporary map of Albuquerque, New Mexico illustrates that Sonny's drive is about a 57-mile drive that takes a little over an hour. He drives northbound from Albuquerque where the Rio Grande River wraps around the left side of the city. As he heads north, he passes the North Valley, the Sandia Pueblo where Bernalillo sits on the Pueblo's northern edge. The drive leads to two highways: the interstate 25 and highway 550. Parallel to the interstate 25, there are several pueblos past Algodones: San Felipe Pueblo, Kewa Pueblo and Cochito (farthest north). Sonny's drive on highway 550, heading northeast into Jemez, passes the Zia pueblo, San Ysidro, Jemez Pueblo and lastly a few more miles north to the Jemez Bath House. His drive past these pueblos enables a description of the landscape and provides insights into New Mexico's sacred geography and the urban development threatening cultural and traditional values of the areas.

Sonny admires Albuquerque's sacred geography for its historical importance as a contact zone. During Sonny's initial drive past Albuquerque and the town of Bernalillo, he recalls Albuquerque's history as a trade center in the nineteenth century. He states, "The valley used to be full of vineyards and cornfields. People from Jemez, Zia, Santa Ana, San Felipe, Sandia, Santo Domingo went to Bernalillo to trade. Camino del Pueblo buzzed with activity" (43). He admires the cultural hybridity where the different Pueblos and visitors to New Mexico engaged in cultural and material exchange. Under Mexican rule, Albuquerque was part of a trade route that extended to the state of Missouri, and later, under U.S. rule, railroad routes continued to cultivate these interactions (Howard 57-58). According to Howard's review of the census, in the late 19th century, Albuquerque began to achieve a cosmopolitan atmosphere with the arrival of new citizens from many states and foreign countries (63). Around this same period, notes Heiner Bus, there developed the mythification of the Southwest and its lands as the "Land of Enchantment" in American society (45). Bus calls this the transitional phase of Albuquerque which took place at the end of the 19th century and brings to light how the landscape for some was "a last refuge from the irritations of the modern age, especially for 'a whole class of financiers, philanthropists, journalists, writers and artists'" (44). As Sonny travels north, he reveals his idealistic views of a former Albuquerque without noting the role that capitalism has played since the early colonial times he idealizes.

Prior to the 20th century, Albuquerque and New Mexico were spaces of contestation among ethnic groups, political parties, and foreign countries but all participated in the construction of New Mexico as a marvelous land. Towards the 20th century, historians like Bryan Howard and Marc Simmons report a transformation on the expansion and urbanization of Albuquerque and New Mexico. More significantly, after WWII, a new structure of governance is

instituted as new industries begin to shape the area of Albuquerque. Since 1917 Albuquerque's government was composed of a city commission but in the late 20th century, the city's administration was composed of city council members and mayor (Howard 260). Small businesses like motor courts, cafes and gasoline stations were already present and dependent on the tourist trade (Simmons 358). By July of 1945, aviation and atomic research facilities turned the region into a "growing battalion of scientists" (Simmons 368). This flourishing of scientific and military research installations, a bequest of World War II, were the principal contributors to rapid urban growth (Simmons 369). Albuquerque has also been a major transnational and national crossroads where the trafficking of drugs has been a major issue.

By the 1960s, Albuquerque claimed more Ph.D.'s per capita than any other city in the country. Hispanic rural folk abandoned the countryside for the employment opportunities in Albuquerque's burgeoning job market; soon, the "mounting inflow" of Anglo-Americans exceeded the minority population of the Hispanic population (Simmons 370). The mapping of the modern city of Albuquerque lay in the hands of technocrats and urban planners who "think almost wholly in economic terms, equating unbridled expansion with automatic prosperity and seldom paying more than lip service to such humanistic consideration as municipal beautification and historic preservation" (Simmons 374). Towards the 1970s and later years, Albuquerque took efforts to revive "the sagging downtown district," establishing the Civic Plaza on a square block of land, two blocks north of Central Avenue, which had been cleared of existing buildings (Howard 261). This called for Saturday night celebrations held in Civic Plaza to honor different ethnicities in the city (261). Albuquerque's development brings to light the (post) conditions that now characterize the city with local spaces interweaving alongside this landscape and environment.

The expansion of Albuquerque into a (post) modern city leads to population growth, ethnic diversity, and a multiplicity of different socio-economic, racial, and sexualized groups. Still, Sonny only focuses on the imposition of Anglo-Americans in the city. He states:

> After the war everything began to change. Work for wages replaced the old barter system; neighbors no longer worked together. They went to work for the almighty dollar. To assimilate to a culture, you don't go to war, you provide low interest rates. And you grab hold of city hall. Once the newcomers-controlled city hall the old ways would go out the window. History records wars and conflicts, but the real colonization takes place by imposing law and language. The Americano's law and language were swords cleaving the land. The land was lost and traditions crumbling. (43)

The modernization that began to take place is represented as an invasion of the city by Anglo-Americans and their use of language and law. They use real estate development and the local government to control the city and its spaces. Some of these Anglo-Americans lead the urban development projects towards the modernization of the city that result in the loss of culture and traditions of mestiza/os ancestral past. Sonny sees them as newcomers in comparison to Chicana/os who are descendants of the Spanish, Mexican, or Pueblos. He notes how the old communal system is replaced by the capitalist system that homogenizes the city under the vision of Anglo-Americans, making them the dominant cultural group. Historically, Albuquerque in the 20th and 21st centuries is a developed, modern city; yet the question remains if the city demonstrates postmodern characteristics; does Sonny view uneven or even development?

According to David Harvey and Fredric Jameson, the period of late capitalism coincides with a postmodernist expression. Admittedly, literary scholars have noted that Anaya's works do have a postmodernist style; the question is whether the city and its urban development mark a period of late capitalism and whether these changes need further analysis to interrogate their

dialectical function to Sonny's sacred geography.[183] This calls for elucidating the types of spatial and cultural conditions presented by the novel. Marcial Gonzalez in "Postmdoernism, Historical Materialism, and Chicana/o Cultural Studies" contends that postmodernity, different from postmodern theory, "marks the emergence of an actual condition, characterized by extreme social fragmentation and differentiation, skepticism toward universal systems, a preference for localized politics as opposed to mass movements, and the depthlessness of aesthetic production" (163). The way that the Sonny Baca series describes Albuquerque and its landscape as fragmented between modernization and the Pueblos hints at a late capitalist period and the possibility of a post-modern city. Sonny's reflections also include observations where the dispersed populations and their economic status point to their central or peripheral positions in New Mexico.

The question still remains how Sonny, a detective, is motivated by a city under late capitalist conditions, especially as he tries to preserve the sacred geography that appears to be an antithesis to present conditions? Literary critics have noted how Chicana/o characters have attempted to deal with post-modern conditions in society; they explain that alienation, fragmentation, and a loss of subjectivity could be internal states that characterize postmodern individuals. Marcial González strongly argues against using postmodernism as a lens to understand the Chicana/o subject. She searches for a way to empower how Chicana/os are attempting to build an identity and cultural heritage rather than deconstructing the self and the collective.[184] For example, in some cases, Sonny could be described as a "cultural

[183] In the following section, I argue that the (post)modern values of the city are leveraged by Raven to lead it into its own destruction.

[184] This also points to a critical debate in Chicana/o literary studies that tries to discern whether postmodernism or historical materialism is a better framework of analysis. Some critics question the benefits of using a postmodern lens on Chicana/o identity and historical experience.

schizophrenic," a condition that "does not enable a viable response to social fragmentation because it encourages subjects to 'cope' with alienation rather than figuring out ways of overcoming alienation" (González 174). In *Jemez Springs*, Sonny's battle against Raven points to how he is overcoming any sense of cultural and spiritual alienation; his maturation as a shamanic detective reinforces how he is battling to preserve his identity and the significance of Albuquerque's geographical significance. González advocates on action that goes beyond inhabiting spaces as a form of spatial contestation. She considers the spatial category of heterotopias posed by Foucault and also discussed by other cultural geographers. She argues that heterotopias, or spaces of superimposition, cannot be spaces of resistance or contestation solely from social groups' inhabiting these spaces (179). Gonzáles calls for a form of praxis or action, both spatially and psychologically, to overcome the contradictory conditions. She proposes, instead, a historical materialist approach to Chicana/o literature in order to develop the tensions within dialectical relations. In Anaya's work, as Sánchez explains, the dissonant temporalities posed by the novel are not resolved.[185] In *Jemez Springs*, Sonny does not appear to resolve the tension between the (post) modern city and the sacred geography; he notices the cultural and material transformations of the city, but does not directly address gentrification or social segregation. Instead, his battle with Raven, on a grander scale, aims to preserve the sacred geography and the city by attempting to get rid of Raven and end his schemes.

As Sonny continues on his drive, he notes how (post) modern society replaces Albuquerque's sacred geography. Yet, we don't see any suggestions for how to resolve this tension. We only see his desire to preserve the sacred geography as land development changes

[185] Section 3 of this chapter delves deeper into an analysis of the unresolved contradictions and dialectical relations.

the landscape with new modern technologies and values. He observes how the values of the Pueblo ancestors fade and become replaced by these emerging values. The narrator explains:

> He [Sonny] drove slowly through Bernalillo. Once a quiet hamlet on the banks of the Rio Grande where Hispano families raised corn, beans, chile, and children. The place now buzzed with fallout from Rio Rancho. Up on the West Mesa, Rio Rancho was spreading like a fire out of control, covering the sandhills with brand-new homes, from the Rio Grande all the way to the Rio Puerco. (42-43)

The novel notes that Bernalillo was developed by American Real Estate, Petroleum Corporations (AMREP), and Intel Corp. The town now is marked by a series of retirement communities and high-tech communities as corporations have established their manufacturing facilities in town (Bryan 262). The modernization of the area has led to a population increase from 35 to 512 people in 1990, but a decade later, Bernalillo became "the 4th largest city in New Mexico, ranking behind Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Las Cruces" (Bryan 263). Bernalillo is an example of a contested space for Sonny. Corporations and the rise of the (post)modern city now characterize an area largely inhabited by the working class that makes up Albuquerque's economy: those on government and military payrolls, high-tech industries, and tourism (Howard 266). As Sonny laments earlier in the novel, "A way of life was dying for the old Hispanos of the valley. The fertile lands the Españoles and Mexicanos had settled during those terribly cold years at the end of the twentieth century now belonged to people who did not know the land's history" (16). The urbanization of Bernalillo brings new populations working for the above corporations. As the land develops, new populations migrate to the area and become the modern folks unaware of the sacred geography and its cultural value. With new residents, an older way of life is lost, as is knowledge of Albuquerque's sacred geography. The novel stresses the importance of knowing the history of the land where the Pueblos, the Spanish, and Mexicans produced the hybridity of cultures and values rooted in Sonny's Chicano identity. Sonny's Chicano identity is distinct from

that in California or other parts of the U.S. Southwest. In California there is a "rhetoric of abjection and rejection that informs many Chicana/os relation to their Spanish ancestry" (Rodriguez 114). They disdain Spain's invasion of Mexico and their colonial conquest. However, some Chicana/os in New Mexico value their Spanish roots as others, like Sonny, celebrate the mestizo heritage that resulted from New Mexico's colonial past. The sacred geography encompasses this historical and cultural significance threatened by the (post)modern city.

Sonny's idyllic visions of New Mexico's sacred geography, in a sense, mask the structural changes in the (post) modern city.[186] Henri Lefebvre reminds us of how spaces superimpose on one another. He states, "the principle of interpenetration and superimposition of social spaces has one very helpful result, for it means that each fragment of space subjected to analysis masks not just one social relationship but a host of them that analysis can potentially disclose" (*The Production* 88). The state of New Mexico and the city of Albuquerque are spaces with over-lapping processes and relations. Sonny's idealizations of a sacred geography seek to disclose traditional values that challenge the (post) modern values of the city that follow the cultural logic of late capitalism. Harvey characterizes post-modern society and the city in terms of "the forces that emanate from mass-consumer culture: the mobilization of fashion, pop art, television and other forms of media image, and the variety of urban life styles that have become part and parcel of daily life under capitalism" (*The Condition* 63). Sonny's own conceptualization of New Mexico and the city is also an ideological resistance to the city's

[186] I use the term (post) modernism to note the historical, materialist use of the term that signals the periodization developed by Fredric Jameson and David Harvey. These two theorists integrate Marxists nuances of how post modernism is an expression of the late capitalist period. I parenthesize post to acknowledge that within this capitalist period, the development of modern or post modern societies and cities doesn't follow an even development. This is especially crucial when considering New Mexico in comparison to the US/Mexico Border, Mexico City, and Santiago, Chile in previous chapters.

(post)modern values. Literary critics have focused on Anaya's literary works through a postmodernist lens, pinpointing how the psychological, the temporalities and genres, among other literary elements connote postmodernist themes of chaos, fragmentation, and discontinuity. Yet, the characterization of the city, as a potential character in the detective narrative, needs further analysis as a (post)modern city and how it affects the detective. Elucidating Sonny's quest for the sacred geography provides an understanding of the multiplicity of spaces and contestations among them that influences Sonny's detective work in New Mexico.[187]

Once Sonny reaches Jemez pueblo, his reflections about the mountains and environment are reiterations of New Mexico's sacred geography that forms part of a land-based identity linked to the Pueblos. The narrator relates:

> Sonny had learned that myth was empty without ritual, and so the pueblos performed the ceremonies, the dances. Without enacting the myth, life was empty, the children would forget. Along the Rio Grande corridor, in all the pueblos surrounding the Jemez caldera, it was the old people who kept the cycle of ceremonies intact, prodding the young to remember. (69)

The Pueblo rituals preserve the cultural values of the ancestors that Sonny wants to preserve. Although tales and myths can inform individuals about these traditional values, Sonny declares that the rituals and ceremonies are concrete events that keep these traditions and beliefs alive. The Pueblos and their ceremonies are a form of resistance against the loss of the sacred geography, the glyphs, and knowledge that are being supplemented by modern values. His personification of Jemez mountain echoes this belief as he states, "The mountain watched impassively the works of men and women...its fiery magma burned white. The old volcano would long outlast the scientists whose formulas created nuclear fire in the Los Alamos labs" (71). This sacred landscape recalls a cultural history: "The ancient people, the Anasazi, had left

[187] In the following section, I explore Sonny's detective spaces as a means to discuss how the (post) modern city can be corrupted by Raven. This corruption can lead to the city's own destruction.

their footprints on the sandy gullies, left their old pueblos on the mesas, left their drumming and songs playing along the piñon-covered foothills and in the tall ponderosa pines of the high country. Their voices could be heard. The spirits were there" (73). The Pueblos' ceremonies recall the ancestral spirits, keeping intact the memory and values of the sacred geography.

Spaces of Investigation in Jemez Springs: *The City Future and Shamanic Psyche*

"They, the city, and the entire region were caught in a battle that affected them and generations to come. It wasn't just the war on terrorists, Iraq, or Koreas threat, it was the need to feed starving children all over the world, the need to save the dying cultures. Their own backyard needed saving, for what does a man profit if he topples a dictator only to find the shadow of the dictator in his own heart" (297).

The Sonny Baca series refashions the archetype of the criminal in detective fiction. Raven is an otherworldly character whose criminal activities function as part of the good versus evil battle between him and the detective. Anaya uses this battle as a moral and ethical construction that can serve various purposes in the series. One of those constructions is Anaya's preoccupations with the reconciliation of the individual and his communal self. While Anaya's main construction lies in the spiritual and psychological aspects of the novel, it is worth noting how this construction relates to the socio-political commentary also present in the novel. The production of crime in the novel allows us to explore the link between the moral constructions and the socio-political commentary. In this section, I explore this link by exploring how the production of crime is contingent on the susceptibility of the city to corruption that threatens the values of the sacred geography. Raven manipulates individuals via their modern values, hoping to lead humanity to its own destruction. For Sonny, the loss of the city also means the loss of a land-based cultural identity hinged on collective memory of the sacred geography and cultural legacy. Raven, characterized as a sorcerer and criminal, threatens those values with his egotistical desire for chaos. Here I will focus on the spaces of investigation that provide a socio-

political commentary in the novel about the city and society. Although the production of crime lies in the realm of the shaman space where Sonny and Raven battle each other, these shamanic spaces overlap with the city spaces where in some instance both Sonny and Raven have encounters. The production of crime is contingent upon Raven's evil character, and the susceptibility of the city's moral corruption, that heightens the threat of (post) modern society on the sacred geography that Sonny idealizes. Raven takes advantage of this modernization to manipulate individuals via their modern values, hoping to lead humanity to its own destruction. For Sonny, the loss of the city also means the loss of a land-based cultural identity hinged on collective memory of the sacred geography and cultural legacy. Even though Sonny does not actively participate with the police or in crime scene investigations, he does reveal his concern for how Raven can scheme and manipulate the city. Sonny's battles against Raven, although motivated by personal revenge, represent battles for the preservation of humanity and Sonny's land-based identity.

The production of crime and its investigations occurs on two spatial levels in the novel: real spaces and representational spaces. In real spaces, Henry Lefebvre describes, in *The Production of Space*, the absolute spaces (like the city and mountains) where spatial practice occurs (lived space) (37). Raven's spatial practices in the city and landscape are often characterized by corruption, scheming, and criminal activity. Sonny's spatial practice is to investigate Raven's clues and whereabouts to confront him and seek revenge. Sonny, in *Jemez Springs*, is fueled by a desire for vengeance over the death of his friends and children in *Shaman Winter*. He is determined to put an end to Raven. In representational spaces, dreams and the psyche, lie the imaginary and symbolic elements, linked to history, where Raven and Sonny persistently confront each other. In *Jemez Springs*, we see representational spaces overlap with

real, lived spaces. The production of crime in *Jemez Springs* can be observed in this overlap of the city and shamanic spaces. On the one hand, literary critics note this overlap as a literary style, 'lo maravilloso real' or magical realism, where the real and the magical occur simultaneously. But on the other hand, the religious syncretism points to the cultural characterization of the curandero/shaman rooted in mestizo spirituality.

The production of crime in the novel centers on Raven's evil character and how he leverages the city towards his evil schemes against Sonny. In the spaces of the city, Raven is able to use the post-9/11 political climate to fuel society's paranoia against terrorists. Anaya provides commentary on how society is inherently corrupt and predisposed to Raven's schemes. For instance, in the beginning of the novel, Augie, the policeman, calls Sonny to inform him about the bomb planted on Jemez mountain. During Augie's call with Sonny, we see that the police officer uses this crisis as a form of career advancement. During their conversation. Augie states:

> 'You know the core of a nuclear weapons is still missing. So what if Raven sold it to Al Qaeda?' [rhetorically asks Augie]
> Sonny paused. Raven would form alliances with anyone out to create panic.
> 'Don't believe me? What if I told you I have an Al Qaeda operative prisoner?'[Augie continues.]
> 'You have an Al Qaeda agent?' Sonny repeated. That got his attention. What the hell was an Al Qaeda operative doing in Jemez Springs?
> 'Here's what I am guessing. Raven was paid by Al Qaeda. The FBI's been following this agent. All of a sudden, he shows up in Jemez Springs. Walks right into my hands. You know what this means. Promotion for me. I call the shots.' (33)

Augie has a conspiracy theory that ultimately benefits his career advancement in the police. He bases this conspiracy theory on the current American climate post-9/11 where terrorism and the anxieties over Al Qaeda lead people to react rashly. In the early 2000s, the 9/11 attacks, the war on Iraq, and Al Qaeda heightened racialization and the fear of terrorism in the United States, events that affected marginalized and underrepresented ethnic groups. The population's fear of

racial terrorists resulted in the profiling of and assaults on people of color. Augie suggests a partnership between Raven and Al Qaeda that needs to be combatted and will position him as a hero during this crisis. While not surprised, Sonny focuses more on Raven rather than on investigating the "terrorist crimes." He believes that the police can handle the logistics, while he goes for the main culprit who has a larger scheme in mind. Augie also informs Sonny that "the chief wants you to take a look at the bomb" (33). But, Sonny knows that Raven's feathers at the scene of the crime are a trap (33). He tells Augie to "let the Los Alamos Boys handle the bomb" (33). Sonny is not interested in investigating the details of the crime but is more interested in finding and confronting Raven.

When Sonny investigates and tries to deduce Raven's intentions towards the city, he has to consider how Raven can use the local puppet government and the federal government to achieve his goals. Sonny reflects on conspiracy theories that Augie and the politicians can fall prey to; he considers, "[Raven could] Hire a few misguided terrorists to plant a bomb, then turn against them. Promise the government one thing, and deliver another. Perhaps the whole thing wasn't a Raven plot, one more scenario by the CIA or FBI to entrap whatever terrorist cell existed in the state. Raven would play along with them" (100). Sonny's deductions show that he knows that Raven and government authorities are opportunists who seek their own political gains. For this reason, Sonny becomes more concerned about Raven, stating, "Had he [Raven] now moved beyond running drug shipments into the country, beyond the eco-terrorism he had plotted last summer. Was he now masterminding Al Qaeda cells and other terrorist cults that prayed to the gods of intentional ruin?" (103). As Sonny points out, unlike in the other novels, it seems that the stakes are higher in this novel where Raven appears to be scheming different ways of letting humanity vis-à-vis the city destroy itself. Anaya's moral construct in the novel shows

us that society via the CIA or FBI's possible scenario and Raven can be agents of corruption. If Sonny allows Raven to continue scheming around the city, he will be allowing Raven to become a threat to the city that has cultural significance for him.

The spaces of investigation that concern Sonny remind us that the sacred geography of Albuquerque is also at stake when Raven is free to scheme and fuel society's corrupt nature. After speaking to Augie on the phone, Sonny travels to Jemez mountain to learn more about Raven's plans and whereabouts. During the helicopter ride, the narrator informs us of the connections among the Pueblos, the Jemez river, the volcano, and the landscape. The Jemez river or "water snake" delivered the water down to the pueblos (98). The story reminds us of the role that water plays for residents of Albuquerque and the nearby areas. As Sonny continues to look at the landscape, the novel continues to relate the connection between the landscape and the Pueblo ancestors. The narrator states, "In the kivas of the Pueblos, the sipapu was a small, round hole in the earth. From such an opening, the stories told, the ancestors emerged long ago. Seen from up high the volcano's caldera was a sipapu of the earth, a place of emergence" (98). The opening of the volcano parallels the sipapus as places of ancestral knowledge. The sipus and ecological environment signal the traditional values of the sacred geography that Sonny links to his Chicana/o identity. Sonny observes, "The round, sunken crater of the mountain formed a Zia symbol!" (98). The Zia symbol reminds us of the land-based identity, filled with a conglomeration of cultures and communities, that Sonny cherishes.

The bomb planted at the Jemez mountain becomes a threat to the destruction of the sacred geography and the cultural legacy of the Pueblos that has influenced the New Mexico population over the years. The spaces of investigations are thus spaces of cultural and political significance for the indigenous and Chicana/o population, now threatened by Raven's actions.

The narrator describes the bomb: "There, about half a mile from the Highway which cut along the edge of the volcanic maw, sat the phallic spaceship, its nose stuck into the wet earth and winter-sere grass of the crater, its coat of shining metal reflecting the morning sunlight. The bomb, Raven's desire" (98). On the mountain lies the phallic symbol piercing the sacred landscape. The image of the bomb serves as a psycho-analytic and environmental threat to the mountain: first, the phallic bomb, or man, assaults the mountain, a female personification of the environment; and secondly, man, with its technological advancement and modern ideals, poses a threat to the sacred environment that archives the ancestral knowledge and cultural preservation of the Pueblos. Raven's schemes pose a threat to the Jemez landscape that is a place where ancestral knowledge and Chicano/a identities feel a sense of place and connection to their colonial past. The production of crime, while largely theorized in the shamanic spaces in the novel, does have implications in the lived spaces of the city and landscape. Raven's criminal actions extend beyond the shamanic spaces of evil sorcery to the city and landscape.

In addition to this murderous threat, Raven has the power to corrupt and scheme with politicians to encourage the destruction of the city through other means that include their (post) modern visions of the "City Future." In the Baca series, Anaya consistently provides socio-political commentary on how corporate tycoons seek to modernize Albuquerque as the "City Future," gentrifying the city and taking the water rights away from the Pueblos. While this is not a major focus in the novel, it's still a leveraging point for Raven against Sonny. Raven encourages the political antagonisms in hopes that the city will destroy itself to prove to Sonny that he is more powerful. Earlier in the novel, the narrator informs us how attempts at modernizing the city are occurring through political schemes between Mayor Fox and water privateer, Frank Dominic. Anaya's detective series, including his novel *Alburquerque* (1992),

featured the character Frank Dominic as the city's big tycoon who established a corporation to buy water rights from the state as well as confiscate the water rights from the pueblos. As the narrator informs us, "This was the same man who had proposed the city siphon off Rio Grande water, not for drinking, but to create a Venice in the city. He had a plan to build canals from Downtown to Old Town, a new image for the City Future, a casino on every corner" (29). The novel reiterates the image of the City Future to indicate how wealthy individuals like Dominic seek to modernize the city through neoliberal practices. The modernization of the city, as an American Venice, aims to attract tourists. Dominic seeks to reinvent Albuquerque as a competitive city to Las Vegas. Sonny wants to make sure that Mayor Fox, Dominic, and the governor haven't made a deal that would leave Dominic in charge of the city's water. As the narrator explains, "It was rumored that Fox had taken Dominic's money when he ran for mayor, and if the governor was dead that left Fox in charge of the henhouse, or the water house. The governor and Fox are business partners with Dom" (32). The death of the governor could result in Dominic's full possession of the city's water. Still, Mayor Fox reassures Sonny that he has secured enough water for the city. Even though water rights are at stake, politicians are completely corrupt. Sonny cannot trust that Mayor Fox will protect the water from full privatization.

Following the investigations on the mountain, Sonny's search in the city spaces reveals how Raven is able to antagonize Sonny, while putting the city and humanity at risk. During the Spring Arts Crawl, Sonny walks downtown, observing the city's reactions to a "national" crisis. His observations of folks in the arts festival explore the (post) modern society's consumerist bent under the guise of technological advances. Material commodities are now vices that dominate people's concerns. These factor into the "forgetting" of Chicana/o culture, its colonial past, the

importance of the landscape, and the teachings inscribed in them. Alburquequeños are shown to be drawn to gambling games during the national "crisis." Sonny notes, "There were also bets on if it was or wasn't a bomb, bets on whether the radioactive cloud would reach Albuquerque if Fat Boy did go off" (198). Sonny observes a consumerist culture that seeks capital from gambling activities. Society's superficial values mask the importance of the bomb on Jemez mountain, and how this national crisis can be leveraged by politicians and Raven to destroy the city. Sonny also notes how partygoers aren't aware of Dominic's plan to privatize water, stating,

> But wherever water rights had been privatized the cost of water had skyrocketed. Sure, the rich will be able to afford water, but if you didn't have the money the faucet would go dry. The chamber of commerce was inviting new. Businesses to start up in the City Future, and the city was providing all sorts of tax breaks. Development bonds and a free ride on taxes. (200)

During these moments of Sonny's introspection, the novel reveals how Sonny contemplates the socio-economic and political issues affecting the city. The novel, in the process, provides this socio-political commentary on the ecological issues that threaten the city and concern Sonny. The narrator thus ties real ecological concerns with Raven's intent in using Sonny's worries and concerns as political schemes in the city against him.

At the Artificial Intelligence exhibition, Raven confronts Sonny, showing him how the modern values of the city can be manipulated. According to Raven, images and virtual reality are the means to control the masses. Raven states, "This is it, Sonny. The new soma holiday. No more of those chemical highs, no more ecstasy drugs, none of that caca the kids learn to mix from the Internet, just the world of images to dazzle you. Think of it, Sonny, the image is now returned to its rightful place as mover of the universe, ahem, as it always was" (222). Virtual technology has replaced previous forms of addiction and escapism for society such as drugs and the internet. This form of simulacra keeps the masses from knowing the real world and its values.

For Sonny, this means that the virtual world threatens the sacred geography, the traditional values, and cultural heritage in New Mexico. Raven is confident that he can manipulate this unintelligible society. He critiques society, stating,

> I wanted you to see what our so-called civilization has come to. Virtual reality. You're on the way out, Sonny. Future anthropologists will find the machines, but they won't find a trace of the makers or those who went into the movies. They won't find Diogenes. You see, my dear boy, we are images in the movie of life. We are projections who strut and fret our hour upon the stage, and then are heard no more. The light will go out, Sonny, the movie will end. You will disappear into the Ovid far beyond virtual reality. (225-226)

Raven explains that civilization will be replaced and forgotten by machinery and (post) modern society. He believes that by eliminating Sonny, he can eliminate the myths, traditions, and importance of the sacred geography. All that will be existent will be the virtual, holographic world of images, and no longer the sacred earth that Chicana/o identity is rooted in. The confrontations with Raven challenge Sonny's beliefs and explore the tensions between (post) modern ideologies and the cultural traditions that are being left behind.

At the Hispanic Cultural Center, Raven does a live broadcast to the city persuading them that he has the codes to save Jemez mountain and the city from the bomb. Raven's live broadcast becomes a game show to make the city believe that he can save them. He uses this opportunity to turn the city against Sonny. Raven uses the corrupt natures of individuals in society to aggravate Sonny. In this social space, Sonny's investigations focus on the impact that Raven or any false notions can have on society. Even if Sonny's obsession lies with his own preoccupations of vengeance and the end of Raven, the novel reveals the danger of an interplay between Raven and the city's venality. During his broadcast, Raven interweaves the political issues of water rights, the bomb, and the loss of the cellphone tower, and Raven attempts to leverage these issues and politicians to destroy humanity and the city. Yet, we can see how

diverging interests of city-dwellers and politicians complicate Raven's purpose. When Frank Dominic updates the city on the water, the city's reactions show more concern over the usage of their cellphones; the narrator explains, "The crowd is primarily concerned about their cellphones. Waves of boos, ahs, and ohs interrupting Dominic's updates" (251). The main concern for urban dwellers is the usage of their phones. They portray the (post) modernist preoccupations with superficial needs like that of technology. The important issues of water privatization are of minor interest to this population. They take for granted the usage of water and its significance to the pueblos. Following this warning, Dominic introduces Raven as a savior, explaining, "Were it not for our friend Raven we would never have identified those responsible. A man known only as Bear is the leader of a small renegade group of Indians who call themselves Green; Green is a misnomer because this small group has connections to Al Qaeda" (251). Raven's identification of the "Green Indians" as the terrorist group collaborating with Al Qaeda to manipulate the crowd allows readers to see an example of corrupt corporate tycoons whose propaganda and lies manipulate the city. The Green Indians are targeted by Dominic so that the city will turn against the group and approve of his water privatization. This side presented in the novel further characterizes the (post) modern city as willing to support modernization projects that remove water rights from the pueblos in order to gentrify the landscape. Following the desires of the city, Raven coaxes everyone that he is better than Sonny, their lead P.I, because he can return usage of cellphones and provide the code to disarm the bomb on Jemez mountain. He informs the crowd, "the cell phones were disabled by the Al Qaeda terrorists! My people have fixed the problem. Go on, use your phones. They're working" (253). He feeds the city their own conspiracy theories, knowing that he has been the main culprit behind these crimes. The crowd applauds the return of their cellphones as the narrator states, "The gut-riveting fear of not having working cell phone

was suddenly dispelled. Being able to phone created a mass psychic release. Technology triumphed. The digital age was real, not illusion. The naysayers would be branded skeptics" (254). The (post) modern city is driven by its technological fetishes. As Raven noted earlier, these superficial desires allow him to manipulate the city and to irritate Sonny. Raven's production of crime around the city is shown to be enabled by the moral corruption of society. By manipulating the population, he hopes to prove to Sonny the demise of humanity and his triumph as the personification of evil.

Following the broadcast, Sonny leaves the Hispanic Cultural Center and chases after Raven into the Barelas' bosque. By the Barelas' bridge, alongside the Rio Grande's river's edge, Sonny and Raven have their final confrontation in the novel.[188] The confrontation takes place in both lived and representational spaces. The lived space of the Barelas Brigde, the Rio Grande, and its landscape reminds us that this bridge connected Albuquerque to "the South Valley, the span linking the city's urban barrios to the old agricultural valley, not exactly the Brooklyn Bridge or the Golden Gate but a bridge for the people nevertheless" (260). While the novel focuses more on the overlaid shamanic space, the lived space of the bridges and the city are still present in Sonny's mind. The lived and representational spaces in the novel are portrayed as overlaid rather than as separate containers. Furthermore, as Sonny gets knocked down by a sow, he also references the historical significance of lived space:

> The sounds of the river and bosque echo the creaking of carretas that in prior centuries lumbered up from Old Mexico carrying iron goods to exchange for New Mexican wolf, buffalo hides, and tons of nuts from the stately piñon trees before the concrete bridge was raised; a century later, horse-drawn wagons carrying produce from the South Valley to sell in the City Future as it grew and expanded. (261)

[188] Prior to this moment, these two had short confrontations on the road to Jemez mountain and at the Spring Arts Crawl.

The narrator's memory reveals his and Sonny's nostalgia as the city has modernized over the centuries as the "City Future." This loss points to the loss of the traditional culture that has been supplanted by (post) modern values. Yet, as a representational and shamanic space, the novel presents the bosque and Rio Grande as the setting of death and rebirth for both Sonny and Raven. The novel shifts back to representational spaces and the moral construct that drives Sonny's and Raven's rivalry.

The representational space, or shamanic space, showcases Raven's powers against Sonny. Their debates focus on the implications of ontological death and epistemological loss. Raven reaffirms his quest for the "end of so-called civilization" (267). He doesn't care about terrorists; his larger picture is to be the "Lord of Chaos" (267). This results in the end of humanity, culture, and the significance of time and space. Even when Sonny is primarily concerned with his own personal losses (the spirit of the twin girls and other close friends and family), his debate with Raven not only has philosophical implications but material as well. As Sonny debates with Raven, the reader is left to discern the implications of Raven's quest to be the Lord of Chaos. Through Sonny's retort against Raven's ideal world, we can see the material significance of Sonny's role as an anti-hero. Sonny states, "You know that chaos is formless. Nothingness. It's primordial sea before the Word. There exists no *being* in chaos, no reality, no center on which to stand. You take a dive into chaos and you become the mist before time and space existed" (268). A closer analysis of Raven's desire reveals the end of existence, which means no city, no culture, and no life. At first, the scope of Sonny's and Raven's battle appears philosophical, but should Sonny lose against Raven; then, what he represents is also lost as well.

In a sense, Sonny is an anti-hero who fights for his personal desires rather than against the larger implications of Raven's actions towards a collective—be that humanity, Chicana/os,

etc. When Raven returns to leveraging the chaos and darkness in individuals' hearts, Sonny dialectically explains, "Man's soul, composed of chaos, was also composed of light" (269). The relationship between good and evil, that is between Sonny and Raven, are characterized as oscillations, or back and forth pulls. As Rosaura Sanchez has noted, there is no synthesis to this dialectical relationship or resolution of temporalities. Marcial Gonzalez observes that this type of construct is also a form of schizophrenia without any praxis.

Just as the characters debate, the novel shifts us back to the lived space where Raven attempts to slash Sonny with his sword. This gives Sonny the opportunity to retrieve the Zia Stone. Yet, it is not Sonny's triumph over Raven. Bear, a side character whose personal loss is a driving force, rushes at Raven, sending both tumbling into the Rio Grande (273). The narrator explains:

> He drowned Raven in the river, washed all his sins away, as any river can do, call it the Rio Grande, the Ganges, the Nile, the Yangtze. A river by any name is an instrument of God. It's all the same: from water we come and to water we return. The cleansing was done, the shadow god baptized again, for the moment, for it is not then light that casts shadows, but the light of the sun, and at the end of the spring-equinox night the sun was destined to rise again. (274)

For the moment, as the novel states, Raven is cleansed of his wounds; but, it does not mean that there is a new synthesis or a resolution to the cyclical relationship. Raven will re-emerge as the shadow cast by the moon. Sonny and Raven will continue to struggle as representations of good and evil, light and shadow, etc. At the end of this case, Sonny preserves the Zia symbol and the traditional and spatial values it represents. However, he is no hero or vigilante; Bear's death denotes a different type of justice and ending to this detective story. Sonny, as guardian of the Zia symbol, is reborn and baptized through the pigs' blood from earlier in the confrontation with Raven.

The end of *Jemez Springs* results in the rebirth of Sonny, as a shaman, who will need to preserve humanity and the cultural legacy of Chicana/os. When he first chases Raven into the bosque, Sonny falls and gets splattered with the blood of a pig. The narrator explains,

> this baptism in the name of those forgotten gods who long ago had their images engraved with boards on temple walls, in the name of all those who for centuries in New Mexico had eaten sangre, the blood of a just-butchered pig fried with onions and flavored with red chile de ristra and scooped up with tortillas during the ceremony of la matanza, and finally, in the name of the blood of all creatures who die and give sustenance to the living. (259)

This pagan rebirth signals the return to the cultural legacy and spatial importance of the land for Chicana/o identity. The narrator could be referencing the gods of the Anasazi, the Pueblos, or the Mexicas. This baptism merges the significance of blood and animal sacrifice for those ancient civilizations' beliefs that continue to live on in the practices of mestizos and Chicana/os. Interestingly, as Raven is baptized with water and Sonny with blood, the narrator still confirms that "Water is blood, say the old farmers; nothing disappears but makes its way back in the cycle of life and death" (274). As time passes, both characters will still struggle between good and evil and the preservation of humanity and its cultural legacies.

The social spaces and investigations that Sonny embarks on explore both the sacred geography of Albuquerque and the shamanic spaces that focus on human nature. The production of crime presented in the novel explores possible threats to Chicano/a identity and the cultural heritage in New Mexico. The shamanic spaces where Sonny confronts Raven emphasize the spirituality, mythos, and psyche that showcase the importance of connecting with the ancestors, traditional beliefs, embedded in the geography. As the narrator reminds us,

> Don't forget the dead, the elders said. Ancestor worship? Call it what you want, it's part of our heritage…. Some scoffed at this. Bah! Prayers for the dead. That's for the Chinese, the Koreans, the old Aztecs and Mayas. But get a life, this was the twenty-first century, the Digital Age. Ghosts? Spirits? Wasn't that for

> Hollywood? After all, this was the age of quantum psychology. Forget Freud! (284).

Sonny's battle with Raven symbolically results in the preservation of the Chicano/a heritage in New Mexico. He prevents Raven's desire to destroy humanity, which results in the loss of their cultural heritage linked to New Mexico's geography. We see that Raven manipulates the city and corrupts individuals in a process that is both internal and external. This fight of preservation is also part of keeping the memory of the origins of their identity.

The Blending of Genres: The Shamanic Detective and the Spirit of Space

Rudolfo Anaya blends multiple genres in the Sonny Bacca detective series, incorporating elements of mystery, bildungsroman, and myth among other genres. In the first two novels – *Zia Summer* and *Rio Grande Falls* —we learn about Sonny and his life in Albuquerque. However, in *Shaman Winter*, Anaya further develops Sonny's shamanic purpose; and in *Jemez Springs*, we finally see Sonny access the spirit world in dreams and reality. Cultural studies critics, like Sánchez, have noted the dissonance between the novel's historical and ahistorical elements such as dreams versus New Mexico's history versus magical time leaps in the story. Following Sánchez's observations of these dissonant and contradicting temporalities, I'd like to expand on how Anaya uses these temporalities (genre, history, spiritualism, psyche, and the city) as a process of discernment towards conceptualizing Chicana/o identity. The novel's plot and detective narrative focus on the animosity between Sonny and Raven, as both characters are obsessed with defeating one another in a spiritual battle of good versus evil. The series' plot development emphasizes the psyche, spiritual, and shamanic aspects of the novel. Yet, other literary elements contribute to this detective narrative that allow the reader access to interrogating the cultural heritage and significance of the time-space that fashions Sonny Baca.

Jemez Springs, as the last novel of the series, invites the reader into the spatial journeys that make Sonny Baca a unique Chicano detective. While there are a plethora of Chicana/o detectives, Anaya's use of the detective narrative provides a case study for understanding New Mexican Chicana/o identity, and its specific cultural hybridity and history. In this section, I attempt to bridge together Anaya's spatial theorizations with the ending remarks of the narrator in *Jemez Springs*. I explore how the novel creates the spaces for identity-building as a process that can have hemispheric implications.

The spatial process of identity is to discover the spirit of space, because it reveals the cultural heritage of mestizo, Chicana/o identity. I expand on Robert Con Davis-Undiano's analysis of Anaya's New World Script and Anaya's conversation with Johnson to theorize what the spirit of space means for the shamanic detective.[189] Davis-Undiano focuses on how Anaya fashioned the New World script to theorize a mestizo, land-based identity rooted in the Americas rather than just the U.S. Southwest. In "Aztlán: A Homeland Without Boundaries" (1989), Anaya reconsiders Aztlán as a homeland that may not be localized in "an actual space" (Cantú 131).[190] He develops a framework, A New World script, that re-inscribes Aztlán as an identity that outreaches the U.S. southwest and other territories in Mexico (131). The New World framework conceptualized identity in terms of the ancient people's connection to land and the legacies of indigenous conquests (131). I use the spirit of space as a representational space that unveils the importance of a land-based identity, that to a degree, begins acknowledging the colonial legacies that underline identity. Anaya defines the spirit of space as:

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[189] See Davis-Undiano Con, Robert. "Land, the Southwest, and Rudolfo Anaya." Cantú Roberto, editor. *The Forked Juniper: Critical Perspectives on Rudolfo Anaya*. First ed., University of Oklahoma Press, 2016; and, Johnson, David and David Apodaca, "Myth and the Writer: A Conversation with Rudolfo Anaya." González-T César editor. *Rudolfo a. Anaya : Focus on Criticism*. Lalo Press, 1990.

[190] See, Anaya, Rudolfo. "Aztlán: A Homeland Without Anaya, Rudolfo A, and Lomelí Francisco A.,edited. *Aztlán : Essays on the Chicano Homeland*. Academia/El Norte Publications, 1989.

> a set of historical, cultural, and language traditions, including the myths of place because those primal images are our connection to human history, hieroglyphs of the spirit which help us transcend our daily life and feel connected to a purpose in the universe. (55)

The spirit of space alludes to the myths, symbols, images, and other forms of representation that recall the historical, cultural, and language traditions of our primal existence. For Anaya, these representations can be found in the self-discovery of individuals where they begin to comprehend their individuality within the community.

The spirit of space is found in the collective memory of multiple folks' connections to these primal images. The myths of space for Anaya are found in the heart and expose the spirit of space in such a way that old traditions and cultures are recovered. For Anaya, as he states in a round table conversation with Alurista, M Herrera-Sobek, A Morales, and H. Viramontes, myth is found in the heart; "It is the truth that you have carried, that we as human beings have carried all of our history, going back to the cave, pushing it back to the sea" (Gonzalez – T 445). This theorization points to how myth can be an ontological structure that humanity can retrieve. Discovering this symbology, he explains, "is a step forward, because what you bring from the unconscious will serve you in the step that you are going to take in your profane reality" (445). Anaya does not see this as a retrogressive step but as a revelation of the symbols and archetypes that are available to all people that have been given a cultural setting to be tied to (446). The spirit of space is the process in which we enter the unconscious and the soul to live within a moral construct that preserves the cultural and historical values of our past. Through a hemispheric lens, understanding the spirit of space means journeying into the self-discovery that connects one to the collective memory of one's history, cultural, and language traditions grounded in the legacy of indigenous and colonial conquests.

This analysis gains more grounding, when we apply the New World script that underscores the invocation of Native and cultural origins in the Americas. The spirit of space could be developed and align more with the exploration of how identity (part of an individual's being) is constructed through colonial processes. Current scholars already point to decolonization efforts already in place. Anaya's New World script and the spirit of space begin a spatial consciousness to identity; these frameworks lack the political activism and engagement advocated by decolonial theorists. Heiner Bus, nonetheless, agrees that Anaya's New World scrip to an extent aligns with theorists like Victor Raul Haya de la Torre, Jose Marti, Jose Vasconcelos, Gloria Anzaldua, and Anibal Quijano who also considered the implications of the Spanish conquest on identity (Cantú 131). The New World script invokes the Native cultural origins of the Americas as spaces of myths that give individuals access to the spirit of space. Sonny, in the detective series, journeys through the spaces of myth, demonstrating the importance and recovery of the cultural legacies that constitute part of his mestizo, Chicano identity.

Sonny Baca and Raven's journey in the detective series is a spatial process of rediscovering the spirit of space through an internal pilgrimage through the soul and the unconscious. Anaya describes this internal pilgrimage through a spatial metaphor in which one travels the N/S/W/E axes that hold individual and collective memory, understanding of identity, and one's purpose. Anaya explains,

> The North-South axis that is the community being healed. In Chicano literature, or a great deal of it, is talking about the reconciliation of self within the community, with the communal self, which is exactly what Jung says. You rediscover who [you] are individually in your collective memory, not in your individual memory. It's Freud who hung us up with individual memory. (436)

While the North-South axis defines the communal self, the East-West axis is the Freudian axis that explains how humans do everything through sexual impulses (436). The recovery of symbols and archetypes in the soul can be found through journeying the North-South axis and reconciling the self within the community. In the detective series, Sonny Baca has learned about his New Mexican Chicano/a historical and cultural roots. He learned how his ancestral history depends on the preservation of traditional values found in mythical spaces that are not just representational, but also projected on the land. In the detective series, Sonny travels both axes, learning to reconcile his ego-self and his communal self. Sonny voyages through the East-West axis learning to see himself in the collective memory of his ancestors and cultural heritage. In *Shaman Winter*, he goes back into history to save his family and learns to navigate the dream world. In contrast, we see Raven reside within the East-West axis, fueling his egoistical desires to become Lord of Chaos. Raven is motivated by his desire to kill Sonny and destroy humanity. He has no sense of a collective self or collective memory. Those who fall prey to Raven's dark subconscious powers, fall prey to the loss of their identity and being. They are susceptible to corruption in order to attain their selfish goals.

As Sonny develops into a shamanic detective, his quest is also to understand the dichotomies and discern his purpose. Sonny and Raven provide examples of this spatial travel that can lead towards or away from collective memory and perseverance of primal images. Sonny's journey exemplifies the path towards self-discovery and the healing of the community. Sonny's character development poses an exploration of the N/S/E/W axes and the cosmic tree of life that aims to reconcile two world views in a new way (Gonzalez – T 436). The tree of life refers to the archaic and primal symbols of the people found who wandered through Anahuac and that valley (445). Sonny, the modern Chicano detective, must learn to reconcile the

contemporary civilizing and socializing that threaten the detective's ancestral and cultural legacies. As Anaya himself considers,

> Well, I think they're primarily in the land, and in the collective memory; in the collective sense of who I am, with both of the axes. Because if I am mestizo, I share in the East-West axis. But I am more aligned on the North-South axis; for the total sense of me as communal person, I have to find the point where they meet. They almost become easily joined and separated again. East-West-North-South: how do we wed them together? (437)

The detective narrative blends multiple temporalities to explore how these dialectical relations could come to fruition even if there is no clear answer or synthesis. The importance lies in exploring the process through which the individual fits within the collective. This also means that as the individual enters the collective memory of humanity or even just Chicana/o identity, there is a learning experience about understanding history and our place in it. For Sonny, it is understanding his culture as part of Chicana/o history and New Mexican history. Even as his main concern is Raven, the literary elements such as the city and the people remind us that he is part of a larger population of Chicana/os. Sonny Baca is not just mind and spirit, but a detective in society.

The tree of life describes the existential dimensions of identity. The ending of *Jemez Springs* proposes further theoretical explorations of how one may journey through the spirit of space. The narrator reflects on the four seasons that characterize Sonny's journey stating, "[Sonny] explored the four quadrants, entered the fourth dimension and learned that in other universes there might yet be eleven or twelve more dimensions to explore, depending on who did the defining" (281). The four quadrants reference the four axes of the N/S/E/W directions that the detective series of four novels explores in each encounter between Raven and Sonny Baca. So far, in the series, Sonny has examined "the cosmology that maps a man's life, his heart, his humors, his family, his neighborhood, the city, the country, the universe" (281). Sonny has gone

into the unconscious and brought out the symbols that hold importance to his cultural identity. Sonny is linked to a cultural setting that cannot be ignored.

Anaya's preoccupations with Chicana/o identity lay in exploring the pluralities of mestizo identity from a stance point of collective memory and the spirit of space. The dialectical relationships he presents—N/S and E/W, Sonny and Raven, history and shamanism, among others—seem to be held in tension without synthesis or a possibility of unification. This is an ongoing process that Anaya since the 1990 continues to discern. In his conversations with Johnson, he uses the Quetzalcoatl myth as a way to explain why trying to merge polarities and dichotomies are important. He states, "If you leave them separated, if you leave a polarity or dichotomy, then the world is going to destruction. So, it seems to me that we have to look at that principle that is throughout all cultures and through all mythology, and say, what does it mean to us?" (Gonzalez-T 426-427). As previously noted, Sonny and Raven present two different ways of engaging with the spirit of space. These are also presented as polar opposites: light versus dark, or North/ South versus East/West. Anaya uses these characters as a way of also surveying his theoretical position to merge, harmonize, and reconcile dichotomies and dissonances. In *Jemez Springs*, we see Sonny tell Raven, "Look Raven, we are in this together. Why split ourselves in two? Why continue the old duality?" (266). Sonny knows that there can be no peace between them, yet he still poses the question. The dialectical relation between Sonny and Raven cannot reach synthesis, or a new world vision. Yet, these two are bound to meet again and again in centuries to come. Even the narrator later notes, "The evolution of two brothers, as it were, come to speak to each other as eternal reflections of one soul" (272). Anaya aims to demonstrate how these two are representations of "Man's soul, composed of chaos, was also composed of

light" (269). These two characters represent a moral construction and the understanding of different processes.

Anaya includes the journey into the tree of life in the ending of *Jemez Springs;* he foreshadows the continuation of Sonny's journey, because, as scholars have pointed out, there is still no resolution, or new way of reconciling these dimensions and processes presented in the novel. The narrator ponders:

> Perhaps Sonny yet had to climb the tree, unify the four directions with the fifth, the up and down, climbing upward into the branches where, as if climbing a family tree, he would meet the damnedest ancestors and the role they once played in his coming into being. (282)

Here the narrator suggests a type of ascension on a vertical axis that transforms a 2D graph into a 3D graph: an x, y, and z axis. In the z axis, Sonny will venture into another realm to meet "the damnedest ancestors" those of a bad nature. One could imagine perhaps this could bring an opportunity for real decolonial efforts into a fifth season that addresses the violence and displacement of colonial conquest. Yet, Anaya's main concern is the spiritual journey into discovering one's purpose and identity within the collective, whichever collective that may be. Some of Sonny's concluding remarks leave us with a return to the mundane, earthly life of the Chicano man; he states:

> Yes, the fifth season might prove even more phantasmagorical than today's adventure. Best leave it at that. Best do our daily work in the here and now, but work consciously, praising the Light that arrives each. Morning with the rising of the sun, praise the saints and kachinas, praise the Lords and Ladies of the Light. Bless all of life. (282)

Where other Chicano/a authors have focused their detective narratives on political concerns of the Chicano/a movement and their geographical experiences as Chicano/as, Anaya adapts the detective narrative in an attempt to use myth as a representational space found in individuals'

hearts. The detective Sonny Baca develops into a shamanic detective that understands the importance of spiritual spaces and their implications in the real world.

Conclusion: The Resistance of National, Official Historiographies and Literary Canons in Latin American and Chicana/ Detective

Latin American and Chicana/o authors' detective works emphasize diverse aspects of the detective formula that go beyond the original conceptualizations of the genre proposed by Anglo-American and British authors. Latin American and Chicana/o authors this cultural genre is not just a form of entertainment, but a means through which to express a political commitment to fighting injustices present in their respective society. These authors challenge established hierarchies of power within literature by demonstrating that the detective genre, often considered a "low" cultural form" can, as Mempo Giardinelli explains, have literary merit: "[la novela policiaca es] un genero tan sólido, tan arraigado, con tanta calidad artística como cualquier otro; como la literatura costumbrista, la objetivista, la psicológica, la realista, la que se quiera" (16).[191] Latin American and Chicana/o authors have used detective fiction to challenge the (national) canon by incorporating in the genre unheard stories of their communities that the state or dominant culture seeks to suppress.

In analyzing the detective works of Ramón Díaz Eterović, Paco Ignacio Taibo II, José Salvador Ruiz, Rolando Hinojosa, and Rudoldo Anaya, I have explored the diversity that these authors contribute to the cultural form as it has traveled across the northern hemisphere of the Americas.[192] These authors adapt the Anglo-American hardboiled formula that considers society as inherently corrupt to delve deeper into the spaces and processes that create these corrupt conditions. Their detective works allow for the analysis of how socio-economic and political conditions facilitate the production of crime in their respective cities. Latin American detective

[191] I provide my own translation: a genre so solid, so ingrained, with as much artistic quality as any other; such as costumbrista, objectivist, psychological, and realistic literatures; whatever literature you want.
[192] In this dissertation, I do not aim to define what America is or what detective fiction should be, since it is beyond the scope of this study. Instead, I note how Latin American and Chicana/o authors contribute to the detective genre and the role that space and place have in the study of detective fiction and the stories themselves.

fiction critiques the state and its policies for exacerbating the inequitable social conditions experienced by the lower classes, and in some instances, by ethnic minority populations. Chicana/o detective works portray the conditions under which ethnic minorities in the U.S. live. In some cases, these detective works focus on the construction of identity in the context of the Chicana/o movement, workers' rights struggles and issues of gentrification, among other topics. Thus, both Latin American and Chicana/ o authors indict the government and the dominant culture in society, while revealing the experiences and stories of populations that are marginalized and oppressed. The detective works of Ramón Díaz Eterović, Paco Ignacio Taibo II, José Salvador Ruiz, Rolando Hinojosa, and Rudolfo Anaya provide counter-narratives using this cultural form to contest literary spaces and state politics. In the process these Latin American and Chicana/o authors, including those stated above, contribute to the development of the detective genre through their political persistence to use literature to indict systemic injustices by the state and dominant society. In doing so, both Latin American and Chicana/o fiction builds on numerous techniques and the recovery of historical events by focusing on particular geopolitical spaces that are crucial to the plot. For this reason, works in Hemispheric studies that deal with literature and space have been helpful in considering the impact that Latin America and Chicana/a detective fiction has had on literature and the narrative formula itself.

In conceptualizing literary production beyond the limitations of (national) canons, Hemispheric scholars in Latin American and Chicana/a literature have provided ways to contest official narratives by drawing on works that focus on marginalized and under-represented groups and that point to the importance of decolonizing and resisting imperialism, settler colonialism, neocolonialism, and more. The analysis of detective fiction by Latin American and Chicana/o authors encourages us, as Lavander and Rutger note, to think of nations as historical

configurations that include and exclude others (5). Literary canons provide "official" narratives that reinforce national boundaries and ideologies. These accepted approaches and formations in (national) canons often exclude detective fiction as "a popular genre that is primarily used for entertainment value" (Sotelo 5). The political commitment embedded in the detective narratives of Latin American and Chicana/o authors on the other hand is crucial to our reading of them counter-narratives to the "official" forms of history and literature that the state supports.

Lavanders and Rutgers, like many other hemispheric studies scholars utilize frameworks that provide "spatio-temporal vantage points where comparative approaches bring out the contingency of both the nation and region" (6). Hemispheric methodologies, in a sense, "put pressure" on historical configurations of the nation-state, including our conceptualizations of what "America" is (Lavander and Rutgers 4). These methodologies encourage scholarship that analyze literatures in new ways that decenter the state and uplift peripheral stories and narratives. For example, Latina/o and Chicana/o literature scholars use these methodologies to consider how their respective literatures form part of American studies. They try to think of how to incorporate their narratives without endorsing U.S. imperialism and without going along with the marginality that it places on their experiences. These scholars find ways to empower themselves and resist the oppressive structures both in literature and society that conceal their experiences. For example, Lamas proposes setting up a Latino/a continuum to consider identities occupying multiple spatialites within the continuum since Latina/os are a heterogenous population; Coronado, on the other hand, traces the discursive (trans) formations of writing as a mode of searching for immanence; and Alemán utilizes the dialectics of difference to discuss Chicana/o identity under post-nationalism.

The detective narratives by Ramón Díaz Eterović, Paco Ignacio Taibo II, José Salvador Ruiz, Rolando Hinojosa, and Rudolfo Anaya decenter the canon and reveal each author's political commitment to the writing of counter-histories and narratives that represent the unvoiced stories of those populations marginalized by the state or dominant culture. Their respective detective narratives' socio-political commentary is a refusal to maintain their respective society's status quo. *La novela negra*, *la novela neopoliciaca,* neoliberal noir, and *la novela post-policiaca* voice the different experiences of political and cultural oppression imposed by official institutions that cannot be trusted with the truth. These detective focus on marginalized geopolitical spaces and expose their relation to larger and more powerful centers of society.

In addition to offering a comparative study of how Latin American and Chicana/o authors contribute to the development of the detective fiction genre, this dissertation also places an emphasis on the role of the city and geopolitical spaces in these detective works. Prominent, cultural geography theorists like Henry Lefebvre, David Harvey, and Fredric Jameson describe ways of considering space as a relational process that is critical to understanding, as I have found, the socio-economic and political situations of Mexico, Cuba, the U.S.-Mexico Border, and Albuquerque, New Mexico. Space is intimately related to the marginalization and oppression of certain social groups that, in some instances, end up murdered. These theorists' analysis of late capitalism, modernity, and the post-modern city help elucidate how capitalism transforms geopolitical spaces through rapid urbanization and uneven economic development. This dissertation finds that these economic and political processes are represented as crucial in the detective works under consideration as prototypes of the city figure centrally in the detective narrative. Some of the detective works also provide counter-narratives by revising history and

exposing how the government and dominant culture manipulate these processes against marginalized populations.

The aim of this dissertation has been to consider how these detective works offer counter-narratives and histories to challenge Latin American authoritarian states and U.S. essentialism as a First World country and its dominant culture. It is not the aim of this dissertation to use this study as a way to marginalize racial and sexualized groups. Unfortunately, detective fictions still remain predominantly patriarchal and racist in some respects. The genre needs further intervention by BIPOC authors and scholars who can decolonize discourses and further challenge normative assumptions of race, gender, sexuality, citizenship, disabilities, and more. I, myself acknowledge, my position as an American academic with the privilege to research and analyze literary texts from Northern America. I speak as a scholar who was previously undocumented in the U.S., immigrated from Mexico City to Los Angeles, California, and was raised in a low -income household by a single parent. I do plan in future work to consider detective fiction written by women.

The first section on Latin American authors illustrates how *la novela negra*, *la novela neopolicia*, and *post-policiaca* are detective narratives that indict the state and its power to transform cities and societies. Díaz Eterović 's detective Heredia, Taibo II's detective Belascoarán, and Ruiz's detective Nepantla are motivated to be detectives upon seeing the injustice and inequitable conditions in their respective cities. For them, authoritarian governments and liberal/neoliberal economic policies form part of the processes that facilitate the production of crime in the city. These processes have become a system of impunity and corruption masked by government institutions.

Nadie Sabe Mas que los Muertos emphasizes the importance of historical spaces to show how competing political ideologies transform cities and even houses over time. For example, the novel shows us how a house in a sector known as poblaciones for socialist collectives becomes a site of contention between two political ideologies: the Pinochet neoliberal dictatorship and the socialist, possibly communist, poblaciones supported by Allende. The city in *No Habra Final Feliz* becomes a leveraging space that gives Belascoarán hope that he can at least put an end to the Halcones group. Every shoot-out and every battle in the city represent an attempt to claim the city from the nation-state and its corrupt agents by showing readers that there are battles to be waged against the nation-state that rules over the city and society. The criminal production exposed in *Nepantla P.I* consists of similar interrelated levels in which the state, local police, and local spaces contribute to the commodification of sexualities, illegal substances, and the exploitation of cheap labor. The novel shows how the economic development of the city has resulted in an uneven urbanization that has fashioned the city with old maquiladora buildings, an underworld, and rural areas with dispersed settlements. The state in these respective detective novels has produced an official historical narrative that belies the experiences of those oppressed and murdered. The challenge these detectives face is to find justice against a corrupt government system. They leverage city spaces as a means to re-write the history produced by the state. The detectives Heredia, Belascoarán, and Nepantla explore the possible failures of a one-man revolution against the state. They pose alternative forms of resistance that lie in underscoring the importance of city dwellers and their local spaces. These detectives defend their city by leveraging its spaces and people, noting in the process the historical transformations of the city and the processes that produce crime in order to expose the state as a culprit and demystify an

ambiguous system. The city is both a material and symbolic representation where battles against systemic corruption can be waged.

The second section on Chicana/o detective fiction focuses on two Chicano writers whose works don't solely focus on the historical impact of the Chicano movement. These works are set during the post-cultural nationalist period; at this point Chicana/os studies began to explore the diversity of identity. For this study, I chose two diverging works that consider Chicana/o identity and ethnic minorities. The Chicano authors, Rolando Hinojosa and Rudolfo Anaya, present two different stylistic approaches to the detective narrative. Hinojosa focuses on a more realistic portrayal of the U.S.-Mexico border to show how a Chicano detective works with the police to achieve justice. The novel provides various points of view provided by Mexican, Chicano, and Anglo-American characters about crime in their respective city. As critics note, Hinojosa attempts to describe the whole landscape in Texas, including the characterization of individuals in its population. Sotelo sees both Hinojosa and Anaya's focus on their respective states and cities as providing epics that tell larger stories of different Chicana/o ethnic populations.

Similar to *Nepantla PI*, *Ask A Policeman* shows how the black market thrives on the late capitalist logic of trade and privatization that reaches its climax with the implementation of neoliberalism. However, *Ask a Policeman* uses the police procedural to explore how drug trafficking crimes are solved through Mexican and American police units' successful collaboration. The police procedural reveals that although the border region's porous space can be beneficial to criminals, police units who collaborate with one another can analyze the criminal spaces to reveal the criminals, their motives, and their victims. Clearly the notion of justice is alive and well in Hinojosa's narrative, unlike in *Nepantla P.I.*

Anaya's focus on Albuquerque's sacred geography touches on the ancestry of the Pueblos, the different Chicanos in New Mexico and the Anglo-American migrant groups in the state, offering a historical overview of how the city and landscape has changed over the years. Both Chicano novels help us understand the importance of both cultural and the socio-political and economic circumstances that can become oppressive in society. Hinojosa's police procedural poses that a unit of local police can achieve justice if led by a Chicano detective who can navigate multiple temporalities. In *Jemez Springs,* Sonny's idyllic visions of New Mexico's sacred geography do not however mask the structural changes in the (post) modern city, as he comes to see that Raven's schemes pose a threat to the Jemez landscape, a place where ancestral knowledge resides. Here, too, Chicano/a identities have a sense of place and feel a connection to their indigenous and colonial past. The production of crime, while largely theorized in the shamanic spaces in the novel, does have implications in the lived spaces of the city and landscape. Anaya attempts to recover the ancestral, indigenous cosmologies tied to the land via glyphs and stories recalled by older characters. Sonny's nemesis, Raven, manipulates individuals via their modern values, hoping to lead humanity to its own destruction. For Sonny, the loss of the city would mean the loss of a land-based cultural identity hinged on collective memory of the sacred geography and cultural legacy, and for that reason he sets out to defeat Raven, a defeat that is seen as temporary for evil forces are seen to return every generation.

My dissertation has considered the importance of cities and socio-economic and political policies that have motivated the detective narratives of Ramón Díaz Eterović, Paco Ignacio Taibo II, José Salvador Ruiz, Rolando Hinojosa, and Rudolfo Anaya. Further studies of Latin American, Chicana/o, Latina/ o detective fiction could explore a broader spectrum of the cultural form for understandings of intersectionalities, migration and population, and the globality of this

genre in the "Americas." For example, in future studies, one could also consider the role of sexuality and gentrification in Chicana/o and Latina/o detective works by Leticia Nieto and Michael Nava. These detective narratives also explore the importance of re-claiming spaces by marginalized communities in the U.S. Latina/o detective fiction also offer broader view of Puerto Rican and Cuban American communities and their problems. For example, the impact of immigrant policies and U.S. imperialism in Suzzane Chazin's Puerto Rican police fiction that features detective Jimmy Vega. Gender is further explored in Carolina García-Aguilera's work. Her Latina detective focuses on Cuban American identity construction in the context of U.S.-Cuba geopolitics. In this vein, one could also broaden the Latin American perspective of U.S.-Latin American relations by considering detective works like *Adios Hemingway* by Padura Fuentes or the novel *Muertos Incómodos* by Paco Ignacio Taibo II. *Post-policiaco* novels also continue to attract readers in numbers and do work dealing with, the U.S.-Mexico border and other geopolitical spaces presented, for example, in the Emilia Cruz series by Carmen Amato. *Triple Crossing* by Sebastian Rotella exemplifies another police procedural featuring, this time, a Chicano border patrol agent who must learn how to navigate the U.S.-Mexico border to learn who the real criminals are. Similarly, the U.S.-Canada border and Latina/o Canadian detective fiction can expand our analysis of borders and different ethnic communities. Cuban author Jose Latour's detective novel *Crime of Fashion* (2009) follows detective Elliot Steil from Miami to Toronto on a case. Other Canadian authors such as Michael Boughn, Deryn Collier, Roy Innes, Michael Januska, Grant McKenzie, Mary Moylum, Michael Slade, Carsten Stroud, and Sheila Kindellan-Sheehan also use detective fiction to address crime along the U.S.-Canadian border.

This dissertation does not include a discussion or analysis of film and how its cinematography has also greatly impacted the detective genre. Famous detective novels have

also been adapted and made into tv shows and movies. For example, Leonardo Padura Fuentes' detective Mario Conde series has been adapted for a four-part series streaming on Netflix, called *Four Seasons in Havana*. Other original detective tv shows have been aired featuring Chicano detectives as well. The *Penny Dreadful* tv series provides an enriching view of narratives. One, for example, focuses on mystery, the supernatural, and gothic classic stories of Dorian Grey, Frankenstein, etc., whereas the second season in *Penny Dreadful: City of Angels* solely focuses on Los Angeles' first Chicano detective. The story unfolds as the detective faces claims of space by Nazis, Anglo-Americans, and Chicana/os in the 1920s when Los Angeles being to undergo gentrification. The combinations and explorations of detective fiction are endless but one must investigate these new offerings with the hopes of expanding our understanding of how ethnic minority detective fiction, Latina/o and Chicana/o detective fiction, and Latin American detective fiction function as counternarratives to reclaim spaces, that allow for the construction of erased histories, and voice the marginalization that has yet to be pronounced. I hope that this dissertation will encourage more social-justice-driven scholarship on the genre to draw connections between marginalized ethnicities and races that seek to challenge systemic forms of oppression and, in the process, demonstrate the value of detective fiction in literary studies.

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