

Anticipating Transformation: The Urbanization of Consciousness in Eduardo Mendoza's *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta* and *La ciudad de los prodigios*

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Very few Spanish novelists in the last 30 years have enjoyed more success with critics and readers than Eduardo Mendoza, and even fewer have matched the intensity and consistency with which he portrays his native city of Barcelona in his works. In this study I reassess Mendoza's two most critically acclaimed novels—*La verdad sobre el caso Savolta* (1975) and *La ciudad de los prodigios* (1986)—in relation to the urbanization of capital, the urbanization of consciousness and the politics of space and place as described by the geographer and urbanist David Harvey. Examining these novels in the light of contemporary urban theory facilitates a greater comprehension of the texts and enhances the understanding of Barcelona.

Since his 1985 works *Consciousness and the Urban Experience* and *The Urbanization of Capital*—later combined and published as *The Urban Experience* (1989)—Harvey has sought to redefine and refocus materialist studies by adding a geographic component. In the introduction to *The Urban Experience* he states: “Historical materialism has to be upgraded to historical-geographical materialism” (6). This links capital to urbanization, which for Harvey, following Henri Lefebvre, can only be fully understood as a process that shapes and transforms the urban experience and in turn is transformed by it. Harvey, reaffirming the theories of some of his Marxist predecessors, explains that accumulation, the basic tenet of capitalism, depends on the exploitation of labor in order to make profits and seeks to maximize those profits in the shortest possible time. Space, therefore, becomes inextricably bound to time and money, which logically leads to urbanization as a means of increasing profits:

Capital flow presupposes tight temporal and spatial coordination in the midst of increasing separation and fragmentation. It is impossible to imagine such a material process without the production of some kind of urbanization as a ‘rational landscape’ within which the accumulation of capital can proceed. Capital accumulation and the production of urbanization go hand in hand. (22)

Nevertheless, due to the expansionary nature of capital and constant technological advancements, this urbanization can not be seen as an end result of capitalism, rather a continuous process whereby capitalism reproduces itself by the conquering, organization and reorganization of space, building “[...] a geographical landscape in its own image” (*Spaces* 177). This leads to one of Harvey's most insightful observations of the urban process under capitalism: the “urbanization of consciousness” (*Urban* 229-55, 321-22). The same time/space/money philosophy that sets capitalist urbanization in motion has changed the way in which we view ourselves as human beings in relation to others and our environment. The consciousness that develops from this process becomes a mechanism by which capitalist urbanization can perpetuate itself. Harvey specifically points to five major loci of consciousness formation—individualism, class, community, state and the family¹ (231)—and demonstrates how the urbanization process shapes and is shaped by each of them: “Through our daily experiences of these bases we generate a matrix of conceptions, understandings and predispositions for action which in turn serve to construct the conditions which prevail in each domain” (240).

Many of the daily experiences that play out in these five loci of consciousness formation have to do with the division and control of urban spaces. Space imposes upon us a way of understanding which will “reinforce existing patterns of social life” (250). The conception of space entrained by the urbanization of consciousness logically leads to the production of space that reinforces that conception. Therefore, the control and manipulation of space—in both material and discursive realms—become sources of social power for both capital and labor. Harvey maintains that spatial practices “are never neutral in social affairs” (*Condition* 239) and for this reason proposes an analysis of how urban space is divided and who controls that space. Paraphrasing Michel Foucault, Harvey states: “Space [...] is a metaphor for a site or container of power [...]” (213). Furthermore, the configuration of urban space “reveals much about the dynamics of the urban process, its inner tensions, and the significance of urbanization to capitalism’s evolution” and can help us to “understand the dilemmas and confusions that the urban experience produces for political and intellectual consciousness” (*Urban* 198). It is from this consciousness that plans and designs—of individuals, capitalists, and city planners—for the built environment emerge.

These aspects of Harvey’s theories are highly instructive in my reconsideration of Barcelona in *La verdad* and *La ciudad*. I explore the way in which the five components of the urbanization of consciousness function in the novels in relation to each other and to the experience of Barcelona’s urban space under capitalism. This approach allows each novel to be viewed as a sort of photograph of urban consciousness from its respective time of production. Since a subject can be photographed from many angles and perspectives, I acknowledge that each novel only provides its own specific vision of Barcelona’s urban consciousness. These cultural artifacts are, nonetheless, emblematic of sweeping changes in Barcelona’s collective consciousness, and they epitomize a body of discourse that can be classified as resistance to or rejection of Barcelona’s capitalistic spatial practices.

La verdad and *La ciudad* both take place around the turn of the 20th century in Barcelona. These historical novels ground their fictitious plots with extensive references to actual figures and events of the period in question. Ramón Buckley, in his study entitled *La doble transición: Política y literatura en la España de los años setenta*, explains the function of historical novels like *La verdad* and *La ciudad*: “[The novelist] rescata el pasado para proporcionarnos las claves de nuestro propio presente, o, si se prefiere, busca en el pasado un «espejo distante» [...] para comprender el «hoy», el tiempo del propio novelista. La historia parte del presente; la novela histórica regresa al presente, devuelve al lector al momento mismo de su lectura” (115).

How, then, do these historical novels mirror their present? For Giménez-Micó *La verdad* and *La ciudad* attempt to explain the present situation with past events (53). After all, as the nameless protagonist of Mendoza’s *El misterio de la cripta embrujada* asserts: “pues siempre seremos lo que ya fuimos” (124). The history and events depicted in the novels also parallel certain key aspects of contemporary society. Nevertheless, some critics astutely call attention to numerous and conspicuous historical errors and omissions in these novels. The nature and frequency of these discrepancies suggest that something else is at play with the manner in which Mendoza presents history and the urban experience of Barcelona, indicating that the author’s view and depiction of the past is filtered through his optic of the contemporary urban

consciousness of Barcelona. Mendoza explains in a 1988 interview with Marie-Lise Gazarian Gautier:

I believe that history is both a science and a literary form. [...] I am not a historian; therefore, it is not the reason my novels are based on history. I am not primarily concerned with dates, but I am interested in recapturing our signs of identity. I am a narrator, who wants to tell a familiar story, the personal history of a given community, in this case, Barcelona, my city. [...] In my novels I attempt to relate the past with a vision that we hold of it today. I lay aside important events [...] and stress other moments that are more relevant to our present. *It is an evocation of the past from the perspective of the present.* (204, my emphasis)

The components of consciousness formation in these novels explicitly call attention to and reveal much about the contemporary urban experience of Barcelona, thereby making them emblems of an urbanized consciousness anticipating significant transformations: *La verdad* facing the economic and political shifts that accompanied the loss of much of Barcelona's heavy industry and the end of the francoist dictatorship, and *La ciudad* looking forward to Olympic apotheosis.

***La verdad sobre el caso Savolta* (1975)**

Mendoza owes his enormously successful debut on Spain's literary scene to his 1975 novel, *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta*. He won the prestigious Premio de la Crítica in 1976 for *La verdad*, and in 1992 a poll of Spanish authors and critics named Eduardo Mendoza and *La verdad* "the most important author and novel of the post-Franco era" (Deveny 278), in spite of the fact that the novel was published three months before the death of the dictator. The narrative present of the novel is 1927, when the protagonist of the novel, Javier Miranda, testifies as the principle witness in a New York City court case concerned with a life insurance claim for his ex-boss, Paul-André Leppince, who died in a factory fire in 1919 Barcelona. The structure of the novel is fragmented: a conglomeration of first person accounts, omniscient third person narrations, court transcripts, letters, newspaper articles, etc.. The reader must piece together these fragments in an attempt to find out the murky truth about the case. In one of the final fragments of the novel Comisario Vázquez reveals to Miranda the version of the truth that he has been able to deduce through his investigations. Nevertheless, the truth about the Savolta case, at best, remains incomplete and ambiguous. On the other hand, the portrayal of the tumultuous urban experience of Barcelona—full of social tensions, anarchist rebellions and marked class conflicts—achieves unmistakable clarity. An analysis of the depiction in *La verdad* of the five components of the consciousness formation and their relationship to space supports the affirmation of Ramón Buckley that "[...] no estamos, pues, [...] ante una novela de evasión, sino al contrario, ante una novela de compromiso desde la distancia, que busca un punto pasado capaz de brindarnos la perspectiva suficiente para comprender el presente" (115-16).²

The representation of the state in *La verdad* provides one of the most obvious indications that this historical novel communicates a contemporary urbanization of consciousness. Mendoza makes this connection by linking Alfonso XIII's autocratic monarchy (1902-1931) with late Francoism. The King even makes a cameo appearance in the novel, which speaks to the corruptness of his government in its tendency to favor the interests of the rich. He accepts

Lepprince's invitation to come to a reception at his home, and by doing so, endorses Lepprince in his future campaign for political office. It can also be inferred that because of Lepprince's contact with the King, and other high ranking Spanish officials, that Comisario Vázquez was transferred from Barcelona in 1918 when his investigations started to turn up evidence that Lepprince wanted to keep under covers.

While the King's appearance in the novel is conspicuous, the police of Barcelona constitute the most prominent representative of the state in *La verdad*. In general the police appear as an oppressive force, but mostly ineffective. They are unable to prevent the violence that plagues Barcelona, so they focus their efforts to capturing a few individuals responsible for the civic unrest in order to make examples of them. The fact that when the victims of crimes belong to the upper class the police have much greater success in apprehending suspects than when the victims are workers indicates where the authorities' loyalties generally lie. The investigation into the assassination of Enric Savolta illustrates this point. After the crime, several factory workers were falsely accused, tried and executed relatively quickly. When evidence showed that they were not the killers, the investigation continued for years. When asked to explain this mistake, Comisario Vázquez responds: "Sí, ya sé que fue culpa mía [...], pero no hay que lamentarse demasiado. Aquellos individuos merecían el pelotón por más de un concepto" (418-19). Conversely, when Lepprince's hired thugs brutally attack various workers, the police conduct a brief investigation that produces no evidence other than common consent pointing to the factory administrators as the logical guilty party, so they drop the case (67).

In some ways Comisario Vázquez seems very competent and dedicated, albeit somewhat imperious. Miranda describes Vázquez in the following manner:

Recuerdo que, al principio, me cayó mal el comisario Vázquez, con su mirada displicente y su media sonrisa irónica y aquella lentitud profesional que ponía en sus palabras y sus movimientos, tendente sin duda a exasperar e inquietar y a provocar una súbita e irrefrenable confesión de culpabilidad en el oyente. [...] La primera vez que le vi lo juzgué de una pedantería infantil, casi patética. Luego me atacaba los nervios. Al final comprendí que bajo aquella pose oficial había un método tenaz y una decisión vocacional de averiguar la verdad a costa de todo. Era infatigable, paciente y perspicaz en grado sumo. (42)

Despite his skills as an investigator and intentions to uncover the truth, Comisario Vázquez makes some crucial errors in judgement. His principal mistake involves his initial treatment of Nemesio Cabra Gómez, a mentally debilitated police informant. At the beginning of the case, while Vázquez and the police misinterpreted the little evidence they had, Nemesio understood the keys to the unfolding of the case. Nevertheless, since this information was being proffered by what Vázquez considers "un verdadero desecho social" (418), and since at the time the police had the accused anarchists in custody, Comisario Vázquez refuses to listen to Nemesio. Only later does Vázquez confess his error in discounting Nemesio's findings (411-18). When Vázquez finally does manage to dig up concrete evidence in the case, his superiors transfer him to a post in Tetuán, and later to Guinea after he continues to intercede in the case by correspondence. He returns to Barcelona in 1919 and resumes his investigations before leaving (or being obliged to leave) the force in 1920. Miranda recounts Vázquez's fate: "Sé que abandonó [Vázquez] el

cuerpo de Policía en 1920, es decir, según mis cálculos, cuando sus investigaciones debían estar llegando al final. Algo misterioso hay en ello. Pero nunca se sabrá, porque hace pocos meses fue muerto por alguien relacionado con el caso” (42).

The novel’s treatment of Comisario Vázquez speaks to the ineffectiveness and corruption of the state and the police of BarcelonaBarcelona. The state and the police cannot even protect the interests of the upper class due to their lack of sound policy, which occasioned the rise of labor movements and anarchist riots, resulting in the destruction of lives and property of all classes.

Buckley believes that the representation of the state constitutes the clearest link between this novel’s time of production and time of representation, describing both governments as regimes in a state of decomposition (116-17). He explains:

En 1917, la monarquía parlamentaria de Alfonso XIII entraba en su recta final, y las perspectivas de una revolución *a la rusa* parecían cada vez más plausibles en medio de la crisis económica, la inoperancia de los partidos políticos, el vacío de poder, etc. Lo mismo podríamos decir del régimen de Franco después del asesinato de Carrero Blanco (20 de diciembre de 1973): no se trataba sólo de que el régimen ya no tenía futuro, sino de que no tenía presente, de que se descomponía a ojos vista porque sus propios seguidores habían dejado de creer en él. [...] Se producía así (tanto en 1917-19 como en 1974-75) un vacío de poder político, vacío en el sentido de que el gobierno deja de ofrecer soluciones políticas y se limita a ejercer la pura y dura represión policial. (117)

The urbanization of consciousness as portrayed in this novel clearly speaks to the ineffectiveness of the policies of the state in social and economic affairs. Nevertheless, there is also a sense of anticipation—but not necessarily optimism—for the future. History affords us this clue. The novel’s chronicle of the events in Barcelona ends when Miranda and María Coral move to the United States in 1920, while Spain was still experiencing the “vacío de poder político” (Buckley 117) of Alfonso XIII’s government. This vacuum was filled by the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, a government even more repressive in its dealings with Barcelona than the previous one. Miranda finishes his account of the Savolta Case in 1927, when Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship began to lose public and political support (Carr 100-10). In 1930 the King asked him to resign. The Second Republic eventually filled this void in 1931 after two short and impotent dictatorships of Berenguer and Aznar (110-11). In 1975 Barcelona, along with the rest of Spain, faced another vacuum of political power—one that would soon need to be filled—as Francisco Franco’s health began to rapidly fail. The historical references in the novel to the political vacuums in Barcelona—one explicit and the other inferred—present two distinct possibilities for filling the void of 1975: another absolutist government that will enforce a social status quo that supports uneven geographical development, or another attempt at a democratic government that promises social reform. For better or for worse, Spain—and Barcelona in particular—anticipated political transformation that would have far reaching social, economic, geographical and cultural effects.

The function of individualism in *La verdad* also deserves careful consideration in these

novels. Individualism is a locus of consciousness formation in that the individual's experiences with and understanding of time and money under capitalism mold his or her perception of space. Furthermore, the individual who sells his skills to buyers of labor, earns a means to control a little bit of space, which becomes a part—however small—of the process that continues to form and reform the urbanization of consciousness. Harvey clarifies:

Money [...] functions as a concrete abstraction, imposing external and homogeneous measures of value on all aspects of human life [...] Money and capital therefore confront us as double alienations, the compounding of which should surely produce energy of revolt sufficient to dispose quickly of both. Yet the alienations can also confound and confuse each other. Class-bound political movements against the power of capital hesitate or fail if they appear to threaten real and cherished, though necessarily limited liberties given by the possession of money in the marketplace. Even the poorest person can relish the kind of liberty that even the minutest amount of money power can give. Workers may even connive or accede to their own exploitation in production in return for increased money power that gives them greater market freedoms and greater ability to control a portion of their own space [...] and their own time [...]. (*The Urban* 232)

Of the more than 30 characters that have at least a minor role in *La verdad* (Yang 55), Javier Miranda, Paul-André Lepprince and María Coral most explicitly emulate issues of individualism and space. Miranda, a native of Valladolid, moves to Barcelona some time before 1917 looking for work. Miranda soon finds a job in the law offices of Cortabanyes, which allows him to barely earn a modest living. During the fall of 1917 Miranda meets Paul-André Lepprince, a wealthy Frenchman who moves to Barcelona and assumes a primary role in the affairs of the Savolta factory. When Lepprince asks for Miranda's assistance in a few matters he takes advantage of this opportunity because it offers him a little extra money and he figures that it might help him in his quest for professional advancement to have a contact like Lepprince. Over a year later Lepprince offers Miranda just such an opportunity for advancement, albeit a dubious promotion. Lepprince makes Miranda his personal assistant, conditioned upon Miranda's marriage to María Coral. Lepprince explains the arrangement at first under charitable pretexts, claiming that he feels a sense of responsibility to care for María Coral since they used to be romantically involved. Since a high profile figure like Lepprince would suffer social reproach for his affiliation with a gypsy and former striptease acrobat, he enlists the collaboration of Miranda, who he knows has feelings for the young María Coral as well (267-69). Only later does Miranda discover that the arrangement was actually meant to facilitate the continued affair of Lepprince with María Coral.

The situations of these three individuals have meaningful spatial implications. In the first place, by accepting Lepprince's arrangement, Miranda willingly subjects himself to an exploitation consisting of a rigorous and demanding work schedule and a loveless marriage with María Coral. María Coral also consigns herself to a less than desirable union with Miranda, and to the sexual domination of Lepprince. In return, Miranda and María Coral receive a boost in social status which allows them access to spaces that before were off limits to them—exemplified by their invitation to a reception graced by a visit from King Alfonso XIII (337-39)—and offers María Coral an escape from the lowest class spaces to which she was previously

consigned. Javier recalls María Coral's reasons for accepting the arrangement:

María Coral me dijo que había meditado al respecto [...]. Declaró haberse casado conmigo por interés, sin que mediase sentimiento alguno en su decisión. Tenía la conciencia tranquila porque suponía que yo no era víctima de un engaño y que también ha había desposado como medio de obtener algún provecho; asimismo, lo que de reprochable pudiera tener aquella boda quedaba compensado por el hecho de que, al contraerla, había evitado que sus angustiosas circunstancias la condujeran a trances mil veces peores. (308-09)

Although Miranda and María Coral gain access to more exclusive spaces than previously allowed, both of them feel at least a little out of place in these environments—especially María Coral (319-20).

There is yet another irony concerned with space and individualism. Miranda's acceptance of the marriage arrangement, along with his new job as Lepprince's personal assistant, greatly improve his financial situation, giving him power to control personal space. He exercises that power by purchasing an upper-middle class home in the Eixample and remodeling it to his liking (294-95). Nevertheless, Miranda later learns that he really does not control his personal space at all. Lepprince does. The Frenchman enters Miranda's home to be with María Coral whenever he so desires and he stays as long as he likes, often impeding Miranda's timely return to his own space by having his aides create more work for him at the office (346). Later on Lepprince's insolence regarding his relationship with María Coral reaches such a degree that he ceases to care whether Miranda is home or not, and while Lepprince makes love to Miranda's wife, Lepprince's bodyguard, Max, dictates with threats where Miranda can and cannot go in his own house.

The manner in which Mendoza portrays individualism in this novel exposes an interesting contradiction in the urban process under capitalism. The power to control space with money tempers the potential for revolt against the exploitation of the individual, yet in *La verdad* this individual power barely exists superficially. Legitimate control over space remains in the hands of the individuals—like Lepprince—who have access to much larger amounts of money (and other forms of capital). This understanding leads María Coral to conclude the following concerning Lepprince's power over the Miranda couple's individual space: “Ya ves qué sencillo es todo cuando se tiene dinero y poder” (346).

For many individuals in the Barcelona of *La verdad* the power over space they received in exchange for their exploitation fails to measure up to their needs. These individuals, united by class, strive to work together to change their situation. Nevertheless, they encounter several difficulties in their attempted resistance. First, they never achieve true solidarity because they have different ideas about what they want and how to achieve it. Some want a revolution to dynamite the system, while others simply seek greater compensation and less exploitation within the existing capitalist order. Some individuals—like Pajarito de Soto, believe that by exposing the truth of the plight of the working class, the situation would then remedy itself. Some call for workers strikes, others resort to terrorism against the upper class, and still others take to the

practice and preaching of free love and unscrupulous sex as their means of revolt (397-98).

In addition to the lack of solidarity among the working class, any acts of resistance also met with severe repression by capitalists. Lepprince ordered the assassination of Pajarito de Soto for his discourse against the Savolta factory, and he avoided a plant strike in 1917 by hiring thugs to beat up anyone thought to be involved in heading up the movement (56-59). Lepprince is not the only individual who makes use of these repressive tactics. Claudedeu, a high ranking official in the Savolta factory gains the nickname “el Hombre de la Mano de Hierro” for his merciless repression of worker resistance. These conflicts of individualism and class have extraordinary and immediate spatial implications. During the years portrayed in *La verdad* (1917-1919) Barcelona’s space frequently resembled a battleground where at any given moment, any person could find themselves a victim—innocent or not—of violence and terrorism due to the intense civic struggles going on at the time. Furthermore, during the peak moments of revolt, mobs drastically altered the urban landscape by destroying segments of the built environment that they felt represented or fostered oppression of the working class (factories, churches, businesses, etc.). Judge Davidson explains:

Siguiendo con los informes que obran en mi poder, a lo largo de 1918 se produjeron en Barcelona ochenta y siete atentados de los llamados «sociales», cuyo balance de víctimas es el siguiente: patrones muertos, 4; heridos, 9; obreros y encargados muertos, 11; heridos, 43. Esto sin contar los daños materiales causados por los numerosos incendios y explosiones dinamiteras. En mayo se produce un saqueo de tiendas de comestibles que se prolonga por varios días y que sólo la declaración del estado de guerra pudo contener. (168-69)

Miranda’s response to the judge’s description of the tumultuous space of Barcelona represents one of the novel’s great understatements: “Eran años de crisis, indudablemente” (169).

The significance of individualism and class struggle in this novel would not have been lost on the contemporary reader in Barcelona. Although the individuals are fictitious and from another era, the mechanism remains the same. Any far reaching power over space remains a privilege of the upper class, and workers still must weigh the individual power they receive as compensation for exploitation against the potential costs of resistance and revolt. Just as in 1917-1919, Barcelona of the mid-1970s was in crisis, and therefore experienced many of the same manifestations of resistance and repression that plagued the city at the beginning of the century. Although workers unions were outlawed during the Franco years, a group called Comissions Obreres managed to organize worker protests and strikes in the 1970s, toward which the state reacted with heavy-handed repression (McNeill 62). The terrorist and reactionary activity of the novel and the fear that it produces in the inhabitants of Barcelona finds a contemporary referent in the affronts of the Basque nationalist terrorist organization (ETA). Even the women proponents of free love that Miranda meets on his way back to Barcelona toward the end of the novel bear a striking resemblance to the ideas of the sexual revolution of the 1960s in England, France and the United States, which only began to gain notable popularity in Spain in the 1970s.

Family and community—much like individualism—take on increased importance in *La verdad* when seen in relationship to class. Class concerns virtually subsume the portrayal of

community in this novel. The severe civic strife in Barcelona places two class-bound communities against each other: the bourgeoisie and the workers, each with their corresponding urban spaces. The most intriguing aspect of community, however, consists of the internal divisions in both communities that undermine what they attempt to accomplish. I previously mentioned the different political and ideological factions that mollify the effectiveness of the labor movement. Likewise, *La verdad* depicts the community of the rich and powerful as a house divided. In the first place, an underlying hypocrisy pervades their interaction and flattery at their frequent parties, receptions and visits. Secondly, although on occasion members of this community work together to increase profits—take for example the collaboration between Savolta, Claudedeu, Parells and Cortabanyes that made their factory an initial success—others seek to move ahead at their colleagues' expense. Lepprince exemplifies this divisive ambition perfectly, ordering the assassination of Enric Savolta (his father-in-law) and Pere Parells in order to gain and keep control over the Savolta plant. Comisario Vázquez speculates that were it not for these divisions and dealings among their own upper-class community, the Savolta company might have been able to stay afloat during the recession that followed the end of World War I (421-22).

The dealings of the Savoltas show the formidable influence family can have on the formation of a consciousness of class, which inevitably manifests itself in the urban environment in the form of uneven geographical development. Enric Savolta, who comes from a wealthy and distinguished lineage, uses family money to buy into a new industrial plant specializing in the production of weapons. By capitalizing on the wartime circumstances, his investment pays off handsomely. Savolta's family money and prominence allow him to literally change a significant portion of the landscape of Barcelona. He and his associates build an industrial plant, which creates new jobs and a need for workers housing. He perpetuates the uneven geographical development by exploiting his workers and by establishing his residence in a lush mansion in the exclusive Sarriá district, far from the factory and the residences of the workers he employs. He then passes his understanding of class bound space and consciousness to his child, María Rosa Savolta, who quietly accepts the marriage of convenience with Lepprince arranged by the Frenchman and María Rosa's parents. Even after the demise of the Savolta factory and the deaths of her father, husband and mother, class consciousness remains fixed in María Rosa Savolta's mind. Furthermore, she passes on this consciousness to her daughter, Paulina. In her letter to Miranda, thanking him for his efforts to recover the money—which would allow her and her daughter to return to the upper-class lifestyle befitting them—María Rosa Savolta states:

No puede usted imaginarse la enorme alegría que nos ha producido a Paulina y a mí recibir la noticia de que usted nos iba a enviar dinero desde Nueva York. [...] Estos años han sido muy difíciles para Paulina y para mí. [...] Mi único deseo, en este tiempo, ha sido procurar que la pequeña Paulina no cariese de nada. [...] Como además hemos tenido que ir vendiendo mis joyas, la pobre ha crecido en un ambiente de clase media, tan distinto al que por nacimiento le corresponde. La niña, sin embargo, no traiciona su origen y se quedaría usted sorprendido de su distinción y modales. [...] El dinero que usted nos va a enviar nos viene pues como anillo al dedo. Tengo puestas mis esperanzas en una buena boda, para cuando Paulina esté en edad de merecer, cosa difícil de lograr si no se cuenta con un mínimo de medios. Y, aunque estoy segura de que muchos hombres de valía la

mirarán con buenos ojos, no creo que ninguno se atreva a dar el paso definitivo, por consideraciones de orden social. Ya ve usted lo muy necesitadas que estamos de ese dinero que usted nos enviará en breve. (431)

María Rosa successfully teaches her young daughter concerning her true social standing by right of birth and how to avoid betraying her upper-class family origin despite the temporary lack of wealth. In this letter María Rosa shows the degree to which a sense of class is engrained in her consciousness. In addition to the constant references to money, material possessions and social status, she also employs a materialistic simile—“como anillo al dedo” (431)—which indicates the type of luxuries she has been privileged to enjoy throughout her life.

While the depiction of community and family of 1917-1919 Barcelona is not unrealistic, verifying that their roles actually played out precisely in the depicted manner would prove not only difficult, but inconsequential as well because Mendoza only concerns himself with a reproduction of the past insofar as it sheds light on the present. Thus Mendoza proffers his view of how community and family—in relation to class—influence the contemporary urbanization of consciousness, and subsequent material urban spaces.

It may seem meaningless to examine the descriptions of urban space in *La verdad*, since that space has undoubtedly changed since 1919. What that space symbolizes in relation to class, however, makes Barcelona’s early 20th-century space relevant to the contemporary reader. The portrayal of urban space in this novel criticizes the uneven geographical development in Barcelona that existed both at the time of representation and production, and a Barcelonan of 1975 would recognize the areas of the city portrayed in the novel and concede that the same urban spaces continue to be dominated by the same classes as at the beginning of the century.

The Barrio Chino is represented in this novel as a dangerous, dirty and labyrinthine area dominated by the lowest classes. When Miranda takes his friend Perico Serramadriles to the cabaret where María Coral performs, he describes the neighborhood in the following manner:

Perico y yo nos internamos más y más en aquel laberinto de callejones, ruinas y desperdicios, él curioseando todo con avidez, y ajeno al lamentable espectáculo que se desarrollaba a nuestro alrededor. [...]

—¿Se puede saber adónde vamos? Este lugar es horrible.

—Ya hemos llegado. Mira.

Y le señalé la puerta de un tenebroso cabaret. Un letrero sucio y roto anunciaba: ELEGANTES VARIEDADES e incluía la lista de precios. Del interior llegaban las notas de un piano desafinado.

—No querrás entrar ahí —me dijo con el miedo cincelado en el rostro. (187-88)

When Miranda goes back to the same neighborhood looking for María Coral’s residence, he provides a gloomy description of the miserable conditions of the people who reside in the Barrio Chino:

Localicé por fin las señas y vi que se trataba de una mísera pensión o casa de

habitaciones que [...] hacía las veces de casa de citas. La entrada era estrecha y oscura. [...] Subí los desgastados peldaños alumbrándome ocasionalmente con una cerilla y a tientas. La lobreguez del entorno, lejos de deprimirme, me animó, pues evidenciaba que María Coral no disfrutaba de una posición que le autorizase a despreciarme. [...] Llegué ante una puerta que decía:

HABITACIONES LA JULIA

y más abajo, junto al picaporte: EMPUJE. Empujé y la puerta se abrió rechinando. Me vi en un vestíbulo débilmente iluminado por un lamparilla de aceite que ardía en la hornacina de un santo. El vestíbulo no tenía otro mobiliario que un paragüero de loza. A derecha e izquierda corría un pasillo en tinieblas y a ambos lados del pasillo se alineaban las habitaciones, en cuyas puertas se leían números garrapateados en tiza. (209)

These miserable conditions are rivaled only by the shacks that the immigrant industrial workers construct in the suburban area between Barcelona and Hospitalet, home to the Savolta factory:

Los suburbios quentos esperaban y callaban, uncidos a la ciudad, como la hiedra al muro. (77-78)

The novel also contrasts these lower class spaces with other sectors of the city. Lepprince's first home is situated in one of the "barrios pacíficos y virtuosos de la clase media" (73), a bourgeoisie dominated portion of the Eixample, on the Rambla Catalunya. The Savolta family resides in a mansion in the exclusive Sarriá district in the foothills of western Barcelona: "[la casa] estaba enclavada en [...] un montículo que domina Barcelona y el mar. Las casas eran del tipo llamado «torre», a saber: viviendas de dos o una planta rodeadas de jardín" (108).

In 1975 Barcelona these spaces continue to reflect the same social segregation as they did in 1918 (McNeill 14-21), which demonstrates some very important aspects of the urbanization of consciousness. The manner in which urban space is configured imposes an understanding of urban space that becomes perpetuated in subsequent spatial practices. Furthermore, this perpetual reproduction of segregated urban space answers more to class than it does to the state, which casts a pessimistic shadow over the urbanized consciousness portrayed in the novel. I mentioned before that the publication of *La verdad* anticipates an impending political transformation that was certain to have significant social, cultural and geographical effects. Nevertheless, by showing that Barcelona's segregated spaces have remained in tact throughout the monarchy of the first part of the 20th century, two dictatorships and a democratic republic, Mendoza communicates the improbability that the new state configuration—whatever it may be—would pay sufficient attention to issues of space and social justice and succeed in correcting the uneven geographical development that has characterized Barcelona for so long.

La ciudad de los prodigios (1986)

Few critics—if any—question the importance of Mendoza's fourth novel, *La ciudad de los prodigios*, winner of the 1988 Best Book of the Year award in France and the Italian prize Grinzane Cavour (Gautier 203). Marín Minguillón attests that this novel is "sin duda alguna la novela más vendida de la era posfranquista ("Hacia" 111), and Malleus Mellefic praises it as "lo

más importante que se había escrito desde el Quijote (56). *La ciudad* deals with the development of Barcelona between the two World Fairs that the city hosted in 1888 and 1929, and chronicles the life of an enterprising rural Catalan immigrant in Barcelona, Onofre Bouvila. At only thirteen years of age, Onofre abandons his family and leaves the poverty of rural Catalonia to seek his fortune in Barcelona. After a series of odd jobs and money making schemes—mostly illegal—Onofre becomes a rich and powerful man in Barcelona. He manages to survive anarchist rebellions, the failure of the silent movie industry in which he invested, a brief exile at the beginning of the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, a failed marriage and a heart attack, all with his fortune intact. At the end of the novel the aged Onofre flies away with a priceless diamond and a young woman in a prototype of a helicopter he commissioned for the 1929 Universal Exposition.

Like *La verdad*, this novel recalls real people and events from Barcelona's history and gives great detail to the representation of the time period in question. Nevertheless, Mendoza does not restrict himself to the confines of traditional historical representation. He also includes myth, local legend, popular tradition and religious anecdotes along with a slew of fictional characters. This historical novel also has substantial contemporary significance, using the World Fairs of 1888 and 1929 to recall Barcelona's bid for the 1992 Olympics. Both of the World Fairs were crucial to the formation of the urban identity of Barcelona. Prior to 1888 and 1929, key segments of urban space were restructured in such a way so as to create an image of the city that did not coincide with the objective urban reality of the time, except in the areas that would be most visible to foreign visitors. *La ciudad* constitutes a critical account of image construction, exposes the falsity of that process as it happened in that era and forms a special connection to the context in which the novel was published, six years before Barcelona was to host the Summer Olympic Games of 1992. Amalia Pulgarín concludes: "*La ciudad de los prodigios* es la Barcelona de finales del siglo XIX que irremediamente nos remite a la Barcelona de finales del siglo XX. La historia se muestra como espejo del presente. [...] *La ciudad de los prodigios* nos hace pensar en cómo los hechos del pasado pueden dar un sentido a nuestra experiencia del presente" (*Metaficción* 23). A study of the portrayal of the five loci of consciousness formation in this work reveals precisely how this historical novel treats contemporary urban issues.

Because of his primordial role in the novel, I have chosen to examine Onofre Bouvila as an example of how individualism is portrayed in relationship to the urbanization of consciousness. Onofre clearly understands the power of money, the individualism it facilitates and the misery that the lack of it causes. The accumulation of wealth, therefore, becomes the driving force behind the behavior of Onofre: "Ser rico era el objetivo que se había fijado en la vida" (46). Onofre's comprehension of how money imposes "measures of value on all aspects of human life" (Harvey, *Urban* 232), is exemplified by his repeated attempts to buy love—not just sex—from Delfina, Margarita Figa i Morera, and María Belltall. Furthermore, in exchange for money, he subjects himself to exploitation, passing out anarchist pamphlets to the workers at the construction sites of the 1888 World Fair. When Onofre becomes dissatisfied with the miniscule returns for his propagandist work he devises other means to make money. He begins by conning the construction workers into buying his miracle hair restorer potion, then he practices petty thievery, becomes a thug, then rises to be second in command to Barcelona's most notorious crime boss, Humbert Figa i Morera. He gains the majority of his fortune, however, through real estate speculation in the last decade of the 19th century. Although most of his deals were ethically marginal—or downright illegal according to some (187-90)—Onofre achieved his goal of

becoming rich, and also gained a certain amount of respect, despite his shady beginnings. With part of that fortune, he invests in the silent movie industry, exploiting Delfina as his marquee actress until her internment in an insane asylum.

The way individualism plays out in this novel communicates that in order for individuals to break out of their exploitation, they must abandon their scruples, subject themselves to exploitation, resort to alternative ways of accumulating wealth and ultimately exploit others. Those who do not do as Onofre, either stay in the same situation, or suffer a worse fate. Pablo, the anarchist “apóstol” is imprisoned, tortured, then executed for a crime that he did not commit (55-57). Delfina also suffers an ignoble fate. After several years of incarceration, Onofre exploits her in his nascent movie industry before she dies, miserable and alone, in an insane asylum. Onofre reflects on this matter: “Los pobres sólo tenemos una alternativa, se decía, la honradez y la humillación o la maldad y el remordimiento” (327). Onofre clearly chooses the latter alternative.

Onofre often expresses his individualism in ways that directly affect the configuration perception of space in Barcelona. With his money he purchases an old mansion and its surrounding property and restores it to its initial state. This residence in Bonanova,³ at the time separated from Barcelona, reinforced the trend of wealthy people purchasing homes to the west of the city, thus reinforcing the spatial segregation of Barcelona by class. As a matter of fact, Sarriá, Tres Torres and San Gervasio de Cassoles—the three sectors that surround the Paseo de la Bonanova—continue to be some of the most exclusive neighborhoods of the city. Onofre’s speculative activities on the Eixample also deeply affect Barcelona’s urban space. The narrator of *La ciudad* explains:

En poco más de dos años se hizo muy rico [Onofre]. Mientras tanto, de resultas de ello, causó a la ciudad un mal irreparable, porque las víctimas de sus argucias se encontraban con unos terrenos baldíos carentes de valor por los que habían satisfecho sumas muy altas. Ahora tenían que hacer algo con ellos. Normalmente estos terrenos habrían sido destinados a viviendas baratas, a ser ocupados por los pobres inmigrantes y su prole. Pero como su valor inicial había sido tan alto, fueron destinados a viviendas de lujo. [...] Para recuperar parte del capital perdido los dueños esacatimaban dinero en la construcción [...]. También hubo que edificar en parcelas originalmente destinada a jardines o parques de recreo, a cocheras, escuelas y hospitales. Para compensar tanto desastre se puso mucho esmero en las fachadas. [...] *Todo para poder recuperar el dinero que Onofre Bouvila les había robado.* Así crecía la ciudad, a gran velocidad, por puro afán. (190-91, my emphasis)

The individualism exemplified by Onofre truly has far reaching effects. In fact, Patricia Hart believes that Onofre “is genuinely defined by his ability to make all Barcelona feel the results of his acts” (“Barcelona” 113). Even Barcelonans of the time of publication of the novel could look out their windows at their congested city and see the contemporary effects of the sort of speculation practiced by Onofre. Furthermore, the 1980s saw the same sort of speculative activities increase in preparation for the 1992 Olympic games (McNeill 17; Moreno and Vázquez Montalbán 82-120). Resina writes: “By staging the equivalent of a world’s fair in the 1992

Olympic Games, the city provided a correlate for renewed speculative adventures” (965). In this manner Mendoza uses individualism at the turn of the century to reflect the contemporary urbanization of consciousness.

Onofre quickly learns the power money can offer, but he also learns that money has its limitations. As rich as Onofre becomes, he cannot purchase familial happiness nor ancestral prestige. His wife ends up despising him and his relationship with his children is at best strained. He learns that family pedigree can trump money when he grants the petition of a group of Barcelona’s “prohombres” to finance the Russian Czarina’s visit to Barcelona, hoping to gain more prestige and respect (234-35). Nonetheless, at the reception that Onofre arranges for the Czarina, these same men who asked for his money do not allow him to sit at the same table with the Russian aristocrat because he does not have a noble lineage (240). The social and political importance of most of these *prohombres* results from their familial origins and upbringing. It is an order that existed before them, and that will carry on to future generations, perpetuating the social divisions and spatial segregation that it entails.

This same instance shows how family also functions in this novel as one of the undermining factors to a sense of community. The loyalties of these noblemen fluctuate depending on the circumstances. They ask Onofre for support, evoking his solidarity with them as fellow bourgeois colleagues, and then later they claim privileges of noble lineage, at the expense of bourgeois solidarity. By the same token, the lower classes are unable to form a strong enough community solidarity to successfully resist their exploitation. Different factions of socialism and anarchism weaken each other. Delfina betrays her anarchist comrades when she discovers that her boyfriend had been lying to her, hiding the fact that he had a wife and children. Immigrant workers find it hard to fit in when they arrive in Barcelona, and not just immigrants from other provinces of Spain. Knutson observes: “Onofre, aunque es español y catalán, es nuevo en la ciudad, y distinto a los natives barceloneses con quienes vive. [...] Mendoza distingue la patria de Onofre de la tierra a la que emigra, y a pesar del enlace nacional de los dos lugares, las diferencias son patentes” (76). Because of Onofre’s first hand experience with the lack of community solidarity among labor, he is able to remain confident that the revolution proclaimed by the rioters of 1909’s Tragic Week would never fully materialize (242-46).

In *La ciudad*, while the political leaders of Barcelona attempted to package and sell the image of Barcelona as an idealized and progressive community, the rest of the narration negates such a notion. Barcelona suffers division due to class, political ideology, geographic origin, gender and lineage. This portrayal has interesting contemporary parallels. For the World Fairs, as well as the Olympics, attempts were made to rally opposing factions behind the common goal of urban transformation for the spectacles. While a majority supported the events, divisions still remained. Some individuals opposed the staging of the 1992 games and the way in which the urban renewal was deliberated (Moreno and Vázquez Montalbán 67-70). The comment of an 1888 newspaper included in the novel reflects a common sentiment among dissenters for the 1992 Olympics: “*Tal vez, decimos, convendría que tanto esfuerzo y tanto dinero se aplicasen á cosas más necesarias y apremiantes, y que no se despilfarrasen en aparatosas obras públicas de efecto inmediato y utilidad efímera, si alguna*” (58). Additionally, many who supported the spectacle had very different ideas about how to rebuild the city. Socialists, conservatives, rich, poor, Catalanists, Spaniards, architects, engineers, municipal leaders and provincial government,

among others, all had their own agendas for the reconstruction of Barcelona.⁴ The official image of community solidarity for the staging of the Games contrasted with the reality of the political, social and cultural divisiveness that characterized the staging of this event.

Community and the State also relate to class in this novel. In a way, Onofre could be seen as a hero for the lower classes, because he manages to succeed economically and cross social boundaries. In spite of any individual triumphs, however, the capitalist mechanism that fosters the perpetuation of class divisions remains the same at the end of the novel in 1929, as it was when Onofre first arrives in Barcelona in 1887. Likewise, his methods of achieving a higher social standing and the harshness with which he represses and exploits individuals from the lower classes afterward makes it impossible to consider Onofre a poster child for social reform. The most telling representations of the influence of class on the urbanization of consciousness in *La ciudad*—as in *La verdad*—deal with Barcelona's urban spaces characterized by class-bound uneven geographical development. When Onofre first arrives to the city, he can only afford a week's stay in a run-down boarding house in an undesirable portion of the old city:

Esta pensión [...] estaba situada en el carreró del Xup. Este carreró [...] iniciaba a poco de su arranque una cuesta suave que se iba acentuando hasta [...] morir escasos metros más adelante contra un muro asentado sobre los restos de una muralla antigua [...]. De este muro manaba constantemente un líquido espeso y negro que a lo largo de los siglos había redondeado, pulido y abrigado los peldaños que había en el callejón; por ello estos peldaños se habían vuelto resbaladizos. Luego el reguero discurría cuesta abajo por un surco paralelo al bordillo de la acera y se sumía con gorgoteos intermitentes en la boca de avenamiento que se abría en el cruce con la calle de la Manga [...]. (10-11)

Not far from there lies Barceloneta and the port, areas teeming with poverty and disease at that time (20-22). The small, lawless sector called Morrot is situated a short way to the south, just beyond the medieval wall. The only entrance to this neighborhood consisted of a small opening in the mountain of coal that was imported from England and Belgium for use in nearby factories. The narrator describes the Morrot sector as a truly dangerous and filthy space with the worst reputation of any of Barcelona's neighborhoods (79):

Allí había teatros que ofrecían espectáculos procaces y sin gracia, tabernas mugrientas y bullangueras, algún fumadero de opio de poca categoría [...] y mancebías siniestras. Allí sólo acudía la hez de Barcelona y algunos marineros recién desembarcados, no pocos de los cuales nunca volvían a zarpar. Allí sólo vivían prostitutas, proxenetas, rufianes, contrabandistas y delincuentes. [...] La policía no entraba en la zona salvo a pleno día y sólo para parlamentar o proponer un canje. [...] no era raro encontrar allí de cuando en cuando un ahorcado balanceándose en el dintel de un local de diversión. [...] se sabía que quienes morían violentamente, si no habían de servir de escarmiento público, eran sepultados en la pila de carbón. [...] En el fango seco y cuarteado de la calzada dormían borrachos envueltos en sus propias deyecciones, rodeados de un halo de pestilencia. (79-80)

The spaces pertaining to the poor immigrant workers are also quite miserable. Because of their lack of resources, many of these individuals built meager shacks from scavenged materials on the outskirts of the city:

Los barrios de barracas brotaban de la noche a la mañana en las afueras de la ciudad [...]. Lo inquietante de este fenómeno, lo peor del barraquismo, era su carácter de permanencia [...]. En las ventanas de las barracas más miserables había cortinas hechas de harapos; con piedras encaladas delimitaban jardines ante las barracas, en estos jardines plantaban tomates, con latas de petróleo vacías hacían tiestos en los que crecían geranios rojos y blancos, perejil y albahaca. (356)

In an attempt to remedy the problem of the *barracas*, the state fostered and subsidized the construction of huge apartment building projects called *casas baratas*. Nevertheless, the workers who could afford these apartments found themselves in an almost equally difficult situation:

En este tipo de casa no sólo era barato el alquiler: los materiales empleados en su construcción eran de calidad ínfima, el cemento era mezclado con arena o detritus, las vigas eran a veces traviesas podridas desechadas por los ferrocarriles, los tabiques eran de cartón o papel prensado. Estas viviendas formaban ciudades satélites a las que no llegaba el agua corriente, la electricidad, el teléfono ni el gas; tampoco había allí escuelas, centros asistenciales ni recreativos ni vegetación de ningún tipo. [...] En las casas baratas las instalaciones eran tan deficientes que los incendios y las inundaciones eran cosa de todos los días. (356)

Both of these options—the *barracas* and the *casas baratas*—resulted in destitute neighborhoods that by most standards would be considered inhumane. The narrator of *La ciudad* explains that the appalling living conditions in these poverty stricken spaces cause Saint Eulalia, the patron saint of Barcelona, to look down from heaven and lament over what has become of the city, exclaiming: “Qué ciudad ésta, Dios mío” (357).

Compare the circumstances of these destitute sectors with the ostentatious environment of the Paseo de la Gracia where Humbert Figa i Morera lives (124), the luxury of the Ritz Hotel during the visit of the Czarina of Russia (246-47), the “viviendas de lujo” that were built on the Eixample (190-91), and the following description of Onofre’s residence in Bonanova:

La casa constaba de tres plantas, cada una de las cuales tenía una superficie de mil doscientos metros cuadrados; la fachada principal, orientada al sureste, mirando hacia Barcelona, tenía once balcones en cada una de las plantas superiores y diez ventanales y la puerta de entrada en la planta baja. Entre balcones, ventanas, tragaluces, vidrieras, claraboyas, miradores y puertas había en la casa un total de dos mil seis piezas de vidrio. [...] Ahora el jardín [...] había recuperado su antigua armonía; los esquifes recién barnizados se mecían en el canal, varias parejas de cisnes reflejaban sus formas gráciles en el agua cristalina del lago; dentro de la casa las puertas se abrían y cerraban con suavidad, las lámparas centelleaban en los espejos, en los techos se podían ver querubines y ninfas recién

pintados, las alfombras amortiguaba el ruido de los pasos y los muebles absorbían en la superficie reluciente la luz tamizada que filtraban los visillos. (298-332)

By 1986, many of the spaces described in *La ciudad* had been radically changed. Morrot had disappeared, Barceloneta was renovated, and the semi-rural areas of Sarriá, Pedralbes and Bonanova had been subsumed in the urban expansion of the 20th century. Nevertheless, urban space remained segregated along class lines in the 1980s. In fact, the description of the immigrant worker satellite cities described in *La ciudad* differs very little from the living conditions of many workers in the Nou Barris district in contemporary Barcelona (McNeill 19).

The World Fairs of 1888 and 1929 and the 1992 Olympics provided opportunities to renovate much of the city. Urban renewal for these events, nevertheless, was selective and seemed motivated more by the desire to project a positive, marketable image—which would profit the wealthy more than anyone else—rather than on social justice. The narrator of *La ciudad* illustrates this point when he explains how before the 1888 Exposition the authorities decided to “limpiar The narrator of *La ciudad* explains:

aunque [...] nadie en sus cabales discutía la igualdad de todos los hombres ante la ley, la realidad era muy distinta. Las personas de orden, la gente de bien, gozaba de una protección que al perdulario le estaba negada. El perdulario desconocía sus derechos, y de haberlos conocido, no habría sabido cómo hacerlos valer y aun cuando lo hubiera sabido, es dudoso que la judicatura se los hubiera reconocido; siempre le tocaba las de perder. (119)

Viewing this novel as an emblem of contemporary urban consciousness provides noteworthy insights to Mendoza’s perspective of the role of the state in the urban process of Barcelona. The institutions of the state are complicitous with—or at least powerless against—the abuses of capitalist urbanization. Furthermore, in terms of urban policy and social justice, the novel aligns the post-Franco democracy with such ineffective governments as Alfonso XIII’s monarchy and the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. This results in particularly harsh contemporary criticism because in 1986 the PSC had been in control of the city council for seven years, and nationally the PSOE had been in power for four years. The moderate, neo-liberal politics—or “social democratic new realism” (McNeill 85-105)—that kept the socialists in power in Barcelona was seen by many leftists as a sell out to the ideals of social justice and change that swept the PSC in to office in the first place. McNeill observes:

Instead of going down the expected route pioneered by the Eurocommunist-run cities of Italy such as Bologna, the PSC veered down the middle. Narcís Serra, who had become the city’s first socialist mayor, set the pattern of moderation and public-private partnership between the Ajuntament and private capital that would lead Barcelona into a new round of property development and civic boosterism. [...] The characteristics of Francoist urban development—the social dominance of finance capital, the resuscitation of celebrated land use cases defeated in the 1970s, the prevalence of zoning changes of dubious legality, and the continued dominance of road-building schemes—still pertained to a certain degree throughout the 1980s and 1990s. (125-27)

The fact remains, however, that although urban renewal was selective and resembled the work of “enlightened despots” (156), many of the transformations of the 1980s benefited a wide range of Barcelonans. The portrayal of the state in *La ciudad* calls into question the contemporary government’s motives for urban development, which seemed based more on aesthetics and selling place than on socialist ideals.

I previously pointed out how the depiction of Barcelona’s urban space in *La ciudad* relates to current issues of class, but it also has another contemporary parallel. The novelistic space of 1887 to 1929 bears a striking resemblance to Barcelona’s urban space of 1986 because of its quality of transformation. Most of the urban space described in the novel is set during times of significant transition: before the 1888 and 1929 World Fairs and during the rapid development of the Eixample at the end of the 19th century. Even the attention given to the restoration of Onofre’s mansion emphasizes a sense of transformation, dedicating several pages to the process of renovation, and only a small paragraph to its final state (298-332). The prominence of space undergoing transformation coincides with the projects of urban renewal already underway in 1986, and foreshadows the even greater change that was to come after Barcelona received word of their successful Olympic bid in October of that same year.

La verdad and *La ciudad* both emerged out of an urbanization of consciousness that anticipated significant urban transformations. Nevertheless, the linking of the past eras with the present also gives the impression that the more things change, the more they stay the same. Even though the urban spaces have changed, the individuals are different and the state has evolved many times over since the eras portrayed in these novels, the dynamic remains the same. The urban process in Barcelona still forms, transforms and reforms space reflective of an urbanization of consciousness under capitalism.

NOTES

¹ Harvey has received sharp criticism for failing to consider other possible aspects of consciousness formation, such as race and gender. In *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* he addressed some of these concerns, but for the most part he remained stalwart in his Marxist stance that class encompasses all these other issues important to the urbanization of consciousness. According to Harvey, giving equal attention to all possible differences that he collapses under class would simply enable an excess of “militant particularisms” (32) which would undermine any program of resistance to capitalist urban consciousness.

² Mario Santana also notes the parallels between 1917-1919 and 1975 (140).

³ Although the novel clearly places Onofre’s residence in the area of Bonanova, the description of the estate and its history more closely parallels the area of Horta at the current site of the Parque del Laberinto. Mario Camus also noted these parallels, setting part of his filmic adaptation of this novel in the Parque del Laberinto.

⁴ See Moix’s *La ciudad de los arquitectos*, McNeill’s *Urban Change and the European Left*, and Moreno and Vázquez Montalbán’s *Barcelona, ¿a dónde vas?*.

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