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Source: *PMLA*, Vol. 109, No. 5 (Oct., 1994), pp. 951-968

Published by: [Modern Language Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/462964>

Accessed: 29/04/2014 08:38

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Money, Desire, and History in Eduardo Mendoza's *City of Marvels*

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FINDING NEITHER the social realism prevalent in the 1950s nor a progressively untenable avant-garde suitable to their purposes, Spanish authors in the post-Francoist period wavered between reappropriating novelistic forms of discourse (based on the bourgeois conception of the novel as a modern chronicle) and moving toward fantasy and, eventually, popular genres like romance and melodrama. These genres were adapted with the irony typical of the self-consciousness and parodic intent often associated with postmodern works but were also pressed into the service of narrative needs that the novel of the 1950s and 1960s had left largely unsatisfied. This new narrativity sought to bypass both the static reportage of the social realism of the 1950s and the disruption of temporal linearity in the subjectivist fiction of the 1960s and early 1970s. The return to forms dependent on temporal progression, mimetic illusion, and agonistic characters can be said to advance a mythical consciousness of historical time, a particular form of collective new historicism.¹

The experience of time through mythical formations underlies the self-understanding of Spanish society during the two decades since 1975, when Spain was developing the political institutions necessary for the stabilization and further expansion of the economic model it had adopted in the 1960s. Although this model was indistinguishable at first from classical capitalism, the Spain of the technocrats (as it was called during the 1960s) was already laying the groundwork for the development undergone by other European countries, which after World War II had entered the new stage of capitalism that came to be known as postindustrial society. This stage differs from the previous one in that the economic exploitation of labor can no longer be isolated from social aims that are not always oriented by the criterion of profit (Touraine 12). The ideological function of capitalism in a society directed no longer by a purely economic class but by those who control the instruments of social transformation is the neocapitalist formula by which Spain accomplished

the transition from dictatorship to democracy.

Franco's death became a mythical marker, an *ab quo* date for a new national self-image and a conception of history based on a new narrative. Endowed with teleological force, the resolution of this narrative, which proved to be the full integration of Spain into the European Community in 1992, constituted a second mythical marker. This event promised to dispel the social effects of a long historical divergence, neutralizing the topos of difference with the rhetoric of economic development. But a self-understanding made possible by myth implies subjection to myth's limitations and formal constraints. The linearity of a time hedged by crisis and resolution, on which the sense of progress of the reconstituted Spanish democracy rests, can be seen as a function of a representational structure that necessarily preempts the form and signification of the future. The restoration of narrativity through myth roughly coincides with a political restoration—that of the Spanish monarchy in 1975—similarly grounded in myth. Both the literary and the governmental restorations were formal expressions of deeper changes affecting the entire social fabric. In retrospect, the transformation of Spanish society in the three decades between the end of World War II and Franco's death in 1975 was a sinuous but unmistakable conversion to capitalism. This conversion was carried out amid rhetorical denials by the dictatorial regime, which derived its support from forces that had fought and won the civil war in the name of pre- and largely anticapitalist interests.² This process, which culminated in the political disenchantment of the late seventies—a disenchantment with the unfulfilled ideals spawned by decades of opposition to the regime—led to the “reenchantment” of the social domain in the eighties. As the hope for a utopia of equality and for redress of political injustice receded, a fascination with new mores, with new styles of personal relations, and with the material transformation of daily life took hold of the collective imagination. What had been a “technical” reinsertion into the market economy, masterminded by government technocrats with a Catholic ideology, suddenly became a way of life legitimated by the ideology of modernity, soon

to be renamed *postmodernity*. It was inevitable that this ideology, like that of the Francoist regime—and that of the opposition to the regime—would generate its myth of origin and select its expressive forms from among those available for this purpose.

I intend here to analyze the pragmatics of reappropriating a narrative mode in a historical context that diverges significantly from the context that first determined the mode's orientation and worldview—its ideology. In the work I discuss, Eduardo Mendoza's *La ciudad de los prodigios* (*City of Marvels*), the formal model is a combination of historical realism and magical romance. Although seemingly antithetical, these genres converge in the expression of a utopian desire temporarily fulfilled in a brief suspension of history, which is constituted as an aesthetic object within the force fields of two magical dates: 1888 and 1929, the years of the two world's fairs held in Barcelona. The problem I consider, then, is the rehabilitation of romance or, more exactly, the combination of realistic historical narrative and adventure romance in a society characterized by the fusion of the theoretically mutually exclusive ideologies of economic liberalism and bureaucratic state centralization, the social mechanisms whose differentiation, according to Max Weber, marks a modern society. In post-Franco Spain these ideologies were reconciled or, rather, synthesized (in the Hegelian sense) in the new and superior cycle of multinational corporate and state capitalism. The post-Franco regime inherited the contradictions between a rigidly centralized administration and the demands of economic development. These contradictions survived not only at the symbolic level, in the grounding of the new regime through monarchical restoration rather than modern legitimation, but also and more decisively at the meeting point of private or associational initiative and administrative control. This conflict, placed in historical perspective, sets the scene for action in Mendoza's novel and suggests a correlative dialectic of forms. Structured according to the conventions of the novel of adventure, the text sets up generic presuppositions that run counter to the contingencies of realism, while realism figures in the text as a historical trans-

position of extant political conditions.

Framed by events that function as historical markers, the novel's plot traces the Catalan bourgeoisie's rise to historical protagonism and its disappearance beyond the historical horizon under conditions it helped to create. Mendoza brings this development into focus by means of fantastic characters and situations that trace the adventures of this mobile class in the multiple transformations and proairetic decisions of the entrepreneurial hero, Onofre Bouvila. This hero's rise from social insignificance to boundless economic might challenges the ethos of traditional (precapitalist) society by subjecting reality to the transformative magic of capital, which the novel vindicates as a metaphoric embodiment of desire. Once Onofre enters the metropolitan dynamics, he becomes conscious of progress as an interplay of social mobility and historical existence. Thus he understands the relation of social mobility to (economic) control over one's (and other people's) time:

Tengo que llegar a más, se decía, no me puedo quedar aquí. Si no hago algo pronto mi vida está sellada, pensaba, y mi destino será convertirme en un hampón más. Por más que le fascinase la vida fácil de los bellacos y las mujercuelas la razón le decía que estos seres marginados en realidad vivían de prestado: la sociedad los toleraba porque le resultaban de utilidad o porque le parecía demasiado costoso eliminarlos definitivamente. (133)

"I must rise higher," he said to himself. "I can't stay where I am. If I do, my fate will be sealed—I'll end up just another thug." Though he [was fascinated with] the easy life of [gangsters and hustlers], his reason told him that these people on the fringe of society were really living on borrowed time, tolerated for the moment because they had their uses, or because it seemed too expensive to eradicate them. (140)³

Living on borrowed time within the shells of easy pleasures, these people have figuratively run out of time into a futureless existence. Onofre's fascination with this life reveals that pleasure is anticipated fulfillment and thus the abrogation of the experience of time born of the protensive nature of desire. Onofre is rescued from the

timelessness of pleasure by his incapacity to assimilate his own image to the frozen, futureless images of the Barcelona underworld. Like characters in Dante's *Inferno*, these forms of an already fulfilled destiny move within a time that is not their own; they are souls lost beyond time and therefore unable to transcend their fixed signification within the narrative. One can speak here of a persistence of the Lacanian mirror stage, the identification that changes the individual as he or she assumes a self-image. This primordial image, which Lacan, following Freud, provisionally calls the ideal I, places "the agency of the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction [*ligne de fiction*], which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone, or rather, which will only rejoin the coming-into-being (*le devenir*) of the subject asymptotically, whatever the success of the dialectical syntheses by which he must resolve as *I* his discordance with his own reality" (Lacan 2). Lacan's *ligne de fiction* can here be taken as the narrativity inherent in Onofre's identity, which seeks self-recognition and representation by attempting to appropriate time through control of everything that is temporal. Narrative time becomes Onofre's as his ideal self ventures into a dialectic with other subject positions in order to assume absolute narrativity (i.e., the privilege to determine stories and, eventually, history). Absolute narrativity, the mastery of fictional development that, as Lacan points out, remains merely virtual for the individual, thus becomes the unreachable yet inexorably pursued convergence of the idealized image of the self with the symbolic positions available in the narrative order of the novel.

In search of this convergence, Onofre's self traverses the social world, adopting a variety of persons in a swift metamorphosis, which provides some grounds for those who see picaresque reflections in the novel. Beginning as a street urchin, Onofre rises to strength, influence, and fabulous wealth by virtue of his sharp intelligence and unflinching cynicism. Such a deployment of social masks, in which the ideal I metaphorizes itself as it penetrates different domains of signification, can be best conceptualized by means of the modes of self-representation that Lacan calls the symbolic and the imaginary. The

imaginary is a narcissistic perspective in which desire rebounds on the mirroring image, which is as yet undifferentiated from the self. The symbolic appears with the irruption of a tertiary instance that shatters the duality of the mirroring illusion. This disruptive position, which Lacan designates the other, encompasses everything (father, language, law) that alienates the self from the specular relation to its object and that forces the self to enter the symbolic relations constitutive of social life.

In recounting Onofre's infancy, Mendoza delineates a state of perfect empathy between mother and child during which the child's fantasies grow unchecked. "Su madre no había hecho ni dicho nada que hubiera podido fomentar estas fantasías; pero tampoco podía disuadirle de ellas: nunca hablaba del tema. Así él había fantaseado a su antojo" 'Although his mother did nothing by word or deed to encourage that fantasy, she did not discourage it, either—she simply never brought up the subject—and he had gone on dreaming to his heart's content' (46; 46). The arrival of the father ushers in the domain of the other and the scene of displaced representation where desire must reckon with the law. The dissolution of Onofre's illusory narcissism is completed one February morning, when his father is accused of fraud. From then on Onofre's life is energized by the need to recover the shattered narcissistic image in the sphere of social exchanges, where the law makes every position excentric and residual, as it were, in relation to the full object that it replaces.

The fall from the unity of the original self-image into the adventures of the symbolic initiates desire and the experience of time. The relation between time and desire is readily apparent as the congruence between the actively and the passively experienced consequences of the removal from the imaginary. Lacan unequivocally points out this relation in the constitution of the self: "This development is experienced as a temporal dialectic that decisively projects the formation of the individual into history. The *mirror stage* is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation" (4). Onofre's unquenchable desire stems from the insufficiency of the outer world as compared with

the inner world—one reason that his efforts at self-transformation are inseparable from the profound modification of the outer reality, in both social (symbolic) and spatial (image-sustaining) terms. Cast in the form of anticipation, desire is the engine of time. It produces time as it projects itself in spatial correspondences, which are no sooner overtaken than they are abandoned for new ones. Long known by storytellers to be the source of narrativity, the relation between time and desire is paradoxical in that desire generates time by seeking to annul itself in a symbolic synthesis of the subject and the ideal I, a fusion that would bring time to a close by ending the dialectic between the self's *ligne de fiction* and its effective reality. Unattainable under the reality principle (and thus excluded from the realistic novel), this synthesis is, however, accessible to romance, and through this mode Mendoza's fictional line departs from the Lacanian scheme. The extension of Onofre's ego over the space of his world is almost unlimited, and the moment of triumph is properly couched in the glowing subjectivity of romantic fulfillment that transcends—or rather sweeps along—historical obstacles. Perfection, power, and love come together in the culminating scene where, in possession of the perfect Regent diamond and in the company of Maria Belltall (whose last name, meaning "beautiful cut," assimilates her excellence to that of the diamond), Onofre soars in a flying machine above Barcelona. Suspended above the dictator Primo de Rivera and Alfonso XIII—emblems of delegitimized power—he is acknowledged by the people as the realization of a collective dream and the focal point where image meets reality.

Onofre escapes from timelessness into the world of adventure through a symbolic pact, one that, with reference to its historical correlation, has perceptively been characterized as Faustian.⁴ The historical event (or series of events) that the concept of the Faustian pact alludes to is the Catalan bourgeoisie's betrayal of the revolutionary impulse of Catalan nationalism in exchange for the Madrid government's guarantee of bourgeois class domination.⁵ The political consequences of this event, not completely obliterated by the novel, are mere side effects of the dynam-

ics set in motion by the pact. Similarly, in part 2 of Goethe's *Faust* the demonic partner destroys Philemon and Baucis so that Faust can retain his decorum and affect indignance at the means used to serve his will. That pact, however, is based on a different intent: the complete fulfillment of desire. Surrounded by Faust's immense territory, Philemon and Baucis's small plot of land signifies that which holds back a totalitarian dream. On that unassimilated spot Faust wants to build a watchtower "[u]m ins Unendliche zu schauen" 'in order to gaze out into the infinite' (341). He yearns for a comprehensive self, one that circumscribes the extremes of life. The collateral? His soul, of course, but only at the moment of fulfillment, that moment to which he can say, "Verweile doch, du bist so schön!" 'Linger on, you are so beautiful!' (57; my trans.). That moment seals his life at the exact point where the assumed image meets the socially realized image, where the idealizing soul of the contemplative scholar is fused with the active spirit of the entrepreneur. Only at this point is time unnecessary; only this moment encompasses the totality of experience, which has remained latent in the ideal image of the comprehensive self. And the moment's completeness is manifested in Faust's acquisition of the last fragment of alien space, the small plot of land not yet assimilated into the homogeneous expanse of his domain.

Although land acquisition is among the many enterprises by which Onofre's fortune grows, his gradual appropriation of time is symbolized in a different way. In the end Onofre is identified with the entire period surveyed by the novel. Each of his activities—delivering anarchist pamphlets, peddling hair lotion, gangsterism, real estate speculation, film and arms production, political conspiracy, and sponsorship of technology—corresponds to a stage in the modern history of Barcelona. From whatever angle it is observed, his multifaceted life, like the perfectly cut Regent diamond, sparkles with the collective life of the city. The diamond is in this sense a condensation of time. It expresses the pure moment and thus the perfection of time. But it is no less a condensation of power, a circumstance that points to another aspect of the Faustian pact. Mephistopheles supplies the power for Faust to realize

his desire, a power that in a different order of things would be Faust's own but that is alienated through an ideological limitation: the bourgeoisie's incapacity to ground its actions in the dark side of being. Onofre joins forces with (and draws power from) the underworld by means of a symbolic mediator: money. Money attracts him to the underworld and pulls him back from it. The absoluteness of money, the capacity to bridge otherwise impassable gaps between social-metaphysical realms, endows his existence with an indelible "underworldliness."

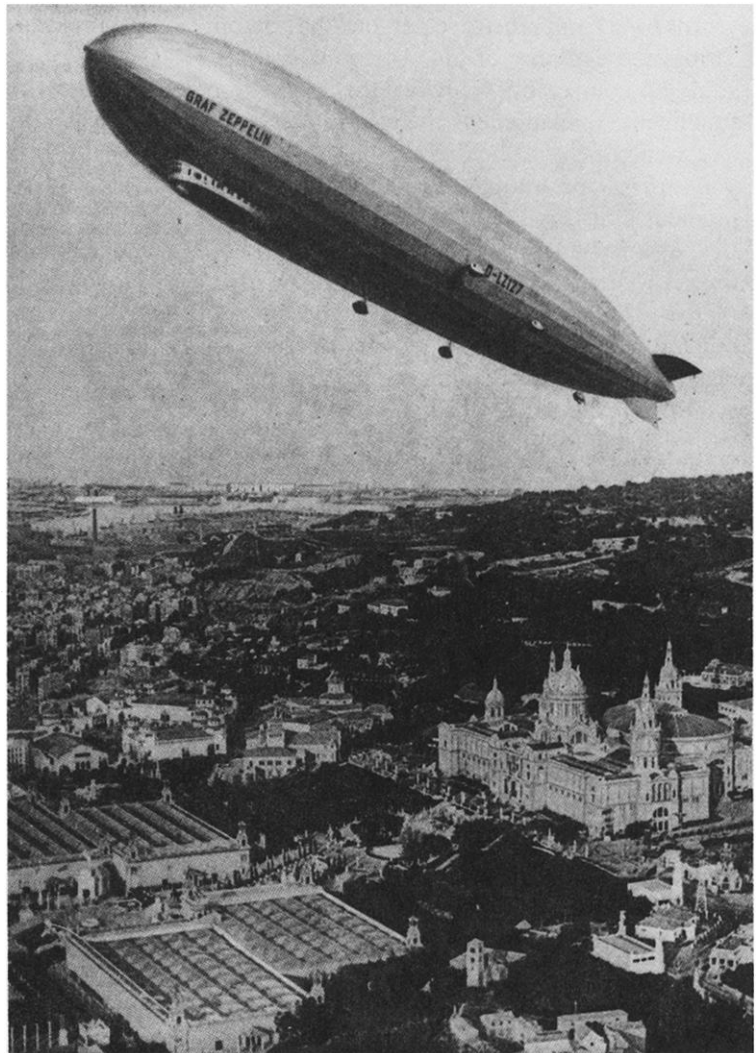
Money is the contractual basis of the pact. How else could the pact have been arrived at in bourgeois conditions? But money is not the end for which the pact is entered into. Money functions at a metaphoric level as the medium of desire. Because desire can no longer be immediately realized, it must take a detour through money as the privileged leverage on reality. Money, as the young Marx points out, "converts . . . wishes from something in the realm of imagination, translates them from their meditated, imagined or desired existence into their *sensuous, actual* existence." The Mephistophelian offer involves the power to realize, to actualize mere subjectivity. Nevertheless, Marx also observes a dialectical process whereby money not only transforms latent powers into effective powers but also brings about the reverse, changing real powers into abstractions and "tormenting chimeras" (122). Money offers itself as a vehicle for desire but in the process metaphorizes desire, inverting its realization. What is realized is in fact merely an image of desire, an image, however concrete, of another, previous image. The abstraction involved, to which Lewis Mumford calls attention when he observes that the capitalist economy translates "all goods, services, and energies into abstract, pecuniary terms" (274), is at the heart of the power of representation that founds the myth of presence as a compensation for the universal alienation of the ideal I.

Representation is possible on the condition that what is presented spectacularly, what is objectified, be a projection of that which has been suppressed through social mediation. As such, the representative merges with the heroic,

which is the attribute of those figures whose egos are collectively reclaimed as mediators. Heroism is a spectacular being present *to* the self of that which, no longer present *in* the self, continues to ground the self's identity. When the throngs at the 1929 world's fair see Onofre rise above the city, hovering over politicians and king, they recall his legend, wondering whether it can be true that "todo esto lo consiguió solo y sin ayuda, partiendo de cero, a base de coraje y voluntad" 'he did all that alone, single-handed, starting from scratch, armed only with his courage and his cunning.' They wonder, in short, about the possibility of heroism, of the presence *in* the dream. "En el fondo todos estaban dispuestos a creer que así era: en él se realizaban los sueños de todos, por su mediación se cumplía una venganza colectiva" 'And they wanted to believe that it was all true: in him the dreams of every man were realized, in him a collective revenge was achieved' (390; 413). They are eager to believe in the collective realization of desire, because in their concrete existence their own ideal images have been denied.

Money is the means by which modern marvels are accomplished. They originate and take shape in this most fluid of mediums, money being more fluid than magic, which is the traditional medium of the marvelous. Belonging to a world that preserves a primitive cosmological division, magic is polarized by the sign of antagonistic powers vying for possession of the world. But in the modern world cosmo-

logical divisions have collapsed, and the same forces traverse the upper and lower worlds. The breakdown of cosmological order is welcomed by Onofre, who exploits money's homogeneity to inject his subjectivity into this purely quantitative medium, using money as an extension of his self: "A él las cosas como estaban, las cosas confusas y enrevesadas le parecían bien, no en vano había escalado la posición que ocupaba ahora prevaliéndose de ello" 'He liked things as



The *Graf Zeppelin* hovering above the site of the 1929 world's fair in Barcelona. In *City of Marvels* Onofre Bouvila flies over this area in a machine conceived by a Catalan scientist and produced under the supervision of a German engineer. (Arxiu Fotogràfic de Museus, Ajuntament de Barcelona.)

they were, confused and twisted—he had, after all, got where he was by turning such conditions to his advantage’ (312; 334). But the universality of money also implies that one’s enemies can tap into the same source of power to further their hostile purposes. They can use money’s formal neutrality to buttress the archaic cosmos that in romance always provides the image of the underworld, and nothing can be done to prevent the flow of power in their direction.

In connivance with the king, Primo de Rivera resorts to the Catalan bourgeoisie’s money to aid the failing powers of traditional magic in support of the monarchy. For this kind of magic not money but wealth is necessary, wealth whose sumptuous display rather than its productive application strengthens the fiduciary basis of society. Indifferent to this old magic, the fascination with money as a purely symbolic means of exchange—and a highly mobile, decentralized one—derives from money’s elasticity, its capacity for infinite expansion, limited only by the collective imagination. Georg Simmel remarks that “[m]oney’s flexibility, which follows from its being detached from particular interests, origins and relations, entails as a necessary logical consequence the invitation to us not to restrain ourselves in those spheres of life in which money predominates” (441).⁶ The disinhibiting nature of money is, no doubt, the reason for Onofre’s economic gigantism and for his seemingly irrepressible selfishness. It is also the formal condition for the narrator’s imaginative “speculation” with the creative virtues of a free-flowing medium that, by virtue of its metaphoric status, is isolated from particular historical referents. The power of money grows with abstraction. Deriving from money’s semiological character, that power works best when detached from concrete referents. As Simmel points out, “[T]he purely formal and indifferent forces of life attain in [money] their primary, as it were, natural, and congenial fulfillment” (441). In *City of Marvels* the formalization of vital endeavors through money appears in the speculation in Barcelona’s newly developed Eixample (“Expansion”) district that promotes capital at the rate that the amount of available land shrinks, with the result that small apartments “valían, naturalmente, veinticinco,

treinta y hasta treinta y cinco veces más de lo que en su día habían costado las viviendas amplias, soleadas e higiénicas construidas al inicio del proceso. Se podía decir, como alguien, dijo, que *cuanto más pequeña y asquerosa la casa, más cara resulta*” ‘cost twenty-five, thirty, even thirty-five times what was originally paid for the spacious, sunny, and salubrious dwellings built at the start of the process. As someone put it, “The smaller and smellier the house, the more expensive”’ (184; 197). The explanation for this abstract gratification at the expense of the senses lies with the Catalans’ business orientation, a peculiar disposition toward purely mental satisfaction resulting from their centuries-long ghettoized existence:

Para entender este fenómeno, esta fiebre, hay que recordar que los barceloneses eran una raza eminentemente mercantil y que estaban acostumbrados desde hacía siglos a vivir hacinados como piojos: a ellos la vivienda en sí les importaba un bledo, por todo el confort de un harén no habrían dado un solo paso; en cambio la perspectiva de ganar dinero en poco tiempo les excitaba, era su canto de sirenas. (185)

To understand this phenomenon, this fever, one must remember that the people of Barcelona were an eminently mercantile breed, and that for centuries they had been used to living all crammed together like lice. They didn’t give a damn about their homes as such, about creature comforts, but the prospect of making a quick profit captivated them like the song of a mermaid. (197–98)

Mendoza presents the magical dimension of capitalism as the universal medium for the inscription of desire and its productive displacements or adventures. In *City of Marvels*, capital appears as what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari call an “enchanted surface of inscription” (18), the equivalent of a magnetic band or celluloid strip that transmits the initial impetus for the production of new urban images. The capture of all impulses by this surface of inscription reduces the heterogeneous predicates of the subject (the subject as, for example, a political or erotic being) to the generality of a neutral property. This reduction is at work in Onofre’s

conversion of anarchism and revolution into business and in the universal subordination of eroticism to economic enterprise, even when that enterprise serves an erotic end, as in Onofre's investment in fantastic engineering at the request of Maria Belltall. The novel illustrates this principle most clearly when Onofre, worried about the scandalous nightlife of his stooge, señor Braulio, channels señor Braulio's centrifugal desire into the economic mainstream: "si necesita un desahogo o quiere un poco de jarana, la paga y se la trae a casa, que para eso ganamos una pasta gansa" 'If you need to let off steam or go on a binge, get your wallet out and fix it up at home. We're earning plenty now, you know, and that's what money is for' (152; 161).

As a universal medium for the inscription of desire, capitalism challenges the notion of a necessary identity by multiplying images, an operation that gives rise to capitalism's specific temporality. This temporality holds true even when capitalism proposes the nostalgic retrieval of the past—as in Onofre's conjuring up the specter of an aborted history through his detailed reconstruction of the Rosell mansion or in Mendoza's own reconstructive project. A fascination with the assumed self-image underlies the attempt, whether collective or individual, to fixate that image by recording it on the medium's surface. The assumed self-image appears to differ from alternative images only in being fortuitously endowed with the positive charge of identity. The identity must be suspended, however, while the subject runs through the series of socially or historically available positions. Each position, when occupied, produces a new identification equally distant from a potentially definitive position that is no longer available to the subject. That definitive position can be imagined as a center that is structurally inconceivable, however necessary it appears to be metaphysically.⁷ Such a center can be conceived in Faustian terms as the watchtower from which an infinite viewpoint becomes available. It is, in short, the utopian point at which the subject ceases to be mediated by the symbolic order and vanishes, along with desire, into a state of indifferentiation where self and other are fused (see Onofre's stage exit [390–92; 413–15]). The movement of desire

through its positions makes use of multiple combinatorial possibilities available on the temporal axis. Exploiting the contingency of these combinations in a playful manner that belies determinism, desire is thus subject to historical equivocations (such as the ambiguities of a past formalized in restorations), although history is precisely this movement of desire.

Onofre undertakes the colossal enterprise of supervising down to the smallest detail the reconstruction of a ruined mansion, thus simulating a reversal of time's ravages. The historical mansion is not an entity but a temporal product with no being of its own except in memory; it is the reference point of a desire that has moved on to other historical combinations. Thus the house is reconstructed only from the blueprints that exist in an old servant's memory. But memory, the trace of cathexes whose objects are no longer available, is, like the desire it projects backward, inapprehensible in its totality. Because of its dependence on the symbolic order,⁸ memory represents, in Maurice Halbwachs's words, "the intersection of collective influences" (44) and not the possession of a privileged subject. Memory's libidinal counterpart is the form of social mediation that in Lacan's scheme accounts for desire's mimetic constitution of its objects in competition with the other's desire. The syntheses of polyphonic desire that at different times contributed the partial objects leading to the historical event known as a mansion are not, therefore, to be seized by a desiring subject. The servant's mnemonic exercise cannot evoke the full current of desire that brought the house into existence; it can at most signal the empty positions where desire once merged with objective conditions. Onofre's resolution to synthesize the statistically improbable series of conditions required for a perfect reconstruction entails boundless arrogance insofar as it supposes the conquest of time. The flow of desire through contingency is replaced by will, which mimics the unconscious source of history—the lure of an untroubled specularly between subject and world—by reproducing the effects of chance in the controlled composition of a pattern. Where desire rose above the subject and generated time by superseding all subject positions, Onofre attempts to

centralize the subject, with the result that time is (subjectively) stopped and desire repressed:

Aunque la reconstrucción podía considerarse perfecta había algo inquietante en aquella copia fidelísima, algo pomposo en aquel ornato excesivo, algo demente en aquel afán por calcar una existencia anacrónica y ajena, algo grosero en aquellos cuadros, jarrones, relojes, y figuras de imitación que no eran regalos ni legados, cuya presencia no era fruto de sucesivos hallazgos o caprichos, que no atesoraban la memoria del momento en que fueron adquiridos, de la ocasión en que pasaron a formar parte de la casa: allí todo respondía a una voluntad rigurosa, todo era falso y opresivo. (332)

Although the renovation was perfect, there was something disturbing in that perfection, something both pompous and demented in that excessive fidelity to a past that was not their own. Those imitation paintings, vases, clocks, and statuettes, which were neither gifts nor heirlooms, whose presence there was not the result of finds or fancies, and which had no personal history behind their acquisition other than a cold and thoroughgoing will, were all false and oppressive. (355)

The subjective stoppage of time is signified by the subject's enclosure in a particular and arbitrary constellation of desire. After reconstructing the romantic mansion and thus producing an image of a consumed historical process, Onofre remains inside the house, which takes on "una solemnidad funeraria" 'a funereal solemnity' (332; 355). In so doing Onofre attempts to conclude the Faustian contract, his willful synthesis of a moment to which he can say, "Verweile doch, du bist so schön!" (Not by chance this reactionary moment in Onofre's life coincides with the Catalan bourgeoisie's attempt to stem the historical flux, to which it has contributed, by stooping to a Faustian pact with the underworld of politico-military powers that are no longer agents of historical change.) Onofre's tyranny over his wife and daughters is not devoid of underworld references. To his daughters' complaint that their social life will be curtailed by their seclusion in the mansion, he replies, "Mientras yo sea rico vendrán a vernos al infierno si es preciso" 'As long as I [am] rich, . . . they'll

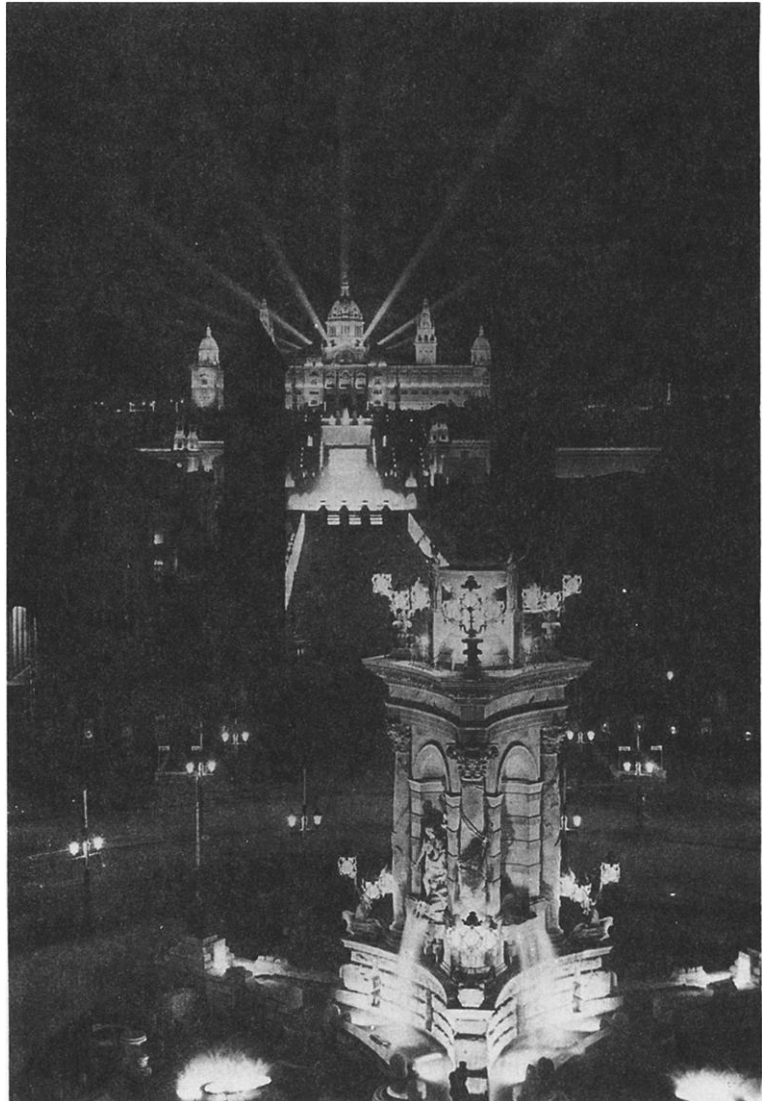
come [to see us] in hell [if need be]' (332; 355). His new role as a subjectivity in suspended time fittingly takes on demonic functions. The symbolic investment in ordinary exchanges increases in proportion to the impediments to socialization, until that investment announces the Faustian contract and the reappropriation of the powers of the ideal I that are lost to the unconscious. This symbolic transformation is the meaning of Onofre's "hell" and of the Mephistophelian turn it gives to his pleasure. Onofre seems "divertirse viéndolas sufrir" 'to take pleasure in making them suffer' (332; 355). Conceiving wealth no longer as an abstract equivalent but as the locus of desire, he replaces the symbolic fulfillments available within the social system with a specularity based on the power of money to dissolve even the starkest of metaphysical boundaries. "They'll come to see us in hell" means in effect "They'll come to see themselves in us."

Withdrawing into a fabricated image of the past, Onofre views himself as an originator of desire and no longer as a subject in its orbit. Identifying with money's image-generating power, he enters a second mirror stage, seeking release from the historical tide that he has so successfully ridden. His dream of a nonmediated subject that is not the residue of incomplete libidinal discharges (epitomized in the exact reconstruction of the house in defiance of history) soon founders, however, on the reversibility of the pact, as the suspension of time that he mistakes for a fuller existence emerges as a delusion induced by the power of nonbeing. This situation parallels the broader social conditions generated by Primo de Rivera's coup d'état, thus illustrating how historical irony removes the subject from the positions it has previously occupied and reveals those positions, at a higher level, as passive syntheses of objective sequences ultimately indifferent to the subject. Primo de Rivera, who casts himself in the role of Onofre's enemy, thus displaying Mephistophelian traits, turns out to be an ironic victim of the Faustian pact that momentarily elevates him from the underworld into the light of history. The full implications of the contractual reckoning are not, however, admitted into the narrative con-

sciousness; that is, Primo de Rivera's fall and the bourgeoisie's accelerated decline are the narrative horizon against which the plot unfolds. The imminence of these events is unmistakably evident, for example, in the dictator's engagement in the image-producing activity toward which social energy is directed in the novel. To conceal his unwillingness to address the longstanding causes of social dislocation, Primo de Rivera offers a policy of public works that can lead only to economic and political bankruptcy. This policy's grand finale is the Barcelona World's Fair of 1929, Mendoza's setting for the last act of the novel.

The circumscription of desire in the Lacanian imaginary and the move away from the relational aspect of the symbolic order characterize Onofre's project of simulation. By creating a self-enclosed system of images, Onofre attempts to render this system absolute. It may seem ironic that Onofre's rebuilding project marks the end of his involvement in the film industry—the novel calls this concurrence “pura casualidad o . . . deliberada armonía” ‘pure chance or cosmic design’ (308; 330), which amount to the same thing. The two enterprises seem to express opposite inclinations: an antiquarian passion and a forward-looking, technologically revolutionary venture. But while in pioneering the Spanish film industry Onofre seems both to take a lease on the future and to grasp the inseparability of modernity from the ephem-

eral, his project works the miracle of fixation, as his antiquarianism does later. In film Onofre seeks to trap lack and desire in the eternity of a consumed moment, as if the flow of time, simulated by the rolling of film, could be forced to yield a totality of meaning concentrated in the image. “Te felicito” ‘My congratulations,’ Ono-



In the background, the National Palace in Barcelona, built for the 1929 world's fair. King Alfonso XIII and the dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera, standing on a terrace, inaugurated the palace in a ceremony reproduced in *City of Marvels*. In the foreground of this photograph taken during the exposition is a fountain by Josep Maria Jujol, a prominent Catalan architect. (Arxiu Fotogràfic de Museus, Ajuntament de Barcelona.)

fre says to the film director. “Todo lo que yo quería está aquí; en esta mirada está todo: las ilusiones y los terrores de la humanidad” ‘Everything I wanted is there[; that look renders it all:] the hopes and fears of humanity.’ This moment of high semantic tension would be the properly Faustian moment, when light is aided by the shadows of the underworld in producing the supreme illusion. “Dentro de poco esta luz que aún resplandece en el fondo de sus miradas se extinguirá, será un rescoldo primero y luego un montón de ceniza fría, pero este instante último habrá quedado fijado para siempre en el celuloide, pensó” ‘Soon this light that shines deep in [her] eyes will go out—turning first to embers, then to cold ashes—but [this final moment] will be fixed forever on film’ (294; 316).

Time and money can be said to constitute the polarization from which the novel arises and whose resolution it strives for. This polarization is clearly evident in the undertakings most richly invested with Onofre’s desire: the film project—on which he embarks to fixate the boundless suffering in the sulfurous eyes of his erstwhile lover, Delfina (282; 303)—and the rebuilt mansion. Onofre invests money in the film project to gel the evanescence of a significant moment; in the mansion a dispersed, fragmented portion of the past is retrieved and transmuted into an image of money’s triumph over time. Despite the apparent inconsistency in ideological significance between the projects, Onofre attempts in both to dam the flow of desire in order to control its source. The appropriation of time and its conversion into a system of subjectively mediated images, into a privately determined collective imaginary, is also at the heart of Onofre’s entrepreneurial adventures in the film business:

[P]oder ofrecer un espectáculo siempre idéntico, que empiece siempre a la misma hora y termine exactamente a la hora señalada, siempre la misma también! ¡Tener al público sentado, a oscuras, en silencio, como si durmiera, como si soñara: una manera de producir sueños colectivos! Este era su ideal. (284)

“To be able to put on a show that is always identical, that begins and ends exactly at the times

indicated, and these too always the same!” he thought. “To have the audience seated in darkness, in silence, as if asleep, as if dreaming a collective dream!” That was his ideal. (304)

Speculation with time becomes a source of wealth, as in the medieval definition of usury, in which the usurer is blamed for selling time.⁹ But the time involved is not the active, living time that, according to theologians, belongs to God; it is a dormant, packaged time. Reflecting the substitution of synchrony for diachrony, of system for genuine temporality, the newer kind of time endows the signifiers with a totalizing sense that facilitates unconscious identification with a mediated image. The images in the film are always identical, and the time mediating (and mediated by) this experience is also invariable, homogeneous, at once signified and unsignifying, a time that cancels itself out. As in the simulation of the mansion, the simulacrum of desire replaces productive desire. In the reconstruction of the mansion, intense capitalization creates the illusion that time can be annihilated; in the film business, mastery over time produces money. The roots of this operation lie in *usura*. This projection of desire into form involves not a genuine temporal series, however, but a synthetic time resulting from a purely economic operation—hence, *usura* in reverse. Money buys the essence of experience, abolishing temporal specificity in the process. Detached by film from its real-life origin, Delfina’s boundless suffering reveals the dark side of desire as a universal open to anecdotal participation. Like the negative of her image preserved on film as the fictional Honesta Labroux, her suffering can be projected on the collective imaginary as a specular image of unquenchable yearning. By this means Onofre triumphs over an ill-disposed audience, holding it in the grip of its own emotion. “El público había enmudecido en efecto: . . . ahora estaba viendo por primera vez lo que durante varios años el mundo entero vería a todas horas en todas partes: el rostro apenado de Honesta Labroux” ‘The audience fell silent . . . they were seeing for the first time what the whole world would see for years: the grief-stricken face of Honesta Labroux’ (277; 297). The illusion takes

place as if the eternity of suffering and the infinity of longing made available within consumable units of time could be produced as a special effect by the medium, whether it be film or money.

The synthesis of time by money is best illustrated in Onofre's conjuring the Rosell mansion back from its ruins. In its first existence the house was a historical entity. Built in stages corresponding to the lives of its dwellers, it resulted from the articulation of distinct temporal sequences. In its modern reconstruction, an equivalent combination of partial objects (images) is synchronically arrived at through systematic operations in the medium of money. The equivalence in surface manifestation conceals the semic transformation undergone by the model. The irreversibility of relations among the compositional elements is superseded by a new compositional principle, in which operations are reshuffled, rehearsed, and restored:

Hizo venir a Barcelona pintores y escultores de todos los talleres y mansardas y restauradores de las pinacotecas y museos de todo el mundo. Un pedazo de jarrón no mayor que la palma de la mano viajó dos veces a Shanghai. Se hizo traer caballos de Andalucía y de Devonshire y los enjaezó y unció a réplicas de carruajes contruidos especialmente para él en Alemania. (308–09)

Painters and sculptors from distant studios and attics were summoned [to Barcelona,] and restorers from art galleries and museums [all over the world]. A fragment of a vase no larger than the back of one's hand made the journey to Shanghai two times. He had horses from Andalusia and Devonshire harnessed and yoked to a replica coach built specially for him in Germany. (331)

Numerous monetary investments in the shortest possible time span compress historical time in the surface logic of the model. The intense capitalization of the synchronic elements measures their equivalence in time, which is thus synthesized into images, as contemporary materials turn into simulacra of historical artifacts. History is then abolished in the homogeneous time of repetition; the act dissolves in the scene, and the system of images appears as a totality whose origin and existence can be surveyed: "ni

la conveniencia ni la comodidad ni la economía eran argumentos que estuviese dispuesto a considerar: cada cosa tenía que ser exactamente como había sido antes, en tiempos de la familia Rosell, cuyo rastro, por otra parte, no se había preocupado nunca por encontrar" 'Practicality, convenience, and economy were ignored in his single-minded quest: each thing had to be exactly as it had been before, in the day of the Rosell family—whose [vestiges,] curiously, he made no attempt to trace' (309; 331).

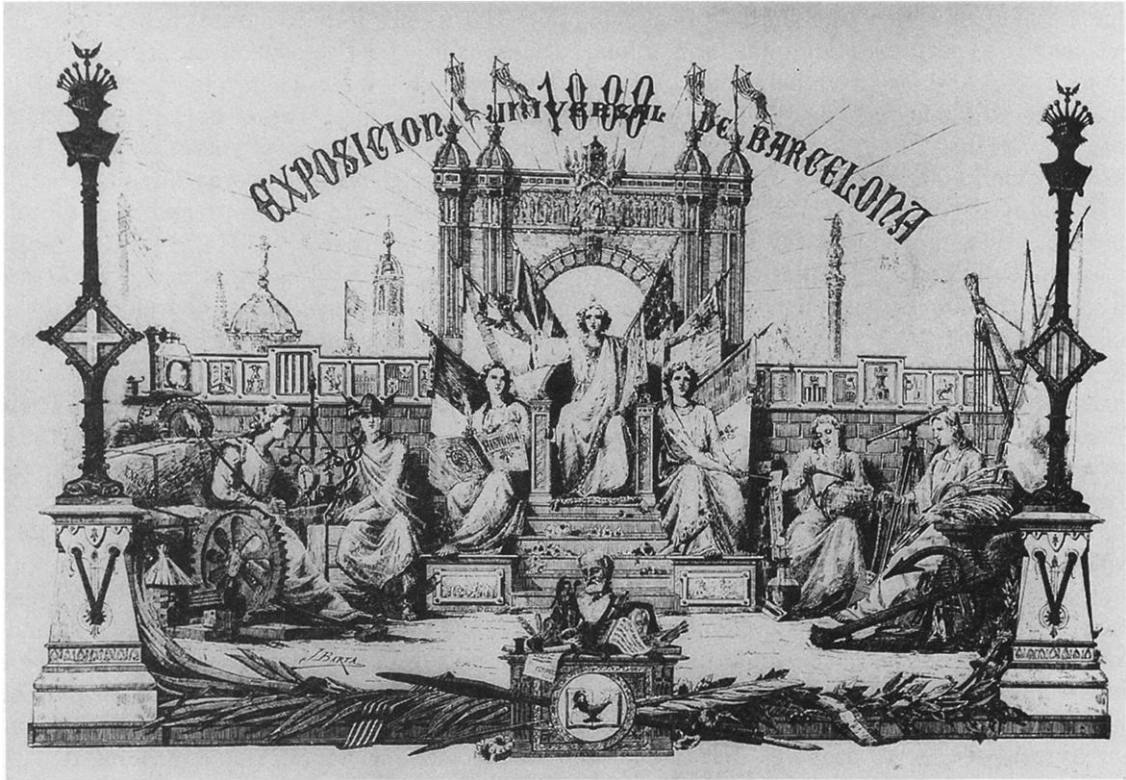
Repetition is thus revealed as the driving force or "ideologeme" governing Onofre's enterprise and the novel itself. Just as Onofre redirects desire from the political history involving the Rosell family to the ostensibly apolitical series of capitalist miracles or mirages—"No me interesa el resto de la historia. . . . Me quedo con la casa" 'I'm not interested in the rest of your story. . . . I'll take the house' (308; 330)—the novel translates a narrative in terms of another narrative. The historical sequence, like eternity in Onofre's films, is foreshortened to a consumable unit of time, and the framing technique provides a repetitive structure. World's fairs open and close the novel, suggesting the cyclical nature of time and, consequently, the abolition of time by structure. The operation at work is the reverse of the one that structuralist criticism conceives as engendering surface (diachronic) structures of narrative from the deep (synchronic) structures underlying representations. Here diachrony appears not as the shadow show of formalized relations projected on the fictional screen of the temporal sequence but as the cause of those relations. Formal functions—figurative replications, semantic codes, temporal telescoping, delays—are synthesized by abstraction from the irreducible flow of history, which is then forced into the depths. History becomes the source of the experience of depth borrowed by the formal elements, the source of their illusory power, by projecting its shadows onto the screen of the different narrative played out on the surface. Subordinated, history becomes the transformative cause of the marvels, the marvelous being an effect of discontinuity caused in the diachronic sequence by the systematic rearrangement of meaning-producing units. I refer not to

the inevitable segmentation of historical flow enacted by all narratives but to the superordination of trope, which as a characteristic of romance is no doubt related to Northrop Frye's observation that "the historical pattern is fixed in the romance and plastic in the novel" (306–07). And even if one disagrees with Frye's general principle that most historical novels are romances, it should be clear that *City of Marvels* displaces the conventions of the novel to those of romance.

The central category in the historical novel, history itself, is in fact missing from the romance, where it is replaced by antiquarianism, the valorization of archaism. History, corresponding to Frye's "plastic time," is not opposed to treatment of a closed and remote temporal segment whose content is definitively settled. It demands, however, the reopening of process, the suggestion of inconclusiveness, of developing effects and implications through the vitalization of the historical datum by interpretation. But *City of Marvels* does not foreground interpretive analysis. Instead the novel proposes the humor of pathos. And pathos ridicules a form that remains available when its constitutive conditions are no longer present,¹⁰ a form that, in the historical novel, presupposes a contingency that romance can suggest only through absence. Contingency—history's disruption of the systemic model in which the subject encloses desire—is suggested by the impending execution of the Faustian pact. This event is noted as a corollary but cannot be admitted into the narrative as an experience of dissolution that is part of the world conjured up by Onofre's magical powers. Beyond this world's narrative limits, the fates of the dictator Primo de Rivera and of Alfonso XIII are sealed, as is the fate of the Catalan bourgeoisie, the other party to the contract. Because history will reduce them all to shadows, the pathos of a doubly figural prosopopoeia anticipates their dissolution. They act as historically absent figures, yet their presence voids the intended significance of their actions. Pathos points to their obsolescence in a future that is already implied in the contract. The narrative unveils a beyond, neither fatal nor definitive, that is nevertheless appropriated by the past.

The novel's implied future proves to be the unspoken narrative source, the locus of desire from which the novel's imaginary emerges. The novelist's temporal location appears as the meta-horizon beyond the novel's narrative scope. Borrowing his character's words, Mendoza could say, "Aquel futuro ya es el pasado" 'That future is already my past' (391; 415). While the novel ends on a note of decline associated with Onofre's disappearance, the romancelike fixity of the novel's historical pattern suggests a suspension of history and a latency of the social configurations over which Onofre has presided. Those ideas are no doubt implicit in the restorative role accorded to memory in the novel, whether in the reconstruction of the mansion or in the repetition of collective adventures. Memory of the 1888 world's fair both prefigures recurrences and evidences the will to enact them: "También quedó el recuerdo de las jornadas de esplendor y la noción de que Barcelona, si quería, podía volver a ser una ciudad cosmopolita" 'The memory of the days of splendor also lingered on, along with the notion that Barcelona, if it so wished, could again become a cosmopolitan city' (117; 124). Latency is the reason for Onofre's disappearance into a beyond not of death but of time conquered. The impression of immutability, of time standing still before the aircraft plunges into the sea, and the lack of debris or oil on the water suggest a magical withdrawal. This "clean" exit from the historical scene points to the final irresolution in the generic dialectic, where history, though seeming to prevail in the closing historical notation, is in fact vanquished by the utopian strivings of romance. Like King Arthur's removal to the transhistorical isle of Avalon, Onofre Bouvila's passing into the eternity of the sea asserts, by the mythical power of romance, the magical nature of capital and its eternal capacity to produce collective dreams in historical restorations.

The assertion that repetition is the novel's ideologeme can be modified by the observation that repetition as a romantic ideal takes the form of restoration after passing through the medium of history. *Restoration* is in fact the title of one of Mendoza's works, and it is, of course, in the period of Spanish history thus named that Ono-



A poster announcing the 1888 world's fair in Barcelona. The image displays allegorical figures representing industry, commerce, science, and the arts among monuments erected for the exposition. (Arxiu Fotogràfic de Museus, Ajuntament de Barcelona.)

fre Bouvila's career begins. The generic indecision from which all the charm and dissatisfaction produced by *City of Marvels* derive is a function of existential tensions in contemporary Catalan society. Foremost among these tensions is the gap between act and reflection, between aspiration and missed historical opportunity, a gap that reflects the impotence that is so pervasive at the end of historical cycles, when the sense of being too late imprisons life in worn-out paradigms. As a formal expression of belatedness, the historical novel reveals the impossibility of retaining a strong subject position in what has come to be considered a "posthistorical" society, that is, a society in which the dialectic of conflict and hope has allegedly been superseded by the synchrony of global market trends and profit. The dominant affect in this genre is nostalgia, the ambivalent admiration for the past that

corrodes the present with the sense of ineffectuality. Yet romance offers redemption from nostalgic passivity through its reduction of history to the eternal domain of myth and recurrence.¹¹ In its heroic age, the subject of Mendoza's narrative, the Catalan bourgeoisie created modern Catalan society, manifesting its economic preeminence in Spain through the construction of Barcelona's definitive urban structure. Having raised itself to a historical apex from which it could have consolidated its power and itself as a substantial political entity, this bourgeoisie, fearful of the historical forces it had unleashed, entered into a Faustian pact based on the illusion of attained fulfillment. For this class the beautiful moment had already been reached; the bourgeoisie demanded only that the moment linger. Mendoza poignantly renders this compromise by adapting a local legend. In his version the devil

tempts a financier by showing him the city's expanse and the fields and beaches beyond: "Todo esto te daré si postrándote a mis pies . . . El financiero no le dejó acabar: acostumbrado a las transacciones que hacía diariamente en la Lonja este trato le pareció muy ventajoso y no vaciló en concluirlo al punto" "All this shall be yours if you prostrate yourself at my feet and—." But the financier did not let him finish: accustomed to striking quick business deals every day in the chambers of La Lonja, he found this offer advantageous and without hesitation signed on the dotted line' (354–55; 377; ellipsis in orig.). The financier does not properly understand the terms of purchase for his soul and thinks that the deal is for the hill on which the devil and he are standing.

Through a failure of nerve the Catalan bourgeoisie passed into a historical underworld, where this class became a shadow and a memory of its agonistic moment. It makes no difference that in the novel it is the (working- and middle-class) Catalan nationalists who, together with anarchists and socialists, descend into the sewers, while Onofre flees by plane the repressive measures of the new military government. In swerving from its course, the Catalan bourgeoisie entered a void where it became the inverted image of its unfulfilled mission. As this class became a mere shadow on the historical register, its adventures could have been rendered by the paradigms of realism, although not without a touch of grandeur from the pathos of a fully disenchanting world. But as a paradigm for action in a radically altered situation where the available social forces no longer meaningfully articulate that paradigm, the pathos of obsolescent figures falls prey to fantasy and its parodic determination. And fantasy, as Harold Bloom notes, "promises an absolute freedom from belatedness, yet this promise is shadowed always by a psychic overdetermination in the form itself of fantasy, that puts the stance of freedom into severe question" (206). Fantasy, in other words, invites a displacement in the historical system of mimetic representation. Through what Bloom calls "misprision," fantasy proposes to produce as if for the first time the world under whose shadow the present languishes in impotence and thus to lift from the present the weight of genetic (oedi-

pal) identifications. But fantasy reencodes that world in a stricter paradigm centered on repetition. In translating the disenchanting world of the commodity object into the magical world of the object as marvel, the restoration exacts in exchange for its promise of new originating power the collateral of a renewed Faustian contract.

This pact involves less a specific rendering of desire than the mastering of desire's symbolic mediator, money, which thereby acquires absolute status. Through its capacity to bridge otherwise discontinuous social and metaphysical realms, money finally takes on the "fantastic" power to bridge historical zones and to induce repetitions or, more precisely, restorations. Barcelona's new affluence in the late decades of the twentieth century ushered in a period aptly characterized as a second Restoration (Gilbert, "El mito burgués" 168–69). By staging the equivalent of a world's fair in the 1992 Olympic Games, the city provided a correlate for renewed speculative adventures and for the bewildering attempt to conquer a mythic identity to make up for the surrender of deeper political aspirations. The Spanish government's unabashed mythification of this date was aimed to legitimate its own restorative project. The year 1992 marked not only the quincentenary of Columbus's adventure but also Spain's full integration into the European Community. The Spanish government responded with a lavish injection of money into the production of images: Seville's Universal Exposition, Barcelona's Olympic Games, and above all the attempt at breakneck speed to move Madrid onto the stage of world capitals. These megaimages were meant to communicate, and thus to synthesize, a historical accomplishment. But like their prefigurations at the end of the first Restoration, these present-day marvels disguised a less flourishing reality, which became apparent as soon as the curtain fell on the stage of 1992. Like Onofre's restoration of the mansion, the monumentalism of 1992 served not a historical transformation but merely an aestheticizing revision of the past (the postmodern consecration of "eternal Spain") and thus evidenced the inexhaustible reproductive power of money when it is conceived as a self-enclosed system in which desire discovers its true image.

As a symbolic mediator of desire, money cannot reduce desire to a specific meaning. In its capacity to generate collective dreaming, money does not operate through a bilateral grammar, whereby a determinable latent content would correspond to the manifest content of the dream. As a shrewd reader of Freud remarks, “[T]here is no truth either beyond or this side of unconscious desire; the formula that constitutes desire both represents it and betrays it at the same time” (Leclaire 53). In *City of Marvels* money is the formula that constitutes desire. As such, money stands both as the originator of dreams and as their central, revealing element. This assertion accords with Freud’s own remark in chapter 6 of *The Interpretation of Dreams* that in almost all dreams a center with a special intensity can be detected. This center, Freud asserts, is a direct representation of desire (Leclaire 39). To reveal desire is not, however, to supply an equivalence that dissipates it, since desire, being metonymic, can be displaced (as in hysteria) but not abrogated by metaphor. Mendoza underscores this condition of desire when Onofre orders his father-in-law, don Humbert, to liquidate Onofre’s possessions (the phantasmic elements of Onofre’s dream) so that they can transcend their localized appearance and can be rescued from time (and confiscation by the new master of the moment, Primo de Rivera). Don Humbert’s protestations to Onofre’s “formula” arise from a literal reading of the inscription of desire in what Freud, speaking of dreams, calls the manifest text: “Pero esto que me pides es imposible, ¿cómo vamos a valorar todos tus bienes?” “But what you’re asking is impossible—how can we put a value on all you own?” Don Humbert is correct in assuming that a meaningful correspondence with the latent text is unfeasible, but he is not aware, as Onofre is, that desire can be conceived only as a formal element, as a formula for engendering images and marvels and for reconstituting them by virtue of its lack of meaning beyond the present. “Déles un valor cualquiera: un precio simbólico, ¿qué más da?—dijo Onofre—. Lo importante es que todo quede en buenas manos” “[Assign an arbitrary value, a symbolic price—it doesn’t matter which one],” said Onofre. “The important thing is for it all to

be in safe hands” (317; 340). The particular images articulated by desire are arbitrary (in the sense that the linguistic sign is arbitrary), just as this or that value is anecdotal in relation to the principle of money. Onofre redeems not a specific valuation of desire but the system from which value emerges as if by magic.

As a center of particular intensity, money proves to be the hero of the tale, the true once and future king, subject to returns and restorations in the form of capital. In this respect money is one with the formula of desire in dreams, which reappears enigmatically and insistently instead of being fulfilled and contained (Leclaire 53). Rescued by the formula of desire from the beautiful moment of arrest that liquidated an entire era, capital reappears on the novel’s meta-horizon—which emerges in Mendoza’s perspective—as the center of intensity in a new collective dream that is taking shape in the glaring anticipation of 1992. This dream too threatens to drift away from history and heralds a new Faustian pact. Adequate representation of this broader historical context in relation to its constitutive illusions would require a new kind of narrative objectivity, one that would consciously abandon the centrality of character, which has been a constant in both romance and traditional realism. Mendoza must be credited with having come very close to this new objectivity in his unhesitating substitution of collective structures for character psychology and his presentation of a manifest center of intensity: Barcelona. But the city is only an apparent center, not the source of the narrative tension, which is located elsewhere.

Such a displacement has its theoretical counterpart in Freud’s remark that the dream’s center is apparent in relation to that which orders the dream’s latent thought. In the novel the unrepresentable latent center is the future, a future that is generated, by virtue of capital’s reproductive quality, as a phantasmic image of the past. Capital’s conquest of time and history bridges both the latent and the manifest centers, coordinates the two historical axes, and proposes a tertiary focus arising neither from romance nor entirely from realism. Capital’s conquest of time and production of marvels direct the reader toward the specular mode of fantasy, where the

heroic function is the eternal repository of desire. This direction becomes clear in Maria Belltall's role as the damsel in distress who appeals to the hero's daring: "sé que no rehúye usted los riesgos; el hecho de que hace unos años usted mismo le diera [a mi padre] su tarjeta demuestra lo que digo: que no le retrae lo desconocido ni lo nuevo" 'You are a man who knows how to take risks. The fact that you gave [my father] your card years ago proves that you do not shrink from the unknown or the new' (353; 376). But the historical references call the reader back to the representative mode, restoring the correlation of the narrative sequences of fiction and truth implied by that mode. And historically the Catalan bourgeoisie, at least in the period discussed here, did not learn to take risks, much less to broach the unknown.

The narrative tension between romance and realism suppresses a third element that is unrecognizable by either mode and that thus constitutes a narrative unconscious. This tension disguises the desire for a content that can neither be satisfied with the status of fantasy nor satisfy the strictly realistic conditions of truth. Expressed in terms of the larger transformations of Spanish society—of which Mendoza's novel offers a (pre)figuration of active, if also imaginary, intervention—this content is none other than the neocapitalist ideology, which grounds its universalizing claims in the social and historical situation while furthering them through the archaism of myth.

Notes

¹For a study of the relation between narrativity and myth in contemporary consciousness, see Resina 251–79.

²As late as 1956 Luis Carrero Blanco, who would later become the Spanish premier, was still denouncing "pure capitalism," which he declared "even less acceptable" than communism—a significant statement, coming from a staunch antisocialist (de Miguel 289).

³Brackets indicate my changes to Bernard Molloy's translation.

⁴Joan Gilabert has used this concept in a number of works. See, for example, "Dos momentos" 37.

⁵The term *bourgeoisie*, used here to designate a sphere of economic interests, obscures the political and ideological rift within this sphere. While some of the wealthiest magnates remained monarchists, thus aligned with political parties in Madrid, most commercial entrepreneurs, professionals, and smaller-scale industrialists supported the autonomist Lliga Regionalista de Catalunya. Alfonso XII and Alfonso XIII clarified the distinction between the two groups by granting nobiliary titles to anti-Catalanist industrialists (Riquer 26–28). These new aristocrats, like Alfons Sala, count of Egara, and the baron of Viver—whom Mendoza represents in the reactionary marquis of Ut—facilitated Primo de Rivera's coup d'état and subsequently collaborated with the dictatorship. But as Mendoza shows through Onofre Bouvila, a more recent and more skeptical entrepreneurial class, impelled by social warfare, acquiesced in the government's overthrow, only to find itself repressed and undermined by the military regime. Although the idea of betrayal and of the Faustian pact clearly refers to this liberal bourgeoisie and its historical limitations, I use the term *Catalan bourgeoisie* without distinctions because the haute bourgeoisie's anti-Catalanist option was merely an earlier version of the pact.

⁶Simmel's reflections on the relation of money to modernity are especially relevant to understanding a narrative world in transition to a new paradigm, not least because of the strict contemporaneity of his observations to the novel's historicized events.

⁷Deleuze and Guattari place this center in the machine of desire, whose residue is precisely the subject installed on the circumference drawn around the center it can no longer occupy (28).

⁸Like language, memory has a differential structure. For this reason there is no memory, only a trace—and that unconscious—of the full presence in the imaginary.

⁹"The usurer sells his debtor nothing that belongs to him, but only the time that belongs to God," wrote Thomas of Chobham in the thirteenth century (Le Goff 40).

¹⁰Bakhtin observes that "[n]ovelistic pathos always works in the novel to restore some *other* genre, genres that, in their own unmediated and pure form, have lost their own base in reality" (394).

¹¹For the relation between "the anxiety of belatedness" and modern literary fantasy, see Bloom 201. I follow Bloom's application of Freud's reality principle and pleasure principle to the novel and to fantasy, respectively. See Bloom 202.

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