Crime fiction in a time of crisis: Society in transition in the detective series by Manuel Vázquez Montalbán and Leonardo Padura

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The resonance between society and popular culture has been described by John Fiske as "the constant process of producing meanings of and from our experience, and such meanings necessarily produce a social identity for the people involved" (1989, 1). Thus, crime narrative is highly susceptible to the realities of its contemporary reader, and the detection of the actual social situation should be considered one of its essential qualities. The article attempts to investigate how the configuration of time and space is modified while the genre itself is exposed in order to portray a society in transition. It seems natural to apply the concept of the chronotope to the study of the crime fiction since the correlation between time and space is the core of any detective investigation. Inspired by the ideas of Fredric Jameson (2016), I attempt to detect how the cognitive model of classic investigation is developed within the categories of time, space and mobility. The latter is to be considered according to the categories introduced by Zygmunt Bauman (2000) in his reflections on globalization.

This article examines crime fiction occasioned by extreme social changes and analyzes the impact of social crises on the referencing mechanisms within the genre, through the work of Manuel Vázquez Montalbán (1939–2003, Spain) and Leonardo Padura (1955, Cuba). Despite their different places of origin, their artistic biographies coincide in many aspects, particularly the fact that they are both the authors of detective series which cover a period of radical changes leading to the redefinition of social values. Both authors anticipate the need to chronicle the process of transformation: Vázquez Montalbán with reference to the Spanish Transition after Franco's death in 1975, Padura with reference to the "Special Period in Time of Peace" (*Período Especial*), the term used to define the decade of economic depression in Cuba in the 1990s.

Manuel Vázquez Montalbán was a communist and an anti-Francoist activist who was arrested in 1962 and sentenced to three years in prison. As a dissident, he struggled to secure a decent job as a journalist, and in 1974 he made his debut as a crime writer with his protagonist Pepe Carvalho, who became the most famous Spanish detective of the 20th century. After Franco's death, the rapid transformation of the country from dictatorial regime to liberal democracy disillusioned the generation of leftist militants and intellectuals such as Vázquez Montalbán (Balibrea 1999). Pepe Carvalho embodied this disappointment and critical attitude. Today his series con-

sists of over 20 novels, short stories and cookbooks, which portray the early years of democracy in Spain. Vázquez Montalbán declared that his intention was to "violate the genre" of detective fiction and to create a chronicle of the Spanish Transition (Colmeiro 2013, 71).

Padura owes his legacy to the Cuban Revolution (1953–1958), since he belongs to the first generation born and raised under the system which was believed to be legitimated by universal literacy, free access to medical services and the eradication of poverty. Unlike Vázquez Montalbán, Padura successfully developed his career as a journalist for the leading Cuban publications *El Caimán Barbudo* and *Juventud Rebelde*, and he set the first four installments of lieutenant Mario Conde's adventures during the crucial year of 1989. The collapse of the Cuban economy following the fall of communism in the Eastern Bloc resulted in the promotion of tourism and the private sector, but also, according to Padura, permitted Cuban writers to take advantage of the opportunity to find publishers abroad – a fact that triggered the literature of disillusion and social criticism (García Talaván 2012, 315). Since both authors are implicated in the social and historical entanglements of their times, it is hardly surprising that they are directly influenced by hard-boiled fiction, which was an earlier example of the transformation within the genre in response to the new reality that required a new cognitive model.

Leonardo Padura admits to finding Carvalho's series inspirational and he explains the innovations his Spanish colleague had introduced to the genre:

> Vázquez Montalbán makes a fusion of the social novel, the novel of context, and the novel of revelation of a very precise reality – the Spanish Transition – with a crime novel, by means of protagonists who belong to both literature and reality, and this gave me a clue for a possible crime novel. When in late 1989 and early 1990 I began to write *Pasado Perfecto*, the influence of Vázquez Montalbán was decisive at the moment when I determined the way I was going to write these novels (García Talaván 2012, 317).[1]

When Vázquez Montalbán and later Padura announce the intention of "violating" the genre, they in fact find a new way to express social concerns within the formula. The society they attempt to recreate in their novels is in the course of transition, and both authors have managed to expose this process by adding the notion of temporality to the traditional hard-boiled novel. Both authors detect the moment of radical changes and resort to crime fiction as a tool enabling them to chronicle the transformation. The intentional introduction of the temporal aspect to the formula therefore results in a narrative whose chief purpose is to raise social consciousness. Both Vázquez Montalbán's Pepe Carvalho series and Padura's Mario Conde series employ a similar strategy in terms of relating social problems and crime to cultural motifs that enrich the reader's awareness of local reality and at the same time universalize the social problems that are presented.

MAPPING SPACE

Fredric Jameson defines a classic detective story as one whose reality and structure depend on the crime itself (2016, 27) since the detective (reader) is expected to solve an intellectual puzzle. He acknowledges that in hard-boiled novels the reader

is simply exposed to "an evocation of death in all the physicality", and wonders if "it was then simply to substitute an experience of space for that of the temporality of problem solving" (28). As a matter of fact, Jameson accepts Raymond Chandler's invitation to "map space", and assumes that a distinguishing characteristic of hard-boiled fiction is to provide "the code of space which the reader must learn to read" (31). Thus Jameson puts his idea into practice and analyzes the spatial organization of Chandler's *The Big Sleep* while uncovering the social typology that is defined by the space people occupy, together with some narrative solutions determined by landscapes and social structure.

Vázquez Montalbán recreates Barcelona starting, intentionally or not, with his childhood neighborhood, el Raval. This central district of Barcelona, also called *Barrio Chino* (Chinese Town), was never inhabited by Chinese emigrants, but in the early 20th century it acquired a well-deserved reputation as a location where shady business, prostitution and crime all thrived. With every installment of the series the author adds another layer to the urban tissue. In the first book of the series, *Tatuaje* ([1974] 1986, trans. *Tattoo*, 2008), the reader gets a closer look at the underworld of drug dealers, the life of a call-girl or the passions that might become part of the apparently dull life of housewives. The second, *La soledad de manager* ([1977] 2004a, trans. *The Angst-Ridden Executive*, 1990) enters the world of business and nightlife of the dwellers of Eixample, a central district of Barcelona inhabited by the upper class. In the third installment, *Los mares del Sur* ([1979] 2014, trans. *Southern Seas*, 1999), which was awarded the Premio Planeta, the panorama of the city expands and we observe the luxurious life of the wealthy of Sarrià-Saint Gervasi and the miserable living conditions of a fictitious district on the outskirts. The problem of land speculation is also extensively analyzed in *El delantero centro fue asesinado al atardecer* ([1989] 1998, trans. *Offside*, 1996). In the 1990s Vázquez Montalbán investigated the transformation of Barcelona into a theme-park as a result of the investments and the tourism policy associated with the 1992 Summer Olympics in *El laberinto griego* ([1991] 2007, trans. *An Olympic Death*, 1992) and *Sabotaje olímpico* (1993, Olympic Sabotage). He particularly exposed the process of gentrification which eradicates the authentic elements of the metropolis. Yet Pepe Carvalho, as a resident of Vallvidrera (a town on the outskirts of Barcelona), sees the city from an outer perspective.

Unlike Vázquez, Padura situates his detective in the heart of the city. Mario Conde's habitat is the core of his universe: Mantilla (the district where he was born, and he still lives), la Central de la Policía, his high school, and the house of his friend Carlos. All these points on his intimate map of Havana define the detective and are used extensively by Padura to construct the background of the generation of which Conde is a representative.

The first tetralogy in the Mario Conde series is referred to collectively as *Las cuatro estaciones* (The four seasons), since each is set in a different season during the single year of 1989, while the titles of the English translations emphasize their shared location in the Cuban capital: *Pasado perfecto* (1991, Past Perfect, trans. *Havana Blue*, 2007), *Vientos de cuaresma* ([1994] 2013a, Winds of Lent, trans. *Havana Gold*,

2008), *Máscaras* (1997, Masks, trans. *Havana Red*, 2005) and *Paisaje de otoño* (1998, Autumn Landscape, trans. *Havana Black*, 2006).

Conde's universe likewise stands for a point of reference which helps expose and understand the social tensions in the Cuba of 1989, since the cases Conde investigates in the tetralogy take place in districts inhabited by the establishment. In so doing the detective uncovers the opportunism of people who are privileged to live in the districts like Casino Deportivo or Santo Suarez, do their shopping in *diplotiendas* (shops in which they pay with dollars), and whose fathers are *administradores perpetuos* (administrators for life) of impeccable revolutionary pedigree.

In the continuation *Adiós, Hemingway* ([2001] 2006), we encounter Mario Conde eight years later; he works as a book-dealer and occasionally becomes a private detective. The following volumes, *La neblina del ayer* ([2005] 2013b, The Fog of Yesterday, trans. *Havana Fever*, 2009), *Herejes* (2013c, trans. *Heretics*, 2017), and *La transparencia del tiempo* (2018, trans. *The Transparency of Time*, forthcoming 2021) convey the reality of 21st-century Cuba, and the sense of continuity within Padura's series has clearly been interrupted. It seems as if Padura restrained himself from covering the critical moment directly, since the most severe years of the economic crisis, the so-called "Special Period," are not depicted in the series.

In these books, Conde continues deconstructing Havana by means of his itineraries, but this time he descends into the poor districts. In *La neblina de ayer* the reader is exposed to a vision of Barrio Chino and Esperanza Street compared to the successive circles of hell. At the beginning Conde is guided by his younger friend Yoyi, who explains to him the mechanism by which people make a living with "inventions" (Padura [2005] 2013b, 1827), which seems to be any kind of activity other than proper work. While passing through this shabby and miserable place, Conde concludes: "Too many people who have nothing to do or lose. Too many people without dreams or hope. Too much fire under a covered pot which sooner or later blows up from the accumulated pressure" (1815). Conde then passes alone along Esperanza Street, which seems to him the next circle of hell, with impassable places for rubbish and debris, with dogs starving and consumed by mange, with indifferent women in latex leggings exposing their sexual organs (2739). Conde describes the district as "postbélica" (2741) and "the world on the verge of an Apocalypse difficult to reverse" (2748). In *La transparencia del tiempo*, Conde and his friend penetrate the world of the invisible – those who attempt to live underground ("la infravida") in a district of Havana founded in 1990 by immigrants from the South. Since the authorities have no solution at their disposal, the immigrants are tolerated so long as they remain invisible, so they construct cardboard houses without toilets but equipped with TVs, and organize an infrastructure of commerce to buy and sell everything in order to survive. This is how an outlawed territory has been created with its own rules, where the fundamental one is "llegar y poner" (come and occupy; 2360–2456).

The new reality is controlled strictly by economic rules and even Conde, whose main role in the series is to show the naivety of an idealist, has to learn how to follow them in order to survive. He keeps asking how things work in Cuba, where no one seems to work. Every time we see through his own eyes increasingly severe exam-

ples of poverty contrasted with the extravagance of the rich. However, the detective still behaves in conformity with his legacy. Conde gives away his shoes to a barefoot beggar, surprised that nobody had helped the man in a country that is supposed to have eliminated inequalities. Mario Conde also spends all his money on celebrations with friends over good food and rum, as if this was a rebellious act against the humiliation of the crisis of the Special Period, or maybe against the new market rules. In *La transparencia del tiempo*, Padura is merciless in his description of the last 20 years in Cuba. Conde continuously compares the prices of the free market with the purchasing power of a normal salary in Cuba, where a regular hamburger in a restaurant might cost a day's wage (Padura 2018, 3722). Padura openly describes the starvation in Cuba, where food has been rationed for decades in a way that does not let Cubans die of starvation nor live without hunger. And yet again as a private detective Conde works for the new rich and at the same time observes the poor, and asks himself the question: Do they all live in the same historic time and in the same geographic space? And where does he belong? (1150)

The motif of the crisis of national identity enforced by economic circumstances reappears in the new installments of the series. In *La Neblina de ayer* Conde and his cohorts perceive themselves as different since they were deprived of the right to live "the rhythm of their times" (Padura [1994] 2013a, 2610). They make a diagnosis of the psychological state of Cubans who suffer from an exhaustion with history ("cansancio histórico"). People are tired of being historical and predestined. The image reappears in *La transparencia del tiempo*, when the old town of Havana is described as "the mirror of a country whose columns cracked under the burden of time, indolence and historical exhaustion" (1059).

Although both Vázquez Montalbán and Padura overtly declare their intention of modifying the genre, they nevertheless still retain the strategy of mapping space. Their detectives, Pepe Carvalho and Mario Conde, are strongly attached to their place of residence. Both authors resort to the hard-boiled tradition since they employ geography as a code for reading the urban social fabric.

THE TRANSPARENCY OF TIME

Despite the fact that crime narrative is perceived as an example of formulaic literature and as such is a "structure of narrative conventions" (Cawelti 2001, 209), central to the study of the genre is its receptivity to expressing the perception of reality, such as Jameson's explanation of how Raymond Chandler managed to portray 1930s America in his classic hard-boiled novels. Jameson concludes that Chandler is able to convey historical momentum by emphasizing the fact that during that epoch "older products had a certain stability about them, a certain permanence of identity […] the brand name is still synonymous with the object itself: a car is a 'Ford'" (2016, 16). Thus, the hard-boiled formula exposes the reality of early consumer society, the period that Jameson dates from the Great Depression to the postwar boom era in the United States.

The moment of social, political or economic crisis within a society usually leads to a rethinking and questioning of the status quo, a situation that cannot be ignored

by a literature that, by its very nature, resonates with the cognitive approach of its times.

In 1971, Vázquez Montalbán published *Crónica sentimental de España* (Sentimental Chronicle of Spain), a collection of articles whose aim was to deconstruct the postwar sentimental values conveyed by popular culture, in order to depoliticize society and, as the author himself claims, create a reason for winners and losers to coexist once the Civil War was over. The problem of historical memory, or rather the lack of it, is the reason why Manuel Vázquez decides to employ the same technique of political and cultural references within the Carvalho series. Recreating sentiments, the author forces the reader to recall the past and simultaneously assess the present by applying the same philosophy of injustice to a world in which the rich becomes winners while the poor are always the losers.

Since their intention is to chronicle society in crisis, the two writers deliberately define a particular historical moment in their novels. Vázquez Montalbán creates the temporal context by extending his net of allusions to specific historical events (the Moncloa Pacts, the 1979 elections, the 1992 Olympics), and he does not hesitate to present the names of particular politicians and public figures, as well as those of parties that are intended to define the political sympathies of the protagonists. The narrative, abundant in references to current affairs, recreates the political and social situation of the historical moment, and lets the reader situate the plot in a specific time, while generating the image of Spain in transition between the years 1974 and 2004 when the last volume of the series was published.

Padura recreates the historical moment more straightforwardly, as he simply informs the reader that the events in the first four novels of the series take place in 1989. In that year Cuban public opinion could for the first time openly comment on the corruption of the establishment, since the prominent officials Arnaldo Ochoa Sánchez and Antonio de la Guardia were sentenced to death for smuggling drugs. In 1989 the Berlin Wall fell, followed soon after by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the COMECON system, with the consequence that Cuba was left on its own without any external economic support.

Leonardo Padura claims that the new sub-genre of the *neopolicial iberoamericano* (Ibero-American neo-detective novel) that flourished in the 1970s exposes a dominant tendency toward journalism, and in some cases toward the chronicle (1999, 44). According to Padura, it was Vázquez Montalbán who managed to develop the generic formula, initiating a formal search in order to combine national argument and characters, while introducing social criticism, parody, humor and irony (1999, 43).

In the Carvalho series, the dead drug dealer is identified (in *Tatuaje*) as the sailor thanks to the famous song "Tatuaje" by Conchita Piquer, the businessman guilty of constructing poor-quality prefabricated houses for immigrants is obsessed with Paul Gauguin and his flight to Martinique (in *Los mares del Sur*) and the land speculation carried out by the president of the Barcelona football club is contrasted with the image of heroic warriors attributed to today's footballers (in *El delantero centro fue asesinato al atardecer*). Vázquez Montalban's cultural references are numerous and

originate from art, sport, cuisine and, above all, literature. Surprisingly, the latter subject is the one Carvalho, the main character of the series, despises most as he burns his library to take revenge for the deceit that literature provides in creating illusions. Carvalho overtly rejects culture, and looks for authenticity, which he finds in good food and sex. While the detective resists the postmodernist invasion of *culturalism* in almost all areas of life, the author willingly implements cultural references and obliges Carvalho to contemplate cultural aspects of reality in order to solve the crime and take a critical view of the world.

As we examine the authors' methods of reproducing the moment in time, it is worth noting that Padura's strategy when it comes to the role of literature in his series is once again characterized by a more straightforward approach. As an aspiring writer, Mario Conde is sensitive to all manifestations of the literary world. Throughout the series, literature can become the tool of liberation for people excluded from society (the gay community in *Máscaras*) or it simply provides means to survive economic problems (in *La neblina de ayer*) but above all, literature is the way to establish identity. Libraries define their owners, libraries are places of refuge for writers affected by censorship, and, last but not least, in *La neblina de ayer* Conde has the opportunity to examine an ancient library whose volumes are priceless since they belong to the Cuban national heritage and define the nation. This story raises the question of who history belongs to: The National Library, people who had sacrificed their lives in the Revolution, or book-dealers who sell national treasures abroad?

The Conde series is dominated by the problem of identity, which is questioned by a new historic perspective and new economic conditions. The first four novels of the series become a generational tetralogy as Conde and his close friends embody people born in the post-revolutionary period, who were raised according to the ideas of the Revolution and share the feeling of belonging to a lost generation. Conde abandons his genuine vocation of being a writer and becomes a policeman. His best friend Carlos comes back from the war in Angola in a wheelchair. Andrés, who was supposed to be a successful baseball player, becomes a doctor who leads a mediocre life. They all accuse themselves of believing that they had a "historical responsibility" which was meant to be fulfilled ([1994] 2013a, 806), of being too docile, of not choosing their destiny but just doing the right thing.

When Andrés reproaches the friends with the words "estamos jodidos, nos han jodido" (we are fucked up, they fucked us up; 819), the reader is once again referred to the youth of the protagonists. The whole tetralogy is a transposition of the lost generation and the new establishment. In the 1989 installments, every case that Conde investigates is an opportunity to explore the privileged and corrupted world of new districts of Havana. Simultaneously, the tetralogy is the nostalgic confrontation of Mario Conde with his past, his childhood in post-revolutionary Cuba and his youth in the high school in La Víbora. At some point, however, Conde has to accept that immersion in nostalgia creates illusion. According to his friend Carlos, Conde is not prepared to live his life, he is a "cabrón recordador" (bloody collector of memories; 1653). Carlos, alluding to his war experience, claims that lack of memory is the only way to survive. Interestingly though, Conde decides to become a professional col-

lector of memories – a writer. The tetralogy closes when Conde is reconciled to his destiny.

Nevertheless, when we meet him again, he is earning his living as a book-dealer and part-time private detective, and Cuba is a different reality where a businessman is the right thing to be. The continuation of the Conde series depicts Cuban society entering the 21st century and opening up to free market rules. Considering the economic changes, Sophie V. Lavoie notes that Padura's first four novels are about Cuba's transitional situation in the face of the unknown (2013, 85). Thus, all the motifs that were dominant in the tetralogy come back in its continuation, but are now presented in the harsh and acute way that the new conditions require. According to Lavoie, "[b]y this juncture, the problems of the Cuban economy have had a direct impact on that country's societal values, which in turn have begun to be adapted by individuals to suit their needs" (83). The series itself becomes more violent and the criticism increasingly severe.

On one hand, the economic crisis weakens the national will to carry the historic burden, whether this is the historical responsibility of Conde's generation or the rich cultural heritage of Cubans. On the other hand, in the 21st century continuation of the series, the author recreates Cuban history and openly drifts toward the historical novel, since each detective story is alternated with episodes from the past (*Adios, Hemingway* – the 1950s, *Herejes* – World War II, *La neblina de ayer* – the Havana of 1950, *La transparencia del tiempo* – Antonio Barral's adventures). In the latest installment, while one of the protagonists is depicted as a guardian of a wooden figure of the Virgin, and appears at various moments in Spanish and Cuban history which altogether cover a few centuries, we can discover the author's overt declaration of his faith in history as both the protagonist and the wooden figure travel through "inextricable spirals of time" (Padura 2018, 6051).

The temporal character of the two series is also exposed by the very fact that both detectives are depicted as getting older. The authors highlight the information that time has accelerated and the pace of change is enormous, as they repeatedly describe the state of confusion the detectives suffer from. Pepe Carvalho finds it impossible to live in Barcelona and cannot read its code anymore, as the city is being deprived of its authentic and historic character by constant modernization and gentrification. Mario Conde is still able to assess the value of everyday products and appreciate priceless old volumes or pieces of art, but while he can read economic realities, he is unable to understand that global capitalism is invading almost all areas of Cuban life. He is surprised to hear that passports are available if you only pay, that leaving the island is not illegal any more, and that mobile phones can track people's itineraries. "Misplaced, alien in his own land" (1275), Conde realizes that the rules of logic applied in his country are anything but rational.

DETECTIVES IN MOTION

Comparing the final volume of the Carvalho series, *Milenio Carvalho* (Carvalho Millenium, 2004b) with the last of Conde's adventures, *La transparencia del tiempo* (2018), one cannot avoid pointing out another parallel between them that exposes

one of the vital concerns of modern societies – a coincidence that makes the issue even more pertinent and makes implicit the ability of crime narrative to detect current social questions.

Detectives by nature are condemned to move, whether they are forced to investigate the topography of a crime scene or to find witnesses. As we have mentioned, geography is a valid factor by means of which to construct the fictional world of the series in question and, consequently, to portray social problems and tensions. In both books, nevertheless, it is the concept of motion that is brought to reader's attention, and should be treated as yet another question that modern societies ought to consider.

Zygmunt Bauman argues that it is not the end of history that should bother us these days, but the end of geography (2000, 18). Impelled by the constant progress in transportation and overwhelmed by a continuous stream of information, today we find ourselves in the situation of a *new disorder* generated by globalization. Taking that into consideration, Bauman defines the new type of consumer as a person in constant motion, real or virtual, who becomes a collector of sensations and gets easily bored with any particular attraction, as his/her aim is to keep moving. Nowadays societies categorize consumers according to their levels of mobility, or, in other words, their ability to choose the place where they stay (100). The inhabitants of developed countries are not limited by space. Therefore, they live in the world of mobility, whose consequence is the constant sensation of living in the present. Conversely, people whose abilities to move are limited inhabit a space strongly related to time, and this fact deprives them of the possibility of controlling it (104). Bauman also introduces the categories of tourist and vagabond of the postmodern world. The latter, deprived of the possibility of choosing a place to stay, is forced to move.

As demonstrated above, both the Spanish and Cuban author, while developing the notion of a crime narrative throughout the series, they impose a temporal aspect and consequently transform their detectives into philosophers who investigate reality in order to uncover a crime, and thereby discover a new perspective by means of which to understand it. They are not, however, divorced from the challenges of the spatial reality in which they live. Carvalho, since he realizes that Barcelona in its state of transformation is the principal cause of his discomfort, tends to travel and to investigate abroad. In the last volume of the series, the detective sets off to travel around the world. Officially, he escapes in order to avoid the accusation of killing a man, but between the lines one notices that the narrative, this time adventurous in its character, is intended to provide evidence that the globalized world is also ruled by the law of winners and losers. The Spanish detective begins the new millennium as a person free to go wherever he is willing to, just as rich tourists do.

Meanwhile, Mario Conde continues his existence in Cuba along with ten million of his compatriots, surrounded by the sea. In the 1989 tetralogy, Conde is attracted by the sea and he wonders whether he, like every islander, is sensitive to the unlimited freedom of the ocean, or whether he is still fascinated by the idea of travelling around the world, as he had dreamed of doing when he was young. The motif of abandoning the island is present throughout the whole series. In 1989, it is associated

with his school friend Dulcita and with the painful process, imposed by the system, of forgetting about the emigrants, since their act of emigration was a direct criticism of the Cuban regime. In the continuation of the series an insular society functions as an exponent of the globalized world's problems, and economic migration is one of them. Besides, the question of motion is also related here to the problem of liberty. At some point Conde realizes that leaving the island is neither illegal nor ideological any more (Padura 2018, 4825), and has become simply a question of personal choice (6151). Thus, not without difficulties, the detective abandons the idea that emigration is a declaration of disloyalty to the homeland, and manifests his freedom when he rejects his dreams and deliberately chooses to stay on the island where he belongs. With this gesture of resistance Mario Conde refuses to become a modern vagabond.

As we can see, both authors scrupulously chronicle the social, political and economic reality of the time presented in their series, and introduce the notion of temporality by imposing a historical perspective. Every time Vázquez Montalbán's Carvalho investigates a case within the new Spanish society in transition, he comes to the conclusion, through a series of references to the past and to culture, that the eternal division between winners and losers, rich and poor, remains valid. Padura's Conde, on the other hand, tends to search for the explanation of present conditions in historical events (the Cuban Revolution, colonialism, migration). The process of ageing transforms both detectives into philosophers whose confusion is yet another way of criticizing the sense of lack of direction that is engendered by societies immersed in globalized capitalism.

NOTE

[1] All translations from Spanish by the author of the paper.

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Manuel Vázquez Montalbán. Leonardo Padura. Spanish Transition. Special Period. Cognitive model. Globalization.

The analysis focuses on crime series by Manuel Vázquez Montalbán (the Pepe Carvalho series, Spain, 1974–2004) and Leonardo Padura (the Mario Conde series, Cuba, 1989–2018). Both authors chronicle historical momentum in form of detective series initiated by drastic social changes: the Spanish Transition (1975–1982) and the Special Period in Time of Peace (1991–2000) in Cuba respectively. The article attempts to track how both authors employ the notions of space, time and mobility within the genre while portraying society in transition.

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