



The Expansion of Consciousness in Roberto Bolaño's Distant Star

Citation

Novoa, Daisy. 2020. The Expansion of Consciousness in Roberto Bolaño's Distant Star. Master's thesis, Harvard Extension School.

Link

<https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.INSTREPOS:37365645>

Terms of use

This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material (LAA), as set forth at

<https://harvardwiki.atlassian.net/wiki/external/NGY5NDE4ZjgzNTc5NDQzMGIzZWZhMGFIOWI2M2EwYTg>

Accessibility

<https://accessibility.huit.harvard.edu/digital-accessibility-policy>

Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available.
Please share how this access benefits you. [Submit a story](#)

The Expansion of Consciousness in Roberto Bolaño's *Distant Star*

Daisy A. Novoa

A Thesis in the Field of Foreign Literature, Language, and Culture
for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

Harvard University

May 2020

Abstract

This thesis is a comparative analysis of two of Roberto Bolaño's works published in 1996, "The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman" from the book *Nazi Literature in the Americas* and the novel *Distant Star*, a duplicated and extended version of the short story. This thesis examines how Bolaño represents consciousness in both works and how the author seeks to expand in *Distant Star* the representation of a consciousness sufficiently prolonged in time in which the reader himself becomes an active participant, or "*lector cómplice*" as Julio Cortázar advocated, while demonstrating that Borges' Pierre Ménard is not simply an allusion to a "rewriting" but is used in a much more complex manner related to the concept of consciousness.

What consciousness is and how Bolaño understands and represents it in his narrative is carefully examined by using current scholarship in the field of literature and cognitive science and by doing close readings and comparative analyses of his works and interviews. The influence of Cortázar and Borges on Bolaño's works is also investigated. Bolaño's short story and novel explore the same themes of literature and evil interwoven in basically similar plots; however, in *Distant Star* Bolaño creates a deeper and more complex ontological exploration by taking a very different creative and structural path where intricate semantic games and interpersonal interactions allow the reader to become an active participant in the construction and interpretation of the narrative.

Dedication

Dedico este trabajo a mi madre y padre, personas amorosas y honestas. Ellos han sido firmes creyentes en la educación y trabajaron siempre duro para ofrecernos a mis hermanas y a mí lo mejor.

I dedicate this work to my mother and father, lovely and honest people. They have been strong believers in education and worked hard to always offer my sisters and me the best.

Acknowledgments

I express my gratitude to Dr. Johanna Liander and Dr. Stephen Shoemaker, who have been pivotal throughout this complex research journey and who have encouraged me along the way, providing wise and uplifting words when most needed.

I first read and did an in-depth analysis of one of Bolaño's works in one of Professor Liander's classes. She has demonstrated a passion for Latin American studies and encouraged me to continue my studies in the field of liberal arts. In addition, she has approached things from a positive and fresh perspective and has given me valuable advice. Likewise, Professor Shoemaker has been an invaluable ally who has guided me kindly and patiently through my research process in this ambitious task. I could never forget their help.

I also want to extend my gratitude to my family and loved ones, who have patiently encouraged me to continue in the pursuit of my academic and intellectual goals and who have periodically asked me about my progress in this work and listened to me patiently when I had breakthroughs and setbacks in my research.

Table of Contents

Dedication	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Chapter I: Introduction	1
Chapter II: The taxonomy of “The infamous Ramirez Hoffman” and <i>Distant Star</i>	11
Chapter III: Consciousness in Bolaño’s works: Overview and Influences.....	29
Chapter IV: Comparative Analysis of the Expansion of Consciousness in Bolaño’s work	58
Conclusion	85
Appendix: Summaries of “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman” and <i>Distant Star</i>	89
Bibliography	107

Chapter I

Introduction

In the final chapter of my novel Nazi Literature in the Americas I recounted, in less than twenty pages and perhaps too schematically, the story of Lieutenant Ramírez Hoffman of the Chilean Air Force, which I heard from a fellow Chilean, Arturo B. ... He was not satisfied with my version. It was meant to counterbalance the preceding excursions into the literary grotesque, or perhaps to come as an anticlimax, and Arturo would have preferred a longer story that, rather than mirror or explode others, would be, in itself, a mirror and an explosion. So we took that final chapter and shut ourselves up for a month and a half in my house in Blanes, where, guided by his dreams and nightmares, we composed the present novel. My role was limited to preparing refreshments, consulting a few books, and discussing the reuse of numerous paragraphs with Arturo and the increasingly animated ghost of Pierre Ménard.

Roberto Bolaño, *Distant Star I*

The Chilean author Roberto Bolaño is one of the most controversial contemporary Latin writers and a figure of cult status among readers and scholars. His short life and work have always been permeated by a sense of aporia, and his narrative is characterized for being highly intertextual, playful, and ambiguous. It creates generic suspense and has characters who are usually in search of something between the frontiers of art and politics. Scholars have different takes on his work and disagree on many issues. Therefore, his writings are open to extended interpretations and misinterpretations. His

books *Nazi Literature in the Americas* and the novel *Distant Star*, both published in 1996, are no exception. *Distant Star* is an offspring of the “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman”, dubbed “the last chapter” of the aforementioned encyclopedic collection of Nazi stories. Neither book had major commercial success though received some positive reviews (Birns, et al 1), and like other Latin books about Nazism, these were exposed to little scrutiny and enjoy more creative freedom than foreign texts on the same subject (Hoyos 34). Gutiérrez-Mouat states that “*Nazi Literature in the Americas*, it goes without saying, is one massive hoax that uses a scholarly apparatus to render plausible the historical existence of thirty apocryphal authors and their works” (68). However, the importance of *Nazi Literature in the Americas* lies in the fact that it serves as “an incubator” that allows for the interconnection and “diegetic continuity” of Bolaño’s future narratives (Andrews 43), as is exactly the case with the last chapter of the book. Bolaño gives the story “Ramírez Hoffman, el infame” the place of honor towards the end, as often did Jorge Luis Borges with his darkest tales (Hoyos 48), but unlike Borges, Bolaño expanded and published his short story about eight months later as the novel *Distant Star*. In it Bolaño recycles some old characters and presents new ones with their own important subplots, exploring more deeply issues that were just briefly skimmed in the previous version, and also featuring the character of Pierre Ménard in his prologue.

Since Bolaño’s death in 2003, *Nazi Literature* and *Distant Star* have been subjected to some research and analysis. However, very little comparative work has been done between “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman” and *Distant Star*, as most literary criticism has focused on more prominent titles such as *The Savage Detectives* (1998) and the posthumous novel *2666* (2004). In general, there is a lack of an in-depth study and a

conclusive answer as to what and who really motivated Bolaño to expand a commercially unsuccessful story into a novel. In this thesis, I examine how Bolaño represents consciousness in both works and how in *Distant Star* he seeks to expand the representation of a consciousness sufficiently prolonged in time in which the reader himself becomes an active participant in the same manner as Julio Cortázar advocated, and I also analyze how the reference of Pierre Ménard fits in the whole scope of the novel.

Roberto Bolaño was born in Chile in 1953, and his life was marked early on by persistent migration, with literature being the only stable and constant presence in his life. Bolaño was a voracious reader from an early age, who confessed to stealing books when young, and considered Borges and Cortázar among his favorite writers. He moved to Mexico when he was a teenager, and there the violence of the massacre of Tlatelcoco Square caused an impression on him, as is evident in his writing (Gutierrez-Mouat 1). Later on, he returned to Chile where he was imprisoned in November, two months after the 1973 coup d'état by rightwing General Augusto Pinochet (Bolaño, *Bolaño por sí mismo* 107). Eventually, he returned to Mexico, then lived in El Salvador and also in France, finally settling in Spain. He entered Spain as an undocumented immigrant and experienced many hardships that transpire in his poems (Gutierrez-Mouat 30) and most of his writing. These eclectic and difficult life circumstances with the commonality of literature and violence marked him deeply. Bolaño's writing serves to explore issues of inequality and violence, but his "literary habits had been formed by the practice of dissent, and symbolic conflict" (Andrews 6). His plots have autobiographical references blended with fiction and an erudite proliferation of pop-culture and literary references.

Bolaño “is a writer of an omnipresent self-referentiality... The texts of the Chilean writer suppose an evolution of the bibliophile authors where there is a permanent awareness of the literary fact” (Fernández Díaz 37). In general, Bolaño’s main recurrent theme throughout his narratives has been the “relationship between literature and evil” (Gutierrez-Mouat 14) and a “detectivisque” search for something or someone.

Both “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman” and *Distant Star* explore the themes of literature and evil interwoven in similar plots: a poet is in search of a fascist poet/killer who looks for real and literary clues by carefully looking for traits of the fascist killer in many texts. “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman”, as part of *a pseudo-encyclopedia with apocryphal biographies, is developed in a few pages and with an informative tone; whereas Distant Star* is an expanded version with a more intimate and testimonial tone (Simunovic 11) in which refurbished and new characters appear in the main story line or in completely digressive chapters where Bolaño uses a reference to the book *Ma gestalt-thérapie* to group the stories of three characters, all poets: Stein, Soto and Lorenzo. Both works by Bolaño raise the question of the presence of fascism and evil in South America and have resulted in some research focused on the importance and influence of Bolaño on contemporary Latin American narrative in retelling the brutality of the Chilean dictatorship of 1973. However, as stated by Gutiérrez-Mouat in his book *Understanding Roberto Bolaño*, the Chilean author “does not focus on the traditional concerns of the dictatorship novel” (79). Bolaño’s main concerns in *Distant Star* go beyond politics. On the other hand, given that the themes of brutality and dictatorships were covered earlier and extensively by Borges and Cortázar, the influence of both Argentinean masters is indisputably present, either consciously or unconsciously, in his work. During an

interview about *The Savage Detectives*, Bolaño confessed: “To say that I am permanently indebted to the work of Borges and Cortázar is a no-brainer”¹ (*Bolaño por sí mismo* 327). Therefore, in addition to the idea of consciousness, by default I also consider if the reference of the “ghost of Pierre Ménard”, a character from a Borges short story, goes beyond the implications of rewriting, as most scholars have understood this reference. Given the nature of Bolaño, notorious for playing pranks on and fooling his audience as do “Borges’ erudite hoaxes” (Andrews 124), I examine if this reference serves a more complex role and if it is in some regard related to the concept or idea of consciousness, particularly because Borges never wrote a novel in his life, and Bolaño deliberately uses his character in the prologue of his novel. Bolaño was well versed in literary matters and most likely used this metatextual reference with more complex implications that have not been addressed by scholars. At the same time, the sentence “*Arturo would have preferred a longer story that, rather than mirror or explode others, would be, in itself, a mirror and an explosion*” (1) evokes Cortázar’s words used multiple times to explain how different generic forms allow for more profound explorations of ontological issues. Therefore, the central questions I investigate in this thesis are: Was Cortázar a major influence in Bolaño’s rewriting of his short story into a novel? How does Cortázar impact Bolaño’s narrative techniques, representing consciousness and the engagement of his reader in *Distant Star*? How did Bolaño understand the concept of consciousness and was he seeking a better medium to represent and expand it in his narrative to truly engage his readers? How does Borges’ “Pierre Ménard” reference in Bolaño’s prologue fit in the

¹ Translated from: “Decir que estoy en deuda permanente con la obra de Borges y Cortázar es una obviedad” (*Bolaño por sí mismo*, 327).

rewriting of a short story into a novel with respect to consciousness? For all of this, I do a close reading and comparative analysis of Bolaño's "The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman" and *Distant Star* and examine some of Bolaño's interviews while taking into account Cortázar's and Borges' possible influence in the representation and expansion of consciousness by examining part of their works.

Additionally, I will also attempt to clarify the generic taxonomy of Bolaño's work, given that it is problematic to understand the representation and treatment of consciousness in narrative when the same fictive works are mislabeled by the author and some scholars studying them. Through my research, I explain how "genre" is a broad term, used loosely, and how its definitions vary substantially with geographic boundaries and time, and with the attention given by scholars and critics, as has clearly been the case with Bolaño's work. As Jacques Derrida stated in his seminal work "The Law of Genre", genre -whether natural or constructed- always serves a purpose. In this process, I examine some possible motivations for Bolaño to refer to *Nazi Literature* as a novel and offer a clarification of the taxonomy of both works studied and the implications of this in Bolaño's narrative development and construction of consciousness. I base my research on using a variety of theories and poetics on the short story and the novel offered by authors and scholars such as Lauro Zavala, Julio Cortázar, Greg Hollingshead, Michael McKeon, and Chris Andrews and by consulting the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* and some literature companions. In this research, I demonstrate that among the few scholars who have studied particularly the expansion of "The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman" into *Distant Star*, such as Celina Manzoni, Eun-Kyung Choi, Chris Andrews, Jeremias Gamboa, Ricardo Gutierrez-Mouat, and Eugenio Santangelo, there is not a consensus on generic

taxonomy for Bolaño's work and to this day, no one has done a deep analysis of the generic classification of his work. Neither have they discussed or examined any influence of Cortázar's work in either of Bolaño's fictive works, confirming in a sense the arguments of Wilfrido Corral concerning a lack of in-depth study of Bolaño's work (40). After classifying "The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman" and *Distant Star*, I highlight some important features of the novel in the construction of consciousness.

The question of what exactly consciousness is and how Bolaño understood it is analyzed carefully in this thesis by examining interviews with Bolaño and the current bibliography on this concept in the field of literature and cognitive science. Thomas Metzger, a doctor in mind-body problems and an expert in the field explains: "consciousness is different in that we gain knowledge about it from the inside as well as from the outside- and we don't really understand what that statement actually means. Consciousness, we say, is also known from the first-person perspective, by an experiencing self" (Blackmore 149). Consciousness is a complicated concept, and up until today it has divided scientists in adopting objective and subjective approaches to its understanding. In psychology, the area that deals with subjectivity is known as phenomenology; it deals with individual experiences, on how the world looks and feels in someone's mind (246), and narrative and literature have become important in its research. According to David Lodge, a novelist and scholar of consciousness and narrative, consciousness truly became a "hot topic in the sciences" in the 1990's with many writings published about it, but earlier developments encouraged attention to the topic in both the scientific and literary worlds (7-14). Lodge has devoted part of his life as to understanding the stylistic devices and narrative methods through which novels

communicate meaning and have the effects that they have upon readers. He has applied close readings that New Criticism has provided for poetry and drama, yet he also has expanded these methods with theories of the Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (for whom consciousness is inherent to language) and new literary theories from new post-structuralist phases. Lodge points out that some scientists, such as Daniel Dennett, pursue the analogy between consciousness and literary creation as intimate: “the very idea of the individual self... is constructed like a novel” (112). In other words, we use language to define and present ourselves to others. For a long time now, various theoretical perspectives have claimed that we almost always “think in words, that we talk to ourselves, and this inner speech is equated with consciousness” (Fireman et al. 59). Therefore, special attention is given to language and semantics in the analysis of consciousness of Bolaño’s work, but it is not limited to that. Professor Doritt Cohn explains that the modes of rendering consciousness are not only linguistic but that attention should be given to style, context, and psychological aspects; therefore, in this thesis I also examine stylistic changes from the short story to the novel, and I also focus on the psychological depiction of interpersonal relationships and intrapersonal growth in some characters. The work of David Lodge is particularly important in understanding Bolaño’s rendering of consciousness in his narratives, as it is more up to date with postmodern techniques and because Lodge as an academic, critic, and writer, admits that self-conscious novelists are very conscious of what they are doing in their creative process and points out other particularities (296). Of course, unconscious motivations and influences can shape a writer’s work as well; for example, Bolaño was asked once if the poet/aviator in “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman” and *Distant Star* was the real-life poet

Raúl Zurita, a contemporary of Bolaño, as many critics have suspected, and Bolaño's answer was: "No, or maybe unconsciously" (*Bolaño por sí mismo* 112)².

In this thesis, there is a short survey of the history and concept of "consciousness", and I refer to the work of Thomas Natsoulas to explain how the term historically did not distinguish between the concepts of mental awareness and moral discourse as the English language currently does with the terms consciousness and conscience respectively. In narrative, consciousness encompasses both meanings and that is how it is examined in this thesis. Besides analyzing how different literary genres affect the representation of consciousness, I demonstrate how Roberto Bolaño understands and represents consciousness by examining interviews and analyzing linguistic and psychological components in his narrative, while taking in account the work of some major scholars such as Dorrit Cohn, James Wood, Paul Ricœur, and David Lodge, and by focusing on Julio Cortázar's writing philosophy captured in *Literature Class*.

In the final section, I compare and contrast "The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman" to *Distant Star* through a close reading of the works and an examination of some techniques used by Cortázar in his novel *Hopscotch*. I focus on two new female characters in Bolaño's novel (Amanda Maluenda and Marta Posadas) and analyze how they may help further the representation and expansion of consciousness in Bolaño's work and the readers' involvement. However, this thesis is not a comparative analysis of *Distant Star* and *Hopscotch* as I limit my examination to some of the techniques used by the Argentinean writer that may have influenced Bolaño's rewriting and treatment of

² Translated from: "No, o tal vez inconcientemente" (Bolaño, *Bolaño por sí mismo* 112).

consciousness and point out some obvious parallels. Additionally, this thesis is not a critique on translation, although since consciousness is represented through language and Bolaño's works were published originally in Spanish, some important discrepancies that may affect the intended representation of consciousness between the original novel in Spanish and its English translation will be addressed.

It is reasonable to predict that Bolaño's rewriting of "The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman" into *Distant Star* was driven by his need to create a process of gradual discovery of not only the mystery but also of himself, that he deliberately sought to expand the representation of a consciousness sufficiently prolonged in time in which the reader becomes an active participant in much the same manner as Cortázar advocated, and that Borges' Pierre Ménard is not simply an allusion to a "rewriting" but is used in a much more complex way related to the concept of consciousness.

Chapter II

The Taxonomy of “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman” and *Distant Star*

In order to understand the expansion of consciousness and what motivated Roberto Bolaño to rewrite the “final chapter” of *Nazi Literature in the Americas* into *Distant Star*, it is important to clarify the taxonomy of these works, in the sense of generic form, given that Bolaño refers to both books as novels. This is problematic and controversial, especially because most scholars disagree with these classifications (yet there is no consensus among all) and also due to the fact that Bolaño was well-versed in literary theory and criticism and understood the generic differences. As a matter of fact, he stated that: “Each text, each argument demands its form” (*Bolaño por sí mismo* 98).³ All this is important to consider given that different genres allow for different treatments of the development of consciousness in their narratives, for different psychological processes of the text construction, and “the novel is, among all the literary genres and artistic forms, peculiarly focused upon consciousness” (Lodge 121).

The fact that Bolaño refers to “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman” as a chapter, as many scholars continue to do, is problematic as well because this keeps perpetuating unnecessary misunderstandings about his work and more importantly interferes with a proper structuralist or poststructuralist analysis of it. As Jack Derrida stated in his seminal

³ Translated from: “Cada texto, cada argumento exige su forma” (Bolaño, *Bolaño por sí mismo* 98)

work “The Law of Genre,” genre whether natural or constructed always serves a purpose; therefore, only by identifying within which genres these works by Bolaño fall will it be possible to understand better their purpose.

On the other hand, it is important to clarify that while *Nazi Literature* and *Distant Star* remain controversial with regards to their generic form, conveniently both books have been classified as post-modern metafiction, which in turn attests to the self-conscious nature of their narratives--an important aspect with regards to consciousness studies. In addition, both works share characteristics of the detective subgenre, since at the core of their narratives there is a search for a poet/aviator that develops with the aid of an ex-detective and a narrator who helps find clues: regular and literary ones.

The genesis of the problem of genre in Bolaño’s work

When categorizing pieces of literature and defining their particularities, we generally speak of “genre,” however this term is broad and used loosely, causing misunderstandings, especially with an author like Bolaño who experiments with his work and pushes generic boundaries as many scholars have indicated and which has caused his work and writing to be described as “unsettled and unsettling” (Andrews, xiii).

As the online *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* explains, there is a lot of confusion around the term “genre”, as it is applied simultaneously for a variety of categories such as the most basic modes of literary arts, composition, sub-categories, structure, length (sometimes called *form*), intention, and subject-matter, among others. Then we have the classifications within subgenres, etc. Additionally, when we finally speak of “genre” in a certain sense, there could be a lack of concrete and clear-cut definitions, as is apparent with the terms short story, novella, and novel. Moreover, the

definitions for these genres are not concrete and can vary substantially with geographic boundaries and time, and additionally with the attention given by scholars and critics to certain works, as various books on literary theory demonstrate⁴. This has been the case with Bolaño's work since there is "discrepancy between scholars working on Bolaño in Latin America or Spain and critics and reviewers writing in the United States or the U.K" (Gutiérrez-Mouat 14). Furthermore, when analyzing Bolaño's books, scholars encounter complex works that defy many of the standardized categorizations of genres and subgenres, given that Bolaño is adept at mixing styles and techniques, breaking rules, adding autobiographical elements or "so called" autobiographical elements to his work, providing false information, making obvious and subtle references to others' work, and offering literary games with "complex intertwining[s] of history and fiction" (Lynd 170) which have been misunderstood at times by critics. Complicating things more, in order to understand Bolaño's work better, many scholars have tried to contextualize his work in reference to other writers of his period or to his own previous work, but this has proven difficult to do in Bolaño's case (Gutierrez Mouat 41). Furthermore, when trying to contextualize his work in regard to his personal life, problems arise not only because Bolaño lived in multiple places, but especially because Bolaño deliberately offered contradictory or controversial information in interviews and speeches, as books like *Entre*

⁴For example, in the essay "Novel, Novella, Short Story" published by Oxford University Press, Adrian Hunter describes that when Richard Ford was given the task to edit an anthology of American novellas, he suggested that "he couldn't say confidently what a novella was" (Hunter 277). Another example: in the preface and introduction of *Short Story Theories*, Charles May discusses the renaissance of interest the short story saw in the mid 1970's among scholars and how academics and writers alike were trying to define the short story and its parameters to no avail. Equal testimonies are present in works such as *Teorias del cuento III* by L. Zavala & *Literature Class* by Cortázar pertaining to the genre of "short story", "novella" and "novel".

Paréntesis and *Bolaño por sí mismo*, which collect these, attest to; therefore, “his biography is too many times a distorting element regarding his works” (Santangelo 337)⁵.

If Bolaño’s own statements regarding his life have been controversial, facts about his biography have also been “embellished” by some of his publishing houses, which for example exaggerated the number of days Bolaño was imprisoned, or by critics who have done some disconcerting “misreadings” of his work, indicating in later publications that Bolaño was a drug addict. All of this information and misinformation has contributed to the creation of a “myth.”⁶ Moreover, besides this permanent sense of aporia that has guided Bolaño’s life and work, Wilfrido Corral points out that many scholars keep jumping all over the place without studying Bolaño’s work in-depth (40), while Oswaldo Zavala insists that there is a “saturated critical production that overinterprets his work” (76-77). All of this, in part, explains the misclassification of *Nazi Literature* and *Distant Star* and the lack of formal categorization for “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman.”

In order to avoid more controversies and ambiguities, it is fundamental to clearly classify both works and to pay special attention to the conceptual weight of meaning of these different genre classifications in order to create an effective premise to successfully understand the creation and expansion of consciousness and conscience in Bolaño’s work.

⁵ Translated from “su biografía es demasiadas veces elemento distorsionador con respecto a sus obras” (Santangelo 337).

⁶For more detailed information on the controversies about Bolaño’s work, see “The Anomalous case of Roberto Bolaño” in *Roberto Bolaño's Fiction: An Expanding Universe* by Chris Andrews, pages 1 to 32.

“The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman”: the last *chapter* of *Nazi Literature in the Americas*

Roberto Bolaño writes in the opening pages of *Distant Star*: “*In the final chapter of my novel Nazi Literature in the Americas I recounted, in less than twenty pages and perhaps too schematically, the story of Lieutenant Ramírez Hoffman...*” (I) This final chapter is “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman”; however, the classification of “chapter” is questionable as is if *Nazi Literature* is really a novel in the traditional sense. Nonetheless, what truly matters for the purpose of this research is to focus on the generic taxonomy of “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman,” yet a brief analysis of *Nazi Literature in the Americas* will be helpful to shed light on Bolaño’s motivation to call this book a novel and to see his concerted effort to differentiate this “last chapter” from the others in his book.

Various scholars dismiss *Nazi Literature in the Americas* as a novel⁷ because they consider it a compilation of pseudo-biographies which lack a cohesive and distinctive plot or a main character. For example, Héctor Hoyos, an important scholar of Bolaño, considers *Nazi Literature* a “mock-erudite encyclopedia of imaginary authors” and writes in his book *Beyond Bolaño* that “a fair amount of free association connects the lives of these ‘Nazi writers’; however, it is clear that randomness alone cannot sustain the book’s apparatus...” Therefore, he proposes that “Nazism is a synecdoche for the broader

⁷ According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, the word “novel” is an open and flexible term, but in general it applies to an extended fictional prose narrative that does not have an obligatory structure, style, or subject matter. The novel as a literary genre can be distinguished from the *short story* and the *novella* by its greater length, more developed characters and themes, and for its significant meaning. Also, a novel should have at least one or several characters who are involved in processes of change and social relationships in a plot or part of the plot across its narrative.

phenomenon of fascism” (36-37). However, Hoyos does not further his analysis to propose a clear classification for this book.

Nazi Literature in the Americas is a book that contains thirty biographies distributed in thirteen sections, and only two biographies stand alone within their section, one featuring the plagiarist Max Mirebalais and the other being the last biography of Carlos Ramírez Hoffman within the section titled “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman.” Regardless of this, the book does not have an overarching plot or a single character involved in most of or the whole of the book’s narrative. *Nazi Literature*’s connecting theme is Fascism in its different forms; other than that, there is nothing else that bridges its “entries” together. Franklin Rodríguez in his essay “Unsettledness and Doubling in Roberto Bolaño’s *Estrella Distante*” also adheres to the idea that *Nazi Literature* presents “independent but interrelated biographical sketches of... writers with fascist inclinations” (203). Ricardo Gutiérrez-Mouat, author of *Understanding Roberto Bolaño*, explains that in *Nazi Literature* Bolaño explores the “pathos and grandeur of the writing career” of various alt-right men and women in a book that is in debt to and simulates Borges’ 1935 collection of short stories *A Universal History of Infamy* (14), and indicates how Bolaño also recognized the influence of *Imaginary Lives* (1896) by the French author Marcel Schwob’s (69), another collection of semi-biographical short stories.

In fact, in *Bolaño por sí mismo*, Roberto Bolaño accounts for other works that have influenced *Nazi Literature*, which are all short story collections. Controversially, Bolaño starts by saying that all writers who write in Spanish have or should have Cervantine influence: that all owe to a bigger or lesser extent something to Cervantes, and that nevertheless the genealogy of *Nazi Literature in the Americas* in concrete does

not follow that path but owes a lot to *La sinagoga de los iconoclastas*, a short story collection by Rodolfo Wilcock. He then continues to say that Wilcock's book is in debt to *Historía universal de la infamia* by Borges and that this is in debt to Alfonso Reyes' *Relatos reales e imaginarios*, another short story collection, which in turn is in debt to Marcel Schwob's *Vidas Imaginarias*. Bolaño concludes by saying that Schwob's book is in debt to the methodology and the ways some encyclopedists make available certain biographies.⁸ This demonstrates Bolaño's erudition and awareness of the influences in *Nazi Literature*, yet at the same time puts him at odds with his position of calling his book a novel when he distances his book from Cervantes, author of *Don Quixote*, considered the first modern novel in Western Literature, and states that the genealogy of *Nazi Literature* is primarily comprised and modeled after a series of famous collections of short stories. This cognitive-dissonant admission teases and provokes Bolaño's readers and also sheds light onto the "inventive" and "daring" strategies Bolaño promoted that writers take in order to stand out (Andrews 5). As a matter of fact, regarding the fixation of calling *Nazi Literature* a novel, Gutiérrez-Mouat points out that like Borges' *A Universal History of Infamy*, Bolaño's *Nazi Literature in the Americas* shares a provocative title, exemplifying that both authors wanted the attention. Therefore, the "explosive nature of the respective titles," and the fact that Bolaño "inherited this desire to 'make noise' with his own choice for a title" (69) makes it understandable that Bolaño refers to *Nazi Literature in the Americas* as a novel, given the prestige and value this

⁸ Paraphrased from Bolaño's interview in *Bolaño por sí mismo*, edited by Braithswaite (Bolaño, 42)

gives a work of fiction as opposed to calling or categorizing it just as a collection of short stories.

While a handful of scholars have agreed that *Nazi Literature* is not a novel, none has done a deep analysis of the classification of the book and in particular of its chapters. For example, Jonathan Monroe writes in his book *Framing Roberto Bolaño: Poetry, Fiction, Literary History, Politics* that “in the dozen categories that make up the fantastical literary-historical taxonomy that is Bolaño’s *La literatura nazi en América* (*Nazi Literature in the Americas*), Bolaño offers a structure for a book that is, like *Antwerp*, not a novel in any traditional sense, but a collection of meta-short-story prose poems or meta-prose-poem short stories” (66). Here Monroe rejects the classification of *Nazi Literature* as a novel and rather labels it as collection of short stories; however, he partakes in what Oswaldo Zavala labels as an “overinterpretation” of Bolaños’ work (76-77) by offering complex definitions of these short stories as either *meta-short-story prose poems* or *meta-prose-poem short stories*. On the other hand, scholars like López-Calvo fall in the “oversimplification” category addressed by Corral and mentioned earlier by writing in *Roberto Bolaño, a Less Distant Star* that “‘Carlos Ramírez Hoffman’ is just one of several chapters in a sort of collection of literary stories or fictional literary biographical encyclopedia that Bolaño liked to consider a novel” (49). Like Monroe, López-Calvo dismisses the classification of *Nazi Literature* as a novel yet does little to offer a clear or concrete classification for these “chapters.” Likewise, it is important to mention that a few scholars who have written about the expansion of “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman” into *Distant Star* continue to refer to it as the “last chapter” or give it other labels without doing an analysis or justifying their classification. For example,

Chris Andrews in his book *Roberto Bolaño's Fiction an Expanding Universe* refers to "The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman" as "final chapter, "text" or "episode" (34, 35), Celina Manzoni refers to it as "historia," "texto," "escritura," "episodio," "narración,"⁹ in an essay in *Roberto Bolaño: La Escritura Como Tauromaquia* (Aguilar 39-43). Eun-Kyung Choi refers to it in her essay "Historias Especulares y Explosivas en 'Estrella Distante' de Roberto Bolaño" as an "último capítulo" (33) or "otro texto"¹⁰ (34), and finally Eugenio Santangelo, in the abstract of his essay "Poéticas De Lo Indecidible: Roberto Bolaño y La Re-Narración Post-Dictatorial" refers to it as a "relato" in Spanish, and as a "short-story" in the English version of the abstract (336), but like all the other scholars he does not explain why "The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman" falls within this category.

In this section, it has been made clear that *Nazi Literature* does not fall within the definition of *novel* and therefore should be dismissed as such given that it lacks a cohesive plot from beginning to end, and particularly because it lacks one or more characters as main protagonists in the narrative development of the whole book. *Nazi Literature in the Americas* is in fact a collection of stories, as the genealogy detailed by Bolaño exemplified as well.

It is pertinent now to offer an analysis of "The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman" in order to classify this "last chapter" of *Nazi Literature* within clear generic boundaries and avoid further oversimplifications.

⁹ In English: "story," "text," "writing," "episode," "narration"

¹⁰ In English: "Last chapter" (33) or "other text" (34)

“The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman”: the last chapter in *Nazi Literature in the Americas*

Of the thirty “chapters” or “entries” of *Nazi Literature*, “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman” is the last one and it stands out from the others because it is significantly longer (it has twenty five pages as opposed to the average four pages) and its narrative tone is completely different from the other biographies. Furthermore, its characters and plot are more developed than any other “chapter” within the book. Unlike the other stories in *Nazi Literature in the Americas*, “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman” presents substantial differences that make it easy to classify it as a short story and moreover as what academics and writers, including Julio Cortázar, consider a good short story.

Even though there is not a specific and infallible definition for a short story¹¹, the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* proposes that a short story is “a fictional prose tale of no specified length, but too short to be published as a volume on its own...[it] will normally concentrate on a single event with only one or two characters, [it is] more economical than a novel's sustained exploration of social background”. Complementing this definition, it is important to take into consideration the conceptual weight of meaning present in a short story versus that present in a novel. Greg Hollingshead proposes in “Short Story vs Novel” that “in a good short story the meaning is not so abstractable, so portable, as it must be in a novel, but is rather more tightly and ineffably embodied in the formal details of the text.” In other words, the short story has a defined focus and intention, or as Julio Cortázar puts it, a short story is “primed to fulfill its narrative

¹¹ In *Teorías del Cuento III, Poéticas de la brevedad* various authors and scholars agree that the “short story,” like other genres, is indefinable. See Mempo Giardinelli Essay, page 331

function with the maximum economy of means” (“On the Short Story”, 34), elements that are clear and present in “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman.”

Let us start with the fact that the narrative voice in “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman” breaks from the “encyclopedic” and factual tone of the other stories from *Nazi Literature*. Here we have a homodiegetic narrator named “Bolaño” that primarily has a reporting tone that at times presents a distinctive and spontaneous oral quality punctuated by Chilean jargon, seen here in its original Spanish: “La carrera del infame Ramírez Hoffman debió comenzar en 1970 o 1971, cuando Salvador Allende era presidente de Chile...Emilio Stevens pololeaba (la palabra pololear me pone la piel de gallina) con María Venegas...” (Bolaño, *La literatura nazi en América* 193). In addition, the story is substantially longer than all the others, but it does not derail into mayor subplots.

Gutierrez-Mouat writes in his book *Understanding Roberto Bolaño*, “‘The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman,’ is the longest in the book and stands apart from the others because it is narrated in the first person by a character named ‘Bolaño’, while the other twenty-nine entries of Bolaño’s fictitious encyclopedia are presented in a detached tone by an impersonal narrator” (62). “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman” focuses on the story of a writer who is in search of a poet/aviator with Fascist tendencies, whose direct connection to Nazism is in the allusion that he flies a Messerschmidt (Bolaño 185) and the crimes he commits against some socialists using his alter-ego. Any potential digressions in the narrative are ended quickly with clear syntactic markers of closure or by redirecting the storyline and moving the main plot forward while preserving the contained nature of the story. This is very clear, for example, with Marin García’s character, where Bolaño writes: “Later on Martin García was killed too, but that is an entirely different story”

(183). Bolaño does not digress in narrating García's destiny in his short story nor does he with any other character, but he does cause his reader to think about them.

Julio Cortázar, whose influence is significant in Bolaño's work and aesthetic (Nieves, 15), and who is considered a Latin American master of the short story, explains in his essay "On the Short Story and its Environs" important elements that make a good short story, and "The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman" contains all of them. Cortázar starts by saying that nine of Horacio Quiroga's famous ten commandments for writing a short story are dispensable but the last one is not: "Tell the story as if it were only of interest to the small circle of your characters, of which you may be one. There is no other way to put life into the story" stressing that "the notion of the little word gives the deepest meaning to this bit of advice by defining the closed form of the story", what he calls "its sphericity" (34). Cortázar stresses that a short story should be closed, spherical, and that one of the infallible elements of a good short story is that the narrator could be one of its characters and equally important that the "narrative situation itself should come into being and unfold within the sphere" (34), which is exactly the case in "The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman" where the narrator, Bolaño, helps a Chilean detective find the poet/aviator Carlos Ramírez Hoffman in order to bring justice, accomplishing the unfolding of the story by bringing it to an end after stretching it to its limits but never breaking it by derailing in subplots addressing other issues. The fact that this story form is brief, no more than 25 pages, and its narrative follows a single plot that is contained by itself and resolved and told by one of its main characters fulfills Cortázar's words and also the famous premise that "in a short story the crisis *is* the story" (Hollingshead, 877). Furthermore, it is a good or perfect short story because it builds suspense, comes to a

resolution, and awakens the reader's curiosity and moral conscience by offering complex subject matters that make the reader think during and after the story has finished.

On another important note, Gutierrez-Mouat points out that "The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman" is particularly significant within *Nazi Literature* because it represents Bolaño's "earliest experiment with 'autofiction,' ... and – more concretely– as the projection of the author onto imaginary situations under the aegis of a fictive reading contract" (62). And it is exactly under this aegis that *Distant Star* comes into existence; Carlos Ramírez Hoffman becomes Carlos Wieder in the novel, and the tropes and themes of poetry/literature and Fascism expand into different subplots explored within the lives of old characters from the short story and new ones in what Monroe calls a "fully realized novel" (Monroe 66). This expansion and the words Bolaño uses in the opening pages of *Distant Star* bring to mind what Cortázar said on multiple occasions about the crucial differences between the short story and the novel, the important difference in form/structure, and the psychological development of characters in the different genres.

In the book *Literature Class*, which collects Cortázar's lectures at UC Berkeley in 1980, the Argentinean author explains how a good short story is primarily a "closed system" and that it "tends toward the spherical, towards closure" while the novel resembles an "enormous structure" due to its complexity; it is "open literary game". He explains that the limited number of characters in the short story can become multiple and intricate in the novel and the author can then delve into complex ontological questions (17). In a previous essay, "Algunos aspectos del cuento" in the Cuban literary magazine *Casa de las Americas*, Cortázar explained in depth his famous metaphors of the photograph and film as analogous to the short story and the novel. There he explains how

contained and limited one medium is compared to the other, but that regardless of this a truly good short story, regardless of its limited form, is able to transmit something bigger: “Un cuento es significativo cuando quiebra sus propios límites con esa explosión de energía espiritual que ilumina bruscamente algo que va mucho más allá de la pequeña y a veces miserable anécdota que cuenta” (4-5). This translates to “A story is significant when it breaks its own limits with that explosion of spiritual energy that sharply illuminates something that goes far beyond the small and sometimes miserable anecdote that it tells.” These words are important, as they resonate with those in *Distant Star*'s introduction where Bolaño writes that Arturo B., the author's fictional alter ego¹² “*would have preferred a longer story that, rather than mirror or explode others, would be, in itself, a mirror and an explosion*” (1).

Bolaño's short story, while perfectly sphered, does communicate beyond its limits but it only truly explodes when it becomes *Distant Star* and allows other stories to grow with their own developed characters. In *Distant Star*, the basic plot is expanded and the stories of a few more characters are detailed in subplots that deal with important ethical and moral topics. The reader has in her hands something bigger, something that some have called a novella and others a novel; therefore, next is an analysis of this work to once again avoid any generic ambiguity.

¹² Arturo Belano, or Arturo B. is considered Roberto Bolaño's alter ego. See *Roberto Bolaño's Fiction: An Expanding Universe* by Chris Andrews, page 4.

Is *Distant Star* a novel and why does this matter?

Distant Star has been classified as a novel by the majority of scholars and critics who have studied or reviewed it, such as Andrews, Hoyos, Monroe, Santangelo, Manzoni, and Paz Soldán, among others. Roberto Bolaño also referred to it as a novel. However, there are a few scholars, such as Solà García and López-Calvo who refer to it as a “novela corta” (short novel) or novella, and this is problematic because once again there is no definite consensus to analyze Bolaño’s work. Even though the Spanish edition of the book has around 160 pages and the English version around 150 pages, the length constraints of a work of fiction are not the only parameter to take into account when classifying this book as a novella or novel. Generally speaking, a novella does not allow for the details and weight of meaning that a novel offers, and *Distant Star* as Bolaño suggests in its prologue is “guided by dreams and nightmare” exploring complex issues in important subplots. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* online, a “novella” is “a fictional tale in prose, intermediate in length and complexity between a short story and a novel, and usually concentrating on a single event or chain of events, with a surprising turning point”. Even though *Distant Star* is not expansive, its weight of meaning is important and goes beyond anything a short novel could effectively explore. *Distant Star* deals with the brutality of a dictatorship, fascism, and the complex dynamics of arts and politics through the lives of various characters that appear in the short story but that in this new book are developed in depth. In addition, new characters with complex psychological profiles offer a more profound exploration of important issues such as homosexuality, homophobia, intuition, and female consciousness, to name a few. In addition, *Distant Star*’s plot does not focus on a single event but offers a decentralized

narrative that explores important ontological questions through various characters and the complexity of the human experience, such as fear, hate, jealousy, and the struggles of living in a dictatorship and exile. In this respect, the short stories main focus is on the development and conclusion of the plot and the reader comes to know the characters superficially. *Distant Star* however, allows for a more detailed and sophisticated development of most of its characters and their respective subplots deepen the understanding of human interaction. Bolaño enhances their psychological profiles and allows the reader to see different perspectives of them through their interactions. In the novels, characterization is an expansive literary device that helps resemble real life people and Bolaño uses it correctly in *Distant Star*. José Ortega y Gasset saw it clearly and said it eloquently many years ago:

This possibility of constructing human souls is perhaps the major asset of future novels. Everything points in this direction. The interest in the outer mechanism of the plot is today reduced to a minimum. All the better: the novel must now resolve about the superior interest emanating from the inner mechanism of the personages. Not in the invention of plots but in the invention of interesting characters lies the best hope of the novel.

(McKeon 315)

Distant Star also presents a structure that is flexible and complex, inviting the readers to incur their own discoveries; it “confers the ultimate responsibility for agency with the reader” (Lynd, 23). *Distant Star*’s structure and weight of meaning fulfill all the characteristics of the “novel” rather than that of a “novella” and this matters enormously to allow Bolaño to work on the expansion of consciousness and conscience in his narrative. The *Oxford Dictionary* explains that the novel is “thriving on this openness and flexibility, the novel has become the most important literary genre of the modern age...”

These aspects of openness and flexibility are particularly important because a novella cannot effectively support these, but a novel can. Mikhail Bakhtin declared that “the generic skeleton of the novel is still far from having hardened, and we cannot foresee all its plastic possibilities. We know other genres, as genres, in their completed aspect, that is, as more or less fixed pre-existing forms into which one may then pour artistic experience” (McKeon 321). *Distant Star* does this, as is examined in detail in the essay by Simunovic Díaz, who alludes to *Distant Star*’s dynamism and countless possibilities due to the detective qualities of the narrative that is heterodox and problematic and similar to Bolaño’s other titles, such as *The Savage Detectives* (20)¹³. It is the complex and subtle development of characters and themes, understood as the weight of meaning, and the incorporation of other elements in the narrative and style of *Distant Star*, rather than its length, that makes this work a novel, and a complex novel as such.

Chris Andrews, Bolaño’s official translator and one of Bolaño’s most prominent scholars, considers *Distant Star* a complex novel and in his book *Roberto Bolaño’s Fiction An Expanding Universe* explains how the novel deeply engages the reader to wonder what is going to happen and to even form “prognoses in a largely subconscious manner” (71). This demonstrates the relevance of Bolaño’s work in expanding the reader’s awareness. Bolaño not only offers the reader a postmodern fiction but also a work that has some qualities of the detective novel, and in the novel the reader goes along with the anonymous narrator in a search that is constructed gradually and shaped by the reader’s own experiences and moral convictions, allowing for an expansion of consciousness that go beyond the written pages. Andrews says that in general “Bolaño’s

¹³ Paraphrased from the Spanish from Simunovic Díaz’s essay, page 20.

fiction sometimes produces generic suspense, which depends on the reader's familiarity with the convention of a genre..." and continues with an important point about Bolaño's novels: "production of narrative tension is decentralized, depending more on glimpses into the lives of marginal characters" (Andrews, xiii), which is exactly the case of *Distant Star* where the narrative tension of the main plot is interrupted by narrative digressions by focusing on the destinies of secondary characters such as Stein, Soto, Petra and Marta Posadas. More importantly, the issues of morality and consciousness are expanded and explored more in depth in *Distant Star* where some "recycled" characters from "The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman" are much more developed, psychologically and plot wise, in their new environment, or as Andrews once again explains "his characters are not strictly constrained by their first version: they evolve; their names and properties are allowed to change in response to new fictional environments... It also creates intriguing puzzles for the reader" (46). All of these important properties are truly allowed only in a novel rather than short novels or short stories.

Chapter III

Consciousness in Bolaño's works: Overview and Influences

Understanding consciousness and how different literary genres represent it does not have a detailed prescription; however, it is possible to demonstrate how authors, in this case Roberto Bolaño, understand, treat, and represent consciousness in his different works. It is also important to trace the influence others have had in his writing and the expectations Bolaño has of his readers because through a careful analysis and criticism of narrative one can infer the nature of different cognitive processes (Lodge xi). At the same time, to a degree, one can determine how the unconscious and conscious mind of writers may affect the development of their work and consequently how different narrative techniques, particularly the blur between fiction and nonfiction in postmodernism, impact the conscious and ethical involvement of the reader (Fireman et al. 9).

Like Bolaño's work, the origin of the term "consciousness" is complex and to name most intellectuals who have worked on shaping and understanding this concept would be impossible, but the idea of human consciousness in the modern sense, in western tradition, evolved significantly during the seventeenth century, particularly with René Descartes and the Cartesians (Jorgensen). The term has been historically closely connected to moral identity, with Latin and French lacking a linguistic distinction between consciousness and conscience as in the English language (Jorgensen). Spanish, also a Romance language, lacks this distinction. There is one word "conciencia" that

means both the mental awareness of being present in the world and the knowledge or awareness between good and bad or acting in such ways.¹⁴ Thomas Natsoulas explains in “Consciousness and Conscience” that from a historical and literary perspective the term *consciousness* usually emphasizes “two branches of meaning” (330), blending the concepts of thought and awareness with moral sensibility. In this regard, Bolaño’s exploration and expansion of consciousness from “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman” to *Distant Start* must be understood encompassing this fusion; nonetheless, to avoid confusion the terms consciousness and conscience are both used at times.

Descartes, well-known for the philosophical proposition “Cogito, ergo sum” / “I think, therefore I am”, offered a psychological use for the idea of consciousness when he described “thought” in terms of consciousness; yet, he did not provide an analysis or definition of the concept (Jorgensen). From there forward, the idea of consciousness has been studied by many more intellectuals, with John Locke (1632-1704) being important in the shaping of its understanding and meaning with *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* published in 1689 (Bray 5). Moreover, Kant adds the dimension of time to the concept of human consciousness: “The internal sense orders internal states according to time... Thus our representation of external things are constrained by the form of time as well as the form of space (Drodge 20). However, the term consciousness, while quite popular then and now, is devoid of a standard meaning and has created much confusion (Humphrey 2 & Bray 4). Moreover, there is a division concerning the

¹⁴ The official dictionary of Spanish (RAE) offers multiple meanings for the word *conciencia* ranging from moral self-reflection to awareness of one’s reality: “Conciencia del lat. Conscientia 1. Conocimiento del bien y del mal que permite a la persona enjuiciar moralmente la realidad y los actos, especialmente los propios ... 4. Conocimiento claro y reflexivo de la realidad”.

individual life of interiority and one focusing on the socio-ideological idea of a collective consciousness (Bray 6). This differentiation, however, has been conciliated particularly in literature under the premise that individuals, while having their own thoughts and feelings, are primarily social beings, and they need of others and society to become who they are. At the same time, society needs individuals, who by living or experiencing similar and significant events, create a collection of particular common experiences that shapes the idea of a collective or historical consciousness (Funkenstein 6-9). The individual and collective ideas of consciousness are intrinsically linked to our values. The writer and philosopher Iris Murdoch explains in *Metaphysics as a Guide of Morals* that “the concept of consciousness, the stream of consciousness is animated by indicating a moral dimension. Our speech is moral speech” (260). Regarding the individual and collective consciousness in narrative, Bolaño said:

I write from my experience, both my experiences, let's say, personal, and my bookish and cultural experience, which over time have merged into one thing. But I also write from what used to be called the collective experience, which is, contrary to what some theorists thought, something quite ungraspable. Let's say, for simplicity, that being the fantastic side of individual experience, the theological side. (*Bolaño por sí mismo* 76)¹⁵

In Bolaño's “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman”, the idea of a collective consciousness is not truly developed; however, in *Distant Start*, there are various forms of collective

¹⁵ Translated from: “Yo escribo desde mi experiencia, tanto mi experiencia, digamos, personal, como mi experiencia libresca y cultural, que con el tiempo se han fundido en una sola cosa. Pero también escribo desde lo que solía llamarse la experiencia colectiva, que es, contra lo que pensaban algunos teóricos, algo bastante inaprensible. Digamos, para simplificar, que poder ser el lado fantástico de la experiencia individual, el lado teologal”. (Bolaño, *Bolaño por sí mismo* 76).

consciousness clearly crafted in the narrative, and this will be analyzed more in detail in the next chapter.

Consciousness is prominent in all narrative; however, the idea of consciousness is central to the novel, and it is well understood in the theory of narrative and poetics of fiction that the genre of the novel is the best way to convey characterization, or in other words the psychology, thoughts, feelings, inner speech, self-expressions, experience, ideas and knowledge of characters, hence the representation of our own evolving real world and human consciousness. Bolaño set out to explore something personal with “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman” in *Nazi Literature*; however, the short story was not the best medium to satisfy a deep ontological quest and to convey characterization. In order to develop a process of truth discovery, which only the utterance of a consciousness can afford, Bolaño required time which only a novel fully offers. As a matter of fact, most studies pertaining to consciousness and its representation in literature have focused mainly, if not solely, on the novel and barely on other generic forms. To mention some concrete examples, one can look at the seminal work of Robert Humphrey: *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel* (1954), Dorrit Cohn’s *Transparent Minds: Narratives Modes of Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (1978), and in more current works such as David Lodge’s *Consciousness and the Novel* (2002), Joe Bray’s *The Epistolary Novel: Representations of Consciousness* (2003), James Wood’s *How Fiction Works* (2008), and the interdisciplinary work by Gary Fireman, Ted McVay and Owen Flanagan: *Narrative and Consciousness: Literature, Psychology and the Brain* (2003). Many other scholars, philosophers, and writers, among them Julio Cortázar, and even experts on neuroscience, have echoed the relevance and preponderance of the novel

above all genres in portraying human consciousness. Many articles and essays have been written in the twenty-first century regarding narrative and consciousness and some feature neuroscientific methods for this research¹⁶, but unfortunately few books on this topic have been published so far.

In psychology, the area that deals with subjectivity is known as phenomenology as it deals with individual experiences (on how the world looks and feels in someone's mind) (246), and narrative and literature, which are records of human experience, have become important in the understanding of this phenomenological approach and therefore of human consciousness and how we perceive ourselves individually and in history. The limitations of each genre affect how realistic and detailed the representation of consciousness can be and also mediate the commitment and engagement from the reader. However, different narrative techniques used by a writer can profoundly affect these dimensions. In this regard, Roberto Bolaño knew and executed this well in his novel, for example by just switching from a known homodiegetic narrator called Bolaño in his short story to an anonymous narrator in *Distant Star*, he forces the reader "to avoid simplistic inferences about the author" (Lodge, 122) and his narrative. Bolaño takes this even further by providing ambiguous information in *Distant Star's* prologue that suggests the anonymous narrator of the novel may be Bolaño's alter-ego: Arturo B. /Arturo Belano¹⁷ and may be re-writing alone or collaborating in the re-writing: "*we composed the present novel. My role was limited to preparing refreshments, consulting a few books and*

¹⁶ For more about neuroscientific consciousness research in literature, see: Díaz, José-Luis. "A Narrative Method for Consciousness Research."

¹⁷ For more on the ambiguity of the introduction of Bolaño's alter ego, see: Gutiérrez Mouat, Ricardo. *Understanding Roberto Bolaño*.

discussing the reuse of numerous paragraphs with Arturo” (Bolaño, *Distant Star* 1) [original emphasis]. Lodge explains that using an alter-ego creates an “alibi that the author can claim if held to account for any of the opinions stated” (87). This displaces some of the responsibility from Bolaño, the author, and places them into the reader’s interpretation of the indirect authorial knowledge provided by the alter-ego. As James Phelan explains in *Narrative and Consciousness: Literature, Psychology and the Brain*, this multilevel communication in fictional narrative (particularly in retrospective pseudoautobiography, which is a characteristic of *Distant Star*) “involves the audiences’ intellect, emotions, psyche, and values. Furthermore, these levels interact with one another. Our values and those set forth by the narrator and the implied author affect our judgments of characters (and sometimes narrators), and our judgments affect our emotions” (Fireman 132). Hence, by simply reworking the narrator and potential author of *Distant Star*, Bolaño enhances the engagement of his audience and allows for their subjective interpretation. Adding to this, Matei Chihai explains that Bolaño “transforms the binomial ‘Bolaño and I’ into the triangle ‘Bolaño, Belano and I’” (Toro et al. 147), shifting from the author’s clear political and artistic identity in the short story to a multifunctional presence that expands the forms of experience, particularly because his alter ego alludes to the protagonist of *The Savage Detectives* (1998) and also to other real people, including Arthur Rimbaud (Toro et al. 147-148)¹⁸. Bolaño knew that readers willing to play along with his metaliterary games would be able to better understand some of his intentions, which are not few nor simple. In a 1998 interview, Bolaño said:

¹⁸ Translated and paraphrased from: “Transforma el binomio ‘Bolaño y yo’ en el triángulo ‘Bolaño, Belano yo’ (Toro et al. 147-148).

“Fortunately, I am condemned to have few readers, but faithful ones. They are readers interested in entering the metaliterary game and the game of all my work, because if someone reads a book of mine it's not bad, but to understand it you have to read them all, because they all refer to all of them. And therein comes the problem”¹⁹ (*Bolaño por sí mismo* 118).

In literary theory, the study and understanding of consciousness is growing parallel to that of other fields and the relationship has been to an extent symbiotic and productive. In the late seventies, Professor Dorrit Cohn was already working with a dynamic system technique to learn how writers represent consciousness in narrative. Cohn encoded linguistic terms that were then paired with possible corresponding states of consciousness: sensations, emotions, thoughts, and images (223-226). She categorized different modes for representation of characters' consciousness for third-person and first-person narrative situations. However, she expressed that the modes of rendering consciousness in a novel are not only linguistic, but that attention is also given to literary ones such as stylistic, contextual, and psychological aspects (11). Bolaño's *Distant Star*, unlike “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman”, gives particular attention to psychological aspects of consciousness by heavily depicting detailed interpersonal dynamics, particularly between Marta Posadas and Ruiz-Tagle; and between Posadas, the narrator, and Bibiano O’Ryan just to name a few. These interpersonal dynamics in the novel allow most of the characters to become reflective and self-reflective, therefore sooner or later realizing truths about themselves and others, and they also stage the dangers of

¹⁹ Translated from: “Estoy condenado, afortunadamente, a tener pocos lectores, pero fieles. Son lectores interesados en entrar en el juego metaliterario y en el juego de toda mi obra, porque si alguien lee un libro mío no está mal, pero para entenderlo hay que leerlos todos, porque todos se refieren a todos. Y ahí entra el problema” (Bolaño, *Bolaño por sí mismo* 118).

misreading and misunderstanding people. Natsoulas explains that the interpersonal kind of consciousness teaches people something with respect to what “goes on intrapersonally” (335). In the short story, the most sophisticated representation of interpersonal dynamics is limited to the interactions of the narrator and Romero, and there is little interpersonal or intrapersonal evolution or growth from either character. The opposite is true for the narrator of the novel, who we see gradually analyze and condemn his past and present actions and moral responsibility.

Regarding stylistic and linguist approaches to consciousness, “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman”, being part of a sort of pseudo encyclopedia, feels informative and even reads slightly like a report: “The infamous Ramirez Hoffman must have launched this career in 1970 or 1971, when Salvador Allende was president of Chile” (Bolaño, *Nazi Literature* 179); whereas *Distant Star* from its prologue and first lines feels more intimate: “I saw Carlos Wieder for the first time in 1971, or perhaps in 1972, when Salvador Allende was president of Chile” (3). By doing these changes, Bolaño committed to a more humanistic approach in his narrative, which is also obvious when there is space for more voices and accounts in the rewriting of the same basic story. David Lodge explains in *Consciousness and the Novel* that:

historiography can give us selective accounts of events in selected human lives, but the more scientific its method- the more scrupulous it is in basing all its assertion on evidence- the less able it is to represent the density of those events as consciously experienced. That is, however, something that narrative literature, and particularly the novel, can do. The novel creates fictional models of what it is like to be a human being moving through time and space. It captures the density of experienced events by its rhetoric, and it shows the connectedness of events through the devices of plot (13-14).

Bolaño understood that while history books could account, study and analyze the historical moment of Chile in the 70's and its aftermaths, only by changing his words and stylistic choices would he be able to tell a story in a moving and intimate manner that would allow for empathy and more reflection. "The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman", being part of a pseudo encyclopedia, does not illicit the same emotional response and reflection as *Distant Star*. Additionally, it lacks the character of Amalia Maluenda who connects other parts of Chilean history enriching the narrative and the subjective dimension of human's perception of time.

Postmodern writers like Roberto Bolaño, unlike modern ones such as Henry James and Virginia Woolf known for the stream-of-consciousness technique, are not interested in depicting the subjective thoughts and feelings of their characters in detail. Postmodern writers "retreat from the modernist effort to represent subjective consciousness as faithfully as possible" (Lodge 64). They provide a mixture of information, generate distrust, rely heavily on metafiction, and blend fiction with truth in order for readers to make connections and inferences on various possibilities:

Certainly metafiction has been a favorite resource of many postmodernist novelists... By openly admitting and indeed drawing attention to the fictionality of their texts, they free themselves to use all the conventions of the traditional novel, including omniscient insight into the consciousness of their characters... It may seem simplistic, but it perhaps helps to explain the increasing popularity of first-person narration in fiction in the post-modern period (Lodge 81).

Bolaño's "The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman" and *Distant Star* are narrated in first-person and offer a blend of information, not allowing the reader to know with certainty what exactly is happening. Both works of fiction are highly self-referential, in particularly

Distant Star given the information in its prologue and the fact that the anonymous narrator and Bibiano O’Ryan share traits with Bolaño’s real life persona²⁰. Regarding this, in *Distant Star* we could infer that the anonymous narrator, or Arturo B., serves as Bolaño’s consciousness (of the real author) and Bibiano, who is nothing but “a new Bolaño doppelgänger” (Monroe 98), serves as his unconsciousness. In *Distant Star*, Bibiano is in the background constantly doing research, analyzing and interpreting information about Wieder. Likewise he seems to know and notice things that the narrator does not and through him Bolaño’s desires, dreams, and wants are expressed: “he wanted to write stories in English...he dreamed of barricading himself inside Stendhal... most of all, he wanted to write an anthology of Nazi literature of the Americas” (*Distant Star* 42-43)²¹. James Wood is right when he says that “In the novel we can see the self better than any literary form has yet allowed” (148). By expanding a short story, that to a degree is autobiographical, into a novel and by using these characters as an extension of his real-life persona, Bolaño is able to reflect better on his past actions, desires and the direction of his existence. Readers may be able to notice this, but science, as Lodge explains, demonstrates that “unlike other animals, we are almost continually engaged in presenting ourselves to others, and to ourselves, in language” (112), and for writers, literature is the medium to do this. Some may only discover what is they want to communicate in the

²⁰ In *Distant Star* Bibiano wants to write “an anthology of Nazi literature of the Americas” (43) and the narrator is at one point “back with a clapped-out liver in the Vall d’Hebron Hospital in Barcelona (76). Bolaño was hospitalized for liver complications in Spain and died in 2003 while waiting for a transplant.

²¹ These can be interpreted as Bolaño’s aspirations as stated in various interviews compiled in *Entre Paréntesis* and *Bolaño por sí mismo*. He published *Nazi Literature in the Americas* only eight months before *Distant Star* in 1996.

process of doing so or after it has been written, so “every revision [or rewriting] is not a reformulation of the same meaning but a slightly (or very) different meaning” (111).

Compared to the “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman,” *Distant Star* privileges more depth than surface, as it allows the reader to learn more from the emotions and thoughts of the characters; however, never quite enough is gleaned, and at times the reader is indeed, as Lodge says of postmodern writing, forced to supply the “emotional and moral outrage that are missing from the text” (69) due to a lack of explanation or reaction from the characters. The scholar Choi notices that in the short story the photographic exhibition appears but does not explain what the photos are about, whereas in *Distant star* we know what the photos are about and “reading the description of the non-dramatized visual representation of violence, without any explanation, generates a reaction that is both physical and ethical (Choi 33)²². One thing that is different in Bolaño’s writing compared to what is expected of postmodernists is poetic symbolism, Lodge explains that poetic devices were particularly used by modernists in an effort to explore the psychological depth of consciousness (61). Bolaño’s *Distant Star* is particularly highly allegorical in design which attest to the importance poetry had in his life. Bolaño first and foremost considered himself a poet and stated that the “best poetry of our time is written in prose” (Gutiérrez-Mouat 5). Bolaño’s abundant figurative language is present to some degree in “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman”, but it is featured heavily in *Distant Star*. One example of this is the photographic exhibit. In the short story, this is based on Curzio Zabaleta’s report, who in the novel is the renewed

²²Translated from: “leer la descripción de la representación visual no-dramatizada de la violencia, sin ninguna explicación, genera una reacción que es a la vez física y ética” (Choi 33).

character of Muñoz Cano. Where the short story reads: “Meanwhile there was hardly any talking in the hallway, as if it were a dentist’s or a nightmare’s waiting room. Ramírez Hoffman’s father made his way forward and went in” (Bolaño, *Nazi Literature* 192), the novel reads: “There was hardly any talking; it was like a dentist’s waiting room. But who, wonders Muñoz Cano, has ever seen dentist’s waiting rooms were the *rotten teeth* (sic) are standing in line? Wieder’s father broke the spell. He made his way forward politely, addressing each officer by name as he excused himself, then went into the room (Bolaño, *Distant Star* 87) [original emphasis]. This is a good example of phenomenological narrative; the description is highly suggestive of an uncomfortable environment most likely experienced by a reader when visiting the dentist, and it may help to understand the character’s inner thoughts and feelings better.

Although Bolaño reuses many lines from the short story, he makes *Distant Star* richer descriptively but also morally as he demonstrates a concerted effort in representing consciousness by the motif of the eyes, though this motif is not precisely to assess the poet/aviator as one may expect but rather the narrator. This is important because the eyes are symbols of conscience and truth and are also understood as windows to the soul: “a passage into consciousness to obtain higher knowledge” (Brown-Smith 231). The following are a few examples: “The building resembled a fossilized bird. For a moment I had the impression that Carlos Wieder’s eyes were watching me from every window” (Bolaño, *Distant Star* 142); “I felt that Wieder’s lifeless eyes were scrutinizing me, while the letters on the pages I was turning (perhaps too quickly) were no longer beetles but eyes, the eyes of Bruno Schulz, opening and closing, over and over, eyes pale as the sky...” (144). The moral judgment that in the short story is placed mainly onto the

actions of the poet/aviator is now expanded to the narrator, as it is obvious that he is experiencing moral anguish and guilt, possibly from helping Romero find the poet/aviator for money. To be precise, the word “eyes” appears only three times in the whole short story, whereas in the novel it appears up to three times only in one sentence, as shown in the example above. Additionally, in the novel Bolaño replaced a paragraph containing the word “eye” that casted direct attention onto the poet/aviator’s perverse acts for one that is less conspicuous. In the short story, the paragraph is about a poem titled “Photographer of Dead” that tells how his crimes are retained forever in “the photographer’s mechanical eye” (Bolaño, *Nazi Literature* 199). In the novel, the poem is now titled “The Pilot” and is about a “poet’s gaze, a new kind of love and an old Indian maid fleeing a house in terror” (103). This softens the direct association of death to the poet and his constant scrutinization and also demands a more attentive interpretation from its reader while preserving the integrity of the eye motif to examine the narrator. Bolaño’s intention is to elicit different ethical perspectives and the acknowledgment of everyone’s actions in the construction or destruction of their own moral fabric.

Bolaño’s interest in consciousness and its representation in writing is well documented in interviews collected in *Bolaño por sí mismo* and *Entre Paréntesis* as he talks about his work and that of other writers. Bolaño discusses these at length, focusing on the American writer Philip K. Dick, who has been influential in his work:

Dick, in *The Man in High Castle*, tell us, as would later be frequent in him, about how changeable reality can be and how changeable history can therefore be... Dick sometimes writes like a prisoner because really, ethically and aesthetically, he is a prisoner. Dick is the one who most effectively approaches, in *Ubik*, the consciousness or the pieces of consciousness of the human being and his staging, the coupling between

what is told and the structure of what is told, he is brighter than some experiments about the same phenomenon done by Pynchon or DeLillo. (Bolaño, *Entre paréntesis* 183)²³

In *Distant Star*, Bolaño develops a character who belongs to the Philip K. Dick Society and “who specialized in ‘secret messages in literature’ (Bolaño, *Distant Star* 101) and apparently helps Bibiano in trying to find the poet/aviator abroad. In the novel, this man’s “personal theology” and beliefs about good and evil are narrated in detail: “He explained the death of the innocent (and everything our minds refuse to accept) as the expression of chance set free” (102). In “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffaman” this never takes place. Bolaño’s homage to Philip K. Dick in *Distant Star* with this character that was a “genuine expert on the works of Dick” (103) broadens the ontological discussion of the book and perspectives on people’s moral and immoral acts, and account for his interest on the depiction of consciousness in narrative.

Borges and Cortázar the most important influences in Bolaño’s work

Philip K. Dick is just one of the few writers who have influenced Bolaño’s work. Some critics have pointed out Jorge Luis Borges’ and, to a small degree, Julio Cortázar’s influence in the thematic thrust of Bolaño’s “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman” and *Distant Star*. However, none of the scholars who have particularly worked doing comparative analysis between “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman” and *Distant Star* have

²³ Translated from: “Dick, en *El hombre del castillo*, nos habla, como luego sería frecuente en él de lo alterable que puede ser la realidad y de lo alterable que, por lo tanto, puede ser la historia... Dick escribe, en ocasiones, como un prisionero porque realmente, ética y estéticamente, es un prisionero. Dick es quien de manera más efectiva, en *Ubik*, se acerca a la conciencia o a los retazos de conciencia del ser humano y su puesta en escena, el acoplamiento entre lo que se cuenta y la estructura de lo contado, es más brillante que algunos experimentos sobre el mismo fenómeno debidos a las plumas de Pynchon o DeLillo” (Bolaño, *Entre paréntesis* 183).

attributed any influence of Cortázar in Bolaño's rewriting of his novel. However, there are very important similarities between Cortázar and Bolaño's work, that have not been exposed or mentioned by any other scholars working independently in "The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman" and *Distant Star*, and his influence is significant and should not be ignored or relegated.

First, given that the themes of the double and of dictatorship and brutality in confluence with art mentioned in Bolaño's short story and novel were adopted earlier and extensively by Borges and Cortázar, many critics²⁴ have pointed out these connections and written extensively about these topics and also about these authors' fascination for offering intertextual references, as López-Calvo exemplifies here:

And like Borges and Cortázar, bookish references and intertextualities are common throughout his oeuvre including a peculiar emphasis on the trials and tribulations of being a dedicated writer, particularly an aspiring one. Some of his works are an uncensored examination of evil and its possible sources: many of his characters live in a violent Latin American world, where terror is sometimes part of daily (literary) life. Other times, both themes are related: he explores the relationship between violence/crime and literature/art. Not surprisingly, Bolaño once said on Chilean television that "crime is an art and sometimes art is a crime" (4)

The reference to Pierre Ménard in *Distant Star* prologue immediately stands out and suggest the influence of Borge's in the rewriting of the novel. Ménard is one of Jorge Luis Borge's characters, who in the short story "Pierre Ménard, Author of the *Quixote*" attempts to "rewrite" Miguel de Cervantes's novel *Don Quixote* (O. Zavala 83). Many

²⁴ To name them all would be a long task; as mentioned earlier there has been a saturation of criticism on Bolaño's work (Zavala 76-77).

readers know this, and in general, critics interpret the short story of Pierre Ménard as raising questions and discussions about the nature of authorship, appropriation, and interpretation (Mason 83). However, Borge's short story is also a conscious writing experiment and an important piece of criticism that contains important themes covered by Bolaño in *Distant Star* that go beyond the mere act of rewriting.

Bolaño offers with Ménard an important connection related to consciousness, interpretation, truth's subjectivity, and also a clever and humorous²⁵ (but obscure) clue about the difference between the short story and novel that have been ignored by critics. Bolaño does all of this while honoring Borges, a master of the metatextual techniques and known for his "erudite hoaxes" (Andrews, 124). Bolaño demonstrates his concerted effort to take care of every detail pertaining to the idea of consciousness when crafting *Distant Star*. The writing of "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*" was the result of a conscious experiment done by Jorge Luis Borges to determine if he was in fact still the same person or not. As told by Borges in his autobiographical essay published in *The Aleph and Other Stories*, during Christmas Eve of 1938 as Borges was rushing up the staircase, he hit and cut his head on the edge of a window. The accident was quite serious and for a couple of weeks it was debated if he would survive. At some point he had fevers, hallucinations, and lost his speech (242). Borges eventually recovered, but as he did he was concerned that he had lost his imagination and creativity. Therefore, Borges set to explore this in writing: "I decided I would try to write a story. The result was 'Pierre

²⁵ Bolaño embraced the ludic in literature and used black humor in his writing no matter how dense the topic. In *Bolaño por sí mismo*, he says: "Siempre escribo con sentido del humor. Negro, claro, pero humor al fin" (117). This translates to "I always write with a sense of humor. Black, of course, but humor nevertheless" (Bolaño, *Bolaño por sí mismo* 117).

Ménard, Author of the *Quixote*” (243). Roberto Bolaño certainly knew this story that attests to Borges’ dilemma about his own consciousness given that he had: “read all of Borges’s work, at least twice, and almost all the books that have been written about him” (Bolaño, *Bolaño por sí mismo* 77)²⁶. However, the parallels with the very nature of *Distant Star* do not stop there-- the character of Pierre Ménard is also a philosophical criticism about interpretation, the search for truth, and giving meaning to things.

Borges’ short story is narrated by one of Ménard’s friends, who at some point believes in recognizing Ménard’s style in a section of *Don Quixote* not actually written by him: “As I was leafing through Chapter XXVI (never attempted by Ménard) I recognized our friend’s style, could almost hear his voice in this marvelous phrase” (Borges, *Collected Fictions* 92), the narrator says. The irony increases when we know that the only fragmentary attempts of Ménard that were actually written by him are identical line by line to Cervantes’ original. The narrator of Borges’ short story when analyzing the phrase “truth, whose mother is history, rival of time...” comments “mere rhetorical praise of history” when reading the text written by Cervantes, but when reading the identical version written by Ménard, he comments that it was “staggering” and that “Menard, a contemporary of William James, defines history not as delving into reality but as the very fount of reality. Historical truth, for Menard, is not ‘what happened’; it is ‘what we believe happened’” (Borges, *Collected Fictions* 94) [original emphasis]. With this story, Borges raises concerns about authorship and also satirizes interpretation of literature while emphasizing truth’s subjectivity. Following a careful reading, one could understand

²⁶ Translated from: “He leído toda la obra de Borges, al menos dos veces, y casi todos los libros que se han escrito sobre él” (Bolaño, *Bolaño por sí mismo* 77).

that Bolaño's reference to Pierre Ménard does only relate to rewriting or authorship, which has been the main focus of critics' attention when analyzing Bolaño's novel. This metatextual technique (besides immediately framing Bolaño's book as a postmodern work) also raises important issues of historical consciousness and awareness and this has not been addressed by those studying *Distant Star*, and it reflects Bolaño's careful attention in crafting every detail of his novel.

On one hand, the phrase that "historical truth is what *we believe* happened" that is at the core of Borge's story, may reflect Bolaño's concern and understanding of the historical consciousness of Chile, which is to this day fragmented. Socialists and capitalists argue about whether or not President Allende died during the Coup of 1973 by a self-inflicted shot to his head; for some he is a hero and for others a coward. Funkenstein tells us that people "naturally ascribe historical 'consciousness' and 'memory' to human collectives" (5), but for Bolaño those in power were not worth his time as they care little about anything and especially literature, and Bolaño is said to have grown tired of the empty promises of left and right (Bolaño, *Entre Paréntesis* 333-339).

On the other hand, the placement of Menard in his prologue reflects the careful job of reading and interpreting correctly in order to find the truth. In Bolaño's short story and novel, his narrators engage in an important hermeneutic task. They carefully analyze many literary texts in order to find the real poet/aviator among hundreds of pages, and as they do this they see the influence of other writers in different texts until the narrators finally discern the poet/aviator's writing from that of others. Likewise, Bolaño expects a careful reading from his readers so that they also discern the truth behind his writing and his characters and also about those influencing the rewriting of his work. Like the

narrator of Borges' short story, who supposedly says he recognized M nard's style in a section he "never attempted", many critics and readers recognized Borge's influence in Bola o's novel. The irony there is that Borges never wrote novels or attempted to do so. Therefore, by placing the figure of Pierre M nard in his prologue, Bola o is pranking and fooling his audience and playing a "Gestalt" trick on us.

Bola o used *Ma gestalt-th rapie* in *Distant Start* to connect the digressing stories of Stein, Soto and Lorenzo, all of whom the narrator in the novel surmises could only have in common the fact of being Chilean and possibly that all three read *Ma gestalt-th rapie* by Frederick Perls, a German psychiatrist who escaped Nazi Germany (Bola o 85). Their stories expand Bola o's original short story, consolidating it into a robust novel, and in a way "draw connections between Chile and Nazi Germany" (Lynd 182), enhancing the theme of fascism present in his work and likewise bringing up the psychology of perception. Gestalt therapy is "a humanistic method that takes a holistic approach to human experience by stressing individual responsibility and awareness of present needs. According to this psychology of perception, when organisms are confronted with a set of elements, they perceive a whole pattern or configuration, rather than bits and pieces, against a background" (Encyclopedia Britannica Online). In other words, Gestalt therapy is highly related to consciousness, to establishing connections. Anything a person's awareness is focused on, at any given moment, becomes the "gestalt figure", the main figure seen in the foreground. Readers engaged in a careful reading, and that know Cort azar's and Borges' work as well as Bola o did, may notice that Bola o's words in the same prologue: "*Arturo would have preferred a longer story that, rather than mirror or explode others, would be, in itself, a mirror and an explosion*" (Bola o,

Distant Star 1) [original emphasis] evoke Cortázar words: “a story is significant when it breaks its own limits with that explosion of spiritual energy that sharply illuminates something that goes far beyond the small and sometimes miserable anecdote that it tells” (Cortázar, “Algunos aspectos” 5)²⁷. These words are clear evidence of Cortázar’s influence. They get lost and diffused in the prologue, but if readers direct their attention and awareness away from the figure of Ménard and onto them, they will see that in spite of the thematic and metatextual import of Borges, Bolaño’s novelistic development takes a very different creative and structural path, one advocated and explored only by Cortázar and not Borges, who never wrote a novel in his life (despite that his character, Ménard, did). In other words, Borges is the foreground figure in Bolaño’s prologue while Cortázar is the background figure for the entire novel but is up to the reader to discover that.

The fact that many scholars guided by Bolaño’s reference to the “ghost of Pierre Ménard” have ignored many other clues in the same prologue and other parts of the book also proves the point that truth and interpretation are subjective and guided many times by what is placed in the forefront of our attention. The figure of Pierre Ménard placed deliberately in the prologue represents Borges and will make many aware of him while they neglect to focus on the “background” that has the structural influence of Cortázar. Julio Cortázar advocated for a “radical and daring verbal inventiveness, which can throw open the conscious and subconscious mind like a strange and indescribable yeast that expands and nourishes our moral and mental power” (Cortázar, *Literature Class* 268) and

²⁷Translated from: “Un cuento es significativo cuando quiebra sus propios límites con esa explosión de energía espiritual que ilumina bruscamente algo que va mucho más allá de la pequeña y a veces miserable anécdota que cuenta” (Cortázar, “Algunos aspectos”, 5).

in *Distant Star* Bolaño does exactly this by expanding “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman” into a novel using some of Cortázar’s techniques. In *Literature Class*, Cortázar documents that his short story became a novel because he needed to explore something that was troubling him, and he does this by playing with the possibilities of language, by providing the characters in his novel with voice to express more frankly their preoccupations, moral dilemmas and doubts, by a careful dynamic of semantics that involves the reader. Creating what Cortázar calls the “reader accomplice” (178-186) or “lector cómplice” in Spanish, this is a concept introduced in *Hopschtoch*, and the genesis of this concept “is the discovery of others, the other as a human being, which is reflected in the story ‘The Pursuer’” (Fernández 57).

Bolaño, who considered Borges one of the best humorous Latin writers and knew well his bibliography and opinions pertaining to literary matters, mentioned having read all of Borges’ works twice (*Bolaño por sí mismo* 77) and uses the figure of Ménard as an homage to Borges’ metatextual and literary erudition and humor. The reader should not forget that Borges loved reading novels and equality loved citing novelists and novels, real and fictional in his work, but overall Borges enjoyed polemicizing things in much the same way as Bolaño. For example, Borges publicly admitted on various occasions the antipathy he felt for the length of the novel as an exercise in writing and that he had no interest or capacity for writing one. The following interview of Borges by Cesar Fernandez Retamar for *Mundo Nuevo* in 1967 may help to shed light onto this matter following Bolaño’s interpretation of Borge’s response. When Borges was asked “Ending the theme of genres, have you never thought or dreamed of writing a novel and not a story?” He briefly replied “Never” (L. Zavala 48). When the interviewer inquired why,

Borges gave his usual answer, that he preferred the short story because it focuses on the essential and that novels need a lot more. Of course, he answered with the wittiness that characterized him and that Bolaño understood well: “Because I couldn't do it. I am lazy. In a novel you need a lot of rubbish, it is natural. If there is already too much rubbish in three of my pages, in three hundred there would be nothing but rubbish... Furthermore, the novel is a genre that could pass, it will undoubtedly pass; I don't think the short story will pass” (L. Zavala 47-48)²⁸. Borges' answer caused confusion and many misinterpretations, even after his death, but Bolaño's explanation for Borges' response demonstrates the careful analysis words should receive and brings to full circle the connection to the issue of genres (their differences and similarities) and of course the implications of the interpretation of words:

And saying that the story could survive the novel is also a joke. Borges knew, better than anyone, that the novel and the story are two Siamese twins. One big and the other small, with different brains and separate souls, but united and probably sharing the same liver or the same heart, which implies that the death of one follows the death of the other (Bolaño, *Bolaño por sí mismo* 77).²⁹

²⁸Translated from: “Porque no podría hacerlo. Soy un haragán. Una novela necesitas muchos ripios, es natural. Si ya hay demasiados ripios en tres de mis páginas, en trescientas no habría otra cosa más que ripios... Además la novela es un género que puede pasar, es indudable que pasará; el cuento no creo que pase” (Zavala L, *Poéticas*, 47-48).

²⁹Translated from: Y decir que el cuento podía sobrevivir a la novela también es una broma. Borges sabía, mejor que nadie, que la novela y el cuento son dos hermanos siameses. Uno grande y el otro pequeño, con cerebros distintos y almas separadas, pero unidos y probablemente compartiendo el mismo hígado o el mismo corazón, lo que entraña que a la muerte de uno sigue la muerte del otro (Bolaño, *Bolaño por sí mismo* 79)

In Bolaños' novel, when the narrator is close to Wieder, he identifies himself for a brief moment as his Siamese twin. This never occurs in the short story.³⁰ The use of the word *Siamese* in *Distant Star*, besides the narrator's awareness of his moral identification with the aviator that will be explained in more detail later, brings to mind the allegory Bolaño uses for the short story and the novel. The reader could interpret this as an implicit acknowledgment from the narrator that Wieder, a name that means "'one more,' 'again,' 'a second time'" (Bolaño, *Distant Star* 40) has come again from the short story. In this respect, the poet/aviator is the same in the short story and in the novel; he is renamed but there is no change or moral growth in him whereas the narrator of the novel has evolved. This represents a growth in consciousness in Bolaño's novel, which is even more obvious when considering that the narrators in both narratives say the exact same words just after seeing the poet/aviator at the bar: "He seemed adult. But he wasn't adult. I knew that straight away". (Bolaño, *Nazi Literature* 202 and *Distant Star* 145). In Bolaño's rewriting, this subtle change in identifying himself with Wieder demonstrates that only with time and self-reflection are some people able to eventually grow and learn from their mistakes and to be more conscious of who they truly are. In *Distant Star*, the relationship between the self and the other, the interpersonal sense of consciousness, elicits ethical questions that cannot be ignored, particularly if one has already read the short story.

³⁰ Difference in narratives: "Then Ramirez Hoffman came in and sat down by the front windows, three tables away. He had aged" (Bolaño, *Nazi Literature* 202) / "Then Carlos Wieder came in and sat down by the front window, three tables away. For a nauseating moment I could see myself almost joined to him, like a vile Siamese twin, looking over his shoulder" (Bolaño, *Distant Star* 144).

The scholar Rory O'Bryen, among others, in his essay "Writing with the Ghost of Pierre Menard: Authorship, Responsibility, and Justice in Roberto Bolaño's *Distant Star*" notes how the introduction of *Distant Star* resembles "'Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius' in *Ficciones*" and that the nature of most of the stories in *Nazi Literature in the Americas* is similar to Borges' *A Universal History of Iniquity* (López Calvo 17-18). However, some Latin American scholars have indicated that while the resemblance to Borges is merely thematic, plot wise *Distant Star* is more aligned with Cortázar's short story "Apocalipsis de Solentiname" than to any of Borge's stories. Edmundo Paz Soldán writes about this in the introduction to *Bolaño Salvaje*: "It is worth stopping at Cortázar's story to understand what is happening in Roberto Bolaño's work" (13). However, Paz Soldán does not discuss Bolaño's short story. Also, the scholar Nieves Vázquez Recio in her book *En el réves* studies and analyzes Cortázar's influence on the overall work of Bolaño and explains the similarities in the plots of "Apocalipsis de Solentiname" and *Distant Star*, in which both authors use scenes with photographs to expose "the terrible evidence of torture" (77)³¹. Vázquez Recio never explores the writing of Bolaño's short story; nonetheless, she warns early on in her book that sometimes these subtle connections and intertextual relationships often depend on the reader's knowledge of both authors and the possible associations the reader could make (37).

On the other hand, Horacio Simunovic Díaz, without making any reference or association to Cortázar, defines *Distant Star* as an "always open and heterogeneous novel" that could be labeled as a "detective novel" but also warns us that "is one of multiple possibilities" (10). Simunovic Díaz makes an in-depth analysis of *Distant Star*'s

³¹ Translated from: "las terribles pruebas de la tortura" (*Vázquez-Recio 77*)

structure by demonstrating that the novel has many layers and offers multiple alternative readings (11) and that there is a narrative consciousness purposefully present in organizing the material (15)³². These structural similarities bring to mind Julio Cortázar's *Rayuela* (1963), which is a highly structured, experimental, and playful novel. Lopez-Calvo mentions a thematic similarity between most of Bolaño's books and *Hopscotch* yet not a structural one: "Like Julio Cortázar's 1963 novel *Rayuela* (*Hopscotch*), different types of both successful and aspiring, marginal writers and intellectuals populate Bolaño's fiction" (4). Besides these thematic similarities and the similarities to Cortázar's "Apocalipsis de Solentiname", *Distant Star* is too a degree structurally interactive like Cortázar's *Hopscotch* as it encompasses three independent subplots within the main story line that contains the stories of Stein, Soto, and Petra. These are in chapters four and five and the reader could skip them and continue to the main story when the narrator says "But let us return to the beginning, to Carlos Wieder..." (Bolaño, *Distant Star* 77) in chapter 6, demonstrating that *Distant Star* offers alternative readings but also demands the cognitive and moral input of the reader, who may come up with their own second readings based on their interpretation. In this respect, no critic has alluded to this similarly. Critics only started associating both writers and noticing Cortázar's influence on Bolaño's structure after *The Savage Detectives* (1998) acquired some success: "Many critics and some writers -such as Jorge Edwards- have related the writing of Roberto Bolaño with that of Julio Cortázar; the kinship, particularly noted after the double award and subsequent overwhelming success of *The Savage Detectives* -with its expansive

³² Translated and paraphrased from: "siempre abierta y heterogénea... novela como policial... es sólo una de múltiples posibilidades" ... "lecturas simultaneas" "la conciencia narrativa que organiza el material narrativo" (Simunovic Díaz 10-15)

reading destiny similar to that of *Rayuela*” (López-Badano 137)³³. According to Andrews, Bolaño created an interconnected diegetic continuity, not in all his oeuvre and from the beginning as Bolaño has proposed, but “in 1995, when he had the idea of rewriting the final chapter of *Nazi Literature in the Americas*” (43). Naming Arturo B. in *Distant Star*’s prologue, which is one of the main characters in *The Savage Detectives*, demonstrates that Bolaño was already planning his narrative following in the steps of *Hopscotch*, where the protagonist, Horacio Oliveira, is known for being always searching for something, as Arturo B. always is. Oliveira, at one moment says “Searching was my trait”³⁴ (Cortázar, *Rayuela* 15).

Distant Star may not be as expansive as *Hopscotch*, but it is to a degree structurally similar and cognitively and morally demanding. Yet, what is truly significant and remarkable is that before Julio Cortázar wrote *Hopscotch* he had written the short story “The Pursuer”, which is essentially the prototype of his 1963 novel *Hopscotch*. In a sense, Bolaño did exactly the same with “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman” and *Distant Star*; additionally, these stories have writers as protagonists who also migrate to Europe and are questioning things and searching for something. Cortázar commented about his rewriting in lectures and this is his account in *Literature Class*:

Around the year 1956, I wrote “The Pursuer” and I didn’t realize it, I couldn’t at that moment – but what I was writing was a sketch of what would become *Hopscotch*. One critic (I think Ángel Rama) called “The Pursuer” a “little hopscotch” (“rayuelita”); a “little hopscotch” he called it and he is completely right, because later, in retrospect, when I finished

³³ Vázquez Recio comes to a similar conclusion alluding to Vila-Matas’ essay comparing *The Savage Detectives* to Cortázar’s *Hopscotch* (11).

³⁴ Translated from: “Buscar era mi signo” (Cortázar, *Rayuela* 15).

writing *Hopscotch*, I realized that the “The Pursuer” already contained the outlines of a series of concerns, searches, experiments, which in *Hopscotch* found a wider and more free-flowing path. In fact, you can make a comparison between the axes of the two texts: the main characters. The character in “The Pursuer,” Johnny Carter, is a man consumed by the kinds of anxieties and concerns that will later belong to Horacio Oliviera, the character in *Hopscotch*. In that sense, “The Pursuer,” which I managed to finish at that time, was the first stab at the question, the issues, I was exploring through that character (178).

Additionally, when referring to his characters in *Hopschotch*, Cortázar affirms that “each one of them reflected a moment of my own experience: different perspectives on the life of an Argentine in France” (*Literature Class* 179). Like Cortázar, Bolaño also offers important perspectives on his life in Chile and in Spanish in his short story. In *Distant Star*, the circumstances of living in Chile and abroad are explored at length also using “compelling biographical reference” (Lynd 182), and in his novel, like Cortázar, Bolaño also mentions part of his experience in France and uses a secondary character, Diego Soto, who ended up in exile, to further explore the topic of the life of an expatriate.

In the case of Roberto Bolaño’s rewriting, it appears that the need for expanding the short story into a novel was a conscious decision given that it only took him eight months to publish *Distant Star* and because in “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman” there are hints in his narrative that there was more to be told but that this information was not pertinent at the moment, such as: “Later on Martin García was killed too, but that is an entirely different story” (Bolaño, *Nazi Literature* 183). In *Distant Star*, Bolaño tells the “entire different story” of García, who in the novel is called Diego Soto. This is not to ignore that in Bolaño’s case the rewriting could have also been momentarily an unconscious decision; although, what matters is that for Bolaño, like Cortázar, there were

a series of concerns, quests and literary experiments that required a wider and elastic medium to allow his main character, and himself, to continue exploring important matters, as Bolaño expresses in *Distant Star*'s prologue.

Given that Cortázar and Borges were among Bolaño's favorite writers, it is hard to believe that these resemblances are just coincidental. Bolaño is said to have read all of Borges's works and most books written about him (Bolaño, *Bolaño por sí mismo* 77); therefore, most likely he did know about Cortázar's rewriting of his short story into a novel. There are not interviews or explicit information that states this; however, Bolaño read Cortázar's "The Pursuer" and *Rayuela* according to the accounts he gives in *Entre Parentesis*. In an interview there, he called Cortázar the most ambitious and seminal writer and added: "My generation, needless to say, fell in love with *Hopscotch*, because that was what was fair and necessary and what saved us" (293). Bolaño refers to "The Pursuer" as a jewel of the 1950's (295).³⁵ Moreover, Bolaño said: "Cortázar is the best" (24) and he attested to his versatility saying that Cortázar wrote "original books", "perfect short stories" and "total novels" (25)³⁶.

Bolaño's rewriting of his short story into a novel echoes Cortázar's deed that took him to expand "The Pursuer" into *Hopscotch*, and like Cortázar, Bolaño is concerned with searching for truth and understanding the same whole process better. Bolaño uses similar techniques used by Cortázar and mentioned by him in many essays, lectures and compiled in *Literature Class* to engage his readers and also creates a new female

³⁵ Translated from: "Mi generación, de más está decirlo, se enamoró de Rayuela, porque eso era lo justo y lo necesario y lo que nos salvaba (Bolaño, *Entre paréntesis* 293).

³⁶ Translated and Paraphrased from: "Está Cortázar que es el mejor" & "libros originales...novelas totales... y cuentos perfectos, como Cortázar" (24-25).

character that in a way serves to question the narrator and other characters and to add perspective to the story. In Bolaño's *Distant Star*, this character is Marta Posadas, in Cortázar's novel it is Maga, of whom he says: "it seems to me that Maga is the personification of Horacio Oliveira's consciousness... Intuitively [she] sees much better than he does" (204). Bolaño's character, Marta Posadas, serves a similar purpose, and she also seems highly intuitive. Marta is a complex character that forces the reader to question many things taking place in *Distant Star*, and in the next chapter, this will be analyzed in detail.

Chapter IV

Comparative Analysis of the Expansion of Consciousness in Bolaño's works

In much the same way that Julio Cortázar transformed “The Pursuer” into his famous novel *Hopscotch* in order to expand a “line of personal exploration that filled [him] with anguish, that troubled [him]” (Cortázar, *Literature Class* 182), Bolaño, not having fulfilled his ontological quest with “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman,” also transitioned from the contained genre of the short story into the flexible genre of the novel in order to more meticulously and seriously explore the violence and uncertainty during and after the 1973 Chilean Coup d'État. In *Distant Star*, Bolaño examines the same human dilemmas to their ultimate consequences with more complex and developed characters who speak their minds and truly models the dynamic structures of human consciousness. Bolaño also crafts in his novel a critique of reality and history through linguistic games and requires a “lector cómplice” like Cortázar did in *Hopscotch*, one capable of reading the subtle clues and being able to engage in their own quests and conclusions. In *Distant Star*, the reader comes to know consciousness in the sense of “awareness” and most importantly in the sense of “moral” discourse, as Bolaño creates a process of gradual discovery not only of the mystery but also of ourselves. This is only feasible, as Cortázar explained in his lectures, by carefully expanding the narrative, and therefore the consciousness, in one's work.

One particular limitation in “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman” is that, although some female characters briefly appear in the narrative, a true female voice or point of view is never present. The Venegas twin sisters, whom Ramírez Hoffman kills, are the most relevant, and they are not fully developed. They lack any depth and fail to effectively demonstrate what it meant to be a woman, and at that, a Chilean woman, in the 1970’s. The most detailed description of them is limited to the fact that they were talented writers, “stars of the workshop”, “seventeen- or perhaps eighteen-year-old poets from Nacimiento, who were studying sociology and psychology” (Bolaño, *Nazi Literature* 179). María and Magdalena Venegas appear as decorative or utilitarian elements with the role of fulfilling part of the main plot by dying at the hands of someone they considered their friend. Besides them, the short story briefly mentions other tertiary female characters. However, in *Distant Star* there is a significant change pertaining to the role and representation of women and their interactions with their male counterparts as Bolaño develops the twin sisters into more complex characters. More importantly, he fully introduces new female characters, Amalia Maluenda, Marta Posadas, and Joanna Silvestri in the main story line, thus giving real voices to women, and their perspectives provide a new female consciousness in the narrative. They also help to better understand their male counterparts and offer alternative readings of the story. Cortázar did something similar in *Hopscotch* with the inclusion of Talita and La Maga, who do not appear in his short story, allowing for more intricate dynamics in the novel³⁷. By including new female characters with truly rich and complex personalities in *Distant Star*, Bolaño better

³⁷ For more on this see: Cortázar, et al. *Literature Class* (Six and Seventh Class) and Yovanovich, Gordana. “The Role of Women in Julio Cortázar's *Rayuela*.”

equipped his narrative to develop the line of exploration he started in “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman” but that was never able to be “in itself, a mirror and an explosion” (Bolaño, *Distant Star* 1).

Besides these new female characters, Bolaño refurbished the characters of Juan Cherniakovski into Juan Stein, Martín García into Diego Soto, and added the new character of Lorenzo/Petra, who the narrator surmises have perhaps read *Ma gestalt-thérapie*. Bolaño’s reference to “Gestalt” may be good to reference again Nazism, as the narrator explains the author Frederick Perls escaped Nazi Germany, but it also demonstrates Bolaño’s interest in showcasing the implications of humans’ consciousness and awareness, as Gestalt theory has made important contributions to the study of perception and social psychology (Rock & Palmer 84). Kahlil Chaar Pérez points out that these poets represent an imaginary collective (662) and through them Bolaño dramatizes similar struggles. Therefore, is relevant that Bolaño group them together. Although these characters help Bolaño’s expansion and exploration of important ontological matters and in constructing a robust novel that invites deep reflection and attention to consciousness, their stories work more in a vacuum as they are highly digressive from the main story line and told separately in chapters four and five; therefore, the characters of Amanda Maluenda and particularly that of Marta Posadas will be analyzed here to demonstrate how Bolaño carefully crafted the expansion of consciousness in *Distant Star* compared to “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman” .

First, the character of Amalia Maluenda, the twin’s maid at their house in Nacimiento, which doesn’t exist in the short story, fulfills an important role because she serves as the only witness to the crime and goes to court to testify against Wieder. By

analyzing the narrative techniques Bolaño uses to render her character and testimony, which models the dynamic structure of consciousness, it is possible to see how Bolaño achieves an expansion of consciousness and conscience. The narrator tells us about Maluenda's appearance in court toward the end of the book, in chapter seven. Maluenda's testimony is done in an allegorical way and mixes languages given that "every second word was in Mapuche" (110), which denotes that she is engaged in a process of thinking aloud. Maluenda's struggle to speak in Spanish serves to demonstrate the implications of language in the construction and reconstruction of thoughts and memories in the shaping of her testimony and the weight of her first language on her thought process. "Maluenda's testimony in court is complicated not only by the challenge that speaking Spanish poses, but also by the collective trauma she traces back" (Di Stefano 469). Indeed, Maluenda is more than a witness to Wieder's crime—her testimony also voices the collective consciousness of the indigenous Mapuche in Chile and of women in a history of recurrent (cyclical) abuse and oppression, and this addresses the implication of meaning and the perception of past personal and historical events in the construction of narrative discourse:

Her account of the events was swept up in a cyclical, epic poem, which as her dumfounded listeners came to realize, was partly her story, the story of the Chilean citizen Amalia Maluenda, who used to work for the Garmendias, and partly the story of the Chilean nation. A story of terror. When she spoke of Wieder, she seemed to be talking about several different people: an invader, a lover, a warrior, a demon. When she spoke of the Garmendia sisters, she likened them to the air, to garden plants or puppies. (111)

Maluenda's testimony, which comes late in the book after the main plot digressed onto the stories of three other characters, embodies intersubjective dimensions. Maluenda speaks from her personal experience and from a collective experience. Her description of Wieder is allegorical and can be understood in different ways to different readers. One interpretation is that for her, Wieder represents the many faces danger can take against minorities, particularly women, while her representation of the twins could imply that that they were innocent and pure or simple helpless victims. More importantly, during her testimony when she remembers the night of the crime, she speaks of a black night where "she had heard the music of the Spanish", a statement that no one understood in court. "When asked to clarify what she meant by 'the music of the Spanish,' she replied sheer, pure rage" (111). Maluenda's description is once again a subjective mental representation, a small window into her consciousness. In consciousness studies, these private manifestations are referred to as "qualia," and are important in the understanding of consciousness. They denote distinctive phenomenological characteristics, impossible to describe in precision to others, due to the "subjective qualities of any sensory experience" (Blackmore 266 & Lodge 8), but humans try to explain them to others finding common denominators through language. The reader is forced to consider the socio-historical implication of the Spanish domination over the Mapuche and also has to remember the mainly conjectural story the narrator offered about the night of the murder very early in the book, when Ruiz-Tagle and the twins might have read poetry and played the guitar while Maluenda, sensing something odd, was "watching them from the shadows, not daring to come in" (Bolaño, *Distant Star* 21). As Santangelo explains of Bolaños' novels, and which is perfectly reflected in *Distant Star*: "the digressive

structure of his novels configures constellations of narrative fragments that act critically and reactivate the past, forcing the reader to a continuous relational effort against the ruins of the stories” (338)³⁸. One interpretation of her testimony could be that Wieder’s killing of the twin sisters after they played music and read poetry was just another reincarnation of the tragedies and brutalities disempowered minorities had endured by a few in power who enjoy the acts without remorse at the expense of those suffering.

Bolaño’s narrative structure and techniques with the figure of Maluenda, which are the use of emplotment as a mediating function, high use of figurative language, and the reference to repressed stories, represent accurately the human experience and the representation of time passing. By adding Maluenda’s testimony after the book digresses into other stories and carefully crafting her memories as a series of mentally disparate personal and historical events, which finally acquire meaning when Maluenda is asked to explain what she means, Bolaño successfully captures the essence of human consciousness and engages the reader in assigning possible meanings to her phenomenological experience, which the reader feels took place a long time ago. The French philosopher Paul Ricœur, who was concerned with hermeneutics and phenomenology, explains in *Time and Narrative I* that “the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the reader” (77) bridges together the act of narrating and the act of reading which are important in the mimesis process to a certain degree and that the decoding of what is “communicated” from what is “referenced” by the writer is shaped

³⁸ Translated from: “La estructura digresiva de sus novelas configura constelaciones de fragmentos narrativos que actúan críticamente hace el pasado que reactivan, obligando al lector a un continuo esfuerzo relacional frente a las ruinas de las historias” (Santangelo, 338).

according to each reader's "receptive capacity" (77) and self-understanding. In *Distant Star*, Maluenda's experience that encompasses pieces of Chile's history along with her personal story engage in a narrative configuration that allows for a reconfiguration of temporal experience unlike that in "The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman", and this is evident when readers need to interpret Maluenda's testimony by going beyond what was said in the pages of the book and drawing from historical information and their own experiences. In "The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman", the possibilities to represent a complex human experience and to play with interpretation are much more limited than in *Distant Star*, and the reader does not need to become in a sense a true "*lector complice*". In Bolaño's short story, the examination and implications of violence are limited and clear in a single linear narrative plot that does not require much background knowledge, while in *Distant Star* "the story of Amalia Maluenda is a minor digression, but it also serves to sketch a historical and political hinterland that is absent from 'Carlos Ramirez Hoffman.'" Bolaño's explosive expansion lengthens the stories retold but also, by opening them out, broadens their significance" (Andrews 40). For those who have previous knowledge of the Mapuche, Maluenda's narrative is more meaningful and serves as a subtle and almost poetic criticism to remind people that others had and have cyclically been witnesses to, if not victims of, abuses and hence expands on the implications of moral responsibility that go beyond political affiliations or gender.

While the significance of Maluenda's character in the expansion of consciousness is evident towards the end of the book, that of Marta Posadas is at the beginning, and it is much more complex, forcing the reader to do meticulously close readings in order to grasp all of its possible meanings. Marta Posadas, who like Maluenda shares an intuitive

quality that makes her suspicious of Ruiz-Tagle before anybody else notices something is amiss, is crucial in the expansion of consciousness and conscience in the novel. Posada is a complex character who plays various roles. First, through Marta, the reader is made aware of what was expected of most young women in Chile during the seventies, and she sheds light on some more prejudices that particularly affected them. Posadas is shown in a role as a friend, a poet, a student, and an intellectual; therefore, her character is important in the mimesis of female consciousness. Moreover, through this new character, the reader is allowed to glimpse new aspects of the personality and psychological profile of the two main characters: the narrator and the poet/aviator. In particular, she helps us understand some of Ruiz-Tagle's motivations; a close analysis of their relationship establishes significant connections as well to fascist ideologies, a pervasive theme in Bolaño's oeuvre.

Once "La Gorda Posadas" or "Fat Martha" is introduced in *Distant Star* in chapter one, the reader soon learns that Marta is a bit different than the rest of characters, just like Ruiz-Tagle. She is the "only medical student who attended the workshop in the Faculty of Medicine: a very white, very fat, very sad girl who wrote prose poems" (11). Besides Ruiz-Tagle, who "was an autodidact" (4), all others at the workshop study social sciences or humanities, careers predominately associated with left-wing sympathizers. Marta particularly contrasts with the young twin poet sisters who are "tall, slim, with dark skin and black hair, very long black hair- it was the fashion back then" (5). For the reader, it is obvious that Marta is unhappy due to her prominent weight, which has earned her her nickname, and this reflects and examines another prejudice in Chilean society not articulated in the short story, that against fat people, with all the negative implications

this means, particularly for young women in a male-centric society that favors slender female bodies.

Although Marta in a sense is relegated in society for the stigma of being overweight, and even though Alberto Ruiz-Tagle is in a romantic relationship with one of the twin sisters and is distant and hermetic to others, particularly to all other male poets (11), both characters develop a close friendship that sheds light on important information concerning other characters, therefore imitating the complexity of interactions and human psychology. For example, when one day Marta says that Alberto “is going to revolutionize Chilean poetry” (14), this calls the attention of the narrator and Bibiano who immediately inquires “Have you actually read his stuff, or is this just a feeling³⁹ you have?” (14). Marta does not provide a direct or concrete answer, saying she went to Alberto’s flat unexpectedly and derails the conversation:

Alberto opened up to me, said Fat Marta. I can’t imagine Ruiz-Tagle opening up to anybody, said Bibiano. Everyone thinks he’s in love with Veronica Garmendia, said Marta, but it’s not true. Is that what he told you? asked Bibiano. Fat Marta smiled to herself, as if she were in possession of a great secret. At this point I remember thinking, I don’t like this woman. She might be talented, she might be intelligent, she’s on the right side, but I don’t like her. No, he didn’t tell me that, said Marta, although he tells me things he doesn’t tell anyone else. (Bolaño 14)

This creates a sense of momentarily distrust and disbelief in the narrator and Bibiano while at the same time it gradually helps the reader to understand better the antagonistic character of Ruiz-Tagle. Marta eventually says that Ruiz-Tagle talks to her about his new

³⁹ This alludes to the “feminine intuition” / “la intuición femenina”. The Spanish original uses the word “intuition” rather than feeling: “Pero tú has leído algo, o estás hablando de una intuición que tienes?” (Bolaño, *Estrella distante* 24).

poem, the one “he’s going to *perform*” (15) [original emphasis], but that she believes his poems are “not *his* poems” (15) [original emphasis]. The narrator and Bibiano seem to doubt and question Marta in her assertion that those are not Ruiz-Tagle’s poems; at the same time, Marta seems to show anguish in the truth she is uncovering: “And how do you know? I asked with mounting irritation. Because I can read people, she said sadly looking at the empty street” (15). Her answer can be understood as a form of intuition that Ruiz-Tagle was faking or hiding something, and her sadness while she looks at an empty street foreshadows the disappearance of people and the tragedy yet to come in those same streets. At no point is the reader given more details of how or why Marta is so sure those are not Ruiz-Tagle’s poems, nor is there an explanation or questioning, by the narrator or Bibiano, of why she earlier said that Ruiz-Tagle was going to revolutionize Chilean poetry if she didn’t even believe he wrote those poems.

Likewise, the character of the narrator is expanded through his interactions with Marta, and the reader can perceive that he experiences complex emotion. The narrator perceives something particularly troubling in the medical student, even though he is not able to say exactly what it is. He is uncomfortable and eventually admits to thinking that Marta is conceited (15). However, and more importantly, in this passage the narrator and Bibiano, who constantly express their dislike and jealousy for Ruiz-Tagle because he had the affection of the twin sister, barely inquire or react to the comment that Ruiz-Tagle is not in love with Veronica, even though up to that point in the narrative the emotional component was strong with the narrator explaining how Bibiano liked Veronica and the narrator Angelica, but neither of the girls was in love with them or paid them much attention (10). Instead, both friends focus solely on the literature aspects of the

conversation, demonstrating their real extrinsic versus intrinsic motivations, questioning if Ruiz-Tagle indeed would have any impact as a writer: “Martita, he said [Bibiano] there are not many things I’m sure about, but one of them is that Ruiz-Tagle is not going to revolutionize Chilean poetry” (15). The narrator follows with a comment that may seem unrelated and that requires the reader’s knowledge of what it meant to be a young artist in Chile in the seventies and the socio-historical implications of ideological affiliations: “I don’t think he’s even a socialist. I added. Surprisingly, Marta agreed with me. No, he’s not, she said, her voice sounded even sadder” (15). This exchange more than dispels the reader’s notions about Ruiz-Tagle’s possible ideological inclination, demonstrates the immense hope and intimate relationship arts and politics had in Chile at that time, particularly for the collective consciousness of the socialist youth. It speaks of the interdependability of literature and the socialist cause, after all “this is the time of Allende, and literature is still inseparable from the romantic possibilities of individual and collective becoming” (Jelly-Shapiro 88), but it also foreshadows the drastic socio-political changes about to come and Ruiz-Tagle’s role in this. Bolaño’s capacity to offer a realistic exchange that is deeply rooted in psychological and socio-historical aspects is a good example of a narrative that offers a double reading that engages the reader’s consciousness, or as Cortázar explains “a second reading” that “is also included in the first, but the reader himself has to make the distention and establish the difference” (Cortázar, *Literature Class* 118).

Bolaño’s narratives in the novel omit a lot of logical details as he constantly directs them from one idea to another by intermingling memories, using direct and indirect speech, and at times presenting ambivalent information, forcing the readers to

make sense of things and arrive at their own conclusions, therefore requiring them to engage with their own knowledge and intuition and expand their imaginations and awareness of what might have happened and what may happen. This of course is possible for Bolaño only with the flexible form of the novel. In “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman”, these narrative techniques were not used as his fiction needed to move forward in its plot development, while at the same time be contained. In *Distant Star*, the opposite happens, and with Marta Posadas, Bolaño is also able to expand the complexity of his narrative and psychological aspects of his characters, offering a great depiction of the intricate system that is the human brain--one that does not think in a fixed, temporal way but that instead jumps from one idea to another and makes interesting connections and does not rely solely on information but also on intuition, or as Ortega and Gasset wrote: “The novel is one of the few fields that may still yield illustrious fruits... the material proper of the novel is imaginary psychology. Imaginary psychology advances in unison with scientific psychology and psychological intuition which is used in daily life” (McKeon 313).

As the narrative moves forward, the coup takes place and Ruiz-Tagle reappears as Wieder, flying over the skies of Chile. He also has his photo exhibit, which mostly features bodies of women (dead or dying). Among those are the female poets from the workshops, according to the witness, Muños Cano (Bolaño, *Distant Star* 88). Bolaño uses multiple techniques and subtle details, along with figurative speech, to help convey the chaos that Chile was living after the coup and the ethical and psychological implications for many involved. While this is used minimally in the prototype short story “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman”, in *Distant Star* these narrative techniques are abundant in

the form of colloquialisms, similes, allegories, intercalation of direct and indirect speech, games with temporal markers, and with careful attention to semantics and inflections, as his characters' word choices reveal. These are particularly obvious when Ruiz-Tagle confides more things to Marta Posadas after many people have disappeared after the coup: nothing that will particularly expose his murderous nature as Wieder the fascist poet/aviator, but enough information about the female poets to be disquieting to Marta and the two friends:

Alberto turned and looked at me with a big smile on his face. The game's up, Martita, he said. He was scaring me, so I told him to stop talking in riddles and lighten up. Stop being an asshole, will you? *Say* something for fuck's sake! I've never been so crude in my life, said Marta. He looked like a snake. No, like a pharaoh. He was just sitting there smiling and watching me, but it was as if he was moving round the empty flat. How could he be moving and sitting still at the same time? The Garmendia sisters are dead, he said. Carmen Villagrán too. I don't believe you, I said. You're trying to scare me, aren't you shithead? All the girls who wrote poetry are dead, he said. That's the truth, Martita, you better believe me. We were sitting on the ground. I in one corner and he in the middle of the living room. I was sure he was going to hit me. Any moment, I thought, he's going to jump on me and start beating me up. I came close to wetting my pants⁴⁰ (Bolaño, *Distant Star* 39-40) [Original emphasis].

⁴⁰ The original reads: "Alberto se giró y me miro con una gran sonrisa en la cara. Esto se acabó gordita, dijo. Entonces a mí me dio miedo y le dije que se dejara de enigmas y me contara algo más entretenido. Déjate de huevadas, conchaetumadre y respóndeme cuándo te estoy hablando. En mi vida había sido más vulgar dijo la Gorda. Alberto parecía una serpiente. No: un faraón egipcio. Sólo se sonrió y siguió mirándome, aunque por un momento tuve la impresión de que se movía por el apartamento vacío. ¿Pero cómo se podía mover si estaba quieto? Las Garmendia están muertas, dijo. La Villagrán también. No lo creo, dije. ¿Por qué van a estar muertas? ¿Me querís asustar huevón? Todas las poetisas están muertas, dijo. Ésa es la verdad, gordita, tú harías bien en creerme. Estamos sentados en el suelo yo en un rincón y él en el centro de living. Te

First, in the example above, if the reader does not do a close and attentive reading it is hard to discern if the person speaking is Marta, the narrator, or Alberto especially in the original Spanish version. The multiple intercalations of speech and changes in the temporal narrative that Bolaño uses prior to this paragraph create a sense of confusion that simulates the collective feeling many Chileans, particularly left-wingers, experienced right after the coup. This at the same time forces the reader to be conscious of who said what and when and to be aware of what is known and unknown to Bolaño's characters, as opposed to the reader. In fact, Bolaño so carefully crafts a narrative that simulates the feeling of disorder that this has been troublesome even for some Spanish-speaking critics, as Franklin Rodriguez explains in "Unsettledness and Doubling in Roberto Bolaño's *Estrella distante*": "Manzoni's remark [referring to Bibiano's philological madness] misses the fact that when Ruiz-Tagle confesses to Marta Posadas, the trio of poets are still unaware of the fact that Ruiz-Tagle is Wieder – even though we as readers already know. They can identify Ruiz-Tagle as a murderer but not as Wieder" (Rodriguez 210). Refining Rodriguez's observation, it is more accurate to say that the trio of poets can "suspect" Ruiz-Tagle as a murderer or "accomplice" for what he tells Marta Posadas right after the coup.

The issues of semantics, emphasis, and inflection are important for Bolaño, and they should be equally pertinent in a close reading and analysis of his novel in Spanish, but more so in any translation. The English version of the paragraph just discussed, for example, differs significantly from the Spanish original, and this can create

juro que pensé que me iba a pegar, que de repente, pillándome por sorpresa, me iba a empezar a dar de cachuchazos. Por un momento creí que me haría pipí ahí mismo." (Bolaño, *Estrella distante* 49).

misinterpretations or convey different implications from Bolaño's original intention. Doritt Cohn's *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes of Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* attests to the correspondence of different linguistic terms to particular states of consciousness and the importance of words in the study/construction of consciousness. Therefore, if a translation differs significantly from the original, the intended state of consciousness depicted by an author may be lost.

In the paragraph cited, Bolaño uses colloquial language, diminutives, and particular word choices and verbs that reflect different emotions and perceptions and that can serve to understand the characters' consciousness. While this is not a critique of the translation, it is important to note some important differences from the Spanish original while analyzing how each word choice matters in Bolaño's depiction of consciousness. For example, Marta Posadas, after hearing that the Garmendia sisters and "la Villagran" are dead, replies in Spanish: "No lo creo" which translates to "I don't believe it," placing the cognitive and psychological intention of disbelief in the things said not in the person who says it, whereas the translation reads "I don't believe you." That answer in Spanish would have been, "No te creo," which places the "disbelief" in the person and not in the thing said; changing the object pronoun significantly changes the implications of trust and hope in the conversation. In other words, Marta does not say she does not believe Ruiz-Tagle at that point, but rather that she does not believe the statement she just heard from him. On the other hand, his answer in Spanish is "Ésa es la verdad, gordita, tú harías bien en creerme" and reinforces that Marta's belief or disbelief should be placed on him not in the thing said. If Ruiz-Tagle would have wanted to place the intention on the thing said, just as Marta did, he would have said: "Ésa es la verdad, gordita, harías bien en

creerlo”. This paragraph is full of nuances pertaining to the psychological depiction Bolaño crafted in his original language and in the importance of semantics reflecting the gradual shift in Marta’s fear and trust response towards Ruiz-Tagle and in his own way of thinking. As Zofia Grzesiak explains in her essay about *Distant Star*, “we can assert that each of the words can constitute a key to the process of deciphering the possible meanings of the work” (67)⁴¹.

By doing a close analysis of the words used in this interaction with Marta Posadas, the reader can also understand what is lurking in those of Ruiz-Tagle. For example, in the Spanish original he refers to the female poets as “poetisas” (Bolaño, *Estrella distante* 49), which in English translates to “poetess”. Historically, this term in Spanish has been controversial, with some female poets considering it derogatory and preferring the word “poeta” instead, much like in English where the word has fallen out of use. David Foster explains in *The Writer's Reference Guide to Spanish*: “Although the feminine *poetisa* exists, the latter is now used pejoratively, while *la poeta* is the preferred neutral feminine form” (246). Therefore, by using this term, which in the translation appears as “all the girls who wrote poetry” which does not denote the same contempt, Ruiz-Tagle demonstrates dislike and disregard for these women. Julio Cortázar explains in *Literature Class* that “the writer plays with words, but plays seriously” and the writer chooses, rejects and combines elements in ways “he considers to be the most precise, the most fertile, a way that will have the greatest effect on the mind of the reader” (156). It is no coincidence that while Ruiz-Tagle refers to the women as “poetisas”, the narrator

⁴¹ Translated from: “podemos aseverar que cada una de las palabras puede constituir una clave para el proceso de desciframiento de los posibles significados de la obra” (Grzesiak 67).

regards them as *poetas* and refers to them as such: “Carmen era una buena poeta, aunque no tan buena como las hermanas Garmendia” (Bolaño, *Estrella distante* 21)⁴². This sharply contrasts both characters in the novel and allows the reader a better understanding of the character’s consciousness; Ruiz-Tagle saw the women as inferior and pseudo-writers while the narrator as talented writers and his equals. Bolaño, who besides being a fiction writer was a poet, understood the implication of using *poetisa* and how this would characterize Ruiz-Tagle’s ideas, feelings, and *self-expressions*. In psychology the term “*self-expression*” refers to the innate and unique traits a person possesses that are “viewed as authentic, spontaneous, and originate from within the actor” (Leary 154). Self-expressions are manifested in the way people talk, in their writing, and in their art; these are important aspects of conscious mental life but also take place in our dreams and both “reflect and participate in the project of self-creation” (Flanagan 48).

For Bolaño, self-expressions are important in both “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman” and *Distant Star* but are more prevalent and acquire more importance in the depiction of consciousness in the novel where he chooses each word with care. For example, Bolaño chooses his two main characters to be poets and poetry is one of the most intimate ways of writing where personal forms of expression are found. The detective Romero, who has traits of a psychologist, was not mistaken to say, in both the short story and the novel, that “to find a poet, he needed the help of another poet” (Bolaño, *Nazi Literature* 197 & *Distant Star* 197) to study texts that the poet/aviator may have written, obviously with the intent of finding him. The narrator in the short story

⁴² “Carmen was a good poet, although not as good as the Garmendia sisters” (Bolaño, *Distant Star* 11).

answers “in my opinion Ramírez Hoffman was a criminal, not a poet” (Bolaño, *Nazi Literature* 197), and the narrator in the novel echoes this: “in my opinion Carlos Wieder was a criminal, not a poet” (Bolaño, *Distant Star* 117). In summary, after studying and reading some poetry and texts, the narrator in the short story and the anonymous narrator in novel, identify the creator as the barbarian writer Jules Defoe: “I could see the shadow of Ramírez Hoffman. It was signed by a certain Jules Defoe...” (Bolaño, *Nazi Literature* 199) vs “something told me this particular champion of barbaric writing was Carlos Weider” (Bolaño, *Distant Star* 135). Even though the poet/aviator worked on constructing a desired identity and changed names and professions, his self-presentation was in peril under the scrutiny of the narrator and the detective who were in search of his “true-self” and were able to spot traces of his self-expression among hundreds of works and were finally able to track him down, attesting to the importance of hermeneutics, words, semantics and self-expressions in the construction and development of consciousness in Bolaño’s work. This part is similar in both narratives, but Bolaño delves further into the representation of consciousness when in *Distant Star* the narrator dreams Wieder and he end up clinging to pieces of wood in the ocean: “Wieder and I had been travelling in the *same boat*; he may have conspired to sink it, but I had done little or nothing to stop it going down” (122). This exposes the narrator’s fears and moral distress or “in addition to the feeling of being shipwrecked and lost, the dream also suggests a dark sense of guilt and impotence” (Lopez-Vicuña 160). The narrator’s dream is a form of self-expression, and as Flanagan writes in *Self Expressions: Mind, Morals and the Meaning of Life*: “Dreams sometimes express aspects of you” and they can help one in “self-exploration or deeper self-knowledge” (48), which is exactly what happens with the

narrator, not only with the dream but also when, towards the end of the novel, he recognizes Wieder as “a vile Siamese twin” (Bolaño, *Distant Star* 144) when he finally finds him at a bar. While both narrators in the short story and novel try to understand the violence that has happened since the coup, only the narrator in *Distant Star* expands the exploration of his own consciousness and conscience by reflecting on his own role in the historical progress and comparing himself to Wieder. This frightens the character, but it makes him become self-reflective like never before. In the novel “guilt and redemption are bonded together” (Gutierrez-Mout 79) while in the short story this “is missing from the original nucleus of the story, in which the narrator is only tangentially related to the criminal and devoid of any symbolic identification with him” (Gutierrez-Mout 80).

As the confession of Ruiz-Tagle to Marta moves forward, the reader is aware of Marta Posadas’ mindful perception of danger and how she starts believing more and more that Ruiz-Tagle might attack her. Much like Maluenda, she describes Ruiz-Tagle as having some sort of omniscient power, which in Posada’s case makes her perceive him as moving all over the apartment, even though he was sitting still. Bolaño describes both women’s states of anxiety and fear in subjective ways that share some overlapping characteristics. In Marta’s case, she expresses her terror first by alluding that Ruiz-Tagle was all over the place and later on more concretely with “I came close to wetting my pants” (Bolaño, *Distant Star* 40). After this, she tells her friends how she eventually found an excuse to leave Ruiz-Tagle’s apartment due to the uncomfortable situation.

The role of Marta then becomes more complex and puzzling as she discovers the double identity of the poet/aviator, something never addressed in the short story. In *Distant Star*, the narrative development and characterization allows an engaged reader to

understand the different conscious processes and moral dilemmas other characters may experience when she reveals that Ruiz-Tagle and Wieder are the same. Note that a part in the English translation fails to capture the nuances of the Spanish original:

Two days later Fat Marta rang Bibiano and told him that Alberto Ruiz-Tagle was indeed Carlos Wieder. She had recognized him from the photo published in *El Mercurio*. Which was hard to believe, as Bibiano pointed out to me some weeks or months later, since the image was so blurry it could have been almost anyone. What did she have to go on? Her sixth sense, if you ask me, said Bibiano. She says she can recognize Ruiz-Tagle by his posture. In any case, by that time, Ruiz-Tagle had disappeared for good and Wieder was all we had to give our wretched, empty days some meaning (Bolaño, *Distant Star* 42) [original emphasis].

The portion that fails to capture the nuances of the Spanish original:

... ¿En qué se basaba la Gorda para su identificación? En un séptimo sentido, me parece, dijo Bibiano, ella cree reconocer a Ruiz-Tagle por la *postura*. En cualquier caso, en ese tiempo Ruiz-Tagle había desaparecido para siempre y solo teníamos a Wieder para llenar de sentido nuestros días miserables. (Bolaño, *Estrella distante* 52) [original emphasis].

In the Spanish version, when the narrator asks what Marta Posadas had to go on in thinking that the blurry picture of Wieder in *El Mercurio*, a right-wing⁴³ newspaper, was Ruiz Tagle, Bibiano literally answers: in a “seventh sense” and there is an emphasizes on the word *posture*. The English translation says “in a sixth sense” and omits the original emphasis in the word *posture*, losing in translation the connotation in Bibiano’s answer in the original language. In Spanish, *el sexto sentido* (sixth sense) also alludes to the power of intuition; therefore, Bibiano’s remark is intentional. When analyzing the Spanish

⁴³ For implications of *El Mercurio* in 1973 Chilean Coup d'État see: Kornbluh, Peter. “The El Mercurio File.”

original, one may wonder if Bibiano is being ironic and implying that Marta is lying or knows more than she is telling. Attentive readers will have to rely on their own awareness to interpret this and may look for more clues by going back or moving forward in the reading. For example, before Marta tells them about her visit to Ruiz-Tagle, the narrator says: “He [Bibiano] had already heard the story and I had the impression that certain parts of it struck him as improbable” (38). Marta’s character brings about different dramatic components to the novel: first she creates an unnerving and uneasy feeling in the narrator and Bibiano when she tells them what Ruiz-Tagle confides in her; then she incites a sort of literary jealousy when she remarks he is going to revolutionize Chilean poetry; and finally we see what seems to be Bibiano’s skepticism about her intuitions. Her character is disconcerting; in retrospect, the narrator admits early on that “Fat Marta was the only one who glimpsed a part of what was lurking behind the façade” (12), and from this premise many readers may believe her. However, at this point an engaged reader may realize that even the unreliable narrator made similar remarks about Marta early on, bringing about possible ethical dilemmas of her involvement in all the disappearances, particularly because she is the only female poet that Ruiz-Tagle did not kill. In addition, she also “hadn’t been expelled from the university” (38) as Bibiano and the narrator had, among other things. These complex dynamics recreate perfectly in *Distant Star* the different degrees of awareness and moral distress real humans experience and force the reader to consider possibilities beyond those presented in the story. Like Cortázar Bolaño is implementing here the use of “intensely questioned language” that leads to “the reader accomplice” (Cortázar, *Literature Class* 193-194).

Unlike the narrator, Bibiano keeps looking for evidence, whereas the narrator is disengaged: “Bibiano followed the journey step by step. Personally, to tell the truth, I no longer cared much what Lieutenant Wieder did or did not do” (43). Bibiano eventually finds a photo “much clearer than the one in which Fat Marta had thought she recognized Ruiz-Tagle” (43) and shows it to the narrator. He notices a resemblance between Ruiz-Tagle and Wieder but declares “neither the photo nor Wieder’s declaration [about poetry] showed even a trace of the old Ruiz-Tagle” (43). Eventually, both friends finally confirm that Wieder is indeed Ruiz-Tagle when they watch him on TV: “(I couldn’t avoid seeing the program; there was no TV in Bibiano’s boarding house, so he came round to my place), and yes, Carlos Wieder *was* Ruiz Tagle” (45) [original emphasis]. His image on the black and white TV makes the narrator think that Wieder recalled not only the figure of Ruiz-Tagle but many more (46), echoing Maluenda’s testimony in court. The narrative in *Distant Star* opens the opportunity for many questions, ranging from complex to simple ones, such as how and why the narrator believed and credited Marta for uncovering Wieder’s double identity when he and Bibiano confirm it only days later on TV. Bolaño’s narrative logic underlines a contradiction between Bibiano’s and the narrator’s convictions pertaining to Marta’s discovery and demonstrate their different personalities, awareness and care for the situations and the people involved in them. The narrative tension is high in *Distant Star* by leaving many things unresolved, presenting questions to the reader and allowing for various interpretations, and this suspense engages the reader “in a largely subconscious manner” (Andrews 71) as well. The reader suspects whether Marta could be erring or not, and this is exactly how the genre of the novel, with all its elasticity and capabilities, helps Bolaño explore the human minds’

complexity and dynamics, allowing for an expansion of his characters' consciousness but also of his readers' who need to be engaged and aware of all the different circumstances at play. Bolaño achieves in *Distant Star* what Cortázar advocated: a "radical and daring verbal inventiveness, which can throw open the conscious and subconscious mind like a strange and indescribable yeast that expands and nourishes our moral and mental power" (*Literature Class* 268) On the other hand, in "The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman" none of these complex and puzzling uncertainties and questions ever takes place because from the very beginning it is a given that Stevenson and Hoffman are the same, and the characters are flatter and never engage in such intricate dynamics.

The figure of Marta particularly serves to dynamically project the reader's minds into various potential hypotheses of what is really going on in the novel. On one hand, she is the confidant to the poet/aviator and this in turn helps us understand his mind better, but at the same time she has seemed to like and fear Ruiz-Tagle since very early in the novel, if one reads it carefully. It is intriguing that she is the only female poet left alive, particularly when Ruiz-Tagle even killed the twin sister he was dating. Many critics and scholars have attributed Wieder's murderous rage against women to his fascist tendencies and ideas⁴⁴, and following some of these fascist philosophies one could infer why he did not kill her. According to Klaus Theweleit's interpretation of fascist literature and propaganda, fascist men feel hatred of women's bodies and sexuality and fear their "otherness" and being engulfed by it (xv). In their imaginations, there are only two types of women that are respected: the absent mother/wife/fiancé and the white nurse, while all

⁴⁴ See for example: Marinescu, Andreea. "Fascism and Culture in Roberto Bolaño's *Estrella distante* and *Nocturno De Chile*."

other women (“red women”) are in a sense their enemies (100). Other fascist ideologies point out that they dislike feminism as much as socialism (Passmore 125), but that in their hierarchy the only women employed and respected to a degree are health workers, nurses, teachers, and social workers (Passmore 132). Therefore, one could speculate that Bolaño very purposely characterized Marta the way he did: a white, not sexually attractive, woman who studies medicine. Under a fascist reading, she may not represent a threat for Wieder, and in addition just like him she was an outsider. At one point, the narrator comments:

Fat Marta looked at me and I realized for the first time that she wasn’t just intelligent, but strong as well, and that she was suffering terribly (but not because of the political situation); Marta was suffering because she weighed more than eighty kilos, and she was watching the show, with all its sex and violence, and its love, from a seat in the stall, cut off from the stage, behind bullet-proof glass (39).

Assuming Wieder did not kill her because he did not find her threatening is one supposition of many more one could infer given all the clues in the narrative. Others may even speculate that she helped him out of envy or that she knew something but did not dare to speak. Bolaño’s craftiness in offering multiple readings demonstrates a serious commitment in furthering his understanding of the human mind and the issues that concern him while expanding and engaging the reader’s awareness, imagination and even ethics in the drawing of their own conclusions.

Toward the end, the narrator’s train of thought engages once again in loops as he reflects back to Marta and Bibiano. With this technique, Bolaño provides more salient information of the narrator’s own beliefs and emotions than that of the other characters providing us window into his mind. He imagines Marta working in a hospital, married

and reasonably happy, and reflects that unwillingly “she had been the devil’s intimate, but she was alive” (139). Then he imagines Bibiano progressing from being a shoe store clerk to a published author lecturing in international universities and becoming wealthy, perhaps enough “to settle his scores with the past” (140), and having overwhelming emotions admits: “I don’t know what it was that possessed me: melancholy, nostalgia or just envy (which in Chile, by the way, is often the cruelest kind), but for a moment I thought that Bibiano might have hired Romero” (140). The detective assures him Bibiano did not. The novel ends, leaving the reader wondering if Romero actually killed the poet/killer or not, in a similar manner as the short story; however, the novel leaves the reader pondering more questions about Marta’s interactions with Wieder and possible knowledge of the crimes, while at the same time questioning the narrator’s own moral compass and Bibiano’s obsession with Wieder.

Cortázar said that the short story is like a photograph that tends towards closure, whereas the novel is more like a film: an open order where the plot can be prolonged, and the director increases the incidents (*Literature Class* 17-18). Just as Cortázar’s metaphor explains, Bolaño’s “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman” is a contained narrative where the protagonist is alone in a search for a poet/aviator with little linguistic inventiveness to criticize reality and history and that does not require a truly engaged reader; moreover, the ethical dilemmas are explored lightly and do not allow for much expansion. However, in *Distant Star* Bolaño expands the exploration of important issues in the main story line by offering complex characters, such as Marta who serves as a catalyzer in the exploration of other character’s minds and forces the reader to produce their own ethical interpretations and alternative readings, some leading to his recurrent theme of fascism.

Bolaño stretches the possibilities of language in *Distant Star* and demands a truly engaged reader that follows the narrator along with his friends Marta and Bibiano, first in clarifying the poet/aviator's identity and then in tracking him in Spain. Unlike in the short story, the characters in *Distant Star* engage in long interactions, speculate, dissent, and experience complex feelings and thoughts, thus representing more accurately what it is to be human. Only gradually does the narrator's awareness and moral responsibility in this search evolve to such a point that his dreams are consumed with the images of Wieder. He acknowledges his own fault and blames himself for not stopping him earlier or counterbalancing his destruction. At some point, he even realizes that the terror that Chile was living during and after the coup is not different from the long history of prejudices and injustices as narrated by Maluenda. Towards the end of the novel, the narrator with repulsion identifies himself as Wieder's "vile Siamese twin" (144), and at this point the narrator and the reader are aware that he is not morally better than the fascist poet and that this journey helped him realize many things and reflect deeply.

Bolaño achieves a narrative where the exploration of shortcomings and morality flows, making one wonder about the evil and destruction not only in these pages but in the world, while at the same time forcing the readers to expand their own consciousness and conscience. Bolaño once said: "To live without guilt is to abolish memory, to perpetuate cowardice. If I, who was a victim of Pinochet, feel guilty about his crimes, how could someone who was his accomplice, by action or omission, not feel guilty?" (*Bolaño por sí mismo*, 114). *Distant Star*'s narrator feels guilt and preoccupation particularly when in his dream and at the bar he identifies with Wieder, two events that the short story lacks. This demonstrates that Bolaño had to explore more deeply and with

time his consciousness, the consciousness of his characters, and the process of consciousness itself, and in doing so his search grew into a novel that “reveals and critiques the mutual inherency of civilization and barbarism” (Jelly-Shapiro 78). In *Distant Star*, the narrator realizes that this barbarism was present in himself as well, that it can be present in anyone, as the character of Marta Posadas also suggests. Bolaño’s narrative expands from being a critique of the abuses of the right against the left that scrutinizes the poet/aviator who represents the fascist element of the Chilean dictatorship to being a reflection that represents and expands human awareness, beliefs, and moral commitments on various levels and that indisputably has Borges’ and Cortázar’s influence and that particularly engages the reader in the whole process of discovery.

Conclusion

Based on the research presented in this thesis, there is substantial evidence that Roberto Bolaño rewrote his short story “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman” into the novel *Distant Star* seeking to expand the representation of a consciousness sufficiently prolonged in time for the reader to become an active participant, much in the same manner that Julio Cortázar advocated for with his description of a “lector cómplice”, and that indeed the figure of Pierre Ménard is connected to the idea of consciousness and represents more than just the idea of a “rewriting” in the novel’s prologue. With *Distant Star*, Bolaño offers a complex postmodern fiction with qualities of the detective novel where the reader goes along with the anonymous narrator (who significantly reflects and grows in the novel compared to the short story) in a search that is constructed gradually and shaped to a degree by the reader’s own interpretation of Bolaño’s careful narrative techniques that offer ambiguous and ethically demanding information.

Borges wrote “Pierre Ménard” to explore something that was intriguing him and at its core deals with a criticism of the interpretation of texts and what we want to believe to be truth. Similarly, Bolaño set out to explore something personal with the last short story of *Nazi Literature*. However, unlike Borges, Bolaño’s short story was not enough to satisfy a deep quest that was not only personal or political, but more than anything ontological, as it dealt with the very nature of being human and understanding the moral responsibility of our actions or inactions. In order to develop a process of truth discovery in his literature, which only the utterance of a consciousness can afford, Bolaño required

the time that only a novel can fully offer. Unlike the short story, the novel with its dynamism and flexibility can offer a sufficiently complex representation of a consciousness in which the writer can deeply explore particular issues. Bolaño succeeds in doing so in *Distant Star* while truly engaging his readers by using some of the same narrative techniques used by Cortázar in the rewriting of his short story “The Pursuer” into his novel *Hopscotch*. Among these techniques are the subtle semantic games already mentioned and the introduction of a new character that allows for the interpersonal exploration of different characters and the intrapersonal exploration of the narrator. In Cortázar’s case, this is accomplished by using the intuitive female character of Maga and in Bolaño’s the highly intuitive Marta, whose intuition is further placed under scrutiny given Bibiano’s ambiguous comment (in the Spanish original at least) that Marta has not a sixth sense but rather a “seventh sense”. In “The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman”, examples of self-expression, qualia, and interpersonal dynamics to understand the minds of other characters are limited because the prototype of Marta Posadas does not exist. The character of Marta forces the reader to come to their own conclusions based on the ambiguous clues and semantic games offered in the novel through her character. On one hand, scholarly criticism (as explained in this thesis) has virtually ignored the role of Marta in *Distant Star*, and on the other hand it has never examined Cortázar’s structural and technical influence on Bolaño’s *Distant Star*. In these regards, some possible implications for further scholarly research on Bolaño’s work could be the role of the female characters in Roberto Bolaño’s *Distant Star*, careful attention to distinct aspects of translation, and a deeper study of Cortázar’s influence on Bolaño’s *Distant Star* and earlier works.

Bolaño's *Distant Star* has strong parallels to Cortázar's writing process as he wrote "The Pursuer" with the aim of exploring something that was intriguing him but that "obviously demanded much fuller development" (Cortázar, *Literature Class* 178) and led him to write *Hopscotch*. Although Bolaño never said that Cortázar influenced the rewriting of his short story, Bolaño admitted to Borges' and Cortázar's influences in his general work. There is also evidence that Bolaño read Cortázar's "The Pursuer" and *Hopscotch* and most likely knew about this expansion that is similar to Bolaño's creative process; therefore, it would be hard to argue that it is just coincidental. Additionally, the figure of Arturo B. in *Distant Star*'s prologue, as argued in this thesis, is a clear clue that Bolaño was already projecting toward Cortázar's critical differentiations of the scope of what can be done in the short story versus the novel (regarding the realm of awareness and the engagement of the reader) and that this made Bolaño expand the threshold of this work and future works.

Additionally, in this thesis I demonstrate that Bolaño was truly interested in the representation of consciousness in literature, as he discussed this in interviews by analyzing the work of Philip K. Dick and references Gestalt therapy in *Distant Star*, which is highly related to consciousness and at its core deals with people's awareness. In this regard, a future area of research could be analysis of Philip K. Dick's influence in the representation and construction of consciousness in Bolaño's work. Additionally, as David Lodge explains in *Consciousness and the Novel*, the surge in interest in consciousness in science and narrative took place in the 1990's, which is around the same time that Bolaño wrote his short story and *Distant Star*. Moreover, Lodge explains that most postmodern writers do not use poetic symbolism in the representation of

consciousness, something modernists did in an effort to explore the psychological depth of the phenomenon. This thesis demonstrates that Bolaño uses poetic symbolism heavily in *Distant Star* and uses the motif of the eye to explore the conscience of the narrator, changing some parts of the short story in the novel to focus on this.

Distant Star contains highly self-reflexive, meta-fictional aspects (such as Pierre Ménard's reference in the prologue) that immediately grab the reader's attention and directs his awareness towards Borges. Bolaño also aimed to increase the distance between reader and writer by offering an anonymous narrator, who may be his alter ego or is possibly someone who helped write the novel. These features demonstrate the complex and conscientious task of Bolaño's rewriting of his short story in an ambiguous narrative novel only eight months later. "The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman" does not plumb the depths of consciousness to the degree of the novel as it focuses primarily on the inner mechanism of the plot and its development, which barely allows for convincing characters who possess complex psychological qualities or for a truly developed sense of consciousness. Nor does it allow for a complex emplotment and well-developed narrative time as with *Distant Star*, in which Bolaño expands the work from being a critique of the abuses of the right against the left. It is in the novel that Bolaño scrutinizes the actions of other characters and creates a long reflection that represents and expands human awareness, beliefs, and moral commitments on various levels, and thus truly engages the reader in the whole process of discovery.

Appendix

Summaries of “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman” and *Distant Star*

Detailed Summary of “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman”

The story of “The Infamous Ramírez Hoffman” starts when early during Allende’s socialist presidency in Chile (1970-73) a young and quiet poet, called Emilio Stevens, appears at a poetry workshop held by some members of a leftist group in Concepción, a city in the south. The narrator describes the different poetry workshops, their respective directors, Cherniakovski and Garcia, and some of the students, and how Emilio Stevens seduces the twin sisters and poets, María and Magdalena Venegas. Stevens becomes María Venegas’ boyfriend to the envy of many, including the narrator named Bolaño. Emilio Stevens is described with conjectural tone as “handsome, intelligent, sensitive” (Bolaño, *Nazi Literature* 180), but overall a mysterious character. The twins decide to leave Concepción to go to Nacimiento. After the 1973 coup, Bolaño tells us that “it must have happened something like this... in mid-spring, someone knocks at the door, and it is Emilio Stevens” (181). He reappears in the sisters’ lives, visiting them. They lived there with an aunt away from on-going confusion in Chile. The narrator vaguely describes how Stevens, the twins, and their aunt had spent an evening reading poetry, and that during the middle of the night Stevens gets up “like a sleepwalker, and goes to the aunt’s room... he cuts the aunt’s throat, no he stabs her in the heart, it’s cleaner, quicker...” (181) then allows two men in and ends up kidnapping the twin

sisters, and using their pictures along with those of other female victims for a future photographic exhibition that he proclaimed will be “art for art’s sake—and that everyone would find it amusing” (187). Around that time, the narrator is imprisoned in a provisional detention camp, and there he an old airplane writing poetry in the sky-- according to Norberto, another inmate, it was a Nazi airplane: “It was a Messerschmidt, Bolaño, I swear to God” which was writing in Latin “about Adam and Eve” (185) among other things while wishing luck to his readers. “A poet,” the narrator says and later on learns that the aviator is Stevens, who reappears in the air force as Carlos Ramírez Hoffman.

The poet/aviator now displays a very secure and vibrant personality. However, the aerial prank caused him to spend a week in jail. He then performs new writings about “death” and “renovation” in Santiago’s sky, where he also draws a star, and a poem none of his superiors understood but some of his friends “knew that Ramírez Hoffman was conjuring up the shades of dead women” (186). By 1974, he was at the height of his fame after returning from Antarctica. He had gone there with the support of a general, and there he wrote poems that his admirers declared “heralded a new age of iron for the Chilean race” (186). When asked what the most dangerous thing was, he answered “The stretches of silence... Silence is like the sirens singing to Ulysses” (187). He is commissioned to undertake something spectacular to show that the new regime was interested in art. While preparing for the aerial exhibit, at night Ramírez Hoffman was planning a photography exhibition that he kept secret in the bedroom of a friend’s flat. Years later, the owner of the flat said he never saw the photos until the night of the exhibit.

The poet/aviator then performs new writings about “death” and “renovation” in Santiago’s sky where he also draws a star, and later that night he has his photographic exhibition. The poet/aviator instructs the guests to enter one by one. The guests were limited to a handful of officers and people with aesthetic sensibility, and among the most notorious guests were “a young society belle named Tatiana von Beck Iraola (apparently the only woman to attend), and his father, who lived in Santiago” (186-187). Ramírez Hoffman had spoken about doing his “visual poetry” that would change the art and future of Chile, as it was “experimental, quintessential” (187). That same morning the poet/aviator had written in Santiago’s sky: “*Death is friendship... Death is Chile...* over the presidential palace of La Moneda, he wrote the third line: *Dead is responsibility*” (187). Bolaño tells us that “perhaps it all happened differently” but that the “account of the photo exhibition in the apartment is, however, accurate” (190). There the lieutenant Curzio Zabaleta said that Ramírez Hoffman after opening the bedroom doors said in a jocular tone “One at a time, gentlemen; the art of Chile is not for the herd” (190), while winking at his father, first with the left and then with his right eye. Less than a minute after entering, Tatiana was out, staring at Ramírez Hoffman wanting to speak but unable to do so and vomiting. Other people went in, including a captain, and the owner of the flat who left the room right away; it seemed that he wanted to punch Ramírez Hoffman, but did not. Curzio Zabaleta also entered the exhibition room. The captain then made everyone leave the bedroom and stayed there with Ramírez Hoffman. Hours later military intelligence agents arrived and dismantled the exhibit, but the pilot/aviator was not arrested right away. After the exhibit, Ramírez Hoffman was outcast and rumored to be living abroad under many names and doing odd jobs, from writing for small obscure

magazines and appearing in anthologies to working in the pornography industry. However, the reports of his activities “from that night on are vague and contradictory” (193).

Cecilio Macaduck, “poet and shoe-store salesman”, followed Ramírez Hoffman’s trail “thanks to a document-storage box he happened to discover at the National Library, containing the only two poems published by Emilio Stevens, photographic records of Ramírez Hoffman’s aerial poems, Octavio Pacheco’s works for theatre, and texts...” (194), a bunch of random and eclectic material signed under different names. Under Pacheco’s name he wrote about Siamese twins “where sadism and masochism are children’s games” (194). The man rather than being forgotten had become a mythic figure and young writers set out to search for him. With time he was presumed to be dead, and in 1990 the only person who knew where he might be, his dad, died. In 1992 his name appeared in judicial reports and in 1993 “was linked to an ‘independent operational group’ responsible for the death of various students” (195). Not long after, in 1996 Cecilio published a study of fascism in Chile and Argentina featuring Ramírez Hoffman as his “most enigmatic star” (196). One year before, Zabaleta had published a book and in one chapter described Ramírez Hoffman’s photographic exhibition. The poet/aviator was summoned to trials but never appeared; some were conducted without him, and with time the country forgot him.

Bolaño, who was living in Spain, receives a visit from the Chilean detective Romero, who was given his address by Cecilio. The detective was looking for the infamous lieutenant who apparently was living in Europe as well. The detective tells Bolaño that “to find a poet, he needed the help of another poet” to which Bolaño answers,

“in my opinion Ramírez Hoffman was a criminal, not a poet” (197). The detective tells him that it all depends on the point of view. Right away, the narrator asks Romero how much money he is going to pay him, and when he says a lot. Bolaño agrees to help him. The next day, the detective brings over literary magazines and later on brings a TV and a VCR to watch some porn films where the lieutenant may be involved. Bolaño helps the detective find the poet/aviator by studying potential material written by the lieutenant and by watching some pornographic movies for which he probably collaborated behind the camera. Among some of the poems that stand out is one entitled “The Photographer of Death” (198). After going through various films and obscure writings *and by* reviewing the work of various “artists” and collective groups, Bolaño is able to pinpoint Ramírez Hoffman’s new alias in a French magazine that featured work of the “barbarians” --his new name is Jules Defoe. The detective says that among other aliases there is R.P. English, presumably used as a cameraman when Ramírez Hoffman potentially killed six people of one of those porn films.

Two months went by, the detective tracks the aviator down and asks Bolaño if he can identify him in person. He agrees, and thinks that perhaps Cecilio was paying the detective, but he says “No”. Bolaño asks “When we find him, what are you going to do”, to which he answers: “Ah Bolaño my friend, first you have to recognize him” (201). After arriving in Blanes they go to Lloret: “Are you going to kill him?” Bolaño asks. “Don’t ask me questions like that” (201) replies the detective. Bolaño agrees. The detective points out the building where the poet/aviator lives and then tells him to wait for him at a bar. While waiting, Bolaño reads, orders some water and smokes. Then he sees the man; he realizes that the poet/aviator was fatter and older. Bolaño thinks: “He

was staring at the sea and smoking. Just like me, I realized with a fright, stubbing out my cigarette and pretending to read” (202). He observes the man and says “He seemed *adult*. But he wasn’t adult” (202). After Ramírez Hoffman leaves, Romero arrives shortly, and Bolaño tells the detective not to do anything as the aged poet/aviator may not harm anyone else. The detective replies “You don’t know that...nor do I” (203). Bolaño later concludes “Of course he could. We all could” (204). The detective says he will be right back, and Bolaño lets him go and awaits his return. Twenty minutes later the detective is back with a folder under his arm. The reader never knows with certainty what happened. Both men leave and go to Bolaños’ apartment where the detective gives him an envelope and they part ways. “Look after yourself, Bolaño, he said, and off he went” (204).

Detailed Summary of *Distant Star*

Distant Star begins when an anonymous narrator, whom most critics have identified as Bolaño’s alter ego, Arturo B. says that he saw Carlos Wieder “for the first time in 1971, or perhaps in 1972, when Salvador Allende was President of Chile” (Bolaño, *Distant Star* 3) and that at that point the man was called Alberto Ruiz-Tagle. Both men along with others attended the poetry workshops of Juan Stein in Concepción. The narrator is a student at the Faculty of Literature like most people at the workshop. The Garmendia sisters, beautiful twins, “studied sociology and psychology, and Alberto Ruiz-Tagle, who, as he said at some point, was an autodidact” (3-4). The narrator admits to not knowing Ruiz-Tagle very well and that his jealousy or envy helped shape his suppositions about the man, who made friends right away with the twins Veronica and Angelica. Ruiz-Tagle, unlike most, lived on his own. While the narrator never visited his

flat, years later Bibiano O’Ryan, his friend, told him in a letter that he did, and that the flat was too empty, that there was something strange, and that “he felt like Mia Farrow in *Rosemary’s Baby*, when she goes into the neighbor’s house for the first time” (7).

Ruiz-Tagle was tall and handsome, and the narrator speculates that Veronica was in love with him and that perhaps Angelica was too. Bibiano and the narrator were miserable because neither sister paid much attention to them. Furthermore, Ruiz-Tagle became friends with most women in Stein’s literary workshop and at Diego Soto’s, which was another poetry workshop that the twins, the narrator, and Bibiano also attended, and where Ruiz-Table befriended Carmen Villagran and Marta Posadas, “known as Fat Marta, the only medical student who attended the workshop in the Faculty of Medicine: a very white, very fat, very sad girl” (11). Ruiz-Tagle was polite but indifferent to men and only befriended the poetry directors. In retrospect, the narrator says that no one really knew the man and his real intentions: “Bibiano and I hated him, but we had no idea either. Fat Marta was the only one who glimpsed a part of what was lurking behind the façade” (12). When Bibiano was making a bid to publish a short anthology of poetry, Fat Marta asked him not to include Alberto: “Don’t put him in, she said suddenly. You mean Ruiz-Tagle? I asked. I couldn’t believe my ears: she was one of his most fervent admirers” (13). She first suggested and then confirmed those were not his real poems, and when asked how she knew, she answered: “Because I can read people” (14). Bibiano tells her that he believes Ruiz-Tagle’s poetry will not revolutionize Chile, as Ruiz-Tagle had suggested, and the narrator added that he believed the man wasn’t even a socialist like all of them, to which Marta agreed.

In September 1973, the socialist government collapsed as the army seized power in a coup. The narrator met with the twin sisters and learned they were leaving to Nacimiento, to a house they inherited. The narrator then discloses that “from here on, my story is mainly conjecture” (19) and says the sisters shut themselves up there with his mom’s sister, Ema Oyarzún, who lived with an elderly maid, Amalia Maluenda. Weeks later, Ruiz-Tagle visits them. The maid opens the door but does not let the man in. She looks for the girls, who receive him effusively and admonish Amalia for not letting him in. The girls and their aunt invite him for dinner, and they spend an evening reading poetry, playing guitar, and the maid looks from afar. The aunt invites her in, but she is cautious. As the night falls, the party is over. They go to bed. The narrator refers to Ruiz-Tagle as Carlos Wieder and explains how he maybe had slept with Veronica, but at some point “gets up like a sleepwalker”. He looks for the aunt and “cuts her throat” (22). He then goes to the maid’s room but finds an empty bed. He doesn’t know what to do and gets mad, but he soon gets to the front door and lets four men in. They kidnap the sisters. The twin’s “bodies will never be found; but no, *one* body, just one will appear years... the body of Angelica Garmendia... as if to prove that Carlos Wider is a man and not a god” (23).

Around that time, members of both workshops disappear, and the anonymous narrator is imprisoned at La Peña, a transit center on the peripheries of Concepción. There he sees a noisy plane flying that eventually writes poems with grey-black smoke. We learn the poet/aviator is Carlos Wieder. In the first poems, he transcribes the opening lines of Genesis: “IN PRINCIPIO...CREAVIT DEUS...COELUM ET TERRAM, I read as if in a dream” (25). The narrator adds that Norberto, another prisoner, insists the

airplane is a Messersmith from the Luftwaffe. The plane continues flying and writing in Latin, and Norberto regards the pilot's skills. The narrator says the pilot "looked like a stone statue enclosed in the cockpit... Over Concepción the symmetrical outline of the plane looked like a Rorschach blot" (29). Finally, the poet writes one word: "Learn!" The people at the La Peña are surprised.

Wieder's performance in the sky won him admirers, and soon people were demanding his poetry sky-writings. At some point he drew a star, the star of the Chilean Flag. Later on at the El Condor air force, he wrote more poetry that to an informed reader was about the twin sisters, who were already dead. The aviator participates in two more shows and writes more Biblical verses and sections from *The Rebirth of Chile* and, aided by two civilian pilots, draws a large Chilean Flag in the sky. The Chilean media admired his prodigious abilities, and his career received a boost by an influential Chilean critic, Nicasio Ibacache, who was a devout Catholic who in his weekly column in *El Mercurio* published an "explication for Wieder's highly individual poetic style" (35). The article appeared along with two photographs, one of Wieder, which was blurry, and another of his verses and the Chilean flag.

When the narrator is released, he learns from Bibiano that most of their friends had disappeared, including the twins. That night they went to see Fat Marta, who told them that she saw Alberto earlier and that he was moving. He scared her that night, and she said he was sitting on his empty apartment floor, but it seemed as if he was moving all over the place and told her the Garmendia sisters and Carmen Villagran were dead. She questioned him and said she did not believe him, but he answered: "All the girls who wrote poetry are dead... That's the truth, Martita, you better believe me" (39). Marta got

scared and said she didn't want to bother him more. "You never bother me the same... You're one of the few women who understands me, Marta, and I appreciate that" (40). Marta left as soon as she could. Bibiano informed them that according to a friend who studied German philology, the name *Wieder* meant "'one more,' 'again,' 'a second time,' and in some contexts 'over and over'..." (40). Two days later, Marta called Bibiano to inform him that Ruiz-Tagle was indeed Carlos Wieder, that she had recognized him from the photo in *El Mercurio*. Both friends wondered how Marta recognized him, if the person in the blurred photo could have been anyone. Bibiano made a remark about Marta's intuition. At that point, Bibiano was working in a shoe shop and going broke, but he kept dreaming and above all he wanted to write "an anthology of Nazi literature of the Americas" (43). Meanwhile, he continued to gather with minutia everything he could about the poet/aviator. In 1974, they learn that Wieder was flying to the South Pole to write poems that his admirers declared "heralded a new age of iron for the Chilean race" (43). In an interview, the poet/aviator said that the most dangerous thing in his journey was silence: "Silence is like leprosy, ... silence is like communism; silence is like a blank screen that must be filled..." (45). In Antarctica, he wrote something about the colors white and black, the occult, the smile of the Fatherland, and as he appeared on TV on his return to Santiago, Bibiano was certain that the man was Ruiz-Tagle as Marta had told them.

In chapter four, there is a digression from the main story, and the narrator tells us about Juan Stein, the director of the poetry workshops in Concepción and a published author. Bibiano and the narrator often visited him in his house that seemed to have more maps than books. There were also two framed photos on the wall, one of a family and the

other of a “Red Army general called Ivan Chernyakhovsky. According to Stein, he was the greatest general of the Second World War” (50) and apparently a distant relative too. A whole account of Chernyakhovsky’s military feats as the only Jewish general during the war is recounted. Later on, the narrator tells us that Stein goes missing after the coup and that everyone assumed he was dead, but Stein had died of cancer and was buried in Valdivia. At that point, the narrator had left Chile.

In chapter five, the narrator tells us two different stories, one of Diego Soto and the other of Petra, also known as Lorenzo. The anonymous narrator says that around the end of 1973 or the beginning of 1974 Soto had disappeared. Soto was interested in French poets unknown to many in Chile and translated them, a thing that “infuriated a lot of people. How could that ugly little Indian presume to translate and correspond with Alain Jouffroy, Denis Roche and Marcelin Pleynet? ... Pretentious bastard” (65). The narrator says that many “would have been happy to hear of his death” (66) even if in exile. According to some stories, Soto lived first in Berlin and left after a terrible beating and then in France married a woman and became a father. After a lot of work, Soto achieved a stable financial position by lecturing at a university. The narrator says he was also living in France at the time too but with no desire to look up old friends. According to Bibiano, who maintained correspondence with Soto, he had become happy with his middle-class life in Europe. However, on the Perpignan train station, he was stabbed by three young neo-Nazis. Soto had tried to help a homeless woman from being hit by the fascist youth.

In the last pages of chapter five, the narrator tells the story of Lorenzo, who as a boy lost both arms. “He soon discovered that he was a homosexual, which turned the

hopeless situation into an unconceivable and indescribable” one (72). Lorenzo becomes an artist and eventually tries to commit suicide by jumping in the Pacific Ocean, but he decided not going to die. He swims out, saves money and goes to Europe. There he lives as a street artist until a man offers him the role of “Petra” during the Paralympics. “From the very first day he was a media favorite” (75). The narrator says, “at that time I was flat on my back with a clapped-out liver in the Vall d’Hebron Hospital in Barcelona” (76) reading newspapers and seeing Petra’s interview that made him laugh and cry. Three years later he learns Petra had died from AIDS, but no one knew where. Then the narrator reflects: “Sometimes when I think of Stein and Soto I can’t avoid thinking also of Lorenzo. [...] Although the only thing they had in common was having been born in Chile. And possibly a book [which they all read] ...called *Ma Gestalt-thérapie*” (76). The book’s author, Dr. Frederick S. Perls, was a psychiatrist and fugitive from Nazi Germany.

In chapter six, the narrator continues the story of Wieder, who by 1974 was at the height of his fame after returning from Antarctica and doing numerous aerial displays in various cities. At that point, Wieder is commissioned to do something spectacular in the capital to demonstrate that “the new regime and avant-garde art were not at odds, quite the contrary” (77). During the day he prepares for the aerial exhibit and at night prepares a photography exhibition. The owner of the flat said he never saw his photos until the night of the exhibit. Wieder then writes in the skies of Santiago that death is responsibility and communion (80-81). When an electric storm starts forming, he is told to land; he acknowledges the communication but begins to climb and writes more, and those who saw him thought he had gone mad. Without any smoke left and in bad weather, he wrote his last line: “*Death is resurrection*”. Those who saw him knew “they

were witnessing a unique event, of great significance for the art of the future” (82). When Wieder lands, he is reprimanded but leaves to attend his photo exhibit.

The narrator discloses that even though the accounts of the aerial exhibit may be inaccurate, those of the secretive photo exhibit are accurate and adds that a handful of selected guests arrived. Among them was Lieutenant Muñoz Cano, who later on wrote a memoir that shed light on Wieder’s behavior and words that night. Another guest was Tatiana von Beck Iraola, the only woman at the exhibit and the first to enter the bedroom. Less than a minute, she was out, staring at Wieder, wanting to speak but unable and vomiting. Others go in. Muñoz Cano describes the atmosphere like a dentist’s waiting room and compares people to rotten teeth waiting in line. He recognizes the Garmendia sisters and others: “The women looked like mannequins, broken dismembered mannequins in some pictures” (88). After this, a captain, some agents, and Wieder are locked in the bedroom for what seemed an eternity and curses and silence could be heard. Muñoz Cano describes the atmosphere like a hospital waiting room and says he never saw Wieder again.

After the exhibit, the report of Wieder’s activities “are vague and contradictory. His shadowy figure makes a number of brief appearances in the shifting anthology of Chilean Literature” (94). According to rumors, Wieder was expelled at a secret court martial. He was associated with magazines and the name Octavio Pacheco, who had written a play about Siamese twins, where one tortured the other, never killing the brother. Bibiano then discovers publications that are authored by Wieder in magazines in Chile and abroad under different pen names. In one he signed as Juan Sauer and spoke about poetry and photography. Bibiano realizes that the archive kept growing because

Wieder's father supplemented it, but there was some deception with the names by mixing real people with made-up characters.

Some said Wieder occasionally appeared at the salon of Rebeca Vivar Vivanco, known as Madame VV, an ultra-rightwing painter and millionaire supporter of some artistic and military communes that held some "ritual initiation" ceremonies (99). Later on, a few war games appeared, and Bibiano thought Wieder had invented them. Bibiano was obsessed. The narrator tells us: "I heard from a friend (though I don't know if the story is true) that Bibiano contacted a member of the Philip K. Dick Society in Glen Ellen, California... who specialized in 'secret messages in literature, painting, theater and cinema'" (101). His contact was an expert on the works of Dick and "kept an eye out for any traces that Wieder might have left in the United States, but he found nothing" (103).

Bibiano discovers a poem by Wieder signed as "The Pilot" that according to him was about Amalia Maluenda. The narrator says the poem did not really prove anything. Finally, Wieder leaves Chile, and when Ibacache dies in 1986, a letter turns up that says that Wieder had supposedly died as well, but soon this was denied. "Wieder became a mythic figure and his alleged ideas found a following" (107). Wieder's dad had died in 1990, and three years later Wieder "was linked to an 'independent operational group' responsible for the death of various students in" (108). In the early 90's, Bibiano had published *The Warlocks Return*, that depicted the fascist literary movement in South America and that stylistically was in debt to a detective novel. The biography of Wieder was the last one: "In the chapter devoted to Wieder (the longest in the book) entitled 'Exploring the Limits,' Bibiano relinquishes his generally measured and objective tone... (108-109). Wieder is indicted by a judge but never shows up in court. Another judge

names him the main suspect in the murder of Angelica Garmendia. Amalia Maluenda appears in court to testify, constantly saying words in Mapuche that a priest translates. Also, when “she spoke of Wieder, she seemed to be talking about several different people” (111). Maluenda referred to the crime as a night when she had heard the “the music of the Spanish,” and when asked to explain what she meant, she answers “Rage, sir, sheer, pure rage” (111). The cases against Wieder did not progress. Chile had too many problems to keep remembering him.

In chapter eight, the narrator, who is living in Spain, receives a visit from the Chilean detective Abel Romero, who is looking for the poet/aviator. The detective had solved two important cases during Allende’s presidency and was awarded a Medal of Valor. However, after the coup Romero was imprisoned. Once freed, he moved to France. Bibiano had given Romero the narrator’s address. At that point Wieder was living in Europe too. Romero tells the narrator that “to find a poet, he needed the help of another poet” to which he answers, “in my opinion Carlos Wieder was a criminal, not a poet” (117). The narrator asks Romero “How much are *you* getting paid? ... Enough, he said. My client isn’t short of money” (117). The next day, Romero brings money and a suitcase full of literary magazines. They spend some days talking about literature and arts. Eventually, the detective brings a TV and a VCR and explains how he suspected Wieder worked in the porn industry. The narrator helps Romero find the poet/aviator by studying material possibly written by the Wieder and by watching pornographic movies.

After two days, the narrator is drawn into the story of Wieder and realizes that his story “was also the story of something more – exactly what I couldn’t tell—but one night I had dream about it” (121). He understands: “Wieder and I had been travelling in the *same*

boat; he may have conspired to sink it, but I had done little or nothing to stop it going down” (122). After going through films and obscure writings the narrator pinpoints Wieder’s new alias: R.R. English. The man was a suspect in the murder of six people of a porn film crew, but the police never found him. Romero had begun his own investigation and visited Joanna Silvestri, an actress dying in a hospital. She remembered English, but Romero’s search was not productive.

After immersing himself in what the narrator calls “literature’s bottomless cesspool” he is able to identify Wieder in some French magazines, this time signed as Jules Defoe (130). He was part of a group called “the barbaric writers”, a sort of sect founded by Raoul Delorme, who believes in degrading the classics by defecating, urinating, and vomiting in them in order to “humanize” them and allow the barbaric writers to emerge with inner strength and wisdom (132). As part of this group, Jules Defoe had written poems and an essay where he argued that “literature should be written by non-literary people, just as politics should be and indeed was being taken over by non-politicians” (135). Two months later, Romero track down Jules Defoe. The detective and the narrator went looking for him. In their journey, the narrator imagines Marta Posadas working in a hospital, married and happy, and reflects: “Unwittingly, unwillingly she had been the devil’s intimate, but she was alive” (139). He also thinks about Bibiano living in Chile, unhappily working in a shoe store until he reaches thirty-three and starts publishing successful books and lecturing on the new Chilean poetry. He felt envy and then thought that perhaps Bibiano hired Romero, but the detective says it was not him.

In the train to find Wieder, the narrator asks Romero if he had found Delorme; Romero says yes, and that the place where Defoe was staying belonged to one of

Delorme's disciples. "Poor Defoe" he said, and Romero looked at him as if he were going mad and told him "I don't feel sorry for people like that" (141). When they arrive, the narrator says that he could not imagine anyone living there and asks Romero what was going to happen with Wieder, but he does not answer. The narrator says he doesn't want anyone to get hurt, and that he feels trapped in a recurring nightmare. He adds "the building resembled a fossilized bird. For a moment I had the impression that Carlos Weider's eyes were watching me from every window" (142).

Romero advises the narrator to wait for Wieder in a bar. While waiting, he reads a book, orders some coffee and smokes; then he sees Wieder come in. He feels time is standing still. Wieder sat three tables away and "for a nauseating moment" the narrator sees himself "almost joined to him, like a vile Siamese twin" (144). Wieder "was staring at the sea and smoking and glancing at his book... Just like me, I realized with a fright, stubbing out my cigarette and trying to merge into the pages of my book" (144). But he could not keep reading, as the book seemed to have eyes looking back at him. The narrator then says: "He seemed *adult*. But he wasn't adult. I knew that straightaway" (145). As it got dark, Wieder left, and Romero arrived shortly after: "Is it him?" asked Romero. Yes, I said. Are you certain? I am certain" (146). The narrator asks if he is going to kill him and Romero gestures in reply, but it is too dark to see his response. "It's not a good idea... It could ruin our lives, yours, mine, and anyway what's the point? He's not going to do any more harm now. It's not going to ruin *my* life, said Romero. Quite the opposite; it's going to set me up. And as to whether he'll do any more harm, all I can say is: we don't know" (147). The narrator insists that no one needs to get hurt, but the detective tells him that it is better that he stays out of it and leaves telling him that he will

be back soon. When he is back, half an hour later, he has a green folder under his arm. The narrator compares him to Edward G. Robinson, slightly different but with the same knowing eyes. "Eyes ready to believe that anything is possible, but *knowing* too, that nothing can be undone" (148). Both men leave and go to the narrator's apartment. There the detective opens his suitcase and hands him an envelope with more money. "I don't need this much money" he said after counting it. "It's yours, said Romero... You've earned it. I haven't earned anything, I said" (149). The detective didn't reply. He was going back to Paris that same night. They go to the street, and a taxi pulls up. "Look after yourself, my friend" the detective says, "and off he went" (149).

Bibliography

I. Works Cited

Aguilar, Gonzalo Moisés., and Celina. Manzoni. *Roberto Bolaño: La Escritura Como Tauromaquia*. Corregidor, 1996. Print.

Andrews, Chris. *Roberto Bolaño's Fiction: An Expanding Universe*. New York, Columbia University Press, 2014. Print.

Baldick, Chris. *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. 3rd ed., Oxford University Press, 2008. n. pag. Web. 20 Sept. 2019.

Birns, et al. *Roberto Bolaño as World Literature*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. Print.

Blackmore, Susan J. *Conversations on Consciousness*. Oxford University Press, 2005. Print.

Bolaño, Roberto, et al. *Bolaño Por Sí Mismo: Entrevistas Escogidas*. 1. ed., Universidad Diego Portales, 2006. Print.

Bolaño, Roberto, et al. *Distant Star*. New York, New Directions Pub., 2004. Print.

Bolaño, Roberto, and Ignacio Echevarría. *Entre Paréntesis: Ensayos, Artículos y Discursos (1998-2003)*. Editorial Anagrama, 2004. Print.

Bolaño, Roberto. *Estrella Distante*. New York, Vintage Español, 2010. Print.

Bolaño, Roberto. *Literatura nazi en América*. Santiago de Chile, Seix-Barral, 1996.

Bolaño, Roberto, et al. *Nazi Literature in the Americas*. New York, New Directions, 2008. Print.

Borges, Jorge Luis. "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*." *Collected Fictions*. Trans. by Andrew Hurley. New York: Penguin Books, 1999. 88-95. Web.

Borges, Jorge Luis. *The Aleph and Other Stories, 1933-1969 : Together with Commentaries and an Autobiographical Essay*. 1st ed.] E. P. Dutton, 1970. Print.

Bray, Joe. *The Epistolary Novel: Representations of Consciousness*. Taylor and Francis, 2003. Print.

- Brown-Smith, Julie. "Eye Symbolism in Flannery O'Connor's REVELATION." *The Explicator*, vol. 70, no. 3, 2012, 231–233. Web
- Cacheiro, Adolfo. "The Force Field of the Real: Imaginary and Symbolic Identification in Roberto Bolaño's *Estrella Distante*." *Confluencia: Revista Hispánica De Cultura y Literatura*, vol. 25, no. 2, 2010, pp. 131–146. Web.
- Chaar-Pérez, Kahlil. "La Lógica Del Trauma: Dictadura, Posdictadura y Melancolía En *Estrella distante*." *Revista Iberoamericana*, vol. 77, no. 236-237, 2011, 649–664. Web.
- Choi, Eun-Kyung. "Historias Especulares y Explosivas En 'Estrella Distante' De Roberto Bolaño." *Hispanamérica*, vol. 43, no. 129, 2014, 33–40. Web.
- Corral, Wilfrido H. *Bolaño traducido: nueva literatura mundial*. Madrid: Ediciones Escalera, 2011. Print.
- Cortázar, et al. *Literature Class: Berkeley, 1980*. New Directions Publishing Corporation, 2017. Print.
- Cortázar, Julio. "Algunos Aspectos Del Cuento." *Casa De Las Américas*, vol. 2, no. 15, 1962, 3-16. Web.
- Cortázar, Julio. "On the Short Story and Its Environs." *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1983, 34-37. Web.
- Cortázar, Julio. *Rayuela*. Biblioteca Ayacucho, 2004. Print.
- Di Stefano, Eugenio. "Reconsidering Aesthetic Autonomy and Interpretation as a Critique of the Latin American Left in Roberto Bolaño's *Estrella distante*." *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos*, vol. 47, no 3, 2013, 463–485. Web.
- Díaz, José-Luis. "A Narrative Method for Consciousness Research." *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, vol. 7, 2013, Article 739. 1-12 Web
- Derrida, Jacques, and Avital Ronell. "The Law of Genre." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1980, 55–81. Web.
- Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*. Princeton University Press, 1978. Print.
- Droege, Paula. *Caging the Beast: a Theory of Sensory Consciousness*. John Benjamins Pub., 2003. Print
- Fernández Díaz, J. Javier. *La Alegría De Las Influencias: Roberto Bolaño y La Literatura Estadounidense*. 1a edición. ed., Universidad De Murcia, 2017. Print.

- Fernández, Mariangeles. "Aproximación a La Idea De Lector Cómplice En Julio Cortázar." *Letral: Revista Electrónica De Estudios Transatlánticos*, no. 12, 2014, 58–69. Web.
- Fireman, Gary D., et al. *Narrative and Consciousness: Literature, Psychology and the Brain*. Oxford University Press, 2003. Print
- Flanagan, Owen. *Self-Expressions: Mind, Morals, and the Meaning of Life*. Oxford University Press, 1998. Print.
- Foster, David William. *The Writer's Reference Guide to Spanish*. 2000. Print.
- Funkenstein, Amos, and Myers, David N. "Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness." *History and Memory; Studies in Representation of the Past*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1989, 5–26. Web
- "Gestalt Therapy." *Britannica Online Academic Edition*, 2019, pp. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. n. pag. Web. 14 Oct. 2019.
- Gutiérrez Mouat, Ricardo. *Understanding Roberto Bolaño*. Columbia, South Carolina, University of South Carolina Press, 2016. Print.
- Hollingshead, Greg, -. "Short Story vs Novel." *University of Toronto Quarterly*, vol. 68, no. 4, 1999, 878–879. Web.
- Hoyos Ayala, Héctor. *Beyond Bolaño: The Global Latin American Novel*. Columbia University Press, 2015.
- Humphrey, Robert. *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel*. University of California Press, 1954. Print.
- Hunter, Adrian. "Novel, Novella, Short Story." *The Oxford History of the Novel in English*, Oxford University Press, 2016, *The Oxford History of the Novel in English*, Chapter 16. Web.
- Irvin Rock, and Stephen Palmer. "The Legacy of Gestalt Psychology." *Scientific American*, vol. 263, no. 6, 1990, 84–90. Web
- Jelly-Schapiro, Eli. "This Is Our Threnody": Roberto Bolaño and the History of the Present." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, vol. 56, no. 1, 2015, 77–93. Web.
- Jorgensen, Larry M., "Seventeenth-Century Theories of Consciousness", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Spring 2020 Edition., Edward N. Zalta (ed.) n. pag. Web. 19 Dec. 2019.

- Kornbluh, Peter. "The El Mercurio File: Secret Documents Shine New Light on How the CIA Used a Newspaper to Foment a Coup." *Columbia Journalism Review*, vol. 42, no. 3, 2003, 14–19. Web
- Leary, Mark R., and June Price. Tangney. *Handbook of Self and Identity*. 2nd ed., Guilford Press, 2012. Print.
- Lodge, David *Consciousness & the Novel: Connected Essays*. Harvard University Press, 2002. Print.
- López-Badano, Cecilia. "Construcciones estéticas intertextuales: Ecos postmodernos de Cortázar en tres 'generaciones' literarias latinoamericanas (Bolaño, Bellatín, Busqued)." *Chasqui*, vol. 43, no. 2, 2014, 133–149. Web.
- López-Calvo, Ignacio. *Roberto Bolaño, a Less Distant Star: Critical Essays*. First ed., Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Print.
- López-Vicuña, Ignacio. "The Violence of Writing: Literature and Discontent in Roberto Bolaño's 'Chilean' Novels." *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, vol. 18, no. 2-3, 2009, 155–166. Web.
- Lynd, Juliet. "The Politics of Performance and the Performance of Narrative in Roberto Bolaño's *Estrella Distante*." *Chasqui*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2011, 170–188. Web.
- McKeon, Michael. *Theory of the Novel: a Historical Approach*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. Print.
- Monroe, Jonathan. *Framing Roberto Bolaño: Poetry, Fiction, Literary History, Politics*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. Print.
- Marinescu, Andreea. "Fascism and Culture in Roberto Bolaño's *Estrella Distante* and *Nocturno De Chile*." *Revista Canadiense De Estudios Hispánicos*, vol. 39, no. 2, 2015, pp. 341–365. Web.
- Mason, Fran. *Historical Dictionary of Postmodernist Literature and Theater*. Second ed., Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. Print.
- May, Charles E. *Short Story Theories*. Ohio University Press, 1976. Print.
- Murdoch, Iris. *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*. Chatto & Windus, 1992. Print.
- Natsoulas, Thomas. "Consciousness and Conscience." *The Journal of Mind and Behavior*, vol. 21, no. 4, 2000, 327–352. Web.
- Passmore, Kevin. "Fascism, Women, and Gender." *Fascism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2014, *Fascism: A Very Short Introduction*. Web.

- Paz-Soldán, et al. *Bolaño Salvaje*. 1. ed., Editorial Candaya, 2008. Print.
- O'Bryen, Rory. "Writing with The Ghost of Pierre Menard: Authorship, Responsibility and Justice in Roberto Bolaño's *Distant Star*." Roberto Bolaño, a Less Distant Star: Critical Essays, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY, 17–34. Web.
- Ricœur, Paul., et al. Time and Narrative. Volume 1. University of Chicago Press, 1984. Print
- Rodríguez, Franklin. "Unsettledness and Doublings in Roberto Bolaño's *Estrella Distante*." *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, vol. 63, no. 2, 2010, 203–218. Web.
- Simunovic Díaz, Horacio. "Distant Star: Crime and Poetry." *Acta Literaria*, no. 33, 2006, 9–25. Web.
- Santangelo, Eugenio. "Poéticas De Lo Indecible: Roberto Bolaño y La Re-Narración Post-Dictatorial." *Confluente: Rivista Di Studi Iberoamericani*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2012, 336–360. Web.
- Solà Garcia, Alba. "Rescribir El Horror. Historia y Poética De La Memoria En La Obra De Roberto Bolaño." *Catedral Tomada: Journal of Latin American Criticism*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2013, pp. 82–105. Web.
- Solotarevsky, Myrna. "Roberto Bolaño y La Importancia De La 'Estructura.'" *Hispanamérica*, vol. 40, no. 119, 2011, 3–14. Web.
- Theweleit, Klaus. *Male Fantasies*. Polity Press, 1987. Print
- Toro, Vera., et al. *La Obsesión Del Yo: La Auto(r)Ficción En La Literatura Española y Latinoamericana*. Iberoamericana; Vervuert, 2010. Print.
- Vázquez Recio, Nieves. *En El Revés: Julio Cortázar y Roberto Bolaño*. Del Centro Editores, 2016. Print.
- Wood, James. *How Fiction Works*. 1st ed., Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. Print.
- Yovanovich, Gordana. "The Role of Women in Julio Cortázar's Rayuela." *Revista Canadiense De Estudios Hispánicos*, vol. 14, no. 3, 1990, 541–552. Web.
- Zavala, Lauro. *Teorías Del Cuento*. 1. reimpresión de la 2. ed., Universidad Nacional Autónoma De México, Coordinación De Difusión Cultural, Dirección De Literatura: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Xochimilco, 1995. Print.
- Zavala, Oswaldo. *La Modernidad Insufrible: Roberto Bolaño En Los límites De La Literatura Latinoamericana Contemporánea*. North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, 2015. Print.

II. Works Consulted

- Aare, Cecilia. "A Narratological Approach to Literary Journalism: How an Interplay between Voice and Point of View May Create Empathy with the Other." *Literary Journalism Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2016, 106–139. Web.
- Alonso, Carlos J. *Julio Cortázar: New Readings*. Cambridge University Press, 1998. Print.
- Altenberg, Tilmann. "La Obsesión Del Yo: La Auto(r)Ficción En La Literatura Española y Latinoamericana." *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, vol. 88, no. 5, 2011, pp. 604–605. Web.
- Álvarez, Marta., et al. *Metanarrativas Hispánicas*. Lit, 2012. Print.
- Arnall, Gavin. "Repeating Translation, Left and Right (and Left Again): Roberto Bolaño's Between Parentheses and Distant Star." *CR: The New Centennial Review*, vol. 17, no. 3, 2017, 237–263. Web.
- Baldick, Chris. *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. 3rd ed., Oxford University Press, 2008. Print.
- Bell, Lucy. *The Latin American Short Story at Its Limits: Fragmentation, Hybridity and Intermediality*. Legenda, 2014. Print.
- Cortázar, and Bernárdez. Aurora. *Autopista Del Sur y Otros Cuentos*. Penguin Books, 1996. Print.
- Dennett, D. C. *Consciousness Explained*. 1st pbk. ed., Little, Brown and Co., 1991. Print
- Etherington, Ben, and Jarad Zimler. *The Cambridge Companion to World Literature*. Cambridge University Press, 2018. Print.
- Gerardi, Guadalupe. "En Retrospectiva: *Estrella distante* de Roberto Bolaño." *Caravelle*, vol. 110, no. 110, 2019, 163–180. Web.
- Hartman, Douglas. "Eight Readers Reading: The Intertextual Links of Proficient Readers Reading Multiple Passages." *Reading Research Quarterly*, vol. 30, no. 3, 1995, 520–561. Web.
- Horton, William S., and Brennan, Susan E. "The Role of Metarepresentation in the Production and Resolution of Referring Expressions." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 7, 2016, 1111. Web
- Jennerjahn, Ina. "Escritos En Los Cielos y Fotografías Del Infierno. Las "Acciones De

- Arte” De Carlos Ramírez Hoffman, Según Roberto Bolaño.” *Revista De Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana*, vol. 28, no. 56, 2002, 69–86. Web.
- Kant, Immanuel, et al. *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. Yale University Press, 2002. Print.
- Lehar, Steve. *The World in Your Head: a Gestalt View of the Mechanism of Conscious Experience*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2003. Print.
- Maier, Gonzalo. “Out of Focus: Irony and Photographs in *Distant Star* by Roberto Bolaño.” *Neophilologus*, vol. 100, no. 2, 2016, 213–227. Web.
- Manzoni, et al. *La Fugitiva Contemporaneidad: Narrativa Latinoamericana, 1990-2000*. Ediciones Corregidor, 2003. Print.
- McInerney, Peter K. *Time and Experience*. Temple University Press, 1991. Print
- Pino, Mirian. “Memoria y literatura. El 'yo / detective' como dimensión lúdica en *Estrella distante* de Roberto Bolaño.” *Anales De Literatura Chilena*, vol. 13, no. 18, 2012, 183–191. Web.
- Sotirova, Violeta. *Consciousness in Modernist Fiction: A Stylistic Study*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Print.
- Tobin, Patricia Drechsel. *Time and the Novel: The Genealogical Imperative*. Princeton University Press, 1978. Print.
- Villalobos-Ruminott, Sergio. “A Kind of Hell: Roberto Bolaño and The Return of World Literature.” *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, vol. 18, no. 2-3, 2009, 193–205. Web.
- Williams, Gareth. “Sovereignty and Melancholic Paralysis in Roberto Bolaño.” *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, vol. 18, no. 2-3, 2009, pp. 125–140. Web.
- Zayas, Hélène. “Apocalipsis De Solentiname o La Encrucijada Del Escritor.” *América. Cahiers Du CRICCAL*, vol. 17, no. 1, 1997, 165–174. Web.
- Zelazo, Philip David., et al. *The Cambridge Handbook of Consciousness*. Cambridge University Press, 2007. Print.