Chronotope and the De-Mythification of History: Madrid 1936 in Eduardo Mendoza's *Riña de gatos* (2010) and Antonio Muñoz Molina's *La noche de los tiempos* (2009)

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Introduction

Since the mid-1990s in Spain, a renewal of interest in the history of the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) and Francoist dictatorship (1939–1975) has resulted in a surge of cultural and historiographical production related to the subject, as well as instigating a robust debate about how these difficult periods ought to be officially interpreted and commemorated. This 'memory boom' indicates that there is still an unresolved tension in Spanish society. While there are many who speak in favour of final reconciliation, the means of best achieving it are so contested that old divisions appear to have been paradoxically widened rather than diminished. The two novels which are treated in the present study – Eduardo Mendoza's *Riña de gatos* (*An Englishman in Madrid*, 2010), and Antonio Muñoz Molina's *La noche de los tiempos* (*The Night of Memories*, 2009) – make an important literary contribution to the debate, and although they are very different in tone and style, they evidence a mature, considered approach to the issues.[1] Drawing upon the Bakhtinian concept of chronotope (the organisation of space-time in the novel), this paper will contend that the two works, in their different ways, inscribe and subvert the conventions of the classical historical novel in order to challenge particular historical myths about the origins of the war and open up a dialogic space for the reader to engage critically with the past. This narrative strategy prevents the war from being plotted as an inevitable tragedy, therefore emphasising the argument made by both novels that, contrary to popular belief, the civil war was not simply the result of a radical polarisation between the mythical 'two Spains' eternally at war but of a complex of factors, both national and international.

1 References to the English titles of novels in this paper are to official, published translations unless otherwise indicated. The dates refer to the first Spanish edition.

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In the first section below, there will be a brief exposition of what is meant by the 'classical historical novel' in this paper, followed by an explanation of how the concept of chrontope is to be employed. There will then be an overview of how the 'Two-Spain' trope has dominated interpretations of the Spanish Civil War since the event and how this has been challenged by recent historiography. The remainder of the paper will then focus on the analysis and comparison of the two novels.

The Historical Novel

There has been considerable debate over the classification and labelling of various types of historical fiction, making it useful to clarify exactly what is meant by the various terms to be employed in this paper. Thus, 'classical historical novel' will be used to refer to a mimetic, third-person narrative following a typical, nineteenth-century structure, and which is concerned with events that happened before the author's birth. It will be distinguished from the 'historical romance' or 'historical adventure novel' on the basis of its commitment to realistic and detailed depiction of the historical past, although we may discern more Romantic or Realist tendencies on an individual basis (these latter terms referring to the nineteenth-century literary movements). The labels of 'romance' and 'adventure novel' will be applied to those novels whose focus is action and melodrama, and which draw upon the past merely for its exotic or dramatic properties. Finally, the terms 'historical fiction' and 'historical novel' will be used synonymously to designate the family of novels which are to a greater or lesser extent concerned with the representation of the past, incorporating all the sub-categories which we have mentioned above, as well as modernist and postmodernist variants which subvert and adapt the conventions of the classical historical novel to differing degrees. The innovations of these later historical fictions have echoed the various criticisms levelled against classic positivist historiography by thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Walter Benjamin, Michel Foucault, and Hayden White, among others. Although their understandings of historiography vary, these critics have all made the fundamental point that the pretence of historical totality and pure objectivity put forth by the classical positivist model is artificial and false, and may give the misleading impression that history moves along a pre-determined path towards some ultimate destination. As we will see, the novels of Mendoza and Muñoz Molina are sensitive to these philosophical issues, and accordingly challenge the linear, narrative mode of classic historiography and its mythifying propensities.

Chronotope As Analytical Tool

The Bakhtinian concept of chronotope has been applied in this study because of its particular usefulness in the analysis of historical fiction and the understanding of genre. It is a neologism coined by Bakhtin to give name to the 'intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature' (84). It has 'representational importance' because 'the chronotope makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their veins. An event can be communicated, it becomes information, one can give precise data on the place and time of its occurrence' (250). In addition, it is intimately connected to genre:

> It can even be said that it is precisely the chronotope that defines genre and generic distinctions, for in literature the primary category in the chronotope is time. The chronotope as a formally constitutive category determines to a significant degree the image of man in literature as well. The image of man is always instrinsicially chronotopic. (85)

Therefore, we can examine how novels blend different chronotopes in a manner that promotes evolution, creating a constant tension between the unifying forces of convention and the disruptive, subversive forces of innovation. Bakhtin points out that chronotope does not just refer to the organisation of space/time in the literary text but also applies to the 'real' world. The relationships between the text and the real world may also be understood chronotopically, and the chronotopes of art and life are always in dialogue with one another, affecting the way in which meaning is produced at different points in time (254). There is, therefore, no determining point in space/time from which the text can be definitively interpreted.[2] Our understanding of space and time in the text depends upon our own particular conceptions of these, which will have been formed by the culture within which we have been raised (257). Chronotope thus serves as a useful concept for understanding the interaction between the text and its socio-historical context and between the text and its historical referents. It reminds us that interpretation is ever changing, older discourses becoming assimilated and synthesised to create new understandings over time, like an endless feedback loop with increasing resonances. While the chronotopes of the work may be drawn from the chronotopes of the real world, however, Bakhtin cautions

2 This, says Michael Holquist, can be contrasted with the chronotopical conceptions of other theories. In vulgar Marxism, for example, the time/space of the author is determining; in reader reception theory, the time/space of a text's reader is determining; and in early formalism, the analysis derived in the time/space of a formalist critic is taken to be a universal pattern not dependent on the contingent factors of its reception (141).

against falling into a naïve realism, and insists on the categorical separation of the exterior world and the world represented in the work. Similarly, 'we must not confuse the author-creator of a work with the author as human being' nor 'confuse the listener of multiple or varied periods, recreating and renewing the text, with the passive reader or listener of one's own time (which leads to dogmatism in interpretation and evaluation)' (253).

In this article, the term 'structural chronotope' will be used to refer to those chronotopes which govern the overall organisation of space and time in the novel. For example, a historical novel is always governed by a structural chronotope of 'historical time' (which refers to real historical events), although the way in which historical time is made manifest will depend on how it is combined with other structural chronotopes, as well as with chronotopes of other orders. Another chronotope which has particular structural importance is what we will call a 'narrative chronotope'. Such chronotopes can be made to correspond to the different diegetic levels of Genettian narratology. For example, a heterodiegetic narrator is harboured in one of the novel's narrative chronotopes, which refers implicitly or explictly to the time and place of narration. The story told by the heterodeigetic narrator is framed by at least one other narrative chronotope, with the two chronotopes being in dialogue with one another to create the novel's overall structure. Thus, in the structural chronotopes of historical time and biographical time, we generally find a heterodiegetic narrator who speaks from a point in space/time distanced to that of the represented events. The narrator inhabits one narrative chronotope (which corresponds to the extradiegetic level in Genette), while the represented events are contained in another (corresponding to the intradiegetic level). The narrative chronotopes can themselves be further broken down or aligned with other minor chrontopes (or generic motifs), all of them also blending and combining with one another to provide variations on the overall chronotopical structure and therefore to genre. If the narrative is fragmented across different spatial and temporal locations, then each of these may also have their own corresponding narrative chronotope (as we will find in the case of *La noche de los tiempos*). Most novels will contain at least two narrative chronotopes, although it is possible for there to be only one in the case of a homodiegetic narrator who narrates events in which he or she is directly involved, as they occur and in the present tense. As soon as a homodiegetic narrator speaks of past events, however, two narrative chronotopes emerge.

This understanding of structural and narrative chronotopes will be applied to the analysis of the novels of Mendoza and Muñoz Molina to show how they resist the emplotment of the Spanish Civil War as an inevitable tragedy and instead put forth a view of history as a series of chance happen-

ings. We will also see how various generic motifs are employed and subverted in order to advance the novels' critique of particular civil war myths.

The 'Two-Spain' Trope

The trope of the 'Two Spains' – the one liberal, progressive and secular, the other authoritarian, conservative and Catholic – has been used to narrate and interpret Spanish history since the early nineteenth century and, despite Santos Juliá's proclamation to the contrary in 2004 (*Historias* Conclusion), it continues to exert an influence over Spanish historical and political discourse today.[3] Accordingly, the Spanish Civil War has often been understood as but another instance of the perennial social conflict between these opposing groups, born of a congenital propensity of Spaniards for violence and civil war. This characterisation of deep and irreconcilable division has given the war a sense of inevitability and provided a justification for the military rebellion of 1936. The Francoists claimed that it was a necessary 'crusade' in order to forestall an imminent Communist revolution, restore law and order, and preserve Spain's Catholic tradition and unity as a country. In the 1960s, the Francoist interpretation gave way to a generalised conception of the war as a collective madness for which both sides bore responsibility but which was still an inevitable, if tragic, result of the radicalism of Second Republic politics. This view of the war endured throughout the years of the transition to democracy and is still prominent today (see Aguilar Fernández, 85–6). Meanwhile, outside Spain the war has frequently been simplified as a clash between the forces of international communism and fascism. This has happened largely because

3 For a history of this trope, see Juliá's *Historias de las dos Españas* (2004) or Vicente Cacho's article 'La imagen de las dos Españas' (1986) for a shorter summary. In a 2007 article in the *Colorado Review of Hispanic Studies*, Sebastiaan Faber disputed Juliá's assertion that the 'Two-Spain' trope was no longer applicable to current-day interpretations of Spanish history, correctly pointing out that the polarisation of the debate about how the war should be remembered indicates it continues to play a significant role ('Spain's Past', 169). Faber and Juliá have also disagreed over the historical memory movement, with Faber robustly defending the 'recuperacionistas' against accusations made by Juliá that they are ingenuous and confuse fallible memory and its present-day political concerns with historical objectivity. Faber's initial response to Juliá is delivered in the article just cited, with the discussion being further extended in the same journal in 2009 (see Faber 'Spain's Past' and Julia & Faber 'Debate'). In fact, both make valid points, for it is essential to maintain an overall discursive balance between the objective account of the historian and the subjective narrative of the witness. Neither alone can tell us all there is to know. It is here too that literature can play an important role, as it is able to combine the various elements of objective historical narrative, first-person testimony, and imaginative fictional re-creation to present its own unique viewpoint on the past.

of the participation of Germany, Italy and the USSR in the conflict, causing the membership of the fascist Falange and the Communist Party to surge in Spain, although they had only had minority status before the war broke out and were regarded with contempt by many. Another reason was the tendency among the diverse political groupings, both before and after the war, to apply the epithets 'fascista' and 'rojo' (red or Marxist) to their enemies, regardless of whether they actually supported the associated political positions.

Such mythical characterisations of the Spanish Civil War and its origins have been systematically dismantled, or at least qualified, by historians over the past forty years. Already in 1977, the English historian Raymond Carr had attacked the assumption that Spain was divided into two opposing blocs in the pre-civil war period. He argued that analysis of the 1936 electoral lists suggests the existence of a hidden 'centre' vote that was camouflaged by the system and that the rhetoric of both sides had given a perception of increased antagonism (47).[4] This interpretation is broadly supported by historians such as Casanova and Gil Andres in their 2009 *Historia de España* (158) and Javier Cervera in his study of wartime Madrid (34), with many commentators now referring to this hidden centre vote as the 'Third Spain'. The term was coined in 1937 by the first President of the Republic, Niceto Alcalá Zamora, who defined it as 'constitucional y parlamentaria, cordialmente igualitaria, emanada de la justicia social, católica en su mayoría, pero sin formar un partido confesional' (quoted in Giustiniani, 7) ('constitutional and parliamentary, warmly egalitarian, emanating from social justice, Catholic in its majority, but without forming a confessional party'). However, the exact make-up of this group remains subject to debate, and it is sometimes understood as referring exclusively to those who went into exile in 1936 (cf. Giustiniani, 1; Romero Samper, 306; Juliá 'Guerra', 45), while others apply the label to all those who supported democracy against radical extremism, whatever their age, class or ideology (cf. Moradiellos García, *Mitos*, 53–67; Preston, *Tres Españas*; Trapiello). For his part, José-Carlos Mainer denies that a Third Spain existed at all, contending instead that there were a variety of positions within both sides ('Guerra civil'), while Angel Loureiro dismisses the category as another variation of the two-Spain myth which obscures the plurality and contingencies of history (32). He makes a valid point and the

4 Interestingly also, a 2010 Metroscopia poll found that 45% of respondents were unable to say firmly whether their families had fought for one side or the other. Of this number, 8% said that their families belonged to no side, 11% said to both and 26% said they did not know (Lamo de Espinosa, 56). We should not assume that the families of all the 'don't knows' were moderates, as they may have opted to black out any mention of the war or of the political convictions that they might have had. However, these figures do seem to indicate that a substantial number of Spaniards were either ambivalent or uninterested in the reasons for which the war was being fought.

term will therefore be largely avoided in this paper.

Over the past fifteen years there has also been a growing consensus among national and international historians that the military coup of July 1936 escalated into an all-out war only because of the intervention of Germany and Italy and the failure of democratic France and Britain to do so. Indeed, it has also been shown that it was British antipathy to the Republic (due to fears that a communist government would damage her economic interests) which actively prevented France and other democratic countries from coming to the aid of the legitimate government, thus forcing its leaders to reluctantly turn to the USSR (cf. Viñas, 12–37; Bernecker, 81; Moradiellos García 'British Government'; *Perfidia*).[5] These interpretations grant far more importance to the international European context than in the past, when the focus was almost exclusively on the historic social and political tensions within the country.[6] Recently uncovered evidence from the Comintern archives also shows that far from planning to instigate Communist revolution in Spain, Stalin did not believe the country was ready for revolution and instructed the Communist Party (PCE) to help stabilise the democratic Republic after the 1936 elections (see Hernández Sánchez 72).

Although Francoist interpretations of the war have been largely dismantled, many historians nevertheless warn against romanticising the Second Republic or establishing a false equivalence between that politically unstable regime and the successful democracy of Spain today. Instead, as Santos Juliá argues, the violence and atrocities perpetrated by Republican sympathisers, before and after the war had broken out, must be acknowledged as well as the presence of anti-democratic elements.[7] As we will now see, the two novels

5 Gabriel Jackson, however, maintains that between 1933 and 1945 Germany was perceived as a greater threat than the USSR by the majority of Western Europe and America and that analyses have been overly tainted by Cold War divisions (57). He mentions only the more anti-communist studies of Burnett Bolloten (*The Spanish Civil War*) and Stanley Payne (*The Spanish Civil War, the Soviet Union, and Communism*) and J. J. Linz (*El sistema de partidos en España)*, though, and makes no reference to more recent works by Angel Viñas or Enrique Moradiellos, which are more impartial in their analyses of Soviet intervention.

6 Angel Viñas is perhaps the most vocal spokesperson of the international view, having devoted the majority of his career to the investigation of to the international context of the war. He maintains that it was not the result of a long process, and that its immediate origin was the result of a coincidence of internal and external factors between July and September 1936, which turned the military coup into both a civil war and international conflict (10–11). He further argues that the conspirators had never envisaged an extended war, although there are some tenuous indications that some of them thought the coup could turn into a short one (19). See also Aróstegui, *Porqué el 18 de julio;* Preston, *The Politics of Revenge;* and Juliá 'De 'Guerra' contra el invasor' for similar appraisals.

7 For recent accounts of Republican rearguard violence, see especially Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust*, Julius Ruiz, *El terror rojo,* and Javier Cervera Gil, *Madrid en guerra*. Their inter-

which are the focus of this paper engage with these reappraisals of the war's origins, both in their discursive content and in their chronotopical structure.

Eduardo Mendoza: *Riña de gatos* (2010)

Eduardo Mendoza's *Riña de gatos* is set in the turbulent Madrid of March 1936, a moral fable with a humorous twist that exploits the conventions of various popular genres in order to provide a fresh perspective on the political rivalries that bitterly divided the Second Republic.[8] The main character is Anthony Whitelands, an English art expert who has been invited to Spain in order to evaluate the paintings of a wealthy Duke so that it can be sold to finance his family's evacuation to England. Whitelands is the stereotypical, reserved English gentleman. Apolitical to the point of naïvety and with an almost pedantic fascination for Velázquez, he forms a sharp contrast to the politicised, passionate and wily Spaniards who seek to manipulate him for their own ends. Against his will, he find himself enmeshed in an international intrigue involving the Falange, the Communist Party, the Spanish police and the British embassy, as each tries to extract an advantage in the confused political situation. Parody and comedy are used to devastating effect in the novel in order to subvert mythified discourses about the past and stimulate a dialogue between history and fiction. Political radicalism is ridiculed and simplistic characterisations of the civil war as an ideological battle between Communists and Falangist/Fascists are challenged, with both parties shown to have played only a minority role in Spanish politics before the war broke out. The Falangist leader José Antonio Primo de Rivera, with whom Anthony strikes up a friendship, is portrayed as a charming but irresponsible fool who, in contrast to the Francoist myths which glorified him as a hero after

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pretations vary somewhat, with Preston and Cervera Gil emphasising that most of the violence was perpetrated by 'uncontrolled' militants, particularly anarchists, while Ruiz argues that the role played by these 'incontrolados' has been exaggerated, with the rearguard repression soon being institutionalised by the Republican authorities through the mechanism of the revolutionary tribunals, which were not necessarily more just.

8 *Riña de gatos* won the Planeta prize in 2010 and is the first of the Catalan writer's novels to treat the Spanish Civil War, as well as the first to be set exclusively in Madrid. His novels have generally been divided into more complex, historically dense works such as *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta* (*The Truth About the Savolta Case*, 1975) or *La ciudad de los prodigios* (*The City of Marvels*, 1986), and shorter, lighter novels such as *El año del diluvio* (*The Year of the Flood;* 1992) and *Sin noticias de gurb* (*No Word from Gurb*, 1991). Parody and extratextual references are common to all of them to a greater or lesser extent and, as Ana Spitzmesser has observed, literary allusions are always highly self-conscious, as if the author recognised and was laughing at the difficulties inherent in the recreation and writing of history (35).

his death, did not have the respect of either Franco or the other military leaders. Instead – in accordance with recent historiography – *Riña* emphasises that there were many factors which led to the outbreak of war, while laying ultimate responsibility for the conflict at the feet of the military plotters and wealthy oligrarchs who wanted to replace the progressive Republic with their own, deeply conservative form of government.

The Ironic Dismantling of History

Riña not only parodies the classical historical novel but is also, in Bakhtinian terms, a parodied hybridisation of the chronotopes of the spy thriller and the nineteenth-century *folletín* (or serialised novel), combined with elements of farce, *esperpento* and the picaresque. The definition of parody itself remains the subject of controversy, as does its literary value, and it has been understood as having both reactionary and subversive potential.[9] These debates will not be repeated here, and we will adopt Linda Hutcheon's definition of parody (which is indebted to Bakhtin) as a structural relationship between two texts, or a form of textual dialogism, where there is a 'repetition with critical distance, which marks difference rather than similarity' (6) and which may have both a serious and a comic function. Hutcheon maintains that parody can be 'used to satirise the reception or even the creation of certain kinds of art' (16), although she distinguishes satire from parody by saying that the latter's 'target' text is always another work of art or, more generally, another form of coded discourse, while satire 'is both moral and social in its focus and ameliorative in its intention', thus having the outside world as a direct target (16). In *Riña de gatos*, the parody is both comic and serious and, as David Knutson has remarked in general of Mendoza, has a playful rather than denigrating attitude towards the popular genres whose conventions it exploits (158–9). *Riña* is also satirical – directly of 1936 politics and society, and indirectly of a present-day society which remains enthralled by the many myths that surround the catastrophic war. *Riña* employs two important structural chrontopes for its parody – the first is that of adventure time and the second, related one is that of historical time. The chronotope of adventure time is common to the various popular genres parodied by Mendoza (including the historical romance), and therefore provides a means of binding the complex parody together.[10] In addition, it adds to the critique

9 As Hutcheon says, parody can be a 'conservative force in both retaining and mocking other aesthetic forms, but is also capable of transformative power in creating new syntheses' (*Parody*, 20). Simon Dentith makes a similar point in his study of the form (27).

10 The type of historical works found in the *folletín* were sometimes akin to the classical nineteenth-century historical novel and contained footnote references, historical tracts,

of historical myth when it is juxtaposed with real historical time, while its own conventions are also subjected to parody and ridicule.

The chronotope of adventure time is fundamentally ahistorical and atemporal, its origins identified by Bakhtin as lying in ancient Greek romances. In its pure state, this time is externally 'empty', with the start and end point seeing no change in the age or psychology of the heroes despite the many adventures they may have experienced. On the 'inside', adventure time is 'made up of many short segments that correspond to each such adventure'. Within each sequence, minutes, hours and days all add up, as they would in the 'real' world' (91). Time linkers such as 'suddenly' and 'at just that moment' are crucially present because they introduce an element of chance, which has its own logic of '*random contingency* [*sovpadenie*], which is to say chance *simultaneity* [meetings] and *chance rupture* [nonmeetings], that is, a logic of random disjunctions as well' (91). Bakhtin also noted that in a second type of Greek novel adventure time was combined with 'everyday time'. This second chronotope is at heart a chronotope of the road and, as Bakhtin says, is to be commonly found in picaresque fiction. In such novels, the hero is not part of everyday life but comes into brief contact with it during his travels, before exiting again as he continues his journey or adventure. This chronotope is therefore fragmentary and 'time is deprived of its unity and wholeness – it is chopped up into separate segments, each encompassing a single episode from everyday life. The separate episodes […] – are rounded off and complete, but at the same time are isolated and self-sufficient' (128).

Other critics have described the use of adventure time (without calling it by that name) in the *folletín* and spy thriller. Thus, Ignacio Ferreras (249) and Aparici and Gimeneo (*xxx*) write of the Spanish serialised novel that there is little attempt to concretise space, and that a character defined in the first pages will neither age nor psychologically evolve. According Aparici and Gimeneo, such description of location and custom as exists is mythified and made to serve the purposes of moral, rather than social, characterisation so that the novels, while supposedly historical, are in fact atemporal (*li–lvi*). Ferreras largely concurs, further adding that since the author is unable to create a realistic world or characters, these novels are all necessarily adventure novels in the broad sense of the term, for they rely entirely on the narration of action to create interest (252). The spy thriller, especially in its most popular formats, has also been criticised by Vittorio Brunori for its ahistoricity and use of an ageless protagonist who is so completely identified with

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newspaper excerpts and other documents or reports to give historical authenticity. Nonetheless, most were closer in format to the romance or the historical adventure novel, where the main interest was action and melodrama rather than the realistic recreation of an era (cf. Aparici and Gimeneo, *xvii*; Ferreras, 262–5).

the dominant system that he is no more than a symbol (168–72). Brunori's characterisation is probably applicable to most cases (a famous example is, of course, James Bond), although a more profitable, nuanced analysis is prevented by his clear antipathy towards the spy thriller and other popular forms for their alleged conservatism.[11] Patricia Waugh, on the other hand, points to a pertinent difference between the spy thriller and the detective story which bears upon their chronotopical contexts in the real world and is relevant to our discussion here: the spy thriller, she says, 'is based not upon some faith in human reason as the detective story but much more upon fear of anomie, of disorder, of the insecurity of human life' (84). It is very much a product of the modern era where the old faith in human progress and the power of reason and logic to conquer barbarism had been shattered by the experience of the world wars. Its conventions are therefore particularly fitting to the purposes to which Mendoza would put them in his novel, as we will see in a later section.

The combined chronotope of adventure time and everyday life is manifested in a number of ways in *Riña.* Firstly, the novel begins and ends with a journey: we are introduced to Anthony while he is travelling on a train across Spain towards Madrid, and we say goodbye to him as he is about to board the return train to England. These are the threshold moments when Anthony enters and exits the 'adventure'. Indeed, at the station where Anthony catches the express to Madrid, he notes that the clock has stopped, showing 'una hora inverosímil' ('an improbable time', 11) as if hinting that he is about to step into a different temporal zone. Once he arrives in Madrid, time is very precisely defined and the reader is always informed of where and when Anthony goes to bed. In addition, he is invited to spend time among the people of Madrid, both high and low, and to participate, if only temporarily, in their everyday lives and concerns. Accordingly, he takes on the role of a fool (connected in literary terms to the picaresque rogue), an 'insider/outsider' figure who is free to move everywhere and who, according to Bakhtin, exposes convention and 'all that is vulgar and falsely stereotyped in human relationships' (162). In *Riña,*

11 The political affiliations of the popular novel and *folletín* have been the subject of some debate. Some commentators, like Brunori, see them all as essentially reaffirming the dominant system, although Aparici and Gimeneo are a little more nuanced, arguing that, although they treated problems such as the reform of prisons and the virtue of the worker, there was a complete conservatism with respect to issues such as family structure or the role of the woman in society. Even Ayguals de Izco, who is one of the most socially and politically progressive authors, reaffirms the lower middle class social structure, they say (*x–xi*). Ferreras, for his part, remarks that even though many of the *folletínes* manifested a vague socialism, their liberalism and anti-clericalism was confined to a few repeated clichés and never constituted a real challenge to the ruling class system, while the more radical novels were never very popular (273–4).

Anthony's innocent and uncomprehending gaze highlights the contradictions of pre-Civil War politics as he stumbles from one farcical situation to another.

The action usually unfolds along a linear chronology and is narrated by an omniscient, third-person narrator, also typical of adventure time. While the narration is usually focalised externally through Anthony, the narrator occasionally makes lengthy digressions, and there are sometimes rapid switches of point of view to present events which are occuring simultaneously elsewhere. These shifts become more frequent in the last third of the novel as the pace of the action increases, although they are often accompanied by self-conscious irony. One example occurs at the end of the scene where the Soviet agent, Kolia, orders Anthony's murder. His final words to the British/Communist double agent Higinio Zamora Zamorano are immediately succeeded by the following:

> Al mismo tiempo, lejos de allí y sin la menor sospecha de la inapelable sentencia dictada contra él por el agente de Lubianka, Anthony Whitelands hacía parar al taxi a cien metros del palacete […] (291)
>
> At the same time, far from there and without the slightest suspicion regarding the non-appealable sentence which had been pronounced on him by the agent from Lubianka, Anthony Whitelands stopped the taxi a hundred metres away from the mansion [...]

The irony here is a double-ended barb which ridicules Communist paranoia while at the same time poking fun at the stereotype of the evil Communist agent in anti-Russian and Cold War spy literature. There is also something reminiscent of Valle-Inclán's *esperpentos* in this cinematic technique of rapid scene-switching, giving an impression, as Diane Almeida says, of the whole as a cumulative 'succession of presents' (25). In addition, it recalls Walter Benjamin's modernist conception of history as an image that briefly 'flashes up at a moment of danger' in the present time ('Theses', 255), and of the work of the historian as a montage, where fragments of history have been placed together into a sequence which is not entirely seamless.

While ahistorical adventure time is the overriding chronotope of the popular historical romance, it is present in only minor form in the the historical novel proper, which is primarily governed by a combination of human biographical time (that of a human life from birth to death, and the associated physical and psychological changes) and historical time (the narrative of real historical events). Bakhtin emphasises that 'the historical time-sequence is measured by different standards of value [to individual life-sequence, or biographical time], other kinds of events take place in it, it has no interior aspect, no point of view for perceiving it from the inside out' (217). However, he also remarks that the Realist novels of the nineteenth century tightly

bound biographical, historical and everyday time together, so that they are 'fused into the unitary marker of the epoch' (247). In this way, historical fiction at its greatest can provide us with both an inside and outside view of history, providing a perspective that ordinary historiography is incapable of.

Riña is saturated with authentic historical detail. We can see numerous examples of the generic motifs (or chronotopes, as we prefer to call them) of the historical novel which were identified by Richard Humphrey in *The Historical Novel as Philosophy of History*. One of these is the clash between old and new, manifested in *Riña* as the opposition between the conservative forces of traditional Spain on the one side, and democratic Republican ideas and radical left-wing ideologies on the other (8).[12] The cyclic Romantic chronotope of 'nature and her slow processes' (12), intimately connected to human, biographical time, also manifests itself: at the beginning, winter still has its grip upon Madrid but it will have given way to spring in the final pages, coinciding with the resolution of the novel's mysteries, the arrest of José Antonio Primo de Rivera and the end of Anthony's adventure in Spain. Shifting seasonal weather between winter and spring creates a sense of passing time and historical movement, as well as reinforcing mood or signalling oncoming strife (cf. 194, 271, 280). In the following quotation, for example, which describes Madrid on the night of Anthony's arrival, the windy, wintery weather heightens the sense of imminent confrontation and creates unease:

> [a] causa del frío, el bullicio de la noche madrileña ha sido sustituido por el lúgubre ulular del implacable viento de la sierra, que arremolina las hojas secas y los papelotes esparcidos por el suelo negro, brillante de escarcha. Las fachadas de los edificios están cubiertas de carteles de propaganda electoral, rotos y sucios, y de pasquines de todas las tendencias que invariablemente llaman a la huelga, la insurrección y al enfrentamiento. (17)

> [b]ecause of the cold, the bustle of the Madrid night has been substituted by the mournful wailing of the implacable mountain wind, which swirls up the dry leaves and useless bits of paper scattered about the black soil, glittering with frost. The facades of the buildings are covered with billboards of electoral propaganda, broken and dirty, and with posters of all political tendencies which invariably call for strike, insurrection and confrontation.

Spring arrives in full at the end of the novel (423), signalling the end of one period and the beginning of another, both in the lives of the characters and in the fortunes of Spain which is entering the final chaotic period of the Second Republic before the outbreak of the civil war.

12 Falangism in itself could be said to embody this clash. While its fascist trappings place it among the new ideologies, its proponents would enthusiastically support the conservative-backed military uprising.

Riña also displays the chronotope of historical explanation based on 'long-term processes and developments' (Humphrey, 15). The novel is set over a period of only ten days, the last of José Antonio's days of freedom before his imprisonment (both historically and in the novel) and eventual execution.[13] However, the incarceration of the Falangist leader is clearly placed within the larger scope of the years and months leading up to the outbreak of civil war in Spain. The reader is informed of the background of events through historical digression on the part of the narrator or else through direct reports by characters. Such digressions were common techniques in the historical novel and the *folletín,* although, in the latter form in particular, the digressions usually had a moral or didactic purpose (Aparici and Gimeno, *xlix*).[14] In *Riña* the digressions always correspond with the accepted historical record, although they may be ironically double-voiced with the words of a character. For instance, there are two extended narratorial digressions related to the political situation in March 1936 on pages 170–172 and 338–339. The first briefly explains Azaña's political career during the Republic and how he became its president after the 1936 elections, along with an overview of the social problems: 'la agitación laboral, la reforma agraria, los enfrentamientos armados, la cuestión catalana' ('labour unrest, agrarian reform, armed confrontations, the Catalan question', 170), and the attitudes of the various political forces to the Republic's attempts at reform. Despite the difficulties, Azaña believed that it was still possible to reach a solution through dialogue and negotiation, a belief that is repeated in the second digression.[15] The narrator concurs with the president that the majority of the Spanish people also desire a peaceful resolution to the problems, the proof being in the multitudes who attended Azaña's election meetings, for whom he is 'la última esperanza de acuerdo

13 José Antonio Primo de Rivera was imprisoned on 14 March 1936 along with other Falangist leaders for the illegal possession of arms, although the charge was merely an excuse for the recently elected Popular Front government to remove the Falangist threat. He was incarcerated in the Modelo prison in Madrid and moved to the prison of Alicante on 5 June, where he was executed on 20 November 1936, having been found guilty of conspiracy against the Republic.

14 H. L. Hansen has noted that the mimesis of historical/documentary discourse is a common strategy employed by a number of recent civil war novels in order to give their texts an aura of authenticity, and is frequently accompanied, as in *Riña,* by the mixing of other genres such as biography, farce and grotesque realism ('Formas', 87).

15 The historical account given in these pages accords with the current, generally accepted view of pre-war political dynamics in Spain and Manuel Azaña's beliefs and position. The narrator is quite neutral in his account and mentions animosity shown towards Azaña by forces on both the left and the right. Nevertheless, it is clear that he sympathises with the president's belief that war was not inevitable, but that it was the self-defeatist attitude of Spaniards which was impelling them towards disaster and that the danger came from a violent minority. Therefore, there is here, as elsewhere in the novel, a challenge to the 'Two-Spain' myth.

y conciliación' ('the final hope of agreement and accord', 338). The danger posed by the violent elements is emphasised, however, because while Azaña 'cuenta con un amplio apoyo parlamentario y con la inmensa mayoría de los españoles, si bien y esto él lo sabe, la mayoría que le respalda de poco sirve contra las pistolas, y menos contra los cañones' ('counts on his extensive parliamentary backing and on the immense majority of Spaniards, he knows well that the majority which supports him is of little use against pistols, and of even less against cannons', 338). This quotation is one of the clearer examples of where Azaña's voice fuses with that of the narrator, presenting us with a double-voiced, subjective/objective account of the situation.

Despite such invocations of historical time and authenticity, 'History' is frequently referred to ironically in the novel (and is always written with a capital 'H'), such as in the following example:

> Todos los pesares que los reveses de la Historia, el desgobierno de la nación y las discordias de los hombres habían acumulado sobre la España de 1936 quedaban momentáneamente suspendidos a la hora del aperitivo por acuerdo unánime de las partes implicadas. (197)
>
> All of the sorrows which the misfortunes of History, the misgovernment of the nation, and the discord of men had accumulated over the Spain of 1936 were momentarily suspended at the moment of the aperitif by the unanimous agreement of the implicated parties.

Such treatment deflates teleological theories of history contained in Marxism and Falangism, impressing upon us that history is but the interpretation of selected facts and must not be treated as an eternally 'true' and complete picture of the past.[16] This is a view which is reinforced in a scene at the end of the novel, where Anthony pieces together all the various elements of intrigue in order to arrive at the conclusion that the Falangist leader, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, is a Communist agent and a traitor to his own party (even though he had just assisted in Anthony's rescue from a Communist assassination attempt). The usually rather naïve Anthony also provides us here with a suprisingly astute analysis of the Falange, its political irrelevance and its empty rhetoric, one which fully accords with non-biased historical studies of the period.[17] This combination of seemingly absurd speculation

16 The Falange, for example, constantly turned to Spain's violent and imperial past to argue that its destiny lay in a similar future, encapsulated in the rhetorical slogan of 'Unidad de destino en lo universal' ('Unity of destiny in the universal') the inspiration for which José Antonio derived from the writings of Ortega y Gasset. Crude Marxist theories also pointed to the inevitability of the arrival of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and slogans to this effect were much repeated in the years before the war.

17 See, for example, Preston's *The Politics of Revenge*, Sheila Ellwood's *Spanish Fascism in the Franco Era*, Ian Gibson's *En busca de José Antonio*, and Stanley Payne's *Falange*.

about José Antonio's political allegiances with real historical analysis reminds us that it is only in the light of the reader's prior historical knowledge that Anthony's conclusions appear as ridiculous as they do.[18]

Finally, we will briefly examine how the parody of the spy thriller places the Spanish Civil War in its international European context. The spy genre developed mainly in Britain in the late nineteenth century and then later in America. Its exemplars derived their plots from the international political concerns of their moment of production. Thus, during the interwar period, many British spy novels treated European balance-of-power politics, with the 'Red Menace' featuring strongly after the Bolshevik Revolution, a fear which intensified during the Cold War period. The parody of it is, therefore, a perfect vehicle for the satire of the European powers whose constant jockeying for position lead to the horror of the two world wars. The elements of the thriller are set up from the very beginning: the art dealer who organises Anthony's trip to Spain, Pedro Teacher, is described as a man of 'oscuros antecedentes' ('obscure background', 25) who is rumoured to have been involved in shady art transactions. The first hint of a wider international implication to the sale of the paintings emerges when Anthony recovers his lost passport from the British Embassy in Madrid. There, the diplomat Harry Parker mentions that Teacher is only half-English, implying divided loyalties, and that there are rumours he might be dabbling in contraband. Anthony denies being involved in any illegal transactions but when he is shown a supposed Velázquez by the Duke of Igualada that night he feels impelled to tell the diplomat about it in confidence. Parker informs his superiors against Anthony's wishes and the latter is summoned to the Embassy once more. He is then ordered by the absurdly named secret service agent Lord Bumblebee to continue with the sale of the painting in the name of British interests. The Embassy was aware that the proceeds of the sale would go towards supporting the Falange but while 'Inglaterra no mantiene relaciones de amistad y cooperación con gobiernos ni con grupos de ideología fascista, […] tampoco tiene una actitud beligerante hacia ellos' ('England doesn't maintain friendly or cooperative relations with fascist governments or groups, [...] neither does it have a belligerant attitude towards them', 242). The real threat for Britain was from the USSR, so 'en España hemos de apoyar los fascistas frente a los marxistas' ('in Spain we have to support the fascists before the Marxists', 242), and here

18 This also illustrates the point made by Agnes Heller that comedy requires a present perspective in order to function. As she argues, the comic experience is not only always a present one (it can only be related as a memory, not re-created in telling), but satires, parodies, palimpsest mock genres, paraphrases, figures and ideas of the past all happen in the present. This is why the comic drama and novel, and eventually also the comic picture, are said to follow a moralistic or political purpose (13–14).

the novel again follows most recent historiography. Bumblebee also warns Anthony that, if the Spanish authorities learn of it, he will have no protection from the Embassy and will have to pay the full consequences.[19] Finally, he adds that a Soviet Agent named Kolia has been mobilised to stop the sale of the painting and will try to eliminate Anthony. The art critic's subsequent terror is comically over-exaggerated and he is convinced that his nemesis will look like George Raft, the American actor famous for his portrayals of gangsters in crime melodramas of the thirties and forties.

The inevitable assassination attempt is set up by the British/Communist double agent, Higinio Zamora, and is conducted in an entirely farcical manner. The would-be assassins are described in esperpento fashion as incarnating 'a la perfección los rasgos distintivos del barroco español' ('to perfection the distinctive features of the Spanish barroque', 386). The row that develops between Higinio and one of the other assassins also provides a satire on Commmunist totalitarianism which provoked the assassinations of many who diverged from Stalinist policy during the Civil War, seriously damaging Republican unity and increasing international hostility to the Republic.[20] Thus, when Higinio pompously informs an incredulous Anthony that he is being executed in the name of the international proletarian cause, the other silences him, wanting to get the unpleasant job done with quickly. Higinio refuses, saying,

> Me cago en san Judas, Manolo […] una cosa es ejecutar a un hombre por la Revolución de Octubre y otra es despachar a un tío como si fuese un cerdo. Aquí don Antonio, después de todo, no es un enemigo del pueblo. (385).

19 This refusal on the part of the authorities to protect their 'unofficial' agents if they are exposed is a common theme in Mendoza and also occurs in *El misterio, El laberinto* and *La verdad.*

20 The real motives for Soviet policy during the Spanish Civil War remains the subject of some controversy, partly because access to Russian Comintern archives has only been very recent and there is still much room for historiographical work. In relation to the Communist purges in Spain, particularly of the anarchist POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista), Hernández Sanchez, argues that they policy was implemented because of Communist conviction that a united, moderate front needed to be maintained in order to win the war and gain international sympathy (25–74). Geoffrey Roberts also emphasises that the hunting down of the POUM was the result of a genuinely-held fear that they were sabotaging the war as part of an international fascist front (84). For his part, Daniel Kowalsky, who has had access to Russian archives, argues that Stalin's involvement was ultimately cynical and self-interested but that his nefarious influence in Spanish affairs is over-exaggerated, as the Kremlin did not possess the resources to realise the objectives declared in various decrees (par. 22). Whatever the motives of the Communists, Paul Preston reports that Ronald Fraser and Fernando Claudín have argued convincingly that had the Communists managed to channel the revolutionary fervour that had exploded at the start of the war instead of crushing it, the Republic might well have won the war (*Guerra Civil,* 273).

> To hell with Saint Judas, Manolo [...] it's one thing to execute a man in the name of the October Revolution, but it's another to finish him off as if he were a pig. When all is said and done, Mr. Antonio isn't an enemy of the people.[21]

In the end, Higinio will allow Anthony to escape and the Englishman is dramatically swooped off by José Antonio Primo de Rivera.

The final denouement occurs shortly afterwards at the British Embassy but, in keeping with its parodic style, *Riña* frustrates generic expectations and leaves a number of mysteries unresolved. We learn that Pedro Teacher was a German spy but this was not the reason for his mysterious murder. A search of his flat uncovered documentation which showed he had known that the Velázquez was not real but there is no indication of whether the Duke also knew the truth. Finally, even though Kolia met Higinio and the latter presumably would have been able to provide the British with information about his identity, the diplomats claim to have no idea who the Russian agent actually is. As in Mendoza's first novel, *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta* (1975), the impossibility of ever knowing the ultimate truth of an event is thus underscored and the uncertainties of history once more foregrounded.

To sum up, we have seen how the novel's chronotopes establish an implicit connection between 1936 Madrid and the current debates in Spain and how the chronotope of adventure time is used to bind the parody of different genres together. We have also seen that lurking beneath this seemingly unified, linear chronotope there is in fact a disunity and disjunction provoked by the episodic nature of the adventures and the need to heighten drama through frequent switches of scene and point of view. This presents us with a somewhat Benjaminian conception of history as a series of episodes which have been strung together giving it only an apparent unity. The parody of the spy thriller is also used effectively to place the Spanish Civil War in its international context, a factor frequently overlooked in novels which focus on the internal aspects of the conflict. The comedy provoked by the clash of generic conventions also establishes a critical distance from the represented past, the interspersing of passages of historical analysis with farcical scenes reminding us that history is a somewhat provisional interpretation of established facts not an ultimate, final truth about the matter.

21 There is also here is a subtle joke in Higinio's use of the term 'don',' hierarchical modes of address having been dispensed with by communists in favour of 'comrade'.'

Antonio Muñoz Molina, La noche de los tiempos (2009)

Antonio Muñoz Molina's *La noche de los tiempos* (2009) tells the story of forty-eight-year-old architect, Ignacio Abel, as he goes into exile in the US in October 1936.[22] While the present time of the novel narrates his journey from New York to Burton College, Rhineburg, the narrative is dominated by his memories of the past year in Madrid and of his love affair with the young American, Judith Biely. It tackles many of the same issues explored in *Riña de gatos*, displaying an equally negative attitude towards political extremism. Both novels also challenge the clichéd view that pre-war Spain was divided into two radically opposing blocks, with pre-war politics represented as shifting and plural. However, unlike *Riña* which suggests that there was a crucial lack of communication among the different sides, *La noche* shows that people from all political persuasions mixed and fraternised with one another despite the increased levels of violence. Unusually also for a novel written from a left-wing perspective, there is an unflinching depiction of the repression practiced by uncontrolled militias in Madrid during the early months of the civil war and a more negative re-evaluation of the role played by frequently glamourised left-wing artists and intellectuals such as José Bergamín, Rafael Alberti, and Maria Teresa León. Nevertheless, the Francoist alliance is roundly condemned for having instigated the war, the brutality and cruelty practiced by its advancing army presented as being even worse than the terror unleashed by the 'revolutionaries' in Madrid. Finally, there is a strong vindication of those moderates who are said to have made up the 'Third Spain', and whose voices have so often been silenced by the cliché of the 'Two Spains'.

Gonzalo Navajas has noted that in his treatment of history Muñoz Molina has tended to oscillate between the subjectivised reconstruction of the past and an objective reconstruction which calls upon the individual conscience to engage with this past in a signficant and genuine manner (40). In *La noche,* we find a relatively equal balance between the subjective and the objective, presenting us with a view of history which comes simultaneously from

22 It is his tenth novel, and was well-received by both critics and readers, winning the French *Prix Mediteranée* in 2012 and appearing on a number of Spanish bestseller lists for 2009 and 2010. Muñoz Molina was one of the relatively few novelists to treat the Spanish Civil War in the decade before the 'memory boom', first of all with *Beatus Ille,* which was published in 1986 and presented a rather mythified view of the war but especially with *El jinete polaco* (1991), winner of both the Planeta Prize (1991) and National Literature Prize (1992). The latter is a novel about 'post-memory' (to use Marianne Hirsch's term for trans-generational memory transmission of Holocaust experiences), the two protagonists sharing the second-hand memories they have received from their parents and using old photographs to reconstruct a past event in the fictional town of Mágina.

the inside and the outside, thus bringing history close while paradoxically distancing it at the same time. This balance is achieved through the use of a complex chronotopical structure which betrays modernist influences in the construction of time.[23]

Governing the whole, we have a chronotope of historical time. The novel employs a number of conventions from the classical historical novel: it portrays a decisive moment in Spanish history – the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War – and the impact it has on private lives; it is peopled with a mixture of historical and fictional characters, with the former playing the major roles while the latter have only a secondary part; and it is rich with description and heteroglossia (a Bakhtinian term to refer to the diversity of social languages contained in a single, unitary text) in order to provide authenticity of time and place. However, Muñoz Molina eschews the standard practice of the classical historical novel (and the historiographical practices it echoes) to narrate history as a sequence of cause and effect leading to a particular event. This type of structure, as we have discussed, gives a feeling of inevitability which Muñoz Molina has said that he explicitly wanted to avoid: 'Es mentira que estuviéramos abocados a un final así' ('It's a lie that we were doomed to such an end') ('Contra los fanatismos'). Neither does he use an omniscient third-person narrator to give the illusion of total objective impartiality and therefore of narrating historical 'truth'. His aim was rather to give an account of 1935–36 Madrid from the subjective perspective of someone who has no idea of the disaster that is about to unfold. At the same time, he does not seek to create a *faux*-memoir but to foreground the ways in which the past may be fictionalised and apprehended by the present. In this, Muñoz Molina follows Walter Benjamin's exhortation to pursue a practice of history that does not seek to pile up facts about a dead past but one which recognises the presence of the now. Such a practice involves brushing history 'against the grain', (Benjamin, 'Theses', 255) in order to reveal those elements which have been obscured by dominant stories about the past.

In order to break up standard historical time, Muñoz Molina employs three narrative chronotopes, which are combined in a number of ways to create a critical distance from the represented events and provoke the reader to question previously-held beliefs. The first narrative chronotope is the time/

23 Time is a constant preoccupation of the novel, reaching its pinnacle in pages 408 to 416, where the words 'time' and 'tiempo' appear 49 times with rhythmic repetition in expressions and idioms in both Spanish and English. They mostly refer to Judith and Ignacio's family, although in the midst of the more personal reminiscences there is also a sudden shift to current affairs – to the fatalistic wait for the military uprising and common political slogans – followed by a final movement back to the personal. As we will see, this is but one of the strategies used by the author to link the private/fictional with the public/historical in the novel.

space of the novel's moment of production at the end of the 2000s. It is here that the narrator is located, speaking always in the first person and the present tense. He posits himself as the author of the novel, addressing the reader from the very first lines and referring repeatedly to the act of imagination in his exposition of Ignacio and his chronotopical situation. He says on page 12, for example: 'Lo he visto cada vez con más claridad, surgiendo de ninguna parte, viniendo de la nada, nacido en un fogonozo de la imaginación […]' ('I've seen him more clearly every time, appearing from nowhere, materialising from nothingness, born in a flash of the imagination').[24] Such self-reflexive interventions reappear throughout the novel, reminding us of the fictionality of the story and helping to create a certain distance between the reader and the represented world. At the same time, though, the narrator explicitly states his desire to present a vivid and realistic portrayal of the past in the manner of the classical historical novel: 'Quiero imaginar con la precisisón de lo vivido lo que ha sucedido veinte años antes de que yo naciera y lo que dentro de no muchos años ya no recordará nadie' ('I want to imagine with the precision of lived experience what happened twenty years before I was born, and what no one will remember in a few years time', 575). This quotation also indicates that the narrator bears a biographical resemblance to the real-life author, who was born in 1956, exactly twenty years after the outbreak of the war. In addition, the narrator's intentions are similar to those expressed by Muñoz Molina in interviews.[25] As noted by H. L. Hansen ('Autoreflection', 14–15) and A. Gómez López-Quiñones (35), the foregrounding of a subjective narrator is typical of a category of novels written during the current 'memory boom'. Such texts tend to engage directly with the processes of current-day historical memory, foregrounding how, why, when and by whom the past is constructed and interpreted.

The second narrative chronotope is the novel's present time/space, beginning in October 1936 as Ignacio Abel is about to board a train in Penn Station, New York, bound for Burton College, Rhineburg, where he is to oversee the

24 Further examples of direct narratorial intrusion occur on pages 42, 69, 75, 103, 179, 575, 673, 719, and 958, usually with reference to Ignacio but sometimes to Judith.

25 Muñoz Molina says, for example, 'A veces me encontraba yendo un poco alucinado por la calle, buscando los lugares exactos donde habían sucedido episodios reales o inventados' (Sometimes I found myself walking somewhat dazedly through the street, looking for the exact places where real or invented incidents had occurred', 'Narra el drama'). He also talks about how he wanted to touch tickets and newspapers from the time to get a literal feeling of how it was. Similarly, the narrator of *La noche* tells us he visited the building that once housed the 'Alianza de Intelectuales' after looking for its location on a map (719), and that when he touches the pages of a newspaper 'me parece que ahora sí estoy tocando algo que pertence a la materia de aquel tiempo […]' ('it seems to me now that I am touching something that belongs to the matter of that time', 577).

construction of a new library. Here narration occurs in the third person about Ignacio's journey and the present tense is used to give a sense of immediacy; but it is only ever focalised (internally or externally) through Ignacio's thoughts and actions. Sometimes, the future tense is employed, such as on pages 42–3 when Ignacio is on the train to Rhineburg and imagines how Professor Stevens will react when he sees him. It is used most noticeably in the very last chapter of the novel where the narrator tells us (in a speculative, almost conditional tone) what will happen once Judith and Ignacio wake up in the morning, having spent the night with each other at his residence in Burton College. The section begins thus: 'Se quedará dormido y cuando despierte con la sensación de un sueño muy profundo […] ya habrá empezado muy débilmente a clarear y Judith no estará a su lado en la cama' ('He'll fall asleep, and when he wakes with the sensation of having rested deeply […] the sky will already have started to brighten a little and Judith won't be next to him in the bed', 948). Narration then proceeds in the future tense until a new paragraph on page 955 which returns us to the present time: 'Pero ese momento no ha llegado todavía, pertenece a un tiempo aún inexistente, al futuro de dentro de unas pocas horas' ('But this moment has not yet arrived, it belongs to a time which does not yet exist, to the future of a few hours time'). The narrator's voice very clearly dominates here, with his omniscient ability to look into the future but there is still a sense of uncertainty, a refusal to close off that future; the reader will never know whether Judith and Ignacio ever meet again or even on what terms they eventually part that morning. History (and Ignacio's story) thus remains unfinalised.

Finally, there is a third narrative chronotope which frames the past year of Ignacio's life, also narrated in the third person but in the past tense. The narration here is generally omniscient and, while Ignacio is usually the focus, there are moments of internal focalisation through other characters. One such example occurs in the narration of Adela's attempted suicide preceded by an extended description of her thoughts with regard to both her personal situation and the increasing violence on the streets of Madrid (499–517).

The second and third narrative chronotopes taken together create a structural chronotope of memory. There are frequent temporal and spatial shifts between the present and past as well as a certain repetitiveness, particularly of themes which obsess Ignacio. These include his love affair with the young American student Judith Biely whom he seeks in the US; his failed marriage to his wife, Adela; the pleas of his Falangist brother-in-law for protection in war-time Madrid; and his fruitless attempts to prevent the assassination of his friend Professor Rossman. It is not, however, a full mimesis of memory, for the narrator's voice is never far away continuously foregrounding the fictional act of narration.

A linking of the first and third narrative chronotopes occurs when real historical events are interlaced with Ignacio's memories, giving the impression of simultaneously looking back at history and of living that time as it was through his eyes (or through those of other characters). This could also be partly understood within the chronotope of memory, as Ignacio may have gained later knowledge about simultaneous events which he is able to relate to his personal life. Nevertheless, it is the narrator's chronotope which dominates in such sequences, for it is here that historical knowledge is located. The following quotation from *La noche* is exemplary of the technique:

> El viernes 10 de julio, a la misma hora en que Ignacio Abel consigue hablar con Judith Biely después de dos semanas sin saber nada de ella, cuando por fin logra que le prometa un encuentro, el teniente José Castillo, de la Guardia de Asalto […] está tomando café en un bar y ve al otro extremo de la barra a unos desconocidos que le parecen algo sospechosos y le hacen instintivamente llevarse la mano a la pístola. (339)

> On Friday, 10 July, at the same time that Ignacio Abel succeeds in speaking to Judith Biely after two weeks of hearing nothing from her, when at last he manages to get her to promise him a meeting, Lieutenant José Castillo of the Assault Guards […] is having coffee in a bar and sees some suspicious-looking strangers at the other end of the counter, who cause him to instinctively reach for his pistol.

Ignacio's direct memories are usually written in the past tense and the use of the present tense here indicates that the narrator's voice dominates, although it is still filtered through Igancio's mind. There is a self-consciousness about the use of this technique in the novel, such as when Ignacio is travelling on the train to Burton College and he reflects upon his ignorance of what was to come:

> Pero esta tarde de finales de septiembre de 1935 Ignacio Abel no sabe nada todavía: es la escala de su propia ignorancia es lo que ahora más le cuesta imaginar, como cuando se mira la expresión de alguien en una foto de entonces […] *no ven lo que va a sucederles, lo que está sucediendo tal vez muy cerca sin que ellos se enteren, sin que sepan que esta fecha común en la que viven habrá cobrado una siniestra magnitud en los libros de historia.* [emphases added] (43)

> But that afternoon of the end of September 1935, Ignacio Abel still knows nothing: the scale of his own ignorance is now the most difficult thing for him to imagine, like when you look at the expression on the face of someone in a photograph from the time […] *they don't see what will happen to them, what might be happening very close by without them being aware of it, without knowing that this ordinary moment they live in will have taken on a sinister relevance in the history books.* [emphases added]

The quotation is strongly double-voiced with the language of Ignacio and the narrator, and the italicised section clearly reveals the author's refracted intentions with regard to the treatment of history in the novel: it is only in retrospect that events acquire historical significance.

The second and third narrative chronotopes also combine to form a structural chronotope of exile. As is commonly perceived in such a chronotope there is a doubling of space and time. Ignacio's current location in space/time cannot be fully separated from that of his past; the motherland exerts a strong power over his present, so much so that the two chronotopes are metaphorically linked to his body, as if they were contained within him or as if he inhabited both of them at once:

> En su conciencia dos relojes marcan dos horas distintas *como dos pulsaciones discordantes que percibiera apretando en dos puntos distintos del cuerpo*. Son las cuatro de la tarde y son las diez de la noche [...]. En Madrid es noche cerrada desde hace varias horas […]. En la casa de la Sierra donde sus hijos tal vez siguen viviendo se escucharán en la oscuridad los golpes secos del péndulo y el mecanismo de un reloj que siempre anda con retraso. [emphases added] (77–8)

> In his consciousness two clocks mark two different times like *two discordant pulses which can be perceived by pressing against two different points of the body*. It is four o'clock in the afternoon and it is ten o'clock at night [...]. In Madrid it has been fully light for several hours [...]. In the house in the mountains where his children might still be living, the dry ticking of the pendulum and the mechanism of a clock which is always behind time will be audible in the darkness. [emphases added] (77-8)

The slowness of the clock in the house in the mountains is in contrast to the precision of those in Penn Station, alluded to a number of times in the opening pages of the novel (eg. 11, 12, 23). There is also evidence here of what Esther Peeren called 'dwelling-in-dischronotopicality' (72–3). The exile not only experiences the homeland as a different chronotope, distanced in space and time from the one he is presently inhabiting, he also takes with him a way of conceptualising space and time which is particular to his community. For Ignacio, everything in Spain, such as the clock and the house in the mountains which belongs to his conservative in-laws, moves slowly. It therefore exists in an anterior time to other parts of the world; it is backward and behind. Thus, at the very end of the novel, he says to Judith that

> se había equivocado acerca de todo, pero más que nada sobre sí mismo, sobre su lugar en el tiempo. Toda su vida pensando que pertenecía al presente y al porvenir, y ahora empezaba a comprender que si se sentía tan fuera de lugar era porque su país era el pasado. (935)

> he had been mistaken about everything, but above all, about himself, about his place in time. All of his life thinking that he belonged to the present and the future, and now he was starting to realise that if he felt so out of place it was because his country was the past.

Ignacio is not only out of place because Spain is part of his personal past but also because he still conceives of himself within the chronotope of Spain where everything always moved too slowly for him, placing him comparatively at the vanguard. While he was there, he could feel himself part of the present and the future represented by the Republic's modernising projects,[26] intimately connected for him with construction projects such as that of the Ciudad Universitaria (see 260–1).[27] However, the Civil War truncated Ignacio's conception of Spanish modernity and the Ciudad Universitaria would be completely destroyed by Francoist bombings.[28] The US is much further along the path of economic modernisation and everything moves much more quickly – it is the future in comparison to Spain.

In *La noche,* this chronotope of exile has the function of both creating nostalgia for the homeland while at the same time creating an emotional and critical distance from it by highlighting its imperfections. Ignacio's journey to the US is emblematic of those educated moderates who chose exile over participation in the conflict. It is they who might have eventually

26 Following Mari Paz Balibrea (who is in turn influenced by Jo Labanyi), the Second Republic is conceptualised in this paper as 'a plurality of competing modern projects', many of which would become 'residual, alternative' modernities to the one represented by the Francoist dictatorship. Modernity is understood by Balibrea in a threefold manner as a way of conceiving time, an Enlightenment project, and 'how individuals and collectives experience their own conditions of life' (7–8).

27 Ignacio is a member of the architectural 'Generation of '25', and the Ciudad Universitaria works, begun in 1927 during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, was 'la manifestación global del espíritu de la generación de 1925' ('the global manifestation of the spirit of the generation of 1925', Bohigas, 22). It was initiated under the direction of Modesto López Otero, who was reactionary and monumentalist in his style but included a team of young architects who managed to impose their more progressive ideas due to the climate created by the arrival of the Second Republic (Bohigas, 22). Ignacio Abel would have studied functionalism when he was at the Bauhaus in Germany, a modernist architectural style developed in the 1920s, and which has been called the official architecture of the Republic (Bohigas, 110). He is thus very much part of the Republican intellectual and artistic vanguard.

28 Ignacio has a prophetic conversation about the destruction of the Ciudad Universitaria with the artist and poet, José Moreno Villa. In the conversation, Moreno Villa mentions how painters used to draw fruit with a mark or a hole through which a worm might appear in order to symbolise the transience of life. Ignacio replies: 'No me diga eso, Moreno […]. No quiero llegar mañana a las obras y pensar que llevo seis años trabajando para construir ruinas futuras' ('Don't tell me this, Moreno […]. I don't want to arrive to the works tomorrow and think that I've spent six years working to create future ruins', 71).

brought Spain into line with modern, democratic Europe had it not been for the coup and the machinations of the European powers. In order to reinforce both of these points, the novel ends with a declaration by Judith that she is returning to Spain as a member of the International Brigades to fight against the Francoists. Ignacio's bitterness and disillusionment is clear in his response: 'Claro que prefería que ganara la República le dijo, pero no estaba seguro de la clase de República que habría en España al final de la guerra, y menos aún de si a él le sería permitido regresar a ella, o si lo desearía' (932) ('Of course he would prefer if the Republic won, he told her, but he wasn't sure what type of Republic there would be in Spain at the end of the war, and even less if he would be allowed to return to it or if he would want to). Here Ignacio echoes similar pronouncements made by other exiles of 1936, such as the eloquent Republican activist Clara Campoamor in '*La revolución española vista por una republicana*' who feared that a Republican victory would lead to a dictatorship of the proletariat (151). By highlighting the ambivalence felt by many of Spain's intellectuals towards the Republic, here and elsewhere, the novel thus counters contemporary discourses which have sanctified the Second Republic.

La noche also contains hints of the chronotope of adventure time as well as of the road which is intimately related to both exile and adventure; the essential randomness of events, their dependence on a particular place and time for their very occurrence, are constantly alluded to. For instance, when Ignacio realises he has almost left his passport in the New York hotel, he is reminded of how close he came to being shot during the summer: 'En el descuido de un segundo está contenida entera una catástrofe. Faltaba tal vez menos de un minuto para que le mataran esa noche de finales de julio con la que sueña muchas veces y una voz que decía su nombre en la oscuridad lo salvó' ('An entire catastrophe is contained in the carelessness of a second. There was probably less than a minute to go before they killed him on that frequently dreamed-about night at the end of July, when a voice said his name in the darkness and saved him', 25). Such reflections also serve to resist a deterministic reading of past events, quashing the temptation to view history as inevitable and encouraging us to see each moment as unique and irrepeatable.[29]

Finally, the melding and joining of different chronotopes involves a rich use of heteroglossia in the novel. Excerpts from political speeches and news

29 Here, there is perhaps also a hint of Pío Baroja, who was influenced by Nietzsche's conception of history and conceived of history as a series of essentially random accidents, eschewing traditional beginning/middle/end plotting for his narratives in favour of a loose structure which he felt was more similar to life's meandering path (cf. Johnson, 159; Ribbans, 117).

reports are interspered collage-like with elements of Ignacio's story in order to place history and fiction into overt confrontation with one another. Just before one striking section of such technique, the narrator indicates his intentions:

> En los libros de historia los nombres tienen una rotundidad abrumadora y los hechos se suceden como cadenas inapelables de causas y efectos. En el presente puro que uno quisiera saber imaginar, en el pulso íntimo y verdadero del tiempo, todo es una agitación minuciosa, un aturdimiento de voces que se superponen, de páginas de periódico pasadas apresuradamente y leídas a medias, olvidadas en seguida, mezcladas entre sí […]. (584)
>
> In the history books, the names have an astonishing finality and events happen like inevitable chains of cause and effect. In the pure present that one would like to be able to imagine, in the true and intimate pulse of the time, everything is minute agitation, a bewilderment of voices speaking over one another, of newspaper pages hastily turned over and only half read, immediately forgotten, mixed up with one another […].

Over the following six pages, there is a juxtaposition of newspaper reports containing a mixture of normal news and details of the double murders of Lieutenant Castillo and José Calvo Sotelo, the second of which has been viewed as the immediate catalyst for the military uprising.[30] The comparative normality of some of the pieces of news stand out in contrast to reports of politically-inspired murders and assassinations which would in hindsight be made to form part of a chain of cause and effect by historians. The following serves as an example:

> El señor Calvo Sotelo había pasado el domingo en Galapagar. Minutos antes de ser asesinado el teniente Castillo se despidió de su joven esposa en el portal de su domicilio. Numerosos turistas alemanes visitan Ceuta y Tetuán. Un automóvil arrolla a una moto y resultan gravemente heridos el conductor de ésta y su acompañante. (585)
>
> Mr. Calvo Sotelo had spent Sunday in Galapagar. Minutes before being assassinated, Lieutenant Castillo said goodbye to his young wife in the door of their home. Numerous tourists visit Ceuta and Tetuán. A car runs over a motorbike, seriously injuring the driver and passenger of the latter.

Such a concept of history is also reminiscent of Unamuno's concept of 'intrahistory', which emphasises ordinary day-to-day events as the motor of history, an approach famously displayed by Tolstoy in *War and Peace* and which is also adopted in *Riña de gatos*. This view is in contrast to that of histo-

30 The rising had already been planned before this murder, however, and it should not be seen as the actual cause of it (see Carr, 71; Casanova and Gil Andres, 163).

rians in the more traditional, positivist mould, who prefer to focus on the actions of 'great men' in their accounts of the past.

We have seen, then, how *La noche de los tiempos* adds a modernist twist to the conventions of the historical novel in order to create a sense of the past that is vividly realistic, while at the same time pointing to its own fictionality and to the artificiality of human constructions of time. The lack of a straightforward linear chronology prevents the plotting of Ignacio's story or the collapse of the Second Republic as inevitable tragedy, instead encouraging us to read in the discontinuous manner that was exhorted by Benjamin and other modernist and postmodernist thinkers. This means that, even while some of the events portrayed evoke sadness, sympathy and even horror, there is a certain distance which prevents nostalgic over-identification. In this way, the novel seeks to put the past to rest and refuses to see it as a haunting of the present, while at the same time acknowledging that the present has arisen out of this past and that by coming to terms with it, a better collective future might be forged.[31]

Conclusion

To conclude, while both *Riña* and *La noche* have affinities with the classical historical novel, in Mendoza's novel, its conventions are called up only so that they can be parodied, while in that of Muñoz Molina the use of a first-person narrator and the chronotope of memory disrupts the original genre's typical linear flow and impersonal representation of the past. As a result of these techniques, the practice of writing and interpreting history is foregrounded in both novels and the reader is called upon to question prior beliefs and expectations. The novels also cause past and present to be called up simultaneously – *Riña* implicitly and *La noche* more explicitly – thus providing a link between the novels and the debates happening in Spain today. These chronotopical structures are key to their successful challenge of mythified discourses about the civil war and particularly of the old cliché that the conflict was the inevitable result of the polarisation of 'Two Spains'. The novels therefore provide an interpretation of the past which might be acceptable to all Spaniards, acknowledging the crimes committed on both sides, rejecting misplaced nostalgia and, above all, emphasising the need for mutual tolerance, understanding and respect.

31 This type of representation also indicates that Muñoz Molina has moved on from his earlier novel, *El jinete* (1991) and its preoccupation with the recovery and narrativisation of a traumatic past by members of the post-memory generation.

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