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Reciprocal Development of the Lived City and the Popular Press (1833-1868)

Catherine Sundt

Henri Lefebvre defines the writing of a city as the daily text that is “inscribed and prescribed on its walls, in the layout of places and their linkages, in brief, the use of time in the city by its inhabitants” (115). It is a language of connotations and signs, a secondary system that inscribes itself upon the urban space by means of “stories and urban legends that haunt urban space like superfluous or additional inhabitants” (De Certeau 106). Imagined cities—Dickens’s London, Balzac’s Paris, Galdós’s Madrid—exist separately from the physical city, but are discursively linked with the lived city that the reader and writer inhabit. Urban writers don’t merely respond to the external stimuli of the city; they are its poets, its cartographers, its biographers. For De Certeau, the collection of their urban texts form a secondary, imagined city, a “universal and anonymous subject which is the city itself: it gradually becomes possible to attribute to it [...] all the functions and predicates that were previously scattered and assigned to many different real subjects” (94). However, the created urban imaginary is not completely separate from the real, physical city; it often serves as pretext for and promotion of the built and owned urban environment.

In Madrid, newspapers and serial publications enjoyed a massive proliferation in the mid-19th century and formed a unique medium through which writers could react to an event, interpret it, and turn it back around to the public in a very short period of time, thus projecting outward their own interpretations of the city and making them public. The men behind the newspapers were actively participating in the construction of an urban imaginary by creating representations of real events, real places, and often real people in ways that affected how their readers viewed the city around them. The newspapers and the novels published within them were also “instrumental in the creation of a class of readers—a group of literate persons who could thus imagine themselves as protagonists of the social mobility shown in the novels, and who could therefore use them as guides to behavior” (Mercer, “Defining spaces” 3). This growing readership, particularly in the middle class, had access to information regarding how their city was changing and ways in which they could participate in that transformation.

In order to fully capture the complex relationship between the popular press and the urban environment, I propose the possibility of reciprocal development. This concept

acknowledges that “urbanism was as much a verbal construction as the novel” (Mercer, *Urbanism* 2), and it stems from a synthesis of the interiorization of the urban landscape as proposed by Simmel and the outward projection of mental life as proposed by Lefebvre. Simmel, speaking of the early 20th century, frequently discusses “the domination of the metropolis” (326) over the individual, focusing on how the mind must protect itself from the constant bombardment of the urban experience. Simmel suggests that the 19th Century “sought to promote, in addition to man’s freedom, his individuality [...] and his achievements” (324), an endeavor which is a precursor to the 20th-century individual’s resistance to being consumed by the urban environment. I believe that this struggle applies to the context of mid-19th-century Madrid; while the capital could not be called a “metropolis” at the time, many of the same tensions are present. Lefebvre, on the other hand, recognized the city as an *oeuvre*, a collective production which requires a succession of messages and codes.

Edward Soja, in his study of Lefebvre’s work, elaborated upon his ideas and proposed the existence of “Thirdspace,” a hybrid space in which the real and the imagined worlds can interact. This concept has been applied to literature in recent scholarship, such as Irene Pérez-Fernández’s study of third spaces in contemporary British literature (2009), and Amarjeet Nayak’s case study of the work of bilingual Indian writer Manoj Das (2010). However, the use of “Thirdspace” as a guiding theoretical concept is largely absent from studies of the mid-19th century, and is non-existent in critical studies of the two authors that I have chosen to engage: Wenceslao Ayguals de Izco (1801-1875) and Antonio Flores Algovia (1818-1865).

The classification of the roles played by Ayguals and Flores requires some definition of the professions involved in creative production during the period, due to the fact that an institution like Ayguals’s *Sociedad Literaria* produced and distributed all of its own content. During the reign of Isabel II, both men worked as directors of newspapers, *costumbristas* (writers of short essays, sketches, or descriptive commentary), *periodistas* (journalists, investigators of news, politics, and events both local and national), and novelists (specifically, of the *novelas de folletín*, the serial novels published in newspapers). Their wide-ranging involvement in mid-19th-century print media allowed the press to encompass a variety of roles within Isabeline Madrid. The three roles that I find most important are the role of the *periodista* as *flâneur*, the role of the newspaper as “Thirdspace,” and the function of the popular press as a discussion between authors and readers. As men like Ayguals and Flores circulated more and more texts, the city became a collaborative production as the local culture and the lived environment were developing together and influencing each other. Writers did not merely represent the city in 19th-century novels; they “produced the cultural imaginary of a new, complex social system” (Mercer, *Urbanism* 7). A variety of newspapers, all with distinct functions and goals, engaged and challenged the city and its inhabitants. The serialized nature of the newspapers was especially important, because these publications were not one-time manifestos pinned to a door; rather, they were part of a developing and constantly-changing text that participated in a decades-long rewriting of Madrid.

In the present study, I will provide a theoretical framework for the methods by which the urban imaginary—constructed through the popular press—was a medium of reciprocal

development, cultivating collective identity in Madrid. I will argue that the supposedly archetypal 19th-century urban figure, the *flâneur*, is helpful for conceiving the role of the *periodista*, but that it is ultimately not adequate to approach the urban imaginary and reciprocal development. I will propose that Edward Soja's notion of "Thirdspace" better permits an understanding of the newspaper's role as both a printed product and a space for symbolic elaboration of the urban imaginary. A further model for the function of reciprocal development within "Thirdspace" is that of a cooperative conversation in which *periodistas* engaged with their readers and were, thus, able to articulate such abstract concepts as public opinion and collective identity.

The Popular Press

The popular press between the years of 1833 and 1868 was the central instrument of reciprocal development. It was essential to both cultural and urban progress in a way that more traditional media (like theater) were not, largely due to its constant negotiation with an ever-growing reading public. The printed publication itself acted as an agent of that negotiation, and within the space of each newspaper, a dialogue took place between the *periodista* and his readers. This dialogue consisted of observation, criticism, satire, and a collective creation of cultural identity, all of which facilitated the reciprocal development of the lived city and the urban imaginary.

The print industry was a complicated and heterogeneous enterprise, and we can see reciprocal development at work through the collaboration of many individuals involved in its production. During this time, "escritores y librereros, editores y dibujantes, grabadores y encuadernadores, tipógrafos y legisladores forman el conjunto de la historia de la Imprenta, en la que influyen la política, las artes, las finanzas" (Del Campo 11). Newspapers and magazines emerged to appeal to a wide range of readers, and the press encouraged and facilitated communication as a way of cultivating its readership. A *periodista* like Larra, for example, was "living in and writing about Madrid, aware of his urban context and attentive to the urban shifts that characterized the nineteenth century" (Fraser 43). His work, and that of his contemporaries, was not merely a cultural monolith pushed upon the masses; it was the result of a collective conversation and a shared identity among Spaniards, specifically among *madrileños*. David Henkin writes about this tendency in 19th-century New York, when moments of collective celebration "depended not only on the newspapers' advertising and coordinating events involving unwieldy numbers of city residents, but also on their construction of an intelligible and broadly inclusive public identity of New York," drawing on members' shared status as potential readers (128).

There is a collective identity that is fomented by popular literature, specifically for urban dwellers who can conceive of a larger setting while only inhabiting a small part of it. In this way, the "urban imagination' is [...] very much a 'synecdochal imagination,' defined by the ability simultaneously to conceive the part and the whole" (Ferguson 68).¹ In Spain, this imagined Madrid—as well as the lived Madrid—is both the product and catalyst of figures like Antonio Flores and Wenceslao Ayguals de Izco, whose work shows that it is:

[...] erróneo entender la literatura como mera causa o resultado [...]. El arte costumbrista no “creó” el gusto por la documentación, aunque sin duda favoreció esta tendencia; tampoco fue causa de la naturaleza formulario que este género poseía en esencia [...] fue tanto un resultado de los efectos [...] como su origen. (Fontanella 107)

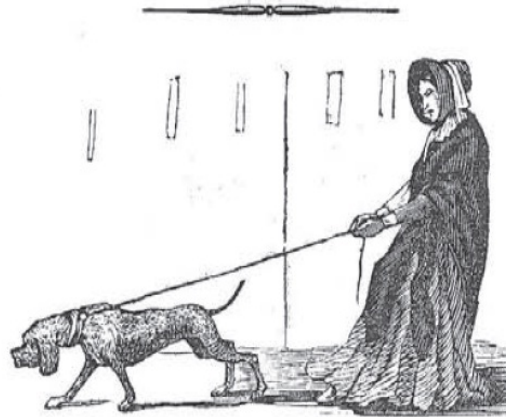
It is this simultaneous capacity to create and be created that makes *costumbrista* literature—and, to a certain extent, all literature—such an essential cultural specimen with regard to collective identity. Naturally, the proliferation of newspapers that disseminated that literature was especially significant.

Flânerie and Serial Publications

An examination of 19th-century literature reveals the emergence of the figure of the *flâneur* as “an emblem of the changing city and the changing society, a product of urbanization and revolution” (Ferguson 82). The term appears in Charles Baudelaire’s 1863 essay “The Painter of Modern Life,” personified by Monsieur G., a curious man who sees everything as a child does, with a sense of newness and wonder (7-8). He is a spectator, a loiterer, an explorer, a people-watcher, and simply a man of the crowd. He observes the people, places, and objects of modernity and he delights in spectacle. He is in the crowd without being a member of it; the *flâneur* moves and explores the public spaces of the street and the marketplace, where multiple people meet with different interpretations of the city that interact and influence each other, thus engendering an urban imaginary. Studies of the 19th Century are replete with discussions of the *flâneur* (Connerton, Donald, Ferguson, Parsons), sometimes to the point of excluding other theoretical approaches. While the figure of the *flâneur* is useful for discussing the *periodista* and *costumbrista*, merely focusing on the urban individual observer is one-sided and limiting, and does not help to articulate the complexities of reciprocal development. Rather, urban correspondents like Ayguals and Flores went beyond the practice of visual *flânerie* and engaged in active creation of the urban imaginary through strategic spatial practices.

In their capacity as *periodistas*, Ayguals and Flores did serve the function of the *flâneur* for their readers by navigating and translating the streets, but they also engaged in research, correspondence, and forays into private space, none of which fits within the definition of the *flâneur*.² The figure of the *costumbrista* does seem to match more closely the definition of the *flâneur*—the artist who is sometimes “a poet, more often he comes closer to the novelist or the moralist; he is the painter of the passing moment and all the suggestions of eternity that it contains” (Baudelaire 5). The *costumbrista* sketches that Ayguals and Flores included in their newspapers gave importance and permanence to momentary occurrences, such as a “conversación que tenían entre el zapatero del portal, su mujer y una verdulera del patio” that Flores describes in “Los ministerios de Chamberí” (262). *Costumbrismo* is a literary genre, and is therefore not equivalent to the social act of *flânerie*, but *costumbristas* do tell stories that link together places and “specify the kind of passage leading from one to the other” (De Certeau 115). Their stories transmitted the felt knowledge into literature that reaffirmed a sense of shared identity for *madrileños*, and thus contributed to the construction of the imagined city.

Cartoons and caricatures were extremely common in serial publications. In Ayguals's newspaper *El Fandango*, we see a cartoon of a woman walking her dog, with the caption "No hay ya señorita elegante en Madrid, que no lleve á paseo su perrito" (304):



No hay ya señorita elegante en Madrid, que no lleve á paseo su perrito.

The caption is reminiscent of a quip from Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*: "In 1839 it was considered elegant to take a tortoise out walking. This gives us an idea of the tempo of *flânerie* in the arcades" (422). The woman in this image seems to want to stroll at a leisurely pace, but is being dragged by a large dog (humorously referred to as a "perrito") that is significantly more forceful than a tortoise. I see the cartoon as a humorous statement on society and *moda*: the woman is uncomfortable and overpowered, but she is compelled to move forward by a society that dictates how an *española* is supposed to behave. This sort of social criticism is common within the literature of the *flâneur* because of the figure's status as an outsider. Baudelaire was born in Paris, lived there for most of his life, and died there, but "no one ever felt less at home in Paris than Baudelaire" (Benjamin 336) because he made himself an outsider in order to capture the fleeting nature of modernity. Ayguals is likewise able to engage in social criticism by distancing himself from cultural trends in order to point out their ridiculousness.

A sense of critical *flânerie* is evident in Flores's narratives as well. In his article "Las fiestas de Navidad," he describes the mountains of food, the children playing drums, and the carols that the participants sing at Christmas, all while seeming an outsider to the action. He is unquestionably Spanish, and yet seeks to distance himself from some of the Spanish customs in order to engage in satirical social criticism. Flores explains that "la única costumbre perpetua que se ha emancipado de la moda es la de comer; por la cual repetimos a coro: 'Comer, dormir y no pensar en nada / es tener la salud asegurada'" ("1 enero" 64). His movement is also evident in his published series such as "Una semana en Madrid: viernes," in which he describes his routes around the city and the sensory experiences that are characteristic of the urban space: "El viernes santo, huelen las calles de Madrid a una cosa que nadie sabe lo que es, compuesta de partes iguales de cofre, membrillo y polilla" ("16 enero" 78). Again, by documenting the city as both a

participant and as a correspondent, Flores achieves critical distance while still authentically representing local experience.

There are tensions that emerge within the figure of the *flâneur*, and these tensions make it so that the use of the term to describe figures like Ayguals and Flores is at times applicable, but ultimately insufficient. Baudelaire articulates that the *flâneur* wants “to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world” (9). The *flâneur* frequently appears in studies of 19th-century culture, yet he represents the opposite of the progress and modernization of the time period. He doesn’t work, build, design, or innovate; he is merely a connoisseur of the streets, a gourmet of the visual. Baudelaire offers two possibilities for understanding the *flâneur*: “We might liken him to a mirror as vast as the crowd itself; or to a kaleidoscope gifted with consciousness, responding to each one of its movements and reproducing the multiplicity of life and the flickering grace of all the elements of life” (9).

I do see the act of representing the city as a mirror, but the reflection is neither static nor passive. I find Baudelaire’s second definition, that of a complex kaleidoscope, more accurate in describing the role of the *periodista*, because he who documents the urban experience is consciously reproducing the elements of daily life. However, it must be noted that the *periodista* was not simply a loafer who strolled around the city. The production of newspapers was challenging work that required a great deal of commitment, training, and research. A kaleidoscope could show reflections of light and color, but the printing press was a far more complex technology.

There are consistent themes in the work of both Ayguals and Flores that tie them to this figure of the *flâneur*: their sense of exploration, their people-watching, and their ability to transform this temporary experience into permanent textual evidence that contributed to the imagined Madrid. Nonetheless, an understanding of the *periodista* as a *flâneur* merely acknowledges his observational tendencies, and does not completely capture the reciprocal development process. One must also take into account the means of distribution that facilitated this exchange of information within a “Thirdspace” that is both imagined and real, both material and metaphorical. I posit that the newspaper fulfills this role in the mid-19th century as the first truly modern form of communication.

The Newspaper as “Thirdspace”

In his seminal work “Thirdspace,” sociologist Edward Soja calls us to explore “‘other spaces’ [...] that are both similar to and significantly different from the real-and-imagined spaces we already recognize” (21). Previously, sociologists had distinguished two kinds of space: “*Firstspace* (Perceived Space) refers to the directly-experienced world of empirically measurable and mappable phenomena” (Soja 17), and is understood as the actual realm of human geography: the public and private spaces where people work, sleep, walk, socialize, and eat. Alternatively, “*Secondspace* (Conceived Space) [...] is more subjective and ‘imagined,’ more concerned with images and representations of spatiality, with the thought processes that are presumed to shape both material human geographies and the development of a geographical imagination” (Soja 18).

By proposing the existence of “Thirdspace,” Soja allows for:

[...] a different kind of human geography, one that combines the grounded and politically-conscious materialism of Firstspace analyses and the rich, often metaphorical representations of space and spatiality characteristic of Secondspace geographies [...] spaces that are radically open and openly radicalized, that are simultaneously material-and-metaphorical, real-and-imagined, concretely grounded in spatial practices yet also represented in literary and aesthetic imagery, imaginative recombinations, epistemological insight, and so much more. (24)

“Thirdspace” is where “Firstspace” and “Secondspace” interact, where the real, directly-experienced world is converted into images, depictions, and representations. “Firstspace” is perceived by means of the senses, and “Secondspace” is conceived by means of the text. Therefore, the text itself is not the imagined environment, but rather the space in which that imagined environment is constructed. The understanding of the newspaper—particularly popular publications like those of Ayguals and Flores—as a “Thirdspace” allows for the possibility of “keeping the material and the metaphorical interconnected, acknowledging that the real and the imagined are dependent upon one another” (Reynolds 46), thus supporting the notion of reciprocal development in the context of the popular press. The newspaper was certainly a real, tangible object, but it also provided a space in which symbolic understandings of the city could be elaborated and constructed.

On a political level, “Thirdspace” can be “a strategic meeting place for fostering collective political action against all forms of human oppression” (Soja 22), and that is precisely what Ayguals sought to accomplish with *La Guindilla*, when he stated that the “prensa independiente tronará desde ahora con más energía que nunca contra los opresores del pueblo [...]. *Guindilla* será el primero que escitará el pueblo a una sublevación salvadora” (“23 octubre” 35). This uprising does not take place in the real, physical streets of “Firstspace,” but rather within the strategic “Thirdspace” of the newspaper, which was being threatened by censorship. A newspaper was not only a printed object; it could be used as a tool of democracy, but also as an instrument of corruption. It was for this reason that Ayguals insisted that the press “no pudo resignarse a esta situación en lo presente, ni aceptar sus forzosas consecuencias en lo venidero” (“6 noviembre” 84). He recognized that, if revolution were to take place in the lived “Firstspace,” there would have to be freedom of expression and information in the periodic “Thirdspace.”

Ayguals also pioneered many satirical, humorous publications, which “le sirvieron para crearse una plataforma publicitaria y un prestigio periodístico que hoy le reconocen los historiadores del tema” (Romero Tobar 58). He produced a great variety of content, including his weekly column “Ambigú” in *La Risa*, in which one of his many alter egos, “Don Abundio Estofado,” gave advice about cooking soup, noodles, lamb chops, tortillas, and other traditional Spanish food. In addition to political and social matters, he, at times, merely sought to promote topics or hobbies that were of interest to him. His readers, in turn, engaged with his periodical “Thirdspace” by reading the paper and perhaps connecting with the content.

This periodical “Thirdspace” is necessary for reciprocal development because it is the medium through which the lived and imagined cities can interact. For example, the aforementioned “Ambigú” column in *La Risa* dealt with real, practical advice: how to cook certain Spanish foods. In the first issue, Ayguals explained how the publication was to be used: “[N]o hay publicación más útil que la nuestra a toda clase de personas de *buen gusto*; pero en las fondas, cafés, botillerías y pastelerías, es donde conviene a los intereses de sus dueños tener continuamente a la vista nuestra enciclopedia, porque al paso que será su Mentor para el buen éxito de sus tareas” (“2 abril” 8). Ayguals wants his readers to engage with the content in their real lives within “Firstspace,” particularly if they are in a position to cook for customers. However, he also includes many references to Spanish manners and ways of eating, cooking, and serving food, thus contributing to a “Secondspace”-understanding of what it means to be a Spaniard and follow “nuestras costumbres” (“23 abril” 31). He also acknowledges that these recipes did not come from his own mind, but rather that he had “elegido los métodos mejores y más sencillos entre los innumerables que enseñan los tratados de cocina” (32). This is reciprocal development at work; within the “Thirdspace” of the publication, recipes that have come from various sources are documented in a tangible publication, and within that publication, one finds both practical advice for everyday life and a reinforcement of a sense of Spanish-ness that the readers collectively understand.

In the case of Antonio Flores, we see an attempt to capture the authentic Spanish experience in terms of a collective, symbolic understanding of the city. Flores spent an entire year (1849) chronicling the experience of Madrid in a series called “Un año en Madrid” in *El Museo de las Familias*. He stated in the first issue: “Un viaje por Madrid me parece que sería una gran ocupación para el presente año” (“25 enero” 21). He then chronicled every month as he lived it, combining basic descriptions of “los paseos, las fondas, los cafés y los teatros” (22) with more symbolic elaborations of the *madriño* experience, such as his description of the month of March:

[C]uenta treinta y un días de una vida tempestuosa y bullanguera, que ni duerme, ni deja dormir a nadie, y que su extremada afición a los instrumentos de viento, la hace pasar las noches silbando en medio de la calle. Las torres, las ventanas, las puertas, los faroles, todo lo anima con su incansable aliento, y en todas partes halla armonías para su diabólica orquesta. (“25 marzo” 68)

Flores uses the “Thirdspace” of *El Museo de las Familias* to not only combine the lived and imagined experiences of the city, but also to document those events in Madrid which had both visible and symbolic components, such as the *Carnaval de Madrid* in February, the Easter and Holy Week rituals in April, and the procession of *2 de mayo*. He also imbues the entire year’s narration with the metaphor of a year being born and dying, from the “año nuevo, vida nueva” (“25 enero” 21) statement in January to the cold winds of December that symbolized not only the end of the year, but the end of the 1840s (“25 diciembre” 287). Those who read his work were not only learning about that which could be seen and experienced in the city, but also that which could be felt and understood within the context of a collective community. That shared experience can only take place

through the act of reading and interpreting the content that Flores put forth to his subscribers.

Flores provides an interesting take on the act of reading in his essay “Vamos a matar el tiempo,” in which he says that *madrileños* primarily enjoy activities that waste time, and he puts reading newspapers in that category. The narrator encounters a young mother who had fallen asleep with a book in her hand. She explains: “[M]e había puesto a leer un rato para matar el tiempo: pero como estas novelas modernas son tan pesadas, me he quedado un poco traspuesta” (“10 diciembre” 92), as though the book had somehow captured her. The narrator doesn’t portray all activities this way, claiming that the “hombre que va a paseo, a los teatros, a las tertulias, y las demás diversiones deliberadamente, es trabajador; cree no hacer nada y hace mucho” (92). This description is very similar to the traditional understanding of the *flâneur*. Yet, reading is a strange activity that somehow exists outside of time because newspapers are “set in homogenous, empty time” (B. Anderson 204) in which many different pieces of information are being put forth simultaneously, to be read at the consumer’s leisure. The act of reading, according to Flores, is not deliberate, and it takes time away from people without their knowledge. It is a spatial practice, yet it participates in the formation of a symbolic understanding of one’s environment. In this way, “lived, perceived, and conceived space fold into and spin across one another, working together to accomplish the production of space” (Reynolds 16), making “Thirdspace” a more effective method for understanding the popular press than that of *flânerie*. The *flâneur* wanders through space and describes it, but the *periodista* strategically categorizes, politicizes, interprets, and makes symbolic the lived “Firstspace” of the city within the “Thirdspace” of the newspaper. There is a dialogue within this “Thirdspace” that facilitates this creative process, and it takes place between the readers and creators of periodical publications.

Distribution as Dialogue

The essential element of writing successful popular publications is finding a readership that wants to engage in a conversation with the content that is being published. Finding a truly massive readership was not entirely easy during a time period when “there was no such phenomenon as a mass media” (P. Anderson 198), and in a country with such a high rate of illiteracy.³ Through this medium, Ayguals and Flores could engage with their readers and discuss topics of historical importance, especially the issue that dominated the public discourse: politics. It is here once more that we encounter the idea of public opinion, which was “fundamentalmente una comunicación de los ciudadanos con su gobierno que tiende a producir unos efectos que sean visibles en los niveles de decisión y de poder” (Pereira and García 213). Just as with gossip, it is not generally possible to determine the origins of public opinion on a certain matter. Public opinion emerges from the “difusión de mensajes de interés colectivo con el empleo de todas las formas comunicativas posibles” (213), and those messages could exercise “presión o fuerza profunda en la elaboración y ejecución de la política exterior del Estado” (212). Ayguals was especially adept at identifying collective sentiments, and those sentiments could be manifested in the following ways:

[...] *la opinión inmediata*, móvil e inestable, resultante de un acontecimiento o de varios; *la ideología*, de un carácter estructural y de un nivel de análisis más profundo; *las mentalidades colectivas*, en las que se mezclan actitudes mentales con los efectos de inconsciente, las relaciones coyunturales y las opiniones ideológicas; *los caracteres nacionales*, expresiones simbólicas de grupos, que tienden a considerar las reacciones de una colectividad o un individuo de una cultura específica. (Pereira and García 215)

Some of the collective reactions were extreme or revolutionary. Ayguals himself claimed in *El palacio de los crímenes* that “[I]a opinión pública [...] se declaraba a cada momento más a favor de la insurrección” (II: 480). Ayguals, in fact, considered himself an “intérprete de la opinión pública” (II: 414), but it must be acknowledged that “en muchas ocasiones los periódicos ‘fabrican’ la opinión más que la reflejan” (Pereira and García 215-16). It is here that we see the function of reciprocal development once more. Political discontent emerges from groups of citizens, but it can be captured, classified, and even invented by those with a medium to communicate it.

Those with the power to influence or manufacture public opinion, even those who did not agree politically, would join forces against those who wished to censor their right to publish. In the 1850s, “los moderados y los progresistas, contra [Bravo Murillo] centraron el fuego de sus respectivos periódicos, que eran los más numerosos e importantes” (Gómez Aparicio 382). The fluctuation in power during the 19th century was volatile, and journalism was directly involved in government affairs. One of the “principales constantes del periodismo decimonónico, será la continua renovación de disposiciones y decretos que cada Gobierno establece según los propios intereses del partido en cuestión” (Rubio Cremades I: 35). The press served to reflect political problems and attempted to provide solutions. Sometimes, authors put forth direct calls to action, and other times, there were more subtle criticisms or suggestions for reform.

Popular publications were an effective method for *periodistas* and *costumbristas* to engage in regular dialogue with their readers, and the periodicity of their circulation allowed for an environment in which “el acontecimiento y la actualidad tienen efectos inmediatos sobre la propia construcción social de la realidad” (Riego 145). In collections like *Los españoles pintados por sí mismos*, Flores engages in the process of “describir y analizar la vida colectiva a través de sus tipos genéricos, recorriendo en su estudio desde los niveles más altos a los más bajos” (Ucelay 67), a task which required him to engage the residents of the city on a personal level. In an article in *El Laberinto* titled “Las verbenas,” he even admits: “Soy algo dado a la discusión, y me gusta consultarlo todo con mis lectores” (220).

Ayguals was equally prone to discussion, although his methods of describing this dialogue were more complicated. In the publication *El Dómine Lucas*, he and Villergas engaged in a weekly dialogue in their column “Palmetas,” taking on the role of “El Dómine Lucas” (Ayguals) and “Cartapacio” (Villergas). Often, the duo would discuss an issue of the day, engaging in a conversation that illuminated some of the popular opinions. One column in particular discussed print culture and readership while praising the *Sociedad Literaria*:

Cartapacio: [...] no hay español que no sea poeta, y periodista, comediero [...]

Dómine Lucas: [...] hay truchimanes que hacen un daño inmenso, con sus barbaridades, no sólo a la literatura sino a la prensa en general y muy particularmente a los editores de buena fe. [...]

Cartapacio: [...] ya ve usted las continuas muestras de aprecio y de confianza que de todas partes prodigan los inteligentes a la Sociedad Literaria de Madrid. La brillante acogida que se dispensa al *Judio errante*, al *Cancionero del pueblo*, a la historia de los Jesuitas, al *Pilluelo de Madrid* y demás notables publicaciones de una sociedad que tanto se desvela por la ilustración de su patria, es el galardón más grato para los que se esfuerzan en elevar la España a la altura de las naciones más civilizadas de Europa.

Dómine Lucas: [. . .] En las páginas del *Dómine Lucas* no ha de haber más que amenidad, instrucción y recreo. (“Palmetas” 7)

This conversation captures—and satirizes—the effects that newspapers had on their readers. Publications had the ability to offend, swindle, educate, or simply entertain their public, and the *Sociedad Literaria* (ostensibly) sought to civilize Spain and raise it up to the level of other European countries.⁴

In an effort to maintain a sense of open communication, the *Sociedad Literaria* printed many letters that they had supposedly received. Most of them were not actual submissions, but rather scripted letters that served as part of the humorous content. They were intentionally badly written, and often exaggerated something about *madrileños* or foreigners that the writers found amusing. This tendency was important to the creation of the urban imaginary because it played with the readers’ understandings of their collective identity and the idea of public correspondence. One such letter was published in *El Fandango*, and Ayguals introduced it saying: “[H]emos recibido la siguiente carta que creemos divertirá a nuestros lectores” (“Introduction” 65). The letter was supposedly submitted with a manuscript from someone claiming to be an “individuo de la Real Academia de la Ystoria,” but was written with grammatical and spelling errors such as “beinte” and “hignoro.” The letter was likely written by Ayguals himself, and he inserts his own commentary making fun of the writing style, with asides like “¿Qué lengua es ésta?” (66). Ayguals was engaging with an amalgamation that emerged from real people whom he had met and found pompous or ridiculous, proving that satire of one’s own readers was an acceptable form of humor. This is reciprocal development at work once again: Ayguals uses the “Thirdspace” of the publication to simultaneously identify a person in the lived city and create an urban type in the imagined city. The readers were thus made to recognize their material selves and laugh at their textual selves.

The readers of the popular press were active participants in the process of reciprocal development by means of a dialogue with the cultural content that they consumed, and the popular press was readily available, affordable, and tailored to their tastes. The city that was developed and defined within the “Thirdspace” of the popular publications was not merely a collection of people, places and events that could be observed by a *flâneur*; it

also held within it abstract concepts that emerged through collective dialogue, such as public opinion and shared identity. In order to examine the urban imaginary as a complete entity, we must take into account all of the pieces of the changing culture, built environment, and other aspects of the urban experience.

Interconnected Puzzle Pieces

If we understand the city as an *oeuvre*, as a collective creation and production of all of the people who inhabit it, it then follows that all of the parts are developing together. Politics, municipal development, culture, social change, and technology are all pieces of a puzzle that depend on each other and feed off of each other's momentum. In the case of Spain, this development was uneven; "modernization came in fits and starts, alternating with periods of stagnation" (Sieburth 231), but no aspect of the city stood alone. Margot Versteeg acknowledges that this collective development is especially true of the press: "Si es cierto que la prensa periódica contribuyó a la formación de la nación, también lo es que el desarrollo de esta nación ocasionó determinados cambios en la prensa" (14). The culture of creativity emerged as a force in the 19th century, and this surfaced most notably "in the salons, informal social gatherings (*tertulias*), albums, almanacs, poetic homages (*coronas poéticas*), and poetry competitions (*juegos florales*) that proliferated throughout nineteenth-century Spain and elsewhere" (Valis 122). This creativity manifested itself in many ways, and newspapers had multiple agendas; *La Risa*, for example had "un carácter estrictamente humorístico" (Elorza 94), and in other papers, journalism "a la vez que afirmaba y robustecía ideas, preparaba para la acción pública" (Gómez Aparicio 289). However, these *periodistas*, regardless of their intentions, often used many of the same techniques to communicate their ideas: exploring the spaces of the city as a *flâneur*, communicating with their readers, and using the newspaper as a "Thirdspace" that fed into the imagined city through "la búsqueda de signos intangibles de identidad, formas de orientación, de evocación y de memoria" (García Canclini 94). Pascual Pla explains the intentionality of the writing process as an attempt to "guiar, encaminar o manipular una masa, cuanto mayor mejor, a favor de la ideología y la visión del mundo del autor" (15), which is why so many government orders were directed towards censoring or repressing the popular authors of the day.

The newspaper, the literary magazine, and the *folleto* all permitted writers to speak to "un público mucho más extenso que el que alcanzaba el libro en los años anteriores" (Ucelay 31). In turn, the society to which they spoke "fomenta y dificulta la profesión del cronista. Si bien genera una alta demanda de crónicas, también impone un ritmo que el cronista apenas puede seguir" (Versteeg 44-5). The work of a *periodista*, *costumbrista*, or *novelista* of the time was one of constant negotiation with a reading public within the "Thirdspace" of the newspaper, and while the impact of that relationship is not always recognized, it was certainly a cultural juggernaut. The editor of *El Progreso* referred to "la famosa *María o la hija del jornalero*, que tantos estragos ha causado en nuestra clase media" (Fernández 141), due to its status as a seminal novel of Madrid culture. It is clear that the middle class listened to the popular press and the individual voices who contributed to it, whether they were being told to challenge authority, to understand their own history, or simply to laugh.

Ayuals and Flores serve as excellent examples of *periodistas* who put forth their own opinions, disseminating knowledge and projecting an understanding of the city that made the changes and developments of the Isabeline period legible. The figures of the *periodista* and *costumbrista* do share some characteristics with the 19th-century *flâneur*, but their practices went beyond that of simple movement, observation, and documentation. Rather, they used some of the techniques of the *flâneur* to engage in more complex criticism of Spanish customs and traditions by putting forth their own opinions and interpretations.

Reciprocal development was possible because of the popular press; these publications were a Thirdspace that allowed *periodistas* to go beyond the process of *flânerie* and engage with the readership on a real level. Printed publications like *El Fandango* and *El Laberinto* strove to entertain and attract readers, but also attempted to capture such elusive content as public opinion and the identity of Madrid. These newspapers were not a passive medium for consumption; they were a “Thirdspace” within which the lived and imagined cities interacted, political resistance took place, and information circulated. Specifically, their content arose from a continuous conversation between writers and their readership over the course of several decades.

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Notes

- ¹ Ferguson made this statement about 19th-century Paris, but I find it equally applicable to Madrid.
- ² Antonio Flores's "Revista de la Quincena" (*El Laberinto*) often provided information about private events such as palace dances.
- ³ By 1860, only 40% of Madrid's population was literate (Botrel 316).
- ⁴ Amusingly, *El Fandango* caricatured and ridiculed almost every other Western European country with cartoons and jokes.

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