

Letras Hispanas

Volume 9.2, Fall 2013

TITLE: Barcelona Underground: The Secret Metropolis in Antonio-Prometeo Moya's *Los misterios de Barcelona* (2006)

AUTHOR: Cristina Delano

AFFILIATION: University of Mississippi

ABSTRACT: *Barcelona Underground: The Secret Metropolis in Antonio-Prometeo Moya's Los misterios de Barcelona* (2006). Antonio-Prometeo Moya's *Los misterios de Barcelona* (2006) presents a counter-narrative to the urban success story of modern Barcelona. The novel, set sometime in the late 1990s, tells the story of the corrupt García-Valdecristo family and its connection to a serial killer known as the *Vampiro de Gracia*. The novel takes place not in the "New Barcelona" that has become an international playground for tourist consumption, but instead navigates the underground, where the secrets of Barcelona's modernity hide. This essay examines how Moya employs the imaginary of the underground to contest the symbols of Barcelona's modernity and *official* urban narrative.

KEYWORDS: Barcelona, underground, urbanism, mysteries, modernity

RESUMEN: *Los misterios de Barcelona* de Antonio-Prometeo Moya (2006) presenta una narrativa que pone en entredicho la imagen de éxito de la Barcelona moderna. La novela, cuya acción transcurre a finales de los años 90, cuenta la historia de la corrupta familia García-Valdecristo y su conexión con el asesino en serie llamado *El vampiro de Gracia*. La novela desestima la noción de la "Nueva Barcelona", la cual se promociona para atraer el consumo turístico, y prefiere indagar por los sórdidos parajes donde en verdad residen los secretos de la ciudad. Este trabajo examina las maneras en que Moya emplea el imaginario del subsuelo para refutar los símbolos de la modernidad y la narrativa oficial de la gran ciudad catalana.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Barcelona, subsuelo, urbanismo, misterios, modernidad

DATE RECEIVED: 02/18/2013

DATE PUBLISHED: 10/23/2013

BIOGRAPHY: Cristina Delano is an Instructional Assistant Professor at the University of Mississippi. She earned her M.A. at the University of South Florida and her Ph.D. at Emory University. Her research examines the nineteenth-century urban *misterio* novel and its use of the Gothic mode, as well as the re-writing of nineteenth-century cultural production in the twentieth century and beyond.

Barcelona Underground: The Secret Metropolis in Antonio-Prometeo Moya's *Los misterios de Barcelona* (2006)

Cristina Delano, University of Mississippi

Since 1992, Barcelona has been praised as an urban success story. As Antonio Sánchez relates, the Olympic-era projects “transformed the ailing modern city into a gigantic post-modern mirror reflecting an idealized image of itself to local and global audiences alike” (303). The Olympics provided Barcelona with the opportunity to shine on the world stage as a major world metropolis. In the years leading up to the Olympic games, run-down neighborhoods were transformed into glittering stages of urban renewal, and historic *barrios* of the *casco antiguo* were cleaned up and made safe and friendly for the tourist gaze. Joan Ramón Resina has examined Barcelona's periodic renovations, (its “rituals of self-display”), and views the Olympics as a watershed moment for Barcelona, an event that revised its urban landscape and image (200). No longer suffering from the years of neglect it experienced under the Franco regime, Barcelona was now a modern, cosmopolitan city.

Not everyone has celebrated Barcelona's ideal image. Manuel Vázquez Montalbán was a vocal critic of Barcelona's redevelopment projects in 1992. His Pepe Carvalho detective novels parody the zeal for urban renewal leading up to the Olympics. Vázquez Montalbán was dismayed at how Barcelona's former Marxists enthusiastically embraced capitalist-directed Olympic urbanism (McNeill 5). As Donald McNeill points out, the unabashed love for all things new and glamorous in Barcelona was indicative of Spain's national amnesia regarding the struggles of the past:

With the cult of modernization came a culture of forgetting, absorbed into the individual psyche, where the *desencanto* of those left behind goes beyond the disappointment of failing to achieve political goals. Carvalho and, we presume, Vázquez Montalbán, find their ability to relate to the city has dissipated in the themed shallowness and municipal tidiness of the New Barcelona. (51)

Manuel Delgado has called Barcelona “la ciudad mentirosa” (73) whose politicians are enamored with making Barcelona not just a model city, but “modélica [...], ejemplo ejemplarizante” (74) rather than a place for citizens to live in. Indeed, Delgado notes that the current mania for improving the city is a return to the idea of the city that began in the eighteenth century: the never-ending quest to improve, order, and regulate the city. These projects, the legacy of the Enlightenment, aim to eliminate “la opacidad y la confusión a que siempre tiende la sociedad urbana” (17). Urban renovation seeks to eradicate what is unpredictable and irrational about city life in order to create the perfect city. Idelfonso Cerdà attempted to do this to Barcelona in the nineteenth-century; his design of the *Eixample* (L'Eixample) was meant to eliminate the chaos, filth, and disease that plagues the center and foster a sense of social order and equality.¹ For Delgado, however, the ideal city is actually a “contra-ciudad” that aims to “desactivar para siempre lo urbano” (17).

Vázquez Montalbán and Delgado's critiques suggest the possibility of a different Barcelona outside of the official narrative of the ideal city, one that contains its rejected and hidden histories.²

Antonio-Prometeo Moyas 2006 *Los misterios de Barcelona* presents a vision of the city that contests the image of the ideal Barcelona.³ Through its pastiche of Gothic and detective novel tropes and labyrinthine plot, Moya portrays a counter-city that rejects Barcelona's official urban narrative. Moya's Barcelona is the Barcelona of the underground, a dark, irrational, dangerous landscape where the city's secrets reside. Moya's novel takes place sometime in the mid 1990s and follows Santiago Bocanegra and his ex-wife Virginia as they uncover the sinister history of the García-Valdecristos, one of Barcelona's elite families. After Virginia discovers she is related to the infamous clan and inherits their Gracia mansion, she and Santiago are thrust into the middle of the investigation of the "Vampiro de Gracia," a serial killer who murders women by extracting copious amounts of their blood.⁴ The search for the vampire leads them to the underground, where they find a different Barcelona. Moya's novel employs the underground to critique Barcelona's cosmopolitan image and displays of modernity; this Barcelona is not a tourist playground nor an urban success story but rather a *contra-ciudad* where the symbols of the city's modernity are shown to be monstrous deceptions.

The title of Moya's novel establishes an intertextual dialogue with the popular urban mystery genre of nineteenth-century Europe. Inaugurated by Eugène Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris* (1842-1843), urban mystery novels soon proliferated throughout Europe and the Americas. Spain was no exception to this publishing phenomenon, and saw several *misterio* novels written about its cities.⁵ The urban mystery novel showed the dark sides of city life: the crime, vice, and conspiracies that lurked beneath the surface of the modern metropolis. Many of these novels have a Gothic tenor, for the Gothic mode reveals what is ir-

rational and menacing about urban life (Botting 123). The Gothic transforms the city into a subversive space; it breaks from order and rationality to privilege instability and uncertainty (Punter 3). *Los misterios* located many of their mysteries in the underground, for as the modern city was continually regulated and perfected, the underground became the site of all that was negated, denied, or rejected on the surface (Pike 1). The underground plays a special role in the urban mystery genre. The urban mysteries "introduced the fundamental paradox of the view from below as an epistemological approach to modernity" (Pike 161). Urban mysteries are characterized by their clear opposition between good and evil, and the power struggles at play in the novel are set against the background of above-ground versus below-ground activities (Pike 162). At the core of the imaginary of the underground is its relationship to modernity. The advent of the mining industry and the construction of underground railways and subway systems made the underground the most explored and exploited place on earth (Pike 3). The underground became necessary for the modern city to function, yet it was also the physical home of what civilization attempted to suppress.

The back cover of *Los misterios* contains an "Aviso a los lectores" in which Moya highlights the iconic presence of the underground in modern culture:

Desde *El viaje al centro de la Tierra* de Verne, hasta *El misterio de la cripta embrujada* de Eduardo Mendoza, pasando por *La máquina del tiempo* de Wells o *El inspector de alcantarillas* de Giménez Caballero. Por no hablar de las catacumbas y Las memorias del subsuelo. Un mundo lleno de puertas secretas y pasadizos oscuros que recorren la geología oculta de nuestras vidas. Un perfil narrativo gótico que heredaron el folletín y las novelas de misterio.

Moya presents the underground as "otro

mundo,” a space created by literature to house the secrets of modern life. Moya avails himself of the discourse of the underground to create another Barcelona, one that reveals the city’s secrets and contests the rationality of the “above-ground.”

Olympic Barcelona was not the first time the city attempted to recreate its image. The nineteenth century saw the implementation of the famous “Plan Cerdà,” which created the *ensanche*, the district outside the *casco antiguo*. Idelfonso Cerdà’s plan was one of the first exercises in modern city planning and its characteristic drive to order and rationalize urban space. The *ensanche* became the neighborhood of Barcelona’s bourgeoisie, while the lower classes were mostly left to the crowded quarters of the city center. With its wide boulevards and *modernista* buildings, the *ensanche* is, like the Olympic projects, a performance of self-display, an idealized projection of Barcelona’s identity. The agents of this performance were Barcelona’s *Good Families*, a group of about 200 families who formed Barcelona’s aristocratic and industrial elite (McDonogh 4). Gary McDonogh has shown how these families became a metaphor for Catalan society and the foundation of its sense of identity (165). These elites constructed modern Barcelona as a reflection of their sense of social order (183). The underground in *Los misterios* distorts this foundational narrative of Barcelona’s modernity by revealing the secrets of one of Barcelona’s *Good Families*.

Although the novel takes place after the Olympics, Moya’s Barcelona is curiously free of many of the realities of contemporary Barcelona: immigrants, tourists, and modern high-rises. Instead, *Los misterios* uses the city’s nineteenth-century landscape, the site of Barcelona’s “bourgeois paradise” (Hughes 374), to criticize the post-Olympic city. Nineteenth-century Barcelona was the city’s original urban success story, and Moya returns to Barcelona’s initial displays of its modernity to subvert the latest *New Barcelona*.

Los misterios begins with Santiago’s

return to Barcelona after many years away grieving the death of his best friend, Vicente. Santiago and Vicente were classmates at the *Laberinto*, a school and research center founded by the recently deceased Alberto García-Valdecristo, a noted scientist. Through a series of coincidences Santiago ends up renting a room from his ex-wife, Virginia. Virginia tells Santiago that a man has been following her, and she fears for her safety, especially after the Olympics:

Limpieron el centro cuando los Juegos Olímpicos y la peligrosidad está ahora en los barrios periféricos, pero no te puedes fiar y donde no hay heroína ni navajas asoman la cabeza los chiflados más peligrosos. Dicen que en Gracia hay un loco rabioso que ya ha atacado a varias personas a mordiscos; y sin ir más lejos, el otro día me siguió un hombre hasta la puerta de la casa [...]. (Moya 40)

The Olympic projects attempted to sanitize the city for bourgeois consumption, but the elimination of petty crime served to open space for real danger.⁶ One of these dangers is the rumored *Vampiro de Gracia*, an apparent serial killer who has been terrorizing the neighborhood of Gracia. The killer is called the *Vampiro* because he attacks the victim’s neck to extract blood. Gracia is on high alert due to the *Vampiro* killings; a group calling themselves “*Los vigilantes*” has formed to protect the citizens from the killer. One of the *Vigilantes* blames the killer’s vampirism on urbanization and modernity:

El vampirismo es una mutación, perfectamente estudiada, que apareció como todas las mutaciones, cuando la sociedad inventó las máquinas para que los músculos y el cerebro no trabajaran tanto [...]. Esos seres monstruosos que hoy se corren con tristeza, que son más de los que pensamos, son los tataranietos de aquellas primeras generaciones de ciudadanos que dejaron de trabajar y de que-

mar energía cuando se inventaron las máquinas. Porque el progreso también es retroceso, ¿eh?, también es retroceso [...]. (Moya 113)

Virginia and the vigilantes see the Vampiro as one of the consequences of urbanization projects; by trying to suppress Barcelona's irrationality, the urban improvements have only created more monsters.

In the midst of the panic over the Vampiro, Virginia discovers that her stalker is in fact a lawyer, Arístides Fenil, who is seeking her out to inform her that she is the heir to the García-Valdecristo fortune. According to the strange will left by Ismael García-Valdecristo, the brother of Alberto, Virginia is his long-lost daughter, the product of his relationship with a woman from a humble background, Adela. When his family discovered the relationship, they forced Adela to give up the child and declared Ismael insane to prevent them from eloping. Ismael's ominous will states that "si en vez de tener a tu padre sólo tienes la carta, es que algo malo me ha sucedido, no sabría decirte qué" (Moya 99). Part of Virginia's inheritance is the García-Valdecristo mansion in Gracia.

The Gracia house is hardly a typical house. Fenil tells Santiago and Virginia that he refused to stay in the house, because "[l]o que me asustaba era la casa misma" (Moya 150). From the outside, the house is "imponente y sobria; con múltiples desconchadas en las dos fachadas, pero más lúgubre que decrepita" (Moya 106). The house is in a state of disrepair and filth. Some of the house's strange features give clues to its unusual history:

Y en el suelo de la cocina había una trampilla que parecía ser el acceso natural al sótano. En conjunto, por la organización de sus espacios y la idea de comunicación que expresaban sus puertas y escaleras no parecía que la casa hubiera cobijado nunca las actividades de lo que solemos llamar vida familiar normal. (125)

The basements appear to be the defining feature of the house, "como si los sótanos mandaran sobre el resto" (140). The basements can be accessed from various points in the house; there is even a staircase that runs directly from the attic to the basement. The Gracia house is not a traditional family home, but rather a portal to the underworld.

After the Vampiro kills another victim outside the García-Valdecristo house, Santiago and Fenil join forces with Inspector Paco Fenoll and Fenil's niece Sonia to catch the Vampiro. Paco suspects that the Vampiro is using the house as a refuge. He also believes that the death of Alberto García-Valdecristo is related to the *Vampiro* de Gracia. One night, in an attempt to catch the *Vampiro* in the act, Santiago and Paco go to the Gracia house. When Paco is called away by news of another victim, Santiago begins to explore some of the stranger aspects of the house:

Aquella casa parecía reproducir formas geométricas inusuales, trazadas con una gran precisión, y todas curiosamente inscritas, como para que encajaran en un dibujo general. Puede que fuera casualidad, pero así como el pozo y las pilas de la fuente eran círculos concéntricos, la base de la fuente era un rombo y esta figura estaba como sobreimpuesta a una gran losa cuadrada, encerrada a su vez en otro círculo de gran tamaño. A grandes rasgos, el patio parecía reproducir la forma de una brújula y Santiago buscó instintivamente con los ojos la presencia de alguna veleta en las alturas, los típicos hierros que se cruzan con los extremos rematados por las letras N,S,E,O. (202)

Santiago recognizes N-S-E-O; it refers to the García-Valdecristo family motto, "Noble Sangre Encumbrada y Orgullosa" and appears in the *Laberinto* and the family mausoleum. Fenil then realizes that the Valdecristo landmarks form the points of a map:

El subsuelo de la ciudad está prácticamente hueco, entre los túneles del metro, las cloacas, los aparcamientos, los sótanos comerciales y otras perforaciones [...]. Vemos que basta una sencilla red de corredores o conductos para moverse libremente por el subsuelo de la ciudad. Se puede escapar así de cualquier persecución [...]. Los puntos cardinales se determinan con dos rayas cruzadas perpendicularmente. Olvídate de la orientación geográfica y piensa sólo en el trazado de las líneas y en los ángulos de noventa grados que origina la intersección. La dirección de la segunda línea se averigua por sí sola si se conoce la primera, pero para determinar la dirección y longitud de ésta necesitamos localizar antes los dos puntos que la delimitan. La casa de Gracia y el panteón de los Valdecristo son esos puntos. (214)

Santiago, Fenil, Paco and Sonia venture through one of the basement tunnels of the Gracia house, and when they emerge, they are in front of the monument to Alberto García-Valdecristo at the *Laberinto*. Paco then takes out a map of Barcelona to link the points:

Podemos trazar ya la segunda línea. Arranca del lugar donde estamos, se cruza con la primera en los alrededores de la Ópera y sigue hacia el puerto, en busca del cuarto punto, que no sabemos cuál es [...]. Hasta ahora nos dedicábamos a esperar la llegada de los acontecimientos, pero creo que por fin han cambiado las tornas [...]. Pienso que ese vampiro, sea quien fuere, conoce las rutas subterráneas de la ciudad tan bien como las casas abandonadas de Gracia y, al margen de la relación que tenga con la persona o personas que realmente buscamos, puede servirnos de orientación. (217)

The group is able to “map” the mysteries of the García-Valdecristos, and once they follow the lines that link the cardinal points of

Barcelona’s underground, they are led to the source of the mystery.

Following the map, Paco and two patrols discover that the tunnels of the metro lead to passageways underneath the Liceo, Barcelona’s opera house. While exploring the tunnels, Paco has a startling encounter with the *Vampiro*:

la vista se llenó de moscas y cucarachas durante un segundo, no apartó la armónica de la boca y siguió mirando con fijeza a quien lo miraba, sin atreverse a mover un músculo. A dos metros escasos había una forma humana, humana porque tenía una cara pálida que recordaba a los humanos, pero por lo demás podía ser muy bien un animal peludo y encogido, una araña con cara de cadáver. (230)

Paco and the patrols race to catch the *Vampiro*, but only discover what appears to be a hidden door at the end of the Liceo’s storage rooms. In a nod to Gaston Leroux’s *Le Fantôme de l’Opéra*, the Gracia vampire takes refuge under the opera house. The vampire of *Los misterios* is a creature of the underground, and uses the tunnels and sewers under the city to travel undetected.

The Liceo, located on the Ramblas, is one of Barcelona’s most iconic and symbolically charged buildings. The Liceo was “perhaps the most significant and certainly the most lavish institution of the nineteenth-century Catalan bourgeoisie” (Resina 53). The Liceo was a manifestation of social wealth and visibility; it was where Barcelona’s elites went to see and be seen. The Liceo was also a visual representation of Barcelona’s social structure; boxes were owned by families and kept for generations, thus a performance at the Liceo was also a performance of social norms and status (Resina 57). The Liceo was a common meeting place for business deals and displays of power and wealth. Resina has noted that the Liceo was so important to Barcelona’s society precisely because it lacked a court or other official stages on which to display

status (57-59). The Liceo was an institution in which the Barcelona bourgeoisie could create an ideal image of itself. McDonogh calls the Liceo “a metaphor for Barcelona” (“Good” xii). The vampire’s refuge belies the splendor of nineteenth-century Barcelona’s temple to the success of its bourgeoisie, for just under the surface awaits poverty, violence, and death.

Paco and his men decide they need dynamite to blast open the door, but they need a distraction, so they ask the *Vigilantes* to invade the theater in search of the vampire during a performance of Wagner’s *Tristan and Isolde*:

Los vigilantes subieron las escalinatas del centro y de los lados e inundaron la platea y los palcos de platea, en dirección del escenario. Tristán, Kurwenal e Isolda retrocedieron con aprensión, pensando durante un segundo que iban a lincharlos. (Moya 259)⁷

The invasion of the Liceo by the working-class *Vigilantes* recalls the bombing of the Liceo in 1893, when working-class anarchists aimed to destroy the symbol of elite Barcelona. The bombing of the Liceo struck at the source of the Good Families’ sense of identity and social dominance (McDonogh 200). By re-creating the violation of the temple of Barcelona’s nineteenth-century bourgeoisie, Moya contests the façades of splendor that characterize Barcelona’s “rituals of self-display.”

As Paco and the patrols prepare to open the hidden door of the Liceo, the narration changes perspective to focus on the decidedly not deceased Alberto García-Valdecristo, who is working in the laboratory he constructed to conduct his experiments in secret. It is also the lair of the vampire, Josué, who is shown to be more pathetic than monstrous. Alberto long ago faked his death in order to carry out his work and hide his terrible family secrets. After Alberto is arrested, Paco takes down Alberto’s confession. The confession is a story of a corrupt, decadent family. Alberto’s brother, Ismael, was promiscuous to the point of pa-

thology. Alberto, ever the scientist, analyzed Ismael’s blood in order to find some reason for his perversion, and found that Ismael had an autoimmune disorder.⁸ Alberto believed the disorder to be genetic, and he set off to find more of Ismael’s offspring to prove his theory. In the course of his investigations, Alberto found Virginia and discovered that she was not Adela’s daughter, but instead the daughter of his mother, doña Eulalia, and a man who was not her husband. Alberto confronted his mother with her secret and strangled her, but not before revealing that Alberto’s father was not the elder Valdecristo either. The worst secret is yet to come, however; Alberto learned that Virginia is the daughter of Ismael and his mother, Eulalia. Enraged, Alberto killed Ismael, and hid his body inside a wall of the Gracia house. Alberto became obsessed with the desire to “depurar el genoma familiar, reconstruir desde cero el árbol de la familia” (Moya 288). The will that Virginia received was a ruse to lure her to the house so Alberto could kill her and take her blood for testing. In order to carry out his sinister plans, Alberto faked his own death, and began to live in the underground space beneath the Opera. Living underground, he learned the passageways that connect the Gracia house, the Laberinto, and the family mausoleum. Alberto became part of the society of the residents of the underground. After using his medical skills to save the life of an old beggar woman, Alberto became known as “el benefactor misterioso del subsuelo” (Moya 292). The old woman’s son, the grotesquely deformed Josué, pledged eternal faithfulness to Alberto. Taking advantage of his loyalty, Alberto used Josué to carry out his above-ground crimes, and Josué became the *Vampiro* that terrorized Barcelona. The underground thus subverts the dynamics of the above-ground; in the “real” world, Alberto is a murderer, a Gothic mad scientist, but underground, he is a savior.

When families are present in Gothic narratives, they undermine the bourgeois ideal of the family unit. The recurrent theme of incest speaks to the Gothic’s aim to portray

the extremes of desire and to parody the foundation of modern society (Kilgour 12). In *Los misterios*, the García-Valdecristo family, one of the *Good Families* of Barcelona's success story, is shown to be a monstrous version of family relations. As a symbol of Catalan society and culture, much of Barcelona's sense of modernity and identity was tied to the integrity of these Good Families. By portraying the García-Valdecristo family as a corrupt, murderous, incestuous Gothic family, Moya strikes a blow to the image of the *Good Family* that carried out its success in the nineteenth century.

Los misterios ends with the villains vanquished: Alberto commits suicide; the vampire, Josué, is killed as he attempts to carry out Alberto's final order to kill Virginia and eliminate the family bloodline. At the end of the novel, Santiago visits Vicente's grave at Montjuich cemetery. He takes in the vista of the city, which no longer appears threatening:

Vio a lo lejos la ajedrezada alfombra de la ciudad, blanquienegrecida por las densas nubes, sombreada por las montañas que la empujaban hacia el Mediterráneo, ilusoriamente inmóvil a causa de la distancia. No parecía preñada de misterios, como el infierno o el mismo paraíso, sino absorta en la mediocre rutina de las frustraciones e impotencias del purgatorio, donde los condenados viven al borde de la angustia, pero no creen en la eternidad. (Moya 303)

Above ground the city is no longer mysterious; neither a hellish nightmare or a dream city of the future. Although the monsters have been defeated, the city remains in a state of eternal purgatory, unaware of the dangers that lie beneath the surface.

Moya's use of the underground focuses on the hidden landscapes of the city, where the darker side of its modernity resides. The underground reveals the corruption and

decadence of the narratives of Barcelona's modernity. By connecting the nineteenth-century culture with post-Olympic Barcelona, Moya shows how the underground has haunted both of the *New Barcelonas*. Moya's novel is not the postmodern mirror that reflects an ideal city; it is the inverted mirror that reveals the *contra-ciudad*.

Notes

1. *Los misterios* uses the Castilian versions of Barcelona place names, therefore this essay follows suit.

2. The novelist Javier Calvo, who writes Gothic-inflected thrillers set in present-day Barcelona, is another critic of Barcelona's urbanism. Calvo Gothicizes the projects of the Litoral, the Forum de las Culturas of 2004 and Distrito 22 by calling them "terroríficos conjuros que progresivamente van expulsando a la población nativa para entregarle el territorio a los zombis turísticos y a los sirvientes del capital" (104).

3. Antonio-Prometeo Moya, born in Ciudad Real in 1946, published his first collection of short stories, *Retrato del fascista adolescente*, in 1975. Moya's early work shows a preoccupation with Spain's fascist and Francoist past. Moya published several novels in the late 1970s through to the 1990s. *Los misterios* was received as a novel "de entretenimiento" or an experiment in popular literature by an author "de otra orientación" like Eduardo Mendoza and his *Los misterios de la cripta embrujada* (Senabre). *Los misterios de Barcelona* was characterized as "ligero e intrascendente," appropriate reading for "un rato de metro" but not much more (Molina).

4. The name "Vampiro de Gracia" recalls the infamous serial killer Enriqueta Martí i Ripollés (1868-1913), known as "la vampira del Raval." Martí kidnapped and murdered several children, using their blood and bones to make magical potions (Costa). Martí has been the subject of two recent novels, Marc Pastor's *La mala dona* (2008) and Fernando Gómez's *El misterio de la calle Poniente* (2009), and a play, *La vampira del Raval o Els misteris de Barcelona* (2010) by Josep Arias Velasco. I would like to thank the outside reviewer who brought this to my attention.

5. *Los misterios de Barcelona* follows the phenomenon of Carlos Ruiz Zafón's *La sombra del viento*, Spain's biggest bestseller in decades and a boon to the publishing industry. *La sombra del viento*, an

urban Gothic, folletín-inspired tale of post-Civil War Barcelona, sparked a publishing trend of novels about Barcelona with a Gothic tenor.

6. The traditional site of the “other” Barcelona was the infamous “Barrio Chino” of the Raval district. Gary McDonogh has shown how writers in the 1920s gave El Raval its nickname to “heighten the air of mystery and romance” (176) of Barcelona’s red-light district. El Raval, like the Barrio Gótico and El Born, are districts of the *casco antiguo* that retained the haphazardness of medieval urbanism. After the construction of the *Ensanche* in the nineteenth-century, these neighborhoods became synonymous with danger and vice. Gradually, however, these areas became gentrified and tourist friendly; the Barrio Gótico along with much of the historic center became museified, “quitándole la vida e inutilizándolo para los fines verdaderos de una ciudad” (Calvo 102-103). During the Olympic era, the Barrio Chino was swept clean of its slums and subsequently experienced a gentrification akin to that of the Barrio Gótico and El Born. After gentrification and “urban renewal” projects there is a shift in the urban imaginary; the “otherness” of the city is forced to find new quarters. For Barcelona, as with many European cities, urban vice is often pushed to the outskirts; after the Olympic reforms a new, larger red-light district has formed in the outskirts of the city (Resina 208-209).

7. Moya’s selection of a Wagner opera is not coincidental; late nineteenth-century Barcelona experienced a craze for all things Wagner (Resina 86).

8. Ismael’s promiscuity and auto-immune disorder draw clear parallels to HIV/AIDS. The vampire myth has been used to explore the fear of AIDS, an illness spread either through sex or blood.

Works Cited

- Botting, Fred. *Gothic*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print.
- Calvo, Javier. “Ríos perdidos.” *Odio Barcelona*. Ed. Ana S. Pareja. Barcelona: Melusina, 2005. 91-105. Print.
- Costa, Pedro. “La vampira del carrer Ponent.” *elpais.com*. El País, 1 January 2006. Web. 9 September 2013.
- Delgado, Manuel. *La ciudad mentirosa. fraude y miseria del modelo Barcelona*. Madrid: Catarata, 2007. Print.
- Hughes, Robert. *Barcelona*. New York: Vintage, 1992. Print.
- Kilgour, Maggie. *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*. London: Routledge, 1995. Print.
- McDonogh, Gary W. “The Geography of Evil: Barcelona’s Barrio Chino.” *Anthropological Quarterly* 60.4 (1987): 174-184. Print.
- _____. *Good Families of Barcelona: A Social History of Power in the Industrial Era*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1986. Print.
- McNeill, Donald. *Urban Change and the European Left: Tales from the New Barcelona*. London: Routledge, 1999. Print.
- Molina, Sr. “Los misterios de Barcelona.” *solodelibros*. 16 October 2006. Web. 30 April 2010.
- Moya, Antonio-Prometeo. *Los misterios de Barcelona*. Madrid: Caballo de Troya, 2006. Print.
- Pike, David L. *Metropolis on the Styx: The Underworlds of Modern Urban Culture, 1800- 2001*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2007. Print.
- Punter, David. “Introduction: Of Apparitions.” *Spectral Readings*. Eds. David Punter and Glennis Byron. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999. 1-8. Print.
- Resina, Joan Ramón. *Barcelona’s Vocation of Modernity: Rise and Decline of an Urban Image*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2008. Print.
- Sánchez, Antonio. “Barcelona’s Magic Mirror: Narcissism or the Rediscovery of Public Space and Collective Identity?” *Constructing Identity in Contemporary Spain: Theoretical Debates and Cultural Practice*. Ed. Jo Labanyi. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002. 294-310. Print.
- Senabre, Ricardo. “Los misterios de Barcelona.” *El Cultural.es. El Mundo*, 27 July 2006. Web. 30 April 2010.