I. Crime fiction and Modernity
The age of late modernity has given rise to a crisis of social control and policing as an expression of a worldwide social crisis. In this context, it is possible to distinguish various narratives about forms of violence, drug dealing, and violent crime in contemporary Latin American societies.

The political difficulties accompanying the democratic transition processes in Latin America have remained in being during the last 20 years; not only do ignorance and surprise at the expansion of violent phenomena persist, but the efforts for institutional reconstruction of the full-fledged rule of law have not called into question several dimensions of institutional social control, and in particular, the condition of the prisons and modes of police action. One need only mention the difficulties of gaining access to justice, the social selectivity of criminal justice and the loss of legitimacy of the institutions of social control.

Violence as a new global social issue is provoking changes in the state: the threat of a repressive social control state is growing in present-day society. The option of a growing repressive social control by the police is expanding throughout the planet, accompanied by a systematic appeal to the use of illegal and illegitimate violence, thereby creating a penal social
control state.
In other words, we are seeing contemporary forms of social control having the characteristics of a repressive state, accompanied by the crisis of the welfare state.

In a very visible way in Latin America, this has meant that the problem of citizen insecurity in the region has been addressed mainly from a conventional perspective based on the police-justice-prison model, which emphasizes the adoption of policies of control and repression of crime and criminal violence.

The penal social control state has multiple characteristics. The first is social production of the feeling of insecurity. This uncertainty has been produced by the weakening of social ties, ranging from job insecurity to the crisis of social relations among people. In the second place, it takes the form of imprisonment of young populations, of socially excluded young men who belong to stigmatized ethnic minorities. The prison industry has prospered. In the third place is the selectivity of the judicial system, the barbarity of the prisons as atrocious warehouses for men and the new forms of electronic vigilance that threaten democracy and individual and collective freedom. Four, the discretionary power and violence by the police have come to be among the new global social issues, still largely unexplored by sociology, within the perspective of conflictivity. So, the police’s behaviour includes not only to maintain the public order and to control criminal activities, but also the police violence is a trend in the Latin American societies. Finally, the inefficiency of the Criminal Justice System produces impunity and an environment of distrust in the police and in the judicial institution.

This is the political context where the phenomena of violence acquire new contours, coming to spread throughout society, including domestic violence, since the crisis of the family crystallizes the changes in social ties, threatening the social functions of that social unit marked by kinship. A plurality of different kinds of social norms are realized, making for something more than legal pluralism and bringing us to visualize the simultaneity of patterns of orientation of behaviour that are often divergent and incompatible.

The multiplicity of forms of violence in contemporary societies – ecological violence, social exclusion, gender violence, racisms, and school violence – come together to form a process of disintegration of citizenship.
Violence is a microphysics of power, i.e. a network of powers that permeates all social relations, marking the interactions among groups and classes. In fact, contemporary societies suppose violence in the form of language and as a social norm for many social categories, in contrast to the so-called civilized norms with their characteristics of self-control and institutionalized social control. In this moment, the social conditions could make possible the novel of violence.

This essay analyzes the representation of the following social dimensions as contained in several contemporary novels: the relationship between crime, the State, and power elites; trans-national crime and policing networks; connections between crime and businesses, politics, and forms of corruption; and finally, the cognitive mapping of the micro-physics of violence.

The purpose of this essay is to propose what could be seen as a new genre of fiction, "the novel of violence", whose novelty can be perceived through the transformation of its narrative structure, albeit incorporating some trends of the classic detective novel and the roman noir. This type of novel presents some classic characters: the agents of social control (mostly policemen), the victims, the culprit, as well as a multitude of urban professionals, the unemployed, and street people. In this sense, these novels exhibit a specific rationality of late modernity, which includes the cognitive mapping of the microphysics of violence and cruelty.

To verify this hypothesis, we will present an analysis of novels published in Latin American countries since the 1990s, particularly those written by Roberto Bolaño, from Chile; Ruben Fonseca, from Brazil; and Alfredo Garcia Roza, from Brazil. The research methodology of this essay will elaborate not only the plot of these novels, but also their characters (policemen, the figure of the detective, the hero or the anti-hero, gang members, politicians, and other state actors), and the characters’ actions (as related to the State and the police, new forms of violent crime associated with the international trafficking of both drugs and people, sexual abuse, and corruption). The analysis of these aspects of Latin American literary production will illustrate the existence of representations of contemporary society based on forms of violence as a social pattern, or
what we call the "the novel of violence".

III. Roberto Bolaño 2666

The novel 2666 by Roberto Bolaño (2003) is a complex and immense text that deserves a more detailed analysis. It presents an interesting variation on the traditional structure of the detective story and of the roman noir, constituting a work of singular importance both from a literary and a sociological point of view. We may interpret the formal innovations as an answer to the changes and concerns within the literary field, but also as Bolaño’s attempt to represent profound social transformations in Latin America, especially concerning violence in all its moral and social complexity.

Considered Bolaño’s greatest work, 2666, which was published posthumously, examines the limits of human evil, and shifts its thematic and historical ambiance. Bolaño had previously represented the fascism of Latin American dictatorships and state violence (with books like Nazi literature in the Americas, By Night in Chile or Distant Star), but in this work he interrogates the more diffuse violence on the northern border of Mexico, which according to Bolaño characterizes the economic and political conditions present in all Latin American societies.

The novel 2666 is made up of some structural elements of the detective fiction genre but also contains an endless maze of murders. The location is a fictional town called "Santa Teresa," which we may easily identify as Ciudad Juarez, on the border between Mexico and the United States. In this city, the murders of women of all ages escalate, mainly workers in "maquiladora" factories or prostitutes.

In an effort to solve the puzzle in a manner familiar to readers of conventional detective novels, the plot is built around the attempt to find the serial killer, who appears to operate in a sinister pattern that mixes satanic rituals and the production of snuff movies. But what the narrative brings out is a complex web of power relations in which the lawful and the unlawful collide, where deputies and managers of multinational corporations associate with drug dealers or killers in both business undertakings and leisure activities.
The reader approaches this scenario of misery and precarious bare life related to global capitalism through a series of literary clues: a group of European critics try to find a mysterious German writer and some hints eventually allow him to be located in Santa Teresa. Edmundo Paz Soldán argues that Bolaño creates a double detective plot "where are both a disappeared - Archimboldi writer – than various murders" (2008, p. 22). However, both searches are unreachable goals that result in leakage hypnotic points, wherein the detective and the reader share the tragic hero condition of trying to solve the unsolvable.

The solution to the mystery and the capturing of the killer do not appear as a reassuring outcome expected at the end of the narrative, but as an impossible horizon. The detective is a grotesque Sisyphus trying in vain to raise the light of truth to the summit of the mountain of rubble.

This subversion of the detective genre is akin to a stylistic development of the theme of misleading multiplicity, along with the non-linear narrative structure, which is also used by authors such as Umberto Eco, Italo Calvino, and Georges Perec, who are Bolaño’s major influences (Peter Elmore, 2008, 259-260; Vila-Matas, 2008, 45-48).

But at the same time, Bolaño’s literary style responds to a new figuration: it is an "expressive form that helps the understanding of contemporary social violence" (Viscardi, 2014, 112): there is a historical Latin American specificity, marked by lacerated citizenship and diffuse violence (Tavares-dos-Santos, 2009).

In 2666 we observe the implosion of crime fiction that soothes us, and even the reader's curiosity seems to be part of this moral chipping. The mystery of the disappeared writer is the main focus at the beginning of the novel. The shadow of the murders is simple background that will gradually emerge in the first three parts of the novel, and only becomes the main narrative in the fourth part before returning to the descriptive darkness at the end of the novel. The questions about the deaths return but now the reader is dedicated to other hints that follow and so the deaths remain unsolved and in this sense are left to oblivion.

The fourth chapter of the novel (441-792) is the most closely related to crime fiction, even though this is where Bolaño creates a new narrative effect that departs from the traditional form of the genre. The beginning of the chapter could be the opening of a conventional crime novel: the
narrative voice presents the discovery of a corpse (identified as Esperanza Gomez Saldaña, 13 years old), who has been killed by an unknown murderer. According to the forensic analysis, she was strangled and had bruises on her chin and around the left eye. A series of precise details are provided that could be clues to be pursued.

In a classic crime novel, the reader could expect a detective to turn up and take over the investigation. Following a series of rational procedures and courageous investigations, he would then struggle to solve the fundamental question: who killed Esperanza Gomez Saldaña? But none of this happens: the first death is succeeded only two pages later by a second, and instead of a detective as an heroic protagonist we have the presence of a truculent police officer, impotent and careless, trying to close the case quickly without worrying about the abstract concept of "truth". Following a principle of chaotic enumeration, Bolaño presents a sinister gallery of detectives and murders, an endless drip of death and indecency that nobody solves.

This overwhelming tide of unsolved mysteries puzzles the reader, with one unanswered question succeeded by another and then another. The most prominent unanswered question is that the police only solve a few of the 183 "femicides" that appear in the novel. That's why the myth of the serial killer emerges in Santa Teresa, with the police, the press, the narcogangs, and the government working together to assign all the deaths to the character Klaus Haas. He is described as a very odd German immigrant that few people know, a perfect scapegoat to hold responsible for the murders.

But his capture does not lead to the end of the murders, but only to a temporary calm. That creates a distinction between two types of deaths: the "folkloric" and the "modern" ones (Bolaño, 2004, 675). The folkloric deaths are not worrying, but the modern deaths must be explained by a deviant serial killer, to avoid linking this horrible living conditions with the myth of progress and modern development.

To realize this imaginary construction of a "modern" murderer, the participation of the American detective Albert Kessler is essential. The government of Santa Teresa requests the help of this FBI expert with years of experience in the psychological profiling of serial killers. Kessler is the classic detective, a "modern Sherlock Holmes" (Bolaño, 2004, p. 762),
whose presence is more a marketing ploy on the part of a corrupt government than a real attempt to resolve the issue.

In contrast to Kessler, there are many characters in 2666 that embody a specific type of proud and truculent detective. The unrealizable love affair between the lawyer Juan de Dios Martinez and the psychologist Elvira Campos seems to represent this incompatibility between the social sciences and police practice, or between rational legal knowledge and unfocused repression. On the other hand, the real effectiveness of research practices is only activated when the murders affect the upper strata of society.

Harry Macgana (or Magaña) is a Texas sheriff who undertakes independent research in Santa Teresa in the style of Philip Marlowe after the murder of a neighbour of his who was traveling south of the border. The private detective Luis Miguel Loya, a former Mexican police officer, is hired to solve the disappearance of a close friend of a congressman. After a few inquiries, his suggestion is that the deputy must abandon the attempt because it is impossible to reach the guilty: her own political allies will make it impossible (Bolaño, 2004, 780).

The most paradigmatic Bolaño detective is called Lalo Cura, whose formation is a clear example of the confusing confluence of legal and illegal power. Recruited by the police chief among the killers from a rural area to be offered as henchman to a drug kingpin, the police later hire him as an officer after he demonstrates his courage in a shoot-out.

But there is a sort of homage in this character. In the beautiful pages dedicated to the ancestors of Lalo Cura (2004, 692-98), Bolaño seems to connect the detective’s attitudes and gestures with the story of the suffering people of Latin America, praising their courage and intuitive knowledge, embodied in a sui generis tragic hero.

The literary ability to connect people and characters sums up one of the qualities of Bolaño’s narrative structure. It takes the shape of a constellation of signifiers connected by deformed mirrors (names, locations, gestures, images) that creates an illusory and labyrinthine fictional universe. An amazing example is the brothers Pedro and Pablo Negrete, respectively police chief and dean of the University of Santa Teresa. This couple represent the corruption of two central institutions of modernity:
the characters reflect the fact that the security of citizens cannot be entrusted to the police, and ideas cannot be ordered by academics.

As in the realm of myths, the characters disappear and reappear in different stories and chapters, describing biographical trajectories, sometimes contradictory and multiple. Bolaño’s literary mechanisms (narrative labyrinths with deceptive Ariadne's wires, games of warped mirrors and constellations of dubious meanings) overlap with the model of the classic crime novel, renewing their literary effect.

A roman noir with conventional structure could have portrayed the femicides in Ciudad Juarez with relative efficacy, but this method would not have achieved a sensitive treatment of the subject immersed in Bolaño’s reality, which is incomprehensible by the standards of the classic detective novel. Indeed rather than answering the specific question of who killed the murdered women, Bolaño’s novel asks a series of more far-reaching questions: how to transmit to the reader the helplessness induced by the presence of ubiquitous institutional corruption (government, drug trafficking, the US Embassy, the multinationals, the tabloid press) that everybody knows about but that cannot be investigated in detail? How to communicate the lonely investigator’s knowledge that their attempted quest is doomed to end in either failure or death?

The literary approach of a violent, strange, and incomprehensible reality does not end with horror and incomprehension. The social change opens up possibility and requires an effort to communicate the sensitivity of this despair and astonishment. Amidst this indecipherable intertwining net of events, the figure that gives us hope is dragged down: the heroic individuals are like Sisyphus pushing the rock. Just as in the roman noir, the hero lives within an apocalyptic landscape.

IV. The brutalist fiction of Rubem Fonseca

In Brazilian literature, the presence of violence can be viewed as an inheritance from Euclides da Cunha, Pedro Nava, Erico Verissimo, Guimarães Rosa, and finally Rubem Fonseca, whose work is characterized by literary criticism as an expression of a fierce realism or a literary Brutalism (Bosi, 1994, 1999; Candido, 2006a, 2006b; Schwartz, 2000a, 2000b; Fischer, 2008; Botelho, 2012).
The detective novel in Brazil emerged in the 1920s, with the book *Mysteries*, written by four authors (Coelho Neto, Peixoto, Medeiros e Albuquerque, and Viriato Correa), which took a critical approach to the Brazilian judicial system (Reimão, 2005, p. 17). Since then, several authors have developed this genre (Albuquerque, 1979; Figueiredo, 2003; Reimão, 2005). Recently, it has acquired some density and further cultural expression in a series of novels by Tony Belloto, Patricia Mello, Delgado Nogueira, Tabajara Ruas, Reginaldo Prandi, among others. However, the puzzle axis would be the presence of cruelty in Romanesque forms in which violence in social relations acquires centrality. Certainly, the most important authors are Rubem Fonseca and Garcia Roza, some of whose stories have been adapted for cinema.

Brazilian literature in the 1960s and 1970s had, in large part, taken on urban violence as one of its main themes, partly due to the fact that the country had been ruled, from 1964 up until 1985, by an authoritarian military regime. Between 1969 and 1974, state violence was manifested through censorship, prison, torture, and murder. In addition, socio-economic inequality in large cities worsened, creating a breeding ground conducive to the explosion of cruelty in social interactions. This situation required a stylistic treatment that could do justice to it, hence the literature of the period is characterized by a kind of "journalistic neorealism" (Schollhammer, 2013) or by what the critic Alfredo Bosi (1975) called "brutalism".

Rubem Fonseca is a remarkable example of the period. He has turned literature into a powerful instrument of denunciation and reflection about the violence that emerged from the outskirts of Brazilian cities. Fonseca’s work represents a reversal of perspective about crime and violence, both in his short stories and novels, because the narrative is driven by forsaken characters whose reality is marked by the presence of criminals and corrupt police, eliminating any kind of moral detachment and expressing the direct experience of cruelty in its most crude and raw form. In this sense, his very language is that of marginality, i.e., a language that expresses forms of violence in its most terrible aspect, and which manifests itself in violent ways, through the absence of mercy, as a way to join literary form and content.
The "ferocious realism" of Fonseca (Candido, 2004, p. 126), however, is not a naive, discreet mimesis that aims to act as an accurate portrayal of reality; on the contrary, the author offers us a "trans-realism" concerned with re-symbolizing the violent acts perpetrated by the characters. So, in order to express the forms of violence, Fonseca's style reframes violence by the way in which he "re-enacts the limits of their ability" (Schollhammer, 2013, p. 128).

In other words, Fonseca aims to communicate the incommunicable, to say the unsayable, to overcome the silence that surrounds violence and makes it impossible to understand. His realism cannot be reduced to a document of a particular historical experience, but instead strives to re-symbolize an uncomfortable and incomprehensible reality.

The poetic language of the author proves to be subversive in both content (through his choice of subject matter and focus on unusual social types) and form, because it sets itself the task of breaking the boundaries of representation. Fonseca exposes cancers that spread throughout the social fabric, undermining ties and solidarities among the social actors.

A novelist, but also a master of the short story, Fonseca, in his story *The taker*, presents a kind of synthesis of his aesthetic program. The opening scene of the story introduces us to the central character (and narrator) in a dental office. The dentist asks how his client had let his teeth get in this state, and he responds: "Just laughing. These guys are funny" (Fonseca, 2004, 273.). This dialogue offers us a clue about the social origin of the character, who does not have adequate economic resources to allow him to visit the dentist regularly.

The language that characterizes the dialogue between dentist and client-narrator is direct and harsh. At the moment when he is charged, the anger explodes: "I will not pay anything, I am tired of paying! - Yelled at him - now I just take it!" (p. 273.). Then, he shoots the dentist in the knee and later regrets not killing "that son of a bitch." The unnamed character-narrator tries to achieve justice by seeking redress for a multitude of injustices of which he was the victim - or at least he sees himself as the victim. However, by adopting the strategy of "taking the law into his own hands," the character is really looking for revenge, denouncing the injustice of the world we live in, surrounded by poverty, inequality, loneliness, and the absence of public services by the State. According to the taker, they all
owe you something: "They owe me food, pussy, blankets, shoes, a house, car, watch, teeth, they owe me . . . the electric company, vaccinations, doctor, clothing store, people everywhere" (273).

The taker demands reparation for his needs and requirements and in this sense his violence is a response to a previous violence, an exclusion. But does answering violence with violence bring about restitution? Does it generate justice? Ideally, justice is not just an economic act but also a social act of reparation, something that ought to be capable of restoring human dignity.

In front of the TV, the taker sees inequality and social exclusion reproduced, or reaffirmed, because everything that is advertised is only accessible to few customers: a true act of symbolic violence that excludes huge portions of the population. Once again the character feels wronged, humiliated, robbed, and demands revenge. Two of his victims - a husband and his pregnant wife - ask for mercy: "We didn’t do anything to him" (278), says the husband. The taker thinks to himself “Didn’t they? Just laughing. I felt hatred flooding my ears, my hands, my mouth, my whole body, a taste of vinegar and tear” (278). After killing the husband and wife, he states: "I'm a holocaust / There was neither God nor the Devil / that made me an avenger / I made myself by myself / I am the Dick-Man/ I am the taker" (281).

This scene shows a catastrophe, a disaster that was created neither by God nor by the devil, but by the social reality. The taker didn’t have a crisis of conscience, and feels no repentance; he is a devastating force that turns against the social body that created and then abandoned him. The character-narrator is a social type that tells us something about the world, about violence; a credible and unlikely figure who both shields us from, and at the same time, brings us closer to reality. This twofold approach, the second producing the first, is the key to re-symbolizing social reality.

The character-type from Fonseca’s short story is absolutely unable to control his aggressive impulses, his most destructive instincts. In some passages he behaves like an individual who isn't a "social being" in the Durkheimian sense, i.e., a being devoid of the moral rules necessary to ensure social cohesion. More than an example of poor socialization, we find ourselves facing a figure who is the by-product of his circumstances, the Brazilian social figuration. This society failed to extend the bonds of
solidarity because of its own history, marked, for instance, by a system of slavery that lasted for over 300 years. This history generates disrespect for otherness, especially when the other comes from marginalized sectors of Brazilian society, composed mainly but not exclusively of black and poor mulattoes.

Fonseca reveals Brazilian society as a place in which the civilizing process - in the sense used by Norbert Elias - did not happen fully, but was aborted and privatized. The ruling classes developed a restricted politeness, a cordial treatment for themselves, while allowing only disregard and cruelty for the others. At the end of the story, the taker embarks on a love affair with Ana, a young white middle class woman who becomes his partner in crime, even suggesting new ways to kill, such as the use of explosives. Their union indicates that violence is not restricted to this or that group, to this or that social class, but has become a concrete possibility, part of social interactions. The couple, however, is not a symbol of reconciliation. Rather, they are a symbol of a violence that is everywhere and structures Brazilian society, where the civilizing process is limited to certain social groups.

The poetics of Rubem Fonseca show that literature has enough force to serve as a "transgressive movement", capable of producing a cathartic experience. In this sense, literature is not just another form of representation of violence, thanks to its strength and ability to break the boundaries between what can be said and what cannot be said. Literature may express brutality and cruelty in its most explicit form; so literature also expresses the forbidden, what is hidden or denied.

Fonseca’s realism is a combination of representation and non-representation. His literature nurtures a passion for social reality, but is not limited to a mimetic representation of reality, unable to create the necessary distance for reflection and the effects of estrangement. Fonseca understands the need to distort the ties of familiarity in order to be able to capture something from the real that insists on remaining hidden. There is a questioning of the concept of mimetic representation and its relation to the referential world, because such proximity would be an obstacle to reflection itself. The literary discourse that intends to imitate the sensible reality is doomed to failure because it can never accurately reproduce the empirical world, even at the risk of becoming mere pastiche.
The importance of efforts to narrate the horror lies in producing in the reader the effect of trauma, discomfort, strangeness, and not simply contemplation. The only way, therefore, to capture the violence in its entirety, in all its complexity, is through an equally violent, brutal, crude language. In this sense, language is not just the representation of violence, but is itself violent, an aesthetic movement that Schollhammer (2013) calls "negative aesthetics": the expression of cruelty requires the cruelty of expression, as the work of Rubem Fonseca demonstrates.

VI. Garcia-Roza's novels: the Inspector Espinosa Mysteries

We can identify the differences between the structural properties of the novel of violence and those of the classical detective story, by using as our reference point the novels of Garcia-Roza and showing how the components of his narratives are quite different. In classical crime fiction, the motives for the criminal act are money, power, and sex. In the *roman noir* money and sex are the predominant motives. In the novel of violence, the recurrent themes are money, theft, and drugs, but also firearms and drugs trafficking are responsible for killing. Moreover, imaginary crime arises. Espinosa says: "It's much harder to get rid of the corpses produced by our imagination than real bodies already buried" (*A Dangerous Place*, 2014).

Garcia-Roza’s plots include more than one murder: throughout the chapters, the author presents a series of murders. The novelty comes in the form of tortured or mutilated bodies, evidence of the brutal violence of late modernity. In addition, there is a lot of sexual violence, particularly widespread rape as an expression of relationships that dominate through humiliation.

The setting of the novels is the city of Rio de Janeiro: the Copacabana district and the Peixoto district, in the south of the city; the Catete district; and downtown Rio de Janeiro. Garcia-Roza offers a detailed description of the city and its places, with its subways and skyscrapers and, of course, the presence of a beautiful sea. However, it is a fractured city, in which a college class "ended before 10 p.m. for security reasons" (*Sky Origamis*, 69).

In the classic crime novel, the detective runs lonely throughout the pages, although there may appear a secondary character playing a
supporting role (Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, for instance). Deductive-inductive logic shows its face, but the murderer is typically an amateur criminal. The private detective is the hero who restores the social order that had been threatened by crime. In the roman noir, the hero is a detective, or even a policeman, but they are often prone to vices such as alcoholism. The detective is a troubled and vulnerable hero, an anti-hero, he "is beaten, wounded, constantly risks his life" (Todorov, 1979, 103).

Garcia-Roza’s characters are diverse. The narrator and main character of his books is the 52 year old policeman Espinosa. Espinosa, newly promoted to the position of police chief, loves books ("three thousand books stacked"), as his grandmother used to be a translator of American pulp fiction. He possesses literary tastes, enjoying the work of writers such as Joseph Conrad, Somerset Maugham, Cornell Woolrich, Herman Melville, William Faulkner, J.M. Coetzee, and Primo Levi. He also reads detective novels, ranging from Edgar Allan Poe (‘The Purloined Letter’, ‘The Gold Bug’), to Dashiell Hammett, Patricia Highsmith, Georges Simenon, and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán. He lives alone, but fell in love with Kitty and was seduced by Flor; he has been married and has a 15-year-old son who lives in Washington with his mother. Espinosa is a flaneur; he likes to be welcomed by the residents of his neighbourhood.

Garcia-Roza’s other characters are cops, all Espinosa’s friends: Welber, Ramiro are his researchers; Vieira, a retired police chief; the young officers Maldonado, Arthur, Chaves, and Paulo; the forensic expert, Freire. Repeatedly, there appear characters from the Copacabana underworld: street children (the street boy called Washington that eventually gets killed), the nameless boys that live by night in the streets; Clodoaldo, a street educator; Princess, a homeless woman; Isaiah, a worker friend of Princess; the prostitutes (Florinda, Magali, and Vanessa); and the cheap extortionists, contract killers and beggars.

There are also characters from various professional backgrounds: Espinosa’s son, Julius, now an interior architect, was educated in the United States; Gabriel, an office worker lives with his mother; Hidalgo, the artist at a puppet theatre; Jonas, or Isidoro, student and patient; the psychiatrist, Dr. Nesse; an economist Guilherme; Aldo, an architect; and lawyers (André; Reginald); Dominguez or Arthur Clement, an arms dealer; the Professor of letters, Vicente Fernandes. And there is also a whole world of servants.
Women are a constant presence in Garcia-Roza’s novels: Alzira, Espinosa’s mother; the boardwalk painter Kitty; Olga, a work friend; Stella, Hidalgo’s psychic girlfriend; the officers’ lovers, Maria Rita, Aparecida, and Celeste; the witness at the window, Serena, who seduces Espinosa and then turns up dead. Many of the women are professionals: Camila, a doctor's wife and psychiatrist, and Antonia and Mary, her patients.

In Garcia-Roza’s work, the image of women differs profoundly from the crime fiction. The classic detective is misogynistic, the woman is a distant being. In the *roman noir* the figure of the *femme fatale* appears, immortalized by Hollywood divas. But in the novel of violence, women are ambiguous, sometimes victims, sometimes powerful executioners, even getting to assume important roles as drug dealers. Seduction permeates these writings and a distinctive feature of Garcia-Roza’s novels is the presence of female homosexuality, depicted with both delicacy and mildness.

Garcia-Roza’s novels reveal crime as an integral power that lies within the man himself, which leads to some apparent paradoxes: on the one hand, Espinosa and his police procedural behavior; on the other hand, the corruption and the relations among a group of corrupt cops and drug dealers (*Lost and Found*, 1998, 91; *Origami Sky*, 2009, 50). There appears to be coexistence between a type of police and criminal activities.

We can also see a contradiction between reason and imagination, evidence or fantasy, as Espinosa thinks: "Although he considered himself smart, he was not the cerebral type; his fantasies were more powerful than thought and often overlapped it, causing the thread of reasoning to become entangled in an vast image" (*Wind Southwest*, 1999, 18).

The other main conflict in Garcia-Roza’s work is the relationship between reason and the unreasonable. In Espinoza's own words: "No one is completely crazy and no one is completely normal. Each person has his/her own particular madness, which might be a soft one, modest, intimate madness, or otherwise take the form of a tropical storm, impossible to go unnoticed "(*A Dangerous Place*, 2014, 262).

The novel’s epilogue remains open as many times the enigma remains unsolved. Even when the guilty party is identified, or has confessed, there is no such thing as comprehensive law enforcement. Perhaps the ambiguous characters' trajectories and the author's choice to let the story
remain unresolved is a way of maintaining the reader’s curiosity until the next narrative. But it is also a literary expression of liquid modernity.

VII. The novel of violence: a new literary genre?

We must now identify the structural differences between the novel of violence and the detective novel. Since the French *nouveau roman*, the character of the anti-hero has been analyzed as a form of rebellion, which brings the social conflict back to the centre of literary figuration (Jordan, p. 101).

Todorov points out that the detective novel contains two stories: the story of the crime and the history of the investigation, that is, the fable and the plot of a narrative. In the novel puzzle, there are "two stories, one of which is missing but it is real, the other present but insignificant" (Todorov, 1979, 96). The *roman noir* is a type of novel that fuses the two stories by suppressing the first and giving life to the second: the narrative coincides with the action. Its features and themes are: violence, sordid crime, the immorality of the characters, and unbridled passion.

But in the novel of violence, unlike the detective novel, the "problematic hero" leaves the scene, his place is occupied by the dissolution of the characters, and the problematic anti-hero makes his appearance. In Vallejos’ *Virgen de los Assassins*, young killers make a request to the saint: “I need to be hired; my shot must be effective; and don’t let them kill me”. In Franco’s *Rosario Tijeras*, the powerful drug smugglers are nameless; the narrator refers to them as “the toughest of the tough”. The criminals are fully present, either belonging to criminal organizations or emerging from among ordinary people.

The detective emerges as a fallible human being, sometimes in collusion with forms of violence. The dead appear repeatedly, including in the form of tortured bodies. Moreover, in the romance of violence, there are a number of other characters: the detective, the policeman; the politicians; the gang members, male and female assassins, contract killers (*sicarios*), and members of organized crime. There also appears a diffuse mass of working class and lower class characters, sometimes living in poor neighbourhoods or slums, and the homeless. The characters’ names are frequently either elliptical or absent.
The components of the narrative are also different. In the crime novel the motifs guiding the criminal act are money, power, and sex. In the roman noir money and sex predominate. And some features are specific: there are no surprises in the last pages; descriptions are cynical; comparisons connote a certain roughness (Todorov, 1979, p. 102).

By contrast, the novels of violence condense money and sex, but they also combine micro-power and macro-power. We also see representatives of power in action, including capitalists and politicians. The ruling class in Latin America often exerts its power without democratic rules, making frequent use of brutality and corruption.

The plot usually includes more than one murder: throughout the chapters, the authors present a series of murders. The novelties are the tortured bodies and the brutal violence, a mimesis of social life in late modernity. The criminal act is sometimes marked by cruelty. The characters embody a brutalized violence, and often bear a grudge.

In the puzzle novels, the supreme moral value is individualism, influenced by the values of aristocratic society that see the world eroded by money (as in Agatha Christie’s novels). The roman noir consolidates competitive individualism and focuses on the crisis of American society after the Great Depression. Cynicism is widespread in an urban environment. In the novel of violence, indeed, the figures are those of the liberal market society, competitive and predatory, marked by the abuse of drugs and a rude individualism.

The location of the plot also is completely different. In the puzzle novel, it is the aristocratic house, the English countryside, a place of elegance and discretion (Agatha Christie); or the great city, such as London, with its winding streets and fog (Conan Doyle). In Hammett and Chandler, it is an urban space, often the small town, degraded, with a pathological social body. However, in the novel of violence, we find the metropolis, fragmented, with the partition between rich and poor neighbourhoods, and the proliferation of vulnerable or deprived urban areas (Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City, Medellin).

If we observe the patterns of domination, in the first place we have the traditional domination that must be rational. In the case of the roman noir, we find a charismatic domination, claiming to be bureaucratic. In the novel of violence, there is a market domination by the owners of money, be
it of legal or illegal origin, but that nonetheless has a corrupting influence on political power.

The notion of time that the classic novel manifests is the evolutionary time of progress and reason. In the roman noir, there is a time of crisis, epitomized by the economic depression of capitalist society. In the novel of violence, there is a society living in uncertainty and insecurity. The novels express a tragic fate, an eternal present that has no possibility of future: all the characters are hopeless. Often, only a desperate love could continue to give meaning to human dignity.

The puzzle solution is a distinctive feature of the three types of crime fiction. In the classic novel, the puzzle is always solved, the author often providing the reader with a series of clues in order to involve him in the web and to share the solution. In the roman noir, the solution often precedes the outcome of the plot, appearing to be secondary to the unfolding events. However, in the novel of violence there is no definite solution: the enigma itself vanishes, remaining a latent narrative.

Finally, there are significant differences in the types of violence these novels represent. In the puzzle novel, violence is individual, often from a noble character; the murder is often carried out by the use of poison or with a bullet. In the hard-boiled novel, violence is acted out between individuals, marked by physical action and the use of firearms.

The origin of detective novels coincides with the emergence of Psychiatry and Sociology, therefore, in a context marked by an episteme of research, causality and interpretation. It is an episteme of scientist optimism of the nineteenth century, based on rationalism, the rational search for solutions, and the unveiling of the findings.

The solution of the mystery and crime enables a return to a supposed normality; an episteme therefore focused on the social control. In this sense, the detective novel has, throughout the history of the genre itself, some structural similarities: there is always a crime, which must be revealed because is a kind of threat to the social order. This function needs the detective, whether state agent or acting particularly, and whose methods vary depending on the development of the detective novel: from the rational method of Sherlock Holmes, through the brute force of the hard-boiled American novels or the Maigret instinct.
Nevertheless, the role of the detective does not change: restore a supposed normality.

On the contrary, in the novels of violence, crime and its solution are secondary, because violence is no longer seen as a kind of diversion, but as a structuring element of social reality. For some authors, in fact, violence appears as a founder of the social element. In Freud, Elias and Girard, violence appears as constitutive of the human component, inherent to their condition. But violence would be, paradoxically, constitutive of society itself, born under the sign of an original violent act; on the other hand, the society needs to contain violence to ensure their continuity.

Without assuming that violence is presented as inherent to social relations, yet it can be said that violence has participated as a basic component of primary socialization processes, as well as secondary processes of creation of new forms of sociability. It is not just the violence of one class over another or from one ethnic group against another, but also violence throughout society, and manifesting in all social, public and private spaces.

In more complex societies, according to hypothesis of René Girard (1990), besides the existence of a judicial system, violence is still ritualized in many other ways, for example, through literature, whose mimetic dramatization of violence can generating a atonement effect therefore containment. But as literature could exercise such ritual function?

The literary experience makes empirical reality as possible to the experience. The intensification of experience through literature is possible because it allows at least the confrontation between literary representation and the social and historical reality. The literary narrative, according to this perspective, is seen as a kind of "crucial experiment," critical, a laboratory that allows enhance and create experiences that would be impossible in real life.

The mimetic effect of literature is thus the possibility of catharsis of desire, rivalry and violence, at the turn of subject into yourself in a move that would allow the expansion of your consciousness and the reworking of picture of yourself and another. It is as if the literature reveals our own mimetic constitution, which therefore requires the awareness that our actions are always directed to
one another. The literature and the arts would present the potential to create, within us, the consciousness of otherness. The literary aesthetics of social life would bring in its wake, therefore, an ethical potential.

It is important to tell the violence through words or images in order to report some accommodation for all of us to violence, certain passive acceptance of a phenomenon that has become part of everyday life to the point that we bow to almost naturalize it. Perhaps, to narrate violence recreates our ability to be intolerant about the violence acts. Radicalize the effect of shock happens to be one of the attributes of the arts, seeking to break with the "cultural anaesthesia" (Schollhammer, 2013: 35), proving thus a "transgressed power" to overcome the most immediate everyday reality. This is the "aesthetic of trauma", necessary to face the spectacular commodification of violence, which, with its ambiguous fascination, a mixture of attraction and rejection, has become a highly valued good of symbolic consumption.

Literature - and art in general - possess sufficient strength to serve as a "transgressed movement burst" capable of producing a shock effect and, from such a shock, a cathartic experience. In this sense, literature is not just another form of representation of violence, but goes beyond that because of its strength and ability to transgress, to break the boundaries between what can be said and what cannot be said. The literature says the unspeakable and incommunicable. When communicating violence, the novel of violence modifies it to re-enact their communication impossible, making it possible.

The novel express brutality and cruelty in its most explicit form, that is, the literature expresses the forbidden, what is hidden, what is denied. Literature modifies the symbol of violence and communicates it as an uncomfortable reality: the novel of violence tends to deny violence as a social norm.

In the novel of violence there arise new forms of murders: violent crimes, international drug trafficking, sexual abuse and violence, rape, corruption, and torture. These forms appear as an aesthetic of "brutalism" and "cruelty". The world of the novel of violence is a world without law, defined by the ineffectiveness or simply the absence of the police or the judiciary. There is a lack of a legitimate authority, formal or informal, signifying the crisis of the judicial system.
The final lesson of these novels is anguish and nihilism, both of which suppress the future in a world without destination. What may remain from our humanity is fragile love, the character's search for something else: at the end of an exhausting journey of wanderings, a frail passion could suggest a hope for a new culture of nonviolence.

Works Cited:


