

Chapter 1

Publishing Matters

The Boom and Its Players

Shortly after the approval of the printing and publishing law of 1966, Manuel Fraga Iribarne, Spain's Minister of Information and Tourism, reportedly commented: "He dado orden de que los lápices rojos los dejen en el fondo del cajón" ["I have ordered that the red pencils be stored at the bottom of the drawer"] (Cisquilla 19).¹ Fraga's pronouncement echoed not only the letter of the law—articles 1 and 50 allowed for freedom of publishing and article 3 eliminated official censorship—but also the government's claim that censorship no longer existed. Unfortunately, the red pencils nevertheless continued to be placed at the very top of the desk drawers of many Spanish censors. These "readers" (as they were officially called at the Ministry of Information) saw their censorial duties regulated but in no way eliminated by the new law's claim to recognize "the right to free expression of ideas" ["el derecho a la libertad de expresion de ideas"] (*Prensa e Imprenta* 79). Some subtle changes, however, did begin to appear in the censorship practices of the regime. Where before the *apertura*, the political "opening up" of the 1960s, these "readers" had worked for the coercive "Book Inspection Services," the new modernizing efforts of the regime now "transferred" them to the apparently inoffensive "Department for Editorial Orientation," also known as the "Department for Bibliographical Orientation."²

These ingenious euphemisms notwithstanding, then, Fraga's speech to a group of publishers made it clear that more red pencils would still

be needed at the Ministry: “Ya tienen Ley de Prensa. Yo la he elaborado y yo voy a gobernar su cumplimiento. A mí, y no a ustedes, toca administrarla” [“Here you have your printing law. I drafted it, and I plan to enforce it. I, not you, will administer it”] (Cisquella 27). More precisely, Fraga was to administer the law in such a way as to alter, but not to end, the censorship practices of the regime, which were maintained by the controversial article 2 of the law. In this article, freedom of expression was circumscribed by a requirement that included, among other things, respect for truth and morals, allegiance to the Principles of the National Movement, due respect for the Institutions of the State, and the preservation of privacy and personal and family honor (*Prensa e Imprenta* 80). This article would not be repealed until 1977, two years after Franco’s death (Abellán, *Censura* 117).

Indeed, article 2’s list of limitations was a blank check for the government to continue its past censorship practices. The regime obviously did not present things in this way, or more accurately did not argue along such lines. Francisco Abella Martín, chair of the commission in charge of examining the law before parliament, defended it for its comprehensive understanding of what the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights and the European Council saw as “valid limitations of expression,” such as respect for the freedom of others, respect for moral order, and for a society’s welfare. Furthermore, Abella Martín hinted that the government was attempting to promote self-imposed censorship on the part of editors and publishers: “El proyecto de Ley, ante el dilema censura o responsabilidad, opta por la Segunda” [“Considering the dilemma of censorship vs. responsibility, the law opts for the Second Option”] (*Prensa e Imprenta* 26–7). What this formulation really meant seems obvious today, but it became a matter of debate among critics, publishers, and writers at that time. For Carlos Barral, the new law brought a “rationalization of censorship” and “easier ways” to exchange ideas with the censorship authorities (*Almanaque* 12); for Manuel Abellán, the law was “a judicial ploy” [“un montaje jurídico”] (*Censura* 119); and for Hans-Jörg Neuschäffer the law was designed to “influence the very process of creation” (49). In my view, the new rules of censorship paved the way for a strategic expansion of the book industry, an ambitious policy of the regime that culminated with the approval of a significant piece of legislation in 1975, the *Ley del Libro* [the Book Law]. My research at the *Archivo* indicates that this law had been drafted as early as 1969, was revised in 1972 and 1973, and was finally approved in 1975. The new legislation (incidentally, still on the books) encouraged not only the promotion, production, and distribution of books, but also provided a

carefully designed structure intended to coordinate the government's efforts to pursue the expansion of the Spanish book industry through subsidies and tax credits. These measures took place under the Economic Plans for Development (*desarrollismo*) of the *apertura* years, when leading figures of the Franco regime such as López Rodó designed a series of economic and political reforms that would allow the regime to break down Spain's international isolation from the world scene, with one clear goal in mind. The idea was to:

promover el crecimiento de la economía como vector generador de prosperidad y el bienestar material de la población, con la esperanza de que dicha prosperidad y bienestar cimentaran la paz social, suplieran la falta de libre participación democrática y dieran legitimidad de ejercicio a un régimen autoritario pero también modernizador.

To promote economic growth as the generating principle of prosperity and well-being for the population, in the hope that this prosperity and well-being would be the foundation for social peace, make up for the lack of free and democratic participation, and give legitimacy of exercise to an authoritarian yet modernizing regime. (Moradiellos 149)

For the book industry economic growth and prosperity implied some relaxation of the censorship regulations, together with the implementation of government-sponsored subsidies and reforms geared toward the modernization and expansion of what the regime saw as a somewhat out-of-date industry. With the 1966 law, the government was claiming to put an end to the censorship of printed materials under the banner of "censorship no longer exists" ["la censura ya no existe"], but despite this claim, all printed material still had to receive the seal of approval of the Ministry of Information, which meant that censorship continued. What the new law did change was the way in which censors evaluated manuscripts. And in the case of Latin American literature, the new law allowed for a wider distribution of Latin American texts, since many works by Latin American writers were authorized for printing as long as they were not distributed in Spain (Abellán, "La censura"). For instance, the 1973 submission of Salvador Garmendia's *Día de ceniza* [*Ash Day*] was done for "export" purposes only, and that pleased the censors who in 1968 had not approved Seix Barral's request to import the book due to its "eroticism." The authorities saw no objection to approving the 1973 petition since the book was to be marketed overseas (Expediente de *Día de ceniza*). Similarly, Barral

Editores submitted Alfredo Bryce Echenique's *Huerto cerrado* [*Closed Orchard*] "para exportar" ["for exportation"]. The censor authorized the "4,000 copies for exportation" but held the "1,000 copies to be distributed in Spain" until corrections were made on "pages 111 and 112" (Expediente de *Huerto cerrado*). This policy of exporting to Latin America was balanced by the many restrictions on importing books from abroad, particularly from Cuba and Argentina, two of Spain's most notable competitors in the literary distribution of the Latin American Boom.

It is no coincidence, then, that the debate leading to these reforms and to the approval of the 1966 and 1975 laws coincided with the successful penetration of José Donoso, Mario Vargas Llosa, Carlos Fuentes, Guillermo Cabrera Infante, and other Latin American writers into Spain's 1960s literary market. For the Franco regime, the publishing success of many of these writers was pivotal in its plans to take control of the Spanish-language book market. Furthermore, the new censorship practices of the *apertura* were crucial, not only for the Boom writers and the renovation of the Spanish book industry, but also and most importantly for the development of Spain's transition into democracy. For example, the "softening" of the many restrictions on the printing and distribution of books fit the government's plan to keep the Latin American book markets as one of Spain's main export markets, but it did so at the price of allowing the publication of Boom writers who sided with the Cuban Revolution of 1959 and were known to be on the side of the left. In this chapter, I use the double sense of the phrase "publishing matters" to summarize this apparent paradox: censorship worked hand in hand with a certain liberalization required by the desired expansion of the book trade. Thus, I read the new rules of censorship vis-à-vis the confidential government reports on the book industry, on the one hand, and, on the other, Seix Barral's publishing policies (the Boom's leading publishing house in Spain) as laid out in its 1969 *Catálogo General de Publicaciones*. I do this with a view to showing how censorship worked simultaneously in conflict and in complicity with the Franco regime, as well as with Seix Barral's publishing ambitions and the Boom writers' careers and literary production.

For the regime, the promotion of "Hispanic" culture in the Americas became the magic formula that resolved the conflict created by the successful incursion of pro-democracy Boom writers into the book market that the government sought to control. In a confidential report dated October 1963, the Spanish government framed the promotion of pan-Hispanic culture as a vital cultural endeavor that would—not coincidentally—generate important revenues for the regime: "El

libro es el principal vehículo para la presencia cultural de España en el mundo... también tiene el libro considerable importancia para una economía como la española, que ha de esforzarse continuamente para incrementar un comercio exportador todavía precario” [“Books are the main vehicle for Spain’s cultural presence in the world. Books are also of considerable importance for an economy that must constantly struggle to improve its still precarious commerce abroad”] (Informe sobre el comercio exterior del libro 3–5).

For the authors of this document, books could not be regarded as “mere merchandise,” nor could they be “measured only in economic terms” [“meramente valorado mediante criterios económicos”]. Indeed, they viewed Spanish books (that is, books printed in Spain) as the “highest exponent of our culture” [“el más alto exponente de nuestra cultura”] and “of the ideological and moral principles that inform our country” [“de los principios ideológicos y morales que informan a nuestro país”] in the Spanish-speaking world (Informe sobre el comercio 3). So, in their eyes, the importance of the Latin American book market lay in the fact that it responded both to a cultural ambition, “books are the main vehicle for Spain’s cultural presence,” and to Spain’s desire to become a modern economy through the massive exportation of books.

These anonymous bureaucrats probably did not imagine that their dull and often verbose reports on the book industry would illustrate today’s debate about the value of the literary work, the contingencies that define it, and the economic and cultural capitals generated by it (Pierre Bourdieu, John Guillory, and Barbara H. Smith, among others). Yet they clearly show that a nexus between literary value and economic worth is paramount in understanding the workings of the Spanish book market between 1960 and 1975. At that time, the economic interests of the Spanish government conflicted as often as they converged with the defense of “national moral values” imposed by Franco’s censorship. But for the regime, books ensured “Spain’s cultural presence in the world” [“la presencia cultural de España en el mundo”] (Informe sobre el comercio 3). For that reason, the “cleansing effect” of censorship was expected to make a positive contribution to the production of books, rather than to impede it.

Of course it is true that Latin America had been a traditional target of Spain’s international policies, which had always favored economic and cultural exchanges with Ibero-American countries. It is also the case that the *apertura* failed to convince the European democracies of any substantial changes in the Franco regime. Nevertheless, for the Spanish government, publishing *did* matter, and in order to overcome the import/export imbalance Spain faced at the time, the regime

granted priority status to certain industries (the so-called *industrias prioritarias*) under its new economic policies, including the tourist and the book industry, both supervised by Fraga's Ministry.

So government officials went on repeatedly interpreting Spain's "cultural presence" as part of a larger economic enterprise to reap profits in the Americas. As pointed out by a 1970 report from the National Book Institute (*Instituto Nacional del Libro Español*, INLE), in thirty years "the peoples of Spanish America will reach six hundred million inhabitants who will know how to read and write and will be consumers of books" ["los pueblos de Hispanoamérica dentro de 30 años sumarán seiscientos millones de habitantes que sabrán leer y que serán consumidores de libros"] (Conclusiones de la Primera Exposición Itinerante 15). Never mind that this prediction was wildly off the mark. (Today's estimates of potential readers in Latin America total just over three hundred million.) It is evident that the National Book Institute felt a need to beef up the numbers of "consumers of books" in support of governmental policies that had already been decided.

Still, and as inflated as these reports were, the statistics these officials had at hand were themselves quite promising. Between 1959 and 1975, the publication of literary works in Spain tripled—from about two thousand to over six thousand new titles per year. Meanwhile, two of Spain's most significant competitors, Argentina and Mexico, saw a significant drop in the numbers over the same period. There was a 50 percent reduction in Argentina—from two thousand to one thousand new titles—and in Mexico a stagnant production of fewer than eight hundred new titles in Mexico (Santana 46–47).³ These data are consistent with the Spanish government's own "bookkeeping": the revenues generated by all these new titles were quite significant. In 1959 the total sales for Spanish books exported to Argentina, Chile, and Cuba amounted to roughly 557 million pesetas. By 1961, this amount had doubled, and in July 1962 it reached about 100 million pesetas a month (Datos de la Exportación de Libros).

It was the regime's view, remember, that this expansion was undertaken under the aegis of a historical call of duty to promote and protect Hispanic cultural heritage worldwide. As such, the government often appraised books simultaneously in terms of their economic and cultural value, stressing on occasion the concurrence of the regime's views in this respect with those of publishers:

se han presentado . . . diversas peticiones del Instituto Nacional del Libro, Dirección General de Prensa, Gremio de Libreros . . . solicitando en las tarifas postales de impresos,

rebajas, con objeto de favorecer—dicen—la expansión y desarrollo del libro y, consecuentemente de la cultura.

Several petitions from the National Book Institute, General Department of the Press, and the Association of Booksellers request a reduction in the postal rates for printed matter in order—as they put it—to *expand and to develop the book industry, and thus culture*. (Nota-Informe sobre las tarifas 1; emphasis mine).

Accordingly, books were seen as *cultural commodities*: simultaneously merchandise for consumers in an expanding market and a staple of cultural exchange. This commercial-cum-cultural endeavor, legitimated as the honest promotion of Hispanism in the Americas, found a further *raison d'être*, and simultaneously a justification for the practices of censorship, in the idea of linguistic purity. In many censors' reports on the works of the Boom writers, language—more precisely, the preservation of what they defined to be the Spanish language—became the determining factor in the approval or rejection of a literary work. Needless to say, the claim of preserving the Spanish language provided cover for moral and political censorship of the writing of Latin American authors who happened to be regarded as profitable and were to be launched massively on the international scene.

The preservation of linguistic purity also masked another concern. The Franco regime feared that the success of established publishing houses in Mexico and Argentina (and the newly created *Casa de las Américas* in Cuba) might translate into a different linguistic and cultural approach (*their* versions, if you will, of the promotion of “Hispanism”), an approach whose success would result in losses for Spain in the book markets of Europe, Latin America, and the United States.

Particularly worrying, in the eyes of the Spanish government, were the advances of the book industry in Argentina and in Cuba: “El libro argentino se afirma, pues, en su propio mercado y se lanza a la conquista de otros nuevos, fundamentalmente Sudamérica, pero también en España” [“Argentinean books are strong in their home market, and they are being launched into new markets, especially in South America, but also in Spain”] (Informe sobre el comercio 5). In Cuba, “un peligro político-económico lo constituye el consorcio editor ruso-checo, que ha establecido su fase de operaciones en Cuba. Este peligro es realmente serio . . . los libros de origen soviético se venden en Sudamérica a precios que calificaríamos de nominales: alrededor de un tercio del precio del libro español” [“a political and economic danger is the Czech-Russian

publishing consortium that has established operations in Cuba. This danger is really serious...Soviet-financed books are sold in South America at what we would call nominal prices, about a third of the price of Spanish books”] (*Informe sobre el comercio* 10).

Reports like these alerted the authorities to the emerging changes in the Spanish-language book trade and to Spain’s most competitive rivals. They also drew attention to the expanding commercial possibilities presented by the United States’ market for books in Spanish. In 1963, a confidential report mapped out the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations’ subvention programs and their implications for Argentinean publishers (*Planes de Estados Unidos* 1–4). That same year another report drew attention to the importance of the United States market:

Hemos de felicitarnos del interés creciente que manifiestan hacia nuestras publicaciones los países exteriores del área idiomática hispánica, singularmente en Estados Unidos y la Europa occidental...EL PORVENIR DE LA EXPANSIÓN EDITORIAL ESPAÑOLA depende esencialmente de la situación de los mercados ibero-americanos, que es donde se encuentra amenazada precisamente.

We must congratulate ourselves on the increasing interest in our publications in countries outside the Hispanic world, particularly in the United States and Western Europe...THE FUTURE OF THE EXPANSION OF THE SPANISH BOOK INDUSTRY rests upon the Ibero-American market, precisely where it is threatened. (*Informe sobre el comercio* 5)

Note the emphatic capitals. The twin tools of this government-sponsored commercial and cultural expansion in the direction of Latin America were competition and production, on the one hand, and censorship, on the other. That is why the government reexamined the 1943 decree that established the rules and regulations for Spain’s National Book Institute, which was now supposed (at least in theory) to “guard and make a difference for the Spanish Book in Spain and in the world” [“vigilar e impulsar la diferencia del Libro Español en España y el mundo”] and to promote “any initiatives that may support the production, sale and exportation of books” [“cuantas iniciativas tiendan a favorecer la producción, el comercio y la exportación del libro”] (*Decreto de 6 abril*).⁴ One of these initiatives (which I discuss in greater detail when I revisit Latin American publishing in the epilogue) was the overhauling of Spain’s paper industry. As shown in official reports as

early as 1958, shortages in the paper industry were seen as a hindrance to the expansionary plans for Spanish publishing (Subcomisión del papel). And the new policies laid out in the *decreto* also required immediate changes in the approval process for the printing and distribution of books. These changes in turn were to result in the regime's abandonment of a significant part of its own political agenda of the 1940s and 1950s: "during the Franco period, the censorship bodies underwent a series of restructurings that betray the regime's ideological tension and shifts" (Labanyi 207).

1. THE NEW RULES OF CENSORSHIP

The new printing and publishing law is a perfect example of the government's reformist attitude in the 1960s. The law removed the *consulta obligatoria* [compulsory submission] imposed on all printed works in Spain up to 1966, which often required publishers to delete sections and alter manuscripts; they replaced it with the *consulta voluntaria* [voluntary submission] and the *déposito* [deposit]. Joan Mari Torreal dai mentions that, under the regime of compulsory submission, publishers often faced a costly and lengthy approval process. They were required to submit complete books or galley proofs, and no deadlines were set for the government officials to respond (11). The costly production delays that resulted were a severe hindrance to the success of publishers in the booming and fiercely competitive book market of the 1960s and 1970s. For years they had begged for leniency when it came to the censorship rules; the 1966 law was the regime's response to their demands. Fraga's public statements about the new law, however, made it clear that he was still in charge: it was for him to administer the law and set its rules. The State continued to have the right to prohibit any material it deemed inappropriate; however, the new rules allowed for direct negotiation with the censorship authorities.

For example, under the 1966 law, publishers (in theory) did not have to seek an explicit authorization to print books. Instead they could either "deposit" or "voluntarily submit" the complete text or galley proofs of the book for "final verification" by government officials, at which point it was now possible for negotiations to take place. Of the two options, voluntary submission was the safer way to gain approval from the censors, and became the preferred alternative for publishers like Carlos Barral (*Almanaque* 12–3), whose overt opposition to the regime's censorship practices (which is clearly documented in the *Archivo's* files), together with his astuteness and willingness to

negotiate with the relevant authorities, make his case exemplary of the beneficial results these new practices brought to the Spanish publishing industry. By contrast, under the regulations for *depósito*, publishers could bypass the submission of a work for review merely by depositing six copies of the printed book at the Ministry and receiving official clearance for distribution. (Barral often used this option with the Boom writers.) By law, this process could not take longer than “one day per each 50 pages or fraction thereof” [“un día por cada cincuenta páginas o fracción”] (*Prensa e Imprenta* 85). However, this option carried considerable risk, since the law also included the possibility of *secuestro* [sequestration] as a measure to avoid the circulation of undesirable printed material: “el Ministerio Fiscal podrá ordenar el secuestro a disposición judicial del impreso o publicación delectivos donde quiere que éstos se hallaren, así como de sus moldes para evitar la difusión” [“The General Attorney’s Office may order the legal sequestration of any delinquent printed document or publication wherever they may be, together with the typesetter’s forms in order to avoid their distribution”] (*Prensa e Imprenta* 64)

For this reason the *depósito* option, while “allowing” book production to go ahead without the regime’s direct supervision, could backfire and result in significant economic loss. Some publishers nevertheless favored it because it offered the bureaucracy a finished product, a book ready to be marketed, with the expectation of a sort of up-or-down vote on the censors’ part. This made it an appropriate channel for publishers to test the government’s reaction to certain books they deemed “not censurable” (mostly foreign ones that they were considering for import or for potential Spanish editions). At the same time, it became a filtering device for the government to keep track of trends in the Spanish-language publishing industry.

As a result of these new options, the law promoted an apparatus of censorship that both implicitly and explicitly favored behind-the-scenes negotiations among censors, publishers, and writers. Manuel Abellán claims that the new law “forced publishers to take precautions with manuscripts—but, above all, to expurgate them—even more than before, given that they became subsidiary accomplices of any infringement of the law” [“obligó a los editores a vigilar—pero, sobre todo, a expurgar—mucho más que antes los manuscritos, ya que en el caso . . . [de haber] infringido de algún modo la ley, el editor era subsidiariamente cómplice del delito cometido”] (*Censura* 118). Carlos Barral, though, took the view that “it is easier to exchange ideas” [“existen más facilidades para el intercambio de ideas”] with the censorship authorities since, before the new law, publishers had no room

to negotiate, in view of the absence of standardized regulations (*Almanaque* 12). Tactical maneuvering, of course, was to become the standard practice in the negotiations Barral would engage with the regime's authorities, as I will detail in chapters 2 through 5.

While the *consulta voluntaria* and the *depósito* were designed to expedite the distribution of books, the most significant change in the law was its redefinition of *silencio administrativo* [official silence]. This was a legal formula used by many censors when they had certain objections to the content of a work, but foresaw benefits in authorizing its publication. By officially declaring silence, the authorities did not explicitly approve of a given book or endorse its moral content; they simply refrained from blocking its commercial distribution (they "remained silent," as it were). From a legal standpoint, official silence has been described as a "fictional act" (Guillén Pérez 81) and as a "legal fiction" (García-Trevijano 67–8) in the Spanish judicial system. Under the Franco regime official silence had both negative and positive implications. Whereas the legislation of 1956 had defined it as a negative outcome of a petitioner's request, the printing law of 1966 interpreted official silence in a more positive fashion: "la respuesta aprobatoria o el silencio de la Administración eximirán de responsabilidad ante la misma por la difusión del impreso sometido a consulta" ["Approval or silence on the Administration's part shall exempt the publisher from any responsibility before the said Administration for the printed text submitted for consultation"] (*Prensa e Imprenta* 6).⁵

Close examination of these legal terms—*consulta obligatoria*, *consulta voluntaria*, *depósito*, *secuestro*, *silencio*—reveals how the new vocabulary of censorship responded to the interests of those involved in overhauling the Spanish book industry in the *apertura*. While the old rules of *consulta obligatoria* reinforced the concept of censorship as an entity of power that watched over each and every creative process and in effect censored it both before and after its completion, the *consulta voluntaria* redefined censorship officially as a practice that intervened only following completion of any piece of creative writing but in fact positioned it to become part of the production process. It became "a rule-embedded phenomenon" capable of being modified, through changes in conventions and regulations, in such a way as to make it possible for the censor to participate in the creative process itself (Jansen 8).⁶ The government's new policies were designed in this way to displace censorship from the censors' desks to the publishers'. Thus, the red pencils would not be completely put away; rather, the authorities handed them down to publishers, and they in turn, to writers. Censorship did not disappear, then, under the *consulta voluntaria*.

Rather, the law implied a shift of the censorial subject, in accordance with an underlying assumption that book production came first and that approval for circulation *followed* the intervention of censorship in that process. Thus, publishers and government censors tacitly agreed that censorship did not have primacy over book production. This repositioning of censorship as part of the production process was disclosed by the introduction of the new terms *déposito* and *secuestro*, which corresponded to the former practices of postproduction censorship. But the upshot of all these new regulations was to favor competition in the book market among publishing houses and to empower the government's plan to expand the Spanish book trade. That said, the promotion of Latin American literature in Spain that resulted from these new arrangements did not please everybody. Rather it fueled discussions in journals and intellectual circles and triggered a reexamination of the literary and cultural relations between Spain and Latin America. In *Foreigners in the Homeland*, Mario Santana argues that the Spanish publishing and literary scene of the 1960s is encapsulated in the metaphor of the wheat and the chaff, which describes how the commercial success of the Boom in Spain provoked sibling rivalries between Spanish and Latin American writers. Santana examines the reaction of certain Spanish intellectuals who saw the 1960s Latin American novel as "foreign chaff" (*la cizaña extranjera*) in contrast with the Peninsular novelists who represent "the national wheat" (*la mies nacional*).⁷ Many Spanish writers seemed to be afraid of the so-called invading chaff. Angel María de Lera, the 1967 Planeta Prize winner, refused to accept the criticized notoriety gained by Latin Americans in Spain, stating that "we don't believe any Colombian or Cuban is going to teach Spanish to Delibes... Enough is enough" (Santana 131). But linguistic issues were not all that was thought to be at stake. As Santana points out, "idiomatic baroque-ness," "inventiveness," and "multi-leveled constructions" were among the complaints leveled by José María Gironella, who cried foul at the double standard to which Peninsular and Latin American writers were held: "much of the praise given to Asturias, Carpentier, Cortázar, Vargas Llosa... refers to narrative elements that—if they were to be used by those of us writing in Spain—would surely bring us a string of insults" (133). It is striking that these censorious statements replicated many of the comments made by the real censors in their evaluation of the Boom novels. I see these echoes as an example of the trickle-down effect the new censorship rules began to have on publishers and writers, just as the regime had intended. At the same time, they are a symptomatic response to the unexpected liberalization of literary culture that was a presumably unintended consequence of Spain's new economic ambitions.

2. THE NEW SEIX BARRAL

Seix Barral offered a more congenial contribution to the wheat and chaff debate in its 1969 *Catálogo General de Publicaciones*. This unusual two hundred page catalogue contained a detailed account of Seix Barral's collections and current publishing policies, together with a section on projects for future expansion. If the *Catálogo* reflected the government's interest in expanding the book trade, its prime function was to further the publishing house's interests by presenting the Boom writers in three different collections: *Biblioteca Breve*, *Biblioteca Nueva Narrativa Hispánica*, and *Biblioteca Formentor*. These three collections, designed to suggest market-based diversification and even competition within Seix Barral, were the vehicle of the firm's new international identity. From them we can gain insight also into how Latin American novels were first promoted in Spain. The *Biblioteca Breve* collection supposedly presented "a collection devoted to the publication of avant-garde works from various literary traditions" ["una colección dedicada a la publicación de obras de vanguardia de las distintas literaturas modernas"]; the *Nueva Narrativa* collection provided "a general overview of Spanish and Latin American writers" ["una visión general de todos los escritores españoles y latinoamericanos"]; and the *Formentor* offered "a general panorama of contemporary narrative of various literary traditions" ["un panorama general de la narrativa contemporánea en las distintas literaturas"] (*Catálogo* 22). Obviously, there is no clear-cut distinction among the three collections, and, in reality, Boom novels appeared in all three without regard to the supposed rationale behind each collection as formulated in the catalogue. The collections, in other words, were a marketing device intended to give the firm the appearance of having a wider and larger backlist and broader distribution than was actually the case. Another ploy was the numbering in the collections. As Pere Gimferrer confessed to me in a personal interview, Barral decided that the first number in the *Biblioteca Breve* collection would be 101 as a way of making it look larger (and possibly more significant) than it actually was in the early 1960s.⁸

Tactics such as these were inspired, as Carlos Barral recalls in *Los años sin excusa* [*Years without Excuse*], by the impressive scope of French literary journals and publishers—such as *NRF*, *Les Temps Modernes* and *Minuit*—and in particular the numbers of international authors whose writing they published. These new editorial policies of Seix Barral were a significant departure from the origins of the firm. Founded in 1911 by Victoriano Seix (1885-1933)—a professional

lithographer trained in France who decided to make his fortune printing calendars, maps, circus posters, and pedagogical material—and Lluís and Carles Barral, owners of the printing press “Gráficas Barral Hermanos,” the joint publishing venture had been a family affair from the outset, and as such it was to experience feuds and family rivalries in the years to come. After the Civil War, following the deaths of the founders—and, what’s more, at a time when the school book market was meager—the families decided to split the two sides of the firm and in 1942 they founded “Editorial Seix Barral,” which they conceived as a separate entity that would be able to carry out a new editorial line while enjoying the technical support of the printing house “Gráficas Seix i Barral” (*Breu Història*). In 1958, this firm created a publicity department and began its Latin American venture, following the initiative of its manager, Víctor Seix, the “money man,” who traveled to America the same year and established distribution networks in Mexico, Peru, Chile, and Colombia. Carlos Barral, the “literary expert,” simultaneously began to make contacts among young Latin American writers and international publishers, laying the groundwork for Seix Barral’s future expansion. In the early 1960s, the firm took center stage and began to pursue the promotion of Latin American authors in deadly earnest. The death of Víctor Seix in 1967 was the signal for a major crisis, when the two families began a feud for control, the outcome of which was the launching of Carlos Barral’s new publishing venture, Barral Editores, in 1969.

So the Boom years coincided nicely with Víctor’s and Carlos’ new plans for their old firm. The “new” Seix Barral had two clear strategies with which to reposition itself: on the one hand, a new market identity, and on the other international visibility. It was Carlos Barral who realized that expanding into the Latin America market, which had been a major source of income for the firm in the 1930s, was a way to achieve both goals. In *Los años sin excusa*, he explains that this move was a two-step enterprise: first, “it was a matter of building up a backlist with recent and important authors or else those who were exotic to the French and Italian channels of Argentinean publishers” [“se trataba de construir una *backlist* con autores importantes muy recientes, o exóticos a los canales italo-franceses de los editores argentinos”]; and second, “of imposing the content of this literary phase on the Spanish-language markets” [“imponer el contenido de esa etapa literaria a los mercados de lengua española”] (139).

In his essay on Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, Seix Barral’s publishing partner in Mexico, Danny Anderson proposes that a study of the role of publishing houses as “cultural institutions” can provide “a broader

basis for understanding why and how texts become important works of literature” (34). “Rather than following changes in narrative trends,” he adds, “one can establish histories of publishing houses that promoted certain kinds of literature, and at various moments achieved qualified and temporary degrees of cultural hegemony” (35). The implication in the present context is that by examining the marketing strategies employed by the firms that distributed the Boom one may well be able to decipher a corresponding literary and aesthetic program. Tracing Seix Barral’s role as the Boom’s publisher is a way to achieve understanding of how the Boom came into being as a literary field.

A literary field, like any other social formation, is part of a hierarchical structure which consists of a set of fields (the economic field, the educational field, the political field, the cultural field, etc.), each of them with its own functioning and its own relations (Bourdieu, *Field* 6). Whereas in the economic field agents battle over the acquisition of economic capital, in the cultural field—one component of which is the literary field—competition centers on the acquisition of symbolic capital, defined as the accumulation of recognition, consecration, and prestige. Bourdieu proposes that the field of cultural production is “an economic world reversed,” one in which economic success (i.e., writing a best seller) can preclude consecration and symbolic power in the literary field. This distinction between economic and symbolic capital is paramount for an understanding of how the publishing industry operates within and as a part of the literary field. Books have both economic and symbolic value (“cultural value,” the Franco regime would argue). They are priced not only according to their printing costs, but also with regard to other factors that cannot be measured in economic terms, such as the author’s reputation, the book’s critical reception, or the publisher’s fame: “symbolic goods are a two-faced reality, a commodity and a symbolic object,” although their cultural and commercial value “remain relatively independent” (Bourdieu, *Field* 113).

Seix Barral’s symbolic capital was based in part on the construction of Barcelona itself as a production site of the avant-garde; its marketing depended heavily on the annual literary prize that it sponsored, the *Premio Biblioteca Breve*. In his post as literary director of the firm, Carlos Barral functioned as an agent whose “symbolic investment” consisted of attracting Latin American writers by channeling a more international distribution of their works, which simultaneously increased the firm’s profits. Thus, the Boom writers and Seix Barral (and arguably the regime’s authorities) all became agents occupying the available positions in the field, as they engaged in competition for control of their interests (Bourdieu, *Field* 6–7). The Latin American writers

compete for the production and distribution of their works and the fame attaching to their names. Seix Barral stands to derive financial benefits and cultural prominence from marketing them.

But the literary field is itself contained within the field of power, and Seix Barral's new market identity had to "fit" within the political structure of the time. Barral's new project for an avant-garde readership had to go forward within (and despite) the framework of the censorship of all printed material under the Franco regime. In fact, and as we have seen, the recent changes in the political-economic configuration of the "field of cultural production" were not at all at odds with Barral's attempt to create a new and more international reputation for his firm. The field of power had been altered by the government's new international liberalism, so that it was only apparently a contradiction for Franco's government to allow, and even to sponsor, the distribution of left-leaning Latin American writers. While Barral's new market identity was geared toward gaining more symbolic capital for his firm, it meshed seamlessly with the intentions underlying the new printing law and the regime's *desarrollismo*.

In such circumstances symbolic capital can be understood in theory as economic or political capital that is disavowed, or at least misrecognized—misrecognized and thereby recognized, hence legitimated, as a "credit," which under certain conditions, and always in the long run, guarantees "economic" profits (Bourdieu, *Field* 75). But symbolic capital's economic worth is not really disclaimed or repudiated by those involved in the promotion of Latin American literature in the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, it is often considered more of an investment than a "credit," notably when we read the regime's own internal reporting: "Es preciso que el libro español no se encarezca en América como consecuencia de los dilatados plazos de pago que hay que conceder a los importadores de aquellos países... el libro es un artículo de consumo; pero el pago de compras de libros, [se halla] extraordinariamente diferido" ["it is imperative that Spanish books do not become more expensive in the Americas as a consequence of the deferred payment plan that we grant importers in those countries... books are consumer goods, but the payment for a shipment of books is extraordinarily deferred"] (*Créditos a la Exportación*).

This nexus of aesthetic and economic value seems particularly cogent to the market policies of the *apertura*, since government officials, publishers, literary critics, and even censors often raised questions of economic value and literary worth in the same breath. The value of publishing the Boom is constantly defined in terms either of economics (by the detractors of the marketing ploys of the Boom), or of aesthetics (by the defenders of the Latin American *nueva novela*). The critical

debate on the Boom has mostly focused in similarly either-or fashion on its being, on the one hand, a merely commercial phenomenon (an economic boom), and, on the other, an innovative aesthetic transformation of Latin American narrative.⁹ Seix Barral's new positioning of the Boom in the literary field—through the strategies of an enhanced market identity and international visibility—meant that contemporary Latin American novels were now widely distributed in Europe. Although Seix Barral at first aimed toward a restricted and more elitist production in line with the aesthetic renovation implied by the term *nueva novela*, it was soon able, therefore, to combine its symbolic investments with a relatively large-scale distribution of Latin American fiction geared toward the general public: “These two fields of production [restricted and large-scale], opposed as they are, coexist” (Bourdieu, *Field* 128). The two terms, Boom and *nueva novela*, are not opposed as much as they are complementary.¹⁰

The selling of *nueva novela* within the market parameters of the Boom was the point of departure, then, for Seix Barral's new image and international visibility as an avant-garde publisher. While the strategy of a new market identity relies heavily on “markers of prestige”—quality, openness to innovation, interest in international high culture, cosmopolitanism, and so forth (Anderson 13)—, Barral's project to acquire international visibility was based on a much wider distribution of his firm's backlist, thanks in particular to the publicity generated by the literary prizes the firm sponsored. By combining these two strategies, Seix Barral was to become an “agent of consecration,” competing in the field of restricted production for “the power to grant cultural consecration” on the strength of its position in the large-scale field (Bourdieu, *Field* 121). It was an agent of consecration for the Boom writers. Its success also consecrated Barcelona's avant-garde status within the field of Hispanic cultural production.

I would argue that Barral's involvement in literary awards—the *Premio Biblioteca Breve*, then the *Prix Formentor* and the *Prix International de Littérature*—was a crucial part of this consecration function.¹¹ The idea behind these prizes had as much to do with the internationalization of the firm's range and the reinforcement of its avant-garde readership as with the consecration of individual authors and their texts. Barral brought his experience as a promoter of the *Biblioteca Breve* prize to the Formentor group, which offered an international audience. It was he who convinced the Formentor group to award the 1961 *Prix International* to Jorge Luis Borges, undoubtedly the precursor of the Boom writers; and it was the consequent success of Borges's work in the international market that launched Seix Barral in its new direction.

This process of reinventing a publishing house's trajectory "consists of the systematic use of a network of social relationships," which, in Seix Barral's case, included members of the Barcelona intelligentsia as well as published writers and well-established intellectuals who had already achieved prestige of their own (Bourdieu, *Field* 10). Barral looked in particular for the validation of international editors and writers, capable of endowing Seix Barral with the cachet it needed to accumulate symbolic capital—mainly in the form of literary success and prestige—which in turn would bring economic gains through large-scale sales not only of prizewinners, but also of some of the items in Seix Barral's backlist.

But the first step was the creation of an annual literary prize that would prove to be a springboard for the international success of the Latin American Boom writers, the *Premio Biblioteca Breve*.¹² In his memoirs, Barral himself is clear about his strategy, describing the prize as a "transatlantic literary bridge," and as "a publishing device [that] ended up becoming a wonderful cultural toy...it began to gain prestige, especially all over the Americas...and became the cornerstone of a possible literary policy that was a true discovery of Spanish American literature" ["instrumento de maniobra editorial [que] terminó en un maravilloso juguete de la cultura...se fue cargando de prestigio, sobre todo a lo ancho de las Américas...se fue convirtiendo...en el eje de una política literaria posible, una política de verdadero descubrimiento de la literatura americana"] (*Memorias* 572). The "true discovery" of America distances his personal enterprise from the regime's oft-renewed vows to "conquer" the Latin American book market.

So it is somewhat ironic that this "conquest" began with the economic success that the 1962 *Premio Biblioteca Breve* turned out to be. That year the winner was *La ciudad y los perros*, written by an unknown young Peruvian writer, Mario Vargas Llosa. The book rapidly sold out, and by 1971 there had been sixteen editions of the text and more than one hundred thirty-five thousand copies sold worldwide. This was quite an accomplishment for an avant-garde publishing house; at the time most new titles in Spain sold an average of three thousand copies. The award launched Vargas Llosa internationally as well as Seix Barral; their names were linked from that moment on and became inseparable from the success of the Latin American novel in the 1960s. Seix Barral marketed the books brilliantly. While most volumes from Spanish publishers had something (as Donoso puts it) "suspiciously old" about them, this firm made the Boom novels appealing to the general public with "cutting-edge, brilliant, and up-to-date contemporary covers" (Figs. 1.1, 1.2). According to Donoso,

Seix Barral's *Biblioteca Breve* books became the envy of all Latin American writers, who were displeased with the total lack of style and the defective presentation of their novels published in Latin America (Donoso, *Historia* 85).

One problem was that unfortunately the new promotional ploys concocted by Carlos Barral seemed too close to the government's own plans for the Latin American market. The contradiction his firm faced was something of a mirror-image of the government's dilemma: How could an avant-garde publishing house (*editorial cultural*) massively promote the writing of pro-democracy Latin American writers without becoming an active participant in the Franco regime's neocolonial plans for the Spanish book trade? Confronted with what was an inverted version of the same contradictions the government was faced with, Seix Barral also found a "magic formula" to resolve the paradox. The same formula responded to the "chaff" and "wheat" debate. In contradistinction to the regime's faith in the purity of Castilian Spanish Seix Barral's *Catálogo* proposed an all-inclusive *pan-Hispanic literature*, one not defined by geographical borders, but rather by the shared use of a common language with its many linguistic registers:

En nuestra política de publicación de autores de lengua española tiene especial relieve nuestra voluntad de incorporación de los valores de la narrativa hispanoamericana a nuestra cultura nacional... Entendemos que es literatura castellana toda aquella que se escribe en las distintas formas del castellano actual; que la lengua literaria castellana moderna es un mosaico de lenguas equidistantes de la lengua del barroco, del mismo modo que la lengua castellana actual es un mosaico de dialectos equidistantes de la lengua y de los dialectos de la época de la conquista. Entendemos que nuestra literatura contemporánea es una sola aunque se sitúe en puntos tan distantes como Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Cuba, Santiago de Chile o Santiago del Estero.

Of particular importance in our editorial policies for Spanish-language authors is our will to incorporate the values of Latin American narrative into our national culture... We understand that Spanish literature is any literature that is written in today's varied forms of Spanish; that the modern Spanish literary language is a mosaic of languages that are equidistant from the Castilian of the Baroque, just as contemporary Spanish is a mosaic of dialects that are equidistant from the Castilian language and the dialects of the time of the conquest. We

understand that our contemporary literature is one literature and one only, even though the actual linguistic experience may be sited in places as distant as Santiago de Compostela (Spain), Santiago in Cuba, Santiago in Chile, and Santiago del Estero (Argentina). (*Catálogo General de Publicaciones* 13)

Incorporating “the values of Latin American narrative into our national culture,” Seix Barral’s policies reconfigured the value of the alleged chaff as a constitutive and integral element of what I would call a “whole-wheat literature”: one that retains the healthy components—the dietary fibers—of the chaff in the pursuit of a heartier pan-Hispanism, or if you will, a Hispanism free of chaff and full of bran. Despite some references that would seem to come directly from government reports—“the language of the Baroque,” “the time of the conquest,” or the use of Spain’s patron saint Santiago to unify the diverse linguistic registers of the Spanish language—, the Seix Barral theory of “a mosaic of equidistant languages,” unlike the official view, saw Spain not as the origin or point of departure for the promotion of Hispanism, but as one link in the chain of “equidistant” nations that shared certain literary and cultural traditions. Ancient notions of literary prestige and canon formation were radically redefined in the interest of expanding the market for books.

Nevertheless, and despite such efforts, the case of Seix Barral’s *Catálogo* is also a good example of the way the government’s plans and those of this avant-garde publishing house became closely intermeshed under the new economic policies, and thanks to the new rules of censorship. The *Catálogo*—which lists the works of major Latin American writers such as Alejo Carpentier, Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Carlos Fuentes, Mario Vargas Llosa, and José Donoso—was itself submitted to the Spanish censorship authorities in June 1969 and, after a thorough review, was officially “silenced” by two censors who saw it as an instrument of left-wing propaganda: “no reseña precios por lo que más que comercial es de propaganda” [“it does not indicate prices and therefore it is not commercial, but rather propagandistic”] (Expediente de *Catálogo*). Remaining silent seemed to one of the censors the most appropriate response to the political ideas of Carlos Barral, whom he viewed as a vocal member of the left-leaning intelligentsia against Franco’s regime. Yet the censor recognized in someone he thought of as a known enemy policies so compatible with those of the regime itself that he perceived Barral as arrogating the official mission to himself: “conocidas las ideas políticas de Barral, no extraña que intente defenderlas con argumentos capciosos y que se arroge la misión de liberar a