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# The Rhetoric of Newspapers in Francisco Ayala's *El fondo del vaso*

Chikako Maruta

## 1. Introduction

Francisco Ayala's *El fondo del vaso* (*The Bottom of the Glass*, 1962), a fifth book written in exile, is a sequel of *Muertes de perro* (*Death as a Way of Life*, 1958). Both were written in the US where the author lived from 1956. Compared to *Muertes de perro*, *El fondo del vaso* has a simple narrative structure. While *Muertes de perro* includes a variety of narrative resources: memoirs, letters, monologues, diplomatic documents and newspapers, *El fondo del vaso* consists of a monologue of the protagonist José Lino Ruiz (Part One and Part Three) and a collection of newspaper clippings of *El Comercio* (Part Two).

Ayala's novels written in exile have close connection to his articles and works of various fields, such as sociology, political science, history, philosophy or literary criticism. This tendency is understandable when one considers Ayala's academic career as a scholar of law in Spain, a professor of sociology in Argentina and Puerto Rico, and a professor of Spanish literature in the US. Ayala in exile wrote a considerable number of writings including articles and essays for periodicals. These writings serve as a background of Ayala's literary creation, as the author himself affirms in "El fondo sociológico en mis novelas" (The Sociological Background in My Novels): "[son] utilizados para edificar la obra que me propuse redactar con intención artística" ([they] are used to build the work that I elaborated with artistic intention, 3: 247). The case of *El fondo del vaso* is not an exception. In this novel, the newspaper clippings show the investigation of the suspect Lino Ruiz and the murder of Luisito Rodríguez, the young son of a bourgeois family. These newspaper articles in Part Two reveal the characters' different faces that are untold in Part One. At the same time, they report new findings that impact the result of the police investigation on the protagonist, Lino Ruiz, a suspect of the murder case. In *El fondo del vaso*, newspaper clippings are a critical element. Newspapers

were always a base of inspiration for Ayala's literary invention.<sup>1</sup> For example, newspaper clippings are used as a complementary tool in *Muertes de perro*, but in *El fondo del vaso*, they play a central role to change the tone of the story. In *El jardín de las delicias* (*The Garden of Pleasures*, 1971), they open the first section of the first part "Diablo Mundo" (Diabolic World) that describes a vile reality in actual society.

On the other hand, during his many years in exile, Ayala wrote various articles on sociological observations of the press, journalism and public opinion. These articles demonstrate how Ayala is interested in the press and its role in a liberal democratic society. Each article written in exile may vary in its length and its density of the argument, but three of them should be specially analyzed to understand Ayala's opinions on the socio-political and cultural aspects of the press; "La opinión pública" (Public Opinion, 1941), "Sobre la prensa" (About the Press, 1944) and "La retórica del periodismo" (The Rhetoric of the Journalism, 1984).

This paper analyzes the use of newspaper clippings of Part Two of *El fondo del vaso*, discussing how these clippings affect the development of the plot and give unique features to the novel. There are previous studies on *El fondo del vaso*, most of which examine this work together with *Muertes de perro*, but there is no reference to Ayala's articles on the press, except Irizarry.<sup>2</sup> In *Teoría y creación literaria en Francisco Ayala*, Irizarry refers to the article "Sobre la prensa" but it barely discusses the relationship of Ayala's novel and other articles related to public opinion and the press. The use of newspapers is one of many literary strategies of Ayala that is rooted in his sociological examination of the role of the press. First, this paper examines Ayala's observations in articles on the press. Then, it analyzes how his observations on the press are reflected in the novelistic creation of Part Two. As a result, in *El fondo del vaso*, Ayala creates the novel which fuses literature and his observations on sociology as he did previously in *Muertes de perro*.

## 2. Ayala's Articles on the Press and Newspapers

As Gutiérrez Palacio points out, many intellectuals of the Second Republic collaborated frequently in the press.<sup>3</sup> As a writer, Ayala contributed throughout his life with his essays on various themes to periodicals and the press. Ayala's interest in the press is rooted in two aspects: socio-political and aesthetic ones. These interests synchronize with his professional career as he explains in the article "Sobre la prensa." As a scholar of political law, Ayala considers the press an object of juridical and political regulation, and also one of the forms of pretended freedom that is, freedom of opinion and the right of expression. As a man of letters, Ayala had contact with the world of journalism when he was young (5: 791). In "La retórica del periodismo," Ayala states that he worked

as an editor of daily newspapers under the Second Republic. First, he worked a few months in *El Debate* when he was a student, and years later, as an editor of editorial articles in *El Sol* and in *Luz*, a daily newspaper founded by José Ortega y Gasset (1985, 42).<sup>4</sup> Ayala confesses that although an editing task was not a pleasant experience, for him, through editing he learned techniques to write newspaper articles, from a very short telegram of minimum words to a longer article. He learned to write from secondary sources without specifying the original resources, or to write an article “economically,” that is, an article of a persuasive and clear content with a limited numbers of words (1985, 42). Thus, these experiences taught Ayala strategies and techniques of writing newspaper articles.

On the other hand, in all his “careers” –as a journalist, professor, essayist, novelist- Ayala is constantly interested in elucidating problems of actual society by looking into its structure and its history. In this way, Ayala can present his ideas to a wide public with both socio-political and literary writings. Ayala considers that the press is one of the effective tools to mirror an actual reality. This opinion is clear in his work, *El jardín de las delicias* (1971) through the narrator of the introduction for the first part of the book, “Recortes del diario *Las Noticias*, de ayer” (Clipping from Daily Newspaper *Las Noticias*, of Yesterday) :

(. . .) desde hace un tiempo, me dedico a fraguar noticias fingidas que, en el fondo, son demasiado reales, buscando usar la prensa diaria como espejo del mundo en que vivimos, y prontuario de una vida cuya futilidad grotesca queda apuntada en la taquigrafía de ese destino tan desastrado” (since a while ago, I dedicate myself to conceive fictional news that is, basically at the bottom, too real, looking to use the daily press as a mirror of the world where we live, and as a handbook of life, in which grotesque triviality remains engraved in a shorthand writing of very disastrous destiny, 1971, 16).

Thus, the use of “fictional newspaper articles” in his literary works, such as in *El fondo del vaso* or *El jardín de las delicias* is a natural providence of Ayala.

### **2.1. The Articles of the 1940s: “La opinión pública” (1941) and “Sobre la prensa” (1944)**

Ayala’s opinion of the press as a mirror of reality emerges through the process of analyzing the public opinion in a liberal democratic society. In “La opinión pública” in *El problema del liberalismo* (*The Problem of the Liberalism*, 1941), Ayala affirms that in a liberal state, the government is ruled by the parliament, and the parliament is controlled by the public and the press.<sup>5</sup> The press takes up various opinions of the public, which will evolve as public opinion. Therefore, the freedom of speech, assembly and the press support the creation of public opinion (1941 73). The other chapter, “Los derechos individuales como garantía de la libertad” (The Individual Rights as a Guarantee

of Freedom) also confirms Ayala's belief that freedom of thought is usually expressed by speech and the press (1941 43). This work argues that the structure of modern society is established with the emergence and rise of the bourgeois class; therefore, the press is a symbol of a liberal democratic society guided by the bourgeois class. In this way, Ayala confirms that the press and public opinion are indispensable elements and symbols in a liberal democratic state.

Based on the idea shown above, three years later, in 1944, Ayala writes "Sobre la prensa" as a part of *Histrionismo y representación (Histrionism and Representation)*. This article is collected in *Tecnología y libertad (Technology and Liberty)* in 1959, three years prior to the publication of *El fondo del vaso*. The article examines the press and its connection to the public opinion more in detail than "La opinión pública" and explains more precisely Ayala's ideas about the press from a socio-political perspective. In this article of 1944, Ayala studies the press under a historical and cultural map.<sup>6</sup> The first half of the article discusses modernity and public opinion, which confirms what Ayala stated in "La opinión pública." Ayala claims that the press can be valued as a reservoir of knowledge through which one can learn about the Modern Era. This is because the press is a historical and cultural phenomenon, which clarifies the process of social and spiritual contexts of the time (2007 5: 792). A culture of modern times is verifiable in humanities and in universal curiosity, and in the novelties in the world. In this cultural map, the press, which provides news to the public and satisfies their curiosity, has a profound significance and documental value (2007 5: 793-794). The press informs the "objective" reality for the public to judge it and makes comments from the fringes. However, the recent press uses methods of seduction and propaganda and it is the sign of the definitive collapse of rationalist ethos of the modernity.

The periodical printing press is undoubtedly an important tool to direct public opinion, but the press also originates as an economic activity from its emergence in the sixteenth century.<sup>7</sup> According to Ayala, the press is an apparatus of the government because the power of the press had a great impact on the public. He sees a clear antecedent that actual totalitarian control of the press by authoritarian regimes can go back to the seventeenth-century. Thus, the press is economic and political, but also social and cultural. Ayala repeatedly stresses that the press has a close relationship with the élite bourgeois class that uses it effectively to influence public opinion and thereby to negotiate with the government.

As a cultural product, the press acquires a new readership among lower strata of the bourgeois class, with its commercial advertisements and *folletín*, or serial novels.<sup>8</sup> A majority of these readers became a part of the lower class, the masses. This new social group who received a very superficial education and little enlightenment was easily influenced by the propaganda in the press.<sup>9</sup> There were also sensationalist presses created as an industry by cartels and trusts in the

eighteenth century later to seduce them. The new masses were easily impressed and dragged by the persuasive rhetoric of these types of newspapers. As seen, in the articles of the 1940s, Ayala presents the features of the modern periodical press from socio-political and cultural perspectives.

## **2.2. The Article of the 1980s: “La retórica del periodismo”(1984)**

After these articles, Ayala does not issue other writings on the newspapers; instead he uses newspaper clippings as a component in his literary works in *El fondo del vaso* and in *El jardín de las delicias*. In the 1980s, he returns to this topic in the articles, “La retórica del periodismo,” “Los orígenes de la prensa periódica” (The Origins of the Periodical Press, 1985), “Otra especie de periodismo” (Another Type of Journalism, 1985), and “La literatura del periodismo” (The Literature of Journalism, 1987).<sup>10</sup> These articles examine the press from sociological perspectives as he did in the articles of the 1940s but they also discuss literary aspects of the press. The most outstanding article of this period is “La retórica del periodismo.”

In “La retórica del periodismo,” Ayala resumes the main ideas of his previous articles that the press is an essential piece of the bourgeois society, a political institution in a liberal democracy, and the press serves as the fourth power, in addition to juridical, congressional and governmental authorities (2013 6: 291). Expanding the discussion of the relationship between the press and the masses from “Sobre la prensa,” Ayala refers also to the role of the intellectual in a society, a theme that Ayala had a great interest in especially in the post-Civil War period. In this article of 1984, Ayala affirms that the intellectuals embody a role to guide the public, using printed materials (2013 6: 293). The press is a convenient and efficient tool for intellectual writers; it is able to diffuse writers’ opinions promptly to a wide range of the public. Compared to books, the press can generate more potential support from readers.

The press should endeavor to satisfy and to provoke readers’ curiosity, as commercial advertisements do (2013 6: 300). However, readers are unreliable and volatile and may not read the articles that the writers want them to. Ayala states that one of the techniques to draw the reader’s attention is to prepare attractive titles and headlines. The headlines of the articles should have strong impacts on readers, and provide tempting information about the article’s content, like a bait. It is why a summary of the important news is announced with big titles in bold on the front page of a daily newspaper. The reader decides to read an article by looking at the headline, if it provokes his curiosity. Ayala states that in order to make the reader focus on reading the article, the writer places the details of the incident in the first paragraph or in the first phrase, or even in the title itself. If the news has further development, the writer reports complementary and background details in the inside pages of the issue, and encourages the reader to read further articles on a

topic. On the other hand, the article writer uses techniques to distract the reader's attention. The newspaper writer sometimes intentionally uses an elliptic redaction, hiding or disguising information to make the reader easily forget it, or uses manipulative vocabulary, cultural and specialized words to persuade readers (2013 6: 301). In this way, the newspaper writer uses special techniques to guide readers in a desired direction. This is why Ayala claims that the press is tendentious: "la información periodística es siempre tendencioso, y tanto más cuanto mejor lo disimule. Operando bajo capa de neutralidad, afecta a todas las cuestiones del día" (the information of the periodical is always tendentious, and even more so, when the press pretends not to be. Operating under a cape of neutrality, the information affects every question of the day, 2013 6: 302). All these techniques are intended to guide and satisfy readers' curiosity, to draw their attention to the news and eventually to formalize a collective opinion on the news.

Ayala also confirms that there are two types of articles: informative and argumentative. There are both single articles to deal with a story and a series of articles where a reporter follows the development of an event. He explains with concrete examples from his fiction. The following three examples are extracted from two texts of *El jardín de las delicias* and Part Two of *El fondo del vaso*. The first text or a fictional newspaper clipping "Otra vez los gamberros" (Again, the Hooligans) from *El jardín de las delicias* is an informative but emotional article. It is about a violent act of a group of hooligans in a park, attacking a grandfather and his grandson. The article reports general information but at the same time, it has an emotional tone to provoke readers' sympathy to the victims. The next fictional text, "Escasez de la vivienda en el Japón" (The Housing Shortage in Japan) is a simple informative article that only transmits the fact without any subjective perspective of the writer. The article reports that in Japan, a house is small and there is no private room for a married couple, so they have to go outside the home to have sexual relations. Ayala does not mention any example of a purely argumentative newspaper article, but one can find it in some articles in Part Two of *El fondo del vaso*, which will be discussed in the next section.

Another type of journalistic report is news that has a developing story. The information has to cover incidents as time elapses. Ayala states that a writer has to provide the latest happenings and then to look back to previous incidents in order to understand the present news. In addition, if some incidents suddenly happen at the last minute, a writer has to include them and modify the entire story, if necessary. In this way, a writer reconstructs and reorganizes the story.

The purpose of all features of the newspaper is to attract current and future readers with articles that may be more important than other "literary" texts, such as books. Ayala mentions that the newspaper is an economic product; the price paid by its readers does not cover the cost to produce articles; therefore, it is indispensable to insert commercial advertisements to gain revenues. As

an economic product, the press is more complex in its writing strategies. The newspaper provides general information promptly, and widely, persuades readers with its opinions but has to be profitable. This is one of the reasons that compared to other published writings, the periodical press is closely connected with economic activities.

As seen, Ayala considers that the press has a complex nature for being an economic, literary and political product. However, due to these features, the newspaper is able to provide diverse information of a society from different approaches; it can uniquely describe a picture of actual reality. The ultimate purpose of the press is to guide its readers and to formalize a shared opinion. This opinion later will develop as a large common opinion and have the power to put pressure on politics. In the next section, we will examine how Ayala's claims about the sociological and literary aspects of the press find expression in his novel, *El fondo del vaso*.

### 3. Newspapers in *El fondo del vaso* (1962)

The novel is about the vicissitudes of a prominent businessperson, José Lino Ruiz who owns a series of warehouses. Lino Ruiz is wrongly accused of killing Luisito Rodríguez, a son of his Spanish friend and journalist Rodríguez. When the country is in chaos after the collapse of Bocanegra's dictatorship, Lino Ruiz goes into exile with a secretary and mistress, Candelaria, leaving his wife behind. However, Candelaria leaves Lino Ruiz for her new lover, Luisito, who is found murdered one day. Lino Ruiz is arrested as a suspect, accused of being jealous and trying to impede the relationship of the young couple, Luisito and Candelaria. Doubts about Lino Ruiz' guilt seem to be cleared when the police receive an anonymous letter that denounces the vandalism against a local religious congregation by a group of wealthy young people, to which Luisito belongs.

*El fondo del vaso* is composed of three parts. Parts One and Three are first-person narrative by Lino Ruiz, and Part Two is a third person narrative, composed of articles of a daily newspaper *El Comercio*. In Part One, Lino Ruiz describes his successful private life in post-Bocanegra society, now a democratic country. In Part Three, Lino Ruiz, who is in jail, looks back and regrets his past arrogant attitude and conduct toward Candelaria and to his wife. He accepts his destiny as a redemption, even when he knows that his wife confesses that she has had an affair with Luisito's father and his friend Rodríguez.

Twenty-six newspaper clippings of eight sections of Part Two titled "El caso del Junior R., a través de algunos recortes del diario capitalino *El Comercio*" (The case of Junior R., through some clippings from the daily newspaper of the capital, *El Comercio*) examine Lino Ruiz and his involvement in the case from different angles. A series of newspaper articles report precisely Lino Ruiz's



private and business lives to explain the reason of his possible “murder” of Luisito. Moreover, what the newspaper finds about Lino Ruiz reveals his different persona from what he tells about himself in Part One. Ayala has used newspaper articles in *El fondo del vaso*, in order to incorporate into the plot of the story the sociological function of the newspaper. As discussed in the previous section, since Ayala believes that the press is an essential social component in a democratic country, in *El fondo del vaso*, using newspaper articles illustrates that post-Bocanegra society has moved to a liberal democratic regime from a dictatorship. Furthermore, being an economic product, the newspaper tries to respond to readers’ curiosity and to publicize the truth. However, at the same time, using and combining two types of articles, informative and argumentative, journalists guide readers in a direction that the press wants, persuading them that views expressed in the articles are correct and truthful. The novel also shows that the press has the power to damage the private and public life of an individual. However, even when the newspaper publishes wrong information and causes a negative impact on an individual, as *El Comercio* does to Lino Ruiz, the newspaper does not take any responsibility under the right of freedom of expression. In this way, the novel shows that the newspaper is tendentious. *El Comercio* sides with the rich bourgeois class and not with people of the working class. This attitude is seen when a journalist describes a young gang group from the working class in Chapter Six.

From literary perspectives, the newspaper illustrates a panoramic view of society with its different views on characters and incidents, that is, it can look into a social group and atmosphere that the protagonist Lino Ruiz does not belong to. Ayala’s use of newspaper allows an abrupt change of perspectives. In some cases, a journalist presents fragmented information or information which is unrelated to Lino Ruiz *per se*. The readers accept this unexpected shift of views, because they know that they are reading newspaper articles and not a novel with a plot. On the other hand, the article writer prepares a proper headline for each clipping to attract the reader’s attention and to make a series of articles into a story about the murder case.

### **3.1. Sociological Perspectives of the Newspaper**

In *El fondo del vaso*, the newspaper symbolizes the liberal democratic society which has emerged following Bocanegra’s dictatorship. In order to emphasize the country has changed, the novel has no characters who are associated with the dictatorship, such as politicians or militants. Instead, the main characters are mostly from the bourgeois class, such as business people and their families (Lino Ruiz, Cipriano Medrano), journalists (Rodríguez, anonymous reporters of *El Comercio*), and people from the working class (Candelaria and her family, members of the religious congregation). Now in a democratic country, *El Comercio* has a rival newspaper, *El Tiempo*, and

both newspapers report the case of Luisito's death and its relation to Lino Ruiz. Since *El Tiempo* has reported the case in detail first, *El Comercio* tries to forestall *El Tiempo* by collecting new data before its rival in order to publish attractive news for its readers. This competition to scoop news is an example of liberal business competition in a democratic society.

To get information on the case, *El Comercio* contacts people involved, such as a police detective Lupino, Candelaria, employees of Lino Ruiz's company, and friends of the victim and the suspect. *El Comercio* reporters use other unidentified resources, too. In this way, the journalist uses collected data or combines informative and argumentative articles.

Chapter Five, composed of six newspaper clippings or six sections, is a good example to see how a writer blends two types of articles –informative and argumentative– to offer objective data on Lino Ruiz's public and private life and to subjectively criticize his behavior. These articles serve to impress readers of *El Comercio* that Lino Ruiz has a very reasonable motive to murder Luisito because he is Candelaria's new boyfriend. Thus, *El Comercio* successfully creates a negative public image of Lino Ruiz using a combination of informative and argumentative articles.

The first two sections of Chapter Five, "Cita misteriosa" (Mysterious Promise) and "Contradicciones" (Contradictions), are informative articles, revealing that there is a contradiction between Lino Ruiz's statement and that of Anastasio Madroñera who is employed by Lino Ruiz. Anastasio testifies that Lino Ruiz asked him to deliver a message to Luisito on the day of his death; in the message, Lino Ruiz asks Luisito to visit him. Since nobody can confirm if Luisito did or did not visit Lino Ruiz, Anastasio's testimony becomes one of the proofs that Lino Ruiz may have committed the murder. On the other hand, at the end of Part One, Lino Ruiz states that Luisito did not contact him that day, so he went to bed, not feeling well. This contradiction is not examined thoroughly enough by *El Comercio* nor by the police. Furthermore, the newspaper keeps publishing more negative articles of Lino Ruiz. In the next section, "Detalles reveladores" (Revealed Details), an informative article reports that almost all the employees of Lino Ruiz's company knew about the secret relationship between their boss and the secretary, Candelaria. The report also unintentionally reveals that Luisito is not a nice or a polite young man. When he visits Lino Ruiz's company to look for Candelaria, he harasses other employees, so that Lino Ruiz has to prohibit his access to the office. This behavior of Luisito synchronizes with the act of vandalism of a young gang, to which he belongs, against a religious congregation in a poor suburb, described in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight. However, *El Comercio* keeps providing articles based on the premise that Lino Ruiz is the murderer of Luisito in Chapter Five.

The first three sections of Chapter Five are informative articles but the fourth section, "Antecedentes del encartado" (Antecedents of the Persecuted) and the last section, "La quiebra de

Casa Ruiz” (The Bankruptcy of Casa Ruiz), are both informative and argumentative articles. In these sections, *El Comercio* presents its judgement on Lino Ruiz. After reporting the unfortunate fate of his company, first the closure and then the bankruptcy, the writer, pointing out the immoral behavior of Lino Ruiz, claims that the morality of company’s owner seriously affects his business. The article states:

“( . . . ) resulta muy lógico que la publicidad hecha alrededor de todo este desgraciado asunto haya desencadenado una avalancha de reclamaciones contra la firma Casa Ruiz, la conducta de cuyo dueño ( . . . ) tampoco en el terreno de las transacciones comerciales se considera irreproachable” (it becomes a quite logical result that the publicity around all of this unfortunate incident unleashed an avalanche of reclamation against the Company Casa Ruiz, [although] the conduct of its owner is not considered unrepachable in the world of commercial transactions, 189). The newspaper tries to attack him with its comments and not with the facts.

Lino Ruiz’s wife has to close the company because newspapers keep publishing articles on her husband; because of those stories, curious mobs of people have come to the company, driving away the company’s clients. “La quiebra de Casa Ruiz” reports the company’s bankruptcy, due to a suspension of payments and an intervention of the court. The writer repeats the same comments that the moral sense of an entrepreneur is important for the fate of the company: “En la quiebra moral de dicho negocio puede verse simbolizada la más completa quiebra moral de su dueño” (The fullest moral bankruptcy of the company’s owner can be seen symbolized in the moral bankruptcy of the aforementioned business, 191). The writer critically implies that Lino Ruiz’s bankruptcy is inevitable due to his shameful and irresponsible conduct, even if he is not the real murderer.

These negative opinions of Lino Ruiz widely spread among the public thanks to newspapers. The news of Lino Ruiz’s arrest creates a sensation in the capital, and the continuous coverage of this story in the newspapers induces more curiosity of the masses. In this way, the articles of Chapter Five give enough information to the readers to believe that Lino Ruiz may have committed the crime. On the other hand, in “Antecedentes del encartado,” the writer cautions that regarding the possible involvement of Lino Ruiz in the death of Luisito, “nosotros ( . . . ) nos guardaremos muy mucho de prejuizar en el presente momento” (we will be cautious to prejudice in this present moment, 188) that Lino Ruiz is the murderer. This attitude of the writer of *El Comercio* can be seen again at the close of Chapter Five. The writer only states that Lino Ruiz does not admit that he committed the murder and leaves the reader, and not the writer, to judge Lino Ruiz (192). These statements imply that the press is powerful enough to put pressure on and damage the life of an individual, but the newspaper does not take responsibility for this, instead hiding behind the justification of “freedom of expression.” In *El fondo del vaso*, *El Comercio* indirectly sanctions Lino Ruiz with the power

of its writings. However, in Chapter Six, when a further investigation proceeds and new findings turn over the suspicion on Lino Ruiz, *El Comercio* does not take any action to recover the honor of Lino Ruiz. It is why Lino Ruiz's friend Medrano criticizes reporters of *El Comercio*, implying that they are not trustworthy: "ustedes, los muchachos de la prensa, son el diablo: son capaces de fabricar una noticia con cualquier cosita" (you, guys from the press, are devils: you are capable of fabricating news from any types of small things, 190).

As seen, informative and argumentative articles of Chapter Five persuade the public that Lino Ruiz deserves to be sanctioned socially and economically for his immorality. Guiding the public to reach a certain consensus with the newspaper is an antecedent act of creating public opinion. A journalist of *El Comercio* states: "en un regimen democrático como es el nuestro la opinión pública tiene sus fueros, y a la prensa compete, como derecho y como obligación, suministrarle los indispensables elementos de juicio sobre todas las cuestiones de general interés" (in a democratic regime like ours, public opinion has its own rule and is under the influence of the press as a right and obligation, [public opinion] provides [the press] with indispensable judgements on every issue of general interest, 182). In this way, the press influences public opinion, which in turn, reflects judgements on important social issues. Thus, Ayala's earlier sociological writings become the background of his artistic intention in this novel.

### 3.2. Newspapers and Panoramic View on Reality

Ayala's use of the newspaper in Part Two of *El fondo del vaso* portrays a social landscape of post-Bocanegra society that the protagonist Lino Ruiz cannot see from the social class to which he belongs. Lino Ruiz, for example, remains unaware of information on Altagracia, a poor suburb developed by the government for a working class as a welfare project, the emergence of gang-like groups of the young generation, or activities of a mystical religious group. For example, five sections in Chapter Eight bring up these stories and also uncover a story about vandalism by a group of young people from wealthy and distinguished families, and their conflict with a mystical religious group. This is important evidence since it may clear a doubt on the guilt or innocence of Lino Ruiz.

In Chapter Six, a newspaper writer affirms that a rival newspaper, *El Tiempo* has found new facts that may change the direction of the investigation on Luisito's murder (192). Then, *El Comercio* starts to examine these facts and report this new evidence in three chapters of Part Two, Chapters Six, Seven and Eight. These chapters reveal the story of vandalism conducted by a group of youngsters against a new religious congregation which does activities in Altagracia. This new story about a conflict of two groups comes to light in an anonymous letter sent to the police. While

*El Comercio* focuses on examining the content of the letter, it does not refer to Lino Ruiz, now in jail, as if the public as well as the newspaper loses their interest in his detention.

These chapters reveal that in the capital, violence and insolent acts by groups of young people have become an epidemic. A writer introduces two groups among others; “Mi Solo Dueño” (My Only Master) whose members are youth from a lower class, and “Los Dragones del Espacio” (The Space Dragons) whose members are youth from a privileged upper class. Though these groups have similar power structures and hierarchies, the writer describes each group in a different tone. He implies a certain kind of prejudice toward the group of poor adolescents, “Mi Solo Dueño.” In the first section of Chapter Six, “¿Nueva pista?” (New Trace?), the writer implies that “Mi Solo Dueño” may have some relationship with Luisito’s murder. The writer suggests that since Luisito belonged to “Los Dragones,” he may have been brutally murdered as a result of vengeance from “Mi Solo Dueño.” He also attacks this group for imitating disgracefully the life of “yankees” and becoming “a plague of our capital city” (192). This writer plays upon the attitudes of the targeted readers of *El Comercio* who are mainly from the bourgeois upper class. Thus, *El Comercio* is not fully neutral, but rather feeds the prejudices of the target readership for the sake of the commercial business of the newspaper.

The doubt on “Mi Solo Dueño” is cleared up in Chapters Seven and Eight. It is revealed that “Los Dragones” triggered Luisito’s death by their violent conduct against local people of Altagracia. Rich young gangs abduct and violate an innocent young girl who is a member of a congregation, “La Iglesia de Dios Feliz y Reconciliado” (The Church of Reconciled Felicitous God). After the members of the Church learn of the violent act against the girl, they attack a car of the Domenéch brothers who are Luisito’s relatives and also members of “Los Dragones.” The young gangs, as a revenge, destroy and soil the inside of the Church with reproachable and disgraceful conduct. After uncovering all these facts, the newspaper writer conjectures that Luisito may have been counter-attacked by members of the Church because of the vandalism of “Los Dragones.”

As seen, by using the newspaper clippings from *El Comercio*, Part Two portrays some social aspects of post-Bocangra society that cannot be told by the protagonist Lino Ruiz. Even though the country is now democratic, its society is still in turmoil and the lack of morality and prudence prevails in the society, regardless of a person’s age or social status. The reported episodes of gang groups confirm that the execution of power is always present at every level of society, despite the country’s political situation. Moreover, as a literary strategy in the novel, the newspaper clippings are effective, compact and economical, when the text tries to combine fragmented and unrelated data to compose one story. Newspaper clippings also portray events from different angles and different people’s points of view. The readers do not feel strange when they are suddenly shown

newly found facts that have nothing to do with Luisito's murder because they are reading newspaper articles. On the other hand, the proper headlines help unify the articles as one story. Thanks to these headlines and the articles without dates, the newspaper clippings of Part Two smoothly blend with the monologues of Parts One and Three, forming a complete story in the novel *El fondo del vaso*.

#### 4. Conclusion

This paper has shown that Ayala uses sociological aspects and literary features of newspaper articles to create multiple perspectives in *El fondo del vaso*. In his articles of the 1940s, "La opinion pública" and "Sobre la prensa," Ayala claims that the press is an essential element in a liberal democratic society, so he uses the newspaper articles in the novel to stress that this society of the novel has changed from a dictatorial society to a democratic one. In "La retórica del periodismo," Ayala presents two types of articles; informative articles that provide information to the public to respond to their curiosity on the case, and argumentative articles that are to persuade them that the newspaper's opinion toward Lino Ruiz is righteous. As a literary technique, the newspaper articles are effective to offer fragmented information in a natural way to readers. The headlines, which imply the article's content, make these clippings a part of the novel without giving an impression to the reader that they are out of place. As a result, newspaper clippings of Part Two of *El fondo del vaso* play an essential role in the development of the plot and give unique features to the novel. In *El fondo del vaso*, as in the previous novel, *Muertes de perro*, sociological observation and artistic creation fuse to create a fictional world.

When we survey Ayala's novels, we see clearly the newspaper functions to give a literary continuity among three works; *Muertes de perro*, *El fondo del vaso* and *El jardín de las delicias*. In *Muertes de perro*, newspapers play a minor role to transmit the social atmosphere of Bocangra's country, along with other materials. In its sequel, *El fondo del vaso*, the newspaper plays a central role in the investigation of the murder case of Luisito. In *El jardín de las delicias*, the newspaper clippings reproduce a fragmented reality in fiction. Judging from the gradual change of Ayala's use of the newspaper articles in his novels, one can trace a progression of his literary works from the 1950s to the 1970s, an evolution which merits future study and research.

#### Notes

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- 1 See Richmond for an overview of the use of newspaper clippings in *Muertes de perro*, *El fondo del vaso* and *El jardín de las delicias* (2018, 57–58).

- 2 The studies on *Muertes de perro* are Gullón 1977, Vera Luján 1977, Álvarez Sanagustín 1981, Orringer 1993–1994, 2006, 2010, López Fernández 1994, Oxford 2006, Barroso Villar 2006, Merino 2014 and Richmond 2014. The analysis on *Muertes de perro* and its sequel *Fondo del vaso* is studied by Sobejano 1964, Ellis 1960, 1964, Irizarry 1971, Hiriart 1972a, 1972b, Bieder 1979, Baquero Goyanes 1981, Sanagustín 1981, Mermall 1983, Bobes Naves 1988 and Orringer 2006, 2015. The studies on *El fondo del vaso* are not many: Murena 1962, Ellis 1963, Orringer 1993, 1995.
- 3 Many of Ayala's articles contributed in the press were first published for periodicals, such as literary magazines and newspapers, but later they were collected as a section of a book.  
In the case of other intellectuals, for example, Ortega's *La rebelión de las masas* (*The Revolt of the Masses*, 1930) was originally written for an Argentinean newspaper, *La Nación* (*The Nation*) between 1914 and 1929 as a series of articles. In 1930, the articles were published as a book, yet Ortega states that the book should be read as a collection of articles written between 1926 and 1928 (Marías 10).
- 4 The years that these newspaper companies existed are *El Debate* (1931–1936), *El Sol* (1931–36) and *Luz* (1932–34).
- 5 A chapter “La opinión pública” was originally issued in 1940 in *Sur* under the title of “Sobre la opinión pública.” After it was incorporated in *El problema del liberalismo*, “La opinión pública” was collected in two other books in the post-Franco era, *Hoy ya es ayer* (*Today is Already Yesterday*, 1972) and *Ensayos políticos* (*Political Essays*, 2006). This shows Ayala's consistent interest in the issue of public opinion. In the discussion of public opinion, Ayala refers to Ernst Manheim, Lawrence Laurel, Ferdinand Tönnies, James Bryce and Francisco Giner de los Ríos. In particular, Manheim's *Die Träger der öffentlichen Meinung* (1933) was translated by Ayala into Spanish in 1936.
- 6 Ayala states that he was incited to examine this topic because of the film *Citizen Kane* and through a translating task of *Le journal; origines, évolution et rôle de la presse périodique* (1934) written by a French historian Georges Weill. In the article, Ayala mentions that he was asked to translate this book, yet his name is not shown in the front matter of the Spanish version, *El diario* (1941). In the front, there is only a reference under the title, “Versión española de Paulino Masip.” *Citizen Kane* (1941) was put on the screen in Buenos Aires, probably around 1941 when Ayala lived in exile in this city. Jorge Luis Borges wrote a review of the film “Un film abrumador” (An Overwhelming Film) in *Sur* in 1941.
- 7 The features of the press are also discussed, for example, in Chapter VII of Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion*, but in Ayala's works, there is no reference to Lippmann's work.
- 8 In French, *folletín* is “Feuilleton.” Here, Ayala refers to the French “feuilleton.” In Spain, “folletín” was created by French influence.
- 9 Ayala precisely discusses the education of the masses later in *La crisis actual de la enseñanza* (1958). See Ayala's discussion on education in Maruta 2019.
- 10 The article “La retórica del periodismo” is a speech delivered in 1984 when he was admitted in Real Academia Española (The Royal Spanish Academy) and took over the seat Z from a linguist, Salvador Ramírez Fernández. One year later, this article was published in *La retórica del periodismo y otras retóricas* (1985). “Los orígenes de la prensa periódica” was published in a daily newspaper, *ABC* both in the Madrid and in the *Sevilla* version. Also, “Otra especie de periodismo” (1985) was only published in *ABC* and was not collected in a book. “La literatura del periodismo” (1987) was issued first in *El País* and then was collected in two books, *Mi cuarto a espadas* (*Stick My Oar*, 1988) and in *En qué mundo vivimos* (*In Which World Do We Live*, 1996).



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