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The Problems of Higher-Education in Spanish Intellectuals' Writings and in Francisco Ayala's Novel *Muertes de perro*

Chikako Maruta

Introduction[1]

Francisco Ayala's essay on education, "Universidad y sociedad de masas" (University and Society of the Masses) in *La crisis actual de la enseñanza* (*The Actual Crisis of the Education*, 1958) was written in 1957, one year before the publication of the novel *Muertes de perro* (*Death as a Way of Life*, 1958).[2] The book is a collection of four essays, taking a sociological rather than a theoretical approach to clarify problems of the education in a mass society. Ayala's observations of education are a different approach to examine the role of the

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(2) The essay was published in 1957 in the following three media; in the Argentinean newspaper, *La Nación* (April 7, 1957), then in a journal, *La Torre: revista de Universidad de Puerto Rico*, vol. 18 (June 1957): pp. 11–20, and in a book, *Temas de pedagogía universitaria*, Imprenta de la Universidad (1957), pp. 19–28. See bibliographic information at "Bibliografía de Francisco Ayala" in Home Page of Fundación Francisco Ayala (http://www.ffayala.es/bibliografia/).

intellectuals in a mass society, which is the central theme of his writings published in the 1940s and 1950s, while he lived in exile in the Americas. Ayala considers that the university needs to offer a proper education for the masses as a new social demand, and the intellectual should play a certain role in its educational system.

The mission of the university in a mass society is also discussed in the essays of other Republican exiled intellectuals: "Vida académica y sociedad" (Academic Life and Society, 1951) by the sociologist José Medina Echavarría, and "Meditación en la universidad" (Meditation on the University, 1966) by the philosopher José Gaos. These writers published works on the university after they went into exile in the Americas at the end of the Spanish Civil War. However, their arguments, on the university were already developed before the Civil War by José Ortega y Gasset in *Misión de la Universidad* (*Mission of the University*, 1930). While Ortega presents theoretically two main roles given to the university in a mass society, Ayala and Medina Echavarría try to discuss the problems practically and sociologically, relating the issue to current social conditions. Expanding this, Ayala explains the problem referring to specific countries and his observations are used to create characters for his novel, so that the problem could be widely recognized by the general public.

As a sociologist and intellectual novelist, Ayala publishes works on a variety of topics of sociology, politics, philosophy and literature; his works always contain sociological elements that show the author's strong interest in the relation between a society and its people's behavior. Ayala's post-civil war novels reflect current social conditions more than those before the Spanish Civil War. Among them, the most outstanding novel that shows a close relationship with his sociological writings is *Muertes de perro*. The novel depicts the immorality of people, especially that of the intellectuals of the élite class. In *Muertes de perro*, the élite intellectuals refer to those who are educated in universities or dedicated to intellectual activities. The problematic attitude of these intellectuals implies that higher education is not

able to instil high morality in educated people. Yet, literary critics have not paid much attention to this work on education when they discuss the relation of Ayala's representative philosophical and sociological works, *Razón del mundo* (*Reason of the World,* 1944) or *Tratado de Sociología* (*Treaties of Sociology*, 1947), to Ayala's novels.

I argue that based on his observations on the university, Ayala creates the main characters of *Muertes de perro* to show the failure of education for the mass students in institutions of higher learning and the devaluation of intellectuals with high academic degrees. The analysis confirms the close connection between Ayala's works on sociological writings and his literary creativity, especially, the writing on education and this novel, which is not discussed in detail among critics. This paper first discusses Ortega's work and the essays of Medina Echavarría and Ayala that follow the main idea of Ortega. Then it analyzes characters of the novel relating to Ayala's claim in his essay.

1. The Problems of the University in a Mass Society

1.1. Ortega y Gasset's *Misión de la Universidad* (1930)

In 1930, José Ortega y Gasset raised the issue of the role of the university in *Misión de la Universidad*.[3] According to Ortega, from the 1910s to the 1920s, Spaniards did not look into the problem of the university: "[t]he best attempts of the last fifteen years (…) instead of putting the question squarely, 'What is a university for, and what must it consequently be?' have done the thing that was easiest and most sterile" (18). They only saw and imitated policies of universities in other countries. Therefore, Ortega suggests that Spaniards need to deliberate these fundamental questions on the role of institutions of higher education in a mass society.

(3) See Higuero for the analysis of Ortega's *Misión de la Universidad*.

Ortega claims that "the university is the institution in which higher education is imparted to almost all those who receive any [basic level of education]" and that those who receive this higher level of education "are only the children of the well-to-do class" (23). Though, in modern society, the university is required to offer academic and professional knowledge to students from the working classes, it still follows an old and anachronistic style of education. Therefore, in order to accept and train greater numbers of students in a mass society, the university needs to discuss "what higher learning and instruction are to be" (23). Higher instruction consists of two missions: professionalism or "[t]he teaching of the learned professions," and research or "[s]cientific research and the preparation of future investigators" (24). In addition, Ortega emphasizes the importance of teaching "culture," which originates in his philosophical idea.

According to Ortega, on the human level, one cannot live without ideas (27), and culture is "the *vital* system of ideas of a period" (28). Culture is also "what saves human life from being a mere disaster [and] it is what enables man to live a life which is something above meaningless tragedy or inward disgrace" (27). However, Ortega asserts that the contemporary university has abandoned "almost entirely the teaching or transmission of culture" (28). As a result, a man whom he calls the "average person" is not fully aware of the importance of culture and becomes "the new barbarian." Ortega criticizes that this new barbarian is "the professional man [who is] more learned than ever before, but at the same time more uncultured –the engineer, the physician, the lawyer, the scientist" (29). This is a consequence of the shift from the traditional university that put weight on academic research, to the university that emphasizes technical and professional skills more, so the university needs to teach culture particularly because the students' background has changed since the nineteenth century. The masses of students are from non-bourgeois families that do not offer any cultural education to their children. Students need to learn culture in the university, but actually the university

does not teach it. Thus, Ortega insists that the university has to take some measures to rectify this situation, and to adapt to the emergence of the masses.

Ortega believes that the current university has to incorporate cultural education, and concludes that the university's teaching has to compromise three functions; "I. The transmission of culture. II. The teaching of the professions. III. Scientific research and the training of new scientists" (33). These claims of Ortega will be followed up in different manners by his disciples or followers, such as Medina Echavarría, Ayala and others. The following sections will discuss some of the expansions of Ortega's ideas on university education, written by these intellectuals.

1.2. Medina Echavarría's "Vida académica y sociedad"(1951)(4)

The sociologist Medina Echavarría is a close friend of Ayala, with whom he studied law in Universidad Madrid in the 1920s and served as "Letrado de las Cortes" or judiciary advisors of the Parliament of the Second Republic. After the Spanish Civil War, in 1939 Medina Echavarría left for México and worked as a professor of sociology in various Mexican universities, and then in Universidad de Puerto Rico, San Juan from 1946 to 1952. Medina Echavarría invited Ayala for lectures at Universidad de Puerto Rico, which gave Ayala a chance to move to Puerto Rico from Argentina in 1950.

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(4) According to Andrés Lira, this article was later published under the title of "La vida académica y la sociedad" in a prestigious journal issued by El Colegio de México, *Cuadernos Americanos*, Año XI, Vol.LXII (marzo-abril 1952), pp. 7–29. See more bibliographic information of Medina Echavarría's article in Lira 1999, p. 9 fn.1. In this footnote, the reader will find a list of works on the university written by Medina Echavarría. A large number of his works on the university indicate his strong interest in this topic. See biographic information of Medina Echavarría and of Gaos in *Diccionario biobibliográfico de los escritores, editoriales y revistas del exilio republicano de 1939.* See also "Medina Echavarria" in Ayala's *Recuerdos y Olvidos* (*Memory and Oblivion*, 2006) for their friendship (356–358).

In "Vida académica y sociedad," Medina Echavarría affirms that Ortega had already prognosticated the difficulties that the university would face in his works (26). In the essay, Medina Echavarría shares Ortega's observations on the university but at the same time, he adds his own observation of social and practical realities. This implies that even after two decades, Ortega's concern with the university remained unresolved and drew attention of the Republican intellectuals such as Medina Echavarría and Ayala; the university had still not adapted to the conditions of mass society. These intellectuals had a strong interest in the problems of the university, because Medina Echavarría and intellectuals of his generation, such as the philosopher José Gaos, were repressed in their academic careers and research activities during Primo de Rivera's Dictatorship in the 1920s (Lira 11). Therefore, they demand democratic government and believe that such a government should be responsible for the administration of universities. From their experiences in Spain, they recognized that the university as an institution was always in crisis (Lira 13). After their exile, these intellectuals worked at universities in their host countries, so they became aware that the problems of the university are a universal matter and not a specific problem of a certain country.

Under these circumstances, the essay "Vida académica y sociedad" was written in Puerto Rico, seven years prior to Ayala's "Universidad y sociedad de masas." Medina Echavarria explains that the university's education benefits a large majority of the masses rather than small groups of minority élites (22). The essay insists on several important points. First, he problematizes the university's attitudes to continue accepting students who come from ordinary families that do not have any academic background, without deciding how to organize educational goals and methods of teaching these students (27). Second, a traditional formation of students is not currently useful, because the social division of labor and the specialization in science require a rapid professionalization of students (23). Third, these problems of the university are found in any country, regardless of political ideology. The

university in a totalitarian country becomes a center of apologetics and indoctrination, but the university in non-totalitarian countries also experiences both a disruption in its traditional role and an internal crisis (27). Medina Echavarría is aware that the university tends to be a part of the authority; therefore, he insists that academic life and research have to distance themselves from the support of the authority in order to guarantee and defend the freedom of creation. He suggests that research support by the State is only possible if institutions are politically independent, autonomous or generously open to an enthusiastic researcher with independence (48). Fourth, the university should not turn its back on a society and distance itself from what is currently changing and happening in a society. It has to play an active role in social activities, and has to rigorously examine, profoundly analyze and critically discuss a social situation without conceding its ideas, indoctrination or concepts against a society and the State. In the university "como congregación afanosos del saber, todo puede y debe ser examinado, en efecto, sin restricción alguna" (as an enthusiastic congregation questing for knowledge, everything can and should be examined without any restriction, 33). In the university, "lo que en la calle circula como demagogia, como cobertura ideológica, como encuentro de intereses, puede acrisolarse en la cátedra y ser reducido a sus modestas proporciones de verdad limitada" (what circulates in the street, such as a demagogue, an ideological mask, or a conflict of interests, can be refined in the professorship and reduced to modest proportions of limiting truth, 33–34). Finally, Medina Echavarría suggests that the mission of the academia is to show the result of research to the public through scientific articles, so this mission mirrors the actual moment and exposes intellectual freedom (52).

All of the points mentioned above originate from Ortega's claim that the university and the society are interconnected. Yet, the originality of Medina Echavarría's essay is to articulate academic knowledge with practical use (Lira 13). These points are taken over in Ayala's essay, which expands them and shows them

in more easily recognizable ways.

1.3. Ayala's "Universidad y sociedad de masas" (1957)

Ayala's essay, "Universidad y sociedad de masas" is one of the four essays in *La crisis actual de la enseñanza*. Other essays are "La crisis de la enseñanza en los Estados Unidos" (Crisis of Pedagogy in the US, 1958), "Sistema escolar y delincuencia juvenil en los Estados Unidos (School System and Crime of the Youth in the US", 1958) and "El problema educativo: puntualizaciones" (The Educational Problem: Clarification, 1958). These essays discuss education systems from primary to higher education based on Ayala's experiences in Argentina, the US and other countries which he visited. In "Universidad y sociedad de masas," Ayala confirms Ortega's claim that the university and a society have a close relationship; therefore, the problems of the university have to be examined together with the actual social atmosphere of the time (9). In the case of universities in Argentina, the problems are serious and urgent, since an enormous inadequacy is prevailing around the university's institutional structure and sociological framework (9–10). In agreement with Medina Echavarría, Ayala states that this inadequacy is not specific to Argentina but also to other countries; modern society has changed from a society stratified by classes into a society of the masses. Even though the social reality has changed much in the past decades, the university keeps its traditional physiognomy. It is because the university, along with other institutions, is a solid nucleus of society like a skeleton in a vertebral animal (10). However, Ayala asserts that it needs to readapt to new social conditions.

Ayala agrees with the observations of Ortega and Medina Echavarría: the university became degraded, especially after WWI, with the emergence of the masses in society. Ayala mentions that the relationship between students and educational institutions is critical (14). In a mass society, the education for the masses is different from that for a selected minority of the élites (13). Traditionally

a college education was also organized based on the premise that incoming bourgeois students were well prepared either in schools or in their households. The university was an institution for high-level study, where one completed a professional or an academic specialization. It was also a place of preparation and habitation for young bourgeois, so that they had access to pursue a career in the State or dedicated themselves to liberal professions (12). For all these reasons, the university had a close relationship with the bourgeois class.

However, this conventional social condition changed due to the rise of the masses. The bourgeois class is mostly dissolved under new social conditions, and now an enormous number of students from non-bourgeois families enter the university. Unlike those from bourgeois families, mass-students do not depend totally on education given by their family, but on public education. Yet public education does not offer enough academic background and preparation for mass-students. For example, in the essay "La crisis actual de la enseñanza en los Estados Unidos," Ayala presents an episode of William C. Warren, President of Columbia University who laments that the situation of students who lack the ability of reading and writing is an epidemic-like disease (25). Ayala criticizes a deficiency of the current educational system, in particular, that of primary and secondary education.

The problem is not only that of unqualified students, but also that of increasing numbers of incoming students. As already discussed by Medina Echavarría, Ayala states that the modernization of society, the disappearance of social strata, and the elevation of people's economic level, induce an intense mobility and a demographic density in a society. In such a society, many people want a professional education in order to play a specialized role in a dynamic and modernized society that is rich in opportunities (16). However, an overflow of a massive number of students from the classroom makes it difficult to maintain material and physical facilities or educational organization: there are not sufficient spaces, premises, instruments or professors to satisfy the demands of all the students (16). Like Medina Echavarría,

Ayala affirms that it is easy to lock out unprepared mass-students from the university, but eventually this is not a fundamental solution. It is critical to increase the quality of public education at the primary and secondary institutions, yet the essay does not specifically refer to a necessary reform of pre-college education.

On the other hand, Ayala, in agreement with Ortega and Medina Echavarría, stresses the close relationship between the university and the society. Ayala claims that the university has to respond to social demands and to resolve the incongruity among traditional academic departments in order to prevent it from becoming an archaic institution (17). A variety of social instances, such as technical innovation, require academic activities and training for students' professional scientific education, yet the university avoids discussing it, foreseeing necessary changes, or adapting to new social demands (17–18). The university has to comprehend the current crisis of the institution and to find well-considered solutions, not superficial ones, to avoid aggravating its situation (19). Ayala insists that it is time for the university to promote a fundamental reform.

In the essay, Ayala, as Medina Echavarría, does not forget to point out that the university is not free from political influences and it continues to be sustained by the State. According to Ayala, the relationship between the university and the State goes back to the time of an absolute monarchy in Europe. As the monarch promoted the modernization of institutions, the university became an institution of the State and was involved in political games. Ayala sees that universities of Latin America also followed the same process (11). Ayala brings up this point, for the purpose of alluding to the university under the Perón administration, which suffered from an enormous intellectual and moral perturbation (19–20). The experiences of the socio-political circumstances in Argentina may have inspired Ayala to write the essay in 1957, the year after Perón lost the presidency.

In Argentina, Ayala witnessed political turmoil between 1939 and 1950. In the first five years of Ayala's residence in Argentina, Presidents changed one after

another until Perón took the presidency in 1946. In 1943, there was a military coup that had critical effects on Argentinean universities.(5) In the years after the outbreak of the coup, social circumstances and job security surrounding national universities deteriorated. The central government intervened into the national universities and issued the legislation of university reform. Though there were some push-backs by students' movements and some resistance of faculties, universities in Argentina had to conform to the dictates of the nationalist regime, as did those in other countries under dictatorship, such as in Germany, Italy or Spain.(6) As a result, both liberal Argentinean and exiled Spanish professors were forced to leave the universities.(7)

According to Flavia Fiorucci, the social atmosphere of Argentina at the opening of WWII politicized the ideological debates among anti-fascists intellectuals and nationalists (21–22). For example, Eduardo Mallea who was Ayala's close Argentinean friend formed an anti-fascist network among liberal intellectuals (22). In 1947, the Perón administration put anti-liberal and nationalist pressures on intellectuals and on educational institutions. It also intended to reform the educational system for people from working classes who supported the government. In Argentina, the problems of the university were very serious even in the 1950s because the university was a part of the political institution of the State. In "Universidad y sociedad de masas," Ayala states that people should learn a lesson from the nefarious education policy of the Perón administration and should think positively about the reconstruction of academic institutions for the present

(5) See a particular intervention by the government into Universidad Nacional de Litoral in Berdichevsky, 1965.

(6) See Dércoli for more information on policies of the universities during the first Perón regime. The resistance against nationalist movements in universities in Argentina is shown in pp. 22–24.

(7) See in Schwarzstein for the attitude of Spanish exiled professors, especially that of Luis Jiménez de Azúa, against the intervention of the Perón administration in the university (172–173).

time and the future (21). This essay is written considering universities of Argentina but Ayala's observations are also applicable to other countries, including Spain.

Though Ayala and Medina Echavarría do not explicitly refer to Spanish universities under Franco, points mentioned in their essays are also found in Spain. According to Ruíz Carnicer, in the 1960s when Franco retained power, Spanish universities experienced the tension of growth and the massive entry of students, and the Franco government tackled reform of the educational system after the Civil War (113). Since teachers of the university were either exiled, dead or purged by the Civil War, the university hired new faculty members "whose credentials were based more on political than academic merit" (114). The university was transformed into an élite training system for adherents of the regime, and the university's mechanisms were controlled by Franco's government:

> The curriculum was identical for the whole country and strongly weighted toward the humanities rather than technical or scientific studies, and there was a great gap between teaching staff, erudite and elitist, usually inaccessible, and a small student body that was, with a few exceptions, drawn from the upper class. (…) This old nineteenth-century university system was to become increasingly involved in the political radicalization of the period. (Ruíz Carnicer 118)

Accordingly, the Francoist university suffered from a thorough pedagogical and intellectual break. As a result, higher education took a step backward, in research as well as in teaching. Thus Ayala's observation on the problem of Argentina's universities could also be applied to Spain.

In their articles, Ayala and Medina Echavarría conclude that the university has to accept and educate masses of students responding to their needs to pursue professionally useful skills. The social development and transformation of the

university require the reconstruction of universities, which is not only an issue for Argentina but also for other countries. The university needs reform in order not to be an obsolete educational institution in order to adapt to a society of the masses.

2. The Problems of Education in *Muertes de perro* (1958)

One year after the publication of the essay "Universidad y sociedad de masas," Ayala published a longer novel, *Muertes de perro*. This is a representative and critical novel among Ayala's other novels. Its complex structure is studied from various perspectives, yet there is no detailed study to look into the inter-relation between Ayala's literary works and his sociological, political or philosophical works.(8) In "El fondo sociológico en mis novelas" (The Sociological Background in My Novels, 1968), Ayala contests the opinions of critics and presents a self-criticism of his own novel.(9) Here, Ayala asserts that critics mistakenly interpreted *Muertes de perro* as a political novel and that he does not intend to write against the dictatorship nor to write a political satire (252). The novel's final goal is to describe the human condition to question morals and ethics, which are critical elements to be a man with culture and education. Though Ayala contests that the novel is not political, the novel cannot get rid of political elements due to its deep connection between his sociological essay on the university and its influence on the creation of the characters and events. The novel exemplifies the points he made in the essay: the university's need to offer cultural education to mass-students without cultural

(8) For example, the narrative perspective (Bieder), the uses of time and space (Bobes Naves), representation of body (Orringer 1993–1994), historiographic metafiction (Merino), the representation of power (Mermall), the role of female characters (Oxford), the moral degradation of intellectual characters (Gullón), linguistic analysis (Vera Luján), and historical background (Richmond), among many others.

(9) This is his style after 1949 when he published two short story collections *Los usurpadores* (*Usurpers*) and *La cabeza del cordero* (*The Lamb's Head*) and gave his comments in Prologues of his novels, as if to dialogue with his reader and critics.

backgrounds, and the university's tendency to be a political institution. The episodes related to this connection are not many, but still they form the main arguments of the novel.

Muertes de perro is set in a small republic in Central America, possibly in the 1950s.[10] The protagonist is a lawyer in a wheelchair, Luis Pinedo, who intends to write a history of his country under the dictatorship of President Antón Bocanegra, who has recently been killed by his illegitimate son and private secretary, Tadeo Requena. The novel describes the collapse and the tragic fate of two families: the Rosales and the Bocanegras. This dichotomy represents a conflict of two forces, namely educated élites and uneducated masses, or an agrarian feudal family and a family from the masses. The Rosales are a prestigious and prominent feudal-like family in a rural agrarian society, San Cosme, and the Bocanegras are an upstart family with *mulato* blood. President Bocanegra is called "Padre de los pelados" (Father of the poor) and is supported enthusiastically by local people.

In *Muertes de perro*, there is not a direct criticism against university education, but the story raises problems of the education and the university as a tool of politics in a society under dictatorship. The novel portrays problematic behaviors of characters who earn academic degrees, such as the narrator Pinedo, President Bocanegra, his illegitimate son Tadeo and Minister of Education, Doctor Luis Rosales. Among these characters, Tadeo stands for a student from the masses and Doctor Rosales represents a traditional élite minority. Tadeo has originally grown up in a rural village San Cosme where his father President Bocanegra and the Rosales are from. First, the novel portrays the university as a political institution under Bocanegra's regime. After Tadeo comes to the capital by his father's request, Bocanegra orders Doctor Rosales to help Tadeo to earn a law degree: 'I want you to see [to it that] you make him a little doctor of laws, without any delay, eh?" (21).

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(10) See Orringer's footnote 4 to the novel. He points out the reference to President Roosevelt that gives a hint as to the time of the text (2010, 72 f4).

Pinedo exposes precisely the President's political intention behind his statement:

> A little doctor of laws . . . without a moment wasted. (…) This sharp yokel was to be turned into a doctor overnight, for no other reason than that it was the president's wish. Still, Bocanegra had grounds for that. Hadn't our famous old National University of San Felipe, carrying the dual title of royal and pontifical, humbled itself shortly before then by granting him, a superannuated former student who had flunked out, its highest and most prized honorary doctor's degree solely because it had become obvious that he had risen to power? A little doctor of laws . . . without a moment wasted I, who had spent five years wheeling myself through those halls of learning, (…) in order to be entitled to call myself a lawyer, while this. . . A special case! And it goes without saying. (23)

Pinedo, who takes five years to earn a doctoral degree, is surprised to know how a young rural uneducated Tadeo seems easily and rapidly to obtain the same degree only because he is the President's son. Then, Pinedo criticizes the fraud of the national university that gave an honorary degree to Bocanegra, only because he is the President.

The novel brings in the problem of education of mass-students. In the novel, there is no indication that Tadeo is given a proper education in public schools or in the university. Tadeo keeps being "a new barbarian" who is a lawyer but an uncultured man as Ortega points out. To prove Tadeo is "a new barbarian," he later behaves like a savage in cruelly treating Luis Rosales's dog. Tadeo's ease of getting an academic degree implies Ayala's observation that the masses of ordinary students rush to colleges just as they rush to test centers only to get grades and do not acquire the intellectual knowledge, morality and dignity as cultured people (Ayala 1958, 21–22). This reference also mirrors Ayala's observation in the 1957

essay that the university is a political institution of the State. Furthermore, Doctor Rosales, with a doctor's degree from the University of Sorbonne, is nominated as the Minister of Education by Bocanegra as a compensation for the assassination of Rosales' brother. Pinedo describes him cynically:

> (…) the little fellow [Rosales] kept dreaming of his student days in Paris, a bygone Paris by then, and falsified in memory by imagination to boot. Mired as he was in our raw tropics, he always thought of himself as a *docteur es lettre*s from the Sorbonne, and that is serious. (37)

The naïve Minister from a prestigious family is trying to persist in a European social atmosphere that is more cultured and sophisticated, and more liberal than that of his own.

From their different backgrounds, it is natural that the mentor Doctor Rosales and his student Tadeo are unable to understand each other. The narrator points it out:

> Is it any wonder that the young Tadeo could not understand him? What he kept expecting, and what he would have understood perfectly, was an attitude suitable to one of the gentlemen of San Cosme, to a Rosales, who had taken a boy from that village under his wing owing to a certain set of circumstances, and had gone all out to teach him. And that village boy had adjusted himself to such expectations almost by instinct, almost from the beginning. Tadeo seems to be lost in conjecture, always trying to understand why his teacher is driving himself, working so hard, and taking such great pains with him. The ambiguous phrases of that demented man only confuse him farther; he never is sure whether the man is talking sincerely or making fun of him; he never sees clearly

where so much talking and doing are going to end. (36–37)

This controversial relationship between Doctor Rosales and Tadeo reaches its climax with the incident that leads Doctor Rosales to commit suicide. In order to please President Bocanegra at his birthday, Doctor Rosales shows Tadeo his dog, whom he has been teaching how to sing the national anthem (109). Because of his fascination at this curiously trained dog, Tadeo wants to personally enjoy the dog's singing, and despite Rosales's hesitation, insists that Rosales leave the dog with him for a while. However, the dog does not obey its new and temporary master who tries to force it to sing. An irritated Tadeo beats the dog to death and in anger, hangs it in a closet. Later, Doctor Rosales learns of the death of his favorite dog and after a couple of days, echoing the fate of his dog, the desperate minister hangs himself in his house in San Cosme. The barbarous nature of Tadeo is not corrected with the education or with his academic degree.

The episode of the death of the dog and its master alludes to the inability of universities to educate unprepared students from the masses and depicts the differences between a traditional cultured intellectual represented by Doctor Rosales and a student with a professional education represented by Tadeo. It is ironical that Doctor Rosales, who is the person in charge of the education in the country, does not transform Tadeo from a savage and uneducated youngster to a cultured professional lawyer.

In the novel, the education system and intellectual activity are not properly working under Bocanegra's dictatorship. The characters and the dramatic episodes in the plot represent points from Ayala's essay and confirm Ortega's observation that the educational system of the university that does not offer cultural education has to be changed. The fusion of socio-political and aesthetic elements in the novel blurs the border of real and unreal worlds.

Conclusion

Ayala's essay follows the observations and critical opinion on higher education in a mass society discussed by Ortega and Medina Echavarría. Their writings point out that the emergence of the social standing of the masses changes the traditional role of the university as an educational institution for the bourgeois class. Since the nineteenth century, a society modernizes rapidly from an agrarian society to a society that demands ordinary people be equipped with professional and technical skills, but the university is not able to reorganize its structure to adapt to this social and economic demand. On the other hand, masses of students enter the university unprepared academically. They lack cultural education due to their uncultured families and to the defective pedagogical system at public schools. Consequently, these intellectuals insist that the university has to reorganize its academic structure to teach both professional skills and academic knowledge drawn from research but also has to teach basic academic and cultural content. In addition, from Ayala's and other intellectuals' experiences in Spain under political turmoil and in Latin American countries in exile, they strongly support the idea that an academic institution should be independent from political authority.

Ortega opens the discussion of these points, analyzing the two important roles of the university; teaching culture and/or professional skills. Medina Echavarría develops Ortega's theoretical analysis and presents measures that the university has to take. Ayala, incorporating the theoretical claims of Ortega and Medina Echavarría, approaches the issues referring to the case of Argentina in order to show substantial and concrete examples. Then, Ayala takes one further step to move from theory into a fictional practice.

By bringing up these universal themes from his sociological observations in *Muertes de perro*, Ayala implies that his writings in different formats are deeply and mutually connected, humanizing his theoretical observations in his literary

creation. First, Ayala confirms that the university is easily subordinate to politics, especially in a country where the political power is enormously concentrated in the State. *Muertes de perro* demonstrates this point by the episode of granting an honorary doctor's degree to Dictator Bocanegra. Second, the education for professionals such as lawyers is not enough to teach masses of students moral and ethical values in human behaviour, and this is exemplified by Tadeo, who has not changed after he gets a doctor's degree in law.

In this way, Ayala presents the philosophical points of the 1957 essay on education developing it in the shape of character behavior in the novel. The goal to inter-relate the sociological essays and the novels is to present a kind of visible "real world", though fictional, so that ordinary readers can easily understand and examine the problems of education and more widely, those of the actual society. Hence, though *Muertes de perro* is imaginary fiction, it is not only rooted in Ayala's interests on the crisis of education but also various intellectuals' theories on higher learning at universities. In this sense, *Muertes de perro* can be called a sociological novel.

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