

Genre in the Works of Benjamín Jarnés: *el género intermedio*
by
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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Romance Languages and Literatures: Spanish)
in the University of Michigan
2012

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DEDICATION

To my husband and my parents, who know why.
To my son and daughter, who will.
And to my parents, always.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the many people who have supported me in this endeavor over the years. I extend my deepest thanks to Samuel Sánchez y Sánchez for his patience and unwavering support over the years, to Melba and Doug Watts for their unfailing encouragement, and to Javier and his sister who have each accompanied me in different ways in the home stretch.

I am also deeply grateful to the faculty members in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures for their support and guidance. I thank my dissertation director, Cristina Moreiras-Menor, for her patience and for allowing me to proceed at my own pace. Her understanding and support allowed me to see this project through to its final stages despite many twists and turns along the way. Juli Highfill has also played a key role throughout this project and has served as a cornerstone of my graduate education. She introduced me to the work of Benjamín Jarnés and to the Spanish avant-garde, sewing the seeds of an interest that would endure over many years and life changes. She has also shown great generosity in her careful readings and suggestions, and graciousness when bumps in the road arose. I also thank Enrique García Santo-Tomás for his astute comments and exceptional attention to detail, and to Catherine Brown for her willingness to support this project.

I would also like to express my thanks to the many colleagues at The University of North Carolina at Charlotte who have provided encouragement and support over the years. My chairs during this period, Martha Miller and Robert Reimer, have each provided moral support and understanding as I completed this project while working full time. I also thank the many colleagues who have continued to offer help and who have

shared their own experiences, as well as those who persisted in calling me “Dr. Watts” despite my continual reminders because “I keep forgetting, because that’s the way I see you.” I also thank Allison Stedman for sharing the three magic words that allowed me to keep writing, Carol Hartley for her kindness and wizardry, and my friends and colleagues Heather McCullough and Rebecca Ruhlen who have patiently and unwaveringly waited for me to join their ranks as Ph.D.

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Abstract

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This dissertation examines the concept of the *género intermedio* in the work of the Spanish author Benjamín Jarnés. Generally associated with the experimental prose of the 1920s and early 1930's, Jarnés in fact published a vast body of writings in a broad range of genres from 1917 through 1948. Yet even within this context of innovation, critics and scholars have consistently found it necessary to identify a particularly Jarnesian genre termed the *género intermedio*. Despite the persistence of this category, however, it has not been defined or analyzed in depth. Building on the few brief studies on the *género intermedio*, this dissertation further explores the concept by examining three texts that critics have placed in this category. Drawing on a view of genre not as a prescriptive set of textual rules but as a range of discursive functions that intersect and diverge within a given work, my approach examines the use of both traditional literary models of genre and non-literary strategies such as rhetorical modes, paratextual apparatuses, and models of interaction adopted by characters. In addition to providing a detailed examination of how the *género intermedio* functions, this dissertation expands the current understanding of Jarnés' work to include the range of genres and phases in his production, with a particular emphasis on three of his later texts: *Teoría del zumbel* (1931), *Libro de Esther* (1935), and *La novia del viento* (1940).

Chapter 1

Introduction: Genre and the *género intermedio* in Benjamín Jarnés

In the 1920s and early 1930s Benjamín Jarnés was one of Spain's most prominent prose writers, critics, and editors of literary publications such as *Revista de Occidente* and *La Gaceta Literaria*. In November of 1929, Pedro Salinas wrote to his fellow poet Jorge Guillen reporting on the author's tremendous literary success, announcing "Jarnés en la cúspide: un tomo por mes, colaboración en todos los diarios y revistas, conferencias por la radio, *interviews*, la gloria" (qtd. in Dennis 403). Shortly afterward the field of Spanish letters would be devastated by the country's Civil War and subsequent dictatorship. As the dust settled from the ravages of the war, Jarnés' return from exile in Mexico was met with near silence. The two works published in 1948, *Eufrosina o la gracia* and a second edition of his 1935 *Libro de Esther*, were scarcely noticed by the Spanish press whose few reviews used the occasion to discuss the author's physical and mental decline.¹ Jarnés would go unnoticed by critics, publishers, and literary historians until 1963 when Joaquín de Entrambasaguas selected the author's *Locura y Muerte de Nadie* as the best novel of 1929 in his anthology *Las mejores novelas contemporáneas*.²

¹ A detailed discussion of the reception of these texts appears in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, which focuses on *Libro de Esther*.

² Domingo Ródenas de Moya highlights the importance of the political context in which Jarnés attempted to re-enter the world of Spanish letters:

Si Benjamín Jarnés hubiera regresado de su exilio en 1975 y no hubiera muerto en 1949 sin saber que se moría ni que era escritor ni siquiera quién era con certeza, es muy probable que hubiera disfrutado del reconocimiento justo y compensatorio que se tributó a otros creadores republicanos,

Although this anthology marked the first of repeated critical and editorial attempts to reincorporate Jarnés into the history of Spanish letters, the once-prominent author remains, in the words of Rafael Conte, “un rehén de la academia” (*Novelas* 8).³ The fate of Benjamín Jarnés has become bound up with that of the avant-garde novel in Spain, both of which have been long overlooked.⁴ Central to both the initial disenfranchisement of and subsequent efforts to recover both this author and the literary current with which he was associated is the question of genre.

Discussions of Spanish literature of the 1920s have traditionally centered on two specific genres, poetry and theater, associated with a group of writers known as the *Generación del 27*.⁵ The past two decades, however, have witnessed a critical effort to

más jóvenes que él y en cierto modo discípulos suyos, por ejemplo Francisco Ayala o Rosa Chacel (*Impureza* IX-X).

³ Jarnés’ work as a whole has been the focus of only a handful of monographs which provide overviews of the author’s work and which focus largely on book-length fictional prose prior to the Spanish Civil War [J.S. Bernstein’s *Benjamín Jarnés* (1972), Emilia de Zuleta’s *Arte y vida en la obra de Benjamín Jarnés* (1977), María del Pilar’s *La novela intelectual de Benjamín Jarnés* (1979), José Carlos Mainer’s *Benjamín Jarnés* (2000) and David Conte’s *La voluntad de estilo: una introducción a la lectura de Benjamín Jarnés* (2002)]. However, beginning with Víctor Fuentes’ 1965 dissertation “La obra de Benjamín Jarnés, un estudio de su novelística y de su estética” Jarnés’ work has consistently been the focus of university theses and dissertations in Spain, the United States, and Canada. See, for example, Valerie Finch’s “The Narrative Art of Benjamín Jarnés” (1967), Marion Welch O’Neill’s “The Role of Myth in the Novels of Benjamín Jarnés” (1968), Judith Mary Wood’s “An analysis of the hero in the novels of Benjamin Jarnés” (1969), Karin Smith’s “El tema de la vida y el arte en las novelas de Benjamín Jarnés” (1972), Pascual Hernández del Moral’s “Benjamín Jarnés, aproximación a su novelística” (1973), María del Pilar Martínez Latre’s “La novela intelectual de Benjamín Jarnés” (1979), María Cristina Guillot’s “La Poética Novelística de Benjamín Jarnés” (1984), Julie Boland’s “Benjamín Jarnés y la metaficción vanguardista” (1993), Armando Pego Puigbó’s “La propuesta estética de Benjamín Jarnés: un proyecto narrativo” (1997), Robert P. Hershberger’s “The Visual Arts in the Novels of Benjamín Jarnés” (1999), and Dagmar Schmelzer’s “Intermediales Schreiben im spanischen Avantgarderoman der 20er Jahre : Azorin, Benjamin Jarnés und der Film” (2007). Other dissertations include discussions of individual works by Jarnés as part of a broader discussion of Spanish avant-garde narrative techniques (Ródenas de Moya 2007), the relationship between philosophy and literature in the interwar period (Senés Herrero 2006), the influence of film on the literature of the period (Montoya 2000), and characterization (Highfill 1993; Linares Farras 1997).

⁴ For a summary of the causes of this dual disenfranchisement, see Domingo Ródenas de Moya’s introduction to his anthology *Prosa del 27* and Nigel Dennis’s epilogue to *El aprendiz de brujo* titled “¿La hora de Jarnés?”

⁵ The *Generación del 27* takes its name from a gathering of Spanish writers to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the death of the Golden Age poet Luis de Góngora in December 1927. Organized by a group of poets including Gerardo Diego, Jorge Guillén, Dámaso Alonso, Pedro Salinas, Federico García Lorca and Rafael Alberti, this event established a group identity based on both artistic and social

reincorporate both vanguard fiction and Jarnés into the literary panorama of the period. In addition to a series of critical volumes focusing on vanguard prose, anthologies such as Ana Rodríguez Fisher's *Prosa española de vanguardia* (1999) and Domingo Ródenas de Moya's *Proceder a sabiendas (Antología de la Narrativa de Vanguardia Española 1923-1936)* [1997] and *Prosa del 27: antología* (2000) have recovered brief prose pieces of the era which had been scattered across literary journals and other ephemeral sources and made them accessible to a broader audience.⁶

In addition, efforts to reintroduce Jarnés to readers have been made consistently, beginning with Emilia de Zuleta's articles in *Ínsula* (1963) and *Papeles de Son Armandans* (1966) and followed by two monographs, J.S. Bernstein's *Benjamín Jarnés* (1972) and Zuleta's *Arte y vida en la obra de Benjamín Jarnés* (1977). The early 1970s saw the re-edition of several of Jarnés' texts, the biographies *Castelar, hombre del Sinaí* (1971), *Sor Patrocinio, la monja de las llagas* (1972), *Doble agonía de Bécquer* (1973), and *Zumalacárregui, el caudillo romántico* (1974) as well as his book of essays on film,

relationships. This identity was further cemented by Gerardo Diego's 1932 anthology of poetry by members of the group. The validity of both the term and the concept of the *Generación del 27* have been the subject of much debate. See, for example, Andrew Anderson's *El veintisiete en tela de juicio: examen de la historiografía generacional y replanteamiento de la vanguardia histórica española*, in connection to Pierre Bourdieu's observations regarding the connection between social and historical forces and the construction of literary history.

⁶ The past two decades have seen the emergence of critical efforts to broaden Spanish literary and cultural history of the 1920s and early 1930s beyond the group of poets and dramatists known as the *Generación del 27*. In addition to studies on vanguard prose's specific characteristics such as José del Pino's *Montajes y fragmentos: una aproximación a la narrativa española de vanguardia* (1997), Domingo Ródenas de Moya's *Los espejos del novelista: Modernismo y autorreferencia en la novela vanguardista* (1998) and the volume edited by Francis Lough, *Hacia la novela nueva: Essays on the Spanish Avant-Garde Novel* (2000), interest in the field has expanded to include a variety of cultural relationships and products. Publications have focused on the "new biography" (*Vidas oblicuas: Aspectos teóricos de la nueva biografía en España (1928-1936)* [2002]), the relationship between changing social and cultural norms and literary and artistic production (María Soledad Fernández Utrera's 2001 *Visiones de estereoscopio: paradigma de hibridación en el arte y la narrativa de la vanguardia española* and 2002's *Agítese bien: A New Look at the Hispanic Avant-Garde*, edited by María T. Pao and Rafael Hernández-Rodríguez) and the influence of film on avant-garde narrative (Gustavo Nanclares' 2010 *La cámara y el cálamo: Ansiedades cinematográficas en la narrativa hispánica de vanguardia*).

Cita de ensueños: figuras del cinema. At the end of the decade the Aragonese publishing house Editorial Guara would publish second editions of *El convidado de papel* (1979) and *Lo rojo y lo azul* as well as a first edition of Jarnés' previously unpublished novel *Su línea de fuego*.⁷

1988, the centennial anniversary of Jarnés' birth, saw a significant effort to reintroduce the author to readers and scholars. The Institución Fernando el Católico in Jarnés' birthplace of Zaragoza hosted a conference attended by a large number of scholars and whose proceedings, titled *Jornadas jarnesianas*, included articles by a range of prominent scholars. In addition, the Instituto published a twelve-volume series of works on the author ranging from fragments of his private journals to monographs on specific themes such as a book-length bibliography on Jarnés. In the same year the Instituto also published two additional volumes, César Pérez Gracia's *La venus jánica. Breve estudio sobre los personajes femeninos de Jarnés* and Jordi Gracia García's *La pasión fría: Lirismo e ironía en la novela de Benjamín Jarnés*.

The occasion was also marked by Ricardo Gullón's article "El escándalo Jarnés" in the widely-circulated newspaper *ABC*. Denouncing what he viewed as an inexcusable omission of Jarnés from Spanish letters, Gullón's article was the first in a series of such protests that continues to the current day.⁸ At the same time, the past twenty years have seen a flurry of re-editions of Jarnés' works ranging from fiction to collected letters to essays, produced by a range of scholars and publishing houses from the academically-

⁷ *Su línea de fuego* is the only of Jarnés' works to explicitly address the theme of the Spanish Civil War. See Francis Lough's "A Lesson in Tolerance: Benjamín Jarnés' *Su línea de fuego*" and María del Pilar Martínez Latre's "La contribución de Benjamín Jarnés a la novela de la guerra civil española. Análisis de *Su línea de fuego*."

⁸ Jarnés' marginalization regularly appears as the theme of articles and introductions to his works as recently as Nigel Dennis' epilogue to the 2007 edition of *El aprendiz de brujo* titled "¿La hora de Jarnés?"

oriented Ediciones Cátedra to the mass-market Planta DeAgostini.⁹ The increasing momentum in re-releasing a range of Jarnés' work from novels to biographies to essays provides evidence of his continued interest to both scholars and readers in general.¹⁰ In addition, scholarly articles on Jarnés' work began to appear regularly in major journals in the 1990s, and *Ínsula* published a special issue dedicated to the author in 2003. At the same time, Jarnés remains largely unfamiliar to the public.

As recently as 2007 Nigel Dennis has pondered, “¿Cómo explicar el que una figura como Jarnés, de auténtica proyección nacional e internacional, sea prácticamente desconocida hoy, víctima de una especie de amnesia colectiva?” (408). Dennis suggests that the primary cause of Jarnés' erasure from literary field is due to the fact that “Jarnés

⁹ Beginning with Ildefonso-Manuel Gil's 1993 edition of *Sor Patrocinio o la monja de las llagas* (Círculo de lectores), followed by Rafael Conte's 1994 edition of *Viviana y Merlin* (Cátedra), Jarnés' works have been consistently re-released by a range of regional and national, academic and mass-market publishing houses. Ildefonso-Manuel Gil edited a version of *Locura y muerte de nadie* (Viamonte) in 1996. In 1997 Domingo Ródenas de Moya produced a new edition of *Paula y Paulita* (Ediciones Península). His 1999 edition of *El profesor inútil*, published by Castalia, was followed in 2000 by Francisco Miguel Soguero's edition of the same work, published by the Institución Fernando el Católico. Several of Jarnés' previously-published collections of essays and criticism were compiled in Ródenas de Moya's 2001 *Obra Crítica* (Institución Fernando el Católico). In 2002 Ródenas de Moya and Juan Herrero Senés edited *Salón de estío y otras narraciones 2002*, published by the Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza. In 2003 the Residencia de Estudiantes published Jarnés' *Epistolario, 1919-1939* edited by Jordi Gracia and Domingo Ródenas de Moya. In 2004 Ródenas published an edition of Jarnés' *Sobre la gracia artística* (Renacimiento). Jarnés' little-known first novel, *Mosén Pedro*, was re-released in 2005 by Olatz Arechaga Gómez and Josep Carles Lainez (Centro de Estudios del Jiloca). In 2006 Ródenas de Moya published an edition of Jarnés' biography *Cervantes, bosquejo biográfico* (Renacimiento). The year 2007 saw three new editions: the first edition of the previously unpublished novel *El aprendiz de brujo*, edited by Francisco M. Soguero and published by the Residencia de Estudiantes, the first edition of *Cuentos de agua*, edited by Elvira Luengo Gascón and published by Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, and Ródenas de Moya's *Elogio de la impureza: invenciones e intervenciones* published by Fundación Santander Central Hispano. In 2009 Planeta DeAgostini re-released Jarnés' biographies *Zumalacárregui, el caudillo romántico* and *Castelar, hombre del Sinaí*. Francisco Ayala, who had written the introduction for the 1980 edition of *Lo rojo y lo azul*, wrote the prologue for the edition released by 2010 by Salto de página. In the same year Stockcero released Juan Herrero Senés' edition of *Escenas junto a la muerte* and Víctor Fuentes' edition of *Locura y muerte de nadie* and Quálea released a new edition of *Stefan Zweig, cumbre apagada*. In addition, Jarnés' translations of the anonymous Medieval French text *El cantar de Roldán* and of Erich Maria Remarque's *Sin novedad en el frente* have been published regularly over the years.

¹⁰ Despite the range of texts re-released, it is of note that Jarnés' three novels published in exile (*La novia del viento*, *Constelación de Friné*, and *La venus dinámica*) along with the two works most closely associated with the *género intermedio*, *Libro de Esther* and *Eufrosina o la gracia*, have not be reissued. Published between 1935 and 1948, these works received little contemporary attention or diffusion and remain largely unexplored by critics.

es *prosista* en una edad dorada de poetas” (408). Yet he also observes that such distinctions are not germane to the literary production of the period, which was characterized by the cross-pollination of prose and poetry characteristic of the era. Rather, Dennis notes, this generic distinction is erroneously applied by critics who retroactively constituted the literary landscape of the prewar period.¹¹ He observes,

... una cosa es la realidad o interpretación crítica de esa realidad en los manuales al uso en años posteriores. La verdad es que, con un criterio de selección sumamente discutible, los responsables de la política cultural de la posguerra se empeñan en reducir la riqueza de la literatura de la época a un <<grupo del 27>>: un puñado de poetas unidos por la amistad (como si no se sintieran igualmente unidos a sus amigos prosistas) y por una serie de ideales estéticos, no compartidos, al parecer, por los que cultivaban otros géneros, o compartidos fuera del recinto sagrado de la amistad (409).

Whereas Jarnés was certainly one of the most well-known and prolific writers of the period, the range of his work greatly exceeded neat classification. Known primarily as a novelist and critic for literary and cultural magazines such as *Revista de Occidente* and *La Gaceta Literaria*, his published works include more than 1,446 texts covering a broad range of genres: novel, short story, biography, essay, theater, literary criticism, and poetry.¹² Despite this apparent catalogue of distinct genres, however, Jarnés’ writing reflected the vanguard tendency to merge and blend traditional barriers among text types. In his *Idle Fictions*, which remains the most comprehensive study of genre in Hispanic avant-garde prose, Gustavo Pérez Firmat highlights vanguard fiction’s uncertain generic standing:

from the beginning vanguard fiction was seen as something of a *rara avis*, a pigeon without a pigeonhole. It contained novelistic or fictional matter but did

¹¹ Pierre Bourdieu’s analyses of the influence of social and commercial factors on the construction of the literary field, developed in *The Rules of Art*, are particularly relevant.

¹² See Juan Domínguez Lasierra’s exhaustive *Ensayo de una bibliografía jarnesiana* for a comprehensive list of these works.

not fit the definition of the novel or story; it contained lyrical and essayistic matter but was neither poetry nor essay (*Fictions* 11).

Pérez Firmat's words echo common descriptions of Jarnés' writing. Yet even within this context of generic experimentation, several of Jarnés' works stand apart. In addition to the exceptionally broad range of writings Jarnés produced, his repertoire includes what critics have identified as a genre unique to this author: the *género intermedio*. In the first critical attempt to analyze this concept in depth, Emilia de Zuleta observes that

varias de las novelas [de Jarnés] y, en buena parte, sus biografías se caracterizan por la índole indeterminada y ambigua de su patrón genérico. Lo narrativo, lo lírico, lo ensayístico se integran, en diferentes proporciones, con predominio de unos y de otros ingredientes, funcionando según la intención del autor (*Obra* 246).

Similarly, questions of genre—or more concretely, the questioning of the limits and functions of genre—inhere in the Spanish avant-garde project, blurring the lines among criticism and creation, prose and poetry. Yet the persistence of the notion of the *género intermedio* in criticism of Jarnés' work suggests that the author's approach to genre stood apart from that of his contemporaries.

The concept of genre was a central concern for the Spanish avant-garde. In the context of José Ortega y Gasset's observations that the novel was in a state of decadence, many authors of the 1920s and early 1930s attempted to renew the genre through experimentation and expansion of its traditional thematic and stylistic boundaries.¹³ However, as Gustavo Pérez Firmat notes in *Idle Fictions*, only Jarnés developed a substantial body of writings in this genre. Jarnés' literary reputation was established in connection with what was viewed as the pinnacle of the avant-garde novel, his 1926 *El*

¹³ Ortega y Gasset develops his perspective on the decline and renewal of the novel in *Ideas sobre la novela*.

profesor inútil, and to his subsequent association with Ortega y Gasset through his role as *Revista de Occidente*'s most prolific editor and contributor.

Although he gained prominence as the representative of the vanguard novel, this association led critics to dismiss his work in the 1930s and beyond as literary fashion shifted. Due to the changing political and intellectual climate and the nature of the publication and preservation of literary texts of the period, the contemporary prominence of Jarnés and his *oeuvre* would disappear from literary history. Despite his reputation for apoliticism, Jarnés fought with the Republican forces and went into exile in Mexico from 1939 until his return, gravely ill and barely conscious, in 1946.

Jarnés had first gained critical attention through his association with the *Revista de Occidente* at a moment when Ortega's concept of the "dehumanized novel" was in vogue, and the association remained long after Jarnés' work had evolved in a different direction. Yet as the experimental style he cultivated fell out of favor with the shift towards a more politically-oriented and more direct approach, the content of his writing was overlooked and Jarnés was dismissed as a mere stylist. As Emilia de Zuleta notes, Jarnés lamented in a private journal what he perceived as a loss of artistic freedom:

También al arte le llegó el sentir totalitario: fue condenado a expresar las opiniones de un partido político... Cuadros, música, poemas, comenzaron a convertirse en discursos de mitin, mientras los artistas —medrosos— parecían pedir perdón por atreverse a prescindir alguna vez de las consignas (*Obra* 41).

Although the bulk of his work was published from 1929 through 1935, in this cultural environment his ostensibly apolitical texts received increasingly negative reviews or critical silence. However, Jarnés' reputation was then, and to date largely remains, based on a narrow view of his earliest work and therefore does not do justice to his evolution as a writer and thinker or to the range of genres he practiced. By focusing on

three little-studied texts published from 1931 through 1940, the present study aims to broaden critical understanding of Jarnés work as whole. Ródenas de Moya notes that Jarnés' fall into obscurity

fue posible sólo porque prevaleció el prejuicio que lo convertía en adalid del arte deshumanizado sobre el conocimiento directo de la obra del autor de *Paula y Paulita*, de *Locura y muerte de Nadie*, de *Teoría del zumbel*, de *Escenas junto a la muerte* y de *Lo rojo y lo azul*, las novelas que publicó entre 1929 y 1932 (2007 XXVIII).

A reader familiar with the full range of Jarnés' writings will note that his reputation as a "dehumanized" writer is based principally on his second novel, *El profesor inútil*, published by Ortega y Gasset. Preceded by the 1924 *Mosén Pedro*, a novelized biography of one of Jarnés' brothers, and followed by the autobiographical *El convidado de papel*, which explored the author's experience in the seminary, *El profesor inútil's* solipsistic narrative in reality stands outside of Jarnés' larger trajectory and thus provides a reductive view of the author's artistic range.

Yet both the 1926 publication of *El profesor inútil* and its alignment with many of the trends Ortega had noted in contemporary narrative provide a deceptively simple rubric for classifying an author whose highly experimental style continually slipped between genres. As late as 1975, even critics who championed Jarnés' work replicated the discourse of his detractors. Including the author in the *Dictionary of the Literature of the Iberian Peninsula* Roberta Johnson writes,

Jarnés' aesthetics, as developed in his novels and essays, coincide with those expressed by Ortega in *La deshumanización de la novela e ideas sobre la novela*—namely, that art should be divorced from life. Art need not and should not be a vehicle for faithfully reproducing 'real life' or for engaging in political or social criticism. Style thus takes precedence over thematics, and cultivation of the non-transcendental aspects of art leads to a concern with itself as a self-contained form (875)

This reductive association of Jarnés' *oeuvre* with the "dehumanized novel" reflects both the artistic and ideological split in the Spanish literary field of the 1930s as well as unfamiliarity with Jarnés' own opinions. As noted by Amancio Sabugo Abril, in the preceding decade a core of literary producers had worked together in the two flagship journals of the period, *Revista de Occidente* and *La Gaceta Literaria*. The growing tensions surrounding the political upheaval of 1930-1931, however, drew a group of writers to political engagement and rejection of what they perceived as "deshumanizada y evasista, [que] huye de la realidad para entregarse a un estetizante y gratuito jugueteo artístico" (Fuentes "Narrativa" 155).¹⁴

Domingo Ródenas de Moya attributes this prejudice to the rise of "los novelistas llamados sociales surgidos en la década de 1930 y para los que Jarnés representaba un ejemplo de escritor burgués en cuya supuesta abstención política detectaban una implícita connivencia con la clase opresora" (2007 XXVIII). Yet Jarnés differed from the bulk of his contemporary writers precisely in his status as an outsider to the world of bourgeois privilege. A former military officer from a poor, rural background, Jarnés would equally be criticized for his need to write for money in order to make ends meet, thus sullyng his art in the eyes of defenders of privileged 'artistic purity.' At the same time, politically-motivated judgments characterizing the author and by extension his work overlooked or misconstrued Jarnés' markedly pacifist stance. As Eugenio de Nora observes, Jarnés' decision not to engage in the genre of socially-committed literature was due neither to

¹⁴ In January 1930 the growing resistance to General Primo de Rivera's dictatorship prompted him to step down. In 1931 the Second Republic was established and King Alonso XIII went into exile. These events led to an increasingly divided Spanish society whose tensions would escalate into a military uprising and subsequent armed conflict from 1936-1939.

evasion nor indifference but rather to a life-long political perspective suited to a different mode of presentation. De Nora notes:

La reiteración jarnesiana en la posguerra, su negativa a combatir escribiendo; incluso acaso, la más ambigua posición adoptada en su última novela,¹⁵ constituyen un hondo, visceral rechazo de la barbarie que la guerra significó. Jarnés sigue anclado en un humanismo integrador, manifiesto en la culminación de la que algunos hemos considerado su obra cumbre: *Viviana y Merlín*, en su versión final, de 1935 (“Novelista” 4).

Yet in the increasingly polarized cultural field of the late 1920s and early 1930s, Jarnés’ reputation as an avant-garde writer, established by the success of his first two novels, obscured the evolution in his writing.¹⁶ As the *novela nueva* fell out of favor, its flagship author was dismissed as well. As Gustavo Pérez Firmat has shown, criticism of this period gave significant emphasis to stylistics, which was frequently equated with content. Max Aub’s 1945 appraisal of Jarnés, included in Aub’s attempt to create a literary history of the period, sums up the conflation of style and content with literary value which characterized politically-motivated negative valorizations of Jarnés’ work:

Dueño de una excelente retórica, el nuevo arte de novelar le prohibió los caminos naturales; caso más de lamentar, teniendo en cuenta que la vida de Jarnés (seminarista, sargento íntimamente ligado a la frustrada sublevación de las Juntas de Defensa), seguramente le hubiese dado buenos materiales y motivos de sobra... Benjamín Jarnés se pierde en los vericuetos distinguidos del arte nuevo, sin alcanzar a más que bien decir cosas que ya no interesan a nadie (98).

¹⁵ De Nora is referring to *Su línea de fuego*, Jarnés’ only published work addressing the Spanish Civil War.

¹⁶ Jarnés’ disappearance from the literary history of the period is due to a combination of contemporary and a posteriori factors including ideological shifts in perceptions of literary value linked to the social and political turbulence manifested in the end of José Antonio Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship (1930), the establishment of the Second Republic (1931), the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War (1936) and the subsequent dictatorship of Francisco Franco (1939-1975). Efforts to recover the Zaragozaan Jarnés accelerated in the post-dictatorship period and were in part linked to the rise of regional identity and increasing activity of associated cultural organisms such as the Institución Fernando el Católico (Zaragoza) and Editorial Guara, a publishing house focused on Aragonese authors and topics.

Such a view of Jarnés' writing rests in part on ignorance of Jarnés' texts. Autobiographical material runs through many of Jarnés' novels, both through his fictional counterpart Julio Aznar and through the military and seminary settings of *El convidado de papel* (1928, 1935) and *Lo rojo y lo azul* (1932).¹⁷ Aub's evaluation reflects the tenor of criticism as the *nueva novela* falls from favor, and, as Gustavo Pérez Firmat has shown in *Idle Fictions* is more a reflection of this change in attitudes than of the novels themselves. At the same time, however, Aub's criticism resides on the erroneous conflation of style and form with content. As Marion Welch O'Neill notes, "Artistic refinement has been confused with lack of regard for the subject matter, as though perfection of external form must preclude the expression in that form of a human-oriented cosmic vision" ("Myth" 15).

It is precisely at this point of confusion where genre, although unnamed, operates in the framing of Jarnés' *oeuvre* and determines the reading and reception of the texts bearing his name. Gerard Genette's distinction between 'genre' and 'mode' provides a useful model for stepping outside of this critical blind spot that has long obscured readings of Jarnés' texts. In Genette's model, 'genre' refers to "usually some combination of thematics and stylistics... or what has commonly come to be labeled literary movement. The essential characteristic of genre or movement in this sense, then, is its identification with a historically defined body of works. 'Mode,' on the other hand,

¹⁷ Jarnés was deeply familiar with the two institutions, the Catholic Church and the Spanish military, that would drive the opposition to the Republican government. Born into a large, rural, and impoverished family Jarnés received an education through a scholarship to study at a seminary in the deeply religious and militaristic provincial capital of Zaragoza. This experience provided him with an extensive knowledge of a broad range of texts and philosophical traditions that would later inform his own richly intertextual writings. In later years Jarnés abandoned the seminary to join the military. He remained a military officer until his writing career was established. In 1926 he had begun to earn enough money to leave the armed forces and make a living as a writer. After the outbreak of the Civil War, Jarnés returned to active duty as a member of the Republican army and was forced into exile upon the war's end in 1939.

is a linguistically grounded... concept” similar to the notion of diction, which may apply to a text as a whole: that is, a realist text will be composed of various styles of phrasing and presentation which as a whole take on the ‘flavor’ of referentiality and truth-value for the reader (Spire 4). Theme does not necessarily prescribe or preclude a given mode: one can write a poem in either refined or colloquial prose, and it may still be a love poem. Genre and mode do not always match, and it is precisely at this juncture that Jarnés *género intermedio* emerges. In making explicit claims to a generic identity which is simultaneously brought into question by a continual switching of narrative modes, works such as *La novia del viento*, *Teoría del zumbel*, and *Libro de Esther* provide a rich site for exploring Jarnés’ particular use of genre.

During his exile Jarnés had published extensively in Mexico, receiving little critical attention outside that country. In 1948, shortly before his death, an attempt was made to reintroduce the once-prominent author to Spanish readers.¹⁸ In this year Josep Janés published Jarnés’ last two prewar works, a second edition of 1935’s *Libro de Esther* and a first edition of 1936’s *Eufrosina o la gracia*.¹⁹ Although these books went largely unnoticed by contemporary literary critics, they would go on to form the core of Jarnés’ *género intermedio*.

¹⁸ The Civil War displaced the network of social and artistic relationships that had provided Jarnés with publishing outlets, favorable reviews from friends and admirers, and a series of editorial positions that had placed him in a central role as consecrator of other writers in the cultural field of the prewar period. The essential role of relationships among individuals and institutions is skillfully reflected in Ernesto Giménez Caballero’s 1927 graphic (*cartel*) titled “Universo de la literatura española contemporánea” (Rodríguez Amaya 423). In Bourdieu’s terms, this document maps the vanguard literary field of the late 1920s and captures its complex and interdependent network of relationships among individuals rather than texts. Writers and artists circle around centers of gravity such as Menéndez Pidal, the Real Academia de la Lengua Española and a sort of “planet Ortega y Gasset” ringed by the *Revista de Occidente*, which keeps its varied satellites at a certain distance. There is no sun in this picture; in fact Ortega’s “El sol” is entirely absent despite its important role in promoting the work done in the cultural universe of Spanish letters in the 1920s. Jarnés himself appears, however, circling around the *Revista de Occidente* along with Antonio Espina, José Díaz Fernández, Pedro Salinas and even Fernando Vela, the *Revista*’s second in charge, whose star cannot cross the ring thus keeping Ortega at a safe distance.

¹⁹ *Eufrosina o la gracia* was lost in the chaos of the war, and recovered upon Jarnés’ return to Madrid.

In its most traditional sense, that is, as a means of classification, genre played a determining role in the preservation of Jarnés' contemporaries through publications that favored authors associated with the privileged genre of poetry. Key initiatives such as Gerardo Diego's seminal anthology of Spanish poetry, published in 1932, formalized both the concept and the membership of the Poets of the Generation of '27. As Domingo Ródenas de Moya has noted, no comparable compendium of prose was published, however, leaving writers such as Jarnés who did not publish poetry or who fell outside of certain social and literary circles dispersed and poised to disappear (*Prosa* 5). The relationship among anthologies and literary history becomes crucial for a period characterized by two disparate but equally relevant factors: the dominance of ephemeral media such as periodicals and little magazines as opposed to books and the disruption of traditional institutions such as universities, literary circles and publishing venues brought about by political turbulence, war, dictatorship and diaspora. The literary field of the prewar period, then, was doubly vulnerable to distortion and erasure of certain genres.

In addition, Jarnés' innovative style would come to work against him as critical favor, influenced by politics, turned away from generic experimentation in the 1930s and throughout the postwar period in which literary history was rewritten in support of the new regimen's ideological goals. As John Crispin observes,

la nueva política franquista desprestigió el arte inspirado por las vanguardias, aunque parcialmente, como 'muestra judía y racionalista de obra confusa arbitraria y seca... ismos extravagantes y lo geométrico sin alma como muestra de un mundo despersonalizado' (217).

Once a key figure in the Spanish literary landscape, Jarnés fell victim to a dual exile: from his homeland and from literary history. Perceptions of genre, in which thematics, stylistics, and ideology were conflated by both sides of the political divide, played a

significant part in this banishment.

Genre is a key concept in Benjamín Jarnés, a recurring theme inside his works of fiction, in his literary criticism and in critical discussions of his work by both his contemporaries and by more recent readers. As Gustavo Pérez Firmat has demonstrated in his study of the construction of the vanguard novel, this type of writing was characterized by a blending of genres. Armando Pego Puigbó, in his introduction to Jarnés' *Teoría del zumbel*, links a subset of Jarnés' works to this literary trend. In addition to the blending of biography and the novelistic in the prose of the period, Pego Puigbó sets apart five other texts as examples of a different use of genre fostered by the tendency towards hybridization. He identifies *Rúbricas*, *Fauna Contemporánea*, *Feria del libro*, *Libro de Esther*, and *Cita de ensueños* as examples of a singular generic approach “cuya clasificación ha dado lugar a marbetes tan lábiles como <<género intermedio>>” (18). Pego Puigbó explains,

La difuminación de las fronteras entre los géneros, característica de la práctica vanguardista, le permitió a Jarnés ensayar vías que se encontraban a medio camino entre el diario, el ensayo propiamente dicho, el cuadro de costumbres y los manuales didácticos (18).

The expanding nature of prose fiction evoked two main critical responses. The first viewed this literary current as the inauguration of a new genre which it struggled to define and name. A variety of new terms came into circulation, including “narración,” “prosa,” “novela poemática,” “novela lírica,” and “nueva novela,” among others. In seeking to create a new name, that is, a new category of texts, this debate over terminology rests on the traditional view of genre as a means of taxonomy and overlaps with the historical orientation of literary movement as genre. The difficulty, however, of

describing and classifying these new texts gave rise to a debate that continues to the present day. In recent analyses of Spanish avant-garde prose, critics such as José Manuel del Pino, Domingo Ródenas de Moya, and John Crispin have found it necessary to struggle over both textual nomenclature (“narraciones” versus “prosas,” for example) as well as genre in Genette’s model of literary movement (“novela de vanguardia” versus “nueva novela”).²⁰ Such discussions preface these critics’ analyses, as though it were necessary to establish a new set of working terms and concepts before interpreting the texts themselves.²¹

The challenges posed by a lack of common terminology gave rise to a second response, that of declaring the disappearance of genre. As Guillermo de Torre notes in his 1927 review of Antonio Espina’s writing, “Todos estamos acordes en esto: los ‘géneros literarios’ apenas existen ya” (qtd. in Ródenas, *Prosa*, 90). Underlying both of these responses to the innovative nature of vanguard writing, however, is a specific view of genre as a system of textual taxonomy in which specific traits identify a text with a particular category. A concern for classification characterizes the history of genre from its origins in the classical triad of lyric, epic, and drama and produces an “either or” framework in which each text must be aligned with a specific dominant.

As we shall see, generic experimentation has both characterized this fiction and complicated its interpretation from its initial publication through the present day. Genre, then, is relevant to the experimental prose of the 1920s and early 1930s and in particular

²⁰ See del Pino’s *Montajes y fragmentos*, Ródenas de Moya’s “Algunas notas sobre el corpus narrativo del arte nuevo,” and Crispin’s *La estética del las generaciones de 1925* for each critic’s views on this terminology.

²¹ A similar dilemma occurs in contemporary genre theory. As John Frow notes, “One of the inherent problems with working with genre theory is of course the lack of an agreed and coherent terminology” (65).

to the work of that current's most prominent and prolific writer, Benjamín Jarnés. The debate over terminology, however, falls short of illuminating the central concerns that emerge from Jarnés' own thematizing of genre in his fiction and criticism: why genre matters, how it operates, and what it produces. As we shall see in our analyses of three of Jarnés' works included in the *género intermedio* by critics who simultaneously find themselves unable to define the category while finding it a necessary and particularly Jarnesian concept.

Although focusing on avant-garde prose in general rather than on Jarnés' particular use of genre, this dilemma undergirds contemporary literary criticism sympathetic to the vanguard's generic experimentation, as seen in the most detailed studies of genre and its relation to reception and interpretation of such prose, Gustavo Pérez Firmat's *Idle Fictions: The Hispanic Vanguard Novel, 1926-1934* and article "The Novel as Genres." Pérez Firmat carefully demonstrates the relevance of genre to avant-garde narrative by linking the demise of the Hispanic vanguard novel to genre-oriented critical discourse rather than an exhaustion of its artistic possibilities. This important work seeks to overcome what he describes as

the circularity typical of most generic studies, which might be summarized thus: in order to describe a class, one must first delimit a corpus of works, but the delimitation of a corpus requires a prior definition of the class, which in turn presupposes the existence of a corpus, and so on (*Fictions ix*).

Faced with the necessity of making genre-bound choices, Pérez Firmat must limit his corpus by deciding not only what texts can fit into the category of avant-garde but also what constitutes a novel. In the course of doing so, he highlights the relevance of issues of genre both as an intertextual "text of texts" surrounding narratives and as an

intratextual feature of avant-garde fiction (“Novel” 269).²² “Vanguard” in his formulation refers to a historical category as recognized by critical discourse: the genre emerges in 1926 with the publication of three particular novels in the *Revista de Occidente*’s ‘Nova novorum’ series and ends in 1934 when “the vanguard novel has ceased to exist as a token of critical exchange; it has been effectively suppressed” by negative reviews of the first and second editions of Jarnés’ *El profesor inútil*.

Pérez Firmat chooses to delimit his field by researching the terms used by literary critics, and links the demise of the avant-garde novel not to its replacement by a new literary current but rather to a crisis of literary terminology which continues to problematize the discussion of this body of texts: there is no language to describe this stretching of generic boundaries. Critics launch accusations of textual deformity as a product of generic miscegenation (“That the writers who called themselves ‘avant-garde’ did not know how to make true novels but rather poems barely structured by feeble plots? In general the reproach is accurate”) as well as direct attacks towards their progenitors (“Benjamín Jarnés, Antonio Espina?... Well, but this group of pearly snails, drooling metaphors, remains outside the true novel”) (*Fictions* 7).²³

Pérez Firmat provides a genre-based explanation for this critical change of heart, suggesting that a concern for generic purity arises from “the advent of an experimental form of fiction at odds with the normative definitions of the genre” as represented by the still-prevailing realist novel, perhaps evidenced by the consistent description of the

²² I use these terms as defined by Ian Reid: he writes regarding intertextual framing that “prior texts are to be regarded not just as sources of allusions but rather as materials for generic transpositions” (32) and that intratextual framing is the product of the interaction of features within a given text (28).

²³ As Alistair Fowler observes, a preference for either generic purity or innovation occurs at particular historical moments in the transformation of genres over time. He notes, for example, that “classical and neoclassical theorists have preferred pure unmixed genres, whereas in periods ‘inimical to tradition’ their fusion has been ‘exalted’” (243).

vanguard novel as the negative image of this literary tradition (*Fictions* 7). At the same time, however, Pérez Firmat denies the existence of a convincing theory of genre. Attempts to trace the existence of the novel as an ahistorical text type result in what he describes as “the chameleon theory of the novel: the novel is protean, elastic, amorphous. It is the lawless genre, receptive to every possibility of expression” (*Fictions* 11).

Faced with this critical dilemma, Pérez Firmat retains the model of genre as classification by historicizing the concept. In his 1979 article “The Novel as Genres” Pérez Firmat calls for a return to literary history as an organizing principle, proposing that contemporary critical discourse provides a shortcut through debates about textual classification. His goal is to find a methodology for working within genre while not attempting to define it. He defends the approach of ‘historical genealogy,’ which does not engage in analyses of the concept of genre either within or among texts, as the only possible strategy for writing about the vanguard novel. Arguing against ‘theoretical’ (as opposed to ‘historical’) genre, Pérez Firmat rejects a Bakhtinian view of the novel as heterogeneous by nature:

The chameleon theory, though a popular and handy crutch, fails because it does not enable one to distinguish between the chameleon and the leaf, between the novel and the non-novel. The boundaries of the genre become tenuous to the point of imperceptibility (“Genres” 273-274).

Pérez Firmat’s words echo the sentiments of those who, like Guillermo de Torre and later Maurice Blanchot, abandon genre as a useful literary construct. Underlying this response, however, is a reductively taxonomic approach to literature, which seems at odds with his own characterization of the avant-garde novel. In the context of the vanguard’s tendency toward generic experimentation, which reaches its maximum

expression in Jarnés' *género intermedio*, it is counterproductive to merely dismiss the very constructs that form the basis of a text's originality. The apparent futility of genre perceived by many critics rests on a classificatory approach to genre which was questioned by Ortega y Gasset in the brief essay "Géneros literarios," first published in 1914 as part of *Meditaciones del Quijote*.²⁴

Here Ortega emphasizes the importance of genre and its relationship to literary history, positing that "cada época prefiere un determinado género" (125). Yet he opens his discussion with the clarification of his own view of genre, which differs from that traditional models which "entendía por géneros literarios ciertas reglas de creación a que el poeta había de ajustarse, vacíos esquemas, estructuras formales dentro de quienes la musa, como una abeja dócil, deponía su miel" (124). In separating genre from a series of rules or specific structures, Ortega proposes a shift away from precisely that classificatory and regulatory model which underlies the two critical dead ends of vanguard criticism: an endless debate over terminology which hinders critical dialogue, or an abandonment of genre as a relevant concept. In the place of rigid rules, traits, or categories Ortega proposes distinguishing between "fondo y forma: no son una misma cosa... la forma es el órgano y el fondo la función que lo va creando" (124). By separating form and content as two distinct yet interdependent textual components, Ortega opens a space for examining the variety of relationships that may emerge between them.²⁵ In this sense, he explains that "los géneros literarios son las funciones poéticas" (124). As we shall see, this view of genre as dynamic function rather than static textual

²⁴ Ortega's observations, echoed by Jarnés in both his fiction and critical writings, prefigure recent approaches to genre.

²⁵ As we shall see later on, this view bears some resemblance to Genette's more detailed distinction between genre and mode.

feature will allow for a new understanding of the relationship between genre and signification.

Within this context of generic experimentation and the critical conundrum it produced, Jarnés himself proposed an alternative approach which shared Ortega's view of genre as poetic function rather than as a structure for classification or recipe for textual production: the *género intermedio*. Jarnés himself coined the term in his 1933 review of Pío Baroja's *Las noches del Buen Retiro*, noting "Se trata de un género intermedio --como hoy lo son ya todos los géneros literarios" (349). Although Jarnés himself did not continue to use this term and did not apply it to his own works, critics since 1963 have consistently invoked the *género intermedio* in discussions of the author's work. As Armando Pego Puigbó points out, this label has been applied exclusively to Jarnés by others ("Género" 411). The term appears in all of the monographs devoted to Jarnés and seems to be of obligatory reference in the introductions to new editions of his texts. Yet even though the concept is used consistently over the years, it is occasionally described but never defined. Additionally, although the *género intermedio* is frequently used as an exclusively Jarnesian category, critics do not agree on which of the authors' works belong to this category.

Generic experimentation characterizes Jarnés' writings a whole, yet critics have consistently felt a need to differentiate between this characteristically vanguard approach and a particular use of genre in certain of Jarnés' texts. Discussing the combination of generic traits that characterize the *género intermedio*, Emilia de Zuleta explains,

...aún dentro de esta libertad compositiva, existen en la producción de Jarnés una serie de obras que se escapan a toda clasificación-- por muy aproximada que

fuere-- dentro de los géneros conocidos, las cuales, sin embargo, pueden ser agrupadas dentro de lo que él mismo llamó el género intermedio. (*Obra* 246).

Zuleta does not provide an analysis of what the *género intermedio* is, however, leaving it as category simply defined by a not-statement and echoing Pérez Firmat's description of contemporary criticism of the avant-garde novel. Her description, however, is useful in that it differentiates between the generic hybridity inherent to the vanguard novel and a separate genre known as the *género intermedio*.

The concept of *género intermedio* was recovered by Zuleta in the first of her important efforts to reincorporate Jarnés' work into the literary field. In a brief yet ambitious article titled "La novela de Benjamín Jarnés" she presents the author as the most important novelist of the "Generación del 25," framing his work in terms of genre. Published in *Ínsula* in 1963 this article reintroduces Jarnés to a new generation of Spanish readers. The first half casts Jarnés as a novelist and provides an overview of his major works, including the biography *San Alejo*, focusing his range of innovative narrative techniques. The second half of the article, titled "El género intermedio," presents this concept as an essential characteristic of Jarnés' work. Zuleta explains

...no trazáramos un cuadro completo de la obra de creación de Jarnés, si soslayáramos el hecho de que varias novelas y biografías que hemos mencionado y, aún más específicamente, algunos libros de los que hablaremos en seguida, pertenecen a lo que él llamó *el género intermedio* ("Novela" 7).

Zuleta goes on to analyze *Teoría del zumbel* and *Libro de Esther* as examples of this phenomenon. Yet at the same time she refers to *Zumbel* as a novel, thus echoing the apparent contradiction in the quote above which implies that a work in the *género intermedio* can simultaneously belong to a recognizable generic category such as the novel or what Gérard Genette has called architext. However, as the detailed analysis of

La novia del viento, *Teoría del zumbel*, and *Libro de Esther* in the following chapters will show, the unique nature of Jarnés' view and use of genre makes such textual polyvalence possible.

Although Zuleta does not address this distinction, she implicitly recognizes the underlying model of genre that makes the *género intermedio* possible. This model resembles Jean-Marie Schaeffer's distinction between "genre" and "genericity" which posits "el género en tanto que categoría de clasificación retrospectiva y la genericidad en tanto que función textual" (174). For Schaeffer, genre differs from genericity in that

a diferencia de la genericidad, no se trata de una categoría de la productividad textual: el género pertenece al campo de las categorías de la lectura, estructura un cierto tipo de lectura, mientras que la genericidad es un factor productivo de la constitución de la textualidad (174).

Although Schaeffer does not develop the necessarily mutually-informing relationship between conventions of reading and textual operations, by separating these two strands of production of meaning he provides an alternative to the prescriptive or descriptive approaches which have failed to provide fruitful insights and which have prevented critics from being able to shed light on the category they so frequently employ but cannot define: *género intermedio*. As a function of reading, Schaeffer's "genre" allows for a variety of architextual identifications; that is, a text can be both a novel and an example of the *género intermedio*. At the same time, the concept of genericity allows for an exploration of the ways in which individual discursive acts, operating as a constellation of codified textual enunciations, produce simultaneous channels of meaning running throughout the text as a whole.²⁶ Within this view of genre, then, Zuleta's affirmation

²⁶ This model of genre (or what Schaeffer terms "genericity") as "the historically attested codification of discursive properties" embodied in concrete utterances or enunciations is drawn from Todorov's "The Origin of Genres" (164).

that “la feliz designación de *género intermedio*... podría abarcar muy bien la mayoría de los libros de Jarnés” reads not as a contradiction but as an indication of innovation and originality particular to the author (“Novela” 7). This approach allows us to examine the questions raised by David Conte who, citing the consistent use of the term *género intermedio* despite a lack of critical consensus regarding its definition or the works it incorporates, asks “¿Para qué sirve designar una serie de libros como perteneciente al <<género intermedio >>, y en qué medida nos ayuda a esclarecer la obra?” (“Gracias” 14).

Indeed, despite the persistence of the term in discussions of Jarnés’ work since 1963, the dearth of investigations into the nature of the concept or the effects it produces have led one of Jarnés’ main scholars to challenge the validity of this notion. Rafael Conte, who has played a key role in recovering Jarnés’ work in the past twenty years, has preferred to avoid the term *género intermedio* claiming its ambiguity fails to serve a meaningful function, creating confusion rather than serving as a useful critical category. Writing in 1994, Conte had seen critics apply the term to a wide range of texts while failing to define the concept or to explain the criteria they employed in making their identifications. Noting that generic experimentation was a characteristic of vanguard prose as a whole, Conte proposed that the *género intermedio* did not contribute to an understanding of Jarnés’ work.

In addition to Emilia de Zuleta’s 1977 book chapter on the *género intermedio*, in recent years Armando Pego Puigbó (2000) and David Conte (2003) have published two detailed analyses of the *género intermedio*, revindicating this particularly Jarnesian use of genre. Armando Pego Puigbó’s article “El género intermedio de Benjamín Jarnés” traces

the concept and briefly discusses its presence in the only two texts that critics consistently include in the genre, *Libro de Esther* and *Eufrosina o la gracia*.²⁷ Focusing on the question of whether the *género intermedio* constitutes a new genre, Pego Puigbó concludes “Jarnés no crea otro género sino que sostiene su discurso sobre unas propiedades discursivas, formales y temáticas que garantizan, junto a un riguroso manejo del estilo, la adscripción literaria de estas obras” (“Género” 426). Whereas this critic’s approach ultimately falls back on a taxonomic view of genre, he moves towards a more comprehensive view of textual function by linking the *género intermedio* to Jarnés’ leitmotif of the relationship between art and life. In linking genre to the production of meaning, this article takes a significant step in moving the discussion of the *género intermedio* beyond the critical impasse it had reached years earlier.

David Conte states that his intention is to continue the avenue of inquiry opened up by Pego Puigbó’s article. Inverting the traditional view of the *género intermedio* in which the essayistic is seen as a metafictional technique subsumed within the dominant textual genre of the novelistic, Conte sees in these works a common tendency in which theme and manner of expression are intimately linked, noting

existe una serie de diferencias y particularidades con respecto a las novelas propiamente dichas que permitiría, a mi juicio, entender su carácter ensayístico o reflexivo como parte de un anhelo poético que se va depurando a modo de testamento final, y que tiene que ver con el afán de lograr un sentido para la obra cada vez más amenazada, de vislumbrar un vértice capaz de dotar de coherencia una vida dedicada al arte (13).

For David Conte, the overarching structure and signification of the *género intermedio* is *la gracia*, a concept intimately related to the interplay of seemingly opposite yet

²⁷ Interestingly, in his edition of Jarnés’ *Teoría del zumbel* published in the same year Pego Puigbó abandons the term *género intermedio*, preferring the category “ficción narrativa” --in addition to “novela,” “biografía,” “ensayo,” “narrativa”-- in which he includes a broad number of Jarnés’ texts.

mutually-dependent entities such as art and life which permeates Jarnés' fiction and critical writings over the course of his career.

Writing in 1967, Valerie Finch foreshadows the direction that Pego Puigbó and later David Conte would pursue in the first detailed analyses of the concept. Responding to Zuleta, Finch is the first to question the dominant view, noting "I disagree with her observations on the 'género intermedio' as an eclectic combination of differing genres, for I believe that Jarnés' perspectival synthesis involves essay and narration as aspects of an integral functioning of reason" (viii). Although she does not develop this observation, in suggesting a link between that Jarnés' use of genre and textual meaning, Finch points out the possibility of moving beyond a view of genre as a set of formal characteristics which combine haphazardly in experimental pastiche.

Both Pego Puigbó and David Conte, initiators of the new debate on the *género intermedio*, follow this direction in linking genre to a larger thematic and artistic project. David Conte's 2003 "Las tres gracias (apunte sobre el género intermedio)" picks up where Pego Puigbó left off and provides a more textually-bound approach to the topic, linking Jarnés' generic experimentation to his development of the concept of *la gracia*. Pego Puigbó and Conte each successfully reopen the debate on the *género intermedio* and advance the discussion beyond the critical dead ends it had reached, either by declaring the dissolution of genre through hybridity for the sake of hybridity or by proposing an endless array of new categories. This dissertation builds on this initial work by employing a broader conception of genre and examining a wider range of texts to delve into the questions that guide my investigation of genre and particularly the *género intermedio* in Jarnés.

Whereas I agree with Rafael Conte that the term's usefulness has been limited by the lack of critical examination of its nature and implications, I believe that its very persistence in combination with Jarnés' own critical reflections on genre call not for the abandonment of the term but rather for deeper investigation. Examining an innovative approach to genre invites us to step outside the circularity of traditional genre theory. In particular, the *género intermedio*'s combination of the fictional and the factual invokes emerging models of genre which view the concept not as a merely literary phenomenon but rather as a feature and function of all discursive modes.²⁸ In practical terms, John Frow's basic framework for examining genre will guide my analysis of three texts, *La novia del viento*, *Teoría del zumbel*, and *Libro de Esther*. Frow identifies "three overlapping and intersecting dimensions... the dimensions of formal organisation, of rhetorical structure, and of thematic content (roughly, how genres are shaped, the speaking positions they enable, and what they are typically about)" (4). Following these lines of inquiry rather than seeking to define or delimit the concept or identify works in that category, my approach steps outside of a traditional taxonomic view of genre. Specifically, I will explore how the *género intermedio* operates and the effects it produces with the aim of understanding how this concept enriches our understanding of Jarnés' work.

I examine these questions to move beyond the dead end genre criticism of the

²⁸ Critical activity in the field of genre theory currently draws heavily from Linguistics and Composition Studies. For an overview, see Amy Devitt's "A Theory of Genre" as well as the other essays in her *Writing Genres* (2004). In addition, John Frow's *Genre* (2005) effectively brings together interdisciplinary approaches to genre with traditional literary studies. David Duff's *Modern Genre Theory* (2000) provides a panoramic view of key texts in literary genre theory.

avant-garde has encountered, which is due in part to a traditional view of genre. As Gustavo Pérez Firmat has noted,

Just as the eclectic conception of the novel posits a kind of all kinds, much of the criticism of vanguard fictions posits a genre without genre, a collection of similar works that fits under no particular rubric. In this view the only thing that defines these works is their uniform recalcitrance to generic definition (*Fictions* ii).

Although such an approach certainly is circuitous, the model of genre implied by the language of this and other similar dismissals of generic experimentation as a producer of meaningful new forms reveals a common view of genre as a prescriptive, almost moralistic imperative against which particular texts blindly rebel.

As demonstrated by the shift from praising avant-garde fiction's creativity to condemning its generic innovation as a sterile exercise in stylistics, the confusion which uses 'ambiguity' and 'multiplicity' as loaded terms to condemn or praise the same characteristics overlooks the key difference between the two concepts. As Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan points out, "multiple meaning' refers to the possible coexistence of various meanings whereas 'narrative ambiguity' occurs when a decision must be made between mutually exclusive options in order to give sense to the text" (121). Applied to notions of genre, this distinction allows for a solution to what David Conte identifies as the essential challenge of Jarnés' *género intermedio* "[resistir] con buena argumentación al impulso de disolverlo todo en la desaparición de los géneros o en la omnipresencia del producto <<novela>> que todo lo abarcaría" ("Gracias" 13).

I suggest separating the notion of plurality from that of indeterminacy as a means to reframe the view of genre in Jarnés. Such a view requires replacing traditional views of genre as a static list of characteristics and features, rules and prohibitions with a model of genre as pragmatic, that is, as a series of processes and functions which map out fields

of signification.²⁹ As Adena Rosmarin explains in proposing a pragmatic view of genre, “Genre is not, as commonly thought, a class but, rather, a classifying statement” (25). In this view, genre is not a static entity but a discursive action that involves a relationship among the text, the reader, and a range of social and historical signifying strategies. Multiplicity, then, is enabled in this view as a text may make numerous, even contradictory or ironic, statements of identity. This model also allows for the distinction between local and global genres; that is, between the genre of the text as a whole and of the layers of meaning that comprise it. This key distinction allows us to step outside of the reductive and taxonomic view of genre which has dominated much of literary genre studies.

In a broad sense, then, I conceive genre not as a prescriptive set of features but as a means of producing meaning by activating a context of allusions, references, expectations and connotations. A variety of generic messages can be unsettling as it continually disorients the reader and, in the case of Jarnés' texts, the characters themselves. Recognizing the genre of a text activates a set of expectations, conventions of interpretation, and a frame for reading and interpretation. Yet viewing genre as a process rather than a product opens the possibility of generic multitasking, continual switching or simultaneous running of various modes.

²⁹ The underlying view of genre as a system of classification persists in contemporary genre theory as applied to literature. John Frow cites David Fishlov’s overview of 20th Century genre theory as a series of models such as those based on family resemblance, biological species, social institutions, or speech acts (52). Yet each of these models ultimately relies on an impulse to define and delimit. Due to the inherent heterogeneity of discourses comprising any literary text, no single classificatory model has proved sufficient. For this reason, in exploring the *género intermedio*—a genre characterized precisely by resistance to classification—I draw on theoretical models that focus on a pragmatic and description view of genre. These models come from linguists such as Monika Fludernik and members of the “Australian School” such as Ian Reid, Anne Freadman, John Frow, and Amanda MacDonald, as well as from major literary theorists whose insights remain relevant today, as evidenced by their inclusion in the recent anthologies of genre theory as well as in recent work on Jarnés’ *género intermedio* by Armando Pego Puigbó.

In this model of genre I draw from the premise outlined in Derrida's "The Law of Genre" that all texts participate in yet do not fully belong to a genre of genres. Derrida's approach rests on the existence of genre markers, necessarily present in all texts but which themselves belong to a category outside of the genre they indicate.³⁰ Although Derrida's view of genre is based on a model of genre as taxonomy, it is not reductive or restrictive. Instead, this model enables texts to use these categories as fields of production of meaning: the genres are static, but texts may move freely among them. Derrida explains, "Every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text; there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging" (230). Although written in a different context, these words echo the first description of Jarnés' *género intermedio*, provided by Emilia de Zuleta in 1963 and echoed by Pilar Martínez Latre in 1979. Zuleta notes, "la feliz designación de *género intermedio*... podría abarcar muy bien la mayoría de los libros de Jarnés, que se separan de los géneros literarios corriente o participan por igual de todos ellos" ("Novela" 7).

For Zuleta, the concept of *género intermedio* does not serve as a classificatory device but rather as a framework or perspective necessary for making comprehensible certain of Jarnés's texts. Although Zuleta does not develop her understanding of genre in depth, in her brief discussion of *Teoría del zumbel* she implies a distinction between the text as a whole as "novel" and the wide range of generic discourses which it incorporates. In this way Zuleta's model prefigures Gérard Genette's distinction between genre and

³⁰ Genre markers to be explored in this project include subtitles such as "Novela" and "Epílogo" in addition to formal characteristics such as layout and type set, among others.

mode, in which “genre” refers to the text’s form or “macro-genre” and “mode” refers to the “situación de enunciación” (“Géneros” 191).³¹

As in *Zumbel*, a single text may incorporate a variety of modes, from the “fragmento teórico,” love story, and metafictional intervention of the narrator through both commentary and influence over the plot to what Zuleta calls

el relampagueo de imágenes vanguardistas, la introducción de episodios simbólicos, descripciones cubistas de figuras y escenas, sueños, transposiciones mitológicas y bíblicas, reflexiones sobre la vida humana, algunas a cargo de su propio Creador (“Novela” 7).

Such a perspective forges a new path that avoids the two dead ends of the genre debate: the endless search for appropriate nomenclature or what Tzvetan Todorov has called the “egocentric illusion” of the disappearance of genre (“Origin” 159). He explains:

...it is not ‘genres’ that have disappeared, but the genres of the past, and they have been replaced by others. One no longer speaks of poetry and prose, of first-person accounts and fiction, but of the novel and the narrative [*le récit*], of the narrative [*le narratif*] and the discursive, of the dialogue and the diary. The fact that a work ‘disobeys’ its genres does not make the latter nonexistent (“Origins” 160).

Emphasizing the historical and institutional nature of genre, Todorov’s model allows for both continuity and change through transformation and adaptation. Yet, like Genette, Todorov’s concern lays not in aligning texts with generic categories but in understanding the fabric of meanings that generic heterogeneity creates. This model rests on a specific view of discourse as speech act, a model which fruitfully bridges the literary and the linguistic to account for a broad range of textual communication. Such a distinction is necessary to move critical discussions of Jarnés’ *género intermedio* beyond mere description as “obras híbridas de evocación, ficcionalidad, autobiografía y diálogo —

³¹ Although working in a different context, Monika Fludernik develops a definition of “macro-genre” which allows us to bring together Zuleta’s and Genette’s concepts. The term will be defined in Chapter 2.

[como] *Libro de Esther*” (Senés Herrero 508). Here, as in other attempts to describe the concept, literary and linguistic discourses are muddled together rather than teased apart as coexisting strands of signification. Todorov provides a framework which allows for the latter approach, which opens up readings based on productive multiplicity of meaning rather than the dead end of ambiguity.

Todorov defines discourse as synonym of text, which in turn is comprised of enunciations, codified through repetition over time. He distinguishes between metadiscursive genres, for example the novel and its various manifestations, as “historical reality” and “discursive reality” as a combination of speech acts which I suggest are similar to Genette’s enunciations. This dual perspective on genre sheds some light onto the approach to genre taken by Jarnés himself. As Emilia de Zuleta observes, “Frente al problema de los géneros literarios, [Jarnés] mantiene una posición semejante a la de Ortega, en el sentido en que los considera, más que estructuras formales funciones o direcciones en que gravita la generación estética” (“Novela” 7). It is this distinction between what genre is and what genre does that allows for the *género intermedio* to operate on both the macrotextual level— producing, for example, the difficulty of identifying the global genre of works such as *Libro de Esther* as fiction or nonfiction, novel or diary—and on what Monika Fludernik calls the “problem of narrative’s variegated textual surface structure” of the text, in which a variety of discourses cooperate and clash (n.pag.)

As the preceding discussion of generic models has shown, the lack of consensus on the use of terminology complicates the critical conversation on genre in general and on Jarnés’ *género intermedio* in particular. Having established the theoretical approach

undergirding the current project, I will retain the term “genre” for simplicity of communication while incorporating Genette’s distinction between ‘genre’ and ‘mode’ in which the former refers to

usually some combination of thematics and stylistics... or what has commonly come to be labeled literary movement. The essential characteristic of genre or movement in this sense, then, is its identification with a historically defined body of works. ‘Mode,’ on the other hand, is a linguistically grounded, synchronic concept (Spires 4).

In conjunction with Todorov’s view of the coexisting layers of historical and discursive functions within a single text, distinguishing between “genre” and “mode” provides language with which to untangle the combination of discourses which commingle in three of Jarnés’ texts characterized as belonging to the *género intermedio*: *La novia del viento*, *Teoría del zumbel*, and *Libro de Esther*.³² Such a framework allows us to differentiate between historical transtextual conventions and the interaction of codified discourses with the individual text, thus permitting an exploration of the functions of genre in these works and their relations to the production of meaning. In one of the few existing studies of *La novia del viento*, for example, Robert Spires effectively employs this breakdown of theme, stylistics, and genre to read the text as cohesive whole despite its ostensibly disjointed composition. I retain this useful distinction between genre and mode in my analysis.

³² *La novia del viento*, Jarnés’ first novel to be published in exile, expands on a previously-published short story. The text consists of two chapters which follow a rather traditional plot structure linked by a middle section in which the narrator addresses readers’ complaints regarding the first chapter and declares his intention to script the last chapter in response to these concerns. The text, however, is simultaneously framed as a true account of actual events and thus embodies the basic generic distinction between factual and fictional discourse observed by Gérard Genette in *Fiction and Diction*. *Teoría del zumbel* incorporates several apparently conflicting layers of textual signification which simultaneously trace a simple plot through a parody of the romance novel and question the nature of human knowledge, perception, and existence. *Libro de Esther* continually makes and subverts a series of overt statements of generic identity, thus highlighting both the ineluctable role of pragmatic conventions of reading and writing and their inherent instability. All three of these texts share a blurring of the distinction not only between the novelistic and the essayistic but also between the poses of factual and fictional discourse.

At the same time, my approach to genre differs from most previous studies of Jarnés and of the *género intermedio* in particular. In my view genre is not an identity -- a taxonomy or a checklist of features contained in a text-- but rather a function which positions elements in a range of possible interactions. As Anne Freadman has argued, genre is a pattern of interaction similar to a game. A game entails rules that exist but stand outside of their enactment, setting the boundaries in which an infinite range of exchanges among participants may occur. I suggest not only individual texts but their layers of signification and reference, in addition to the relationships among characters and between reader and text, may all be seen as participants in this sense. In addition, each participant may engage in various games simultaneously.

Essential to this model is the understanding linguistics has provided that genre is not exclusively literary, nor is it limited to fiction. All interpersonal and linguistic events are governed by a genre or genres, which can combine or coexist simultaneously. My approach examines the use of both traditional literary models of genre, which the well-read Jarnés employed in conjunction with more contemporary modes such as the cinematic or surreal, and non-literary strategies such as social genre-- interpersonal settings, roles, and models of interaction adopted by characters within the text. As a specific example the concept of speech genres, which entail both a particular form and content shaped by social convention, provides a bridge between literary and non-literary text types.

Within this framework, the work of Anne Freadmen, Amanda Macdonald, and Ian Reid provides the basis for conceptualizing genre as interaction: between setting and characters, among characters themselves, between text and reader, and among texts.

From this perspective of genre as a producer of meaning through the encounter of two or more participants, Genette's notion of transtextuality provides a particularly useful set of avenues for exploring the “radial” nature of Jarnés' continual stream of references which produce a sense of generic dispersion. Each of the five key concepts-*intertextuality*, *paratextuality*, *architextuality*, *metatextuality*, and *hypertextuality*- delimits a field of textual interaction that can coexist with others, thus potentially moving us past the trap of defining genre as a taxonomy of surface features viewed as static entities traditionally associated with particular types of literature.

This model is particularly appropriate for the study of Jarnés as it provides language to delimit and analyze a variety of functions operating simultaneously in these texts. These five concepts represent recurrent characteristics of Jarnés' work which have been seen as disruptive to textual integrity. Genette's model, however, provides a framework for viewing multiplicity as a series of concurrent transmissions of signification rather than a chaos of dispersive forces. As we shall see, *Teoría del zumbel*, *Libro de Esther*, and *La novia del viento* each employ a variety of these phenomena as constitutive functions of generic innovation.

In addition to the difficulty of defining the term and the disagreement over which texts to include under that rubric, attempts to define the *género intermedio* have suffered from a tendency to separate form, function, and meaning by centering on either description of a combination of characteristics associated with different literary genres or on thematics. Yet as Ortega y Gasset proposed, “hay que distinguir entre fondo y forma: no son una misma cosa” (124). Neither of these approaches has answered the question of what makes the *género intermedio* different from both other avant-garde narrative, as

exemplified by Jarnés' own *El profesor inútil*, and his other works. Rather than attempting to pin down a definition of the *género intermedio* or to repeat the continual recategorization of Jarnés' works, my approach embraces Ortega's awareness that form and content are intimately related yet distinct conduits of textual meaning. In combination with a view of genre as poetic function rather than identifying trait, this orientation moves analyses of genre beyond the taxonomic model which has limited our understanding of the *género intermedio*. Pérez Firmat summarizes the futility of this model, noting

the circularity typical of most generic studies, which might be summarized thus: in order to describe a class, one must first delimit a corpus of works, but the delimitation of a corpus requires a prior definition of the class, which in turn presupposes the existence of a corpus, and so on. (*Fictions* ix).

Stepping outside of this self-limiting model, I continue in the direction Armando Pego Puigbó and David Conte have indicated in which the particular nature of the *género intermedio* is related to Jarnés' production of meaning. Yet whereas these critics posit a relationship between this particular use of genre and Jarnés' broader artistic philosophies of the relationship between art and life and of "la gracia," my focus is not on Jarnés' lifelong artistic project. Rather, in attempting to elucidate the concept of *género intermedio*, I aim to clarify how genre functions and the ways in which it produces meaning in individual texts. I will investigate both the activation and interplay of genre, understood on the level of architext, macrotext, and microgenre or enunciation, in three of Jarnés' texts which on the surface appear to have little in common. I have chosen the texts which have been identified by the three critics who have actively examined the *género intermedio*: *La novia del viento*, *Teoría del zumbel*, and *Libro de Esther*.

Despite the lack of critical consensus regarding the meaning of the *género*

intermedio and which works it includes, I see in the persistence of this contested concept evidence of both its existence and of its validity. Coined by Jarnés himself, this term has become a central issue in studies of his work out of critical necessity to identify the existence of a particularly innovative approach to literary creation. In an effort to shed further light on the operations and significance of this singularly Jarnesian use of genre, the following study takes up the current endpoint of the critical discussion. In the words of David Conte, “¿Para qué sirve designar una serie de libros como perteneciente al <<género intermedio>>, y en qué medida nos ayuda a esclarecer la obra?” (“Gracias” 14). The following chapters will address these questions.

Chapter 2

Genre as Mediator, Genre as Moderator: *La novia del viento*

“Una buena novela abraza todos los géneros.”

Benjamín Jarnés (Límites 29)

The visible arc of Jarnés' career follows the political developments of the period: the twenties and early thirties saw a flurry of publications, including twenty-two book-length publications ranging from essay to criticism to novels, yet a silence emerges between 1936 and 1940, when the exiled Jarnés renews his book publishing with *La novia del viento*. This novel traces the development of Jarnés' years of successful writing: it combines and reworks material published from his rise to prominence in 1926 through his exile in 1939. Published in Mexico in 1940, *La novia del viento* is a key text in the Jarnés corpus yet along with the rest of his work in exile it has received little attention.³³

The novel is comprised of three sections, titled “Andrómeda,” “Digresión de Epimeteo,” and “Brunilda en llamas.” The first section relates the story of the 'false Star,' a cabaret singer who will be contraposed to the real “Estrella,” the experimental painter Brunilda who protagonizes the third section of the novel. The middle section of the

³³ Due to the limited diffusion of Jarnés' four novels published during his exile in Mexico, *La novia del viento* (1940), *Orlando el pacífico* (1942), *La venus dinámica* (1943), *Constelación de Friné* (1944), these texts are largely overlooked in appraisals of Jarnés' work. Both sympathetic and hostile critics have largely based their opinion of the evolution of Jarnés' creation on his pre-exile writings. These four exile novels have not yet been re-released, and very little has been written on them. However, Domingo Ródenas de Moya views these novels as an essential part of the Jarnesian *oeuvre*, noting: “Jarnés encontró en México la última encarnación de su arquetipo femenino, síntesis de gracia e inteligencia, y que en él tomó un último impulso creativo que no hizo sino expandir el universo estético y los motivos de su obra de preguerra” (*Impureza* XLII).

novel, a metatextual reflection which will be explored in depth later on in the present study, links the two chapters and provides instructions for reading each of them.

Ironically this novel, which was ostensibly crafted in order to appease readers who did not appreciate the innovative nature of the first section, itself went largely unread.³⁴

Jarnés' defenders point to his reputed apoliticism and social apathy as a cause of his disappearance from Spanish literary history. In addition, however, I suggest that specific notions of genre-- generic preferences and prejudices linking a consumerist view of literary production to artistic value along with a conflation of theme and genre-- led to the dismissal of some of Jarnés' most creative and original work.

Jarnés' work in exile was largely ignored by his contemporaries. *La novia del viento* appears to have received very limited critical attention when it was published Juan Domínguez Lasierra's *Ensayo de una bibliografía jarnesiana* lists only one review, published in 1944 in the American journal *Revista Hispánica Moderna*. My research in the Archivo Benjamín Jarnés housed at the Diputación Provincial de Zaragoza has discovered only two additional reviews in the form of brief articles apparently clipped from 1940s newspapers.³⁵ The review written by the prominent Mexican writer Xavier Villaurrutia casts the novel in a positive light. The other, which is comprised of two paragraphs by an anonymous author, characterizes the *La novia del viento* as “una novela llena de gracias y de frescura” and makes the misleading claim that the novel was inspired by a hill in Jarnés' homeland, thus framing the text with in field of nostalgia.

³⁴ The first section, “Andrómeda,” was published in 1926 as a free-standing short story.

³⁵ Bibliographical information for these clippings is incomplete. The articles are Villaurrutia, Xavier. “La novia del viento.” *N.p.*: *n.pag* and “Benjamín Jarnés. La novia del viento.” *N.a. n.p.*: *n.pag*.

The lack of attention received by Jarnés' first book in four years reflects the effects of displacement on the interpersonal politics of the postwar environment. As Manuel Andújar observes, Jarnés was one of the many cultural casualties of the Civil War in that “el desenlace de la guerra lo había arrancado, literalmente, de su consustanciada circunstancia, de su nutricio entorno colectivo, de su entronque con él...” (44). Although Jarnés had fought with the Republican army he was perceived by many of his fellow exiles to be apolitical. Despite his prominent role in the Spanish literary field of the 1920s and 1930s, the newer generation of writers emerging in exile tended to view Jarnés as a relic of an earlier era. As Juan José Lanz notes, “el giro rehumanizador y realista que se había imprimido a la literatura en los primeros años treinta, había desplazado la obra de Jarnés del foco de atención de los jóvenes escritores del exilo” (“Novelística” 144). Having lost his sponsors and mentors such as Ortega y Gasset and significantly older than many of his fellow exiles Jarnés was able to scrape together a living from his pen while failing to regain a position of prominence.

As early as 1933 Jarnés had lamented the importance of interpersonal relationships for the production and valorization of Spanish literature. In *Fauna contemporánea*, a catalog of the types of individuals in Spanish society, Jarnés had noted:

El libro español apenas tiene críticos. El espíritu español, en consecuencia, apenas tiene quien lo estudie. Quien estudie desde muy dentro el libro y el espíritu. *Se suele hablar del libro del amigo, ya comienzan a escribirse libros entre y para amigos...* El día en que España se convierta en una gran tertulia, quedarán muy satisfechos todos los amigos de la frivolidad, de la superficialidad... Y de la cultura impertinente. (190-191).

His comments seem to anticipate the future reception of his work in a literary field that would become distinctly polarized. In his landmark study of Spanish exile literature, José Ramón López-Marra would summarize and perpetuate a misconception about Jarnés' later writing:

Lo patético es que si la guerra civil y el destierro le acongojaron profundamente en su intimidad ... nada se trasluce en (sus) obras. Ni en *Eufrosina o la gracia*, fechada en Barcelona --¡en la Barcelona de 1938!--ni en *La novia del viento*... Está presente el <<estilo artista>>, el tono mitológico-bíblico-simbólico jarnesiano de siempre (82).

López-Marra's criticism rests on the presumption that a change in style is desirable, a notion shared by critics of the period who presupposed that only certain means of presentation are readable as a testimony to suffering. In reality, several of Jarnés' works speak of illness, abandonment, violence, heartbreak and bloodshed through metaphor and allusion, rather than through the testimonial style Michael Ugarte has identified, along with nostalgia and remembrance, as characteristics of Spanish literature of exile. In response to those who criticize his apparent indifference to the suffering through which he has lived, Jarnés notes in his 1941 journal:

Se llegó demasiado lejos en la estimación del *dolor humano*. Llegó a prescindirse de todo dolor que no fuese melodramático, llorón, ruidoso... No se tuvo en cuenta el dolor aristocrático, el dolor que sonríe; el dolor cristiano que, en silencio, perdona; todos los dolores, en fin, que se esconden pudorosamente en sí mismos. Y se creó una mala literatura de *falsa estimación humana*, una literatura *política*, en la que se exaltaba *el dolor llorón* de hombre de partido... (Porque los demás no contaban). (*Textos* 39).

As Jarnés' words suggest, the implicit presumption that theme and manner of presentation are one and the same reveals the dangers of a misunderstanding of genre. In denying the personal range of responses and by imposing a particular mode of

expression, critics on both sides of the postwar political divide found grounds to dismiss Jarnés' writings.

Jarnés' defenders have frequently catalogued the attacks against his work, which emerge in the postwar period. He was disparaged by both sides of Spanish literary criticism, from fellow exiles such as Max Aub to Falangist writers such as Gonzalo Torrente Ballester.³⁶ Interestingly, the quality of Jarnés' writing was generally acknowledged even by his critics, who tended to base their negative assessment of the author's work on thematic and stylistic characteristics which were reductively conflated with political ideology. Writing under Francoist censorship in his 1956 *Panorama de la literatura española contemporánea*, Torrente Ballester observes “!Qué lástima que un escritor así haya gastado sus dotes en pura cohetería!... Jarnés se equivocó... Todo aquello pasó y hoy una rosa de papel sigue pareciéndonos inferior en categoría humana y estética a una rosa de verdad” (413).

Yet as Ignacio Soldevila Durante points out, this criticism was based on Jarnés' prewar writing (37). Of the critics of this period, only López-Marra makes reference to Jarnés' exile production, yet strikingly his valorization of Jarnés' work stops in years before the war: “Desde la fecha clave de 1931 nada tenía que decir a los españoles, salvo una repetición de formas anquiloscadas-- llenas de gracias y destreza literaria, eso sí, pero estériles-- que no interesaban a nadie” (482). The ideological conflation of form and content that emerged as a political mandate as tensions rose in the 1930s thus prevented the reading of texts whose stylistics failed to align with the emerging genres of “rehumanized” and politicized literature.³⁷

³⁶ See Lanz (2000) for an overview of negative criticism of Jarnés' work in exile.

³⁷ In his private journal, Jarnés lamented the increasing politicizing of literature:

In addition to the political and interpersonal factors which contributed to the dismissal of Jarnés' work in exile, the failure to read these texts carefully contributed to the critical commonplace that Jarnés had ceased to develop as an author. As Jarnés' texts are reread from different cultural, critical, and historical perspectives an evolution in his work has become evident. Víctor Fuentes has demonstrated how negative criticism of Jarnés, which arose as vanguard literature fell out of favor, was based principally a political reaction against avant-garde literature in Spain rather than on specifically literary concerns. In *Benjamín Jarnés: bio-grafía y metaficción* Fuentes reads Jarnés from the vantage point of postmodernity and redirects the critical approach to his work by focusing on how techniques such as metafiction and intertextuality are used to develop themes of humanism and eroticism. Although Fuentes follows others in dismissing Jarnés' exile work, his reframing of the relationship between Jarnés' stylistics and conceptual content paves the way for a rereading of these texts.³⁸

Continuity of theme and style must not be confused with creative paralysis and may be more fruitfully viewed as part of a life-long artistic orientation driven by a desire for continual improvement and change. As Juan José Lanz's reading of *La novia del viento* observes, the similarities in theme and difference in treatment between 1929's *Paula y Paulita* and the reinterpretation of “Andrómeda” created by its contraposition to “Brunilda en llamas” demonstrate a conceptual shift in the presentation of female characters. From a focus on the “epidérmico”—that is, of woman as a visual and tactile

Hacer depender la evolución de las letras de la evolución política es atentar contra la vida misma del espíritu. No hay literatura revolucionaria y literatura burguesa, sino literatura mala y literatura buena. O, sencillamente, *temas*, preferencia por *temas* revolucionarios o no, burgueses o místicos. Si la revolución ha de atentar contra la libertad de pensamiento, no será una auténtica revolución sino un cambio de despotismo (*Textos y márgenes* 118).

³⁸ John Crispin points out the critical error of equating technique with content: “En la estética de los narradores de la generación de 1925 se nota una evolución de tono si bien se conserva en muchos casos la técnica adoptada anteriormente. Es el caso de... Jarnés para todas las novelas posteriores a 1929” (151).

artifact existing only through the perception of a male protagonist-- to the model of woman as creative agent,³⁹ the thirteen years separating these novels produce

dos modos diferentes de concebir a la mujer que marcan una evolución fundamental en su obra: la distancia que puede establecerse entre Andrómeda y Brunilda y Paula y Paulita respectivamente marca la evolución intelectual y estética del Jarnés vinculado a la narrativa vanguardista de anteguerra y el Jarnés del exilio (Lanz 2000 166).⁴⁰

As Eugenio de Nora notes in his 2003 article on Jarnés titled “El novelista ausente,” Jarnés' work in exile was generally dismissed:

...se minusvaloraba su producción narrativa del exilio, considerando sus principales novelas de ese período (*La novia del viento*, *Venus dinámica* y *Constelación de Friné*) como meras <<refundiciones, levemente recosidas, de fragmentos narrativos publicados ya en buena parte antes de 1936>> (85).

Implicit in the devalorization of recycled or revised works is a consumeristic view of literary production which values the writer in function of his or her ability to produce “new” products, a view which is industrial rather than artisanal. As Isabel Román Román notes, the reworking of fragments, combined with a broad array of paratextual apparatuses, characterized avant-garde fiction in general. Suggesting that this style of narrative was directed at a more sophisticated audience than that which read popular fiction, Román Román observes that “en el formato del libro se desarrollan aún más los experimentos narrativos, los prólogos y epílogos, las digresiones metanarrativas, el reciclaje de materiales heterógeneos” (n. pag.). As José Manuel del Pino has demonstrated in *Montajes y fragmentos: una aproximación a la narrativa española de vanguardia*, the continual reworking and recombining of textual fragments characterized the Spanish avant-garde for several reasons, not the least of which was the dominance of

³⁹ See Michael Schlig's 2004 article “Benjamín Jarnés's Portrayal of Women Artists from “Andromeda” to “La novia del viento” for a detailed analysis of this evolution.

the little magazine as the principal means of dissemination of these texts. In this sense, the process of composition and revision was given value. Ródenas de Moya notes that revision and reworking characterize Jarnés' creative process from the beginning of his career and are motivated by “un afán insobornable por alcanzar la perfección” (2007 376). Jarnés' intricate style was cast as artisanal as early as 1930, when Ricardo Gullón praised the author in an article titled “Jarnés, orfebre del vocablo.”

Revising and rewriting characterize Jarnés' approach to writing. One of Jarnés' best-received novels, *El profesor inútil*, reflects this process. First published as a novel in 1926, the novel was expanded and revised in a second edition published in 1934. The text was composed in part through a series of partial sketches and drafts published from 1925 through 1934. A glance at Jarnés' bibliography reveals that without exception each of his novels, biographies, and works belonging to the *género intermedio* was preceded by the publication of fragments or versions which were often later revised and incorporated into the book-length publication.⁴¹ In fact his first novel, the often-overlooked *Mosén Pedro* (1924) produced the largest number of fragments for a total of eleven.

Yet this approach to artistic production, while accepted in the Spanish literary environment of the prewar period, was later used to disparage Jarnés' work in exile. Due to financial difficulties Jarnés produced or lent his name to a wide range of endeavors, from encyclopedias to articles to lectures for American students studying in Mexico, many of which did not reflect his personal artistic project. As Manuel Andújar observes Jarnés found it necessary to devote much of his time to

cumplir encargos editoriales –su firma llegaba a núcleos más amplios de

⁴¹ See Juan Domínguez Lasierra (1988) for an extensive, if somewhat incomplete, list.

lectores—y colaborar en revistas especializadas y generales, tareas que, para subsistir, quizá le privaron, por lo jornaleras, de realizar, en aquella su madurez, la importante obra de propia creación que de sus naturales dotes, sabiduría y sensibilidad, hubieran sido expectables (38).

Whereas it is undeniable that much of Jarnés' exile writing was determined by financial concerns, I suggest that a careful study of his Mexican novels such as *La novia del viento* provides evidence for the continued development of themes and techniques which had formed the basis of his work since the early days of his literary career. Thus I suggest that Jarnés' work in exile can be divided into two categories: intellectual piecework produced in order to make ends meet, and his longer fictional texts such as *La novia del viento* which represent the culmination of many years of reflection and revision of ideas and texts.

Since at least 1935, Jarnés' had hoped to continue to develop the original story that would go on to form the germ of *La novia del viento*. In *Libro de Esther* the narrator, "Benjamín," praises the 1926 short story "Andrómeda" as "mi cuento menos endeble, desde luego más original" (1935 18). The narrator continues "Y si pudiera alguna vez continuar aquel relato, se vería cómo, desde siempre, nació en mi el deseo de escribir dos libros: el de la verdadera Estrella y el de la falsa." (18) *La novia del viento*, Jarnés' first novel published in exile, is the realization of this plan.⁴² It is only in recent years that this text, which spans the most productive years of Jarnés' career, has begun to be addressed at any length by critics. Beginning in the 1980s, critics such as Robert

⁴²Jarnés published a series of book-length works published in exile, ranging from biographies such as *Cervantes, bosquejo biográfico* (1944) to essays such as the nostalgically titled *Cartas al Ebro* (1940). His novels of the period include *Orlando el pacífico*, *Constelación de Friné*, *Venus dinámica* and *La novia del viento*. Of his work in exile, *La novia* has received the most critical attention to date. Although Jarnés was frequently cited in scholarly works and anthologies of Spanish writers in exile, attention was focused on his prewar production. See, for example, Angel Flores' 1948 *Spanish Writers in Exile*. For a detailed discussion of Jarnés' work in exile and its reception, see Tucker (1991), Virginia Trueba Mira (1995) and Juan José Lanz (2000).

Spires, Naomi Lindstrom, Juli Highfill, Juan José Lanz, and Michael Schlig have devoted attention to the novel, highlighting the text's interest for a range of critical approaches.⁴³

La novia del viento begins with the generic description “novela,” a denomination which implies fictionality. Yet the epigraph reframes the text by linking it to a physical location that does not in fact exist, while implying that this location is worthy of having inspired a myth. In a sense, then, the story that follows is presented as the answer to the question, “¿Hay, en torno a ese cerro, alguna romántica leyenda?”⁴⁴ This invocation of the mythical provides a contextual rationale for the next paratext, a table of contents listing the three sections of the novel that invoke the mythical: “Andrómeda,” “Digresión de Epimeteo,” and “Brunilda en llamas.” The first section will set the scene for the last, which does in fact present the apocryphal legend of the hilltop known as “*La novia del viento*.” The title of each of these sections refers to their protagonists, Star/Carmela, the narrator/“cronista” and Brunilda.

When recontextualized as the first section of a larger “novel” rather than a short story, “Andrómeda” is subjected to different generic expectations than those activated by its previous two locations as freestanding vignette and as a section of the “intermediate genre” text *Salón de estío*. The second section, “Digresión de Epimeteo” enumerates

⁴³ Lindstrom's 1989 article “Creation in Criticism, Criticism in Creation: Four Ibero Exemplars” includes an analysis of *La novia del viento* in her interrogation of the validity of terms such as ‘metaliterary,’ ‘self-reflexive,’ self-referred’ and ‘intertextual’ when used to separate criticism from fiction. Spires devotes a chapter of *Beyond the Metafictional Mode* (1984) to the novel, focusing on the middle section as a specific type of self-reflexive text. Highfill's “The Allegorical Woman in Benjamín Jarnés's ‘Andrómeda’” (1995) and Schlig's “Benjamín Jarnés's Portrayal of Women Artists from ‘Andromeda’ to *La novia del viento*” focus on Jarnés' strategies of characterization of women in the text (2004). Lanz's “La novelística de Benjamín Jarnés: de la vanguardia al exilio” (2000) views the novel as both a turning point in Jarnés' fiction and a bridge linking his prewar and exile writings.

⁴⁴ *La novia del viento* is not necessarily a name invented by Jarnés. It is also the translation of “Die Windsbraut,” the name of Oskar Kokoschka's famous 1914 painting expressing his passion for Alma Maher.

readers' complaints about "Andrómeda," all of which are based on the frustration of novelistic genre expectations such as the lack of characterization and traditional plot development including a progression from exposition to climax to denouement. The narrative voice, self-identified as an objective 'chronicler' rather than creator, simultaneously highlights his control over the fictional world by promising to fulfill readers' genre-bound desires by meeting the requisites of story development in the final section, "Brunilda en llamas."

This last section follows the norms of traditional narrative by setting up a situation for which it provides internal justification, and continues by introducing consecutive moments of suspense culminating in a dramatic finale. "Brunilda en llamas" thus contrasts sharply with "Andrómeda" by fulfilling the generic norms which this latter continually calls into question, then violates.

La novia del viento's evolution traces the most productive years of Jarnés' career and reflects his creative process as a continual reworking and revising of shorter texts into longer ones. The first section, "Andrómeda," is comprised of a text originally published as a short story in the *Revista de Occidente* in 1926. A slightly retouched version of the tale was republished in a 1929 volume entitled *Salón de estío* published under the imprint of the *Cuadernos of La Gaceta Literaria*. In this context "Andrómeda" is read in relation to the three other stories in the volume, each of which is framed by the overarching title "Salón de estío" as a portrait in an exposition. Each of these "portraits" may be read as a reinterpretation of archetypical romantic relationships.

In this context, what Gérard Genette has termed the "architextual" generic status -- that it, of the overarching frame or text type-- of "Andrómeda" is reconfigured not by

any changes to the text itself but rather its generic repositioning as a part of a larger whole.⁴⁵ This compilation of four previously-published texts reflects the difficulty of describing avant-garde narrative as the book is described variously as a collection of novelistic fragments, a “libro de narraciones,”⁴⁶ “un volumen de relatos”⁴⁷ and, most frequently, as the first work belonging to the Jarnesian category of ‘género intermedio.’⁴⁸ Contemporary reviews of the book are favorable yet vague, praising Jarnés' technical innovations and stylistic virtuosity in general terms.⁴⁹ The texts which comprise the book-- “Andrómeda,” “Circe,” “Folletín,” and “Película”-- share several characteristics. Firstly, they are all reworking of other stories: of the myths that lend their names to the first two stories, of Romeo and Juliet in combination with Calisto and Melibea in the case of “Película,” and of the melodrama of the unfaithful wife discovered in bed with her lover in the case of “Folletín” (Bernstein 96). This last text bears a strong thematic relationship to “Andrómeda”: both include the painting of the female nude and the ultimate destruction of the representation as a statement of the supremacy of life over art. Each of these texts would be further revised and incorporated into book-length works, thus belying the accusation that the revising and recycling of texts was the sign not of a drive for perfection or of a life-long artistic project but rather an indication of creative

⁴⁵ See *Palimpsests* for a discussion of this concept.

⁴⁶ Ródenas, Intro. *Salón de estío* 7.

⁴⁷ Ródenas, *Prosa* 17

⁴⁸ Along with most of Jarnés' short texts, *Salón de estío* has not received much critical attention. It is frequently classified by critics as belonging to the *género intermedio* rather than as a collection of short stories. This text was republished in a compilation of Jarnés' short fiction in *Salón de estío y otras narraciones* (2002).

⁴⁹ Contemporary reviews include a favorable evaluation by José Fernández Díaz published in the same year as his *El nuevo romanticismo: Polémica de arte, política y literatura* which is often cited as a turning point in Spanish literature of the era, ending the era of “dehumanization” and initiating a movement towards a more socially-engaged mode of writing.

paralysis or expediency.⁵⁰ In 1940 Jarnés published *La novia del viento*, a text comprised of “Andrómeda” followed by two new sections entitled “Digresión de Epimeteo” and “Brunilda en llamas.” Each of these three sections invokes genre in a different way. *La novia del viento* foregrounds the question of genre on several levels: as paratextual frame for reading the text contained between the book's two covers, as a set of reader expectations which, when violated, cause dissatisfaction, and as the basis for interaction among characters.

Yet *La novia del viento* is not reducible to the sum of its parts. The subtitle “Novela” appears on the cover, evoking Anne Freadman’s observation that explicit statements about genre tend to be made when there is a risk of misidentification due to similarity among discourses. It is unclear if the author, editor, or publisher decided to explicitly state the genre of the text; however a conscious decision was made to do so. By establishing the novelistic as an architext, the perceived value of situating *La novia del viento* within a generic framework suggests an awareness that genre does not inhere in narrative, but rather is a production of the interaction between readers' expectations and the text itself. The explicit attempt to situate the text within a generic framework suggests an awareness that genre does not inhere in narrative, but rather is a production of the interaction between reader expectations and the text itself.⁵¹ Writing six years after his once-hailed *El profesor inútil* was disowned by critics on the basis of generic

⁵⁰ “Andrómeda” would become the first section of *La novia del viento*. “Circe” would be incorporated as a key segment of *Lo rojo y lo azul*. As J. S. Bernstein notes “Folletín” would be incorporated into the second of Jarnés' three exile novels, *Venus dinámica*, as the short story “La verdad en el pozo” which is read by one of the characters in that novel. A version of “Película,” glossed by the addition of illustrations of that story's key scene, is included in Jarnés' last exile novel, *Constelación de Friné*.

⁵¹ In *Structuralist Poetics* Jonathan Culler develops a theory of ‘literary competence’ which, although still influenced by a prescriptive function of genre, provides a starting point for this observation.

impurity, Jarnés's subtitle may be read as a preemptive strike against the operative conventions which would tend to disregard or ignore sections of the text.

As Anne Freadman observes, "The question of genre is always the question of reading: the class to which a text is assigned is mutually entailed with the uptake of that text" (83). Although the text is virtually identical, the text "Andrómeda" -- previously presented as a freestanding story and as a section in a book that produced generic confusion-- must be read differently when it is positioned as the first chapter of a novel, that is, as a part of a larger whole. Although the plot retains its exposition, development, and denouement the story itself becomes an episode functioning as the exposition of the novel as a whole, in which "Digresión de Epimeteo" serves as the conflict and "Brunilda en llamas" as the resolution. In this way *La novia del viento* exemplifies the relational nature of genre by underscoring the notion that genre does not inhere in texts but is situational, emerging through a dialogical process among reader, language, and context. The ability of the same text to function comprehensibly yet differently when framed in a variety of settings highlights the insufficiencies of traditional theories of genre as described by Thomas O. Beebee, who in *The Ideology of Genre* provides a succinct history of theories of genre which clarifies the communicative vision attached to each:

genre as rules, genres as species, genre as patterns of textual features, and genre as reader conventions (which) correspond to the four positions in the great debate about the location of textual meaning: in authorial intention, in the work's historical or literary context, in the text itself, or in the reader (14).

In framing *La novia del viento* as a novel it is helpful to move beyond the essentializing and reductive tendencies that underlie these models of genre and to bear in

mind Bakhtin's observation that the novel is the most heterogenous of genres.⁵² By making a statement of generic identity which it later undermines, this text casts into relief the break point of such a flexible genre. Both the readers addressed in “Digresión” and those outside it in the world of literary criticism take issue with the classification of the text as a novel. In framing itself within a genre which it goes on to both follow and resist, readers have chosen either to revise their definitions of the novelistic, for example by including metafictional discourse as an acceptable textual feature or behavior, or by refusing to recognize the text as a novel.

Reading *La novia* as an example of the *género intermedio*, however, makes possible a richer view of both this text and of genre's capacity to generate meaning by viewing the text's apparently contradictory traits as simultaneous channels and layers of meaning. A fruitful approach to genre, I propose, will not attempt to pin down the characteristics or boundaries of the text but rather will provide an overlapping series of modes and manners of meaning. Whereas much critical energy has been devoted to defining the genre of the avant-garde novel or to dismissing texts on charges of generic indeterminacy or miscegenation, my approach will be to explore the range of generic strategies at play in the text. I will approach *La novia del viento* as a novel but not only as a novel, that is, by reading each of its sections and their generic tapestries both alone and in relation to the others they accompany.

In this context Monika Fludernik's 2000 article “Genres, Text Types, or Discourse Modes? Narrative Modalities and Generic Categorization” proposes a tripartite model of

⁵² See particularly the essays “Discourse in the Novel” and “Epic and the Novel” in *The Dialogical Imagination*.

genre.⁵³ This model, which marries literary and linguistic theory, provides a strategy for accepting generic indeterminacy while permitting us to analyze the construction and effect of its various components on the word through the textual levels. Fludernik identifies three layers of a text. The first layer is the macro-genre or discourse type, which is “constituted by the functions of communication” (n.pag.) I include communication among characters as well as between narrator and reader in this category, which provides a framework for analyzing the conversation between the protagonists. The second category consists of traditional generic expectations and the uses made of them, such as the reader protests in “Digresión de Epimeteo” and the consequent framing of the novel's last section. Fludernik defines the last category as “Discourse modes on the surface level of texts: ... the function, for instance of an argumentative or descriptive passage, within the schema of the specific genre,” which I use as a grounding for exploring the metatextual function of “Digresión de Epimeteo” (Fludernik n. pag.) The multilayered generic fabric of *La novia del viento* thus provides the opportunity to examine genre on a linguistic, pragmatic, and literary micro- and macro-level.

Rather than pinning down a definition or an explanation of the text the macro level provides an aerial view that maps out connections and conflicts from both a synchronic and a diachronic perspective, thus allowing for the coexistence of mutually-exclusive interpretations. In terms of genre the macro level of a text can be mapped out by using Gerard Genette's model of transtextuality, comprised of five types of textual function which provide a particularly useful set of avenues for exploring the complex web of

⁵³ Fludernik's article provides a summary of the linguistic approaches to genre whose value, I believe, lies in allowing us to step outside of the traditional dilemma of genre as a taxonomic system operating on the level of the text in order to examine the concurrent channels of meaning functioning both independently on the local and in concert on the global level.

generic interactions characterizing Jarnés' *género intermedio*. Each of the five key concepts—*intertextuality*, *paratextuality*, *architextuality*, *metatextuality*, and *hypertextuality*—traces a field of mechanisms of signification posited as interaction. This model is particularly appropriate for the study of Jarnés as it provides language to both tease apart and relate a variety of functions operating simultaneously in texts classified as belonging to the *género intermedio*. Genette's five concepts represent recurrent characteristics of Jarnés' work which have been seen as disruptive to textual integrity. This model, however, provides a framework for viewing multiplicity as a series of concurrent transmissions of signification rather than a chaos of dispersive forces.

One such mechanism is the model of the architext as generic self-situating strategies. A text may contain a series of coexisting yet contradictory architextual cues which function as genre markers, that is, as road signs for interpretation that together form a genre of their own.⁵⁴ Reading *La novia del viento* as a novel in accordance with the genre printed on its cover is immediately problematized by the epigraph which precedes the table of contents:

...No recuerdo haber leído cosa alguna acerca de “*La novia del viento*”... ¿A qué labriego aragonés se le ocurrió llamar así a un cerro? Tal vez haya sido analfabeto, pero --eso sí-- ha resultado ser un poeta. ¿Hay, en torno a ese cerro, alguna romántica leyenda? No sé. No la conozco (n. pag.)

Thus *La novia del viento* is framed by an epigraph, a type of paratext whose function is ambivalent: located in the middle of the paratextual apparatus after the title page and before a section listing the chapter and subchapter headings, the epigraph can be read in several ways depending on who the reader decides is speaking: the flesh-and-

⁵⁴ The concept of genre markers is developed in Derrida's “The Law of Genre.” I propose that Genette's model of transtextuality, comprised of five types of textual function, may be used to analyze the varieties and effects of genre markers.

blood author, the implied author, or the narrator. Determining the speaker of the epigraph determines its function. For example, when read as a note from the real author its ambiguity disappears and the epigraph serves as an explanation of textual origin thus providing the context for interpretation of the tale that follows. Such is the case in the anonymous review which unquestioningly asserts that the novel was inspired by a hill in Jarnés' homeland, thus erasing the generic ambiguity suggested by the epigraph itself: the text is not to be read as a legend (a genre combining historiography, fiction, and collective cultural authority) but rather as the fictional product of a single author inspired, in Romantic fashion, by nature, and nostalgia (n.a. n.pag.). In this sense, authority is taken away from the tale and is focused back on the author. Ildefonso-Manuel Gil, writing in 1979, also accepts the author of the epigraph as the author of the novel, noting: “la descripción de una colina que da nombre al libro no permite una identificación, pese a que el autor en texto marginal asegura que se trata de un nombre real” (129).⁵⁵ This dual positioning of the text as simultaneously both fictional and factual straddles the essential division Gérard Genette has identified between genres in *Fiction and Diction*. As we shall see, this ontological ambivalence appears as a common thread among the three works in the *género intermedio* to be analyzed: *La novia del viento*, *Teoría del zumbel*, and *Libro de Esther*.

The question of audience is inscribed in genre as well: a reader who knows that the hill is not real necessarily frames the entire text as fictional. Gil overlooks the separation this knowledge provides between the physical author and the author of the epigraph: Benjamín Jarnés knew the hill did not exist, yet the speaker of the epigraph grants it a

⁵⁵ Gil notes that “Andrómeda” section contains references to imaginary locations as well as to real places. Although Gil does not make note of it, “Andrómeda” begins in a fictional location and moves progressively towards the real, culminating in specific places as the characters return to the city (Gil 129).

real-world status underpinned by historicity: the apocryphal Aragonese peasant who named the hill serves as a witness to its presence through time and space. By linking the novel's title to an ostensibly real place in the natural world of Jarnés' rural origins, it invokes autobiography by aligning the speaker with the biography of the putative author.⁵⁶ The particularity of this environment and its physical and conceptual distance from the reality of the 1940 Mexico City of its publication grant authority to the speaker: he possesses knowledge of this fictional world that his readers lack. The epigraph grants gravitas to the story it frames by establishing the hill as worthy of inspiring a legend. At the same time it opens the question of the genre of the story that will follow: is *La novia del viento* the legend the narrator of the epigraph is seeking? Or is it a purely fictional invention created to fill that void? The ambiguity of the relationship of the epigraph to the story that follows highlights the link between the position of the narrator and the genre of the narrated.

An additional function of the epigraph is to characterize its speaker: he or she is a knowledgeable individual for whom reading is the primary source of authority and transmission of knowledge: as he or she has not read anything regarding the hill, he implies, the peasant who named it may have been illiterate. At the same time the speaker implies that the hill was named by a specific individual who then created its story. In this way the epigraph simultaneously sets up and undermines the genre of *La novia del viento* by attributing authorship to this peasant thus violating a basic generic characteristic of legend, which is characterized by the untraceability of origin and ownership. By raising and then destabilizing the issue of genre, I suggest, the epigraph foregrounds its

⁵⁶ This blurring of roles and identities between flesh-and-blood author, narrator, and fictional character helps sustain the balanced ambivalence between the planes of fiction and reality which characterize the three works in the *género intermedio* examined in this project.

importance as a framework for reading and opens the possibility of a model of genre that allows for continual switching.

The text also provides another sort of generic transgression, whose subtlety imbues it with the sense of originality that posits genre as the protagonist of “Andrómeda”: the words and actions of the protagonists are themselves generically inappropriate. E.D. Hirsch provides the vocabulary for this pragmatic model of genre by positing it as a situationally-based code of etiquette, which lacks the power to enforce appropriate behavior but attempts to sanction impropriety (34). As discourse, the characters’ speech is necessarily genre-marked. That is to say, the situation in which their dialogue takes place imposes its own field of acceptable speech acts. At the same time Julio and Carmela attempt to impose competing genres, each resisting the role the other tries to assign him or her. For example when Julio resists rescuing Star, preferring to call a taxi, she herself is forced out of her role as damsel in distress. Calling attention to the gap between the situation as read from the standpoint of literary clichés and the words and actions of the reluctant protagonist, Star complains “Poco le entusiasmo su papel de héroe” (25). Julio responds, “Perdone. Pero todos los encantos de usted solo son ahora para mí un fardo de sesenta kilogramos de belleza, peso neto” (25). In referring to the young woman as nothing more than a burdensome load to be carried, Julio breaks norms of both interpersonal and generic etiquette. In addition, the characters’ struggle to establish their roles through a common genre of interaction highlights the nature of genre as a both producer and product of the relationship among setting and interlocutors. Freedman and MacDonald explain the pragmatic effect of genre as a regulator of interactions:

A genre is a way of speaking; it organizes the relative positions of interlocutors, what they do to or for one another, possible uptakes and consequences. 'Genre' is therefore a way of describing the 'politics' —that is the tactics and strategies— that play out relative positions of power (53).

The inappropriateness of their words reveals the existence of an underlying system of norms. By examining the ways in which characters continually violate the context of their interaction, the role of interactional genre reveals its presence as an intratextual feature of literature.

This foregrounding of genres in conflict in “Andrómeda” produces the effect of unconventionality and originality which mark it as an avant-garde text, requiring an ever-shifting horizon of expectations for both the text-reader and the interactants within the textual space. In contrast, “Brunilda en llamas” adheres to the intention announced in “Digresión de Epimeteo” to follow realist narrative and generic conventions. The resulting lack of continuity between the first and last chapters of the novel reveals not only the effects of genre, but most importantly reveals that genre is not a means of classification imposed on a text but is rather an active pragmatic field governing both the interior textual world and its dialogue with the reader.

Studies to date have generally focused on identifying the presence of generic instability or ambiguity, frequently viewed as a defining characteristic of the Postmodern text. This phenomenon may take the form of a violation of generic expectations: John Barth's *Lost in the Funhouse* exemplifies the text which revels in its own artifice, thus destroying the “novelistic illusion” of a complete and cohesive reality. The mixing of genres may also take the form of what has been called the *pastiche* model: a combination of different genres within a single text which problematizes the question of identification of text as a whole. For example, the coexistence of religious, historical, philosophical

and erotic discourses within Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* combines with the thematic focus on a murder mystery allow the text to be placed simultaneously in several categories. Yet whether the text is identified as detective story, historical novel, memoir or simply a book, one comes no closer to an understanding of the ways in which generic multiplicity is produced by the text.

La novia del viento presents a model of generic multiplicity unaccounted for by descriptive or prescriptive theories of genre. The generic quality of the text does not reside in the existence of a short story within a novel nor upon the inclusion of various subgenres but rather in its demonstration of the effects of genre. One aspect of *La novia del viento*'s value as a site for the study of genre lies in the attempt to account for the apparent lack of continuity between the first and the last chapters, bridged by the self-conscious "Digresión de Epimeteo." These sections are linked both through the protagonist, Julio, and through thematic consistency, yet there is a discomfiting feeling of mismatch between "Andrómeda" and "Brunilda en llamas." This lack of continuity has yet to be accounted for in critical literature, and may in fact explain the lack of scholarly attention devoted to the novel.

La novia del viento begins with Julio, a young man walking through the evening forest. A topographer, he suffers from a sort of *deformación profesional*: he needs to identify and classify the elements that surround him. Interrupted by a cry that he cannot identify as animal or human, he seeks its source and comes across a naked woman bound to a tree. Fortunately he is immediately able to classify the cry, the woman and the situation: she is Ruben's Andrómeda, and therefore he must act as Perseus and save her. The complicated task of untying the woman tires him, and so he must go to town for a

cab instead of carrying her off to safety. The pair ride around in the taxi, waiting for shops to open so that the woman—now dubbed Star by Julio, as she prefers not to reveal her name—can acquire clothing and makeup and re-enter society. When she is finished dressing, Julio recognizes her not as a star, but as a minor light: she is a cabaret singer whose promotional photo the young man has carried in his pocket all along. Thus Star becomes Carmela, who invites Julio to accompany her. Exhausted from a sleepless night, Julio declines.

The second section, entitled “Digresión de Epimeteo” begins with a summary of “Andrómeda” and continues with a list of readers’ complaints, all of which demand more information about the plot and characters. The section ends with the chronicler’s promise to continue the story in a way that will satisfy the demands of his critics, and a return to the story of Julio. This self-conscious reflection on the process of the composition of the text itself is an example of a specific metafictional strategy Alistair Fowler has named the “poioumenon” (“Future” 294). The poioumenon’s purpose is to “offer opportunities to explore the boundaries of fiction and reality—the limits of narrative truth” (1989 372).⁵⁷

The final section of the novel, entitled “Brunilda en llamas,” brings Julio to a summer spa where he meets a mysterious young painter named Brunilda. Julio befriends her father, and the three of them hike up the peak called ‘*La novia del viento*.’ Brunilda has heard rumors of a tryst between Julio and Carmela, and demands to see the tree to which she was bound. The growing intimacy between Julio and Brunilda is threatened when he receives a letter from Carmela, urging him to visit her. Before he leaves,

⁵⁷ This particular metafictional strategy appears in the three works in the *género intermedio* studied in this project. In addition to the section of *La novia del viento* discussed here, the narrator’s self-professed role as both transcriber and participant in *Teoría del zumbel* and the narrator’s reflections on the genesis of *Libro de Esther* as simultaneously a diary and an edited, co-authored text complicate the models of genre each text claims to embody.

Brunilda asks him to come to her studio to receive a farewell gift: a portrait of Brunilda, naked and bound to a tree in imitation of Carmela. Once the portrait has seduced Julio, he promises to remain with Brunilda.

This sequence of sections produces a sense of disjointedness. Yet this lack of fit is a challenge: to what is it due? The answer, I propose, is a lack of generic continuity that in turn provides insights into the effects of competing generic strategies. The section “Disgresión de Epimeteo” provides the key to this enigma. This section enumerates readers’ complaints about “Andrómeda,” all of which are based on the frustration of generic expectations such as the lack of characterization and traditional plot development including a progression from exposition to climax to denouement. The narrative voice, self-identified as ‘chronicler’ rather than creator in a move which aligns him with the mythical third person omniscient narrator inscribed in the realist tradition, promises to fulfill readers’ genre-bound desires by meeting the requisites of story development in the final section, “Brunilda en llamas.”

This last section follows the norms of traditional narrative by setting up a situation for which it provides internal justification, and continues by introducing consecutive moments of suspense culminating in a dramatic finale. “Brunilda en llamas” thus contrasts sharply with “Andrómeda” by fulfilling the generic norms that this latter continually calls into question, then violates.

In terms of plot development and narrative technique, “Brunilda en llamas” conforms to the model of a love story. The traditional nature of this last section removes it from the category of the avant-garde, thus alienating it from the “Andrómeda” story. In contrast, this first section is not easily classifiable: at the same time this text both is and

is not a myth, a romance, an erotic story and an epic. Strikingly, it is the text itself which sets up this generic indeterminacy by continually constructing these models, only in order to subsequently destroy them. The text calls its own genre into question, both by violating traditional norms of the models it proposes and by continually stating and undermining their status.

Yet the text also provides another sort of generic transgression, whose subtlety imbues it with the sense of originality that posits genre as the protagonist of “Andrómeda.” As we shall see, the words and actions of Julio and Carmela are themselves generically inappropriate.⁵⁸ As discourse, the characters’ speech is necessarily genre-marked. That is to say, the situation in which their dialogue takes place imposes its own field of acceptable speech acts. At the same time Julio and Carmela attempt to impose competing genres, each resisting the role the other tries to assign him. Freedman and MacDonald explain the pragmatic effect of genre as a regulator of interactions: “A genre is a way of speaking; it organizes the relative positions of interlocutors, what they do to or for one another, possible uptakes and consequences. ‘Genre’ is therefore a way of describing the ‘politics’ —that is the tactics and strategies—that play out relative positions of power” (Freedman and MacDonald 46). The inappropriateness of their words reveals the existence of an underlying system of norms. By examining the ways in which Julio and Carmela continually violate the context of their interaction, the role of interactional genre reveals its presence as an intratextual feature of literature.

⁵⁸ Hirsch provides the vocabulary for a pragmatic theory of genre by positing it as a situationally-based code of etiquette, which lacks the power to enforce appropriate behavior but attempts to sanction impropriety.

This foregrounding of genres in conflict in “Andrómeda” produces the effect of unconventionality and originality which mark it as an avant-garde text, requiring an ever-shifting horizon of expectations for both the text-reader and the interactants within the textual space. In contrast, “Brunilda en llamas” adheres to the intention announced in “Digresión de Epimeteo” to follow realist narrative and generic conventions. The resulting lack of continuity between the first and last chapters of the novel reveals not only the effects of genre, but most importantly reveals that genre is not a means of classification imposed on a text but is rather an active pragmatic field governing both the interior textual world and its dialogue with the reader.

La novia del viento is generally seen as a two part novel, interrupted by a commentary by the implied author entitled “Digresión de Epimeteo.” The question of genre, then, manifests itself in this section. Although it is formally marked as the second section of the novel, there is a general tendency to excise it from the fictional ensemble. Critics generally use generic terms to identify “Digresión” as a separate text: it has been called “an essay on the novel” in which the author speaks directly to his audience (Bernstein 100-1; Highfill, “Character,” 117-8). Whereas the self-reflexive nature of the section prompts critics such as Spires to read it as a rupture of the fictional illusion that would, if maintained, give it the status of a chapter, an approach which takes the text on its own terms –i.e. as the novel it proclaims to be—permits “Digresión” to flow as part of the text as a whole. Naomi Lindstrom’s call to reconsider the construction of theory and fiction as mutually exclusive discourses highlights the generic assumptions underlying reading which separate this section from the novel:

To call a text **metaliterary**, as is so frequently done, is to make the statement that it is noteworthy to find an essentially imaginative

piece of writing speaking about literature. The same hidden assertion is present when the work's discussion of itself is called by overused terms like **self-reflexive** or **self-referred** writing, and its discussion of other texts **intertextual**, to bring out one of the most abused terms... Fictional/critical unity is a tradition well established in Ibero-language literatures. A more careful reading is necessary in order to classify it (425).

The title "Digresión de Epimeteo" places the section in a simultaneous relation of similarity and difference to the texts which flank it: whereas the reference to Epimeteo⁵⁹ provides a link to the mythological theme maintained by the titles of the other two chapters ("Andrómeda" and "Brunilda en llamas"), the word "digresión" suggests a veering off or a departure from the principal text, which may be seen as the story of Julio's adventures. At the same time, the use of the god of afterthought as a ventriloquist implies a (perhaps tongue-in-cheek) retraction or an admission of error. The possibility of the separation of the *cronista*/narrator from the implied author of the text (Epimetheus) allows for a reading which aligns the error not with the telling of the story but with its reception: the 'lectores zoilecos' failed to read "Andrómeda" properly. Viewing the effective nature of genre as the protagonist of the narration thus repositions "Digresión" as central to the novel: it is the realist-centered readers who are off track.

The placement of the section further underscores its status as an integral part of the text: it does not stand outside of the story as a preface, nor is the speaker's voice identified through labeling as an "Author's Note" or introduction. By being named and numbered in relation to the preceding and following sections "Disgresión de Epimeteo" is integrated into the fiction. Interestingly this formal division may unwittingly provoke the tendency to excise it from the novel. Yet interpretation is governed by location, and the

⁵⁹ Epimetheus, the husband of Pandora, is also known as 'the god of afterthought.'

physical and thematic situating of the text provides a frame for its reading.⁶⁰ “Digresión de Epimeteo” stands within *La novia del viento*, and any study of the novel must incorporate a discussion of this second chapter.

The relationship of this section to the text as a whole is further established by the narrator, who situates himself within the fictional world by giving himself the mythological name of “Epimeteo.” Our narrator carefully separates himself from the author by labeling himself as a “cronista”: he is not the creator of the events he describes, but rather a reporter. Whereas his text selectively includes or excludes information (leading to the reader dissatisfaction which theoretically prompts Epimeteo to write his “Digresión”), he does not *create* events. The narrator locates the story of Julio and Carmela in a real world in which characters live outside the confines of the text: demands for more information are registered from a professional driver “que – al parecer – no logró recibir las inmediatas confidencias del indiscreto camarada” (68).

This section, then, serves to appease readers who were not satisfied with the information provided by the “cronista.” His report left out facts that his audience considered interesting or important, and left open the possibility of ‘indecent’ conduct on the part of Julio and Carmela. The narrator agrees to change his style in order to “calmar las ansias de verdad histórica que suelen acometer al buen lector” adding, in an ironic tone, “– y censor de novelas” (69). The reference to novels – in other words, to fiction rather than faithful reporting—leads to the foregrounding of the question of genre. The narrator goes on to recognize that the inclusion of details expected by the traditional reader may change his writing from chronicle to fiction. His writing will satisfy

⁶⁰ See Freadman’s “Untitled (On Genre)” and Ian Reid’s “Genre and Framing” for a discussion of the role of place in interpretation.

convention-bound readers and equally closed-minded censors only “Suponiendo... que esta crónica de una noche lunática resulte ser una novela” (70).

Genre, then, is inextricably bound up with reader expectations. The failure of “Andrómeda” to please a certain audience is due to its transgression of generic ‘etiquette’ (what a text is expected to do and to avoid) both through the inclusion of inappropriate language (such as the erotic description of Carmela’s naked body) and the omission of expected information (“¿Quién es esa mujer?” “¿Cómo fue su vida anterior y posterior?”) (68). Interestingly, it may be this same lack of fit between reader expectations and text which has prompted critics to view “Digresión de Epimeteo” as a commentary on the novel rather than an integral part of the text. The bulk of this section does not serve to continue the central plot of “Andrómeda,” but instead focuses on this first section and its reception. The narrator emerges to discuss the text, yet whereas this sort of unmasking, of self-consciousness and reflexivity works falls into the genre of commentary it does not necessarily fall outside of the novelistic. As Bakhtin has noted, the novel is characterized by the combination of genres; it is inherently heterogeneous (“Discourse in the Novel” 261). Self-commentary, then, may be incorporated as a novelistic discourse; in fact self-reference and reflexivity are generally seen as genre markers of the avant-garde text.

In fact, “Digresión de Epimeteo” continually calls attention to the role of genre in reading, advocating the transgression of expected norms. The narrator praises the breakdown of predictability based on generic expectations, casting “Andrómeda”’s anticlimactic ending as a refreshing stylistic breakthrough. The innovative nature of the story’s lack of closure was

...placenteramente leída. Sobre todo por algunos expertos, ya cansados de leer esas historias pasionales que se detienen golosamente en el punto y hora en que el héroe acaba de desnudar al objeto amado. ¡Con qué vehemencia elogiaban esta nueva modalidad en desenlaces novelescos!” (67)

The recognition of something new necessarily implies the previous existence of a field of expectations, whether or not they are conscious.

It is at these sites of difference that genre manifests itself. Yet the understanding of genre presented in *La novia del viento* shifts the focus from a prescriptive model characterized by the attempt to locate norms and boundaries to a rich and productive exploration of the operation of genres. In a discussion of genre, Todorov observes that “for there to be a transgression, the norm must be apparent” (*Fantastic* 8.) This statement profits from a bit of tempering, for example by noting that inappropriate textual strategies *become* apparent through transgression. The failure of “Andrómeda” to meet readers’ expectations, then, simultaneously serves to trace the outer limits of the traditionally novelistic and highlights the possibilities for pushing them back.

This double function is especially productive in the investigation of the ‘novelistic,’ characterized by Bakhtin as the only genre whose limits have not been reached. The study of the novel, he proposes, is the site for the investigation into the nature not only of genre but also of ‘literature’: “the novel is a developing genre... the novel is in the vanguard of change. The novel may thus serve as a document for gauging the lofty and still distant destinies of literature’s future enfolding” (“Discourse” 261). In this way reading the three sections of *La novia del viento* as a novel—that is, choosing to frame the text in the way it frames itself—poses a challenge. What, then, does the apparent lack of stylistic continuity among the three chapters reveal about the nature of the novel? About the nature of literature?

By starting with “Digresión de Epimeteo” we are immediately confronted with the central issue of the text: generic transgression is both discussed (in terms of readers’ frustrated expectations) and exemplified through the combination of summary, commentary and narration which composes the chapter. By beginning the continuation of the story in the middle of “Digresión de Epimeteo” the narrator reaffirms the status of the section as an integral part of the story. He frames the fictional text as a conscious attempt at generic stability in order to appease the conventional reader: “Lo que sigue debe ser leído sin miedo” (70). What follows is the transcription of Julio’s philosophical reflections on relationships between men and women, an apparent digression which serves to provide the psychological depth expected of novelistic characters. The narrator continually signals his goal of presenting a traditional text, at the same time criticizing the reader who demands this sort of writing. His interruption of the narration manifests his disdain: “Hasta aquí llegan aquella noche las reflexiones de Julio, reflexiones escritas para lectores graves, enemigos de todo humorismo” (72).

The self-consciousness of the text functions as a commentary on the traditional narration which contrasts sharply with that of “Andrómeda.” The continuation of this first section makes use of hackneyed narrative devices which reassure the conventional, plot-driven reader that the information provided forms part of an integrated plot development. By ending the subsection entitled “La vuelta de Perseo” with the statement “La aventura, fuera de él, continúa creciendo, creciendo...” the narrator assures the reader that the text is leading towards a goal (73). The ellipsis underscores the suspense needed to maintain the reader’s interest, thus foregrounding generic expectations (Tomashevsky 79).

This foreshadowing is repeated in the final lines of the third chapter. Julio, having manifested his intention to eliminate all adventure and limit his involvement in the potentially turbulent area of romance to finding a passive woman devoid of dangerous curiosity, closes the chapter with the declaration “¿Qué nueva aventura mítica me aguarda? Si ella viene, yo la estrangularé en la cuna!” (79). In the context of the traditional novel, this determination by the protagonist is conditioned by its location in the middle of the text. The reader knows that the story will continue for another fifty pages, and has been made aware that another “adventure” awaits Julio; therefore these lines are read as the foreshadowing of plot developments that will contradict the protagonist’s resolutions. In this way, “Brunilda en llamas” is framed as *novela rosa* -- one of the most popular and formulaic genres-- before it has begun. The conventional reader, tipped off by these markers of generic identity, now knows what to expect.

“Brunilda en llamas” is thus doubly framed as a romance, both from within (by the expectations produced by “Digresión de Epimeteo”) and by the intertextual reference in its title. The combination of this generic marking and the narrator’s stated commitment to producing a text in line with conventional reader conventions identify this section of the text as ‘story.’ “Brunilda en llamas” succeeds in fulfilling these expectations, not by including a specific set of elements but by not producing an effect of breakdown or of clash. This section, then, complements “Andrómeda” by providing a model of generic stability whose study demarcates the boundaries of the novelistic by revealing what remains inside the circle.

The section begins by locating the action in time, space and social milieu, providing background information which places the story in a contemporary frame, thus

enabling the reader to judge the verisimilitude of the story while encouraging him or her to do so: a realistic setting brings with it the expectation of realistic actions. The narration's focus on Julio and Brunilda is logically motivated in terms of the fictional context. Julio has been made the center of the resort's attention by the rumors about his nocturnal encounter with a mysterious woman, and his separation from the rest of the vacationers is underscored by his detachment from their social world: unlike the rest of the town, he does not know Brunilda's name. Brunilda's admission that her name is known by everyone highlights her position as a center of attention, a fact which is possibly due to the fact that her physical appearance as "una mujer evidentemente forastera" (88) isolates her from the rest of the vacationers.

The meeting between Julio and Brunilda, then, takes on the tone of destiny: the two misfits find their place in each other. The narrator's intervention frames the internal motivation for the encounter between these two characters by asking "¿Será que esta noche (Julio) acaba de tropezar con un excelente cómplice para seguir viviendo?" (91). As their friendship develops, their conversation is characterized by flirtatious banter and insinuations such as Brunilda's rejoinder to Julio's observation that "Su sonrisa parece de cómplice, más que de buena amiga." She responds, "¿De cómplice? ¿Qué más quisiera yo?" (91) Thus the plot follows the traditional pattern of exposition and development expected in a story. The inevitable complication takes the form of Brunilda's jealousy of Carmela, which also serves to provide a thematic link with "Andrómeda."

The reader's interest is maintained by the growing intimacy of Julio and Brunilda, which is highlighted by the suspenseful conflict provoked by Carmela's letter. The dramatic tension thus comes to a head when Brunilda declares her love for Julio by

unveiling the portrait she has painted of herself as Andromeda. Immediately, Julio understands Brunilda's offering. The two lovers are at last joined, y "comienzan a arder en la misma llama" (128). The story's final act symbolizes that destruction of the jealousy that had separated them. By destroying the portrait, Brunilda exorcises the ghost of the other woman. The past is destroyed, and the lovers are free to live happily ever after. The development and progression of the love story, then is linear and logical: two characters meet and begin to develop intimacy when an external force threatens to block their relationship, yet love overcomes all and the lovers are joined at last. "Brunilda en llamas" thus fulfills the generic expectations raised by its framing.

This seamless creation of a believable fictional world that behaves according to novelistic dictates is a tongue-in-cheek effort to appease the conventional reader who protested the inability of "Andrómeda" to fulfill his or her generic expectations. This first section of the text, praised by the narrator as a successful innovation, is characterized by generic indeterminacy. "Andrómeda" is continually identified as belonging to a specific genre, and subsequently disqualified from the place it claims for itself. Its self-reflexive construction and deconstruction provide insight into the nature of genre, its power and its limitations.

"Andrómeda" first identifies itself by its inclusion in *La novia del viento*, classified by the subtitle of "novela." Its location in a sequentially numbered set of subtexts identifies it as a part of an integrated whole. Yet its title evokes it with another genre, that of myth. This self-identification as myth chafes against its status as a chapter in a novel rather than a free-standing text: by nature, a myth is a story that has already occurred. It is finished and complete; it is not a beginning, it leaves no room for

variation, yet the first chapter of a novel is a beginning.⁶¹ How, then, to reconcile these conflicting generic expectations?

The problematic nature of genre as a theme of the novel is foregrounded from the opening lines of the chapter, where we encounter Julio dedicating his evening to classifying the sounds of nature. As Juli Highfill points out, he is reading the world (57). Julio's task is to catalogue, to identify and classify according to criteria culled from literary models. His rigid taxonomy initially allows him to inscribe order in a chaotic, decentered text: Julio seeks to "depurar la noche, tan turbia, corregir aquella indisciplina de masas vibratorias, romper aquella espesa malla de resonancias" (11). This belief in the possibility of imposing order as a method of classification echoes Aristotle's— and more recently Northrop Frye's— approach to genre, in which a set of organizing principles allows the scholar to locate each text within a single specific category.⁶²

Yet Julio's scientific approach to classification breaks down when there are two sounds that resist fitting into his generic boxes. The attempt to deduce identity from a prescriptive list of qualities that must be present in any given category fails to account for the excess. This aspect of genre manifests itself in Julio's attempt to categorize a sound which resists classification: "en el segundo (murmullo) se advertían inflexiones patéticas. Además, se producía irregularmente. Podía catalogarse, entre los ecos de procedencia literaria, por un fino matiz dramático" (13). Yet the mere presence of a particular characteristic is not sufficient to allow Julio to assign the sound to a definitive category: "Pero era preciso señalarle una exacta filiación zoológica" (13).

⁶¹ See Bakhtin's essay "Epic and the Novel" for a discussion of the relationship between temporal distance and generic stability.

⁶² See Frye's essay "Historical Criticism: Theory of Modes" in *Anatomy of Criticism* for an overview of this categorical approach to genre.

Derrida's reflections on genre seem to speak directly to Julio's dilemma: "a text (does) not belong to any genre. Every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text, there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging" (230). Julio's endeavor, therefore, can never be completely successful: he will always find a text that simultaneously fits and overrides the boundaries of any category he develops.

The same can be said about "Andrómeda" itself: it is a self-reflexive text which continually constructs and undermines its generic status. Constant thematic transgression and metagenic interruptions by both the narrator and the characters serve to propose a conception of genre as a formative—yet not prescriptive—textual feature. By crossing over generic boundaries, this text helps to locate them and, even more productively, investigates their functioning.

Julio's attempt to assign the murmur mentioned above leads to the construction of another genre: that of myth. This transition framed by the narrator, who informs us "principia la tragedia" (16). Yet the tragedy has already occurred: Carmela has already been abducted and abandoned. The narrator's guiding comment, then, seems to be directed to the experience of the reader (who is about to hear of the 'tragedy') rather than the action of the story. This 'leading of the reader' combines with the title of the following section, "Nacimiento del héroe" in order to establish myth as the active generic framework.

Myth is by definition a known story whose development has been rendered unchangeable through its consecration as historical patrimony. It is also characterized by its location in what Bakhtin has called the 'absolute past;' that is at an unbridgeable

temporal distance from the reader.⁶³ Yet “Andrómeda”’s narrator deflates the text’s status as myth by situating the story in the modern era. He uses a twentieth-century metaphor to describe the light on the ‘mythical’ figure’s body: “Y la luna sobre toda la piel. En hábil electricista escogió el árbol, frente al reflector” (18).

Julio himself has recognized the genre: the similarities between the naked woman tied to the tree and Rubens’ depiction of Andromeda⁶⁴ lead him to believe that he has entered the realm of myth. His words reveal support Hirsch’s understanding of the generic expectations as constitutive of understanding: instead of rushing to untie the woman who has been screaming for help, Julio asks her “¿Dónde está el dragón?” (Hirsch 74-5; *Novia* 18). Carmela’s confusion serves a double function: it leads Julio to recognize his error and mocks his blind faith in generic regularity. In this way both the narrator’s commentary and Carmela’s reaction foreground the violation of literary codes as a means of parody of conventionality.⁶⁵ Spires’ observation is clearly borne out by the critique of the reader reluctant to abandon his or her generic expectations, seen in “Digresión de Epimeteo.”

This observation resonates with Bakhtin’s description of the novel as a genre: The novel parodies other genres (precisely in their role as genres); it exposes the conventionality of their forms and their language; it squeezes out some genres and incorporates others in its own particular structure, re-formulating and re-accentuating them (“Epic and the Novel” 5).

This conception of the novel is borne out by the continual construction and destruction of generic norms which characterizes “Andrómeda.” For the model of epic romance suggested by Julio’s position as “salvador de bellezas” (23) is also destroyed as soon as it is built up.

⁶³ I am extending Bakhtin’s description of epic in “Epic and the Novel” to myth.

⁶⁴ Juli Highfill identifies the reference to Rubens’ painting (57).

⁶⁵ See Robert Spires for a discussion of the function of literary codes in *La novia del viento*.

Carmela, as a naked damsel in distress, must be a chaste virgin concerned with protecting her virtue. She therefore insists that Julio blindfold himself before attempting to untie her. Yet Julio's temporary blindness inevitably produces a situation in which Carmela's physical modesty is violated: as he cannot see, he must run his hands over her body in order to undo the knots. The narrator's language characterizes the scene as erotically charged: "De la áspera corteza del olivo, pasaba a la fina corteza de la mujer. Recorría las dos epidermis, alternativamente, sin detenerse en ninguna, por razones opuestas. Pasaba por ambas zonas con el menor desnivel térmico posible" (20). The sexual nature of the process is recognized not only by Julio, but also by Carmela and the narrator: "Un instante ella se sintió ofendida. Julio recorría la más ondulante trayectoria que es posible recorrer, desde el pecho a los tobillos" (20). The irruption of eroticism provokes a transgression of genre: the scene changes from one of chivalrous rescue to a sexual fantasy.

The mythical tone of the scene is quickly reestablished when Carmela is freed: "Unos momentos permaneció aún con los brazos en alto, como pidiendo venganza del ultraje" (20). Yet just as quickly, the text mocks its own conventionality by demystifying Carmela. The narrator reduces her from powerful mythical figure to physically material woman: Carmela's dramatic posture "era, sencillamente, un poco de rigidez" (20). This continual marking and transgressing of generic models suggests that whereas a particular fictional moment may be fruitfully colored by the associations carried by convention, no single generic discourse is capable of expressing textual meaning.

The shock produced by 'Andromeda's' physicality sheds light on another of the functions of genre, that characters' actions and sensations are limited by 'typing' the text.

By continually casting Julio in the role of hero, the narrator activates a set of characteristics associated with this archetype.⁶⁶ Yet Julio consistently defies his role: he is too weak to carry off his “redimida” and must leave her alone in the woods, abandoned for the second time. Julio underscores his inability to serve as protector by providing her with stones so that she may defend herself from wild dogs (26).

When Julio announces his inability to carry out his heroic role and his decision to go off in search of a car, Carmela attempts to dissuade him from leaving her alone by trying to impose a genre which identifies her as a helpless victim and prescribes protective behavior on Julio’s part. “¿Qué va a ser de mí?... ¡Sola, en medio de la noche!” (25-6) Carmela’s words manifest Bakhtin’s observation that “certain features of language take on the flavor of a given genre” (“Discourse in the Novel” 289). The implication of Carmela’s words as an attempt to prescribe behavior is recognized by Julio as forming part of the discourse of melodrama. Genre, then, is not a descriptive category but rather a framework for action as described by Thomas Beebee: “genre gives us not understanding in the abstract or passive sense, but use in the pragmatic or active sense” (14). Julio’s resistance to Carmela’s words, then, is a rejection of a model of interaction.

The intersection between genre and interaction manifests itself not only in expectations of behavior but also in the sort of language appropriate to a given situation. “Andrómeda’s” exploration of the effects of generic instability extends to the social realm as well. The generic force of situation manifests itself in Julio’s inability to give Carmela a satisfactory answer when, upon awakening in the dark back seat of the car, she asks where they are. Julio replies “En el kilómetro 4 de la carretera de Augusta a

⁶⁶ This conclusion was inspired by Bernstein’s observation that Jarnés uses mythical figures “to endow his characters with a personality” (90).

Valleclaro. Entre los 41⁰-4'-15" y 42⁰-47'-20" de latitud Norte, y los 1⁰-30'-12" u 3⁰-58'-53" de longitud Este..." (45-6) Julio's explanation fails: Carmela doesn't understand the answer because its technical form, while acceptable in Julio's professional life, is generically inappropriate to a conversation involving a layperson. Julio's apology recognizes that his was not a error of information but of situational appropriacy: "Perdone. Son datos exactos, aunque impertinentes" (46). Thus genre functions by regulating not only the actions and characteristics of fictional characters, but also the interaction between them.

Language as well as setting implies genre, as manifested by the change in roles observed by Julio and Carmela once the sun rises, finding them back in the modern world of Augusta. Their return to society brings about a change in the genre of the situation: the recognition of their presence in the twentieth century "les hizo volver sobre sí mismos, revisar, rectificar su papel de redentor y de víctima, trocándolo por el de dos amables camaradas que regresan de una excursión nocturna" (51). Context, then, acts to regulate genre.

The interrelation of theme and discourse also reveals itself in the narrator's ability to recast the text as a *novela rosa* through the use of language. After sharing breakfast, Carmela and Julio's attitude towards each other changes, as manifested by the narrator's commentary: "Sonrieron a un tiempo. Era la primera sonrisa colectiva... Cada sonrisa, se engarzaba a una coquetería, a una mirada, que ambos creían profunda" (51). Thus emerges the relationship modeled by the repeated theme of the saving of the damsel in distress: the hero and the heroine fall in love. This context combines with the mention of coquetry and synchronized smiles to predict a kiss, a wedding and a life lived happily

ever after. Yet these generic expectations are immediately destroyed by the narrator's breaking with the romantic atmosphere he has created: "Pensaban haber ahondado ya en sus almas, y todo era fruto de un caliente, un suculento desayuno" (51). Once again, the 'reality' of the fictional situation resists generic prescriptions.

The juxtaposition of genres manifested in the above-mentioned quote exemplifies "Andrómeda's" performance of generic transgression: a situation is defined which activates generic expectations, and these expectations are immediately undermined by the transgression of generic boundaries. Having been placed by "Digresión de Epimeteo" in contrast to the generic regularity of "Brunilda en llamas," "Andrómeda" addresses the challenge of creating something new with materials already tinged with connotations. The use of a mythological reference as the chapter's title foregrounds the play of intertextuality that inheres not only in every work of fiction, but also in language itself. Although referring to a different aspect of novelistic creation, Bakhtin describes the dilemma of the writer's pursuit of originality: "For the novelist working in prose, the object is already entangled in someone else's discourse about it, it is already present with qualifications, an object of dispute that is conceptualized and evaluated vigorously ("Discourse in the Novel" 330).

"Andrómeda"'s value, then, lies in its having found a way to exploit the generic expectations attached to textual language, themes and figures: by continually constructing and undercutting hackneyed generic stereotypes, the text demonstrates the central role of genre in fiction. By highlighting the generic expectations inherent in any textual situation, the sites of generic transgression which stud "Andrómeda" are windows into the functioning of genre as a productive textual feature. Genre, rather than being an

essence or a list of identifying traits, constitutes the text. It operates both inside the text by framing characters' speech, action and qualities, and outside the text in the form of reader expectations culled from the field of intertextuality.

From its criticism of convention-bound readers to its parody of Julio's attempt to perform a topography of the world-as-text, *La novia del viento* demonstrates the fallacy of viewing genre as a set of textual characteristics, whether these are seen as prescriptive or descriptive classificatory devices. This novel both proposes and presents a reconceptualization of genre as the producer of textual meaning. The limitations of particular genres, then, serve not as restrictive boundaries but rather as fields of meaning whose creative force lies in their intersections and interaction, recognition and exploitation. By positing genre as the protagonist of narrative, *La novia del viento* succeeds in a seemingly impossible task: the creation of originality through the exploitation of stereotypes.

Chapter 3

“Integralismo” as Metaphor for the género intermedio in Teoría del zumbel

Published in 1930, *Teoría del zumbel* stands out among Jarnés’ writings for several reasons. As was customary in the period, fragments of *Teoría del zumbel* were released in literary magazines such as *Revista de Occidente* before the novel as a whole was released. From 1929 through early 1930 the novel was introduced through excerpts published in Mexico and Spain. However, unlike many of Jarnés’ other works, *Teoría del zumbel* was not continually reworked, expanded or revised after publication as a novel. No scholars or bibliographers have located evidence of further development of the novel in Jarnés’ expansive bibliography of publications and private notebooks. This exception to Jarnés’ tendency to continually revise his fiction may be due to in part to *Zumbel*’s carefully-constructed shape in terms of both plot and of organization.

The text consists of several layers of paratextual and thematic frames. It opens with an epigraph in italics consisting of a short paragraph in which a child spins a top, followed by a lengthy reflection on art, in particular Romanticism, Realism, and Surrealism, and the various levels of human consciousness titled “Bajo el signo de Cáncer” and subtitled “Nota preliminar.” This essay, which may be seen as a theoretical introduction to the narrative techniques on which the subsequent novel is based, is also typeset in italics. It is followed by the first chapter, set in standard type and marked with

the title “El caballero de los espejos.” This section begins what most readers would consider the “novel proper” which in turn contains three main narratives: that of the

young lovers Blanca and Saulo, the destiny that a group of meddling elders wishes to script for the couple, and the narrator's own account of events and of their adaptation into the novel.

In addition, various states of consciousness from dreams to drunkenness create narrative levels which intersect with these three plot lines. On the level of romance novel, the story's ending is signaled thematically as well as textually through Saulo's death in a car crash. Titled "El paralítico," this chapter describes the drunken Saulo's experience of delirium and death after a car accident. As the romance between the two protagonists ends so does the novel, but a final section titled "El Caballero de la Blanca Luna (Epílogo)" continues the story in which Blanca marries one of her moral guardians thus legitimizing the child she had conceived with her young lover and returning the young woman to the world of order and virtue prescribed by the characters who had attempted to script her destiny. The text novel ends with virtually the same paragraph as that which opened the text, in which a child plays with a top. In this setting, however, the child is cast as the reincarnation of the deceased hero and the symbol of renewal and continuation. Thus the text's ending curls back on the its opening scene and reinforces the text's view of human life as a game which repeats but does not vary.⁶⁷

On a structural level, then, the novel consists of a series of frames: an epigraph, which serves as a leitmotif reappearing both during Saulo's experience of death and again as the last paragraph of the epilogue, a "Nota preliminar," five chapters and an epilogue. The plot begins in the first chapter and focuses on the hyperbolically virginal and overprotected Blanca, raised by a triad of keepers of order. Like Blanca, each of these

⁶⁷ It is important to note that the epigraph, which brackets the fictional world, includes the essay-like "Nota preliminar" within the text rather than setting it apart.

characters is an archetype rather than an individual. Julia, her spinster stepsister and moral jailer, is a model of virtuous femininity: chaste and dedicated to good works. Yet the same narrator who builds Julia's character in such glowing and predictable terms punctures this illusion by presenting the less noble motivations behind her behavior.

Blanca and Saulo meet by coincidence as the young woman, who has accompanied her half-sister and moral guardian Julia on a health cure at a rural spa, is walking along the path to the chapel. Saulo retrieves the book Blanca accidentally drops and pays her a flirtatious compliment. Blanca reports the incident to Julia, whose initial disapproval is swayed by the discovery that he is single, dissolute, and wealthy. Julia forms a committee to take charge of both Blanca's and Saulo's fate by bringing them together. Julia, Father Valdivia, the spa's medical director, and the narrator/novelist meet to "redactar el plan de rectificación vital de Saulo" (88).

The discourse employed in this scene invokes the legalistic genre, legitimizing the participants' roles and granting their machinations moral authority through the presumption of disinterest. This highly-codified genre functions euphemistically by depersonalizing the motivations of the interested parties and allows them to preserve their moral justifications for such unethical tactics as hiding Saulo's immoral behavior from Blanca's father. The narrator/novelist transcribes this agreement:

Segundo. Enumerar al recto fiscal las condiciones físicas y económicas de Saulo. En evitación de alarmas inútiles, había que atenuar algún detalle escabroso de la intimidad del joven. Su afición a reproducir en vivo las escenas mitológicas debía ser cautamente omitida (89).

In his aftermentioned role of "espectador puro," the narrator is limited to reporting what he observes yet in an example of what Bakhtin has denominated "double-voicing" the

dissonance between the characters' stated role as adjudicators of morality and their own breach of the values they ostensibly defend casts the scene in the mode of satire.⁶⁸

Satire differs from parody in its critical attitude towards its object, and this attitude is voiced directly by the narrator as he explicitly breaks out of his role for the first time. After reporting the committee's second point above, the narrator opens parenthesis to separate his role as witness from that of participant and directs the following comments to the reader: "Yo me opuse al empleo de este método de información, tan solapado. Era preciso decirlo todo. Era lo noble, lo justo, aunque Dios y la *Banca Bermúdez* no pudieran luego llegar a un consorcio" (89). By expressing ethical disapproval of the actions of the committee, the narrator simultaneously reveals their hypocrisy and stakes his own position as a trustworthy character. Typographically identified as an aside or a digression, the narrator's intromission here allows the novel to continue unimpeded by his commentary thus implying that he is a witness who does not interfere with the actions of the characters. In this sense the narrator is also contraposed to the members of the "committee" whose purpose is precisely to direct the lives of Blanca and Saulo for their own benefit.

The narrator's opposition to human intervention in destiny echoes the theme of the top-string that gives the novel both its structure and its title. Writing about the genesis of *Zumbel* for the newspaper *Cosmópolis* in 1930, Jarnés provides a rare declaration of intention for the novel's message: "Sólo las fuerzas vitales pueden modificar el destino de un hombre, sólo la carne y la sangre; nunca fuerzas sobrevenidas, aunque traigan la pretensión de venir en nombre de la divinidad, en nombre de toda tradición elaborada aparte de la vida" (*Zumbeles* n.pag.). Yet the narrator is also the novelist, and as such

⁶⁸ See Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* for a discussion of this concept.

should have the power to decide the characters' words and actions.⁶⁹ In this scene, the narrator criticizes both literary conventions and the use of codified rhetoric as a moralizing strategy. His opposition to misleading Blanca's father is overruled by the spa director's insistence that

el método aconsejado por el padre Valdivia fue siempre utilizado por los más ilustres siervos de Dios... Que sólo mentir es punible, pero la técnica de administrar la verdad es ardua. Que una verdad escamoteada puede redundar en la mayor gloria de Dios... Ante estas frases y un sabroso versículo evangélico donde se hablaba de las serpientes tuve que enmudecer (89).

In this battle of perceptions the narrator is overwhelmed by labyrinthine religious discourse, which is revealed as more powerful than reality itself.

Similarly, the narrator challenges the validity of literary models as a framework for communicating experience. Upon retrieving her dropped copy of *Camino de salvación*, Saulo's words to Blanca had been, "¿Es una broma del cielo? Porque soy un descarriado, guapa... No dejo yo el camino si usted es mi cicerone" (84). In planning to persuade Blanca's father to join their plot, the committee members decide to convince him that "el piropo inicial fue un auténtico aviso del cielo" (88). Within both the committee's discourse of religious redemption and the genre of the romance novel, such a conclusion is plausible.

Generally classified as a novel although it is the text that most patently experiments with traditional notions of genre, *Zumbel's* generic status has not been analyzed in depth by critics. Over the years the text has most frequently identified as a

⁶⁹ This metanovelistic dimension created by the locating of the author within the text and subject to the influence or control of autonomous characters invokes Miguel de Unamuno's *Niebla* as an intertext and reflects a trend traced by Robert Spire in *Beyond the Metafictional Mode: Directions in the Modern Spanish Novel*.

novel, following the subtitle “Novela” which appeared on its cover when published in 1930 despite the text’s own foregrounding of generic indeterminacy. Víctor Fuentes notes, “Precisamente, esta novela es una de las de más marcado carácter novelesco” (*Obra* 38). *Zumbel*, however, has been identified with a series of novelistic subgenres from ranging from the metaphysical to the intellectual, the surrealistic and the metaphysical.⁷⁰ Only two critics, however, have placed the text in the category of Jarnés’ *género intermedio*: María Pilar Martínez Latre and Emilia de Zuleta. Martínez Latre follows Zuleta in identifying *Zumbel* along with *Libro de Esther* as the two examples of this particularly Jarnesian genre which, she explains, “se separa de los géneros literarios consagrados o ... participa por igual de todos ellos” (44). In her brief discussion of genre in Jarnés’ prose, Martínez Latre employs this definition of the *género intermedio* to explain the apparent difficulty of classifying *Zumbel* and *Esther*. This description, however, is not particular to Jarnés but rather applies to much of avant-garde prose. As Gustavo Pérez Firmat has noted, “much of the criticism of vanguard fictions posits a genre without genre, a collection of similar works that fits under no particular rubric. In this view the only thing that defines these works is their uniform recalcitrance to generic definition” (11).

However, underlying both Martínez Latre’s and Pérez Firmat’s models is a taxonomic approach to genres. These critics express a vision of genre as a set of mutually-exclusive categories used to define and identify texts, echoing the first clause of Derrida’s law of genre: “Genres are not to be mixed. I will not mix genres” (220). Derrida explains, however, genre does not inhere in language and therefore cannot be enforced because his very law performs the instability of genre: his statement may be

⁷⁰ See Garibaldi, Martínez Latre, Ilie, and Bonilla Cerezo respectively.

read as a prescription ('One must not mix genres. Genres must not be mixed') or as a proclamation of intention ('Genres should not be mixed. I resolve not to mix genres'). Yet the need for a law, for a declaration of identity which will activate a frame for interpretation, reveals the impossibility of generic purity: as Anne Freadman explains, "definition is, literally, more the 'tracing of boundaries' than the discovery of an essence" (77). In other words, the act of aligning a text with a conceptual framework simultaneously invokes the excess that lies outside the boundary, signaling its engagement with other genres.⁷¹ Thus the law of genre is contravened by its counterlaw: 'the law of the law of genre,' which proclaims the inevitability of generic multiplicity. It is "a principle of contamination" which inscribes other possible generic readings along with the genre of genre into all texts (224). Derrida's conclusion proposes a framework for reading which resolves the critical dead end reached by Martínez Latre's and Pérez Firmat's shared taxonomic model of genre and which respects the difference between ambiguity and multiplicity while leaving room for a model of genre as generation of meaning: "a text cannot belong to no genre, it cannot be without or less a genre. Every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text; there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging" (230).

Derrida's theory posits genre not as a set of stylistic features or a label imposed on a text by the librarians of literary history, but rather as a field of textual actions. In contrast to the essentializing emphasis on classifying the text as a whole or on abandoning the notion of genre under the rubric of "hybridity," this acceptance of

⁷¹ Derrida attributes the necessary existence of generic impurity to the notion of the existence of 'genre markers,' which themselves belong to a genre outside of genres. I am adapting his elements of his reasoning rather than applying his theory as a whole: Derrida's formulation of the impossibility of generic purity is not "because of an abundant overflowing or a free, anarchic and unclassifiable productivity, but because of the *trait* of participation itself, because of the effect of the code and of the generic mark" (230).

multiplicity places the focus on the simultaneous operations performed by the text itself, its play and its engagement with other texts. Positioning genre as a range of signifying practices and bearers of meaning will allow us to read *Teoría del zumbel* as both a whole and its component parts through what Jerome McGann has termed *linear, spatial, and radial* reading (122). On one level, *Teoría del zumbel* may be seen as a pastiche of generic conventions: it patently mixes genres thematically, structurally, linguistically, and explicitly through directly stating its self-proclaimed status as a *novela blanca* (an apparent synonym for the *novela rosa* popular in the first quarter of the twentieth century) while simultaneously subverting this claim.⁷² As Emilia de Zuleta explains, the novel

significa dentro de la obra de Jarnés, un punto extremo de nuevas formas para el género novelesco, en la que se fuerzan los límites de la experimentación, a la vez que se los contiene en diversos planos: mediante la coexistencia de la caótica materia narrada con patrones genéricos, literarios, temáticos y símbolos tradicionales” (*Obra* 192).

Interestingly this text, in which traditional literary genres are more explicitly mixed than in any other of Jarnés' works, is accepted as a novel by critics and is never classified as belonging to the *género intermedio*. In this sense, *Teoría del zumbel* exemplifies Derrida's conception of genre, which states in part that “a text (does) not belong to any genre. Every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text, there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging” (230).

⁷² Although the narrator of *Zumbel* uses the term “novela blanca” to refer to a type of formulaic romance novel popular at the time, the description “novela rosa” is the generally accepted term. Jarnés himself may have coined the term “novela blanca” as it allows for the characterization of the female protagonist, Blanca, through metaphors of purity based on traditional associations with the color white as well as with poetic commonplaces employed in the Golden Age and Modernist work the narrator invokes as intertexts throughout the novel.

Genre is also expressed explicitly as a theme in the novel. Genette's notion of the architext is useful in analyzing the dueling claims made by the text to be both a romance novel and a parody of that genre. The romance novel also functions as a metatext as characters and the narrator openly discuss this genre's conventions as the organizing principle behind the textual world. As hypertexts, which differ from the metatext or intertext in that they may not be explicitly mentioned, Miguel de Unamuno's *Nada menos que todo un hombre* and *Niebla* provide thematic structure and an interpretative framework for the novel. Jarnés' own *Locura y muerte de nadie* also serves as a means of characterization for the protagonist, Saulo, who inhabits the universe of the Banca Bermúdez which figures in that novel. The character of Saulo is also built from intertextual material derived from the Bible: like Saul of Tarsus, this young man experiences a life-changing event which gives rise to a new person. This story underlies the metaphor of birth which frames the novel and which dovetails with the birth of Saulo's illegitimate child. Additionally, the references to *el Quijote* so common in Jarnés' work take on a particularly evident role in the form of Doctor Carrasco, whose role is to bring logic and order to Saulo's dissolute life.

For Saulo, order brings about the end of his existence. Perhaps similarly, the cohesion of the novel itself relies on the tension produced by a series of textual rebellions against generic convention and what Jerome McGann calls "linear reading" (120). For example, the inclusion of various layouts associated with narration, dialogue and drama present in *Teoría del zumbel* continually disrupts reading, cueing different expectations and reframing the nature of the language cited and the relationships among characters. This level of "spatial reading" is accompanied by the various levels of textuality outlined

above and invokes a type of interpretation that continually shifts between frames of meaning. As McGann explains,

Good readers have to read both linearly and spatially but both of those operations remain closely tied to the illusion of textual immediacy. Radial reading is the most advanced, the most difficult, and the most important form of reading because radial reading alone puts one in a position to respond actively to the text's own (often secret) discursive acts" (122).

The difficulty of reading such a text as *Teoría del zumbel* may explain why it is often praised as being one of Jarnés best works yet has not been frequently analyzed. Yet it is the balance among linear, spatial, and radial reading prompted by the text which, I suggest, provides the cohesion necessary for the text to be read as a novel. Rather than aiming to determine a single generic status or identity for the text under which each of its elements may be subsumed, my approach is not classificatory nor does it attempt to shoehorn the work as a whole into a certain category. Rather, I explore the various channels of signification which, through their simultaneous independence and coexistence, perform Jarnés' particular theory of genre as manifested through the *género intermedio*. In being accepted as a novel composed through generic multiplicity, *Teoría del zumbel* stands as a counterexample suggesting that the *género intermedio* is not a mere cutting and pasting of genres within a single text but rather a product of the relationship among them.

This model provides a framework for untangling the meanings produced by such a use of genre, and allows us to focus on the specific nature of the *género intermedio*. On one level, *Teoría del zumbel* may be seen as a pastiche of generic conventions: it patently mixes genres, thematically, structurally, linguistically, and explicitly through

directly stating its status as a *novela blanca* while simultaneously subverting this claim.

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The formal and thematic complexity of the text is composed of various layers: an epigraph, “Nota preliminar,” five chapters which combine traditional plot elements such as exposition, conflict, climax, and resolution, and a final section labeled both as a chapter and as an epilogue. Readings of *Zumbel* to date follow the novelistic impulse of treating the epigraph and “Nota preliminar” as external to the rest of the text, yet *Teoría de zumbel* frames itself quite differently. As we shall see, these “paratextual” elements in fact work together as a series of signifying practices which, in the case of *Zumbel*, challenge generically-bound notions of what is ancillary.

In addition, *Zumbel*'s categorization as a novel may have been due to the fact that the text, published as Jarnés' work began to fall from favor, appears not to have been widely read due to a combination of limited circulation and declining interest in the avant-garde novel with which Jarnés was associated. As Gustavo Pérez Firmat has demonstrated in his comprehensive study of the relationship among conceptions of literary genre, criticism, and the Hispanic avant-garde novel, “... already in 1930... vanguard fiction would be regarded as moribund or superannuated” (21). Published in that difficult year, *Zumbel*'s contemporary reception was limited, consisting of vague praise by Jarnés' friends or of dismissals such as that of Francis Douglas. When read against expectations of the traditional or social novel, the text is dismissed as unsuccessful. Writing in the

American journal *Hispania* in 1930, Douglas's review consists of a brief and somewhat inaccurate plot summary framed by an unfavorable judgment based on a preference for literary traits associated with the realist tradition:

Benjamín Jarnés, with his novel *Teoría del Zumbel*, has produced a rather cynical work... The story is told in vivid, nervous prose, there are many fine pages of description, and the character drawing is well done. However, the injection of the novelist into the story, discussing the development of events, breaks the continuity, and fails to produce an artistic effect. Considering the reputation of Jarnés, one looks to him for works of broader scope than *Teoría del zumbel* (151).

A thematically and structurally complicated text, *Zumbel* had been largely overlooked, benefitting neither from re-release nor careful critical attention until fairly recently. In his 1968 *The Surrealist Mode in Spanish Literature*, Paul Ilie provided the first in-depth analysis of the novel. Ilie views Surrealism as both a dominant literary technique and theoretical underpinning of the novel, an approach which overlooks the novel's defined plot structure and parodic relationship to the romance novel. Even as Jarnés' work as a whole began to attract renewed attention in the 1990s, this text was among the last of his major works to be re-released. In addition, scholars bringing fresh interest to Jarnés focused largely on his pre-1929 writing thus unwittingly perpetuating the author's association with the vanguard novel when in reality the bulk of Jarnés' work was produced in subsequent years and circumstances. As Juan Domínguez Lasierra's exhaustive bibliography demonstrates, reviews of Jarnés' work peaked in 1929 and dropped off sharply as the political and cultural climate of Spain shifted as the decade of the 1930s began.

In his introduction to the 2000 edition of *Teoría del zumbel* Armando Pego Puigbó frames the text within the context of Jarnés work, separating it from his early

novels which, in Pego Puigbó's view, focused on narrative innovation. He identifies *Zumbel* as the center of a trilogy focusing on the lived experience of the common Spaniard beginning with 1929's *Locura y muerte de Nadie*, a scathing portrait of the loss of the individual in the face of the dual rise of capitalism and mechanization and continuing through *Teoría del zumbel* and *Escenas junto a la muerte*. Pego Puigbó notes:

No pretendo afirmar que esta trilogía poliédrica de los problemas existenciales y estéticos de la vanguardia narrativa, tal como la asimiló y elaboró Benjamín Jarnés, se resuman en *Teoría del zumbel*. Quizás represente, sin embargo, su síntesis más completa ("Introduction" 25).

As we shall see, it is precisely *Teoría del zumbel*'s simultaneous rupture and continuity of convention which produces its portrait of humanity's crisis of modernity.⁷³

Changes in literary trends and terminology have allowed for new classifications of the text as a variety of novel, as seen in Ródenas de Moya's categorization of *Zumbel* as "metanovela" ("Novelistas" 7). Yet pre-postmodern critics wrestled with the traditional generic classifications available to them, and the text proved problematic for critics who had read the text closely. Commenting on Emilia de Zuleta's article "La novela de Benjamín Jarnés" Víctor Fuentes notes, "Lo que no comprendemos, sin embargo, es por qué la autora elige *Teoría del zumbel* y la coloca con el *Libro de Esther* para ilustrar el género intermedio. Precisamente esta novela es una de las de más marcado carácter novelesco" ("Obra" 132).

Written in 1963 Zuleta's article describes Jarnés' novels in general, and brings to bear for the first time the relevance of this author's *género intermedio* as a framework for

⁷³ See José Manuel del Pino's *Montajes y fragmentos: una aproximación a la narrativa española de vanguardia* (1995) for a detailed discussion of the relationship between the use of these narrative techniques and changes in the perception of experience caused by technological and social changes of the 1920s and 1930s in Spain.

understanding his writings. Zuleta unearths this term, coined by Jarnés in a review of a novel by Baroja, and applies it to the writing of Jarnés himself.⁷⁴ She simultaneously invokes and revokes genre to provide a new framework for reading Jarnés' writing. This reframing constitutes a successful first step in removing Jarnés' writing from the morass of negative criticism generated by shifts in literary and political trends, focusing attention on the notion of a individual literary project rather than the product of outdated and discredited artistic movements. Zuleta notes that "frente al problema de los géneros literarios, [Jarnés] mantiene una posición semejante a la de Ortega, en el sentido de que los considera, más que estructuras formales funciones poéticas o direcciones en que gravita la generación estética" ("Novela" 7). This view of meaning allows for the copresence and interaction of genres as producers of meaning within a text. Although traditional approaches to attempt to pin down the generic status or identity of a text, the resistance of Jarnés' writings to classification warrants shifting the focus not on the work as a whole but rather on the ways in which various conceptions of genre generate meaning in these texts.

The complex combination of textual layers in *Teoría del zumbel* foregrounds this nonreductive approach to genre. The structural organization of the novel contains several frames. The cover includes the title as well as the descriptor "Novela." The first page reads "Teoría del zumbel." The reverse of this page, a space typically reserved for paratexts such as dedications or epigraphs (the body of the text starts on the front side of a page) is formatted in italics and contains a vignette, seemingly plotless yet which serves as a metaphor for all of life:

⁷⁴ Jarnés coins the term in his discussion of literary genre in "Baroja y sus desfiles."

El peón es verde con rayas amarillas. El niño enrolla despacito el cordel y, con brío, lo lanza al pavimento. Como las losas están limpias y el zumbel es largo, el peón gira algún tiempo, azuzado por el rapaz. Al fin, languidece, cabecea torpe, ya sin ímpetu, muere. El niño vuelve a su juego... El peón sigue girando mientras el capricho infantil dura. (n.pag.)

The story thus begins with a strong visual description of an object as subject, a green and yellow-striped spinning top. In a reversal of the social order in which children are powerless the boy here is in control of the subject/object. He calmly and confidently initiates and observes the result of his power over the top: the child gives life and witnesses its birth, development, and death in a model that parallels the simplest of traditional story forms. As in the natural order of things only God and nature but no mortal creature witnesses the complete life span of its progeny, the child is simultaneously aligned with the careless whim of youth and with the authority of the transcendent. The length of the top string is predetermined: the toy's lifespan is determined before it begins. This acceptance of destiny resonates in the child's dispassionate response to the top's "death."

Yet rebirth and repetition inhere in this allegory as the child holds the power to wind the top again and again if he wishes. The cycle will repeat itself, and the length of the spinning is invariable no matter how many times the child repeats the game. This model of repetition finds an echo in the novel itself, which is populated by a cast of incarnations of fictional characters and archetypes. Through this epigraph the reader is situated as an outside observer to both the creator-child and his games and can apprehend the making of the textual universe.

As the reader does not know the relation of this story to the rest of the text, it remains present as an unresolved question in the mind of the reader as the text continues,

in this way framing everything that follows. Immediately following this text of ambiguous generic standing appears a section titled “Bajo el signo de Cáncer” followed by the explicit generic statement “Nota preliminar.” At first glance it might seem necessary to label this section in order to distinguish it from the preceding section as they are both presented in italics, a typographical marker associated with commentary or gloss and which therefore suggests a relationship of contingency and provisionality with another, principal text.

Although the epigraph and “Nota preliminar” are differentiated spatially by appearing on separate pages, they are signaled typographically as together occupying a common space or role in contrast to the remainder of the text, which appears in standard font and which is divided with chapter headings. The reader therefore apprehends a distinction between these textual components, yet “Bajo el signo de Cáncer” is explicitly framed as non-fictional, as an authoritative introduction or guide to the text.⁷⁵ The novel thus begins with fiction, then an ostensibly non-fictional section, followed by fiction. After this lengthy introduction, the fictional world emerges again, cued by the heading “El caballero de los espejos,” a reference to the character Sansón Carrasco in Cervantes’ *Quijote*. This chapter heading both stakes out the beginning of *Zumbel*’s fictional core and undercuts its identity by referring to a story that has already been told, a story protagonized by a hero who cannot separate fiction from reality and who will ultimately be defeated by Carrasco.

⁷⁵ Many of Jarnés’ novels are preceded by an introduction of uncertain generic standing which is generally read as an exposition of the aesthetic theory underlying the novel they precede. However, none of these paratexts is as thematically bound to the accompanying fictional nucleus as that of *Teoría del zumbel*. The relationship of these paratexts to the accompanying fictional text has not been widely studied and warrants future critical attention.

The novel proper opens with a statement of the insufficiency of language to describe the defining characteristic of the novel's female protagonist, "Blanca, folio donde nada se ha escrito. Cuartilla pura" (80). Complementing the epithet, the metaphor of the character as a text will be developed throughout the novel, which in part parodies the "novela blanca" or formulaic romance novel. The novel opens with a hyperbolic invocation of traditional literary metaphors of purity associated with highly codified modes such as modernism: "¿Vuelo de cisnes sobre palacios de Carrara, madre selvas, arrayanes, nardos, palomas, armiños en bandejas de plata?" (79) Language and literature are insufficient to capture the "virginal color, la total ausencia de color del espíritu de Blanca" who is both the protagonist of and metaphor for the self-proclaimed romance novel (79-80). The models of language and tradition upon which the *novela blanca* claims to be built are immediately discredited: "¡No nos sirves hoy, oh Diccionario!" laments the narrator, who uses precisely these materials to build the novel (79).

In a double movement, Blanca is both characterized as an archetype of purity as well as a blank slate, as both a recognizable and generic model and as an exceptional creature for whom there exists no precedent. In this sense, Blanca is a suitable partner for the Biblical Saulo: both characters inhabit the plane of epic, myth, and legend populated by superior individuals.⁷⁶ The remaining characters, including the narrator as well as Saulo's foil, the all-too-grounded Carrasco, occupy the comedic sphere which produces the contrast upon which the novel's ironic tone rests. Archetypes are invoked

⁷⁶ See Northrup Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* for a model for applying Aristotle's modes to literary genres. Whereas Frye's approach has been criticized as oversimplified and reductive, his observations regarding the connection between characterization and genre are useful in describing how Jarnés invokes a variety of modes through his characters.

and continually undone, thus establishing a tone of irony and consequently of criticism of the very genre the text claims to embody.

Studies to date have focused principally on the narrative technique of the novel, which in turn had been linked to genre and subgenre. Paul Ilie reads the novel as a surrealist text, and Víctor Fuentes and Domingo Ródenas de Moya as metafiction. Interestingly, the text self-identifies as a parody of the *novela blanca* and contains a simple, traditional plotline interspersed with—by not interrupted by—a series of digressions which function, I suggest, as means to parody prescriptive model of genre itself. As Jordi Gracia has noted, the romance novel in its various forms-- “folletín, novelón, novela pasional, rosa, blanca” – appears frequently through both Jarnés’ fiction and theoretical writings (“Fortuna” 211). Gracia traces Jarnés’ connection to the genre to his earliest memories of reading and highlights “la altísima frecuencia con que alude Jarnés a este subgénero en tono irónico o ridiculizador y, por el otro lado, y paradójicamente, apuntar el elevado rendimiento literario que obtiene, en su propia creación, de la pervivencia activa de modelos y situaciones de origen folletinesco” (210). Although Gracia’s article does not develop this idea in regard to specific texts, his observation provides a framework for interpreting not only specific intertextual relationships such as that of *Zumbel* and *El Quijote* but also what Genette has termed “architextual” (or generic intertext) relationships such as that between the ostensibly competing genres of romance novel and intellectual novel which interact throughout *Teoría del zumbel*.

Metafiction, intertextuality, and genre come together through parody, yet critical attention has not focused on these aspects of the novel although these topics have been

recently addressed in relation to *Zumbel*'s novelistic predecessor and intertext, *Locura y muerte de nadie*. These themes are in fact more clearly developed in *Zumbel*, but *Locura*, having been included in Joaquín de Entrambasaguas' 1961 anthology and re-issued in 1937 and again in 1996, is more widely known and therefore has received more attention.

As Domingo Ródenas de Moya has noted, the nucleus of *Teoría del zumbel* is comprised of two plot lines, a trait which the novel shares with one of its principal intertexts: "*Teoría del zumbel*, como *El Quijote*, es una novela que cuenta dos historias, la del encuentro fatal entre Blanca y Saulo, o historia A, y la de cómo se elabora la novela que refiere ese encuentro, o historia B" (*Espejos* 215). The "Story B" is comprised of the narrator's observations and asides, which are typographically marked off from what is presented as the principal storyline, Blanca and Saulo's relationship. The narrator splits the novelistic world almost as soon as the story begins by opening a series of parenthetical observations commenting on the characters' words and actions, and by announcing his intention continue his own version of the story in addition to telling the one the characters attempt to script.

In addition, the narrator separates his intervention in the story by switching genres to present his conversations with characters. In contrast to the continuous text which represents the other characters' inner and outer worlds, the narrator cordons off his active participation as a character by breaking the fictional and narrative continuity by invoking the fact-based genre of reportage or transcription within the context of legal discourse established by his presentation of the machinations of the "committee" plotting to bring Saulo and Blanca together. A line break and three asterisks open and close each conversation between the narrator and a character, who are indicated as "Yo" and

“Valdivia,” “Saulo,” or “Blanca.”⁷⁷ This generic display of impartiality reinforces the characterization of the narrator within the novel, who must gain and retain the others’ trust in order to maintain the necessary distinction between his story (Story B) and that of the other characters (Story A). In this way, Saulo is free to confess his state of financial ruin to the narrator, a secret which “sólo puede decirse al novelista” (100). Their conversation continues:

YO

Confía en mí. Yo tengo el deber de recoger todas las palpitaciones del sumario. Pero el sumario es secreto.

SAULO

Gracias. Tú me harás justicia cuando sentencies.

YO

Yo no sentencio. Redacto, firmo, y edito.⁷⁸ (100)

The narrator’s claim that he does not influence the novel in any way is generically consistent with the legalistic tenor with which he frames his role. Yet the narrator is unreliable: he lies to Saulo. In order to maintain his own version of the story, the narrator intervenes in the novel at the moment when Saulo’s opponent, el Doctor Carrasco, “el eterno asesino de aventuras” attempts to foil the young man’s plan to rescue Blanca (114). A transposition of Cervantes’ character, Carrasco endeavors to destroy Saulo’s and Blanca’s “quijotismo recíproco” by inducing Saulo to marry another woman (94). At the moment when “Saulo va a quedar vencido... aparezco yo, el novelista, que no debo tolerar un impertinente desviación de la novela... Soy dueño de la acción, y mi juicio es inapelable” (114).

⁷⁷ At no point in the text is the narrator/character/novelist named, a fact which favors this ambiguity in his role and therefore in the range of perspectives he presents.

⁷⁸ The narrator is unreliable, as despite his claim of impartiality he intervenes when he sees fit.

The narrator's story is thus interdependent with the fate of the characters who characterize the *novela blanca* he claims to write. In a departure from the lyrical and impressionistic nature of his earlier novels, *Zumbel's* "Story A" focuses on a love story. Blanca, a sheltered young virgin, accompanies her spinster half-sister to a health retreat, thus literally and figuratively stepping outside of the carefully-controlled world she has inhabited for the past twenty years. Leaving the world of habit and of order opens the possibility of action, of adventure, of life:

¿Cómo era posible a la historia invadir el recinto donde evolucionaba el espíritu de Blanca si el hogar y el colegio estaban defendidos contra toda invasión terrestre—única posible invasión histórica—por el inflexible funcionario de la Audiencia Territorial, por la viril Sor Patrocinio y, en todas partes, por la astucia infatigada del padre Valdivia? (81)

By implying that the first twenty years of Blanca's life were untouched by *la historia*, the text makes a statement on the nature of narrative. The actions and events the narrator mentions during Blanca's youth—the years of school, of indoctrination, of learning about life through books selected and censored by Father Valdivia—form the basis of the characterization of Blanca as a type or a category in a move necessary to establish the relationship of commentary to text necessary for parody. In this sense, the 'story' of Blanca is the posited not as the focus of the novel but as its hypotext: her life is mere source material from which the 'novelistic' is selected and extracted by the narrator. If *Zumbel* were an exemplary tale of religious femininity, just like the books on which her youth was based under the censure and guidance of her spiritual advisor, Blanca's youth would indeed count as a story as it would meet the thematic expectations of that genre.

Blanca is both the first person we meet in the novel and is the last to speak at the end. She provides both the model and the foil for tradition. The text's parody of the

novela blanca and by extension of a prescriptive model of genre rests on the simultaneous invocation and deauthorization of such conventions. The first chapter, titled “El caballero de los espejos” invokes the world of Golden Age literature. The novel proper opens with language seeped in highly-marked generic connotations: “¿Varal de azucenas, narciso de corola de marfil, clemátidas, gardenias, jazmines? ¿Pueblecito andaluz entre olivares?” (79) Three successive paragraphs of strung-together metaphors for whiteness signal poetry rather than prose and refer simultaneously to contemporary literary trends and the great models of Spanish literary history by evoking highly-stylized language and images associated with a series of literary movements belonging to the past: Romanticism, Modernism, and Golden Age poetry (Ródenas *Especios* 207).⁷⁹

In contrast stands Blanca’s chaperone, the ungainly and embittered Julia who “observa una conducta ejemplar porque le sería muy difícil observar otra” (83). She serves as “la vicepresidenta de todas las asociaciones de caridad de la provincia” neither out of a desire to serve nor a sense of piety but rather “como aborrece a los hombres, gusta de humillarlos con limosnas, con todo su aparato de generosidad vicepresidencial” (83). This dual perspective alerts the reader to distrust facile literary constructions and thus serves as a criticism of generic stereotypes.

Such formulaic characterization and its simultaneous undercutting forms the foundation for the text’s implicit and explicit claims of generic commentary. Both these archetypes and the language used to create them belong to the highly-scripted genre of the novel that the narrator claims to be writing: the *novela blanca*. As Thomas O. Beebe has observed, such popular texts such as the romance novel inscribe themselves within a

⁷⁹ The late twenties saw a renewed interest in Golden Age poets such as Góngora, and his influence on the *Generación del 27* has been widely documented. Víctor Fuentes notes that Jarnés admired the poet’s sensuality and use of metaphor (“Estudios” 46).

formulaic notion of genre. This model of genre rests on patterns of recurring linguistic, stylistic, and thematic features.

Blanca's father, the "recto fiscal" Bravo Gómez embodies the theme of order and its necessary preconditions of disruption, violation, and chaos (84). The prosecutor's very existence depends on the ineffectuality of his ostensible role of control not by preventing rulebreaking but by enforcing consequences for rules which have already been broken: in a lawabiding universe there is no need for a prosecutor. Gómez Bravo, then, represents the law of genre which necessarily invokes its counterlaw. The narrator's ironic attitude towards Bravo Gómez, who is characterized in epic language, highlights this essential contradiction by noting that Blanca's father "despierto centinela de su propia castidad—se ha casado ya tres veces" (83). The fear of disruption, of a threat to prescribed mores and behavior underlies the minor characters' investment in generic regularity which is manifested through moralizing discourse.

The concern of Blanco Gómez, Julia, and Father Valdivia for Blanca's spiritual purity is equated solely with sexuality. No mention is made of other religious values; rather, her education is based on the avoidance of romantic love, described by her oft-married father as "ese lodo terreno" (82). Restrained to the environments of home, school, and church, the perceived threat to Blanca's purity lies not in life but in texts: books are zealously censored by Father Valdivia who "comisionado por el cielo para velar por el candor de Blanca, no se concedía un día de reposo. Lo expurgaba todo" (82).

The three characters, Bravo Gómez (who is never referred to by first name and is most frequently referred to in terms of his profession), Julia, and Father Valdivia form a triangle centered on Blanca, thus positioning her, and by extension the genre of the *novela*

blanca, as the protagonist. The three serve as guardians of legal, religious and moral order based exclusively on the preservation of what the narrator describes as Blanca's "inapreciable lirio" (83). In phrasing his own commentary in the hyperbolic euphemisms which characterize the Blanca's religious indoctrination, the narrator separates the level of story from discourse, object and gloss, irony and the earnest sincerity which characterize the young woman. In this way the narrator criticizes both literary formulae and their ideology, and by extension prescriptive models of genre.

Confined to three controlled spheres of experience, Blanca's knowledge of the world and her model for living come directly from language, from literature, that is, from textual models. Yet this attempt to script Blanca's life through literary models ultimately fails. Although "ningún aspecto del amor pudo ser conocido por Blanca al través de las teclas ni al través de la literatura" her story begins when literature gives way to life: the beginning of her affair with Saulo will be precipitated precisely by a book approved by the priest (82). Walking to the chapel, Blanca encounters a group of youths chatting by the side of the path. As she walks by them, "deja caer una furtiva mirada y su *Camino de salvación*, encuadernado en un tafilete. ¡Inescrutables designios! De aquí, precisamente de aquí, de esta doble caída, arranca el brote novelesco" (84).

This passage operates simultaneously on two generic levels: phrased in the language of the fantasy-based romance novel in which chance and destiny rule over logic and reason, it makes claims to truth by situating Blanca's life and consequently the novel on a plane of "reality" into which the "novelistic," or fictional, is inserted. Yet the novelistic is framed as an episode of reality, both by the narrator's identification and through the epilogue which occurs after the 'novel' has ended. Casting himself in the role

of transcriber of reality who witnesses Blanca's story/history ("historia"), the narrator paradoxically claims to be reporting an act of fiction ("la novela"). The impossibility of such a narrative position underlies the criticism of prescriptive genres which motivates the text's parodic function. The narrator's phrasing cues a particular interpretation of the actions he reports by using formulaic expressions associated with the romance novel. As Bakhtin has noted, "certain features of language take on the flavor of a given genre" ("Discourse in the Novel" 289). The "inescrutables designios" are, precisely, perfectly recognizable: the allegory of Blanca's fall rests on the coalescing of social convention and literary clichés which characterize the highly-predictable nature of popular genres.⁸⁰

The "doble caída" serves as a plot device, allowing Saulo to approach Blanca in order to retrieve the book in a chivalrous manner just as the dropped handkerchief served as the pretext for previous generations of heroines to come into contact with their gallant pretenders. The action is also framed by the narrator to function metaphorically, as Blanca is walking down the path to the chapel (the site of salvation) when she encounters the man who will incite her to sin. Yet in foreshadowing this second "fall" the narrator betrays his own self-claimed role as contemporary of the characters: in lived experience foreshadowing is an effect of aftersight necessarily distanced by time and space from the original event. This technique, however, invokes the world of the romance novel in which each action or occurrence serves a purpose: to lead toward the eventual union of the lovers.

Later in the novel, Blanca will experience another "doble caída": when Saulo fails to appear for their midnight rendezvous, Blanca's sexual frustration leads her to

⁸⁰ See Thomas O. Beebee for a detailed analysis of the relationship between generic regularity and high versus popular texts.

commit the confession-worthy sin of masturbation. Having been absolved by the priest, she later meets with Saulo in an encounter in which she loses her virginity and becomes pregnant, the visible fall from grace from which she will be rescued not by her lover but by his opponent, Carrasco, in a apparent restoration of order which, as we later see, will be undercut by the novel's epilogue. The narrator's self-proclaimed project of writing Blanca's *novela blanca* will not be realized, but her story will be written.

The simple plot of Blanca's story is as follows: she and Saulo meet by chance. The promiscuous and ostensibly wealthy Saulo Bermúdez is immediately interested in Blanca, as he is equally interested in all young females he encounters. The scandalized Blanca reports the incident to her half sister Julia, who responds, "¡Qué insolencia!" (84). She begins an investigation of the young man, which the narrator uses to satirize the motivations of Julia and the others who will join her in prompting Blanca to seduce Saulo:

Cuando horas después se enteró Julia de que el joven audaz era Saulo Bermúdez, presunto multimillonario, dulcificó su voz y rectificó diciendo:

-- ¡Qué delicadeza!

Cuando al día siguiente averiguó Julia que la *Banca Bermúdez* tenía en Saulo – soltero, recientemente huérfano—su primer representante, siguió rectificando, beatífica:

--¡Qué gracia! (84-85)

Julia's changing and self-interested perception of Saulo based on his wealth and availability underscores the hypocrisy of Blanca's moral guardian and of those associated with her plan to unite the two young people. This satirizing of religious institutions and attitudes underlies the narrator's perspective and connects the novel to the growing tensions between traditional and secular worldviews in the Spain of the moment.⁸¹ In addition, the text's explicit operating genre—the *novela blanca*—is contravened: instead

⁸¹ Frequently criticized for evading the social and political issues of his period, Jarnés' fiction in fact frequently incorporated such references obliquely rather than making of them an explicit theme.

of two lovers overcoming all odds and opposition to come together, Blanca and Saulo are coerced into a relationship.

The calculating Julia quickly discovers Saulo's two weaknesses, alcohol and women, which conveniently frame him as lost soul in need of salvation. The dissolute Saulo is in need of redemption, and when Blanca's protectors discover the redeeming quality of his supposed wealth they enlist the young woman in a campaign to save Saulo's soul while uniting his fortune with the her family and Father Valdivia's church. At Julia's prompting, the narrator explains, the innocent Blanca is recruited for this purpose by a "committee" comprised of "un médico del alma, el padre Valdivia. Un médico del cuerpo, el director del balneario. Un espectador puro, el novelista, yo" (87). The committee's plan is to "asociar los dos poderes: el divino y el humano. Cristo y la *Banca Bermúdez*" (87). From the beginning, the calculated nature of the relationship between Blanca and Saulo chafes against the value system implicit in the world of the romance novel. In *Teoría del zumbel* money, and not love, attempts to conquer all. Blanca does not rebel against her circumstances but rather lends herself to the machinations of her hypocritical triumvirate.

In an inversion of the expected plotline, Blanca and Saulo are not star-crossed lovers determined to overcome external obstacles to their love. Rather, they are pawns in the machinations of the heroine's supposed protectors. After twenty years of isolating her from any contact with romance, Blanca's moral guardians instruct her to act essentially as a prostitute: she must use her sexuality to "rectificar aquella torcida existencia, aún a costa del más penoso sacrificio... Sólo Blanca podía hacer de Saulo el hombre nuevo. Blanca, en nombre de Dios" (86). It is precisely Blanca's innocence which attracts Saulo,

who, secretly on the verge of financial ruin, confesses to the novelist, “Quiero recomponer mi casa, ordenarla. Nadie como Blanca, que se ajusta al único modelo que yo puedo hoy elegir, será capaz de ayudarme” (100).

For Saulo, Blanca is not an individual but an archetype. His understanding of life, like that of the other characters, resides on traditional literary models which structure actions and relationships on the plane of “reality,” that is, lived experience. In his eyes, Blanca is a model of purity and of passivity, a guileless creature “incapaz de estrategia” whose “fuerza está en su misma pasividad” (96). Casting himself as a modern prince in shining armor Saulo explains, “quiero rectificar su vida, esa vida absurda que suele llamarse piedad. Quiero hacer de ella una mujer actual, arrancarla del medievalismo en que vegeta” (194).

In reality, Saulo’s use of literary archetypes to interpret reality constitutes a naiveté criticized by the novelist himself who attempts to warn the young man of Blanca’s calculated plan to redeem him in a sort of “quijotismo recíproco” (94). It is precisely this unawareness of his own embeddedness in generic frameworks of interpretation that gives them force. Whereas the novelist is aware of the literary allusions shaping the self-avowed hero’s actions and interpretations, he highlights Saulo’s refusal to acknowledge that he himself is subject to the rules of genre. The novelist, whose involvement as a character in the novel ostensibly precludes omniscience, asks Saulo to provide information regarding the relationship between the young lovers. “[Blanca] me quiere,” responds Saulo, “Eso es todo. Apenas hay detalles excepcionales. Son del tipo corriente. Amor, juventud, deseo... No creo que con eso pueda hacer usted una novela” (94).

Saulo's conception of Blanca is so tightly bound to her characterization as the archetypal savior-female whose existence is a projection of male desire that he refuses to recognize her potential agency, and thus becomes vulnerable to manipulation. Saulo's view of Blanca rests on the trope of the woman as mirror who "triunfa en cuanto espejo. Devuelve lo que le dan" (96). In response to the novelist's warning "Quizá, como tú a ella, desea conquistarte poco a poco, rectificar tu vida... Estás colaborando en un plan divino" Saulo insists "¡Yo, sólo yo, soy capaz de rectificar su vida! ¡No Blanca a mí!" (96).

The discourse of salvation frames Blanca and Saulo's relationship beginning with their first encounter in which Saulo retrieves the *Camino de salvación* Blanca has dropped, saying "¿Es una broma del cielo? Porque soy un descarriado, guapa... no dejo yo el camino si usted es mi cicerone" (84). The neat overlapping of setting (the path to the chapel) and the book's title and the metaphor of the "fall" are highlighted by Saulo's flirtatious comment. This combination of physical, linguistic, and metaphorical planes of signification are framed by the narrator's interruption of the novelistic world with unnecessary references to the situation's fictionality. "Aquí comienza la novela," notes the novelist as the paragraph begins. Such an explicit generic statement, together with the highly-scripted "coincidences" making up the ostensibly chance encounter between Blanca and Saulo, fails as self-situating strategy by undercutting a basic function of the romance novel.

As Janice Radway has observed in her landmark study of the romance novel, this genre often serves a "compensatory function" for its readers. In other words, the reader's lack of satisfaction with lived experience leads her to fulfill frustrated desires and fantasies

through immersion in a highly-scripted and predictable textual world.⁸² The generic pact between romance and reader relies heavily on destiny as an organizing principle, which casts coincidence as a plot device. Another key feature is the impenetrability of the novelistic universe: it must be framed within the discourse of realism in order to retain its power as an alternative to reality. Self-conscious commentary short-circuits the reader's suspension of disbelief in a move which punctures the mode of fantasy which determines both the romance's social use-value and its generic function: the narrator is continually drawing the reader out of the textual world which is meant to replace reality.

By continually interrupting the series of generic cues signaling the romance novel, *Zumbel*'s narrator opens a dual level of generic functioning: the tale of Blanca and Saulo will be a frustrated love story coexisting with the story created by the "novelist," that is, the story of the making of the novel. Yet the simple plot of the romance remains intact. Although many critics agree with Víctor Fuentes that "en la metaficción jarnesiana le da el tajo a la narración lineal, con su planteamiento, nudo y desenlace, y ordenación lógica y cronológica," in *Zumbel* the story of Blanca and Saulo must respect these conventions which characterize both the Realist and the romance novel (*Discurso* 70). Blanca and Saulo meet, fall in love, encounter an obstacle, and overcome it in order to be united. Their passion consummated, the novel proper ends as the lovers reach the end of their story: there is nothing left to say or to tell, except for the final "¡Saulo!" "¡Blanca!" These are the last words spoken in the novel, and their melodramatic flavor communicates the culmination of the romance: language falls away, and all that remains is the beloved.

⁸² I employ the feminine subject pronoun not to imply a necessary relationship between the genre of the romance novel and a particular sex but rather because Radway's study focused on women.

The narrator emerges and ends the chapter with the triumph of the young lovers: “Julia sigue durmiendo. Y el resto del comité” (160). The chapter’s finality is underscored by its title, “Elegía a un amor beodo.” The ‘elegy’ confers a sense of an ending and is necessarily situated in a moment after the demise of the love affair. The ‘drunken’ love signifies both Saulo’s intoxicated state and the metaphor of passion as inebriation. In this way the narrator locates the telling of the story as subsequent to and not contemporary with its unfolding. At the same time, the title belies the chapter’s content which is the story of the lover’s encounter. This apparent contradiction between the chapter’s frame and the content produces an effect of foreshadowing. The following and final two chapters of the novel, titled “Tránsito a la cámara oscura” and “El paralítico” provide a window into Saulo’s experience of death.

These chapters’ link to the Blanca and Saulo’s story is crucial yet tangential: together they confirm Saulo’s demise, yet they consist almost entirely of thoughts and images which take place outside the narrative proper and within Saulo’s mind. As they represent an unknowable and uncommunicable reality—that of the experience of the subject’s death—they lie outside of rules of verosimilitude and inhabit a space similar to the novel’s third narrative level, that of altered consciousness. This level will be analyzed further on.

The novel ostensibly ends at the moment of Saulo’s death in a car accident caused by his haste in returning to the city to salvage his former life. Having been detained by his erotic encounter with Blanca, Saulo takes a curve too fast and crashes his car. The narration shifts from Saulo’s perspective to that of the novelist and ends with the time of the young man’s death in the dispassionate and definitive tone of a death certificate: “La

curva. El paisaje da una vuelta de campana. Alguien—¡buen jugador!— apuntó al verde felpudo, y ¡allá va, parabólicamente, el peón! La cabeza se abre en dos gajos. Entre la hierba asomaba un pedrusco. Las veintiuna cuarenta y tres” (201).⁸³

Saulo’s end is in a sense prescribed by the genre of his story, that of the romance novel. Having consummated his passion with Blanca, the story must end: if the lovers marry, they will be reduced to the pawns of the *comité*’s machinations and therefore will not triumph. If they go their separate ways, their union is reduced to a moral failing. Saulo’s death provides a tragic yet generically appropriate ending which preserves the imperative of destiny in the lives of the lovers.

Additionally, in its dual claims of being “una historia” (as opposed to a mere description of events) and “una novela blanca” the text itself supports such a conclusion. The discourse of salvation and that of the romance novel share highly-scripted characteristics and a sense of destiny as inscribed in events and the reader who accepts one or both of these generic contracts would accept the committee’s proposed interpretation. The novel itself has cued such a framework for interpretation through the characterization of the virginal Blanca and the Biblical reference to Saul, a persecutor of Christians who experiences conversion through an encounter with God on a path. However, it is the narrator, precisely in his self-proclaimed role of novelist, who fails to participate in the genre of the story the committee is crafting for Blanca’s father.

Once again opening parentheses to distinguish his commentary from the novel proper, the narrator calls attention to the power of language to shape reality: “Aquí yo

⁸³ This scene echoes the “huída frénética” of the protagonist in Jarnés’ short story “Película.” As Carrie L. Ruíz has noted, such high speed getaways are characteristic of both film and fiction of the period and “no corresponden a la concepción tradicional del tiempo sino a la percepción que obedece a las nuevas experiencias cosmopolitas” (469).

formulé un voto particular. Lo del aviso del cielo me parecía una metáfora, y lo creía de muy dudoso éxito para un inexorable fiscal, a prueba de transposiciones y desplazamientos retóricos” (88). While maintaining the legitimacy of the plot, this aside draws attention to the contrived nature of the encounter between Blanca and Saulo, and highlights the discrepancy between the religious and legalistic discourse with which the committee cloaks its self-serving intentions.

Rather than arguing in favor of divine intention, the priest himself responds by recognizing the power of language to shape reality. In response to the narrator’s comment, “el padre Valdivia refunfuñó que también los tropos deben contribuir a mejorar las costumbres” (88). The narrator responds by retracting his objection, and the committee moves on to consider the next point in its plan to intervene in the lives of the other characters.⁸⁴ In their attempt to guide the action of the novel, the committee members attempt to create an alternative story which will serve their own interests.

In this sense, Julia, Father Valdivia, the spa’s medical director, and the narrator conspire to write the novel by taking control of its genre through language: Blanca and Saulo are cast as the protagonists of a romance novel. Yet in a romance novel, characters are united by destiny and conquer all odds to be together. The spinster half-sister, the priest, and the father act not as facilitators but as blocking characters in such a story line. By pointing out the artifice of the committee’s role and the narrative they attempt to create, the narrator opens a space for a critique of formulaic approaches to genre. His objections echo the sentiments of the narrator of *Locura y muerte de nadie*, the novel immediately preceding *Zumbel* and which through the *Banca Bermúdez* serves a hypotext:

⁸⁴ As Jordi Gracia García notes, “Jarnés apela a menduo de manera explícita en su novela al valor negativo y represor que suele implicar la concepción misma del género folletinesco, con el fin de oponerse a él en ese sentido mismo pero también en tanto que artificio retórico-literario” (“Fortuna” 213).

“Sólo un falso novelador puede recortar aquí y allí trozos singulares de la vida y acoplarlos —como los líquidos en un matraz— para hacerlos hervir ruidosamente, en un momento prefijado” (174). The *novela blanca* the narrator claims to be writing is, in fact, undermined from the very beginning.

Initially recruited as a member of the committee, the narrator/novelist’s initial inclusion in the group allows him to witness and transcribe their conspiracy. Throughout this scene the narrator is overruled by his characters, and thus the authoritative role of the novelist is undermined. In response, he opens parenthesis and secretly confides his decision to retain his position as a character among characters while secretly taking control of the novel:

Yo me propuse —y entonces nada dije— continuar por separado esta novela... Vería el tapiz por ambas caras. La novela más blanca—porque estamos frente a una novela blanca—puede ofrecernos un sombra, una espesa nube. Como sucede con el sol, intacto, bruñado, para el vulgo, lleno de manchas y arrugas para el astrónomo (90).

The narrator thus opens a parallel novelistic space of which the characters, trapped as they are in the predetermined roles of the romance novel, are ignorant. By creating this space and justifying it within the plot of the novel, the text reconfigures the traditional relationship between text and paratext that has dominated criticism of *Zumbel*. The layman’s view of the text is the plot which stretches but does not break the boundaries of the romance novel: the young lover’s relationship comes to a tragic end yet is redeemed through the birth of their son who, named after his father, perpetuates the notion that love conquers all.

At the same time, the ‘professional’ view, aligned with the narrator who has protested dishonesty and misleading rhetoric, encompasses that story and its telling. As

Jordi Gracia García has noted, Jarnés' use of the romance novel as genre moves beyond of simple parody to serve as an impetus for creation. In his exploration of this genre as recurrent hypotext in Jarnés' fiction, Gracia García highlights

por un lado la altísima frecuencia con que alude Jarnés a este subgénero en tono irónico o ridiculizador y, por el otro lado, y paradójicamente, ... el elevado rendimiento literario que obtiene, en su propia creación, de la pervivencia activa de modelos y situaciones de origen folletinesco ("Fortuna" 210).

Zumbel's narrator, in rejecting the novel the committee attempts to write, functions as the link between Story A and Story B, inhabiting both spaces and serving as the hinge connecting them. By identifying traditional narrative roles (narrator, observer, reporter, participant) and discarding each of them, the narrator opens the space of the narration to include all of his verbal creation as presented between the covers of the book. In this way the various layers of the text are woven together. Rather than a pastiche or collage, the novel incorporates simultaneous layers of meaning which work in tandem: the paratexts can be read as part of the whole, and the spaces of narration—from the path to the chapel to Julia's past fantasies to Saulo's experience of death—coexist rather than cancelling each other out.

Similarly, the epigraph, introductory note, chapters, and epilogue may also be read as a cohesive unit rather than as a series of appendages to a privileged nucleus (the 'novel'). Within each textual segment, various modes operate simultaneously: codified discourse associated with various literary movements from Golden Age poetry to surrealism and with social genres from the juridical to the intimate, a metafictional perspective which projects both "text" (the story of Blanca and Saulo) and commentary (the story of the narrator's telling), and hypotexts such as the Bible and *El Quijote* operating through character's names and actions, among others. Yet, as Jarnés notes in his

presentation “Pintura de hombre y de niño,” in a work of art the whole is greater than the sum of the parts:

El cuadro y el libro no se producen por sumas, por simples agregaciones, no se producen por simple acumulación... Elaboración. Construcción. A la obra de arte se llega por estos dos rieles: la vocación y la disciplina. Con sólo la vocación, se produce una obra amorfa, disgregada, fragmentaria, incoherente, pobre en definitiva, aunque en ella se junten todos los cachivaches del Rastro o se apilen los restos de todas una cultura. Con sólo la disciplina, se reproducen esqueletos, estructuras desjugadas, sarmentosas, petulantes racimos de pasas en vez de voluptuosos racimos de uva (32)

For Jarnés, so frequently accused of producing shapeless masses of metaphors and disjointed pastiches of previous texts, each component of the text must serve a function. This notion resonates with the artistic philosophy of *integralismo* proposed in the “Nota preliminar” to the *Zumbel*, and which calls for a combination of literary modes in order to capture the various layers of human experience. As interlocking components of both the lived and the created world, these channels of signification produce meaning both in relation to each other and within themselves.

The nameless narrator serves as the conduit for these simultaneously-transmitted meanings. As he slips between his roles as “cronista,” “novelista,” and character, the narrator switches generic channels. In this sense, *Zumbel*’s model of genre is not hybrid or mixed; rather, there are simultaneous layers or paths which each comment on each other without blending or cancelling each other out. The novel is not characterized by generic ambiguity, nor is it merely a shapeless, all-encompassing mass of language. On the contrary, its layers of signification depend precisely on the interaction among of multiple planes of perception, each steeped in its own mode of transmission. *Teoría del zumbel*’s combination of a range of genres from the lyrical to the legalistic in conjunction with its

breakdown of the barriers of text and paratext, hypotext and hypertext, serve not as mere stylistic experimentation but rather as the means by which

el hombre, presentado en su triple aspecto de vigilia, sueño, y ensueño, queda al final diluido en una sombra-fantasma-espejo de si mismo, enseñanza última de Cervantes, quien ya nos enseñó que no hay certeza posible, que el mundo, lo humano, es susceptible de varias, y a veces encontradas, interpretaciones (Saldaña Sagredo 230)

Echoing the call “¿Eclécticismo? No. Integralismo” in the novel’s “Nota preliminar,”

Teoría del zumbel exemplifies Jarnés’ particular approach to genre as producer of textual meaning: the *género intermedio* (*Zumbel* 78).

Chapter 4

The *género intermedio* in *Libro de Esther*

“No, no es una novela. Nada más es un excelente libro. No, no es un libro de versos. Nada más es un gran libro poético.” Benjamín Jarnés, “Libros sin género.”

This description, taken from Jarnés’ 1931 article suggesting that all literary texts are inherently multigeneric, prefigures critics’ futile attempts to describe the genre of his *Libro de Esther*. First published in 1935, this text exemplifies the trend in Jarnés’ creative and critical writings away from prescriptive genre towards a freer view of textual composition. Yet despite the stretching of boundaries that had characterized Spanish vanguard fiction, critics almost universally consider this text in conjunction with the subsequent *Eufrosina o la gracia* as inaugurators of Jarnés’ *género intermedio*.⁸⁵ This category includes what Víctor Fuentes’ describes as “los libros de Jarnés escritos con mayor fruición artística” (*Obra* 114).

Going beyond a pastiche or hybrid combination of genres, the *género intermedio* consists of “esa zona intermedia de los ‘libros sin género’ equidistante de las tres formas literarias, la biografía, la novela y el ensayo, preferidas por el autor” (*Obra* 114). This new category, in Jarnés’ view, is characterized simply as that of creative works, that is, works of authors (characterized by innovation) and not of writers (characterized by imitation). He defines these two roles: “Autor, cuya ineludible misión es diferenciarse, crear un mundo personal; de otro modo es insignificante, no significa, no es autor, es

⁸⁵ Composed in 1936, *Eufrosina o la gracia* was lost during the upheaval of the Spanish Civil War and recovered upon Jarnés’ return from exile in 1948.

sólo, o tal vez parásito, o quizá revendedor de literaturas anteriores, fáciles de simular” (“Género” 207).

Jarnés proposes the author as a more accurate organizing principle than genre, an approach that would most fruitfully have been applied to his own texts. As Gustavo Pérez Firmat demonstrates, Jarnés’ work presented special challenges to critics who struggled to classify his writings. Although he became closely associated with the vanguard novel, at the same time reviewers focused largely on debating the generic status of his writing due to both to Jarnés’ particular approach to this issue and to the divided reception of vanguard fiction as a whole.⁸⁶ Despite Jarnés’ resistance to genre’s dominance in literary creation and criticism, this critical construct would have a significant impact on the reception of his work which was overshadowed by his having been classified as a novelist.

The success of his novel *El profesor inútil* and simultaneous association with Ortega y Gasset’s *Revista de Occidente* catapulted Jarnés into the literary limelight in 1926. This stroke of good fortune for the previously provincial writer of humble beginnings would, however, cast a long shadow over his future literary production. Despite the extensive range and number of writings Jarnés published over the course of his career, even those who have sought to reincorporate him into the literary canon have focused on a limited number of works characterized by narrative techniques associated with vanguard authors’ attempts to reinvigorate the genre of the novel.

Specifically, two experimental novels first published during the height of the *nueva novela*, *El profesor inútil* (1926) and *Locura y muerte de nadie* (1929) have

⁸⁶ See Pérez Firmat’s *Idle Fictions* for a detailed discussion of the role of genre in critical reception of Jarnés’ work and of Hispanic vanguard fiction in general.

formed the focus of recent critical attention thus reinforcing this reductive interpretation of Jarnés' literary range. Due to the interest the innovative techniques of works raised and their positive reception, each was revised and reissued in three subsequent editions, becoming the most widely disseminated of Jarnés' writings. These texts went on to receive significant critical attention both contemporaneously and as part of the efforts to revive Jarnés beginning in the 1960s with Joaquín de Entrambasaguas' selection of *Locura* as the best novel of 1929 and resulting inclusion in his significant anthology *Las mejores novelas contemporáneas*.

As a genre-specific association underlying both his initial rise to prominence, fall from favor, and later recovery by literary history, the continued characterization of Jarnés as the most skilled and prolific vanguard novelist carves out a unique space for the author in Spanish literary history. Simultaneously, however, its limited scope validates only a brief stage in his artistic development and projects a misleadingly narrow view of Jarnés' particularly broad stylistic, generic, and conceptual range. As Jordi Gracia reminds us, "Jarnés no fue sólo novelista, aunque su sintonía estética con Ortega haya acabado conspirando en contra del escritor y a favor del novelista de vanguardia. Pero el coste ha sido amputar el valor del prosista de ideas, del ensayista y del crítico" (12). In addition to his novels, over the span of Jarnés' career he would publish nearly 1,500 works of poetry, theater, short story, drama and criticism of literature, art, and film.

Over the course of his career, Jarnés' writing moves progressively through a series of genres ranging from the most prescriptive to the most innovative, as manifested by the *género intermedio* which emerges in his later works. From the poetry which constituted his first published writings, he shifted into a stretch of novel-writing lasting

from 1926 through 1932 followed by an expansion into essays, drama, and the *género intermedio*. Although he simultaneously published short stories, essays, and literary criticism in little magazines over the course of his career, in the 1930s Jarnés' books move away from the novel proper as he begins to work both among and between a broad range of genres. Fiction such as *Tántalo, farsa* (1935) and *Don Álvaro, o la fuerza del tino* (1936) invokes and parodies traditional literary genres while resisting neat generical classification themselves. Perhaps as he has gained authority as a respected author and critic Jarnés adopts new, ostensibly non-fiction stances such as the sociological analysis and *reportage* embodied by *Fauna contemporánea* and *Feria del libro* along with film criticism and essays on Jarnés' theories of literary value.

Despite the recent reedition of several of his essays and short stories, scholarly attention continues to focus on both on Jarnés' earlier work and on the genre of novel despite the reedition of a range of texts including criticism and his most widely disseminated and frequently re-released texts, a series of biographies.⁸⁷ Yet as Armando Pego Puigbó notes, within this period Jarnés' work displays an evolution in the use of

⁸⁷ Beginning in 1929 Jarnés published a series of biographies commissioned by José Ortega y Gasset for his collection *Vidas españolas e hispanoamericanas del siglo XIX*. Participating in a trend toward the renewal of biography as a genre, Jarnés built upon the innovative combination of fact and fiction, art and life that had characterized his *Mosén Pedro*. The same year marks the first of his works to be classified as belonging to the *género intermedio*, *Salón de estío*. In tandem with the nine biographies Jarnés published between 1929 and 1940, Jarnés began to develop a new approach to writing in all of his work. Moving out of the period in which he had focused exclusively on the short story and novel, Jarnés began producing a range of essays, "narraciones," and biographies which themselves incorporated and straddled several clearly-defined literary genres. As Enrique Serrano Asenjo has demonstrated, this series initiated a new generic approach to the biography spearheaded by Benjamín Jarnés both through his "textos teóricos esenciales" such as the articles "Vidas oblicuas" and "Nueva quimera del oro" published in Ortega's *Revista de Occidente* and his biographies such as *Sor Patrocinio, la monja de las llagas* which appeared in the *Vidas* series. Serrano Asenjo draws the title of his *Vidas oblicuas: Aspectos teóricos de la nueva biografía en España (1928-1936)* from Jarnés' 1929 article of the same name. Along with Elvira Luengo Gascón's "Benjamín Jarnés, Bécquer, y el arte de la biografía" (1999), this book, which examines the rise of the "new biography" as a genre, includes the only other detailed study of Jarnés' biographies.

genre that has been overlooked by literary criticism. In this regard Pego Puigbó describes the key period in Jarnés as

un arco de fechas que marcaba la publicación en la colección <<Nova Novorum>> de su novela más emblemática, *El profesor inútil*, y la aparición de una obra tan personal y difícilmente clasificable como el *Libro de Esther* (1935), generalmente atribuida al tan difuso como estimulante epígrafe del <<género intermedio>> (*Pesimismo* 144).⁸⁸

By the time *Libro de Esther* was published in 1935 critical attention to Jarnés' work had begun tapering off, and up to the present the text has remained largely unstudied.⁸⁹ As literary history's view of Jarnés' work has traditionally been limited to a single genre produced during a mere eight years of a publishing career spanning from 1917 to 1948, appraisals of these texts lack the context of both his larger artistic project and of his evolution as a writer and thinker, and reinforce Jarnés' misleading identification as an avant-garde novelist. Such an incomplete and misleading vision of this prolific author's work both overlooks other genres and provides a biased lense for reading the novels themselves. As Jordi Gracia observes in his brief yet insightful article "Fuera de foco: la prosa de ideas de Jarnés" in which the critic calls for a broader view of Jarnés' generic repertoire, "al escritor se le fija en un molde y de ahí será difícil sacarlo entre nosotros, es decir, aprender a leerlo como escritor y no como exige el molde de lectura" (12).

⁸⁸ As the present study demonstrates, I advocate a more comprehensive view of Jarnés' work up to and including his publications in exile and upon his return.

⁸⁹ According to Juan Domínguez Lasierra's exhaustive bibliography Jarnés' second two books, *El profesor inútil* and *El convidado de papel*, received the greatest amount of critical attention upon publication (116-188). Not surprisingly, the number of contemporary reviews each of Jarnés' books received slowly diminished as the avant-garde approach to the novel gradually lost favor. At the same time Jarnés' power and visibility in the literary field diminished as *La Gaceta Literaria*, of which he was a prominent editor, folded and other literary trends emerged. In his detailed study of the rapid change in literary attitudes between 1926 and 1934 and the subsequent devalorization of narrative techniques associated with the vanguard novel, Gustavo Pérez Firmat links the shift in attitudes towards generic experimentation to the first and second editions of Jarnés' *El profesor inútil*.

Jarnés himself railed against this reductive approach to literature in his 1931 article “Libros sin género,” proclaiming the importance of “Autores, no géneros” (207). In Jarnés’ view genre is a category applied from outside the text by critics and publishers; it is “letra menuda que al parecer es indispensable para justificar textos, programas, discusiones, crítica al por menor... rotulación, epigrafía, fichero editorial” (205). All works can be divided into two categories according to their function, he asserts: poetry (that is, “creación”) and nonfiction or “documentales” (205). Beyond this distinction genre is not useful for understanding a work of literature as all literature is inherently “mixta,” an amalgam of genres (206). Instead, Jarnés proposes that the author be seen as the principal means of differentiating works of literature. The author, who freely disposes of all genres and traditions in crafting a text, stands above genre as the organizing device for meaningful criticism and therefore may not be subject to classification as a novelist, poet, or playwright. Jarnés explains:

¿Qué es, por ejemplo, Azorín? ¿Es novelista? ¿Ensayista? ¿Poeta, en el sentido pequeño de hacedor de versos? ¿Dramaturgo? ... es un autor. Es Azorín. Leímos y leemos a Azorín, no por ser novelista, ni comediógrafo, ni articulista— en todo hay *técnicos* mejores--; lo leemos por ser él, y nada más que eso, él (208).

Curiously, it is precisely the force of genre-based expectations arising from the pigeonholing of Jarnés as an experimental novelist associated with the generic innovation of the *nueva novela*, I suggest, which both produces the need for the uniquely Jarnesian category of “género intermedio” to describe works which defy categorization. In addition, the need for a specific term may explain the simultaneous recognition of these texts’ importance and the difficulty critics have faced in analyzing them. As Tzvetan Todorov has observed in his study of genre in fantastic literature, it is precisely at the point of transgression that the norm becomes apparent. As a category comprised of the

transgressive, the apparently paradoxical “género intermedio” complicates the underlying commonplace that genre is a set of rules or characteristics, a sort of ‘textual etiquette.

Libro de Esther, as one the first of two texts inaugurating this critical category, serves as a prime source for uncovering a broad range of generically-bound expectations and their relation to the process of reading.

While the 1935 edition of *Libro de Esther* was reviewed in Spain, France, and Italy, it has received very little attention in subsequent studies of Jarnés perhaps because of its uncertain generic standing. The text has been summarized by Emilia de Zuleta, the figure of Esther has been briefly analyzed by César Pérez Gracia, and two recent articles exploring the *género intermedio* read the text in terms of theme rather than structure. My approach will be to read *Libro de Esther* as a single text comprised of different genres functioning in the same space, and to examine the effects each produces alone and in conjunction with others.

In his extensive bibliography of Jarnés’ writings, Juan Domínguez Lasierra includes *Esther* along with *Salón de estío*, *Viviana y Merlin*, *Eufrosina o la gracia* in the category of “género intermedio” and not in the other categories he uses to classify Jarnés’ books: “novelas,” “ensayos,” “biografías,” and “narraciones” (30). However, Domínguez Lasierra describes *Esther* as “glosas sobre el arte y sobre autores como Goethe, Nietzsche, Max Aub, Stendhal, Benjamín Constant, o Pirandello” thus implicitly emphasizing the essayistic thread of the text over the fictional or autobiographical (18). Juan Herrero Senés groups *Esther* and *Eufrosina* separately from Jarnés’ other works, describing them both as “obras híbridas de evocación, ficcionalidad, autobiografía y diálogo” (508). Yet the text incorporates these and other marked genres. Domingo

Ródenas de Moya describes *Esther* as “diálogo misceláneo entreverado de narración y ensayo entre un preceptor y su discípula” (“Novelistas” n.pag.) Although Ródenas does not explore this aspect of the text, in emphasizing the connection between situation of enunciation and theme he links it thematically to Jarnés’ recurring interest in teaching and learning as a gendered relationship.⁹⁰

It precisely in locating and teasing out the effects of such nexi of form and content that the concept of the *género intermedio* emerges as a productive, meaning-producing framework for interpretation rather than a catchall descriptor of indeterminacy. As David Conte asks in his article on the concept, “¿Para qué sirve designar una serie de libros como perteneciente al <<género intermedio>>, y en qué medida nos aydua a esclarecer la obra?” (15) As we shall see, the impossibility of limiting *Libro de Esther* to a single category resides in its simultaneous participation in a variety of genres which are in dialogue among themselves. From its opening pages, the text explicitly aligns itself with such a pragmatic view of genre through the various simultaneous identifications with particular genres stated in the *Preámbulo* which opens the text. The remainder of the text is divided into “cuadernos,” echoing the name that Jarnés gave his own private journals. Each “cuaderno” is divided by numbered sections, each with its own title. Each section or “entry” reads independently of those that come immediately before or after it, yet enough subsequent entries refer back to previous moments in the text that there is some sense of continuity through the story of Esther and of the narrator Benjamín. Meditations on art, literature, and philosophy are interspersed with these sections yet are often linked thematically to them. However, unlike a diary, entries are not dated.

⁹⁰ This theme dominates his first major novel, *El profesor inútil*, and recurs throughout his work.

The preface or introduction opens with an ambiguous declaration of intentions that destabilizes the notion of genre as an overarching framework arranging the text's elements into a logical whole. Yet at the same time, the preamble refuses to perform its explanatory role by expressly stating that the text resists a single generic classification: "Esto, que podría llamarse *Diario de una intimidad*, quiere a veces ser etopeya; las más, lección sencilla; o pocas —e involuntariamente— resulta un doble apunte biográfico... Es un *diario* a dos voces" (11). By simultaneously claiming to establish the text's genre and refusing to pin it down, the preamble posits this concept as a central feature of *Esther*. In a sense, however, it is the explicit alignment of the work with the architect of diary which permits this apparent indeterminacy precisely because this genre admits a nearly endless number of subgenres and discourse types.

In framing itself as a diary, the text gives itself the broadest possible latitude because, as Bruce Merry explains, "It [diary] is the most pliable and elastic of literary genres" (3). The diary admits all manner of content, including personal reflections and direct quotes in the manner of a scrapbook of thoughts, observations, and inspiration. Several critics have pointed to the insertion of such material in *Esther* as disjointed pieces of a separate genre (the essay) roughly inserted into the text's body. However, as Merry notes, this is a characteristic of the diary as a genre. He observes, "Nearly all diarists list their reading, their own reactions to classics, their slow mastery of world literature and immediate response to art" (4).

Reading *Esther* as a diary thus liberates interpretation from the unifying impulse at the heart of a novelistic reading. As Philippe Lejeune has noted, diary differs from autobiography precisely in its lack of overarching structure, direction, or coherence.

Lejeune opposes “The characteristics of the diary (immediacy, contingency, no control over time, no attempt at literary communication) and of the novel (reconstruction, meaning, communication)” (169). *Esther*’s alleged means of composition reflect this distinction by providing a rationale for the apparent lack of structure or coherence that characterize diary and which characterize the text. The narrator reports:

Se vino [*Esther*] escribiendo a lo largo de unos meses: ayer un rasgo, hoy cierta sabrosa pregunta y su respuesta. Frecuentemente colaboran en la faena autores predilectos; también –naturalmente—el azar, los buenos hados; también –divinamente—la fantasía, las buenas hadas (11).⁹¹

Within this context, the range of entries in *Esther*, which include short stories, analyses of philosophers, artists, and writers in addition to personal recollection, is justified: the author’s lived experience provides the link among these apparently disparate materials.

The very inclusion of the preamble, however, undercuts diary as the single dominant genre of *Esther*. According to Lejeune, the diary is by nature discontinuous, full of gaps, and allusive, frequently constructing meaning and connections “through references only the author can understand” (170). Redundant, repetitive, and non-narrative, diary is seen by this critic as “The exact opposite of literary communication” in that “there is no *sequentiality*... *it is written without knowledge of the ending*” (170). A preface or introduction to a diary occupies a paradoxical position. Situated as a paratext anterior to reading, it is necessarily the product of such reading and serves as a frame which retrofits an interpretation to the text endowing it with a sense of order and purpose, of what Lejeune has called “hegemonic intent,” that diary proper cannot know (168). This is the key distinguishing feature between diary and

⁹¹ All quotations are from the 1935 edition of *Libro de Esther* unless otherwise specified.

autobiography, which is governed by a narrative “‘unifying utopia’ of autobiography, in which a life is narrated according to formal aesthetic rules” (Popkin 2).

A preface is necessarily a guide to reading, and *Esther*’s “Preámbulo” breaks the illusion of diary by endowing the text with a sense of conscious purpose and intent bound to an audience outside of the intimate duo who ostensibly serve as both authors and interlocutors of this “diario a dos voces.” As Lejeune notes, “There is a gulf between the diary as it is *written* and the diary as it is *read*” (169). The preamble, which serves as a prior reading of the text, contradicts the one-directional flow of time which governs the writing of diaries and in this way resituates *Esther* as a constructed work, that is, a work of intentional artistic creation at odds with the diary’s unedited nature and documentary function. In this way *Esther* merges the two essential genres into which Jarnés divides all literature: “libros de creación” and “libros documentales” (“Género” 205).⁹²

Similarly, the narrator’s characterization of *Esther* as both a “*diario a dos voces*” and as an “etopeya” would appear contradictory, yet finds a harmonious synergy in the text through *Esther*’s simultaneous pedagogical function as “lección sencilla” (11). The two voices represented in the text belong to Benjamín and Esther who represent “autor y tema” respectively (12). The entries in the text are Benjamín’s ‘lessons’ to Esther and emerge in response to her questions, yet at the same time Benjamín—who speaks the most throughout the body of the text and who ultimately reasserts his role as author through the preamble—portrays both the young woman’s development and his own inner world. Through this dialogical process both participants reveal characteristics, thoughts, and emotions, producing through in this way a portrait of each: a “doble apunte

⁹² This distinction prefigures that made by Genette in *Fiction and Diction*. Jarnés’ model is discussed in further detail later in the present chapter.

biográfico” (11). The reference to biography and not autobiography situates Benjamín and Esther both as separate from the text’s author, despite the fact that several anecdotes in Benjamín’s life mirror events in Jarnés’ own.

At times the narrator overlaps with the implied author, yet maintains distance between the rich text of life and the incomplete nature of the literary work. Embodying the dual roles of participant and narrator inherent in the genre of diary in entry 11, titled “Insatisfacción,” the narrative voice asks

¿Por qué he comenzado a escribir este libro? Si en él nunca pude decir toda la verdad profunda de Esther, ¿para qué amontonar sobre este nombre unas páginas cargadas de meros circunloquios?... Pero el tema estaba muy cerca de mí, dentro de mi círculo afectivo; ¿cómo no acogerlo en mi pequeño mundo de escritor? (70)

Having stepped temporarily out from behind the mask of narrator, the speaker quickly ducks back into his textual role as Esther’s friend and in this way shifts the text’s genre from that of creation to documentation, from fiction to sort of *reportage*. The speaker paradoxically announces the impossibility of writing the text in which he is embedded. He is too close to the topic, to Esther, and therefore cannot write her book:

Este *Libro de Esther* será escrito cuando esos *terroncitos de hielo* que ella también conoce hayan apagado cualquier rescoldo emotivo. Ahora, esta páginas no son biografía ni etopeya; son, apenas, un cuaderno de apuntes. ¿De apuntes de escritor? Sencillamente, de buen amigo. Un escritor –un artista de esos que tanto miedo suelen dar a Esther—hubiera embellecido más el tema; pero ¿no le hubiera restado verdad? (71)

The text’s inability to realize a true portrait of Esther is thus bound up with issues of life and art, truth and distortion. As the narrator sees these as competing concepts, the only way in which to portray their complexity is to leave the work open, unfinished, in progress. Contradicting the claims made in the preamble, which by convention is considered as having been composed after the text’s completion, this section disrupts any

sense of generic stability that may have emerged in the text. Emilia de Zuleta underscores the function of this apparent contradiction, noting that “Mediante esta ficción de distanciamiento --<<borrador dentro del libro>>, por analogía con las más corrientes de <<libro en el libro>>--, Jarnés subraya la indeterminación del género, la libertad caripchosa del cauce elegido” (*Obra* 253.)

Previous critics, who have encountered difficulty in identifying the purpose and value of such a polyvalent text, have unsuccessfully attempted to classify the text as a whole in terms of a single generic framework, for example, novel, essay, or even essay-novel. However, I suggest that *Esther*'s very resistance to such classification reflects the Derridean model of genre as not as a category or a feature but rather a combination of simultaneous acts of signification, that is, of participating but not belonging to genre. Jarnés' *género intermedio*, then, highlights this view of genre as action and not of identification. From this perspective of genre as producer of meaning, I will examine the effects produced by simultaneously present and shifting genres in the same textual space. Specifically, through a combination of formal, thematic, and rhetorical features *Esther* invokes and undermines the genres of diary, biography, autobiography, *Bildungsroman*, legend, and criticism, among others.

Interestingly, the very title of the book raises the question of textual identity, of genre, genesis, authorship, and purpose. In naming itself with the exact title of an Old Testament text in which a young woman saves the Jewish people, *Libro de Esther* alerts the reader to the fact that the text is not what it claims to be. The reader is aware that the text is not a copy of the Biblical story as its author is contemporary, flesh-and-blood figure. Coupled with the cover's simple drawing of a solitary, contemplative young

woman, the title simultaneously links the past and the present, the transcendent and the pedestrian, activating expectations of allegory or, potentially, parody. The Biblical theme and tone of the title, however, do not reappear in the text itself, a fact which simultaneously undermines conventions of reading by failing to serve as a thematic intertext thus reinforcing the text's claim to factuality by underscoring the individuality and intranscendent specificity of the Esther of 1935.⁹³

Such a technique indicates a change in Jarnés' habitual use of Biblical and mythical motifs, a stylistic inheritance from his formative years in the seminary and his initial forays into literature, as well as his simultaneous liberation from prescriptive rules of genre.⁹⁴ His earliest work may be seen as a stage of apprenticeship in which he worked to master tightly-controlled genres such as the sonnet and honed his skills through imitating a range of literary styles.

Between 1917 and 1922 Jarnés' artistic efforts focused principally on literary criticism and on poetry, in addition to two military-themed dramatic works cowritten

⁹³ As seen in *La novia del viento*, for example, Jarnés typically uses myth and legend either as characterization devices or as sources of parody. However, these techniques are absent in *Libro de Esther*. Unlike her Biblical counterpart, the Esther of Jarnés' text does not lead or save anyone, nor is she portrayed as a moral exemplar. Rather, the narrator describes the young woman as an imperfect human "work in progress" whose focus is on developing herself as a person as she grows from girl to woman. At the same time, the narrator as author refuses the role of all-knowing mentor or guide, insisting that each individual must determine his or her own path. In this way, *Esther* can be seen as advocating for literary originality by highlighting the reader's own intertextual assumptions. This message resonates with the narrator's insistence that there are no models or guidelines for life, as "cada vida ofrece un texto diferente, un drama diferente" (57).

⁹⁴ Although the literary press presented Jarnés' career as a sudden rise to prominence in 1926 through the success of what was viewed as his first published work, *El profesor inútil* and his subsequent association with *Revista de Occidente*, Jarnés had been publishing since 1917. The years preceding his relocation to Madrid have been labeled "la prehistoria de Jarnés" in which "[de] las limitaciones de una formación conservadora, religiosa y militar, evolucionará hasta formar parte de la vanguardia del pensamiento y de la creación literaria" (García Juste 20). By not drawing attention to his earlier work, what Jarnés' may have wished to obscure is not his own formative years in the military and the seminary as these environments serve as the setting for future, somewhat autobiographical works *Lo rojo y lo azul* and *El convidado de papel*. Rather, what changes over time is Jarnés' attitude towards these institutions, which becomes increasingly critical at the same time as his style and techniques become less imitative and increasingly experimental.

with a fellow army officer. In contrast to his later writing, characterized by generic experimentation and thematic complexity, Jarnés' poetry was of a markedly conventional nature in both content and form, focusing on religious and nature themes and imitating the style of poets such as Fray Luis de León and Santa Teresa de Jesús, moving in later years towards experimentation with Modernist imagery.⁹⁵ Unanthologized and quickly overshadowed by the success of Jarnés' prose writing, his poetry has been addressed by only three critics. José Carlos Mainer dismisses these early writings as "poemas de gusto vacilante," a judgment with which I concur due to the primarily imitative concepts and composition of these poems (112).

However, I disagree with Rafael Conte's appraisal of Jarnés' work prior to *El profesor inútil*: "nada quedó en la obra posterior de nuestro autor... [fueron] años que desaparecieron por completo" (qtd. in García Juste 22). Rather, I view this early stage in Jarnés' writing as a period of apprenticeship in which he gradually worked through a series of highly-structured generic models of poetry ranging from the Bible through the Spanish Golden Age to the Modernist themes and techniques of the period preceding the avant-garde.⁹⁶ Along with García Juste, the author of the only published study of Jarnés' poetry, I agree and expand upon his conclusion that "aunque su evolución literaria pueda considerarse una revolución personal –tanto estilística como ideológica– en muchos aspectos, no se deja tampoco de vislumbrar el germen de este cambio en las inquietudes e

⁹⁵ Significantly, upon his introduction in 1923 into the Madrid literary circle of the Café Oriente, Jarnés abruptly stopped writing poetry and turned exclusively to prose with only two exceptions: his 1920 poem "Agua viva" was reprinted in 1927, and three plays of which *Cardenio, monodrama* was published in 1934.

⁹⁶ Jarnés' work as a whole is characterized by an exceptionally broad range of references to other texts and literary currents from myth and the Biblical to the Spanish tradition, with particular emphasis on the Medieval, Golden Age, and Romantic periods. In particular, Marion O'Neill Welch (1968) and María del Pilar Martínez Latre (1998) have examined the role of myth in Jarnés' novels (1968), José Carlos Mainer highlights the pervasive influence of Jarnés' fellow Aragonese author Baltasar Gracián (2008), and Elvira Luengo Gascón discusses the relevance of Bécquer in Jarnés' biographical work (1999). A range of motifs and intertexts from these periods will be discussed in the current project.

intereses del Jarnés de los comienzos” (22). The impulse to create through the destruction and exploitation of artistic models seen in *La novia del viento*, the exhaustive stylistic and intertextual repertoire undergirding *Teoría del Zumbel*’s multiple discourses, and the dialogue between life and art seen in *Libro de Esther* all owe a great debt to this initial period of apprenticeship.⁹⁷

Throughout the remainder of his career, Jarnés’ work is characterized by its highly erudite and heterogeneous amalgam of intertextual references, conceptual models, and stylistic techniques borrowed from a range of genres and historical periods, many of which are present in his first published writings. Perhaps most significantly, Jarnés’ work would be characterized by its highly poetic use of language, a feature which would blur the boundaries between prose and poetry in his narrative and criticism, and which would underlie his “género intermedio.” *Libro de Esther*’s use of Biblical references, transcultural and transhistorical use of intertexts, and vast range of registers reflect this particularly Jarnesian approach. Furthermore, under the title “Estrella errante” the 1935 text includes Jarnés’ very first story, “Estrella,” published in the literary journal *Sinceridad* in 1923 (Luengo Gascón *Cuentos* 108).

In addition, Jarnés’ first incursion into long narrative resonates with *Libro de Esther*, published eleven years later. After a visit to his brother Pedro, a priest in the village of Olalla, in 1924 Jarnés composed and published *Mosén Pedro*, a narrative text classified by Juan Domínguez Lasierra as “biografía novelada” (18). Loosely based on

⁹⁷ Jarnés’ poetry reproduces highly-regimented, prescriptive models of genre in which form and content are tightly scripted and bound together. His later work retains yet recombines a range of conventional stylistic, thematic, and generic elements to produce texts of a singularly innovative nature. In sharp contrast to his earlier efforts, described by his contemporary Melchor Fernández Almagro as “inconfesables,” Jarnés’ later work employs the techniques honed in those initial writings to parody formulaic genres and literary clichés (3). This distinctly Jarnesian combination of convention and innovation characterizes his later works, in particular those ascribed to the *género intermedio*.

his brother's life, Jarnés' first book-length narrative dealt with a traditional theme in an unconventional manner combining fact and imagination, exposition and interpretation.⁹⁸

Although it had received an award from the Biblioteca Patria, *Mosén Pedro* was confined along with Jarnés' poetry to obscurity due, perhaps, to its religious focus and sanctioning by a conservative publishing house. However, the text's innovative narrative technique in conjunction with its partially biographical focus prefigured the rise of the "nueva biografía" whose success, according to Alvaro Alcalá Galiano, rested on the hybrid nature of "lo que pudiéramos llamar la "biografía novelesca", procedente de la novela y del archivo documentando a un tiempo" (Soguero *Narradores* 21). Jarnés would go on to become a leading producer of this new type of biography in which fact and fiction were interwoven with the intervention of the author in the text, an approach which would influence the composition of *Libro de Esther*.

One of two critics who have dedicated articles to the *género intermedio*, Armando Pego Puigbó has noted that in the first half of the 1930s Jarnés' generic experimentation moved beyond the boundaries of the novel to reconfigure traditional conceptions of a variety of text types. Pego Puigbó explains, in the years 1931 through 1936 "La difuminación de las fronteras entre los géneros, característica de la práctica vanguardista,

⁹⁸ After its partial publication in Zaragoza's Catholic weekly newspaper *El Pilar*, the complete text was released in 1924 by Biblioteca Patria, a small press known for "su patriótica empresa de renovación moral y literaria" (81). *Mosén Pedro*'s publication resulted from its having received the publishing house's "Premio Colectivo para el Fomento de las Buenas Lecturas." Works chosen for this prize followed a strict code of Catholic censorship, as reflected by the disclaimer which served as a preface to the 1924 edition:

la edición de obras en esta «Biblioteca» no implica recomendación de otros libros de los mismos autores que en ella colaboran; solamente supone la moralidad y ortodoxia de las que publicamos, que en todo tiempo están sometidas a la autoridad de la Iglesia (4).

Despite its featuring illustrations by the prominent artist Rafael Barradas, according to Domínguez Lasierra the book appears to have received only one review in a local newspaper, *Heraldo de Vallecas* (116). Followed by *El profesor inútil*, which marked a sharp contrast to his previous work stylistically and thematically and whose 1926 edition received over 25 reviews in prominent journals by well-known critics, *Mosén Pedro* was not reissued until 2005. Despite its disappearance from the Jarnesian canon, as we shall see, the text's experimental approach to biography would reemerge in later works such as *Libro de Esther*.

le permitió a Jarnés ensayar vías que se encontraban a medio camino entre el diario, el ensayo propiamente dicho, el cuadro de costumbres y los manuales didácticos” (“Introduction” 17-18). As we shall see *Libro de Esther*, one of the last works Jarnés would compose, embodies this new direction in the author’s manipulation of genre as a means of artistic innovation. Published at the height of his experimentation with the biography, *Libro de Esther*, followed by *Eufrosina o la gracia*, extends the combination of nonfiction and interpretation to include the fictional and autobiographical. In stepping outside of the biography, which is necessarily tethered to a world outside the text, *Esther’s* autobiographical claims permit blurring and blending genres in a more subtle and elusive fashion.

Originally published in 1935, a second edition of *Libro de Esther* was released along with *Eufrosina o la gracia* by Josep Janés in 1948, the year in which the seriously ill Jarnés returned from exile or, as Rafael Conte notes, “más bien le <<regresaron>> de México a Madrid, ya herido de muerte, afectado por una grave enfermedad reumática progresiva que le había dejado años antes sin funcionamiento cerebral, en estado vegetativo” (20).⁹⁹ In a semi-conscious state since 1946, Jarnés most likely had little input into these editions which marked the author’s return to Spain. As José Carlos Mainer notes:

Los achaques reumáticos, que tuvo desde muy joven, y sobre todo la senilidad precoz lo habían convertido en una sombra de sí mismo. Ni siquiera debió de llegar a saber que un activo editor barcelonés, Josep Janés, había publicado en 1948 el original de *Eufrosina o la gracia*, en que tanto confiaba y cuya suerte le había tenido preocupado desde que lo entregó en 1936 a la editorial Apolo. Y por supuesto, tampoco supo que muy pronto le hizo compañía, en la misma bonita

⁹⁹ *Libro de Esther* was originally published in 1935 and was re-edited in 1948. As Jarnés had been in a semi-conscious state for two years prior to the publication of the second edition and his role in its production is unclear, I have chosen to work with the first edition.

colección 'Manantial que no cesa', la segunda impresión de *El libro de Esther*" (Jarnés 5).

Although Jarnés was unable to participate in any literary endeavors from 1944 on, Rafael Conte views the simultaneous publication of *Libro de Esther* and *Eufrosina o la gracia* as the first of several attempts to restore Jarnés to the literary field. The limited attention these two books received was due, he affirms, to the social and political concerns dominating postwar Spain. Conte explains, "los tiempos no estaban por desgracia para este tipo de formalismos tan alejados de las sangrientas heridas bélicas todavía sin cerrar, en el contexto de una literatura de tipo <<imperial>> precognizada por el nuevo régimen" (*Viviana* 20). The same cultural forces that had increasingly isolated the once-ubiquitous Jarnés in the 1930s would prevent these two texts from being read in 1948.

The relationship between *Esther* and *Eufrosina* thus includes their date of composition, simultaneous publication as Jarnés' attempted return to the Spanish literary field, and the generic nature of the texts themselves. As David Conte points out in one of the two recently-published articles on Jarnés' *género intermedio*, along with *Eufrosina* *Libro de Esther* is only one of two texts classified by all critics as belonging to Jarnés' *género intermedio* ("Gracias" 12). Conte focuses his exploration of the concept on these two texts in an effort to uncover the meaning-effects of such a use of genre. In stepping outside of the traditional, taxonomic approach to genre in reading Jarnés, Conte asks, "¿Hacia dónde apunta el género intermedio?" ("Gracias" 13). Conte concludes that the essence of Jarnés' experimental use of traditional literary genres serves as the means to embody and express the notion of "gracia," which Conte defines as "como un valor de síntesis entre el arte y la vida" ("Gracias" 16). He notes that the concept is a recurrent

theme in Jarnés' writings over the course of his career and links it to a combination of form and content which he affirms is "específicamente presente en el género intermedio" ("Gracias" 13).¹⁰⁰ In attributing a signifying function to the *género intermedio*, Conte successfully moves the discussion beyond the fallacious separation of form and content that underlies negative criticism of much of Jarnés' work.¹⁰¹

Although references to both works appear in recent appraisals of Jarnés' work, to date no critic has analyzed either work in depth as attention has been focused on texts that have been aligned with the novel. *Libro de Esther*, however, is frequently cited in analyses of Jarnés' other works and is most frequently invoked as a theoretical framework for understanding aspects of his earlier novels. Critics such as Valerie Finch make extensive use of *Esther* as a secondary source or reference text containing the theoretical underpinnings of Jarnés' approach to the relationship between life and literature, and thus read *Esther* as an essay rather than a work of fiction. Marion Welch O'Neill's article "The Role of the Sensual in the Art of Benjamín Jarnés" identifies *Esther* as the vehicle for his development of the notion of *la voluptuosidad*, which, she affirms, explains the author's attention to the sensual in his novels. References to *Esther* appear regularly in critical discussions of Jarnés from Víctor Fuentes to Gustavo Pérez

¹⁰⁰ "La gracia" appears in a broad range of Jarnés' writings, both fictional and critical, throughout his career. Presented as an elusive ideal towards which art aspires, the concept forms a central theme of *Viviana y Merlín* (1930, 1994), a fictional text attributed to the *género intermedio* by critics such as Juan Domínguez Lasierra. In addition the concept forms the basis of Jarnés' 1932 lecture "Sobre la gracia artística" published in book form in 1932 and reissued in 2004. The term appears in the title of Jarnés' last published text, *Eufrosina o la gracia* (1948), considered as a member of the *género intermedio* by all critics who employ the term, as well as in his 1936 article "La gracia inmaterial de Betty Boop."

¹⁰¹ Conte's reading is valuable yet limited as his reading reduces *Esther* to a step in an artistic process culminating in *Eufrosina o la gracia*. By reading *Esther* both alone and in conjunction with more apparently dissimilar works such as *La novia del viento* and *Teoría del zumbel*, the current project embraces Conte's observation as one among many functions of Jarnés' use of genre to produce meaning.

Firmat, and in conjunction with *Eufrosina* the text forms the basis for both David Conte's and Armando Pego Puigbó's articles discussing the *género intermedio*.

Esther's relevance within the Jarnesian corpus is clear yet the text has generally been read as a secondary source rather than an artifact in its own right, that is, as a theoretical text providing insight into Jarnés' novelistic projects. Although generic experimentation characterized Jarnés' writing as a whole, it is in a few works—those not aligned with existing categories such as novel and essay and their subgenres such as lyrical novel—that the concept of the *género intermedio* emerges as out of critics' need to describe these texts. Interestingly, it is Jarnés' own need for a new term that leads to the creation of this category which would later be considered to be a unique characteristic of works such as *Esther*.¹⁰²

In his review of Pío Baroja's *Las noches del Buen Retiro*, the concept and term *género intermedio* arises from Jarnés' inability to uniformly associate the text either with fiction or reality, two worlds of meaning which have traditionally been considered mutually exclusive. Citing its delicate balancing over "la zanja abierta entre la crónica y la novela" Jarnés struggles to find a way to express the paradoxical nature of Baroja's text: "¿Periodismo ilustrado? ¿Crónica novelada? ¿Mixtificaciones de un inagotable Paradox? En todo caso, se trata de un género intermedio" ("Baroja" 352). In Jarnés' model the essential element undergirding this *género intermedio* and differentiating it from hybrid or pastiche, however, is not a question of stylistics but rather the distinction between fact and fiction, *reportage* and creation. This distinction is linked to linguistic production and reception, however, and does not refer to the origin of the content but to

¹⁰² Although Jarnés coined this term in his article "Baroja y sus desfiles" he neither fleshed out the concept in later writings nor applied it to his own work.

its presentation and perception. Jarnés explains, “La crónica puede seguir inmediatamente al suceso; la novela necesita una gran pausa, una zanja bien visible entre el espectáculo y los lectores. Y esa zanja sólo puede abrirla el tiempo, con sus implacables golpes de azadón” (“Baroja” 352).

Similar issues of genre are at play here as *Esther* resists generic definition both by explicitly describing itself as a combination of genres from diary to portrait to biography and by its autobiographical references to the flesh-and-blood author Benjamín who shares a name with the text’s narrator. As genre functions as a frame for interpretation, a variety of generic messages can be unsettling as it continually disorients the reader and, in the case of Jarnés' texts, at times the characters themselves. Knowing the genre of a text activates a set of expectations and a frame for reading and interpretation. Yet in the *género intermedio* genre is a function within a text rather than an architecture determining the role of each element, and can therefore exist in conjunction with others.

Although over the years critics have classified a wide range of works as belonging to the *género intermedio*, the consensus surrounding both *Esther* and *Eufrosina* has been constant with a single exception. Domingo Ródenas sums up the rationale underlying this classification, describing both texts as “un diálogo de género híbrido” (*Novelistas* n.p.). Rafael Conte, however, describes *Eufrosina* as a novel while describing *Esther* as “un gran ejemplo de lo que [Jarnés] mismo calificó como <<género intermedio>>, pues mezclaba el relato con el ensayo” (“Resistencias” 7). As the two texts were composed almost simultaneously and mark a new use of genre in Jarnés, it was perhaps for this reasons that Josep Janés released a second edition of *Esther* when he published *Eufrosina*.

Given the cultural environment and Jarnés' near-decade of exile, it is not surprising that these two books published in the year before the author's death received very little contemporary critical attention, especially as they were followed by editorial silence. Curiously, although the second edition of *Esther* was published simultaneously with *Eufrosina o la gracia*, the texts received differing amounts of attention. *Eufrosina* was reviewed at least six times in important forums such as *Ínsula*. Generally well-received, *Eufrosina* was praised for its "lunar hermosura" and was considered by Bartolomé Mostaza to be the pinnacle of Jarnés "novela-ensayo" (n.pag.).

However, a review of the Benjamín Jarnés archives in both Madrid and Zaragoza along with Juan Domínguez Lasierra's thorough *Ensayo de una bibliografía jarnesiana* uncovers only two reviews of the second edition of *Esther*.¹⁰³ Of these, one was published in Mexico despite Jarnés' return to Spain in 1948 and the text's publication in Barcelona. Essentially a retrospective memorial piece titled "Letras de México: Presencia y tránsito de Benjamín Jarnés 1888-1949," the critic David Arce classifies the text as a novel. Arce writes, "Ilegamos a la culminación de su exponente como novelista en el 'Libro de Esther'. Libro ejemplar en su belleza, fué éste 'de Esther' origen y sustento de las conquistas tanto cordiales como literarias mejor logradas por su autor" (n.pag.)

In his joint review of Jarnés' 1948 editions Bartolomé Mostaza briefly discusses the text along with *Eufrosina* in a vague yet positive appraisal of both as examples of Jarnés' signature approach to genre: "Hay más descripción que cuento en sus novelas.

¹⁰³ Although contemporary reviews of works such as the first edition of *Libro de Esther* were plentiful it is almost exclusively Jarnés' most clearly novelistic texts such as *El profesor inútil* and *Locura y muerte de nadie*, and *Teoría del zumbel*, which have been the subject of significant critical attention and in-depth analysis. Generic indeterminacy, then, has had significant consequences: by falling into the undefined category of *género intermedio* works such as *Libro de Esther* have been left outside of the Jarnesian canon.

Por eso forman estilísticamente un género entre el ensayo y el relato” (4). Mostaza asserts that Jarnés’ approach provides an essential link between form and content which enhances the literary product. Regarding *Esther* he notes, “¿Un ‘Diario íntimo’? Sí, y con una fuerza intimizante, con una veracidad, con un realismo que no poseería si fuera crónica pormenorizada de sucesos. Jarnés no narra, describe” (4). Curiously, although Mostaza addresses the text’s claim to the status of diary he does not explore that genre, which necessarily refers to a field of reference anchored in reality and therefore in tension with the novelistic. Mostaza’s appraisal of *Eufrosina* prefigures David Conte’s reading of that text as the culmination of Jarnés attempt to combine the theory and practice of his concept of *la gracia* through generic experimentation: “Benjamín Jarnés reafirma en ‘Eufrosina’ su concepto de la novela-ensayo. Escrita toda en coloquio, salvas las introducciones capitulares, que se limitan, a usanza de las acotaciones en las comedias, a situar en un ambiente concreto a los interlocutores” (4).

The difficulty in defining a genre, however, somewhat paradoxically is seen by one critic as a hallmark of a specific genre, the vanguard novel. In his detailed study of genre in the Hispanic avant-garde, Gustavo Pérez Firmat reads *Esther* as an example of the ‘new novel’ characterized by the destruction of the traditional novel’s generic imperative of linking form and content. Noting the recurrent metaphor of architecture in literary criticism, he opposes this image to vanguard fiction’s leitmotif of the nebulous or “pneumatic” which he links to a shift in the function of genre. Pérez Firmat explains:

...the pneumatic effect subverts the form-content dichotomy, while the architectural impulse endorses it. The image of the edifice readily doubles as a metaphor for the division of a work into form and content, a division that goes along with the view that the novel is a fixed genre. The frame of the building, its *armazón* (a word constantly used to subsume the categories of plot and character),

serves as the “form” which the novelist imbues with a specific content (*Fictions* 51).

Upon its publication in 1935, the first edition of *Esther* was reviewed in three countries. Critics focused on one of two themes, the relationship between Esther and her interlocutor or the generic status of the text. Discussions of genre variously identify the text as a novel, a variation on the diary, a Pygmalion story, a lyrical novel (‘roman-méditation’), and “una divagación conceptuosamente sentimental” (Herrero n.pag.) On the whole, reviews of the text fall into two categories, those that focus on the text’s form and those that focus on the text’s content. Each of these approaches, however, implicitly addresses the particularly unusual use of genre in *Esther*.

Antonio Espina’s 1935 reading of *Libro de Esther* casts the text as an example *avant la lettre* of Pérez Firmat’s “novela pneumática,” succinctly defined by Juan Herrero Senés as “una estética pneumática cuyos valores nucleares eran lo indefinido, lo inconsistente o lo desdibujado, y, en consonancia, una novela que o bien era ‘pre-novel’ o ‘ultra-novela’ “ (222). Situating the text as a novel, Espina praises Jarnés’ ability to create in *Esther* “una arquitectura dinámica” which restructures traditional literature characterized as “el duro croquis del castillo feudal con su cúbica mole asentada en la roca” (108). Espina highlights the skilled use of adjectives in Jarnés’ prose, linking the style of *Esther* to a renewal of the novelistic genre. He attributes “la fábrica especial de la prosa jarnesiana” with the ability to “[trocar] en ágil, veloz y siempre móvil la vieja idea pesada de la solemne arquitectura en reposo” which characterizes the traditional novel (108).

The theme of architecture appears in Marcel Brion's review of *Esther* published in the same year. The French critic views the text as the most outstanding example of the trend in Spanish literature toward the novelistic "roman-méditation" in which a range of genres combines in a harmonious whole similar but not identical to a novel. Brion explains:

Il y a ici, plus encore qu'un roman proprement dit, les approches d'un roman. Une construction subtile dans laquelle le récit, le dialogue et la méditation s'enlacent selon un apparent carpece mais en obéissant, réellement, à une rigoureuse architecture spirituelle qui captive le lecteur comme dans un château de rêves (n.pag.).¹⁰⁴

Although he does not discuss these concepts, in Brion's model genres are implicitly viewed not as an overarching structure or as essentially literary constructs, but rather as text types defined principally by the relationship between speaker and addressee. A "récit" or story is a monologue directed towards a listener or listener, a dialogue results from the interaction of two speakers, and a meditation is, much like diary itself, the most enigmatic form of communication in its solipsistic overlapping of speaker and addressee.

Viewed from a pragmatic perspective, then, the text emerges as an organic whole rather than a patchwork of textual scraps. It is precisely this critical move away from existing models of genre, either as monolithic structure governing all textual elements or as pastiche which defies any overarching frame for interpretation, allows for the emergence of a *género intermedio*. Brion's observations correspond to the three main types of "entries" that comprise the body of *Libro de Esther*. By focusing on the

¹⁰⁴ "Here we find, more than a novel *per se*, something which approaches the novel. A subtle construction in which story, dialogue, and meditation are woven together in what appears to be a whimsical manner but which in reality obey a rigorous spiritual architecture that captivates the reader as if within a castle of dreams."

situation of enunciation rather than purely literary genres his model makes visible a coherence among these seemingly unrelated sections. The recounting of traditional Chinese folk tales included as “entries” in the text, such as “Estrella errante” and “La niña en venta” thus aligns with apparently autobiographical narratives “Viaje infantil” under the rubric of stories.¹⁰⁵

Similarly, rather than critical essays inexplicably inserted into a diary within this framework reflections ranging from Bécquer’s poetry or the Jarnesian concept of “la voluptuosidad” may be read as contemplation or thinking aloud to oneself. Dialogue, both as the utterance and response used as framing devices throughout the text, links *Esther* to both the ‘diario a dos voces’ and to the relationship of teacher and student, mentor and mentee which serves as the underlying premise of communication throughout the text. In a sense, perhaps, the role of narrator is analogous to the role of pedagogue: the narrator defines the field of relevant knowledge, edits content by selecting and omitting details, and guides participants through a specific set of material by providing commentary.

In addition to discussing the unusual generic status of the text, contemporary critics addressed the relationship between the older, male narrator and the young female Esther which evokes a common theme in Jarnés’ work from *El profesor inútil* (1926) to *Cartas al Ebro* (1940), a collection of letters directed to a young woman named Carlota. In Jarnés, however, this model of traditional pedagogy in which the wise and all-knowing teacher molds the passive vessel of the student is undermined: the fruitless attempts of “useless professors” to transmit lifeless concepts are frustrated by the pupil’s vital life

¹⁰⁵ For a discussion of these two stories, which Jarnés inserted into *Esther*, see Luengo Gascón’s “Vanguardia y humor en los cuentos chinos de Pu Songling y Benjamín Jarnés” (2009).

force, frequently manifested through sexuality. In *Benjamín Jarnés* José Carlos Mainer perceives a close similiarity between Carlota and Esther, observing

Carlota y Esther son dos suertes de discípulas que despliegan ante el autor una mezcla inextricable de coquetería, ingenuidad y sabiduría. Son, en suma, el contrapunto de voluptuosidad y arbitrariedad a la tentación intelectual, como el hada Viviana lo es frente al sabio Merlín (66-67).

However, I suggest, in *Libro de Esther* the pedagogical relationship appears quite differently than in Jarnés' other works primarily because the enterprise is presented for the first time as successful. Perhaps not incidentally sexual and romantic tension is atypically absent although, as César Pérez Gracia observes, "Esther no es un personaje de ficción como los otros, como los de las restantes novelas de Jarnés. Esther tiene algo de Carlota, de la alumna jarnesiana, pero aquí hay una relación más directa entre el escritor y su personaje" (51). In this "diario a dos voces" the learning process emerges from interaction. The instructor does not impose a syllabus but follows an emergent curriculum in which topics arise from the flow of the student's interests.

Although Esther does not frequently speak in the text, her questions form the pretext and organizing principle for each "entry" in the journal. The relationship here is one of mentoring rather than molding, and in criticizing "el sesudo pedagogo profesional" who attempts to direct the lives of others the narrator lays out a theory of teaching that underlies the common Jarnesian theme of teacher and student, male and female, the intellectual and the "vital" (57).¹⁰⁶ The focus of this "libro de educación y aprendizaje" is precisely learning how to live (D. Conte *Gracias* 14). In *Esther* it is the student who seeks the teacher's wisdom, and it is the teacher who makes explicit the

¹⁰⁶ This theme is developed in *El profesor inútil* (1926, 1934), *El convidado de papel* (1928), and *Viviana y Merlín* (1930), *Libro de Esther* (1935, 1948), *Eufrosina o la gracia* (composed 1935, published in 1948), and *Cartas al Ebro* (1940).

fallacy of this model of learning. There is no overarching reality known as “life,” he says, and so each person must find their own path. The narrator explains, “Esther quiere una brújula—una brújula que pretende que sea yo---. Tendrá que contentarse con un aparato mucho más humilde, con un despertador” (52). In other words, the teacher cannot direct the course of the student’s life but may simply call her attention to ideas and issues. Ultimately, he implies, the traditional model of pedagogy as guidance or direction fails because “la brújula va dentro de nosotros; lo que puede ir fuera es el despertador” (52).

The structure of *Esther* reflects this approach: rather than following a neatly prescribed narrative or thematic path leading to an overarching conclusion, the text is composed of a series of observations that may draw Esther’s attention to important life issues. Ultimately, each individual must find his or her own way because “*La vida* no existe; sólo existen *las vidas*, la vida de cada uno: y cada uno sólo cuenta la suya, sepa o no contarla” (33). There is no test for Esther to pass, no exam or hidden agenda as there is no single model for living. By leaving open her interpretation of the narrator’s “lessons,” the young woman’s near silence in response to these observations reinforces the notion that there is no specific lesson to be learned. Rather, the function of these observations is to provoke thought. “Son los silencios los que dejan en nosotros huella,” the narrator explains, “no las palabras. Las palabras sólo sirven para que el pensamiento se enmascare” (30).

Ricardo Gullón’s appraisal of *Esther*’s narrator as “profesor inútil” suggests a connection between the ostensibly contradictory generic condition of the text and this attitude towards pedagogy. Gullón describes the narrator as a

maestro [que] era, ante todo, artista, y [que] se recreaba contemplando el espectáculo de esta voluntariosa creación. Sin vocación magistral, prefirió este profesor, en otro tiempo acaso aturdido... hoy limpiamente sereno, anotar, observar: por eso el resultado ha sido ‘un diario a dos voces.’ Esther y el autor” (“Esther” n.pag.).

This evolution in the Jarnesian archetype parallels the implied age and pedagogical mission of those characters, who in addition to being teachers are simultaneously students of life. As Gullón has noted, the Jarnesian “profesor inútil” is characterized as an “‘eterno aprendiz’ ... [un] hombre que no está nunca de vuelta de las cosas, porque vive” (“Esther” n.pag.). Experience, then, is the source of knowledge and serves as the link between teaching and learning. Over time the bumbling young tutor terrorized by household dogs in *El profesor inútil* who fruitlessly attempted to teach fundamental accounting to a fellow adolescent has grown into *Esther*’s mature older man whose lessons center on how to live one’s life.

Learning through books, that is, through models and knowledge constructed by others, is presented as an isolated, monologic, and passive endeavor in opposition to learning through life. Reflecting on Esther’s conventional approach to study, the narrator comments:

Precisamente nos gustaría verla en otro paisaje, con árboles en torno, en vez de libros; con trinos de pájaros, en vez de sonoras frases. Convertida en walkiria, en amazona, en algo lindo y dinámico al mismo tiempo. No sentada junto a una mesa, pasando revista al gremio de poetas del Renacimiento, o a una familia de peces... Nos gustaría verla dialogando con el mar, sentada en la arena, escribiendo en ella algún nombre querido: preparando – para el regreso—su menuda artillería de juguetes, sus preguntas infantiles, que luego sabe disparar como flechitas de papel (138-139)

Learning here is an active pursuit, characterized by youthful joy and playful and inquisitive nature unintimidated by the world and its mysteries. In such a model the

student figures more prominently than the teacher, whose role is to respond to the fire of questions released by the pupil. The shape of the lesson emerges from the inquiries and responses of the student, much as the “entries” of *Esther* are framed as responses to the young women’s questions.

As the Jarnesian professor embraces the personalized and interactive nature of learning, following a shift away from the abstract to lived experience, both his methods and his educational philosophy become less prescriptive and more dynamic. As the “profesor” matures, he cedes control over the material he seeks to impart in his educational mission, and lessons become conversations sparked by the student’s inquiries. Refusing Esther’s request for him to direct her life, the narrator explains that existing models may not be reproduced but must be altered to fit the individual, affirming “El destino y el traje, a la medida” (181). This perspective may be viewed as a metaphor for writing: as Jarnés moves through his literary career, his own work evolves from the initial stage of largely imitative, generically prescribed form and function seen in his early poetry to the thematic and stylistic heterogeneity of *Libro de Esther* and *Eufrosina o la gracia*. In a sense, form and function – each text’s “traje” and “destino” – may be seen as taking shape in consonance with the contours of its individual content. The result is a unique and unrepeatably combination of content, form, and function emerging from the intersection of these three elements.

The criticism of traditional pedagogy inherent in this approach casts light on Jarnés’ series of reluctant professors. *Esther*’s narrator explains his reticence:

¡Qué enorme responsabilidad la de un comienzo de siembra en terreno tan exigente! ¿No es preferible que mi influencia resbale por Esther a influir nocivamente en ella? ¡Qué enorme responsabilidad y qué delicia enseñar a un buen amigo la ciencia del vivir! Después de todo, ¿quién podrá envanecerse de

saberla bien? Porque, además, cada vida ofrece un texto diferente, un *drama* diferente (56-70).

The humility expressed here reinforces his respect for both each individual's path and for life itself, once again employing the metaphor of life and text. In Jarnés' approach living and telling are cast in terms of content and form respectively, yet for the author these two elements are inseparable. Perhaps, then, as the individual cannot entirely control life the narrator must not pretend to rigorously control the narrative, a view which may be reflected in *Esther's* self-proclaimed resistance to a single generic category.

Another difficulty in reading *Esther* resides in the differences between the 1935 and the 1948 editions. The second edition includes a significant amount of material drawn from essays and reviews Jarnés had previously published in newspapers and literary magazines. This material is merely inserted rather than grafted into the text, and the resulting whole suffers from a lack of care and cohesion which does not plague the first edition. As previously noted, it is unclear to what extent Jarnés participated in the second edition of the text which was published six years after he lost the ability to communicate coherently. Having returned to Spain in a state of described by Domínguez Lasierra as "onubilación mental," the question of Jarnés' role in the works published in 1948 was raised by contemporaries such as Juan Antonio Cabezas (20). A sympathetic critic, in early 1949 Cabezas published several articles designed to revive the figure of Jarnés in the Spanish literary arena. As Jarnés' diminished mental state had been noted by the press, Cabezas portrays the ailing author as a heroic martyr to literature. In a promotional piece reporting on Jarnés' return to Spain, the critic notes "Abrazamos a un hombre que se ha consumido interiormente, que se ha dado entero a su obra" (*Chamberí*

n.pag.) Several months later Cabeza publishes a review of *Eufrosina o la gracia* titled “Jarnés, el escritor inactivo, edita” (n.pag.). *Eufrosina*, composed in 1936 but lost in the war, was recovered by the publisher Josep Janés who published it in 1949. Cabezas’ title implies that although unable to create new works, Jarnés remained lucid enough to participate in the process of publishing his work. However, no evidence of revisions to the 1936 manuscript has been uncovered, and it is nearly certain that the only hands involved in the edition were those of Janés and of Jarnés’ wife Gregoria, who had returned to Spain with no means of financial support beyond the money produced by the work of her husband.

In view of Jarnés’ inability to oversee the 1949 editions of his work, coupled with the uncharacteristically unpolished feel of the second edition of *Esther*, I have chosen to work with the first edition. Despite the insertion in the 1948 edition of additional essayistic material culled from previously published reviews and articles, the structure of the two versions remains constant. As is habitual in Jarnés’ writings, the text opens with two epigraphs followed by an introductory section titled “Preámbulo.” The remainder of the text is divided into three “cuadernos,” echoing the terminology Jarnés would employ in his own private journals. Each “cuaderno” consists of a series of what may be seen as ‘entries.’ Within the text each entry is labeled with a number, but the “índice” at the end of the book includes titles for each of these subsections. Despite the structural similarity of the two editions, a few characteristics of the 1948 edition which directly address the 1935 addition merit attention for their value in providing insight into the text’s generic self-situating strategies.

Significantly the 1948 version of the *Preámbulo* appears essentially the same as that of 1935, bearing only a few stylistic changes. However, the last sentence appears as a statement of intentions regarding the revisions made to the text as a whole. In 1935 the preamble ends with these words: “Por miedo a cualquier profanación quedan sin abrir muchas ventanas. Quizá puedan abrirse –aunque no todas—algún día” (13). The 1948 edition adds the following somewhat contradictory statement: “En esta segunda salida, se intentó cerrar alguna, de escasa perspectiva, de ningún valor poético, sólo circunstancial” (*Esther* 1948 6). By identifying the new edition of *Esther* as a ‘second foray’ (“segunda salida”) the narrator invokes the futilely idealistic attempts of don Quijote to shape reality, and simultaneously casts both the first and the second edition as failed efforts on the part of the protagonist, thus framing the text as a denunciation of a world hostile to the narrator’s perspective. Rather than opening additional “windows” as the narrator of 1935 had hoped would be possible in the future, the 1948 narrator draws attention to the fact that he is in fact closing some.

Within this context the ambivalent generic status of the published diary as simultaneously public and private is provisionally stabilized: the narrator of the second edition is an editor charged with correcting the ‘first draft’ of the intimate journal, which is consequently reframed as a literary text to be revised and therefore read according to the standards of “valor poético” rather than as a truth-based representation of the author’s inner world. Yet although both texts self-identify in part as a diary, in drawing attention to the ‘windows’ into the inner worlds of the two speakers the second edition highlights the generic conventions which characterize such an ostensibly private genre. As Bruce Merry notes, “Young girls confide in them, putting stars and asterisks for the names or

details which seem compromising, as if the fact of an incident being converted into print, or ink, is a kind of revelation to the world” (3). The very act of writing, then, is intimately bound up with simultaneously revealing and concealing information.

In what may appear to be a dispassionate explanation of editorial criteria, the narrator effectively reframes the genre of the text by changing its situation of enunciation and consequently its use-value.¹⁰⁷ The narrator of 1948 claims to modify the text based not on the original emotional criterion of protectiveness towards the special or ‘sacred’ nature of the spaces simultaneously marked off and hidden by the closed ‘windows. In this sense the text’s self-identification as a “diario sin cebos” is undercut: it has been indeed been edited to become more appealing (13). The concept of ‘bait’ implies a need to attract a reader, and merges the form with content: the material must be presented in a way that will increase its poetic value in the eyes of the reader. Yet the generic pact implied in the diary requires that editing remain invisible, as the reader and the writer are the same person.

The 1935 preamble also violates this illusion of the private and unrefined text invoked by the genre of diary in several ways. Firstly, the existence of a preface underscores the dual roles of the narrator as both the diary’s writer and reader by providing evidence of an overarching logic to a text which is meant to be a series of fragmented entries unified only by the author’s experiences over time. As Jeremy Popkin has observed, “the fragment from the diary becomes a different kind of literary artifact, one which is placed in a pre-literary context, one which is consigned to the page before the tools of a standard *répertoire* are brought to bear on the idea in germination” (14).

¹⁰⁷ See Beebee for a discussion of genre as use-value.

In speaking from both the position of the narrator of the written diary and from a posterior position as author and editor introducing the text, the narrative voice exposes this gap which is similar to the “zanja abierta” that Jarnés hypothesized as the difference between literature and “crónica.” In this way, *Esther* straddles this gap: as a diary and autobiography, the text aligns itself with the genre of *reportage*, yet by exposing its editing of reality the text simultaneously aligns itself with literature. As reading necessarily occurs after writing, in presenting a statement of intentions such as that in the “Preámbulo” the text breaks the linear temporality that underpins the diary, which is meant to be composed in over time in a series of fragments

In contrast to autobiography, Lejeune notes, diary is meant to be read as it is written. This particular diary, however, claims to be the product of both literal and figurative collaboration and thus inscribes the roles of reader and writer as shifting functions rather than essential and unchanging positions. Anchored in the truth-claim inherent in the genre of diary, the text is presented not as the univocal utterance of solipsistic stream-of-consciousness but rather as the edited compromise of several voices: “Pero borroso o al desnudo, abundante o parco, significativo o insignificante, todo es aquí auténtico. Y nada se hizo constar sin previo acuerdo de las dos voluntades. De ambos se recoge cuanto ellos mismos –tema y autor—quisieron dar” (12). The primary value of the text thus resides in a notion of “authenticity” which remains undefined, and which within the genre of diary aligns with both sincerity and with factual accuracy. Yet the identity of the “topic” or “subject” (*tema*) by which this authenticity might be gauged refuses to be pinned down. It is precisely this coexistence of equally viable yet mutually-exclusive frames for reading, each based on one of two principles—fact or fiction—

which underlies the text's status as "intermediate genre." In order to establish this delicate balance, in a sense an equilibrium of instability, the text employs a range of thematic, stylistic, and formal strategies.

Like many of Jarnés works, *Libro de Esther* contains layers of paratexts: a title invoking a section of the Bible, two epigraphs, and a prefatory section titled "Préambulo." The title explicitly invokes the Old Testament's Book of Esther, which tells the tale of the heroic young woman's key role in saving the Jewish people from slaughter. Given Jarnés' seminary background and characteristic tweaking of mythical and Biblical archetypes such as *Teoría del zumbel*'s Saulo, the reader is led to expect a modernized recasting of the traditional tale focalized through Esther as hypotext. In this case, however, the title is misleading: the Esther of the text, a passive figure visible largely through the narrator's description, bears no resemblance to the brave Biblical queen who risks her life to save her people and Jarnés' narration shares neither a literal or allegorical relationship with its ostensible intertext. In this sense, *Libro de Esther* violates what Jonathan Culler has described as 'contract theory' of genre, which implies a singularity of literary meaning which can be discovered by a reader endowed with 'literary competence.' This latter concept applies to a reader who is skilled in recognizing the genre appropriate to a text, therefore activating a relevant set of expectations. In this way, *Libro de Esther* also breaks with the Jarnés' characteristic style of densely allusive characterization and narrative construction, and ultimately sets a trap for the erudite reader who is familiar with the ostensible intertext.

Having no connection with the apparent Biblical intertext, then, *Libro de Esther* gains a local and particular meaning which lends it an air of real-world referentiality

appropriate to its ostensible nature as an unfinished combination of dialogue and journal notes created by two specific and unrepeatable individuals. This dual signaling of reference, both to a Biblical tale and to a human representation of lived experience, involves issues of textual ontology and truth-making. The Biblical genre first evoked by the title is itself the ultimate example of perpetually-contested generic claims in regard to these two topics. Centuries of debate continue over questions such as: was the Bible written by God or humans? Which, if any or perhaps all, of its versions is definitive? Does it contain fact, fiction, or a combination of the two similar to myth? Is it literal or figurative? In contrast the book of a specific Esther, incomplete and written in conjunction with a lover, friend or mentor, would seem to parody these claims through its pedestrian intranscendence.

The relationship between life and legend, the literary and the literal, is explicitly blurred in *Esther* from the first entry in which the narrator distinguishes links language to reality by characterizing the text's protagonists through a chain of linguistic and historical associations:

Esther es tanto como Estrella... Risueño parecido con Benjamín. Benjamín quiere decir *hijo de la fortuna*, hijo de la suerte, de la buena estrella. Esther y Benjamín –tema y autor– quieren decir lo mismo; los dos –en la historia– dieron la buena suerte: ella a los hebreos del tiempo de Mardoqueo, él a los del tiempos de Jacob (2).

The apparent overlapping between the interlocutors inside and the individuals outside the text reinforces the preamble's generic claims to documentalism through its partial identification as “diario a dos voces” and “doble apunte biográfico” (11). Yet although the names of the characters in the text align with those of flesh-and-blood individuals outside it, however, the reader must be aware that this is a conscious choice

on the part of the author. As David Conte has noted, only in *Esther* does Jarnés deviate from his habitual use of the pseudonym Julio Azar to introduce autobiographical material into his fictional texts. In the use of the author's name, Benjamín, as that of the narrator Conte sees "cierto *grado* de sinceridad literaria, aproximándose al género de la confesión" ("Gracias"14). This tone of sincerity and of implied veracity is emphasized by the preamble's declaration that "borroso o al desnudo, abundante o parco, significativo o insignificante, todo es aquí auténtico" (12).

Yet the underlying definition of authenticity upon which this link between life and text rests is problematized. The text has been edited and contains omissions: "Nada se hizo constar sin previo acuerdo de las dos voluntades. De ambos se recoge cuanto ellos mismos –tema y autor– quisieron dar" (12). Yet although the preamble claims that the text to follow is devoid of "cebos" which can be planted by "cualquier astuto ilusionista de los que saben poner trampas de novela," this claim raises doubt as to the narrator's reliability at the same time as it ostensibly reasserts it (13). In reality, as we have seen the text's title performs a sort of bait-and-switch. As Adele Berlin observes, "It is a literary convention to say that your story is true and to offer proof. And I dare say that an author is just as likely to invoke this convention for a fictitious story, if not more so" (7). Therefore, the distinction between documentation and creation is blurred as an edited version of reality is a conscious construction rather than a mere record. As a genre, fiction can include reality; however, historiography cannot include fiction. Straddling these two generic fields is Jarnés' *Esther*, an example of the *género intermedio*.

In terms of the relationship among authenticity and interpretation, the text's explicit Biblical allusions mirror issues that arise in Jarnés' *Esther*. As Adele Berlin

notes, “the question of historicity, that is whether the story reflects past or imagined events, seems to have loomed larger for Esther than for most other books in the Hebrew Bible” (3). In explaining that the question of historicity has traditionally been linked with a Biblical text’s degree of verisimilitude, Berlin notes that the illusion of plausibility is a literary construct and should not be taken as a reliable measure of truth-value. “To judge a story’s historicity by its degree of realism is to mistake verisimilitude for historicity,” she explains, “Just because a story sounds real does not mean that it is. Realistic fiction is just as fictional as nonrealistic fiction” (4).

Similarly, in attempting to understand the genres at play in Jarnés’ *Esther* the importance of historicity for interpretation, that is of textual origin and its related status as creation or documentation, emerges as a key concern. Yet as the challenges of Biblical interpretation demonstrate, content and function do not neatly align with these categories: the purpose of a story ultimately presides over its source material, which may be a combination of fact and fiction. In his article “Libros sin género” Jarnés himself divides all literary texts into two broad categories: “la de *libros de poesía*— que es tanto como decir de *creación*— y la de *libros documentales*—que es tanto como decir de *acarreo*” (205). In this model, the illocutionary force of the text, that is, its intended meaning, presides over any consideration of truth or invention.

Jarnés’ distinction echoes the dichotomy between fiction and historiography which underlies Biblical exegesis and which has received particular attention in the case of The Book of Esther. As Adele Berlin explains, the question of genre underpins this phenomenon:

During the greater part of the last century, scholars assumed the basic historicity of most of the Bible... exceptions were stories that could be defined as myth,

epic, and legend. These genres were well known from the ancient Near East, so their presence in the Bible was not cause for concern. Short fiction, however, seems to have generated more apologetics than myth or legend (3).

Berlin goes on to explain that as the assumed intention of the Bible was that of veracity, despite occasional inconsistencies or contradictions history or factual truth was the default generic setting for the text. Exceptions to these truth-claims were present in the form of highly marked genres which were framed as fictional inserts. The emergence of short stories, which appeared later in the Hebrew Bible, lacked an external precedent that would easily permit their identification as a specific genre. Therefore, Berlin suggests, the question of genre in the form of historicity versus fiction has provoked years of debate over The Book of Esther.

Signaling the text's difference from the Biblical story, the cover of the 1935 edition depicts a contemplative young woman seated alone in modest, somewhat anachronistic dress. The image is posed, a painted portrait of a woman who is clearly not the inhabitant of a past millennium. A reader familiar with Jarnés' trademark reworking of myth, archetype, and literary tradition might well expect the text to be a modern reworking of the Biblical tale. Unlike many of Jarnés' books, *Libro de Esther* does not have a subtitle. The text is preceded by two unglossed quotes serving as epigraphs. The first, drawn from the Old Testament, reads "... Y ganaba Esther la gracia de todos los que la veían" (1935 n.pag.) By drawing attention to the figure of the protagonist's charm instead of her bravery and heroic role in saving the Jewish people, this Biblical quote links the attractive young woman on the book's cover to its title.

The second quote serving as an epigraph quotes the Rumanian Pius Servien's words "Yo cantaré a las estrellas para no escuchar su silencio" (Jarnés *Esther* 1935 n.p.)

The text's first section or chapter, titled "Constelaciones," provides a link to these words by noting that the name "Esther" literally means "star" in Hebrew, the original language of the Old Testament. Thus Servien's words serve as a frame for the text, providing an explanation for Esther's near silence in the apparent generic oxymoron of this "*diario a dos voces*" composed almost exclusively of the narrator's monologue (11). The chain of associations evoked by the text's title—the exact transcription of an existing text—is explained in a plausible manner in which legend is linked to the individual through language in a characteristically Jarnesian blending of language and lived reality through a relationship which may be either causal or coincidental: "Esther es tanto como Estrella. Y siempre buena Estrella desde Esther la Grande—a la de este librito todos la llaman *Pequeña*" (*Esther* 1935 17). The "little Esther" of Jarnés' text is thus associated with and distinguished from her Biblical namesake; she is 'brought down to size' and thus imbued with the sense of realism associated with the flawed and particular through her interpolation by others as secondary—"pequeña," that is, smaller, younger, or less important-- to the Biblical Esther.¹⁰⁸

Such an association tethers the text's Esther, portrayed on the book's cover, to a specific individual. The potential identity – real or fictional – of this Esther provides a link to a thread of the text's generic tapestry by tightening the biographical and autobiographical claims of the presumed "portrait" and "double-voiced diary." No identifying information beyond her Esther's first name and age are given in the text, and most critics have not linked the young woman to a specific individual. However, in his 1965 dissertation on Jarnés Víctor Fuentes asserts that the text refers to "una persona real,

¹⁰⁸ No identifying information beyond her first name and age are given in the text, and most critics have not linked the Esther of the text to a specific individual.

Esther Rodríguez Bauzá, joven de la alta sociedad madrileña de quien, por una temporada, Jarnés fue tutor. El libro es un homenaje del autor a su bella y sensible alumna” (*Obra 95*). Although Fuentes does not cite the source of this information, it may have been shared by his dissertation director Francisco Ayala who was an associate of Jarnés in his Madrid years.

In the chain of associations linked to Esther’s name, Jordi Gracia perceives a subtle parody of the Biblical character. Citing the relationship of mentor and mentee which underlies the relationship of both the text’s narrator and interlocutor, a dynamic which mirrors that between Jarnés’ and his young student, Gracia explains:

Aquí el nombre hebreo Esther es tomado como signo de buena suerte, fortuna, buena estrella, en ese aprendizaje de lo femenino en que maestro y alumno se identifican. Esther, estrella, significa la buena suerte bíblica, ser elegida concubina del rey Asuero y convertirse en reina, y poder de esta manera salvar al pueblo judío. En el libro de Jarnés, mitad ensayo, mitad diario, el personaje de Esther es como una atenta alumno, acaso la favorita, como si el escritor fuese un Asuero que entre mil concubinas da con su predilecta (*Venus 51*)

The narrator continues to explore the simultaneously illuminating and confounding relationship between names of specific individuals and their inevitable associations gathered through historical and social uses. Names, especially those originating in a text such as the Bible, carry with them a constellation of associations that escape the control of the literary writer whose enterprise entails careful crafting of fictional characters. In this way names exemplify Bakhtin’s observation regarding the tension between authorial control and the ineluctable proliferation of meaning inherent in the social dimension of language. As Bakhtin observes, “For the novelist working in prose, the object is already entangled in someone else’s discourse about it, it is already present with qualifications, an object of dispute that is conceptualized and evaluated

vigorously” (330). *Esther*’s narrator acknowledges this dilemma through a playful exploration of associative meanings which constitutes the fulcrum on which the text’s apparently competing generic claims balance.

Following these decontextualized quotes is another paratext titled “Préambulo.” Located between the epigraphs and the three “cuadernos” constituting the body of the text, this brief section comments on the nature and genesis of the text to follow. A statement of intention, the “Préambulo” explicitly raises the question of genre by what ostensibly appears to be an statement of identity, yet simultaneously reveals the futility of such a claim: “Esto, que podría llamarse *Diario de una intimidad*, quiere a veces ser etopeya; las más, lección sencilla; no pocas-- e involuntariamente-- resulta un doble apunte biográfico” (11). This paratext shatters unconscious expectations that genre is a totalizing organizing force and that each text must belong to one genre, and one alone. It disorients the reader, who is forewarned of the need to continually shift among generic frames while reading and, on a certain level, threatens the integrity of the text.

Yet, as we have seen, through the use of explicit and apparently contradictory generic claims Jarnés’ text highlights the illusory and reductive power of such a framework for reading and in this way allows for a meditation on the production of literary meaning. Although *Esther* claims to be, at least in part, a representation of a young woman the narrator’s acknowledging of the process of composition is in fact a challenge to the empiricist fantasy of portraiture in which the hand of the composer both dominates and disappears. At the same time, the narrator—a character within the text—and the author—a flesh and blood individual outside of and in ultimate control of it—are

inextricably woven together in the thread of autobiography implied by the text's participation in the genre of the diary.

As reading progresses, one becomes aware that the self-situating claims of text do not serve as a definitive frame and cannot be trusted. There is very little dialogue: Esther rarely speaks and is only occasionally addressed directly. Most of the text is comprised of the narrator's description and opinion of Esther, interspersed with allusions to and quotations of Spanish literature from Santa Teresa to Bécquer. In addition, the text is later described as the biography of Esther and "Benjamín," which destabilizes the genre of biography by inserting what may be autobiography thus undermining the third-person position the narrator has claimed. Towards the end of the text, a character from Jarnés' 1931 novel *Escenas junto a la muerte* intervenes in the story and invites Benjamín to a concert, which the narrator attends and recounts to Esther in the final entry, titled "Pastoral."

In this way the narrator, and consequently Esther, are located in the realm of fiction. Yet "Pastoral" opens with a framing device which reconciles life and art, reality and fiction: "Esta nota final, Esther," notes the narrator, "voy a escribirla como en sueños" (191). The pages that follow blend the senses through a dreamlike combination of dialogue with Esther, musical notes striking the narrator on the forehead, and an "onda lírica [que] venía flanqueada por dos hileras de chopos, no de butacas" (192). Here music unites nature, poetry, and one's inner life. The narrator, describing this unifying flow of experience, bombarded by "mensajes de ramas tañidas por un arco travieso" asks if the piece being played, Beethoven's *Escenas junto al arroyo*, "pretendía fíltarse en mi memoria para dormir allí, entre pinos y nubes, entre lo preciso y lo vago, con el fin

diabólico de reducir a música las pocas ideas que aún flotaban en mi caótico monólogo interior”? (192) Echoing the title of the book in which resides the character of the Opositor Número Cinco, who invited the narrator to the concert, this reference once again links reality to fiction. Yet this apparent contradiction does not annul the other generic strands woven throughout *Esther* as it echos the text’s underlying concern: the traditional, yet erroneous, opposition of life to art.¹⁰⁹ Rather, it reflects Jarnés’ theory of “la voluptuosidad.” As the narrator of *Esther* explains,

Pero, ¿por qué todo deviene poético, por qué todo nos puede parecer poético en un instante dado? Es que entonces pasamos por el trance voluptuoso...Y entonces, resolver un problema algebraico, encontrar una fórmula química o una image son pura e intensa poesía. Poesía vital, vitalísima, de la cual arrancan todos los caminos. Porque en la estrella poética hay mil puntas, pero un solo foco: nuestra vida. Nuestra vida en trance voluptuoso: he aquí la fuente de toda creación, de toda poesía (155-156).

In “Pastoral” as in *Libro de Esther* as a whole we once again find the continual foregrounding of genre and its subsequent undermining which characterize Jarnés’ particular approach to genre. The role of music, which here merges of all levels of human experience, provides a unifying context in which apparently contradictory elements can be enjoyed in a delicate balance, thus reflecting the experience of literature as presented through the *género intermedio*. As Valerie Finch notes in language strikingly similar to Derrida’s description of the law of genre, music “is a law which seems not to be obeyed. It is an intellectual reagent of the urge to transcend experience. This apparent defiance of a law is the very essence of the concept of “gracia” and harmony in Jarnés” (79). In *Eufrosina o la gracia*, written just after *Esther*, the narrator proclaims that “la gracia vive a costa de una ley que deja, en apariencia, de cumplirse”

¹⁰⁹ Both Emilia de Zuleta and Víctor Fuentes have explored Jarnés’ approach to literature, in which art and life are intimately and inseparably related.

(20). As we have seen, in *Libro de Esther* Jarnés has applied this very law to craft a work which inhabits and exemplifies his *género intermedio*.

Chapter 5

Conclusion: Genre is as Genre Does

As we have seen, the *género intermedio* persists as an ineluctable concept in discussions of Jarnés' work: although critics cannot agree on its definition or application, the term consistently appears in appraisals of this author's literary production. At the heart of this critical impasse is a model of genre which itself has generated debate since Antiquity. Throughout the history of genre studies from Plato and Aristotle to Northrop Frye scholars have proposed a seemingly endless array of classificatory strategies. As Thomas O. Beebee has observed, each of these strategies aligns with a different view of the producer of meaning ranging from the author, the socio-historical or artistic context, the text as a linguistic artifact, or the reader.

Although critics do not agree on the locus of signification, they do share a common assumption that renders their models incompatible: that both genre and its location are single, discrete entities which cannot be combined. Purity, or univalence of meaning is an implicit necessary condition for systems that ultimately rest on a view of genre as classification. Yet as Jacques Derrida has demonstrated through the very ambiguity of his statement of the law of genre: "Genres are not to be mixed. I will not mix genres," meaning cannot be controlled by any one element be it language, intention, or context, and generic purity is rendered impossible by the necessary presence of genre markers which themselves belong to a separate category (220).

A solution to this dilemma resides in new directions in genre theory suggested by critics such as John Frow and Anne Freadman in which analyses move beyond a prescriptive or descriptive view of genre as a set of textual features in favor of a pragmatic approach which views genre as a combination of operations involving a series of takes and uptakes among language, reader, and various levels of textual signification. This perspective allows us to distinguish between levels and strands of generic meaning that may compete or collude in a single text. Within this framework we are able to move beyond a model of genre as restrictor of meaning to producer of meanings, that is, as a generator of textual complexity and richness. As we have seen, this understanding of genre resonates with that implied by Jarnés' critical writings and artistic creations and thus constitutes a particularly suitable tool for dismantling the conundrum of the *género intermedio*. Such a model makes it possible to move beyond an impossibly reductive taxonomy to the model of multiplicity which undergirds the *género intermedio*'s continual foregrounding and undermining of conventional genres.

As demonstrated by the analysis of the multiple layers of generic discourse in *La novia del viento*, *Teoría del zumbel*, and *Libro de Esther*, textual meaning does not reside in a single location but rather is the product of the interactions of multiple channels of signification. Gérard Genette's concept of transtextuality, combined with Jerome McGann's model of radial reading, allows us to trace out particular discursive pathways which in the case of the *género intermedio* share a focus on the theme of genre itself. It is, in part, this interrogation of genre which distinguishes the *género intermedio* from other hybrid genres such as pastiche. At the same time, acknowledging a variety of coexisting yet potentially conflicting generic discourses resolves the conundrum of

classification: employing Todorov's definition of genre as a range of codified discourses coexisting in a text enables a work's simultaneous participation in one or more architextual or macrotextual genres. Such a perspective proves especially fruitful in both illuminating the operations of the *género intermedio* and in resolving the endless debates over classification that have clouded discussions of the concept.

In her landmark article on topic, Emilia de Zuleta discusses *Zumbel* along with *Libro de Esther* as one of two examples of the *género intermedio*. In his discussion of this concept, however, Víctor Fuentes views the same work as the counterpoint to the *género intermedio*. Fuentes writes, "Lo que no comprendemos... es por qué la autoría elige *Teoría del zumbel* y la coloca con el *Libro de Esther* para ilustrar el género intermedio. Precisamente, esta novela es una de las de más marcado carácter novelesco" (*Obra* 132). The apparent disagreement over the classification of texts such as *Zumbel* illustrates the inherent generic polyvalence of many of Jarnés' works. However, as the present discussion of the *género intermedio* has shown, a single text may invoke and participate in several genres simultaneously. The case of *Zumbel* serves to clarify this phenomenon.

Zumbel's very structure raises the question of the boundaries of the text, and consequently informs its reading as a novel or as an example of the *género intermedio* characterized by a range of enunciative modes. The text is framed by a lengthy "Nota preliminar" which includes a meditation the role of the artist, on the reconciliation of reason and passion, and on Jung's theories of the unconscious, on one hand, and an epilogue which brings the text back to a traditional ending yet is not included as the final

chapter. As we have seen, this complex combination of paratexts paradoxically stands both outside and inside the text itself.

On one level, *Teoría del zumbel* may be seen as a collage of generic conventions: it patently mixes genres, thematically, structurally, linguistically, and explicitly through directly stating its status as a *novela blanca* while simultaneously subverting this claim.

As Emilia de Zuleta explains, the novel:

significa dentro de la obra de Jarnés, un punto extremo de nuevas formas para el género novelesco, en la que se fuerzan los límites de la experimentación, a la vez que se los contiene en diversos planos: mediante la coexistencia de la caótica materia narrada con patrones genéricos, literarios, temáticos y símbolos tradicionales” (*Arte* 192).

Interestingly this text, in which traditional literary genres are more explicitly mixed than in any other of Jarnés' works, is accepted as a novel by critics. Zuleta, however, identifies *Zumbel* simultaneously as a novel and as a work in the *género intermedio*. In this sense, *Teoría del zumbel* exemplifies Derrida's conception of genre, which states in part that “a text (does) not belong to any genre. Every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text, there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging” (Derrida 230).

Genre is also expressed explicitly as a theme in the text. Genette's notion of the architext is useful in analyzing the dueling claims made by the text to be both a *novela blanca* and a parody of that genre. The romance novel also functions as a metatext as characters and the narrator openly discuss this genre's conventions as the organizing principle behind the textual world. As a hypertext, which differs from the metatext or intertext in that it may not be explicitly mentioned, Miguel de Unamuno's *Nada menos que todo un hombre* provides thematic structure and an interpretative framework for the

the theory of *integralismo* presented in the “Nota preliminar” and developed through the array of genres woven together throughout the text. Jarnés' own *Locura y muerte de nadie* also serves as a means of characterization for the protagonist, Saulo, who inhabits the universe of the Banca Bermúdez which figures in that novel. The character of Saulo is also built from intertextual material derived from the Bible: like Saul of Tarsus, this young man experiences a life-changing event which gives rise to a new person. This story underlies the metaphor of birth which frames the novel, and which dovetails with the birth of Saulo's illegitimate child. Additionally, the references to *el Quijote* so common in Jarnés' work take on a particularly evident role in the form of el doctor Carrasco, whose role is to bring logic and order to Saulo's dissolute life.

For Saulo, order brings about the end of his existence. Perhaps similarly, the cohesion of the novel itself relies on the tension produced by a series of textual rebellions against generic convention and what Jerome McGann calls “linear reading” (120). For example, the inclusion of various layouts associated with narration, dialogue and drama present in *Teoría del zumbel* continually disrupts reading, cuing different expectations and reframing the nature of the language cited and the relationships among characters. This level of “spatial reading” is accompanied by the various levels of textuality outlined above and invokes a type of interpretation which continually shifts between frames of meaning. As Mc Gann explains,

Good readers have to read both linearly and spatially but both of those operations remain closely tied to the illusion of textual immediacy. Radial reading is the most advanced, the most difficult, and the most important form of reading because radial reading alone puts one in a position to respond actively to the text's own (often secret) discursive acts (122).

The difficulty of reading such a text as *Teoría del zumbel* may explain why it is often praised as being one of Jarnés best works yet has not been frequently analyzed. Yet it is the balance among linear, spatial, and radial reading prompted by the text which, I suggest, provides the cohesion necessary for the text to be read as a novel. In being accepted as a novel despite its generic multiplicity, *Teoría del zumbel* stands as a counterexample suggesting that the *género intermedio* is not a mere mixing of genres within a single text.

Libro de Esther, originally published in 1935 and re-edited in 1948, provides a different example of the *género intermedio*. Not considered a novel by critics, as David Conte points out, *Libro de Esther* is only one of two texts universally identified as belonging to Jarnés' *género intermedio*. The book opens with a "Préambulo" which, from its first lines, raises the question of genre: "Esto, que podría llamarse Diario de una intimidad, quiere a veces ser etopeya; las más, lección sencilla; no pocas-- e involuntariamente-- resulta un doble apunte biográfico" (11). A bit further down appears a more direct statement: "Es un diario a dos voces" (11). As the first words the reader encounters, this paratext challenges the implicit assumption that genre is a totalizing organizing force and that each text must belong to one genre, and one alone. It disorients the reader, who is forewarned of the need to continually shift among generic frames while reading and, on a certain level, threatens the integrity of the text.

As reading progresses, one becomes aware that the self-situating claims of preamble do not serve as a definitive frame and cannot be trusted as Esther herself rarely speaks in this self-described dialogue. Most of the text is comprised of the narrator's description of a silent and perhaps absent Esther, interspersed by allusions to and

quotations of Spanish literature from Santa Teresa to Bécquer. In addition, the text is later described as the biography of Esther and “Benjamín,” which destabilizes the genre of biography by inserting what may be autobiography thus undermining the third-person position the narrator has claimed. Towards the end of the text, a character from Jarnés' 1931 novel *Escenas junto a la muerte* intervenes in the story, repositioning the text as fiction.

While the 1935 edition of *Libro de Esther* was favorably reviewed in several countries, through the present day it has received very little attention in studies of Jarnés perhaps because of its uncertain generic standing. The text has been summarized by Emilia de Zuleta, the figure of Esther has been briefly analyzed by César Pérez Gracia, and two recent articles exploring the *género intermedio* read the text in terms of theme rather than structure. Domingo Ródenas de Moya, who has lead the effort to resuscitate Jarnés, dismisses the book as “diálogo misceláneo entreverado de narración y ensayo” (“Novelistas” n. pag.). Once again, a text’s uncertain generic identity contributes to its negative reception even by a sympathetic reader. By recognizing the *género intermedio* as concept, however, it is possible to recast the text as a particularly innovative work rather than a mere mixed bag of narrative scraps. In *Esther* it is precisely the obvious seams of generic mismatch which produce its exceptional quality by disrupting the essential distinction between fiction and nonfiction recognized by both Jarnés and Genette.

The boundaries between texts, and consequently between the narrator and the physical author they share, frequently break down in the *género intermedio*. In *Libro de Esther* the narrator, “Benjamín,” praises the 1926 short story “Andrómeda” as “mi cuento

menos endeble, desde luego más original” (18). Simultaneously occupying the position of narrator and character in the text as well as flesh-and-blood author of both *Esther* and “Andrómeda” the speaker crosses the essential generic divide of fiction and nonfiction. The narrator continues “Y si pudiera alguna vez continuar aquel relato, se vería cómo, desde siempre, nació en mi el deseo de escribir dos libros: el de la verdadera Estrella y el de la falsa” (18). *La novia del viento*, Jarnés' first novel published in exile, is the continuation of the story.

The question of genre inheres in *Novia*, which incorporates the various manifestations of “Andrómeda,” on the architextual, macrotextual and local discursive levels. Originally published in the *Revista de Occidente*, the story was republished in a 1929 volume entitled “Salón de estío,” the first of Jarnés' works to be classified as belonging to the *género intermedio*. In this context, the generic standing of “Andrómeda” comes into question: this compilation of four previously-published texts as is described variously as a collection of novelistic fragments, “un volumen de relatos” and as a work belonging to the Jarnesian category of *género intermedio* (Ródenas, *Prosa* 17). In 1940 Jarnés publishes *La novia del viento*, a text comprised of “Andrómeda” followed by two new sections entitled “Digresión de Epimeteo” and “Brunilda en llamas.” Each of these three sections invokes genre in a different way, and as in conjunction with each other produce an apparent macrotextual dissonance characteristic of the *género intermedio*.

La novia del viento is subtitled “novela.” By establishing the novelistic as an architext, Jarnés' attempt to situate the text within a generic framework suggests an awareness that genre does not inhere in narrative, but rather is a production of the

interaction between readers' expectations and the text itself. Situated as the first section of a larger “novel” rather than a short story, “Andrómeda” is subjected to different generic expectations. The second section, “Digresión de Epimeteo,” enumerates readers’ complaints about “Andrómeda,” all of which are based on the frustration of novelistic genre expectations such as the lack of characterization and traditional plot development. The narrative voice, self-identified as an objective ‘chronicler’ rather than creator, simultaneously highlights his control over the fictional world and resituates the preceding section as fact-based *reportage* rather than fiction. He responds to readers’ negative response to generic experimentation by promising to fulfill their expectations by meeting the requisites of story development in the final section, “Brunilda en llamas.”

This last section follows the norms of traditional narrative by setting up a situation for which it provides internal justification, and continues by introducing consecutive moments of suspense culminating in a dramatic finale. “Brunilda en llamas” thus contrasts sharply with “Andrómeda” by fulfilling the generic norms which this latter continually calls into question, then violates. Similarly, in addition to problematizing the structural level of the text, genre functions as a theme shaping the words and actions of the characters and the narrator both explicitly and implicitly. *La novia del viento* thus provides the opportunity to examine genre on a linguistic, pragmatic, and literary micro- and macro-level.

In this way, *Novia* thematizes and performs a model of genre described by Todorov. He explains,

The fact that a work ‘disobeys’ its genres does not make the latter nonexistent; it is tempting to say that quite the contrary is true. And for a twofold reason. First, because transgression, in order to exist as such, requires a law that will, of course,

be transgressed. One could go further: the norm becomes visible—lives—only by its transgressions (“Origins” 160).

Within this framework, generic multiplicity—precisely in violating the impossible “law” of generic purity—opens a space for examining the relationship between genre and the production of meaning. It is precisely at these sites of conflict and of chafing that the *género intermedio* emerges as a unique opportunity to observe the variety operations of genre. Such an approach follows Jarnés’ own view, which does not deny the existence or relevance of genre as a textual function but rather resists its use as a means of classification that limits the author’s creative freedom. He laments, “en cuanto a esto o a cual género se le cuelga un rótulo, el autor debe atenerse a su promesa de achicar el género, no le será lícito defraudar a sus lectores” (“Hermes” 97).

Yet although he does not wish to be limited by prescriptive generic expectations, Jarnés does not deny the existence or importance of genre itself but rather its misuse as a critical straitjacket unnecessarily limiting the text’s reception and interpretation. Praising the generic multiplicity of Henri Michaux’s work, Jarnés proposes in “Libros sin género” not the disappearance of genre but rather an exhortation to readers and publishers to abandon their desire to restrict literature by forcing works into single, narrowly-defined generic categories. He writes, “Bien está que haya géneros, pero está mejor que no nos sirvan de punto de arranque para fijar los valores de un libro” (*Libros* 206). Jarnés’ “genreless books” are not books without genre; rather they are books in which genre and genres are free to combine and recombine through the text. It is precisely this approach which informs Jarnés’ own writing and which allows us to move beyond the perennial conundrum “What is genre?” to focus on the question “What does genre do?” The *género intermedio*, viewed from this perspective, makes this critical move possible.

By employing this approach in reading three of Jarnés' texts viewed by critics as belonging to the *género intermedio*, this project has taken up the questions posed by the three existing studies on the topic, focusing principally on exploring what the *género intermedio* is, how it operates, and the degree to which the concept is useful in understanding Jarnés' work. In addition, it has brought attention to works belonging to the post-vanguard period, an overlooked yet crucial period in Jarnés' development as an author. Future studies may continue to explore texts such as *Eufrosina o la gracia*, both as an example of the *género intermedio* and in relation to the Jarnesian concept of *la gracia*. Additional directions to be explored include the evolution of Jarnés' use of genre as he moves through a series of genres, particularly his biographies and collections of essayistic writings such as *Cartas al Ebro*. The interpretative framework emerging from such studies may also be fruitfully applied to other experimental works in the avant-garde vein by refocusing discussion from a debate over terminology to an exploration of how texts create meaning.

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