
Shipwrecks and Time in Daniel Moyano's *Libro de navíos y borrascas*

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Daniel Moyano has been an important voice in Argentinean narrative literature during the second half of the twentieth century. Many of his short stories and novels are known for exploring social issues, and he has made important contributions to the novel of exile. Among these contributions is *Libro de navíos y borrascas*. The novel depicts the journey of seven hundred exiles who head for Spain in the wake of the coup d'état in 1973 that plunged Argentina into a reign of terror at the hands of a military junta that lasted until 1985. The novel offers a complex look at the challenges facing these individuals as they seek to successfully integrate themselves into a new society after being forced to leave their homeland. This analysis will focus, in particular, on the crisis of exile as it relates to the novel's representation of the voyage as an allegory of linear time. The journey of the ship in the novel and a journey through historical time share certain structural similarities. The ship's voyage is charted through a linear trajectory that will take the exiles, not just from one geographical location to another, but from Argentina to what they hope will be a better future in Spain. As the ship's trajectory becomes a metaphor for linear historical progress, the exiles are represented as travelers who journey together through time toward the utopian ideal of a more egalitarian and civilized society. Because of the democratic ideals of Moyano's protagonists, rather than just accepting the role of mere passengers, they also strive to function as co-captains or co-helmsmen who, along with their fellow travelers, navigate their ship to a desired destination. This article will show how the novel's representation of the voyage and the shipwreck accentuates the inherent social hierarchy of privilege and exclusion within a linear historical narration that prevents the protagonists from ultimately reaching their dreams of a democratic and inclusive utopia.

Several studies on *Libro de navíos y borrascas* have explored its contribution to the genre of exile within Hispanic American fiction, at times comparing Moyano to other well-known exile writers such as Héctor Tizón and Antonio di Benedetto.¹ Among the more prominent themes that appear in Moyano's novel is the fragmentation of the protagonists' sense of national and historical continuity brought about by the crisis of exile. The novel's depiction of a specific

historical moment through fragmented memories has inspired other investigators to analyze how the novel blurs the boundaries between reality and fiction as well as the ideological mediation of narrations representing past events.² The topics of allegory and time have been mentioned in previous analyses of Moyano's works; however, the connection between the two as they relate to the linearly structured voyage has not been a central focus of the studies cited in this article. This analysis of the novel's representation of the linear trajectory can complement the previous investigations by showing how the particular framework of time in the novel contributes to the exiles' sense of social exclusion.

Moyano's literary exploration of the journey into exile draws from his personal experience. He was born in Buenos Aires in 1930. In 1959, he moved to La Rioja where he became a professor of music and was a violinist in the string quartet and the chamber orchestra of the Conservatorio Provincial de Música. This latter role may account for his choice in selecting a violinist as the main protagonist of his novel. Moyano's life as a music professor came to an abrupt end in 1976. On March 26, the day after the military coup toppled President Isabel Perón, he was detained by soldiers who arrested almost all of the intellectuals at the university because many of them had contributed to a leftist newspaper, *El Independiente*, or were then members of the communist party. Moyano endured torture and was made the object of a simulated summary execution. This experience had a profound effect on his life and his subsequent literary production. After being released, he left Argentina for Spain to live in exile until his death in Madrid in 1992.

Libro de navíos y borrascas centers on the experiences of the violinist Rolando, one of the seven hundred exiles who, like Moyano, journeys from Argentina to Spain after the coup d'état. Among Rolando's closest shipmates, with whom he frequently converses, are Bidoglio, El Gordito, Sandra, and Paredes the puppeteer. They all sail to Spain on the *Cristóforo Colombo* which, incidentally, was the name of the ship that Moyano himself took as he went into exile. The *Cristóforo Colombo* makes just one voyage to Spain. Yet, during that single sea voyage, the exiles aboard the ship make their own unique metaphorical voyages within the context of their hopes for the future and their individual memories rooted in Argentina's past. They accomplish this through stories they tell to pass the time and with a puppet show they stage during the trip.³ This plurality of experience accounts for the plural *navíos* in the novel's title.⁴ When the *Cristóforo Colombo* finally reaches Spain, one of the more prominent objectives of the many metaphorical voyages in the novel, that of the protagonists' desired endings, has not been fully achieved. The final chapter of the novel titled "¿Fin?" leaves the exile's ultimate destination

open and is characteristic of how the novel does not bring a definitive closure to any of their journeys.

Idelber Avelar has observed that many allegories written during periods of dictatorship in Latin America contrast with magical realist works. While the latter attempts to reconstruct a pre-modern or pre-capitalist logic based on cyclical time, the former tends to adopt the linear logic of the regimes they wish to critically assess (Avelar 15). The linear representation of time found in many historical discourses appears frequently in Moyano's novel. Linear historical narrations and fictional works, such as *Libro de navíos y borrascas*, are often seen as pertaining to two distinct disciplines of study. However, historian Hayden White has observed that the structures of the story forms in both narrations are often similar and, therefore, the imaginary tale of the voyage in Moyano's novel becomes an ideal metaphor within which to critically reflect on the narratives that represent collective realities through a framework of linear time.⁵

Vladimir Propp's *Morfología del cuento* brings to light some of the structural similarities between the story forms of fiction and linear historical narration. He observes that stories centered around a hero often begin with an initial separation from the social group to which the protagonist belongs (38) and will generally end with a successful reintegration into that group (83-84). While the basic structure described by Propp does not encompass all possible story forms, the beginning and an idealized reintegration in the ending are typical of many linearly structured narrations. In the physical voyage of the exiles, the initial separation comes as they are forced to leave Argentina. The idea of integration that manifests itself in the exiles' desire to become part of Spanish society is similar to the reintegration described by Propp. For the protagonists, the end of their physical journey is intertwined with a historical narration. Upon their arrival in Spain, they hope to reestablish for themselves the cultural and historical bonds with Spain that were ruptured after the independence of Argentina was declared in 1816.⁶ However, the metaphor of the shipwreck that appears in the novel sows doubts that a successful reintegration will even be achieved. The failure to reach the desired reconciliation at the journey's end forces the protagonists to scrutinize the entire structure of beginnings, endings, and trajectories as they seek to discovering what went wrong.

Despite the pain of the exiles' separation from Argentina, Spain offers them an opportunity to reformulate the memories of their homeland into a new historical trajectory. This reconstruction of the past allows the protagonists to develop an awareness of time's plurality. While the alternative trajectories that the protagonists explore tend to be linear, Avelar's comparison of linear logic and pre-modernist logic accentuates the fact that linear time is only one of the possibilities

for framing individual and collective memories.⁷ Yet, many societies will try to subordinate the representations of cyclical time to a singular linear model (Le Goff 14). This tendency is described by philosopher Guy Debord, who has observed that within modern society, the capitalist class, with its need to measure production, has appropriated time's representation, privileging linear time over cyclical time (75). As a result, the interests of the privileged sectors of a society generally govern the choices that determine how the past and its linear trajectory will be represented in that society. This relationship reveals the underlying class conflict in the novel that prevents a successful reconciliation between narratives that conform to the dominant social interests and the protagonists' desire for democratic integration. As the protagonists gain greater awareness of the multiple possibilities for representing their individual memories, they begin to see the social hierarchy that takes shape when one particular structural framework of time is chosen over another. Moyano's main character, Rolando, will even play with the idea of the appropriation of time to express his own utopian desire for an autonomy that would allow him to choose his own historical trajectory rather than having that trajectory chosen for him by others whose interests are not his own.

The formation of a linear representation of the past and its hierarchical structure can be traced back to an eschatological vision of time that sought to show how individuals and their societies could progress linearly toward greater levels of human perfection. While modern discourses of progress secularized the values that would lead to their particular visions of utopian perfection, the hierarchical organization of these values was conserved (Mudrovic 23). In addition to the hierarchy that privileges linear time over other forms of representing the past, linear historical narrations also tend to elevate eminent figures and events deemed most worthy of remembrance.⁸ These figures and events often evoke a nostalgic past and embody the values designed to carry a collective society toward a particular utopian destination that will resolve current social conflicts or divisions.⁹ Fredric Jameson has observed that this reconciliation or closure is a key characteristic of many utopian visions that seeks to define history's final destination (4). In the story forms described by Propp, which share similarities with the voyage of the novel's protagonists, closure can be seen in the reintegration and reconciliation between a hero and society. For the exiled protagonists, the desire for closure is seen in their hope, as they begin their journey, of socially integrating into their new home and integrating their memories from Argentina into Spain's historical trajectory.

This attempt at reconciliation between the individual and a collective narrative is at the heart of the protagonists' utopian visions. It is highly influenced by

Enlightenment thought, as was the nineteenth-century historicism from which modern discourses of progress are derived. The Enlightenment fueled the idea that human reason could bring about collective reconciliation through the discovery of universal truths and values.¹⁰ The great ideas and great historical figures who were thought to best embody these universal values would be elevated in history's social hierarchy. However, by the twentieth century, through investigations on the fragmentation of memory by philosophers such as Maurice Halbwachs and others, history came to be seen not as a unified universal discourse, but as being comprised of a collection of multiple memory fragments (Le Goff 68). Fragments of memory, like those of the multiple characters that Moyano has included in his novel, do not naturally exist in a universal linear form. Rather, they are selectively framed or constructed within a linear format.

Linear historical narrations that continued to present themselves as universal came to be seen as ideological. Through the process of *interpellation*, ideologies offer an individual an identity within a social order (Althusser 55). Moyano's protagonists initially hope that the order provided by the linear trajectory of progress will offer them this sense of identity when they successfully integrate into Spanish society. However, their attempts to resolve the conflicts and contradictions of the past by way of a linear ideology do not lead them to a discovery of universal values and truths. Rather, these narrations of progress create confusion and frustration as they mask the presence of multiple and fragmented memories. Many social critics point out how ideologies blind individuals to the tensions between social classes. For example, Terry Eagleton describes how many historical narrations seek to naturalize and universalize an existing social order, making any alternative unthinkable (244).¹¹ The protagonists soon discover that their attempts to project their own personal desires for social integration conflict with a larger power structure that continues to marginalize them.

Although the worldviews of the novel's protagonists are initially shaped by ideologies of progress that seek unity, they eventually discover how dominant ideologies suppress the multiple memories that might lead individuals in directions that stray from the trajectory dictated by the privileged classes. In the novel, the trauma of exile is one of the most significant factors that begins to shatter the protagonists' sense of historical continuity and opens their minds to the multiplicity of memory.¹² Dominick LaCapra has observed that the ideologies of consensus can often cause the conflicts and individual differences in memory to go unnoticed (60). However, the loss and absence characteristic in narrations of trauma will often accentuate the tension between a fragmented or partial memory and the desire for full unity, community, or consensus (60).

From the initial separation and trauma that begins the protagonists' voyage, they begin to develop a consciousness of the multiple possible beginnings, endings, and trajectories of linear time as they reformulate their personal and collective journeys.¹³ The arbitrary selection of linear time's beginning is exemplified in the following scene where Moyano's main protagonist, Rolando, using the images of lead soldiers and a paper boat, ponders the variety of options that make multiple narrative trajectories possible:

¿Dónde comienza un barco, o una naranja, o una mujer desnuda? Se necesita un juego para ir entrando en trance poco a poco. En este sentido, cualquier comienzo es como empezar a disponer las piezas, sacarlas de la caja, poner en fila los soldaditos de plomo, que son los juguetes pero no el juego todavía. El verdadero juego empezará más tarde, en el momento menos pensado estaremos jugando sin saberlo. Contar una historia supone enredarse enteramente con el lenguaje. Los soldaditos de plomo o el barquito de papel irán de un lado a otro según los lleven las palabras (11).

The reference to a paper boat is just one of the novel's many analogies between the ship's voyage and the story forms found in historical narratives.

The voyage of Christopher Columbus, whose story often figures prominently in the narrations of America's historical origins, also illustrates the hierarchy of power resulting from an arbitrary beginning. Given the name of the exiles' ship and the direct and indirect references to the famous explorer, the story of discovery is conferred special significance in *Libro de navíos y borrascas*. Many traditional accounts of Latin American history begin with the discovery of the New World by Columbus and often overlook the fact that highly sophisticated cultures of indigenous peoples were living on the continent long before Europeans arrived. By placing the origin, and subsequently, the center of power of the New World in Europe, these accounts create a social hierarchy that was designed to subordinate Hispanic America and its people to the interests of the Spanish empire and to a Eurocentric worldview.

Early on the exiles feel a sense of empowerment over the direction of their trajectories, and they themselves often parody the discourse of early explorers such as Columbus. Rolando, for example, innocently adopts the colonizer's language of patriarchal dominance as he describes strange new lands and virgin territories waiting to be subordinated: “[a]caso más allá de los bastiones en ruinas hubiese extraños animales y frutos desconocidos, una selva virgen que terminaba en el otro mar” (181). In his innocence, Rolando, speaks from a democratic desire to participate in the construction of his history's trajectory; however, he ends up emphasizing the hierarchies of patriarchal and Eurocentric privilege that are found

in many of Hispanic America's historical narrations.

The protagonists' desire to control their trajectories is also manifested in a variety of other ways. In contrast to the previous quotation that offers a critical look at the discourse of early Spanish explorers, Rolando, in another scene, evokes nostalgia and praise for Spain's natural warmth and beauty and the great achievements of eminent intellectuals and artists such as Francisco Goya. It is his hope that his voyage from Argentina to Spain will allow him to become part of a trajectory of progress in which the barbarity of the past that he has escaped will yield to a new age of natural and artistic beauty:

España es un país soleado. ¿Se acuerda de *El quitasol*, de Goya? Ahí tiene usted todo el sol del mundo. ¿Se acuerda de la mirada de la muchacha que tiene un perrito sobre la falda? ¿Del aire que corre bajo el sol? Estar al sol no significa andar paseándose indiferente como los jubilados en las plazas. Se debe estar al sol no circunstancialmente, sintiendo por lo menos una parte de la tremenda importancia que el hecho tiene. Se debe estar no con un momento de uno sino con todo lo que ha sido y será, plenitud en la que finalmente la persona puede apropiarse del tiempo. Mire, tomar sol es una de las cosas que más deseo en este momento (78).

Above, Rolando speaks of appropriating time. It is a key component of his utopian vision and it is founded upon the value of democratic self-determination. One of the central conflicts for the protagonists arises from the recognition that it is not the common citizen that has appropriated time, but an elite social class. Rolando eventually becomes aware that he will not play a significant role in influencing the direction of his society's historical trajectory.

Finding love is another important part of Rolando's utopian vision. It is one of his primary motivators, and it is his attempt to reconcile the social isolation brought about by the crisis of exile. Among love's many manifestations, Erich Fromm has noted that it can be seen as an attempt by individuals to achieve closure by overcoming their separateness from others and from their surroundings (19), a condition created by a modern capitalist society (85-86). In his imagination, Rolando constructs the idealized figure of Nieves, the niece of one of the ship's sailors. He imagines that she will be waiting for him upon his arrival in Spain. However, Bidoglio, a fellow exile, warns his friend against getting carried away with his fantasies, foreshadowing disillusionment yet to come as Rolando attempts to bring closure to his journey through a romantic relationship:

Las fantasías eróticas en estas circunstancias, son un buen signo de salud. . . .
Porque una cosa es fantasear y otra muy diferente tener esas alucinaciones. Yo también en la cárcel tenía una mina que ni te cuento. Estas cosas son muy lindas

pero no hay que pasarse de la raya. Por eso vos, tranquilo con tu mina y tu velero; pero hasta cierto punto. Visualizar las fantasías es asunto peligroso (82-83).

As the novel progresses, more stories appear in which individual hopes for self-determination and social inclusion are dashed. In the novel, the metaphorical shipwreck, like Rolando's desire to appropriate time, is often tied to the idea of autonomy and the individuals' failure to arrive at a predetermined destination that they have chosen for themselves. The protagonists do not specifically refer to every personal failure or lack of social integration as a shipwreck. However, the shipwreck is mentioned throughout the novel and discussions of a physical journey veering off its desired course are frequently juxtaposed with stories of individual failures to achieve autonomy. One example is Rolando's description of the indigenous people of Latin America who once wove their own traditional garb, but who, having been deprived of ownership of their means of production, must now use cloth manufactured in England. Rolando observes that the English "vendían a los indios ponchos llenos de colorinches, tejidos en Manchester" (31). The uniqueness and creativity of Hispanic America's indigenous cultures, as manifested in their art, and in this case, their clothing, have often embodied the region's hopes of achieving autonomy from dominant European artistic and historical traditions. Yet, Rolando's observation alludes to how these hopes tend to remain subordinated to powerful external interests.

No less ironic than the story of the indigenous people is that of the bumblebee described in the novel. It also draws a vivid connection between the idea of self-determination and the image of a trajectory. Nature has provided the bumblebee with the perfect navigational system, yet, Rolando tells of the multinational companies—representatives of some of the world's most powerful economic interests—that, disliking the bumblebee's capacity for self-determination, decide to deny the bumblebee the use of its navigational apparatus. As a result, the bumblebee is left to find its way with but remnants of what nature had once provided. According to Rolando, "[d]esde que las multinacionales les negaron [a los abejorros] cualquier instrumento de navegación o comunicación, [ellos] crearon sus propios recursos apelando a las antiguas técnicas" (313-14).

The multinationals' suppression of self-determination is also seen in the narration of Latin America's historical origins as it relates to the story of Christopher Columbus. Rolando raises a concern about who determines the direction of that particular historical trajectory when he comments on seeing "[p]ersonajes de Disney mezclándose a [la historia sobre] Colón" (Moyano 269). The idea of Disney characters becoming the protagonists in an animated retelling of the history of Columbus may at first appear to be lighthearted fun. However,

when seen through the lens of Moyano's dark humor, it also illustrates a powerful multinational company's appropriation of the foundational narratives of Latin America, inserting its own brand and ideological influence.

Moyano explores the attempts to revive and elevate various historical images, such as the tango, those of the indigenous peoples of Latin America and the gaucho, all of which have embodied visions of progress leading to national autonomy by way of a cultural emancipation from Spain and Europe. It was hoped that the peoples of Latin America could tap into their native creativity and originality and free themselves from being seen as mere imitators of Europe's artistic tradition. The elevation of Latin America's autochthonous cultures also expressed the hopes of eliminating the traditional social hierarchies that marginalized the poor and the peoples of non-European origin, including those of indigenous or African descent or even those of European descent born in the Americas. Yet, for the protagonists, each of these symbols of independence and autonomy ran aground before fulfilling their utopian promise. Rolando observes that in Argentina, whatever cultural roots the indigenous people might have offered to provide the nation with a distinct Latin American identity had long been suppressed or eliminated: "[e]n cuanto llegó la gringada, a los indios se los dio por desaparecidos y desde el vamos se acabaron las raíces. Los únicos indios en serio son los del Martín Fierro" (188). Rolando observes that the historical figure of the gaucho, born in the Pampas and held up as a distinctly South American embodiment of freedom and cultural independence, rather than helping the nation aspire to self-determination, has now been appropriated by the culture of the mass media and has degenerated into spectacle and vulgarity:

Los últimos gauchos, idealizados por la radiotelefonía de entonces, yéndose más al sur, al sur de los tiempos según los folklóricos locutores, porque los empujaba nada menos que la civilización. Todo el mundo parecía muy preocupado por el destino de los gauchos, que nos habían dejado la guitarra, el mate, las espuelas y el ombú. . . . Lo mejor era que se fueron de una vez lo más lejos posible a llorar en otra parte la libertad perdida esos peoncitos, y para eso convenía despedirlos elegantemente, con nostalgia radiofónica y festivales folklóricos. A ver quién se anota para el concurso de malambo, aunque nadie tenga la menor idea de los gauchos (229).

The tango, another image embodying the dreams of Argentina's cultural autonomy, is evoked at the beginning of the novel. While riding in a van toward the dock where the exiles will depart for Spain, a fellow prisoner tells Rolando of his romantic relationship. Just as Rolando will later create an idealized image of Nieves to help him overcome his feeling of separateness, the imagery of the tango

plays an important role in the prisoner's construction of his own personal utopia where he had hoped to be united with his love. Rolando hears how the repressive brutality of Argentina's military junta brought an abrupt end to the journey that would have united the two lovers when the prisoner's love interest is "disappeared": "Las palabras del preso se demoraban en el patio de su casa con malvones, en el farolito de la esquina desde donde se asomó a la vida, como en los tangos, y se citó por primera vez con aquella pebeta, que también cayó en can cuando empezó este desastre" (Moyano 16). Even the government officials responsible for this misfortune seem to be subordinated to powerful economic interests. Rather than serving the Argentinean people and their interests, Rolando will later conclude that in the end they are: "jefes y militares de multinacionales" (250).

The exiles' hope for autonomy gives way to the discovery that the part they play in the shaping of historical progress in Argentina or in Spain has become diminished in the face of much larger institutions of power. In a previous quotation, Rolando speaks of setting lead soldiers and paper boats into place to emphasize his desire to participate in the process by which historical narrations are constructed. As the novel progresses, however, he begins to feel an ever greater sense of impotence and fears that he and his fellow shipmates will not even play a secondary role in the decisions that give form to the larger historical trajectories of Spain and Argentina. Rolando concludes: "Ni el poder estable ni la revolución se hacen con muñequitos o poemas. En esta tragedia que pasan en el teatro principal de la ciudad ni siquiera somos personajes secundarios" (250).

The philosopher Jean Baudrillard offers valuable insight into the string of individual and collective failures depicted in *Libro de navíos y borrascas*. He describes the historical narration as a type of simulation, concluding that the elements of the simulation are ruled by "el montaje artificial y el sinsentido" (*La ilusión del fin* 29). A singular linear trajectory is never inclusive enough to capture the plurality of human goals and desires and, therefore, the idea that a determinate ending will bring about universal integration or closure is but an illusion. In Moyano's novel there is an emphasis on the plight of the marginalized members of society who are alienated from the trajectories of powerful economic interests.¹⁴ However, even though in the novel the powerful seem to determine the direction of the trajectory, the inability of discourses of progress to fully reconcile the multiplicity of interests and desires of a collective group is what ultimately brings all of the rigid and artificial trajectories of linear time to their inevitable demise.¹⁵

The violent repression that causes the exiles to flee from their homeland is truly one of Argentina's greatest and most tragic national shipwrecks. Yet, it is for Rolando a tragedy that was not totally unforeseen. The military dictatorship

from which Rolando escapes is not the first historical period when Argentina's hopes for democracy and autonomy have run aground. In Rolando's mind, the great civilizing trajectory of Argentinean history is first blown off course with an incident that foreshadowed more brutality to come. During the voyage, the protagonists stage a puppet show centered on General Juan Lavalle's historical execution of Manuel Dorrego in December of 1828. Lavalle is often portrayed through the lens of progress as one of Argentina's great embodiments of civilization. He fought for Argentina's independence from a repressive Spanish empire, and he sided with the *unitarios* during Argentina's civil wars against the barbarity of Juan Manuel de Rosas, who from 1835 until 1852 governed Argentina with dictatorial powers.¹⁶ What is puzzling to Rolando and his fellow exiles is that this hero, an embodiment of Argentina's civilizing trajectory and of the ideals that promised to bring to an end Argentina's past history of violent repression, committed an incredibly barbarous act in the execution of Dorrego:

Si recurrimos a la historia, tenemos todavía cerca el fusilamiento de Dorrego. Lavalle lo derroca y después lo hace fusilar. Como su acción no tiene fundamentos éticos, es irreal.... Con Lavalle y Dorrego parece que empezaron estas cosas, y todavía no nos hemos dado cuenta de que el verdadero peligro es la irrealidad (61).

As Rolando contemplates the historical account of Dorrego's death, he plays with the ideas of reality and unreality. He begins to perceive that even true events can be imbued with fictional qualities once framed within a narrative form, such as that provided by discourses of progress.¹⁷ Rolando comes to realize that the contradictions within these discourses of progress, discourses that often ideologically present themselves as being factual, can create confusion and make true events, such as the execution of Dorrego, seem absurd and unreal.

In the context of the ambiguities between reality and fiction, Rolando explores the multiple and contradictory meanings present in the images of the destination and of the shipwreck in the story he tells of a lighthouse keeper. One night, an old lighthouse keeper is unable to fulfill his duty due to an unexpected blackout. Yet, the blackout, instead of endangering lives and causing a shipwreck, actually saves the life of the lighthouse keeper's own grandson. Rolando, recounting the grandson's words, observes that if the grandson, who had escaped in the darkness of that night had been spotted, the authorities would have certainly detained him: "Mire, abuelo, a ese faro lo necesitamos todos, pero esta noche es imposible. Están pasando cosas muy graves en el mar, que es mejor que usted las ignore todavía. Si usted lo prende, mis amigos no podrán llegar aquí mañana. Desaparecerán. Gracias al apagón de ayer pude llegar vivo hasta aquí" (342). On the second night,

after the blackout has ended, the grandfather chooses not to turn on the light in the lighthouse so that his grandson's friends will not be seen, and by doing so, he also saves them from "disappearing" at the hands of the military junta.

At the beginning of the final chapter of the novel, Rolando concludes; "[a] mí los finales nunca me han convencido mucho. Siempre me parecieron arbitrarios" (361). The journey has not ended as Rolando and his fellow exiles had originally intended. The exiles have escaped from what is one of Argentina's greatest national shipwrecks, the overthrow of the government by a repressive military junta, only to have their newly created hopes and dreams dashed upon their arrival in Spain when they are denied permission to work and are once again confronted with the harsh reality of social exclusion. According to Rolando "nos prestaron una silla de ruedas y con esto pudimos hacer tranquilamente la cola para que nos pusieran en los papeles el sellito de prohibido trabajar en España, setecientas veces el sellito como sacando chispas" (411). Even though the *Cristóforo Colombo* has arrived at its projected destination, the exiles' personal journeys have not ended with the social integration that they had hoped for. A tone of profound pessimism builds throughout the novel as the exiles encounter a continuing series of disillusionments.¹⁸ Their frustration is best summed up by Rolando when, with a feeling of deep sadness couched in dark humor, he tells his shipmates in the Argentinean vernacular "[s]omos los pelotudos permanentes" (250).

Despite the seemingly pessimistic ending, the final lack of closure is one of the strengths of *Libro de navíos y borrascas*. While the novel leaves the protagonists in a painful state of crisis, it leads the reader to understand that the experiences that rupture one's sense of continuity can open an individual to new critical perspectives and turn the past into a place of exploration and debate. Moyano's novel appeared at a time of political crisis, not only in Argentina, but also throughout the world. This period of unrest coincided with a rise in the prominence of post-structural and postmodern thought. Inspired by philosophers such as Jean Baudrillard and others, these intellectual movements questioned the validity of the grand political and historical narratives of the past that were based on the Enlightenment ideals of universal truths and values. *Libro de navíos y borrascas* shares an affinity with many of these works, such as Baudrillard's *La ilusión del fin*.

Through the imagery of a shipwreck, Moyano looks critically at narrations of linear progress. However, it is also important to note that the novel's protagonists do not completely abandon the utopian impulse imbedded in narrations of progress. A shipwreck does not have to be a definitive ending, and the hope persists that there can be a new beginning or that arriving at a better place still remains possible. Although the separation brought about by forced exile enhances the protagonists'

ability to critically assess dominant discourse, for them, exile is not a liberating experience, but a painful one.¹⁹At the end of the novel they are still seeking a way to reconcile their separation from Argentina. Within the context of the crimes and human rights abuses committed by Argentina's military dictatorship, the protagonists continue to affirm the importance of an Enlightenment view of universal democracy and human rights, even though in the novel these ideals are never achieved.

Neither linear progress nor the criticism of it provides a satisfactory solution to the protagonists' dilemma, which has been brought about by exile, social and political marginalization, and human rights abuses. The inconclusive ending in Moyano's novel fails to resolve the protagonists' personal crises. As a result, the issues surrounding their linear progress and its powerful influence over the representations of memory remain open to debate and further exploration. While this study has focused on linear time, its contrast with cyclical structures of time, as manifested in the novel through the recurring failures of progress, is an area left open for further study. As Avelar and Debord suggest, cyclical time can be an important component of the memories of those who are located on the peripheries of economic power.

Progress often seeks to transform social conditions through the reconciliation of personal or political conflicts. The exiles in *Libro de navíos y borrascas* imagined that they could achieve this type of progress through the integration of marginalized members of society. In the end, they never achieve the unity or integration they seek. Their journey, however, has been transformative in other ways. The metaphorical shipwrecks that have frustrated their attempts to construct a linear trajectory toward a more inclusive and democratic society have endowed them with new insights into the multiple possibilities of representing their past and present experiences.

Notes

¹ See the articles by Deffis de Calvo, García-Romeu, Gnutzman, Heredia, and Roca Martínez for studies that look at Moyano's place among other Latin American exile writers who were active during the time of the dictatorships of the latter part of the twentieth century, such as Antonio di Benedetto, Héctor Tizón, Juan Gelman, Juan José Hernández, and others. In addition, the articles by Elgi, García-Romeu, and Roca Martínez explore *Libro de navíos y borrascas* as it relates to the definitions of exile and its variations, such as interior and exterior exile. For a look at the psychological effects of exile, particularly the resulting crisis of identity, see the articles by Aurora, Gálvez Acero, Gnutzman, Heredia, Hollabaugh, and Schmidt-Cruz.

² See the articles by Deffis de Calvo, Fernández, and Steinberg de Kaplan for a look at how *Libro de navíos y borrascas* offers a critical look at the relationship between fiction and reality. This

topic is also developed in the articles of Flawiá de Fernández, García-Romeu, and Sosa, who highlight different ways how representations of reality are mediated ideologically.

³ See Sosa's article for an exploration of the metaphorical significance of the puppet show. The historian who constructs a narration about the past is compared to the puppeteer who, in his own way, controls the actions of the characters in the performance.

⁴ The novel's fragmented structure is described by Zokner, who alludes to a linear narration "da qual florescem episódios cuja dimensão varia" (105). Hollabaugh adds that "[t]he title and format of *Libro de navíos y borrascas* imply a heterogeneous structure" (144). García-Romeu uses the term "*collage*" to describe the novel's fragmentation (paragraph 8).

⁵ Hayden White discusses how individuals only make sense of historical narrations and fiction when they are organized in story form. According to White "historians refamiliarize [past events], not only by providing more information about them, but also by showing how their developments conformed to one or another of the story types that we conventionally invoke to make sense of our own life-histories" (87).

⁶ In her article, Schmidt-Cruz discusses the protagonists' desire to integrate themselves into Spanish society (152).

⁷ Like Avelar, historian Reinhart Kosellek also observes that time tends to be represented either linearly or cyclically (35).

⁸ Luis Villoro, in his study on ideologies, observes that culture, including historical discourse, will often provide individuals with a means to communicate, a justification for beliefs and values, and an ideal of perfection that they can strive toward (158).

⁹ Ulrich Beck observes that discourses of historical progress attempt to unite the past, present, and the future (75). Andreas Huyssen adds that while nostalgia is not the polar opposite of the utopia, it often comes into play in the formation of an idealized future (257).

¹⁰ Jacques Le Goff recounts how, from Christian concepts of time, "[e]l iluminismo y el evolucionismo construyeron la idea de un progreso irreversible y tuvo su máxima influencia sobre la ciencia histórica del siglo XIX, especialmente el historicismo" (58).

¹¹ The contradiction inherent in historical narrations that attempt to present themselves as universal while ignoring the political choices involved in their construction is underscored by specialist in Latin American memory, Elizabeth Jelin, who states that "[m]emory is selective; full memory is impossible" (17). In addition to the selectivity of the past, Jelin states that various political actors are always engaged in interaction and dialogue in order to decide how memory is to be constructed, what is to be remembered, and what is to be forgotten (16-17). Similarly, Beatriz Sarlo notes that the interaction described by Jelin often becomes a site of contention (9).

¹² León and Rebecca Grinberg describe exile as a special type of migration that is often marked by a violent separation that implies that there will be no return (149-50). While exile is often traumatic, José Luis Abellán states that it can also be a liberating experience for an individual who refuses to accept authoritarian social conditions (61), as is to some extent the case with the exiles in the novel as they begin to question the hierarchy of domination and subjugation inherent in linear representations of time.

¹³ Michel de Certeau has observed that representations of linear time will seek to establish a beginning, and from that beginning, a hierarchical order (26).

¹⁴ Paulo Virno observes that the moment when that which is not the present is inserted into a linear rational construct, it is then that the individual is alienated from his own past. According to Virno “[e]l momento de la alienación es el momento en que el no-ya como tal. . . se inserta en la historia empírica” (171).

¹⁵ Baudrillard makes the statement that “la historia está obsesionada por su desaparición” (*La ilusión del fin* 16). While history searches for a sense of unity and singularity, as exemplified in the trajectory of linear time, it is inevitably confronted with its own plurality.

¹⁶ Sarmiento discusses the barbarity of Rosas’ regime in his famous work *Facundo* (1845), as well as the controversy surrounding the execution of Dorrego (210-15). Sarmiento, who was optimistic that Argentina’s civilizing project would move forward, downplays the importance of the execution (212). Moyano, writing from a period when Argentina had again fallen to a dictatorial regime, reinterprets the event’s importance in his novel to emphasize how for his protagonists, the cyclical recurrence of barbarity seems to have overshadowed historical progress.

¹⁷ As mentioned earlier, Hayden White and Jean Baudrillard discuss the points of intersection between historical narrations and fiction. Also see endnotes 5 and 15.

¹⁸ Roca Martínez and Gil Amate contrast Moyano’s pessimistic historical vision to that of Julio Cortázar and Eduardo Galeano, who stress the importance of identifying oneself with the positive aspects of the experience of exile (582).

¹⁹ Despite the affinities between Moyano’s novel and the theories of Baudrillard, the French philosopher places much more emphasis on the liberating aspect of exile. In an interview with Enrique Valiente Noailles, Baudrillard refers to himself as a voluntary exile (*Los exiliados del diálogo* 57), distancing himself from the illusory discourses of unity, integration, and progress.

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