

CREATING CULTURAL PRESTIGE: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz*

Danny J. Anderson
University of Kansas

Sus libros, más que precio, tienen valor.
Si alguien es cómplice en literatura,
ese es el editor. Dime quién es tu editor
y te diré quién eres. Dime a quiénes
editas y te diré quién puedes ser.
Antonio Magaña-Esquivel¹

For the past thirty years, the imprint "Editorial Joaquín Mortiz" has stood for innovation, quality, and prestige in Mexican literature. After it was founded in 1962, Joaquín Mortiz quickly emerged as the premier literary publisher in Mexico and has provided readers with many of the novels and short stories now recognized as landmarks defining the contemporary canon of Mexican fiction. Most studies of Mexican narrative of the 1960s have tended to emphasize the dichotomy between the elitist self-conscious experimentation of *escritura* writing and the irreverent youthful exuberance of *onda* writing. Shifting the focus from texts to publishers, however, reveals a different configuration. Editorial Joaquín Mortiz actually encouraged both these trends by cultivating the work of *escritura* authors such as Salvador Elizondo, Juan García Ponce, and José Emilio Pacheco along with those of *onda* authors like Gustavo Sainz and José Agustín. Moreover, during its first two years, Joaquín Mortiz staked much of its early reputation on promoting two Mexican novels now fundamen-

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1. Antonio Magaña-Esquivel, "Joaquín Mortiz y su registro cultural," *Novedades*, 19 Nov. 1966, p. 4.

tal to women's writing throughout Latin America: *Oficio de tinieblas* (1962) by Rosario Castellanos and *Los recuerdos del porvenir* (1963) by Elena Garro. Thus Editorial Joaquín Mortiz has greatly influenced the development of contemporary Mexican narrative.

The thirtieth anniversary of Editorial Joaquín Mortiz in October 1992 caused many Mexican writers and critics to assess the company's contributions to Mexican culture and to highlight the firm's prestige. José Agustín, now famous for helping initiate *la novela de la onda* with his canonical *De perfil* (published by Joaquín Mortiz in 1966), commented: "Pocas editoriales se han convertido como Mortiz en 'el sueño' de los escritores mexicanos. Muchos de ellos, incluyéndome por supuesto, siempre consideraron que publicar en Joaquín Mortiz era una meta que valía la pena, aunque hubiese que competir con numerosos manuscritos (era célebre el temible e inmenso mueble donde yacían cientos de obras que aspiraban a publicación) o esperar dos, tres, cuatro años para ver el libro impreso. . . ." ² Journalist Jaime Avilés questioned the enduring literary quality of *onda* literature but praised Joaquín Mortiz nonetheless for its contribution to public culture in Mexico. In addition to publishing the best in Mexican literature by already famous writers, Joaquín Mortiz extended to "los jóvenes escritores de los sesenta un rotundo certificado de adscripción a una sociedad tan cerrada como era la de entonces, en tiempos de Díaz Ordaz, avalando de este modo a esa generación destinada a caer en Tlatelolco. . . . Si la literatura de la onda no reportó mayores beneficios a la literatura en sí misma, su aparición en una editorial tan prestigiosa como Mortiz, contribuyó sin duda a consolidar un espacio de mayor tolerancia social para los jóvenes. . . ." ³ These two comments reflecting on the thirty-year history of the firm make patent the prestige to be explored in this article. Agustín underscored from a writer's perspective, the "dream" of placing a book with Joaquín Mortiz, while Avilés suggested from a political perspective Joaquín Mortiz's fundamental role in expanding the public sphere in Mexican society.

In recent scholarship, Barbara Herrnstein Smith, Janice Radway, and Pierre Bourdieu have addressed the processes of creating value, accumulating distinctive markers of prestige, and tracing the connections between literary texts and larger social institutions. These scholars have drawn on literary studies, sociology, history, and anthropology to propose economic models that outline the circulation and consumption of cultural goods in society. Bourdieu's formulations are especially useful for analyzing the prestige of Editorial Joaquín Mortiz because of the way they define context and value. As context, Bourdieu identified a dynamic

2. José Agustín, "30 años de Joaquín Mortiz," *El Universal*, 23 Nov. 1992, p. 2.

3. Jaime Avilés, "El otro homenaje a don Joaquín," *El Financiero* (Mexico City), 25 Nov. 1992, p. 58.

field of cultural production in which social actors collectively compete for dominance, individually plan strategies, and mutually define each other's positions. With regard to value, Bourdieu described various kinds of capital to demonstrate different strategies for making symbolic investments in order to accumulate symbolic returns. Most important for this study, the concept of "symbolic capital" relates back to economic capital, thus providing conceptual tools and language that can help explain how a publishing house exploits cultural prestige as part of a larger set of strategies for achieving ongoing financial success.⁴

Thus in terms of Bourdieu's theories about cultural production, the accumulation of a firm's prestige constitutes a kind of symbolic capital, an investment in the name "Joaquín Mortiz." The amount and kinds of value associated with the name Joaquín Mortiz have changed dramatically over its thirty years of publishing success. Analyzing this change in symbolic capital reveals some of the relationships between culture (especially "high" literary culture) and economic capital. Consequently, it would be erroneous to conceptualize literary publishing as merely a commercial endeavor designed to provide financial returns. Yet it is equally mistaken to view publishing as a philanthropic venture dedicated to capturing symbolic returns. Along this line, Patricia Vega reported that Joaquín Díez-Canedo, founder and manager of Joaquín Mortiz for most of these thirty years, "antes que ver la edición de libros como un negocio, . . . la vió siempre como una actividad de promoción cultural. . . ."⁵ Eduardo González, however, proposed an opposite characterization of Díez-Canedo: "El peor ataque que le hicieron fue que no hacía libros para vender, sino para satisfacer su gusto. Aparte de lo idiota del comentario, es falso: una tarde chocaron dos autos frente a la editorial; se arremolinaron los mirones, y don Joaquín le ordenó a Magdalena Blanco (otra de sus manos derechas) que saliera a repartir folletos de la editorial." Somewhere between the idealized view of the editor as a beneficent cultural Maecenas

4. Recent scholarship has conceptualized literature in terms of institutions and specific texts, both the social and the aesthetic realms. Edward Said referred to this conceptualization as the "worldliness of texts" (1983, 39). Pierre Bourdieu's (1993) notions of symbolic capital and the field of cultural production attempted to explain the logic of social actions, the hierarchies of symbolic value, and the social nature of aesthetic traits. See especially the introduction by Randal Johnson (Bourdieu 1993, 1–25) and chaps. 1–3 (29–141). Bourdieu (1986) distinguished various kinds of capital (cultural, social, and economic), while Barbara Herrnstein Smith (1988) similarly discussed the contextual creation of value. Toril Moi's (1991) article provided an insightful overview of Bourdieu's work and "appropriated" his theories for a feminist agenda. In addition, Janice Radway's work on popular romance novels (1984) and the Book-of-the-Month Club (Radway 1989, 1990) offers specific cases for tracing relations between social institutions and texts. Finally, the essays in Cathy Davidson's (1989) edited volume chart a move from a sociology of literature, as envisioned by Robert Escarpit (1971) to a history of the book. See especially Davidson's introduction and Robert Darton's bibliographic essay (Davidson 1989, 1–26, 27–52).

5. Patricia Vega, "Joaquín Mortiz, pieza fundamental para la literatura mexicana: Díez Canedo," *La Jornada*, 9 Dec. 1992, p. 23.

and the humoristic view of the editor as a consummate opportunist lies a more appropriate middle ground.⁶

Publishing houses exist to make money, and they can only continue to exist if they remain profitable. At the same time, the ability of any publishing house to carve out a special niche in the market for symbolic goods like books depends on a series of strategies that create the firm's reputation, demonstrate how economic capital can be converted into symbolic capital, and indicate how symbolic capital can be accumulated and later reconverted into economic capital with profits. Books are symbolic goods because their value derives from more than the economic costs and projected minimal profit margin required for the publisher to produce and sell the artifact of pages bound between two covers. In addition, books accrue value conceptualized as symbolic capital through aspects measurable only in a broader social field, such as their publisher's standing, the author's reputation, literary style, critical recognition, influence over other artists, and academic consecration, to name only some indices of symbolic capital. Therefore the emphasis on books as symbolic goods seeks to reveal the dual nature of their value, both economic and symbolic, and to trace the commercial and social networks that connect these two kinds of value and allow for their transubstantiation from one kind to the other. Recognition of the articulation between these two kinds of value, whether resulting in a consciously meditated plan or emerging from an implicit sense of competition for prestige, allows for the strategies that guide publication choices and ultimately make or break a small but influential literary publisher like Joaquín Mortiz.

In order to focus on the accumulation of symbolic capital, this article will emphasize the signifier "Joaquín Mortiz" as a proper name that has accrued connotations by circulating in society.⁷ Three specific strategies have helped accumulate symbolic capital and invested it in the

6. See Eduardo A. González, "Joaquín Díez-Canedo, II y último," *Unomásuno*, 28 Oct. 1992, p. 30. Bourdieu emphasized the ambiguous role of the publisher as a go-between and a risk-taker who assumes the business of literature so that writers can cultivate the "charisma" of artists (Bourdieu 1993, 279, n. 2, 77–80, 280, n. 6). In their sociology of contemporary U.S. publishing, Lewis Coser, Charles Kadushin, and Walter Powell emphasized how a publisher's view of his or her goal results from a negotiation between culture and commerce that affects publication strategies (Coser, Kadushin, and Walter 1985, chap. 1). Several analysts have addressed the structural ambiguity of a publisher in Mexico (*un editor*), who must negotiate cultural goals, commercial responsibility, and market demands (see Díaz de Cosío 1984, 46; Alavez et al. 1984, 101; and Avedaño-Inestrilla 1990).

7. By *strategy*, I mean systematic actions that facilitate achievement of a goal in the future. In publishing, a strategy involves acquiring a certain market image as well as insuring financial solvency. Yet strategy is often a less-than-conscious plan about how to approach the market. Rather, as Bourdieu has suggested, it is a "feel for the game" of cultural contests for legitimacy, a "practical mastery" or "sense of social direction" necessary "to navigate in hierarchically structured space in which movement is always fraught with the danger of losing class, in which *places*—galleries, theatres, publishing houses—make all the difference . . ." (Bourdieu 1993, 95, see also 77–78).

commercial label “Joaquín Mortiz.” The first part of this study will analyze how the history of Joaquín Mortiz began with a strategy of affiliation designed to accumulate prestige in the company name by appropriating the symbolic capital associated with the names of successful writers. The second part will focus on a subsequent strategy of visibility that multiplied the effects of affiliation via structuring the catalog of titles according to various collections. The third part will analyze reader reports, confidential documents used to evaluate unpublished manuscripts, to examine an unstated yet systematic strategy of distinction related to the firm’s concept of its own specific literary reputation, a strategy employed to insure further accumulation of symbolic capital understood as cultural prestige. Analysis of these three strategies will emphasize the first fifteen years (1962 to 1976), when the firm was most aggressively staking out its position in the field of Mexican publishing and literary production. The fourth section will consider the legacy of Joaquín Mortiz’s prestige in the 1980s and 1990s.

A HISTORY OF JOAQUIN MORTIZ

After it was founded in 1962, Joaquín Mortiz rapidly consolidated its reputation as a literary publisher. But the story of its success began earlier in two related contexts: the international repercussions of the Spanish Civil War and national trends toward cosmopolitanism operating in Mexican high culture after 1940. The outcome of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) radically affected Spanish-language publishing. Before the war, Spain had dominated the book industry both on the Iberian Peninsula and in Spanish America. The disruption created by the war and the need for national reconstruction created a publishing void in Spain and thus a demand for new publishers. Several houses in Argentina—Losada, Emecé, Sudamericana, and Sur—rapidly began to supply outlets for literary titles by Spanish authors. In Mexico, the Fondo de Cultura Económica (FCE), which was founded in 1934, began by emphasizing translations and prospered by publishing Spanish translations of major titles in science, economics, history, the social sciences, and philosophy (see Peñalosa 1957, 24–29; Acevedo Escobedo 1962, 422–25; Silva Herzog 1972; Palacio 1984; Cosío Villegas 1985; and Camp 1985, 186–89).

Moreover, the exile community of the Spanish Republic was at that point available to contribute to the growth of the publishing industry in Spanish America.⁸ Literary censorship under the dictatorship of General

8. Laurence Hallewell emphasized that Mexico’s open support for the Spanish Republic led to the immigration of “some 160,000 republicans . . . , including 2,440 from the printing trades, 2,065 *profesores*, 368 *‘intelectuales,’* and a half-dozen publishers” (Hallewell 1986, 143). Hallewell therefore concluded that the Mexican publishing industry “benefited most from the Spanish republican diaspora” (1986, 145). See also Suárez (1983) and Fischer de Figueroa (1986).

Francisco Franco from the 1940s to the mid-1970s necessitated new outlets for Spanish literary works (Abellán 1980, 1992; Barral 1978, 1988). By the 1960s, these factors had created a favorable climate for the appearance of Joaquín Mortiz, along with other important Mexican publishing houses such as Era (founded in 1960 by Neus Espresate, Vicente Rojo, and José Azorín) and Editorial Siglo Veintiuno (founded by Arnaldo Orfila Reynal in 1966). What distinguished Joaquín Mortiz from these other publishers in Mexico was its emphasis on literary works, especially contemporary Mexican literature.

The very name “Joaquín Mortiz” evoked intimate connections with the Spanish Civil War, as founder Joaquín Díez-Canedo has explained.⁹ The name originally evolved from the pseudonym used by his mother used to send letters to him just after the war. Because the surname Díez-Canedo was associated with the Republican forces and was therefore dangerous, his mother, Teresa Manteca Ortiz, wrote to him using her maiden last names, Joaquín Manteca Ortiz. This pseudonym eventually became Joaquín M. Ortiz and was finally shortened to Joaquín Mortiz. The name was later used to invoke Joaquín Díez-Canedo’s unique filial relationship with his father, diplomat, intellectual, and literary critic Enrique Díez-Canedo. A year after his father’s death in 1944, Joaquín Díez-Canedo gathered together several sets of short poems by Enrique Díez-Canedo and published them as *Epigramas americanos*, in a volume bearing the “pie de imprenta” Joaquín Mortiz.

Joaquín Mortiz’s emergence in 1962 as an emphatically “literary” publisher also reflected changes in national cultural life that had begun in the 1940s. Numerous Mexican intellectuals had been calling for a reconceptualization of Mexico’s revolutionary legacy from the 1920s and 1930s and an end to the official culture of the Mexican Revolution. At the same time, economic changes following World War II were fostering rapid economic growth in Mexico. In this context, influential journals like *Cuadernos Americanos* (founded in 1942) and the *Revista Mexicana de Literatura* (1955–1956, 1959–1965) were promoting a cosmopolitan culture. Although often guarded or resentful about the increasing cultural and economic presence of the United States, this cosmopolitanism followed broader modernizing trends and strove to place Mexican cultural production in an international context (Vargas 1985; Brushwood 1989, 31–56; Aguilar Villanueva 1988, 846–52). Established Mexican publishers such as Ediciones Botas or Editorial Porrúa continued to support some literary trends, such as the Botas investment in novels of the Mexican Revolution and Porrúa’s reprintings of nineteenth-century Mexican literary classics. But

9. The name has also occasioned jokes and confusion, such as the mechanical “Joaquín Motriz,” the elegant “Joaquín Moritz,” and even the deadly “Joaquín Mórtiz, así, con un acento ominoso sobre la o” (Moscona 1986, 115).

limited outlets for new writers and contemporary Mexican letters were materially restricting literary change.

In the 1950s, three important publishing enterprises appeared that fomented contemporary Mexican literature, especially works that were experimental or internationalist in attitude. The Colección Los Presentes, directed by Juan José Arreola, published the first works of emerging Mexican authors like Elena Poniatowska and Carlos Fuentes. The Fondo de Cultura Económica introduced Letras Mexicanas, which included influential titles such as *Confabulario* (1952) by Arreola, *Pedro Páramo* (1955) by Juan Rulfo, *Balún-Canán* (1957) by Rosario Castellanos, and *La región más transparente* (1958) by Fuentes. In 1958, under the direction of Sergio Galindo, the Universidad Veracruzana began a series entitled Ficción, which circulated works by contemporary Mexican writers including Galindo himself, Emilio Carballido, Vicente Leñero, Juan García Ponce, Sergio Pitlor, and Elena Garro. Although limited to small print runs (many Los Presentes editions consisted of only five hundred copies), these series consolidated the emergence of a contemporary Mexican literature by young or previously unpublished writers and contributed to a gradual professionalization of Mexican writing. According to Galindo, the Universidad Veracruzana in 1959 introduced to Mexico the practice of paying royalties to authors (Brushwood 1976, 679). Emmanuel Carballo also noted fundamental changes in the publishing industry between 1958 and 1964 that allowed writers to “mediovivir de sus libros” and fostered professionalization of bookdealers and publishers.¹⁰

This general background—a growing Mexican book industry after the Spanish Civil War, cosmopolitan trends emerging in the 1940s, and limited outlets for promoting contemporary Mexican literature in the 1950s—coincided with a sudden increase in international focus on Latin American novels (nicknamed “the Boom”), making 1962 an attractive moment for creating a literary publisher. After twenty years at the FCE, Joaquín Díez-Canedo resigned his position as general manager and co-founded Joaquín Mortiz with Jorge Flores and Vicente Polo: “Yo fundé Mortiz . . . porque estaba un poco cansado de trabajar en el [FCE] y de publicar libros de economía, sociología, derecho . . . que me parecían interesantes pero que a mí no me hacían gracia para publicarlos. Yo quería publicar literatura y fundé una editorial con ayuda de mis amigos. . . .”¹¹

10. Emmanuel Carballo, “Cambios fundamentales de la industria editorial,” *La Cultura en México*, 26 Aug. 1964, p. 24.

11. The history of Joaquín Mortiz and its founder, Joaquín Díez-Canedo, has been reconstructed from numerous journalistic pieces and interviews. See Díaz Arciniega (1993), *El exilio* (1982, 763), Leyva (1993), Moscona (1986), and Suárez (1983). See also Eduardo A. González, “Joaquín Díez-Canedo, I,” *Unomásuno*, 27 Oct. 1992, p. 27; and González, “Joaquín Díez-Canedo, II y último,” *Unomásuno*, 28 Oct. 1992, p. 30; Carlos Martínez Rentería, “Joaquín Díez Canedo: ‘Los libros se hacen sin amor; algunos autores me han desencantado,’” *El Universal*, 1 Dec. 1992, pp. 1, 4; Elena Poniatowska, “Vicisitudes del editor que nació ‘en el

Given the larger context, Díez-Canedo's decision to leave the FCE to found Joaquín Mortiz suggests more than a personal preference for working exclusively with literary publishing. The success of the enterprise also implies that he accurately recognized the relevance of a modern, professional publishing house committed to contemporary Spanish-language literature and dedicated to promoting Mexican literature.¹² Given Díez-Canedo's motivation and the books first published by the new company, Joaquín Mortiz stood for literature from the start.

The Strategy of Affiliation

Joaquín Mortiz's ability to emerge as an exclusively literary publishing house depended primarily on a strategy of affiliation. This kind of affiliation consists of systematic use of a network of social relationships, in this case relationships with published writers and prominent intellectuals who had already achieved prestige of their own.¹³ More specifically, a double process of affiliation was actually at work in the early years of Joaquín Mortiz. First, Díez-Canedo called on the numerous relationships he had established at the FCE and in this sense transferred the literary talent to Joaquín Mortiz. This transfer, effected through Díez-Canedo's social network, also led to the second process of affiliation: as the commercial name Joaquín Mortiz began to circulate publicly in Mexico, it assumed the transferred symbolic value associated with the names of certain "consecrated" authors now being published by the new firm, authors who had "transferred" from other publishers.

The first process of affiliation was possible because Joaquín Díez-

interior de un libro," *Novedades*, 11 Jan. 1968, pp. 1, 10; Avilés, "El otro homenaje a don Joaquín," *El Financiero*, 25 Nov. 1992, p. 58; Vega, "Joaquín Mortiz, pieza fundamental para la literatura mexicana," *La Jornada*, 9 Dec. 1992, p. 23; and Vega, "Joaquín Mortiz, eje del desarrollo literario de México: Vicente Leñero," *La Jornada*, 10 Dec. 1992, p. 23. A commemorative volume in homage to Joaquín Díez-Canedo "padre" at the 1994 Guadalajara book fair collected many of the presentations celebrating the company's thirtieth anniversary (see Díez-Canedo Flores, ed., 1994).

12. The two other major Mexican publishing houses founded in the 1960s contrast markedly with Joaquín Mortiz. Era promoted controversial historical studies about postrevolutionary Mexico. Era also published a line of literary works that, although not central to its reputation, have shaped Mexican testimonial writing. Siglo Veintiuno has specialized in social science scholarship with a strong Marxist influence but has also supported a small but significant literary line. In addition, Mexican literary publishing has attracted a variety of strong competitors that often promoted important works or authors but never succeeded (at least in the 1960s and 1970s) in amassing the special cultural prestige held by Joaquín Mortiz. These competitors include Costa-Amic, Editorial Libro-Mex, Novaro, Diógenes, Jus, Diana, and Grijalbo, among others.

13. Bourdieu (1993, 121) and Coser, Kadushin, and Powell (1985, chap. 3) have pointed out the importance of informal networks that situate institutions and their members (such as publishing houses) in the field of cultural production. These networks exemplify Said's proposal that in the twentieth century, "affiliation" supports collective efforts to constitute cultural authority (1982; 1983, 16–24; see also Johnson's introduction to Bourdieu 1993, especially 18–19).

Canedo's personal history had made him part of a network of publicly prominent intellectuals and writers in Mexico.¹⁴ Born in Madrid on 26 October 1917, he studied Spanish literature before the Civil War at the Universidad Central de Madrid. During these years, he participated in cultural activities in Madrid, including the founding in 1936 of a short-lived literary journal named *Floresta*. After serving in the Republican Army, he arrived in Mexico in 1940 as an exile. While studying at the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Díez-Canedo established lasting bonds with his classmates, who included the now-distinguished writers and critics Alí Chumacero, José Luis Martínez, and Jaime García Terrés, and also with teachers such as Julio Jiménez Rueda, Francisco Monterde, Julio Torri, and Agustín Yáñez.¹⁵ From 1942 to 1961, Díez-Canedo worked at the FCE, rising from *atendedor* (one who reads a manuscript aloud so that another can correct the proofs) to *gerente de producción* (production manager) and ultimately *gerente general* (general manager). During these twenty years at the FCE, Díez-Canedo participated in several important cultural events. He supervised the first edition of Octavio Paz's *Libertad bajo palabra* (1949). About the same time, he translated Pedro Henríquez Ureña's Charles Eliot Norton lectures at Harvard in 1940–1941 and published them as *Las corrientes literarias en la América Hispánica* (1949). Díez-Canedo also oversaw the introduction of massive printings at economical prices with Colección Popular, witnessed the growth of the literary line Letras Mexicanas, and coordinated the Breviarios series. He also established a relationship with historian Daniel Cosío Villegas, FCE founder and its director until 1946. In fact, Joaquín Mortiz published Cosío Villegas's daring political analysis *El sistema político mexicano* in 1973 as well as his *Memorias* in 1976. While at the FCE, Díez-Canedo also worked with numerous *correctores*, *editores*, and *autores* such as Juan José Arreola, Octavio Paz, Carlos Fuentes, and Rosario Castellanos, cultural figures who all went on to publish major works with Joaquín Mortiz in subsequent years.

The founding of Joaquín Mortiz depended heavily on Díez-Canedo's ability to transfer his prior affiliations, especially those from the FCE, to

14. My phrasing attempts to evoke the dual nature of subjectivity and agency implied by this analysis. On the one hand, I am suggesting that a variety of factors placed Díez-Canedo in a certain position, one defined relationally in a larger social field and limited by the nature of such relations. On the other hand, I am simultaneously underscoring the potential choices for agency and action, the strategies that Díez-Canedo successfully executed from this position. I am not arguing for an exclusively deterministic model of context or for an exclusively heroic model of individual action. Rather, at each moment I am tracking the dialectic tension between the limitations of a specific position in the field of interaction and the potential "positional" strategies that lead to success in the competition for prestige in the field.

15. The relations Díez-Canedo established at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México follow the general pattern of intellectual recruitment in Mexican society identified by Camp (1985).

the new publishing house. He even formulated this affiliative transfer explicitly: “En un principio hasta Orfila [Arnaldo Orfila Reynal, director of the FCE since 1946,] llegó a estar de acuerdo con que sacara de allí la colección ‘Letras Mexicanas’ para hacerla yo por otro lado. Desde luego se arrepintió” (Suárez 1983, 619). Although Díez-Canedo was not allowed to take the Letras Mexicanas series with him when he left the FCE, his first years of publishing in Joaquín Mortiz achieved the same transfer of talents in practice.

In October 1962, Joaquín Mortiz published its first three titles: two novels by revered Mexican authors, *Las tierras flacas* by Agustín Yáñez and *Oficio de tinieblas* by Rosario Castellanos, and a translation from French of *La compasión divina* by Jean Cau, which had won the Prix Goncourt in 1961. By the end of 1962, the company published additional titles in poetry and essay. Publications in 1963 included important translations such as Günter Grass’s *El tambor de hojalata* (first published in German in 1959) and André Breton’s *Nadja* (first published in French in 1928). In publishing works by already established Mexican writers and attention-getting translations, the company immediately coupled its name with the connotations of quality, high culture, innovation, and cosmopolitan taste associated with these titles. Confirming this affiliative success was the fact that Joaquín Mortiz’s productions in 1963 included two novels that won the Premio Xavier Villaurrutia: Elena Garro’s *Los recuerdos del porvenir* and Juan José Arreola’s *La feria*. Innovative works reflecting the firm’s cosmopolitan tastes also won the Villaurrutia Prize in the next two years: Homero Aridjis’s *Mirándola dormir* in 1964, and Salvador Elizondo’s *Farabeuf* in 1965. In 1965 Joaquín Mortiz published *Estudio Q* by Vicente Leñero. His previous novel *Los albañiles* (1964) had won the highly coveted Premio Biblioteca Breve for 1963, a prize associated with the Latin American Boom and later awarded to another Joaquín Mortiz title, Carlos Fuentes’s *Cambio de piel* (1967).

The early years of publishing also set into motion the second process of affiliation. In addition to the value derived from works of revered authors, the critical success of titles by young or emerging authors added more symbolic capital and transferred additional positive connotations to the name Joaquín Mortiz. For example, in 1965 the company published Jorge Ibargüengoitia’s first novel, *Los relámpagos de agosto*, winner of the 1964 Premio Casa de las Américas in Cuba. Also appearing were Gustavo Sainz’s first novel, *Gazapo* (1965), and José Agustín’s second novel, *De perfil* (1966), which almost instantly became canonical titles of onda literature. As its catalog grew, titles multiplied, and successful books were reprinted, Joaquín Mortiz came to be recognized as a literary brand name connoting the cutting edge in Mexican letters.

In a 1968 interview with Elena Poniatowska, Díez-Canedo formulated this strategy of affiliation as an ideally monopolistic relationship

between author and editor: "Lo normal debe ser que un autor descanse en su editor; que todo lo que produzca se lo entregue al editor y que éste se ocupe de hacer posible que el autor siga escribiendo. . . . Yo creo que el funcionamiento lógico de la industria editorial debe ser que los autores se concentren alrededor de un solo editor . . . para que el público lector incluso sepa donde encontrar a su autor."¹⁶ Joaquín Mortiz achieved this exclusive relationship consistently with Jorge Ibarguengoitia and Vicente Leñero but more briefly with others writers such as Gustavo Sainz, José Agustín, Juan García Ponce, and Salvador Elizondo. Over time, Díez-Canedo discovered that an exclusive relationship depends on both parties to the agreement. For years, he complained that writers like Carlos Fuentes and Octavio Paz have not been faithful to their editor in promiscuously publishing with others. Similarly, the success of Joaquín Mortiz in "discovering" new writers has shown that the affiliation strategy can work in both directions: many young writers who established their careers at Joaquín Mortiz later chose to transfer their talents elsewhere.¹⁷ Yet despite Díez-Canedo's complaints, the affiliation strategy was immensely successful in helping Joaquín Mortiz rapidly acquire lasting markers of prestige: quality, openness to innovation, interest in international high culture, cosmopolitanism, and a steadfast concern for contemporary Mexican writers, established and emerging alike.

Strategies of Visibility

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Joaquín Mortiz published increasing numbers of titles. The firm's general catalog—its backlist—thus represented a growing reserve of economic capital (its investment in books in the warehouse or contractually available for reprinting) as well as symbolic capital (the list of titles and authors whose success and prestige had become affiliated with the company name). The importance of a good backlist should not be underestimated in the book industry. Low-capital entry costs make publishing a highly competitive industry, in which a house can easily contract for many aspects of production and distribution (see Coser, Kadushin, and Powell 1985, 25; Díaz de Cossío 1984, 46–47). Thus in the early stages of creating a reputation, a publisher must invest in a growing backlist of titles that will accumulate symbolic "value" identified with the company.¹⁸

16. Poniatowska, "Vicisitudes del editor que nació 'en el interior de un libro,'" *Novedades*, 11 Jan. 1968, p. 10.

17. See *ibid.*; also Margarita Pinto and Adriana Moncada, "Hablan los editores," *Sábado*, 20 Feb. 1982, pp. 18–21; Carlos Martínez Rentería, "Joaquín Díez Canedo: 'Los libros se hacen sin amor; algunos autores me han desencantado,'" *El Universal*, 1 Dec. 1992, pp. 1, 4; and Vega, "Joaquín Mortiz, pieza fundamental para la literatura mexicana," *La Jornada*, 9 Dec. 1992, p. 23.

18. Carlos Barral described Seix-Barral's backlist as a consciously planned publishing strategy (1978, 139; quoted in Rama 1986, 253). The backlist aimed for a specific niche, for a

But a firm like Joaquín Mortiz, which emerged as a “cultural publisher” specializing in contemporary literature for a small audience, operates according to a different concept of success than a “commercial publisher.”¹⁹ Rather than selecting immediate best-sellers that provide commercial publishers with short-term returns, a “cultural publisher” must strive to accumulate a distinguished backlist that yields the symbolic return of prestige in the short run and will later guarantee through reprintings the economic return of “classics, best-sellers over the long run . . .” (Bourdieu 1993, 100).

Díez-Canedo commented that improvisation was more effective than planning during the company’s early years, but his initial economic strategy clearly was built around low-capital entry costs and the goal of producing “best-sellers over the long run” for a small audience of readers (see appendix 1). He established Joaquín Mortiz with enough capital to operate for at least five years without having to rely entirely on financial returns from sales.²⁰ In 1965 Díez-Canedo noted the difficulty of launching a cultural publisher: “Necesitamos un período largo para llegar a funcionar con desahogo. En la actualidad invertimos mucho dinero y recuperamos a un ritmo verdaderamente intranquilizador.”²¹ Thus his financial plan provided a period of time to produce a backlist that would guarantee economic and symbolic returns over the long run. Three main strategies of visibility supported this plan and insured the immediate

certain public (*una minoría atenta*, or select group of readers), and implicitly for a recovery of the economic investment in the long run. Although immediate returns are necessary to ensure the ongoing functioning of the company, production of a backlist with elevated symbolic value depends more on the long-run consecration of authors and titles. Bourdieu stressed that such strategies imply two kinds of success: first, the symbolic success of cultural authority and prestige sought as the basis for a cultural publisher’s solvency; and second, the immediate economic success sought as the main return by a commercial publisher (Bourdieu 1993, 100–101).

19. Rama emphasized the role of publishing houses in the boom of the Latin American novel, especially “pequeñas empresas privadas que he definido como ‘culturales’ para distinguirlas de las empresas estrictamente comerciales” (Rama 1986, 248). A more nuanced typology of Mexican publishing houses and culture would take into account the kinds of books published (high, middlebrow, or low, for example), the economic strategies employed to guarantee a profit, and the availability of other financial resources for underwriting a specific ideal of cultural legitimacy and authority. Many other kinds of publishers can be found in addition to cultural publishers such as Joaquín Mortiz: some commercial publishers that may choose to finance symbolically prestigious literary lines with other kinds of more economically profitable titles (as has been done with Grijalbo’s *Colección Autores Mexicanos*); marginal publishers that receive support from authors and may “pay” royalties with copies of the published book (see Hinojosa 1978); university publishers that operate with annual budgets and certain intellectual goals; and publishers that are state-subsidized (like the FCE) or state-owned (the Secretaría de Educación Pública and the Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, or CONACULTA). Federico Patán and Rogelio Carvajal were particularly helpful in suggesting the importance of such a typology and identifying some of the relations outlined here.

20. Joaquín Díez-Canedo, personal interview, 30 June 1992, Mexico City.

21. Héctor Anaya, “Habla Joaquín Díez-Canedo: Los problemas de los editores,” *Diorama de la Cultura*, 17 Oct. 1965, p. B3.

accumulation of symbolic capital and the slower return of economic capital. More than improvisation, these strategies reflected the priorities and issues of the day. They also reveal Díez-Canedo's "feeling for the game" of legitimacy, that is to say, his knowledge about how to navigate the currents of contemporary Mexican culture successfully.

The first strategy of visibility can be seen in the structuring of the Joaquín Mortiz catalog. Beyond merely categorizing books according to genres, themes, and disciplines for the sake of record keeping or easy reference, the various lines of publication—each with its own series title, format, and literary characteristics—make visible the symbolic capital amassed by Joaquín Mortiz. Since its first years early in the Latin American Boom, the company has been known best for its three lines of contemporary narratives. In 1962 the company launched its first three titles as part of the series *Novelistas Contemporáneos*, which was identified with writers who were already well respected.

The following year, Joaquín Mortiz introduced *Serie del Volador*, a line emphasizing innovation, experimentation, and exploration. It was an ideal showcase for *onda* writing, which employed exuberant and often irreverent generational slang to recount tales of adolescent love, sexual initiation, interest in rock and roll, and coming of age in middle-class neighborhoods of Mexico City. Publishing Gustavo Sainz's novel *Gazapo* (1965) and José Agustín's novel *De perfil* (1966), drama *Abolición de la propiedad* (1969), and novel *Se está haciendo tarde (final en laguna)* (1973) insured the renown of *onda* works and the visibility of *Serie del Volador*. Yet the series also published *escritura* authors like Salvador Elizondo, Juan García Ponce, and José Emilio Pacheco, who were producing sophisticated, self-referential, and sometimes hermetic narratives that explored the nature of literature, time, eroticism, and language.²² Although novels and short stories dominated the series early on and most *onda* and *escritura* works first appeared here, *Serie del Volador* eventually included essays, drama, poetry, and works that blurred conventional boundaries between genres.

In 1968 Joaquín Mortiz launched *Nueva Narrativa Hispánica*, a collection paralleling a series with the same name published by Editorial Seix-Barral in Barcelona. Joaquín Mortiz had already published Spanish writer Juan Goytisolo's *Señas de identidad* (1966) and subsequently brought out his *Reivindicación del Conde Don Julián* (1970). *Nueva Narrativa His-*

22. Margo Glantz canonized the terms *onda* and *escritura* to describe the two major trends in Mexican narrative in the 1960s and 1970s (see Glantz, ed., 1971). The styles are discussed at length in Glantz (1979); Brushwood (1973, 96–131; 1985; and 1989, 57–77); Blanco (1982); Sefchovich (1987, 168–81, 204–15); and in essays in Ocampo (1981) by Rosario Castellanos, José Luis Martínez, Luis Leal, Paloma Villegas, José de Jesús Sampedro, and Adolfo Castañón. The *onda* has been analyzed in detail in Monsiváis (1977); Carter and Schmidt (1986); Chiu-Olivares (1990); and Steele (1992, 111–15). Discussion of *escritura* writing is often addressed in terms of metafiction, as in Brushwood (1978).

pánica was designed to facilitate exchanges between the two publishers and to publish works that had been censored during the Franco dictatorship, like those of Goytisolo. Amidst the enormous international success of the boom in the Latin American novel, Nueva Narrativa Hispánica could take advantage of popular critical attention, make public the cooperative effort, and facilitate editions that would appear simultaneously in Mexico and Barcelona (as did Manuel Puig's 1973 novel *The Buenos Aires Affair*). Such an arrangement benefited both publishers in terms of market visibility.²³

In addition to these principal lines for contemporary narrative, Joaquín Mortiz introduced others to build symbolic capital in different ways. In the founding year of 1962, Joaquín Mortiz started *Confrontaciones*, which emphasized essays and some memoirs, and *Las Dos Orillas*, which promoted contemporary Mexican and Spanish poets such as Octavio Paz, Luis Cernuda, Agustí Bartra, Homero Aridjis, and Jaime Gil de Biedma. In 1969 another line of essays was added under the series title *Cuadernos de Joaquín Mortiz*, which would feature important books such as *La nueva novela hispanoamericana* (1969) and *Tiempo mexicano* (1971) by Carlos Fuentes and *Conjunciones y disyunciones* (1969) by Octavio Paz. Although these lines had limited audiences, they amplified the connotation of cosmopolitan values and high culture by promoting elite literary genres such as the essay and poetry.

In these early years, Joaquín Mortiz created three additional lines. In 1964 the company introduced a line of informative manuals entitled *Culturas Básicas del Mundo*. Titles such as *Los aztecas* (1964) and *Los mayas* (1966) by Victor Wolfgang von Hagen were reprinted repeatedly, guaranteeing an ongoing economic return. In a similar manner, *El Legado de la América Indígena* (also introduced in 1964) reissued standard handbooks like Miguel León Portilla's *El reverso de la conquista* (1964) and Angel María Garibay Kintana's *La literatura de los aztecas* (1964). In 1965 Joaquín Mortiz started the series *Psicología y Psicoanálisis: Cuestiones Sociales*, which included frequently reprinted translations of *Eros y civilización* (1965) and *El hombre unidimensional* (1968) by Herbert Marcuse. These three lines, with their informative and pedagogical intellectual emphases, provided a solid economic annual return for the company but also reinforced its image as a cultural publisher without detracting from

23. An internal document, "Lista de Asistencia de la Asamblea General Ordinaria de Accionistas de 'Editorial Joaquín Mortiz', S.A." (dated 30 April 1963), identifies Juan Seix Miralta, Víctor Seix Barral Percarnau, and Carlos Barral Agesta as holding 23 percent of the company's shares. Their participation was recognized by proxy under the signature of Joaquín Díez-Canedo. By 1970, however, a series of internal adjustments in Seix-Barral (recounted in Barral 1988 and in sporadic personal correspondence with Joaquín Díez-Canedo throughout 1970) eventually resulted in a split within Seix-Barral and the emergence of Barral Editores. By 1974, representatives of Seix-Barral had sold all of their shares of Joaquín Mortiz.

the literary reputation associated with the highly visible narrative lines. Thus the overall structuring of the Joaquín Mortiz catalog has allowed the various lines to work synergistically in a strategy of visibility: the high profile of the narrative lines took advantage of the symbolic value and public prominence associated with narrative in the 1960s, the lines for poetry and essay further elevated the overall connotations of a high culture for a select audience, and the pedagogical and intellectual lines provided legitimate economic support for the company without diminishing the symbolic capital associated with other lines.

A second strategy of visibility has relied more on publicity and public knowledge. The affiliation strategy already described works hand in glove with this kind of visibility. *Novelistas Contemporáneos* and *Serie del Volador* initially included revered national authors and translations of prestigious international authors, a plan that depended on the reading audience's prior knowledge of these cultural actors. Meanwhile, the various narrative lines have promoted lesser-known writers and "discovered" unknown authors by publishing their titles among those of already respected authors. This kind of visibility via public knowledge also explains creation in 1971 of the line *Obras de Juan José Arreola*. As defined, the series united Arreola's previously published works, ratified his cultural importance as worthy of a publishing line of his own, and reinforced the affiliation strategy with Arreola by endowing him with distinctive visibility as a "Joaquín Mortiz author."

Gradual accumulation of prize-winning titles and authors also relied on the public knowledge and certification of the firm. Between 1962 and 1977, Joaquín Mortiz published works by Jorge Ibarguengoitia, winner of the Premio Casa de las Américas, and also by three by winners of the Premio Biblioteca Breve—Vicente Leñero, Carlos Fuentes, and Chilean novelist José Donoso. In addition, twenty-three Joaquín Mortiz titles won the Premio Xavier Villaurrutia (although Manuel Echeverría rejected his to protest a four-way tie in 1974), and the company also published works by five authors who had won that prize for titles published by other firms.²⁴ Solidifying this connection with prize-winning titles in

24. Between 1962 and 1977, the following Joaquín Mortiz titles received the Premio Xavier Villaurrutia: in 1963, Elena Garro's *Los recuerdos del porvenir* and Juan José Arreola's *La feria*; in 1964, Homero Aridjis's *Mirándola dormir*; in 1965, Salvador Elizondo's *Farabeuf*; in 1972, Gabriel Zaid's *Leer poesía*, Hugo Hiriart's *Galaor*, Jaime Sabines's complete works, and Ernesto Mejía Sánchez's complete works; in 1973, Federico Arana's *Las jiras*, José Emilio Pacheco's *No me preguntes cómo pasa el tiempo*, and Tomás Segovia's *Terceto*; in 1974, Arturo Azuela's *El tamaño del infierno*, Julieta Campos's *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina*, and Gustavo Sainz's *La princesa del Palacio de Hierro* (Manuel Echeverría rejected his award for *Un redoble muy largo*); in 1975, Carlos Fuentes's *Terra nostra* and Efraín Huerta for his complete works; in 1976, Tita Valencia's *Minotauromaquia*, Daniel Leyva's *Crispal*, and Enrique González Rojo's *El quintuple balar de mis sentidos*; and in 1977, Silvia Molina's *La mañana debe seguir gris*, Amparo Dávila's *Los árboles petrificados*, and Luis Mario Schneider's *La resurrección de Clotilde Goñi*. Joaquín Mortiz also published authors who won the prize for books

1969 was the collection *Las Dos Orillas*, which regularly published the annual recipients of the Premio Nacional de Poesía.

The second strategy of visibility has also built on readers' knowledge of recent events, especially the "publicity" of "public culture." For example, intellectual events like *Los Narradores ante el Público* (cycles of summer presentations in 1966, 1967, and 1968), which were sponsored by the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, publicized the activities of many Joaquín Mortiz authors. As a result, Joaquín Mortiz published the first two series of presentations. The most dramatic example of this strategy was publication in 1965 of the third edition of Oscar Lewis's *Los hijos de Sánchez*. The Spanish translation of Lewis's influential work was first published in 1964 by the FCE, then headed by Arnaldo Orfila Reynal. The first edition sold out immediately, and a reprint was soon released. Before year's end, however, the Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística had filed a lawsuit against Oscar Lewis and the FCE for defaming the nation. Although the court ruled in favor of the author and the publisher, Orfila Reynal had already been removed from the FCE. Newly appointed director Salvador Azuela decided against reissuing the book. Díez-Canedo obtained the rights and printed a third edition in 1965 that included the court decision in an appendix. Simultaneously, Joaquín Mortiz launched the line *Obras de Oscar Lewis* and translated other of his works. Although some might construe this exploitation of publicity as opportunistic, it manifested a sense of solidarity among the intellectual community of publishers and thus reinforced Joaquín Mortiz's role as a cultural publisher.²⁵ A similar interest in potential scandal attended the success of

published by other houses: in 1956, Octavio Paz's *El arco y la lira* (already published by the FCE); in 1960, Rosario Castellanos's *Ciudad Real* (as part of the *Ficción* series at the Universidad Veracruzana); in 1966, Fernando del Paso's *José Trigo* (Siglo Veintiuno); in 1972, Juan García Ponce's *Encuentros* (FCE); and in 1975, Augusto Monterroso's *Antología personal* (FCE).

25. The cultural significance of this event was much larger than Joaquín Mortiz's strategy of visibility. In terms of the relationship between the intellectual community and the state, the censorship implicitly effected by firing Orfila Reynal echoed the earlier dismissal of Fernando Benítez as director of *México en la Cultura* (the cultural supplement of *Novedades*) toward the end of the year in 1961, and presaged the ouster of director Julio Scherer García from *Excelsior* in 1976. The intellectual community rallied around Benítez, and the weekly magazine *Siempre* immediately created a space for his group in the supplement *La Cultura en México*. Scherer García's group received immediate support and successfully launched the important weekly publication *Proceso*. Similarly, the intellectual community contributed financially to allow Orfila Reynal to start up *Siglo Veintiuno* in 1966. The juxtaposition of these three events dramatizes the unity of the Mexican intellectual community despite its much-publicized internal divisions. These events also highlight the importance of book and journalistic publishing in the ongoing creation of public culture. Coser, Kadushin, and Powell have appropriately called publishers the "gatekeepers of ideas" (1985, 3–5). On the scandal attending publication in Spanish of *The Children of Sánchez*, see Carrillo Flores (1972, 118–19); Batis (1984, 108–11); Camp (1985, 197–98); Zaid (1975, 1988); Agustín (1990, 236); and Monsiváis (1993). This chain of events related to Scherer García's ouster from *Excelsior* was recounted by Vicente Leñero in *Los periodistas* (published by Joaquín Mortiz in 1978). Sánchez Susarrey (1993) discussed trends in cultural conflicts within the intellectual community since the 1960s.

Daniel Cosío Villegas's *El sistema político mexicano* (1973) and *El estilo personal de gobernar* (1974), which discussed frankly the taboo subject of presidential power in Mexico. Unlike novels and collections of short stories that become best-sellers in the long run and may be "consecrated" by critics, overnight best-sellers like these titles have helped maintain immediate economic stability without damaging the legitimacy of Joaquín Mortiz's symbolic capital as a cultural publisher.

A third strategy of visibility has been built on the quantity of new titles released. Joaquín Mortiz's image of dynamic activity depended on annual publication of new titles, only a few of which would ever be reprinted or judged influential. Although its market share varied from year to year, Joaquín Mortiz at times managed to dominate the publishing scene (see appendix 2). This dominance reflected rapid growth in the three main narrative lines launched in the early years, which jumped from three titles in 1962 to seventeen in 1965 (see appendix 3). The constant selection and publication of works advertised in the press and offered as "*novedades*" in bookstores established Joaquín Mortiz's public image as a valued public space in which quality authors rubbed shoulders. Economic strictures set some limits on the house's ability to expand a range of literary styles associated with cosmopolitan high culture. But within these limits, symbolic capital accumulated from occasional successes, openness to experimentation, support of beginning or unknown writers, and the dynamism of regularly promoting new texts.²⁶

The Private Strategy of Distinction

Evaluation and selection of manuscripts depended on a strategy of distinction. What José Agustín called "el sueño de los escritores mexicanos" resulted from the success of strategies of affiliation and visibility. Dramatist, novelist, and journalist Vicente Leñero may have described this "dream" best: "Era como un sueño transformarnos en colegas de los nombres con mayúsculas de la literatura mexicana. Compañeros de colección de Agustín Yáñez, Juan José Arreola, Carlos Fuentes, Rosario Castellanos, Ricardo Garibay. . . . Creíamos, ingenuos, que con sólo aparecer en la misma casa donde publicaban ellos, los grandes, nos convertiríamos de golpe en gente de sus tamaños. Aspirábamos al crédito, al éxito, quizás a la fama. . . ." ²⁷ The desire to be in the company of renowned Joaquín Mortiz authors grew so great that by 1976, Díez-Canedo estimated that he was receiving each year 350 to 400 manuscripts, of which he could pub-

26. By the end of 1976, Joaquín Mortiz had also launched five more lines: *Obras de Enrique Díez-Canedo* (begun in 1964), *Obras Incompletas de Max Aub* (1965), *Los Nuevos Clásicos* (1967), *Contrapuntos* (1971), and *Otros Títulos* (1972).

27. Vicente Leñero, "En el homenaje a Joaquín Díez Canedo," *Proceso*, 14 Dec. 1992, p. 55.

lish only a tenth.²⁸ To deal with this abundance of material, Joaquín Mortiz employed a group of professional readers: “Una serie de asesores leen los originales, nos aconsejan si se deben publicar o no. Tanto para los autores nacionales como para las obras extranjeras que nos proponen” (Landeros 1965, 6). This undertaking produced confidential reader reports that were used to evaluate and recommend titles for publication. Gustavo Sainz has suggested that these reports were often written hurriedly, remunerated poorly, and seldom became the final word on a manuscript. Rather, the reader reports served as the point of departure for an evaluative discussion with Díez-Canedo.²⁹

Despite their limitations, the confidential reader reports can be construed as one tool in a strategy for accumulating symbolic capital, a strategy of distinction. The criteria for literary value defended systematically in the reports revealed the implicit distinctions that Joaquín Mortiz was promoting, distinctions that elevated its own prestige and influenced change in Mexican narrative. These criteria evidence two major factors associated with Joaquín Mortiz: the view the company held of itself in the Mexican publishing panorama; and a general set of textual traits that evoked the desired image of “quality.” Taken together, these criteria fulfilled the task of social differentiation that Pierre Bourdieu has associated with taste: “Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed” (Bourdieu 1984, 6). When examined from this perspective, the reader reports suggest the class of “serious” contemporary Mexican literature that Joaquín Mortiz

28. Abelardo Martín, “Los autores sin editor: ‘Mortiz apenas publica el diez por ciento de lo que recibe’: Díez Canedo,” *Excelsior*, 18 May 1976, p. 24A.

29. Sainz’s comments were made in response to a presentation about strategies of distinction at the Kentucky Foreign Language Conference, 24 April 1993. Díez-Canedo has outlined aspects of the selection process in several interviews. See Carlos Landeros, “Una encuesta sobre la industria editorial,” *La Cultura en México*, 24 Nov. 1965, p. 6; and Moscona (1986, 116). Joaquín Díez-Canedo Flores recently listed his father’s criteria succinctly: “La calidad, la originalidad, la riqueza del léxico, las aportaciones a la estructura, en la sintaxis; estrictamente era valorado según sus méritos literarios.” See Josefina Estrada, “Un artífice del matiz: Entrevista a Joaquín Díez-Canedo Flores,” *Sábado*, 20 May 1993, p. 3. Avilés Fabila emphasized the selection process and teams of professional readers as crucial elements in establishing the honesty and legitimacy of a publisher (1975, 29–30). The subtext for Avilés Fabila’s concern was the contention that “quality literature” might fail to find a publisher in Mexican publishing, an idea widely circulated in the 1960s and exacerbated by diatribes against “la mafia.” The idea of a “mafia” of literary and intellectual figures enjoying a tight hold on Mexican public culture arose in part from the overlapping editorial boards of prominent journals like *Revista Mexicana de Literatura*, *Revista de la Universidad*, and *La Cultura en México* (see Batis 1984, 108–11; Trejo Fuentes 1988, 138–44; Agustín 1990, 205). Avilés Fabila’s novel *Los juegos* (1967) satirized the closed circle of the intellectual mafia in the 1960s, while Luis Guillermo Piazza’s novel *La Mafia* (1967) celebrated the outlandish “happenings” promoted by this group.

sought to publish in order to identify itself as a name of quality in high Mexican literary culture.

A typical reader's report consisted of two pages of single-spaced commentary.³⁰ Most were requested for manuscripts submitted by relatively unknown writers, although many of the names are readily recognizable today. The reader reports are curious documents in that the firm solicited the opinion of a professional reader (usually a published writer), who was supposed to justify the capital gain or loss (symbolic as well as economic) involved in selecting or rejecting each manuscript submitted for publication. The reports typically discussed content, techniques, positive and negative observations and ended with the reader's final recommendation. These reports were written as confidential memos to Díez-Canedo, not to the manuscript's author. They are often blunt to the point of brutal sarcasm. For example, an unsigned report of 16 February 1963 concluded, "Oligofrenia del autor: oligos 'poco,' fren 'sesos.'" An attentive editor assuredly would not share such comments directly with a potential author, except to get rid of him or her for good.

Even when the company was staking out its reputation, these reader reports already exhibited a clear vision of the superior quality to be associated with Joaquín Mortiz. For example, one reader rendered this negative verdict: "No creo que corresponda a los niveles (salvando excepciones no muy honrosas a las cuales supera) que establece, por lo general, la editorial" (dated July 1964). That same year, another reader rejected a manuscript because "[l]a novela está muy lejos de alcanzar el mínimo de calidad literaria requerido para las colecciones de la editorial" (15 April 1964).

Such terms as "*niveles*" and "*calidad literaria*" reflect a consensus regarding "una editorial con las características de 'Joaquín Mortiz'" (2 March 1967), and they often led to comparisons with other publishing companies. For example, one reader rejected a manuscript because of its unsuccessful technical experimentation and concluded by describing it as

30. Two sets of reader reports exist. A total of 229 reports, alphabetized by the prospective author's last name, occupy three folders dated between 1961 and 1973. They include three additional evaluative documents that are not reports on manuscripts. A second series of 82 reports, also alphabetized by author's last name, fills two folders dated 1974–1979. These reports obviously cover only a portion of the manuscripts considered by Joaquín Mortiz, usually those by young or relatively unknown writers. Established writers (such as Carlos Fuentes, Vicente Leñero, Rosario Castellanos, Elena Garro, and Octavio Paz) did not undergo this process), and once young writers were established, they too were exempt (Jorge Ibar-güengoitia and Manuel Puig, for example). Most manuscripts were novels, but sometimes collections of short stories, essays, and hybrids were also reviewed. Reports usually ended with a negative recommendation, and most of these manuscripts were never published by Joaquín Mortiz. Some eventually found homes with other publishers, but most were never printed anywhere. Given the confidential nature of these reports, my access was conditioned on maintaining the anonymity of the readers and authors. Each report is identified by date, or when the date is missing, a probable date based on the manuscript's eventual publication elsewhere.

“un libro reducido a memorias folklóricas, a recuerditos . . . no carentes de ‘encanto,’ muy en el nivel contemporáneo de la colección Letras Mexicanas del Fondo de Cultura” (undated report, probably 1968). Another reviewer invoked an implicit balance between “quality” and linguistic propriety in questioning the level of vulgarity in “[el] tipo de novelas por jóvenes que edita Novaro o Diógenes. . . .”³¹ Another reader, without naming a specific publisher-competitor, wrestled with a difficult evaluation of the manuscript version of Rafael Bernal’s *El complot mongol*, which ended up being published by Joaquín Mortiz in 1969 contrary to this recommendation. The reader was enthusiastic about the novel because it showed that “es posible escribir una clásica novela policial a la mexicana sin desfigurar la realidad legal del país. . . .” But the reader went on to suggest that because it was “formula literature,” the manuscript “merecería publicarse dentro de una colección literaria comercial, . . . pero que evidentemente no tiene cabida en las colecciones de la editorial Joaquín Mortiz” (15 April 1968). And despite the fact that Joaquín Mortiz published much experimental writing, some readers exhibited implicit concerns about genre. One reader rejected a manuscript for low quality but also because its hybrid genre “no tiene nada que ver con la política editorial de J. Mortiz . . . y no puede ser tomada en consideración para ser editada en esta casa” (2 August 1974).

Digging more deeply into this self-labeling image of “quality” in the confidential reader reports turned up four criteria that regularly informed judgments: “oficio,” originality, “malicia,” and reader participation or involvement.³² Most of the reviews refer to a variety of artisanal aspects associated with creative writing—“oficio” or what might be called

31. This self-concept of the “quality” of Joaquín Mortiz also led to comparison with other publishers during the heyday of *onda* writing. Although the *onda* greatly opened literary language to contemporary orality, especially the use of vulgarities and generational slang of urban adolescents, quality as a criterion also implied limits. In one novel published by Joaquín Mortiz, *Las jiras* (1973) by Federico Arana, an initial report complained about the use of vulgarity: “Este hincapié de la escatología cae más bien dentro del tipo de novelas por jóvenes que edita Novaro o Diógenes; y ahí se comprendería su edición. A no ser que Arana aceptara pulirla, lo suficiente no más, para dejar su lenguaje a la altura de las ediciones de J. Mortiz. (Tampoco hay que ser demasiado exigentes en contra de la procacidad y en pro de la pureza del idioma, en este tiempo.)” (8 June 1971).

32. The increasing attention to narrative techniques as markers of “success” in the “nueva narrativa hispanoamericana” are addressed in Rama’s “La tecnificación narrativa” (1986, 294–360) and Siebenmann (1988). The criteria in these reading reports speak in the same critical discourse as Rama and Siebenmann: they adeptly attend to the formal aspects of high literary production. Bourdieu has emphasized the relation between such formalist concerns and the field of restricted production (1993, 115–20). In other words, the enclosed nature of phenomena like “the mafia,” special attention to formalist aspects of literature, and a restricted field of producers who were creating mainly for other producers (insiders) were all part and parcel of the competition for cultural legitimacy in the 1960s and 1970s. These factors may also have reflected the restricted economy that allowed symbolic goods (literary texts, especially novels) that were selected, promoted, and published by Joaquín Mortiz to accrue extensive symbolic capital rapidly.

"craft." Usually such comments discuss grammar, syntax, punctuation, uses of characterization, dialogue, plot structure, and the general relationship between "*asunto*" and "*técnicas*." Problems cited in *oficio* were usually correctable if the manuscript proved to be outstanding according to the other criteria.

Originality was discussed in these reports repeatedly. Because of the excitement generated by the Boom, many would-be authors in the late 1960s were submitting manuscripts modeled on various successful kinds of narrative: the rural novel of Juan Rulfo, the magical realism of Alejo Carpentier and Gabriel García Márquez, fantastic tales by Jorge Luis Borges and Julio Cortázar, the French *nouveau roman*, the *escritura* writing of Salvador Elizondo, or the *onda* writing of Gustavo Sainz and José Agustín. A category added after 1968 was testimonial writing on the student massacre at Tlatelolco. Although many of these works were ultimately published (some by Joaquín Mortiz and many by other houses), the sheer quantity of manuscripts in these veins that were never published is surprising. Even more astonishing is the editor's daunting task of sorting through this overwhelming mass of manuscripts in search of that special "quality manuscript" destined to become a literary landmark and thus increase the symbolic capital of Joaquín Mortiz.

The trend toward *onda* writing is perhaps the most illustrative category in the debates over originality in the reader reports. The cultish vogue for such writing in the 1960s led one reader to complain that a manuscript lacked "*verdadera aportación al género específico*" because it did not exhibit "*valores insólitos, originales, que al fin de cuentas son el motor de toda literatura. . .*" The reader expanded on this point by objecting to "*novelas juveniles*" that slavishly imitate José Agustín's *De perfil*: "*Es el mismo mundo. Pero en este redescubrimiento del Mediterráneo se añora el talento literario de los que hunden en el universo juvenil para buscarlo, no sólo para traducirlo; para arriesgarse totalmente en la recreación del lenguaje y no para decir únicamente: 'ah, yo también puedo describir a un joven de mi época'*" (17 February 1969). In other words, a lack of talent plus a lack of personal creativity equaled a total lack of originality. In other instances, even where the author was described as talented and the writing as superior, this same reader protested that the author "*ha seguido la fórmula de los 'jóvenes narradores de su generación' para repetirnos . . . un mundo que la literatura mexicana ya ha construido*" (18 August 1969). Just as the *onda* style was often perceived as obstructing originality, numerous reports complained about poorly digested renderings of the French *nouveau roman* in many manuscripts written in *escritura* style.

In this sense, the ideal of originality dominated the judgment of each reader, who looked for the author's personal act of making the experiments in theme and technique authentically a part of his or

her own creative universe rather than a mere repetition of a genre or trend. Thus originality paradoxically involved the specifically social effect of adding a new point of view, a different version, or a singular thematic focus to the collective body of narrative texts already in public circulation.

Perhaps the most crucial of the markers of quality discussed in these reports is "malicia." Although never formally defined, it appeared as a keyword throughout the reader reports. *Malicia* as a term refers both to communicative cunning or narrative instinct possessed by the author and also to the ways in which such skill reveals itself in the composition of a text. The critical eye of these professional readers associated malicia with impeccable expertise in oficio and superb intuition about originality. A report on Manuel Puig's manuscript that later appeared as *La traición de Rita Hayworth* (1968) can be cited as setting the standard for narrative malicia, even though the reader never used the term in this particular report (dated 21 February 1967).³³ In this enthusiastic review, the reader emphasized clear individualization of characters as separate beings and the convincing web of relations established among them: "el autor sabe diferenciar—con notable destreza y dominio de su técnica—a cada uno de los personajes, y construye seres individuales, únicos, formidablemente contrapunteados. . . ." The commentary also pointed toward malicia in structure in observing that the manuscript's textual organization produces the counterpoint effect appreciated by an attentive reader. The same reader also praised the clear separation of the author-as-narrator from the linguistic world of the characters: "En todos estos trabajos el autor ha sabido sacrificar voluntariamente su magnífico estilo—patente en los monólogos—para inventar los mediocres estilos de sus personajes. El resultado es formidable, de una verosimilitud novelística de primera." The reader's conclusions describe the overall effect of malicia in the text: "Por la avanzada concepción novelística del autor, por la original y efectiva estructura de la novela (que, no obstante la gran importancia que da a los aspectos formales, no descuida—antes bien, lo hace sobresalir—su contenido vital y estrictamente humano), recomiendo con gran entusiasmo la publicación de 'La traición de Rita Hayworth.'" Thus malicia arises from four interrelated factors: the author's concept of the genre, the originality of the text's linguistic organization, the effectiveness of this structure for the reader, and a balanced or appropriate relationship between the text's formal aspects and the human or vital content of the narrative.

33. This title got away from Joaquín Mortiz when Editorial Jorge Alvarez beat the company to the draw in offering a contract. Although the novel was written by an Argentine author and the focus of this study is Joaquín Mortiz's role in Mexican literature, the similarity of criteria reveals the broader continuity between Joaquín Mortiz's cosmopolitan distinctions and the distinctions valued internationally at the height of the Boom.

Even in manuscripts judged as failures in other regards, the author's narrative malicia was sometimes clearly noted. For example, another reader reviewed a collection of short stories that demonstrated narrative malicia but disappointed in terms of the author's oficio: "Un fuerte contenido anecdótico dota a estos relatos de extraña vitalidad. En rigor, el autor es un narrador nato, sin duda un conversador hábil pero un gramático deficiente. Un poco de oficio literario elevaría la calidad de sus relatos que gramaticalmente abundan en lugares comunes" (12 October 1966). Despite the author's literary cunning in achieving "extraña vitalidad," this text was not judged publishable.

A different reader, in contrast, later reviewed a novel manuscript that raised doubts about the author's malicia:

No estoy muy seguro de la malicia del escritor. Quiero decir: no alcanzo a establecer si la intencionada imprecisión en la pintura de sus protagonistas, en la secuela de los acontecimientos, en la estructuración de su novela, obedezca a un plan consciente, a un firme propósito, o sea producto de una cierta 'inexperiencia literaria' que se advierte en otros aspectos de la novela. Con ello no trato de medir el resultado por el grado de consciencia o inconsciencia con que el escritor ha conformado su obra; trato únicamente de medir la efectividad o la ineffectividad literaria de sus recursos. Y no estoy muy seguro. (5 December 1968)

This manuscript might at times produce the effectiveness of malicia for readers but also raised overall doubt: perhaps the best qualities of this manuscript—its various "imprecisions"—were merely narrative accidents.

When the absence of malicia was evident, the problem left no room for doubt in the minds of the evaluators. One wrote, "el defecto principal es una acusada falta de malicia, de penetración literaria, que lo hace rozar muy a menudo con el ridículo" (14 August 1971). This definition of "falta de malicia" as a lack of "penetración literaria" suggests the entire gamut of textual traits. On a manuscript that underwent many reviews, each one ultimately negative, a final reader summed up the consensus of at least seven different reports: "Quizás me equivoque, pero encuentro que [ésta] es una novela correcta, bien escrita, pero sumamente plana. Así la proyectó y así la escribió su autora, y no puede criticársele ni objetársele su éxito en haber logrado realizar su propósito. Lo que es objetable, a mi juicio, es su propósito mismo" (30 September 1971). In this case, the concept of malicia was even applied to the author's choice of subject matter and narrative strategies.

The last example raises the complex question of gender, of what malicia might imply when a woman was told that her subject matter was irrelevant. Yet clear correlations between gender, malicia, and manuscript review are impossible to establish. For example, this same reader wrote enthusiastically about works by other women, as in praising Angelina Muñiz's creative exploration of anachronism and female subjectivity in the manuscript later published as *Morada interior* (report dated 24 No-

vember 1970, novel published in 1972). In any case, men greatly outnumbered women as both readers and potential authors. Although the collection of reader reports consulted for this study is far from exhaustive and must be analyzed cautiously, the grouping between 1961 and 1973 indicates the proportion of the gender imbalance. All manuscripts submitted for review during this period in all genres and languages were written by 158 male authors, 35 female authors, and 9 whose gender could not be identified. Among the professional readers, 28 male, 6 female, and 4 unidentifiable reviewers provided recommendations. Significantly, of the 229 reports saved from this period, 117 were written by the two principal reviewers for Joaquín Mortiz, both of them male. As a general rule, manuscripts by both male and female authors were judged primarily according to the dominant preference in the 1960s and 1970s for successful structural and linguistic experimentation discussed here under the heading of malicia.

Malicia as a textual effect evokes the fourth criterion of quality recurring throughout the reports: works that required the involvement or participation of readers. In all the examples noted thus far, works successful in terms of malicia were designed to elicit active and meaningful response from perspicacious readers. Malicia, understood as the author's expertise in manipulating aspects of *oficio* to produce originality of theme, structure, and language, was always directed toward the reader. In one report, the reviewer explained the reader's relation with the text by employing the metaphor of a bridge: "El libro no carece de aciertos parciales, pero no por esto se recomienda su publicación. No es posible hacer literatura a base de descripciones sexuales y la enumeración de dos o tres posturas políticas. Antes que sociología y antes que experimento, la literatura necesita de un puente estético que la acerque al lector. [Este manuscrito] parece estar demasiado engolosinado con rompecabezas que encubren la vacuidad de su mensaje y prefiere ignorar eso" (no date, probably 1968). According to this evaluation, literature of quality constructs an aesthetic bridge that leads readers to participatory roles. No magic formula exists for this bridge because it is produced neither by simplicity or difficulty nor by theme, structure, or point of view. Rather, the bridge is erected by the wily artifice of malicia that lures the reader into the snares of textual participation.

In summary, accumulation of prestige in the name Joaquín Mortiz resulted from a strategy of distinction associated with the concept of taste. The consequent distinctions allowed the selection of new titles and were intimately connected with the prestige of the publishing house in that its growing catalog of titles became the basis for a public reputation that distinguished it from other Mexican publishers. Even more important, these distinctions contributed to the symbolic capital of Joaquín Mortiz by seeking to maximize the firm's prestige as *the* publisher of

quality “serious literature” in Mexico. The reader reports overtly argued about such concepts as *nivel*, *calidad*, *oficio*, *originality*, *malicia*, and *reader participation* but were actually making investment recommendations about symbolic capital: they were recommending values in which the editor should invest the company’s economic capital and at times pointing out the investment risks to be avoided.

THE LEGACY OF JOAQUIN MORTIZ, 1983–1993

In 1982, amidst devaluations, disruptions in the international oil market, and nationalization of the Mexican banking system, the publishing industry experienced a major crisis. Devaluations radically affected the already precarious Mexican publishing industry because it depends on imported paper. Moreover, dramatic increases in production costs immediately raised the cost to potential buyers, a small group of consumers who were themselves suffering the effects of the devaluation in all aspects of their daily lives.³⁴ While other publishers curtailed their activity, reorganized, or folded, Joaquín Mortiz became in 1983 part of the transnational Spanish corporation Grupo Editorial Planeta. Despite offers from other publishers including Diana and Grijalbo, Díez-Canedo decided to join Planeta. In a recent interview, he expressed disenchantment with his decision, however. He had hoped to gain access to the book market in Spain via the merger but did not, and he therefore concluded, “me confundí porque creí que Planeta estaba interesada en Mortiz y lo que querían era simplemente un pie de venta para entrar en México.”³⁵ In my view, Grupo Editorial Planeta selected Joaquín Mortiz strategically, not simply as a Mexican beachhead but as the most prestigious entry available into the Mexican book market.³⁶

In January 1987, Díez-Canedo turned over direction of Joaquín Mortiz to his son, Joaquín Díez-Canedo Flores, who became its *gerente*. The following year, “Joaquín hijo” was joined by sister Aurora Díez-Canedo Flores as *asistente editorial*. During this period of intense readjustment, Joaquín Mortiz negotiated its relationship and position within the

34. The dynamics of this crisis were widely discussed throughout the Mexican press in the last quarter of 1982 and throughout 1983. The publishing industry in this period owed its visibility and viability to the concerted efforts of the “grupo de las 10,” publishers who united to propose restructurings necessary for the economic survival of the Mexican publishing industry. These publishers were Siglo Veintiuno, Nueva Imagen, Era, Joaquín Mortiz, Prensa Médica, Martín Casillas, Nuestro Tiempo, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE), El Colegio de México, and the Fondo de Cultura Económica. Special issues of *Diálogos* (1984) and *Casa del Tiempo* (1983b) provided overviews of the publishing crisis. A previous issue of *Casa del Tiempo* (1983a) focused more broadly on the general sense of social crisis. See also Greaves (1988, 365–68).

35. Vega, “Joaquín Mortiz, pieza fundamental para la literatura mexicana,” *La Jornada*, 9 Dec. 1992, p. 23.

36. Leyva (1990) described the organization of Grupo Planeta, and Leyva (1993) discussed Joaquín Mortiz’s thirtieth anniversary and merger with Grupo Planeta.

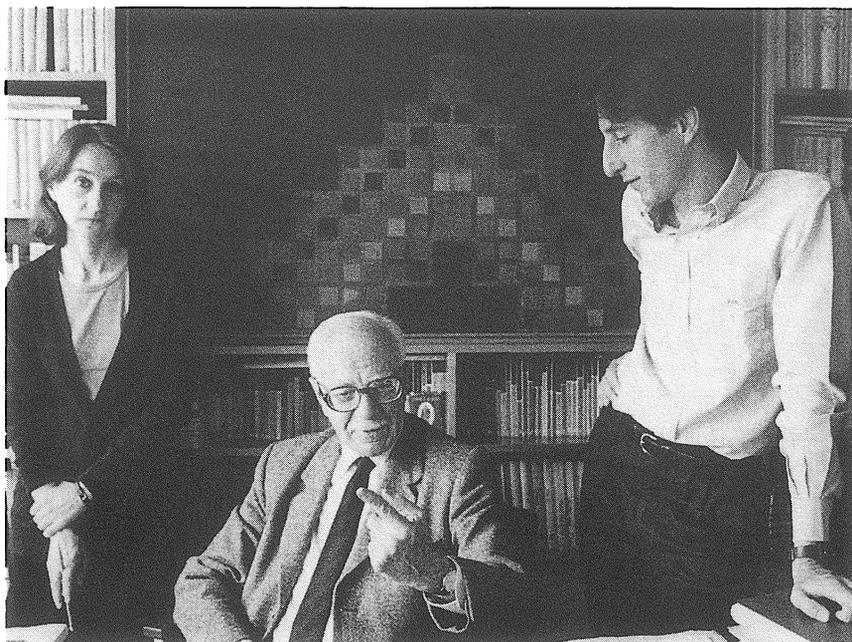


Illustration 1. Joaquín Díez-Canedo in his office at Grupo Editorial Planeta in Mexico City in 1992 with his daughter Aurora Díez-Canedo Flores and son Joaquín Díez-Canedo Flores. (Photo by Rogelio Cuéllar, courtesy of Joaquín Díez-Canedo Flores.)

Grupo Editorial Planeta as well as its role in the larger field of cultural production in Mexico. Here Joaquín Díez-Canedo Flores continued some of the strategies that had built the company's reputation in the early years. For example, recalling the establishment of the Obras de Juan José Arreola, the company in 1989 launched Obras de Jorge Ibargüengoitia, a line that gathered previously uncollected pieces and reprinted classic titles published by Joaquín Mortiz in the 1960s and 1970s. Similarly, in 1992 Díez-Canedo Flores began planning a new line, Serie Laurel, which would reprint the classics of Mexican narrative originally published by Joaquín Mortiz in the 1960s and 1970s. Most of these works first appeared in the Serie del Volador and are now being released with a new design in a larger and more refined format. Díez-Canedo Flores initially conceptualized this series as including titles like Vicente Leñero's *Estudio Q* (1965), José Agustín's *De perfil* (1966) and *Se está haciendo tarde* (1973), José Emilio Pacheco's *Morirás lejos* (1967) and *El principio del placer* (1972), Carlos Fuentes's *Cambio de piel* (1967), and María Luisa Mendoza's *De ausencia* (1974). Obras de Jorge Ibargüengoitia and Serie Laurel both rely on the success of Joaquín Mortiz's earlier strategies for accumulating prestige and seek to publicize this older symbolic capital.

Joaquín Mortiz has also continued to publish titles in the impor-

tant series *Novelistas Contemporáneos* and *Serie del Volador*. Meanwhile, the series *Nueva Narrativa Hispánica* was reconceptualized. The Boom had subsided and the term *nueva narrativa* had become part of standard critical discourse. Therefore Díez-Canedo Flores launched a new series entitled *Cuarto Creciente* in 1990 to emphasize the literary values now emerging rather than the “*nueva narrativa*” associated with the past.

Finally, in 1992 Joaquín Mortiz and Planeta pooled resources to establish and promote the new “Premio Planeta–Joaquín Mortiz.” Modeled after the long-standing “Premio Planeta” that publicizes contemporary literature each year in Spain, the first Premio Planeta–Joaquín Mortiz was awarded to Paco Ignacio Taibo II for his historical novel *La lejanía del tesoro* (1992). The following year, Uruguayan-born Daniel Chavarría won the prize with the first installment of a trilogy on fifth-century Athens, *El ojo Dindymenio* (1993). In 1994, the prize was bestowed on Sealtiel Alatríste for *Verdad de amor*, a novel about the search for an erotic film made by a famous Mexican actress (obviously inspired by María Félix) and secretly conserved by French director Jean Renoir. The joint prize aims for public visibility and strategically exploits Joaquín Mortiz’s cultural authority as an arbiter of value.

Despite these successful strategies for maintaining the symbolic capital of Joaquín Mortiz and insuring ongoing economic return, published interviews with Joaquín Díez-Canedo Flores suggest a sense of frustration in the 1990s as fundamental changes in the cultural field have manifested themselves. Noting such changes, Díez-Canedo Flores commented, “el apego rígido a la tradición de la letra impresa puede no ser muy favorable a la nueva situación que se vive en el mundo. Insisto, hay contenidos específicos para el libro, por eso a mí no me interesa la literatura ‘light,’ los libros de reportaje y similares” (Leyva 1993, 10). In another interview, Díez-Canedo Flores discussed marketing information provided by Planeta and explained how “la actual imagen del producto, lo que la gente está buscando, no coincide con la gráfica tradicional de Joaquín Mortiz.”³⁷ In a third interview, Díez-Canedo Flores detailed the disparity between the firm’s “gráfica tradicional” and current literary production. He contrasted his personal interest in a more “difficult” literature that experimented with narrative techniques and had “pretensiones globalizadoras” in its social interpretations and thematic content with current market preferences for the “preceptos decimonónicos de la novela y el cuento” (a return to “realism”) and themes related to the personal (“*ámbitos íntimos*”), biography, the *Bildungsroman*, and historical episodes with “historias y personajes *ready-made*” (Díez-Canedo Flores 1993, 59).

Joaquín Mortiz’s current position in the field of cultural production becomes clearer when compared with those of Era, Cal y Arena, and Pla-

37. Estrada, “Un artífice del matiz,” *Sábado*, 20 May 1993, p. 3.

neta's Colección Fábula. In the 1980s, Era emerged as the main promoter of the testimonial novel in Mexico. Recognized as a major source of controversial studies in twentieth-century Mexican history, Era had also published important Mexican literary works like Elena Poniatowska's *Hasta no verte, Jesús mío* (1969) and *La noche de Tlatelolco* (1971), José Revueltas's *El apando* (1969), and Luis González del Alba's *Los días y los años* (1971). These examples underscore the overlap among testimonial writing, participation in the 1968 student movements, and Era's editorial preferences. Era eventually released the complete works of José Revueltas and established Elena Poniatowska's reputation as an "Era author." During the 1980s, increased academic attention to Poniatowska's works, her testimonial narrative, and life writing gave special value to this literary line at Era. In contrast to the cosmopolitan aesthetic preferences projected by Joaquín Mortiz, Era's investments in a more realist and socially committed literature of the late-1960s were producing a significant if somewhat delayed return.

In the mid-1980s, Cal y Arena and Planeta began to compete for best-sellers associated with a return to storytelling, the kind of "realist narrative" eschewed by Díez-Canedo Flores. Cal y Arena, which is closely associated with the magazine *Nexos*, began to promote commercially successful writers like Angeles Mastretta (*Arráncame la vida*, 1985); historian, novelist, and *Nexos* editor Héctor Aguilar Camín (*Morir en el golfo*, 1985; *La guerra de Galio*, 1991); and journalist, satirist, and short-story writer Guadalupe Loaeza (*Las niñas bien*, 1987; *Las reinas de Polanco*, 1988; and *Primero las damas*, 1989). All these writers strive to tell an accessible story that will reach a broader audience. Mastretta and Aguilar Camín share the approach of slightly fictionalizing events from Mexican national history, a technique that allows them to embellish on recognizable episodes freely while inviting readers to play the insider's game of reading between the lines. In contrast with Joaquín Mortiz's commitment to certain kinds of innovation, Cal y Arena promotes writing dedicated to storytelling and reader accessibility.

Meanwhile, Planeta launched Laura Esquivel's internationally successful and eminently readable novel *Como agua para chocolate* (1989) in its series Colección Fábula. Taking advantage of increased public interest in women writers and the success of Esquivel's first novel, the series has published recent novels by Mexican women writers including Rosamaría Roffiel (*Amora*, 1989), Brianda Domecq (*La insólita historia de la Santa de Cabora*, 1990), and Sara Sefchovich (*Demasiado amor*, 1990; *La señora de los sueños*, 1993). These novels exemplify the emphasis on readability and realism typical of Cal y Arena. Yet the concentration of women writers in a single publication line suggests a strategy of market visibility that is exploiting heightened rates of payment for women's writing in the literary marketplace.

The reputations established by Era, Cal y Arena, and Planeta all

contrast with the central editorial approach at Joaquín Mortiz and the legacy of structural, conceptual, and linguistic innovation that Díez-Canedo Flores has tried to maintain. Recent observations made by Díez-Canedo Flores evidence the complex position of a publishing house within the broader field of cultural production. Díez-Canedo Flores's comments point toward the editor's "feel for the game" and sense of "the action." But they also represent resistance to the trend known in Mexico as "literatura light." The question is whether the innovative, experimental, and cosmopolitan literature fostered by Joaquín Mortiz in the past will continue to be valued and to accrue symbolic capital. What has changed by the 1990s is the configuration of the field of literary production in Mexico and hence Joaquín Mortiz's position as defined by the firm's "gráfica tradicional."

The central factor identified by critics as the basis for this change and lamented by Díez-Canedo Flores is a new market sensitivity in literary publishing (Prada 1991, 56; López González 1993, 665; Alatríste 1990, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c). The closed circle of "high" literary culture in the 1960s and 1970s—a community of producers creating for an audience of other producers, often referred to in Mexican literary circles as "*la mafia*"—allowed for great accumulation of symbolic capital in Joaquín Mortiz and made possible the economic return on "classics" of contemporary Mexican literature as best-sellers over the longer term. Then the economic crises of the early 1980s sped up the trend toward forming publishing conglomerations (such as Planeta's transnational debut in Mexico) and raised concerns about the economic bottom line and how to reach a wider audience and a larger market.

Concurrent with this reconfiguration among publishers are changes among writers and also among the potential audience of readers. Díez-Canedo Flores's comments point toward the current competition for legitimacy being conducted in the field of Mexican literary production, in which publishers, writers, and readers as book buyers are all taking positions. Literary scholar Aralia López González has highlighted the best-seller status of Angeles Mastretta's *Arráncame la vida* (1985) and Laura Esquivel's *Como agua para chocolate* (1989) as well as the ensuing debates over their status as part of "una literatura comercial" or as "obras 'buenas' y respetables desde el enfoque de la 'alta' cultura. . . ." López González concluded from this debate that "el mercado es ya un elemento determinante en el campo intelectual." She has emphasized the necessity of defining new criteria for judging literary production and for critically evaluating the pertinence of categories of culture such as "high," "consumer," "mass," or "popular" (López González 1993, 665). Also speaking to the problem of labels and categories, Sealtiel Alatríste has noted the international success of Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1980), Gabriel García Márquez's *La crónica de una muerte anunciada* (1981), and Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984) to suggest the emergence

of “el nuevo *best-seller* de calidad,” a new category that transcends the conventional distinction between “high” and “low” culture. According to Alatríste, these works combine “dos aspectos aparentemente irreconciliables: el producto editorial de éxito [comercial] con el producto literario de calidad” (1990, 89). In the 1960s and 1970s, the publishing industry, writers, and the reading public implicitly cooperated to support the symbolic capital of “high culture,” cosmopolitanism, and formal experimentation. But by the late 1980s, the same social actors were renegotiating the terms of legitimacy, a phenomenon that has undermined Joaquín Mortiz’s position in the field and required formulating new strategies to maintain prestige in the forms of accumulated symbolic capital and economic viability.³⁸

In 1992 Joaquín Mortiz celebrated its thirtieth anniversary by announcing a catalog of 750 titles written by 152 authors. But despite the commemoration, the struggle to defend a certain kind of prestige has taken a heavy toll. In a 1993 interview, Josefina Estrada asked Díez-Canedo Flores about Joaquín Mortiz’s loss of “el antiguo prestigio” after the merger with Grupo Editorial Planeta. He answered, “nada de lo que le ha pasado a Mortiz puede ser imputable a Planeta.” He attributed the change instead to a broader set of factors: “Considero que la pérdida de prestigio es producto del escepticismo general, de un cuestionamiento general de todo tipo de autoridad; no sólo Mortiz ha perdido prestigio, muchos escritores nacionales que siguen siendo los mejores que tenemos también lo han perdido.”³⁹ Later that year, Díez-Canedo Flores announced his resignation from Joaquín Mortiz during Grupo Editorial Planeta’s 1993

38. The debate over “literatura light” is profoundly related to struggles to define cultural legitimacy, and individual statements in this cultural conversation constitute significant acts of taking positions. Most statements tend to polarize positions between “literatura light” and a serious, difficult, transcendental, or “high” literature. As examples, see Asiain (1992); the special issue of *Vuelta* (1992); Enrique Serna, “Vejamen de la narrativa difícil,” *Sábado*, 18 Dec. 1993, 1–3; and María Ximena and Alejandro Toledo, “Por una literatura fácil,” *Macrópolis*, 26 Mar. 1992, 32–37. In addition to polarizing terms in public discourse, the disparaging label “literatura light” has in practice been erroneously equated with contemporary Mexican women’s writing. Brianda Domecq and Carmen Boullosa are only two striking examples of successful women writers who have published with Planeta and Cal y Arena (respectively) and yet are in no way related to the “light” trend. Earlier scholarship tended to avoid the polarized positions characterizing the 1990s. For example, rather than emphasize a radical separation between positions, Monsiváis (1988) stressed that “high” culture’s apparently “new” relationship with “popular” culture in the late 1980s actually originated with successful cosmopolitan works of the 1960s, especially texts by Mexico’s *onda* writers and Argentine novelist Manuel Puig. Jean Franco also noted the increasing importance of mass culture as the category of author evolves into the commercial role of “*superestrella*” (Franco 1985, 325–34). Similarly, Sara Sefchovich observed, “el código de masas ha penetrado a la ‘alta’ cultura.” She emphasized a turn in the 1980s to two kinds of realism (1987, 203). Rather than include all of these new “realist” novels in a category like “literatura light,” she distinguished between *realismo mimético* designed to satisfy market demand and readers’ entertainment and *realismo crítico* created to explore present conditions in the committed struggle to change society (Sefchovich 1987, 226–32).

39. Estrada, “Un artífice del matiz,” *Sábado*, 20 May 1993, p. 3.

“coctel de fin de año”: “Quiero retirarme a tiempo, como en el box y en los toros, aunque supongo que también regresaré.”⁴⁰ In 1994 Aurora Díez-Canedo Flores became director of the company and later that year had to confront internal restructurings in Grupo Editorial Planeta. In January 1995, Joaquín Mortiz was placed with another member of the Grupo Planeta, Espasa-Calpe Mexicana, leaving observers to wonder how the next stage of the company’s history would evolve. In a personal interview, Aurora Díez-Canedo Flores explained that throughout 1994 and especially after January 1995, she did not have the freedom and support to continue her family’s book-editing tradition and defense of literary innovation.⁴¹ With the dramatic devaluations occurring in December 1994, Grupo Planeta (like all Mexican publishers) has encountered increasing economic pressures. Aurora Díez-Canedo Flores also described ongoing personal tensions and philosophical disagreements between Joaquín Mortiz and the directors of Grupo Planeta, a situation that eventually resulted in her being notified of her “liquidación” (dismissal). Her exit on 15 June 1995 ended a venerable family tradition in book editing and literary promotion. Although the Díez-Canedo family still owns 30 percent of company stock, Grupo Planeta controls the firm and will decide on the strategies that will determine the future prestige and symbolic capital of the name Joaquín Mortiz.

CONCLUSIONS

The three main strategies discussed here—affiliation, visibility, and distinction—map the claiming, accumulating, and consolidating of symbolic capital recognized as the prestige of Editorial Joaquín Mortiz. These strategies have placed Joaquín Mortiz in a social arena in which texts, especially narratives published during the Boom, may be viewed less as objects available only for literary analysis and more as events or actions that help stake out positions in a larger contest over authority. This kind of attention to the field of cultural production in which actors and institutions struggle, compete, and negotiate for legitimacy has four important implications for studying Mexican literature.

First, an institutional history like the one presented here is intimately related to the corpus of texts that have circulated publicly. Novels and short stories of the thirty-plus years of Joaquín Mortiz’s existence have often treated thematically the position-taking involved in publishing. For example, Vicente Leñero’s *El garabato* (1967) is a novel within a novel in which a recognized novelist-character (Leñero) presents to an editor a manuscript by an unknown novelist, and this

40. Joaquín Díez-Canedo Flores, “Las razones de J. Díez-Canedo Flores,” *El Bicho*, 2 Jan. 1994, p. 2.

41. Personal interview with Aurora Díez-Canedo Flores, 11 July 1995, Mexico City.

manuscript tells the tale of an editor who reads and rejects a detective novel by an unknown novelist. Similarly, José Emilio Pacheco's "La fiesta brava" from *El principio del placer* (1972) recounts the writing and critique of a short story heavily influenced by the literary styles in vogue in the 1960s.⁴² In a slightly different vein, the metafictional experiments of these years can be read as self-conscious meditations about writing but also about the symbolic value of certain kinds of formalist experiments. Julieta Campos's novel *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* (1974) self-referentially debates the writing of a novel with the same title and also discusses the cultural hierarchy of writing styles and their relation to gender. Even more significant, all texts can be understood from this perspective: the seemingly subjective choices made about aesthetic characteristics in creating a text also represent objective positions in the range of aesthetic possibilities and the struggle for cultural authority.

Second, considerations of the contested corpus called "the canon" often fail to take into full account previous processes of cultural selection that have already occurred outside the academy. Thus the study of publishing houses as cultural institutions can provide a broader basis for understanding why and how certain "texts" become important works of "literature." A canon is only the tip of an iceberg. Beneath it lies a social world of differentiated groups that compete and reconfigure networks. The strategies for attaining prestige analyzed in this study suggest that such groupings radically affect and determine selection processes, functioning as a sorting mechanism that remains hidden from view as long as literary studies focus only on the close reading of published texts. This study also confirms López González's hypothesis that from the 1940s into the 1970s, Mexican cultural elites played fundamental roles in shaping cultural production. But starting in the 1980s, market forces began to exert a stronger role and groups were less able to achieve hegemony in any particular discourse. At the same time, public culture became more fragmented, entropic, and multifarious (1993, 682–84). Future research on Mexican literature needs to situate this market competitiveness within the changing intellectual networks that have struggled to exert power through public discourse since the mid-1970s. After Julio Scherer García was ousted as editor of the newspaper *Excelsior* in 1976, the community of reporters, journalists, and writers underwent a series of reconfigurations. Over the following decade, new groupings and divisions gave rise to bitterly competitive alliances in magazines like *Proceso*, *Vuelta*, and *Nexos* and in the newspapers *Unomásuno* and *La Jornada*. The situation resulting

42. The first study to explore Bourdieu's notion of the field of cultural production in order to map out the social space of Mexican narrative was López González (1993), which emphasized the 1970s and 1980s but also attended to important changes in the 1960s. This article includes an extensive list of texts that thematically address actors and institutions in the cultural sphere (López González 1993, 662, n. 4).

in the 1990s may be in part the fulfillment of rumors surrounding the Boom in the 1960s asserting that it was primarily the result of aggressive commercialization, marketing, and publicity by publishing houses.

Hand in glove with questions about the canon and the selection processes that underlie it is a third implication: the possibility of another way of writing histories of the Mexican novel. Rather than following changes in narrative trends, one can establish histories of numerous publishing houses that promoted certain kinds of literature and at various moments achieved qualified and temporary degrees of cultural hegemony. For example, the emergence of Ediciones Botas after the Mexican Revolution needs to be analyzed in terms of the origins of the category known as “the novel of the Mexican Revolution.” Similarly, Colección Los Presentes and the publishing activity of the 1950s were intimately related to the growth of a cosmopolitan Mexican literature. More recently, Era emerged as the main promoter of the testimonial novel in Mexico since the early 1970s, while Cal y Arena and Planeta competed for the best-sellers associated with “literatura light” in the 1980s. Yet it must be emphasized that attention to the history of publishing cannot replace close reading and textual analysis. Rather, such histories offer the possibility of situating literary texts thoroughly in the social world by relating textual trends to institutions and to competing positions in a contested field of cultural production.

The fourth and final implication is a more general formulation of the principle underlying the study of publishing as an alternative approach for writing literary history. My history of Joaquín Mortiz and its strategies for creating cultural prestige has attempted to take to an extreme the implications of what Edward Said has called “the worldliness of texts”: “The point is that texts have ways of existing that even in their most rarefied forms are always enmeshed in circumstance, time, place, and society—in short, they are in the world, and hence worldly” (Said 1983, 35). Said emphasized this worldliness as a point of departure for interpreting textual representations and their manner of existing and circulating in society. I have attempted to carry this approach a step further by tracing the connection between such representations and the factors affecting their material existence and circulation as commodities within a market of cultural goods. For Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, the strategies of affiliation, visibility, and distinction were parts of processes that converted economic capital into symbolic capital (in the form of the company’s catalog of titles), provided short-term and long-term returns in economic capital (from sales), and increased the long-term accumulation of symbolic capital through the growing prestige of the publisher’s name. In sum, the study of publishing houses can help break the impasse of analytical models that place texts and commerce on incommensurate levels of existence by identifying points of articulation where economic and symbolic capital are converted from one to another via specific strategies.

APPENDIX 1

Best-Sellers in Mexico in the Long Run: Editions and Printings from Date of Publication through 1976

Initial printings of new narrative titles usually range from 3,000 to 5,000 copies. Despite frequent complaints about these small *tirajes*, longer-term figures provide a more solid sense of commercial success for elite literature. The fiction titles listed below have been literary successes in terms of their recognized symbolic capital in Mexican literature (their consecration by academics, critics, and other writers), and most have proved to be best-sellers over the long run that provided a slow but reliable reconversion into economic capital. In contrast, the studies and essays listed below fall within the realm of high cultural legitimacy, appeal to current interests, and yet yield a more immediate return on the publisher's economic investment.

Author	Title	Year First Published	Printings	Copies
Fiction				
Rosario Castellanos ^a	<i>Oficio de tinieblas</i>	1962	4	13,500
Elena Garro ^a	<i>Los recuerdos del porvenir</i>	1963 ^b	1	4,000
Juan José Arreola	<i>La feria</i>	1963 ^b	8	34,400
Carlos Fuentes	<i>Cantar de ciegos</i>	1964	9	45,150
Salvador Elizondo	<i>Farabeuf</i>	1965 ^b	4	12,250
Gustavo Sainz	<i>Gazapo</i>	1965	8	25,400
José Agustín	<i>De perfil</i>	1966 ^b	6	26,600
José Emilio Pacheco	<i>Morirás lejos</i>	1967 ^b	1	4,200
Studies and Essays				
Miguel León Portilla	<i>El reverso de la conquista</i>	1964	4	26,000
Herbert Marcuse	<i>Eros y civilización</i>	1965	5	19,500
Oscar Lewis	<i>Los hijos de Sánchez</i>	1965 ^c	14	118,600
Herbert Marcuse	<i>El hombre unidimensional</i>	1968	7	35,100
Daniel Cosío Villegas	<i>El sistema político mexicano</i>	1972	9	60,000
Daniel Cosío Villegas	<i>El estilo personal de gobernar</i>	1974	8	88,000

Sources: Joaquín Mortiz annual reports, "Relación de obras publicadas," 1963–1991; "Títulos publicados por Colección"; lists of author, title, and number of copies for first two series of "Lecturas Mexicanas" (Eugenio Aguirre); Joaquín Mortiz balance sheet for payments received in 1985–1986 for "Lecturas Mexicanas, Segunda Serie."

^a In the 1980s, increased attention to women writers led to greater interest in Rosario Castellanos and Elena Garro. By the end of 1991, *Oficio de tinieblas* had been reprinted sixteen times for a total of 29,150 copies since 1962; *Los recuerdos del porvenir* had seen twelve printings with 18,000 copies since 1963, in addition to the 40,000 in *Lecturas Mexicanas*, adding up to 58,000 copies.

^b Titles later reprinted and “consecrated” in 1985–1986 in the second series of “Lecturas Mexicanas,” coordinated by Eugenio Aguirre for the Secretaría de Educación Pública. Large printings of 30,000 or 40,000 copies at economical prices stimulated mass circulation of “high” culture.

^c Third edition.

APPENDIX 2

Number of Mexican Novels Published from 1962 to 1976 by the Fondo de Cultura Económica, Era, and Joaquín Mortiz

Year	Joaquín Mortiz	(% of total)	FCE	Era	Others ^a	Total
1962	2	(6%)	2	1	28	33
1963	3	(9%)	2	1	28	34
1964	6	(16%)	2	0	30	38
1965	9	(25%)	2	1	24	36
1966	5	(15%)	1	0	27	33
1967	7	(17%)	2	0	33	42
1968	3	(13%)	1	0	20	24
1969	6	(23%)	2	3	15	26
1970	8	(31%)	0	1	17	26
1971	6	(35%)	1	2	8	17
1972	5	(42%)	1	1	5	12
1973	10	(71%)	0	0	4	14
1974	5	(56%)	0	0	4	9
1975	8	(47%)	2	0	7	17
1976	6	(27%)	0	0	16	22

Sources: The totals provided here are based on the publications listed in Brushwood (1973, 1985) and in the bibliography by Carballo (1988). All three works focus on novels of Mexican “high” culture and therefore reflect a selection process. Thus the totals do not include all Mexican novels published across a variety of popular, mass, consumer, or middlebrow categories.

^a This category includes Siglo Veintiuno, Universidad Veracruzana, Editorial Libro-Mex, Seix-Barral, Novaro, Diógenes, Jus, Diana, Grijalbo, and many other small publishers. Although it is not evident in this table, Costa-Amic was a strong competitor in new titles from 1962 to 1968. Its activity diminished from 1969 to 1972, and the house became inactive until 1976.

APPENDIX 3

Growth of Major Narrative Lines in Joaquín Mortiz, 1962–1976

Year	Novelistas Contemporáneos	Serie del Volador	Nueva Narrativa Hispánica	Total
1962	3	0	0	3
1963	6	3	0	9
1964	3	10	0	13
1965	4	13	0	17
1966	9	12	0	21
1967	1	15	0	16
1968	1	10	4	15
1969	3	9	4	16
1970	1	14	8	23
1971	0	7	4	11
1972	2	5	7	14
1973	4	7	6	17
1974	1	6	4	11
1975	1	8	4	13
1976	1	5	11	17
Total	40	124	52	216

Note: Whereas appendix 2 covers only Mexican novels, the series *Novelistas Contemporáneos* and *Nueva Narrativa Hispánica* include works by international authors. Also, although novels and Mexican authors predominate in the *Serie del Volador*, it also contains translations, works by international authors, essays, poetry, dramas, and short story collections. By the end of 1976, Joaquín Mortiz had published 390 titles in sixteen different collections. Over half of these titles (55 percent) appeared in the three major lines emphasizing narrative, which gave the company its greatest and most visible symbolic capital.

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