

**Montevideo Crisscrossed. Two Novels by Mario Benedetti:  
*The Truce and Thanks for the Fire***

Pedro Serrano<sup>1</sup>

This essay is a rereading of two novels by Mario Benedetti published first in Montevideo in the 1960's and subsequently in Mexico around the 1970's, receiving changing receptions over the years. Both have Montevideo as their setting, but the topographical perspectives and writing strategies are different. It traces the networks of writers, publishers and readers in Latin America developed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and their obliteration by the military regimes in the 1970's. Reviewing the fluctuating moods in Benedetti's later reception, this essay compares opposite sets of aesthetic values developed during the second half of the last century, which are taken for granted even today, studying their initial hypotheses and showing how literary works are distorted by prejudiced sets of critical perspectives that pigeonhole works and authors in boxes established in advance. [Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: [journal@transformativestudies.org](mailto:journal@transformativestudies.org) Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2021 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]

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<sup>1</sup> **Pedro Serrano** (born 1957, Montreal, Canada) is a Mexican poet, essayist, editor and professor. He has published several collections of poems: *El miedo* (*Fear*, 1986), *Ignorancia* (*Ignorance*, 1994), *Tres poemas* (*Three poems*, 2000), *Turba* (*Peat*, 2005), *Desplazamientos* (*Displacements*, 2007), *Nueces* (2009). His critical study on modern poetry, entitled *La construcción del poeta moderno. T.S. Eliot y Octavio Paz*, appeared in 2011. He has co-edited and co-translated the groundbreaking anthology *The Lamb Generation* (2000) which brought together texts of 30 contemporary British poets. His libretto for the opera *Marimbas de l'Exile / El Norte en Veracruz* was first staged in Besançon, France, in January 2000, then traveled to Paris and Mexico. He has also translated Shakespeare's *King John* into Spanish. Many of his poems have been translated into English and have been published in *Modern Poetry in Translation*, *Verse*, *Sirena*, *The Rialto*, *The Red Wheelbarrow* and *Nimrod International Journal*. He has been also included in the anthologies *Reversible Monuments* (2002) and *Connecting Lines* (2006). He was awarded a Guggenheim Poetry Fellowship in 2007 and he won the Prize Antonio Viccaro given by French Language Publishers in 2016. He directed the Banff International Literary Translation Centre from 2016 to 2019 and *Peatland*, translated by Anna Crowe, was published in Britain by ARC Publications in 2013. He teaches Contemporary literature in the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in Mexico City. He has been editor of UNAM's highly-regarded poetry website *Periódico de Poesía*. Address correspondence to: Pedro Serrano, e-mail: [pedrosco@gmail.com](mailto:pedrosco@gmail.com).