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Image of the Anonymous Detective:

Eduardo Mendoza's Breaking and Construction

From a cultural perspective, naming changes the naturalness of human beings and has a role in shaping characters. In the traditional impression, most of the protagonists of the story have a distinctive name “as a necessary representative symbol of a group or individual in social interaction.” Eduardo Mendoza, an outstanding Spanish writer of the generation of ‘68, has carried out bold literary experiments on his popular fictions. From 1978 to 2015, he has successively published 5 novels in the anonymous detective series (*El misterio de la cripta embrujada*, *El laberinto de las aceitunas*, *La aventura del tocador de señoras*, *El enredo de la bolsa y la vida*, *El secreto de la modelo extraviada*), in which contradicting the normality of detective novels, he banteringly creates an atypical detective image – a psychopath without name. This article will focus on the discussion from two perspectives of narrative techniques and satirical connotation, analyzing the “breaking” and the “construction” of Mendoza's literary expression through the anonymous detective, with the introduction of related concepts of semiotics, meta – narrative, etc. The “breaking”: The symbolic role of the identity on a name has been broken. Readers’ scrutiny of this character no longer bases on the traditional cognition and prejudice of the detective group, designed by the authoritative discourse system from the American detective fictions; Furthermore, the weakening of identity brought about by the nameless and vague image also makes the background of the times and social contradictions in the story relatively prominent and better discussed. The “construction”: On the one hand, he develops a kind of new detective fiction with national characteristics during the Spanish transition period. Borrowing parody techniques, the exaggeration and self – deprecating presented by the funny anonymous lunatic detective gets the similar inner souls of Don Quixote and of the classic images in Spanish traditional vagrant literature; On the other hand, the uncertainty implied by anonymity increases the space for reader's imagination and reflection, meanwhile, compared to each of us outsiders, which is being trapped by names, identities and various orders, the author also expresses profound thinking and satire through the image of the anonymous lunatic detective. In those ways, Mendoza has succeeded in constructing his own unique discourse system of the detective fiction.