This chapter discusses three novels of the so-called Mexican gay literature from the 1960s through the 1980s: *Después de todo* (1969) [After All] by José Ceballos Maldonado, *El vampiro de la colonia Roma* (1979) [The Vampire of Roma Neighborhood] by Luis Zapata and *Púberes canéforas* (1983) [Adolescent Canephors] by José Joaquín Blanco, as well as *Amor Chacal* (2000) by Juan Carlos Bautista and Víctor Jaramillo, a tourist-ethnographic documentary on coastal homoeroticism. This chapter focuses on the characterization of the “mayate,” a character whose resistance to identifying himself as homosexual, despite his homoerotic practices, challenges the concept of identity and therefore constitutes a relevant object of queer analysis.

### Wishing to Be Desired: Ceballos Maldonado

In the novel *Después de todo* [After All] by José Ceballos Maldonado (1969), the protagonist Javier Lavalle, a mature homosexual man, tries to fill the emptiness of his boredom, unemployment, and solitude by writing his memoirs in a modest room he rents in the Colonia Roma, a middle-class neighborhood in Mexico City. From this setting he imagines his past in Guanajuato, where he spent his youth. His story unfolds as a constant tension between the invisibility and the exposure of his sexual relationships with other men. Lavalle talks about his seductive strategies such as furtive adventures, always under the threat of discovery. The most outstanding actions in his remembrances—to hide, to
denounce, to watch over, to expose, to blackmail, to simulate, and to dissimulate—refer to his meticulous escape from the social gaze. Lavalle develops two daring skills: to seduce men who do not consider themselves homosexuals and to hide from the gaze of those who could condemn him. Lavalle’s power can destabilize both the norm that prohibits homoeroticism and the masculine hegemony that presumes itself impenetrable by seduction. He seduces what is considered unseducible, turning upside down the patriarchal rules. Lavalle learns that he can achieve this destabilization by cultivating the art of secrecy. He confirms Annick Prieur’s insight that Mexican society tolerates homoerotic encounters, provided they stay invisible, in a homosocial masculine context, and perfectly dissimulated with euphemisms and absolute discretion (188–189).

Critics of this novel have emphasized the self-affirmation of the homosexual middle-class man. The protagonist-narrator characterizes himself as a homosexual, throughout an episodic chain of sexual encounters with men who are ostensibly heterosexual. Lavalle goes back to his childhood to remember his relationships with pederast priests, classmates, and his assistants in the school laboratory where he used to work. According to Mario Muñoz, Javier Lavalle “en el decurso de los acontecimientos evocados va asumiendo sin ninguna culpabilidad su condición homosexual pese a los desagradables contratiempos que esta forma de conciencia le acarrea” (15) [in the development of the remembered events assumes his homosexual condition without guilt, even though this consciousness brings unpleasant setbacks]. Luis Mario Schneider, on his part, observes that Ceballos Maldonado “descubre los mecanismos del cinismo como única posibilidad de autoafirmación para salvarse de los prejuicios que una sociedad intolerante exige a la marginación homosexual” (75) [discovering the mechanisms of cynicism as the only form of self-affirmation to liberate oneself from prejudices that an intolerant society demands from the homosexual marginality]. The self-affirmation Schneider refers to results from associating guilt with seduction, a combination whose roots we can find in the hypermasculine myth of Don Juan, where seduction challenges the role of guilt in the moral system of the Catholic Church. Seduction focuses on