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**The Myth of Camila O'Gorman in the Works of Juana Manuela
Gorriti, María Luisa Bemberg and Enrique Molina**

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by

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Dedication

A Patricia, inestimable amiga.

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The Myth of Camila O'Gorman in the Works of Juana Manuela Gorriti, María Luisa Bemberg, and Enrique Molina

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Camila O'Gorman, a transgressive aristocratic woman who proudly defied the values of Family, Church, and Society in nineteenth-century Argentina, was executed beside her lover, the priest Ladislau Gutiérrez. Since her execution by dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas, her life and death represent a myth of rebellion and repression in the Argentine imagination, inspiring many works of literature and film.

This dissertation studies three major works inspired by her life: the short story "Camila O'Gorman" (1876) by Juana Manuela Gorriti, the film Camila (1984) by María Luisa Bemberg, and the novel Una sombra donde sueña Camila O'Gorman (1973) by Enrique Molina. It proposes that each author shaped the images of the female protagonist by imprinting on the character of Camila the authors' personal reaction to the political climate in which they lived. Roland Barthes's Mythologies marks the main theoretical frame and distinctive theories on nationalism, narrative, film and genre are also applied.

Chapter One situates the political climate of Camila's contemporary life. It studies the mythologies created to support and undermine Rosas' power. Moreover, it gives an account of three women who actively participated in politics: Mariquita Sánchez, Encarnación Ezcurra, and Manuela de Rosas.

Chapter Two studies Gorriti as a nation builder. Her story "Camila O'Gorman" reinforces the ideals of a liberal progressive nation. By portraying Camila as a negative symbol, Gorriti adheres to the conservative view on women.

Chapter Three inserts the life and work of Bemberg into the development of politics in Argentina. The film Camila addresses the parallel violence of the military regime in the 1980's. The character of Camila is portrayed as a defiant daughter, complying with the feminist views of the eighties.

Chapter Four addresses Molina's Surrealist ideals, which determined his poetic analysis of Argentine history, foreshadowing the Proceso dictatorship. In his novel, Camila is represented as a Surrealist muse, who seeks liberty, love and poetry.

The historical analogies recovered by the authors lead one to conclude that mythologies of Camila O'Gorman reappear in Argentina in times of political change and debate the rank of women in society.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION: THE MYTH OF CAMILA O'GORMAN	01
1. Rosismo: Stigma of Power on Argentine History.....	09
1.1. In the Name of Power	12
1.2. Naming Power: Civilization vs. Barbarism.....	21
1.3. Enshrinment of Power.....	26
1.4. Empowered Women.....	32
2. Juana Manuela Gorriti: Nation Builder.....	53
2.1. Nebulous Style.....	55
2.2. "La Encubierta".....	67
2.3. Women Transgressors.....	77
3. María Luisa Bemberg: Visual Storyteller.....	83
3.1. Being a Bemberg in Argentina.....	86
3.2. Visual Storyteller.....	94
3.3. "Ain't She Sweet".....	107
3.4. Camila: a Love Story in Times of Repression.....	117
3.4.1. Setting the Stage.....	120
3.4.2. Symbolic Orchestration.....	124
3.5. Final Stances.....	135
4. Enrique Molina: "Poeta de la Intemperie".....	137
4.1. Word / World in Sensual Movement.....	141
4.2. "Change the World;" "Transform Life".....	145
4.3. The Shades of Discourse.....	148
4.4. Woman: Desire in Movement.....	165
4.5. Camila and Mélusine.....	169

Conclusion: The Mythologists.....	174
Works Cited	177
Vita.....	188

Introduction: The Myth of Camila O'Gorman

Camila Ogorman hija de D Adolfo Ogorman y de Da. Joaquina Gimenez –
Natural de Buenos Ayres – Edad 21 años – Estado soltera –Domicilio:
Buenos Ayres – sabe leer y escribir en prueba de ello firma a continuación
– Color blanco rosado – Pelo castaño – Es sana . . .

Preguntada por la causa de su prisión dijo que por haberse evadido de casa
de sus padres en compañía de D Uladislao Gutierrez con objeto de
contraer matrimonio con él, por cuanto estaba en la presunción de que no
hera presbítero, y que no pudiendo dar este una satisfacción a la sociedad
de Buenos Ayres, lo indujo a salir del País para que se efectuara lo más
pronto posible estando uno y otro satisfechos a los ojos de la Providencia
– Que si este suceso se considera un crimen lo es ella en su mayor grado
por haber hecho dobles exigencias para la fuga pero que ella no lo
considera delito por estar su conciencia tranquila.

Classification of Camila O'Gorman by the Justice of
Peace Felipe Botet, in August, 1848 (reprinted in Una sombra 314)

The great paradox of personal liberty and absolute political power that plagues all dictatorships has an extreme example in the Argentina of the nineteenth-century. Camila O'Gorman (1828-1848), the genteel daughter of Adolfo O'Gorman, along with Ladislao Gutiérrez, the head-priest of the parish of Socorro of Buenos Aires, had her fate sealed by a society submersed in civil wars. The Restaurador de las leyes, Juan Manuel de Rosas decreed Camila and Ladislao's death sentence for having eloped to live out their passion as man and wife "in the eyes of Providence." The love story of the young aristocratic woman and the priest immediately became a political target in the press, the motif of

gauchesque poetry, and since then it has been immortalized in literature and film as a myth of rebellion and repression.

This dissertation seeks to contribute to a new perspective on the representation of the national martyr Camila O'Gorman, a transgressive woman who proudly defied the values of Family, Church and Society. It studies the three major works inspired by her tragic life: the short story by Juana Manuela Gorriti "Camila O'Gorman" (Panoramas de la vida 1876); the film Camila (1984) by María Luisa Bemberg and the novel Una sombra donde sueña Camila O'Gorman (1973) by Enrique Molina. It proposes that the authors shaped the images of the female protagonist by supporting their personal world-view and by imprinting on the character of Camila their personal reaction to the political climate in which they lived and produced their work. The intent of this dissertation is to analyze the relationship between the country's historical moment in which the works were published or released and the authors' point of view. These two aspects, history and authorship, determine the image created of Camila O'Gorman, who has become a mythical character.

The three works analyzed here belong to historical turning points in Argentine history. In 1876, Gorriti lived in her motherland in an environment of progress. Her story "Camila O'Gorman," along with the stories of Panoramas de la vida, reinforces the ideals of a liberal progressive nation, which affirms itself in the contrast of the darkness of the Rosismo era. In turn, the political atmosphere of the early nineteen seventies resembles the atrocities of the nineteenth-century fratricidal wars, which culminated in the Proceso dictatorship of 1976, marking Molina's poetic analysis of Una sombra. In addition, the film Camila, performed vividly in the red color of passion and blood, also

addresses the parallel violence of the nineteen eighties, when thousands of individual lives and their passions were "disappearing" without trial under the military regime. These historical analogies recovered by the authors lead one to conclude that the mythologies of Camila O'Gorman reappear in Argentina first and foremost in times of repressive politics, and secondarily to debate the position of women in society.

Given the importance of the foundational period of the nation during the first half of the nineteenth century, an introduction to the period known as Rosismo is developed in the first chapter. It first explains Rosas's power according to historians and points out that Rosas achieves population control by extending political ideology into religion. Then, it compares the two exponents of ideological politics: Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, through his journalism and book Facundo: civilización y barbarie. Vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga (1845), and the dictator Rosas, who managed the country by force, by written decrees and through his influence in the periodical Gaceta Mercantil. Promoting the violence of the time, journalism, gauchesque poetry and romantic novels were effective vehicles to arouse people pro and against the regime. Next, it illustrates how a display of semiotic symbols carries out the ideological establishment of the dictator's power. In the details of ordinary life, such as the requirement of headlines in public and private correspondence, the extended use of red color and formal salutations predisposed ordinary people to take political sides and exercise control over citizens. At the same time, resorting to revisionist historians from the 1940's, it calls into attention their own appropriation of the historical past in order to explain their present. Finally, in order to situate women's place in Argentine society and the character of Camila in her own surroundings, this first chapter studies the lives of empowered women of the

nineteenth-century. This final analysis is also meant to illustrate the use of female protagonists in literature as a means to reinforce the negative aspects of their male antagonists, as it is the character of Manuela de Rosas vis-à-vis her father in José Mármol's novel Amalia (1851).

The following three chapters analyze each work separately, given the distinctive genre and the unique motivation of the authors in building a new mythology on Camila. First, the chapters present aspects of biography and oeuvre pertinent to the discussion of authorship. Gorriti's writings and life are deeply linked to the development of the modern Argentine nation. Even though her own life is extremely transgressive for her time, the point of view conveyed in her stories is one of liberal politics and conservative social rules for women. The personal background of the filmmaker Bemberg is very influential in her oeuvre, establishing a sound scrutiny of the society of her time and the place women occupied in it. In Camila, Bemberg portrays an image of Camila as a liberated woman in the development of the narrative; however, during the final scenes the protagonist succumbs, which reinforces the director's view that women are not yet fully emancipated. In contrast, the poet Enrique Molina develops the character of Camila as a strong woman in quest of her own liberty, while he uncovers the propensity to sanguinary governments in Argentina's history. Unlike Gorriti and Bemberg, Molina did not belong to a family of the shapers of the nation. Moreover, his life and oeuvre are in perfect consonance to the surrealist ideals of personal liberty embedded in a liberal society.

1. Mythologies and History

In the preface of the first edition of Mythologies, 1957-1970, Roland Barthes stated the guiding principle of his research: "[I] resented seeing Nature and History confused at every turn and I wanted to track down, in the decorative display of *what-goes-without-saying* the ideological abuse which, in my view, is hidden there" (11). Barthes' Mythologies (1970) provides the main theoretical frame of this dissertation. For him, "a myth ripens because it spreads" (149). Literature and culture followed history and explained it by forging new myths or rescuing myths from the past in order to picture the present. National myths, symbols and legends have the duplicity of a Janus face, opening and closing doors in order to organize the chaos of a society in a given moment. That is why returning myths are invested with different significations in different eras. The brutal story of Camila O'Gorman becomes an efficient myth in a society where governmental violence is recurrent. The myth of Camila O'Gorman in the imagination of Argentina mostly represents "las virtudes de la pasión, las virtudes de la locura, el honor del amor . . . [en] una sociedad donde imperan a la vez el odio y las virtudes domésticas" (Una sombra 7). Therefore, for over a century, the story of the executed woman is being repeated, transformed and recreated to convey adhesion or aversion toward a repressive political system:

Myth deprives the object of which it speaks of all History. In it, History evaporates. It is a kind of ideal servant: it prepares all things, brings them, lays them out, the master arrives, it silently disappears: all that is left for one to do is to enjoy this beautiful object without wondering where it comes from. (151)

The real Camila evaporates, and in her place we can hear the "celestial voice" and see the "black domino" of Gorriti's tale. We can also give Camila the face of Susu Pecoraro's representation in Bemberg's film as a defiant daughter and subjugated lover. In reverie, we imagine her voluptuous body scattered through the pages of Una sombra while she becomes the incarnation of surrealist ideals. All of these accounts take the historical fact of Camila's biography, her execution, as a "servant," making of it a signifier by reshaping her life in a cultural/ideological myth.¹ The authors, or "masters," have their own purpose in appropriating the signification of the historical fact, transforming it into the signifier of a new myth that speaks for passion and madness in a society marked by violence. But the new myth of Camila also echoes the admonitions of Gorriti concerning women's behavior. It is the accomplished melodrama created by Bemberg. Without weakening the autonomy of the poet's surrealist muse, Molina's novel foreshadows the horrors that were to come in Argentina.

2. Mythologies and Authorship

The life experience and the ideology of the author also add significations to the text produced. Therefore, in this dissertation, the author is not dead, but a conscious being who forges an intentional work which is determined by history. Even though the above statement deviates from Barthes' revolutionary article "The Death of the Author" (1977), it does not deny the inherent multiplicity of any text, which is recreated by each

¹ "...culture itself is, in the last analysis, an ideology" Mythologies 81.

new reading,² as Barthes also reveals throughout his oeuvre and mainly in S/Z (1974). In fact, Barthes concludes that the mythologist's task, as ambiguous as it is, is to "unveil" the multilayered text (Mythologies 156).

The controversial topic of authorship in critical theory is researched by Séan Burke in several publications. In the introduction of Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern (1995), Burke affirms that,

Were it possible, in Barthes's famous phrase 'the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author', to take 'reader' as a synecdoche for 'public' and 'author' for 'interiority', then the movement against the author would gain greater coherence in cultural and political terms as well as a clearer sense of historical mission. (xix)

Re-reading Barthes's 'movement against the author,' Burke summarizes the six intersections of author and text: intention, author-ity, biography, accountability, oeuvre and autobiography. The concept of "intention" on its own generated a myriad of discussions (Wimsatt and Beardsley, Hirsch, the New Critics and the Prague School). This dissertation shows that each author's primary "intention" of recovering the myth of Camila O'Gorman is undeniably historical and political. "Holding writers to political account for what they have written is doubtless regrettable in many cases and problematic in all, but remains an inescapable consequence of discourse's inscription within the social" (Burke 220). However, the fact that a work may be the reflection of a personal

² Wolfgang Iser teaches that a literary work has two poles, the artistic one, which is the text created by the author, and the aesthetic pole, accomplished by the reader. He states that "no literary work is complete, all have gaps which have to be filled in by the reader, and all readers and readings will fill these in differently" (Wolfgang Iser "The Reading Process: a Phenomenological Approach" 1974, 274-280).

drive or the fruit of historical conditions of which the author is a product does not limit the texts' performance. The plurality of criticism attests to the multiple significance of a work of art and considerations on authorship do not limit the spectrum of interpretation but enlarge it by placing the contribution of any artistic form on the thought of an era.

The historical contextualization of Camila O'Gorman is treated mainly in the first chapter of the dissertation, while the historical period that influenced each author is present at the different chapters. Other theoretical approaches are also significant. For instance, Norman Fairclough's insights on the relationship of language and power are used to explain las tretas of Juana Manuela Gorriti, while Tzvetan Todorov's theory of the symbol elucidates the short-story's images. A major trait of María Luisa Bemberg's film is its attention to *mise-en-scène* and color, requiring the study of the semiotics on film in addition to the feminist film theory, mainly through the works of Julia Kristeva and Teresa De Lauretis. Enrique Molina's novel is a rich text encompassing all forms of discourse, calling for the approach of Mikhail Bakhtin and the surrealist theoretical canon.

1: Rosismo: Stigma of Power on Argentine History

*¿Cuál es el resultado de esto?
Que el pueblo no eche de menos el orden y la tranquilidad
y en esta perpetua orgía se entretenga, ¡mientras él reina!*
Juana Manso

"A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle," said Ernest Renan in his 1882 lecture "What is a Nation?" In order to hold together its "soul," national narrations and iconography stimulate, if not formulate, the people's desire to preserve and fight for a common territory. Today this is common and accepted knowledge, especially after Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities (1983). Many scholars have devoted their research to the foundational narratives of a region. For instance, in the case of Latin America, Doris Sommer's work Foundational Fictions (1991) explores the arguments of love stories in relationship to state representations in national novels. With regard to Argentina, with The Invention of Argentina (1990) Nicolas Shumway expresses the need to study the period of national formation and its literature in order to understand more recent historical periods. Francine Masiello's Between Civilization and Barbarism (1992), a key study exploring the official literature of Argentina's foundational period, reveals women writer's active participation in shaping the nation politically and culturally. All studies devoted to investigate the imagery of Argentina refer to the time period of 1829 to 1852, known as Rosismo.

While using the support of these and other scholarly and literary texts, I directly resort to Argentine historians in order to delineate the political environment of Rosismo which determines Camila O'Gorman's fate and the role her life plays in history. The

following authors were contemporary to the period of Rosismo and/or its aftermath. José Rivera Indarte (1814-1845) was a direct player in the political propaganda at the time and his participation is discussed in this chapter. Lucio Mansilla (1831-1913), the author of Una excursión a los indios Ranqueles (1870) is also the author of Rozas, ensayo histórico psicológico, "un libro de buena fé," as the author clarifies his intention in the prologue of his uncle's biography. José María Ramos Mejía (1849-1914) gives a comprehensive social picture of the time in Rozas y su tiempo. The Historia de la Confederación Argentina is also a major reference for a detailed study of the period. Its author, Adolfo Saldías (1850-1914) was the depositary of the personal archive of the Rosas's family, given to him by Manuela de Rosas. Other authors, such as Carlos Ibarguren, Pilar de Lusarreta and E. F. Sánchez Zinny, are integrants of the historical revisionist tendency. Their cited works were published around the 1940's, when nationalist intellectuals sought to impact public opinion. In choosing these authors, I stress their own construction of mythologies in resorting to the lives of Manuela de Rosas and Camila O'Gorman in order to make a clear reference to their own historical moment and ideology.

The government of Juan Manuel de Rosas is the foundational period of nationhood by becoming its "spiritual principle." First, it was the period which followed the struggle for independence and the geographical division of the region. For some historians, the government of Rosas was a key instrument in unifying the country and putting an end to civil war; and yet for others, through its violence in repressing the civil war, Rosas delayed the development of the nation and extended the politics of the colonial system.

In retrospect, the colonial past created firm traditions and scattered centers of power in the southern region distant from the main colonial government of Lima. After 1810, the year of independence, the vast territory, which once comprised Pizarro's vice-royalty, was then an amorphous political entity struggling to delineate its frontiers according to the interest of its Creole inhabitants, the landowners. What was once the Provincias del Rio de la Plata eventually became Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina. From colonial times the importance of the River Plate was established: this fluvial system became the gateway of Southern Spanish America to Europe. Therefore, by its importance as a main port, Buenos Aires has always played a significant role in the social imagination and politics of Argentina. Being the major colonial port of the region during this period of delineating frontiers and establishing supremacies, Buenos Aires fought to maintain its hegemony.

Bolivia and Paraguay soon detached themselves from the River Plate Provinces as independent countries. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Uruguay, known as the Banda Oriental, struggled for its independence since 1815, when it was first proclaimed as such by General José Artigas. The Brazilian expansionism was also a menace to the independence of Uruguay and added to the Argentine political turmoil as well. In turn, Rosas sought to control Montevideo by backing the government of Manuel Oribe during the 1840's. Other foreign influences were the British and the French, who carried out a naval blockade to Buenos Aires for most part of the decade of the 1840s retaliating for Rosas's siege of Montevideo.

Within the territory which comprised Argentina, passionate disputes arose to determine the course of the nation's leadership and blueprint. The core of the dispute was

the centralization of power in Buenos Aires, whether to keep its port's hegemony or to open customs on the Paraná River to facilitate commerce to other ports in the estuary. The Unitarian Party fought for Buenos Aires's hegemonic power, alleging that fragmentation would weaken the country's progress. By contrast, the Federalist Party advocated for equal power among the provinces in order to equally develop the land without foreign intervention. Surrounding the port question, a web of interests developed, generating combat among the caudillos themselves and the porteños on both factions; they were known as the "fratricidal wars," which lasted throughout the first half of the nineteenth century until the fall of Rosas in the battle of Caseros on February 3, 1852. This date marks the beginning of national modernization by the Unitarian Liberal Project, which opened the country up to foreign investments and wide immigration from Europe, while the last indigenous tribes were defeated.

1.1. IN THE NAME OF POWER

The government of Rosas is the fruit of partisan tensions. It is not an easy task to understand the complexities of the partisan struggles of the period. Confusion starts by the fact that Rosas, a Federalist, who should have sought equal political powers for the provinces, in reality strengthened the powers of Buenos Aires (Shumway 120). In "La República Argentina 37 años después de su Revolución de Mayo," Juan Bautista Alberdi states:

Rivadavia proclamó la idea de la unidad; Rosas la ha realizado. . . . Los unitarios han perdido pero ha triunfado la unidad. Han vencido los federales; pero la

federación ha sucumbido. El hecho de que del seno de esta guerra de nombres ha salido formado el poder, sin el cual es irrealizable la sociedad, y la libertad misma imposible. (qtd. in Halperín 12)

In his novel Amalia (1851), José Mármol offers through the character of Rosas an explanation for the contradiction in naming power and establishes the success of Rosas's personal power in the Unitarians' fault: "Los unitarios . . . [t]ienen hombres de gran capacidad, tienen los mejores militares de la república, pero les falta un centro de acción común . . . Todos van a un mismo punto, pero todos marchan por distinto camino" (1:7 57-8). The narrator concludes that the Unitarian lack of organized action enables Rosas to practice solid, organized and single-handed power. However, the author does not grant the dictator with a strategy of his own. In their unorganized willingness to destroy the dictator, the Unitarians

le dieron [a Rosas] esa grandeza de poder y de medios que lo hicieron tan respetable a los ojos del mundo, y que él por sí solo no tuvo nunca, ni el talento, ni el valor de conquistarla. (1:7 58)

Mármol's passage above unfolds many literary and historical complexities. Rosas, in fact, was respected by the French and English governments for stabilizing the country's civil wars. On his deathbed in Europe, the hero of Independence José de San Martín bequeathed his sword to Rosas for pacifying the country. Mármol, a Unitarian, used his pen in a double fashion. The author recognized the mistaken course of action of his party facilitating the victory of their opponent Rosas. In this fashion, Mármol does not recognize any value in Rosas's victory or talent. In the novel, Rosas is depicted as a person incapable of talent, even while putting wise words in the character's mouth in a

devilish way. Mármol recognizes Rosas's sagacity and wickedness without granting him intelligence or talent. As Masiello states, in Amalia, "Rosas appears as a Dr. Frankenstein" (Between Civilization 29). To exacerbate the monstrosity of Rosas, Mármol creates a docile, innocent Manuela manipulated by her father; as will be discussed later in the chapter.

Sarmiento uses an episode of Facundo Quiroga's battle to give the origin of Rosas's power:

Facundo traía esa unidad que el terror y la obediencia a un caudillo que no es *causa*, sino *persona* y que, por tanto, aleja el libre albedrío y ahoga toda individualidad. Rosas ha triunfado de sus enemigos por esta *unidad* de hierro que hace de todos sus satélites instrumentos pasivos, ejecutores ciegos de su suprema voluntad. (Facundo 2:8 107)

The play of concepts and words so common in Sarmiento's writings is again shown in this passage. Facundo is Sarmiento's weapon against Rosas's government and the blueprint of the Argentina envisioned by the liberal politician. Sarmiento also puts himself a step above the dictator while recognizing Rosas's strength and sagacity, possessed of "absolute willpower." He points out that the terror and obedience inspired by a caudillo, Quiroga or Rosas, are inspired by a "personal" power, which is in detriment to a lasting "cause" for the nation. Because, in spite of being able to manipulate a large army, general Quiroga was murdered; then, la suprema voluntad of a caudillo was bound to be defeated. In this passage, the author alludes to the fact that a "unity" chosen by a "cause", not force, is capable of granting free will to individuals in the nation.

Similarly, in Manuelita de Rosas y Ezcurra (1942), Sánchez-Zinny repeats the same idea seen in Sarmiento and Alberdi. Sánchez-Zinny states that the total centralization of political power in the figure of Rosas happened after Facundo Quiroga's death. It was this concentration of power which permitted the unity of the country envisioned by Rivadavia, giving to the provinces a pretense of autonomy (167). The historians pro and against Rosas coincide on one point: all describe his government as a one-man leadership, considering the dictator either el hombre de América or el tirano sangriento. The extreme epithets convey well the heightening of passions at the time and the works of violence and political propaganda.

Like many other authors, Ramos Mejía traces the web of forces Rosas was able to advance and maintain for twenty-five years. The historian succeeds in demonstrating how the sentiments of hatred, terror and submission expand themselves among society favoring the dictator's aspiration of absolute power. The point of view enhanced by Ramos Mejía reinforces the thesis of this work. Mythologies of power are constructed on the sentiment of the people, by giving a new reading and direction to popular action. Therefore, in this section I will discuss the way the dictator manipulated all social classes by controlling the legislature, the church, the education and culture in general.

According to Ramos Mejía, until 1831 the political environment was not favorable to Rosas. There were citizens that would not comply with his regulations and declare themselves against the Federation (228). In order to identify and locate his enemies, Rosas introduced a method of knowing each citizen, their political inclination, property, "hasta el 'humor" y la conducta de los clasificados" (230). In a decree of March 14, 1831, transcribed in Ramos Mejía's work, Rosas demands,

Las clasificaciones de personas [unitarios y federales] que se relacionen debe hacerse con el pulso y el tino que corresponde, a fin de obtener por este medio un conocimiento exacto y para que sirva de reglas al Gobernador que firma en sus disposiciones sin necesidad de ocurrir a informes que no siempre son con la exactitud que se desea. No es preciso comprender en ellos los pobres, porque en general es bien conocida su opinión por la Santa causa de la Federación. Sólo deben ponerse los que tengan alguna propiedad porque éstos serán los que desempeñen cargos y comisiones si es necesario darles. Los otros están siempre dispuestos para lo que el Gobernador que firma quiera ordenarles. La de unitarios tendrá también las mismas distinciones según el formulario que se acompaña a este objeto . . . (230)

Such classifications were to be repeated from time to time, and each person needed a permit to relocate within the territory from the respective Justice of the Peace. These classifications would orient the dictator in allowing political persecution or rewarding politically the "good" Federalists. The above decree makes clear the submission of the lower classes to Rosas. Ramos Mejía says that the populace had a genuine admiration for Rosas, who promoted a certain social democracy (234). For the first time, the lower classes were free to express their cultural festivals. "A la más encopetada dama (y no podía excusar su presencia), brindábasele la vueltita federal con el mulatillo que la solicitara henchido del garbo habitual de su democrática insolencia" (238). They were also empowered as watchdogs of the households they served; many slaves acquired their freedom by reporting a "savage Unitarian."

By stirring the masses and having detailed information on the inhabitants, Rosas put in motion the terror machine that would level society. The Unitarians, and even some Federalists, left their fortunes and sometimes their families to continue their opposition from abroad.

Los que se quedan en Buenos Aires, sin condiciones de adaptación . . . buscan, en un mimetismo providencial, la salvación y la comodidad . . . el aparato de simulación es completo . . . Restaba, pues, un sedimento nada despreciable y peligroso . . . sobre el cual la vigilancia y el terror debían operar su indispensable eficacia. Por otra parte, el terror iba a ser también un medio disciplinario para las mismas voluntades federales. (Ramos Mejía 230-31)

Such control was made possible by the legislature which elected Rosas in 1829 with facultades extraordinarias to govern, and in 1835 granted the dictator with la Suma del Poder Público for unlimited time. In order to have the legislature and all government bodies at his disposition, Rosas replaced all members which could represent dissent for ones in blind agreement with the santa causa de la Federación. Ramos Mejía points out that this was the means by which Rosas exercised absolute control within an atmosphere of legality. "He aquí, pues, revelada con toda la elocuencia de su desnudez y franqueza, la manera cómo Rosas organizaba las legislaturas que le votaron después leyes de impuestos, honores, confiscaciones, regalos y controlaba todos sus actos políticos y administrativos" (228). The control which started by the regime of force developed naturally. Ramos Mejía states also that society in general was delighted by Rosas's authority to the point that high ranking military men would serve as Rosas's personal

guard at the rank of sergeant, in a "voluntario adiestramiento de la columna vertebral, que no ha pedido Rosas" (239).

The exercise of submission was reinforced by censorship. The decree of October 3, 1831, prohibits the sale of books and stamps contrary to religion and buenas costumbres with a retroactive effect, causing "grotesque" burning of works of literature and art (241). The political fanaticism was derived from a religious fanaticism in a people whose religious fervor could be compared to the Old Christians (240). Ramos Mejía argues that the people "se hallaba en *inminencia de idolatría*, estado mental que desemboca en el misticismo epidémico de las épocas de guerras religiosas y en las tiranías . . . el carácter . . . se dobla sin resistencia" (241). For these people naturally inclined to religion, the Unitarian reform of the Church represented a source of animosity that Rosas channeled to enhance his power. Ramos Mejía clarifies the interrelation between State, Church and citizens:

Confundidos en su espíritu sensible la religión y la Santa Federación, en un solo haz de fuerzas, el instinto de la vida hacía de ambas una forma de la protección y de la defensa común, al mismo tiempo que de sometimiento y de obediencia a quien las representaba y las defendía. (242)

Rosas nominated Mariano Medrano Bishop of Buenos Aires in 1829. By making the ecclesiastic body public servants, paid by the government, the dictator ensured that the population would be taught to respect the santa causa de la Federación. At the same time, the clergymen could not be opposed to his portrait being exposed to veneration in the churches during religious and patriotic festivities. The alliance with the Church served as well to reinforce the hatred and persecution of Unitarians. By decree, Rosas

regulated prayers and masses, and from the pulpit the priests would predicate against the masons, who were perceived by the people as Unitarians. Thus, persecution of the Unitarians became a religious duty, to the point that the politically indifferent could face excommunication from the Church (244).

Ramos Mejía states that the coalition State-Church was possible because Rosas supported "un clero adecuado a su fin" (245), from the lower classes, the ones who had "el puñal bajo la sotana y la mancebía tras el confesionario" (245). Those priests were rebellious since Rivadavia's Reform of the Church, which cut government expenditures for the Church and seized their land in most cases. Although Rivadavia sought support within the clergy for his educational projects, such as the foundation of the Universidad de Buenos Aires in 1821 and the study of natural sciences in religious schools, he was successful in drawing the hatred of most of the clergy, popular classes and conservative landowners. General Quiroga's motto "Religión o muerte" dates from that period.

Therefore, in reestablishing the interests of the Church, Rosas profited from the popular animosity against the ímpios unitarios. However, Rosas's relationship with the Church was problematic. For instance, the Jesuits were welcomed back in 1836 only to be expelled again in 1847. The succession of Bishop Medrano was a cause of conflict with the Vatican because Rosas did not accept the bishop nominated by the Pope, who did not consider the names appointed by the State. Another episode of contention was that in 1848 Rosas wanted to decrease the number of religious holidays due to a severe increase in criminality and the Senado del Clero did not consent the reduction.

After controlling the Church, the legislature and the population, Rosas completed the leveling of society by demanding that school teachers, students, physicians, and

members of the Sociedad Beneficente be declared Federalists, which resulted in the closing of schools and hospitals, and nearly dismantled all social services. At the university, the situation was the same according to Ramos Mejía: "El decreto del 27 de enero de 1836, Registro Oficial, p. 58, dispone: 'que a nadie se conferiría el grado de doctor en ninguna facultad, sin que previamente acreditase ante el gobierno la correspondiente declaratoria de haber sido y ser notoriamente adicto a la causa nacional de la federación'" (266).

In the name of an absolute power, Rosas manages to regulate society in all instances. These are the times when a woman in love, Camila O'Gorman, sees her private life engulfed by partisan politics. Raised in a traditional Federalist family, Camila rebelled against the repressive environment of her time and escaped with Ladislao (or Uladislao) Gutiérrez, the Jesuit priest in charge of the Church of Socorro, one of the main parishes of Buenos Aires. Even though the control exercised by Rosas and his police is said to be nearly flawless, the fact that the fugitive lovers could assume a false identity and establish themselves in Goya, province of Corrientes, may provide evidence of a corrupt system. The most debated issue in the case of Camila O'Gorman is Rosas's decision to execute both lovers. Exemplary deaths were not unusual during his government. Ladislao's execution may be understood by the political atmosphere between State and Church. The Church had not responded to his demand to reduce the religious festivities and he had recently expelled the Jesuits for defying his authority. These facts may be added to the many explanations of Rosas's action in applying the extreme penalty to the priest. In regard to the execution of the twenty-year-old Camila, it

had the same impact of horror on society as the assassination of the elder Maza, who was sacrificed because his son was a Unitarian, as the novel Amalia recounts it. Once more, Rosas was sacrificing an innocent member of the elite society to reinforce the idea of his absolute power over all inhabitants.

1.2. NAMING POWER: CIVILIZATION VS. BARBARISM

To understand the Rosismo period it is necessary to understand the reach of Romanticism upon the Unitarian intellectuals of the time. A movement born out of the political reformulation of the European states, it lends to the literature and politics of the then recent independent countries of Latin America the guidelines for the creation of a modern state, and for its literature. In "The national longing for form" Timothy Brennan explains the main concepts of "the Romantic insistence on the primordial and ineluctable roots of nationhood as a distinguishing feature from other communities. Each people was now set off by the *natural* characteristics of language, and the intangible quality of a specific Volkgeist" (53).

Brennan's explanation of the "distinguishing feature" of nationhood is based on the development of Rousseau's thought on "people." He also points out Bakhtin's theory, which places folk tradition as the prototypes of national novels. The folk tales of the indigenous societies and their closest heirs were the chosen theme for the emergent literature of Latin America as well. In Argentina, gauchesque poetry became the literary expression of the new nation. In relationship of European nationalism Brennan states that "[the] novel's rise accompanied a changing concept of 'realism' itself" (52). Many were

people reading novels at the same time about other lives similar and different to theirs. The novels "brought together the 'high' and the 'low' within a national framework – not fortuitously, but for specific national reasons" (52).

Throughout the nineteenth century in Argentina, just as in Europe, fiction was first published in periodicals and sought to educate people, like Mármol's Amalia. As pointed out by Sommer and many scholars, the romantic novels developed surrounding a main argument of a love story in which the women are the holders of ideals of liberty through education and civilization. However, a woman's education should be circumscribed to their private life, sufficient to raise liberal citizens. The main point of conflict in the argument of those fictional works was to politically portray and combat the barbarism of the Rosas's era. Another function was to lay out the structure and principles that would organize the nation-state.

On the other hand, without writing fictional works per se, no other like Sarmiento understood that the connection between the printed word and the public's opinion is not accidental. Sarmiento mastered journalistic writing and the "writing of books" in order to form his desired proposal for the Argentine liberal state. In order to achieve his plan, he became a vociferous writer against the dictatorship of Rosas and a prolific writer about his educational plans and all aspects of politics. Sarmiento had the conscience of "educating the people through the press" as he repeatedly affirmed in his writings. He wrote in a unique style ranging from documentation, fictionalized reality and persuasion in order to make his strident opposition to Rosas and to lay out his liberal political and educational projects. Sarmiento's publications gave him a public notoriety of a man of

state long before his presidency. During Rosismo, Sarmiento already occupied a central role in shaping the imagery of the nation.

Rosas also made wide use of the press in order to control and shape consciousness in Buenos Aires. The "unofficial mouthpieces" of the Rosas administration were the Gaceta Mercantil, which received full supervision of the material published and direct financial support from the dictator, and the British Packet, a periodical in English language to serve that community. In "Argentine Counterpoint," Tulio Halperín Donghi stresses that Rosas wanted to make of the periodical an effective instrument of propaganda. Indeed, he imported a British top-of-the-line printing press with which it was possible to print appropriately in red the head-message

¡Viva la Santa Confederación!

¡Mueran los salvajes unitarios! (47).

Both leaders, Sarmiento and Rosas, make of nineteenth-century Argentina an incomparable tale within Latin American history and imagery. Together these men embody the Argentine dichotomy "civilization and barbarism," the sub-title of Sarmiento's long-lasting work. Therefore, history and literature create and validate each other. The consciousness of nineteenth-century Argentine society was constructed in the realm of the Symbolic. History developed guided by literature and literature was guided by history. Both constructed the social imagery of the nation. The political factions of the time, the Unitarians, whose exponent figure was Sarmiento, and the Federalists commanded by Rosas, built powerful symbolic imagery to carry out their political programs. Of course, they are not the sole exponents of Argentine literature and politics of the nineteenth century. Juan Bautista Alberdi was a thinker able to balance partisan

emotions and the political fundamentals for the nation's political future. Alberdi wrote extensively for the establishment of legal institutions which were the basis of a modern state. José Hernández, the author of the poem "Martín Fierro," made of gaucho poetry a political weapon and an instrument of people's education. So many are the illustrious figures of nineteenth-century Argentina that Cristina Iglesia introducing the work Letras y divisas (1998), writes:

Nunca más en la historia argentina, política y cultura estuvieron tan imbricadas, fueron más unívocas, aunque pretendieran salvajemente marcar diferencias.

Imposible no sentir el peso de la pasión con que las invectivas se cruzan entre el bando unitario y federal, imposible no envidiar la productividad de los textos que este fervor provoca. (10)

It is also noted that writers like Sarmiento and Mármol decreased their literary productivity after Caseros. The battle robbed literature of its main theme: Rosismo. While the literary legacy of nineteenth-century Argentina belongs mostly to the liberal intellectuals fighting against Rosismo and creating a picture of civilization, there is also considerable Federal literature praising the dictator and innumerable poems dedicated to his daughter and wife. According to Liliana Zuccotti, "los escritores pusieron sus trabajos en forma parcial y total al servicio de la causa de sostener o derrotar a Rosas" (132).

Rivera Indarte is an extreme example of how literature and journalism were as effective a tool as the mazorquero's cuchillo afilao in shaping social consciousness and social behavior during Rosismo. He once said "la buena doctrina prende: esperemos los

frutos" (233). Rivera Indarte, "pese a su declarado oficialismo, fue sospechoso de conspirar junto a los emigrados, razón por la cual fue a dar en la cárcel. Al salir en libertad se radicó en Montevideo. Su conversión al antirrosismo fue total" (Orgambide 30). The author of "Himno de los Restauradores" and "Himno Federal" also wrote Tablas de sangre and Rosas y sus opositores, works which either vehemently honor or bash Rosas. The radical rhetoric referring to Rosas was a widespread mode of representation. Rivera Indarte's writings illustrate the explosive combination of political passion, journalistic agitation and personal opportunism. Among his writings, published by the Nacional in Montevideo, there is an appeal to murder the dictator in "Es acción santa matar a Rosas" (Tablas 137-235), where he accuses Rosas of many crimes, including incestuous relations with his daughter (167). The author suggests she could cleanse her honor by murdering the father while also prompting all women to become the heroic assassin (201).³

However, Esteban Echeverría, who brought the first ideas of French Romanticism to Argentina and was the founder of the Salón Literario of the intellectual Generation of 1837, comes to discredit the value of the war of words against Rosas, as this letter from 1844 to Melchor Pacheco demonstrates:

Pero se me dirá, si usted no puede ser soldado ¿por qué no guerrillea con la pluma? [...] porque hace mucho tiempo tengo la persuasión íntima que la prensa

³ Indeed, there was an attempt on Rosas's life in March, 1842, when Manuela would have been the victim. The episode known as "la máquina infernal" is narrated by several historians. A box was given to Rosas, handed by a French official in the name of the Portuguese consul on occasion of his birthday. Manuela opened it days later and the mechanism failed, not hurting anybody (Sánchez-Zinny 259-262).

nada puede, nada vale en la guerra contra Rosas, y que el plomo y las lanzas sólo podrán dar la solución de la cuestión (Echeverría qtd. in Zuccotti 132).

The dismay of the author of "Ojeada retrospectiva sobre el movimiento intelectual en el Plata desde el año 37" (1846) stems from the recognition that in spite of the talent and preparation of this intellectual elite, without a unifying program of ideas and action it was impossible to affront the consolidated repression of Rosas's regime. Halperín Donghi suggests that the victory of Rosismo rests on Rosas's power in redirecting the popular force into federal partisanship and using the military resources of Buenos Aires to solidify his hegemony overthrowing dissident caudillos. For him, the dictator did not accomplish a victory of organizing a state. Instead, by reducing the provinces to "a single arena for civil war," Rosas was able to delineate the country's definite frontiers ("Argentine Counterpoint" 51). The nation-state would be constituted only after the fall of Rosas in Caseros, and after the victory of Buenos Aires in Pavón, becoming Bartolomé Mitre the first president of modern Argentina "under a constitution that established a 'republican, representative and federal regime'" (51).

1.3. ENSHRINEMENT OF POWER

Alongside the exercise of persuasion by the press and military force, the social life of the nation was internally controlled by the symbols constructed to defend the barbaric regime. The color red, the cinta punzó, the acclamation heading every official and private correspondence, the mazorca, the life of the matadero and the popular festivals, were all symbols and institutions which played a part in channeling people

under an obsessive commitment to the achievement of total control that Rosas exercised personally and which his Unitarian opposition tried to undermine as soldados de la pluma or by less civilized means, such as castrating their rivals.

In the second part, chapter 4 of Facundo, Sarmiento gives a persuasive account of the tradition of the use of the color red connecting it to blood, terror, dictators and barbarism of the old Europe. "El verdugo en todos los estados europeos vestía de colorado hasta el siglo pasado" (74), making clear that European nations were no longer barbaric and Unitarians were dressed in frac as a sign of their being civilized, by being on a par with European fashion (75). According to Sarmiento, the color red, colorado, was introduced by Facundo Quiroga in the uniform of his militia against the blue and white of the flag, which meant "el cielo transparente de un día sereno, y la luz nítida del disco del sol; la paz y la justicia para todos" (73).

The intricate symbols of colors in the River Plate region dates from the wars of Independence where political parties originated and used colors as symbols to distinguish ideologies. Since the Uruguayan general José Artigas was a Federal, he defended the autonomy of the provinces and free use of ports. Thus, since the days of independence the color red was connected to Federalist ideals.

In 1835, after Facundo Quiroga's death, Rosas returns to his second mandate in the government when he is granted unlimited powers by the legislature. In a short period he obtains the support of the provinces and by "dressing the people in red" (Zinny 165) he starts singling out the Unitarians. In El matadero, Echeverría describes the terror of this time of relentless persecution and killings. It draws a complete picture of the violence, the devotion the lower class of the population had for Rosas and his wife, the

works of the mazorca and the assassination of Unitarians. It is during this time that the dictator extends the use of red to the civilians in order to classify them according to partisanship,

El rojo cundió por Buenos Aires e impregnó al país, convertido en ley de identificación y de acatamiento . . . Con la divisa roja, consigue Rosas un efecto objetivo; marca su rebaño . . . Juran fidelidad a la causa de la Santa Federación, los empleados, los militares, los niños de las escuelas, los universitarios para poder inscribirse y hasta las pequeñas asiladas en el Hospicio de Huérfanas! . . . Se jura no pensar; se jura ser fiel a una causa, cuyo rechazo significa la persecución, el crimen, la muerte. (Sánchez-Zinny 165-6)

Sánchez-Zinny first publishes his study on Manuela de Rosas in 1941. Through the life of the tyrant's daughter, depicting her as a victim and partner of Rosas, the author traces his own ideas regarding the time of Rosas and his own contemporary history. Even though he makes an effort of impartiality, excusing the special regime of Rosas as a natural development in the course of the nation's history, given the disarticulation of its politics,⁴ Sánchez-Zinny strongly condemns Rosas and his methods throughout the book. The author points out the consequences of Rosas's apparatus of control, vehemently stating:

¡Así afirman el poder de los tiranos! El terror crea una nueva voluntad. ¡La voluntad de no tenerla! Hoy, - en 1941 -, cuando el inaudito caso se repite entre

⁴ Y la historia, repetimos, fué injusta, al atribuirle [a Rosas] la responsabilidad de una época, a la que es impulsado por los acontecimientos. Enfrenta a la situación, cuando se han agotado los conceptos, en una horrenda confusión pasional, en un instante en que las ambiciones e intereses, se convierten en odios (Sánchez-Zinny 23).

las pseudo-dictaduras europeas, hay en nuestro país a quienes excusan el hecho como un acto benévolo. . . .⁵ (166)

Historical revisionism in Argentina provides a picture of Rosismo and shows its influence ever since. Juan Alvarez, a judge and historian of a liberal mindset, opposes the tendency to worship tradition. He wrote an overview of Rosas's apparatus of control in an article published by La Prensa of 1934.⁶ Briefly, the author traces a picture of a time when the people lived in "an environment of total submission to the ideas of a triumphant party:"

Fué también el momento que predominaron sin control los rojos, esto es, el partido colorado: soldados vestidos con uniformes rojo, bandera argentina con manchas rojas en forma de gorros frigos, ciudadanos con chaleco rojo, puertas y ventanas pintadas de rojo, uso compulsivo de la divisa roja, con vivas a la federación y amenazas de muerte contra cuantos se permitieran disentir del credo político oficial, elevado a la categoría de dogma. (qtd. in Arrili 50)

The Argentine flag also undergoes significant changes to absorb the mentality and the dogma represented by Rosas. The blue becomes darker; on the four corners appear the red Phrygian caps from the United Provinces coat of arms, created in 1813. Even the Sun in the center receives some red tinting in its rays. The Nacional History Museum of Buenos Aires has on display various pieces of cintas punzó exhibiting the slogans "¡Viva

⁵ Referring to the European rise of tensions leading to the World War II, Sánchez-Zinny openly attacks the Nationalists of his own country, who were known by their Fascist tendencies. Therefore, here we also can observe, in a Chinese box effect, the construction of several mythologies. Sánchez-Zinny's essayistic style reminds of Sarmiento's rhetoric. By tracing the biography of Manuela de Rosas, the author delineates the government of Rosas, imprinting eloquently his own judgment on history, past and present.

⁶ Like Sánchez-Zinny, Juan Alvarez uses the time of Rosas in order to illustrate the dangers posed by the ideology of the Nationalists during the 1930s.

la Federación!" and "¡Mueran los salvajes unitarios!" It does not escape Alvarez that the symbols adopted by public ordinance invaded the private sphere of life and individual consciousness:

El mismo estribillo de intransigencia fanática y de exterminio a los opositores del partido colorado debía estamparse sobre cuanto papel impreso o manuscrito corriese de mano en mano, incluso las fajas o sobres destinados a transmitirlos por correo; y hasta se puso de moda comenzar las cartas con un "mi estimado confederal y amigo", revelador de que ni aun en la mayor intimidad olvidaban las gentes su carácter de afiliados a la federación. (qtd. in Arrili 50)

We are able to reinforce what is narrated by Echeverría's masterpiece by innumerable references besides historical accounts. For instance, Pedro Orgambide compiled in Unitarios y Federales (1998) several texts in prose and verse which illustrate the social environment of the period. One anonymous poem, "El moño punzó," refers to the red ribbon women were suppose to adorn their hair with and the retaliation they were exposed to when disobeying:

Déjame Fabio que estoy
Frenético de enojado
Al ver que algunas señoras
No usan el moño encarnado.
.....
Y esto arguye, cuando menos,
Un desprecio, inmoderado
De la preciable divisa

Del sistema federado.

.....

De modo que ya es preciso

Darles un castigo un chasco,

Y ya muchos federales

Se preparan a efectuarlo.

Y aunque se asusten y lloren

No se nos dará cuidado,

Pues les hemos de poner

Testereras por duplicado.

..... (qtd. in Orgambide 41-42)

Some poems promise to correct the lady's misconduct by attaching the ribbon with tar. These popular verses were sung during festivals and printed in periodicals. This Federalist rhetoric was as powerful a propaganda as the material published abroad by the educated Unitarians.

Rosas consciously and arbitrarily promoted mob behavior. William Mac Cann, an Englishman who was accused as a spy during the 1840s, wrote about his visit with Rosas:

[Rosas] Se refirió al lema que llevan todos los ciudadanos: "¡Viva la Confederación Argentina! ¡Mueran los salvajes unitarios!", y me dijo que lo había adoptado contra el parecer de hombres de alta posición social, pero que, en momentos de excitación popular, había servido para economizar muchas vidas . . . Era verdad que muchos unitarios habían sido ejecutados, pero solamente porque

veinte gotas de sangre, derramadas a tiempo, evitaban el derramamiento de veinte mil (qtd. in Orgambide 84).

From this passage we learn that Rosas encountered initial resistance to adopting his symbols of control. Nevertheless, their use became widespread. In this next passage, by Ramos Mejía, we can observe Rosas's strategy of congregating the people in his favor:

... para informarse si debe o no tirar cohetes voladores, según lo tenía ordenado el Restaurador en oficio de 20 de enero de 1839, cuando noticias graves o placenteras llegaran al pueblo . . . se lanzan los cohetes, conmuevese el vecindario del tranquilo pueblito y como la constitución de los tiempos era plétógena, se organiza la multitud, va, viene, inunda los tendejones y boliches modestos de la plaza . . . y, naturalmente, indignados por la gran infamia de los unitarios. Y convencidos de que es menester escarmentarlos, sigue la nota circulando por los pueblos. (qtd. in Orgambide 99)

The mobilization of the masses was initiated and orchestrated by Encarnación Ezcurra and Rosas since the early days of Los Cerrillos, their first estancia in the pampas bordering Indian territory.

1.4. EMPOWERED WOMEN

During those times of struggle for independence and definition of the Argentine state, Argentine women rose to defend their soil. The episode of brave women pouring boiling oil over British soldiers to defend the "immortal city" of Buenos Aires in its occupation of 1806 and 1807 is legendary. Certainly, such a victory is ingrained in the people's imagination ever since and Argentine women had been active participants in

their country's destiny, with or without male consent; the Madres and Abuelas of Plaza de Mayo still remind us of their power. Therefore, in this frame of a patriarchal state, dominated by violence and oppression, it is remarkable to note that many Argentine women played significant public roles in the nineteenth century. The roles women played ranged from lower-class women being spies, mazorqueras and guarangas to elite women exercising vast political and social influence through their soirées and social connections. Among the elite women, the social class to which Camila O'Gorman belonged, three women were major political players: Doña Encarnación Ezcurra (1795-1838), María Sánchez de Thompson de Mendeville (1786-1868), and Manuela de Rosas (1817-1898).

Encarnación Ezcurra de Rosas: "La heroína de la Federación"

The wife of Rosas was his unconditional collaborator. Carlos Ibarguren gives a whole description of her energy and lack of ethics when it comes to protect her husband's interests. "Ella fué el cancerbero que vigila, lucha y se enfurece para arrancar y defender la presa necesaria a la acción de su marido" (16). For instance, encountering resistance for their marriage, both plotted to receive the blessings of Rosas's mother. As Ibarguren and other historians affirm, Encarnación, who had no dowry, wrote Rosas a letter stating she was pregnant and demanding "repair to her honor" by marriage. In turn, Rosas leaves the letter in sight, so his mother could read it. The mother immediately arranged for the ceremony and the couple started their lives in the estancia Los Cerrillos. Accounts of the patronizing authority that Rosas built with his peons and militia, which included prisoners and ally indigenous peoples is widely published. Ibarguren states that,

[Rosas] conoció a fondo el alma del gaucho y del indio, era el patrón por excelencia: jefe, protector, padre, juez y hasta verdugo que aplicaba las penas que imponía. Ello explica la ciega adhesión a su persona de las masas campesinas y la fidelidad idólatra de los indios amigos. (13)

This type of alliance with the masses and the wiliness of Doña Encarnación played a key role in preparing Rosas's return to political power in 1835. While in his mission of the desert, Rosas commanded the Revolución de los Restauradores through his letters to Doña Encarnación, who promoted the social unrest in the government of Balcarce, Rosas's successor. Her house was the general headquarters of the "partido restaurador, *rojo y apostólico*" from which

oficiales y soldados, caudillejos de arrabal, matarifes y funcionarios de gobierno entraban y salían para recibir y ejecutar las órdenes de la "benemérita señora" . . . La negrada tenía allí su cuartel general, y las mujeres de los soldados, chinas y mulatas... acudían llevando chismes y delaciones . . . Los negros [que vendían tortas, escobas] penetraban en las casas con sus golosinas para enterarse de todo lo que hacían los amos. Eran los espías más eficaces. (Ibarguren 29-30)

This valuable alliance is recognized by Rosas in a letter to his wife: "Ya has visto lo que vale la amistad de los pobres, y por ello cuánto importa el sostenerla y no perder medios para atraer y cultivar sus voluntades" (qtd. in Ibarguren 30). Besides the lowest class, Rosas counted also on the "friendship" of the guarangos. The guarangocracia represented a middle class that flourished during Rosas's period. Comprised of notaries and lower ranking officials, they had a greater mobility in society. In Camila O'Gorman o el amor y el poder (1986), Leonor Calvera argues that in fact Rosas could not rely

completely on the guarangos because they would be in search of personal ascension (11-12). The author points to the feminine role of the guarangas, which at the beginning were authentic Federalists because "ninguna quería ser alcanzada por el grito de 'mueran las perras unitarias'" (10). However, after Rosas diminished the power of the mazorca in 1845, the new generation did not share its parents' hatred or fear. Marrying a repatriated Unitarian was a chance of social ascension for the guaranga (12). In effect, by doing so, they weakened Rosas's power.

Pablo Mantegazza affirms that Rosas denied doña Encarnación a confessor on her deathbed because she knew many political secrets and "los frailes cuentan todo lo que van a cuchichearles los tontos que se confiesan." (qtd. in Arrili 111). However, her funeral was legendary, gathering all the populace in grief. Rosas maneuvered her death into a key political moment by instituting the use of official mourning and two years later, by exchanging the black ribbon for the cinta punzó, and thus classifying the population.

María Sánchez de Thompson de Mendeville: "Madre de la patria"

For her long life and disposition, Mariquita Sánchez, as she is known, was the first woman to participate in the public life of the nation since its beginnings insofar as it was permitted to a woman. She demonstrated her independent character since she was fifteen and married her cousin for love against the will of her mother, who had already made arrangements for her marriage to Diego de Arce. "In an unheard-of act of defiance," says Marifran Carlson, "Mariquita Sánchez went to the viceroy Sobremonte and asked his permission to marry her cousin" (33), which was granted and the couple

married in 1805.⁸ After her marriage, her social gatherings were the most influential soirée of Buenos Aires from 1806 to 1866, where political and intellectual developments of the country were discussed (Newton 66). At her salon in 14 of May of 1812 the Argentine anthem was played for the first time. She is considered the Mother of the Nation, "por el valor que le reconocen los hombres de su tiempo" (Newton 70). She was appointed by Bernardino Rivadavia to help him organize the Beneficent Society, the first institution to give women a public role. She served as president of the Society in 1830 and 1832 and always played a part on it and other institutions which promoted the education for women.

Lily Sosa de Newton explains that social gatherings provided elite women the opportunity to insert themselves into public life,

Lo que caracteriza en especial a los salones porteños es el amor por la patria en pañales, y Mariquita lleva siempre una voz cantante en esa materia. "La mujer argentina haría de su casa, de su alma, el íntimo recinto del que surgirían las decisiones nacionales, fundamentales en la vida de los pueblos"⁹ . . . por la frecuentación de personalidades locales y extranjeras, que convierten la casa de la señora Thompson, después de Mendeville, en una verdadera academia de progreso y cultura. (65-66)

⁸ An interesting question to pose is whether the viceroy would intervene in the girl's favor if the father were still alive at the time of her petition. This episode may demonstrate the weakness of a mother's power and the private life being regulated by the public sphere. Another instance of mixing private and public power concerning women is the case of Ana Perichón de O'Gorman, Camila's grandmother, who was exiled because of her love affair with the viceroy Santiago Liniers, who was executed during the Independence wars. Perichón was later readmitted in Argentina and secluded in her son's *estancia*. Finally, Camila's father, Adolfo O'Gorman, asks Rosas to punish his daughter instigating her death.

⁹ Note in Newton, citing Fryda Schultz de Mantovani. *La mujer en la vida nacional*. Ediciones Galatea - Nueva Visión. Buenos Aires, 1960.

Sosa de Newton also points out that Mariquita Sánchez's salon was not dedicated merely to frivolous conversation and dance, as was common. Most elite women were dedicated to hosting as a way of fulfilling their time, and many of these women shared a genuine interest in the political and intellectual development of the country, "discussing it over tea," which was their possibility of participation in public life.

During Rosas's period, Mariquita Sánchez keeps her tertulias as long as it was possible to dissent without creating a menacing environment, "el terror prevalecería después del 1839, y aún las mujeres tendrían que emigrar ... a menos de quedarse como tantas 'patricias' se quedaron, a adular a Manuelita..." (Ricardo Rojas qtd. in Sosa de Newton 78). However, Mariquita's son, Juan Thompson, had been declared a salvaje unitario and since she was married to the French official of the naval blockade, Washington de Mendeville, these factors were determinant in her self-exile to Montevideo for thirteen years (79). She writes in her diary,

¡25 de Mayo de 1839! ¡Poco menos que desterrada de mi patria por detestar la tiranía y la ignorancia! ¡Y en un suelo libre, hospitalario, no puedo siquiera manifestar mis sentimientos patrióticos! Extraño destino el mío. Los buques franceses han puesto la bandera argentina en el palo mayor y la han saludado con una salva. ¡Rara sensación para los argentinos que piensan! ¡Cuántas cosas se podrían decir! Es una anomalía para unos. Es una bella demostración para decir que no se ataca la independencia del país. Cada uno ve esto según sus ideas. (qtd. in Quesada 165)

The diary and the epistolary of Mariquita Sánchez show the magnitude of her intelligence and commitment to her nation. Writing to her son Juan, she testifies to her

knowledge and the cost of being knowledgeable: "Estoy cansada de lo que veo y sé. . . Mucho he envidiado a las mujeres que no pasan de cierta altura. . . La elevación de ideas ya sabes cuánto cuesta y lo mejor que le puede suceder es que lo tomen por extravagante si es hombre y por pedante si es mujer" (qtd. in Batticuore 48). In exile, she establishes an epistolary dialogue with her son, to whom she sends political information which he publishes in his *Corrientes* newspaper. By keeping correspondence with Echeverría, Alberdi, and Sarmiento, she continues to participate in the male intellectual elite in order to preserve what is left for her in exile, her honor. She writes Juan, "así si somos pobres, nos cubrirá la gloria." Graciela Batticuore analyzes, "[l]a escritura restituye simbólicamente un lugar de privilegio que los avatares de la vida política han puesto en riesgo" (49). Therefore, Mariquita does not resign herself to seeing women as being restricted to their domesticity nor does she bow to Rosas's authority, "to whom she spoke frankly" (Newton 79).

According to Carlson, in exile, Mariquita "carried on an active campaign against Rosas, which included ridicule of his daughter Manuela" (33). It is more credible that the "active campaign" against Rosas was carried out at her salon in exile by the fact that the city of Montevideo was the center of Rosas's political opposition. On the other hand, in spite of her father and even though she lacked the French refinement of the ladies in exile, Manuela de Rosas was a figure widely respected by many Unitarians. Manuela's *soirée* is depicted by Mármol as a gathering of a "coro perpetuo de juramentos y maldiciones" in which Manuela would not feel comfortable during her twenties (292).

Mariquita Sánchez, through her refined salon, provided the environment for political discussion. The information from these tertulias was discussed and passed along

among women and men as well in their letters and diaries. The compilation of women's letters and diaries of this foundational period is an interesting source of knowledge about the web women were able to create to advance their political cause. Therefore, even though subjugated to men's will, some women were able to project their vision and play a vital role in society, be they Unitarians or Federalists.

Manuela de Rosas: "La heredera"

Manuela de Rosas, a direct political player, apparently did not act on her initiative but on her father's command. From the readings on her life and of her letters, Manuelita occupies a symbolic place in the Argentine imagination and history because Rosas chose her as a political partner.

Three portraits of Manuela de Rosas suggest three phases of her life and public influence. Sánchez-Zinny and Lusarretta also refer to her portraits in delineating her personality. The first, from 1845, a drawing by Fernando García del Molino in her album, is a private picture, showing a dreamy, romantic young lady. The second, the official portrait, painted by Prilidiano Pueyrredón in 1850, reveals an empowered lady displaying her wealth and the appropriateness to her position in society. The last, a photograph in London, presents a dignified domestic matron in her sixties.

Through the young lady portrayed by García del Molino we can construct Manuela's life independently of her political functions, or in romantic quest of it. The painter imprints to his model the ideals of the romantic heroine as he states in the verses below the portrait: "Los que con ojos curiosos / Este retrato miráis / Y en su semblante

notáis / Romántica confusión; / Si por fortuna encontraráis / El hermoso original, /
Veríais del bello ideal / La vivísima espresión." (qtd. in Iburguren 1st plate)

At 28, her age in the portrait, Manuela already occupied the public functions assigned to her for a decade. In her eyes, García del Molino represents the duality of the romantic ideals, which in Manuela are translated into the conflict she lived by assisting her Tatita (Rosas), or pursuing aspirations of love, marriage, and family, which were the highest feminine ideals of her time: to serve the nation by being a mother able to educate good citizens. Perhaps, the "romantic confusion" of her expression was the result of the painter's own readings of Manuela. It might as well be that Manuelita lived in perfect conformity with her role: according to tradition, being the only daughter, she must dedicate her life to assisting her widower father, a function Rosas "imposed" on her upon Encarnación de Ezcurra's death. The abundant literature on her life does not make any reference to rebellion or disagreement toward the position she occupied in society. On the contrary, in general, she is portrayed as compliant to her destiny, as if it were the one of her choice.

While her mother was alive, she was a child who received little parental affection or a proper education for a girl of her condition. Still young, while fulfilling her parents' political strategy, she would participate in the candombe festivals with her closest friends. From all accounts, she enjoyed the contact with the lower classes and their festivals. Later on, being a hostess in Palermo, the descriptions are of a content Manuelita. She would find pleasure in horse rides, picnics, dances, and friendship, along with the political functions she would have to perform, including official flirtation to influence Rosas's diplomatic action. After Caseros, already married to Máximo Terrero and a

mother of two, her photographs and her letters reveal a matron committed to her family. In the letters, we observe a relative interest in the political development of Argentina, mainly with regard to its effect on their confiscated patrimony and a disappointment with her friends from the Palermo period.

In spite of the abundance of references to her life, being a legend even during her lifetime, Manuela de Rosas passes into history as a persona created to reflect her authors' views. For many, she is a positive symbol, a source of goodness in oppressive times. For others, she is an extension of Rosas's power. Mármol's literary account of Manuela in Amalia is very similar to the one in his previous essay "Manuela Rosas" of 1850: she is not an angel, but an interesting woman who humanizes the malaise created in Argentine society by her father. In the novel, Manuela is the reverse of the power emanated by Rosas, the tyrant, and her character functions as antagonist. In the essay, Mármol faithfully seeks to explain her character and her actions. His works also conjugate well with the paintings of García del Molino and Pueyrredón, and let us foresee the Manuela of the photographs in London.

Her physical and psychological description here is taken from Amalia:

Era esa mujer una joven. . . que podría llamarse bella, si la palabra interesante no fuese más análoga para clasificarla . . . El color de su tez era ese pálido oscuro que distingue comúnmente a las personas de temperamento nervioso, y en cuyos seres la vida vive más en el espíritu que en el cuerpo... una cabeza inteligente y bella. Sus ojos... eran... animados e inquietos... una de esas mujeres a cuyo lado los hombres tienen menos prudencia que amor, y más placer que entusiasmo. (37-38)

Therefore, for Mármol, she is not a beautiful, pale, and candid lady who awakens spiritual love in men's hearts (38). She is instead an earthly woman able to stir desire and give comfort to a Unitarian, the model man:

Su vestido ... le dejaba descubiertos unos hombros, que sin ser los hombros de María Stuart, bien pudieran pasar por los hombros tan suaves y redondos, que la sien del más altivo unitario no dejaría de aceptarlos para reclinarse en ellos un momento, en horas de aquel tiempo en que la vida era fatigada... (38)

Mármol's description could be derived from García del Molino's drawing, which antedates the novel by five years. By superimposing Mármol's study of the influence of her education and the castration of her feminine sentiments to the drawing of the framed woman with vivid eyes and rounded shoulders, it is possible to create yet another mythology about Manuela de Rosas. The artist produces a private picture, a memo to the model in her own album, which invites us to visualize the private life and sentiments of a younger Manuela. In contrast, the writer delineates a public figure to educate the public of his time and to preserve a literary historical memory of the dictatorship. Thus, with his description, Mármol seems to persuade the reader that this sensitive woman, who could please a fine Unitarian and who seems to be reaching out for her future in the drawing of the album, was denied by her father the natural right of marriage. Mármol even implies incest saying that she had to protect herself "de la profanación a que le condenaba su padre" (Amalia 39).

Following the physical description of Manuela, the author of Amalia draws a picture of Rosas as a person who feels great pleasure in scratching himself and in whom predominates every animal instinct (38). The contrastive descriptions are immediately

followed by an unpleasant scene in which Rosas orders Viguá, one of his jesters, to kiss Manuela for his amusement. This scene extends over three pages and polarizes the sentiments produced in la Niña, which range from pride to humiliation to impotence, the same sentiments Rosas succeeded in producing in Unitarian hearts. Mármol spares the heroine from the disgusting kiss by cutting off the action with the arrival of Cuitiño, the police chief. At the same time, the author stresses the surrender of Manuela to her father's will,

Y salió . . . alisando con sus manos el cabello de sus sienes, cual si quisiese con esa acción despejar su cabeza de cuanto acababa de pasar para entregarse como era su costumbre, a cuidar y velar por los intereses y la persona de su padre. (41)

Through the juxtaposition of sublime and grotesque scenes in the novel, Mármol establishes the antinomy "Manuela is good, Rosas is evil" in order to create the greater image of the novel, which is the castration of a civilized country by a regime of terror. In "Cuerpos (Federalmente) Vestidos de Sangre," Sandra Gasparini refers to the "code of excess" which "contaminates" Mármol's writings (54) and concludes,

En el alegato final, la exasperación panfletaria alcanza un tono de ribetes dramáticos . . . se acusa al victimario de haber pervertido a la hija en el roce de lo incompatible: la inocencia con la perversidad, la femineidad con la política. . . . La de Manuela es la historia de una víctima, a su manera una heroína romántica que, incomprendida, flor en el fango, como Amalia o Florencia, merece ser defendida. (65)

The critic compares Mármol's rhetoric with the one used by Sarmiento in Facundo, "la hija le ha servido a Mármol para acercarse lo suficiente al padre. Como un

Facundo que conduce al verdadero Tigre, la figura inocente marca contrastes y profundiza el crimen" (65). Obeying his language of excess, Mármol complements the bizarre scene of the kiss with another more dramatic one. Manuela must serve wine to Cuitiño, whose hands and arms are bathed in fresh blood, drawing from it a lesson in which Rosas congeals Manuela's character,

- Pero tuve miedo, Señor.

- ¡Miedo! . . .

- Lo que había hecho era por mi conservación y por la tuya; y nunca te expliques de otro modo cuanto veas y oigas en derredor de mí. Yo les hago comprender una parte de mi pensamiento, aquella que únicamente quiero; ellos la ejecutan, y tú debes manifestarte contenta, y popularizarte con ellos; primero, porque así te conviene; y segundo, porque yo te lo mando. (Amalia 46)

What Mármol fictionalized, many authors expressed in various ways, stating the lack of autonomy of Manuela, her absolute submission and devotion to her Tatita and how Rosas controlled her actions.

Pueyrredón's painting shows Manuela at the height of her life in Palermo, la Versalles de la pampa, as it is so referred. Most of the portrait's descriptions allude to Manuela's facial expression; some see it as serene, content, while others interpret it as being stark. For instance, Pilar Lusarretta, who considers Manuela "the false gem of Argentina" (49), harshly describes the weak smile of the model as an "expresión de artificiosa leticia que enarca la comisura de los labios angostos," concluding that "la cara es el espejo del alma" (13). Lusarretta's point of view is understandable because the author intends to relate the "bloody clot" of Rosas's tyranny to the rise of Communism,

which in 1937 divides the world (65). A non-partisan description of the painting and an acute analysis of the time are offered by the poet Marilina Rébora (1919-1999). Her sonnet "Manuelita Rosas" describing Pueyrredón's painting is published in Libro de estampas (1972):

Muéstrase Manuelita en vestido encarnado.
Es la alfombra punzó, el sillón carmesí,
y, en conjunto de sangre, rojo es el cortinado
y las flores de fuego, una no y otra sí.

Vibra todo el ambiente en matiz colorado
y las mismas alhajas arden con su rubí;
excepto el escaipín que se asoma dorado
y que gracioso extraña tal vez al verse allí.

Apoyada en la mesa levemente la mano,
en pálido contraste con tanto intenso emblema,
así quiso pintarla Pueyrredón -Prilidiano.

Qué enigma, sin embargo, ése de Manuelita:
el moño bermellón cediendo a la diadema.
¿Es que responde al sueño real de su Tatita?

Much as Pueyrredón did in the portrait, Rébora condenses in her poem the absolute power of red which is a metaphor of the absolute power of Rosas in all its nuances. Enclosed in this intenso emblema, of color and luxury, Manuela, like her golden shoe, seems to be an ornament of the scenario and not its main theme. Rébora's poem is very eloquent in its silence of the fact that it does not attribute any value to

Manuela's facial expression. Instead, the poet traces Manuela's sentiment and political role through the synecdoche of her hand and shoe, expressing that it was Pueyrredón's point of view. The model's hand is in "pale contrast" to the symbolic redness of the scene and her shoe emerges "graciously and with estrangement." The figure of Manuela, especially the accent of her waist, is echoed in the vase, which contains "flores de fuego, una no y otra sí," marking the duplicity of Manuela's character in government. She was regarded as the humanizing force of the tyranny, while at the same time the collaborator of her Tatita and his personal caretaker. Therefore, the interpretation of the portrait and the poem gives us a picture of the times and the role of Manuelita in this last period of Rosas's dictatorship.

As remarked before, in the mid forties, Rosas weakened the power of the mazorca and invested in the diplomatic aspect of his government, in which Manuela was a major player. Palermo becomes his official residence, rebuilt to offer noble pleasures to the criollo aristocracy and foreign diplomats. "Había en ese medio una mezcla extraña de refinamiento junto a la barbarie política" but also "el gusto por la elegancia, el lujo y las apariencias de la vida civilizada" (Ibarguren 60-61). Manuela and her closest friends, Josefa Gómez, Juana de Sosa, Dolores Marcet, and Petronita Villegas, were the main hostesses of the salon in Palermo. Lucio Mansilla, Rosas's nephew, speaks nostalgically of the tertulias as being animated festivities, full of sounds, food, and pleasures. In Rozas, he also points out that

Rozas ha salido más o menos airoso en todas sus cuestiones con Francia y con Inglaterra. Su astucia ha suplido a la diplomacia. Con raras excepciones, todos los ministros y enviados han pagado su tributo a la maña criolla, concedora de la

humana naturaleza, siendo las mujeres uno de los resortes puestos en juego con más éxito. (146)

Mansilla suggests what Ibarguren explicitly exposes, that Rosas used Manuela's official flirtation with Lord Howden, the British plenipotentiary, to resolve the French-British naval blockade, which ended completely in 1849. In 1847, Lord Howden ordered the suspension of the blockade "como se lo había prometido a Manuelita" and proposed to marry her. Instead, Manuela answered his proposal with a letter, probably written by Rosas, in which she stated that she viewed him as a brother. The Frenchmen, Count Walesky and Minister Mandeville, did not escape Palermo's feminine charms either, as their correspondence to Manuela implies (62-71).

As for the diplomatic influence of la Niña, it must be added that Rosas prepared her to be his successor in power, which would fulfill Rosas's "real/royal dream" as Régora expressed in the last verse of the above sonnet. According to Saldías, after the frustrated attempt on Rosas's life in 1841, the legislature gathered to deliberate who could be the Federal leader in Rosas's absence. Through general consensus all agreed with Doctor Roxas y Patrón, the president, that Manuela de Rosas "era tal vez la única persona que estaba al cabo de las fuerzas, de las aspiraciones y de los rumbos que encaminaban ese gobierno" (255). Agreeing that Manuela was able to administer the country and the future of it, the dictator ponders: "lo que ustedes pretenden es nada menos que el gobierno hereditario en nuestro país, el cual ya ha aventado tres o cuatro monarquías porque eran hereditarias" (Rosas qtd. in Saldías 3 258).

Most historians mention Rosas's ability to manipulate the legislature, as was the case with his periodical resignations. From time to time, Rosas would resign from his

position, alleging that he had done all he could for the country and at that moment he wished to rest and care for his private life. In turn, the legislature would reject his petition and the dictator's power would once again be reinforced. Therefore, the aversion Rosas had toward a democratic government and his delay in organizing the country in that direction may also be explained by the fact that he made Manuela second in power and had the legislature propose a hereditary government. In "Política de Rosas," Sarmiento writes innumerable irate pages on the subject.

The diadem on Manuela's head, more prominent than the moño punzó in the official portrait, also testifies to such royal aspirations. Régora wisely questions Manuela's own enigmatic role: was she just a puppet of her father or to what extent was she in agreement with him? This enigma surrounds the legendary Manuelita from the moment when General Urquiza accepted Rosas's resignation, on May 1st, 1851, contradicting the future which the nation "had to follow."¹⁰

Something overlooked by Régora in Pueyrredón's picture is the fact that Manuela does not rest her hand upon the table but on a sheet of paper. The corner of the blank sheet under Manuela's hand, without the presence of ink or pen, constructs the connotation of the power axis of Rosas-Manuela. Rosas governed through writing. He intimidated, sentenced, and persuaded through official writing, his own writing, and Manuela's writing. With Rosas, private and official writing intermingle and become one.

¹⁰ "de la marcha que ellos [los negocios de la patria] deben seguir, y *han de seguir*" (Rosas to Roxas qtd. in Saldías).

Hers is a blank paper to be written by her Tatita.¹¹ In the case of Camila O'Gorman, private and official correspondence seem to be intercepted and deviated, hindering or disguising Manuela's mediation in favor of Camila's life. There are two known messages from Manuela to Camila O'Gorman and they do not differ from the total of her correspondence: they address Camila compassionately and promise to plead for her friend's life.

The importance of writing did not cease after the fall of the regime. After General Urquiza's victory in Caseros, Rosas's last letter of resignation to the legislature was never read in session. The Palermo archives embarked to London with the family and Manuela later gave them to the historian Adolfo Saldías, who reunited them in Papeles de Rosas, where we can observe the corrections and notes traced by Rosas in documents and in private notes. From exile, Manuela wrote to her closest friends and the content of those letters reveal nothing unknown, nor do photographs demonstrate any more or less contentment than the pictures from Buenos Aires. If Rosas censured her writing and manners, she probably had internalized her thinking and behavior to Rosas's required style. The tone of her letters is amiable, showing some disappointment for being so quickly forgotten by her old friends of Palermo. She displays financial concern in a more elegant way than Rosas, who begs and laments constantly in his letters. The content of

¹¹ Or, by Daniel, the Unitarian hero of Amalia, who dictates a letter to Manuela in order to prevent the mazorca from invading Amalia's house in search of Eduardo (4:10). Batticuore analyses the episode stressing Mármol's skill in connecting the ignorance of women to the ignorance of the barbaric regime (44-45).

Manuela's correspondence to her friends becomes more and more about her own family and the health of Rosas.

A few months after their arrival in London, she marries Máximo Ternero against her father's will, becoming Manuela de Rosas y Ezcurra de Ternero. She lives to be a dedicated mother and grandmother as she was dedicated to her father until his death. Her marriage was the single defiant act in her life. At least, this is the narrative we are able to compose from her own writings to friends in Argentina. The inheritance dispute with Rosas's lifetime mistress, Eugenia de Castro, is the only subject that deviates from an immaculate chronicle of a lady who was incapable of harming anyone and a model of goodwill. Eugenia had five children with Rosas; they all lived in Palermo until the battle of Caseros. Upon Rosas's passing, Manuela did not divide the inheritance with her half siblings, who lived and died in misery, as María Saenz Quesada argues in Mujeres de Rosas (2005).

In conclusion, through the private correspondence, images, and the literature built around Manuela de Rosas, we can envision a woman that probably would not have entered history had it not been for the desire of her father. Even so, Sosa de Newton states, "su natural inteligencia la hace ver que, una vez aceptadas las reglas del juego, hay que jugar para ganar, y Rosas tiene en todo momento, así, la más hábil colaboradora" (89). Evidently, Manuela knew how to use her intelligence and her public image was constructed by authors in relation to her role in power.

In summary, with the collaboration of his wife and daughter, the stronghold of Rosas's power was the web of symbols and influence he spread among the population.

At the most repressive time of his government, from the beginnings of his second mandate, from 1835 to the mid 1840's, the repressive machinery of the tyranny was manipulated by the Restaurador de las Leyes on every sphere of society. The Unitarians such as Sarmiento, Alberdi, Mármol, and others fought some battles of resistance and, mainly, advocated through the written word for "civilization." It is arguable that the eloquence of Unitarian ideals was determinant in the fall of Rosas regime. The Unitarian doctrine mirrored refinement in education, wisdom, and rhetorical persuasion; however, the fruit of their debates was to be felt only after Caseros. Even the long Unitarian alliance with the British and the French during the 1840s naval blockade against Rosas could not defeat the dictator. In spite of the opposition, Rosas exercised social control for such a long time by the "barbaric" violence of the degüellos performed by people of the lower ranks constantly being aroused into mob behavior and consented to by the Federal elite bound to him by loyalty and adulation. The ruthless methods employed by Rosas proved fruitful to his interests and the unification of Argentina in the time span of two decades. The contradiction of reaching "civilization" through "barbaric" methods of this foundational time persisted in the country's imagination and repeated itself cruelly in history during the twentieth century.

Based on coercion more than consensus, Rosismo never acquired ideological significance to survive as a political power and disappeared with the figure of Rosas (Halperín 48). However, certain aspects of the struggle suffered in becoming an independent modern country seem recurrent in the life of the Argentine nation. For instance, the tradition of a caudillo's militia, the attacks of montoneros, the mazorca, proved to be a paramilitary force of resistance and support of a government in power. In

some circumstances, as during the 1960's and 1970's, a popular militia could reach the cruelty of a mazorca. Even though from a different source of power, Juan Domingo Perón and Eva Perón built around themselves a mystique similar to the one that surrounded Rosas and Encarnación and Manuela, through obligatory iconography and popular devotion. The Perons were able to garner genuine popular appreciation and Peronism reached the status of an institutionalized ideological party. Both the funerals of Encarnación and Evita were a parallel traumatic popular experience and a symbolic political tool. As mentioned, Rosismo did not survive the figure of its leader; its legacy, however, its virulence became a stigma in the history of Argentina.

2: Juana Manuela Gorriti: Nation Builder

*If the Queen's looking glass speaks with the King's voice . . .
does the queen try to sound like the King . . .? Or does she "talk back" . . .?*
Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar

As part of the collection "Perfiles divinos," published in Panoramas de la vida (1876), the short story "Camila O'Gorman" speaks with a distinctive narrative voice while presenting the main characteristics of the work of Juana Manuela Gorriti (Salta 1816/18-1892). The curiosity this literary piece arouses lies in Gorriti's singular account of the life of Camila O'Gorman. While it departs from the general treatment the author gives her heroines, it also shifts known historical facts.

Gorriti was not the first writer to deviate from the history of the heroine's life. Without any evidence, Felisberto Pélissot created the drama Camila O'Gorman (1856) in which Rosas falls in love with Camila, and Gutiérrez saves her from Rosas's attempts to rape her (Kinnersman 23). In his drama, the traditional morals and values of femininity are preserved and the tyranny of Rosas is denigrated once more. Gorriti was, however, the first woman writer to approach the episode of Camila O'Gorman. Ironically, Gorriti is the only author who puts into question Camila's morals and the only one who does not depict Camila as a positive historical symbol in the light of Rosas's ultimate demonstration of power.

In most of Gorriti's stories, it is clear that the author's intention is to condemn Rosas. However, in "Camila O'Gorman" the main narrative focus is not on the crime perpetrated by the dictator, nor it is not to defend transgressive values of womanhood. "Camila O'Gorman" is a narrative of costumbrismo structured to convey the morals of a

perfect liberal society. Parallel to the darkness of Rosas's times, Gorriti sets up Camila as a negative symbol for women. Thus, the tragedy of Camila O'Gorman serves as a pretext for a political work of writing which reinforces the values of Gorriti's literary quest.

The negative mythification of Camila is not surprising when considering Gorriti as a "female writer" instead of a "proto-feminist writer." The tale "Camila O'Gorman" conforms to the patriarchal ideology of the time and to the feminine discourse of the nineteenth-century. Perhaps that may explain the scant attention given to this particular story by Gorriti scholars. In an attempt to portray Gorriti as a proto-feminist in the nineteenth-century, most references given to "Camila O'Gorman" hardly go beyond a few lines. Few reviews are directed specifically to this story. The major study of the text is Amelia Royo's "The Textualization of Camila O'Gorman in Juana M. Gorriti's Writing."¹² In her article, Royo confirms Doris Sommer's theory that national novels "construct Eros and Polis upon each other" (xi). Royo states that the key to understanding the text is ideological. Through the divided morals of a tragic subject, the author constructs a love conflict based on the contemporary political debate (162). Although "Camila O'Gorman" is a remarkable short story, it does not bear witness to Juana Manuela Gorriti's defense of women's liberation. In Latin America, throughout the nineteenth-century, other women writers dared to boldly defend with their pen what Gorriti defended in her private life.

In order to support the above affirmations, this chapter first reviews the life and the works of Juana Manuela in the light of a social interpretation of language and power. Secondly, it analyzes how "Camila O'Gorman" places Gorriti as a mythologist of culture.

¹²which is also published in a smaller version in her book Juana Manuela, mucho papel

Finally, it presents an overview of Gorriti's negative reaction to Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera's novel, Blanca Sol (1889). From today's perspective, Gorriti's admonitions clarify her standpoint as a "female writer" and illustrate how her oeuvre stands at the conservative pole of feminism during her time.

2.1. NEBULOUS STYLE

In Argentina of the second half of nineteenth century, what did it mean for Juana Manuela Gorriti to be the first female writer by trade and who was surrounded by the shapers of the nation from the Generations of 1837 and 1880? Was she influenced by the "King's voice"? In the preface of El ajuar de la patria: Ensayos críticos sobre Juana Manuela Gorriti (1993), Cristina Iglesia describes Gorriti as audacious for assuming a role reserved exclusively to men, the role of a writer who forges national identity and through legends recovers the foundational past of a young nation (8).¹³ Like Sarmiento and Mitre, Gorriti wrote biographies of generals and historical figures of the fratricidal wars between Unitarians and Federalists. Further in this chapter I discuss that unlike the male writers, Gorriti did not advocate for one faction or another even though her ideals coincided much with the Unitarian liberal thought. She promoted the model of a united modern nation in need of overcoming partisan differences. The most common conflicts in her stories address the maladies of individuals torn between duty to nation, honor and personal choice.

¹³“Sin duda la mayor audacia de Gorriti consiste en postularse como *escritora patriota* y narrar desde allí la leyenda nacional. Escribe sobre ‘cuestiones de hombres’ y al hacerlo, entabla con los escritores una disputa. Toda su obra puede leerse como la voluntad de sostener este desafío” (Iglesia 8).

Gorriti cautiously preserved the popularity of her writings and the personal fame she achieved in her own time by understanding that "social conditions determine properties of discourse" (Fairclough 19). Certainly, Gorriti did not ignore what today seems common sense:

Discourse types and orders of discourse vary across cultures. But in such gatekeeping encounters, white middle-class gatekeepers are likely to constrain the discourse types which can be drawn upon those of the dominant cultural grouping. (Fairclough 47)

In Language and Power (1989), Norman Fairclough makes clear the implications of social context in the interaction between the productive and the interpretative processes in the text. Authorship and readership are circumscribed in the social context because the individuals who write and who read take to the text what Fairclough calls "members' resources," which are internalized assumptions of the world shaped by social practices of their time (24-25). Being from a prominent military family, Gorriti's personal life was affected by privileged relationships with political and intellectual actors of different political periods. In consonance with the fact that romanticism in Latin America was deeply connected to the shaping of nationhood, her personal life explains her devotion to national themes and the point of view expressed in her stories.

Gorriti's personal life was in constant movement. Still in her teens, because her father's army was defeated by General Facundo Quiroga, she left Argentina for Bolivia in exile with her family. There, she married Manuel Isidoro Belzú, who would eventually govern Bolivia and always be influential in its politics. The exile in Bolivia did not take Gorriti away from the influential circle which shaped the future of Latin American

nations; on the contrary, her marriage strengthened her vision and relations within political circles. For political reasons again, she followed her husband to Perú with her two daughters, Edelmira and Mercedes. However, when Belzú returned to Bolivia, Juana Manuela chose to stay in Lima, where she bore two more children out of wedlock, Clorinda and Julio, who openly lived with her. It is also known that Gorriti actively participated in political revolts (Iglesia 7).

Another important trait of her life that shaped her writings is the fact that Gorriti "nació rebelde y prosiguió durante toda su vida el camino --literalmente, por ser viajera casi constante-- del desafío al conformismo" (Berg 131). Deviating from the norm, even when she had to provide for herself and children, Gorriti preferred an independent life to a troubled marriage. Moreover, her illustrious surname was not accompanied by wealth. Many of the Unitarian families exiled from Argentina, lost their industry and fortunes, and Gorriti's family was no exception. In "Una ojeada a la patria," a story of her return to Argentina, the narrator laments,

De todos esos seres llenos de vida, . . . yo sola había vuelto con el mío desolado llorar, . . . y exañjera en la casa paterna que contemplaba, no me quedaba de la herencia de mis padres, ni una piedra en que reposar mi cabeza. Todo había sido cambiado por el amargo pan de la tierra extranjera. (95)

As a result, she opened in Lima a school for girls. Mary G. Berg depicts Gorriti as a prolific writer. She started publishing in 1845, with La quena, the first of her continuous publications (138), possibly to shore up her finances. Her Peruvian literary soirées were the most famous in Latin America of the nineteenth-century. As a literary personality, in her Veladas literarias Gorriti was able to bring together important writers

of her time, such as Ricardo Palma, as well as support young writers such as Clorinda Matto de Turner and Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera (Lindstrom 124).

Later in life, 1875, she moved back to Argentina "en la mayor pobreza," as Lily Sosa de Newton affirms. Through the influence of the first lady, Carmen Avellaneda, the government granted Gorriti a pension for being the daughter of a general of the independence war (115). Only for financial reasons she took up residence in Buenos Aires, calling it "la patria del destierro" in her letters to Ricardo Palma. In Buenos Aires, with Josefina Pelliza de Sagasta, Gorriti was the founder and editor of La Alborada del Plata (1877-1878). In Wily Modesty (1998), Bonnie Frederick says that the successful international periodical gathered men and women as readers and collaborators. She says that "under Gorriti's leadership La Alborada was less concerned with the theory of advocating women's writing than with its practice" (26-27). Indeed, as in her other publications, Gorriti favors the traditional feminine model: the educated women could better educate the sons of the nation and make their contribution to society. She also advocated the inclusion of women in the scientific process of modernization (Between Civilization 94); however, "there is no angry rhetoric in La Alborada, no impassionate defense of women" (Frederick 26).

This brief account of Gorriti's life has the purpose of summarizing the personal and social context of her literary production. In order to live an independent life and provide for herself and her children, Gorriti embraced both occupations permitted to a woman of her aristocratic rank - she was an educator and a writer - and kept in close contact with the cultural and political circles of Argentina, Perú, and Bolivia. Gorriti became the first woman writer by trade because, unlike her predecessors, she depended

financially on her pen. Based on the social theory of language presented by Fairclough, we can infer that the politics of her personal relations and finances defined the point of view and the tone of her productions, especially with regard to women. She believed that a woman had greater responsibility to defending her honor as a female and as a writer, as she wrote to Palma on March 17, 1889, "el honor de una mujer escritora es doble: el honor de su conducta, el honor de su pluma." The fact that she was a cautious female writer and wrote for money does not exclude her love and talent for her trade. Frederick quotes a passage of Gorriti's diary from March 11, 1876:

Me levanto a las seis de la mañana, tan enferma . . . Mas a medida que me engolfo en el trabajo, la vida vuelve . . . torrentes de vida se agitan en torno mío, y agitan la mía con el poderoso galvanismo de la literatura. (25)

Galvanismo is a metaphor of double significance. At the same time, it is the energy, the force that reanimates the writer; but it also sets up the limit of her movements. Gorriti understands that the female writer must be shielded by a galvanized writing in which the male "gatekeepers of discourse" would not be offended. In this metaphor rests the success of her writings and her popularity.

Gorriti's literary production, in Argentina and for Argentine readers, endorsed the views of the dominant social-cultural group. The intellectual agenda of her time can be condensed in the liberal project for the nation first laid out by Sarmiento in Facundo. In Early Spanish American Narrative (2004), Lindstrom abridges the main points of Sarmiento's project,

civilization is associated with education, liberal ideals, urban, European-style manners and dress, a government with democratic institutions responsive to

public opinion, the desire for modernization, and, of course, opposition to Rosas and his regime... (94)

These were also the preoccupations shown in Gorriti's writings. Lindstrom gives a broad overview of the late twentieth-century feminist critique, mapping out the major characteristics of Gorriti's work and the still varied conclusions of the critics (117-26). Most scholars agree that Gorriti's oeuvre is contradictory. On the other hand, its contradictions can also be appreciated as a historical and personal evolution. The Manichean rhetoric of blood and violence, phantoms and locas, which predominates in the mostly investigated stories of Sueños y realidades (1865)¹⁴, seems to soften and to give way to a narrative form more concerned with exposing the advantages and the divisions of the modern nation such as in Oasis en la vida (1888), which was dedicated to the insurance company "La Buenos Aires."

This later novel is clearly an homage to the modern economic model, if not a "fictionalized publicity" (Zuccotti 13). In a letter to Palma, says Zuccotti, Gorriti explains to her Peruvian friend the financial transactions of the edition sponsored by the Buenos Aires company. Before the novel's publication, as she expresses in several letters to Palma, Gorriti seemed very impressed with the "gold rush" of the Bolsa in Buenos Aires, where fortunes were made overnight. "No es la pasión urbana sino la necesidad y las condiciones materiales de producción lo que determinan a Gorriti a escribir su texto para una compañía de seguros," says Mizraje (11). In general, the author stages her

¹⁴ From Sueños y realidades, "El guante negro," "La hija del mashorquero," and "El lucero del manantial" are the most studied stories along with "Peregrinaciones de una alma triste" and "El pozo de Yocci" from Panorama de la vida. Also, the biographies are favored by the critics.

novels in the rural area, where the landscape becomes an integral part of the romantic narrative. However, as shown in Gorriti's letters to Palma, she did share an enthusiasm for the new cosmopolitan economic model and took personal advantage of it by writing a promotional text. Oasis en la vida, then, responds to another thematic shift in the author's literary production in accordance with her financial needs and personal values.

Panoramas de la vida (1876) is a transitional work between Sueños y realidades and Oasis en la vida, marking a personal and stylistic development. Panoramas is her first publication after returning to Buenos Aires. While the thematic focus is still human suffering, the prose is agreeable, amena, as Mariano Pelliza notes in the prologue. It presents a collection of narratives divided into larger thematic categories. The original stories of this volume are "Peregrinaciones de un alma triste," a novel divided in independent chapters, dedicated to the ladies of Buenos Aires, while "Perfiles divinos" comprises the stories of the martyrs Camila O'Gorman and Felicitas Guerrero. Contrasting these stories with the previous Sueños y realidades, Pelliza declares that the former is a "fantasía que raciocina con disgusto, que moraliza por una necesidad de complemento" (10), while in the present stories,

La señora Gorriti . . . viene ahora a desenvolver una nueva tela; rica de luz y colorido; un esmaltado campo donde a las bellezas naturales que con pluma poética describe, se enlazan las escenas más dramáticas y palpitantes de la vida humana. (9)

Gorriti was first and foremost a professional writer who adapted her style according to the circumstances of her life. Her earlier publications are concerned mainly with the malaise of the Rosas tyranny. Her work then explores the recovery of the

national memory with the biographies of military heroes, pointing to her insertion into the romantic effort to mythologize a glorious national past. Establishing herself in Buenos Aires, in her journalistic production and prose she explores the themes of modernity as with Oasis en la vida. Although the narratives become less tragic, the apparently transgressive messages in defense of women and social critique distract the reader from the underlying conservative message.

For instance, within Panoramas, "Una venganza," chapter VIII of the novel "Peregrinaciones de un alma triste," presents an Indian woman, Uladina, who mobilizes the tribe to punish her husband, the cacique, for escaping with a white woman. In a patriarchal society in which male matrimonial infidelity was mostly accepted, Gorriti presents a heroine who fights for her rights as a spouse. The author guarantees the acceptance of the story by creating a native woman-character, not a white one, as the transgressive protagonist. In spite of wishing for his wife's death and abandoning his tribe, Uladina's husband, who is the traitor cacique, is pictured as being honorable by the way he treats Inés, his white virgin lover. Indeed, Uladina's claim of betrayal is mostly disguised and plotted as a subversive revolt against the white people. She is depicted as choleric, killing the white woman. Consequently, the underlying message of the story is that Uladina deserves to be killed by her husband and she is condemned to be a maligned phantom in the village.

In consonance with the dominant discourse, the rebel woman is punished and the love of a virgin who seeks the conversion of the Indian and the conformity of marriage is protected. The fact that Inés's fiancée, the cacique, was a married man and a fugitive

from his tribe is totally disregarded by the story. Moreover, with no further consequences, the flawed husband and traitor disappears into the flames "estrechando entre sus brazos el cuerpo inanimado de Inés, lanzóse en medio al incendio, y se perdió entre los torbellinos de fuego" (185). By constructing a persuasive and acceptable mythology, Gorriti raises an important feminist issue, marital betrayal, only to punish the betrayed woman and to reaffirm the patriarchal order.

With regard to the depiction of Rosas's government, while denigrating the barbaric times, Gorriti often advocates liberal ideals in a persuasive rhetoric, placing women at the center of the conflict. Using "las tretas del débil," Gorriti was able to balance her feminist views, by which she certainly lived, and created a discourse in which "traces"¹⁵ are not immediately identifiable as transgressive. For example, the sentiment of love is greater than the sentiment of partisan pride in Gorriti's female characters. This characteristic of Gorriti's writings is described by Masiello in Between Civilization as a trait of woman writers of the nineteenth century. The female characters love men from both parties, many times disobeying their family's affiliation. In general, they are a cathartic medium between partisan warriors.

However, in "El guante negro," the narrative plan is changed; here, forced by the love of a Unitarian woman, a Federalist man betrays his family. This story presents Federalist characters with an intense sentiment of honor and patriotic pride usually

¹⁵ "The producer of the text constructs the text as an interpretation of the world, or of the facets of the world which are then in focus; formal features of the text are *traces* of that interpretation. The traces constitute *cues* for the text interpreter, who draws upon her assumptions and expectations (incorporated in frames) to construct her interpretation of the text. Thus, text interpretation is *the interpretation of an interpretation* ... both the production and the interpretation of texts are creative, constructive interpretative processes" (Fairclough 80-81).

reserved for Unitarians in the mainstream literature of the time, Amalia being the canonic example. This story presents a Unitarian woman who seeks vengeance and destroys a Federalist family. The Federalist warrior, at last fights on the side of his family but dies in love with the Unitarian. Through this love conflict, Gorriti's main concern is to display the divide in the country and the effect of it on individual lives. By switching the mainstream partisan literary code of the time, she projects an often covert ideology. The author derides Rosas's dictatorship, but not the Federalists, and she usually sides with the Unitarians more out of the coincidence of values than out of partisanship. Gorriti defends a unified nation, one of prosperity and peace above all partisan conflicts. Her lack of partisanship can be appreciated in the literary code switching, forming new cultural mythologies in which a Unitarian woman may disrupt a family and a Federalist man keeps his honor in spite of his love. Thus, in her stories Gorriti constantly condemns the implications of politics in individuals' lives such as the consequences of exile and all forms of violence produced by partisan politics.

In spite of the seeming contradictions in her work, Gorriti presents a consistent ideological framework in which she praises the traditional model of women while she welcomes modernity where women have a better place... at home! She condemns partisanship, but above all tyranny. In a conference paper, Mizraje declares that Gorriti was not an innocent writer,

Juana Manuela Gorriti, como la gran diva del movimiento literario argentino (y acaso latinoamericano) decimonónico, es la mujer del desafío y la ternura.

Provocativa y maternal a un tiempo, consciente de su rol, de las determinaciones de su sexo, de las construcciones que en torno a él hacen sus contemporáneos.

"Nada hay más despiadado para una mujer como su sexo", sentencia convencida frente a Lo íntimo que planeaba publicar. (10)

To participate in a male discourse considered transgressive for a woman writer, Gorriti writes in "bloody" language, with exaggerated overtones of love and betrayal. Moreover, the construction of palimpsests "galvanizes" her writing in both senses, on the one hand making the story dynamic and on the other shielding its message and protecting its author. In La narrativa dialógica de Juana Manuela Gorriti (1999), Hebe Beatriz de Molina studies the structure of the stories in relation to the narrative voices. The diversity of narrators permits the authorial voice to freely make transgressive statements and changes to historical facts. The referent of time is regularly presented in retrospect, creating temporal layers to convey the dark past of Rosismo from the point of view of the achievements of modernity. The liberal present is reflected in the peaceful landscape which serves to punctuate the mood of the story, following the general dichotomy of the progressive present and the malaise of Rosismo. The story "Camila O'Gorman" is structured according to this general pattern.

Royo places the story "Camila O'Gorman" in the genre of the fantastic (174). According to Tzvetan Todorov, the genre of the fantastic responds to a nineteenth-century authorial strategy of disguise in approaching controversial themes such as sexuality and religion,

The penalization of certain acts by society provokes a penalization invoked in and by the individual [author] himself, forbidding him to approach certain taboo themes. More than a simple pretext, the fantastic is a means of combat against

this kind of censorship as well as the other: sexual excess will be more readily accepted by any censor if they are attributed to the devil. (The Fantastic 159)

The execution of Camila O'Gorman and the fact that she was a twenty-year-old aristocratic woman who eloped with a priest must have made her story taboo in Argentine society. In 1870, twenty two years after Camila's death, six before Gorriti's publication, Rosas was still justifying his conviction: "la urgente necesidad de ejemplar castigo, para prevenir otros escándalos semejantes o parecidos" (Rosas qtd. in Kisnerman 21). This chapter has argued that Gorriti was a determined writer who was conscious of censorship, though she tackled forbidden themes. Her approach to the life of Camila was no different. As a transgressive writer, she was the first woman to fictionalize the life of Camila as a transgressor woman. As a nation builder, she paradoxically constructed a mythology in which she admonished transgression. Royo rightly concludes that "Camila, no sólo paga con su vida el gesto de una rebeldía heroica, sino que su caso pasa a la historia como el máximo escarmiento *de y para* la mujer que osara la profanación de su deber sagrado " (italics mine 165). By appropriating the symbolic historical character who dared to challenge the official order in the name of love, Gorriti reinstates the general norm which places woman as the moral keeper of patriarchal society.

Siendo en América el siglo XIX el de máxima vigencia de las Ilustración y ésta el paradigma de la Razón Universal, lo esperable era que una autora de ideología liberal reaccionara atacando la estructura patriarcal que asignaba a la mujer el único espacio privado del hogar en obediencia servil al mandato social. Camila O'Gorman no es una víctima más de los opositores del régimen, su muerte es la

metáfora de la situación de la mujer en una sociedad caracterizada por el patriarcado como sistema de dominación. (Royo 164)

Royo's argument points to the key of Gorriti's choice of her heroine: even though she was a liberal, she was not a feminist in the terms we understand today. She did not seek the liberation of woman from patriarchal society; on the contrary, Gorriti defended its principles. Influenced by her family history, her financial needs and her public persona, it could not be expected that Gorriti would attack the established order. Therefore, Gorriti chose to disguise in nieblas her transgressions, as she wrote to Palma, "el mal no se debe pintar con lodo, sino con nieblas."

2.2. "LA ENCUBIERTA"

Up to the time of Gorriti's publication, the life of Camila O'Gorman had been the subject of long discussions through the press and theme of literary texts since her elopement with Uladislao (Ladislao). For political purposes, Camila's elopement was condemned by the Unitarian press, which called for punishment; however, after her death, the same press condemned the dictator for the atrocity of the execution. Since then, Camila's execution has been remembered as the ultimate violence of the dictatorship, becoming a symbol against tyranny. As explained in the previous chapter, the many poems and historical accounts on Camila's life tell the story of the ingenuous girl who read romantic novels and was seduced by a priest and taken away from her family. We can also attest that vision by the letter Maria Josefa wrote Rosas pledging for Camila's life in those terms. Therefore, I see the story of the transgressive Camila, who officially declared herself in agreement with Uladislao in escaping Buenos Aires to live

as man and woman, as a taboo story in a society where she was not the first nor the last lover of an ecclesiastic man, but the only one to openly confront Family, Church and Society. Her execution passed into history as a positive symbol against tyranny. When represented as the "innocent seduced girl" her image reinforces the patriarchal power over women, because a man had to seduce her, she had no will of her own. But, for the nineteenth-century frame of mind, her story becomes a taboo when Camila O'Gorman is remembered as the second of her aristocratic family to cause public scandals for her love affair.¹⁶ Moreover, Camila's official testimony guarantees she was conscious and in agreement with her lover. Thus, Gorriti skillfully raises the reader's expectations from the title "Camila O'Gorman" in the section "Perfiles divinos,"

...bajo cuyo rubro se designan los dramáticos e interesantes episodios de Camila O'Gorman y Felicitas Guerrero. La belleza y la desgracia siempre simpáticas, siempre atractivas para los espíritus cultivados, darán ocasión a la distinguida autora, para ofrecernos en esas narraciones un nuevo testimonio de su talento e inimitable gusto para contar y describir la naturaleza. (C. Casavalle 7)

As noted by the editor Casavalle in the prologue, the reader expects a story already known and a version offered by a known and respected female writer. The novelty then, is not in the subject of the tale, but in the story teller. For Barthes,

Mythical speech is made of a material which has *already* been worked on so as to make it suitable for communication: it is because all the materials of myth

¹⁶Her grandmother Anna Perichón was the lover of the viceroy Laniers and because of that she lived in exile, continuing her affairs with powerful men. In her old age she was in domestic prison up to her death.

(whether pictorial or written) presuppose a signifying consciousness, that one can reason about them while discounting their substance. (Mythologies 110)

Confronted by a taboo subject, Gorriti chose to write "Camila O'Gorman" con nieblas, transforming the life of the protagonist into an exemplary tale for women. The author opted for a historical heroine, while changing the historical facts to accommodate the ideology transmitted in the text. On the fictionalization of history, Hebe Molina explains that "las modificaciones a esta historia revelan que Gorriti no quiere crear un conflicto moral y religioso" (254). Molina's declaration may be understood on two levels, first, the author's preoccupation to not attack any institutionalized powers, and second, the taboo which still surrounded the case of Camila O'Gorman.

Though critics have pointed to the use of the fantastic by Gorriti, "Camila O'Gorman" does not strictly pertain to the fantastic genre because it does not present a supernatural phenomenon. It does apply fantastic techniques through the use of suspense and evocation. The reader's attention is drawn to the known story, which becomes the empty signifier, in order to tell a new one: the testimony of Colonel G. and his love for an angel/evil woman. The main characteristics of the narrative structure are the different voices and the imagery employed. Although the images are common to the romantic period and especially to women writers,¹⁷ such as the evocation of nature and sentimental hyperboles, Gorriti uses images for symbolic suggestion, in a way that Todorov explains in his work Symbolism and Interpretation (1982).

¹⁷ For instance, see Juana Manso's Los misterios del Plata (1846), which is permeated by descriptions of a symbolic nature.

Todorov tells us that intratextual symbolism allows the reader to construct the traits of a character by deducing its attributes, which are constructed within the fiction by its actions and sayings, without the author naming them directly (66). Symbolism can also be based on collective memory; however, "if the number 'three' has to symbolize something, it is not because it evokes this or that in the reader's collective memory, but because it appears in certain specific contexts, within the very work that is being interpreted" (67). The story "Camila O'Gorman" is constructed within these characteristics. The author distances herself from the history by constructing the fiction as a three-level narrative. On one hand, she relies on the reader's common knowledge of the facts, and on the other she builds a symbolic fiction. The protagonist's character is delineated through "tropes of the intellect," such as la encubierta and el dominó negro, to point out Camila's transgressive personality. "Tropes of intellect are those whose meaning is established immediately and unequivocally; the statement conveyed may consequently be true or false" (Todorov 82). At the same time, because of the unstable identity, one real and one fictional, of the signifier /Camila/ to whom those attributes are attached, the new meaning established by the tropes is unequivocal, but it becomes irrelevant whether the new meaning corresponds to reality or not. Let's keep in mind that the "real" Camila functions in the story as an empty signifier. Therefore, the negative tropes are applied to the construction of the new mythology of Camila O'Gorman.

Gorriti creates the story "Camila O'Gorman" by using three different narrators, building three narratives around the myth of Camila O'Gorman. The voice of the first narrator can be identified with that of the author, exalting the founding heroes Belgrano, Rivadavia, and Saavedra and the amada tierra argentina (369). In "Juana Manuela Gorriti

and the Persistence of Memory," Beatriz Urraca analyses the importance of the landscape in the author's writings, seeing in it a permanence of national sentiment,

She approached the land through the specific, and in particular places she created a localized microcosm of the nation. Gorriti's identification with the local scene is paralleled in her work by her imagining the nation as a community of individuals. Only they change, only they make changes, but none of these changes ever affects what is essential--the land that prevails through political and military turmoil. (170)

The opening and the final lines of "Camila O'Gorman," which are in the voice of the first narrator, create a durable memory of the "blanco fantasma de una mártir" that now rests under exuberant vegetation (370). In describing the landscape, Gorriti creates powerful metaphors of the future of a nation that preserves its memory. The story opens with a description of a radiant spring day, which establishes the well being of the narrator's current time. The closing sentence condenses a series of metaphors that links the landscape with the memory of Camila:

A la mañana siguiente visitamos el paredón de nuestra memoria.

A su pie una verde alfombra de vegetación alzaba floridos sus exuberantes vástagos; en sus grietas anidaban las tórtolas, y en su negra cima una alondra enviaba al aire alegres cantos. (386)

Vástagos are 'new buds' or the offspring of a family, a metaphor for a new generation in the country. Tórtolas are turtle doves, commonly used as a metaphor for a loving couple, such as Camila and Uladislao. Finally, the singing alondra, a gray bird with black collar, is a reference to Camila's black hair and angelical voice. Furthermore,

the lark is a metaphor for the human drive for happiness, its "flight into the bright dawn light suggests youthful enthusiasm, ardour and happiness in being alive . . . its song is a song of joy" (Chevallier 592). By closing the story with this sequence of images, Gorriti fuses all concepts delineated throughout the story: Argentine society overcame Rosas's tyranny and Camila, by the cruelty of her death, is transformed into a dove, becoming a symbol of "peace, harmony and re-found happiness" (Chevallier 306).

Thus, "Camila O'Gorman" in the voice of the first narrator, the voice of authorship, is inserted into the main characteristics of Gorriti's nation-building literary production. "A ghostly atmosphere pervades several of Gorriti's short stories as a metaphor for the past and an expression of women's traumatic suffering amidst violent attempts to consolidate the nation " (Urraca 163). Through the myth of Camila O'Gorman, Gorriti in the voice of the author-narrator reminds the reader of the broken lives left by the brutality of Rosas and the fratricidal wars without betraying the memory of Rosas's martyr.

In the story, Gorriti suggests that Colonel G., the second narrator, could have fulfilled his love for Camila, if it were not for "la luctuosa época que pesaba como un sudario sobre la hermosa metrópoli del Plata" (376) under Rosas's government. The male voice narrates his adolescent memories, triggered by "el aire, la luz; una ráfaga de perfume o de melodía, se combinan en torno nuestro formando una cadena interminable de reminiscencias" (371). Feeling past emotions in a present time shows the impact of past events in one's life. By creating a literary atmosphere for the nostalgic memory of someone who was deeply affected by the tragedy of Camila's execution, Gorriti adds one more layer to the palimpsest constructed in this story, which serves her purpose of

exposing individual broken lives as a result of Rosismo and the partisan wars and her intention to preserve a national memory.

Gorriti also uses the male voice of Colonel G. to promote women's morality, advocating the liberal project of the nation. Panoramas is part of the second phase of Gorriti's writings, after her return to Argentina. Exploring this second period, Isabel Quintana affirms that Gorriti as the editor of La Alborada del Plata was active in building the social imaginary of the nation, and in opening a space for discussion of women's emancipation and their role as shapers and keepers of "republican virtues" (76). Quintana also states that Gorriti develops a double moral code: one private and another public, which "se inscribe dentro del discurso dominante (liberal y masculino) en donde se afirma que la mujer debe ser el ángel guardián del hogar y la educadora de nuevos ciudadanos" (77). Indeed, in "Camila O'Gorman" the reader senses a condemnation of Camila's behavior through the voice of Colonel G., the male narrator. He refers negatively to Camila through the metonyms el dominó negro and la encubierta, as is suggested by her black costume and the cloak which hides her face. Moreover, the tale of Camila's wayward actions leading to a love affair with the priest, without mentioning her family, contrasts with the model family life of the colonel. In several instances he points to her possibly immoral behavior;¹⁸ the clearest instance is an allusion to the moment of the heroine's escape with the priest, which is only inferred by the reader who is acquainted with the story:

¹⁸ "La joven de la negra cabellera paseó en torno una mirada rápida, *cual si buscara algo*,"
"Las notas de aquel sagrado cántico se exhalaban impregnadas de amor; *pero de un amor humano*"
"pero *aquella* que lo produjera *había desaparecido*, sin que me fuera dado divisarle, *a pesar de que*,
apostado en el atrio del templo, *mis miradas abarcaban, en toda su prolongada extensión, las tres calles que desde allí se descubren.*"

Y se puso a bajar con paso rápido la calle de Santa Fe, que desciende al río. A la mitad de aquella tortuosa pendiente, *vila DETENERSE ENCENDER un fósforo*, cuya llama hizo oscilar sobre su cabeza. En el mismo instante una luz idéntica brilló bajo la fronda de un grupo de sauces en la ribera. La encubierta, al verla, apresuró el paso, y desapareció en las tinieblas. (377)

"Camila O'Gorman" is a fictional biography; nevertheless, from the title the reader identifies its protagonist as the martyr of Rosas. The author's purpose is not only to censure inappropriate moral behavior for women, but also to portray the negative stimulus at that 'time of terror' in national society. Camila belongs to that period, while the colonel's voice speaks from and to the present of the diegesis. To forge a contrast, the character of Colonel G. displays an appropriate liberal upbringing in a family that cared for his emotional and cultural development. Following his father, who went to Europe on a mission for Rosas; therefore a Federalist, the young colonel went to forget "los peligros de un amor indigno" (374) and spent his time as a true modern liberal:

La vista de nuevos horizontes, la sucesión infinita de escenarios en que la vida se agita en todos sentidos; la contemplación de las grandes obras del arte; los estudios serios a que hube de consagrarme . . . Así pasé un año entre París y Londres, trabajando con mi padre en el cumplimiento de la misión que allá lo llevara. (378-79)

Thus, Gorriti advocates unified politics under the dominant discourse by constructing an oxymoron when placing Unitarian values in a Federalist character. Panoramas is a publication sponsored by a liberal government in a time of political unification or Unitarian supremacy. However, the Unitarian liberal government practiced

many of the same atrocities of the former dictatorship. As a female nation builder, one of liberal principles not Unitarian per se, Gorriti avoids the use of partisan words to advocate overtly for unified politics and reverses the political model of "civilization and barbarism" in the character of Colonel G.

Finally, the difficulty and the transgression of addressing the life of Camila O'Gorman by a woman writer of the nineteenth century is resolved in the story through the resource of a third narrator. In the crowd that is waiting to watch the execution, an anonymous person will inform Colonel G. of Camila's story and will tell why she is being executed with the priest. After this revelation, Colonel G. recognizes the same angelical voice as he listens to Camila talking to Uladislao. Then, the passionate colonel is overcome with despair. The importance of this romantic passage lies in the skill of Gorriti, who resorts to an unauthorized voice. The anonymous narrator spreads rumors as well as facts, freely displacing the historical account. It is known that Camila met Uladislao at her own house, the priest being her brother's seminary friend. But the misinformed narrator states,

Lo amó cuando era libre todavía. Ella lo ha declarado en el interrogatorio . . . El amante, inducido en error por la presencia de un rival favorecido con la influencia del padre de su amada, juzgola infiel a sus promesas y en un arrebato de desesperación, huyó de ella, y fue a pedir en un país extranjero las órdenes sagradas. (382)

The story follows with the lovers being reunited when Uladislao returns to the parish of Socorro as a priest. Then, they escape, surrendering to their passion. Enrique Molina published together with his Una sombra donde sueña Camila O'Gorman (1973)

the historical "classification" of Camila's detention. In it, she declares that she persuaded Uladislao to escape with her in clear conscience because in Buenos Aires he could not love her openly.¹⁹ Another deviation from the facts is the inclusion of a jealous lover in the story, "[d]esde la fuga de los amantes, el pretendiente desdeñado de Camila consagrose a buscarlos" (383). It is very unlikely that the historical details were unknown to Gorriti.

Therefore, "Camila O'Gorman" is a fictional biography whose main argument is not the life of the person who gave the title to the story; instead, this biography is a literary text that conveys Gorriti's main concerns in her writings: to preserve the memory of national heroes, in this case a martyr; to advocate on behalf of women, setting Camila as a negative model; and to promote a "civilized" way of life without partisan differences, while reiterating the darkness of the Rosas era. In order to achieve all her purposes, the author resorts to a "clouded writing," creating palimpsests and concentric stories told by several narrators that will hide the transgressive creative voice which does not want to be caught. Gorriti writes in Lo íntimo about her Peruvian friend and fellow writer Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera

Un hombre puede decir cuánto le dicte la justicia: el chubasco que le devuelvan caerá a sus pies sin herirlo. No así una mujer, a quien se puede herir de muerte con una palabra ... aunque ésta sea mentira. (qtd. in Batticuore 24)

¹⁹ "estaba en la presunción de que no hera [sic] presbítero, y que no pudiendo dar este [sic] una satisfacción a la sociedad de Buenos Ayres, lo indujo a salir del Pais para que se efectuara lo más pronto posible estando uno y otro satisfechos a los ojos de la Providencia..." (Camila's classification qtd. in Molina 314).

Mercedes Cabello, who finished her days in a mental hospital, published Blanca Sol and Las consecuencias. She had the courage to start demanding some rights for women that were unthinkable at the time (Batticuore 23-24 and note 5, 26). Following the advice she gave to Cabello, Juana Manuela Gorriti established herself as a respected writer by trade, coping with the dominant codes of her times. "[N]o herir susceptibilidades; lisonjear, mentir en ese sentido; derramar miel por todas partes: ni una gota de hiel, que se torna para quien la vierte veneno mortal" (Lo íntimo 103). Although Gorriti was cautious in her writings to not hurt any sensibilities, her transgression in "Camila O'Gorman" was to publish the story within the series of "Perfiles divinos," which perpetuates Camila not only as the martyr of Rosas but as a 'divine' transgressor, the symbolic alondra which sings joyfully in a new era of the country. Answering the question posed by Gilbert and Gubar, which serves as the chapter's epigraph, Gorriti had the talent to achieve covert transgressions with her use of the language, "in her own vocabulary," using "her own timbre," and "insisting on her own point of view." However, she does not "talk back to the king," she joins his voice, participating in his discourse.

2.3. WOMEN TRANSGRESORS

In order to contextualize Gorriti's literary transgressions and accommodations to the dominant discourse, it is important to contrast her political standpoint as a writer with those of other prominent women of the time who suffered different destinies with no less contribution to the nineteenth-century literature and the national project. Masiello in her introduction to the English translation of Gorriti's Sueños y realidades points out Gorriti's

interest in befriending Juana Manso and Eduarda Mansilla, two major writers of her time. According to Masiello, Gorriti had great respect for Manso while Mansilla did not reciprocate to her camaraderie (xxix).

In French and from Europe, Mansilla, who was related to Rosas and "defended his political world" (xxx) in her writings, confronted the new established order authorized by her social position and fortune, as well as by the distance which protected her. With Pablo ou la vie dans les pampas (1868) Mansilla "issued a rejoinder to Sarmiento to challenge the legitimacy of his presidential Unitarian projects" (xxxii).

On the other hand, the life of Camila O'Gorman could have suited Manso's daring ideals expressed in Los misterios del Plata (1846) and La familia del comendador (1854). In Los misterios del Plata, Manso "reviews the success and failure of marriage as an institution" (Masiello, Between Civilization 72). La familia del comendador is an anti-slavery fiction "which linked the plight of African slaves with the oppression of white women" (Masiello, Dreams xxx). After the publication of this novel, which criticizes the Brazilian social context, Manso left that country to return poor to Argentina.

Exiled in several countries, Juana Manso was more than once publicly accused of madness for her progressive thinking. To the end she suffered persecution; she was barred from being buried at the Recoleta cemetery for her religious beliefs. In spite of that, she is a "towering figure" of the nineteenth-century, in the words of Masiello (xxxiii). Manso was able to accomplish a lasting educational project for its coincidence with Sarmiento's ideals. About her, Sarmiento would say: "la Manso, a quien apenas conocí, fue *el único hombre* en tres o cuatro millones de habitantes de Chile y Argentina que comprendiese mi obra de educación" (italics mine, qtd. in Sosa 127). She also

received the support of Bartolomé Mitre, Carlos Avellaneda, and José Mármol, "pero los enemigos triunfan a la postre," says Lily Sosa (172). Manso's personal sufferings and her public achievements are a statement of the limitations of her own expression in the public arena. Manso's triumph was to "speak with the king's voice," was to be "the only man" who understood Sarmiento's educational project.

Gorriti, instead, chose an effaced transgression, dictated by the need to publish. In her writings she explored her own history and the history of the nation as her own, blurring the division between private and public. Victoria Ocampo says much later: "La historia argentina, que era la de nuestras familias, justo es recordarlo" (Testemonios 28). Gorriti belonged to one of these founding families and wrote the official history in her biographies. It was no different with "Camila;" in 1876, even Gorriti's hatred of the tyranny is secondary to the necessity of writing an exemplary literature. Gorriti was born into a family that shaped the national frontiers and married a man that shaped Bolivian politics. Therefore, as a natural extension, she contributed to the shaping of Argentina's national official literature. If she rebelled in the realm of the personal, she opted for a conservative voice in the public arena. A certain degree of women's emancipation was already part of the liberal thought of the mid nineteenth-century, accepted and supported by male intellectuals, such as Sarmiento, and put into motion by the work of Manso as an educator. Gorriti's feminist ideals did not go any further in her fiction than the already accepted limits of emancipation. On the contrary, Gorriti criticized the Peruvian Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera for being aggressive in her novels.

Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera (1845-1909) was a gifted intellectual with the knowledge and the ideals proper to revolutionary men. She educated herself in the

library of her father, who was a progressive man. At twenty, she moved to Lima where she was admired for her beauty, grace, and intelligence. However, her frank personality would raise uneasiness, "presentaba ... una altanera energía que respondía a cierta masculinidad de su temperamento...", as defined by Abelardo Gamarra (qtd. in Glave 103). Supported by her husband, an Italian doctor, she published her poems, novels, and articles and participated in Gorriti's literary soirées. After her husband's death, publishing became her major activity. Her articles called for innovation and reform in the literary arena and she assigned to the "illustrated" woman the role of keeping the moral values in a progressive society (Glave 92-93). Oswaldo Voysesst concludes that to Mercedes Cabello,

el papel de la novela es «la investigación del ser moral» (Blanca Sol iv). Por lo tanto, ella subrayará la dimensión espiritual del hombre donde el naturalismo europeo destacaba la condición causalista y material . . . El elemento romántico de la autora peruana otorga predominio al sentimiento sobre la razón fría, calculadora y «materialista». . . al creerse continuador (o reformador) del naturalismo zolesco, sobrepone a éste una idealización del bien. Partiendo de esta convicción, su obra se ocupará, por un lado, de la clase alta y dirigente, y por otro, examinará los problemas de esta clase desde el ángulo «espiritual». (v)

The protagonists of Cabello's novel Blanca Sol (1889), even though determined by their social condition, are individuals anchored in their morality. Through their spiritual values they succeed or fall. The protagonist Blanca Sol is the product of an ill society. She is a strong woman, one that could reach the sun, but was educated to praise materialism from her mother (ill educated herself) and a Catholic school. Therefore, she

chooses money and coquetry instead of love. Nevertheless, Blanca is a woman that preserves her dignity while she can live by the standards she learned. Once she loses her fortune, she does not "mend" herself, but seeks prostitution as a form of survival, "losing her dignity." On the other hand, her antagonist Josefina lives away from the vices of society. Because of that, she is able to reflect her moral strength and transform the life of a valuable man, Alcides, who has been seduced by Blanca and the environment he lived in. Through Josefina's love, Alcides regenerates himself and "extracts" from society the malign influence of Blanca. Thus, Cabello's novel condemns, not materialism itself, but the glorification of it, in detriment to morality. Like Josefina, women who are not frivolous and work are role models capable of securing a balance between progress and moral principles.

Gorriti criticized Blanca Sol severely, not for its content but for a woman to dare to portray so clearly the ills of society, expecting to survive as a writer. Gorriti writes to Palma on February 4, 1889, "El lodo hiede, y ofende, tanto al que lo maneja, como a quien lo percibe. Además, se crea enemigos: si incómodos para un hombre, mortales para una mujer" (56). For Gorriti, then, a woman writer was not allowed to and should not confront the established order. Indeed, Gorriti's concerns were valid. After enduring years of derogatory criticism, Mercedes Cabello was declared mentally insane and was interned in a hospice where she died.

In conclusion, Gorriti preserved her popularity through a "galvanized" writing, in which the text "Camila O'Gorman" is an example which places Gorriti as a mythologist building Argentine culture during the nineteenth-century. Gorriti's career "spans nearly a

century of literary modernization . . . Her work pivots on the ambiguities of a decisive nation-building movement that will usher Latin America from colony to modern state" (Masiello Dreams vii). The author's thematic choice depended closely on her life experience, on the blurred frontiers of politics and family. The course of her life and financial needs consciously determined the evolution of her writings. Gorriti contributed to the project of the nation, defending conservative ideals for women and innovating and promoting the literary circle, for women and men. A century later her life and work have been rediscovered and evaluated according to new trends of criticism, corresponding to the affirmation of feminism in Latin America. The story "Camila O'Gorman" testifies for Gorriti's skill in participating in the male discourse from a female writer's standpoint.

3. María Luisa Bemberg: Visual Storyteller

*The woman cannot transform the codes; she can only transgress them,
make trouble, provoke, pervert, turn the representation into a trap...*
Teresa De Lauretis

The oeuvre of the late Argentine film director María Luisa Bemberg (1922-1995) is a conscious transgressive political act by the choice of themes and the cinematic language of her films. Her films discuss women's condition in a sociopolitical context. Bemberg portrays women, fictional characters and historical figures, in an act of transgression that fails because, as she demonstrates, also women have an unconscious role in perpetuating a patriarchal system from which it is nearly impossible to rebel against. Through her art, she attempted and mostly succeeded in showing the way power was exercised in Argentine society. Through her films, Bemberg not only denounces the power structure, but analyzes the "mechanics of power in themselves" as thought by Michel Foucault:

The way power was exercised – concretely and in detail – with its specificity, its techniques and tactics, was something that no one attempt to ascertain; they contented themselves with denouncing it in a polemical and global fashion as it existed among the 'others,' in the adversary camp. [Soviet socialist power was called totalitarianism; Western capitalism denounced as class domination] but the mechanics of power in themselves were never analyzed. ("Truth and Power" 57-58)

This chapter explores the transgressive character of the sociopolitical images of Argentina that Bemberg created with her films. It argue that the visual images created by

Bemberg represent a relevant connection to the historical time of her films and that she projects a new social imagination of Argentina analyzing the mechanisms of patriarchal power from within her social class. She explores the construct of power in the upper class, which historically governed the nation's political events. Therefore, her life experience cannot be overlooked, as it is fundamental to understanding her work. Jorge Ruffinelli, in "María Luisa Bemberg y el principio de la transgresión," explains the positive contradiction of her life and work. He says, "si consiguió filmar algunas memorables películas argentinas del siglo XX fue por la capacidad de transgredir, pero esa capacidad era en parte posible gracias a un poder (de clase) cuya misión es contener las transgresiones" (17). As a woman, Bemberg occupied a "borderline" position within her social group; at the same time, by her social class she enjoyed a "centric" position of power in Argentine society as a whole. Bemberg distinguished herself by developing a transgressive critique of her own class in relationship to the patriarchal powers of Argentina. She was capable of doing so because of the perspective acquired by her social and cultural background. Bemberg's life experience and her social position are both theme and facilitators of her career as a filmmaker. First, because her narratives are drawn from experience, she was able to articulate a feminist discourse which is inserted in the struggle for political power. This is an innovative cinematic perspective of woman and society; as a result, Bemberg's films invite the audience to imagine a new interpretation of relations of power and its effects. Second, occupying a position of social and financial power, she was able to surround herself with the cinema professionals that fulfilled her own lack of technical knowledge.

Studies on Bemberg takes into account the fact that she belongs to the upper social class in Argentina, and the feminist approach of her films. There are three major works published entirely on the films and life of María Luisa Bemberg. First, Clara Fontana published María Luisa Bemberg in the series "Los directores del cine argentino" in 1993. This volume is a comprehensive biography of Bemberg and commentary on all her films. In 2000, five years after María Luisa's death, John King co-edited An Argentine Passion, María Luisa Bemberg and her films, where we are able to access important articles and testimonies about her life and work from a variety of points of view. Finally, in 2002, the Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos dedicated an issue to Bemberg, given her contribution to Argentine cinema and the importance of her work to the study of feminist theory. Furthermore, there is a dissertation dedicated to the study of the films Miss Mary and Camila, defended by García Santillán in 1997. Santillán pays homage to the filmmaker for her innovation in Argentine cinema.

Bemberg renovated Argentine cinema. She responded to the country's call for renovation in the mid-eighties with a new aesthetics and also established a space for women filmmakers. Her cinema presents marked differences from the political films of the sixties made in Argentina, although it is a socially committed cinema. Bemberg inaugurates a new symbolic film language that also receives strong influence from the European masters. Lita Stantic, the Argentine producer, states that art direction and editing were Bemberg's strengths. As an art director, she mastered the use of color and light, enhancing the careful construction of each scene. These characteristics make her films appealing to the public, which is one of the guarantees of commercial success.

This analysis concentrates first on the historical moments of Argentina that are pertinent to the filmmakers' oeuvre and on the biography of María Luisa Bemberg. Then, applying the theories of Michel Foucault on power relations, Homi Bhabha on production of culture, and the Marxist interpretation of cultural texts offered by Fredric Jameson, I will expose the transgressive character of Bemberg's films. The film Miss Mary will be analyzed here not only because it is the most autobiographical of her productions, but also because this film embodies the most transgressive aspects of her films, as a feminist and as a political analyst. Bemberg's films are a political statement of her time and, as Jameson clarifies the Marxist dogma, "there is nothing that is not social and historical – indeed, that everything is 'in the last analysis' political" (20).

3.1. BEING A BEMBERG IN ARGENTINA

The historical period in which Bemberg was raised, along with her family history and the political atmosphere during her career development, are the basis and the force of her transgression. The historical periods to be analyzed in relationship to María Luisa's work and life are the Conservative Restoration (1930-1943), some aspects of the first Peronist Era (1943-1955) and the production of culture following the dictatorship of the Process (after 1983). The historical information discussed here is based on the works of Luis Alberto Romero and Marysa Navarro.

The period from 1930 to 1943 is known in Argentina as the Infamous Decade for the abuse of power and the unconstitutionality of politics. From the Centennial of national independence in 1910, Argentina was developing as a diverse society in which

part of the immigrant population was settled and politics was changing toward free representation. As the middle sectors were gaining strength, they started to displace the political power of the traditional classes. Therefore, to overthrow Hipólito Yrigoyen from his second free elected presidency it was necessary to form an alliance between the propertied class, the military, and the nationalists.

The coup of 1930 was prepared by nationalist propaganda and action. The celebrated writer Leopoldo Lugones was a very influential nationalist; he was "el primer vocero del nacionalismo de derecha en Argentina" (Navarro 43). The poet, essayist, and fiction writer embraced several political credos but none as strongly as nationalism. Celebrating the centennial of the Battle of Ayacucho in Peru, Lugones delivered the official speech known as "La hora de la espada" (1924) urging Latin American countries to opt for the military, for a strong hierarchy in the government, and the Catholic Church as the fundamental pillars of a nation. He also wrote the inaugural address for General José Félix Uriburu, who overthrew Yrigoyen.

The conservative restoration was marked by electoral corruption, repression, and the suspension of constitutional guarantees. The conservatives were following a new form of nationalism inspired by Spain, Italy, and Germany and were guided by a fear of communism. It was a time of social protest worldwide; however, in Argentina, the workers were claiming basic working benefits, not any structural changes (Romero 60). General Uriburu's cabinet was formed by the most conservative oligarchs and marked the end of constitutional powers in Argentina for several decades (Navarro 67).

Peronism is still a controversial topic in the Argentine imagination, it is a phenomenon not yet fully understood. Bemberg closes Miss Mary with a still that

affirms that the Peronist era changed the course of Argentina's history. The oligarchy was never to fully recover its political power. As Romero points out, for the first time labor conditions in Argentina were more equal (93).

After becoming a central figure in the political arena, Juan Domingo Perón was forced to resign from his post on October 8, 1945 and imprisoned. These actions had extreme negative repercussion for the conservatives. Romero narrates that "On October 17, 1945, thousands of protesters gathered in the Plaza de Mayo and demanded Perón's freedom and the restitution of the offices he had held ... Perón was released, spoke to the crowd, and returned to the center of power, now as an official candidate for the presidency" (96). He won the election in 1946 and maintained power through popular support. Perón continued as a symbol of justice and protection for the lower classes even after being deposed in 1955.

Perón's popularity depended upon strong state propaganda machinery. "The Peronist regime did not attack any fundamental interest of the traditional upper-classes, although some segments of the latter may have been adversely affected by Perón's agricultural policies" (Romero 114). During Peronism, proceedings were brought against the Bemberg family. In 1947, José Luis Torres published an article called "Últimas etapas de Bemberg" where he denounced the non-payment of estate tax. Since 1925, Torres had been writing articles expressing anti-oligarchic sentiment. Jorge Enrique Freeland introduces Torres giving him credit for fighting alone against the abuses of the oligarchy for which he was imprisoned many times (Torres 7-8). Although the judicial case lasted for over a decade, it did not hurt the Bembergs' reputation nor their fortune. The Peronist regime's opposition to the upper class was more efficient as an instrument of

propaganda than actual policy changes. The ideological representation of the oligarchy by populist governments and the workers' movement reinforced the oligarchy's image as exploiters and oppressors. Thus, the Peronist propaganda built upon the traditional families' direct involvement in politics which favored economic regulations in the advantage of their businesses. Perón created a mythology of popular power by "repressing" the economic power of families like the Bembergs.

Therefore, opposition to Perón was more articulated coming from the upper-class. As Romero points out, "from the opposition, the resistance to Peronism's political practices was combined with irritation over the Peronist brand of social democratization. In much of this there was a horrified reaction by polite society to the popular invasion..." (Romero 118). Victoria Ocampo dedicated articles against Peronism in Sur. According to Tomás Eloy Martínez, author of La novela de Perón (1985) and Santa Evita (1995), Jorge Luis Borges invented a degrading background of Eva Perón that became credible. Finally, members of the upper-class preferred to live abroad during Peronism, as the Bemberg family did. This cultural battle resembled the antagonism between "civilization and barbarism," dividing society in powerful mythologies of class representations.

From the early nineteenth century onward, the dichotomy of "civilization and barbarism" has survived in the Argentine imagination. With this dichotomy, presented in most of Sarmiento's writings and chiefly in Facundo, Sarmiento had the intention of setting high social standards for the Argentine people. The oligarchy is the class that achieved the wealth and education necessary to resemble the European model dictated by Sarmiento and his generation. For this reason, the oligarchy is a strong myth in the social

imagination and it is associated with the construction of the nation and its political destiny.

In this context, it is important to define the concept of the upper class in Argentina to better situate the problems involved with Bemberg's filmmaking. José Luis de Imaz provides a definition of the upper-class of Buenos Aires from a survey done in 1959 by the Sociology Department of the University of Buenos Aires. Among the characteristics, he states that traditional families have been rooted in Buenos Aires for at least four generations. Since the arrival of the first member of the family, the Bembergs were members of Club del Progreso from 1853 (Imaz 15), which makes theirs an elite surname for over a century. According to Imaz, the expression la oligarquía is used more in relationship to political power and "las doscientas familias de Buenos Aires" alludes to the limited number of affluent and "old line" people.

The Bembergs embody all the myths of the upper-class in the country's social imagination. Clara Fontana affirms that "Bemberg en la Argentina es algo más que un apellido de familia. Tiene resonancias de fortuna y poder concretos, suscita imágenes de explotación y fuertes contrastes económicos y promueve asociaciones con una de las peores épocas de la represión conservadora" (10). María Luisa's family has one of the largest and oldest fortunes in the country, which is represented by a variety of businesses, promoting a greater public visibility.

Bemberg's family history will give us an account of the environment where the filmmaker developed her artistry and her rebellion. Otto Bemberg immigrated from Germany in the mid-nineteenth century. He became wealthy, founding the Quilmes Brewery and expanding to other businesses. Initially, like many other immigrants, he

started with import and export commerce. The first Bemberg married into a criollo family in 1852, with Luisa de Ocampo y Rigueira. The principal conditions for being part of the oligarchy were wealth and blood, which the first Bemberg accomplished through work and marriage.

Otto Eduardo Bemberg was the father of María Luisa and a grandson of the first Bemberg in Argentina. He received the overseas education traditionally reserved for the men of the family. He married into society and managed the family's fortune accordingly. Sofia Elena Bengolea was María Luisa's mother. Bemberg defines her mother as a victim and a keeper of the family's traditions who always taught conformity. Her mother was always concerned about María Luisa's future because she was rebellious from her early years (Bemberg, "Cuentos" 45). Bemberg had her mother as a model to not be followed.

María Luisa declared she hated what her father represented when she was young, but later she understood his position, she declares that "la fortuna de los Bemberg había hecho de él un prisionero" ("Cuentos" 43). In Miss Mary, the character of John acts more out of duty than personal sensibility. John is an interpretation of her father figure. The character stands for the oppression that upper-class men suffered to maintain the family's name and fortune, as it will be discussed later in this chapter.

Otto tried to dissuade María Luisa from working. He wrote a letter asking her not to open a debate over the upper class with her films. In "Las ideas hay que vivirlas," María Luisa writes about the letter: "Sabía que había entregado un guión sobre 'nuestra clase' – así la llamaba—y me aconsejaba destruirlo: 'es una gran imprudencia. Te van a destrozár'. Me sentí aniquilada" ("Cuentos" 45). María Luisa's reaction toward this

letter, which was emotional devastation, directs us to the ambiguity and the balance of her work. On one hand, she is the transgressor who criticized her own class against her family's will. On the other, as we can infer from the many references to her work, she was always concerned about her class' opinion of her work. At the same time, the letter shows the seclusion of the upper-class habits which are not to be uncovered by one of its members ("Cuentos" 45).

After the Process dictatorship (1976-1983), Argentina returned to democracy and to an open debate of its history. For this reason, cultural and educational policies became of great importance to the country (Romero 257). The debate reflected the society's desire for participation and free speech. Beatriz Sarlo, in Tiempo presente (2002), observes that there are different point of views among intellectuals and artists in relation to the dictatorial period of the Process. Sarlo recognizes that part of the production of cultural texts represents and interprets the dictatorial period, while there is also resistance to this discussion. Sarlo concludes that there is no unifying and globalizing narrative that can interpret the period (45). María Luisa Bemberg started filming during the last years of the dictatorship. In spite of censorship, all of her films allow for a political reading of oppression and transgression.

After the most recent dictatorship, the film industry in Argentina acquired great cultural importance in spite of its financial difficulties. Bemberg opened the way to a cinema that combines historical revision and commercial viability.

The post dictatorship cinema faced two challenges: how to support the industry financially and how to depict Argentina's recent history on screen. As Sarlo affirmed, cultural production in Argentina after the Process deals with the topic of historical

reflection. It presents some variables: memory, amnesia, audience fatigue, and necessity. The challenge is to combine memory and commercial viability. Co-production funds came as part of globalizing the economy. It opened a possibility for the continued existence of filmmaking in many countries of Latin America, after the years of totalitarian government, censorship and unstable economy. In 1994, the economy seemed to recover in Argentina and the cinema recovered state funding. The fact that state funding was recovered proves the importance of filmmaking as a medium of dealing with national representation. Nevertheless, co-production continues to be a main financial source for film production. The advantage of co-production is the opening to a larger distribution market, since national distribution is dominated by Hollywood films. Stylistically, co-production also requires the challenge of narrating the local to a global audience. Bemberg co-produced Camila with Spain and De eso no se habla with Italy. With Camila, she was the first woman filmmaker from Latin America to achieve international recognition. From her first feature film Momentos, the films of María Luisa Bemberg were commercially viable. Moreover, all of her films reflect on the historical present of Argentina.

From John King's perspective, "Argentine cinema entered the millennium with some optimism" (Magic 268). Indeed, Argentine cinema has produced quality films that combine a diversity of themes with international recognition and commercial viability in Argentina. This is a path opened by the renovation of cinematic language achieved by Bemberg. For example, El hijo de la novia (Juan José Campanella, 2001) and La ciénaga (Lucrecia Martel, 2001) are widely known recent Argentine movies. El hijo de la novia is a beautifully narrated tale that is an allegory for national amnesia. Like Camila, it

deals with the political present through melodrama. La ciénaga evokes Miss Mary in the way the director relates feminism and social class. The film uses some of the same symbolic representations, such as the powerful influence of a servant and the use of sunglasses to infer the perpetuation of the oppression of women.

3.2. VISUAL STORYTELLER

María Luisa Bemberg called herself "a visual storyteller" because she was not confident enough to call herself a filmmaker. However, her late start in the cinema and lack of formal education did not prevent her from producing a unique oeuvre in the Latin American cinema. Bemberg's life experience is deeply connected to the results she achieved with her film language, to the messages she wanted to convey and to the reactions she provoked in her audience. For these reasons, it is pertinent to present some of her biographical information, which was gathered from all articles reviewed, as every critic feels the need to approach her life story.

Bemberg was born on 14 April 1922. Her formative years were during the Infamous Decade, a time of conservative thought as she narrated in Miss Mary. She was married on 17 October 1945 to Carlos Miguens. Her wedding was on the same date the crowds demanded Perón's release and a similar scene was incorporated in Miss Mary. She divorced after ten years of marriage, upon returning from Europe, where the Miguens family lived from 1953 to 1955. In Argentina, divorce was legal during the Peronist years. After the fall of Perón, it became illegal again and finally the divorce law was

passed in 1987. She was able to legally sign her maiden name with the support of the ex-husband.

These are relevant aspects because her generation lived through three important historical times: the Infamous Decade, Peronism, and the Process. What distinguishes Bemberg is the position she took in relation to her social class, which permitted her to take a different approach and experience through those years. Her rebellious personality and the drive to not accommodate herself to the role assigned to women by society led Bemberg into filmmaking in order to express her ideals.

Bemberg started in theatre. In 1949, she had a partnership with her husband in the theater house Teatro Smart and in 1960, with Catalina Wolff, she opened Teatro del Globo. During her theatre years, she designed costumes and learned technical aspects in addition to the administrative side. She then developed the accurate mise-en-scène of her films. This experience in theatre was fundamental to her filmmaking as she was a director capable of planning the entrepreneurial aspects of film.

During this time, she wrote a play, "La margarita es una flor," which was the basis for her first screenplay Crónica de una señora, directed by Raúl de la Torre. She also wrote the script for Triángulo de cuatro, directed by Fernando Ayala. However, she did not like the way in which male directors interpreted her female protagonists, and this feeling was the first impulse Bemberg had to become a film director. Clara Fontana narrates the widely known anecdote of Bemberg's decision to become a filmmaker. Complaining to Juan Carlos Desanzo, Bemberg said that no one could express her point of view on the screen and received the encouragement she needed from him. From the challenge posed to her by Desanzo's natural question: "¿Por qué no dirigís vos?,"

Bemberg dared to be daring and started her career directing the short El mundo de la mujer in 1972 (King 18-19). Although there had been a small number of women filmmakers since the days of silent movies, cinema in Argentina was a male profession projecting an essentially male point of view up to the 1980s. In this sense, Bemberg is considered the first feminist filmmaker in Argentina.

Several statements in An Argentine Passion, show how Bemberg is perceived as a film director. Lita Stantic was Bemberg's producer for five of her films and they were partners in GEA Films. Stantic suggested the making of Camila after Bemberg received the criticism by the reviewers that she would not be able to film a love story. Before Camila her films were openly feminist. The producer admires Bemberg's discipline in filming. She says that the director never needed overtime and always kept a comprehensive shooting script, which may be a discipline learned in the theatre and as a screenwriter. Stantic also mentions that Bemberg liked to participate in the promotion of her films and frequently would check the box offices in person. Prior to being a filmmaker, Bemberg was a businesswoman and that gave her the perspective to coordinate artistry with the commercial aspects of filmmaking, creating quality films that are not secluded in art theatres and festivals.

Julie Christie, who played the part of Mary Mullighan in Miss Mary, commented on how Bemberg directed actors with trust and giving them the necessary confidence to make their own "statement." Christie explains, "...when I say that she wasn't demanding, I mean that each of us had a statement to make and she was almost secretly making that statement through us and we didn't know it" (51). Allowing the actors freedom, she was also able to learn on the job from the actors' experience and as the problems appeared.

"María Luisa allowed herself to be very spontaneous because she had the humility to know that she didn't know everything. She learned and created on the spot" (49). Her flexibility and spontaneity helped her to acquire experience and to keep a timely schedule within the production budget.

The filmography of Bemberg is not extensive, given her late start in filmmaking and her early fatal illness. In its entirety, her oeuvre is a model of a filmmaker that always stood for the quality of her films and the consistency of her principles. During the seventies, she filmed two documentary shorts, El mundo de la mujer (1972), and Juguetes (1978). The first short is a documentary; she filmed the "Femimundo" shopping fair for women. "Femimundo" was a fair that offered household and beauty objects for women. The fair was conceived as a show of "everything women are" and "everything women should be" in an extreme trivialization of womanhood. Being a documentary, the trivialization of femininity was reinforced by the camera. The film offers contrasting images of the worn-looking female visitors and the impeccable models and receptionists (Fontana 19-20). From the first take, says Fontana, Bemberg de-glorifies the stereotype that women must be beautiful and dedicated to the home. This is a theme that Bemberg would never give up and is deeply rooted in her life experience. The next short, Juguetes, follows the same line of the previous one and is dedicated to Barbara, Bemberg's granddaughter. It shows the difference between boys, and girls, toys and points out that toys are objects that favor sexual discrimination through the stereotype that girls play with dolls and boys with building blocks (Fontana 20-22). The choice of toys is an important factor in the continuation of a social system because it is through play that children are encouraged on their future dreams and possibilities. Fontana reaffirms the

need that Bemberg felt to fight against oppression, even the one exercised by lovable sentiments, through cinematic language (Fontana 22). With these two short documentaries, Bemberg exposes the interweaving of unconscious mechanisms of power: from infancy men and women are designated to the places they will occupy in society as adults, which reinforces the basis of patriarchal society as part of the human "dressage" Foucault reports in his analysis of the origin of power (Foucault qtd. in Kritzman 102-106).

In a little over a decade, Bemberg produced five feature films. The first is Momentos (1980). It is the usual tale of a wife who leaves her husband and returns. Bemberg imposes a woman's perspective on this trivial plot. Lucía, played by Graciela Dufau, is married to a loving husband but chooses to have an affair with one of her clients. They traveled together to Mar del Plata, when she perceives the shallowness of that relationship and returns alone to Buenos Aires. However, the last scene shows Lucía returning to her husband in a very pathetic sequence: the husband is eating dinner alone and reading when she arrives tired and so hungry and/or emotionally disturbed, that she starts eating rice with her own hands. She returns as she left home, by her own will. But the film loses the coherence of Lucía's character at the very end, showing Lucía back to her husband out of hunger and despair, not by choice. Catherine Grant makes an extensive analysis of Bemberg's first feature film. According to this critic, Momentos has feminist and political implications; though it is not overtly feminist. The film focuses on the "needs of the body and the psyche." Grant concludes that this is a new manner of confronting adultery that affirms sexual equality (88). To Fontana, Bemberg reinvents a traditional tale by leaving out any moral connotation (24). I agree with this statement if

the film had finished when Lucía leaves her lover, because showing the wife returning to her husband in such a miserable emotional condition equates to stating that women depend emotionally on men. However, Bemberg's female protagonists do not end in victory, reflecting the circle of oppression.

The plot of Señora de Nadie (1982) may seem trivial today, but it was daring for the early eighties in Argentina. The plot tells the story of a wife that leaves her husband after discovering his adultery. She is capable of building her life independently and keep the relationship with her sons; also, she encounters friendship and true love, not sex, with a gay man housemate. The film points out that the normal behavior of a betrayed wife was to ignore the fact, contrasting two generations of women, mother and daughter, in the same circumstance. This film was released at the same time that the Malvinas War started. In several interviews, Bemberg gives the reasons why the military censorship delayed for years passing the film: because it was "a terrible example for Argentine mothers," "there was a queer in it," and finally because of the fact that "a woman was to direct." As Grant reminds us, the authoritarian political moment encouraged only traditional models of portraying Argentina in cultural texts (93).

After Camila, Bemberg filmed Miss Mary (1986) and then returned to the life of a historical figure, filming Yo, la peor de todas in 1990. This film narrates the story of the Mexican poet of the 17th century, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, based on Octavio Paz, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, o las trampas de la fe (1982). Sor Juana became a nun so she could have access to education and escape marriage. The film is highly symbolic and beautifully photographed and is considered to be among her best films. Yo, la peor de todas was filmed in Argentina, using studio settings instead of real locations in México.

It could have been co-produced by Hollywood studios; however, Bemberg wanted to avoid the responsibility of portraying one of Mexico's highest symbolic figures in Mexico, as well, she wanted to preserve her autonomy as a director - which attests to her auteurism.

Bemberg's last feature, De eso no se habla (1993), is based on Julio Llinás's short story of the same title, which was published after the release of the film in 1993, on request of the director. This film is a tale of a mother who does not accept her daughter's dwarfism. Also set during the thirties, it is a critique of a sociopolitical system that reflects the present of globalization. It is often said that with this film Bemberg distanced herself from realism and feminism, which is arguable. Together with Camila and Miss Mary, this film is Bemberg's statement about the sociopolitical imagination of Argentina.

In 1997, Alejandro Maci directed El impostor. This was Bemberg's last project, based on a short story by Silvina Ocampo. Bemberg finished the script with Alejandro Maci before she died on May, 1995.

From this brief summary of her life and filmography, we may conclude that the visual stories Bemberg told reflect the historical moments she lived, the social class to which she belonged, and her commitment to feminism. The symbolic language used in her films is the fruit of her education, her contact with art, her experience in the theatre, and her experience as a screenwriter. The themes of feminism and politics explored in her stories are shaped with balance by the experience of a mature film director.

Transgression is the hallmark of María Luisa Bemberg. Becoming a filmmaker was a deliberate choice; for Bemberg, filmmaking is a conscious political act. Homi Bhabha states that

The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The 'past-present' becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living (Location 7).

The art of María Luisa Bemberg offers a new imagination of Argentina through symbolic representation, hoping to suggest a better future. Her films offer a unique analytical vision of Argentine society and politics, constructing the "space beyond" for a possibility of social transformation.

Bemberg produces a conscious transgressive political act by the choice of themes and cinematic language of her films. The central theme of all of her films portrays women's condition mostly in an Argentine political context. As Benedict Anderson stated, it could be said that her stories fuse the world inside the film with the world outside (35). The audience is able to recognize the represented social groups and historical time, triggering the imagination of a larger national context. It also invites the audience to connect its own present reality to the reality represented. The effective reception of her films is based on cinematic language techniques, which have two main characteristics: the use of flashbacks and the construction of symbols. The flashback is a technique of persuasion because it is narrated as the credible experience of a principal character. The construction of symbols is very complex in Bemberg's work. It is achieved mainly by her articulation of colors, light and mise-en-scène, creating a mood

that facilitates the comprehension of the message by the spectator. Bemberg's films are cultural artifacts that reverberate in the national imagination.

In Imagined Communities, Anderson argues that since the beginnings of print-capitalism, we have been linked together by imagination. We know our reality less by experience than by the visions with which we are presented. Our perception of reality is filtered through the consumption of newspaper, literature [and the mass media] (40). Homi Bhabha's works cover two types of national imagination that are rooted in people's mind: official nationalism and popular nationalism. Official channels disseminate national myths; for example, Peronism made wide use of myths to support its politics as the image of the "cabecitas negras" and the "descamisados," the populace protected by Eva Perón. These myths were embedded in the social imagination and were used in reference to a patronizing attitude from the government toward the lower classes. On the other hand, national identity myths are rooted in people's minds spontaneously, depending on time and tradition, such as tango and soccer.

Today, the mass media are the main vehicle of communication linking our communities. The mass media present a combination of official and popular representations of national sentiment. The type of representation is determined by the combination of many factors such as economic funding, censorship, and reception. Funding distribution exercises the main control over media language in free societies, while censorship is the most powerful organism of control in authoritarian societies. Censorship permeates consciousness from the public to the individual level. Many artists, including Bemberg, say that self-censorship turns out to be a part of their creation process in times of authoritarian government. However, the public is not a passive

recipient of the media, but rather an important gauge in determining the kind of images that are formulated for public consumption.

Within the mass media, cinema aims to reach a national and an international public. For a global audience, national narratives tend to present a universalized view. Cinema also depends on all the above factors: funding, censorship, and reception. Co-production funding is a form of internationalization of culture and the economy. Regarding censorship, the international distribution of films through foreign festivals can mobilize international public opinion against repressive governments, even when the movie is not released in its own country. For instance, Camila was co-produced with Spain to guarantee its distribution in case it could not be released in Argentina (Stantic 34).

María Luisa Bemberg was a film director concerned with all the aspects of production and distribution of her films in Argentina and abroad (Stantic 36-37). Her filmmaking was supported by the tradition of cinema d'auteur in Latin America. According to this tradition, the director has the final word on and the responsibility for the product. Therefore, Bemberg's films are cultural artifacts that carry her own notions of a society and her own purpose of denouncing women's condition.

Bemberg's choice of depicting her own class was based on her evaluation of the repression of women in the upper class. It was the reality with which she was acquainted and she feared misrepresenting the lower classes. However, being from the upper class did not prevent her from transmitting a critical view of it. She never wanted to confront her class either, showing concern about how its members would react to her stories (Maci

72). Her works transmit a balanced critique from within. They do not represent the Manichean view that is still common in filmmaking concerned with social reality.

In this respect, the decision to build a public career as a film director was for María Luisa a decision to be exposed to public opinion. However, it may have represented some advantages, as Fontana says that Bemberg's class "en principio, despejaba el camino para su ingreso a esa esfera compleja y especialmente 'costosa' que es una vocación cinematográfica" (8). Fontana refers to personal connections by saying that social class "cleared the way" for Bemberg to start a career in film. The circle of cinema professionals is restricted and "complex" as Fontana says; however, Bemberg could reach the best professionals and learn from them.

Being a Bemberg also imposed drawbacks on her career. Prejudice permeated the first reviews of her work and professional relationships. Primarily she suffered prejudice for being a woman from the upper class venturing into a mostly male-dominated profession. The name Bemberg "alienta ciertas formas de escarnio ideológico" (Fontana 10). Goldenberg, an important script collaborator on many of her films, declared that, going to his first meeting with Bemberg, "[he] could not avoid approaching the meeting with ambiguous feelings, a mixture of prejudice, pride, social revenge and boyish curiosity" (Stantic 41). Goldenberg makes an exemplary assertion that brings out all the social barriers María Luisa Bemberg confronted. By challenging traditional views of history and society and by belonging to a class which reinforced traditional values, Bemberg's films received mixed reviews in Argentina. As Eduardo Rojas admits, "es difícil mirar una película de María Luisa Bemberg en Argentina, desde Argentina, desde su historia, con una visión limpia de prejuicios" (60). The difficulty of formulating an

unbiased opinion of her work goes beyond the evaluation of her oeuvre as texts because it meant to break through settled imagined notions of class and gender.

Bemberg went beyond the limits imposed on her by society. Women of her generation and social class were expected to be married and circumscribe their public activities to their class. She went beyond being a filmmaker and a divorced woman. As a filmmaker, she exceeded the tradition of her time, portraying the image of liberated women and picturing the controversial image of the upper-class as the one responsible for many of Argentina's social and political problems. Her commitment to the feminist cause was the major drive for her to become a filmmaker. Bemberg wanted "to avoid prolonging the moulds of sweet, corrupt and complacent female characters. [She] wanted to do away with stereotypes" (Bemberg 221). She states that male directors, even female directors, perpetuate feminine stereotypes on screen.

Her dedication to feminism goes back to the foundation of UFA, the Feminist Union of Argentina, and then she took feminist ideology into cinematic practice. Masiello states that "[n]onconventional sexual affirmation always interrupts the economy of signs, disturbing our fixed understanding of experience and our perceptions of the real" (Between Civilization 85). A woman's work pointing to a different vision disrupts the conception of reality to which we are accustomed through the imagery forged by men. Further, she affirms, "it alters our relationship to the market; it produces the ripe conditions to challenge the authority of the state; it opens a space for questioning the philosophical underpinnings of difference," discussing the revolutionary effect that may be achieved with a new representation of reality (85).

Like Juana Manuela Gorriti, María Luisa Bemberg appropriated a male language. The film industry was dominated by men during her time, just as literature was also predominantly male writers. Her language challenges and disturbs our perceptions of reality because a woman narrating women on screen brought a different perspective to the stereotype of womanhood. In addition, an upper-class woman criticizing her class from within also broke with a system of representation of the wealthy. Unlike Gorriti, "all the female characters in Bemberg's films are transgressors" (Stantic 34). They represent women who "dare to be different," as is written in the dedication of her last feature film De eso no se habla.

All of her films show the struggle of upper and middle class women trying to break the cycle of repression in order to have more productive and self-fulfilling lives. This is a goal that they very seldom achieve. The former mode of representation of woman in film was limited to a frivolous image of women and of the rich. Bemberg's gaze is non-conventional: women are not santas or putas nor are the members of the upper-class grotesque villains. Not presenting a Manichean subtext, Bemberg opens space in her films for questioning difference. Women were not represented on screen as the unconscious keeper of the patriarchal system, one of the main reasons why their transgressive acts nearly always failed. Bemberg demonstrated this paradox in every film, mostly clear in Miss Mary. Therefore, discussing the condition of upper-class women, she opens the argument to a general class critique. Her films allow for a new vision of womanhood and for a new perception of history, illustrating the mechanics of political power construction.

Thus, Bemberg invokes a different image of woman breaking with the old mode of representation in which a feminist vision of woman succeeds in a patriarchal world, or women are represented as the traditional subject of beauty and conformity. Her new imagery of women is based on reality itself and it is often inserted into precise historical times. Bemberg portrays women facing the challenges of their own condition without giving them the promise of liberation. In this respect, the director inserts her characters into History, delineating recognizable factors which constrain female possibilities of self-realization.

3.3. "AIN'T SHE SWEET..."

The film Miss Mary (1986) is a critique of a crucial historical period in Argentina. The director shows the interweaving of power through the tale of a British nanny who goes to Argentina to look after three children in an upper-class home from the time of the military coup of 1930 to the rise of Juan Domingo Perón in 1945. In this film, María Luisa Bemberg goes beyond the usual film language, exposing the source of power in a patriarchal society through the story of an elite family.

Miss Mary is based on the director's memories, not an autobiography but with recollections of her youth. It was filmed in the Bembergs' estancia San Simón, a Normandy castle constructed in 1918 (Eurasquin 53). In many interviews, she declares having had over twenty nannies with a profile similar to the character Mary Mullighan. She dedicated the film to those nannies, who were servants that did not belong either to the kitchen or to the living room. Nevertheless, they were responsible for shaping the children's personalities according to their "Englishness," as María Carbonetti discusses in

"Deseos argentinos: 'Miss Mary'." This particular film elicits different reactions and a variety of critical approaches. Some contrastive examples are the evaluations of Ruffinelli and Carbonetti. For the former, Miss Mary is a mere nostalgic contemplation of class that offers didactic political annotations; while Carbonetti makes an interesting analysis of specific scenes of the film to explain the unfulfilled Argentine desire for "civilization."

Elia Kantaris, who also wrote a remarkable analysis of this film, qualifies it as "stark" in language and "thematically complex" (122). In fact, there is no sophisticated camera work and the color and light are neutral, as if the public should not be distracted from the content by visual effects. However, the filmmaker excels in building subtle symbols that lead the audience straight to the denunciation of women's condition. One such example is the symbolic attitude of the mother wearing sunglasses constantly after being betrayed by her husband and failing in her rebellion. In this case, sunglasses are a trope for repression and rebellion.

The main theme explored in Miss Mary is that women were the unconscious perpetrators of the patriarchal system and the source of political power, a mechanism that women unconsciously support by their upbringing and role in society. Kantaris explains the thematic complexity of the film by stressing the importance of Bemberg's point of view in telling Miss Mary's story. "What is really important about Miss Mary, however, is its exposure of the way in which the military and paternal authoritarianism of the period is inevitably bound up with the control and circumscription of women" (127). The director makes an overt statement tying the basis of political power to the limited possibilities of upper-class women.

Kantaris refers to the "networks of power" built into the film. "They extend from family to honour, through gender, race, language to social class and, crucially, colonialism and neo-colonialism in the subtle examination of the relationship between Britain during the 30's and the Second World War" (124). The film explores power and the construction of power at all levels. To secure the continuation of a patriarchal society, it was important to maintain a line of male line and control of women's sexuality. The role of women was to marry within their same social class and guarantee marital procreation. Religion and social education given at home were the instruments of control, keeping women circumscribed to the house and church. If the reality of women were family and church, women themselves became the perpetuators of the patriarchal system, educating their children to repeat the values received. However, as Carbonetti clarifies, the mother was not responsible for the children's education, but rather the governess hired by the father.

In order to understand how Bemberg developed the complex relationship of power in this film, we will discuss the development of the characters of the governess and the family members in relation to their function within society. For Carbonetti, Mary Mulligan is Bemberg's best achieved character as a new type of woman (96). She is a very credible character, not only because of the performance of Julie Christie, but also because through Miss Mary, Bemberg interweaves all relations of power. As Carbonetti says, she is autonomous in the way she establishes a relationship with the children and educates them more within her "Victorian discourse" than in the values of the Catholic Church as assigned by her employer. For instance, two girls kissing is "unhealthy," not a "sin," as the critic points out. In addition, Miss Mary, who took a job in Argentina to

escape the war in Europe and the memories of a lover killed in combat, is a woman who needs her stipend. After leaving the family's house, she survives in Argentina teaching English until the war is over. Even though she is no longer with the family, the announcement of the wedding of the youngest daughter Terry catches her attention and brings back memories, which is the motivation of the story we follow by and large in flashback.

The British governess and teacher is the character that transmits the story of Argentina's political and social life in the thirties through her own point of view. Goldenberg claims this fundamental change in the original script. Moreover, the British governess is the main perpetuator of the patriarchal system, being the only one who really has access to the children's education. Her Englishness makes her a holder of imperial powers and she does not disguise her prejudice. In her letters home, she perpetuates an exotic vision of the South; they are filled with Spanish guitars and homes that were not a copy of European mansions. Miss Mary looked to Argentina from the British perspective, with superiority, and when confused about her place, stated "I should have gone to India, there it is clear who the natives are."

Miss Mary comes to Argentina hired by an upper-class family and goes back to Britain unchanged and untouched. In contrast, occupying the place of educator, Miss Mary shapes to conformity the lives of Carolina, Terry, and John with the consent of the parents. John was educated to be a "prisoner of his fortune," as Bemberg talks about her father. He must behave as is expected of him even when it goes against his feelings or inclinations. Bemberg's intellectual honesty goes beyond the feminist cliché, showing that men were also repressed and had to conform to their role in society. It is a statement

against a social system in which there is no space for the individual. The last sequence is Miss Mary's reencounter with John. During tea, she reinforces British values and advises the young man to accept his place in society. Of the three children, it is John who now will secure patriarchal powers. This sequence bears the strongest signifier of colonial and neo-colonial relationships.

The other women also perpetuate the same system. Carolina and other women do not succeed in their rebellion. Carolina is the most transgressive character and her impulsive personality is translated as condemned desire. She asks "why" all the time, without receiving satisfactory answers. She is not afraid of menstruation, but menstrual blood was treated as unhealthy. She has a puppet with a penis, which forces Miss Mary to give her a whipping, considered the ultimate punishment. The repression of desire transforms Carolina into a kleptomaniac. As a psychiatric treatment, she has to type the telephone directory. Repetitive actions to sublimate intellectual and sexual desires are constant among the women. The mother repeats the same Satie piece on the piano, transforming the sentiment of frustration into a socially approved action. The grandmother repeatedly plays with photos as cards, discarding the dead ones from the deck. The sublimation of intellectual and sexual desires in women guaranteed the continuation of their role in the patriarchal system because it repressed inappropriate feelings and actions of individuality and freedom.

Miss Mary is a critique of the oligarchy illustrating paternalism, religion, and upper-class control. It is a subtle critique making a relationship between the political past and the present one. Paternalism is a form of social control that weakens the power of the subaltern. Social charity exercises control by giving presents and reaffirming the

authority of the donor. The donations are used as pressure to obtain a certain behavior or action from the subaltern. Charity was a duty of society ladies; so Mecha, the mother, goes to visit the farm workers with clothing and baskets of goods. During the visit, she convinces the workers to comply with religious marriage and the christening of their children. Like Miss Mary, Mecha could not perceive the impact of her actions. This sequence puts in evidence the control of the population by religious marriage and baptism, which were recorded in the Church's archives. At the same time, the scene denounces the lack of citizenship of these immigrant workers, since their civil documents were kept by the patron "for the elections" (Carbonetti 89).

Catholic religious rituals and dogma were an ally of the oligarchy, stressing the hierarchy of power and obedience. For example, the father says: "religion keeps women out of trouble." The strict laws of the Catholic Church exercise a strong control over women: marriage is indissoluble and sex is for procreation. Through confession, women receive male guidance for their lives.

Oligarchic power was well established in the thirties, which is shown in the film by the father's confident posture. He acted in the realm of absolute authority and control. The character of the father, Alfredo, illustrates the relationship of the oligarchy with other classes. The dialogue between Alfredo and his brother-in-law, a nationalist, illustrates the division of political forces. When his brother-in-law says: "You're fighting a cause for people like you," the father replies, "You are either with us or the communists." The nationalists embraced the 1930's coup fighting for their ideal of having a leadership that would defend the country with the fundamental values of the military, the Church, and traditional society. The oligarchy supported the coup to recover power, which had

been weakened by free representation in a diverse society, as proved by the two elections of the Radical president Hipólito Yrigoyen. The father's comment about Leopoldo Lugones, "good boy, he messed with politics," seems to treat the poet's political contributions for his country as not enough to influence the outcome of political events. Bemberg's critical view of the oligarchy wasn't an attack on the upper class as were political films of the sixties, which stressed the exploitation of the working classes. The film reveals the connections of power, the self-assurance of the oligarchs, their dependence on the British Empire, the lack of identity disguised in luxury and suffocated by repression.

One of the finest transgressions of the film is to simultaneously point to the past and present political moments. Telling a family tale, Bemberg shows the oligarchic power regaining strength during the Conservative Restoration of the thirties. Connecting past with present in the audience's mind, she alludes to that time as a possible source of the military dictatorship of the seventies. The British Empire was the mirror and the model for the upper class in Argentina during the thirties. Released soon after the fall of the military, the film touched on the consequences of the Malvinas war (1982-1983) still present in people's minds. In the eighties, in an effort to rehabilitate credibility for the military government, the country was led to the disastrous defeat against Britain, and consequently to the fall of the military regime in 1983. However, Argentina defeated the British twice defending Buenos Aires during the nineteenth century. In a sequence, when John refers with pride to those episodes of glory, Miss Mary laughs in disbelief. John's pride and Miss Mary's reaction connect past and present for the audience.

The film points to possible connections between the Infamous Decade and the Process dictatorship. The Infamous Decade opens the precedent of a military coup in Argentina and it was a period when constitutional rights were suspended. The Process was also marked by authoritarianism, social repression, and support of the Catholic Church. In addition, it shows the connection of the upper class with foreign interests.

Bemberg also displays the construct of power through language. English is used as the language of the powerful. The family speaks English among themselves. In one scene, Miss Mary speaks English to the butler and someone invites her to speak Spanish. She refuses, saying that the Argentines were proud to be part of the British Commonwealth, so they should speak English. Spanish was the language of the powerless. Miss Mary spoke a broken Spanish when she was shown living in the city. It was the language of farm workers and servicemen. When John goes to visit with Miss Mary, he starts the conversation in Spanish. Mary changes it to English and John admits he feels like he is acting when speaking in either language. One of the characteristics of nationhood is language. When John feels that both languages he speaks are foreign to him, it demonstrates a fissure in his cultural identity. Ironically, among all the characters, the father has the strongest accent in English. The strong accent of the oligarch may be interpreted as a metaphor of the fragility of the economic dependence on foreign investment.

A main aspect of language in the film is studied by Carbonetti. Bemberg filmed two versions of Miss Mary, one for the most part in Spanish, which was first released in Argentina, and another mostly in English spoken by the same Spanish-speaking actors. Carbonetti maintains that the two linguistic versions produce different movies, the

Spanish one being richer in sociolinguistic variations within the socio historical context of the film (97). She also examines the insertion of the director in the bilingual tradition of Argentine intellectuals, which has a "larga trayectoria entre la intelectualidad argentina desde los inicios mismos de la gesta de la independencia ... [d]esde los escritos de Sarmiento ... hasta Borges y Cortázar." Carbonetti concludes that Bemberg is perpetuating the elite's unfulfilled desire of appropriation of a metropolitan culture offering different versions to different audiences (97-98).

By this exposure, we may conclude that the film explores the effects of power on two levels. First, the film is a denunciation of the lives of the children who become frustrated adults and adults who perpetuate an established model. Second, the film builds a temporal space for reflection on the present through the critique of the past in the national imagination.

The mechanisms of power and the conservative political context of Argentina during the thirties are the master points of the film. Jorge Goldenberg, co-screenwriter, was responsible for a more critical historical content (40-46). Goldenberg has a different background from that of Bemberg; he is a son of immigrants, Jewish, and a political activist. He asserts that María Luisa Bemberg was not familiar with social reality. Her proposals for the political aspects of the film were "irritating" to Goldenberg because of the prejudiced view with which she was educated (44). In his testimony, Goldenberg talks of "open combat" over political views (45). However, he admits Bemberg would investigate and accept changes to the script out of "intellectual honesty" (45). María Luisa Bemberg made a statement in El Litoral, a newspaper from Santa Fé, saying that the film Miss Mary was not a "betrayal" of the upper class because everything in it "is

true" (46). She was conscious of the fact that the film produced a disruptive image of the upper-class.

Homi Bhabha explains his concept of "beyond" and "to dwell in the beyond" in the introductory pages of The Location of Culture (1994), comparing the space beyond to a "liminal space" (4) where culture is produced outside the hierarchy of class, gender, and race (1).

Being in the 'beyond', then, is to inhabit an intervening space, as any dictionary will tell you. But to dwell 'in the beyond' is also, as I have shown, to be part of a revisionary time, a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity; to reinscribe our human, historic commonality; to touch the future in its hither side. In that sense, then, the intervening space 'beyond', becomes a space of intervention in the here and now. (7)

María Luisa was a transgressive subject of the position they occupy in society, placing herself in "*inbetween* spaces [which] provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself" (Bhabha Location 1-2). Operating in collaboration with Goldenberg, Bemberg directed a film that was created in the "dwellings of the beyond," merging two opposite borderline experiences. They created a historical revision of Argentina's past and present with a critical balance capable to offer a new imaginary of the implications of the oligarchy and the role of elite women in recent Argentine history. At the same time, Bemberg as a filmmaker reinstates traditional models of the upper class by producing the film in English and Spanish. As a result, Miss Mary is a cultural product which displaced the

traditional imaginary view of the oligarchy and of upper-class women while preserving the elitist aspect of that class in the figure of its director. It confirms Bhabha's theory in which "cinematic signification [is] the grounds of political intervention, it gives depth to the language of social criticism and extends the domain of 'politics' in a direction that will not be entirely dominated by the forces of economic or social control" (20).

3.4. "CAMILA," A LOVE STORY IN TIMES OF REPRESSION

María Luisa Bemberg invested the life of Camila O'Gorman with a new mythology while retelling the historical time of Rosismo. The director appropriated the real drama of Camila O'Gorman to construct a cinematic poem in the genre of melodrama. Sergei Eisenstein in Color Film orchestrates the elements that constitute the representation of a cinematic melodrama:

Silence. A word. A tirade.

Mass evolutions. A slight wave of the hand.

Aria or an orchestra passage.

The colour element invading the stage. (Movie 383)

"Each in its own place," concludes the Russian filmmaker and one of the first to practice the art of cinema as an influential tool of persuasion. Melodrama is a genre first applied to the theatre: melos- refers to the music which marks the emotions of the drama on stage. Massimo Marchelli defines cinematic melodrama as aesthetically richer than the dramaturgical genre. It articulates several elements of representation, such as framing, rhythm, light, montage, *mis-en-scène*, acting, and music. All these elements, "in

their own place," heighten the emotion of a story which has its plot constructed around the theme of love and death (12-13). Bemberg worked every aspect of filming Camila toward the spectator's "primal sentiment," as it is discussed in this chapter.

One of the new significations structured in this love story is the connection of nineteenth-century violence with the violence of the Dirty War. The other is the director's feminist agenda, explored through the transgressive female character of Camila, who is mostly displayed as an assertive woman of our times.

As a feminist, I was interested in offering images of women that were different to the traditional stereotypes, that the historians themselves had helped to reinforce. Busaniche, Gálvez, Ibareuren talk of the 'sweet, innocent and pure Camila, who was seduced...' What if it was the other way round? . . . I thought: a traditional, Catholic, virgin, controlled, repressed girl who managed on her own to go and live with a priest. . . What balls she must have had! . . . A woman with a lot of courage . . . a free person. And there are few free women in cinema. (Bemberg qtd. in Pauls 112-13)

Other female characters, Camila's grandmother and mother, reinforce the discussion of contemporary feminism and political repression. Thus, Bemberg's scope was twofold: she wanted to explore the themes of "abuse of power as a subtext and the story of a passion" (Bemberg qtd. in Pauls 116).

In its historical context, Camila O'Gorman's own life corresponds to the guidelines of a true melodrama. The numerous accounts of her life, official documentation, historical texts, theatrical versions, novels, poems, all works, point to excess: excess of passion, excess of power, excess of violence, excess of rebellion, excess

of politics, excess of repetition. All of those historical excesses which marked the Rosas era also marked the destiny of Camila O'Gorman. Therefore, Bemberg's choice of telling her love story as a melodramatic visual excess connects the true story of a tragic transgressive passion with Rosismo and the Dirty War. Both moments of political repression in Argentina are times marked by their tragic effects on individual lives, as in Camila's life.

Since fictional and historical works on Rosas and Camila are recurrent in periods of political change or crisis in Argentina, the novelty of Bemberg's approach to Camila's story is not in the subject matter, but in her mode of representation which transforms the approach to politics in film. Spectacle associated with analysis is the renovation Bemberg brought to the language of Latin American political cinema. With Camila, the director does not seek a cathartic identification with the characters, nor the dramatic feeling of guilt imposed by the films of the 1960's. Camila is apparently a visually pleasant movie which reaches cinematic poetics through the excesses of melodrama. Nevertheless, by fully exploiting and changing the traditional schemata of melodramatic representation, Bemberg accomplishes an analysis beyond the simplicity of emotions and entertainment, which are usually the main goals of this genre. Without overlooking the emotional and entertaining aspects of the film, Bemberg first depicts the social mood of Rosas's dictatorship in relation to individual lives and institutions. Secondly, she builds up emotions through the excess of visual symbols. However, the narrative is punctuated by prefiguration and summaries which guide the spectator in assimilating the profusion of significations through analytical thinking. Finally, and foremost, by reversing the role of the traditionally victimized melodramatic heroine, Bemberg creates a new image of

Camila O'Gorman by depicting her as a strong female protagonist, which was unusual for the Argentine cinema of the 1980's.

Consequently, the film as a myth of power suggests original postulations in the debate of womanhood and politics during the late twentieth-century. Setting the narrative in the year of 1847 in Buenos Aires, the director artistically selects pertinent events in order to produce a love story which responds to a specific political point of view pre-announced in the opening-credit sequences.

3.4.1. Setting the Stage

The opening credits are three sequences which summarize all the aspects developed during the film: the sequence of the arrival of La Perichona, the bathing day, and the cats in the attic. The first sequence, before the credits, shows a peaceful landscape bathed in morning light which is disrupted by horses and the carriage which takes La Perichona, Camila's grandmother, to her imprisonment at the estancia of her son Adolfo. The diffused light in this sequence connotes a past time and imprints the tone of a love story. A combination of peaceful green and white from the trees, the children's clothes and the sun light, becomes tinted with red and black. A soft melody gives way to the conflicting dialogue between mother and son. Adolfo ends the conversation by telling his mother that she should be grateful to the regime for having been imprisoned at home. By the play of colors and light, this first sequence foreshadows the mood of the film and its political stance, which is the invasion of private destinies by the official order. Evoking the title of the story to be told, the sequence ends with the grandmother asking

little Camila if she likes love stories, right after repeating her name. The camera stills over young Camila's face at the center of the screen.

While presenting the credits, the second sequence of the introduction defines the roles which Adolfo O'Gorman and Rosas play in the narrative. This is done through aspects of the household routine during the day of the family bath, which also shows the structure of power organization in that society. Water is a universal symbolic element normally related to creation and origin, seemingly a benign sign. Here, the full symbol /water/ is emptied of its natural significance and is now inversely associated with authority and repression when combined with other signs. Through the simplicity of a household routine, the scenes evoke the organization and the distribution of power and wealth in society. The preparation of the bath requires discipline, and we see the slaves doing the basic work, carrying water, bathing their masters. This scene occurs in the internal patio of the house, and it is accentuated the presence of bars on the windows, which will take on relevance as a sign of repression and later the imprisonment of Camila. It is important to remember that the slaves and the lower classes were the main support of Rosas's regime. Since it also considers that nineteenth-century Buenos Aires was a fluvial port fighting for its prominence and hegemony in the region, the new mythology for the signifier /water/, which establishes the film poetics, is justifiable.

The dictator Rosas plays an active role throughout the film as an absent character. His absence is symbolic: the source of power is unknown and his authority is integrated into people's psyche. It also arouses considerable curiosity; therefore, Bemberg introduces his character through a chisme during the girls' bath when the maid says that Rosas "tiene sus rarezas . . . se baña todos los días" (05:45). Adolfo, the pater-familias

who also enjoys full authority, is presented by leisurely being bathed while reading the official newspaper Gaceta Mercantil. This brief scene encapsulates several levels of signification which conceptualize the sociopolitical order of Argentina of the nineteenth-century and established the connection with Argentina's politics of the 1980's. When Adolfo comments with satisfaction on the British suspension of the naval blockade as the result of Rosas's power, the slave asks him if that is good and Adolfo answers that it means they will have better candles. The mythology constructed by the syntagmatic construction – /master, slave, Rosas, water, the British, candles/ – offers at the same time an explanation and a critique of the sociopolitical order. The sign /water/ here signifies authority, the source of power: Rosas has all the water he wants, Adolfo is in the bathtub while reading with satisfaction that the British suspended the naval blockade surrendering to Rosas's authority. Consequently, fluvial commerce could be resumed. This symbolic imagery places Rosas as the highest authority, Adolfo as his supporter, and the slave as the powerless illiterate worker.²⁰ The suspension of the blockade was Rosas's most important political achievement in 1847 and in the film it is associated with the dependence of Buenos Aires on fluvial commerce. For the audience of the twentieth century, the fact that Adolfo is cheerful over the British defeat and praises the dictator's authority has an immediate resonance of the recent Malvinas War (1982), in which the military hoped to gather civilian support. As a lower-class worker, the slave in the film does not acknowledge the importance of the blockade nor would he enjoy "velas como toda la gente" (05:16). Thus, this introductory segment plays with a double signification

²⁰ previously he was shown reading the paper upside down.

of past and present which persists in the film's discussion of political repression and its ties with an economic system of privilege.

The final segment of the introduction aims to establish Camila's relationship with her father and her rebellious, passionate character. The sequence also foreshadows the fate of a love transgression in a repressive society. When Camila's brother, Eduardo, finds her in the attic, he asks if she is hiding there to avoid taking a bath and reprimands her for her habit of hiding. The attic is dark and cluttered with old furniture, but when Eduardo finds her, she is in the only source of light, in a luminous spot, dressed in a white gown. There to protect some newborn kittens, she says that her father will drown the kittens if he knows about them. At this moment the camera cuts to Adolfo and then to a slave throwing a bag with rocks into the river. The director edits the sequence through independent shots for the spectator to fill in the gaps and form a meaningful narrative. Here, the sign /cat/ is never spoken of or shown but inferred to by the soundtrack. The segment is closely connected to the subsequent one in which Camila is confessing a dream. She dreams of the moaning of cats and of herself naked making love on the floor. These scenes prefigure of the motifs of Camila's fate: just as the father orders the drowning of the cats for freely reproducing themselves, the regime will order the execution of Camila and her lover for eloping to love each other freely. The introduction with the opening-credits ends with the image of the slave drowning the cats in the river, which also seeks to resonate with the present fact that bodies were being drowned during the Dirty War. Many of the desaparecidos of the Dirty War were young people who confronted the political system.

The introduction, therefore, structures the articulation of cinematic codes and the symbolic representation. The color code at the beginning already establishes that darkness, black, and red are connected to power and repression, whereas light and white signify innocence, love, and happiness. Bemberg confirms that

Colours also play a part in the way I map the film . . . Obviously the red blood of Rosas is both violence and passion, which are the two axes of the film . . . As for purity... there is no better colour than white to express this. There are also the chromatic tones of the film: at first, warm and golden... Then gradually everything darkens and at the end, in prison, there are greys, ochre, sepias. The only thing to stand out are the pink flowers on Camila's dress. (qtd. in Pauls 121)

3.4.2. Symbolic Orchestration

Bemberg's use of color follows the "orchestration" suggested by Sergei Eisenstein in his article "Colour Film." By comparing the use of music to color in film, he affirms that each compositional element has an emotional power, a "dramaturgical power" which must be rhythmically calculated in order to be "capable of revealing with utmost clarity the content, meaning, theme and idea of the film" (382). In the film, Bemberg coordinates the color system, along with darkness and light, to a range of other iconic signs. The director bookends these symbols in the parallel construction of segments, driving the audience's comprehension. The white blindfold used at the birthday party at the beginning of the movie is echoed in Camila's black blindfold when she is executed at the end. The innocent game of la gallina ciega of the birthday party is also paired with the cock fight towards the end. As signs of repression and persecution, both the

confessional grille and the metal bars on façades, are a foreshadowing or a hyperbolic statement, according to the sequence in which they appear. In the same fashion, Rosas's portraits prevail throughout the film as a leitmotif for the progressive oppression of society, as reflected in Camila's fate.

From the opening-credits, /water/ is established with the significance of patriarchal authority, as personified by Rosas and Adolfo. Camila's sisters are seen bathing fully clothed as they gossip about Rosas. Even in the most intimate environment the authority figure of Rosas has been internalized, reinforcing the oppression of the female erotic body. In contrast, Camila, by escaping the bath and hiding to protect the transgressive cats, does not subjugate herself to overweening authority.

In addition, by the choice of significant images and historical events in the introduction, the drowning of the cats and the allusion to the blockade suspension, the director inscribes the relationship of historical past and present. Marc Ferro in Cinema and History (1993) delineates the relationship of a film and the projected historical period. He maintains that films which "reproduce" or "reconstruct" a historical period are done with a specific ideological point of view. For him, historical films reach the spectator's affect through the employ of four elements: the selection of historical event, the principle in which the information is organized, the scope of the film's production, and finally, the thematic choice expressing the director's creativity (188-89). According to the historian, the combined selection of these elements may result in a propagandistic or analytical cultural artifact.

La selección de situaciones, ligada a la premisa que quieren potenciar en la pantalla: esto es lo que estimula el genio analítico de algunos cineastas.

Es la forma artística de la historia experimental.

Todo en ella es imaginario, pero igualmente suministra información. (189)

Even though the film is constructed upon symbolic language, its rhythm and punctuation ask for analysis by providing factual events in an artistic form. One example is Bemberg's choice of *mise-en-scène* to convey the absolute power that Rosas enjoyed. The director makes him an absent character. Rosas never appears in person, but the movie characters refer to him and his image appears everywhere in ostentation or in concealment. The display of Rosas's portrait in households and churches is a historical fact which Bemberg employs to enhance the almost omnipotent reach of the dictator's power, which permeated life in Buenos Aires during the first half of the nineteenth-century. Artistically, the director displays Rosas's iconic face on different representations of power. In church, his painting is in the foreground by the altar, surrounded by rich drapery. The construction of this opulent sign is made by a still shot for few seconds, followed by a panning shot which establishes the ostentation of authority and the submission of the clergymen to the dictator. Twice, the portrait in the church establishes transgression: first when Camila is confessing her erotic dream, then when Ladislao is preaching against the crimes of the dictatorship. The mythology constructed by these parallel scenes is the condemnation of individual freedoms, both emotional and intellectual. In the households, a black-and-white drawing of Rosas completes the decor, signifying the subtle presence of the dictator's authority in the popular unconscious. In this instance, the dictator's figure is shown in the background of the frame; the distance is composed through a perspective which places the portrait at the farthest point, such as in a different room from which the action takes place. In the city of Goya, the decor of the

reception at the judge's house includes red and white lanterns decorated with Rosas's silhouette in reverse color. The party is a joyous moment for "Valentina Desan" and "Máximo Brandier", the false identities the lovers took in their faraway refuge. The lanterns are not identified easily by the viewer, given the excess of compositional elements in the sequence. The decorative lanterns are symbolic because they announce the discovery of the lovers by building up the signification of the far-reaching power of government.

Connected to the display of Rosas's portraits in the decor and the discussion of hierarchy of power, it is meaningful to comment on the segment organized in two sequences which follow the couple's imprisonment. This is a key segment to the diegesis of the film because it frames the analytical process and its ideological statements, the abuse of power and the place of women in society. The camera cuts away from the rustic environment of the lovers' home in Goya to a luxurious meeting room in Buenos Aires. There, Dr. Vélez, Monsignor Elortondo and other historical, political figures who played a role in the condemnation of Camila are discussing the political resonance of the case, based on newspapers articles published in Chile by Sarmiento and in Montevideo by Alsina. The back wall of the room is covered by portraits of political authorities, Rosas being the biggest one and at the center. The gentlemen's debate briefly gives an account of the political turmoil generated by the Unitarian press. The scene suggests that the response of the Federalists was an attempt to preserve Rosas's power. The following sequence presents Adolfo O'Gorman condemning his daughter. Contrasting with the previous sequence, in which dialogue has prominence, the gravity of Camila's situation is

now narrated absolutely through visual signs. The opening shot of this sequence, shaped around heavy tones of red and black, is composed by a long panning shot of an almost still scene. Starting in the background, where Joaquina and her daughters, in mourning, are sewing, the camera moves to a mid-closeup pausing on Adolfo's severe aquiline profile. At this point, the father's choice of a fiancée for Camila, Ignacio, enters announcing that she is in Santos Lugares, a jail from which "nadie sale con vida." The effect of the long panning shot is to enhance Adolfo's authority, given his severity and the place he occupies in the forefront of the frame, while the women are quietly laboring in the back. The soundtrack also collaborates with the signification of Adolfo's authority. Throughout the panning shot, the audience listens to the sound of pouring rain, repeating the connotation of power with the signifier /water/. The conclusion of this segment is summarized by Joaquina, who comes to the forefront to confront her husband:

Todos están enfermos de violencia y de sangre. ¿Alguien levanta la voz para salvar a mi hija? Nadie, nadie piensa en ella. La Iglesia piensa en su buen nombre, Vos pensás en tu honor, Rosas en su poder. Los Unitarios en como derribarlo usando ese escándalo. Pero, en mi hija ¿quién? (1:26:30-40)

As if posing an answer to Joaquina's question, the camera cuts away to a night sky and approaches a solitary illuminated prison cell, a little dot encrusted in the opulent tower of Santos Lugares.²¹ Closing the ellipsis between the lovers' imprisonment and their reappearance in Santos Lugares, the segment is introduced by three independent sequences, forming what Christian Metz denominates as "alternating sintagma," which is

²¹ This scene is in parallel connection with a previous one which shows La Perichona imprisoned at the estancia's tower.

a narrative cross-cutting, implying temporal simultaneity. The syntagmatic expression is formed by successive shots suggesting spatial separation. Consecutive and non-linear, they are used to situate the action. First we see Camila marking one more day on the prison wall. Next, we see the prison guard outside the fortress, and then, we see the captain Antonino Reyes, opening the final order to execute Camila. The camera stays on his troubled face and when he leaves the frame, Rosas's portrait takes up the screen in a climactic still, in close up for seven seconds. Again, the director builds the segment on contrasting elements. In this instance, the duration of the shots marks an opposing rhythm within the same segment: slow (the tower), fast (Camila, the guard and Antonino), than slow and still on Rosas's portrait. While the fast segments enhance expectation, the stillness of Rosas's picture becomes a crude statement of authority. Such a rhythmic construction shapes the signification of the dictator's unquestionable power. It reaffirms the brazenness of political repression and provides an answer to the mother's question: in fact, no one is concerned with Camila's life. A relevant point to be inferred by this sequence is the display of the hierarchy of power. Even though Antonino Reyes is the captain of Santos Lugares, he has no real authority.²² Since the director aims to refer to the repression of the Dirty War, the sequence brings up the signification that the origin of repression is unseen and power is executed by subaltern hands.

²² Based on the memories of Antonino Reyes, who was on trial after Rosas fall and found innocent for the executions perpetrated in Santos Lugares, Bemberg crafts his lack of power in the above commented scene and also in another when Ladislao asks his permission to see Camila. Ladislao says that the captain is "the boss" of the place, Reyes replies that he is only following orders. Calvera discusses the role Reyes played in the execution: "Doblemente traidor ... al principio militar de obediencia debida ... [y] a un principio humano general" (145). Bemberg instead, delineates the captain's figure as human, his humanity and goodwill towards Camila's fate, testified by his correspondence with Manuela de Rosas, is accordingly expressed by the actor's facial expression, even through his physical appearance.

As it has been shown, in order to portray a society in a historical perspective the selection of events chosen reinforces the dramatic efficacy and the ideological perspective of the film. Therefore, none of the aspects of film composition are gratuitous,

La habilidad del cineasta consiste ... [en] escoger los incidentes que puedan apoyar el sentido melodramático de la intriga y las motivaciones ideológicas del productor y del espectador. Conviene señalar que esta preocupación puntillosa por la exactitud de los detalles no es más que un "taparrabos" destinado a ocultar la intimidad ideológica del film, la desfiguración en profundidad de un pasado que se podría presentar desde otra perspectiva. (Ferro 212-13)

Thus, Ferro defines the film director as a mythologist. Guided by ideological stimulus, the filmmaker selects historical information and organizes all filmic elements. The film Camila is a cultural artifact consciously constructed to display the mechanisms of dictatorships, repression, and the place of woman in society. The director's rendition of life in Buenos Aires during Rosismo is based on paintings and historical references of the time, counting on the collaboration of Leonor Calvera, a historian who published the fictional-essay Camila O'Gorman (1986). By selecting true historical facts of 1847 and representing the social life and physical aspect of Buenos Aires, we learn how people displayed the dictator's portrait in all homes and public buildings, and that their houses were painted red by official determination or enthusiastic support of Rosas. We also learn how people wore red on their clothing and the divisa punzó on their arms or chest. By emphasizing those details of the time, Bemberg was not only enriching the aesthetics of the picture but also she gave relevance to the main aspect of Rosas's dictatorship,

which was the manipulation of a vast array of symbols which served to control and identify partisanship.

As Ferro pointed out, the director chooses historical events which are pertinent to the ideological point of view of the film. True events like the British suspension of the naval blockade and the decapitation of the Unitarian bookseller Mariano are recovered in the film in order to achieve a resonance into the present, reaffirming the violent cycles of the Argentine history. The segment of Mariano's death has a close relationship to the present of the film release and it marks the repetition of violence in Argentina. The segment starts when Camila and Eduardo hear the sounds of the mazorca²³ and Camila says: "Otra vez... como cuando éramos chicos.... ¿Hasta cuándo?, Dios mío" (21:20-27). The bars on the window and their expression of fear are symbolic representations of the repression in which society lives during the repeated dictatorships in Argentina.

It is pertinent to employ Julia Kristeva's and Umberto Eco's insights on film semiotics to Bemberg's film. In the organization of the filmic elements, or the construction of signification, Kristeva refers to "lektonic traces" in the "meticulous organization of space ... the calculated intervention of every sound and every bit of dialogue – all were meant to add a 'rhythmic,' 'plastic' dimension to the too visible" ("Ellipsis..." 238). The excess of representation incorporated in the image enhances seduction or desire, a "specular" fascination in the spectator. "All semiotic material (color, malleable mass, sound, etc.) lends itself to this rhythmization, this cathartic representation" ("Ellipsis..." 240). Bemberg explored to its fullest the codification of

²³ By showing the *mazorca*, the popular police of Rosas, Bemberg also makes a reference to the recent past of Argentina, when the AAA would persecute and torture people favoring the military repression.

visual signs to create fascination in the spectator, which is an inherent characteristic of melodrama as a genre.

There is no question that color and light are the main code of mood punctuation of Bemberg's cinematic language, creating the spectacle aspect. Kristeva investigates the articulation of color on Giotto's paintings by combining the communicative function triangle of signifier-signified-referent with the Freudian triple register of exterior drive, interior drive, and signifier,

This Freudian metapsychological triad frustrates both "representation" ... and the "word." It suggests an elementary formal apparatus, capable of setting in motion the phonemic order, a stock of lexemes, syntactic strategies ... and the presyntactic and prelogical primary processes of displacement, condensation, and repetition. (Desire 218)

Similarly, in "Articulations of the Cinematic Code," Eco specifies three articulations, three different levels on which meaning is affected. The first is that of "figures," such as color and angle, which maps a semantic variation. The second articulation is that of "signs" which are represented in the world, serving as referent. The third articulation is of "semes." The semes are the combination of signs and figures in a meaningful unity (596-97). Thus, the codification of color is endowed of a particular meaning, it is "articulated within an area beyond meaning that holds meaning's surplus" (Kristeva Desire 221). In the film, red, black, or white reinforce the action given to their repetition within a proper schemata introduced in the first sequence of the movie. "La Perichona" approaches the presence of her son down a bucolic road filled with white, bright light. Then, the red of her dress and the red façade of the house dominate the

frame against Adolfo's light-colored suit; the mother and children are in white. This color scheme is consistent with the action and the role of the characters, enhancing a given mood of individual liberty, white, or repression, black and red. The same way, shadow and darkness emphasize the sinister, while light emphasizes joy and purity of sentiment. In this instance, it is important to reinforce that the symbolic color of passion is also red; however it is distinguished from repression with the use of light. Camila's passion for Ladislao is bright red, the red of the candle flame, which is totally distinct from the dark red symbolic of the establishment.²⁴

The development of the character of Camila closely obeys this scheme of colors and other symbolic signs of representation. As noted above, she is surrounded with light and dressed in white to connote positive sentiments such as innocence, joy, and love. For example, in the early sequence of Camila's birthday party, she is dressed in white and the blindfold used in the game gallina ciega, significantly also white, marks her innocence and the beginning of her tragic attraction to Ladislao. Another symbol of her dangerous attraction to the priest is the cielito that she happily sings. The parallel sintagma²⁵ of this possibility of an ideal future is dramatically changed by the black blindfold worn by the lovers for their execution at the film's conclusion.

The tragic conclusion of the film is articulated in the same code as their love. The resolution of the narrative starts with the segment of the party in Goya, given in their honor. It presents the same elements of the birthday party segment. The game of gallina

²⁴ The church is the space of repression and the space of Camila and Ladislao's love; therefore, the profusion of light, reds and gold mixed with black and shadows makes the Church the bearer of people's repression and latent desires.

²⁵ Two alternating motifs without clear relationship of time or space. For symbolic or thematic parallel or contrast, rather than narrative development. Often Manichean. (Metz qtd. in Stam)

ciega is replaced by a cock-fight; Father Miguel Gannon, the informer, is present in both segments and the same cielito is repeated, but this time it is sung to foreshadow Camila and Ladislao's fate,

we sing for those who have a hidden sorrow
for those who are devils, not saints ... (1:15:36-48)

Following the color code, the segment set in Goya is developed at night with black and red predominating shadows. God's authority, or the Church's power, is also revealed through a thunder storm when, discovered, Ladislao goes to church and Camila, seeing him in prayer realizes she has lost him. Parallel sequences like these, the birthday party, and Goya's party, are part of the structure of the film. The repetitive pattern of other symbols changes primarily through the color code, assigning white and light to the passage of a time of personal liberty, to red and black, a time of repression. Kristeva points out that the "signifying economy thus made up partakes of an ideological function" (Desire 232). Recognizing that artistic practice is doubly articulated, she affirms that "the sociopolitical and ideological position of the painter within the social contradictions of his time ultimately determines a concrete signifying economy turning it into an artistic practice that will play a given social and historical role" (Desire 232). Distancing the spectator from the emotional bond created by visual elements, Camila is a political, cultural artifact which enables historical analysis. In fact, melodrama as a vehicle for a dialectic discussion of violence renews the cinematic debate on the question of power and violence. While focusing on the drama of love, political matters are also sustained and discussed in relation to Camila's story.

3.5. FINAL STANCES

The melodramatic plot line of a daring woman who lives and dies for love is a synthesis of the motivations of power raised along with her love-story and destiny. As B. Ruby Rich states in "A/Other View of Latin American Cinema" what has changed about Latin American films of the 1980's compared to the political films of the 1960's is to present the social through individual lives:

Camila pointedly redefined the site of political struggle as the sexual . . . By seeing the sexual struggle as one on an equal plane with other kinds of ideological struggle, Bemberg was able to include women in the ranks of heroes and freedom-fighters . . . [she accomplishes that] by a dedication to creating seamless art cinema (lush, transparent, and perfect periodicity) in the service of a new idea.

(181)

Bemberg's challenge in filming Camila was to produce a "love story" instead of an overtly feminist film. Even though the director mostly represents Camila as a "freedom fighter," the final scenes show a subjugated Camila, who becomes the traditional portrait of a woman who seeks comfort from her lover. The final words of the film belong to Ladislao's voiceover: "Siempre a tu lado, Camila." The ending of Camila is similar to the ending of Momentos, in which the repentent wife returns home to a stronger husband. The traditional melodramatic ending, predominating over the image of a rebellious Camila, is congruent with Bemberg's point of view. In all her films, women are not yet emancipated. In conclusion, the achievements of Camila are appreciated through the analysis of the color scheme combined with other iconic indexes and the

parallel construction of sequences. The director's full achievement was to narrate visually the story of a passion, to present a new cinematic model of womanhood, and to explore the themes of abuse of power in Argentina.

4. Enrique Molina: "Poeta de la intemperie"

*¿Qué oficio puede convenirme?
Ignoro todos los idiomas
Sólo puedo aprender la sílaba
Del agua que muerde la roca*
Molina, "Transfuga"

*...Y libré la batalla de amor. El ruido de los sables estaba en
nuestros besos. Los suspiros de los heridos en nuestros estertores.
La algarabía de los carros de guerra estaba en las arterias...
Y te conservé como un estandarte destrozado.*
Arabic poem, "La batalla"

Enrique Molina (Argentina, 1910 – 1996) reflects in his poems the search for a primordial life, a desire to establish direct contact with Nature's elements and the sentiment they arouse. The poet describes the aim of his poetry as "la voluntad de captar la vida no a través del intelecto sino de la sensación y de la vivencia" (OC 1 345). For Molina, poetry is a medium to access knowledge; it gives a new dimension to life, it reorders the world, it expresses the tantalizing aspect of life in close connection to surrealist thought. "Perseguir la realidad a través de los sentidos es, sí, una actuación del ser en medio de dones que lo fascinan y no consiguen alcanzar jamás plenamente... Creo que es ése, justamente, el sentido de mi poesía" (345). Time and space are conjugated with the images of natural elements and primordial sensations, which engulf the reader in a voyage through the vertiginous rhythm of his verses. The movement of travel forges the time-space of his poetics, distancing the poetic voice from the immediacy of history and society:

Molina es el poeta de la intemperie . . . que se encara con una vida errante, salvaje y libre; esa vida traduce o no una experiencia personal, pero lo importante es que va creando una experiencia mítica del mundo. (Sucre 359)

Nevertheless, the mythical experience created in his poems originates in reality itself and converges into a sensorial perception of reality. During his childhood, the poet lived in close contact with nature. Molina, recalling in an interview his fascination with animals declares: "nunca he podido sustraerme a la fascinación de esos negros orificios de los que surgen interminablemente esas criaturas minúsculas y feroces, los collares vivos de la tierra . . . [son] una imagen viva de esas instancias, también profundas y secretas, de la conciencia" (OC 1 342). Flies, frogs, birds, horses, snakes, and ants are a constant imagery in his poetry. They are also symbols in surrealist art; for instance, Luis Buñuel's "Un Chien Andalou" (1929) presents a close-up scene of a hand with a hole in its palm from which ants are pouring out. Ants and termites have positive, destructive, and sensual meanings (Chevalier 29-30, 984). As in La Fontaine's fable, the ant is an industrious animal, an example to be followed. On the other hand, termites are considered an evil force because of their corrosive action. Because these insects live and act in the underworld, they are a symbol for the unconscious. Moreover, the termitarium "stands primarily for the Earth's clitoris . . . the symbol of oneness... controlled by the principle of duality or of twinship" (984). The unconscious, sensual and sensorial experiences are themes explored by the surrealists and the symbolists before them, and are shared by Molina in his poetry.

Traditionally, poetic images of ants and termites embody the Freudian "royal road" of dreams, which is the link between consciousness and the unconscious. Molina's

poem "Un lecho de hormigas reales" (OC 2 288-89) traces fears from childhood, "el desamparo de esos serrallos de infancia," and repressed feelings originated by religion "[bautizo] sombrío de destrenzar el alma y el cielo," all of which are stored in the unconscious. The poetic voice wonders about the origins of its freedom. "Baptized" by the natural elements, "[t]odo exorcismo ha sido inútil contra las mordeduras / de cualquier profecía carnal." From Nature alone comes his strength and protection against society and religion, "Y la gran mariposa de mi médula sostiene con sus alas / volcánicas toda la profundidad de las lluvias inmensas / que resbalaron por mi piel." The poet is vulnerable only to desire and submissive to the mysteries of the world and of love:

Toda la profundidad del cielo y de la tierra a cuya lengua

de pánico únicamente me someto

Y luego alcobas de la luna con labios que sangran

.....

Y por volver a vuestros besos oh esposas de ingles de caridad

y de un lujo largo y aborigen

el corazón repite con delicia ese eco que lo trastorna...

The poetic voice in "Un lecho de hormigas reales" professes the poet's world view. Embracing surrealism as vivencia, Molina declares his freedom from the harm of society and religion. His poetry, which is here symbolized by hormigas reales, rescues those fears from the unconscious, "el golpear de grandes cuerpos fosforescentes / que retumban contra las rocas del Paraíso," in search of a tantalizing answer to the mysteries of the world.

Like Baudelaire and Rimbaud, Molina felt the need to explore the world. Marcel Raymond recognizes two categories of surrealist poets: the artistes, who followed the tradition of Baudelaire and Mallarmé, in which I believe Octavio Paz is included. The other is of voyants, who followed the tradition of Baudelaire and Rimbaud. Their poetry is sensorial, reflecting their adventurous lifestyle. Their aim is "dégager son âme, retrouver l'état de nature" (15). After receiving a degree in law, Molina traveled in merchant ships, living for periods of time in Peru, Brazil, and other lands. The freedom and experiences he lived are reflected in his work. Julio Ortega identifies a "romantic ambition" in Molina's poetry: "la identidad de espíritu y de mundo, la conjunción del mundo y la experiencia . . . Tal vez por eso en su poesía lo decisivo no es la conciencia de la palabra, sino su dinamismo, su acción e impulso" (533).

In summary, Molina's life and oeuvre reflect a long tradition of poets: Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Lautréamont, and the first surrealists, who expressed through their art and lifestyle a profound revolt against the stiffness of thought imposed by bourgeois society. They reclaimed the primordial sentiments revealed through beauty, love, and liberty, and rescued them through desire and ecstasy. The aspects already presented on Molina's life and poetry are developed in this chapter in order to ascertain that his representation of Camila O'Gorman conforms to his surrealist approach to art.

First, I discuss Molina's view of his own poetry, establishing the urgent tone of his poems, which are an explosion of sensual and sensorial images. Next, I argue that historical reality, like the Vietnam War and the political unrest in Argentina, affects the course of Molina's production, changing the subject of his verses. Thirdly, I discuss the eroticism in surrealism and Molina's poetry. The novel Una sombra donde sueña Camila

O'Gorman is Molina's highest achievement in art; its discourse accomplishes an intense approach to Argentine culture and history, pursuing an explanation of reality through the senses. Concluding this chapter, I present Molina's characterization of Camila O'Gorman, which is a poetic monument to Rosas's martyr and to Latin American literature. Molina's novel has the poetic value Paz ascribed to real poetry, which is to be resurrected time and again (La otra voz 85-86).

4.1. WORD / WORLD IN SENSUAL MOVEMENT

Molina's poem "Inadaptación" of Amantes Antípodas (1962) is a tribute to Octavio Paz and also an attempt to define his own poetic voice:

Mi brazo de mar no cabe en la cocina mi otra mano del
Golfo de México tiene una fosforescencia de travesía y
un garfío de estibador clavado en la palma y se abre
como un delta para derramar su reguero de luciérnagas y
estremecimientos

Maldito sea y tampoco mis labios tienen conducta ni
sentido como una herida desesperada que mezcla en la
sombra todas las brazas del ocio y de la noche

y tan ávidos

que bajo sus besos suelen dormir bellos cuerpos inciertos

¡Tantas llamas exhalando el destello de la demencia y el
olor de las dárseñas! . . . (OC 2 211)

In this poem, the author delineates his own arte poética by comparing and contrasting their quehacer poético. Both poets reach alchemical transcendence "en la cocina" by different means. Paz, through the dexterity of his writing, produces verses of emotion and revelation. As an intellectual poet, he reaches transcendence by the delicate craft of words, "tiene una fosforescencia de travesía y / un garfío de estibador clavado en la palma." In contrast, as a sensorial writer, Molina seeks transcendence in "desperate attempts" to transmit personal experiences, "brazas del ocio y de la noche." The poet claims that his verses are "bellos cuerpos inciertos," projecting madness and the life of the docks through "besos." Hence, the main elements of Molina's poetry are experiences from reality itself, communicated through sensorial and sensual images. He also includes himself among the poètes maudits: "Maldito sea y tampoco mis labios tienen conducta ni sentido."

From his travels, Molina populates his poems with spatial referents such as país, hotel, costa, and cuerpo, which are not necessarily signifiers for nation or his country of origin. But they are an expression of a permanent existential instability in the poetic voice.²⁶ Thus, Molina's sensorial imagery opens a new sphere to the understanding of concrete reality.

Desire and adventure, oneiric images and hallucinatory rhythm, black humor and revolt are the main components of his poetic search for the tantalizing word/world. Even though Molina did not accept surrealist automatic writing because for him the

²⁶ Molina. "toda poesía es una expresión del sentimiento de soledad esencial del hombre..." (OC I 347).

"unconscious is not everything in man,"²⁷ many of his poems and passages of his novel are skillfully crafted with free associations that remind the reader of surrealist automatic writing. Agreeing with Alejo Carpentier,²⁸ Molina believed that surrealism is a vital force in the American continent, given the landscape, folklore, and popular myths, independent of the formal aspects of language chosen by the poet (OC 1 348-49). Molina adopted the humanistic approach in surrealist thought, finding it essential to every poet. "Breton y el surrealismo me dieron conciencia, muy pronto, de la poesía como revelación, como ruptura de los estrechos límites que encierran a los seres y les impiden una fraternidad profunda entre sí y el universo" (OC 1 347). Octavio Paz recognized Molina's aspiration to communicate reality by awakening the senses. Paz establishes the breadth of the poetry of Enrique Molina when he reviews Amantes Antípodas:

... es un libro que dice. Y lo que dice – sin caer en el cuento ni en la anécdota - , es la terrible pasión, la inhumana soledad del humanísimo hombre de nuestras tierras. En este sentido podría afirmarse, si la palabra estuviese deshonrada, que es un libro realista. Nada más lejos, por supuesto, de la descripción de la realidad: la poesía de Molina, como un cuchillo, no describe, se hunde en la realidad.

(Zona de la poesía 3)

The poetic voice immerses itself in the sensations of reality, setting afloat the solitude of existence. Unlike the first French surrealists, Molina did not believe that the poet can liberate humankind and "transform the world" or "change life." His is a

²⁷ ...yo creo que el poema es un campo cerrado, neto, de tensiones y de lucidez. ... [La escritura automática] Como hipótesis es interesante, pero el inconsciente no es todo el hombre. Suplemento *La Jornada Semanal*, 16 de febrero de 1997. Interview with Fernando Loustaunau y Javier Barreiro Cavestany. <<http://www.jornaldepoesia.jor.br/bh8molina.htm>> Jan 10, 2005.

²⁸ Carpentier, Alejo. "Prólogo." El reino de este mundo. Santiago: Ed. Universitaria, 1967. 9-16.

tantalizing desire for liberty, love, and beauty, which can be envisioned only by freeing the imagination through the poetic experience. Even though incapable of achieving his goal, his poetry is the only vehicle to pursue transcendence as a tantalic force. The desire revealed in Molina's poems comes from a set of imagery identified by Ortega in three groups:

En un primer nivel están las imágenes del viaje, del amor y del inconformismo.

En otro nivel encontramos las imágenes que formulan el asombro, el vértigo y e

deseo, y estas imágenes otorgan realidad verbal, dan materia física a un

irrealidad perseguida, soñada. Y en un tercer nivel están las imágenes

totalizadoras, que resumen la experiencia integrada como una visión que traspasa

la realidad y que propone la poesía como realidad final. (535)

The images which define the poet's personal experience are voyage, eroticism, and dissent. The movement of travel, says Ortega, calls for figures of the sea, rivers, and rain. Another main figure in Molina's poetry is the hotel, which indicates movement, instability, and adventure. It is opposed to home, which indicates permanence. "El mar es el viaje, el ritmo de la aventura y también el vértigo. El erotismo tiene una rica figuración conectada con el viaje... el amor es esa unión fulmínea de las antípodas, en el deslumbramiento del instante" (535). Therefore, as noted by Paz and Ortega, Molina's poetry, even though anchored in reality, it does not refer to reality itself.

Movement is the sign of his poetry. The poet's aim is transcendence from real experiences, using images brought from his childhood and from adult life. Memories and narratives are rescued to capture the sensorial essence of experience. The exquisite

imagery of his verses is achieved through associations of the flora and fauna, the eroticized woman's body, and the four natural elements:

Entre le rêve et la vie, le poète cherche sa voie, et comme un nouvel équilibre qui serait naturel et normal – la nuit et le jour, l'invisible et le visible ayant pareillement droit à sa sollicitude et formant deux mondes complémentaires, deux modes accordés de la réalité essentielle. (Raymond 16)

The poet searches his expression in a transit between dream and reality. This movement is inserted in the complementary worlds of amantes antípodas, which are contrary forces attracting each other through the force of love, revealing in the poem's imagery the tension of antinomies.

4.2. "CHANGE THE WORLD;" "TRANSFORM LIFE"

From immemorial times, to conquer is to conquer the Other, the Other is reflected on a woman or a nation, in a violent attempt to conquer oneself. As Molina declared in many interviews, the Latin American surrealist movement did not stimulate the political activism and force it achieved in France during the 1920s and 30s. However, he states that surrealism is above all ethical, as it seeks to free humankind from all taboos, religious, intellectual, and social. People's alienation, he explains, is the fruit of a coy perception of reality, which the surrealists of the early movement tried to rupture by scandal. As in automatic writing, only extreme actions and experiences were able to open the mind and the spirit to a new vision of the world and discredit the established order. Molina concludes:

Hoy el escándalo ya no es posible en una sociedad donde todo es escándalo. No obstante, la aspiración final del surrealismo, esa identificación – como dije – de la poesía con la vida, de la poesía con el amor y la libertad, es vigente y puede perseguirse sin sujeción a ninguna retórica, a través de cualquier técnica y cualquier lenguaje. (OC 1 349)

At a time of war and political unrest around the world and in Argentina, Molina changed the tone of his poetry to overtly express his political view in accordance with surrealist ethics. Without subjecting himself to a specific rhetoric, Molina gives to Una sombra the same tone of indignant revolt present in the poems of Monzón Napalm (1968), a revolt that is generally absent from his other poems. Both works refer to specific historical times, the poem, to the Vietnam War which was contemporary to the poet; the novel, to the Argentine historical myth of Camila O'Gorman. They characterize the voice and the sensibility of a visionary poet who is able to observe, to listen and react to history while reclaiming people's lost humanity, as in the poem "Estetoscopio," from Monzón Napalm:

Pon el oído sobre el pecho de ese país del diluvio y la luna
con pálidas mandíbulas de plata enmascarado de malaria en
un celeste distrito prohibido
en el plumaje real de las hojas
escucha allí adentro
el sordo crujido de los roperos de la muerte hinchándose con
la dilatación del invierno [. . .]

mira encenderse bajo la sombra de la niebla el filamento

eléctrico de la muerte

el amenazante sueño de una raza en el revés de la tierra

.....

y más abajo

el grito del negro injuriado el tumulto del saqueo el susurro

de plegarías en las iglesia llena de cuernos de búfalo y el blues

del jabón nupcial de la amante desnuda en un líquido

perfumado que fosforece

en el país que ya no verás nunca

.....(OC 2 354-55)

"Estetoscopio" and all the poems of Monzón Napalm are poems of revolt and grief, as pre-announced in the epigraph from Lautréamont, "Escóndete, guerra." These feelings are translated in the anaphora of the imperative "escucha" and similar verbs, followed by alliterations and internal rhymes of 'p', 'r,' and 's' which mark the raspy rhythm of the poem, converging form and argument to deep revolt, "una rebelión sorda." Other sensorial rhetorical figures are also associated with sound "sordo/crujido," vision "encenderse bajo la sombra," in hyperbolic personification "roperos de la muerte hinchándose," contrast "amenazante sueño," "grito/ susurro" in a vertiginous rhythm of oneiric figures. Molina constructs an agonizing world submerged in desperate images and sounds that are produced in "el revés de la tierra," which is the metaphor around which the poem develops. The poet calls the reader to listen, to be aware not only of the destruction in the other hemisphere, in Vietnam, but of the dehumanization and

destruction of Nature by a race of dreamers that are menacing our individual lives: "Y nadie quería . . . escuchar esa lengua del revés del agua / del revés de las frutas / oír allá adentro el chasquido / de tu piel sola sobre tus huesos solos" (v. 34-37). Monzón Napalm is Molina's publication that antecedes the novel, in which the tone of revolt and a greater awareness of the Argentine reality of the seventies is posited to the reader.

4.3. THE SHADES OF DISCOURSE

Molina achieved in Una sombra "uno de los sentidos más altos de la tarea poética: la clarividencia, el combate apasionado por la lucidez" (75), declares the Uruguayan poet Ida Vitale. With his poetic novel, Molina offers us a key to understand the endemic violence of a nation. By retelling Argentine history in the light of poetry, he creates a unique genre with the characteristics of a prose-poem, a historical novel, and a surrealist novel. Molina also created a poetic eulogy to Camila O'Gorman, "un hermoso mito ... la más resplandeciente heroína de [Argentina]" (Una sombra 8). The poet suggests to the reader a lucid new vision of history, exposing the eternal cycle of violence against the vital force of love, which is life. Though Una sombra received a municipal prize, Vitale alludes to the scant attention this novel received during its first publication in 1973. She presents as a possible reason the revisionist current that reestablished Rosas as a positive symbol of anti-imperialism (75). In effect, Molina traces throughout the novel the antinomies love/hatred and life/death, personalizing them in the characters of Camila and Rosas. The critic also points out that Molina dared to condemn equally the partisan wars of the nineteenth century, in a time in which "el maniqueísmo puede ser una forma de la

ignorancia colectiva, y la parcialidad no siempre justicia sino apenas simplificación mental," referring to the explosive political divisions in Argentina (75). The first publication of Una sombra coincides with one of those turbulent political periods of the country, one that would culminate in the military coup of 1976 and the consequent violence of the Dirty War:

Cuando Molina escribió su novela, el país salía de un período de violencia, el de la llamada Revolución Argentina (1966-73) en que tanto las fuerzas del gobierno como las de la guerrilla opositora habían hecho uso indiscriminado del asesinato como instrumento político. (O. Ocampo 89)

In this moment of political instability, Molina transforms the life of a martyr into poetry. The poet became acquainted with the case of Camila O'Gorman when he found a file of her judicial case in an antique shop:

Lo que pude leer me conmovió, me unió para siempre a esa imagen de mujer iluminada por la tragedia y la poesía. Quince o veinte años después sentí el impulso de escribir ese libro. (qtd. in Vera Ocampo 23)

The genesis of the novel departs from a chance encounter and it would become, as in the words of Octavio Paz, "el cuchillo que se hunde en la realidad" of Argentina. In spite of its importance as a literary piece and its historical resonance, the novel has received few scholarly reviews, also moderate public attention as pointed out by Vitale in the seventies. The novel gained a new resonance after Bemberg's Camila; in spite of that, the novel is still unexplored in most of its aspects. Among the articles that offer a detailed discussion of the novel's main characteristics, I will briefly expose four which relate to my analysis of the myth of Camila O'Gorman. Orlando Ocampo defends the

deliberate intention of the author in interpreting "the totality of the national history" (84). His study, based on Linda Hutcheon's concept of postmodern historiographic metafiction,²⁹ lays out the intersection of texts in the novel, the use of historical accounts and the narrator's fictional interpretation of history. Ocampo concludes that Molina achieves in the novel an analysis of Argentine history yet to be approached by its historians (89). Also interested in the types of discourse interweaved in the novel is Susan Lopez de Espinosa. Isolating the discourses of historical, lyric, and essay, the critic studies the tension created by this formal mechanism which guides the reader's appreciation of the historical facts.³⁰

On the other hand, Gwen Kirkpatrick, in a feminist reading of the novel, focuses on its eroticism, relating the historical violence to the sexual fantasies created by Molina. Condemning Molina's violent treatment of the female body,³¹ Kirkpatrick observes that "[t]he same vision that portrays the spontaneous Camila as a victim of repression and as a symbol of spiritual and erotic freedom at times falls captive of its own methods" (141). Marta Gallo's feminist approach is also concerned with Molina's representation of Camila. However, her analysis goes beyond Kirkpatrick's by presenting a rationale for Molina's treatment of his heroine. Gallo perceives the representation of Camila on three

²⁹ 'Postmodern historiographic metafiction' is said of the novel which resorts to historical materials in an auto-reflexive metafiction, problematizing historical knowledge. See Hutcheon, Linda. "The Pastime of Past Time: Fiction, History, Historiographic Metafiction" (*Genre* XX 285-305).

³⁰ "Molina no reproduce los sucesos que describe: nos dice en qué dirección pensar acerca de ellos y así carga nuestro pensamiento con distintas valencias emocionales" (Lopez de Espinosa 211).

³¹ "Molina skirts close to creating a victimization of whatever is labeled the 'feminine'" (148).

levels: as a statue, as a shadow, and in body fragments, each one carrying a specific connotation:

1) ... como una estatua que es alegoría o encarnación de la poesía y del amor ...

2) ...Esa imagen-sombra aparece fugitiva o en actitudes un tanto estereotipadas ...

como una ensoñación vista por el narrador... 3) En imágenes fragmentarias de

partes del cuerpo de C., vistas por la imaginación de "los otros" ... (210-11)

As Gallo explains, through the allegory of the statue, the memory of Camila is preserved, connecting past and present; as a shadow, Camila is a symbol not completely understood by the author. Finally, the body parts form images that construct the dichotomy Eros/death in the novel (217). The eyes and hair are especially distinctive in those fragmentary images and, unlike Kirkpatrick, Gallo understands this fragmentation not as violence towards the female body, but rather as poetic imagery that explains the historical violence:

Ojos y cabellera, puesto que son los rasgos más conspicuos de una cabeza, sirven para evocar esas otras cabezas víctimas del Poder; con sus ojos de otro mundo, como C. con sus ojos extáticos, contribuyen a dar un terrible sentido de este mundo. (217)

The most significant characteristics of Una sombra pointed out by these critics are: first, the historical relationship between the past, Rosismo, and Molina's contemporary time, the circumstances that preceded the Proceso dictatorship. Second is the interweaving of discourses which enhances Molina's poetic analysis of history. Finally, the representation of Camila in this novel opens the discussion of the representation of historical violence through poetic violence toward a woman's body. In

fact, the distinctive discourses of the narrative allow different readings of the representation of Camila. On one hand, she is "an element of plot-space, a topos" (De Lauretis 119) which guides the historical account of government and social violence. On the other, Camila is transformed into a muse, she is Poetry; she embodies the mythical hero, the subject of fables who crosses the boundaries of life and death surviving as a positive symbol of Poetry.

Therefore, the dual mode of representing Camila and the deliberate integration of hybrid discourses result in a revision of history and Molina's poetic statement: the author's revolt against the endemic violence in his country and his belief that poetry cannot change the world, but its significance will reach everyone who needs it.³²

Next, I will present my analysis of the novel focusing on Molina's construction of the myth of Camila by the type of discourse he develops. Then, as an integral part of the discourse, I will consider the oneiric passages and the poetic imagery of fragmentation of Camila's body. Finally, the intriguing accomplishment of Una sombra, is that Molina achieves simultaneously a persuasiveness that "tells us what to think" (López de Espinosa 211), while helping readers to "thaw their imagination" and "reach 'the other' truth" (Vitale 73)

³² "Yo creo que la poesía es una forma de vida. Dentro de una sociedad siempre opresiva, de estructuras morales rígidas, consumista, donde los únicos valores parecen ser los del poder, a través del dinero y de las influencias políticas, el poeta persigue otra cosa: la realización total del ser a través de la poesía. Y aunque ésta no tenga la difusión que merece, va a llegar siempre a quien tenga que llegar. Aunque sea el último ser, en el sitio más remoto, si la necesita, le va a llegar." Molina in Interview with Fernando Loustaunau y Javier Barreiro Cavestany. Suplemento *La Jornada Semanal*, 16 de febrero de 1997. http://www.poeticas.com.ar/Directorio/Poetas_miembros/Enrique_Molina.html Jan 10, 2005

In the preface of Una sombra we hear the author's voice. His aim in the novel is to "someter a un juicio de valor" (7) the historical figures and the historical events. Molina does not pose the narrative as a novel; on the contrary, he dismantles the novelistic structure in the first five lines of the preface, by giving a summary of the plot. There is no room for suspense; the story of Camila O'Gorman and the point of view in which the story will be told are already known by the reader. Molina wants to capture Argentine history in its last resonance with a poetic analysis (7). Moreover, a poetic analysis of history involves, as he said, "imágenes mentales que rescatan de lo profundo los más diversos contenidos, en una total libertad" (7). So, beforehand the reader knows that the author will offer his own subjective imagination of this past. Molina also states that he both respected the historical data and presented new ones. However, for him, history is not a fundamental and monolithic truth, as he places the word in quotation marks, "los datos 'históricos' se han respectado estrictamente" (8). At its formal level, by intertwining fact and fiction, prose and poetry, the discourse of Una sombra achieves a semantic rationalization of history, while at the same time it is charged with an emotional persuasiveness which entraps the reader in a new consciousness of the past and the present.

In spite of dealing with history, Molina's novel is not a traditional historical novel, which was representative of the official discourse of national construction. It coincides with the period of the "Nueva novela histórica," which is representative of intellectual consciousness, of uncovering the social and political farce of the official discourse, by bringing to light in fiction the mechanisms of dictatorships' repression, for instance, by focusing on the dictator's personality. However, Una sombra differs from this model,

since it does not build on a parody nor focus on the central figure of despotic power alone. Molina's novel is a personal gesture of revolt against the endemic violence of Argentina, which sentences to death human aspirations of liberty, love, and beauty. The expression of his rebellion is accomplished by incarnating these surrealist ideals in his construction of the myth of Camila O'Gorman, with a perfect balance in linking his interpretation of reality and oneiric visions. Therefore, Molina crafted a hybrid³³ genre, by reuniting characteristics of the new historical novel, with those of a surrealist prose-poem and essayistic discourse, in what he called "poetic analysis."

Mikhail Bakhtin states that the novel is an artistic genre, whose discourse is poetic and in close relationship to rhetorical forms.³⁴ This study of Molina's novel is supported by the theories of Bakhtin since hybridism, dialogism,³⁵ openendness³⁶ and heteroglossia³⁷ are main constituents of the structure of Una sombra, along with the special relevance that time and space (chronotope) acquire in shaping the persuasiveness

³³ "What we are calling a hybrid construction is an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two 'languages,' two semantic and axiological belief systems" (*Dialogic* 304).

³⁴"The novel, and artistic prose in general, has the closest genetic, family relationship to rhetorical forms. . . But in this uninterrupted interrelationship, novelistic discourse preserved its own qualitative uniqueness and was never reducible to rhetorical discourse. The novel is an artistic genre. Novelistic discourse is poetic, but one that does not fit within the frame provided by the concept of poetic discourse as it now exists. This concept has certain underlying presuppositions that limit it" (*Discourse in the Novel*. *Dialogic* 269).

³⁵ "Dialogism is the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia. Everything means, is understood, as part of a greater whole – there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others. Which will affect the other, how it will do so and in what degree is what is actually settled at the moment of utterance. This dialogic imperative, mandated by the pre-existence of the language world relative to any of its current inhabitants, insures that there can be no actual monologue" (glossary, *Dialogic* 426).

³⁶ as opposed to the epic genre, which is a narrative of a closed past, the novel requires an 'openendness', an indeterminacy; a "new zone opened ... for structuring literary images" (*Epic and Novel* 11).

³⁷ "It is that which insures the primacy of context over text" (glossary 428). Heteroglossia is the phenomenon of the text communicating with the external world, while 'dialogism' is the communication of different 'languages' within the text.

of the text. Another major reason to draw on Bakhtinian thought is the fact that Molina's novel presents the newness that cannot be confined in a simple classification, this being the essential teaching of Bakhtín.

First, I will pose the question of the dialogism in the text. The predominant voice of Una sombra is the voice of the narrator. Like every character in the novel, the narrator is also identified with a real person, the author, who speaks from his own time about a remote past. While the narrator speaks with his own voice, the other characters, when allowed to speak, speak through the narrator's voice, knowledge, and desire as well. For example, in the first chapter of the second part, Camila describes herself and tells her story in first person to Ladislao (154-57). Her speech is marked by the narrator's mythfying language:

Soy la Estrella de la Seducción, cubierta con un velo celeste, la que fuga siempre con su amante y abandona a su familia, la trastorna, la despierta, la arranca a sus imposturas como un estallido en su orden de moscas. (155)

This sentence condenses the narrator's perspective in time and his point of view of the life of Camila within her social environment. At her first encounter with Ladislao she could not have knowledge of her destiny, much less of the influence it would exercise on her family and the political life of the country. Therefore, the character of Camila is not realistic in the novel, and she has no voice of her own but speaks from the perspective the narrator-author has about these historical circumstances. The condensing of events in time, as we can observe above, is one of the types of chronotope employed by Molina

throughout the narrative.³⁸ It has the effect of constantly reminding the reader of the political atrocities perpetrated against Camila and society in general, keeping a global focus to the narrative. So, in a first approach, the text seems to be monologic, in which the narrator-author-poet dominates every signifier and controls the reader's imagination of Camila's story and the political climate in the Argentina of the nineteenth-century.

At the same time as the persuasiveness of the narrative is accomplished by a single voice, which is poetic and oneiric for the most part, the narrator's voice becomes highly analytical as it progressively mixes several different types of discourse into this mono-voiced poetic point of view. Bakhtín states that poetry is essentially a centripetal force, functioning as a "centralization of verbal-ideological life" (272-273), because poetic language is the "language of the poet ... a pure and direct expression of his own intention" (285). While novels, says Bakhtín, incorporate in their structure double-voiced discourses and different types of languages, in dialogizing heteroglossia, novels function by a centrifugal force, decentralizing meaning (273).

In Una sombra, the use of intertexts of previous historical accounts, official speeches, official letters, and controlled dialogues, proceeds uninterrupted toward the decentralization of the official rhetoric while its oneiric language imprints the poet's intention: to revolt against the endemic violence of Argentine governments. Molina effectively constructs the novel in a centrifugal-centripetal axis. The novel is divided into three parts and one appendix with unpublished documents. The language follows a systematic pattern. Although there are on every page traces of poetic language, the

³⁸ Molina uses different combinations of time-space. For instance, the author combines freely the historical events, obeying the effect to be created in the narrative.

discourse is at first highly poetic and then gradually lapses into prose and essay. Finally, it resorts to strictly official language, as found in the documents of the appendix. In this movement of style Molina creates a monologic historical discourse in which his poetic interpretation of events prevails.

The aim of the first part of the book is to give the historical background of the time, establishing its violence: "[v]enía de muy lejos aquella incitación permanente a la violencia, que constituía el verdadero clima moral de la República, la espontánea aptitud para el exterminio" (15). The words, violence, blood, Cabeza, degüello are constantly repeated. In this part, pointing out the surrealist objective chance, the language is meta-poetic. The écriture resembles automatic writing by the use of free associations. The narrative advances mostly in oneiric images, at a fast rhythm, building upon the image of a twister. Following the cyclone pattern, the author intercalates chapters in which he develops the character of Camila with chapters of historical narrative and others of Camila's genealogy. Another element that constructs the cyclone image is the repetition of the words vértigo and jadeante, which are also constant in this first part of the novel. The contextualization of historical characters and events are intermingled with flash images of severed heads, blood, persecutions, all encompassed by the sensorial figures of vertigo, leading the reader to the center of this cyclone with Camila.

In this first part, Camila is mostly a passive character. As historical events are told, the narrator mentions her age, constructing the parallel idea of her growing in love as the country grows in hatred. Punctuating the narrative with Camila's age has the effect of situating Camila and the reader in the midst of the violence of the times: "unos y otros compiten en el terror . . . Más allá de sus partidos, uno y otro se identifican con el oscuro

poder de una tierra que los lanza a la violencia y la alienación" (59). The detailed account of the life of her ancestors puts in context the ills of society, showing the birth of the nation and the birth of the oligarchy as being built upon smuggling and political intrigues. It also contextualizes Camila's inherited "vocation for love" from her grandmother Ana Perichón, who was exiled for her scandalous romantic affair with the Viceroy Liniers. Camila is in the center of this historical cyclone:

Y tantos otros. . . Y tantos personajes empecinados y turbulentos en los episodios de una historia irreconciliable . . . en el torbellino de los bandos en pugna. Camila O'Gorman nació y vivió en tal atmósfera, criatura enamorada en el centro del ciclón. (142)

This first part condenses oneiric stories of the main political actors of the time, the caudillos at war, Rosas, Manuelita and doña Encarnación and Facundo Quiroga, whose passion is equated to Camila's. Each hero of Argentine history is characterized by known popular traits or battles, assigning to each one the author's point of view. For instance, the Unitarians are denominated as las levitas negras, referring ironically to their elegance and trickery. Facundo Quiroga's famous beard is shaped by "una invasión de hormigas" (111), connoting the place Facundo occupies in people's imagination. For Molina, Quiroga, together with Camila, are the ones who dared to live and die for their dreams: Camila, a dream of pure love and Quiroga, the dream of a nation.

The passage on the erotic vision of Delfina nude on horseback to encourage Ramirez's soldiers for the battle (33-37), builds a surreal dream over the historical fact that Delfina followed Ramirez in his battles. The oneiric vision of Delfina inciting the soldiers transforms her into poetry, "a causa de la enigmática identificación, revelada de

golpe, que pueden revestir las formas más antagónicas de la materia al ser recorridas por la energía poética" (35). In this passage, she is the Valkyrie who "incited the heroes to battle by the love which [her] beauty instilled into their hearts and by the bravery [she] displayed at the forefront of the battle on horses charging as swiftly as the clouds..." (Chevalier 1059). It is significant that this scene follows the introductory chapter about Camila, which ends in an analysis of her name as an omen of her destiny. Starting the narrative of the fratricidal wars and its horrors with the erotic vision of a woman who leads the soldiers to fanaticism, Molina underlines the meaning of the sensual power of violence. At the same time, he is evoking the tantalizing power of poetry to reveal "esa zona donde se funden en una verdad única el mundo exterior y el interior" of the nation with its repeated vocation for violence (8). By resorting to poetic language and dreams and interweaving the official discourse in surrealist fiction, Molina is able to retell history, "melting" old concepts into new ones.

The second part of the novel is more centered on the life of Camila and the life of Rosas, stressing the opposition of love and death. It gives an account of the people and circumstances that shaped Camila's destiny and the role of the Church. Passages filled with eroticism give the dimension of Camila's love, where nature concurs with the lovers' desire. When Camila is the subject of the narrative, the discourse is highly poetic but the rhythm is slower than in the first part. The author is now establishing Camila as a figure of Love, Beauty, and Liberty. In contrast, the narrator's voice is very critical of Rosas, who is depicted as a heartless monster, an incestuous father, or as the devil himself. The only titled chapter of the book is "La fiesta de la delación," which comes toward the middle of the second part. This chapter is written in italics as a testimony of an

unidentified character. The remarkable distinction of the titled chapter is to emphasize the tantalizing aspect of life, the chance encounter that re-directs destiny, one of the major beliefs of surrealism. It also marks the end of the dream, the impossibility of transcendence in a hatred society.

The first chapter of the second part narrates the encounter of Camila and Ladislao. As Camila enters the church, the internal space of the temple is described in vivid images as seen through the eyes of Camila, who is blinded by the contrast of the outside daylight and the darkness inside the sanctuary, marking her entrance to the mind's underworld. As her eyes become accustomed, the description is more detailed, surreal and yet critical:

Después de unos instantes, las columnas empezaron a emerger de la sombra . . .
Al frente surgió ... tesoros bañados en vino, muertos recubiertos de mercurio,
como los espejos ... cabezas de hipopótamos embalsamadas ... ataúdes en que se
guarda un brazo...batallas de escorpiones y querubines... la Virgen y el pulpo . . .
mancebos atravesados por flechas que los precipitan al éxtasis ... la visión de la
cruz o un muslo de la Virgen, todo conmovido por la música del órgano. (146-47)

The fantastical view of the main altar, described in surrealist seemingly incongruous associations, projects Molina's distaste for the Church's wealth, political power, manipulation, and hypocrisy. These aspects are highlighted further with the definition of "God," supposedly from the dictionary *Pequeño Larousse Ilustrado*, with the last "related idea" to the word is "escamoteo" (148).

Rosas is defined in relation to the Church. From the center of the main altar, "un hombre cubierto con una malla negra," "con un magnetismo malsano," appears to Ladislao and Camila after they experience their love. The "man," which is later

identified as Rosas, takes them to a descent to hell. On their way appears "ex-votos," body parts as metaphors of tortured people or their torturers, forming a portrait of Rosas's society. Like Dante, Molina places saints and testigos in the catacombs of hell, judging the society who condemned the lovers.

This chapter also gives a summary of the events. In flash oneiric scenes, the poet narrates Camila's and Ladislao's greatest desires, the "window" to their unconscious is the confessional grille. By peeping through the holes, Camila sees herself making love to Ladislao and previews the happy months they lived in Goya in an exotic landscape (150). Also peeping through the confessional grille, Ladislao's battle with his conscience and desires are depicted in his erotic visions of Camila. She embodies the types of lovers we may relate to sadism and to the novels of George Bataille: "los poderes de la imaginación iluminan el mundo de la sexualidad, lo dilatan, lo pueblan de objetos mágicos, de ceremonias, de lujos orgiásticos, donde desaparecen las fronteras entre la fantasía y la realidad" (159). Ladislao's anguish in choosing between Camila's love and the celibate life is rendered in poetic scenes, such as Camila wearing Christ's crown of thorns in her bleeding waist (159). Later, Camila is seduced by the Virgin and becomes one with her after reaching ecstasy through a lesbian sadistic encounter (161-2). Camila's total acceptance of her passion and Ladislao's inability to disconnect himself completely from the Church is condensed by Molina in the metaphor of the marks of Camila's legs in his cassock:

De una extrema blacura, con reflejos de nácar, las piernas impresas daban la impresión de agitarse con el movimiento de la sotana al caminar, lo cual, visto desde atrás y en la penumbra de las naves, hacía aparecer el sacerdote en una

extraña situación, como se avanzara en medio de una mujer que se abriera a su paso y a la que no terminara nunca de alcanzar. (157)

The following chapter, which narrates their escape to Goya, also illustrates Ladislao's torment in a fight with his cassock attacking him. Both lovers had the courage to flee Buenos Aires under false identity in order to enjoy their love openly as husband and wife. However, Ladislao in his last communication with Camila writes from a priest's point-of-view, closing the message with: "te abraza y te perdona, tu M. Gutiérrez" (Calvera 149). Leonor Calvera rightfully points out that even though Ladislao renounces his vows, he still thinks as a priest when absolving Camila from her sins at the moment of death (150).

The third part corresponds to the lovers "descent to hell," previewed in the previous part. It is their journey from Goya to Santos Lugares, where they are executed. Here, the voice of the narrator aligns itself with the author's perception of history; thereby, concluding his juicio de la historia. The narrative is extremely slow paced to convey the misery of the situation: Camila's suffering and the illnesses of society. The author-narrator questions documents and traces probabilities in an attempt to understand Camila's execution. The people involved in Camila's condemnation are described in degrading metaphors, conveying the author-narrator's revolt.

In this conclusive part of the novel, through the narrator's voice, Camila and Ladislao carry the pride of their love against the shallowness of their persecutors. Their torment reveals the impossibility of love and the commotion it causes among people: "como siempre, los esplendores del erotismo nacen a la sombra de los tabús más severos" (246). Camila is referred to in oneiric passages showing her loneliness, fidelity to her

love, and nostalgia for the short-lived happiness in Goya. Ladislao stands for the divinity of erotic love against "las prohibiciones sobrenaturales, destinadas a llenar sus venas de agua bendita en vez de viva sangre trágica bajo el sol" (245).

The third chapter of part III condenses all discursive styles, poetry, essay, and official documentation. In it, Molina reveals his negative judgment of Rosas; in doing so, he also draws on Manuela as the antagonist of the dictator. Like Mármol in Amalia, Molina's character of Manuela is of a gentle daughter who intercedes with her father for the misfortunes of the people. Camila also wrote to Manuela asking her support for her cause. Molina builds upon Manuela's answer to Camila and historical documentation to debate Rosas's contradictory orders. Molina presents evidence that accommodations were prepared for Camila in a monastery and a comfortable cell for Ladislao in Buenos Aires; however, their final destination was Santos Lugares, where they were executed. After denouncing social scandals, and the fact that Rosas had six unrecognized children with his concubine, Molina also analyzes the role of the Unitarian press in the case. The author-narrator's conclusion is that the only explanation for the execution is: "[Rosas] mata a Camila por odio al amor" (264). This is an anticipated conclusion, before its evidence, leading the reader to not formulate another possibility. This conclusion is reinforced by repeating that only love is condemned. Accentuating Rosas's cruelty and incestuous desires, the author forges orgiastic scenes that liberate Manuela from her father and oppressor.

The main statement of this chapter, perhaps of the novel and Molina's oeuvre, is the author's faith in poetry. Following an analysis which seemed a lawyer's investigation

of documents and probabilities of the change of Camila's fate, Molina concludes that by legal means it will never be elucidated:

Hemos cedido por un momento al confuso mundo de los documentos y los balances, amado por los exégetas, y el único capaz de mantener activo, en cada una de sus conclusiones, el bello escalpelo de la duda permanente. Volvamos ahora al claro mundo de la realidad.

En medio a plantas susurrantes, lejos, en una casa siempre en fuga, donde todos los vinos corrían, con el lujo del desorden y de los impulsos repentinos, Camila era también la Hija Rebelde. . . (273)

By contrast, reality can only be clearly perceived in poetry. In the above oneiric passage of Rosas's unconscious, Camila and Manuela are fused in one, both are rebellious daughters: Camila for her crime of love, and la Niña for marrying Ternero in England, against Rosas's will. Later in life, Manuela frees herself of her "Gran Padre Tiránico." The fusion of both characters in a "demente ceremonial carnal" with Ladislao on a horse or in the moonlight symbolizes the victory of liberty and love, enraging Rosas: "La serpiente vertió en sus venas un delirante veneno y el Ilustre Restaurador recuperó su dureza inmemorial" (274). Thus, the author proposes that the scrutiny of the motives of violence must be done in poetic form. Only poetry can reach the unconscious, revealing the "truth." Rosas's justification for executing Camila was, in Manuel Gálvez perspective, "[para] que las mujeres no falten tan gravemente a la ley de Dios y a la ley de los hombres" (272). Rosas's zealotry is refuted by Molina because under such laws women lived in oppression, but society lived in perversion. Thus, the only possible explanation for Camila's sentence is Rosas's thirst for blood and power:

Más que nunca, ante el amor, es compelido a encarnar el guardiacárcel de las convenciones, el dragón de una moral a la que transgrede con esa solapada, fanática hipocresía burguesa en la que sólo cuentan las apariencias. Obseso hasta la minucia por los formalismos, su autoridad representa un pasado ya largamente superado por una nueva conciencia de la vida . . . En su fuero íntimo la primavera, como a los ciegos, le produce un sordo resentimiento. (274-75)

The author concludes that the transgression and sacrifice of Camila produced a new consciousness in favor of life, which is also the aim of poetry. The discourse of the novel anchors the figure of Camila as an "illuminated" woman in the "shadows" of tyranny. Camila's myth survives for Molina like Mélusine's myth survives for Breton in Arcane 17: as Mélusine, from the shadows, Camila dreams of a nation where justice, love and liberty are a possible reality. She returns in artistic form to remind us of the (im)possibility of a dream.

4.4. WOMAN: DESIRE IN MOVEMENT

In The Second Sex (1949), Simone de Beauvoir asserts that the myth of woman is forged by men. The leading feminist of the twentieth century reminds us that in "Genesis" woman is created not as an entity but as the Other destined for man. She establishes woman's connection to Nature and the ambivalent feelings it inspires in man:

He exploits her, but she crushes him, he is born after her and dies in her; she is the source of his being and the realm that he subjugates to his will; Nature is a vein of gross material in which the soul is imprisoned, and she is the supreme reality ... Now ally, now enemy, she appears as the dark chaos from whence life wells up...

Woman sums up nature as Mother, Wife, and Idea; these forms now mingle and now conflict, and each of them wears a double visage. (144)

Detailing each one of these contradictions, Beauvoir traces the origins of the myths of woman. As the goddess of fecundity when associated with Mother Earth, she is the one to give life and fruits and who cares for living beings. The reverse side of it is that life itself is generated in Nature from the fermentation of spoiled matter, and human life is generated by fluids "into the chaotic shadows of his mother's womb" (146). Thus, "germination is always associated with death, so is death with fecundity" (147). Erotic desire starts the fecundation process which culminates in ecstasy followed by orgasm's death, which is also the beginning of germination and the beginning of human death. The mystery of the circle of life is resolved in Nature's soil and in woman's womb. "Woman condemns man to finitude, but she also enables him to exceed his own limits; and hence comes the equivocal magic with which she is imbued" (148). As goddess she bears life; as sorcerer she enchants him; she is at once impurity and innocence.

In Surréalisme et sexualité (1971), Xavière Gauthier analyzes the different portrayals of woman in surrealist literature and painting. The critic does not form a conclusive, monolithic representation of woman in surrealist art. J. B. Pontalis notes at the book's preface that the lack of precision by Gauthier corresponds to the contradictions of the surrealist movement itself, "comment peut-on à la fois exalter le culte de l'amour fou et revendiquer l'exercice d'une sexualité sans entraves?" (10). In a synthesis of representation of women, from courtly love to the Marquis de Sade and the poets maudits, the surrealists see in women the antagonistic force of desire. Sexual desire is the drive that transports not only the male poetic voice, but the male artist to la otra orilla,

which is revelation in ecstasy. Therefore, she is "Melusina, Laura, Isabel, Perséфона, María," "todos los nombres son un solo nombre," says Paz in "Piedra de sol." To Paz's list, we could add the names of Isis, Medusa, Beatrice, Edwarda, Nadja... all the women "petrified"³⁹ in poetry in order to save or destroy her male lover poet through his quest for love and knowledge, through his quest to control Nature. Camila fits and diverges from this paradigm.

I use the word *men* in the context of the historical fact that the majority of surrealist artists were male and displayed a misogynist attitude. As Whitney Chadwick points out, Breton and his friends resolved their search for unique love and personal liberty through "serial monogamy" (130). Since the majority of surrealist art was produced by males, the dualistic representation of woman is man's opposite and complementary pole: she embodies the aspects of yin/yin, life/death, heaven/earth, body/spirit. The male artist's creative life had for its subject, woman, its object, woman, "and even while proclaiming woman's liberty it defined her image in terms of man's desires" (Chadwick 103).

For Molina, woman and Nature are one. Sucre attributes a double signification to the images of woman and Nature in Molina's poetry; they at once are paradisaic and infernal, containing the classic dualistic representation. Molina's poetic voice searches in la materia del mundo, woman and Nature, a cosmic energy:

Molina es, en verdad, no tanto el poeta del trópico o de la pasión erótica como el poeta de la intemperie. La intemperie es, para él, lo Otro, el otro en dimensión

³⁹ "... at Breton's hand, [Nadja] was transformed from a living being into an inanimate book title an operation analogous to that twentieth-century 'petrifying device,' photography." (Conley 115).

cósmica; es decir, el espacio donde el hombre, enfrentado a la dispersión de lo diverso, se concibe y se inventa a sí mismo en comunión con la totalidad original.

(366)

In "¿No hay gracia para mí?" of Pasiones terrestres (1946), it is possible to distinguish the urgent passion in Molina's images, which lead Sucre to give Molina the epithet of "poeta de la intemperie." The poetic voice abandons itself in the midst of all forces, welcomes all vital experiences: "¡Racimo de pasiones! Pon aquí tu sentencia"; however, this passionate urgency is translated into paradoxical images because the poet knows that his search in life is a tantalizing one: "Yo te suplico labios venenosos /llagas aún más brillantes que tus flores /... /-¡tanta dulzura en la avidez del mundo! - /... /donde nada se oiga más que el desnudo salmo de mi alma" (OC 2 83). Thus, Nature and woman are merged in images with the same urgency and reverence. In communion with them the poetic voice reaches significance, the experience of desire becoming an end in itself. Transcendence is only possible through eroticism, the erotic body of woman and the erotic nature of the tropics, because eroticism is movement towards the Other, it is experience.

In "De la ubicación de la mujer en la poesía de Neruda" (Los últimos soles, 1980),⁴⁰ Molina poetically outlines the tradition of woman's representation in surrealist poetry, projecting much of the symbolism of women in his own poetry. He emphasizes that woman is always at the center of Pablo Neruda's poetic universe. These women are voluptuous, "obscenas y sagradas," in deep connection with nature, "con plantas y peces,

⁴⁰ Molina, OC 2: 439-441.

constelaciones, flores." Parts of her body, clothes, and ornaments are fetish elements of her "vocación religiosa para las nocturnas alas del libertinage," which produce "the erotic marriage of the sun and the night." Molina concludes,

De esa esencia femenina, con hipnotizantes órganos genitales, Neruda deduce formas obsesivas y grandes resplendores . . . [ella es] una deidad, una intercesora entre la tierra y la trascendencia, con sus modales obedientes a los pájaros girando entre las brasas de la Osa Mayor en dirección a Canopus. (OC 2 441)

Although this misogynist tradition of poetic imagery of woman rightfully causes an upheaval among feminist critics, Molina's representation of Camila O'Gorman humanizes the young martyr, fixing her love, her ecstasy, her life and death as a "monument" of her liberty: "pues [ha] elegido ser. Y tal elección significa hacer brillar el mundo con una luz tantálica" (Una sombra 25). Molina finds in the drama of Camila's life, the same quest of his poetry, she did not want "tu conjuro entre la temperancia / y el tapiz, / ante los candelabros que te apartan del hálito / nocturno..." (OC 2 82). Camila's drama, for Molina, comes to define the significance of the national drama:

Camila aparece como una provocación: la natural provocación de las alas y las flores. Insulta su nombre o pronuncíalo con amor: de inmediato te revelará tu condición de cerdo o tu estatura humana. (Una sombra 24)

4.5. CAMILA AND MÉLUSINE

Through Molina's novel, the myth of Camila O'Gorman reappears in Argentine history as a possibility of salvation in times of violence. Before him, in post-war time,

Breton recovered the myth of Mélusine in Arcane 17 (1947) as the hope for the future of the world. However, Mélusine is an entrapped being; half woman, half serpent; she was condemned to love and assist her loved ones from the shadows.⁴¹ The uniqueness of Una sombra donde sueña Camila O'Gorman in surrealist literature is that Molina recovers the female character as the subject of her own story. Camila, like other real, fictional, and mythological women portrayed by surrealist authors, is the child-woman, the sorcerer, the fairy, the Star. However, those representations of Camila are not the vehicle for men to reach revelation – she is revelation herself. In the novel, she is the one who wants to reach the Supreme Point, daring to be free in a repressive society. Because of that, Molina raises her stature to Poetry, immortalizing her myth.

Fortune, desire, fate, three aspects of surrealist objective chance, mark Camila's life and her eternal survival. The first image of Camila in the novel is of her young breasts which already contain "una ardiente sabiduría," guiding her will to choose the freedom of living for love, leading her with pride to the ultimate catastrophe (20). From the shadow of her existence, "contra la estupidez de los facones y los breviaros" (23), the myth of Camila survives as poetry, illuminating the world with her tantalizing force. Molina

⁴¹ The myth of Mélusine was first written in novel form by Jean the Arras in the fourteenth-century, and from then on, several versions of the myth have appeared. In general, Mélusine is presented as a beautiful woman, good wife and mother; but she also belongs to a demoniac universe. Because she made a serious fault in her youth, Mélusine was condemned by her mother to see the bottom of her body transforming itself into serpent every Saturday. However, if she finds a husband who promises never to see her this day, she would die as a human. Raimondin falls in love with her beauty when he sees Mélusine in a spring. They marry after the young man promises never to see her on Saturdays. Prosperity blesses the couple; Mélusine builds cities and castles and gives Raimondin eight sons, starting the dynasty of Lusignan. Their sons were all marked on the face, pointing to their supernatural origin. One day, Raimondin's brother entices him to watch Mélusine on a Saturday. The rupture of the pact which conditions their union causes the disappearance of Mélusine. With a terrible cry, she flies away through a window of the castle of Lusignan, to live in the shadows as a fairy. From then on her cry would be heard around the castle as a premonition of disaster. This way, Mélusine continued to care for and protect her descendants. The myth

interweaves her story with the story of tyranny, presenting as one voice the fierce antagonism of both powers, the power of transcendence and the power of annihilation.

Her breasts are a double sign of her own desire and strength as well as of her fate: "sus senos concitan los más delicados destellos carnales, poseen la fascinación de la belleza condenada de antemano, en plena juventud" (20). "Concitar" in Spanish means to provoke or to attract hostile reactions to oneself or to others. Introducing Camila to the reader through her breasts condenses in few images the intensity of her tragedy. The splendor of her sexuality, as in women, is first revealed through her breasts; growing with her breasts, grows her eroticism and her determination grow. On the other hand, as in medieval litany, "Thou art the Breast from which God gives orphans to suck" (qtd. in Beauvoir 180), Camila's breasts are emptied by an orphan society:

Como es natural, la Familia, la Iglesia y el Poder debían fulminar a una criatura que transformaba en éxtasis toda transgresión hecha en nombre del amor, capaz de ser libre, y cuya carne aún estaba húmeda con la lluvia del Paraíso. Su historia es ejemplar, remota y actual como un mito. (21)

Camila is condemned for daring to preserve her connection with the primordial forces of the universe, kept within her breasts latido a latido. More than heroes and martyrs, the narrator suggests, Camila deserves a statue to preserve forever her myth of love and liberty. In presenting Camila, the author traces the antinomies to be developed in the course of the novel within the image of the statue. Pointing out that statues of heroes stand for the principles of the establishment, Molina describe them as oppressive

of Mélusine is cherished by the surrealists because the fairy-woman embodies all the attributes of woman. Because of her eternal youth and contact with the supernatural Mélusine is the child-woman.

objects. Instead, the statue of Camila would not be an emptied symbol in parks to be "ultrajada por las palomas" (25); it would glorify the material to be used. The author describes her statue containing life; whoever leans over her breasts, "representados con una delicadeza especial, sentirá en ellos el temblor de un latido secreto" (26). The statue also would have a "larga cabellera de pelo natural en la que el viento mezclará plumas y hojillas al agitarla" (26). Unlike oppressive statues in parks, Camila's image is to be related to the image of a woman who sacrificed everything for love, with absolute respect for her feelings, defying all established powers. Thus, it is an homage to desire and liberty.

Therefore, Una sombra donde sueña Camila O'Gorman is the poetic monument Molina proposed to build to remind the Argentine society of the endemic violence they have lived in, constantly subjugating their humanity to fratricidal wars:

Hace poco tiempo [Molina] explicó que [la novela] reivindica los derechos del amor y agrega que intentó hacer su historia lentamente a la conciencia social. Su mensaje es entonces rescatar la realidad para la poesía y difundir la historia, "la terrible experiencia" para que la vida de Camila "sea un mensaje de amor más allá de las facciones en que estaba dividida la Argentina de su tiempo, de su ferocidad, de los degüellos y los crímenes" (qtd. in Corvatta and Demichelle 61).

Indeed, Molina forges social consciousness recounting Camila's tragedy rooted in the nation's history since los perros cimarrones. The novel is not made of "superimposed images taken from some stock catalogue" (First Manifesto 7). The oneiric association of surrealist images opens the reader's sensibility to understand a new reality, accessible because it is not rationalized. The poetic images transport the reader to Camila's reality:

the "glowing excitement" (46) of the primordial forces of life encountered in desire.

Moreover, Una sombra is a surrealist novel because it is a testimony to Molina's

"complete nonconformism ... at the trial of the real world" (47).

"El poeta de la intemperie" gives to his novel the same inebriating significance of his oeuvre. In choosing to explore the world, Molina sought freedom for himself, the same liberty he proposes to his readers. Only being free, people preserve their humanity:

La liberté, elle, échappe à toute contingence. La liberté, non seulement comme idéal mais comme créateur constant d'énergie, telle qu'elle a existé chez certains hommes et peut être donnée pour modèle à tous les hommes, doit exclure toute idée d'équilibre confortable et se concevoir comme éréthisme continu.

(Arcane 17 168)

The myth of Camila O'Gorman, as recreated by Molina, gives us the model to approach life in its fullest, having the real courage to accept the risk of liberty. As proved by Molina, Camila's proud death was one of the factors that put an end to tyranny. Her myth survives as the tantalizing possibility of revolution.

Conclusion: The Mythologists

Existe é homem humano. Travessia.
João Guimarães Rosa

One hundred and eight years separate the publication of Gorriti's short-story from the release of Bemberg's film. They were the first two women to approach the subject of Camila O'Gorman's transgression and execution. There are many intersections in these female authors' lives and works which could explain their representation of Camila O'Gorman. Both Gorriti and Bemberg are prominent surnames in the nation's history. Both women expressed through their work their visions of Argentina and its society. They also fought for their right to be independent women in their society. Lastly, they both were pioneers in their profession opening the gate for other women in a male professional territory. There were woman writers before Gorriti, there were woman filmmakers before Bemberg. However, during their times, there were not in Argentina any women who could profit in an all-male cultural profession, who would advocate for other woman in the field, and who reached international recognition for their work as Gorriti and Bemberg did in their respective field a century apart.

Their lives were also influenced by the different dictatorships and governments under which they lived, marking how they portrayed women. While Gorriti's oeuvre is more homogeneous, by placing women characters at the center of the conflict of the nation, she avowed conservative politics for women. Bemberg, instead, has three moments in her career as filmmaker. In the early eighties, her films presented revolutionary feminism in a society dominated by the military and mostly closed to

women in the public arena. At that time, her productions did not receive promising reviews, even though when they were approved by the official censors. The film Camila represented the turning point in Bemberg's career. The making of the film had the purpose of proving that the director was able to direct a classic love story. The third moment of Bemberg's work is the most mature, corresponding to her last three productions. By having proved herself in activist cinema and its opposite with the melodrama Camila, Bemberg was then able to place woman characters as active players in the world of politics. In her last films, Bemberg offered a mature analysis of society and made a resounding contribution to the debate over feminism in Latin America.

In sum, Gorriti represented Camila O'Gorman as a negative symbol for the women of her society, endorsing the values of the writer's public persona. By not overtly transgressing the values of her time, Gorriti preserved the popularity of her work. Bemberg balanced her feminist practice and responded to the feminist aspirations of the eighties by depicting Camila as a rebellious daughter. In order to accomplish her objective, filming a love story, the director resorted to the structure required for a melodrama: she ended the film with Camila emotionally defeated and seeking solace from her lover, who pronounces the last comforting words "Siempre a tu lado, Camila." Therefore, in order to be active players in their society, the female authors opted to not overtly propose the image of a woman who proudly chose the risks of being free.

In Una sombra, Molina sustained a portrait of Camila O'Gorman as an accomplished human being whose fate illuminates the shadows of our existence. By being a male poet who embraced the ideals of surrealism, Molina traced the origins of tyranny in Argentina and constructed a poetic monument in homage to freedom.

This dissertation showed the implications of biography and historical moments in the choice and development of a national character into a fictional work, constructing representational mythologies. The research of the representation of national myths considered within the frame of authorship and history makes a contribution to critical thinking, which is a scholar's commitment.

E me cerro aqui, mire e veja.
J. G. Rosa

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Vita

Fernanda Vitor Bueno, daughter of Antonio Ribeiro Bueno and Eloyza Vitor Bueno, was born in Varginha - MG, Brazil. She attended the Universidade de São Paulo, where she received her B.A. in the Italian and Russian languages and literatures. She was granted a fellowship to attend the Università Italiana per Stranieri in Perugia, Italy, where she acquired an Italian Teaching Certificate. After working in the private sector, she moved to the United States. She continued her education at Texas State University from which she received a Master's degree in Spanish. Her M.A. thesis, "Miguel Littín: imágenes de conciencia," was directed by Dr. Míriam Balboa Echeverría. While completing her Ph.D. at The University of Texas at Austin in Hispanic Literature, she has taught Spanish and Portuguese at UT-Austin, Texas State University, Trinity University and St. Edward's University.

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