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The Child's Perspective of War and its Aftermath in Works of Adult Prose and Film in Mexico and Spain

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**The Child's Perspective of War and its Aftermath in Works of Adult
Prose and Film in Mexico and Spain**

by

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Dedication

To my loving family who has supported me in my every endeavor, and to Jim, the best partner I could ever imagine. You have encouraged and stood by me throughout this process and have my undying love and gratitude. I proudly present to you the dissertation that you made possible.

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This dissertation investigates the literary and cinematic use of the child's perspective to present the Mexican Revolution and the Spanish Civil War and their aftermath in several Mexican, Spanish, and international (Mexican-Spanish collaborative) narratives of the 20th and early 21st Centuries written by adult authors and filmmakers, and targeted for adult audiences. The Mexican narratives are *Cartucho* and *Las manos de mamá* by Nellie Campobello, *Balún Canán* by Rosario Castellanos, and *Bandidos*, a film by Luis Estrada; selected Spanish works are *El espíritu de la colmena* by Víctor Erice, *Cría cuervos* by Carlos Saura, and *El sur* by Adelaida García Morales; and both international works are films by Guillermo del Toro, *El espinazo del diablo* and *El laberinto del fauno*. I attempt to determine the textual or cinematic function of the child as first person (*homodiegetic*) narrative viewer in these works, and I study the different ways in which

this child's point of view is constructed in order to depict the overwhelming tragedy of war. I note patterns and diversities in subject matter presented by the narrative voice, and observe the characteristics of the child narrative viewer's world and priorities (as presented by the authors and filmmakers), paying careful attention to how each perceives and understands his or her country's violent upheaval and its aftermath. The theoretical framework of this investigation draws mainly from trauma theory, Gothic studies, and the tradition of the fairy tale. I illustrate how within the war narrative in addition to the author's/filmmaker's desire to recreate the sentiment that a child would evoke in adult readers and viewers, the child narrative viewer is employed for three main reasons: to play upon or against preexisting notions of the child's innocence; to represent (possibly subversively) the nation; and as therapeutic means of returning to a paradise lost or creating a paradise never experienced.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“A mí me parece que esta guerra está mal organizada. Los hermanos debían estar juntos.”

-*La orilla* by Luis Lucía

From the mouths of babes, indeed. It is statements such as the above that have inspired the present study of the literary and cinematic use of the child's perspective when narrating armed conflict, specifically civil war, in several Mexican and Spanish short stories, novels, and films for adult audiences of the 20th and early 21st centuries.

The focus of this study is the fictional use of the child's perspective from which to narrate the child's experience of armed conflicts, particularly the Mexican Revolution and the Spanish Civil War, and their aftermath. It attempts to determine the textual and/or cinematic function of the child as first person (*homodiegetic*) narrative viewer, and studies the different ways in which this child's perspective is constructed. It looks for patterns and diversities in subject matter presented, observes the characteristics of the child's world and priorities (as presented by the authors), paying careful attention to how each perceives war and its aftermath, and notes the specific devices used to simulate recollection when the narrative voice looks back upon these events. Finally this study illustrates how within the war narrative in addition to the author's/filmmaker's desire to recreate the sentiment that a child would evoke in adult readers and viewers, the child narrative viewer is employed for three main reasons: to play upon or against preexisting notions of the child's innocence; to represent (possibly subversively) the nation; and as therapeutic means of returning to a paradise lost or creating a paradise never experienced. This investigation is novel in that it is the first such study of child narrative viewers to

bridge the Atlantic for the purpose of drawing comparisons between the narratives of these two armed conflicts, the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920 and the Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939.

As my present interest is narrative technique and not child development and maturation, this study addresses the perspective of the young child within fictional works, eschewing the *Bildungsroman*, the novel of development. For the purposes of this investigation I will define the “child” as pre-adolescent, or if the child’s age is not made explicit within the work, one who gives textual indications of being pre-adolescent (or younger than about thirteen years of age) for the bulk of his/her narrative viewing. The oldest child viewer of this study is Adriana in *El sur*, whose narration is also the most internalized and spans from her early childhood into adolescence, but whose focus remains the postwar’s impact upon her family and the mystery that surrounds her father. Thus, the question of the *Bildungsroman* also leads to the next parameter – subject matter. The present investigation excludes works in which the argument centers on the traditional transformation of the narrative voice from child into adult. Included are works in which the narrative voice relates one or a series of war- and postwar-related incidents. Although its 10-year-old witness to the Mexican Revolution experiences adult situations and a noticeable character shift, I include *Bandidos* by Luis Estrada in this study because these situations and transitions are brought about as a direct result of the Revolution and not by the reluctant child on his own developmental timeline. Estrada seems to suggest that the loss of innocence and onset of what could at first be seen as “adulthood” is actually just the war victim’s assumption of vicious living.

Finally, all works selected for this study were written in the 20th – early 21st centuries, are located geographically in two countries, Spain and Mexico, and share Spanish as their common language. The study is divided into three sections: Mexican, Spanish, and “international” narratives – films shot and produced with Spanish crews by Mexican director Guillermo del Toro. The Mexican narratives are *Cartucho* and *Las manos de mamá* by Nellie Campobello, in which a girl chronicles her family’s and town’s involvement in the Mexican Revolution; *Balún Canán* by Rosario Castellanos, a polyphonic work in which, for the majority of the novel, it is the little girl of the family who details the rift between the races and her family’s struggle to quell the revolts of their Amerindian laborers; and *Bandidos*, a film by Luis Estrada that illustrates the life-altering impact the Mexican Revolution has on a boy who must fend for himself after *bandidos* destroy his boarding school. Selected Spanish works are *El espíritu de la colmena* by Víctor Erice, a critically acclaimed film that portrays a girl’s search for a monstrous spirit amidst the stifling postwar climate of her small Spanish village; *Cría cuervos* by Carlos Saura, a film in which audiences witness scenes of the childhood (during the postwar Franco dictatorship) of the narrative voice as she reveals the reasons behind her hateful feelings towards her father; and *El sur* by Adelaida García Morales, in which a woman looks back on her uprooted youth and tenuous family relations, in large part as direct result of the Spanish Civil War. Although both *El sur* and *Balún Canán* were followed by filmic versions of the original written works, for the purposes of this initial study I have chosen to focus on solely the original versions as conceived by García Morales and Castellanos, noting how these authors draw from postwar-related situations they personally experienced as children and as adults have woven into their narratives.

The extension of scope to include the study of the construction of the child narrative viewer within the cinematic versions of these works, by Víctor Erice and Benito Alazraki, respectively, will certainly form a part of a later investigation. Both international works are films by Guillermo del Toro. The first, *El espinazo del diablo*, co-produced by Agustín and Pedro Almodóvar, is presented from the eyes of a group of children who have been left by their elder loved ones in the care of fellow Republicans in a remote location, hoping to shield them from the violence of the Spanish Civil War. The second, *El laberinto del fauno*, depicts a girl's retreat into fairy tales to escape the cruelty and violence of her real life at her stepfather's command post in northern Spain.

Many factors prompted the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), including land reform disputes between the land-owning *ladinos* and the indigenous laborers, widespread poverty and hunger, and Mexico's strengthening position in the world economy (due in great part to the extraction and exportation of the country's natural resources), seen by some to be at the cost of the country's own internal development. On November 20, 1910, with his Plan de San Luis Potosí, Francisco Madero formally challenged Porfirio Díaz's presidential legitimacy and declared himself interim president, and with this call to arms historians mark the official beginning of the Revolution (Knight, Volume I p. 77).

The artistic community of Mexico responded to the Revolution with renewed attention to education and a resurgence of regional music and dance that for years had been neglected (Paz, 136). F. Rand Morton describes the legacy of the Mexican Revolution as "el valor para vivir, pensar y crear como mexicano; expresarse, sobre todo en lo que se refiere a la literatura, de acuerdo con su propia voluntad" (17). And Paz

deems this nation-wide artistic self-contemplation the natural step that follows an explosive Revolution (11). In literature this self-contemplation can be witnessed in the narrative of the Revolution, in which professional and amateur writers alike recount battles and their aftermath. The prevalence and proximity of the fighting prompted even those who normally would not do so to write in order to voice their personal stories. Although scenes of the Revolution may already be found in Mariano Azuela's 1911 novel *Andrés Pérez, maderista*, the war narrative "upsurge" did not occur until the late twenties (Langford, 36). These revolution-based works range from short story-type anecdotes to novels and cutting social satires, "tend to be terse, relatively brief, [and] frequently colloquial in moments of conversation," and focus primarily on the armed conflicts and later on social reforms (Leal, Luis, 100; Langford, 39). "Plot...is usually subordinated to a narration of events, episodes, anecdotes, often revolving around the personal participation of the author in what is related" (Langford, 39). The accounts are characterized by their originality and diversity; *demythifying* description of disparities among class, race, and gender; and often fragmentary nature – indicative of the nation's fragmented social and political reality – that breaks from the cohesive 19th-century canon, signifies change, and requires active participation on the part of the readers to fill the gaps and make the necessary associations (Rodríguez, 144-145; Carol Clark D'Lugo, xiii-2). Thus, the narrative of the Mexican Revolution may be seen as an "agent of activism that positions readers to reflect critically on the status of the nation and to adopt a more participatory role within fiction" (Carol Clark D'Lugo, 1).

The introduction of film to Mexico had also served to engage Mexican audiences with the narrative in a new way. On August 14, 1896 in the Droguería Plateros in

Mexico City, Lumière representatives Claude Ferdinand Bon Bernard y Gabriel Veyre first exhibited film in Mexico, and by 1902 there were already upwards of 300 movie theatres throughout the country (de Buenosaires, 65; Schumann, 218).¹ Mexican cinema was heavily political from the start, as President Díaz appreciated its propagandistic advantages and personally starred in many short documentaries (Schumann, 218; Dávalos Orozco, 14).²

Other early films addressed daily life and spectacles such as bullfights and festivals, including children's dances and parties, but from 1910-1920 the battles of the Mexican Revolution became the central topic of Mexican cinema.³ The public, anxious to learn of the war's progress, received these films with enthusiasm (Dávalos Orozco, 14).

De Luna explains:

Mexican Revolution was nebulous and difficult to decipher. The documentaries of the period showed what was visible: battlefields covered with corpses, battles where one can barely distinguish the faces of the combatants and, above all, images of the caudillos. Nevertheless, the cinematographic rhetoric astounded the public with its vitality, persuasiveness and unquestionable verisimilitude. [...] The short-film format imposed itself while armed conflict was at its most intense. (172)

¹ Of the eight short films the Lumière representatives showed that day ("Disgusto de niños," "Las Tullerías de París," "Carga de coraceros," "Demolición de una pared," "El regador y el muchacho," "Jugadores de escarté," "Llegada del tren," "Comida del niño") children occupy prominent roles in three, providing the Mexican populace with an initial connection between children and cinema.

² Films such as "El general Díaz paseando por el Bosque de Chapultepec," "El general Díaz, acompañado de sus ministros, en desfile de coches," "El general Díaz recorriendo el zócalo," "El general Díaz despidiéndose de sus ministros," "El general Díaz con los secretarios de Estado en el Castillo," "El general Díaz en carruaje regresando a Chapultepec."

³ Similarly, documentaries became a popular means of delivering updates to the families of combatants in the First World War. Special "Roll of Honour" films were produced that featured photographs of soldiers who had been killed, wounded, taken prisoner, or were still serving at the Front and had accomplished commendable feats of bravery (Marcus, 281). These films, which were usually screened with accompanying patriotic songs, sought to rally patriotism. They also aimed to make the war more accessible for the folks at home and "to write the local into the narrative of the nation," a personalization that in the narrative of war, was often achieved by similar attention to individual characters, or by means of *homodiegetic* narration (Marcus, 281). As the war dragged on and the number of casualties became staggeringly high, "Roll of Honour" films lost their ability to inspire.

In Mexico, military men themselves began to film short cinematic productions in which “the civic spirit was mixed with the novelistic,” a trend that continued in many narratives of the Mexican Revolution, as the war quickly became a pretext for adventures, comedies, entertainments, and melodramas (De Luna, 174-175). Fernando de Fuentes’ full-length fictional triptych, *El prisionero trece* (1933), *El compadre Mendoza* (1933), and *¡Vámonos con Pancho Villa!* (1935, based on the 1931 novel by Rafael F. Muñoz), is an example of popular Revolution-based cinematic productions that maintained a central message of social criticism, exposing the dichotomy “between the Revolution understood as an ideal and the Revolution itself, chaotic, contradictory, and relentless” (Mora, 44). Respectively, they spoke against blind obedience to authority, in favor of Zapata’s peasant movement, and *demythified* the figure of the caudillo (Gustavo García, 158).

While the disparity between the idea and the reality of the Mexican Revolution drew the criticism of Mexican authors and filmmakers, throughout the world artists were observing the similar dichotomy of the First World War. North American director D.W. Griffith saw film as a potential way to prevent nations from waging war, and believed that if films properly depicting the true horrors of war had been shown throughout Europe, there would have been no bodies on the battlefields (Marcus, 283-284). Likewise, French film director Abel Gance wrote in his 1916 diary “How I wish that all the dead of the war would rise up one night and return to their country into their houses, to discover if their sacrifices were for anything. War would stop on its own, strangled by the immensity of the horror” (Gance; Winter, 137).

Mexican films that voiced dissention were of course subject to censorship as, for example, the conclusion of *Vámonos con Pancho Villa* in which one Villista kills another was not seen until decades later (Gustavo García, 158). A similar portrayal (similar to De Fuentes') of the Mexican Revolution as an irresistible force that cataclysmically sucked in even "helpless individuals and destroyed them, and which in the end did not really improve conditions" resurfaces decades later in Estrada's film *Bandidos*, this time interpreted by children (Mora, 47).

In the documentaries of daily life and Revolutionary films, children occupied secondary roles, as part of the family or seen briefly as learning to become adults who will soon be required to defend the home, but in later decades the child figure became more prevalent, particularly in films of social criticism.⁴ In the 1950's, for example, worsening social conditions brought forth a series of socially critical films in which children occupied principal roles in the midst of poverty, thievery, and violence. One of the most acclaimed of these films is Luis Buñuel's 1950 neorealist production *Los olvidados* (Wilt, 145).⁵ By portraying the pathetic and brutal lives of lower class children of Mexico City, Buñuel and other cinematographers of this era call attention to the "unjust reality of postrevolutionary society" (Hernández Rodríguez, 102). Other social issues such as class disparity, indigenous rights, and the nation's insularity have also been addressed cinematically focusing on children, in films such as *El joven Juárez* (1954), *El castillo de la pureza* (1972), and *La mugrosita* (1981).

⁴ In *Vámonos con Pancho Villa* (1935), for example, the main scene in which a child is featured prominently is one in which he is being shown how to fire a gun.

By the time *Bandidos* was released in 1991, Mexican cinema had been plagued for decades by censorship and difficulties with funding, as numerous governmental organizations attempted to restrict and/or save the film industry. The quality of films suffered as a result and, says Maciel, by the 1980's the artistic merit and interpretive content of native made films is "nothing short of dreadful, and few products from the period hold more than passing interest for in-depth analysis" (Maciel - Imperio; David William Foster, viii). Mora suggests that perhaps Mexican cinema has not revived because the country has not experienced another great trauma since the Revolution, because "national cinematic revivals, the explosion of new talents who reinterpret a people's historical experience, have often occurred after great national traumas" (Mora, 186).⁶ Contemporary Mexican filmmakers have had no recent dramatic events to draw upon for their works, "just the experience of a nation seeking to modernize while coping with the burdens of the past: poverty, exploitation, and ignorance" (Mora, 186). But if there is indeed a correlation, he says, then the lackluster film production is for the better.

Certainly relevant to this matter of subpar films is the fact that the Mexican film industry to this day faces problems with finding funding. Directors have had to become more creative and involved in all aspects of filmmaking, and this has led to new partnerships and co-productions, both national and international (Maciel – Imperio, 35). Because of such international partnerships, in the 1990s a new generation of filmmakers, including Guillermo Del Toro, Alfonso Cuarón, and Alejandro González Iñárritu,

⁵ Other works include: *La ciudad perdida* (1950), *Dos huerfanitas* (1950), *Los hijos de la calle* (1950), *Hijos de la obscuridad* (1950, but never released commercially), *El papelerito* (1950), *El joven Juárez* (1954), and *Los jóvenes* (1960)

emerged that, for the first time in decades, had much greater control over their own productions, earning them international success.⁷ Indicative of the outward shift Mexican cinema has been forced to take in order to garner both funding and audiences abroad, the work of these filmmakers bears notable traces of international and especially Hollywood productions, with themes that are less exclusively Mexican.

Just one year before the Plan de San Luis de Potosí, on November 7, 1909, Nellie Campobello was born in Villa Ocampo, in the northernmost region of the state of Durango, Mexico. She spent her childhood during these combative years here and also farther north in Parral, Chihuahua, thus it is understandable that Campobello's two major narrative works address in such detail what has been referred to as the first period of the Mexican Revolution. Campobello's personal knowledge of these events is, as she explained, what entitled her and largely what prompted her to craft these works, for she had become aware of the circulation of "inaccurate" accounts of events – especially those related to the nature of Francisco Villa – and she felt obligated to correct these derogatory claims in a personal and laudatory alternative discourse.⁸ Although she draws from true experiences that she collected in her little green notebook, Campobello's two major prose compilations *Cartucho* and *Las manos de mamá* have been classified as fiction since she conflates time and characters, and often bases depictions of events on popular folklore. A trip to Cuba, where she met author and critic José Antonio Fernández de Castro and

⁶ In addition to its presence in *Bandidos*, the Mexican Revolution plays an important role in Alfonso Arau's filmic version of Laura Esquivel's *Como agua para chocolate* (1992), however is not the central focus.

⁷ Del Toro finds state-subsidization a "fossilized approach," appreciates the liberty over his own creations that private investors provide, and notes that generally these private investors work harder to grant exposure for their films – both positive things for a director (Mora, 256).

⁸ Chapter 5 elaborates on this term "alternative discourse" as coined by Kay S. Garcia.

witnessed the passionate resolution of students bravely protesting the Machado government, inspired her to assume similar heroism in finding her voice to speak out against wrongs she witnessed in her home country.⁹ Her description of the students rings of an author who will soon write from a child's point of view:

Aquellos jóvenes universitarios no eran fuertes físicamente, no tenían grandes cuerpos, no tenían pistola al cinto, y en las entrañas – algunos de ellos – sólo llevaban unos tragos de café. Pero si pequeños de cuerpo, en su mayoría, podían hablar, sabían hablar. Esa era su arma. (Mis libros, 18)

There exist three editions of *Cartucho*, the first (containing thirty-three segments divided into three main sections of seven, twenty-one, and five, respectively) was published on October 13, 1931 following the Campobello sisters' 1930 trip to Cuba; the second version (also comprised of three main sections, but with fifty-six segments in all; seven, twenty-eight, and twenty-one, respectively) was published – due in part to the suggestion of Martín Luis Guzmán – in 1940; and the third, forming part of her *obra reunida*, in 1960 (Rodríguez, 156).¹⁰ Of the major differences among these editions, in addition to the deletion of the prologue and one of the 1931 vignettes (“Villa”) and the inclusion of twenty-four more, readers note the elimination of much of the narrative voice's subjectivity and the removal of many historical-political references. The work's “strong, expressive tone” has also lessened in the later version.¹¹ Campobello, whose “prose fiction is free of the kind of sugary sentimentalism that has been traditionally

⁹ Women writers were not easily published in Mexico of the 1930s, but Fernández de Castro facilitated the publication of Campobello's *Cartucho* (Campobello - *Mis libros*, 17).

¹⁰ The quotes for this present study have been taken from the 1940 edition, although both editions have been consulted.

¹¹ Blanca Rodríguez specifies in detail the differences between the 1931 and 1940 editions in her work *Nellie Campobello: eros y violencia*, and in “Cartucho: Recordar a los bandidos del norte,” Ramírez Peña provides a chart illustrating the themes and differences between these two editions as well as sound

associated with women's writing and which is commonly found in texts of other authors of this [narrative of the Revolution] movement," provides short glimpses of many of the participants of the Mexican Revolution as they pass through her town, interact with friends and family, and usually, are killed in the violence of the Revolution (Glantz, 99). In between the first two editions of *Cartucho*, in 1937, Campobello published *Las manos de mamá*, a collection of short narratives also based on accounts of the Mexican Revolution, but with a more personal, lyrical tone. Her focus in this work is on her own family, and particularly on her mother and her mother's actions in the turbulent times in which she was raising young Nellie.

While both *Las manos de mamá* and *Cartucho* are works whose action takes place in the North during the first period of the Mexican Revolution, Rosario Castellanos' 1957 novel *Balún Canán* addresses the years after the official conclusion of the Revolution, and illustrates the continued prevalence of sociopolitical tension between southern Mexican landowners and indigenous laborers. Castellanos was born in Mexico City on May 25, 1925 and her family moved back to Comitán, Chiapas when she was a baby. *Balún Canán* is based on remembered accounts from her childhood of tensions between her own landowning family and their laborers, and bears witness to the fact that within this isolated community the effects of the Revolution lasted long after its official conclusion and well into the 1940's when President Cárdenas enacted reforms to return land to the land-working and indigenous classes.

historical background for situating the work. Sara Rivera López's article "La lectura de la Revolución mexicana en *Cartucho*, de Nellie Campobello" addresses the differences among the three editions.

Luis Estrada, son of the late film director José Estrada, was born in Mexico City on January 17, 1962. Temporal markers within his 1991 film, *Bandidos*, suggest the action takes place during a tumultuous early period of the Mexican Revolution. In this work the children themselves become participants in the chaos of the Revolution, as they assume the lifestyle of bandits. Unlike the hero of the Hollywood Western, who typically confronts the local tyrant on behalf of the “little people” of the town and tries to initiate social change, the bandit consistently seeks only his own advancement (Mora, 46-47; Vanderwood, 11). The analogy of the wolf that Estrada suggests by *El tuco*’s wild howls is appropriate, for animalistic behavior – of animals and of men – prevails and dominates throughout the plains during this lawless time, and wolves, like bandits, are dangerous survivors.

Although preceded by decades of political tension concurrent with the Mexican Revolution, the Spanish Civil War did not officially erupt until July of 1936 when the Second Republic, headed by President Manuel Azaña, was challenged by so-called Nationalists under the command of Generals José Sanjurjo, Emilio Mola, Gonzalo Queipo de Llano, and later led by General Francisco Franco. A major issue behind this conflict was the distribution of power; in simplified terms, the Nationalists – generally speaking, comprised of the conservative wealthy and rural classes, Carlists, and devout Roman Catholics (except in the case of the Basque Country) – were attempting to reinstate a more centralized government (and also to maintain a tight affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church), while the Republicans – generally speaking, comprised of liberal, less wealthy, and urban classes, socialists, communists, and anarchists – fought for the preservation of their more democratic and secular Republic. Foreign intervention

and “non-intervention” were pivotal in the outcome of this conflict, and quickly Spain became the testing grounds for countless new forms of German, Russian, and Italian warfare, as the tremendous number of casualties can confirm. Although sources vary widely in their assessments of the number of casualties by the war’s end, Hugh Thomas sets this figure at 500,000 (Thomas, 926).¹²

The international nature of this conflict explains why the Spanish Civil War became a source of artistic inspiration for world-renowned figures outside of Spain including Malraux, Hemingway, Brecht, Cornford, and Orwell, and it emerged as the focus or background of their subsequent writing. It is understandable then, that so many generations of Spanish artists have chosen to address these horrifying years of armed conflict, their prelude and long denouement under the Franco dictatorship. These Spanish works tend to be of a highly impassioned political and social nature; impartiality is rare if not non-existent. Third person narration containing autobiographical elements is common since many writers experienced firsthand the effects of this conflict (Bertrand de Muñóz – Teoría, 723).

Following three years of bitter conflict, Franco’s Nationalists defeated the Republican forces and formed one of Spain’s most repressive governments by taking such measures as instituting strict censorship regulations that were not loosened until the late 60’s, and paying devout attention to national image-spinning in an effort to legitimize, reconcile, and glorify the Nationalists’ actions, while simultaneously curtailing dissent. In response, social realism; *tremendismo*, the crude and direct

¹² In this death toll Thomas includes losses of life from all war-related deaths, including malnutrition and those shot after the war, and notes that in addition to the 500,000 killed, an estimated 300,000 Spaniards

presentation of things violent and gruesome; and the novel of memory emerged as means of circumventing censure and debunking, or *demythifying*, to use Barthes' term, the official single-voiced static version of history put forth by the state.¹³ In film, cinematographers implemented a variety of means to *demythify* and yet still pass the censors. Marvin D'Lugo explains that the censors were not always trained in film study, and would focus primarily on the words of the film, and consequently cinematographers learned to suggest with images what could not be said directly with words (33).

Cinema was first brought to Madrid audiences by Lumière representative Jean Alexandre Louis Promio on May 15, 1896, just months after the initial Parisian exhibition.¹⁴ Spanish film production began shortly thereafter, with early themes centering on daily events, and then became cinematic quests to reclaim Spain's former glory (prior to the loss of the colonies) through historical and epic tales of Spanish bravery and virtue. Well-known theatrical and musical performances were filmed (for example, *Don Juan Tenorio*), as well as classic Spanish literary works such as *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1925). Spanish filmmakers discovered the usefulness of cinema as vehicle for social commentary and *demythification*, in such films as the 1929 rural drama *La aldea maldita* by Florian Rey¹⁵ and *Un chien andalou* by Buñuel and Dalí (1929).

fled the country.

¹³ In *Mythologies*, Barthes describes how objects pass from a "closed, silent" state of "pure matter" to a multidimensional one of *myth*, according to the way in which they are referred in "social usage," by whom, and when (Barthes, 109). "*Demythifying*" refers to the practice of challenging the conglomeration of materials (pictorial or written, particularly in the form of images, slogans, ideals, etc.) put forth by a dominant power in an effort to expose their fabricated nature, question their veracity (as they are based on a presupposed consciousness), and often contradict their suggested message.

¹⁴ Several short films were presented publicly in approximately 20-minute sessions in the basement of the Hotel Rusia, number 34 Carrera de San Jerónimo (Triana-Toribio, 16; Utrera, 22).

¹⁵ In this film depicting a town's downfall, a mother is denied contact with her child as punishment for having brought dishonor upon the family.

At first cinema was well received by the Spanish public, but as the novelty faded the seventh art had to compete with other more traditional forms of popular Spanish entertainment including sainetes, zarzuelas, and bullfights. In contrast with Mexico's immediate embracing of cinema as culturally and politically significant, Spanish intellectuals and policy makers initially did not deem this new art form worthy of much attention (Triana-Toribio, 16; Utrera, 23). Another challenge that faced Spanish cinema was that the Church did not look upon it favorably. Spanish cinema continued to grow however, and by 1925 was a well-established form of entertainment (Triana-Toribio, 19). In 1938, recognizing the potential for film to support the Nationalist cause, the head of the Departamento Nacional de Prensa y Propaganda created the Departamento Nacional de Cinematografía (Triana-Toribio, 32).

In the postwar era politics and film went hand in hand. Film censorship tightened, certain American movie stars were banned from being mentioned in Spanish print, dubbing foreign films' soundtracks into Spanish became obligatory, and under the pseudonym Jaime de Andrade, the dictator himself wrote a screenplay (Besas, 18). While it is questionable if Franco truly penned *Raza* (José Luis Sáenz de Heredia, 1941) himself, the film served to illustrate the behavior of the ideal Spaniard, the title itself implying the unity of blood and of purpose of the Spanish people, and revealing the even closer ties Spain had formed with Nazi Germany and Italy (Besas, 19). This film marked the State's first direct wielding of cinematic power to influence the nation, and it was shortly followed by another – the creation of the government newsreel service, the No-Do (*Noticiero Cinematográfico Español*), that prefaced each theatre's showing of feature films with snippets of State-supportive propaganda. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s as

ensorship persisted, the overall quality of Spanish cinema suffered and light-hearted diversion films ruled the big screen.

Children occupied secondary as well as primary roles in such early films as *Los chicos de la escuela* (1925), *El Lazarillo de Tormes* (1925; based on the novel), and *La aldea maldita* (1930) by Florián Rey, and were integral in the defining of Spanish cinema.¹⁶ Their on-screen presence often modeled national values or, as with the case of reproductions such as *El Lazarillo de Tormes*, recalled the country's rich literary and theatrical legacy. Ladislao Vajda's 1955 film *Marcelino, pan y vino* marked the beginning of a series of singing and dancing child actors in Spanish cinema, including Joselito and the blonde-haired, blue-eyed Marisol. While these roles continued to advocate traditional Spanish values, they also sought to redefine national identity and renovate the image of *Spanishness*. And as in literature, children in Spanish film often have been utilized to pose challenging questions that prompt viewers to reevaluate or revamp current societal practices (Deveny, 63).

Spanish filmmaker Carlos Saura, born in 1932 in Huesca, experienced firsthand the events of the Civil War and its aftermath, and set his 1976 film *Cría cuervos* not during the armed conflict itself (as were, for example, several of the scenes from his *La prima Angélica*), but rather in the oppressive postwar years of Franco's dictatorship. Saura's social and professional connections and prestige allowed him more creative

¹⁶ Other examples of Spanish films in which children figure prominently are *Nosotros somos así* (1937), *Un rayo de luz* (1960), *Bello recuerdo / así era mi madre* (1961), *El otro árbol de Guernica* (1969; basada en la novela), *La orilla* (1971), *El espíritu de la colmena* (1973), and *Las largas vacaciones del '36* (1976), among many others.

freedom than the average Spanish filmmaker during these years, yet he still encountered obstacles of censorship, as did his contemporaries (Hopewell, 134-135).

Filmmaker Víctor Erice was born in Vizcaya on June 22, 1940. In making *El espíritu de la colmena* (1973) he and co-screenwriter Ángel Fernández Santos drew from personal experience of the postwar era, setting the action in Hoyuelos, a small village in central Spain “around 1940” – which as Paul Julian Smith assures us, “is no accident.”¹⁷

Adelaida García Morales, currently one of today’s most prolific Spanish writers, also sets her 1985 work *El sur* in the aftermath of the war. She was born in 1945 in Badajoz, a town that experienced an early Nationalist victory in August of 1936 followed by particularly brutal reprisals.

Guillermo Del Toro was born in Jalisco, Mexico in 1964 and became interested in the Spanish Civil War through friends and their relatives who fled Spain and sought refuge in Mexico. The stories of these loved ones left an indelible impression upon him as a child and now form the basis for the war scenes depicted in *El espinazo del diablo* (2001) and *El laberinto del fauno* (2006) (Hermoso).

Although these authors and filmmakers proceed from different countries and generations, and refer to two distinct armed conflicts, they all make use of the young child as the voice for their narratives. Campobello, Estrada, and Del Toro address the Mexican Revolution and Spanish Civil War, while Castellanos, Erice, Saura, García Morales, and Del Toro address the aftermath of these armed conflicts.

Castellanos’, Erice’s, Estrada’s, and Del Toro’s child protagonists serve dually as narrative viewer and voice. Both limit their narration to the immediate trauma and do not

reach adulthood within the narration itself. In contrast, Campobello's, Saura's, and García Morales' child viewers do not give voice immediately to the events they witness; rather, they narrate as adults recalling their childhoods. While it remains unspecified what sparks the narrative voice of Campobello's works to recount her childhood war memories, Saura's adult narrative voice recounts her memories in an apparent interview, perhaps counseling or self-examination. García Morales' narrative voice returns to these memories by way of mental and physical journey to her childhood home. One major difference between these two narrative approaches is that the adult narrative voices who recount childhood memories have insight and understanding that they may have lacked as children, but what remains primary is the limited perspective of the child viewer and the present need to reconstruct the child's perceptions.

Narrative tells a story, communicates information, and conveys, directly or indirectly, a point of view. "Point of view" refers to the vantage point from which a work is presented, ranges from 1st to 3rd person, limited to omniscient, and can be concurrent or retrospective, or a combination thereof.¹⁸ It is by nature bound to seeing, by the tellers' respective vantage points, but it is also determined by factors such as their individual ideologies, motives, backgrounds, mental states, degrees of interest, genders, ages, and personalities. The discrepancy or variation in same-event descriptions by various witnesses would be what Gérard Genette describes as "multiple focalization" (190). The same pattern may be seen on a larger, collective scale – in war, for example, where the combatants on one side, influenced by their similar backgrounds and ideologies, share a

¹⁷ Stated in the introductory booklet that accompanies the English language version of the DVD.

particular vision of the conflict – an interpretation of events of which they are certain enough to risk their lives. Meanwhile their adversaries, although they do not share this particular point of view, share their conviction in their own point of view.¹⁹

Not only can the same event be internalized in different ways, but also it can be externalized through narration in words – and in film through images and sounds – in just as many ways that also depend on the narrative voice’s background, mental state, degree of interest, gender, age, personality, and audience. Within a work of fiction the importance of discovering the intent behind a statement is compounded, since the very nature of the work is something crafted, and within that handiwork are the crafted statements of its characters. Also, within a work there may be various and varying points of view coexisting at any given moment: the point of view of the individual characters as they interact using direct speech, the point of view of other characters as they repeat what they have heard, the points of view of the opposing sides in an armed conflict, and the point of view of the narrative voice commenting on what has happened. It is this last example that is the focus of this study.

The point of view of any character, narrative voice included, may be fixed on the temporal, spatial, psychological, ideological, and phraseological planes (Uspensky, 6). From these five levels are born the four point of view markers, temporal, spatial, psychological, and ideological, which appear to be Lanser’s streamlined version of

¹⁸ Or from *extradiegetic-homodiegetic* to *extradiegetic-heterodiegetic* narration, as outlined by Gérard Genette in *Narrative Discourse*

¹⁹ Thucydides states in Book I of the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, that when attempting to compile an accurate account of the events as they truly happened, he experienced difficulty sorting through people’s slanted versions of these events, and came to depend only on his own personal observations and the confirmed accounts of other first-hand eye-witnesses. Thucydides’ observations from over two thousand

Uspensky's five planes.²⁰ The markers themselves are often words that may be considered fillers or tag words but which carry significant weight in establishing the relationship of a narrative voice to his narration. As Francisco Rico reminds us, "...the function of the critic is not to salvage the narrative material and declare the 'digressions' to be irrelevant, but rather to highlight the connecting factor which integrates (without being so naive as to suppose that it is limited to the actual building)" (31). Therefore, I will touch on each of these integral markers and outline how they are utilized within the selected texts.

First, temporal markers are those that indicate the "when" of the narration. They are clues, or trigger phrases, to alert the reader that the action is taking place at present, just took place a moment ago, or took place far in the past and is presently being remembered. In a work in which the narrative voice is recalling childhood memories, distance is created temporally between the current narrative voice and the narrative witness of the past by means of trigger phrases of recollection or vague or lost memories. In addition to more overt temporal markers such as "yesterday" or "when I was a child" readers must also be alert to the verbal tenses themselves when attempting to pinpoint a point of view on its temporal plane. In retrospective works, both of these tools are crucial in creating the *effect* of a lapse of time that Henry James describes in *Art of the Novel*.

years ago still capture perfectly human nature's tendency to distort a story (intentionally or not) and illustrate the importance of point of view.

²⁰ Lanser's decision to eliminate the phraseological level from her marker categories is an understandable one, since these triggers may be studied in the remaining four categories.

It must also be noted, that when dealing with works of fiction in which the narrative voice is recounting memories, the authors are granted quite a bit of leeway.²¹ “We do not ask how the narrative voice could possibly remember details of his feelings, conversations, and observations at the age of two or three; instead of truth we demand only plausibility” (Johnson, 114).

Spatial markers are those that mark a distance between the location of the recounting, and the location of the recounted occurrence. It must be noted, that “with the exception of second-degree narrations, whose setting is generally indicated by the diegetic context..., the narrating place is very rarely specified, and is almost never relevant...” (Genette, 215). That is, more often than not, readers are alerted to the location of the narrative witness, and are given spatial point of view markers to indicate if the narrative voice is near or far in proximity to the event of the witnessing, but are not necessarily informed of the narrative voice’s specific location in and of itself – rather, only in relation to the witnessing act.

The next group of point of view indicators is comprised of psychological markers.

Psychological point of view refers to the ways in which narrative events are mediated through the consciousness of the ‘teller’ of the story. It will encompass the means by which a fictional world is slanted in a particular way or the means by which narrators construct, in linguistic terms, their own view of the story they tell. (Simpson, 11-12)

The final category of point of view indicators is that of ideological markers – markers that convey beliefs and assumptions commonly held by certain social groups. This includes “the taken for granted assumptions, beliefs, and value-systems which are

²¹ There is a certain element of willing suspension of disbelief involved in such readings/viewings and thus, the task of the author is to set the scene with enough markers and depth so that the recollections are at

shared collectively by social groups” (Simpson, 5). These ideologies are important to note, because oftentimes they are the very underlying tensions and conflicts upon which the works center.

Although typically referred to as “first-person” narrative voices, Genette observes that the terms “first person,” “second person,” and “third person” suggest that aspects of the “person” himself – the being, the entity – are being compared and classified accordingly, which is not the case.²² What varies is the entity’s focus. That is, in theory all narrative voices are capable of being utilized to refer to themselves – are capable of voicing “I”-statements – so what must be studied is whether or not this narrative voice is “allowed” to do so. “The real question,” Genette explains, “is whether or not the narrator can use the first person to designate one of his characters” (244). In other words, is the narrative voice also a player in the tale? Our answer is yes, all of the primary narrative voices in this study are also characters in their narrations, and are either *extradiegetic-homodiegetic*: in *Cartucho* Nellie, in *Las manos de mamá* the little unnamed girl, in parts 1 and 3 of *Balún Canán* an unnamed girl, in *Bandidos* Luis, in *El sur* Adriana, in *Cría cuervos* the adult Ana; or *intradiegetic-homodiegetic*: Carlos in *El espinazo del diablo* and Ofelia in *El laberinto del fauno*.²³ I will therefore hitherto refer

least possible, if not probable.

²² An author can select from four narrative voice paradigms: 1) the *extradiegetic-heterodiegetic* paradigm, “a narrator in the first degree who tells a story he is absent from”; 2) the *extradiegetic-homodiegetic* paradigm, “a narrator in the first degree who tells his own story”; 3) the *intradiegetic-heterodiegetic* paradigm, such as Scheherazade in *Arabian Nights*, or Patronio in *El Conde Lucanor*, “a narrator in the second degree who tells stories [he/]she is on the whole absent from”; and 4) the *intradiegetic-homodiegetic* paradigm, “a narrator in the second degree who tells his own story” (Genette, 248).

²³ The opening and closing voiceover can be understood as framework provided by the first degree (albeit little present) narrative voice (the ghost of the doctor and the voice that presents the tale of Princess Moanna, respectively), thus shifting Carlos and Ofelia to second degree.

to this type of narrative voice as *homodiegetic*, with the exception of outside quotes that have already been crafted using the “first person” terminology.

All of the primary narrative voices of these works narrate events in which they are or have taken part and have witnessed personally. Within the grouping of *extradiegetic-homodiegetic* narrative voices, however, there is another division – that of time. As Galbraith notes, “a retrospective narrator may also ‘enter into’ his or her lived experience as a child to a greater or lesser degree, from a ‘reliving’ or phenomenological orientation to a conventional narrative distance focusing on external events and behavior” (123). Indeed, *Cartucho*, *Las manos de mamá*, *El sur*, and *Cría cuervos* are all narrated retrospectively from the point of view of the narrative voice, calling to mind events of his or her own life, but years later. While the narrative voice is still technically the same person he/she was at the time of the narrated events, the passage of time serves essentially to divide the character in two: the *intradiegetic* youth who sees (and exists within the narrated events), and the *extradiegetic* narrative voice (who reports and) who is older and the bearer of a potentially different point of view from that of his/her youth. This is an example of Genette’s distinction between *vision*, the one who sees; and *voice*, the ones who speaks. The more time that elapses between the *intradiegetic* events and their narration, the greater the odds that the points of view of the narrative viewer and narrative voice [the two parts of the (in these instances time-) fragmented self] will differ. In contrast, the narrative voices in *Bandidos* and the first and third parts of *Balún Canán* relate events as they transpire. There is no temporal (nor spatial, psychological, or ideological) separation between the children who narrate and the ones featured in the

events they describe; they are concurrent and non-fragmented. Their narrative vision and voice are one in the same.

If one accepts Rico's proposal that the *homodiegetic* narrative voice is often utilized to render reality problematic, then it follows that it may be used to delineate varying realities and varying points of view, conflicts, discrepancies and troubles within society (20). It is no wonder then, considering the gravity of war, that following outbreaks of war, be it civil or international, there surface narratives relayed by *homodiegetic* narrative voices whose authors find themselves caught on one side or another of the conflict or left in its wake. Participants and bystanders alike feel the need to voice what they have experienced, to notify those uninvolved and unaware, to outcry, to justify, and oftentimes also to begin their own reconstructive healing through narration. Herein lies the humanization of the subject matter. When war is narrated from the *homodiegetic* point of view, it ceases to be a distant, faceless conflict.

The "humanization of reality" to which Rico refers also involves the inclusion of marginal subject matter and characters, questioning of the status quo, and vocabulary and linguistic registers that have been often frowned upon, if not forbidden, in the narrative – tales of low life, the use of slang, and descriptions of criminal activity and other so-called deviant behavior – all forms of reality that are otherwise denied access to the narrative world (20). In these cases, the narrative voice presents situations as he/she perceives them, without frills, without glorification, without the need to make his/her depictions attractive or appealing, and without the need to apologize for such a despicable topic choice.

In reaction to a 19th-century tendency to “equate all narrators with their creators,” there arose a new criticism in which any and all connections between the author and his fictional narrative voice were negated (Lanser, 48-49). Since no assumptions about the author could be made based on the narrative voice, the reader/audience was left with no information as to the author’s worldview.²⁴ Of course, despite the distinction between the author and his narrative voice, there remains the obvious, unbreakable, and crucial connection between *poeta* and *poiesis*. This bond exists because although the voice that the author assumes to tell his/her tale is itself fabricated, it is always born of the author’s own voice, his/her society and world vision, and thus it will emerge in the form of a reflection, a refraction, an inversion, a suggestion, or a chorus, etcetera of the author’s own true voice. The questions that arise for this study then, are how the authors of our selected narratives of war and its aftermath have constructed their *homodiegetic* narrative voices, and for what purpose?

Homodiegetic narration is employed for numerous reasons, including establishing verisimilitude, depth of character, or intimacy with the readers; or surreptitiously introducing subversive ideas. Authors and filmmakers of these narratives create verisimilitude with *homodiegetic* narration by making their tales personal, and also by imposing limits to what their narrative viewers can see and understand. This is seen for example in *Balún Canán* in that the little girl does not understand the language of the

²⁴ From this debate sprung Booth’s term “implied author” which was used to describe: “the image of the writer which the reader creates through his or her encounter with the text and in the light of which the reader assesses the literary work and retrieves its norms. Booth also suggested that in the absence of textual markings to the contrary, the narrator is assumed by the readers to be the implied author of the text” (Lanser, 49). This affected voice, the one with which the readers come in contact throughout the work, is that of Booth’s “implied author.” I shall continue to refer to this as the “narrative voice,” for Genette’s

Amerindian laborers and does not know why her teacher asks for secrecy. Verisimilitude of the work is also established by having these child narrative voices express personal preoccupations about their skinny arms as in *Balún Canán*, play childlike games as in the game of dress-up the girls play in *Cría cuervos*, recite popular silly sayings as in *El espinazo del diablo*, and the focus on immediately observable details mixed with familiar comparisons such as in *Cartucho* when the narrative voice notices the color of a soldier's skin and likens it to a peach. Depth of character is established through *homodiegetic* narration in *El sur* as Adriana reveals her self-sacrificing nature and deep concern for her father's well being in offering her life for his soul, and in *Balún Canán* when the little girl cannot escape the feelings of guilt for having betrayed her brother Mario. Intimacy with the readers is seen for example in *Las manos de mamá* as we learn the narrative voice's feelings of pride and love for her mother, and in *Cartucho* when we learn of the girl's feelings of ownership for the dead soldier outside her window. We may see piggybacking of genre in *El sur* as while the work is a reflection, Adriana directly addresses her deceased father and her words resemble the contents of a letter; and Ofelia's life interweaves with a fairy tale in *El laberinto del fauno*. Subversion through non-conformity is introduced surreptitiously for example in *Cría cuervos* in that Ana exerts her will and refuses to kiss her deceased father; and in *El espíritu de la colmena* when Ana runs away from her father.

While the advantages to writing from the *homodiegetic* point of view are numerous, the question that remains is since these objectives can be accomplished by

terminology for the various types of narrative voices accounts for the possibility of several narrative voices within a single text.

using a *homodiegetic* narrator of any age, why have all of our works' authors and filmmakers, in their narrations of war and its aftermath, selected the vantage point of a child? What else does this particular type of *homodiegetic* narrator have to offer? Is there a connection between the subject matter and the chosen narrative voice?

To answer these questions I reference Anne Robinson Taylor's *Male Novelists and Their Female Voices: Literary Masquerades* in which she addresses the interesting and challenging practice of male authors writing from the point of view of female narrative voices.²⁵ Writing as if from inside the mind of one woman is quite different from writing about several female characters, as for a male author the former requires a much more in-depth understanding of the psyche of the opposite sex and the ability to illustrate these nuances carefully and without bordering on stereotypical or caricature-like. The same is true for female authors writing from the male point of view.

Robinson Taylor refers to these male to female "gender crossings" as "literary masquerades" and explains that while these challenging and exciting feats can be gratifying for their authors, they often emerge out of necessity and serve as therapeutic acts, because "[n]arrative poses can be, in and of themselves, liberating disguises" (4). She suggests that assuming a female narrative voice is often an act of a male author who has in some way experienced a position of powerlessness or vulnerability, because as these traumatized male authors seek a voice in literature they find an appropriate match in the voice of the female who has for centuries in most societies been associated with weakness and fragility. Her compromised position is recognized as being very much like

²⁵ Notable examples of this practice would include Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857, in book form) and Clarín's *La Regenta* (1884 and 1885).

his own personal experience, so to assume her voice seems somehow both natural and fitting. The selection of this voice is most handy for the male author who, in a society that praises and glorifies the male for his strength, intelligence, and virility, still has difficulty accepting his own past physical vulnerability or feelings of impotence resulting from exposure to danger, illness, or difficult family history (Robinson Taylor, 5).

In addition to serving as an appropriate narrative voice for the once vulnerable male author:

[t]he pose of the woman offers distinct artistic advantages as well.... She is, first of all, outside the male power structure. The male hero has many choices and actions open to him to succeed in a world that he must make his own. A woman acts under restraints. Whatever way in which she exerts her power, she will do it under the disguise of weakness and passivity. (Robinson Taylor, 5)

Indeed, this assumed female narrative voice, the voice of a member of the commonly-oppressed sex, may ironically provide more freedom for the male author in that her words and actions are often (sadly) not subject to the same scrutiny as those of her male counterparts and may be taken less seriously. Therefore especially in compiling a controversial or subversive work, a female narrative voice proves an extremely clever choice in that her mere presence as narrative voice softens the impact and lessens the possible suspicions; she allows the male author to “fly under the radar,” so to speak, simply because of who she is assumed to be. Now, with this concept of literary masquerades in mind, we turn momentarily to the concept of narrative voice reliability.

At the start of any work, a certain degree of blind faith is required of readers/viewers as they surrender to the will of the author/filmmaker and allow themselves to be guided by the narrative voice. In a traditional narrative voice-reader/viewer relationship, a “literary hierarchy” is established in which the well-

informed and already comprehending narrative voice reveals and explains happenings, providing whatever information may be lacking to the otherwise non-privy readers/viewers and thus guides them to draw the “proper” conclusions. But this is not always the case, as modern convention has given way to the unreliable or semi-reliable narrative voice, as Scholes and Kellogg point out, “the product of an empirical and ironical age” (264). Generally, it is relatively safe to assume that the audience may trust the narrative voice unless the creator indicates elsewhere in the work that the narrative voice is to be doubted. This may be indicated via point of view markers, conflicting information from other characters, vague or nonspecific information, etc.²⁶ The presence of any of these “unreliable narrative voice” suggestions alerts the readers/viewers that they must take a more active role in the narrative and must personally assess the validity of the narrative voice’s claims. For while it is possible that a narrative voice is intentionally trying to mislead the audience, it is also possible that this voice may be incapable of understanding the situation from his/her point of view, and although he/she may be providing the audience with what he/she deems an accurate account of events, his/her version may be biased, incomplete, or yes, even inaccurate. Consequently what emerges is a new question of “narrative voice sincerity.” For Lanser, this concept aggravates the matter of “narrative voice reliability” for it illustrates how our binary classification systems often prove problematic and insufficient. She accurately argues that:

²⁶ Typically, temporal markers indicating time lapse between the events and their narration; spatial markers indicating that the narrative voice may not have physically witnessed the events he/she presently describes; psychological markers indicating lack of comprehension, immaturity, or bias; or ideological markers indicating a bias on a wider scale that may prevent objective analysis of the events witnessed

...a narrator can be perfectly reliable with respect to the “facts” of a given story, but unreliable regarding opinions and judgments about the story world; how do we classify such a narrator with respect to ‘reliability’? Indeed, a narrator might even be reliable about some facts and not about others. What I am suggesting is that certain narrative elements may be at once “x” and “not x.” (Lanser, 40)

So what are readers and viewers to make of such a narrative voice that is at once sincere and semi-reliable? And why would an author choose to narrate from such a voice?

As Robinson Taylor has explained, the female guise is often assumed by male authors in an (perhaps unconscious) act of self-identification with the vulnerable female voice, and simultaneous wielding of unsuspected literary power. I assert that a variation of Robinson Taylor’s theory of literary masquerades can be applied to our selected works in which adult authors of both sexes choose to base their works on children narrative viewers, either narrated by these children themselves as narrative voice or retrospectively from the more mature (if not adult) version of these children viewers. That is, rather than a male to female pose, we are witnessing an adult to child pose.

While some of the reasons behind this “juvenile pose” are similar to those that prompt the female one, others are more subversive in nature and aim for more powerful results. Personal reasons include self-identification with the child, past or present feelings of powerlessness on the part of the author/filmmaker, and quite arguably his or her (conscious or unconscious, admitted or not) effort to undergo a literary/cinematic form of art therapy, especially if trauma has been involved. Socio-political reasons for this pose are a desire for feigned objectivism while expressing controversial or delicate subject matter (and thus avoiding censorship), and a means of challenging widely accepted “social truths” or beliefs (*demythification*). Authors and filmmakers may also narrate from the child’s perspective in an effort to establish further intimacy with the

reader/viewer and evoke feelings of sympathy for the child figure, or with the intention of making gruesome descriptions/depictions more palatable while (a seeming contradiction) at the same time intensifying the emotion.

Reviewing multiple facets of the figure of the child and the way the child has been viewed throughout history are the first steps in understanding how he/she might be used particularly as narrative viewer of war and its aftermath.

In his essay “On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry” Friedrich von Schiller states that the child is superior to the adult because he or she remains within his or her initial natural state, inherently good and yet uncorrupted by the ways of the world. To Schiller, the child is a beautiful creature full of life, a veritable embodiment of nature, innocent and raw, and since we as humans have sprung from nature, when we as adults come face to face with an entity that retains the freshness we once possessed, we are awestruck. Consequently, this admiration inspires and challenges us to live once again the life of the child, to return to the morally pure existence of our youth (Schiller, 181). For this reason our relationship with children is a complex one. We empathize with the child, whose feelings and thoughts remain somewhat familiar to us as ones we once possessed; are overcome with melancholy upon considering ourselves in their tiny yet impressive shadow, with their freshness of life contrasting perhaps our tired ways or broken spirit; and are frustrated by the impossible goal of chronological rewinding to arrive once again at our initially pure state of existence. All of this considered, it is no wonder that the figure of the child – and all of the complex associations that come with it – appears so frequently in literature.

Perhaps the most well-known genre to feature the child figure is the fairy tale. These tales, originally destined for adult audiences and only developed into a child's form of entertainment and instruction in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, make careful use of the child's logic and view of reality (Tatar, 214-215). These "instruments of socialization and acculturation [...] capture and preserve disruptive moments of conflict and chart their resolution" (Tatar, xxvii). Especially for this glimpse of resolution they are valuable sources of lessons on life, for they reveal that evil does exist, conflict inevitably will arise, and yet if one perseveres he may surmount all obstacles and emerge victorious (Bettelheim, 8). Due to their overt or inferred religious themes, it is understandable that fairy tales have surfaced throughout history in periods in which religion formed an integral part of life (Bettelheim, 13).

The European fairy tale traditionally begins with a family setting, then a separation of some sort occurs, and finally the family is reunited or a new family unit is formed to live happily ever after (Lurie, 25-26). Generally the child figures in these tales are inherently good, and only an outside force can destroy their innocence (Soliño, 197). Unlike myths, whose hero is unique and idolized, fairy tales portray characters – "heroes" included – who are simplified, typical, and quite fallible. The trying situations with which these characters struggle often suggest problems in society, inequalities, and social concerns. But while the traditional fairy tale described by Bettelheim reveals societal problems and grants courage to persist onward to the happy ending, the modern-day fairy tale often encourages its audience to rectify those problems and suggests that the ending is not always going to be a happy one.

Addressing the subversive use of fairy tales, Lurie concludes that they can be used to give voice to “whatever is muted, suppressed, or compromised in mainstream culture” such as that “children already know some of the secrets of adult life of which they are supposed to be ignorant; or [...] that people we usually despise and overlook have unsuspected powers” (xii). Fairy tales representative of official state doctrines appear in several Spanish *posguerra* narratives, often as the focus of scrutiny by their young fictional readers therein, whose challenges to the well-known texts then serve as counter discourse to imposed ideology. In Argentina, too, contemporary authors such as Luisa Valenzuela continue to rework well-known fairy tales, feminizing their perspective and repurposing them for modern-day social challenges. For example, she dedicates her revision (“inversion” might be more appropriate) of “Bluebeard,” a fairy tale that originally depicted a husband’s restriction of his wife’s curiosity and warning not to investigate a room that turns out to be full of human remains, to Renée Epelbaum and the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo (Mackintosh, 156-157).

Literary critic Elizabeth Harries studies the tendency of war survivors to narrate their experiences via a fairy tale structure, and observes that the tale may serve as a device for approaching and interpreting their own childhoods (Harries 124 & 126). Haase concurs, citing examples of Holocaust survivors who, desirous of recapturing home as a place free from repressive constraints and governed by the utopian imagination, found comfort in the liberating potential of the fairy tale and its future-oriented nature (Haase – Children War, 361; Haase – Overcoming the Present, 94). So too, the strange and ambiguous fairy tale landscape, at once comforting and discomfiting, lends itself well to a survivor mapping a war experience, for they may

“approximate the actual experience of physical dislocation and disorientation brought on by war” (Haase – Children War, 364). Psychoanalyst Magda Denes survived WWII as a Jewish child in wartime Hungary. In her memoir, *Castles Burning: A Child’s Life in War*, she recounts her experiences via a fairy tale journey throughout war-torn Europe in order to cast doubt on the promise of a happy ending.

As the title of her memoir suggests, the fairy-tale castles—once the child’s symbol of order and security—are identified with the castles literally burning around her in war-torn Europe, signaling the violent death of childhood and a questioning of the fairy tale’s easy truths and innocent world view. (Haase, 369)

Also aware of the potential healing power of fairy tales, the very Wilhelm Grimm, of the Brothers Grimm, dedicated *Liebe Mili*, a tale about a girl and her mother in a war, to a young girl named Mili to comfort her during the Napoleonic Wars (Zipes – Fairy Tale as Myth, 145).

In the 2006 film *El laberinto del fauno* by Guillermo del Toro, fairy tales serve to guide, comfort, and “befriend” the young Ofelia. They magically intertwine with her reality, offering her a fantastic escape from the violence and cruelty of the “postwar” years in northern Spain where fighting persists. The tasks she must complete for Pan, her mentor, ultimately call for bravery, independence, and morality, revealing both the continued edifying power of the fairy tale and Ofelia’s strength of character amidst countless misguided adults. I will continue this discussion in Chapter 4.

The publication of *Lazarillo de Tormes* in 1554 in Spain marks the beginning of the picaresque, another genre in which the child figure traditionally occupies a central role as *pícaro*. These works chronicle [often in first person (*homodiegetic*) narration]

vignettes of the *pícaro*'s trials, adventures, and mishaps with assorted masters.²⁷ The *pícaro* is generally an adolescent male, has grown up on the streets, and is not bound to any one particular master or home.²⁸ He sets out to acquire (and then implement) the necessary skills to avoid hunger and maneuver in society, which as it turns out, is usually not as noble or proper as it would have him believe.²⁹ Social commentary, satire, and the *pícaro*'s coming into consciousness of the world's true nature therefore play an integral part of the picaresque. Francisco Rico reasons that *Lazarillo* addresses his formative years quickly, because this time of innocent slumber (as *Lazarillo* calls the pre-stone bull years) merely set the scene for his awakening and the knowledge he will acquire in the course of the work's unfolding (14). The *pícaro* differs from the child narrative viewer of war and its aftermath in many ways, for example the former is generally older and more travelled, but is important to consider in this present study because this figure reveals a precedent in Spanish literature for the child to take a very active role in revealing societal inadequacies and injustices.

Like the *pícaro*, the protagonist of the *Bildungsroman*, or novel of development, is traditionally an adolescent or young adult.³⁰ Rather than satirizing a wicked or

²⁷ Other popular Spanish picaresque works include: *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599, Mateo Alemán); *Viaje entretenido* (1603, Agustín de Rojas - drama); *Libro de entretenimiento de la pícaro Justina* (1605, Francisco Lopez de Ubeda – pseudonym?); and *Historia de la vida del Buscón llamado don Pablos* (1626, Francisco Gómez de Quevedo). Mexican picaresque works include: José Joaquín Lizardi's *El periquillo sarniento* (1816, hailed by many as the first Mexican novel); Federico Gamboa's *Santa* (1903); José Rubén Romero's *La vida inútil de Pito Pérez* (1938); and Artemio de Valle-Arizpe's *El Canillitas, novela de burlas y donaires* (1941).

²⁸ Exceptions include Francisco Lopez de Ubeda's *Libro de entretenimiento de la pícaro Justina* (1605) and Salas Barbadillo's *La sabia Flora malsabidilla* (1621) which feature female pícaras.

²⁹ Timothy G. Compton traces the picaresque throughout many more contemporary works, yet interestingly enough he does not mention the protagonist's age as a criterion for this genre.

³⁰ Also worthy of mention are the narratives of the *Onda* that emerged in Mexico in the mid 1960s. These works focus on adolescent and young adult protagonists, as well, but the creation of atmosphere supersedes

hypocritical society however, the German *Bildungsroman* novelists sought to educate their readers, encouraging their moral development in tandem with that of their characters. This genre is relevant to the present study because as it partly emerged as a response to a call for the creation of a national genre and a desire to cultivate good taste and foster the moral growth of the German people, it therefore reveals the state's recognition that the child figure within the narrative may play an active and decisive role in determining the nation's future. The *Bildungsroman* has endured where other genres have withered. It experienced resurgence in the 1930s and 40s, a time when not coincidentally Germany struggled for her own national edification.

As with the fairy tale genre, the *Bildungsroman* also has adapted to serve multiple purposes, and modern-day versions often voice socially critical commentary. Major distinctions of the Spanish American *Bildungsroman*, for example, are its "ability to exploit the full potential of the genre" and its "capacity to generalize human experience owing to the...developmental process of nations and social movements on the one hand, and the inevitable forming of an American identity, on the other" (Kushigian, 16). To Kushigian, this involves the notable expansion of the genre to encompass also the lower classes, an inclusion atypical of the original German *Bildungsroman*. Works may center on "those women, indigenous, blacks, mestizos, lesbians, transvestites, poor, indigent, socialists, communists, and so forth, who struggle for self-development in a society that

character or storyline development, and thus unlike the *pícaro*, these alienated *Onda* youths do "not alone provide coherence to the narrative"(Compton, 18). The tone of these works is one of disdain for tradition and societal norms; they break from and challenge tradition thematically, linguistically, and morally by incorporating marginalized characters, pop culture, other media (especially rock and roll), slang, multilingualism, word play, sexual topics, and drugs. (Carol Clark D'Lugo, 163). Examples of *Onda* works include: José Agustín's *La tumba: revelaciones de un adolescente* (1964) and *De perfil* (1966), and Gustavo Sainz's *Gazapo* (1965).

devalues their contributions but historically demands their participation” (Kushigian, 20). These works often emerge in times of national crisis, and thus the development of the protagonist is commonly embedded with a cry for social justice.³¹

In this study of narratives depicting war and its aftermath, the child figure similarly calls for social justice. The three most relevant contemporary uses of this figure are as “objective” witness, representative of the nation, and healing vehicle.

While the cliché of the child’s innocence continues to permeate literature, authors have manipulated this use of the “tabula rasa” child figure to create a seemingly objective viewer who, unable to comprehend and therefore also unable to judge, will merely recount the events he/she witnesses.³² The child’s assumed innocence is certainly a consideration for the authors and filmmakers of this study, who by setting a child in the middle of a war (or its aftermath) create “an immediate contrast between the reprehensible doings of adults and the fresh honesty of the child who watches them and wonders at them” (Macauley & Lanning, 101). The innocent narrative viewer eye – especially when also used as narrative voice – is typically buttressed by the notion of the child as excellent observer who, rather than analyze motives of characters or reasons behind the events that occur, will adhere to keen sensorial observations while maintaining an open mind. Increased reader participation is therefore required whenever the child figure serves this purpose, since the intended message is outlined with the child’s

³¹ Mexican *Bildungsroman* narratives include: Elena Poniatowska’s *Hasta no verte, Jesús mío* (1969); Rodolfo Anaya’s *Bendíceme, Última* (1972); and José Emilio Pacheco’s *Las batallas en el desierto* (1981). Spanish *Bildungsroman* examples include: Carmen LaForet’s *Nada* (1944), Carmen Martín Gaité’s *Entre visillos* (1957), and Ana María Matute’s *Primera memoria* (1959).

observations, implied, and left for the readers to decipher. As the work progresses the literary child learns and grows by studying the world and asking questions.

Soliño notes that as children reach adolescence their questioning may increase and evolve into outright objection (195). If one bears in mind the goal of maintaining “objectivity,” it becomes clear why this study’s authors narrate from the vantage point of the younger child, incapable of scrutinizing, yet capable of relaying observations. The idea of the child as an observant, alert creature, his/her inquisitiveness, credulity, tolerance of new ideas, and stages of development paralleling those of humanity’s, have linked the child to primordial man, and specifically to Adam and Eve (Pattison, 29). Susan Navarette suggests that this is precisely what prompts artists to juxtapose the child figure against evil, since their purity deems them evil’s “natural victims, and natural opponents” (185). Browning considers both the pitting of the child figure against evil and the setting of the child figure within disastrous situations, manners of intensifying the shock value of these situations, since children, as well as priests, nuns, and women in general, ‘have traditionally been considered [...] worthy of “immunity” from the negative effects of [...] war and modernization’ (84).³³ He continues that to violate that immunity is to heighten the readers’ “perception of the severity of the pressures brought to bear on that sector of society” (84). Cabrera Infante confirms this hypothesis in *Así en la paz*

³² This pseudo-objective witness is the “innocent eye” to which Alberto E. Stone refers in *The Innocent Eye: Childhood in Mark Twain’s Imagination*.

³³ Worldwide examples of this may be found in works such as Buñuel’s *Los olvidados* (1950); Juan Marsé’s *Si te dicen que caí* (1976); Babenco’s *Pixote: a lei do mais fraco* (1981); Grupo Chaski’s *Gregorio* (1985) and *Juliana* (1988); Allende’s *Cuentos de Eva Luna* (1988); Gaviria’s *La vendedora de rosas* (1998); Fabrizio Aguilar’s *Paloma de papel* (2003); Bahman Ghobadi’s *Turtles Can Fly* (2004); and Luis Mandoki’s *Voces inocentes* (2003).

como en la guerra when he acknowledges that the child figure immediately creates the longest distance between presentation and shocking reality (8).

The child figure has also come to represent not just youth as a whole, but any social, political, or racial group that bears a weaker, marginalized status against an opposing dominant culture. The child is meant to demonstrate “the suffering of the nation’s people under a particular political or economic regime and often, therefore, warn of the society’s bleak future, as well as its obviously painful present, under that system” (Browning, 85). Supportive of this claim is Rosemary Lloyd’s earlier study of 19th-century French literature in which she calls attention to the direct relationship that exists between “the level of alienation in a fast-changing society, and the presence of children in that society’s literary works” and notes that in times of rapid change and modernization the child figure, often orphaned or abandoned, becomes progressively more prevalent in literature (Browning, 5; Lloyd 138-39, 241). In addition, it has been documented that as a country faces demographic stress, national attention to the child (with particular interest paid to his/her health and education) historically surges (Lavrin, 422). These assessments hold true in Spain and Mexico, where political restrictions, censorship, social unrest, changing economy, dictatorship and cold war climate have given rise on numerous occasions to the widespread use of the child figure in narrative.³⁴

³⁴ When charting the literary use of the child figure in Spain and Mexico, certain trends must be acknowledged: In Spain, emphasis on the growing empire of the Golden Age gave birth to the picaresque tradition; following Mexican independence the picaresque narrative first appeared in Mexico; the young child is often central to the narrative of the Mexican Revolution; following the Spanish Civil War the figure of the young child marks literature to an extraordinary degree; and in the 60’s *Onda* narratives the adolescent often emerges as the “victim” of a society saturated in imported pop culture and capitalism.

In Iran, too, where censorship for decades has restricted sex, politics, song, dance, and other “*haram*” (unchaste) behavior in film, the child figure has assumed the important role of surrogate adult (Tapper, 16). His presumed sexual and worldly innocence disassociates him from the inherent dirtiness of these themes, and allows the narrative child to say and do things, and move about observing questionable environments that would be forbidden of adults (Tapper, 18). The sexless child figure thus has been able to play a major role in depicting manifestations of love in the past few decades of Iranian cinema, and his nonthreatening nature has allowed him also to document historical changes, such as increasing unemployment, violence, and broken families, and even war (Sadr, 231). Sadr notes that the children in the films that emerged after the bloody eight-year war with Iraq (1980-1988) “denounced the horrors of war or dealt with themes central to friendship. Moreover, in their social and geographical inclusiveness, they represented a bid to redefine the co-ordinates of national and cultural identity” (236). The children of these films [for example Bahram Beizai’s *Bashu, the Little Stranger* (1989) and Masoud Kimiai’s *Snake’s Fang (Dandan-e-mar, 1989)*] were often attractive and idealized, but their innocent faces worked in favor of these war-centric films reaching an audience outside of Iran (Sadr, 231).

Iranian cinema has a direct tie to this study, for director Abbas Kiarostami maintained a lengthy correspondence with Víctor Erice, and among the similarities in their approach to film is their use of a character’s silence to reveal societal repression. Referring to the young woman the protagonist hopes to wed in Kiarostami’s 1994 film *Through the Olive Trees*, Alain Bergala observes,

This non-access to what the young girl in this story thinks and feels is for the filmmaker a radical, incisive way to make us feel, as viewers, something of the status and the place of women in this Iranian society, and of the censorship which reigns therein vis-à-vis female characters, without ever directly speaking of it in his film. (12)

While, worldwide, the child figure more frequently embodies concerns of disadvantaged or minority groups, historically both minority and majority groups have targeted the child in their efforts to obtain, regain, or maintain control of the nation.³⁵ The state often will make use of “familial rhetoric” and tout family values as the cornerstone of the nation’s development in order to establish itself as national authoritative father figure, and it must be noted that both Elías Calles and Francisco Franco publically acknowledged the importance of capturing the support of the country’s youth in their quest to build a strong, loyal nation (Browning, 12 and 53). Specific tools used by the Mexican government in their quest to forge “a new, revolutionary civil religion” have included education, popular theater, puppet shows, and art (Bantjes, 88). In wartime especially, both liberals and conservatives wield the child figure in their “utopian” reshaping or nation-building discourse – Left, in the hope of continued revolution, growth and change; and Right, in nostalgia and call for family structure and discipline. During the Spanish Civil War both Republican and Nationalist forces targeted children with their propaganda, youth organizations, Children’s Weeks, workshops, children’s literature explaining in simplified terms the war efforts, and war-related toys

³⁵ In *Cinema and Soviet Society, 1917-1953*, Peter Kenez explains that under Stalin social realism was the dominant trend in Soviet cinema, but there was very clearly defined description of what that reality was to be. Under such strict censorship, adult characters in films were often infantilized, flat characters. Kenez describes the characters of Ermler and Yutkevich’s 1932 film *Vstrechnyy*, for example, as being “like children in their one-dimensionality: They have no doubts; they have no internal lives; they speak in slogans” (171). It is interesting to compare this censor-born infantilized cinematic adult with the actual child figures that elsewhere were used to breach such censorship.

(Carr, 155 and 167). But when a nation of artists is unable to express themselves freely due to governmental restrictions, be they explicit or implicit, the child figure in the narrative comes to serve a politically subversive purpose as “objective” innocent eye.

In Mexico during the Porfiriato most writers did not condone revolution, nor did they see in the government “solutions for their nation’s ills” and yet, since they enjoyed a “relatively peaceful environment in which to write,” they felt compelled to avoid direct criticism of the government and its procedures (Browning, 43). “Criticizing the system might be considered disloyal, so novelists for the most part criticized the way individuals behaved within the system” (Browning, 49). Surrounding the Revolution the open expression of political views was dangerous, numerous publications critical of political leaders were terminated, and assassinations for political reasons were not infrequent. In *Mis libros*, Campobello acknowledges that because of this threat of danger she at first was afraid to write, but she found the courage because she knew it was wrong to keep quiet because she needed to speak the truth:

Comprendí que decir verdades me ponía en situación de gran desventaja frente a los calumniadores organizados. Me ponía en el peligro de que me aplastaran aquellas voces enemigas, siempre incrustadas en lugares estratégicos de la más alta autoridad. Pero no era correcto el hecho de que, sabiendo yo las cosas, no las dijera. (14)

In the 1920s and 30s only radio stations supportive of the government received licenses to broadcast and laudatory literary publications were favored financially. In their works on censorship, David R. Maciel and José Agustín note that these practices of support and censorship continued well into the 1970s and 1980s and often operated covertly, with topics such as religion, the military, and high-ranking government officials among those that would not be tolerated as targets of criticism (Maciel, 203; Agustín). Even if a work

critical of these institutions and officialdom received formal government approval for production, various other methods could be employed to prevent it from being performed, published, or released. Focusing the narrative, then, on the individual who suffers or defies rules, or delving back to an earlier more pacific time could be manners of subtly voicing dissidence and avoiding political backlash. Rozencvaig's assessment of Arenas and the Cuban Revolution, also holds true for Mexican authors. She states:

Debido a que el niño representa la fase original en la que todas las posibilidades parecen estar a su alcance, al responsabilizarlo con el recuento de la historia, éste le permite replegarse en una época pasada. Liberado entonces de los dictámenes del tiempo, evade el presente (el momento histórico – la revolución – en el que escribió la novela) y puede juzgar con entera libertad el orbe de los adultos cuyas leyes, interpretadas desde la perspectiva infantil, son reflejo de una estructura socio-política totalmente decadente, enfermiza y represiva. (47)

The state, as represented by the military, demonstrates a clear lack of concern for the children's well-being in *Bandidos* when the officer refuses to verbally respond to the priest's concern for the boys' safety. Instead, he spits. The state may also be perceived as parental figure, not necessarily a caregiver, who may be absent, abusive, or a domineering patriarch (Browning, 55). Familial tensions are certainly present in *Balún Canán*, but in *Cartucho* and *Las manos de mamá* this tension generally comes from outside the family unit and is rooted in conflicts with government officials and "the laws of men." The tone of both of these latter works is suggestive that the combatants are merely fulfilling their roles as Mexican men, subject to the will of something much larger than themselves.

La Ley de Prensa, enacted in 1938 by Serrano Suñer, decreed the Spanish press a state institution, and this law remained in effect for decades before it was gradually loosened. It is understandable then, that Miguel Delibes advises historiographers who

wish to reconstruct an accurate account of Spanish life during the war and the Franco regime to look not to the press but rather (through the thick curtain of smoke and silence) to the novelist, for it is the novel that provides more accurate testimony of the problems that face the nation (Furgón, 60). He explains that many of the literary techniques employed during these years developed out of necessity; artists needed to find ways to avert the censors and consequently embraced objectivism, behaviorism, and other depersonalized methods that would not have reached popularity if the “situational index” had been less restrictive (Furgón, 56). The vantage point of the child is one such subversive strategy born of this repression, for it shifted “the focus from the social commentary to an individual child protagonist’s vision” (Soliño, 200). The clichéd association of the child’s innocence worked in these artists’ favor, and the child figure came to serve as a literary Trojan horse, superficially innocuous, yet heavily wrought with political and social criticism. Ana María Matute for example, notes Soliño, had continued success utilizing this subversive strategy, for she (and many others) “appeared to be doing exactly what she was expected as a woman writer. She was writing about children, whom many assume are sweet, innocent, and harmless” (195).

Matute reveals that another benefit of utilizing the child figure within narrative is that it may encapsulate within a short childhood the entire lifespan of an adult, which then in turn also may be seen as a replica of the nation’s past, present, and future. In her novel *Primera memoria* she poses the Nietzschean question, “¿Será verdad que de niños vivimos la vida entera, de un sorbo, para repetirnos después estúpidamente, ciegamente, sin sentido alguno?” (20). It must be considered then, that the adventures and concerns

of juvenile characters may serve as a diorama of society and the nation as a whole.³⁶ Soliño notes for example that “[a]lthough [in *Primera memoria*] the island is removed from the bloody combat of the mainland... both the children and the adults continuously battle over the same issues that caused the war” (Soliño, 179). The implied future of the child figure therefore may forebode an ominous or hopeful future for the nation, but always with the possibility of great change. Miguel Delibes has spoken of the child in these terms as well, stating that the child is the possessor of great potential, a potential that the adult loses as he/she matures (Delibes - *Los niños*, 11). To represent the nation in this way then is to suggest the course upon which it is heading, without ruling out other possible outcomes if the situation were to change.

Childhood is powerful in this regard, for while it may be used to represent the history of one particular nation, it provides a “common ground” for adults worldwide and thus may lend universality to the narrative.³⁷ Delibes agrees, citing as evidence the equally high sales - abroad as at home - of his child protagonist-based books, and suggests that the familiar and beloved subject matter makes possible his wide audience. He posits, “la infancia es la patria común de todos los mortales, que en nuestro ciclo vital es ésta la etapa de la vida más añorada por todos. El hombre no conoce la codicia ni el odio hasta después de haber rebasado la adolescencia” (Delibes - *Los niños*, 12). Furthermore, in addition to the common ground of childhood, Tatar suggests that it is the child’s fallibility and difficulty in making distinctions that makes this figure so appealing

³⁶ Matute has since confirmed this regarding her own characters.

³⁷ Browning argues that the universality of the child figure may have contributed to the slow uptake of this figure’s use in Mexican literature since to suggest that childhood is a universally shared experience would

to wide audiences, as their helplessness makes them virtual “magnets for our sympathies” (216).

The final use of the literary child pertinent to this investigation is that of child as healing vehicle. Rozencvaig, in her study of Cuban author Reinaldo Arenas, observes:

El autor perseguido por los fantasmas de sus primeros años moldea un personaje que no tiene necesariamente que parecerse al que él fue entonces, pero a quien subconscientemente le insufla algunos elementos del yo desaparecido y recordado en ciertos momentos con nostalgia y/o con horror. (45)

This is an idea I explore in greater detail in Chapters 2 and 5, for it can be applied to all of the authors of our study and it hearkens back to the term “*los mutilados psíquicos*,” used by Delibes to refer to all of those who bear civil war-related psychological burden (Alonso de los Ríos, 52). These “psychologically mutilated” artists “plagued by ghosts of the past,” in this case by the Mexican Revolution, the Spanish Civil War, and the years that followed, frequently present in their works a fictional childhood that is loosely based on their own experiences. In so doing, these authors may come to terms with their own potentially fragmented youth, curtailed or restricted due to social and political strife. The situations described need not be an exact replica of what the authors themselves lived, but rather an artistic representation of their childhood as recalled by an adult; they may combine and appropriate accounts of friends and loved ones, extrapolate upon and embellish true events, fill in gaps or speak metaphorically, but there is usually an element of the autobiographical within their works. Browning surmises that this occurs because before “psychologically mutilated” authors can “continue their lives, and populate the country with a new generation born in peace and with an expectation of justice, they must

be to suggest equality of children of various races and this would contradict a major tenant of positivism

first examine their own violent pasts, including their complicity in the oppression of their infant and infantilized (marginalized) countrymen” (80). While this theory casts a complicating psychological light on the study of narrative, it is assuredly a contributing factor to the increased numbers of child-based narratives that followed both of the conflicts studied here.

Although the narrative of the Mexican Revolution is not traditionally associated with the child’s eye view, there are indeed a good number of works that merge both war (and its aftermath) theme and juvenile witness (Rodriguez, 147). Exemplary popular works include: Nellie Campobello’s *Cartucho* (1931) and *Las manos de mamá* (1937), Rafael F. Muñoz’s *Se llevaron el cañón para Bachimba* (1941, but completed before the start of the Spanish Civil War), César Garizurieta’s *Un trompo que baila en el cielo* (1942) and *Recuerdos de un niño de pantalón largo* (1952), Andrés Idearte’s *Un niño en la Revolución Mexicana* (1951), and Rosario Castellanos’ *Balún Canán* (1957). Of these works only the last is told concurrently as the child protagonist matures, the others are written as narratives of memory, of the adult narrator looking back on recalled events. In Spain, however, the narrative of the Civil War is indeed frequently associated with the juvenile witness; before 1939 there were very few literary works published that centered on the child protagonist, while after this time there was an outpouring of such works. Although these child-centered works are born thematically of the same conflict, the

(4).

postwar generations of writers approach the matter differently, depending on several factors which include age and level of participation in the war itself.³⁸

Also among the popular war narratives and worth special mention for its prevalence is the narrative of memory, a valuable means of allowing “*los mutilados psíquicos*” to return to the source of their trauma in a creative and therapeutic manner. Most of these works are narrated *extradiegetic-homodiegetically* (first person narrator outside the narrative’s internal timeframe, telling his/her own story) and include a physical or mental journey on the part of the protagonist. Bertrand de Muñoz posits:

A lo largo de este primer nivel superficial [i.e., the protagonist’s mental or physical journey to the past] un movimiento del exterior hacia el interior se inicia y toma forma, el personaje vuelve a descubrir los lugares donde pasó su infancia, su adolescencia, su juventud, donde ha sufrido tanto durante los años de guerra, donde se sintió desprendido de sus raíces y proyectado en un mundo donde el hombre es un lobo para el hombre. (El viaje, 16)

The protagonist’s looking back within these narratives may be considered his/her first step in “taking back from the past, and thus from the state in his case, control of his childhood” (Browning, 79). These memories are largely allegorical and typically blend critical subjective evaluation of the nation’s past with the author’s self-scrutiny. With this in mind it is understandable then that rarely do the journeys embarked upon by the narrative voice have successful conclusions, and as Bertrand de Muñoz notes “casi siempre, se hunden en un círculo infernal, en su esfuerzo para comprenderse a sí mismos” (El viaje, 18).

³⁸ For in-depth analysis see Godoy Gallardo’s *La infancia en la narrativa española de posguerra, 1939-1978*; and Bertrand de Muñoz’s “Teoría y método narratológicos para el estudio de la novela política de la Guerra Civil Española” and “El viaje a las raíces de la memoria personal e histórica y la novela reciente.”

The chapters that follow are organized regionally. I approach each region (Mexico, Spain, international) from the theoretical framework that is most pertinent for the works considered therein, and yet each also builds upon the previous. The psychological framework used for the Mexican narratives certainly applies to all of the works of this study, and so it is logical that it should appear first.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to how the child's perspective is constructed within the Mexican narratives of this study, *Las manos de mamá*, *Balún Canán*, *Cartucho*, and *Bandidos*. My point of departure is Freud's investigation of childhood memories and trauma, specifically their fragmentary nature, profound impact, and consistent reemergence. Freud suggests that trauma continues to surface in a survivor's dreams and thoughts because it is inherently incomprehensible to the psyche, and unable to be processed. From here, with the help of studies by Caruth and Berger who speak of trauma's "unrepresentability" and yet the importance of attempting to do just that in the name of recovery, I turn our attention to trauma literature. I note how the child narrative viewers of the works of this study have limited and fragmented perceptions of the wars they witness, a perspective that resembles a survivor's incomplete understanding of his traumatic experience. I then discuss rites of passage and the liminality of the war veteran, based on research by Van Gennep and Leed, and explain why many survivors feel compelled to release war experiences through the creative process. I conclude the chapter by considering Freud's studies on the dreams of war survivors and his suggestion that the trauma memory appears to "haunt" the survivor. I consider the haunting presence within several of the works of this study, and what traumas may be causing them, which leads us nicely into Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 investigates the child's point of view in the Spanish narratives, *El espíritu de la colmena*, *Cría cuervos*, and *El sur*. I take up the thread from the previous chapter of haunting trauma and, bearing in mind Kilgour's explanation of the Gothic tradition as being based upon the notion that it is dangerous to bury things, I consider that Gothic traces within a narrative may indicate a "buried" trauma. I then apply Schmitt's theory that the Gothic narrative typically becomes prevalent in times of turmoil as a result of emotional, social, or political estrangement, as an emergence of what has been forbidden, to the Spain's postwar era, its repression and isolation. I show how the child narrative viewer's postwar environments indicate the presence of buried war trauma, and I note that all of the child narrative viewers are motivated by an absent Other.

In Chapter 4, in addition to trauma theory and Gothic studies, I utilize the tradition of the fairy tale to approach *El espinazo del diablo* and *El laberinto del fauno*, the international films of this study. I begin my discussion with an explanation of the fairy-tale journey, as outlined by Jack Zipes, and the protagonist's typical ultimate goal of reconstituting his home on a new plane, and I consider what this means for the child narrative viewers of war. I build upon Leed's observation that when fantasy and fairy tales appear in war narratives, it often suggests a need to resolve a problematic reality; and following Zipes' theory of the subversive power of fairy tales, I cite ways in which the films' seemingly harmless fairy-tale references belie stark criticism of war and the Franco regime. Finally, I incorporate and draw upon Haase's theory of fairy-tale defamiliarization, particularly how it parallels the defamiliarization that often occurs in war, when homes, towns, or entire countries are suddenly made unrecognizable by bombs, tanks, and other artillery; and that for this reason survivors of war are able to

express their accounts of trauma through fairy tales, in a parallel journey with the hero to reestablish normalcy and security.

Within each section, I begin the analysis of written works by presenting examples of Susan Lanser's four categories of point of view markers, illustrating how they spatially, temporally, psychologically, and ideologically establish perspective, and then explaining how this *homodiegetic* narrative voice thereby influences reader's reception of the work.³⁹ I isolate point of view markers that clearly situate the narratives within wartime or post wartime and present the child's restricted mobility, chronological age, developing mental capacity, increasing degree of incorporation of social mores, and limited understanding of the war and its aftermath. Point of view markers continue to be an important resource for the analysis of cinematic works, and thus I conduct a similar deconstruction, but here I pay special attention to how the child's environment and understanding of war and its aftermath is constructed through visual and aural techniques. The discussion incorporates four principal filmic techniques: lighting and visual effects, camera angles, montage, and musical and non-musical aural cues. These techniques form an indispensable part of the scripts of these films, providing just as much, and often more valuable indications of the child's perspective in the finished product than does the dialogue itself. I include examples of these four techniques that suggest or complement the children's interpretations, and therefore bring the viewer closer to comprehending what Nick Browne refers to as the "psychology" of the characters (150).

³⁹ Susan Lanser is a Professor of American Literature at Brandeis University and specialist in the female literary voice, narrative theory, and comparative literature.

This study strives to make use of textual and filmic examples not yet explored in detail in other investigations, for example the significance of the collective estimation of the broken watch in *Las manos de mamá*, Adriana's shifting spatial point of view markers as she enters her home in *El sur*, the interaction between Ana and her doll in *Cría cuervos*, Jaime's book of drawings in *El espinazo del diablo*.

With Barthes' idea of myth in mind and utilizing the isolated point of view markers, I reveal the *demythifying* nature of these works, acknowledging that Rico is correct in his assertion that the *homodiegetic* narrator is often utilized to render the subject matter problematic (Rico, 20). Godoy Gallardo observes that of the authors and filmmakers who experienced the Spanish Civil War as children, many return to their childhoods in their postwar era narratives. I detect this narrative regression to childhood also in the works of authors who experienced the Mexican Revolution as children, expound upon Godoy Gallardo's considerations for child narrative-voiced works, and review the similarities of the works of this study – a connection not yet made in other investigations of this nature. In each work the presence of the child narrative viewer compels the reader/viewer to assume the role of the “*lector cómplice*,” as defined by Cortázar, engaging actively with the work and in this instance specifically fulfilling the role of sympathetic/caregiver to the child. I trace these child narrative viewers' loss and recovery, and compare their interactions with death and war.

Chapter 5 begins by comparing the heroic narrative voice of the traditional war narrative to the child witness of war and its aftermath. Although the small, fragile child stands opposite this brave figure in many ways, they share a metonymical compressed field of vision that establishes verisimilitude and establishes their status as representatives

of a larger collective, be it a region or nation involved in or affected by the conflict. However, while the war hero often serves to propagate myth by glorifying war, the child as narrative witness to war-related events often speaks to the negative effects of the conflict, thus *demythifying* it. Because he/she is an unexpected source of social criticism, and seemingly so innocent, the use of his/her perspective within the narrative often allows authors and filmmakers to challenge dominant discourse with counter or alternative discourse without being censored. I directly link the child figure to such *demythifying* narration, noting that his/her use in this way surged with the development of trench warfare, and has increased in recent decades as weaponry has continued to develop, facilitating increasingly more widespread destruction involving greater numbers of casualties.

This study questions the motivation of the selected child narrative voices and adult narrative voices recollecting their childhood memories, revealing that in each one it is a war-related loss of a loved one that prompts the narrative voice to recount the events of war and its aftermath. Chapter 5 traces the influence these events have had on each child, examining their relationships with war, death, those around them – especially their mothers – and with the authors of the works. Their shared experiences include personal knowledge of death, the loss of a loved one who is typically his/her most intimate relationship, and play that is notably marked by war-related events. The children's responses to death vary, but generally those who have witnessed the death of a younger or same-age child react with more visible shock and fear than those who witness the death of an adult, and those who have been exposed more frequently to death – up until they reach a saturation point – attempt less to counteract it. If the child is overwhelmed

with death experiences he begins to adapt and assimilate to his hostile environment, no longer working to preserve life, but rather to take it.

To my knowledge this is the first study to consider so rigorously and methodically the point of view markers of child narrative viewers, and is certainly the first to do so within both written and filmic works depicting the Mexican Revolution and the Spanish Civil War. Therefore, with this study we take a crucial step in identifying the child narrative viewer as a device employed to decry war and its aftermath, an important realization, as it is my hypothesis that considering the prevalence of worldwide turmoil he/she will gain popularity in the coming decades in the narrations portraying these armed conflicts.

Chapter 2: Mexican Narratives

In the 20th Century, psychological study garnered new interest for the subject of childhood when Freud proposed that recollections of events of one's youth reside in the mind and that, even if unperceived, these recollections may influence for life that individual's behavior (Freud – Childhood, 48). He explained that a child focuses attention outward, rather than on self, and that his/her perception and comprehension of what he/she experiences is limited by the child's still developing mental and emotional capabilities. Later, as the child matures and his/her faculties increase, the individual reinterprets these memories. Thus “childhood memories” in general take on the significance of “screen memories,” and in this are remarkably analogous to early racial or national memories as recorded in myths and legends, that are altered and falsified to be put in the service of later trends (Freud – Childhood, 49; Freud – Leonardo, 83).

Trauma, an experience that jolts the psyche and, like the childhood memory, is characterized by its “lack of integration into consciousness at the time that the event occurs,” is assimilated only belatedly as it repeatedly revisits the witness (Whitehead, 130; Freud – Pleasure Principle).⁴⁰ The survivor finds himself not only unable to control the resurfacing of the recollections of that trauma, but also unable to distinguish the present from the past (Berger). “One of the enormous complexities of traumatic analysis, especially in social-political contexts, is that real events and conflicts continue in the present and often compound the effects of past traumas” (Berger). This temporal interweaving and psychological compounding of an experienced trauma also may occur

on a personal level, but is more traceable when it follows a wider impacting trauma such as a natural disaster or armed conflict. Even when the traumatic aftermath entails a period of imposed restrictions, for instance dictatorship or censorship, the trauma still finds a way to resurface.

Every trauma, even ones that do not result in physical injury, leaves a wound. Combat and trauma psychiatrist Chaim Shatan describes this catastrophe-induced wound as a drastic uprooting of belief that then prompts the creation of a new permanent perspective and lifestyle (178). Nellie Campobello acknowledged the wound that the Mexican Revolution gave her, describing it as a never-healing scar that she could see when she scrutinized her face in the mirror (Carballo 1965 interview with Campobello; Lindhard, 163). She referred to the child narrative voice she uses in her works that depict her childhood during the Revolution as one of “inconsciencia,” for she heard it within her and simply let it speak (Mis libros, 12-13).

Because trauma is by definition inherently incomprehensible, Caruth argues that a victim can never express the exact nature of a trauma he/she has experienced nor assess the full depth of the wound he/she sustained from it. She argues that trauma is therefore “unrepresentable” in transparent language and largely remains a matter of the unconscious (Caruth; Lindhard, 179). The vignettes of the Mexican Revolution presented in Campobello’s narratives therefore reflect both her as a child’s limited ability to witness and then comprehend what she saw, and also her wound, the unresolved conflicts and contradictions of a trauma that remains incompletely processed (Lindhard,

⁴⁰ It was Freud’s observation that the nightmares of former combatants were riddled with relentless and horrific memories of war that forced him to rethink his theory that dreams were subconscious

183). What is more, all of the narratives of this study rely on similar suggestion and fragmentation of traumatic episodes. The child narrative viewers present small details of remembered moments, often moments that were experienced by the authors and filmmakers themselves, and often slightly off from and hinting at what the adult reader or viewer can assume may have been the main event. The traumatized child presents what caught his/her attention at that time, for example the muddy boots of a dead soldier, which addresses the problem of the inexpressibility of trauma by rerouting and instead merely suggesting what the audience can later infer. The difficult task for the audience of these narratives, and what Tal refers to as the unbridgeable gap between trauma writer and trauma reader, is to even come close to apprehending the nature of the trauma outlined therein (218).

Art therapy research of the past decades would confirm that Campobello did well by giving narrative voice to her wound, for it suggests that artistic releases of trauma in symbolic form allow the survivor to heal (Berger). It stands to reason that “because trauma shatters the narratives that structure our lives, we can only be healed by telling our stories again, by representing in words the trauma that now controls our mental images, thoughts, actions, even our bodily functions beyond the reach of language” (Berger). The constructed – or perhaps “released” – narrative, then, may also be understood as the artist’s humble effort to counteract war, violence, and devastating forces, for while these destructors take life, the artist in response creates and gives life (Kelly, 230).⁴¹ The

manifestations of wishes (Whitehead, 130; Freud – Pleasure Principle).

⁴¹ While trauma narratives are “the product of three coincident factors: the experience of trauma, the urge to bear witness, and a sense of community,” those crafted by survivors of that trauma are qualitatively different from those about the trauma of others (Tal, 217-218). Tal says, and my analysis of the works of

trauma that sparks creation may be one experienced personally by the artist, “transmitted from intimates, or sensed in one’s larger cultural setting” (LaCapra – Writing, 105; Freud).

A “founding trauma,” as dubbed by LaCapra, is a particularly powerful trauma that becomes the basis for one’s identity, be it personal or collective (81). The Holocaust, slavery, apartheid, atomic bombs, and wars are examples of founding traumas; they belong to the history of every group of people on earth (LaCapra, 81). But because a founding trauma is constitutive of the nation’s identity:

it creates a wound that must remain open; forgetting the suffering involved in the trauma, or allowing the wound to heal is often seen as a betrayal of the memory of those whose lives were sacrificed or who were damaged in other ways. For this reason there is often a compulsive return to or preoccupation with historical losses, for example within literature. (Knutson, 162)

While a group or nation may become fixated on a founding trauma so, too, can an individual.

In his anthropological book about and entitled *Rites of Passage*, Van Gennep identifies their three phases as:

rites of separation, which removed an individual or group of individuals from his or their accustomed place; liminal rites, which symbolically fix the character of the ‘passenger’ as one who is between states, places, or conditions; and finally rites of incorporation (postliminal rites), which welcome the individual back into the group. (Leed, 14)

War, therefore, can be a rite of passage. Van Gennep explains that a declaration of war, either tribal or familial, can be a rite of separation; going to war can be a liminal rite; and the ceremonies that welcome the combatants back from war upon completion of their

this study supports, that while the former are linked across topic lines, the latter do not adhere to a pattern in narrative tone, genre, or other.

mission can be a rite of incorporation (39). But oftentimes the veteran of war does not manage to reintegrate upon returning to society and instead remains in a liminal state, deriving his features from the fact that he has crossed disjunctive social worlds and has experienced things that the portion of society that remained at home could not fathom (Leed, 194). Leed notes that those veterans who remain in this state of liminality, stuck in the war rite of passage, play a significant part in the repetition of its trauma, for often they are unable to “resolve the ambiguities that defined their identities in war and resume their place in civilian society without acknowledging their status as victims” (213). The war for these combatants is a founding trauma that shapes their lives, and will continue to do so in various ways forever.

The authors and filmmakers of this study have chosen to present their works of war and its aftermath from the perspective of fictional children, a decision that within the psychological context of this chapter makes sense for several reasons. First, childhood memories function much the same way as does the memory of trauma, in that they are not fully processed at the time of the experience, they resurface throughout one’s life, and they contribute to determining the individual’s behavior and personality. Next, founding traumas are deeply impacting catastrophes that afflict individuals or groups, and can determine national identity. What these works demonstrate via their child narrative witnesses is that even the innocent and generations that did not experience the trauma (but follow long after those who did experience it firsthand) can feel the effects of a founding trauma. Finally, war is a rite of passage through which most all nations must pass, and to set a child as the narrative viewer of war suggests the many rites the child will face as he enters society and matures into adulthood. In each of these works, there

appears to be an effort on the part of the authors and filmmakers to show the child narrative witnesses reentering society, however, each work fails to show the child's reintegration, and by this omission the works pose the question if this reintegration is possible, or even desirable.⁴²

According to Shoshana Felman, the task of the literary critic is to engage in real dialogue between literature and psychoanalysis.⁴³ I now utilize these studies of childhood memory, trauma, and rites of passage to approach the Mexican works of this study, all four of which depict in some way the Mexican Revolution, a founding trauma of the Mexican nation that produced “modern, industrialized death for the first time in the history of the Americas” and whose death toll estimates range from 550,00 to over 2.1 million people (Meade, 120; McCaa). I pay close attention to how the child's point of view is constructed to reveal a small but potent portion of these traumatic events that, while incapable of representing the full magnitude of the violence and tension, nonetheless effectively suggests their all-encompassing and life-altering nature.

CARTUCHO

In *Cartucho* by Nellie Campobello, temporal point of view markers indicate that this work has been recorded years after the narrative viewer witnessed these events of the not long ago *intradiegetic* past, which encompasses events from 1915 through 1923 with the death of Villa in “El cigarro de Samuel” (Vanden Berghe, 165; Ramírez Peña, 15).

⁴² In the last chapter I discuss the endings of each work and note how many of the closing frames seem to purposefully leave in doubt the question of the child's future.

⁴³ I must agree with Rashkin, however, in that rather than considering literature and psychoanalysis two different bodies of language and two different modes of knowledge, we must view them as two different contexts for the same mode of interpretation, especially in light of the many creative ways in which trauma memories can manifest themselves (8).

The narrative voice is “now” an adult in the *extradiegetic* present, her mother has passed away, and she still bears vivid memories of the Mexican Revolution.⁴⁴ Her strategy to recover and bring forth the traumatic past entails drawing from the immediate and local – her individual experiences, including Revolutionary accounts she has heard around her home – which in turn suggests a wider-scale cultural perspective of those happenings, and moves from the domestic to the community and the “*patria chica*” (Donoso, 177-178; Parra, 168). Readers are led to suppose that this child narrative viewer represents a larger community of victims and victim-survivors, “[d]e manera que su perspectiva de la revolución deviene un panorama multivocal que supera sus impresiones infantiles acerca de lo que ocurría en ese momento” (Donoso, 178).

Eye witness accounts of events often strengthen the narrative voice’s testament, but while she recalls some events as if they were yesterday, there are also pieces of stories that have been forgotten or twisted with time and retelling.⁴⁵ These recollections – the child’s perceptions of her mother and the townsfolk, and how their lives have been touched or taken by the Revolution, be they accurate depictions or not – are the focus of the narrative. Also supportive of this claim is the fact that the child as individual is not developed in great detail other than her feelings and understanding of her war-torn environment and the relationships that form her community. It is apparent that her

⁴⁴ Markers include: “decía mi mente de niña”; and “Nunca se me ha borrado mi madre, pegada en la pared hecha un cuadro, con los ojos puestos en la mesa negra, oyendo los insultos. El hombre aquel, güero, se me quedó grabado para toda la vida.”

⁴⁵ Quotes such as “Algo dijo en palabras raras que nadie recuerda” (Epifanio), and “Esta fue la versión que durante mucho tiempo prevaleció en aquellas regiones del Norte. La verdad se vino a saber años después.” (“Nacha Ceniceros”) confirm the occurrence of misinformation/loss of information.

primary narrative function is to present the Mexican Revolution, rather than to explore her character thoroughly.

While markers such as “I think” and “I believe” indicate *homodiegetic* narration and qualify statements as personal interpretations, other psychological markers in *Cartucho* demonstrate the child narrative viewer’s limited knowledge,⁴⁶ reveal that her observations rely heavily on information that could be gathered from the immediate senses (for example, from observing her mother’s reactions as do several of the child narrative viewers of this study), and that her subsequent lighthearted interpretations and associations, some playful and some seemingly morbid, draw from the familiar.⁴⁷

Cartucho’s “dizzying,” fragmentary structure coupled with its repeated harsh depictions of staggering violence (that shockingly, in addition, draws from the memory of a traumatized child) proved an obstacle to the work’s favorable reception (Rivera, 22; Vanden Berghe, 153). It was simply too appalling for some audiences. But although some scholars have praised or indirectly criticized Campobello for so simply and “spontaneously” stating her childhood recollections, I agree with Oyarzún in that the way in which Campobello gave voice to *Cartucho* came not from a natural flow of memories, but rather from a conscious decision and “una auténtica batalla por la forma” (189). The “chaotic” structure and frank tone of *Cartucho* are not only appropriate, but also befitting the very nature of the Revolution, its staccato skirmishes, and unfiltered cruelty. The fact that death and violence appear in almost every vignette mimics their near omnipresence

⁴⁶ For example: “Como hablaba de artillería y cañones, yo creí que el nombre de sus cañones era New York...” (“La muerte de Felipe Ángeles”); and “(Digo exactamente lo que más se me quedó grabado, no acordándome de palabras raras, nombres que yo no comprendí)” (“La muerte de Felipe Ángeles”).

in Hidalgo de Parral during the Revolution. Indeed, not only is Campobello the only female author listed in Antonio Castro Leal's *La narrativa de la Revolución Mexicana* (1958), but her narrative also distinguishes itself from the other works therein in its anticipation of "the ghostly presences and voices that haunt both the village of Comala in Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* (1955) and Ixtepec in Elena Garro's *Los recuerdos del porvenir* (1963), novels written between fifteen and twenty years after the first publication of *Cartucho*" (Linhard – Perpetual, 45).

During the Revolution, Mexico earned worldwide infamy for its war-related brutality, especially the prevalence of executions. These fatal ceremonies were routinely conducted as public demonstrations of punishment for the enemy, and photographs of the resultant corpses came to be a common form of proof of death and of justice having been served.⁴⁸ With the increasing circulation of these Revolutionary images in the media, even small-town executions soon assumed an international stage. The images of Revolutionary executions "developed a distinctly national texture, suggesting 'a Mexican way of doing things' that was as cruel and arbitrary as the hanging of Campobello's coffee drinker" (Meade, 124). References to these proof-of-death photographs appear throughout Campobello's narrative.⁴⁹ Meade explains that the repeated photographic

⁴⁷ For example: "...parecía de detrás un espantapájaros; me dio risa y pensé que llevaba los pantalones de un muerto" ("Cuatro soldados sin 30-30").

⁴⁸ Photography and the Revolution took hold of the Mexican nation at roughly the same time. Agustín Víctor Casasola founded the Mexican Association of Press Photographers in 1911, and Francisco Madero immediately showed support by attending their December exhibit and posing for a series of photographs. More than half of Casasola's work during these years was from photographing executions. He later compiled a national photographic archive of the Revolution, which includes hundreds of these proof-of-death photographs (Meade, 146).

⁴⁹ In "La muleta de Pablo López" for example, Martín proudly references the photographs of his brave brother's public execution: "Le avisaron que lo iban a matar en el centro de la ciudad, frente al pueblo. Él se sonreía. (Así aparece en los retratos.) [...] Lo fusilaron frente al pueblo. (Existen muchos retratos de

focus on the post-execution corpse communicated a morbid and artificial uniformity but, however, this sentiment did align with the Mexican cultural logic that death comes to all Revolutionaries and, as Octavio Paz explained, “Mexicans are not afraid of her” (133, 139).

Thus, despite the public’s shock regarding *Cartucho*’s fragmented form and the narrative child’s blunt tone describing scene after scene of violence, the work’s structure itself mimics the popular Mexican snapshots of death and approximates the Revolutionary clime. This more personal compilation of vignettes, however, resembles a family photo album, as the victims are Campobello’s friends and relatives, most of them the conquered *Villistas* (Donoso, 174; Parra, 174). They are named and remembered as individuals, as young Nellie attempts to honor their memory and save them for the veritable din of death that was the impression of the Mexican Revolution that the press often conveyed to the world.

Throughout most of the accounts, the center of the child’s world is her home on Segunda de Rayo Street in Parral, Chihuahua. This town was also a strategic center for the Northern railroad, which was used to transport soldiers, and the constant target of governmental and guerilla forces attempting to claim it (Matthews - Centaura, 83). Historian Francisco R. Almada verifies that few places were stages for such bloodshed as Hidalgo de Parral, adding that the main plaza was taken violently twelve times in ten years (252; Parra, 169). But Parra explains that the armed communities in this region were far enough from the capital that they could enjoy relative political independence,

este acto)” (78); and in “Los heridos de Pancho Villa,” the men lament the fact that they did not have a camera to photograph the body of Luis Herrera, the Carrancista they killed and defiled (100).

with their particular cultural consciousness deriving from the region's "Tradición guerrera, autonomía política, [y] código de honor con matices señoriales" (175). It is from this perspective that many of the events of this work are witnessed, and the accounts are peppered with expressions like "por la calle" and "en la ventana," indicating that the child narrative viewer was able to view events from both inside and outside the home.⁵⁰

In addition to the Parral's strategic importance and consequent elevated Revolutionary activity, the child narrative viewer's close vantage to so many traumatic incidents may also be attributed to the conflict's extension throughout the civilian community. Meade explains:

The civilian populace participated in the carnage at all levels: they witnessed killing firsthand, and narrowly escaped its fury; they heard about it from friends and family, and lost others to its whim; they sung its sad or satirical refrains in countless *corridos*, and suffered its consequences long afterwards. (120)

Indeed, in her article, "A Perpetual Trace of Violence: Gendered Narratives of Revolution and War," Linhard discusses the tendency of acts of war to transcend the battlefield or public arena and permeate society, even into private spaces albeit by means of different types of violence (31). Although this violence is not officially sanctioned when it occurs in the domestic domain, "its manifestations are usually tolerated and sometimes even encouraged. The victims of this violence are, almost always, women and children, while its culprits only rarely need to face the consequences of their actions" (31). This permeation of war violence into the domestic realm is certainly seen in *Cartucho*, as bullets often fly past the front door and Revolutionaries are stuck down

⁵⁰ The distance placed between the childhood home and the speaker in this example: "Allá en la calle Segunda..." and "Un día aquí, en México..." suggest that the narrative voice occupies a different location than she did as narrative viewer, but that she remains in Mexico and is recounting from the capital city.

literally right outside the children's windows. In fact, these acts of violence occur with such frequency that young Nellie fancies herself somewhat of an expert on dead bodies (48). Whenever soldiers invade the narrative viewer's home, be it searching for arms, enemies, or would-be kidnapped nieces, Linhard's theory is confirmed. It is evidenced in several other works of this study, as well, for example, when the butchered farm laborer is brought to the Argüello home in *Balún Canán*, when bandits ransack the boys' boarding school in *Bandidos*, and when the bomb lands in the courtyard of the school in *El espinazo del diablo*. And as illustrated throughout this study, war penetrates the civilian population in other violent ways as well, for example, by infiltrating children's play with war-representative games and toys, and even violent or vindictive language. Linhard notes that even when the narrative voice of *Cartucho* describes things "that seem to bear no relation to fighting, blood or death, violence has invaded her language the same way it has invaded her mother's home: to never leave, never let go" (Linhard – Perpetual, 33). In *Mis libros*, too, Campobello's violence-infected language is apparent as she longs for her words to have the power of weapons, "puntas de flecha pulidas por las manos cobrizas de comanches en guerra" (91; Linhard – Perpetual, 34).⁵¹

As Freud and Caruth have noted, trauma similarly transcends boundaries in that it resurfaces from the psyche repeatedly and in various ways throughout the victim's existence. When Nellie sees General Rueda in the newspaper, even years after he committed an act of aggression against her mother, her desire for vengeance surges and the trauma comes rushing back. The fact that she fantasizes exacting her revenge with "una sonrisa de niña" confirms the temporal origin of this trauma as her childhood (57).

It is interesting to note that in this vignette (“El General Rueda”), the narrative voice mentally returns to the trauma site much in the same way that Campobello returns to her own trauma site with the selection of the child narrative viewer for her narratives *Cartucho* and *Las manos de mamá*. Both the narrative voice and the author return to the trauma *as a child*.

The Mexican relationship to death is an intimate one, and very much a part of everyday life, explained Paz. Indeed, violence and death have become a major part of the young narrative viewer’s daily life, from its omnipresence she has grown accustomed to the bloodshed, and it has become an integral and often exciting part of her childhood.⁵² She is not scared by this horrible reality. Parra suggests that the child’s apparent lack of fear while witnessing brutal attacks may be attributable to the fact that she is able to perceive the victim’s own fear, thus distracting her from her own (171). More likely, however, is the familiarity that death has assumed for her. By appearing regularly outside her home, the uncertainty of what death entails is stripped away (Parra, 171). As it is not out of reach, death becomes something she can know, and perhaps even play with. In “Las tripas del General Sobarzo,” for example, she admires the pretty color of the object the soldiers are carrying. When they inform her that they are guts, “the girls ask who might be the owner of the guts, as though these were an everyday object—the general’s shoes, the general’s hat, the general’s gun— somebody may have left behind” (Linhard – Perpetual, 37). She does not shy away from death. On the contrary, she reaches out, touches it, and is disappointed when there are no corpses to watch over from

⁵¹ The infiltration – and persistence – of violence into language bears traces of Leed’s theory of liminality.

her window, because death, to the child, offers a stable routine. In “Desde la ventana” the child narrative viewer laments the rupture of morbid routine caused by the removal of a corpse: “Como estuvo tres noches tirado, ya me había acostumbrado a ver el garabato de su cuerpo, caído hacia su izquierda con las manos en la cara, durmiendo allí, junto de mí. Me parecía mío aquel muerto” (63).

Nellie’s mother teaches her the importance of remembering the fallen. In “Los hombres de Urbina” she takes her young daughter to the spot where José Beltrán was killed to tell her the history of this brave man. For her, remembering entails more than mere nostalgia: “es una forma politizada de conocimiento, un arma de lucha que se esgrime para defender y valorar la identidad combativa y la voluntad de resistencia de los suyos” (Parra, 177). It is the acknowledgment of the values for which they fought, and the familiarization with who those brave people were as individuals. The child narrative viewer grows accustomed to hearing these lessons from her mother and comes to look forward to them:

Yo tenía los ojos muy abiertos, mi espíritu volaba para encontrar imágenes de muertos, de fusilados; me gustaba oír aquellas narraciones de tragedia, me parecía verlo y oírlo todo. Necesitaba tener en mi alma de niña aquellos cuadros llenos de terror, lo único que sentía era que hacían que los ojos de Mamá, al contarlo, lloraran. (“Los hombres de Urbina”)

The above quote also reveals the narrative voice’s love and concern for her mother’s feelings, and how important this mother-daughter relationship is to her.⁵³ She admires her mother greatly, and her desire, even as a small child, to protect her is apparent.

⁵² “Buscamos y no había ni un solo muerto, lo sentimos de veras; nos conformamos con ver que de la esquina todavía salía algún balazo...” (“El muerto,” 47).

⁵³ Teresa Hurley addresses this relationship in detail in her work *Mothers and Daughters in Post-Revolutionary Mexican Literature*.

From other psychological point of view markers, readers glean that the child narrative viewer (like the little girl in *Balún Canán*) admires individual size and strength, and this is demonstrated in her longing to grow up and occupy a more powerful role.⁵⁴ Ideologically too, point of view markers help readers understand the world in which the narrative voice moved. Much of Campobello's immediate community favored General Villa,⁵⁵ and thus the narrative voice's comments regarding this Revolutionary figure are highly complimentary.⁵⁶ His troops are seen as moving as one strong, solid, honorable, and respectable unit (not to mention much cleaner than the *carrancistas* as is indicated in other accounts), and the general himself is glorified to near deity status; Villa has powerful eyes that command, he knows all things, believes in his cause, sincerely loves his men, and strikes fear in the hearts of the enemy. Conversely, the narrative voice admits that there are also many negative things said about Villa and his men, but these statements are falsehoods spread by the enemy, and she and her loved ones know the truth.⁵⁷ Campobello was highly criticized, however, for heaping praise upon a man many considered a bandit, and after the publication of *Cartucho*, friends began to snub her and others called her "una defensora de bandidos" (Mis Libros, 27). Meyer notes that her second narrative, *Las manos de mamá*, "makes clear that the villista in Nellie

⁵⁴ In one example she confesses, "lo admiraba porque estaba tan alto" ("Bartolo de Santiago"). She is impressed by military size and strength, as well, as seen here: "A mí me parecía maravilloso ver tanto soldado" ("Por un beso").

⁵⁵ See Campobello's *Apuntes sobre la vida militar de Francisco Villa*.

⁵⁶ For instance: "Los villistas eran un solo hombre. La voz de Villa sabía unir a los pueblos. Un solo grito era bastante para formar su cabellería" ("La voz del general").

⁵⁷ For example: "La red de mentiras que contra el general Villa difundieron los simuladores... irá cayendo como tendrán que caer las estatuas de bronce que se han levantado con los dineros avanzados" ("Nacha Cenicerós").

Campobello was more an expression of concern for historical justice than an endorsement of aggression” (752).

Also revealed through point of view markers are the values of the child narrative viewer’s society. In addition to their shared love for Villa, many people of Parral esteem a sense of duty and obligation,⁵⁸ however their duty to aid one side or the other was often shirked out of fear that they would be dealt with harshly for aiding the “enemy.”⁵⁹ Loyalty divisions ran through towns and even families, but what united them was a shared belief that good would triumph, good men would be spared, and that honor and bravery but with a childlike spirit are the ways of men.⁶⁰

Finally, the contrast between popular adult opinions and those of the child narrative viewer and her friends is apparent in quotes such as: “Más de 300 hombres fusilados en los mismos momentos, dentro de un cuartel, es mucho muy impresionante, decían las gentes pero nuestros ojos infantiles lo encontraron bastante natural.” (“El centinela del mesón del águila”); and “...todo querían que pareciera muy elegante, ¿para qué, me decía yo dentro de mí, si Santos ya no vive” (“Los hombres de Urbina”). Through these quotes readers see how practices that are common among adults such as carefully planned funerals seem strange and pointless to the children who are analyzing them “objectively” for the first time. The prevalence of violence has made the youth almost immune to death and destruction – these phenomena are a common occurrence, so the sight of hundreds of men, all killed within the same moments, is not shocking.

⁵⁸ When a watchman falls asleep and allows the enemy to sneak up on his battalion, he is looked upon with disdain: “Algunos lo miraban con rencor” (“El centinela del mesón del águila”).

⁵⁹ As seen here: “Tenía muchos heridos, nadie quería curarlos” (“Los heridos de Pancho Villa”).

LAS MANOS DE MAMÁ

Like *Cartucho*, temporal markers in *Las manos de mamá* by Nellie Campobello indicate that much time has passed since the narrative voice witnessed the violence of the Mexican Revolution. Recollecting her youth, her physical and mental development allow her to see things differently now as an adult than she did as a child, such as the once enormous streets of her youth that now seem narrower, shorter, and more sad.⁶¹ But although years have passed, the narrative voice explains that these events are still fresh in her mind.

In 1934, disturbed by Mexico's "orientation toward a brand of superficial nationalism that undermined the authentic values and strengths of the pueblo," Campobello began this second collection of vignettes of the Mexican Revolution, not to reshape her own identity, as suggested by Meyer, but rather to bring to light and preserve the daily displays of small-town courage, tenderness and kindness that existed defiantly amidst the constant peril and tragic loss of life that she witnessed as a child (Meyer, 749). With this work Campobello reclaims the humanity of the oft-depicted savages of the Mexican Revolution, dispelling the false claims that her *compadres* were "bandits"; they were brave brothers, fathers, sons, friends, and her playmates.⁶²

To demonstrate the actual core values of Hidalgo de Parral, Campobello draws inspiration from the strength and grace of her mother. The resultant narrative bears a similar structure to *Cartucho*, in that her recollections of the Mexican Revolution form a

⁶⁰ For example: "Son así las deudas entre los hombres; se pagan con canciones y balas" ("Abelardo Prieto").

⁶¹ "La calle la veo más angosta, más corta, más triste..."(11).

⁶² "Reíamos con los soldados. A veces se sentaban con nosotros y podíamos comprenderlos" (28).

series of vignettes, but in this work the second theme that unites the work are her mother's courageous, positive actions, earning *Las manos de mamá* the classification as “an homage to all Mexican mothers of the Revolution whose behind-the-scenes heroism had gone unsung” (Meyer, 748).⁶³ It is for the incorporation of this second unifying thread that this work was better received than *Cartucho*, for as a counterbalance to the shocking violence of the Revolution, in this work readers find tenderness (Oyarzún, 186). The focus in the title and throughout the compilation on her hands calls attention to her mother's alternative agency in the conflict,⁶⁴ for while “the hands of revolutionaries fired the rifles that demanded social and political reform in Mexico, the hands of mothers cared for and healed the victims of that violence” (Meyer, 749).

As in several narratives of this study, the *extradiegetic* present blends with memories of the *intradiegetic* past, but in *Las manos de mamá* the narrative voice also mixes narrative register. While she most frequently speaks of her mother, she also periodically speaks to her directly, summoning her spirit and honoring her memory, which increases the work's already intimate tone.⁶⁵ Meyer attributes this vacillation in narrative address – one that may be found within a single account or even a single paragraph – to Campobello's desire to convey all facets of her mother at once, thus rounding out her character and revealing that their mother-daughter communication and intimate bond endure past death (750). She intermittently addresses forthright her deceased grandfather, as well, and these spiritual interjections, rather than digressions,

⁶³ See Meyer and Oyarzún for sound feminist readings of *Las manos de mamá*.

⁶⁴ Meanwhile her partner is referred to as “él, que andaba con los rifles” (“Amor de nosotros”).

suggest Campobello's perception of an interconnectedness of their temporal and spatial planes.⁶⁶

At times, the narrative voice's responses and echoed questions suggest the presence of a third party interviewer who has also entered the circle of confidence of the narrative voice and her readers.⁶⁷ The narrative voice's inability to respond to these supposed questions reminds readers of the passage of time, suggests lapses in her memory, and also calls attention to the fact that she was a little-girl-witness to these events, and as such readers must bear in mind the perspective, priorities, and fancies of the child (Parra, 167). In fact, in "Su falda," the narrative voice herself declares, "Fragmentarios son los recuerdos de los niños. No me acuerdo cómo ni cuándo nos cambiamos de casa." But although she is uncertain of the details of their move to a new home, she does refer to this transition by noting, "Aquí era diferente todo," immediately followed by an explanation of how in this new place *mamá* didn't have to get up so early and she spent more time with them – a change that, to a child, is very near "todo" – and then a paragraph break, confirming the importance of that difference.

Spatial point of view markers are helpful, too, in the quest to better understand the nature of the narrative voice's relationship with *mamá* and the values of her family. The narrative voice is never far from her mother's side, clutching her hand or hiding within the folds of her skirts, and her world is comprised of her family home and the outdoors.

⁶⁵ Readers encounter these examples: "Yo era niña y mamá estaba en el postigo llamándome." (11); and "Mamá: fue usted nuestra artista, supo borrar para siempre de la vida de sus hijos la tristeza y el hambre de pan – pan que a veces no había para nadie, pero no nos hacía falta" ("Amor de ella" 18).

⁶⁶ Campobello's linking of planes may stem from belief in an afterlife, the indigenous concept of el Gran Tiempo (that Crumley detects in *Balún Canán*), or a reverence of familial lineage.

The children's time spent outdoors reveals not only spatial information about the narrative voice, but also that her family revered nature and respected the importance of growing up simply and naturally, breathing fresh air and playing in the sun. Their mother believed that the child's role was to play, break things, and enjoy being young while the grown-ups cared for them.

The narrative voice clearly recognizes their dependence on their mother. *Mamá* fed and protected them, inspired them with her grace and beauty, and while she ensured that they never had to worry, she also never hid from them the harsh reality they faced. Although the narrative voice's mother protected her children, in no moment did she shelter them excessively. In fact, *mamá* typically told her children stories of the Revolution, not to scare them, but rather to inform them; she believed it necessary to relay this gruesome yet crucial information, because these were the stories of their people – an integral part of their identity: “Nos contaba hechos reales: Papá Grande, San Miguel de Bocas, nuestra tierra, los hombres de la revolución, cosas de la guerra que sus ojos habían visto. Así eran sus charlas con sus hijos” (20). Therefore, both the task of the narrative child as she relates these episodes and the adult Campobello who penned them share narrative purpose, paying homage to *mamá* and the brave Revolutionaries she loved and respected.

The Revolution was intrinsic to the narrative voice's family life not only because neighbors and friends formed the warring factions, but also because her father, and later her brother, went off to fight. The proximity and abundance of violence associated with

⁶⁷ “Ya no teníamos papá.” ¿Vinieron quiénes? No sé, imposible recordarlo.’ (“Su falda” 28); “¿Comer? No me acuerdo; no consta en ninguna de mis escenas. Yo creo que no nos dieron tortillas de trigo” (“Su falda”

the Revolution foster within the narrative voice an accustomed, casual response: “La vida era así; una noticia y un hombre picando espuelas” (37).⁶⁸ She is not terrified by the prevalence of the fighting and fatalities; rather, she calmly and logically assesses this chaos and loss as part of life. As she looks upon the dead she wonders to herself, “¿Cuántos kilos de carne harían en total? ¿Cuántos ojos y pensamientos? Y todo estaba muerto en aquellos hombres.’ Esto decía mi mente de niña precoz” (“Ella y la máquina”). Although her first question about the fallen refers to their flesh/their meat, suggesting perhaps a cold, dehumanized view, and her second question is a similar fragmentary pondering about their eyes, she then considers their thoughts. This final inclusion illustrates that although young, she recognizes that the lifeless forms that lie before her were once living breathing humans, who not only had eyes and flesh, but also thought and felt as she does. She has not disassociated these forms from people and is keenly aware of their loss of life.

In addition, she notes that the Revolution has altered her older brother; it has hardened him. At just thirteen years old, he exhibits the behavior of a grown Mexican man who, toughened by his surroundings and welcomed early into adulthood, is strong and apparently emotionless, and remains unmoved even upon seeing his mother distraught. Against the girl’s numerous accounts of tough young Revolutionaries, the description of her brother’s adapted behavior suggests that in her town this desensitizing may be born of necessity, for in times of revolution there is no room for lofty ideals, sympathy, or nostalgia, only for the harsh reality of the day to day combat.

30).

⁶⁸ Here she refers to the bringers of death notices.

Amidst the violence of the Revolution, the children learn the value of living simply. *Mamá* teaches the children the importance of appreciating the simple pleasures of life, the joys of the natural world, and they grow to value fresh air and green grass, while in turn developing the ability to exist without certain material comforts. Even when considered poor by the townsfolk, the narrative viewer feels content and at home in the environment her mother has provided for her and her siblings.

When she senses a threat to remove her and her siblings from *mamá*'s custody, the narrative voice is surprised to learn that "the laws of men" are attempting to destroy her world.⁶⁹ Here a definite division between an "us" and a "them" is drawn. Campobello's clever word choice lends to two interpretations of "the enemy;" one, that the threat comes from literally the men who do not understand motherhood or the mother's need to be with her children, or two, a more loosely interpreted "men," meaning the people of the material world who condemn the narrative voice's family for their more basic, natural lifestyle.⁷⁰

While the narrative voice clearly dislikes city life, she admits that she is unable to understand it fully. City people have a strange way of speaking that baffles her. The fast-paced lifestyle of the city is foreign to her and her siblings, so much so, that in one instance when her baby sister is entrusted with an object of the modern world, a watch, she destroys it with a laugh. This example not only illustrates the little value the

⁶⁹ "¿Las leyes de los hombres trataban de desbaratar nuestro mundo?" ("Su falda")

⁷⁰ Either interpretation would fit the attitude espoused by the narrative voice, as readers already have come to understand the close bond she has with *mamá* as well as her preference for natural living. In fact this latter inclination also manifests itself in a poignant distaste for the stifling ways of the city as she contrasts the city and country-living and suggests that if country life strengthens, conversely, city life weakens and even sickens the body and the soul. As Hurley notes, "This view conforms to post-revolutionary rhetoric of

narrative voice's family places on superfluous material goods, it also reiterates that in the midst of a revolution, the only true possession worth protecting is life. It is not by coincidence that it is a wounded man – someone who nearly lost his own life – who gives Gloriecita this object to play with, and also no coincidence that the object is a time-marking device, a manmade instrument unnecessary for a simple life. Their collective response when this object is destroyed – laughter – marks the group's shared ideology.

Finally, ideological markers are used to show the narrative voice's fondness for her mother and grandfather while also referring to the unbreakable bond between Mexican ascendants and descendants, and to the unbreakable bond between mother and daughter. The central image of this narrative, her mother's hands, has a counterpart toward the end of the narrative that reinforces this generational interdependence. In "Carta para Usted" it is the children's hands that the deceased mother awaits to come stir the earth about her grave so that she may flower and make her way toward them. The Mexican culture has long since been known for its strong and loving connection to and respect for its ancestors, and this phenomenon can be seen in the narrative voice's interaction with her grandfather's memory, as well, as through his photograph she addresses him as if he were still with her, conversing, and giving advice.⁷¹

Equally necessary in the narrative voice's life was her mother, whose long skirts provided a safe haven for her and her siblings, and seemed to them a source of great

the 1930's which, in order to...combat the mass migration to cities, embraced the idea of the country, and romanticized the country people" (Hurley, 55).

⁷¹ "Papá, cuánto lo quiero y su compañía me es tan necesaria; a donde yo vaya va conmigo su retrato.. [sic] Consulto su cara, le hablo y le pido su consejo" ("Lector, llena tu corazón del respeto mío: Ella está aquí"). This example shows the narrative voice's attachment to her grandfather, and refers to the practice of carrying a photograph of a loved one in remembrance and for self-consolation.

power. This image of her mother's skirts repeats throughout *Las manos de mamá* as does the image of the lap – both of the girl's *nana* and of the earth – in *Balún Canán*. In both works the image not only bears ties to the strength and protection of the feminine power of an earth mother, but also offers comfort and consistency. Even when all else appeared confusing and uncertain, the narrative voice could be certain of her mother's presence, forever nurturing and providing for her children. The figure of her mother often stands at their grey front door, her skirts blowing in the wind. It is interesting to find these two images together, for the wind bears special spiritual significance in *Balún Canán*, as I shall address momentarily.

As in *Cartucho*, there is little character development of the child narrative viewer beyond her observations and adoring assessments of her mother as she moves herself and her children decidedly, yet gracefully, through the chaos of the Mexican Revolution.

BALÚN CANÁN

During periods of political and social instability, minority groups traditionally silenced within hegemonic discourse often rise up with a voice of their own (Lagos, 169). In the mid 1930's, President Lázaro Cárdenas' implementation of several radical economic and sociopolitical policies rooted in the tenets of the Mexican Revolution provoked an escalation of class-based, racial, and religious tension throughout the nation (Meléndez, 358). Both women and Amerindians were seen as vulnerable subaltern groups by Mexico's dominant patriarchal land-owning class; theirs is the alternative

voice that opens Rosario Castellanos' narrative *Balún Canán* (Ward, 198).⁷² Excerpts of indigenous texts (*El Libro del Consejo*, *Chilam-Balam de Chumayel*, and *Los Anales de los Xahil*) announce each of the three sections of *Balún Canán*, thus setting the tone for a work that is acutely aware of the nation's rich indigenous tradition; and the first dialogue is pronounced by the Argüello family's indigenous *nana*. Ellipses signify that she has been explaining the conquest of America, and now concludes by emphasizing to her young audience that by effacing the native peoples' languages, the conquerors effectively stripped the natives of their collective memory.⁷³

The *nana*'s audience for this history lesson, who serves as the narrative voice for the first and third parts of *Balún Canán*, is a seven-year-old girl, the older sister of Mario, daughter of César and Zoraida Argüello, whose name, however, like the *nana*'s, the readers never learn.⁷⁴ Castellanos brings the concept of language as power to the foreground of this work, and this small girl, at first a mere silent and nameless listener on the periphery of this patriarchal society, then asserts an audible voice "antithetical to the passive and silent cultural role to which women have been relegated in Latin America," and by the end of the narrative she endeavors to claim a written voice, as well (Cypess, 4; *Fictions of Apprenticeship*, 107).⁷⁵ By raising Amerindians, women, and children to a position of narrative power from the start of her work, Castellanos "signals to the reader

⁷² In 1977 Mexican director Benito Alazraki made a film based on Castellanos' *Balún Canán* with the same title. In this version, a far cry from the subtlety and beauty of the original, differences include that the children are several years older and their father has already died.

⁷³ "Their expulsion from a position of power, their submission," notes Cypess, "began when the word was taken from them, a judgment that concords with Foucault's theories uniting discourse and power" (7).

⁷⁴ As the purpose of this study is to analyze the use of children as narrative voices, it is therefore only the first and third parts of *Balún Canán* (the *extradiegetic-homodiegetic* parts narrated by the little girl) that are relevant and herein represented with textual examples.

that in her examination of a traditional society she will boldly break its rules” (Cypess, 4-5).

Although some critics have declared the shift in narrative vision and voice among the three sections of *Balún Canán* a disconcerting flaw, Castellanos explains that she could not structure her work any other way (Carballo – Diecinueve Protagonistas, 419). The second section mixes inner monologues, indirect discourse, and adult narrative voices discussing adult topics such as amorous affairs and the consequences of Cárdenas’ agrarian and educational reforms. Their discord reveals the incompatibility of the colonial and indigenous worldviews that “promotes their violent disconnection,” as well as provides “an ironic counter to the girl’s nascent consciousness” (Ward, 200; Woodrich, 137). But far from a digression or narrative weak point, this divided structure fits precisely the meaning of the narrative as a whole, argues Cypess, and “can be read as a signifier of the restrictive social arrangements signified in the text” (6). She explains:

The polarity of presentation reflects the divisiveness within the social structure that the class in power wishes to maintain. The apparent unbreachable division between a narrative “I” that is limited by age and sex, and an omniscient narrator with unlimited powers, is as irreconcilable as the separations which exist between the various groups in society – between social classes, the sexes, as well as the generations. (6-7)

What is more, observes Ward, the girl assumes as much of the narrative responsibility as all of the other voices combined. In that sense, she reasons, despite the fact that her parents’ hopes and dreams rest on continuing the Argüello bloodline through their male heir, their openly preferred child Mario, the subaltern perspective of the female child is given “more weight than that of any of the novel’s other characters, including her own

⁷⁵ Throughout the narrative, the Argüellos and other ladinos express shock when they hear indigenous

father. Whereas the thought and word of patriarch César Argüello holds sway over his family and Indians, his daughter's narrative reveals the suffering of those he would keep silent" (Ward, 205). The child's role changes from the first to the third sections, as well, notes Cypess, progressing from witness and reporter of the activities of others, "fulfilling a passive role as befits her stereotyped position in society," to an agent who "undertakes actions motivated by her own thoughts and needs, not dictated by the adults around her" (Cypess - Niña, 73).

Temporal markers in the present tense establish the immediacy of the narrative and reveal that the young daughter of the Argüello family is both the narrative viewer and voice of parts I and III, describing events concurrently as they unfold during the 1930's. Spatially, she generally orbits her *nana*, and their typical environment is with the rest of the Argüello family on one of their two properties in Chiapas, on occasional local outings, or at school. Church was once also an approved venue for the children, but by the start of the narrative the government has already banned public worship. The girl's description of this religious crackdown is the one instance in which she recounts an entire episode from outside her narrative *extradiegetic-homodiegetic* temporal frame. With horror she recalls both seeing their church's altar hacked to pieces by soldiers and thrown into a bonfire of burning mutilated saint bodies in the middle of the street; and the Catholic community's fear that punishment would follow (40-41). Her teacher warns the children that although they are too innocent to grasp the gravity of recent events, they must be prudent and keep the school's activities secret, for the nation is presently in terrible danger (14). This advisory proves accurate, for when an official visits and

people dare speak Spanish, a language of power that was forbidden to them.

determines that their school is being operated without the proper governmental authorization, not to mention the fact that that religion still illegally forms part of the children's curriculum, he closes the school and the girl loses yet another corner of her approved realm.

With these ever-increasing spatial restrictions, the girl generally is found within the domestic sphere, and complains that she and Mario aren't even allowed to go play with friends (250). Spatial markers indicate that the family's main residence is in Comitán and their second, a ranch in Chatajal, is twenty-five leagues away (30). The girl travels with her family between their two homes via Palo María, her aunts' ranch. Upon their arrival at Palo María, Tía Francisca scolds her brother César for having brought the children to such a dangerous place: "Es una imprudencia. Las cosas que están sucediendo en estos ranchos no son para que las presencien las criaturas" (69). The Chiapan agricultural community, which since the settlement of first Spanish friars' colonies had operated according to the paternalistic *baldío* system of Amerindians tending the crops of the Spanish or ladino landowners, has been in upheaval since the news of agricultural reform began to spread throughout the region (Woodrich, 139). The idea of revamping this longstanding patriarchal hierarchy, upon which the farming community was based, raised questions of workers' rights and polarized the Amerindians and landowners. Tía Francisca's admonition to César, then, refers to the escalating racial tension she has witnessed and the violence that she predicts will follow. Dangerous times may require the children's world to shrink even more.

But while the geographical traumatic site of *Balún Canán* is Chiapas, "the location of the discursive struggle between Maya and *ladino* constitutions of community

is situated textually at the site of the *niña*. In her converge both the *ladino* and Maya memory” (Woodrich, 137). Indeed, as the child shares an intimate bond and identifies with her Amerindian caregiver, she – like the child in José María Arguedas’ *Los ríos profundos* (1958) – occupies an unusual position of cultural awareness and sensitivity that will contribute greatly to the formulation of her worldview (Crumley, 492; Woodrich, 137). She is small in stature and has a limited perspective and cognitive ability (due to her young age), but as she is attempting to understand and seek her place in this society, social values are fluctuating, and thus her questions and concerns parallel a similar national questioning (Lagos, 176). Eye-level with her father’s knees, she imagines him as an immensely tall tree; he is out of reach, high up in the hierarchy of Mexican society, while she remains at the bottom, closer to the earth and to those whose language was stripped from them (9; Meléndez, 348).

Psychological markers reveal that the child narrative voice does not enjoy being little. When her *nana* suggests that she is as tiny and insignificant a grain of anise, she protests, declaring that she is not, in fact, a grain of anise, but rather a girl of seven years of age, something much bigger (9). This longing to be taken seriously and respected as are the adult “big people” is common among children and contributes to the verisimilitude of the character. She, like many children is cognizant of her potential; she is a capable little girl, but is still tormented by the thought of her skinny arms. Such markers attempt to either evoke the sympathy of the reader or to establish identification with the girl and her “burden.”

The child’s physical smallness, of course, accompanies her figurative smallness – as both young and female – in Mexican society. As such, Vicenta’s reminder that she

must stay in the living room while the grown-ups tend to her ailing brother, the heir of the Argüello estate, suggests a deeper meaning: “Ningún salir, niñita. A tu lugar” (274). Consistently, the places she may and may not occupy are identified for her. For example, her youth restricts her access to certain outings even within the local community that her mother fears may push her too quickly into the harsh and sometimes dangerous world of grown-ups. When the girl’s *nana* explains that she cannot accompany her mother because she is going to visit a poor woman, the narrative voice explosively retorts: “Yo ya sé cómo son los pobres”(27). This scenario presents the mother’s effort to shield her child from poverty, but also reveals that the latter already has clearly delineated “us” as the landowning, wealthy class of society, and “them” (or “Other”) as the poorer classes and indigenous peoples. When her *nana* indirectly cites the indigenous creation story and the golden man’s inability to enter heaven without the assistance of a poor man made of flesh as the reason Zoraida regularly visits *la tullida*, the girl ascertains the intended meaning and asks, “¿Quién es mi pobre, nana?” (30).⁷⁶

Other psychological markers illustrate, however, that the child narrative voice does not always understand the conversations and predicaments of the adults that surround her, but she often recognizes these gaps in comprehension and is not disturbed by them. Rather, she detaches in such moments, patiently waits for things to be made apparent, or she looks for other readable signs, such as facial expressions and body

⁷⁶ This contemplation along with pre-sacramental attention to proper conduct and her decision to mend her naughty ways (after earlier references to being sent to the corner and purposely spilling her milk) may be interpreted as signs of the child’s moral development (12, 10).

language.⁷⁷ Despite the girl's limited understanding, however, her ability to capture and recount situations remains intact. At times Castellanos opts to present these glimpses of society in a more straightforward manner, with little or no juvenile commentary, while at other times such occurrences are accompanied by a dismissive comment by the confused or disinterested narrative voice. Through both manners of presentation, however, the readers (now "*lector cómplices*") become alerted to the happenings of the day, and the work's psychological and ideological markers become intertwined.⁷⁸ Ward comments that for this reasons, the narrative child's point of view within *Balún Canán* serves Castellanos well, for:

...while she implicitly protests apparent inequalities and social injustices, she maintains a dialogic relationship with the reader, whose active participation she seeks in order to interpret what she has written. Acutely aware of the body of beliefs through which she channels her observations, she refrains from demanding the reader's allegiance to it. (205)

One such fragmented account begins as the little girl trembles in bed, burning up but certain that the damp cloth on her forehead will do no good to remedy the real problem: "No logrará borrar lo que he visto" (30). Her desire to keep her bedroom windows closed because she cannot bear the sunlight reminds readers of the Biblical

⁷⁷ Examples include: "Todavía no es suficiente lo que ha dicho, todavía no alcanzo a comprenderlo. Pero ya aprendí a no impacientarme y me acurruco junto a la nana y aguardo. A su tiempo son pronunciadas las palabras" (28); and "Quiero preguntarle por qué. Pero la interrogación se me quiebra cuando miro sus ojos arrasados en lágrimas" (40). Here without understanding the entire situation, as with the schoolteacher before the inspector's visit, she is still able to use her knowledge of character and to perceive and comprehend emotions.

⁷⁸ For instance, in the following quote it becomes clear that political issues divide the adult community of Comitán, yet narrative voice intervention is limited to the observable, description of the moment: "Mi hijo opina que la ley es razonable y necesaria; que Cárdenas es un presidente justo. Mi madre se sobrealta y dice con apasionamiento: ¿Justo? ¿Cuando pisotea nuestros derechos, cuando nos arrebatara nuestras propiedades? Y para dárselas ¿a quiénes?, a los indios"(46). The narrative voice recognizes her mother's surprise and has noted her passionate reaction (as she noted Miss Silvina's call for secrecy), and she

story of the suddenly ashamed Adam and Eve who hide from God after eating from the Tree of Knowledge. This child, now aware, has just witnessed the violent death of one of her father's Amerindian laborers. Traumatized, and perhaps guilty by familial association, she hides from the light: "No hay olvido" (30). She ran to the dying man as his friends carried him across the threshold of their home. This is another example supportive of Linhard's claim that war and revolutionary violence penetrate the domestic realm, here quite literally. Blood was everywhere. The worker's hand had been nearly chopped off entirely by a machete. In keeping with Caruth's theory of the unrepresentability of trauma and its tendency to persist in graphic fragments, these are the only images presented of this gruesome event. This time the girl cannot keep her curiosity in check; she must know now why someone so brutally attacked this man. Her *nana* begins to explain that the murdered man had been working closely with her father, and that the division between the laborers and landowners is growing, but at this point the girl's attention wanders (31). In accordance with what Freud describes in *The Pleasure Principle*, this small witness is unable to integrate the trauma. She slips into an unconscious, dreamlike state, imagining her mother with *la tullida* and her reading father on a hammock unaware that skeletons surround him. The description of the girl's fantasy ends as she seeks solace in her *nana* and the nine guardians of Balún Canán, visually represented by the water and the air.⁷⁹ A resurfacing of unprocessed trauma similar to that which Freud observed among war veterans is seen in *Balún Canán* when the

recounts the dialogue, yet offers no commentary of her own. Regardless, readers have been alerted to the situation.

⁷⁹ The comfort the girls seeks is more than a mere caregiver-to-child tenderness. Now and in other times of agitation, the girl conjures thoughts of her *nana* as the portal to the indigenous spirituality.

horrified girl makes a visual connection between Jesus on the crucifix and the strewn out ravaged Amerindian who bled to death in her home. “La revelación es tan repentina que me deja paralizada. Contemplo la imagen un instante, muda de horror. Y luego me lanzo, como ciega, hacia la puerta” (41). She is overcome with terror and flees the church.

The girl, perhaps like the readers, is just beginning to piece together the nature of the relationship between indigenous workers and ladino landowners.⁸⁰ From the beginning of the work the child voices negative sentiment regarding Amerindians, but her young age and affectionate interaction with her *nana* suggest that rather than her own innate disdain for the Amerindians, she is unconsciously mimicking the words spoken by her elders.⁸¹ At her tender age she has already been exposed to the stereotypes and negative sentiment towards this indigenous race, and the mere suggestion that God might “turn her into an Indian” for wasting her milk is enough to scare her into submission. Despite her daily intimate interaction with her *nana*, this child has already begun to assume the opinions of her own privileged race and class that deem the indigenous peoples inferior. She is being acculturated for the worse, which calls to mind the figure of the pure child born into a corrupt society.

When the child begins to think for herself rather than merely mimic adult attitudes, however, she questions and is sickened by the popular opinion and practices of her elders. She asks Tío David what a *baldillo* is, and her *nana* why the *brujos* would

⁸⁰ Other markers call attention to the language barrier that further aggravates racial turbulence on the ranch. The narrative voice does not understand the language of the Amerindians, but in this case, she is not alone in her ignorance. In fact her father, the head of the ranch, is the only character apart from the narrative voice’s *nana* who can communicate in both languages effectively.

⁸¹ “¿Sabe mi nana que la odio cuando me peina? No lo sabe. No sabe nada. Es india, está descalza y no usa ninguna ropa debajo de la tela azul del tzec”(10).

want to harm her, destroy crops, or rip apart families (24, 15). Their responses change the way the girl perceives her environment, and especially her father: “Ahora lo miro por primera vez. Es el que manda, el que posee. Y no puedo soportar su rostro y corro a refugiarme en la cocina” (16). When the Cárdenas administration enacts a law requiring landowners with farms upon which more than five indigenous laborers’ families reside to provide those workers’ children an education, the Argüellos are furious and the girl overhears the full extent of her mother’s racism. She is shocked and embarrassed, and she turns to seek the reaction of her brother, who stands equally horrified. The children tiptoe out of the room and, purposefully, so that their *nana* doesn’t hear such their parents’ hideous slurs, they close the door behind them (45). In contrast with her earlier repetitions of prevalent stereotypes and racial aggression, these later differences in opinion, word, and action between the generations mark the child’s moral development and offer readers hope.

Also from ideological markers, readers learn that honor, loyalty, and respect are important to the narrative voice’s family and community.

Y Mario apretando los dientes, resistiendo en medio de sus dolores y pensando que yo lo he traicionado. Y es verdad. Lo he dejado retorcerse y sufrir, sin abrir el cofre de mi nana. Porque tengo miedo de entregar esa llave. Porque me comerían los brujos a mí; a mí me castigaría Dios, a mí me castigaría Catashaná. (279)

Here the narrative voice reveals her guilt for having betrayed her brother, and although it is combined with fear of punishment, her anguish is still a significant marker of her developing psyche and growing awareness of right and wrong (along with her confused amalgam of newly acquired religious and folkloric knowledge). Similarly, calling attention to the fact that she drags her feet as she obeys her parents when they demand

she respect Tío David, reflects her discerning nature as it begins to view adults as separate entities, rather than a single mass of authority, some worthy of respect and some not.⁸²

The rich Mesoamerican tradition is made apparent throughout the narrative via indigenous chronicles, and myths and creation stories told to the girl by her *nana* that she begins to incorporate into her own still-formulating belief system (Crumley, 491). This may be seen in various ways throughout the work, but as in *Las manos de mamá*, two recurring representative images stand out: the wind and the lap of a maternal figure. There is a purposeful juxtaposition of the *nana*'s lap and the lap of the earth from which all of the *dones* come (27). The little girl climbs into her *nana*'s lap: "Ella, como siempre desde que nací, me arrima a su regazo. Es caliente y amoroso. Pero tendrá una llaga. Una llaga que nosotros le habremos enconado" (16). The comfort she finds in her *nana*, when she longs to be by her side after experiencing trauma, suggests that she finds spiritual solace in her, as she will in the earth (32, 240). While the *nana*'s "*llaga*" refers to the wound she has received from the *brujos* who punish her for her continued affiliation with the Argüellos; it also refers to the painful rift between the laborers and landowners, creatures who, having been born creatures of the earth therefore maintain their connection as part of it, and yet now are divided.

The wind, according to local tradition, is recognized as one of the guardians of the region (9). The girl reverently notices its marked presence while her brother is flying

⁸² "A mí me disgusta el aspecto de tío David, tan descuidado y tan sucio. Me repugna el olor a mistela que emana siempre de su boca. Pero mis padres nos han recomendado que respetemos a este viejo, que lo tratemos con cariño, que le digamos tío, como si fuera de la familia, para que no se sienta solo. Y arrastrando los pies para dilatar lo más que me fuera posible la aproximación, obedecí" (275).

kites, and although she is scolded for missing his victory, she is much more fascinated and overcome with respectful awe for having encountered such a sacred place (22-23).

Meléndez explains:

Poseer este importante conocimiento y poder reconocer la voz de uno de estos guardianes, es precisamente lo que le permite a la niña-narradora-protagonista enfrentarse abiertamente con las dicotomías y contradicciones de los mundos que habita, que por un lado la obligan a enfrentarse sagazmente con el espacio y el tiempo socio-cultural que le ha tocado vivir, y a la vez le permiten indagar en un espacio mítico, abstracto y heterogéneo encarnado en la inmensidad y la libertad del viento y de la escritura. (Meléndez, 362)

The girl's *nana* reinforces the girl's attention to the wind and other signs around her.

When the circus organizers refund their money, the *nana*'s explanation to the disappointed girl rings with double meaning of the tension that is mounting regarding Cárdenas' agrarian reform. The air – the wind guardian – brings warning of a storm. This is not the time for diversions (19). The wind serves as a divine presence throughout the narrative, and although many critics have pointed to the girl's final mistaken sighting of her *nana* and subsequent repetition of a hackneyed racial slur as evidence that she is assuming a racist ladino mindset, no one has focused on the earlier sentence, "Dejo caer los brazos, desalentada" (285; Ward, 206). The word "*desalentada*" suggests that her hope, her breath, her air, her sacred wind, leaves the child for an instant after she receives this tremendous disappointment of having (whom she thought to be) her beloved *nana* once more slip away from her. Her words are not her own in this moment because her divine breath has left her momentarily and, frustrated and unable to think, she repeats by rote this horrible statement she has no doubt heard from the mouths of elders. This regression suggests that the girl constantly grapples with this dichotomy, trying to free

herself from the dominant discourse (Meléndez, 351). It breaches her language for a moment, but the child reintegrates and resumes her search for self as evidenced by her picking up a pencil to honor her brother and ask his forgiveness; an act of expression that intimates that her divine spirit is returning to her.

BANDIDOS

Set in 1913, Luis Estrada's film *Bandidos*, the first film of our study, presents the prolific violence and diminished respect for human life that accompanied the Mexican Revolution. The film shows how society suffered a collapse of its power structures, and how unfortunately the younger generation, represented in the film by the 10-year-old protagonist Luis and his new friends, continued to emulate the behavior of the adults even as they discarded social mores in their struggle to survive. Luis returns to his boarding school to find it engulfed in flames and being ransacked by bandits, and although at first he holds out hope that his family will find him if he remains among the ruins, he soon realizes that passivity and solitude would put him at great risk. When a second wave of much younger (fellow 9- and 10-year-old) bandits arrives to rummage through what is left of the school, Luis elects to head homeward and join the three boys traversing the countryside. Along the way the leader, Miguel, pressures Luis to commit to them by adopting their criminal behavior. Luis initially refuses, then weakens and feigns a robbery to make the boys think he's a true bandit, but viewers can tell that his complete transition into full-fledged gang member is imminent. When Miguel's archenemy kills Pablo, the youngest member of their group, the remaining three boys unite in their grief, and Luis reprioritizes, placing his new group's common goal of

revenge ahead of reuniting with his biological family. As the narrative voice in *Cartucho* fantasizes about exacting vengeance, these boys do as well.

The action of the film takes place in non-specific locations throughout the countryside as the boys wander past trees, rocks, cliffs, and fields. The only time a particular city is referenced is when the reporter tells the boys that he next will be heading north to Mexico City. The boys, however, continue to traverse rural areas.

Bandidos is the film of this study that most relies on dark humor to convey its message. Lighting establishes an immediate connection between this drama and Hollywood Westerns, while aural cues continue and yet modernize the renegade tone. Other film techniques such as reaction shots and slow motion sequences are also crucial in establishing the mindset of the children as they forge out on their own amidst the chaos of the Revolution.

While it could be said that – as evidenced by his smoking a cigarette, visiting a prostitute, robbing, and finally killing a man – Luis’ journey ushers him into adulthood,⁸³ the more accurate description is that contact with the Revolution strips him of his innocence and forces him into a life of vice.⁸⁴ When the bandits destroy Luis’ residence,

⁸³ The little girl in *Cartucho* and *Las manos de mamá* also describes the Revolution-induced thrust into vice as it acts upon her brother, El Siete. She notices that after having participated in Revolutionary fighting he is now as hardened and unfeeling as a Mexican man.

⁸⁴ Although Luis unites with the young bandits, at first he does not wish to steal. His efforts to keep a clean conscience while earning his keep in the group involve an elaborately feigned robbery in which he actually gives the victims money and urges them to ride away so that they remain safe. He is ill-prepared for the rugged life of an outlaw, as evidenced by the suitcases he brings and his refusal to eat the food that the other boys scavenge or kill. What is more, he initially is unwilling to shoot another human being, and tries to avoid situations that would warrant such violence. In this turbulent atmosphere and lacking adult caregivers, the boys are thrust into many adult experiences, including a visit to a prostitute. In this scene two of the terrified boys fake stomachaches to provide an excuse for not partaking, the oldest boy goes eagerly, and Luis has to be coaxed into her tent. I justify including this film in my investigation of pre-pubescent child witnesses of war and its aftermath because Luis’ sexual encounter is not sought out by the

the boarding school where crucifixes hang on the walls and priests look out for the boys' safety, they disrupt the established social paradigm by ousting the designated caregivers and shifting into the position of role model. The bandits are adults who manage to survive in a war-torn environment, and the boys observe that they do so by likewise perpetrating violence. With no non-combatant caregivers to instruct them otherwise, the boys begin to emulate the bandits' behavior.

The rugged and wild atmosphere of *Bandidos* is set visually by the film's sepia-toned color palette that resembles the traditional Western genre's. The white, imperfectly edged font of the film title and credits that shake and the errant flecks of white that interrupt the otherwise solid black screen give the appearance of a poor quality or old-time celluloid film shown via an unsteady projector. Browns, tans, and black establish the dusty, dry roads and rocky crags, the same colors that are used for the characters' clothing as they move about the countryside. The characters thus appear camouflaged and at one with the land, both wild and outside the rule of civilized law. Even the foliage of trees and brush are in shadowy muted greens and black, lacking brilliance and thus

child on his own timeline (nor does anything more than a kiss occur, for certain), but rather it occurs because the child is abandoned in the chaos of the Revolution. Furthermore, after saying she will no longer engage in prostitution, she laughs and welcomes the boys into her tent. She calls the boys "sólo niños" and laughs endearingly as she emerges from the tent, shedding doubt on whether or not the boys have had the encounter one might normally imagine with a prostitute. (But to young Luis, that was enough.) Estrada means to show that Luis is a child and that he was innocent, until the Revolution stripped him of that, because even innocent beings may be corrupted in an atmosphere of constant dehumanized behavior. As further evidence, I call attention to the fact that Estrada presents the two most stereotypically innocent figures, the child and the clergyman, and strips them of their purity by the end of the film. He sets the child and the priest amid the chaos of the Mexican Revolution and shows how it demoralizes both into untrustworthy scoundrels, because that is the only way to survive in this environment. Many priests and boys are killed when the bandits attack the boarding school, but the ones who adapt, survive.

continuing the drab background.⁸⁵ These visual techniques combine to resemble a production of a bygone day that in turn grants the film a sense of authenticity, suggesting it was indeed filmed during the Revolution.

Slow motion is used twice in the film, each time to signify that a child is cognizant that he is in life-threatening danger. The first occurs when Luis and his friend leave school, hoping to catch a glimpse of the bandits who have been reported in the area. Their treetop espionage adventure goes awry when the branch supporting them breaks, they fall, and are spotted by the very men they were spying on. The bandits give chase on horseback, waving their guns, and the Luis' friend is captured and carried off by a knife-wielding bandit. Luis continues on, reaches a precipice, and as the bandits close in on him he realizes he must jump. The fast synthesizer music ends and a heroic note sequence accompanies the slow motion images of Luis as he hurls himself off the cliff while a bandit takes aim at him. The normal temporal pace resumes when the boy hits the ground and rolls into a tree, for the moment out of harm's way. Similarly, the second instance when slow motion conveys danger is after a shootout between the boys and the bandits. Their gunfire ceases and Pablo, the youngest boy, erroneously assumes that their opponents have given up. He stands and rejoices, but the other boys warn him to get down and they look across the crevasse just in time to see their adversaries reappear and fire at Pablo. The slowed motion begins as their faces indicate their acknowledgement of the threat, then knowingly and fearfully turn toward Pablo and he is shot to death. All other sounds besides the wind drop out for a moment to draw attention to the boys' faces,

⁸⁵ The lack of female caregivers in this film may go hand in hand with the fact that no tender relationship with the earth is stressed as in *Balún Canán* or *Las manos de mamá*.

and heighten the effect of the next sound that is heard: gunshots. The bullets that strike Pablo mark the return to regular pace and audio. In both instances, the temporal slow motion distortion mimics the inhaled, then held breath that typifies the anxious pause of one who awaits the outcome of a terrible predicament, and here they accompany and guide the viewers' emotions.

The mise en scène of *Bandidos* leaves no doubt that the Revolution is at hand. The silhouette of a horseman in military uniform rides out of the smoke clouds at the start of the film; following him, a company of shadowy figures rolls war cannons and other equipment across the plain. With the timeframe established, the film then cuts to a shot of the boarding school to introduce the main characters.

Silhouettes are also used throughout the film to convey tremendous, yet recognizable emotion. When the boys say goodbye to their friend, high atop a cliff, their figures stand in the setting sunlight in front of the cross that marks Pablo's final resting place. Their actions even from a distance can be understood as ones of mourning and paying respects to a loved one lost to the Revolution. One figure drinks from a bottle, then leaves it in tribute, then they all take off their hats and console each other with embraces. The wind blows the tall grass in the foreground of the frame, and the sad strumming of a guitar plays "Knockin' on Heaven's Door" into the next scene, in which the boys continue grieving.

Similarly, silhouettes are used to suggest grief in the scene in which Miguel is distraught because he knows he is about to be separated from another friend. Luis is summoned to the general's tent at the military camp and as he enters, the light from within illuminates and outlines their figures. Miguel looks on, then his head drops, for

without hearing their conversation he can tell that Luis is about to be sent home and the group will be completely disbanded. As Luis exits the tent, a guitar plays the same song of lament as in the previous scene of loss.

To mark chaos, the camera swings low and into the heart of the action, for example in the scene in which the bandits enter and demolish the boys' school. Close-ups of horses passing, feathers flying, objects being thrown from windows, and the slaughter of priests and boys are captured by this low angle to give the sensation that the viewer is in the midst of the chaos, also being attacked, as are the children. This perspective positions the audience at a vulnerable vantage point that draws them closer to understanding the experience of the child, terrified and in danger. There is much activity and the close and low camera angle suggests the impossibility of taking in the entire scene visually or mentally – it is overwhelming and incomprehensible (Freud; Caruth). The low swinging angles and quick transitions create a dizzying fragmented view of the frenzied activity, which replicates a survivor's fragmented recollections and understanding of the trauma he experienced.

A contrary angle is used for the aftermath of this attack. Once the bandits have moved on, the camera presents young Luis cautiously reentering his school's gate. He is seen from above and the camera rises even higher as he approaches the front door, suggesting how small and alone he feels, and what an overwhelming task this is for him. The camera then switches to the view from inside the building as he crosses the threshold. He enters the total darkness within, the only source of light is the sunlight that comes in through the door, once again visually suggesting the terror felt by the boy as he surveys the devastation.

Luis is not completely alone, however, for periodically throughout the film, he is shown looking at a photograph of his family. He happily describes them to the young bandits, and proclaims that they will probably come looking for him once they hear that the school has been overrun. His faith in his family reveals that he feels cared for and loved by them. When the boys are robbed, among the possessions taken are Luis' photographs. They later manage to recover them, however, and Luis is overjoyed. These scenes lay the foundation for the significance of the final scene in which the photograph of his family appears. Luis sits by the campfire with his new family, the young bandits, after the youngest member of their group has just been killed. The boys are struck with grief and swear vengeance, a vengeance that will now replace Luis' original goal of returning home. A reaction shot shows Luis shed a tear as he looks at the photograph of his family then, resigned to his new mission, he silently tosses it into the fire.

Unlike Luis, the leader of the young bandits never places anyone before the group. He appears dedicated to the boys, and reacts as if offended when Luis says he will be leaving them and heading home to his family. When Luis inquires about Miguel's family, he tells him that his father was a great bandit and they shot him, and that his mother is also dead.⁸⁶ As Miguel states this last piece of information, the camera cuts to the other boys quickly and knowingly turning to look at him, a reaction shot that suggests Miguel is lying about his mother's death. Later, the enemy El Tuco brags that he has had sexual relations with Miguel's mother at a brothel, and the audience can understand both Miguel's hatred for El Tuco and his embarrassed insistence that she is dead.

⁸⁶ The pride Miguel feels about his father being a bandit is in direct opposition to the disdain for bandits that Campobello expresses in her two narratives.

Reaction shots also reveal that most of the adults in the film disregard and underestimate children. The first example of the adults' lack of appreciation for the boys occurs when a military officer visits the school at the start of the film to advise the priests that rebels are in the area. The priest admonishes the officer, worried that the military is putting the children of the school in danger. The camera captures the wordless reaction of the officer, as he shows his lack of concern for the boys by spitting onto the ground, then riding off on his horse. Other adults show a limited estimation of the boys' capacities. For example, the first traveler the boys assault is incredulous that children are holding him at gunpoint. He warns them about the use of a firearm, telling them to be careful or it could go off accidentally. The officer whom the boys rob at the military camp has the same reaction of disbelief and warning. In both instances, however, the boys refuse to be talked down to, and they carry out their theft as planned.

The bandits of this film exhibit the behavior Campobello describes of "los malos" of the Revolution. In *Mis libros* she explains their unscrupulous nature, saying "A estos hombres no les importan los niños ni los jóvenes, simplemente los utilizan y explotan. Les roban su niñez, los engañan, y a la mayoría de ellos los convierten en satélites" (9). And this is precisely the type of informal apprenticeship we see in *Bandidos*. The boys are well versed in the behavior of outlaws because throughout the film they observe the adult bandits. Luis watches from a tree as they slice a uniformed man's ear off and hang him, and then watches as they destroy his school. A fade to black followed by the image of the school at night, then another fade to black followed by the image of the school again by daylight signify that Luis has witnessed the entire horrifying ordeal. When the young bandits enter the school, they repeat the actions of the adult bandits who have

preceded them, rooting through furniture, and carelessly tossing and throwing items out the window. The effect created as they use violent and vulgar speech, smoke cigars, and drink alcohol, is slightly comical for the obvious discord detected between this behavior and their young age.⁸⁷

The campfire is the main image that establishes routine and marks the passage of time in *Bandidos* (and functions as almost the visual equivalent of turning the page from one of Campobello's vignettes to the next). The boys, like adult cowboys, sit around the fire at night talking, eating, divvying up their "earnings," and occasionally listening to Luis read stories. These scenes fade to black and open upon a new day, which in turn ends with another campfire scene.

Toward the end of the film routine is marked again in a montage sequence that suggests more rapidly passing time. Images of the boys conducting heists are interspersed with them galloping away on horses, evading the military, and telegraph operators frantically sending messages, presumably signaling for help and reporting the boys' crimes. These images are set to exhilarating synthesizer music to convey the boys' burgeoning infamy.

Finally, the repetition of events, later with different, more fortuitous outcomes for the boys, indicates that with experience they are advancing toward becoming full-fledged, albeit juvenile, bandits. The repetitions can be seen as variations on a theme, in that a subject is introduced, but when it reappears the boys react differently, either on account of the knowledge they have since garnered, or their adapted dispositions. These

⁸⁷ A similar image is presented in *Cartucho*: "El muchacho nomás estaba tanteando, no se quitó ni un momento las cartucheras. Traía una pistola que le llegaba hasta las rodillas" (109). ("Sus cartucheras")

repetitions range from simple ones such as Luis not wanting to eat the game the boys have caught, and then later devouring such roasted animals; to bigger changes such as Luis being unwilling to rob, then later making thievery his way of life; and the boys trusting and therefore being robbed by a priest, then later mistrusting and robbing him. Even more monumental is the change that occurs in Luis regarding his willingness to take life. When he is faced with a situation in which he must fire his weapon to stop a soldier from escaping, he freezes. Later, however, after witnessing much loss of life, Luis must make a similar decision. A man approaches him, threateningly wielding a knife, and suspense builds as Luis looks hesitant and the audience recalls his prior unwillingness to kill. This time, however, as heroic music plays, he shoots and kills the man. The fact that Luis is still uncomfortable murdering is evidenced in a close psychological shot that shows him close his eyes as he fires, and then the camera returns to his perspective as the man is hit by his bullet. He backs away from the body when it lands at his feet. Nevertheless, these reprises show that the violence of the Revolution is changing the boys, forcing them to become hardened in order to survive.

Sounds, music, and language also reveal the toll that the Revolution takes on the boys. Ambient sounds serve to remind the audience of the rural atmosphere in which the boys operate; their speech confirms their admiration for the bandit lifestyle; while music accentuates moments of military action, conquest, and sadness.

The most common ambient sounds within the film are the crackle of the campfire in the foreground as animals, such as owls or wolves, are heard in the distance. This calls attention to the fact that the boys are in a wild environment full of many dangers, as well as their isolation and lack of adult supervision. The sounds of train whistles and engines

signify action and exhilaration, and are followed by robberies, either conducted by the adult or children bandits.

The children imitate not only the behavior, but also the language of the adult bandits. Vulgar words and threats, having penetrated their language, roll off their tongues as if memorized by rote (Linhard). As they further rummage through the remains of the school they speak of eating children stew and burning Luis alive, and the other boys laugh viciously as these comments are made. They introduce themselves to Luis as “the fiercest bandidos there are...well almost.” And the littlest boy reveals their goal as he proudly assures Luis that one day they will indeed be the worst. To the children, being bad means earning respect and fame. Miguel boasts that they have killed ten men, but the other boys later negate this claim. When we observe the adult bandits interact with the boys it becomes understandable why the children speak harsh, violent words. The adults do not show the boys any leniency for being children, rather they threaten the boys’ lives and actualize that threat when they kill Pablo.

The music of *Bandidos* consists mainly of military drums, acoustic guitar, and synthesizers. The drums establish the atmosphere of war, while other sequences accentuate or clarify the action presented. For example, quiet staccato music accompanies Luis when he tiptoes, a lighthearted guitar strum introduces the boys, and ominous synthesizer music sounds when the boys are in peril. A wordless version of Bob Dylan’s 1973 song “Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door,” originally written for the Western film *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid*, is the only song of the film, and it marks times of sorrow and loss. Its repetition reminds viewers of the sentiment expressed in *Las manos de mamá* that all men die in the Revolution: “Se iban a morir todos, todos, todos” (37).

All four of these Mexican narratives attempt to convey the trauma that the child narrative viewers experience during the Revolution, and all four do so by approximating the child's sense of wonder and curiosity upon observing small indications of the war that envelops them. In this regard the Spanish and International works approach the subject of trauma much in the same way, as Ana of *El espíritu de la colmena*, Ana of *Cría cuervos*, Adriana of *El sur*, Carlos of *El espinazo del diablo*, and Ofelia of *El laberinto del fauno* observe traces of military activity or legacy in, for example, footprints, firearms, and airplanes.

By personifying the trauma wound, explaining that the need to create and express the continued pain caused by the catastrophe is a “crying out” through that wound, Caruth develops the theories of the trauma-induced wound and memories that resurface involuntarily (2). In the horror and especially zombie genres, this crying out takes on particular significance, for as Brinks notes, the deceased yet vocal and active Santi in *El espinazo del diablo* is a literal example of this phenomenon (297). Indeed, the wound often appears to claim a voice of its own, and the repeated dreams, thoughts, and memories of the trauma that plague the survivor's existence can be said to “haunt” that survivor. As Tal succinctly states, “To be a survivor is to be bound to the dead” (229).

In Freud's investigation of the nightmares of veterans, he observes the persistence of war memories therein and states, “The impression they give is of being pursued by a malignant fate or possessed by some “daemonic power”” (Pleasure Principle, 292). He attributes trauma's continued disturbances and interruptions to its unresolved nature, and thus associates its inescapability with haunting (Whitehead, 131). Just as trauma, unable to be fully processed, is condemned to resurface and “haunt” one's memory, ghosts are

the return of repressed history.⁸⁸ On a national level, ghosts may be the manifestation of subaltern groups or “the traces of those who were not allowed to leave a trace and were excluded from the dominant narratives of the victors” (Derrida; Libanyi, 1-2). Within the narrative, they become the sign, the “empirical evidence,” that a haunting is taking place; they signal to society the need to investigate the historical site of an atrocity buried but not laid to rest (Avery Gordon, 8).⁸⁹

The awful elements of human suffering are recalled to modern consciousness lest anyone should forget the horrors that were endured, and these are recalled in terms that reflect their powerful influence on twentieth-century modes of articulation: irony, alienation, and dissociation. It is part of the duty of remembrance to retell these stories – and often in their own terms, which tend to demand the return of those hauntingly familiar tropes and images. Late twentieth-century remembrance, though, is also about telling or (re)imagining the unspoken stories – those concerning class identity, sexuality, masculinity. (Ouditt, 246)

The horror genre utilizes this notion to facilitate rethinking of social issues and give voice to the repressed throughout history. By resituating “haunting” social turmoil within exaggerated, fantastic, or highly representational settings, writers and authors present contemporary audiences with an opportunity to experience and reconsider

⁸⁸ While I am familiar with Derrida’s specters and Abraham and Torok’s phantoms, rather than interweave and debate these terms, for the purpose of this study I make every effort to maintain the use of the previously defined and more pertinent terms: haunting, inexpressible trauma, and founding trauma. Other suggested nomenclatures complicate unnecessarily my argument, which remains centered on the child narrative viewer’s perception of war and its aftermath, and the trauma it causes the witness.

⁸⁹ Abraham states, ‘Should a child have parents “with secrets,” ...the child will receive from them a gap in the unconscious, an unknown, unrecognized knowledge – a nescience.... The buried speech of the parent will be (a) dead (gap) without a burial place in the child. This unknown phantom returns from the unconscious to haunt its host and may lead to phobias, madness, and obsessions. Its effect can persist though several generations and determine the fate of an entire family line’ (Abraham, Nicolas. “A poetics of Psychoanalysis: The Lost Object – Me,” *Substance*, no. 43 (1984): 17n.1 Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok.)

Rashkin builds upon this psychological work and examines how phantoms can be concealed rhetorically and linguistically within literature in an interesting study that resembles this present investigation’s attention to point of view markers to establish the child narrative viewer’s perspective of war and its aftermath (Rashkin - Family).

atrocities of the past from a different perspective, and thus possibly understand them more fully (Caruth, 11). Director Wes Craven explains that horror films impel this socio-historical confrontation by showing the consequences of various forms of repression and dispelling popular myths, for example the superiority of one race over another, or the “glory” of going to war (141).

Horror is also a particularly appropriate genre for the representation of armed conflict, for not only do the two coincide in haunting trauma, danger, and violence, but they also both feature the transgression of the categories of life and death. Monsters and zombies of horror parallel the uncanny presence of dead strewn amongst the living, corpses on the battlefield, with fronts becoming “a place that dissolved the clear distinction between life and death” (Leed, 21). The war combatants’ behavior, too, can be considered monstrous, as it is completely alien to human behavior outside of a war environment.⁹⁰ Furthermore, Lindhard likens trauma, always present and yet not, and represented but not fully representable, to an in-between state, and here I think it useful to again consider Leed’s notion of liminality (178). Like the veteran who after the war finds himself an altered being unable to reintegrate into society, trauma haunts like a ghost between two worlds. The state of “in-between-ness” of trauma, the veteran, and the ghost, link all three as liminal, and one can see how trauma, war, and the horror genre are well suited for each other.

What Abraham and Rashkin would refer to as “phantoms” I address in the next chapter as Gothic mystery and secrecy.

⁹⁰ Tal notes, “The acts that soldiers commit in battle are comprehensible only in a world defined by war: the killing of human beings, the burning of homes, the defoliation of land” (239).

Chapter 3 continues the investigation of the child narrative viewer's point of view in the Spanish narratives of this study, *El espíritu de la colmena*, *Cría cuervos*, and *El sur*, works that are not only bound geographically, but also all bear noteworthy traces of the Gothic tradition. All three works are set during the dictatorship that followed the Spanish Civil War, when the regime's plan for healing involved declaring unity, forbidding the expression of dissent, and forcing the traumatized nation to simply look forward and leave their violent past behind.

Chapter 3: Spanish Narratives

In her article “Dr. Frankenstein Meets Dr. Freud,” Maggie Kilgour reminds readers that the Gothic tradition draws largely from the simple modern ideology that it is dangerous to bury things (40). In this chapter, dedicated to the scrutiny of the Spanish works of this study, I note that Spain’s post Civil War efforts to bury its past, by means of censorship and isolationism, caused an emergence of Gothic themes and devices within the Spanish postwar narrative.

In order to understand and appreciate fully this dark genre, one must “look behind the notion of the Gothic as a discourse on and of the familial subject of psychoanalysis and [...] see it as descriptive – in places, constitutive – of the subject as articulated by the sociopolitical discourse of the nation” (Schmitt, 158). For while it is true that Gothic fiction typically is born of estrangement, this estrangement may range from individual breakdowns in communication and divisions between social classes or generations, to societal prohibitions and fear of the foreign. In times of crisis and especially under threat of invasion, regionalism tends to swell, and divisions deepen as groups more strongly define themselves negatively, that is, by what or who they are not. Schmitt notes, for example, that while the Gothic novel dates from the 1760s, it rose to prominence in the years that followed the French Revolution as part of England’s ‘intense struggle [...] to distance all that was “English” from the French and their debacle’ (Schmitt, 13). Since its origins, the Gothic narrative has continued to surface in times of crisis or political insurrection (Mira, 139-140).

After the Civil War, Franco's Spain became nearly insular and exercised tight restrictions on travel, as well as on the types of information, products, and ideas that could enter and be dispersed throughout the country. In fact, Erice recalls that in Spain in the decades that followed the war there were "practically no foreigners" (Ehrlich Interview, 49). These regulations sought to protect the nation from what lay outside her borders and potentially could challenge Nationalist governance and doctrine, but Spain's insistence on self-sufficiency disaffiliated the Spanish citizens from the rest of the world. Spain's seclusion fostered a national stigmatization of the foreign "them," or Other, and the very material that the nation endeavored to reject and repress surfaced in symbolic form in the narrative "in a terrifying guise and demand[ed] recognition" (Brinks 292). Just as Isabel assures Ana in *El espíritu de la colmena* that the spirit of the beehive assumes many forms, so too, the Gothic Other has many guises. In fact:

Remarkable for the provocative way in which it deploys apparent fixities (of gender, class, nation) in the service of instability and collapse, the Gothic defines itself as that genre in which definition is in doubt. "What am I?" it asks, echoing the implicit question of its own enigmatic monstrosities, its Montonis, Frankenstein's creatures, Heathcliffs, and Draculas. (Schmitt, 3)

With this knowledge, the self-identification of "Soy Ana" with which Ana beckons the spirit becomes all the more meaningful, for in order to see what she is not, the child must first attempt to understand what she *is*. Throughout the film, Ana relentlessly seeks her unique identity despite being raised in a family environment that does not encourage her individuality. The shadows and silence that envelop her home establish a Gothic atmosphere rich with secrets and things unsaid, and the spirit that lures her into the night and risks her safety, encapsulates the tantalizing, dangerous Other. Higginbotham notes that the careful editing that intersperses scenes of daily life in the home with scenes from

Doctor Frankenstein suggests the true horror that was life under Franco's dictatorship, and that the monster itself is a metaphor for the disfigured Spanish nation (1998, 27; and Higginbotham, 119). Similar stifling oppression dominates the home environments of Ana in *Cría cuervos* and of Adriana in *El sur*.⁹¹ These girls, too, lurk in the gloom of their dysfunctional families, captivated by a mysterious force that calls them to act, to avenge and seek recompense, or to clear away the secrets that cloud their home.

When Ana discovers the footprint by the abandoned house, her curious scrutiny reveals that she does not yet know exactly what she is seeking, but the sound of her voice calling, then reverberating through the well 'creates an expectant mode in which viewers become alert to the possible presence of an "other," whose voice may also echo in these spaces along with the constant roar of the wind' (Higginbotham 1998, 19). The final scene presents Ana at her bedroom window once again with the words "Soy Ana" running through her head, a summoning that also may be seen as a Gothic convention, a return to the beginning or a revisit of an event that commenced the narrative's plot. Such returns in Gothic narratives often allude to the continuance or the emergence of yet another Other, in this instance it is Ana who proceeds, determined to know her true self and befriend the spirit (Schmitt, 156).

Similarly, Del Toro uses the Gothic in the international work *El espinazo del diablo* to explore disavowed psychological states and "interrogate what Spain psychologically and ideologically represses about the Civil War and its ongoing legacy"

⁹¹ Higginbotham notes that in *El sur*, Adriana's journey of self-discovery resembles that of Ana's in *El espíritu de la colmena*, but the former reveals "a more detailed and complicated father-daughter relationship gaining some Freudian dimensions" (Higginbotham 1998, 41).

(Brinks, 293).⁹² The unexploded bomb looming in the courtyard is reminiscent of the helmet in *The Castle of Otranto* (1759, perhaps the first Gothic narrative) and the dangerous legacy the passing generation has left for its progeny. In this film the mysterious Other that draws out Carlos, the protagonist, is the dead child, Santi. Del Toro twists the Gothic, however, as the more dangerous threat and blackest soul turns out to be not the horrifying monster, but the most handsome human character of the film. Upon discovering this, Carlos rallies the boys against Jacinto and strikes an alliance with the dead child, like the one Ana seeks with the spirit of the beehive.

Santi and the monster in *El espíritu de la colmena* are terrifying creatures that nevertheless form relationships with their small, fragile observers. Linda Williams' theory of the relationship between the female horror movie figure and the monster is relevant to these works for she notes that while frightening at first, the horror monster connects with its female observer through their shared bond of Otherness. The female observer, or in the case of the works of this study the child observer, empathizes with the creature she detects as one who occupies a similar outcast position within patriarchal society (Williams – "When Women Look"; Martin-Márquez, 222). Oftentimes the woman of the horror film is victimized when she acts upon her desire to see and know this strange entity, for when we recall that the Other may be whatever is repressed within society, including buried trauma and censored dissidence, through this contact she is essentially delving into the forbidden and must be punished. Ana and Carlos both face danger as a result of their interaction with these dejected creatures that hold keys to the

⁹² Brinks details three types of the Gothic in *El espinazo del diablo*: the Gothic of dispossession, the Gothic of the uncanny, and the Gothic of unintelligibility (293-294).

mysteries that surround them, but their unearthing missions are necessary for understanding their present, and for their ultimate well-being and continued development.

What unites these Gothic works with the Mexican and international narratives of this investigation is that at their center, they mark a nation's efforts to move forward from the trauma of war. The mysterious and lugubrious shadows of their homes mask the pain of a nation that is newly filled with ghosts of loved ones – ghosts that as Avery Gordon notes signify the need to address a buried trauma – and the collective inability to address the trauma that caused it. I will now detail how these child narrative viewers' perspectives are constructed, and explain how even the small fragmentary accounts they describe represent the larger conflicts they live and what lies beneath them.

EL ESPÍRITU DE LA COLMENA

Víctor Erice's 1973 film *El espíritu de la colmena*, draws its name from Maurice Maeterlinck's 1901 publication, *The Life of the Bee*.⁹³ In this observational study, Belgian poet, playwright, and essayist Maeterlinck details the almost-mechanical activities of bees in their natural state and points to an "invisible enigmatic and paradoxical force that seems to shape the beehive's life" (Mira, 141). By boldly referencing this mysterious and often dangerous or destructive apiarian force to which all bees submit, Erice criticizes the vapid quality of life amidst sociopolitical repression that characterized Franco's Spain in the years that followed the Civil War. He continues his titular suggestion visibly and audibly throughout the film by means of the home's amber-colored hexagonal windowpanes resembling a honeycomb, and the drone of buzzing bees that accompanies images of the family members at work. But while the film offers "an

indictment of the francoist rule by showing its devastating effects, [it] does not enter a Manichean argument about the past. Rather, by relating the film to a historical circumstance, Erice is urging his counterparts to go beyond that past” (Mira, 141). Appropriately, Erice conveys the importance of considering the country’s future by setting Ana as the film’s narrative viewer, a wide-eyed 5-year-old girl who neither comprehends the motives for the war (but must live with its effects), nor has a clear understanding of who Franco is, but who does understand that some things aren’t to be talked about (Ehrlich - Objects, 12).

The main argument of the film begins with Ana’s unsettled reception of James Whale’s film *Doctor Frankenstein* (1931). She watches mesmerized with her older sister Isabel in the darkness of the town hall and, unable to contain her troubled curiosity, begins questioning during the presentation. “Why did he kill her?” Ana demands. At this precise moment, within the film there is a call for silence, one of *El espíritu de la colmena*’s many intelligent interweavings of the inner film and the wider narrative context in which it is viewed. Here, the onscreen call for silence within *Doctor Frankenstein* seems to respond to Ana’s inquisition about the movie monster’s actions, and alludes to the timely postwar lesson of leaving some matters — especially those dealing with people who recently have been killed — un-discussed.

Later in the privacy of their bedroom, Isabel explains to Ana that while everything in the movies is a lie, there is indeed a spirit that takes the form of many things, and if it befriends you, it will heed your call. Determined to encounter this mysterious spirit, Ana embarks upon frequent ventures away from the oppression of her home to the abandoned

⁹³ First mentioned by name in Maeterlinck’s work at the start of chapter 2, “The Swarm.”

farmhouse Isabel has indicated as an ideal place to find it. It is this “sudden confrontation between the objective narration of the conditions of life in postwar Spain and the subjective narration of a child who wants to enlarge her World” that best encapsulates the plot of *El espíritu de la colmena* (Higginbotham 1998, 17). During one such exploratory venture, Ana discovers an injured Republican fugitive and associates him with the spirit she has been seeking. She strikes a friendship with him, and when she discovers he has been killed she runs away from home, convinced that her father was his murderer. Eventually they find her, exhausted and traumatized, and the doctor assures her family that, because she is young and resilient, she will recover... and forget. But the final scene shows the bedridden Ana once again rising to seek her spirit – peering into the night sky, summoning fulfillment and freedom from oppression.

Following the opening credits, which roll against a series of children’s drawings, text indicates that the narrative unfolds “Once upon a time, somewhere on the Castillian plain around 1940,” a setting that links the film to the fairy tale genre while also paying homage to Spain’s literary Quixotic tradition (Latorre, 30). Viewers follow a truck along a dry road through a green-brown plain to Hoyuelos, a quiet village that appears to have been left in the past. Bare trees mimic the Falangist symbol of the yoke and gathered arrows that is prominently painted on a building at the entrance to town, silently suggesting that everything here, even nature, is now governed by Nationalist ideology.⁹⁴ Juxtaposed against the new generation of eager youngsters who squeal as the truck

⁹⁴ This overt symbol of political dominance is the only one that survived the film’s editing but, as Erice and Fernández-Santos have disclosed, at the start of the film the original script called for “una serie de escenarios del pueblo, en primer lugar una colmena cerrada y, a continuación, entre otros, planos de muros

arrives, for they know it brings the latest movie to be screened in the community center, a town crier announces its arrival in a “ritual that has not changed for centuries” (Edwards, 134). Other temporal markers that confirm the placement of *El espíritu de la colmena* in the postwar years include the soldier in Nationalist uniform on the train, the use of bicycles and the horse-drawn cart to suggest the petrol shortage, and the photographs marked “1929” of Teresa as a teenaged girl (Russell, 19; and Higginbotham 1998, 21). Canby notes that even the composition of the film-viewing audience reminds us that the nation has just suffered a population-depleting war, for it is comprised almost entirely of old women and children (81). While nebulous dissolves transition between disjointed scenes and create the film’s sense of “respiration,” they also cloud efforts to calculate how many days pass between the arrival of the lorry and Ana’s final beckoning of the spirit (Erice - Ehrlich Interview, 41).⁹⁵ The fact that the weather does not change dramatically throughout, however, suggests that the action transpires within a matter of days or weeks in the same season, most likely autumn.

When *El espíritu de la colmena* debuted in 1973, it met with mixed reviews even nationally. Among the harshest criticism accused the film of being “una nadería de media hora de duración que ha sido alargada sin sentido” with a torturously slow pace, superfluous actors, and a script that is just generally lacking in self-propulsion (Palacio, 208).⁹⁶ But despite the film’s paucity of action, critics have lauded its richness of lyric

en ruinas, piezas de artillería, una trinchera abandonada, botas militares, una fosa común [...]” (Erice y Fernández-Santos 1976, reprinted in Pena, 49).

⁹⁵ Numerous double exposure scene transitions also contribute to this sensation, as one image seems to slip into the next one like breath.

⁹⁶ On page 210 Palacio cites Blanco y Negro, 6.X.1973 and claims that the majority of negative reviews of *El espíritu de la colmena* came from Cataluña.

imagery that restores to film “a visual legacy which is so often lost in cinema” (Higginbotham 1998, 34). These images are snapshots of daily life that leave imprints in the viewers’ minds, and do not merely entertain, but also engage their imaginations (Ehrlich - Objects, 13). Erice explains them as “moments difficult to describe, belonging to those primordial stories we hold in our memories, in which often the silhouette of the child and of the adolescent we once were are present” (Erice – Can you See, 55). Examples of these images include Teresa writing letters and Fernando working at his desk, the latter, Pena observes, calls to mind Vermeer’s paintings “The Astronomer” (1668) and “The Geographer” (1668-1669) (71).

Indeed, before filming began, Erice presented copies of paintings by Vermeer and Rembrandt to his cameraman, Luis Cuadrado, to illustrate the visual effect he wished to create (Edwards, 162). They then modeled scenery design and various camera angles on these paintings, and worked to approximate their color palette.⁹⁷ The result is that Ana’s home, their human beehive, takes on an almost medieval darkness of melancholic honey yellows folding into shameful shrouding of rich browns and black, a darkness in which – according to Maeterlinck – bees prefer to work. The chiaroscuro colors and lighting successfully allow the mundane to transcend beneath a dulled brightness that mimics the characters’ muffled passions and relationships (Saborit, 101; Molina Foix, 109). In addition, within this somber house the angular symmetry of the numerous doorways

⁹⁷ In *The Spirit of the Beehive = El Espíritu De La Colmena* (1998), Higginbotham notes several possible artistic inspirations for imagery within *El espíritu de la colmena*, including Rembrandt’s “De anatomische les van dr Deyman te Amsterdam” (1656) for the cadáver scene, and Dalí’s “Visage of War” as a possible inspiration for the beehive imagery (32-33).

resemble a labyrinth, notes Llinas, and as I will explain in the next chapter, this structure often represents an interior journey to the center of oneself (124).

The film foregoes traditional establishing shots that would allow the audience to situate the scenes, which contributes to the feeling of alienation and leaves the audience as lost and disoriented as Ana (Mira, 142; Paul Julian Smith - Introduction). In interior shots, too, and especially notable in the breakfast scene, Erice takes great pains to separate the characters visually, presenting a series of disjointed close-ups that suggests the emotional distance between them, and the emptiness of life in the postwar era (Zunzunegui, 69).⁹⁸ The family members are introduced separately, each in a different section of their metaphorical hive, notes Smith, and “not once in the film’s ninety-nine minutes do they share the same frame” (Introduction). Often, even after the characters exit the screen, the camera lingers on the inaction of the environment.

Erice explains that the film’s spatially and emotionally desolate atmosphere attempts to convey the “inherent vacuum” that was, for his generation, postwar Spain. He says that many of the adults who survived had suffered a type of personal death within or had become self-centered, “radically deprived of their most elemental means of expression. Having finished with what they considered to be a nightmare, many returned to their homes, had children, but something remained ingrained in them, something deeply mutilated that reveals an absence” (Erice and Fernández Santos - *El espíritu de la colmena*, 144; Arata, 99). Thus, Ana’s family environment exemplifies the emptiness that characterized the years that followed Spain’s winner-less war (Edwards, 19).

⁹⁸ See Lomillos (124-125) and Pena (54) for a detailed spatial assessment of the breakfast scene.

To help us through this difficult period, says Erice, we “real and symbolic orphans” were adopted by the cinema (Erlich – Objects, 6). Austere and often makeshift movie theatres became a place for Spanish children to seek refuge, to dream of different lands, and to forget their war-torn surroundings (Erlich – Objects, 6). Moviegoing also became a way for isolated Spaniards to foster a sense of connection to the rest of the world, if only through the limited films that the censors approved. Just as young Erice sat in the theatre mesmerized by his first film (William Neill’s *The Scarlet Claw* with Sherlock Holmes), so sits wide-eyed Ana watching *Doctor Frankenstein* (Pena, 67; Latorre, 132).

The film makes a tremendous impression on young Ana, and on the way home from the screening she and Isabel run giggling and screaming that the monster is coming. The film’s impact upon her also is marked visually each time she encounters the monster by the repetition of a bluish light that resembles the glow of the film projector (Arocena 1996, 117). Soon, as both children attempt to befriend a dangerous force, a parallel structure is established between Ana and the little girl of *Doctor Frankenstein*. The film initiates Ana, the narrative draws her in, and by virtue of the active imagination she has gained from her contact with cinema, by the bluish light of the moon she beckons and encounters the spirit (Cerrato, 74). The same cool light illuminates the final scene in which Ana once again rises to the open window to request the spirit’s presence, silently recalling her sister’s instructions to identify herself: “Soy Ana.”

The fact that Ana’s self-identifying invocation is pronounced by the voice of her sister implies that her formulation of identity is largely constructed by others, notes Xon de Ros, but Ana’s quest for the spirit does become a quest for self (35). She reveals her

curiosity as she investigates a large footprint that could be from the monster, then literally finds her voice to call down the well that stands beside the abandoned house. Not only does her echoed voice ring of the possibility of the presence of an Other, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, but it also shows the presence of self. Like a baby peering into a mirror recognizing its reflection for the first time, here Ana (like Ofelia and the mirror in *El laberinto del fauno* as I explain in the next chapter) is formulating an idea of who she is, differentiating herself from the world around her. Although she is certainly past the stage of development in which a child visually recognizes self, it is indeed appropriate that in this repressive postwar environment in which women were denied a voice,⁹⁹ Ana is only now beginning to hear herself. So, too, it is noteworthy that the well, a device for accessing the traditionally feminine symbol of water, is remotely located and – although functional – appears to have fallen into disuse in this patriarchal postwar period. While the water is out of reach to Ana, by hearing her voice echo off the walls she awakens to feminine consciousness and gets closer to knowing her self. Furthermore, the fact that throughout the film the girls refer to this location as simply “the well,” rather than “the abandoned house” or “the house with the well” stresses the importance of this particular attraction to them.

Atop the girls’ dresser sits a small wood-framed mirror. It is crafted to resemble a miniature piece of furniture with an adjustable-view mirror affixed to the top portion. After antagonizing the cat and consequently sustaining an injury, Isabel peers into this mirror to paint her lips with the blood that trickles from her wounded finger. The camera

⁹⁹ This denial of female voice is exemplified again when Teresa casts her written and addressed letter into the fireplace.

cuts to a side view of Isabel seated on the bed, and from this perspective the mirror plainly reminds the audience of Ana's well. Isabel, the budding femme fatale, carries out her version of the self-recognition act as she performs a feminine ritual of painting her face with makeup. The chirping birds, floral bedspread, and headboard painted with vines create a sylvan space around Isabel, as she eases into the role of temptress in the Garden of Eden or trickster in a fairy tale.

Earlier in the film, Fernando takes the girls mushroom hunting in a green wooded area, the topographical opposite of the dry, windswept plains that we have seen up until this point. In this scene, too, there are both religious and fairy tale traces. Uplifting flute and harp music plays as they walk through this seemingly small enchanted forest, eyes scouring the ground, and Fernando outlines the differences between good and bad, edible and poisonous, mushrooms. There is a clear dichotomy and, he explains, there is no margin for error. He tells the girls that he has never picked a bad mushroom by mistake, because he always adheres to his grandfather's advice not to pick it if in doubt. He then indicates a fog-enshrouded mountain in the distance and calls it the garden of mushrooms, where the best mushrooms grow, which gives this location an almost fairy-tale mystique. Fernando spies and – in a dramatic close-up – stamps out a toxic mushroom, calling it a real devil and essentially casting it out of the garden. This action supports his previous words of caution, advocating obedience and intolerance for evil or questionable entities (Cerrato, 93). His words, of course, ring of deeper political meaning regarding the Nationalists' stamping out of subversive thought. Later, when Ana is alone and reaches for a mushroom that could be poisonous, the scene cuts to a close-up of fire, suggesting both the danger at her fingertips and the recklessness of her action; she is

knowingly courting disaster. But she has seen and learned too much to integrate passively into society, and like the female of the horror film she feels a connection with the outcast monster, and thus she chooses rebellion (Arocena, 72; Williams – “When Women Look”). In the original version of the script, the mysterious bond between Ana and the monster is visually solidified by her presenting him with the mushroom she picks (Latorre, 103). This scene has been interpreted as her final initiation into the spirit, for by the water’s edge the blue moonlight washes over Ana and she sees her reflection (as before in the well water), but now at last she also sees the monster and may be born again (Ashworth, 68; Savater, 89).

Another important visual cue throughout the film is smoke. It emerges from the passing train (but never from the chimney of the family home) and from Fernando’s tea, and Castrillón suggests that it indicates a point of ignition or of desire that marks Teresa’s longing and conversely Fernando’s inability to consume it without allowing it to cool (62-63). I propose that there is yet another possible meaning. In the community center as the film begins, we see a close-up of an older gentleman lighting a cigarette, the presenter within the film warns not to take what they about to see too seriously, and then the image cuts to the image of a masked head. This is the first time the audience sees the beehive, and Fernando, clothed in his beekeeper’s suit, is dispensing smoke into it, an act that stuns the bees so that they become passive and may be manipulated without risk of the beekeeper being stung. The bees are numerous, but as the smoke falls over them they yield to Fernando’s wishes. The next time we see the girls, they are seated in the darkness in the movie audience with the light from the projector overhead, highlighting the smoke that hangs in the air around them, reminiscent of Fernando’s stupefied,

biddable bees. The smoke in each of these scenes suggests the townsfolk of Hoyuelos, and people of Spain, like the bees, are kept subdued and tractable by the government's vigilance and clouds of secrecy and repression. It is in the air; it surrounds them. It then appears all the more significant that when next we see Fernando, he removes his beekeeper's mask and immediately lights a cigarette.

From the moment the presenter of *Doctor Frankenstein* introduces the movie and the image then cuts to Fernando, looking abnormally large in his beekeeper's suit, Fernando and the monster are strangely linked. Throughout the film this eerie connection is maintained, for example when Isabel explains the spirit to Ana and a clomping sound is heard somewhere in the house. The girls hush and lie listening. The camera cuts to Fernando, pacing around his study, his footfalls interrupting the quiet of the home, but Ana's pause suggests that she believes what her sister has told her and wonders if the clomping announces the coming of the spirit. By her hesitation, once again the film subtly alludes to Fernando's monstrosity, but moreover, it reveals Ana's credulous nature.

Ana's continual journeys to the well to look for the spirit confirm her belief in the creature Isabel described. Not the sound, but the image of a foot is what next captivates Ana, for by the well she discovers a large footprint and marvels over its size. She studies the impression and inserts her own small foot into the mark, then raises her head to look around to see if the creature that left this print might still be in the vicinity. The sequence of shoe-related scenes therefore aligns the monster, Fernando, and the fascinated young observer who places her foot inside the track, with the dissenting fugitive who left this footprint and then later fits perfectly in Fernando's "borrowed" shoes. Isabel secretly

follows Ana on her next excursion, and observes Ana attempting to calculate the height of the creature that must have made that footprint. Other similar demonstrations of Ana's curiosity are seen throughout the film, for example when she – as inquisitive scientifically as Fernando – observes the bees in her father's study and taps on their mesh tube.

Taking advantage of her sister's belief in the spirit, Isabel plays a trick on Ana and stages a scene to lead Ana to believe the monster entered their home and killed her. She breaks a flowerpot, sets the rocking chair in motion, leaves the door to the patio ajar, screams, and then drops to the floor and holds her breath. Ana's first reaction is to jostle her sister and tell her to knock it off, revealing that she may be accustomed to Isabel's lighthearted pranks. But already having completely imbibed the idea of the monster's existence, she becomes alarmed when Isabel is persistent in her stillness. Their dog begins to bark, drawing Ana's attention to the open door, both signs perhaps suggestive of an intruder's presence. Ana seems baffled by her sister's motionlessness, but does not appear to consider death as a possibility (probably because she does not yet know what that state entails), because she continues talking to Isabel, shuts the door, and tells her sister "He's gone" thinking this will cause her to be well again. Ana leaves the room, closing the door behind her, but both mistrust of her sister and hopefulness that she will revive seem to motivate Ana's swift reentry as if to catch Isabel off guard and in motion. Unsuccessful, she seeks help, but soon returns alone to where her sister had lain. Isabel now hides from Ana, however, and sneaks up behind her wearing oversized gloves to terrify her poor sister. The playful malevolence of Isabel's pleased-with-herself laughter

is juxtaposed against Ana's scream and then stunned silence, eyes filling with tears. She had truly believed something was wrong.

As time passes, even though it began as Isabel's story, Ana's intensely creative gullibility "allows her to go beyond her sister's more knowing make-believe," and she lays claim to the spirit (Xon de Ros, 36). She listens wide-eyed when Isabel first describes its disguises and how to befriend it, and is fascinated when the two journey together to the well. Soon, however, Ana begins to embark on these excursions alone, at all hours of the day, and with great frequency. On one occasion in which their mother had been looking for Ana, Isabel covers for her, saying Ana stayed late at school. But she wants to know where Ana really was, and asks specifically about the well, and Ana acknowledges that, yes, that is where she had gone. But after Isabel scares her, cruelly abusing Ana's belief, the divide grows between the sisters, and Ana no longer feels compelled to respond when Isabel demands to know her whereabouts. A reaction shot that reveals Ana's separation from her sister is seen when Ana returns from a night excursion, and slips back into bed just in time to rise for school. Ana responds to Isabel's questioning by silently rolling over, turning her back to her sister. The girls have gone different routes.

As Ana drifts apart from her sister, she begins to bond with the fugitive. She sneaks outside one moonlit night in her nightgown and cape and wanders the town. We see a close-up of Ana's face looking toward the sky and then closing her eyes, which seems to imply a cause-effect relationship between Ana's longing for the spirit and the next image, an approaching train. The first perspective of this scene is from one who is on the train, and then it cuts to show an injured man jumping from it. Allowing the

camera to assume his perspective momentarily indicates his importance within the film, and the camera then follows him as he heads toward the abandoned house by the well, his temporary home. As this image fades, the image of Ana likewise arriving at her home becomes visible, with Ana's bed at the right of the frame, the position that the fugitive occupied in the previous shot. Ana climbs into bed, refuses to answer Isabel's inquiries, and goes back to sleep. The final image is a close-up of her face resting against her pillow, and the haunting sound of wind blowing accompanies the image transition back to a similar close-up of the sleeping fugitive's face. It is a new day and Ana has just discovered his presence in her special hideaway.¹⁰⁰ They soon develop a friendship, and she visits and brings the fugitive food from around her house and her father's clothing, until the horrifying day one of these items winds up back in their house and she realizes something has happened to him.¹⁰¹

Fernando is nonplussed when he is called to identify the body of a man they discovered in the abandoned house by the well. But although he does not recognize the deceased, he learns that this fugitive was in possession of several of his personal items, including his pocket watch. There are many differing interpretations of the meaning

¹⁰⁰ Ana meets the fugitive down the barrel of his gun when he reflexively aims at the figure entering the doorway to his hideout. This is presumably her first encounter with a war combatant, but thinking she has found her spirit, she is thrilled and immediately offers him an apple from her school bag. Revealing both her good-hearted nature and limited skill set, Ana notices his wounded leg but directs her efforts to tying his shoe, her seriousness and concentration suggesting this skill is newly acquired. This is a good example of how Erice captures the child's limited cognition, as Ana acts upon only what she has processed: Untied shoes is a problem she knows how to solve.

¹⁰¹ Her first gift to him is an apple from her school bag, and the seriousness with which she hands it to him resembles a doctor making a house call. He accepts her gift, and she smiles and henceforth continues to visit and bring him supplies, including her father's coat, in the pocket of which is his pocket watch. While logical, of course, that since her father raises bees she bring him honey, it is still interesting to note, for although welcomed by Ana with its honey, once he is discovered by law enforcement agents he is rejected from the hive.

behind what transpires next, and while I agree with Higginbotham that Fernando at first has no idea how his watch came to be in this stranger's hands, I believe the fragmentary filming of the breakfast scene is meant to convey that this man of science is conducting a test to determine just that (Higginbotham 1998, 26; Pena, 105). The isolated frames of each family member at the breakfast table have been said to replicate bees in their individual parts of a honeycomb, and to signify the family's separation (Lomillos, 125; Pena, 54). I suggest that they also reveal Fernando's thought process as he views his wife and children as three individual suspects convened before him, each with equal possibility of being the connection to the fugitive. He hypothesizes that one of these family members must hold the clue to this mystery, so he notes the behavior of each, and as he opens his watch his gaze – and the camera – methodically shifts from one to another, watching for any change that would reveal the individual's guilt. Teresa makes no note of the reappearance of the watch, nor does Isabel. Ana freezes and locks eyes with her father when she hears its music play, and the test concludes; Fernando has found the culprit. The image of Fernando's reaction, sitting pensively with a cigarette and reflecting upon his discovery, is double exposed with Ana's, running immediately to the well. She is cognizant that something may have happened to her friend, but when she does not find him in the abandoned house she is puzzled. The fact that she even peers into the well to look for him may serve as evidence that she believed the fugitive to be not only her friend, but also the spirit she had been seeking.

The wind blowing steadily across the Castilian plain is the most prominent and pervasive sound in *El espíritu de la colmena*. It emphasizes the remoteness and isolation of the village, and suggests the desolation of the postwar lives of the people who live

there. This intense sound couples with frequent long shots of the wide, open countryside to make the residents look miniscule and helpless in this vast space (Llinás, 125). The near omnipresence of the wind also calls attention to the fact that there are few other sounds heard consistently throughout the film. Erice explains that since they strove to maintain such quiet on the set for the duration of the filming, the girls assumed it was because even the slightest noise could wake the monster (Erice - 31 Años; Monleón, 86). In a way the children were right, for the silence of the film – its distinct lack of dialogue – indeed replicates the silencing effect that Franco’s censorship had upon the Spanish nation and the people’s fear of imminent death or imprisonment if they were to speak freely (Higginbotham 1998, 38). Mira agrees,

Together with the presence of the silent cinematic monster, so unlike its literary original, the conventions that *Spirit of the Beehive* re-appropriates from silent cinema make of silence a central theme which should be read in terms of the historical context of Franco’s dictatorship. (144)

The few sounds other than wind that are heard are carefully selected and often positioned to compel the audience to seek the source with their minds, as Monleón says, to “audiosee” them (85). Xon de Ros agrees, noting that the “buzzing of the bees, the howling of the wind, the reverberating footsteps have acquired in the film the same expressive capacity as framing, lighting or acting, going beyond their directly figurative function” (35). The sounds within the film are therefore similar to the primordial images Erice uses visually throughout, basic and familiar like a bicycle bell or a train whistle, so that the audience may instantly be able to conjure a mental image of the source of that sound. The sounds often occur off screen, as well, to seemingly extend the field of vision even beyond what may be captured by the camera (Mira, 144). The most notable are the

buzzing of bees and the ticking of Fernando's watch that, at one point overlain with a quote from Maeterlinck likening the hive's activity to the movement of watch parts, imply the perfunctory nature of both the bees and of the townsfolk's behavior.

In addition to the whipping wind and sounds that allow the audience to "audiosee," the silence of Hoyuelos is often broken by music. It first plays during the rolling of the credits, accompanying the images of the children's drawings that open the narrative. The well-known Spanish composer Luis de Pablo wrote and arranged this and several other pieces throughout the film, and in it one may detect the melding of his classical background with contemporary influence (Higginbotham 1998, 35). Along with the film's clouded presentation of time and hazy double-exposed transitions between the scenes that establish the almost breath-like atmosphere of the town, the most prominent instrument of the film's music is, appropriately, a woodwind, the flute. The piece that plays as the credits roll and the truck approaches town, is ethereal, dreamlike and eerie. When heard in conjunction with the fairy tale-like visual framing of the film, the effect is that Hoyuelos appears a far away land, removed from the real world, a reference no doubt to Spain's isolation from the rest of the world throughout Franco's dictatorship. Indeed, Erice explains that to him music is not a way to underline images, rather its function is to discreetly and delicately suggest "some sentiment to the scene, some new element" that enables the audience to digest something indigestible (Erice - Ehrlich Interview, 40). Light-hearted flute and guitar music accompanies the girls' filing into the schoolhouse,

and uplifting sylvan-sounding flute and harp music plays as the girls look for mushrooms with their father.¹⁰²

A familiar children's song weaves its way through the film whenever Isabel and Ana, and later Ana by herself, journey to the well. The song, entitled "Vamos a contar mentiras," has for the film been reworked into an instrumental version, but is nonetheless plainly recognizable, and suggests the dubiousness of Isabel's explanation of the spirit (Arocena 1996, 131; 171-172).¹⁰³ This song typically yields to the rush of the wind and suspenseful electronic sounds as Ana circles the well or enters the house. Arocena identifies this ominous electronic musical theme as the one that marks the "invocation" scenes, for it plays as at the well, when Isabel jumps through the bonfire with her friends, when Ana creeps out into the night, and finally when she encounters the spirit (Arocena 1996, 131). In this latter scene forest animal sounds mix with the electronic notes, and then a chorus of female vocals sings, their plaintive wail seeming to echo "Ana's effort to find some human contact outside her small world" (Higginbotham 1998, 36). Likewise, in *El laberinto del fauno*, a chorus of voices rises as Ofelia approaches the labyrinth to reunite with her underworld and find, in essence, the center of herself. The voices rise at these moments to mark the end of the girls' journeys, both physical and spiritual.

CRÍA CUERVOS

Three years after the release of Erice's *El espíritu de la colmena*, Ana Torrent held the leading role as child narrative viewer in Carlos Saura's *Cría cuervos*. In this

¹⁰² For a detailed explanation of the film's music, see Higginbotham 1998.

¹⁰³ Many critics interpret Teresa's distant demeanor with Fernando and her mysterious letters as evidence that she at one time maintained a lover, which if correct, would mean that Isabel is not the only duplicitous character of the film to which the song may apply.

film, too, Ana resides in an atmosphere of Spanish postwar silence and repression that reek of buried trauma, but this argument unfolds towards the end of Franco's dictatorship, and the deaths that Ana encounters affect her in a much more personal way.

Darkness and shadows within the home illustrate the climate of dubious behavior, Gothic secrecy, and ignorance that pervades Ana's household and postwar nation. As the rest of her family slumbers upstairs in the dark, Ana stands outside her father's bedroom listening to his final gasps, and the lamplight that pours out from the partially open door signifies that she is aware of his adultery. When the light hits her expressionless face, she retreats into the shadows so as not to be seen. It is not until the next scene, however – that I will discuss momentarily – that the audience learns that Ana's motivation is a desire for her presumed involvement in her father's death to go undetected. For now it may be understood as a literal illumination that signifies a mental one, harsh reality falling upon someone who should not be in this traumatic situation – awake, downstairs, and witness to her father's lechery and death.

Another traumatic event that Ana has endured are her parents' verbal fights. Their direct impact upon the young Ana is made plain by her physical, albeit implausible, insertion into an altercation regarding Anselmo's neglect of María and their poor communication. The scene begins with Ana climbing the stairs for bed, but as her father returns home to find María waiting for him, Ana stops to hear their conversation. Next, Ana is standing immediately between her frustrated father and distraught mother as they continue to quarrel, watching blankly but remaining unseen by the adults who are oblivious to the fact that they are psychologically scarring her. This visual insertion signifies not that Ana was actually standing between her parents as they fought, but that

that is how she perceives the fight (and thus how the camera, aligned with her perspective, presents the scene) – as a situation from which she cannot extricate herself – her parents’ cutting words take center stage, as if nothing else were there. The second function of her insertion is to create a spectator within the fictional space who “provides a position of coherent reading for the real spectator, but whose destiny within the film’s action is to practice a way of seeing that puts those received forms of cultural representation into question” (D’Lugo – *The Films of Carlos Saura*, 7-8).

Outside the home, in the natural light of the sun, a scene in which Ana is playing and looks up to watch her imagined self preparing to jump off the top of a building further conveys her psychological state. A close-up shows Ana purposefully blinking and then the camera assumes the point of view of the imagined Ana as she jumps and floats in the air, viewing her real self on the ground, the treetops, and cityscape. Rather than plummeting, the camera sways weightlessly to suggest her state of drifting on the air. This scene not only demonstrates Ana’s lively imagination, but also her ability to disconnect from herself, disassociating for the sake of self-preservation and of seeking an escape from her oppressive home. As Ana watches from the ground her face is fixed and expressionless; this same blunted emotional responsiveness appears as she witnesses her father’s death, and countless other times throughout the film. Hopewell describes Ana’s blank gaze as a passive defense against inquisition, and studies of post traumatic stress disorder have documented similar responses in patients suffering survivor guilt, struggling to reformulate and understand their trauma, and attempting to regain a sense of self (Hopewell, 139; and Wilson, Smith, and Johnson, 146).

In sound films, camera angles enhance the narrative by visually presenting objects, distances, movements, and reactions to complement the film's dialogue. This visual technique becomes even more valuable when there is threat of censorship, as in the case of many Spanish narratives of the postwar era. Filmmakers like Saura placed even greater emphasis on the visual aspect of their narratives because since the governmental censors were not necessarily knowledgeable about film construction, the majority of their objections to scripts for proposed films were based on plot and dialogue rather than visual (or nonverbal aural) cues (D'Lugo - *The Films of Carlos Saura*, 33). Important camera angles within *Cría cuervos* include the close-ups of the adult and child Ana's face, a medium shot of Ana with her grandmother seen through the window, the prevalence of religious items in the mise-en-scène, and counter shots of character reactions.

Viewers apprehend that the narrated events have impacted Ana deeply, for full-faced to the camera the adult Ana ponders how anyone can say that childhood was the happiest time of their lives, because for her it was certainly not. Having been forced to face these adult issues – death, murder, repression, adultery – at such a young age, Ana's childhood has been anything but paradisiacal, and to this day, twenty years later, Ana remains greatly affected by the events of her unhappy youth. An immediate intimacy is fostered by use of this close-up, as Ana appears open, direct, and vulnerable, with nothing obstructing the view of her face, and with no distracting background. She seems one who is both genuinely attempting to make sense of her past and, like the narrative voice of the adult Adriana in *El sur*, is affected emotionally by the events she describes. As she searches her memory and speaks frankly her expression is slightly dazed. Her face is natural and childlike, with the same pallor and blank stare as the child the camera focuses

on in the next scene that marks the beginning of the *intradiegetic* past. This child is presented with the same full-faced shot, which extends the already created intimacy to this new narrative viewer and suggests the two are one and the same. Although in this timeframe Ana does not address the camera directly as she does as an adult, her child's eye point of view is established with over the shoulder shots that carefully keep her head in the frame, limited and obstructed view shots, and sweeping searches when she seeks objects or people.

A related visual effect is the doubling of characters played by Geraldine Chaplin. Chaplin plays both the role of Ana's mother María and that of the adult Ana, suggestive of Ana's life, repressed and unfulfilled, resembling that of her mother. The similarities between mother and daughter do not go unnoticed by Rosa, and she tells the young Ana that she looks, sounds, and moves more like her mother everyday. These resemblances and doubling of characters suggest that there exists a pattern of repression, and that the feelings of sympathy the child Ana once had for her mother (regarding her mother's regret over her foregone musical career and cloistered existence within the home), may now have developed into feelings of empathy in the adult Ana.

The pattern of repression within the family reaches back to the older generation, as well. In a scene following Paulina's admission that she feels trapped within the home, the camera cuts to a medium shot of Ana seated in front of a window, looking at her father's framed old black and white photographs.¹⁰⁴ Ana is hereby juxtaposed against her

¹⁰⁴ The subject of these framed photographs is not plainly visible, but since the contents of Anselmo's study consist primarily of military memorabilia, it is probable that these photographs are of his fellow servicemen. If this is an accurate assumption, the photographs contribute to the film's delineation of gender roles.

grandmother, and the classic woman in the window shot – that typically suggests a longed-for freedom just on the other side – is altered and rejected, for the window behind her frames her grandmother seated outside in her wheelchair, alone and unable to move on her own. Her solitude and physical restriction even outside suggests that the limitations placed upon women extend beyond the home and into Spanish society during Franco’s dictatorship, and suggests that Ana’s fate is to continue the family’s pattern of subjugated women.

Several religious items that appear within the *mise-en-scène* and bear special significance are María’s cross necklace and wall hangings (above her bed and piano), prayer cards, and candles.¹⁰⁵ Ana’s mute grandmother, too, is presented as a Catholic believer for amidst her postcards and photographs of friends, family, and special places, there is a religious card depicting Jesus. Ana is now the proud owner of the cross that once hung around her mother’s neck, and she exhibits the Catholic tradition when she conducts a funeral for her pet Roni, with a little red crayon-drawn cross on the shoebox, saint card, and concluding “Our Father” prayer. The sincerity with which Ana performs this funeral for Roni, a creature that according to Catholic teaching lacks a soul, contrasts sharply with her refusal to fulfill her obligation in the funeral of her father – an adulterer, source of much of María’s anguish, and thus perhaps the true soulless creature. In committing this heretical act of respect for her pet and denying her father his goodbye kiss, Ana rejects hypocrisy and reevaluates who is and who is not worthy of this sacred rite.

These markers establish an atmosphere of communally shared religious belief and unite three generations of women of Ana's household, but through camera angles within the scene in which María agonizes upon her deathbed, Saura presents a contradictory twist. María lies in bed writhing in pain, gripping her midsection, and angrily whispers in an otherworldly voice that it's all a lie, there's nothing, and that they have tricked her. As Ana blankly observes her mother from across the room, remaining in the frame are the lit prayer candles to the Virgin that line the dresser behind her. These burning offertory candles and the cross above the bed sharply contrast María's words and guide viewers to infer that she is speaking of the end of life and the promise of an afterlife in Heaven. María is now at the threshold of this life, and from her point of view there is nothing that follows. After living obediently dedicated to the Catholic faith – a pillar of the Franco regime – she now painfully discovers that this Institution has lied to her regarding the existence of an afterlife.

While Ana's face does not often reveal her thoughts upon observing the world around her, other characters are more easily read. In several instances, rather than focus on the speaker, Saura draws the audience's attention via counter shots to the interlocutor's facial expressions as she listens or observes the would-be main action of the scene. The expressions captured by the camera are often indicative of a contradictory opinion, and Rosa is particularly useful in this endeavor, for although silent, her non-verbal reactions clearly convey her questioning or blatant disagreement with Paulina's words or conduct.

¹⁰⁵ Also important is Rosa's description of María – who shares the name of the mother of God, in the Catholic tradition – as a saint. This comment suggests the strong allegiance of the Spanish population

A particularly significant counter shot of Rosa's revelatory expressions is presented during the girls' first meal with Aunt Paulina. After Anselmo dies, Paulina arrives to assume the role of guardian of the girls, and during their initial lunch she decrees new household rules and goals for the summer. Her assertion of authority infringes upon Rosa's role as housekeeper, however, when she assures Ana and her sisters that they will have much work to do in the coming months since the house is in such a disastrous state. The camera cuts to Rosa's incredulous eyebrow raise that demonstrates her feeling that she has been insulted and yet her respectful control in not retorting against this new authority.

Similar interactions take place as Paulina continues to exert her power in the home while Rosa maintains a careful vigil of keeping herself in check. When Ana pricks herself sewing Rosa observes that she is as clumsy as her mother. But then Rosa pauses and her gaze seeks a particular place in the kitchen as if to verify that she may proceed with this topic of conversation. The counter shot reveals Paulina busily running her sewing machine, as yet unruffled by the discussion she's overhearing, and the camera cuts back to a hesitant but momentarily assured Rosa. Rosa tells Ana that saintly María suffered greatly and not just because of her illness, and that one day she will explain that statement to Ana more fully. She slides her chair closer to Ana, indicative of the increasingly intimate nature of the conversation, and again deliberately looks to the other side of the room. A full frame of Paulina is again the counter shot, but this time it captures Paulina as she lowers her eyes, presumably when she notices Rosa has paused, suggesting that Paulina is indeed monitoring the conversation. The camera returns to

Rosa as she explains that she was María's confidante, and she begins to describe an evening Anselmo was called away unexpectedly. This time the audio of her story continues but the camera cuts to an annoyed Paulina who listens for a moment before curtailing the story and reprimanding Rosa for her indiscretion of constantly speaking of the deceased. It is notable that Rosa's praise for María is left unchecked, but when she begins a potentially questionable anecdote, Paulina the new authority figure governing the home censors it. This series of shots and counter shots of the two women therefore may be understood as a representation of the wider scale control of information the Franco regime imposed upon the nation.

Another revelatory shot that repeats throughout the film is a close-up of young Ana forcefully blinking her eyes. The camera presents this tight psychological shot of the child's face to signify that in these moments the narrative is shifting away from the real world and delving into the imaginary world that Ana manipulates in her mind. Her fantasies are vivid, and as they occur in the same sphere that Ana now occupies they initially blend almost seamlessly with her daily interactions, until in seeking comfort her imagination begins to break spatial and temporal laws. The first time this simple expression of Ana's will is seen is before her imagined self jumps from the rooftop, but after this scene it exclusively marks her desire to conjure her deceased mother. When summoned, María enters through a doorway as do the living characters, but the preceding frame of Ana's concerted blinking and then scanning the room in search of the "magical" result implies a cause-effect relationship in which Ana is the determined agent. María comforts Ana, speaks to her more openly and less condescendingly than do the other adults in her world – except for Rosa, the earth-mother figure who remains Ana's

constant throughout the film – and makes her feel special and loved. It is understandable, then, that when Ana feels agitated she would require her mother’s support, and actively seek her care.

The arrangement of scenes and frames within *Cría cuervos* also complements the dialogue by guiding the viewer through the film’s intricate temporal shifts, depicting the household and nation’s somber present, highlighting Ana’s rejection of her legacy, and confirming her hand in attempted murder while conveying her complicated outlook on death.

There are three main time periods within *Cría cuervos* that have become intertwined: the *extradiegetic* present of the adult narrative voice Ana, the *intradiegetic* past of the narrative viewer Ana as a child of age nine, and the further, more remote *intradiegetic* past of Ana’s mother María when she was alive.¹⁰⁶

The film opens with shots of a family photo album, and the most prominently featured child in the album is equated to the adult Ana by the photographs’ captions indicating an “I” and the adult Ana’s accompanying explanations. The first photograph is marked “febrero de 1962 - El día que nací yo, como dice la canción,” thus revealing the year of the Ana’s birth and allowing to viewers to estimate the *intradiegetic* year as 1971. Temporal markers illustrate a lapse of time between the narration of the *extradiegetic* present and the occurrence of the events of the *intradiegetic* past, place the *extradiegetic* present at about 1991, and grant viewers a clear image of an adult narrative voice who is

¹⁰⁶ However, between her father’s passing and the end of the film there exists another timeframe that cannot be contained as neatly, for it is a time that exists in Ana’s mind. As mentioned above, it is marked by the interjection of Ana’s deceased mother María into present situations as well as Ana’s memories of her.

recounting – against a tonally-appropriate drab grey background – episodes of her mostly unhappy youth.

After the initial presentation of family photographs the camera cuts to the second timeframe, that of the *intradiegetic* past, the night Ana's father dies. The narrative's temporal transition is visually explained by means of the old family photographs, for as the action begins of the night Anselmo dies, the audience recognizes the observer descending the stairs as the girl designated as "T" in the photographs, and places the unfolding action in the past. The arrangement of these scenes therefore serves an explanatory role in separating and yet connecting the different timeframes of the narrative.

Shortly after this scene of Anselmo's death, a viewing for him is conducted within the home, and family and friends in military uniforms assemble in the candlelit room downstairs. All is silent and but a few rays of sunlight penetrate the crevices of the closed blinds as Ana stands before her father's casket, refusing to kiss his forehead. From the shadows across the room enters Amelia, Anselmo's married mistress whom Ana saw hurriedly leaving his bedroom the night he died, and the camera zooms in on her guilty expression as she spies Ana. The next psychological shot cuts to a likewise guilt-ridden Ana retreating from Amelia's view by physically hiding behind her grandmother, and the scene's final frame is a tight counter shot of Nicolás and Amelia in the shadows. This scene marks the somber atmosphere of the home and Spanish nation, the shadows that surround the dead and the men in uniforms mark the cryptic history of the military during the Civil War and into the present, and the silence and guilt that pervades is indicative of their current repressive socio-political climate. Although this scene ends

and the quiet and darkness of Anselmo's viewing is then juxtaposed against the bright and noisy street outside, the images in this new scene seem to editorialize on the previous. A Spanish flag occupies the left of the frame as does Nicolás in the previous scene, and a dark obstruction (a bar or window pane) juts through the center of the street scene, in a location that would also have physically separated Nicolás and Amelia in the previous scene. These objects suggest Nicolás' military service and the division that exists in his relationship with Amelia. The camera pans to the right into the trees and emerges in a long shot that follows Irene as she rides her bicycle into sight and Ana crosses, pushing her grandmother in a wheelchair. This scene continues the emptiness of death from the preceding wake scene, for behind the girls is a large drained swimming pool. The haunting suggestion of the fun and carefree life they could have versus the barren life they do have is presented with this image, and a cause-effect relationship is suggested as this present emptiness being the result of loss of life, both their father's and those who perished during the Civil War.

Another main contributor to the socio-political climate during Franco's dictatorship were the well-defined roles of men, women, and children. Ana's mother's aborted career as a pianist so that she could dedicate herself to the home and her daughters; Anselmo's extramarital affairs; the grandmother's inability to move about on her own or speak; and the fact that whenever a radio is heard in the background it is broadcasting *radionovelas* (radio programs known for their romantic plots and belittling and objectification of women), all mark the woman's second-class citizen's restricted role within this patriarchal society. In keeping with these machista mores, womanizing runs

rampant within *Cría cuervos*; Anselmo and Nicolás both engage in extramarital affairs, and María, Amelia, Rosa, and Paulina all fall victim to them.

Following a scene in which Paulina explains to Nicolás that she feels tethered to the home and lacks any livelihood of her own, the girls help Rosa sort through Anselmo's personal items in his study. When Ana locates and brandishes the pistol her father left her, Rosa quickly and sternly instructs her to put it down.¹⁰⁷ Ana argues rightful ownership of the item, and her sisters support her because they, too, received military items – a rifle to Irene and a Legion flag to Maite – from their father. Rosa responds by sending Ana to the parlor, deferring the dispute's resolution to Aunt Paulina.

The camera presents the doorway as seen from inside the parlor as Ana enters matter-of-factly with gun in hand, just as Paulina and Nicolás are sharing an intimate moment.¹⁰⁸ It is interesting to note that Ana's challenge is exercised pistol-in-hand, the ultimate sign of violence, for Saura states in his 1977 interview with Enrique Brasó, "I don't know how we can feel proud of the fact that our children imitate us; in this respect, they are merely perpetuating our errors. I think children would have to kill the adults in order to be able to be themselves." Ana turns a weapon – literally her legacy left to her by her military father – on her own flesh and blood, family against family as with the Civil War, and presents this violent object in the hopes of getting what she wants

¹⁰⁷ In his article "Cría cuervos," Ryan Prout notes the similarity between Ana and the little girl in Clément's *Jeux interdits* (1952) in their demonstration of the absurdity of weapons and their refusal to blindly accept conflict as would adults (151-152).

¹⁰⁸ Although Ana is too defiant to yield to the imposing authority figure, and too young and too rebellious to fall victim to the charm of Nicolás, the archetypal figure of the don Juan, the audience will notice that her older sister Irene is already showing signs of being won over by this handsome figure in uniform.

(protecting her legacy while challenging the female-stifling status quo).¹⁰⁹ Ana is merely seeking what she is already entitled to, and an oppressive ruling force is standing in her way. The fact that Nicolás steps ahead of Paulina and assumes control of the situation, adopts a condescending tone of voice with Ana, and reminds her that guns are for boys confirms that this arrangement of scenes seeks to question gender and power in Franco's Spain. The camera views low from Ana's eyes as she surrenders the firearm to the inclining Nicolás. The scene ends as traumatized Aunt Paulina slaps Ana violently as soon as she relinquishes the Luger, reestablishing their domestic hierarchy, and then falls to pieces like a child and is consoled by the frantic kisses of Nicolás, who assumes his position at the top of this patriarchy, once again by sexual means.¹¹⁰

Ana's more overt rebellion against authority, however, is attempted murder. Although the initial frames of Anselmo's death scene may evoke great sympathy for the small observer victim who stands in the shadows, the viewer may slowly begin to suspect that Ana's actions imply her agency in this tragedy. Her murderous intent is marked visually by her retreat into the darkness when the light from the bedroom floods the living room; her stoic face as her father gasps for air; her deliberate searching for her father's "poisoned" glass upon verifying that he is dead; her thorough washing of the

¹⁰⁹ The hopeful sign is that while Ana holds this destructive object in her hands, she is not intentionally using it to intimidate, rather she is merely showing what she possesses and is using it as a visual aid for her question of ownership. But when children grow up immersed in a culture that so greatly respects power and might, one in which the current government is in office because of its use of force, then it should come as no surprise if Ana were to use the gun to its full potential.

¹¹⁰ It is no coincidence that the authority Ana challenges comes dressed in military uniform. The stony *franquista* faces of both her father and Nicolás have no time to listen to their children (also not coincidentally all female) or their wives; they patronize and dismiss them in pursuit of their next romantic conquest. In fact the only times Anselmo (while living) is featured within the film he is either engaged in an extramarital affair or is fighting with María.

glass and calculated mixing it in with the other glasses; her avoidance of Amelia's glance and slipping behind her grandmother at the wake; and her refusal to kiss her father's forehead. While many of these markers could at first also be interpreted as being motivated by sorrow, shyness, or limited understanding, this possibility is dispelled several scenes later – immediately following the first visual presentation of Ana's sodium bicarbonate in her secret hiding place – when the adult Ana openly admits that she wanted to kill her father. She describes her misconceptions about the tin of sodium bicarbonate, but it is not until Ana attempts her second murder that the viewer sees Ana mix this “deadly powder” into milk for Aunt Paulina, wait until she has drunk some, and then ritualistically wash and rearrange the glasses. The repetition of the washing and mixing of the glass leads the viewer to presume that the previous step – dissolving the sodium bicarbonate in milk – was also part of her routine she carried out the night her father died, thereby completing this important detail of the initial scene. The arrangement of scenes in this fashion and decided delayed confession allows the viewer time to establish an intimate relationship with Ana by more fully appreciating the psychologically difficult situations she faced, before condemning her outright. This is important because by the time Ana's penchant for murder is determined the viewer understands this behavior as a direct result of all that she has suffered, and may call to mind the “just desserts” meaning of the film's title.

A confusing contrast to Ana's calculated death plot is her behavior as sympathetic consoler, for even though in her mind she has just murdered her father, she caresses his hair gently, ironically, as if to comfort him. Ana repeats this action each time she believes she has encountered death, first with her father, then with her guinea pig Roni,

and finally with her aunt Paulina. For the last two, in addition to stroking their hair she whispers, “pobrecito.” However, Ana’s surprise and dismay at finding Aunt Paulina alive on the first day of school – marked by her cessation of movement under the covers while playing with her sister – dismiss the plausibility of the sincerity of this endearing expression of consolation, and rather suggest that she is mimicking a word she has heard uttered by adults witnessing death. This small psychological marker, a close-up of Ana freezing in place while playing, also solidifies the fact that she believes herself to be her father’s killer, and reveals her disappointment and wonder at why her deadly potion did not also succeed in killing Aunt Paulina.¹¹¹

The combination of scenes in which Ana coldly calculates the murders of her father and aunt, the warmth and innocence with which she conjures her deceased mother, her calmness as she offers to euthanize her grandmother, her chant to resuscitate her “dead” sisters in their game of hide and seek, her incomprehension that they had brought her mother home from the hospital to die, and her vision of herself gracefully floating after diving off the roof of a tall building, indicate that Ana, like many children, does not yet understand death. Ana sees death not as a definite end, but rather as a state of appearance or non-appearance, as witnessed by her calm face in the presence of death, and her ability to bring her deceased mother into her daily activities. In his interview with Enrique Brasó, Saura explains:

¹¹¹ Because Ana’s mother told her that her sodium bicarbonate is a deadly poison, she believes herself possessor of life-giving and life-taking power, and is visibly shocked when she discovers this to be untrue. Following this realization, Ana appears more cognizant of death as being both out of her control and final when she in direct contrast with the beginning of the film when she assures Irene that their mother has passed away.

I think children view death differently from adults. For an adult, death is the end of a process of decay and depletion. For a child, death is identified with disappearance, without the sense of tragedy; beings, animals, things die, disappear, and once it happens there is no point dwelling on the subject. For Ana, the child, her mother's death means her disappearance, which means that at any point she may reappear, and so she can bring her back whenever she feels the need. I think children are incapable of creating clear distinctions between the real and the unreal, the gap between the real and the imagined can be bridged without conflict. Unlike adults, the child doesn't need to go through a process of rationalization to bridge that gap.

Saura continues to explain that Ana is not obsessed with death itself, but rather she is “imbued with the feeling of having the power to kill, the power to make anyone she pleases disappear, and also the power to bring them back. For example she is capable of making her mother be part of her life by strongly desiring her presence” (Brasó, Interview). This desire is made apparent in her game of hide and seek with her sisters in which, upon locating her sisters, she makes them “die,” waits a moment, and then recites a prayerful chant to “bring them back to life.” Indeed, death to Ana is quite natural, and the final marker that reveals this stance is when she offers to help her grandmother bring an end to her pain and sadness by killing her. Her offer is not ill spirited at all, rather, it is made out of a desire to spare her grandmother further suffering. Since these markers reveal that Ana views death as a temporary, reversible state, one that she can personally control, viewers understand why Ana's horror upon hearing her aunt Paulina's voice on the first day of school is compounded, for not only has her murderous mission failed, but her powers as life-giver and taker, and therefore her belief system, have been called into question.

Aural devices, too, especially silence, song, and mimicry, enhance Ana's narrative. The silence of the home and Ana's grandmother's inability to speak contribute

to the repressive environment during the Franco dictatorship, while Ana's retractions and reticence to respond when questioned alludes to its censorship. Music also adds subtle commentary to several scenes, namely three songs: "Canción y Danzas N.6" written by Federico Mompou, "Ay, Maricruz" by by Joaquín Valverde, Rafael de León and Manuel Quiroga, and "Porque te vas" written by José Luis Perales. Each of these songs is heard on multiple occasions in the film and in each instance is used to convey Ana's connection to her mother or society's objectification of women. The third sound of particular importance is Ana's mimicry of adult dialogue, which reveals her observation and internalization of her surroundings, if not her acceptance of them.

"Canción y danzas N.6," the first song of the film and the only instrumental, is a slow tempo song for piano by Catalan composer and pianist Federico Mompou. It plays *non-diegetically* over the initial images of the family photo album and immediately establishes Ana's wistful nostalgia for family and particularly for María. After Ana witnesses her mother writhing in pain, she retreats upstairs to her own bedroom and covers her ears to block out her mother's screams. It is then that "Canción y danzas N. 6" plays again *non-diegetically* and continues, along with Ana's sadness and thoughts of her mother, until she falls asleep. Finally, this song is played *diegetically* by María on the piano, as it is the special song Ana requests and makes come out "magically" by blowing on her mother's hands. The song therefore can be understood as an audible sadness associated with María, a remembrance of her foregone career, sacrifice and regret, and Ana's affinity for it reveals her tenderness and sympathy for her mother.

"Ay, Maricruz" is performed by Imperio Argentina and is also heard three times within *Cría cuervos*. The lyrics deal with the captivating beauty of a young woman, love,

and loss, as do the scenes in which the song is featured. The first is when Rosa sings it as she washes windows and finds herself the object of Anselmo's latest sexual impropriety. The second and third occurrences of this song of a bygone era are when Ana puts this record on for her grandmother as the latter studies old photographs of her happier youth attempting to concretize her fleeting memories. The song therefore resounds of the attractiveness of physical beauty (above other charms) and the power of seduction, while for Ana's grandmother it becomes a lamentation of a youth and beauty that has faded.

Another privation is lamented in "Porque te vas," performed by Jeanette, for each of the three times it is played throughout the film it marks Ana's sadness over the loss of her mother and her efforts to console herself. In the absence of her mother's embrace, when Ana is in need of refuge she retreats to her special space – the safe haven of the sofa in the playroom – positioning herself against the protective barrier of its left armrest. Her physical escape to this piece of furniture is accompanied by a *diegetic* audio marker of consolation-seeking as well, as Ana puts on the record of "Porque te vas." The long sofa makes Ana's frame look extremely small, a visual reminder of her fragility, and the song's lyrics suggest the thoughts that occupy her mind – her continued devotion to her mother. The viewer therefore understands why Ana becomes so upset when Aunt Paulina asks her to turn down the music, to her a seeming request to lessen her mother's continued presence in her life. When Aunt Paulina leaves the room, however, Ana turns the volume back up and the sisters dance happily, regaining their animation. Representative of Ana's self-soothing, the song plays as part of the *non-diegetic* soundtrack after Aunt Paulina scolds her for handling Anselmo's Luger. The music continues and the camera cuts to Ana seated in her special place on the sofa, record

player spinning beside her as she mouths the words to the song. She then imitates Aunt Paulina's grooming gestures and facial expressions and, given new strength by her mother's presence through the song, calmly and resolutely pronounces Paulina's death sentence.

The final scene depicting the girls' first day of school is the third time this song is heard. It plays *non-diegetically* as a long shot of the girls leaving home and walking toward school draws the 3-month *intradiegetic* past to a close. School bells ring and other uniformed schoolmates enter the frame, all en route to the same parochial institution, and the camera follows Ana, then gets lost in a blur of passing girls ascending the stairs. The sheer multitude of girls and their sameness of dress, together with the following and final panoramic cityscape of Madrid that again situates the narrative spatially, suggest that Ana's experiences are not altogether unique. Here, as in previous scenes with Ana's mother and grandmother, Saura sets Ana alongside other women, insinuating their simultaneous otherness and sameness. Ana is like countless other Spanish girls maturing within a stifling environment that prizes a woman's obedience over self-expression, a lesson that will only be reinforced in school. The song lyric "Todas las cosas que quedaron por decir se dormirán" plays as the camera scans the city, implying both the many things that should be addressed and questioned and yet are not, and the silent acquiescence the girls will be taught to adopt. The song's inclusion at this crucial moment therefore signifies that through this indoctrination process Ana will keep her mother with her in her memory as she conforms to societal standards and steadily follows in her footsteps.

While original dialogue between characters establishes the plot of the film, Ana and her sisters' mimicry of these conversations reveals their internalization of the words they hear, and the manner in which they are repeated shows the children's understanding of them.

One way Ana challenges the cycle of repression is through play. Psychological markers exhibited during Ana's play with her sisters show that they have witnessed domestic disputes.¹¹² Role playing, the girls run through hurt lines and accusations of infidelity as if by rote and in an eerily casual way, interspersed with giggles, suggesting that they have heard them many times and that their young age prevents them from fully understanding the gravity of what they are saying. These markers elicit sympathy from the viewers as they are reminded that the witnesses are little girls who have been subjected all too soon to the serious matter of adultery.

Another scene reveals that in more age-appropriate situations Ana's conscience is indeed capable of determining right from wrong. On this occasion – cleverly positioned after a scene in which Ana misbehaves with her aunt Paulina – Ana is playing by herself in the empty swimming pool with her doll, and sternly reprimands the doll for having been a bad girl. This is an interesting episode of transference of blame, for as she runs down a list of all the things the doll has done wrong, viewers realize that these are the things that Ana herself is guilty of, and may assume that she is again role playing and merely repeating to the doll what she has been told recently by her Aunt Paulina. But

¹¹² The girls reenact an aggravated homecoming that, as suggested by the names of the characters they play, either took place between their father Anselmo and his mistress Amelia (also Nicolás' wife), or is the girls' extension of what they witnessed between their mother and Anselmo and they have brought it forward into his next relationship.

upon closer observation, we hear that she maintains her identity as she scolds the doll for having tortured “Aunt Paulina, Rosa, and my sisters,” mentioning Aunt Paulina by name and using the possessive adjective “my” when speaking of her sisters. Then viewers come to suspect that this is not a repetition of what Ana has heard directed towards her, but rather the workings of her own child’s conscience, for as she continues her rant against the defenseless doll, she then mentions the “stealing” of her friend Sofia’s pen, an episode of which her Aunt Paulina most likely has no knowledge and therefore would not be able to add to the list of deplorable things she has done. Here, outside the family unit, Ana shifts back to the possessive adjective “your” for “your friend Sofia’s pen,” revealing a complicated relationship with her doll of alternately sameness and otherness of person (the distance between her and the doll is perhaps shortened here because she finds this particular pen episode less serious and more amusing).¹¹³ This act of play shows that Ana has a conscience and is aware of her poor comportment in certain situations. But among the accusations there also emerges laughter, and the audience sees that Ana is not wholly remorseful, and is rather amused by some of her unbecoming behavior. Her efforts to occupy the role of the dictatorial authority figure are therefore uncomfortable, for she cannot pretend not to be delighted by her antics. She giggles and continues her scolding. The doll, then, can be understood as both Ana’s scapegoat and reflection, and through this scene viewers see this 9-year-old’s well-developed

¹¹³ Since the audio is difficult to hear at the end of this segment (as the scene is transitioning into the next) and is not included in the subtitles, I include the quote: “Tú eres mala porque no haces lo que tienes que hacer. Haces sufrir a Tía Paulina y a Rosa y a mis hermanas Irene y Maite. Eres mala porque no haces lo que tienes que hacer. Eres desobediente y una ladrona. Un día le quitaste a tu amiga Sofía un bolígrafo y nunca se lo devolviste. [Aquí se ríe.] Otro día le diste una mordida muy grande a Tía Paulina.”

conscience at odds with her occasional bouts of recalcitrance, humanizing her even further, making her plausible and lovable.¹¹⁴

Ana's naughty streak is also indicative of her strength of will and her independence. Her mother's final words "No quiero morir" are an inverted reprise of her initial request for death when she feels she can no longer bear her stifling life and deficient communication with her unfaithful, neglectful husband. Ana later echoes her mother's plea for death when she wakes up from a nightmare confused and crying out for her (then deceased) mother, and instead Aunt Paulina comes to comfort her. But although she initially follows her mother's example, Ana is still young and spirited, and she quickly appropriates her mother's words and assertively twists them, wishing instead for Aunt Paulina's death, an indication of Ana's strength of spirit and resolve.

Ana's perspective allows viewers to appreciate the stifling atmosphere within one family's home during Franco's dictatorship, but its male-led hierarchy, wrought with repression and poor communication is representative of the nation's following the Spanish Civil War. Her character is developed more fully than the child narrative viewers' of *Las manos de mamá*, *Cartucho*, and *Balún Canán*, and resembles that of young Adriana's in *El sur* in terms of her deep level of internal focalization; but like all of the works of this study, Ana is presented narrowly only with regard to the events of her traumatic youth. Ana and Adriana both experience the postwar years in Spain, are stifled

¹¹⁴ In his 1977 interview with Enrique Brasó [Found in *Carlos Saura Interviews* in English edited by Linda M. Willem and translated by Paula Wiloquet-Maricondi from the original French version found in *Postif 194* (1977), 3-8.] Saura states: "There's a large body of literature in Spain where the theme of the double personality appears, from Cervantes, to Lope de Vega, to Calderón, etc. Of course, long before that there was Narcissus. We are ourselves and our reflection, that is, we are both, etc. It must be said that the replacement of another personality is fundamental to our work as directors in cinema, and that the actors

by their environments, and long for attention and affection, but Ana's world is made slightly less desolate by the presence of her sisters. Like the narrative voice of *El sur* however, the adult Ana recounts the events of her youth in a somber tone, and nothing is known of her adult life except that she remains gravely affected by her painful childhood.

EL SUR

García Morales' *El sur*, a postwar narrative brimming with Gothic shadows and secrecy enshrouding the Spanish Civil War and her dysfunctional family's past, is also related via the adult version of the child narrative viewer as she recollects her painful youth during the Franco regime.¹¹⁵ The title refers to a dreamlike paradise that will forever remain out of Adriana's, specifically to her father Rafael's origin and mysterious history as well as the unattainable loving relationship with him that she so desires (Cortés Tabares, 26). The narrative recounts Adriana's search for answers and ultimate discovery of another woman in her father's life, but unlike a detective narrative outlining fact collection and objective analysis, Adriana is personally and deeply affected by each realization. Of the works of this study, *El sur* is the most interiorized; "Adriana, lo es todo: instigadora, emisora y receptora del discurso narrativo" (García Jambrina, 10). Her journey of discovery brings about a change in consciousness and a reevaluation of her father and her self (García Jambrina, 10).

are working on this very representationality. The evidence of this statement can be seen in Ana and her doll, Ana and her mother, Anselmo and Amelia, and María and Rosa."

¹¹⁵ Víctor Erice's filmic version of *El sur* (1983) varies from his then wife's original narrative most notably in that it does not feature Estrella's (Adriana in the original) trip to the South. García Morales collaborated on this endeavor to bring her work to the screen, but states in an interview with *La Crónica de Badajoz* that Erice had a different vision for the film version. He planned for a second portion to the film, departing even further from García Morales' original, to be shot in Carmona but due to artistic conflict was never realized.

Temporal markers “entonces” and “por aquellos años” indicate an *intradiegetic* past; and “aún ahora” and “al recordar” mark the narrative voice’s *extradiegetic* present. The narrative voice frames a narration of her own life; she is both narrative viewer and voice of the darkness of the postwar years, but while the narration is personalized, there is a temporal separation between the events and their narration. Markers call to attention that the events of her formative years presently being described – like Ana’s in *Cría cuervos* – are deeply engrained in her memory and suggest that they have impacted her significantly even into her adult life.¹¹⁶ Within the *intradiegetic* past, temporal markers indicate that the past events described transpire over a period of years that cover the bulk of the childhood of the narrative voice, Adriana, from age 6 to approximately age 15. Other temporal markers make plain that the time span of the narrating act, the recounting itself, is brief and occurs within one evening. From references to “tonight” and promises for the next day, readers may assume that these recollections span a matter of minutes or at most hours.

As she visits her childhood home, now abandoned and devoid of life, the narrative voice directs her thoughts conversationally to her deceased father as “tú.” This visit is suggested as the reason for her recollection, and although it is not clear exactly how much time has passed since the final *intradiegetic* narrated moments (when the adolescent Adriana returns Miguel’s notebook) and the present *extradiegetic* narration (visiting her childhood home), the lack of electricity, flaking walls, and tiny lizards now occupying the home, as well as the grass growing between the cracks of her father’s tomb suggest that possibly weeks, but more likely months or years have passed (11). Also, the fact that she

¹¹⁶ Such as “nunca olvidaré” and “Cierro los ojos y ~~no~~ puedo ver...”(11).

describes the home as now seeming strange to her suggests that time and/or distance have alienated her from her childhood home, which would support the interpretation that it has been years since she has been there.

No exact year is given for either the “present” *extradiegetic* narration or the past *intradiegetic* events it describes, which is not unusual since the narration is supposedly directed to her deceased father who would have no need to have the year indicated for him.¹¹⁷ This quote, however, “Quizás aquella fuera su vocación, pero como habían invalidado su título de maestra en la guerra, no podía ejercer más que conmigo” places the the work’s *intradiegetic* past after the Spanish Civil War (8).

In *El sur* spatial markers are used first to establish the location of the family home. Although the narrative voice’s hometown is not mentioned specifically, readers learn that it is neither of the parents’ hometowns – neither Sevilla in the South nor Santander in the North – and that it lies 2 kilometers from “the city” (left unnamed), in a fairly isolated country location, far from neighbors and allowing minimal contact with others. These spatial markers are the first of many references to the isolated status of the Adriana’s family within, or rather without, society.

These markers also offer information about the location of the present narrative voice in relation to the events she narrates. The use of the demonstrative adjective “that” house and the adverb of place “there” are used to mark a spatial separation, disclosing

¹¹⁷ *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* a film by French director Carl Theodor Dreyer was released in 1928, and re-released in 1952. Although no specific information is given to suggest this is the film in question, the re-release date would fit the timeframe in which the *intradiegetic* action occurs in García Morales’ *El sur*, especially if one considers the date suggested by Erice’s cinematic version of this work. In Erice’s *El sur*, the suicide of Adriana’s father takes place in 1957, which would certainly make it possible that Adriana’s first encounter with Mari-Nieves be placed in 1952.

that the narrative voice no longer resides in the childhood home she describes. However, deeper into the narrative García Morales switches these markers to reflect both a freshness and a closeness, and readers will notice the narrative voice's use of "this" hallway and "this" house. This switch can be read as if Adriana as narrative voice is physically approaching her childhood home and her narration coincides with her arrival; or that she is beginning to mentally engage with her past, thus she establishes this closeness as she closes her eyes and enters into her own recollection; it also serves to draw the readers from the frame of the work to the central focus, into the story within the story.¹¹⁸ At the end of her recollection she promises to leave "this" house forever.¹¹⁹ This proclamation, in addition to being one of the very few examples of future tense usage in this study, is an extremely potent ending, as it leaves both Adriana and the readers in the moment of departure, but does not specify to where she is headed. Thus these spatial markers are used to establish place, suggest movement, foster intimacy, but to avoid narrative resolution.

There are also spatial point of view markers that describe the home itself and at the same time reveal the nature of Adriana's family. The family's spacious house (that in Adriana's opinion is too large for them) illustrates both the physical and symbolic space between the family members, similarly representative in *El espíritu de la colmena*, and contributes to her feelings of loneliness. The division of the rooms within the home calls special attention to the separation of Adriana's father from the rest of the family. The

¹¹⁸ "Cierro los ojos y aún puedo ver cómo me llevabas de la mano a través de este largo pasillo, el mismo por el que ahora circulan corrientes de aire entre sus paredes desconchadas y lagartijas que se cuelan por las ventanas mal cerradas"(11).

¹¹⁹ "Mañana abandonaré para siempre esta casa..."(52).

father works isolated from his wife and daughter, and Adriana recalls listening outside his door and peeping through the keyhole of her father's study, intimating her longing yet inability to be closer to him. She also remembers that only when her father was on his way home was she allowed outside by herself to wait for him. With this knowledge readers may better understand the oppressive environment in which Adriana lived, as not only was her ability to move within her home restricted, but also outside it as well. Adriana attributes these limitations and their subsequent tension and desolation to her father.¹²⁰

The language Adriana uses to relate her trip conveys her impression that the South is a mysterious region rich in history, replete with secret palpitations and stories to be unearthed. She refers to Sevilla, her father's hometown, as a legendary and dreamlike city, and detects in it a mysterious life force, stating "Había en ella un algo humano, una respiración, un hondo suspiro contenido" (40). But while Adriana anthropomorphizes this location, she meanwhile consistently dehumanizes her father, as I shall address momentarily. To uncover the secrets of his dark past, she seeks Gloria Valle, the sender of the letters to her father that always incite quarrels between her parents. She finds that amidst the "ruins" of Gloria's half-empty Andalusian home, lies a small oasis of beauty. She has stumbled upon something precious, not only the simple courtyard garden, but also the "very cared-for" relationship between Gloria and her son Miguel (by Rafael), which can be contrasted with Adriana's own family garden in the North – and relationship with her father – withered and neglected (36). Indeed, earlier in the

¹²⁰ After her father's suicide, Adriana's mobility immediately increases, and her mental journey of discovery is finally complemented with a physical journey of investigation to uncover his mysterious past.

narrative, upon her parents' return from their pivotal trip to Sevilla, Adriana observes that the things around them seem to be deteriorating in tandem with their increasingly strained family relations (27). Thus, in addition to marking location, spatial point of view markers are also often adjectivally intertwined with pervading attitudes and feelings.

Like Teresa in *El espíritu de la colmena* and María and Paulina in *Cría cuervos*, Adriana's mother, Teresa, is frustrated about being separated spatially from society. Adriana notes, "Mamá siempre se quejaba, incluso la vi llorar por ello, de la vida que tú le imponías, enclaustrada en aquella casa tan alejada de todo" (9). Compounding Teresa's anguish is the fact that as a result of the war, women were outlawed from the workforce, and thus she is no longer allowed the joy of dedicating herself to her vocation, teaching. Without valid certification, Teresa may teach only at home, and Adriana recognizes that during these lessons is the only time her mother appears not to be irritated by everything. In the absence of work, Teresa tries to busy herself with hobbies, but winds up frequently absenting herself from her family, either on excursions or simply behind closed doors. "Alguna vez creo que intentó escribir algo que no llegó a terminar," Adriana recalls (8). This creative act left unfinished, as with Teresa's unsent letter in *El espíritu de la colmena*, serves to remind the readers/viewers of the inability of the Spanish people, especially of women, to express themselves freely in the postwar era.

As Teresa's dissatisfaction and resentment toward Rafael grow, a rift forms between mother and the daughter who idolizes him. Their relationship is laced with open professions of disappointment and hatred, but Adriana admits that she longs for her mother's affection, to feel her dark, curly hair and perfumed kisses, and thus the child's "hatred" appears to be born primarily of feelings of rejection and her need to defend her

father (as I shall address momentarily) (13-14). Even though the “*cadena femenina*” in Adriana’s family is not strong, upon scrutiny of the portrayal of male and female characters within *El sur*, the voice of feminism is undeniable (Díaz, 226). All three male characters – Miguel, Josefa’s husband, and Rafael – struggle with self-expression and desperately seek to escape their emotional isolation. Though the adolescent chooses the healthier outlet of journaling, the adults turn to alcoholism, violence, and suicide (Men’s Problems, 762). They attempt to control the women around them, but in each case are ultimately unsuccessful, and readers see that “[o]nly in a fantasy world of game-playing is masculine power assured” (Men’s Problems, 762). The female characters, however, prove resilient: Gloria Valle raises her son without his father, and rejects the latter when he attempts to reunite; Josefa and Teresa mutually support each other throughout their respective marital difficulties; Adriana holds the upper hand while interacting with Miguel; and Teresa ultimately tears up her photographs of Rafael after he takes his life. In real life, despite the hardships they face, it is the women who gain strength and have the last word.

The most abundant of all four categories of point of view markers in *El sur* are psychological markers. The most basic of these markers, “quizás” “creo” and “me pareció,” illustrate that information is being presented as it is recalled by the narrative voice, or as it was seen and immediately interpreted by the younger narrative viewer. More revealing still are markers that suggest Adriana’s personality and mental state. Among these are markers that show that because of Adriana’s young age her understanding of adult situations is limited, but she knows that this adult-child distinction is normal. She laments, “Sentí entonces una profunda lástima por ti. Si yo lo hubiera

sabido antes... Pero a una niña no se le hacen confidencias” (46). These markers enhance the work’s verisimilitude, for adults do not divulge adult information to children freely, and this may explain why Adriana was unaware of her father’s complete history.

As, generally, information regarding grown-up matters is not readily disclosed to her, Adriana learns of tensions and happenings like many of the child narrative viewers of this study – by observing the interactions of her parents. Sitting, presumably undetected, overhearing her mother and Josefa’s *tertulias*, she becomes aware of the circulating negative opinions about her father as well as her mother’s sadness about living so isolated from society (8). She sits outside the door to her father’s study, listening and longing to get closer to him, and often peers through the keyhole, wondering what he’s doing that must remain off limits to even her, his daughter. She is aware that her presence there is uninvited, and thus in the threshold, “Apenas me movía, para que tú no me descubrieras” (9). When her parents return from her grandmother’s funeral in Sevilla, she senses that something about them has drastically changed. She notes that her mother has stopped complaining about her misbehavior, and appears to be troubled by something else, a seemingly inexhaustible topic that her parents are actively trying to hide from her. But despite their best endeavors, Adriana discovers the source of the turmoil, saying:

gracias a vuestros descuidos y hostilidades, pude entrever, a través de frases cortadas bruscamente ante mi presencia, silencios tensos, palabras con segundas intenciones que yo captaba enseguida, que aquello que os separó de manera definitiva guardaba una estrecha relación con esa mujer de tu pasado. (25)

Her allegiance to her father is so strong, that even though she is still confused about the cause of the recent quarrels, when she spies him on the floor scrambling to piece together

the letter that Teresa ripped up, she decides to intercept and relay to him any future correspondence from this other woman (25). She processes to the best of her ability the little information she has gleaned from lurking in the wings, and acts as to ingratiate herself with her father, oblivious to the disruption it could increase within her family.¹²¹

In addition to her limited understanding and allegiance to her father, psychological markers also reveal that Adriana perceives him as a strange, almost supernatural being. He is the Other of the narrative who is “different,” an enigma who lurks alone in his study, and appears to know that he is condemned as he wrestles incessantly with “an inhuman suffering” (16; 30). He separates himself from his family, rejects social interaction, and cannot disguise his disdain for the rest of society. Although Rafael’s main occupation is instructing French,¹²² he is known for his mystical *zahori* skills, and thus is called upon to divine the location of out-of-sight objects, namely water beneath the earth.¹²³ Adriana is dazzled by this unusual talent, hopes that she has inherited it, and readily accepts when her father offers to test her abilities. Her fascination compounds when her mother confirms the existence of Rafael’s powers by warning that any intrusion into his secret room could destroy the magic accumulating

¹²¹ Even more heart-rending is the series of sounds that Adriana overhears the night her father takes his life. From behind her bedroom door she hears footsteps of people rushing past, her mother’s wailing, and the voice of Josefa consoling her. No one has come to break the news to Adriana, but she correctly deciphers the commotion and silently waits in her room, aware that her mother would prefer to believe she were sleeping soundly through this tragedy (7).

¹²² Six dubs Rafael’s profession ironic, for despite his presumed linguistic prowess, he is associated with silence and “communicates with his daughter and wife via silent games and is unable or unwilling to use language to address his emotional needs (as far as Adriana’s knowledge of him permits us to understand)” (Men’s Problems, 761).

¹²³ A task that requires him, in keeping with the gothic genre, to bring to light things that are hidden or out of sight. In addition, of course, through its “link with the occult, it can be perceived as being in direct conflict with the Church,” an incongruity whose significance I shall address momentarily (Men’s Problems, 757).

therein (9).¹²⁴ The richly Gothic diction that Adriana employs to explain his preference for silence and solitude – because “cualquier presencia humana” annoys him – aligns her father with the inhuman or monstrous, and even after he takes his life Adriana swears she can detect his cold and bitter continued presence in the house (31; 38).

As Other, Rafael remains aloof, but the attraction that draws Adriana to bond with – and later, to save – him is intense. She, like Ana in *El espíritu de la colmena*, Carlos in *El espinazo del diablo*, and Williams’ female victim within the horror film, looks upon this outcast and sees herself. The fact that she now directs her narrative to him conversationally, even after his death, reconfirms the strength of their connection. She states cryptically, “teníamos en común: el mal,” and sensing her father’s distaste for society she too begins to doubt her need for “los llamados seres humanos” (16; 31). Psychological markers indicate that, like her father, Adriana has difficulty with relationships. She forever feels an outsider, is unable to socialize and fit in with other girls her age, and becomes aware that her mother sees in her the same darkness that exists in Rafael – that she, too, is an Other: “Y yo, de alguna manera, también pertenecía a esa clase de seres. En la voz de mamá me oí llamar “monstruo” y percibí el temor con que ella contemplaba lo que, según decía, yo iba a llegar a ser” (17).

One of the main barriers to Rafael’s integration into the community is his rejection of Catholicism, the official religion of the Franco regime. At first Adriana merely understands this faith-based separation as her father’s dislike for churches (22). She recalls that, for reasons unclear to her, after praying the rosary they would say an

¹²⁴ The inhuman and monstrous depiction of Adriana’s father, together with the darkly phallic descriptions of his divining, Adriana’s dream of marrying him, and her final inscription of love to her half-brother

additional prayer for her father's soul (8). She is shocked when he attends her First Holy Communion, and her perception that he is suffering whilst standing at the back enduring the ritual, hints at a demon's fiery rejection from hallowed ground.¹²⁵ She is thrilled that her father has come, but for the first time she, too, fears for his soul. Although Adriana does not particularly appreciate organized religion (she associates the Catholic Church with fruitless tedium and annoyance, and with regard to her Communion she is mostly just excited about wearing the pretty dress), she does have faith and even belief in magical forces enough to bargain with God for her father's salvation. Satisfied that she may have saved her atheistic father from heavenly damnation, Adriana then attempts to prevent his earthy condemnation as well. But in so doing she perpetrates violence against Mari-Nieves when she asks the loaded question, "¿Por qué tu padre se ha quedado al final y no ha comulgado contigo?" and irreparably disgraces her mother (23).

As in *Las manos de mamá*, the child narrative viewer's development in *El sur* is presented primarily through her relationship with a parent, in this case her father. This work, however, grants more access to the child's thoughts and feelings, illustrating a more complex and self-questioning character as she assesses her standing within her family and – to a lesser degree but present nonetheless – her standing within her circle of contemporaries. Adriana's environment and introspection, like Ana's in *Cría cuervos*, are indicative of the cloud of mystery and inquisition that was prevalent in the postwar

suggest the presence of yet another taboo topic lying buried within *El sur*, incest (Jehenson, 213).

¹²⁵ Similarly, although the reasons for their mutual loathing for one another are not explained explicitly, readers may assume religious differences contribute to the repeated clashes between Rafael, the monstrous disbeliever, and Josefa, the "santa" (5).

years in Spain, as the nation attempted to understand its history, come to terms with its present, and conjecture its future.

From within the oppression, Gothic darkness and mystery of the postwar era, all three child narrative viewers of these Spanish works respond to a call that derives from an Other, be it the absence of a loved one or their detection of the surfacing of repressed ideologies and past trauma. Ana in *El espíritu de la colmena* wishes to befriend and unite with the spirit she is convinced lurks in the night, Ana in *Cría cuervos* feels compelled to avenge her wronged mother (and in that act, all women subject to machismo), and Adriana in *El sur* is driven by curiosity and longing for the father-daughter relationship she always hoped for but never attained.

In the international works of this study, which take place in physically dangerous settings and contain greater traces of fantasy and horror, we witness another version of this call to action from the Other, one that even more closely resembles the traditional hero's call to journey.¹²⁶ The summons may be a simple change in circumstance or common event, that "forces the hero to move beyond the familiar and secure life, and to discover new possibilities in the world and in herself" (Pearson and Pope, 85). In so doing the budding hero learns that he/she has all the skills needed to emerge victorious, and that until this point those skills had merely lie dormant within him/her (Pearson and Pope, 70). In this respect many of the child narrative viewers of this study may be deemed heroes, but the dangerous environments in which Carlos and Ofelia struggle highlight their valiant efforts against the destruction that threatens them, as they

heroically maneuver in favor of life-preservation and revitalization (Norman, 5). As a result of the war Carlos and Ofelia are relocated, and as they acclimate themselves to their unpleasant new living environments they, like the child narrative viewers of the *El espíritu de la colmena*, *Cría cuervos*, and *El sur*, discover stories of others who have come before them and continue to make their presence known. Horror and Gothic elements discussed in this chapter are abundant in both of these works, and in addition, *El laberinto del fauno* heavily incorporates another important narrative tradition, the fairy tale.

¹²⁶ It is noteworthy how similar the phases of the hero's journey – the departure, the initiation, and the return – as outlined by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1973) is to the phases of Van Gennep's rite of passage – separation, liminality, and reintegration – I discussed in chapter 2.

Chapter 4: International Narratives

This chapter discusses the function of the child narrative viewer of war and its aftermath in two films by Mexican director Guillermo del Toro, *El espinazo del diablo* and *El laberinto del fauno*. These two narratives that depict the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath are “international” in the sense that they are both the result of the artistic collaboration of a Mexican director, Spanish producers Pedro and Agustín Almodóvar, Mexican lead cinematographer Guillermo Navarro, Spanish film crews, Spanish and American equipment, Mexican written scripts (with Spanish linguistic adjustments), and Spanish musical composer Javier Navarrete.¹²⁷ Disheartened by both the unwelcoming nature of the film industry in his home country and the loss of artistic control he has experienced with Hollywood productions, Del Toro happily accepted when after the 1994 screening of his film *Cronos* at the Miami Film Festival, Pedro Almodóvar approached him and offered to produce his next film (Kaufman; IGN).

Del Toro believes that “Mexican cinema is coming of age” in the 21st Century and he is excited that the filmmakers of his generation have raised the bar “technically and narratively” to the point where Mexican films are seen at international film festivals and compete in the international marketplace, but he does not feel that he (or Cuarón, or Iñárritu) represent the Mexican film industry (Puig; Fresh Air). “I don’t think there is a real Mexican film industry to speak of,” he explains. “It is such an unsupported form of art in Mexico that it’s very difficult to continue doing it, but I do think we represent one side of the spirit of Mexican filmmaking, which is not to be domesticated, which is to be

your own creature and to do your own thing” (Fresh Air).¹²⁸ This is precisely what Del Toro does with *El espinazo del diablo* and *El laberinto del fauno*, by finding international support for his films that grants him the freedom to express himself and “do his own thing.”

Del Toro’s films, commonly classified within the sci-fi, action, and horror genres, are contemporary and have mass-appeal especially for their strange creatures and increasingly technical special effects. But *El espinazo del diablo* and *El laberinto del fauno* are not just beautifully crafted monster-filled films that entertain; there is also political and historical depth to their narratives. As a director regularly associated with fantastic genres, he approaches his representations of the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath in a fresh way that appeals to audiences internationally by building upon horror and Gothic traditions, while also adding elements of fairy tales and utilizing amazing technology. As such, his films draw wide audiences, some of whom may be learning about the Spanish Civil War for the first time through his films, and may be inspired to research these important historical events and founding traumas whose effects continue to be felt to this day.¹²⁹ I include Del Toro’s films in my investigation, also, because they

¹²⁷ Del Toro submitted the first version of the script, and Almodóvar pointed out that the dialogue was full of Mexican expressions and phrasing. “I asked him what I should do. The next day, Pedro came in with four pages of possibilities for dialogue in Castillian Spanish” (IGN).

¹²⁸ Cuarón agrees. “I don’t believe in the Mexican film community, Cuarón says. “The film community in Mexico is completely rusted. By the same token, I believe amazing individual talent is coming from there” (Puig). He continues: “I cannot say what we do represents what Mexican cinema is about.[...] In a way, we’re ostracized from the Mexican filmmaking community. Success is punishable within the film community in Mexico. There’s this part of the community that accuses you of selling out. If you travel or live outside of Mexico, then you’re not a real Mexican. If you’re entertaining, then you’re superficial. If you’re trying to make money, then you’re a capitalist pig. It comes from a very dinosauric left-wing way of thinking. But there’s a new generation that couldn’t care less about all that” (Puig).

¹²⁹ In addition to the fact that many of his friends were children of Spanish exiles, as were many of the filmmakers he admired, Del Toro says he was inspired to learn more about the Spanish Civil War when,

are a good example of the direction in which cinema is headed in terms of the presentation of *homodiegetic* point of view. The filmic techniques he employs convey the child's perspective not just from the child's eyes but also with engaging psychological shots of his reactions and shifting perspectives to present a fuller view of the child and his world.

In the first chapter, I specified the fairy tale as one of the main genres in which the child figure historically occupies a primary narrative role. Although originally intended for adults, the fairy tale adapted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to speak to younger audiences, all the while remaining rich in lessons for people of all ages, advocating model behavior and compliance with hierarchical societal structures. To this end, traditionally the fairy-tale protagonist's goal has been to overcome obstacles that block his/her achievement of sanctioned and customary social milestones, such as winning a spouse, becoming wealthy, or gaining the respect of officials and the community (Zipes – Theory, 1). In modern times, fairy tales have taken on many new and contrary purposes, including subverting behavioral constraints, voicing contemporary social and political dissidence, and inspiring groups to remain hopeful in the wake of war.¹³⁰

The fairy-tale protagonist attempts to make his way in the world, often traveling through unfamiliar territory and having new experiences, but his journey eventually ends

after Franco's death, films and underground comics depicting (in very explicit ways) the conflict and its aftermath came flooding out of Spain (Fresh Air; Hermoso).

¹³⁰ In the 20th century, not only did fairy tales provide a landscape in which artists who witnessed founding traumas could release and reinterpret their traumatic memories but, in the form of animated films that boomed at the box office, they also helped restore hope to a downtrodden postwar populace (Zipes – Theory, 7). Zipes conjectures that after witnessing acts of great barbarism, society's collective need to believe in the possibility of a happy ending motivated the increasing demand for fairy tales.

with the reconstitution of his home (Zipes – Subversion, 176). But in the fairy tale even familiar locations are made unfamiliar, as otherwise normal homes, for example, can have incredibly large stoves for cooking children, magical trees, curses, or witches who own them (Haase, 362). For this reason, the fairy tale can be of service to victims of trauma and alienation, for as they follow the narrative, they too can disassociate and journey with the protagonist through the unfamiliar, in a double search for the reestablishment of normalcy and security.

Haase likens this fairy-tale defamiliarization to the real world defamiliarization experienced by Holocaust and war survivors when they were uprooted, relocated, or witnessed their hometowns turned into bombarded wastelands (363). He believes that for this reason children of war especially may benefit from exposure to fairy tales, because they:

identify both the distressing disfigurement of familiar places and dislocations such as exile and imprisonment with the landscape and physical spaces of the fairy tale, and [...] within that imaginative space, they transform their physical surroundings into a hopeful, utopian space as a psychological defense and means of emotional survival. (Haase, 362)

When fantasy or fairy tales appear within a war narrative, they typically signal an effort to resolve a problematic reality (Leed, 117). A narrative demonstration of both Haase's and Leed's theories appears in *El laberinto del fauno*, as Ofelia, dislocated by war and rejected by her new father figure, enters a parallel fairy-tale realm in which she seeks to reconstitute a stable, satisfying, welcoming home. Leed reasons that retreat into alternate realities is a logical reaction to war, because the myths of and about war – particularly, its heroic glory and nobility – are not based on real world happenings. They were an escape, “a flight from constraining modern realities that in war were translated into military

terms. The actualities of war, in sum, necessitated a movement toward fantasy and myth” (Leed, 118).

The inclusion of fairy tales within Mexican and Spanish postwar narratives often serves to *demythify* the traditional fairy tale’s promise of the happy ending, and to disrupt the male-dominated hierarchy. Customarily, hierarchy begins at home in fairy tales, as at the head of the fairy-tale family (as typical also in the postwar era family), an authoritarian male makes most of decisions and, notes Zipes, if a fairy-tale “mother, queen, or fairy godmother appears in a more active role than the male, she still acts in favor of a patriarchal society” (Subversion, 148). In this environment the young heroine of the traditional tale receives lessons of humility, modesty, honesty, chastity, and obedience, while coming to understand the importance of putting others before oneself (Zipes – Subversion, 148). Female roles are starkly polarized, as the women who do not adhere to this formula tend to be deceitful evil witches, curious wives, or disobedient daughters who suffer terrible consequences for their improper behavior (Tatar, 113).¹³¹ But in the postwar works of Rosario Castellanos, Elena Garro, Laura Esquivel, Carmen Laforet, Ana María Matute, Carmen Martín Gaité, and Víctor Erice, for example, fairy tales empower women and pose a feminist challenge to the patriarchal current that pervaded both Mexican and Spanish societies (Oder de Baubetta, 132-133). In these narratives women are encouraged to fend for themselves, develop independence, think,

¹³¹ Mercedes in *El laberinto del fauno* is aware of the captain’s chauvinism and cleverly utilizes the formulas of the fairy tale female to her advantage. While her job is to serve obediently, humbly, and dutifully, and she appears to do just that, she uses this subservient behavior to mask her duplicitous alliance with the rebels.

question, create, and not passively wait for everything working out in the end, because Cinderella does not always get to attend the ball.

In her study of *El espíritu de la colmena*, Eva Parrondo outlines traces of the “Little Red Riding Hood” fairy tale she finds within the film as Ana’s caped coat, the fugitive as the wolfman who arrives after the full moon, and Fernando as the huntsman (264). If one accepts this theory, then these fairy tale references highlight the danger Ana faces as she ventures off on her own into the Spanish countryside of the hazy “*érase una vez.*” And in *Cría*, Ana recalls Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tale “Thumbelina,” the tale that her mother used to tell her at bedtime to calm and perhaps inspire her little girl. The story describes a small girl, as little as an almond, who nevertheless exercises her free will, marries happily, and receives wings to fly. Considering the feats that a girl the size of an almond could accomplish, the story has the power to reassure Ana of her potential to accomplish big things even in a repressive postwar environment.

A journey into a distant realm or underworld connotes the hero’s introspection, one that “leads to a dangerous but vital confrontation between the conscious and the unconscious. If all goes well, this process results in synthesis and spiritual integration” (Lüthi, 117; Jung, “The Spirit of Mercurius”). Fairies, from the Latin *fata* for “fate,” often appear along the way as personifications of the character’s frustrations, and proceed to guide him/her and explain gently the workings of the unfamiliar environment (Tresidder, 176). The dislocated Ofelia of *El laberinto del fauno* first sees a fairy while traveling to her new home, which suggests that he may be a projection of her apprehension and of her desire to elude the captain’s order and instead actively create her own, alternative order (Tanvir). She enters the magical underworld from whence the

fairies come, and at first it appears dark, dangerous, mysterious, and quite distinct from the world above, but as time passes the two worlds meld. And although Ofelia's mother assures her that fairy tales are nothing like the real world, Del Toro complicates the relation between life and art, discourages the use of simple dichotomies, and reveals the darkness of war by suggesting, disturbingly, that they are indeed like the real world (Smith 2007, 8).¹³²

Fairy-tale elements are present in *El espinazo del diablo* and abound in *El laberinto del fauno*.¹³³ Oversized scissors hanging in the foreground of the kitchen of *El espinazo del diablo*, just steps away from where a child truly was killed by an adult, remind the audience of the tales of wicked hags who chop up children for dinner. And by intentionally casting physically attractive actors as the most evil villains, Jacinto and Vidal, in both films Del Toro seeks to break the cliché that associates ugliness with nasty disposition. The dress Carmen gives Ofelia in *El laberinto del fauno* resembles the one worn by Alice of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. And while Ofelia's mirror reveals her Lacanian recognition of self and the forming of her ego, the captain's mirror suggests the fairy-tale response that he is no longer the fairest in the land (Del Toro in EW; Mulvey). Fairy tales allow child narrative witnesses to war and its aftermath to understand and cope with their tumultuous or oppressive surroundings by facilitating entry to another realm; and by prompting them to tap into their inner strength

¹³²Here, in the blurring of lines between real and fictitious, lies an allusion to Don Quijote, for fantasy literature transforms that outcast's experience of the mundane into the fantastic, as it does for Ofelia. "It may be no accident that the film's principal location (built like all the sets to del Toro's precise specification) is a mill, albeit one deprived of the giant sails which gave rise to the knight's most famous exploit" (Smith 2007, 5).

to become thinking, compassionate individuals. The violence and cruelty of war may deprive these children of their childhoods, but in turn fairy tales may reactivate their imaginations or warn the children of the dangers that surround them. Although Carlos's time at the orphanage of *El espinazo del diablo* draws more from the horror and Gothic genres, like the Spanish works of the preceding chapter, Del Toro acknowledges that he purposefully included fairy tales in both of these films. What is clear is that both child narrative viewers attempt to heal, grow, and establish a more stable home environment amid the chaos.

Bearing in mind the significance of the fairy tale as pertaining to trauma and psychological journey of the protagonist, I now turn to analyze the child's perspective in the final two works of this study, the international films by Guillermo del Toro. The child narrative viewers of both *El espinazo del diablo* and *El laberinto del fauno* suffer dislocation by war, relocation in an unfamiliar realm, and undesired and uncomfortable restructuring of the family's hierarchy.

EL ESPINAZO DEL DIABLO

Guillermo del Toro's *El espinazo del diablo* records events that occur during the Spanish Civil War as seen through the eyes of a young boy named Carlos, as he attempts to determine why he has been sent to an orphanage and to uncover the mystery of its ghost. His character development – seen in his responses to stimuli in his environment – documents his journey from naïveté to awareness of danger, and ultimately to action against his enemy. His final assertive acts presented within the film distinguish Carlos as the only child narrative viewer to attempt resistance and active recovery through positive community building. Visual and audio film techniques play an integral part of Carlos'

narrative by establishing the temporal and spatial setting, foreshadowing future danger, suggesting past trauma, revealing crucial information about the characters, and reminding the viewer of Santi's presence even when he is off-screen.

When trying to pinpoint the work temporally, automotive-savvy viewers will appreciate the black 1935 Peugeot 601 D that carries 10 year-old protagonist Carlos along the dirt road to his new home, a school and impromptu Republican orphanage. Markers such as “¿Qué coño pinta un jodido chino en una guerra española?” (in reference to a member of the International Brigade who is about to be executed by the Nationalists) help viewers determine that the film is set during the Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939, and “Cataluña está a caer, luego caerá Madrid, y luego...” Carmen's update on specific fronts, helps place the work at the end of 1938, or possibly as late as January of 1939, when increased Nationalist attacks in Cataluña promised its imminent fall.

Within the context of the Civil War there are three main timeframes of this film. The first is that of the *extradiegetic* present of encapsulating voiceover by an initially unidentified male. It is not until the end of the film that the audience becomes aware that this is the voice of the ghost of Doctor Casares, and his voiceover, which also serves as an exit from the film, is literally the voice of the haunting presence that lingers with Carlos and the boys after their trauma.¹³⁴ The second timeframe, that of the *intradiegetic* past whose action begins with Carlos' car ride to the orphanage, comprises the majority of the film and arrives at the *extradiegetic* present as the doctor watches from the main

¹³⁴ The fact that the doctor becomes a ghost plays against Carmen's observation that the boys have been talking about seeing a ghost at the orphanage. She confesses that sometimes she feels like they themselves are the ghosts. (“Los niños hablan de un fantasma, lo has oído? [...] A veces pienso que los fantasmas como nosotros.”)

gate of the orphanage as the remaining survivors leave in search of help. Before Carlos' arrival however, there occurs another event, one night in particular of utmost importance marked by the residents of the orphanage as "the night the bomb fell." As Carlos does not witness these events, he is unable to focalize them for the audience. Instead, the opening montage alludes to the tragedy, but mystery surrounds the events of that night well into the storyline as much for the audience as it does for Carlos, contributing to the mysterious Gothic tone of the film.¹³⁵ Ultimately, the details are revealed to Carlos and the audience through Jaime's drawings and ultimately in his *metadiegetic* narration. On this dark and rainy night, the same night a bomb lands in the courtyard, Santi, a boy residing at the orphanage, is murdered in the kitchen cellar. The bomb, immense and terrifying, does not detonate however, and once deactivated, it remains in the courtyard, an immovable and ominous reminder of that night.¹³⁶

Spatially, the work is set by markers of news updates about Madrid and Cataluña; war planes flying overhead; the bomb in the courtyard; the execution of Republicans by Nationalists in town; Carmen hiding her gold ingots and Ayala and Domínguez refusing

¹³⁵ The opening voiceover that presents the work and posits, "¿Qué es un fantasma?" is accompanied with images of the cellar doorway, a bomb dropping, an injured child with grieving child above him, and malformed babies suspended in amber liquid. These images provide a quick overview of the night the bomb fell. The first image of the doorway invites the viewer into the narrative, and as the camera zooms into the darkness therein, it transitions to the darkness of the inside of a bomber plane. The hatch opens and the bomb drops, and when the hatch closes the darkness becomes that of a figure, Jaime, crossing in front of the camera on his way to observe the injured Santi. A cause-effect relationship is hereby suggested between the dropping of the bomb and Santi's injury. The image of a horrified and helpless Jaime fades out as a shot of the water fades in, and then Santi's body enters the water and sinks. The camera fades from Santi's body into Jaime's reflection in the water, indicating the one who is left behind as witness to his death. The camera pans up to show Jaime, then zooms out to a long shot that is then set to the background of an overlay of the image of the babies in *agua de limbo*. Liquid unites these images, and their combination suggests that now Jaime, too, is trapped and malformed as a result of viewing his companion's accidental death.

to take them for fear of being searched – suggestive of frozen assets and fear of being recognized as Republicans; and Carmen’s explanation for why they needed to erect statues of Jesus and John the Baptist in the orphanage (“Si la nueva España es católica y apostólica...”). A marker that audiences may rely on for more exact placement within Spain is again the automobile. There are three vehicles depicted in this film, the first is the one in which Ayala and Domínguez arrive with Carlos, the second is the one Jacinto’s friends from the town drive, and the third is the one that is used to make the orphanage’s deliveries into town. The latter’s license plate never comes into clear view, but the first two both have numbers preceded by the letter “Z” for Zaragoza (Z1228 and Z932, respectively), in Aragón, in the northeastern province of Spain. The orphanage, itself a microcosm of war-time Spain, is where most of the action of this film takes place and is located in a rural grassy area with dirt roads and low mountains in the distance. They are far enough from town that they suspect that no one has heard the explosion, and when Conchita goes for help she assesses that she will arrive in town the following day at noon if she walks all night.¹³⁷

Camera angles establish Carlos as the main narrative viewer of *El espinazo del diablo*, reveal his changing psychological state, and – through the presentation of key objects in the mise-en-scène – highlight the importance of fairy tales (as mentioned above), the war, and religion. Carlos’ point of view drives the film, and is marked

¹³⁶ The bomb of this work is reminiscent of one described in Chapter 4 of Elie Weisel’s 1958 publication *Night*, an autobiographical account of his detention in several prison camps during the Holocaust. Here he describes a bomb that lands in the yard and does not detonate (72).

¹³⁷ Since events suggest that Conchita leaves the orphanage after breakfast but before lunch, the shadows on the road suggest that she is headed south towards town. Whether or not this lighting was taken into

spatially from his first appearance during the car ride with Ayala and Domínguez en route to the orphanage. He watches from the backseat of the moving vehicle (like Ana in *Cria cuervos* en route to the country) and turns his gaze out the window to the countryside, unaware that his life has already begun to change drastically. The audience travels with Carlos and together we enter the narrative of the orphanage. Throughout the film Carlos' viewpoint is presented in several ways: there are shots directly from his eyes and similar over-the-shoulder shots to present what he sees; close-ups of his expressions that function as internal psychological shots suggesting his thoughts and feelings; and shots at a greater distance that place him within the fullness of the scene, showing in turn his action, inaction, or reactions to what is occurring around him. This latter perspective (for example, as seen when Carlos enters the kitchen for the first time in search of the ghost) is especially useful in revealing the child narrative viewer's isolation and smallness as he enters an environment that is unfamiliar, or would be considered dangerous or potentially overwhelming for a child.¹³⁸

On several occasions the perspective shifts away from Carlos, however. This transition occurs in order to present scenes in which only adults are present (as it similarly functions in *Balún Canán* and in *El laberinto del fauno*); to assume the point of view of Santi as he watches Carlos and the boys (as with the insect in *El laberinto del fauno*); or in the final scene to show the viewpoint of the ghost of Casares as the boys leave the school's walls. The focal shift to view from Santi's eyes contributes to the

consideration upon filming is not certain and therefore is cited here to be an interesting, but inconclusive observation.

haunting atmosphere by verifying that it's not just a suspicion, that indeed there is a watcher lurking in the darkness of the orphanage. But his representative camera angle is familiar, for it is as low as it is when the similarly statured Carlos views, which connects these two perspectives for the audience and suggests these characters bear other similarities that could unite them. Both Santi's and the deceased Casares' gaze bestow life upon their ghostly presences, reminding the audience that after the trauma, the fallen remain and continue to walk among the living. Despite these temporary shifts, the audience's narrative allegiance remains with the child, in fact even more so, for now – having momentarily broken through the limits of the child narrative viewer's cognition and spatial restrictions – we have a fuller understanding of the danger that threatens that child, and the forces that are working for and against him.

Distraught and confused about why his caregivers have left him at the orphanage, Carlos openly asks Doctor Casares why he is here instead of with his father.¹³⁹ Through this direct questioning (as well as by Ayala's previous conversation with Carmen) the audience learns that Carlos is unaware that his father has been killed in the war. The doctor responds indirectly by telling him that he will have to spend some time with them, just a little, and the camera cuts to a close-up of Carlos as he nods, accepting the doctor's answer. A long shot of Carlos dropping his school-issued soap reveals his

¹³⁸ It is utilized also, for example, in *Bandidos* as Luis enters the ransacked school; in *El espíritu de la colmena* when Ana crosses the open plain toward the well; in *El laberinto del fauno* as Ofelia descends into the underworld.

¹³⁹ Carlos is not the only one upset about his arrival at the orphanage. When Casares tells Carmen that they have brought another child for them to care for, her face falls, revealing utter distress. Work now stops as she prepares her prosthetic leg to move to address this matter, her face tired but determined. The viewer may infer that Ayala and Domínguez travel back and forth bringing children of Republican parents to the orphanage in the hopes of protecting them from the violence of the war, and Carlos is one of these

unpreparedness for his new home, the roving shot from the point of view of the other boys as they enter the bedroom highlights Carlos as an outsider, and then the evening ends with a medium shot of him lying in bed unable to sleep while all the boys around him slumber. If this unrest can be viewed as an indication that Carlos feels ill at ease and out of place in the school, it must be noted that eventually he does adjust to his new environment, as can be witnessed in the scene in which Carlos lies fast asleep while the other boys wake him to ask if they can see his comics. As the exchange and sharing of comic books throughout the film represents the bond of boyish friendship, this act confirms that Carlos, in addition to having accepted this place as his new home (if only temporarily), is also accepted by the other boys who live there.¹⁴⁰

Carlos' Other and one of the central figures of *El espinazo del diablo* is deceased for the majority of the film, but mysteriously appears – with the help of lighting and visual effects – in ghost form to the boys of the orphanage. He materializes in the kitchen doorway to Carlos immediately upon the latter's arrival at the orphanage, even before Carlos meets the other boys. Carlos turns in search of other witnesses who might verify what he believes he has seen – of which there are none – and by the time his glance returns to the doorway, Santi is gone. His nearly translucent and at times transparent body disappears as quickly as it appears, during both darkness and the light of day, which establishes the mystery, fear, and omnipresence of this tragic figure. Special effects

children. Carmen's expression reveals that this practice is becoming a problem, and in the next scene the viewer learns why – the orphans are becoming too numerous for them to care for properly.

¹⁴⁰ Similarly, and indicative of the narrative's power to forge bonds, another form literature serves to bond Carlos and the doctor. It is their discussion of Dumas' novel *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1884) (doubly significant, for this literary escape to diversion is also a tale of wrongful punishment and escape from imprisonment) that helps them initiate friendship.

simulate flies that surround him and blood floating from his wounded head, a trail that hangs in the gelatinous air, can be physically touched by the living, and calls attention to the injury that brought about his death. Santi's mischief is established through visual effects, as well, for example when he becomes invisible and knocks over the boys' water pitchers to compel them to make a trip to the kitchen, his wet footprints alone marking his exit route for Carlos to follow. The viewer learns that Santi's repeated efforts to lure Carlos to the cellar below the kitchen are motivated by his desire to "tell his story," warn the boys of impending danger, and exact revenge on Jacinto. In addition, complementary to the haunting nature of his character, Santi is referenced visually in indirect ways throughout the film, reminding the viewers of his tragedy and his omnipresence in the boys' thoughts. Three primary visual references to Santi are the slugs the boys collect, the egg Carlos eats for breakfast, and the rotten apple Carlos finds on the kitchen floor.

As he crouches at the foot of the bomb, a close-up shot shows Carlos' hand picking up a slug. He studies it carefully and tucks it away into his box of treasures, smiling with satisfaction at the first item he has found while at the orphanage. Throughout the film these creatures are a constant source of amusement for the boys, who scour the damp cellar collecting them. The night the bomb falls, Santi and Jaime and are engaged in this activity when they hear noises from the kitchen and discover Jacinto, in search of his own treasure, attempting to open the orphanage's safe. The slugs' presence at Santi's accident coupled with the fact that they often feed on carrion connect them with darkness and death, and thus each time they are presented they hearken back to Santi's tragic fate. The boys' regular interaction with these creatures therefore shows both the interweaving of playtime and danger, reminding the audience

how close they are to death, and also how they are willing to approach something perceived as revolting or frightening, as they eventually do with the deceased Santi.

Another visual reminder of Santi for the audience is Carlos' breakfast egg. In a close-up shot he cracks the shell of his white oval hard-boiled egg and simultaneously interrupts Gálvez's story regarding a letter from his mother, to interject a more pressing matter that's occupying his thoughts – last night he saw the ghost. The camera holds steady and tight on his face to mark Carlos' determination and certainty. He continues opening his egg and professes that he is positive the ghost is Santi, and upon pronouncing these words he turns the egg towards the camera revealing an internal crack, a diagonal deep slash through the white of the egg. This visual suggests an association between this broken object and Santi, who died from a trauma to the head – a gash across his pale forehead in a similar fashion. It is a psychological shot representative of Carlos' thoughts, replicating the connection he has just made.

Right before and after Carlos' egg scene, apples also hint at Santi's presence. To the audience, already familiar with Jacinto's penchant for unnecessary violence, the connection is subtle at first, as Jacinto uses his knife to stab the pristine apple he's about to eat, mimicking his attack upon the defenseless Santi the night of his death. But later, after the explosion, potatoes and apples are strewn about the kitchen floor, victims of the blast, and the boys gather whatever they can salvage. The camera presents this scene at first from across the room, to place the boys amid the devastation, but just as with the larger tragedy of Santi's death, it is not until the aftermath is viewed through Carlos' eyes that the audience is able to comprehend and make definite associations. Carlos picks up an apple that at first appears like the rest but he soon discovers is rotten at the top, the

same position of the crack in the hard boiled egg, and the cut in Santi's head. As Carlos examines the spoiled apple the camera shows a tight shot of it in his hand, and when the camera pans out again there stands a figure – it is Santi. After multiple terrifying encounters and much contemplation, Carlos is ready to confront, listen to, and ultimately pledge his assistance to Santi, demonstrating his recognition that the true enemy that threatens him and his friends is not the gruesome walking dead boy as suspected, but rather someone from within his own species, race...and country – Jacinto, the self-interested, anarchist custodian of the school. Carlos learns that your enemy does not necessarily have to look different from you. This revelation strengthens the allegory of the Spanish Civil War as being encapsulated within the gates of the school.

Of the many important objects that form the *mise-en-scène* of *El espinazo del diablo*, the bomb in the courtyard, religious statues and crosses, the doctor's *agua de limbo*, and the boys' comics and Jaime's drawings bear special significance.

An ominous object that dominates many of the frames of this film is the bomb that looms in the courtyard.¹⁴¹ A constant reminder of the war, it immediately captures the attention of and appears to physically draw in young Carlos as he enters the orphanage for the first time. He approaches it directly, scans it with his eyes in fascination, and taps on it, revealing the intrepidity of youth and a curiosity that suggests he has never seen an instrument of warfare like this one at such a close distance. Throughout the film this projectile appears in each courtyard scene and may be seen in

¹⁴¹ As evidenced by the bomb's little rock border and two decorative flower pots, the people of the school have resigned themselves to its continued presence in the middle of their courtyard and have opted to move forward as best they can, by simply making it appear more homey. This signifies an acceptance of war in their daily lives.

the background in numerous doorway shots, dwarfing the boys as they attempt to understand its connection to the mystery of Santi's disappearance. The boys conceive the bomb as a mysteriously animate object that – according to Jaime – has a heart. It, like the war, could potentially destroy the boys but has not yet, and they respect its power as they stand below it, hoping to more fully comprehend the loss of life that they believe is related to it: since the bomb arrived the night Santi disappeared, they suspect it has information about him.

The wind in *El espinazo del diablo* also has a story to tell. Its primary functions are to facilitate what appears to be a supernatural communication with the bomb, and to establish a feeling of remoteness, quiet, and the futility of seeking outside help.¹⁴² When Carlos wishes to find Santi, he sneaks out in his pajamas into the courtyard and approaches the weapon. Dwarfed by its enormousness, yet still bold in speech, he asks it directly, “Bomba, si estás viva, dime dónde está Santi.” The wind mysteriously picks up

¹⁴² Another example of the wind's seemingly supernatural activity occurs when Jacinto and Conchita stand outside in the darkness of the courtyard discussing his secret past as a member of the orphanage. This intimate close-up is broken first by the audio of material flapping, then within the tight frame Jacinto's eyes follow the sound, and then the camera pans out to a long shot of the two dwarfed by a large dark object. Atop the object, which the viewer recognizes as the bomb, is the source of the sound – flags blowing in the wind. Jacinto identifies this as the source of the sound, as well, and keeps his eyes locked upon it – as one would with an enemy – as he suggests they take refuge from the cold. He appears uncomfortable and cautiously scans the courtyard while ushering Conchita inside. It is hereby suggested that Jacinto's desire to retreat, although ostensibly to seek warmth, is at least partially motivated by his guilty remembrance of the night the bomb fell. By growing more forceful at that moment, the wind seems to participate in their conversation, comment on Jacinto's return to the orphanage after so many years, and implicate him in Santi's disappearance.

In another episode, Jacinto attempts to open the safe to steal “the cause's” gold ingots, and sets his lantern on the counter. As he inserts his latest key the flame flickers as if a great wind were blowing through the kitchen. In a moment the light extinguishes and Jacinto looks first to it, and then to the cellar, and with these glances the viewer understands that Jacinto has again made the connection between the wind and Santi's death. The camera frames the doorway to the cellar, begins to descend, and then cuts to a close-up of Jacinto's hands locking the kitchen door, as he once again retreats and seeks to cover his guilt. By mysteriously extinguishing Jacinto's lamplight, the wind in this scene appears to want to impede his escape from Santi by making it difficult for him to see his way out of the darkened kitchen. Jacinto's glance to the

causing the flags to blow in the direction of the cellar, and one of the red flags breaks free and flies to the doorway of the kitchen where it lodges momentarily before continuing on to Santi's exact location. Carlos, believing, follows. From this and other similar scenes of apparent dialogue with the bomb, viewers can understand how the boys have come to assess it as being "alive," because the wind gives it its "voice" dynamically, by allowing its flags to move in seeming response to their inquiries. The viewer who already accepts Santi's otherworldly existence, must now also entertain the possibility that the forces of nature and the bomb are colluding against the villain so that Santi may have his revenge.¹⁴³

Religious items, meanwhile, help to establish the socio-political climate in which the characters reside. Crosses hang in the boys' bedroom and classroom, a rosary adorns Jaime's locker, and as the Nationalists advance towards the orphanage the boys are tasked with erecting statues of Jesus and John the Baptist to hide the fact that they are Republicans. While the statues and crosses speak to the caregivers' need to feign belief in Catholicism in order to protect themselves and the boys, Jaime's rosary suggests his or a loved one's genuine personal belief in this faith. Another object with special significance in revealing the beliefs of the time is Doctor Casares' *agua de limbo*, the object that relates to the title of the film.

cellar door and his haste to exit confirm that he, too, suspects that supernatural forces are conspiring against him.

¹⁴³ In addition to the recrimination of Jacinto, the wind's other function (as in *El espíritu de la colmena*) is to illustrate the quiet rural location of the orphanage. The series of shots marking the turmoil within the orphanage, for example, culminates in a car part propelling towards the camera and is juxtaposed against the tranquility of the grassy plain in a long shot of the exterior of the sunlit buildings. As Jacinto looks on, the wind blows the tall grass and carries away a trail of black smoke from the right of the frame that replicates the blood that flows from Santi's head – a shot that unites Jacinto's two tragic acts. This image

Carlos studies the *agua de limbo* babies on two separate significant occasions: when he questions Doctor Casares about the existence of ghosts and again when he fetches the doctor's medical bag to tend to the wounded. Both times, the babies' condition as victims of circumstance is juxtaposed against the children of the orphanage and their precarious safety. Although Carlos scrutinizes the babies within their containers, tapping on the glass as he does with the bomb, his refusal to drink the *agua de limbo* reveals his apprehension to come in direct contact with these malformed creatures, perhaps born of a childish fear of becoming one himself, trapped and lifeless, and never truly given the opportunity to live.

When Carlos asks if he believes in ghosts, the doctor responds that although he – a man of science – does not, many people in Spain do have strange superstitious beliefs, and for this reason many are willing to purchase their *agua de limbo* in the hopes of curing their ailments. He continues that now in addition to the superstitions, all of Europe is sick with fear, a certain reference to the beginnings of World War II. These markers illustrate the popular tension, desperation, and willingness to believe anything that may help in such turbulent times. The camera cuts to a close-up of a terrified and disgusted Carlos refusing the glass, but the scene ends with a twist as, after Carlos flees the room, the self-pronounced logical man of science takes a drink of the *agua de limbo*. Here, it is not the receptive child, but surprisingly the experienced adult who is willing to believe in its magical powers. This turn of events suggests that the doctor's desire to cure his sexual impotence outweighs his reason and he is therefore willing to go to unusual

also reminds the viewer of the insular nature of this affray, its almost imperceptibility to the outside world, and consequently the scant possibility the boys have of attaining outside assistance.

lengths in the hopes of curing it. On a larger scale it shows that even the non-superstitious, when driven to desperation, for example in times of war, may be willing to believe in incredible things and try outlandish means to help their cause. This is certainly the sentiment in Spain in the late 1930's and with these scenes Carlos and Casares' participation in that sentiment is duly noted.

Throughout the film, another object that consistently captivates the children's attention and reveals their understanding of the war in an extremely personal way are comics and drawings. Comic books, a typical source of diversion and narrative escape for children, serve as bridge for friendship between the younger boys Carlos, Gálvez and Buho, and as establisher of hierarchy when older Jaime subjugates Carlos by taking his book by force.¹⁴⁴ Jaime is the only boy at the orphanage whose drawing is featured within the film. This could serve to remind the audience that Jaime is older than the other boys, and thus has advanced from the reading of comic books to creative output of his own, but definitely calls attention to the fact that he was the only witness to Santi's murder and suggests that artwork is his necessary cathartic release of this trauma (like the girl in *Balún Canán*). When Carlos observes him drawing in class, he offers to collaborate artistically with Jaime in the future, but ironically (as this conversation transpires during a lesson about primitive man's need to work together) Jaime says he doesn't need any help;

¹⁴⁴ Del Toro has always been a fan of comics, and several images of the boys' boarding school in *El espinazo del diablo* are inspired by the comic series *Paracuellos* by Spanish cartoonist Carlos Giménez, which is based on Giménez's childhood during the postwar era in various *Auxilios Sociales*. Del Toro had read *Paracuellos*, the first series of which ran from the late 1970s and into the early eighties, and the second from 1997-2003 (Film Freak Central).

he works alone.¹⁴⁵ Carlos is curious, however, and suspects Jaime is withholding information that may be hidden within these drawings, so he secretly looks through the entire book of sketches later as Jaime sleeps. The nine drawings in this sketchbook are of particular importance to appreciating the children's perspective of their surroundings because Jaime depicts isolated events and people of the orphanage as he recalls them. The audience views each image as Carlos does, via a tight over the shoulder shot as he runs his hands over each page. Then, to reveal the boy's assessment of what he views, the camera gradually rotates and presents a close-up psychological shot of his reaction upon seeing Jaime's last horrifying drawing of an injured boy. As Carlos looks upon these images, he begins to piece together what might have happened to Santi the night the bomb fell.

The initial two drawings establish Jaime's spatial setting. The first, whose caption reads "un aguero [sic]?" is of a plane with a bomb falling from it, representative of "the night the bomb fell" of which the boys speak hesitantly. It is significant that this is the first drawing of Jaime's artwork, because it is this traumatic event that marks the beginning of the film's more remote *intradiegetic* past. The second drawing is of a chicken in its coop, like the one on the grounds of the orphanage, an object that forms a

¹⁴⁵ The lesson, which also foreshadows danger, is about the hunting and killing of a mammoth and stresses the importance of working together towards a common goal. Carmen presents the class with a picture of a large grey mammoth surrounded by humans with long pointed spears, and explains that although independently the men would be no match for such an enormous beast, unified they gain strength enough to conquer. Not one man could give up. The image of the mammoth appears two more times in the film, once in Jaime's book of drawings in which he has created his own rendition of the same image, and again in the concluding scenes in which the boys (including Jaime) collaborate and execute their plan to escape danger. They lure Jacinto (who is not coincidentally dressed in grey and has been referred to by himself and Conchita as a "bestia") to the cellar and attack him with long pointed sticks, bringing him to his knees (moving on all mammoth-like fours). The image of the mammoth is hereby repeated and the boys carry out their lesson, finding safety and strength in collective action.

part of the boys' chores, and appears throughout the film in association with Jacinto.

This drawing sets the orphanage as the location of the "story" of Jaime's other drawings and is significant not only for its depiction of the boys' routine, but also for its foreshadowing of their confinement within the storage room whose windows are secured with chicken wire.

Jaime's next illustrations introduce some of the activities that comprise his world, and foreshadow the fate of several characters. The third image, with caption "-emos hecho un agujero [sic]," shows a large object next to one tall and one short figure, presumably in the orphanage courtyard. The tall scowling figure holds two objects in his hands, and above them – in a more detailed window than the other – another boy looks on. The figures have large eyes and small mouths, indicating how they have witnessed things but do not speak of them. Jaime's fourth drawing is of a man in a hat riding a horse through a leafless wooded area; and inspired by Carmen's lesson on prehistoric man and foreshadowing beastlike Jacinto's demise at the hands of the children, Jaime's fifth drawing is of four men spearing a mammoth. The sixth drawing features Carmen, drawn with her typical long black dress and cane, recognizable features for the boys, but dark birds are flying all around her, perhaps an allusion that the boys see her as witchlike, or on another level perhaps an ill omen suggestive of her impending death. Jaime's seventh picture is of an "ombre anatomico [sic]" with arm extended upward, presumably the counterpart to the picture of the naked woman Jaime trades Carlos for his cigar ring. Jaime's drawing of these "anatomically correct" pictures shows that he, the oldest of the boys, is beginning to enter puberty and be curious about the human body and differences between the genders. His willingness to trade the picture for the ring, the symbol of

actively seeking the companionship of a real woman, shows that he is ahead of the other boys in his development, for they are content to look at pictures. Furthermore, Jaime's misspelling and lack of proper accentuation in his captions indicate that he is still learning to write. The eighth drawing in the series is of a wise-looking old man with a long beard and a cloud behind him, presumably representative of Doctor Casares because Jacinto later refers to him as "el viejito sabio." This depiction reveals the reverence Jaime and the boys have for the doctor, respecting his intelligence and viewing him as an otherworldly, godlike protector.

The final drawing of Jaime's sketchbook is his representation of Santi's tragic death. The drawing is of a boy with a head injury and is the only drawing to include color – red to mark the blood and the bold psychological impact this traumatic event had upon Jaime. The injured figure is recognizable also by his vest, as Santi is the only boy of the orphanage to wear one. A tight shot of the drawing as Carlos pronounces Santi's name reveals his recognition of the boy, followed by a visible indication – a close-up of his face turning to look at the sleeping Jaime in his metal-framed bed – of his awareness that Jaime knows the details of Santi's death.¹⁴⁶ The images within Jaime's sketchbook serve as visual *paralepsis* alerting Carlos – and viewers – to events that occurred before

¹⁴⁶ Quickly the image changes to the metal chassis of an automobile and the activity of unloading the *agua de limbo* bottles for the townsfolk. Another loss of life is presented in this scene, only in this case the victims are adults, and their death is intentional. As the boys do not leave the orphanage, Carlos is unable to focalize this activity, but its inclusion alerts the audience to the larger danger and intentional murder that surrounds the boys. It is the scene in which Doctor Casares witnesses the Nationalist firing squad round up and then murder Republicans, including his friend Ayala. While the commander of the Nationalist unit maintains composure, Casares jumps as each of the shots are fired, making every effort to contain his terror and sorrow. The imminent danger of the war and the omnipresence of death are presented as these two scenes are juxtaposed and the children's and adults' storylines are interwoven. The next scenes present the ways in which the child and the adult deal with their newly acquired information – Carlos seeks Santi

his arrival at the orphanage making it impossible for him to witness firsthand.¹⁴⁷ Once Carlos is made aware of the tragedy that transpired the night the bomb fell, his understanding of the gravity of the children's situation approximates that of Jaime's and the two, now of like mind, begin to join forces in the name of self-preservation.

The final image of the film solidifies this notion of the boys' unity. The camera, from the haunting perspective of the ghost of Casares, holds steady at the school's gate as the seven cross the threshold together and embark on their own, exhausted and wounded, but assisting one another and compensating for each other's weaknesses. Jaime carries Buho and another boy carries the limping Gálvez's suitcase as they begin the long walk toward town. The understanding is that the boys have a long journey ahead, but since they have already overcome so much by working together, this new challenge may also be surmountable.

The audio soundtrack of *El espinazo del diablo* is comprised of abundant instrumental music, character motifs, and five lyrical songs: "Besos Fríos" written by Romero and Lhoba, "Una lágrima" by Cardenas and Varona, "Recordar" by Borel-Clerc and Salado, "Presumidos" by Alcázar and Prometeo, and "Yo no sé que me han hecho tus ojos" by Canaro. This music alludes to Santi's continued presence and provides the viewer with insight as to the characters' unspoken sentiment, for example Carlos' shock and dismay upon being left at the orphanage, Carmen's suspicion that Jacinto is attempting to access the safe, everyone's haste in readying to flee the orphanage as the

directly, and Doctor Casares turns within for silent contemplation. After being faced with the harsh reality of their situation, each emerges with greater determination of what course of action to follow.

¹⁴⁷ "Paralepsis can...consist, in internal focalization, of incidental information about the thoughts of a character other than the focal character, or about a scene that the latter is not able to see" (Genette, 197).

Nationalists advance, and the boys' determined preparation for battle with Jacinto.

Strings in staccato rhythm accompany Carlos' and Jaime's initial courtyard row, then culminate in a sustained anticipatory high note as Carlos apprehends that he is being abandoned at the orphanage. A panicked swell of strings races as he desperately tears after the moving vehicle so as not to be left behind, and then slow low strings mark his realization that his chase is in vain. Carlos stops running and turns back to face his new caregivers as the creaking of the Peugeot, the crunch of his shoes on the gravelly road, and the cry of a bird of prey add desolation and finality to the music's cessation.¹⁴⁸

The lyrical songs, an assortment of musical selections from Spain and Spanish America that further establish the international nature of this film, are played *diegetically* via radio and phonograph, and they facilitate a deeper understanding of the diegetic listeners' activity or frame of mind. "Besos fríos" performed by Raquel Méller plays on

¹⁴⁸ Instrumental music grants access to the point of view of other characters as well. While Carmen searches her ring for Carlos' locker key, low notes on the piano sound ominously and she pauses, her troubled face implying a key is unaccounted for. Three high notes then sound, connoting her suspicion of what may have happened to the key, a connection to Jacinto that the viewer will not see until scenes later when he informs his cohorts that he has two new keys to try.

Later, when Jacinto is exiled and they begin to evacuate the orphanage, steady repetitive low notes on strings mark the gravity of the impending danger, while high strings mark their need for a swift departure. (A similar rallying music that accompanies this forced exodus from the orphanage is heard again when a few scenes later the boys, now on their own, unite against Jacinto.) When Jacinto ignites the fire and an explosion is imminent, the low notes yield to the dominant high notes on strings and horns that represent the residents' frenetic yet futile efforts to stop it. After the first explosion the music ceases and all that is heard are the wind and the pained breaths of injured Doctor Casares. After the second explosion, the soundtrack is temporarily presented through the doctor, who suffered hearing loss in his left ear and thus hears only muted sounds.

While muffled sound is employed following the explosion to alert the audience to the temporary shift to Casares' point of view, musical motifs are a technique used to reference particular characters throughout the film. A seven-note series serves as Jacinto's aural motif, played on violin in a higher octave when he is with Conchita, revealing her – albeit slight – domesticating influence upon his otherwise barbaric disposition, and in a lower octave when he is alone. His motif is therefore understood as revealing his present state of mind. Santi's theme is a descending four-note sequence that is heard, for example, the first night Carlos occupies his bed, when Jaime is pushed into the cistern, when Jacinto's lantern is blown out in the kitchen, and when Carlos identifies Jaime's drawing of Santi. This motif is different from Jacinto's in that it intimates a connection between the corresponding images and Santi's ghostly presence.

the radio as Conchita and Jacinto kiss, a reference to his cold and untrustworthy disposition. In contrast, romantic Doctor Casares puts on a heart-wrenching Carlos Gardel tango entitled “Una lágrima” as he recites poetry through the wall to Carmen. The song’s lyrics, which resonate of the pain caused by being left by a lover, suggest the doctor’s frustration about his inability to consummate his love for Carmen because of his impotence. Casares’ affinity for tangos alludes to his Argentinean roots, and his phonograph is juxtaposed against Jacinto and Conchita’s radio, marking their difference in generations. Jacinto attempts to repair this radio in the courtyard, first by tinkering with tools and finally with bare-handed violence, and when it tunes in to a frequency the 1931 waltz “Recordar” sung by Imperio Argentina (who, like Casares, left her home country Argentina and relocated in Spain, but in sharp contrast she is known for her professional and personal ties to Nazi Germany and her support of the Spanish Falangists) and Manolo Russell comes across the airwaves.¹⁴⁹ The lyrics, describing an unforgettable love and crazy night, contrast sharply against Jacinto’s refusal to dance with Conchita in the courtyard. The final two songs of the film are played on the phonograph amidst the post-explosion chaos. Doctor Casares instructs the boys to put on a record and position the speaker out the window in order to give the illusion that he is ready and able to defend the orphanage. Jacinto and his friends return, and as Casares hoped, they are discouraged from approaching when they hear the familiar sound of one of Casares’ tangos, Carmelita Ambert’s “Presumidos.” This song, therefore, serves to

¹⁴⁹ In 1938, Imperio Argentina starred in Herbert Maisch’s German version of Florián Rey’s *Carmen, la de Triana* entitled *Andalusische Nächte* in which she sang in German and was supported by Nazi Germany concentration camp prisoners as extras. Her participation in these films serves as the historical basis for Spanish director Fernando Trueba’s fictionalized film *La niña de tus sueños* (1998).

feign a return to a somewhat normal routine and to deter the advancement of attackers. After Casares' death, Jacinto uses the same phonograph to play his Carlos Gardel record when they search the rubble for the gold ingots. "Yo no sé que me han hecho tus ojos" is playing when Jacinto discovers the gold hidden in Carmen's prosthetic leg, a tongue-in-cheek reference to his all-consuming love of money, rather than of woman.

Important non-musical sounds within *El espinazo del diablo* include those that situate the narrative spatially and temporally, reveal the boys' understanding of the war, and remind the audience of the boys' youth and resilience. Although the car radio is difficult to hear in the opening scene as Carlos and his tutors near the orphanage, the voice becomes momentarily discernable as the phrase "la patria en peligro" is pronounced, a Nationalist call to sustain war efforts against the Republicans, who endanger the future of the Spanish nation. The car rattles along the desolate road as the wind whips across the open land, establishing the remoteness of their location. In sharp contrast, inside the walls of the orphanage the courtyard sounds are lively: boys chatter, chickens cluck, school bells chime, chicken wire rattles, and hammers clang to mark the multi-leveled activity. In the center of the daily commotion of the courtyard moans the bomb, whose flapping flags and ticking "heart" make the boys suspect that it is alive. Its sounds and static presence reminds the audience of the danger and proximity of the war.

Gálvez initiates the boys' discussion of war by stating that today he saw those lights again in the distance in the sky. His inability to name these lights more precisely suggests that he is not fully aware of what is happening to his country, and one of his friends explains that those are lights of the war. Another boy quickly follows by giving his negative opinion of the war: "Es una mierda." But another contradicts and says that

he likes the war, because he gets to see planes go like this, and he signals a downward motion with his hand. This conversation reveals that the boys vary in their perceptions of the war, some no doubt blaming it for them not being allowed to see their families and forcing them to live at the school, and some who enjoy it because they get to see instruments of warfare. Interestingly enough the very next statement is about the dead. In a statement reminiscent of Mexican author Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo*, one boy states that his mother told him that it is so hot and dry out that when people die they get stuck in the air. The boys do not directly link the war and the dead, but the implication is obvious by this statement's placement within the dialogue. The children are aware of the death – by war - that surrounds them.

Despite their extremely bleak situation after the explosion in the kitchen, an important ideological aural marker is the boys' interjection of levity into their conversation once they regroup in the bedroom. The room is disheveled with beds overturned and mattresses on the floor, there are several boys badly wounded, others dead, and they fear Jacinto will return, but as Carlos enters the frame he asks if Jaime is hungry. Without waiting for a response, he launches into a popular saying in Spanish, presumably translated to capture the spirit of lightheartedness and the rhyme of the saying, but the English version provided in the subtitles inappropriately slants this innocent saying towards the vulgar. He asks, “¿Tienes hambre? Son lentejas. Si quieres las comes y si no las dejas.”¹⁵⁰ Jaime immediately chimes in when Carlos starts the rhyme, illustrating that it's one they both know well, and also showing the resilience of

¹⁵⁰ The subtitles read: “Are you hungry? We have beans, they're good for the heart – the more you eat, the more you fart.”

children and their need to do childlike things. Amidst all of this destruction and violence, they are still able to make room for some necessary nonsense, because they are, after all, only children. And although they are being forced by the war to grow up quickly and handle difficult situations, these children need time to do what children do, including collecting slugs, reciting silly chants, and playing with slingshots. In addition to showing the characters' resilience, reminding the audience of the characters' humanity and youth, and providing a form of comic relief, this moment also suggests a tiny glimmer of hope for the fate of these characters.

EL LABERINTO DEL FAUNO

While humor does not make a noteworthy appearance in *El laberinto del fauno*, there are several lighter moments amid the darkness of life at the mill when the heroine Ofelia, like the boys of *El espinazo del diablo*, explores her environment and joyfully chases insects. The difference in this work, of course, is that the insects are magical. Because Ofelia believes, the insects become fairies that lead her to a subterranean kingdom and the promise of a happier life as a princess within a restored family unit, out of reach of the Spanish Civil War-related violence that continues above and the Nationalists who have destroyed her family structure. To assume her throne, however, she must first prove her nobility and strength of character through a series of tasks set before her by the mysterious faun. The predicaments she is tasked to resolve reflect social issues of the postwar era, such as unequal distribution of wealth (the Pale man), calls for unquestioning belief and unconditional obedience (Pan), and the malevolence of a few ruining an entire land (the frog). Ofelia must enter the center of the labyrinth, as she must enter the center of herself, to solve the problems set before her.

There are two main timeframes of Del Toro's film *El laberinto del fauno* (2006), and between the two there is interplay at both the start and the end of the film as the narratives weave together. The first, textually announced as "Spain, 1944" and seen briefly accompanied by a hummed lullaby that haunts the soundtrack, is the *intradiegetic* present in the world of mortals. The camera presents a vertical close-up of an anguished and injured Ofelia, as if she were reclining against a wall, but we see that her blood is trickling leftward, back into her nose, alerting the audience to an unusual phenomenon of time and space. The camera then rotates the image into horizontal view to reveal that the girl lies dying. Her rapid breathing is juxtaposed against the soothing lullaby, as a voiceover of an unidentified male ushers the audience into an underworld and narrates the explanatory *extradiegetic* past tale of Princess Moanna. The camera descends through Ofelia's eyes into the darkness of the subterranean kingdom, and the voice narrates that long ago the princess wandered into the world of mortals, losing all recollection of her former life. When the camera once again ascends to the upper realm there is a temporal shift to the *intradiegetic* past, a timeframe consisting of activities at the mill that continues chronologically until Ofelia's death, thus arriving once again at the film's temporal starting point. Just as the voice explains that the king is certain that one day his daughter will return, the image shown is of vehicles (one transporting Ofelia) en route to the mill, thus leading the audience to surmise that Ofelia could be the lost princess.

The young protagonist Ofelia sits beside her pregnant mother Carmen in the car ride to their new home, the Nationalist outpost of Ofelia's stepfather, Captain Vidal. Her ailing mother is preoccupied, and her stepfather is immersed in military strategy and in

his anticipation of a male heir and thus offers Ofelia no affection.¹⁵¹ In the absence of sustained parental guidance, she seeks refuge in fairy tales.¹⁵² A fairy leads her through the labyrinth to Pan, a faun of the underworld who recognizes her as the lost princess and becomes her dubious mentor. He poses to Ofelia three challenges that will verify if she is indeed the princess. In direct contrast to her home life in which she is taught to be obedient and docile, through Pan's tests Ofelia gains confidence and independence, and learns to question authority, as the lines between fairy tale and reality continue to blur. In her final test she proves strong enough to stand by her convictions and defy both the faun and her fascist stepfather, by protecting her baby brother and sacrificing her life for his.

In addition to temporal interweaving, there also exist two distinct spatial planes that over the course of the film begin to pass into each other, the remote mill in the forest where Captain Vidal leads his operatives against the rebel resistance, and the underground kingdom of the princess where Pan and the fairies dwell. As the camera ascends to the world of mortals, the lens floods with light (replicating the moment Moanna loses her memory of her underground kingdom) then emerges within the ruins of Belchite, one of the most famous devastated villages of the Civil War, and one that still lies in ruins (Smith 2007, 4). Skulls amid the rubble verify that lives were taken here. The scenes that follow of the caravan driving through verdant woods to the old mill, however, were filmed in a national park in Segovia, about an hour outside of Madrid

¹⁵¹ In accordance with Lindhard's explanation of the permeation of war violence into other sectors of civilian life, Thormann notes that Ofelia's domestic space is hereby "distorted by the brutality of the Captain, patriarch of the domestic scene, support of the Fascist state; the private family unit is permeated by the public, political formation, and the household is itself a war zone" (Lindhard; Thormann, 177).

¹⁵² Not only is Ofelia's domestic sphere disrupted, a common trope that prompts the fairy-tale protagonist to embark upon a journey to reconstitute home on a new plane, but, notes Thormann, the absent father is

(Calhoun, 37; and Smith 2007, 8). Along the way Ofelia sits reading a book of fairy tales, and her mother scoffs that she's getting too old for such childish nonsense.¹⁵³

Suddenly, the cars must stop momentarily because Carmen's pregnancy nausea becomes unbearable, and Ofelia uses this time to explore. She finds a stone with an eye-shaped carving and then in the distance, an overgrown stele, an object traditionally used to mark the entrance to a new territory, of a face missing one eye. As Ofelia replaces the eye (an act reminiscent of Ana replacing the mannequin's eye in *El espíritu de la colmena*), an insect emerges, the same insect that she will later recognize as a fairy and follow into the labyrinth.¹⁵⁴

The labyrinth, "a structure or pattern of complex passages that is difficult to penetrate," and that in ancient times often constructed to make difficult the discovery of a tomb, bears many levels of representational significance (Tresidder, Dictionary of Symbols, 278). In religion as in psychology, the symbol of the labyrinth may stand for an initiation, rite of passage, or a return to the womb from which one is then reborn (Tresidder, Dictionary of Symbols, 278). The journey through the labyrinth then is not one of getting lost; rather, it is one of finding one's spiritual center through introspection

also "a hole in the Symbolic for the imagination to fill, a space for the exploration of fantasy" and as such Ofelia's delving into fantasy and fairy tales is understandable (Leed; Haase; Thormann, 178).

¹⁵³ Ofelia does not wish to enter the world of the adults if that means she will have to lose her imagination and her voice. Although her mother tries to edge her into womanhood, Ofelia still prefers a new book of fairy tales to the proper party dress her mother gives her. Her youthful inexperience and innocence is especially notable when she naively asks Mercedes if she has noticed that Carmen – clearly in her third trimester - is sick due to pregnancy; proclaims brashly that if childbirth is so complicated she's never going to do it; and cannot fathom why her mother had to remarry - couldn't she be happy with just the two of them together? Her willingness to believe insects are fairies is what grants her passage into the underworld, and at the end of her quests it is her innocent blood that reopens the portal to Moanna's kingdom.

¹⁵⁴ The facilitation of new sight is suggested in both of these scenes, as the girls are about to journey and see the world in a new way, by encountering the fugitive and entering the underworld, respectively.

and making difficult decisions (Murray). Once Ofelia enters the labyrinth, the portal to the underworld, she begins her journey toward independence and free thought, behavior that was considered subversive and punishable by death.

Another interesting and especially pertinent comparison to the labyrinth can be found in *I Saw It Myself*, a 1929 narrative about WWI. In it, Barbusse compares the systems of trenches to a labyrinth, because they form an enclosed world whose initiatory structure may lead the soldier through ordeals that ultimately, if he reaches “the terrible heart of things” and survives, will change him forever (Leed, 80; Barbusse, 19-20). In this film, however, while combat certainly exists all around the young protagonist, the labyrinth serves as Ofelia’s escape route away from this violence. It is as if she embarks upon Barbusse’s journey from the other direction: she is born into “the terrible heart of things,” passes through Spain’s dark, winding, complicated history of violence to understand who she is, and then is finally reborn in her pacific lost kingdom.

El laberinto del fauno is laden heavily with visual meaning, as throughout they rely on the use of color to convey the film’s complexity, and images “carry much of the narrative burden” (Calhoun, 36). At the start of the film, there are distinct color palettes for the two worlds, cold blues and greens mark the harsh reality of the mill while warmer amniotic-like hues color Ofelia’s fantasies.¹⁵⁵ Similarly, a division may be noted among the angles of the mise-en-scene, in that at the start of the film sharp-edged objects frame the captain and his men, while rounded shapes often curve around Ofelia. But Del Toro explains that they decided to do “a contamination process, [and] that one world was

going start infecting the other” so that the two eventually achieve unity, “and Ofelia’s view of the world becomes as real as the fascists”” (Calhoun, 36).¹⁵⁶

One night when Ofelia’s unborn brother is particularly restless, Carmen asks Ofelia to tell him one of her stories. In the blue shadows of their bedroom, Ofelia reclines her head and speaks into her mother’s womb. The horizontal image of her head is similar to the one seen at the beginning and end of the film as she lies dying in the labyrinth, with the moonlight illuminating her face. The bedroom head-tilt marks Ofelia’s entrance into her narrative for the sake of her brother; the “head-tilt” in the labyrinth – the result of her incapacitation after being shot – is also for the brother’s benefit, as it follows her decision to protect his life, and ends in the loss of her own and entrance into the underworld.

The fantasy world of Ofelia’s narrative begins within her mother’s womb. As she immerses herself in the narrative she tells, the camera descends into the darkness of Carmen’s uterus where her brother listens to her tale of a rose that may grant immortality, yet remains protected atop a mountain of poisonous thorns. Amid the red and black thorns sits the insect Ofelia encountered on her way to the mill. It flies against the crescent moon, Princess Moanna’s identifying symbol, and then into the bedroom where Ofelia recites the story, suggesting a connection between narrative and reality, if only - at this point - within Ofelia’s mind.

¹⁵⁵ In “The Walls Fall Down: Fantasy and Power in *El laberinto del fauno*,” Hanley notes how the dichotomies of interior and exterior space, law and lawlessness, and male and female also break down over the course of the film.

¹⁵⁶ Del Toro cites his influences for this film were Francisco Goya, James Whale, Mario Bava, George Romero, David Cronenberg, and fairy-tale illustrator Arthur Rackham (Calhoun, 36).

Moanna's lost kingdom lies beneath the labyrinth. As Ofelia's innocent blood drips into the center, the full moon illuminating the night, Ofelia completes the third task successfully by proving her nobility of character. As the light on her body shifts from blue to yellow, like the light of dawn, the booming voice of the king calls her, his daughter, to stand. The screen fills with golden light and Ofelia rises. She is dressed in warm red and golden hues, the same regal colors that comprise the palace in which she stands. "Padre," she says, recognizing the man who sits before her on the throne as her father, and her mother who sits to his right. Her fantasy is complete: an empty chair beside her restored family awaits her, the returned princess. The subjects applaud as Pan and the fairies emerge to commend her for not taking another's life. Catholic symbolism may be found in the fact that Ofelia has been reborn through self-sacrifice, and will be seated at the left hand of her father in a churchlike kingdom, reuniting her family trinity.¹⁵⁷ Criticism of the Civil War and its subsequent oppression is also latent, for she is rewarded for both making her own decisions and for not taking her brother's life.¹⁵⁸

Reminiscent of the scene in *Cría cuervos* in which Tía Paulina urges Irene to stop reading and to go play in the fresh country air, when the audience first meets Ofelia's mother, Carmen, she is exclaiming she can't figure out why, if they're headed to the country, Ofelia has brought so many books. But books are Ofelia's constant companions throughout the film, especially since it is through them that she is alerted to the existence of the fantasy realm. Her fairy tales are thus what allow her to recognize the insect for its

¹⁵⁷ Ofelia's father on earth, a tailor, is hereby also related to Christ's father on earth, a carpenter.

¹⁵⁸ Tanvir notes the biblical overtones of Pan's request, suggesting a reference to Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son for God in the Book of Genesis. He argues that with Ofelia's refusal to surrender her brother, she "rejects the Christian order that was an undercurrent of the Spanish Civil War."

true magical nature, and to be receptive to the possibility of other worlds beyond her own.

Pan bestows upon Ofelia a magical book, the Book of Crossroads, and advises her to open it when she is alone, for it will tell her future and detail the tasks she must complete. Ofelia flips through its blank pages in bewilderment, then returns to the mill. Later she finds time to be alone in the privacy of the bathroom, where she is expected to be grooming for an important dinner for the captain. Despite her unproductive first glance, she suspends disbelief and again opens the book, but this time to her amazement it fills with writing before her eyes, and through them the audience is likewise able to witness this magical unfurling before the receptive child. The second time Ofelia opens the book alone in search of instruction the pages instead fill with red ink, foreshadowing her mother's childbirth complications. The magical appearance of writing is one of the film's important visual effects that not only confirms that the camera has assumed the child's perspective, but also, like the insect's conversion into a fairy, signifies how the fantastic world makes itself known to Ofelia, she embraces it, and uses this consciousness to assert her agency and rewrite/reshape her world.

When the faun hears of Carmen's troubled pregnancy he grants Ofelia another magical gift, a mandrake root. This plant and member of the nightshade family has a history of use in magic rituals and often resembles a human figure. Visual effects are employed in the film to play upon this association, as once placed in milk and fed drops of blood, the mandrake cries and wriggles like a child. Whilst Ofelia adheres to Pan's instructions regarding the root, her mother "inexplicably" (according to the doctor) regains her health, but eventually the captain discovers the sour-smelling mandrake under

her bed, and angrily rips it from its bowl. Carmen confronts Ofelia about her belief in such nonsense, crying that she will learn that life is not like a fairy tale and that magic does not exist, and with these words she throws the root into the fireplace. The mandrake writhes and screams, and Carmen drops to the floor in agony, as her child likewise begins to remove himself from her womb.¹⁵⁹

While visual effects are employed to humanize this root in accordance with how Ofelia conceives of it, understandably it follows that the opposite seems to be the goal with representations of the monstrous Captain Vidal. His dehumanization includes the military garb that almost completely conceals his flesh, a ticking mechanical instrument that appears to govern his every move, and his readiness to take life and sew his own stitches. This is yet another example of the film's efforts to blur divisions and force the audience to question binaries, by taking on the imaginative properties of Ofelia's mind and presenting the nature of things as they are true to her.

Chalk, Pan's second tool for Ofelia, is also used to break through the divide that separates fantasy from reality. Like the key she retrieves from the belly of the gluttonous frog in her first mission, the chalk is an item that grants access. Pan counsels Ofelia to make her own passage whenever she finds herself blocked. This advice, although customarily symbolic, turns out to have literal meaning, for the girl learns to draw chalk doors on walls and magically pass through them, at first within the fantasy realm as instructed, but then of her own ingenuity she uses the chalk to defy its limits, and then to pass through boundaries within the realm of the real. Open to this fantastic possibility,

¹⁵⁹ As with their arrival scene in which Carmen is curiously stricken with nausea immediately after speaking negatively of fairy tales, here as she rails against them, her seeming punishment is even greater.

she carefully outlines her first portal, then watches as her drawing bubbles and burns like acid through inches of thick stone, creating an opening. She uses this magical chalk again to enter and then (barely) exit the banquet hall of the Pale Man, and finally to escape her locked bedroom to rescue her baby brother.¹⁶⁰ Ofelia's employment of the chalk against the rules and in other circumstances besides the ones that were designated reveals her increasing self-assurance and her imagination's power to overcome even the seemingly insurmountable obstacles of postwar authority. The child's magical point of view thus succeeds in altering the world she (and we, the audience, through her eyes) sees.

Del Toro refers to *El laberinto del fauno* as a type of cinematic Rorschach Test in that it can be understood in different ways, but that each person's interpretation divulges his level of belief (Twitch). He explains that one may conclude that either Ofelia's fantasy world is a figment of her imagination and she meets her end at the full moon; or Pan, the fairies, and the underworld truly exist and in the end Moanna returns to claim her throne. He admits, however, that he views it all as real, and that three moments signify that fantasy does indeed exist and has infiltrated reality: Ofelia's final escape from her bedroom via the chalk door; the labyrinth walls that move to facilitate her passage, but not the captain's; and the blooming flower at the end that signifies the once-dying tree's return to heath as a result of Ofelia's successful mission (Twitch). These fantastical changes within the world above evidence the impact that the girl's imagination has made

¹⁶⁰ Hanley notes that, similarly, Mercedes transcends boundaries when she slips undetected between the captain's realm to the rebel camp, and by controlling the passage of information via lamplight signal and letters beneath the floorboards (43).

upon it. But regardless of the audience's assessment of the veracity of the magic that appears to transpire, because the narrative is presented through young Ofelia's eyes, who does indeed believe and accordingly reconfigures the terrifying world around her, the narrative's "reality," albeit magical, is Ofelia's. And rather than complicate the reality of the postwar era by mixing it with fantasy, the child's viewpoint signifies the true nature of things as Ofelia understands them, *demythifying* the Nationalists' honor and the glory of war, and revealing the devastation they have wreaked upon her family.

From the beginning of the film, periodic sweeping camera shots that simulate an onlooker's searching gaze draw in the viewer. Cinematographer Navarro explains that "the camera is looking and revealing things to you and teaching you, rather than simply presenting things to you" (Calhoun, 39). While the perspective throughout the film is primarily Ofelia's as she studies her new environment and learns to maneuver in it, these sweeping shots create excitement, and the initial perspective of the insect creates suspense. As with the similar perspective shifts that focalize temporarily through Santi's eyes in *El espinazo del diablo*, this viewpoint both reveals the existence of an Other and simultaneously links the creature to the child narrative viewer it observes. What is more, if one understands the insect as magical, then this perspective shift between the insect and Ofelia once again bridges the distance between fantasy and reality.

There is also a fluidity of view that complements the film's task of eliminating boundaries and suggesting ease of passage between different worlds. One way this seamlessness is achieved is through the masked cut, or wipe, a method of transitioning from one scene to the next by passing before an object that fills the screen (Smith 2007, 8). The camera, like the child, disappears behind a tree or a wall and then emerges

elsewhere, as if by magic. Oftentimes a sound bridge accompanies this technique, to make the transition even more fluid. The result is a heightened sense of unity of view and the interconnectedness of different planes within the film that replicates Ofelia's viewpoint as she slips from one realm to the other.

Ideological connections are revealed through numerous reaction shots amongst the characters. Guilty silence, pauses, diverted eyes, and fixated gazes serve to implicate characters in situations being discussed or experienced and reveal the nature of their relationships with others. When, for example, Ofelia asks Mercedes directly if she is helping the rebels in the hill, Mercedes averts her gaze from the child and rather than respond yes or no, she confirms her guilt by asking Ofelia if she has told anyone. Another revealing reaction shot that offers a glimpse into Ofelia's mind is a close-up that captures her self-satisfied grin when her mother scolds her for ruining her party dress. After Carmen gives Ofelia an elegant new dress to wear for an important dinner engagement for the captain and his associates, Ofelia dons it, and heads off into the woods to complete the first of Pan's tasks for her. She successfully completes it by attaining the golden key and destroying the evil tree-dwelling frog, but despite her best efforts to stay clean, wind, rain, and mud ruin her new dress. She returns home filthy, and Carmen reprimands her for having disappointed her father. Upon hearing this Ofelia cannot ignore her need to correct her mother again about the nature of their relationship. "You mean the captain?" she retorts. Carmen exits saying yes, Ofelia has disappointed him even more than her. The camera cuts to a close-up psychological shot of Ofelia's pleased expression, for while she did not mean to hurt her mother's feelings, she cannot help but enjoy the fact that she has disappointed her heartless stepfather.

This scene in which Ofelia denies the captain's paternity brilliantly concludes the film's purity sequence.¹⁶¹ It begins with her test against the parasitic frog, cuts to the captain's dinner party speech, returns to Ofelia's muddy return, and concludes with this bathtub scene. After Ofelia crawls amidst the bugs and mire beneath the dying tree, the captain entertains his colleagues and justifies his presence at this outpost by expressing his desire that his son be born into a clean and pure Spain. The fire in the hearth behind him crackles as he smiles diabolically and says they must kill the sons of bitches who oppose them so that everyone understands that the war is over, and the Nationalists won. Ofelia returns home, shivering and dirty, but victorious, rejecting in action the captain's wishes, and rejecting in words his legacy.

As she walks through the forest Ofelia reads the story of the dying tree that not only explains her task, but also bears national sociopolitical commentary.¹⁶² *The Book of Crossroads* describes the harmony in which the animals and the people of the forest once lived, and yet how an evil greedy frog thwarted that peace and continues to destroy his home, the tree. Ofelia descends into the muddy root system of the tree and confronts the frog, asking if he isn't ashamed for living in filth and eating little bugs while his home dies. The following dinner party scene suggests a connection between the "vermin" ("hijos de puta" in Spanish) the captain wishes to kill, and the insects the frog ingests. Ofelia's observation of the filthy toad's cruel gluttony, therefore, offers the audience the

¹⁶¹ The first reference to cleanliness is when Ofelia returns to the car after finding the stele. She proclaims that she met a fairy, and Carmen's response is a lamentation that Ofelia soiled her shoes. Once again we see the confrontation between the fairy tale and the mundane.

¹⁶² "The tree, in the context of the film's setting, evokes the sacred tree of Guernica, under which the Spanish Basques settled questions of justice, a tree that survived the German bombardment of the city on 26 April 1937, in support of Franco's troops" (Thormann, 179).

child's eye perspective of the Nationalist guests at the captain's dinner party, and indicates that both the frog and the Nationalist captain are integral to the disruption and continued rift in their respective homelands.¹⁶³

Another suggestive audio and video coupling occurs when Ofelia first meets the captain. She cradles her books in her right arm, and thus offers her stepfather her free left hand in greeting. Having already replaced his glove and thus denying Ofelia any true contact with him, he tightly snatches her left hand and admonishes her impropriety, for her awkward left-handed greeting unintentionally resembles a show of defiance against the Franco regime by recalling the left-handed fist of the Republican left, as opposed to the right-handed fascist salute of the Nationalists. As the captain rebukes her unwitting act of treason, a soldier is seen through the window pointing his gun, coincidentally at the level of Ofelia's head. The captain turns and exits, leaving Ofelia alone and hugging her books for consolation. Mercedes stands in the background of the frame, an indication that she will support Ofelia, but between them is a vehicle emblazoned with the Nationalist emblem. What breaks this shot is the rattle of the curious insect she met at the stele. It catches her attention and then flies off as if beckoning her to the entrance of the labyrinth. Captivated, the child drops her books and follows. As she raises her eyes to the stone above the labyrinth's entrance the camera pans in to mimic her curious scrutiny, and then it sways in accordance with her gait as she enters the labyrinth.

¹⁶³ In her second mission Ofelia encounters the Pale Man, another negative representation of the country's ruling forces, fascism and the Church (Twitch). Able either to use his hands or to see, but not both simultaneously, this creature's bloodstained mouth suggests what the horrifying paintings on the wall confirm: this monster violently consumes children. With almost a hunger for innocence, he sits over a splendid banquet of food that he will not share with the hungry. Barry Spector notes that the Pale Man "is surrounded by references to Kronos and child sacrifice. The piles of children's shoes, the semicircular fireplace, and the date (1944) all evoke the Holocaust," while his child-eating evokes Goya's Saturn (83).

Mercedes pursues Ofelia and warns that she shouldn't get too close because she might get lost. Initially, her words seem to reference the labyrinth. But because as she utters this caveat she is returning Ofelia's fairy-tale books, Mercedes' words can be understood as a double warning about the dangers of getting lost in both the labyrinth and in fairy tales. This is the first allusion to the fact that Mercedes (unlike Carmen and the captain) is presumably experienced with matters pertaining to fairy tales, for when later Ofelia asks if she believes in fairies, Mercedes replies that she once did, yes, and then warns Ofelia to be wary of fauns. In addition to a possible shared experience, strengthening their bond is the fact that throughout the narrative Mercedes' escapades parallel Ofelia's magical ones, but on a mundane level. For both heroines, they depend on frequent trips into the woods; written materials passing from one realm to another (letters for the rebels passing from beneath the captain's floorboards and into the realm of the Resistance parallels Ofelia's Book of Crossroads passing from the underworld to above); the use of a key to secure needed materials (to access the supply shed and the Pale Man's cupboard, respectively); and a knife (for protection, used against the captain, and to slay an innocent during the full moon, respectively) (Hanley). Ofelia soon comes to understand that she has found a loving confidante and perhaps a relatively kindred spirit in Mercedes, and views this Resistance fighter as her as a surrogate mother figure, thus coming one step closer to reconstituting her war-destroyed home with a new community of leftist rebels.

The film continues to pit the magical against the mundane and then interweave the two, by juxtaposing the fairy-insect's clicking against the ticking of the captain's

watch.¹⁶⁴ The flapping of the insect's wings fades into ticking and the audience meets Vidal as he stands staring at his pocket watch, disgruntled by his wife's tardiness. Later, the clicking insect appears within Ofelia's bedtime story and then crosses worlds and flies into their window. Ofelia continues to narrate as the image cuts from the insect fluttering in the darkness to the captain tuning his watch. Her description of the rose withering without being able to pass along its gifts to anyone foreshadows the captain's (or, sadly, perhaps her own) fate.

A fluttering noise in the bedroom wakes Ofelia, but her mother continues to sleep undisturbed, so she must investigate on her own. As in the scene in which Ofelia first encounters the insect in the woods, the camera alternates between the insect's watching perspective and Ofelia's seeking perspective to illustrate the presence of a creature also worthy of bearing narrative viewer responsibility, link the girl with this magical Other, and draw the audience to identify with both. She follows the source of the scurrying around the room until the insect alights at the foot of their bed and approaches her and the camera head-on. Ofelia greets it and demonstrates her recognition of their earlier encounter by inquiring if it followed her, and then matter-of-factly asks if it is a fairy. The insect responds by transforming before her eyes (and the audience's through the camera's lens), then leading her to the labyrinth. As they approach its entrance the music's volume increases and a chorus of operatic voices begins to sing. This chorus, that resembles the chorus that sings as Ana encounters the monster in *El espíritu de la colmena*, is first heard singing over horns and drums when Ofelia discovers the labyrinth,

¹⁶⁴ The captain's watch, the mill that resembles the inside of a clock, the captain's obsession with not losing time also hearken to the curse of Kronos, notes Barry Spector in "Sacrifice of the Children in Pan's

and then again here with swirling woodwind music as she ventures in with the fairy. The collective voices of the chorus imply the encounters' potential to welcome the child into a group of others, specifically, inviting her to join Mercedes, the doctor, and Pedro in their rebellion against the Nationalists. The woodwind music simulates a whirlpool, an audible expression of the pull that Ofelia feels drawing her into the center of the labyrinth as well as the pull to align herself with the leftist Resistance. As they reach the center staircase, violins play the labyrinth's melody, which later will be known as Mercedes' lullaby, the motif that introduces the film.

While much of the original score by Spanish composer Javier Navarrete accompanies the young protagonist's sentiment throughout the film, two traditional songs are used precisely for their sharp contrast to the atmosphere in which they are heard. Both are on records played by the captain in his study. Ofelia receives the Book of Crossroads and Pan disappears into the darkness of the labyrinth, and suddenly the traditional up-tempo Spanish sound of "Soy un pobre presidiario" ("I am a Poor Prisoner") fills the night.¹⁶⁵ The image cuts from the circular center of the labyrinth to the curve of the record Vidal plays on his gramophone. This lively *pasodoble*, full of playful horn flourishes, seems out of place in the captain's stark and smoky room, but the reference to being a prisoner (albeit of love, in the song) is understood as the severity of the room reflects the captain's stoic character (the Nationalist ideal of masculinity, with traces of noble bullfighter), and in this drab room he brandishes a straight edge knife to shave and ritualistically buffs his shoes. The music continues as he complains about the preparation

Labyrinth." Jung Journal: Culture & Psyche. Vol. 3, No. 3, 2009. Pp. 81-86.

of his coffee, and the kitchen servants toil in a somber atmosphere reminiscent of a Velázquez painting (Smith 2007, 6).

The second, “En los jardines de Granada” (“In the Gardens of Granada”), a traditional song whose title suggests the warmth and floral splendor of southern Spain and whose lyrics sing of love, also seems incongruous in this dark northern setting (Smith 2007, 8).¹⁶⁶ The captain puts on this record after tricking Mercedes into inadvertently revealing that she has a copy of the key to the supply shed. The sweet romantic lyrics contrast Mercedes’ hasty preparation to flee for her life and end when she exits with Ofelia into the rainy and thunderous night. Although not romantic, a different type of love is indeed present in this scene as Mercedes’ tender heart yields to the child’s pleading to take her along.

In the end, of course, the most important journey Ofelia takes is the one toward the center of herself, and this is made possible through fairy tales. Surrounded by violence, rejected by her cruel new stepfather, and neglected by her sick mother, Ofelia spies a home away from home in her fairy tales and readily enters the once-utopian land within her books in search of a new place in which to thrive. She discovers that she is to play an integral part in the restoration of this land’s harmony, as will her entire generation for the divided Spanish nation. Pan’s trials teach her to trust in her decisions, have

¹⁶⁵ Neither “Soy un pobre presidiario” nor “En los jardines de Granada” are on the official soundtrack for this film.

¹⁶⁶ The contrast between this beautiful Granada-themed song that delights the captain and the knowledge that Mercedes’ rebellious act may be met with unthinkable brutality, may suggest the Nationalists’ severe treatment of Andalusia for its unrepentant anarchism, and continued resistance and assistance to the maquis even after the war.

courage, and to question authority, which provide a framework for self-edification and help Ofelia choose well in her final task.

In each of these two films by Guillermo del Toro, the child narrative viewer begins, as in the fairy tale tradition, by being removed from his home. They are thrust into a war-created atmosphere of violence and must develop strategies to cope. Like in *Bandidos*, the boys of *El espinazo del diablo* must come to terms with the death of a contemporary, become terrified as they realize their own mortality, and fight to defend themselves. The boys in this film however, having much less exposure to death than the boys in *Bandidos*, do not give indications that they will propagate violence once they escape to safety, for as del Toro explains, the work is almost the anti-*Lord of the Flies*, for in this narrative the children come together rather than come apart (esplatter). The time they spend in the orphanage is a microcosm of the Spanish Civil War, and their “reconstitution of home on a new plane” is not a place, but rather a community. Their wounded, beleaguered departure suggests a hopeful albeit difficult future for the next generation (Cineaste). Fairy tales and fantasy are much more prevalent in *El laberinto del fauno*, but Ofelia, like Carlos, also unites with a strange Del Toro-designed creature who guides her. She, too, goes through the rite of passage and emerges with greater self-knowledge, but while Carlos learns to work with others, Ofelia’s journey into the fantasy realm – although paralleled by Mercedes’ activities at the mill, and earning her acceptance within the leftist rebel community – ends as she nobly faces danger alone, the result of her development of strength of character. The nature of Ofelia’s future, of course, depends on the audience’s interpretation of her acceptance into the underworld.

Chapter 5: Conclusion - War as Seen through the Eyes of a Child

In *The Realistic War Novel* Sophus Keith Winther explains that war has been among the most constant literary themes, presented fairly consistently with heroic treatment as a glorious adventure, ever since humans have won battles and boasted of their conquests (7). The war narrative has served as a propagator of *myth*, to use Barthes' terminology (as defined in Chapter 1), by dominant war-supporting powers. But, states Winther, "[t]he only fault with the romantic treatment of war is that it was false from beginning to end, even in the days of Homer. In modern trench warfare this ideal could no longer be preserved"(7).

The use of the child narrative viewer and child narrative voice of war and its aftermath became more prevalent when advances in warfare began to render destruction more widespread. The permeation of violence beyond the battlefield, and into civilian populations throughout even the domestic sphere, where traditionally noncombatant women and children dwelt, granted this juvenile voice the unfortunate authority to present the war narrative. So, too, did a changing understanding of childhood. Psychological studies by Freud, Piaget, and Jung appraised children as holistic beings with different, age-specific cognitive abilities, which allowed the child to shed his/her former classifications as miniature adult, accessory, or Romantic cherubim, and be esteemed as a thinking, feeling individual (Byrnes, 2; Ariès, 34-38). The 20th-century discovery that a child's experiences affect his behavior and shape his/her character brought new concern for childrearing and new interest in the child's perception of the world (Hiner and Hawes, p. 7).

In Chapter 1, in an effort to best represent how the child figure functions within narrative, I presented the genres that typically feature the child and explain his/her significance in each. A condensed overview of the child figure as principal character within the narrative provides invaluable background for this study. The child protagonist of fairy tales, for example, discovers the existence of evil and the inevitability of encountering difficulties in life, yet models that perseverance and adherence to just behavior allows one to overcome these difficulties. The child in the picaresque narrative is used as a source for satire and social commentary as he/she attempts to understand, enter, and climb within society. In the *Bildungsroman* the child begins his/her transition into adulthood, setting an example of moral development for his/her readers. My conclusion is that the child narrative witness of war and its aftermath exists as an amalgamation of these more traditional functions, as modern-day authors and filmmakers play upon the child figure to address an age-old phenomenon. I identify the three most pertinent contemporary uses of the child figure as pertaining to his/her presentation of war and its aftermath as: the child as “objective” witness, as representative of the nation, and as a potential healing vehicle. Because the clichéd innocence of the child often implies an objective eye, utilizing his/her perspective may allow the author to present subject matter that requires delicate treatment or inconspicuous partisanship, while evading censorship, important, if not essential, for authors and filmmakers who wished to depict the Mexican Revolution, the Spanish Civil War, and their aftermath.

Juxtaposed against the strong, brave, noble adult war hero who speaks as war advocate in the name of nationalism (or regionalism) and focuses on the advancement of a cause is the small, fragile, and naïve child who views war and its aftermath on its most

basic and personal level, presenting its observable effects on his/her life. Smaller in stature and seemingly smaller in field of scope, he/she is utilized to *demythify*, and to present new and liberating counter-discourse (as defined by Richard Terdiman) against the popular myths of the traditional war narrative by retextualizing its components in an atypical fashion.¹⁶⁷ The child narrative viewer's limited personal accounts, or metonymical compressed field of vision, a device that is also commonly found in the traditional war narrative "where the exploits of an army are symbolized by a single hero," suggest the presence of similar regional or national experiences (Uspensky, 170).

In *Broken Bars*, Kay S. Garcia offers a variant of Terdiman's term "counter-discourse" that I deem more appropriate for the works of Nellie Campobello. She studies several 20th-century Mexican narratives and describes their more positive discourse that, rather than negate an official story, presents a version that "deviates from the official discourse by creating a personal or collective story that affirms the vitality and creativity of the narrators and the protagonists" (García, Kay, 5). These are precisely the voices that Campobello creates in *Cartucho* and *Las manos de mamá*, for in these works the child narrative viewers humanize the revolutionaries who pass through her town, defend Villa, and honor their mothers. The distinction between these two types of discourse is that of motivation and tone; the motivation of counter-discourse may be negative, and the motivation of alternative discourse may be positive, but both seek to *demythify*.

¹⁶⁷ In *Discourse/Counter-Discourse*, Richard Terdiman defines counter-discourses as "the principal discourse systems by which writers and artists sought to project an alternative, liberating *newness* against the absorptive capacity of those established discourses." He explains that this counter-ideological strategy is employed to cause the self-destruction of popular discourse and is "driven by a negative passion, to displace and annihilate a dominant depiction of the world" (12-13).

The child is an especially appropriate means of *demythification* as he/she is an unexpected source of social criticism, and therefore enables authors and filmmakers to challenge the dominant discourse without being censured. Through questions and the description of outwardly observable things, the child, who is at once sincere and semi-reliable, *demythifies* popular social truths by offering a counter or alternative discourse. This process, posits Berger in reference to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but certainly true of all armed conflicts be they international or national, is essential to healing. In order to move forward, “each side must abandon its myths of national purity, which in large part are symptomatic responses to histories of oppression” (Berger). The child narrative viewers of these works call attention to the fact that their entire nation has suffered as a result of their civil wars, and despite claims to the contrary, there were no victors.

The second principal function of the child figure as narrative viewer of war and its aftermath is as representative of the nation, implying society’s precarious situation as a result of war. Although the child figure may in theory be used to speak for or against any given armed conflict, more often than not the child trapped in war is used to speak against continued violence and to suggest that the prognosis for the future of the nation is grim should the current course of action be maintained. However, even if the nation is in peril, the child’s youth offers the potential for change. Similarly, the non-combatant child’s nevertheless inevitable physical proximity to violence suggests that even future

generations will be affected by the present war, even if steps are taken to ensure their safety.¹⁶⁸

The presentation of the child narrative viewers' development is restricted in these works, in that each child is demonstrated growing mentally and emotionally only with regard to the war or its aftermath. Their thoughts, feelings, and actions center on the death of lost family members and friends. Through these depictions it becomes clear that the authors and filmmakers of these narratives employ child narrative viewers not for the sake of entering the child's world fully, or to accurately portray the child's psyche, but rather to present a glimpse of the horrors of war and its aftermath as seen through the most vulnerable ones' eyes. In Ana María Ferran Parent's study *El niño narrador en la literatura hispanoamericana del siglo XX*, she observes that the social problems presented by child narrative viewers are often of secondary concern in their narrations, however in the works of this present study that is untrue (1). Authors and filmmakers addressing war and its aftermath would find it very difficult to relegate events of such magnitude to a secondary concern within the work (or even to extricate them from daily life, as I have shown throughout this investigation).¹⁶⁹

In Chapter 1, I also consider the significance of an author's decision to narrate from the *homodiegetic* point of view, and conclude that this voice is ideally suited for presenting war and its aftermath, particularly if the author or filmmaker wishes to speak

¹⁶⁸ The works addressing the postwar, too, exemplify this surreptitious consternation through Gothic atmospheres of darkness, solitude, stunning silence, isolation of characters, expressionless faces, and child neglect.

¹⁶⁹ The child's counter-discourse in *Balún Canán* challenges the social hierarchy and decries the racial divide that remains long after the Revolution; in *El espíritu de la colmena*, *Cría cuervos*, *El sur*, and *El laberinto del fauno* denounces the oppression and continued opposition of the post-civil war years; and in

against the conflict. Once personalized and presented in smaller, more concrete and fathomable examples of tragedy, horrific episodes of violence and oppression may become more easily relatable to a wide audience unfamiliar with such trauma. While, in any given armed conflict, death toll statistics enumerating the faceless victims may make us think, personal accounts from survivors remove that anonymity and force us to feel, and so too, in the narrative.

In *La infancia en la narrativa española de posguerra*, Godoy Gallardo proposes that childhood became a popular topic within the Spanish novel of the postwar era as a direct result of the Spanish Civil War, and that the war was integral in shaping the worldview presented therein.¹⁷⁰ One of the principal considerations of his study is the motivation, not of the author, but of the narrative voice within the works themselves. There are indeed similarities within the works of this present study; they are all motivated to narrate by the loss of a loved one.¹⁷¹ In the end of each it is the characters most intimate with the child narrative viewers who are lost. The series of narrated events

El espinazo del diablo, reveals that war affects even those who seem to be safely removed from the actual combat.

¹⁷⁰ “La guerra, es nuestra posición, explica la genesis y desarrollo del motivo de la infancia en la novela española de postguerra civil” (Godoy Gallardo, 25). His study points to the fact that the civil war is “factor central y determinante en la visión de mundo que se da en la novela de hoy” and “determinante para examinar la presencia de la infancia en la narrativa española de post-guerra civil”(Godoy Gallardo, 10 and 22, respectively).

¹⁷¹ In *Las manos de mamá* and *El sur*, the narrative voices address deceased family members, a mother (via a “letter sent on the wind”) and a father (in interior monologue) respectively. In *Balún Canán* the child narrative voice also recalls a deceased family member – her little brother – although she does not address him directly after his death. These three narratives are prompted by different feelings on the part of the narrative voices: in *Las manos de mamá* the girl recounts to honor her mother, illustrating her love; in *El sur* Adriana sorts through the painful and confusing feelings of her past with her father, revealing her maturation; and in *Balún Canán* the girl explains the loss of two loved ones, her *nana* (to separation) and her brother (to death) in order to honor these important figures in her life, showing her need to heal herself from these losses. With similar therapeutic intentions, the narrative voice in *Cria cuervos* addresses the camera directly – an unseen interlocutor - an interviewer, a therapist, or an artistic representation of self-

establish the importance of the soon-to-be-deceased loved one to the child narrative viewer, and the narratives end shortly after the death of the loved one occurs.¹⁷² This motivating factor will appear fairly consistently in child-narrated works of war or its aftermath, for it provides a plausible reason for a child to undertake the narration of war and grants the child a narrative access point. That is, the child can express an example of how war takes life, and yet personally survives to complete his/her narration.

Also revealing of the narrative voices' motivation, and yet not mentioned in Godoy Gallardo's study, is the frame of each work. While two of these works, *Las manos de mamá* and *Balún Canán*, end reflectively with no mention of movement onward, the other seven (or six, if we do not accept by Del Toro's intended magical ending for Ofelia/Moanna) works conclude with a reference to the narrative voices' immediate destination or point of embarkation. In *Cartucho* Nellie and her mother return to her church and in *Cría cuervos* Ana and her sisters return to school, suggesting a return to routine and an allegiance to these established religious and educational institutions. In *El espinazo del diablo*, however, although viewers assume that Carlos and the boys are

examination – as she explains her hatred for her father, which stems from her belief that he caused her mother's death.

¹⁷² The narrative voice in *Cartucho* seeks to describe the war, not to condemn it, and to personalize it by recalling individuals who partook in it. Many of these individuals were family members and neighbors, and it is rare that these accounts end in another way other than with the loved one's death. Luis' motivation for joining the young bandits in *Bandidos* is so that he can reunite with his family again. His motivation shifts, however, when a member of his group is killed, and in the wake of his death the remaining group members bond more tightly and swear revenge. In *El espíritu de la colmena*, Ana's narrative begins as her imagination activates upon watching a horror film, and she longs to befriend the real-life version of that monster that her sister describes. Mistaking him for the spirit, Ana forms a friendship with a fleeing Republican, who is soon killed. In *El espinazo del diablo* and *El laberinto del fauno*, the death of a family member prompts, in different ways, the relocation of the child and the beginning of their narratives. Both Carlos' and Ofelia's fathers are killed in the war. Carlos is sent to an orphanage, prompting his narration -- which then is further motivated by the horrifying mystery surrounding the death of a contemporary. Ofelia's narration begins when she moves with her mother to the Nationalist outpost of her new stepfather. Her narration is further motivated by her fairy-tale quest to reconstitute home on a new plane.

heading towards town in search of help, the only visible location is the one they are leaving behind – they are journeying away from their traumatic past, toward an uncertain future. The conclusion of *El sur* marks the point of embarkation as Adriana’s childhood home, and tomorrow she leaves it, but no reference is made to where precisely she will journey. Thus the narrative voices are moving onward, leaving the loci of their trauma, but as Del Toro and García Morales have not presented a destination for Carlos and Adriana, the final impression is the suffering the children attempt to leave behind and a question as to whether they will be able to transcend it. Neither *Bandidos* nor *El espíritu de la colmena* presents the audience with the child narrative viewer’s specific destination at the end of the film, but the children’s final positions indicate that they will continue on the trajectory they have begun, robbing and seeking the spirit, respectively. *El laberinto del fauno* ends as Ofelia, as Moanna, returns to her kingdom and reunites with her family, presumably to resume her throne and live happily ever after in true fairy-tale fashion. In the land on the surface, however, Ofelia joins her family in death.

For the children who, at the end of their narrative, journey away from their contact with war, Van Gennep’s phases of the rite of passage (addressed in Chapter 2) are particularly relevant. These children have passed through this harrowing trauma and will now attempt to reintegrate into society. Meanwhile, the characters that lack a specific destination at the conclusion embody Leed’s description of the veteran who remains stuck in his/her state of liminality, and may have greater difficulty accomplishing the reintegration phase of the rite of passage. Considering the transformative power of war upon an individual, I drew from studies of rites of passage and trauma theory, with special attention to the war veteran’s response to trauma. This has proved one of the

most fascinating comparisons of this study, for I have shown that the authors and filmmakers of these works present the child's trauma in a fragmentary and repeated way that resembles how war trauma is experienced and re-experienced by the survivor.

Despite the varied treatment of the war and its aftermath, each work clearly indicates that children have been impacted by these traumatic events and they attempt to process the trauma and heal from their losses, but will continue to feel the effects for quite some time (as explained in Chapter 2). The child narrative viewers and voices employ various strategies to heal themselves and recover from these traumatic losses: these include writing, embarking upon physical or mental journeys, seeking revenge, or trying to reconstitute home on a new plane (be that as part of a real or fantastic community). These children do not face this hardship alone, however, and there are similarities in their social networks.

The child narrative viewers of these works are placed into social units, most often comprised partially of family members and partially of other caregivers who compensate for the missing or negligent family members. The children rely heavily on the non-family member, when present, for guidance and affection. Many of these social units have been broken or made dysfunctional specifically by war and its aftermath, and the child then needs to encounter or forge a surrogate family.¹⁷³ The boys of *Bandidos* are

¹⁷³ The most open and communicative mother-child relationship is Ana's with her mother in *Cría cuervos*, followed by the little girl's in *Las manos de mamá*, Nellie's in *Cartucho*, and Ofelia's in *El laberinto del fauno*. Although Ana in *El espíritu de la colmena* rarely comes into contact with her distracted mother, their one interaction is indeed a tender one. Tension between mother and child is seen in *Balún Canán* as her mother rarely spends time with her daughter and prefers her brother to her, and also in *El sur* in which the rift between the parents has compelled Adriana to side with her father against her mother in all conflicts. Although his family does not appear in *Bandidos*, Luis' desire to reunite with them is what prompts him to journey with the young bandits, and throughout much of the film, whilst he clings to this

left without caregivers, but are able to survive because they allow the Revolution not merely to impact, but to completely redefine how they live.

It is no coincidence that all of the caregivers of the works of this study appear, to the children who observe them, to be preoccupied. In the works in which violence is present, those set during wartime as well as *Balún Canán*, the caregivers are indeed preoccupied – with the children’s safety. They may at times appear cold or lacking affection for the children they are raising, yet this response is a natural one that places protecting the child’s life before all other tasks, including granting affection. In the works of the postwar, the caregivers may also be experiencing what Erice describes as the withdrawal and selfishness that resulted from being traumatized by war and then denied the regular channels of self-expression (Erice and Fernández Santos - *El espíritu de la colmena*, 144; Arata, 99). In *Cría cuervos* and *El sur* the parents are additionally preoccupied with marital difficulties revolving around postwar tension, divisions, and inequalities, as well as the fathers’ romantic indiscretions.

In each of the works there is also a notable absence that haunts the child’s world. In some works this absence is generated by the death of a loved one; in others it is the absence of emotional connection with family, which remains distracted and dysfunctional as a result of the war; and in others it is the absence of true communication, now denied by postwar censorship. The inability and/or refusal of these issues to be suppressed or ignored is in keeping with the nature of trauma and its relentless resurfacing throughout a survivor’s lifetime. In the narrative the absence may be made known via various means

hope, he carries their photograph with him. In *El espinazo del diablo*, however, Carlos’ mother is never mentioned and Carmen occupies the role of Carlos’ primary female caregiver.

including pervasive Gothic darkness and secrecy, hauntings, and horrific entities that reach out to the child narrative viewers to impart their truths. The child's relationship with this absence is often one of empathy as, like the woman of the horror movie who connects with the monster, she recognizes that she shares with this creature an inferior and dejected status within this restrictive, patriarchal society. In this case the child works to learn the creature's (and implicitly, the nation's) story, and in effect learns something about herself. I have found that the narratives depicting the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath show a greater tendency to convey this absence via the Gothic Other. I attribute this both to the nature of the Spanish conflict – a bi-partisan (although some would argue tri-partisan) civil war in which there is a clearly recognizable and consistent foe that can be identified as Other; as opposed to the Mexican Revolution in which different forces controlled different regions, the longer time span brought several leaders to the foreground, and alliances amongst their forces were not fixed. Second, and more apparent, is the fact that the decades of postwar censorship and isolationism imposed by Spain's newly seated dictator are precisely the dark and secretive *mise-en-scène* for the Gothic narrative. Even still, in the narratives depicting the Mexican Revolution, a haunting presence does exist to some degree, as death surrounds the characters daily and memories of the fallen linger in their thoughts. But the girl's mother in *Las manos de mamá* instructs her children to live their lives, to focus on the real, and to “ignore the ghosts” (20).¹⁷⁴ In three of these works depicting the Mexican Revolution, rather –

¹⁷⁴ The connotation of this word “fantasmas” is clearly negative for *mamá*, for while she wants her children to ignore ghosts, she conversely teaches them the importance of communicating with their deceased ancestors in a positive way, seeking guidance and paying homage to what they valued and how they lived.

Cartucho, *Las manos de mamá*, and *Balún Canán* – there is a heightened identification on the part of the narrative voices with indigenous spirituality, which draws from an alignment with a maternal figure and respect for the land and familial bonds that transverse time and space. *Bandidos*, the one work that exhibits the most detachment while presenting the Revolution, and in which no traces of either haunting or seeking consolation in regional traditions of spirituality may be found, is by the one artist who did not personally experience these turbulent Revolutionary times. This brings us to the discussion of the next pertinent narrative relationship: character to author.

When considering narratives of war and its aftermath as witnessed by children, the relationship between narrative child viewer and authorial voice is also worthy of scrutiny, especially if the latter has experienced war or similar trauma personally. This complex relationship has been observed by many critics of postwar art but, as discussed in Chapter 1, is perhaps most eloquently explained by Miguel Delibes in *El furgón de cola*. He describes “*los mutilados psíquicos*” of the Spanish Civil War, artists who have lived through either the war or its aftermath and who later attempt to come to terms with their own violent pasts through artistic recreation. Delibes’ description of lingering and resurfacing traumatic memories and the impact that the Spanish Civil War had on survivors, indeed fits perfectly within the trauma theories of Freud, Caruth, and Leed, presented in Chapter 2. “*Los mutilados psíquicos*” are therefore what Van Gennep and Leed describe as survivors caught in the liminal state of the rite of passage of war. The survivor, unable to process the trauma that has happened to him/her, will encounter it

“Fantasmas,” then, more likely refers to unsolicited haunting from unsettled souls, and the surrendering of one’s present life to tragic memories.

subtly and repeatedly throughout his/her lifetime, and while trauma is unrepresentable, his/her natural inclination to attempt to relay the experience creatively will aid his/her healing process. For example, in *Art Therapy and Political Violence: With Art and without Illusion*, McNiff refers to cases such as that of art therapist Imelda McGeehan, who calls the period following the bombing of her hometown in Northern Ireland one of the most creative and prolific of her life. McGeehan explains how artistic expression “can flourish in the aftermath of a disaster or tragedy because it is the complete opposite to the traumatic experience” (McNiff, xiii). Wertheim-Cahen confirms, “Art making in general provides possibilities to heal the destroyed connection between the past, present and future. Art activities offer survivors a transition, even if only momentarily, from helplessness and passivity towards being in charge again” (216). This is the third main use of the child figure in narratives of war and its aftermath – healing vehicle – for through the narrative, the author or filmmaker survivor of war or its aftermath may cathartically return to his/her own youth in an effort to express and attempt to process war-related traumas personally experienced.

The fact that all but one of the authors and filmmakers of this study have openly admitted to crafting child narrative viewers that are to some degree autobiographically based, supports Delibes’ theory of “*los mutilados psíquicos*” and suggests that the cathartic release of the creative process has played a conscious or unconscious part in these authors’ and filmmakers’ decisions to narrate from the point of view of a child narrative viewer.¹⁷⁵ The narrative viewers of *Cartucho* and *Las manos de mamá* are

¹⁷⁵ Estrada being the one filmmaker I have been unable to confirm draws from personal or familial experience of violence or Revolutionary trauma. His history battling Mexican censorship is extensive,

modeled on Nellie Campobello herself with a few adjustments (Muncy; Hurley, 33). The Revolution claimed her father's life in 1914 in the Battle of Ojinaga; she was fascinated with military tactics and weaponry; and as an adult in addition to these works she wrote poetry and essays and, together with her sister Gloria, choreographed dances revolving around the Revolution (Matthews, 96; Campobello interview). Rosario Castellanos explains "A la novela llegué recordando sucesos de mi infancia. Así, casi sin darme cuenta, di principio a *Balún Canán*: sin una idea general del conjunto, dejándome llevar por el fluir de los recuerdos" (Carballo, 419). On her family's two ranches, El Rosario and Chapatengo, Castellanos witnessed the social clashes between landowners and peasants similar to the ones depicted in *Balún Canán* (Bonifaz, 15). The Agüellos are modeled after her family, including the class difference and tension between her parents, her relationship with her *nana* Rufina, her family's preference for her younger brother Benjamín, and her grief upon his passing.¹⁷⁶ *El espíritu de la colmena* contains childhood memories of Erice and his coscreenwriter Ángel Fernández Santos, who both experienced growing up in the ideologically suffocating atmosphere of the Spanish postwar era. Memories of mushroom-picking outings with a grandfather, playing Frankenstein games, learning that a classmate's father had committed suicide in a well,

however, for his films are notorious for their dark humor and cutting social criticism, and have encountered censorship disguised as bureaucratic delays and mishaps as recent as 1999 with his best known film, *La ley de Hérodes* (Velazco). This film was Estrada's "cri de couer against the political system" that he made "out of exhaustion" (Preston). He explains, "My grandfather and my father both suffered under the same regime. Now I have two children, and I don't want them to be victims" (Preston). He is hopeful for progress, however, as his latest film *El infierno* continues his harsh criticism of governmental practices, and yet was made with government funding, was not censored, and even opened during Mexico's bicentennial celebration (Stevenson).

¹⁷⁶ As further testament to the impact that these events had on Castellanos' life, one notes that she later dedicated much of her life to educating (often through puppet shows) and assisting the indigenous

and discovering that a *maqui* had been hiding in the barn, all served as inspiration for Ana's experiences (Paul Julian Smith – Introduction; Paul Julian Smith, 108-109, Pena, 33). Saura has incorporated into his films many details of his own life; in *Cría cuervos* for example the bedtime story Ana is told is the only one Saura's mother used to tell him as a child, and his mother, like Ana's, also had a promising career as a pianist (Hopewell, 138). Adelaida García Morales acknowledges that although “not a straight autobiographical transposition,” the childhoods described in many of her works are indeed based on her own experiences (Lee Six, 151 and Sánchez Arnosi). Jehenson reveals, “Until she was ten, she lived far from the city, restricted and isolated from the companionship of other children. She grew up with adults viewed as rigid and conventionally oppressive, and as distant as those she portrays in her novels” (212). Guillermo Del Toro, as well, admits that he frequently bases the children in his films on himself as a child, and that like Carlos he has a fascination with insects and comics, heard a ghost's voice as a child, and attended an all-male Jesuit school which serves as the model for the orphanage in *El espinazo del diablo* (Filmoteca; BNN interview; esplatter). The violence depicted in his films draws from incidents he as a child witnessed in the streets of Mexico and in his Jesuit school, coupled with Spanish Civil War stories told to him by Spanish expatriates [reallyscary; and Hermoso]. But not only does Del Toro admit to basing his fictional children on himself; he also acknowledges the cathartic power of writing. In 1997 his father was kidnapped, and he explains:

I found myself writing every morning my fantasy stories to escape because those two, three hours I would be able to dedicate to my creatures and my stories in the

population of the Yucatan Peninsula to improve their quality of life at the National Indian Institute and throughout Chiapas (Barrera -and- Bonifaz, 32-33).

morning would absolutely give me the energy and the power to get through the day in that harrowing situation, so I need them. I need them many times. Many times a good story has saved my sanity at the very least, and sometimes my life. (Fresh Air Interview with Terry Gross, January 24, 2007)

Therefore, it must be noted that when considering a narrative depicting war and its aftermath, often textual markers not only present insight into the message of the work, but also reveal personal information about the work's creator that may facilitate a deeper reading beyond the text itself.

Susan Lanser has named three other relationships that further illustrate the similarity of presentation of the works of this study: status, contact, and stance. "Status" refers to the relationship between the narrative voice and his/her speech act, or rather, his/her credibility (Lanser, 85-86). As I suggested in discussion of point of view markers in Chapter 1, each of the narrative voices of these works is constructed to appear sincere while at the same time notably semi-reliable. Their "contact", or the relationships between the narrative voices and reader/viewer, varies. With the aid of the presented point of view markers, one may identify the level of contact each narrative voice has with his or her reader/viewer.¹⁷⁷ Lanser's final relationship, "stance," refers to the narrative voice's relationship with the material he/she presents, that is, his/her attachment to, understanding, and opinion of the episodes he/she conveys (Lanser, 86). His/her stance may be determined by examining the ideological point of view markers of each work. As

¹⁷⁷ The works arranged from most to least narrative voice-reader/viewer contact are *Cría cuervos* (Ana speaks directly to the camera), *Balún Canán* (the girl communicates to a definite yet unspecified audience), *Cartucho* (Nellie's audience is also unspecified), *Las manos de mamá* (an interlocutor appears briefly within the work, but the narrative voice gives no indication of recognizing one outside the work), *El sur* (Adriana is not aware of an audience other than herself and her departed father); *El espinazo del diablo* and *El laberinto del fauno* (although the initial narrators speak to the viewers directly, Carlos and Ofelia are unaware of an outside audience); and *Bandidos* and *El espíritu de la colmena* (Luis and Ana do not address an outside audience).

noted in Chapter 1, each of the narrative voices is personally affected by the narrative he/she tells, and yet exhibits limited comprehension of the narrated events. This is attributable in part to the fact that all describe trauma, and trauma (as explained in Chapter 2) is inherently unable to be processed, and in part to the children's inexperience and still-developing intellect.

The child's limited understanding is indicative of his/her innocence and ongoing discovery of the world around him/her, another important consideration for these works. What these child narrative viewers share is that the environments of violence and oppression in which they exist were created by the generation before them. They are affected bystanders who have done nothing to bring about these situations and yet they must endure them and, sadly, adapt to them; their lack of culpability amidst harsh conditions endears them to readers/viewers, even when they attempt to fight back.

The child's youth, as well, ingratiates him/her to adult readers/viewers who have experienced and may reflect upon their own youth, empathizing through shared memories of childhood in general. The fostering of empathy is strategic, for while childhood is familiar to all, the experience of war may not be. It is this former experience, therefore, that is used to bring the reader/viewer closer to the trauma of war and its aftermath. Childhood is a universal and therefore accessible experience utilized to approach one that may not be as universal or accessible. It is the introduction to the unknown by means of the known.

The subsequent disruption of childhood by the trauma of war and its aftermath invokes in the reader/viewer a sympathetic and protective attitude towards the child narrative viewer whose life and/or well-being is at risk. The role of the "*lector*

cómplice,” as described by Cortázar, is more narrowly defined in these works as one that resembles that of an emotionally invested caregiver concerned for the well being of the child narrative viewer.¹⁷⁸ Because the child figure elicits associations of innocence and a newness of life in need of nurturing, readers and viewers not only work to fill the gaps of the unperceived and interpret the misunderstood, but also become bound to the child narrative viewer in a unique blend of nostalgia and concern for his/her safety. Their role is therefore rooted in identification with the child and a desire to protect him/her. The juxtaposition of the child’s fragility and innocence against powerful destructive forces and oppression intensifies the horror of these conflicts, and amplifies the readers and viewers’ concern for these children whose well-being is threatened.

In order for this specific relationship to exist however, it is imperative that the author/filmmaker establish a believable childhood via depictions of childhood activities to which readers/viewers can relate. While the works of this study vary temporally, spatially, and by age and gender of child narrative viewer, one constant is the inclusion of playtime amongst the child’s activities. Even the boys of *Bandidos*, who follow so closely in the footsteps of the adult bandits, pillaging, destroying, and rummaging through the possessions of the dead in search of food and valuables, make time for play. They pretend sword fight, blow their horn, and sit by their campfire reading aloud stories such as Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Common playtime activities in these works include the investigation of their caregivers’ belongings, and the imitation of

¹⁷⁸ The term “*lector cómplice*” appears in Cortázar’s *Rayuela* where he explains the participation of the reader in association with the author of the text as entering into the author’s game.

adult behavior, including – especially in the works that highlight society’s machismo – the playtime exploration of gender roles.¹⁷⁹

But in addition to losing loved ones to the war and its aftermath, each child narrative viewer of this study also loses the opportunity for a typical childhood. Just as Linhard details, the violence and oppression of war extend beyond the battle itself and alter the lives of even non-combatants. All of the vital experiences of the narrative viewers of these works have been shaped by war, including protection by caregivers, playtime with other children (albeit limited, in the case of *El sur*), and some degree of restricted mobility. In this study it is the Mexican works (*Cartucho*, *Las manos de mamá*, *Balún Canán*, and *Bandidos*) in which the child narrative viewers have more freedom of movement and interaction with the outside world (if only slightly in the case of *Balún Canán*). This mobility enables more outward focus. Conversely, the Spanish Civil War works, in which the narrative viewers exist within relatively more closed environments, include more introspection and more thorough character development.

The permeation of violence, in its varied forms from physical to oppressive, into each child’s domestic sphere robs them of some of their innocence by subjecting them to brutality and prematurely to adult matters. Godoy Gallardo suggests that each novel written in the post Spanish Civil War era presents childhood as either a paradise lost – ended or prevented by the war – or an attempted recovery of paradise as when adults experiencing the devastating effects of war, longingly recall the peaceful years of their

¹⁷⁹ Both Ana in *El espíritu de la colmena* and the Ana in *Cría cuervos* imitate male activities in their playtime, suggestive of their budding nonconformity to gender roles in this rigidly patriarchal society. The former imitates her father’s shaving routine, and the latter grows a pretend beard by smearing her face with mud from the garden.

youth (24-25). This is certainly true of the works of this study, as war and its aftermath loom over these children, denying them freedom, safety, and normalcy in varying degrees; and for those who narrate retrospectively, their sadness and longing for a more traditional childhood is unmistakable.

Playtime is present in each work and is important for several reasons. It makes the topic of war more approachable by establishing with the readers/viewers the common ground of childhood. The children's games often replicate social or domestic conflicts – for example border dispute games and dress-up and imitation of quarrels regarding infidelity – but are less threatening than outright criticism as they are carried out by children who do not comprehend the significance of the roles they are interpreting. Leed's observation that within the war narrative the appearance of fairy tales and fantasy suggests a need to resolve a problematic situation, is certainly relevant here as traces of fairy tales in the children's play reveal their efforts to escape undesirable realities.¹⁸⁰ When the children's play is juxtaposed against the severity of war and its aftermath, the contrast is harsh. Their games illustrate how the children's environment has been infiltrated by the violence that surrounds them. The fact that the children often imitate their adult caregivers reveals their desire to form part of a community, while also may forebode the perpetuation of possibly negative ideologies – such as repeating derogatory language about her Amerindian caregiver in *Balún Canán* – that have caused or facilitated the inhospitable climate in which they now reside. Their play also shows the children's resilience, however, and their ability to sustain tremendous psychological

blows, even founding traumas, but still continue on, releasing the unprocessed experience in playful recreations.

The experience of coming into contact with or feeling the effects of another's death is, understandably, an essential part of narratives of war and its aftermath. All of the child narrative viewers of these works witness death in some way, and yet their responses differ from shock and fear, comfortable acceptance, and the extreme - perpetration. A pattern in the child narrative viewers' responses to death cannot be identified, as within these works there exists no clear division based on the conflict addressed, the wartime or postwar timeframe, the age or gender of the narrative viewer, or cause of death of the victim. What prove to be the most consistent indicators in anticipating the literary child's death response, however, are the age of the victim and the extent of the child's exposure to violence. Child narrative viewers who have witnessed the death of a younger or same-age child react with more visible shock and fear (*El espinazo del diablo*, *Balún Canán*) than those who witness the death of an adult. And those who have been exposed more frequently to death attempt less to counteract it (I speak specifically of *Cartucho* and *Las manos de mamá*). However, there is also a saturation point, as seen in *Bandidos*, after which the child adapts to the death and killing that surround him, not only doing little to counteract it and preserve life, but also beginning to take life.¹⁸¹ Indeed, studies by the Child Welfare Organization confirm that

¹⁸⁰ The girl's mother in *Cartucho* and *Las manos de mamá* once again stresses the importance of living firmly in this world, and thus does not fill her children's heads with fairy tales and fantasy. Rather, the girl notes in *Las manos de mamá* that their stories were of real people and their accomplishments.

¹⁸¹ Luis first encounters death in the film when through his telescope he sees bandits slit a military officer's throat. He hastily compacts the device and gestures to his friend what happened to the man, revealing his comprehension that they are in danger and must quickly leave the area. While urgency is his first reaction

prolonged abuse, neglect, or exposure to violence greatly raise the chances of a child adopting criminal behavior.

It is interesting to note that one work, in addition to demonstrating the loss of life as a result of war, also suggests a loss of life as a result of grief. In *Las manos de mamá* the child narrative viewer identifies her mother's tremendous sorrow upon the death of her youngest child due to lung problems, and then watches her mother ostensibly retreat from life. After the tremendous strength her mother has exhibited throughout the narrative in the face of extreme life-threatening violence, her grief and presumed consequent death over her deceased baby are especially effective at conveying the depth of a mother's love for her children, and suggests that she had drawn much of her strength from her need to protect them.

There are several ways in which this present investigation of the child narrative viewer of war and its aftermath may be expanded. First, it would be interesting to consider the gender of the child narrative witnesses in evaluating their bestowed powers of observation and subsequent interpretation of the traumas they experience. If there is a difference in the way male and female pre-adolescent child narrative witnesses present war and its aftermath, are there perhaps factors of the conflict itself that have created or contributed to that difference, for example variations in environments or alignment with

upon witnessing the death of a stranger, he exhibits horror when he finds his classmates' and teachers' bodies strewn about the rubble of his school, becomes physically sick, and must retreat outside to vomit. But after prolonged regular contact Luis becomes more comfortable in the presence of death and more accepting of the idea of perpetrating similar violence. Considering that Luis' reactions are as would be expected at first – shock, fear, grief, and even physical illness – and change only after prolonged unavoidable exposure to death and killing, we see how this character reaches his death saturation point. Of the works of this study, this is the one in which the children have the most exposure to violence, and so it is understandable that this is the only work to show the child narrative viewer's character shift so radically as a result.

same- or opposite-sex caregivers as a result of the violence? And how do works depicting the Mexican Revolution and the Spanish Civil War through the eyes of older, adolescent children compare to the works of this study? Does the construction of those narrative young adults in any way resemble the narrative children's construction? What remains the same?

Also, because neither the Mexican Revolution nor the Spanish Civil War affected the entire nation equally, a more careful temporal and spatial scrutiny of the child narrative viewers' environments would be an advisable and intriguing advancement for this investigation. That is, as the conflicts progressed, different regions of Mexico and Spain experienced war and its aftermath in different ways: some towns remained hubs of violence for longer periods of time, some areas sustained more damage and greater numbers of casualties than others, combatants and civilian populations were subjected to different types of warfare as new allies emerged and contributed support, and because of their demographic some regions faced more harsh reprisals following the conflict. A regional and temporal breakdown of the specific environments depicted in these works would perhaps reveal not only predictable differences in narrative tone with respect to the conflict, but also overall patterns in the types of war trauma narrated, and correlations between areas most impacted by violence and war-based narrative productivity from those regions. This regional- and temporal-based thinking also raises the question of the nature of the conflict viewed. What, if any, are the differences in the child's voice according to the type of armed conflict, be it bilateral, multi-lateral, or – for a future investigation – international?

As a general observation about the filmic presentation of the *homodiegetic* point of view so crucial to narrating war, its aftermath, and other harrowing traumas, there will be a simultaneous advancement of this perspective with the advancement of technology by which to present it. That is, considering the fullness that developments in technology have brought to the filmic *homodiegetic* narrator's perspective to date – the types of cuts, fades, transitions, and computer-generated images – it will be fascinating to monitor how this point of view amplifies with future innovations. Such technical evolution can already be observed when comparing the films of Del Toro with the earlier films of this study, and will no doubt continue to offer new ways in which the child's world may be conveyed on screen.

Based on the advantages of the child's narrative viewpoint, especially feigned objectivism, veiled criticism, and the intensification of the presented trauma, it is my assessment that in the coming years the child will be utilized prominently as narrative viewer of other contemporary tragedies, with similar construction of the child figure and authorial intent to present alternative discourse. A wider expansion of this project then will be to apply what we have devised about the child narrative viewer of war and its aftermath to child narrative viewers of contemporary non-war-related trauma, and to scrutinize the way the viewpoint is constructed differently according to the specific type of trauma depicted, and especially the changing nature of worldwide conflicts. For example, with the recent worldwide rise in terroristic activity, it is plausible that we will quickly see a new breed of child narrative viewer emerge to address this particular violence. Bearing in mind that increased exposure to death creates a type of tolerance along with a behavioral shift toward violent or criminal behavior, the child narrative

viewer of acts of terrorism will likely be one who perpetrates. The child will be older, adolescent most likely so as to have had ample time to detect his society's hatred for another group of people, and have experienced personal loss that would motivate him to seek vengeance. The narrative of terrorism as related by a child witness will begin with the same framework utilized in these works, in that the child's narrative will begin with the establishment of the importance of a loved one, followed by the loss of that loved one, which will motivate the child to act, but this time, aggressively. To counter the child's hostile acts, his innocence will be displayed in other ways, through acts of play, as in the works of this study, and through acts of love with remaining family members. The child narrative viewer of acts of terrorism will therefore present a similar criticism of society, but here the tragedy will be his perceived salvage-ability amid a hateful environment. Other contemporary tragic events that the child viewer may also increasingly be used to narrate include street crime, border disputes, the increasingly more prevalent trafficking of narcotics and humans, and conflicts arising from illegal immigration.

Of course, as long as there are violent conflicts and technological advances in warfare that facilitate wider-scale destruction, the child will continue to serve as narrative witness to – and spokesperson against – these armed conflicts. His albeit limited point of view enables powerful criticism and revelation that challenge and call for change, and thus the choice to set a narrative of war and its aftermath from the child narrative viewer's perspective is anything but innocent.

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