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2009

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

The Recuperation of Historic Memory: Recognizing Suppressed
Female Voices From the Spanish Civil War and Francoist
Repression

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Spanish

by

J'Leen Manning Saeger

December 2009

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. David K. Herzberger, Chairperson
Dr. James A. Parr
Dr. Raymond L. Williams

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The Dissertation of J'Leen Manning Saeger is approved:

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Acknowledgements

It is my distinct pleasure to thank those who made this dissertation possible. I owe my deepest gratitude to my advisor and mentor, Professor David K. Herzberger. His patience, guidance and constant support were invaluable. I sincerely thank him for never giving up on me, even when I was ready to give up on myself.

My committee members also deserve recognition for their part in shaping not only my dissertation, but also my graduate experience. I thank Professor Raymond L. Williams for agreeing to be part of my committee last minute and for his insights into Latin American fiction. I am also grateful to Professor James A. Parr for his keen editorial skills and encouragement throughout my graduate studies both in Spain and in Riverside. I would also like to recognize his wife, Dr. Patricia Parr, for her support and being a stellar educator who I constantly strive to emulate.

Finally, I would like to thank Teresa Moulin. UCR introduced us, but the dissertation process proved to be the mortar that will bond us forever. I am grateful to have had your friendship throughout this process.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate my dissertation to my family. I thank my parents, Jim and Kathleen Manning, for always believing in me. This dissertation is just as much theirs as it is mine. I am also grateful to my sister Lynette Lewis and her husband William for their encouragement and patience with me during the low times.

I am indebted to my husband Mike Saeger, who for the past 10 years has loved me, supported me, and since I started this program, had dinner waiting for me every night at 7:30 pm.

I also dedicate my dissertation to my beautiful daughter Ashlyn Michael Saeger who has made me smile every day since she was born. Though I started this program for me, I finished it for us.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Recuperation of Historic Memory: Recognizing Suppressed
Female Voices From the Spanish Civil War and Francoist
Repression

by

J'Leen Manning Saeger

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Spanish
University of California, Riverside, December 2009
Dr. David K. Herzberger, Chairperson

During the Spanish civil war and ensuing epoch of repression, female voices were suppressed and as a result, stripped of agency. Francoist historiographers legitimized this discrimination by excluding female perspectives of the past. Grounded in the sociology of memory and the theory of trauma, this dissertation investigates various plays, films and novels that attempt to revise Spain's official history by engaging the past through the memory of others. In chapter one, this dissertation examines earlier attempts to fracture patriarchal thought in the play *Las arrecogías del beaterio de Santa María Egipcíaca* (1970) by José Martín Recuerda and the film *Cría cuervos* (1975) written and

directed by Carlos Saura. Chapters two through four investigate more contemporary works. These are the novel *La voz dormida* (2002) by Dulce Chacón, the documentary *Muerte en El Valle* (2005) by C.M. Hardt, Josefina Aldecoa's trilogy *Historia de una maestra* (1990), *Mujeres de negro* (1994), and *La fuerza del destino* (1997), Lidia Falcón's 1994 play *Las mujeres caminaron con el fuego del siglo* and finally Guillermo Del Toro's 2006 film *El laberinto del fauno*. I argue that these works exemplify intent to splinter Spanish cultural hegemony and accord historical voice to women by undermining the oppressive social, political and cultural ideologies that bind female agency. Consequently, these works produce a new space for women to occupy while at the same time create revolutionary female models.

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Introduction

In Spain today, though many are reluctant to talk about the past, new generations have made a concerted effort not only to remember, but to speak out in opposition to the silence that has helped shape contemporary Spanish culture. This has come to be called the recuperation of historic memory where, according to Cristina Dupláa, "historic memory" refers to the union between a re-reading of historical facts and events from the nation's past fifty years and the collective memory experience of those who lived them (29). According to Dupláa, there are three important movements that occurred before the year 2000 which indicate a desire to evoke and revise the history of the "vencidos" in Spain. These are the commemoration of the collaboration of the *Brigadas Internacionales* in 1995, the official apology made by the Catholic Church in 1998 for its silence and inaction during the Holocaust, and the *Congreso de los Diputados's* condemnation of the civil war in 1999 (*Memoria* 69-70). Shortly after these events, in the year 2000, sociologist Emilio Silva and historian Santiago Macías created the *Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (ARMH)* as part of the *Ministerio del Interior*. In their book *Las fosas de Franco* (2003),

Silva and Santiago trace Silva's journey to find the grave of Silva's Republican grandfather who was executed and buried in the region of El Bierzo. Silva discovered the location of the mass grave in which his grandfather was buried with twelve other militia men. Finding his grandfather prompted many others to solicit his help in locating their loved ones. The ARMH's main objective is not only to locate the different graves of the "desaparecidos," but also to exhume and identify their remains. According to the ARMH website, as of today over five hundred victims have been recovered (www.memoriahistorica.org).

Though the ARMH is indeed a helpful resource in the recuperation of historic memory, this process is taking place in a number of other ways as well. For example, various nongovernmental agencies have been established to facilitate the process of remembering and rewriting the past. Some of the more notable include *Desaparecidos de la Guerra Civil y el Exilio Republicano (DESPAGE)*, *Archivo Guerra Civil y Exilio (AGE)*, *La Gavilla Verde*, and *Asociación de Jóvenes Comarca de Jerte*. One of the main tasks of these agencies is to aid families in locating the cadavers of their loved ones killed by Nationalist soldiers

during the war. In addition, they help to raise money for the excavations, as it is a costly process that the government has been unwilling to incur.

Technology has also contributed to the effort to recover the past. As a basic internet search indicates, numerous websites have been established which assist those interested in learning more about historic memory. Most present information on upcoming events offered by the various memorialist associations as well as materials such as books and DVDs that create awareness of the past from a Republican perspective.¹ Others designate a specific section of their page to help those looking for their family members who are "desaparecidos." Many of these websites even work in conjunction with others, such as www.nodo50.org/foroporlamemoria, which includes links to yet other sites of similar interest.

Television and film also have played a role in the effort to recuperate historic memory. Producers, directors, and writers of various television programs and films, such as "Cuéntame cómo pasó," and "El espinazo del diablo" (2001), have created works that focus on efforts to explore the past while at the same time utilizing a method of communication that can reach a larger audience than

most. Indeed, when Iñaki Gabilondo, former host of the Spanish program "Hoy por Hoy," requested opinions from his listeners about the recuperation of historic memory specifically by Spaniards, the response was so overwhelming that it resulted in the publication of the book *Los años difíciles. El testimonio de los protagonistas anónimos de la guerra civil y la posguerra* (2002). The success of the book as a bestseller suggests that much of the Spanish populace feels the need to talk about their silenced past.

In literature, the novel remains the dominant form in which the exploration of the past has taken place. Juan Goytisolo and Antonio Muñoz Molina, masters at the craft of penning novels of memory, are only two of the many artists that call attention to the need to remember. Goytisolo's *Señas de identidad* (1966) and Muñoz Molina's *El jinete polaco* (1991) investigate Spain's recent past in order to understand the present. The protagonists of these novels attempt to construct an identity by forcing themselves to remember the painful past which they have suppressed and thus focus on their individual histories and Spain's collective history. Ultimately, the process of remembering in *Señas de identidad* is exclusionary; in other words, the protagonist only discovers where he cannot find his

identity, which results in his decision to abandon Spain. However, in the case of *El jinete polaco*, the opposite occurs. Here, the character Manuel confronts his memories, creates his narrative, and embraces his past.

Recently other authors have emerged as writers of books of memory including Ricardo Vinyes (*Los niños perdidos del franquismo*, 2002), Isaías Lafuente (*Esclavos de la patria*, 2002), and Alberto Méndez (*Los girasoles ciegos*, 2004). These works exemplify the struggle involved in seeking to recover the past through memory while at the same time creating a space in official history for lost voices. Literary and cultural critics have also contributed to the growing body of writing interested in exploring the past. For example, *Exorcismos de la memoria* (2001), *Memoria histórica e identidad cultural* (2005), and *The Splintering of Spain* (2005), are collections of essays that offer a range of perspectives on the civil war and the consequences of the Francoist dictatorship.

While broad efforts in contemporary fiction to recuperate historic memory grow ever more compelling, it is the work of male writers that has received the most critical attention. For example, winners of the prestigious *Premio Nacional de Narrativa* for their books of

memory include Alberto Méndez (2005), Miguel Delibes (1999), and Antonio Muñoz Molina (2002).² However women have also contributed to the memory boom. In the 1980s, democratic and progressive ideals began to create a social milieu which welcomed feminist literature and theory from outside the country, "bringing with its presence a tendency among young women writers to often identify more with foreign models than with their own Spanish literary foremothers" (Ordóñez 127). As a result, female novelists of the 1980s broke with traditions of the previous generations and these new women writers began to interrogate the past and their absence in it. "Like fictional narrative, historical narrative appeared to be contained within familiar forms and widely recognized structures, codes perpetuated by the notion that history will say some things and leave others unsaid" (Ordóñez 128). Women such as Carme Riera, Carmen Gómez Ojea and Lourdes Ortiz published works in the early eighties which revise official history. By introducing women into the practice of revising history, "she, too, is able to bring back to memory those aspects of historical experience—her historical experience—that culture has asked her to forget. Becoming her own historian, she performs these acts of

retrieval by dismantling the narrative of forgetfulness with that of remembering—and within the gaps of her own ineluctable forgetfulness, she locates a new narrative of transgressive reinvention” (Ordóñez 128-129). Even though scholars now recognize the importance of the role women have played throughout Spain’s history, to a large extent women in history have been denied a voice and thus the opportunity both to recall the past and help shape its meaning. However, today, as more women novelists and directors focus on the plight of women in Spain’s dictatorial past, they begin to emerge as a source, using female characters, which speaks for women seeking to evoke and understand the past.

In this dissertation I examine works whose authors and directors attempt to fracture Spanish cultural hegemony and give historical voice to women. While undermining the oppressive social, political and cultural ideologies that bind female agency, these works produce a new space for women to occupy while at the same time create revolutionary female models. Though this dissertation utilizes mainly female authors/directors, I also examine works authored by males, for while I believe women’s presence within literature and without to be significant in the attempt to

recuperate historic memory in Spanish novels and films, I also agree with Lucy Fischer when she avers that, "women have no monopoly on feminist art" (18).

The late arrival of the women's movement in Spain, as compared to other Western cultures, hampered the production of literature by female authors. The Napoleonic Civil Code of 1889 "legally imposed women's subordination to men in all spheres of life, denying the former their most basic rights and autonomy as individuals" (Tsuchiya 212).

Although Lidia Falcón, whose 1994 play *Las mujeres caminaron con el fuego del siglo* I analyze in this dissertation, actively spoke out against Franco's decision to reinstate the Napoleonic Civil Code, she was imprisoned and her writings were censored.³ Indeed, the anti-feminist climate overshadowed the dissenting female voices.

However, a few Spanish men criticize the long legacy of women's oppression. In the 1930s for example, various plays by Federico García Lorca, such as *Bodas de sangre* (1932), *Yerma* (1934) and *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1936), feature strong female characters and their attempts to subvert prevailing patriarchal ideology and cultural repression. Though the Francoist regime censored Spanish cultural production, Miguel Delibes writes *Cinco horas con*

Mario (1966). Here, he dismantles the ideology of the *ángel del hogar* chapter by chapter by presenting a supposedly conservative widow who, through her confession to her husband's corpse, surfaces as shallow, materialistic, and perhaps unfaithful. In the 1970s, at a time when women were discouraged from engendering social transformations, José Martín Recuerda and Carlos Saura privilege the female experience. In an effort to splinter a homogenizing vision of women rescuing women, I have included works by Martín Recuerda and Saura in my introductory chapter to show that what men and women produce is not always in tension. Indeed, the works in this dissertation exemplify similar attempts to challenge the notion of fixed gender roles and the resulting suppression. By recognizing those who were ignored, forgotten or excluded from the official view of history, these works, by males and females alike, give voice and subjectivity to women of the past who traditionally have been stripped of dominant positions in history.

Though the intent to accord agency to female characters in narratives today appears to be an increasing trend, it is not a novel concept during the past 50 years, as seen by the works that I explore in chapter one.⁴ This

first chapter analyzes the play *Las arrecogías del beaterio de Santa María Egipciaca* (1970) by José Martín Recuerda and the film *Cría cuervos* (1975) written and directed by Carlos Saura in an effort to show that the concept of recovering lost female voices, though not ubiquitous, can be found during a time when repression permeated Spanish society. Indeed, Martín Recuerda and Saura, writing during the latter years of the Francoist repression, present female figures who subvert patriarchal ideology and challenge the imposed roles of female socialization. By presenting nonconformist postures, these artists pen works that subvert official history while inviting the spectator to contemplate various injustices of the past. Because they grant discursive centrality to strong female characters, Martín Recuerda and Saura accord agency to female characters and create a space for them in history.

Chapters two through four examine the connection between memory and history as a means to investigate female socialization, with trauma theory used as a lens to understand the works investigated. This dissertation draws primarily upon Dominick LaCapra's conceptions of trauma theory, although Cathy Caruth also presents revelent theories on trauma which I discuss in chapter four.

Dominick LaCapra, reading Freud's *Mourning and Melancholia*, presents the notions of "working through" and "acting out" as a means of coping with trauma. I contend that the works I examine embody attempts to work through various traumatic events of Spain's recent past. LaCapra proposes that working through post-traumatic symptoms alleviates the aftermath of trauma by countering one's inclination to act out (compulsively repeat the traumatic event). As a consequence, trauma, inherently resistant to narration, in fact can be articulated through the process of working through. He does not suggest that working through indicates a complete liberation or break from the past, but that this process presents a mode through which one might reconcile the traumatic event with the present (119).

Cathy Caruth, reading Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and *Moses and Monotheism*, explains in the introduction to her book *Unclaimed Experience, Trauma, Narrative and History*, the necessity to narrate trauma, or as she states, allowing voice to be "released through the wound" (2). She claims that literature offers a space that facilitates an investigation into the connection between trauma and history. In addition, she draws on Freud's notion of latency to explain how the "belatedness" of

trauma destabilizes a sequential narration of traumatic events, and proposes that "it is this inherent latency of the event that paradoxically explains the peculiar, temporal structure, the belatedness . . . of historical experience [which is] fully evident only in connection with another place and in another time" (17). Thus, narratives that present disjointed temporal approaches to access the past through memory, which is naturally fragmented, offer a way to experience history, not just understand it.

LaCapra warns that Caruth's studies on trauma theory should be approached with prudence. Whereas Caruth accepts referential truth as inherent in fiction, thereby muddying the modes of interpretation, LaCapra attempts to limit the polemics of understanding. Anne Whitehead in her book *Trauma Fiction* elucidates these polemics against which LaCapra cautions. Whitehead observes that by differentiating between absence and loss, LaCapra attempts to restrict the model of trauma. "For LaCapra, absence represents a transhistorical or foundational loss, a structural trauma that is not related to a particular event and to which we are all subject. Loss, on the contrary, represents a specific historical trauma to which not everyone is subject. Loss can be narrated and is capable

of transformation or reconfiguration in the future" (13). LaCapra maintains that Caruth's approach to trauma runs the risk of commingling structural and historical trauma. This in turn places historical losses on a transhistorical level. "Such conflation, LaCapra argues, results in a melancholic paralysis and potentially obfuscates or generalizes the significance of particular historical losses" (14). If we do not exercise caution in understanding and applying trauma theory, all history can be regarded as trauma persecuting the masses, not leaving a single person untouched. LaCapra advises that one must be intentional about recognizing the difference between structural and historical trauma because conflating the two can become second nature (Whitehead 13-14).

In her book Whitehead explains how LaCapra's observations affect trauma narratives. "Literary fiction relies on and encourages empathic identification. While LaCapra allows that empathy is important in attempting to understand traumatic events and victims, he cautions against identifying with the victim to the point of making oneself a surrogate victim. He alerts us to the issue of what we (seek to) gain from reading trauma narratives and he questions what is at stake for both writers and readers

in taking on the pain of other people's stories" (13-14). I would argue that taking on the pain of other people's stories is part of the process of working through. This is seen in the case of C.M. Hardt whose documentary studied in chapter two, chronicles her journey to expose the mysterious circumstances surrounding her grandfather's murder just after the civil war. Hardt attempts to interview her family and various members of the town of El Valle. However, precise answers evade her because many will not speak of the past. The silence encountered impinges on Hardt's process of working through her pain because she expects the past to be unproblematically uncovered. Eventually, she encounters people who will remember the past and Hardt plays the role of empathic witness to her interlocutors. However, to work through her traumatic experience, Hardt also requires an empathic witness. The spectators of her documentary become her empathic witnesses and allow for her trauma to be processed and transmitted. Ultimately, her story is told and she reclaims a place in history for her family.

The works in this dissertation consider Spain's past from a historiographic position which is inherently traumatic. By exploring these narratives, my intention is

not to create surrogate victims, but rather to consider the past from a place of trauma in order to recognize various displaced female voices.

I specifically draw upon LaCapra's argument on the polemics of too closely identifying with the victim—critical distance is imperative to the process of bearing witness to trauma. Indeed, empathy is of paramount importance when we as readers and spectators engage in traumatic narratives. It is crucial that we distinguish between the survivor of a traumatic event and ourselves as the interlocutor who bears witness. However that is not to say that traumatic events do not affect future generations. C.M. Hardt shows that the pain of traumatic events (whether one experiences them or not) certainly passes down from generation to generation. The murder of Hardt's grandfather, a man she knows only through photographs, because her family does not speak of the past, causes her to relentlessly search for answers. She hopes that her quest will unearth the truth, but in the end it leads only to more questions.

The pain that Hardt experiences is what Holocaust theorist Marianne Hirsch refer to as "postmemory." Hirsch explains postmemory as the suffering that touches the

second and third generations of Holocaust survivors. Though they did not live through the traumatic event themselves, they are still marked by its aftermath because the silence on behalf of survivors eclipses their offspring's search to clarify their past. Though Hirsch ascribes the term postmemory to the progeny of Holocaust survivors, the concept informs my analysis of the works in chapters two through four.

In chapter two I draw on the implications of memory and postmemory to investigate *La voz dormida* (2002) by Dulce Chacón and the documentary *Muerte en El Valle* (2005) by C.M. Hardt as they attempt to resuscitate the past in the present. Both of these works probe the traumatic events of the Spanish civil war and its aftermath. These works confirm that revising history can be a complicated process, first due to the silence on the part of the survivors, and second, because the past can only be accessed through archives maintained and manipulated by the dominant order. This is seen when C.M. Hardt locates her grandfather's death certificate which, in an effort to gloss over the violence, indicates he died from a hemorrhage. Though contrary to what official history identifies as the cause of his death, Hardt and her family

know her grandfather was executed by Nationalist soldiers. Indeed, Hardt's quest to understand her family's history verifies that one cannot recover a totalizing explanation of the past, because to remember requires narration, which is always subjective.

Chapter three examines Josefina Aldecoa's trilogy *Historia de una maestra* (1990), *Mujeres de negro* (1994) and *La fuerza del destino* (1997). I analyze the trilogy through the prisms of memory and postmemory to elucidate the marginalization of female voices. As the protagonist Gabriela and her daughter Juana share the memories of their personal past, their discussion serves to challenge the myth of womanness as presented by Francoist rhetoric and the various prescribed roles that dominate their existence. Though both women choose to subvert these roles, each does so in her own way while questioning her past and how it relates to her present. I also explore Gabriela's endeavors to evoke the forgotten memories of her traumatic past and her effort to put these memories into words at the behest of her daughter, and how her effort relates to Juana's attempts to investigate and narrate her postmemory.

Finally, in chapter four I study contemporary works that attempt to accord agency to women during a time when a

woman's foremost role was maintaining the domestic realm. Lidia Falcón's *Las mujeres caminaron con el fuego del siglo* (1994), alludes to the *patria potestad* clause of the Napoleonic Civil Code of 1889, which granted husbands and fathers guardianship over their wives and daughters and gave these men "exclusive authority and proprietary rights over [women]" (Tsuchiya 212). In this play, the female characters Montserrat and Patro remember their violent and repressive pasts in an effort to reclaim a part of history for themselves. As they share their struggles of the past with Patro's great-granddaughter Ester, they work through their traumatic past caused by life with their abusive fathers and husbands. They recount their story to young Esther, and by extension the audience, with the hope that they might alert the younger generations to the horrors of Spain's silenced past and to liberate their progeny from the same fate.

Guillermo Del Toro's *El laberinto del fauno* (2006), fuses the worlds of fantasy and reality to trace a young girl's journey through the horrors of post-civil war Spain. The film presents three main female characters: Carmen, Mercedes and Ofelia. Carmen, the wife of the villainous Captain Vidal, obeys her husband's every command just as

Francoist rhetoric specifies. Even though she is a capable woman who would prefer to exert control over her life, she cannot contend with her husband's officious rule. Thus she is a weak character whose death symbolizes her ineffectual approach to self-preservation. Contrary to Carmen, Mercedes chooses to rebel against Captain Vidal's tyrannical rule by colluding with the freedom fighters in bringing down his command post. Her participation in this resistance proves fruitful as her character is integral in thwarting the Captain's plans. Her efforts go undetected by Captain Vidal because he sees her as inferior solely because she is a woman. Finally, Ofelia defies Vidal, who is also her stepfather. Seeing Captain Vidal for the despot that he is, she chooses to deny him authority over her life. Though ultimately this results in her death, she dies knowing that she did not surrender to his will without questioning his motives.

Ultimately, these works present women who either collaborate with the Francoist ideal of what a woman should be (wife, mother, and homemaker) or women who function in opposition to this model. This exploration into women's position in society reveals how various female characters function within the norms of society and outside these

imposed norms to thwart a patriarchal culture's attempt to silence their voices. In so doing, the two works in this chapter recognize these voices and as a consequence grant them a place in history.

Chapter 1

Female Voices Recognized During a Time of Repression

This chapter analyzes two works from the 1970s: the play *Las arrecogías del beaterio de Santa María Egipciaca* (1970) by José Martín Recuerda and the film *Cría cuervos* (1975) written and directed by Carlos Saura. As I will show, these works challenge the function of the role of women as set forth by Francoist discourse. In addition, they grant women subjectivity, an effort that the "official history" of the dictatorship in public discourse generally ignored.⁵ Both works also recover personal and collective histories which are cathartic, for they afford the female protagonists the opportunity to confront the need to revise their sense of historical and personal time.

José Martín Recuerda vs. Federico García Lorca

In *Las arrecogías del beaterio de Santa María Egipciaca* (*Fiesta española en dos partes*), José Martín Recuerda dramatizes the historical figure Mariana Pineda, martyr for the Liberal cause during the reign of Fernando VII (1813-1833). Though not the first author to dramatize the life of Mariana Pineda, Martín Recuerda's rendition addresses issues of womanhood and gives agency to a female

figure during a time when women's voices were generally suppressed or ignored. Though he finished the work in 1970, it was not staged until 1977 because of official government censorship, which saw clear parallels between the oppressive conditions of the early 1800s and those of Spain of the 1970s.

Federico García Lorca also makes Mariana Pineda the protagonist of his 1925 play, *Mariana Pineda*. Like Martín Recuerda, Lorca represents Mariana as a heroic figure for the Liberal movement. However, in contrast to the later work, which emphasizes Mariana's personal commitment to a political cause, in Lorca's drama Mariana's intentions are attributed almost solely to the love she has for a man. In so doing, Lorca subordinates his protagonist to all that lies inside of personal desire and thus denies her agency beyond the imposed role of impassioned woman. As a result, his work as a whole does not proffer a contestation to models; to the contrary, his play serves to reinforce the patriarchal values of the time.

Conversely Martín Recuerda's work engages in the matters of renegotiation of power and gender equality. Indeed, Martín Recuerda takes Lorca's earlier poetic work one step further by emphasizing the politics of freedom as

fought for by a woman. Martín Recuerda utilizes this concept to reveal the problems of his present and to recognize the voice of a revolutionary woman who stands up for her ideology until her death in 1831. As a result, his work reconsiders gender culture and women's agency in social and political matters.

Because both Lorca and Martín Recuerda choose to dramatize a well known figure of Spain's past, it is helpful to contextualize the woman whom they depict. Mariana Pineda, a young widow from Granada, supported the Liberal cause against the absolutist monarchy in Spain of the early 1800s. Aiding in the escape of other Liberal supporters, Mariana offered her house as a refuge and had sexual relations with government officials in exchange for important documents and information such as passports and prison blueprints. Though long considered a suspect of revolutionary activities, Mariana evaded capture because for years the police could never gather enough evidence against her until her arrest in 1831. Charged with treason for commissioning a flag embroidered with the words *Igualdad, libertad y ley*, she was taken to the *Santa María Egipcíaca* convent where other female political prisoners were being held. Faced with the decision either to render

the names of her accomplices or face death, she chose the latter and on May 26, 1831 Mariana Pineda was executed.

Mariana Pineda Romanticized

Mariana's presence in literature is largely ignored until Lorca pens the play *Mariana Pineda*. In an effort to recognize her importance in history, he dramatizes this female historical figure as breaking from the *perfecta casada* ideal codified as early as 1583 in Fray Luis de León's play by the same name. Lorca is not the first to do this. The attempt to give voice to women is not a novel concept and indeed has been made before. The nineteenth century is fraught with works that concentrate on how to define womanness. According to Lou Charnon-Deutsch, "The nineteenth century is one of the favored test periods feminism uses to confront patriarchal values because the ideologies of gender are so heavily inscribed in its discourses" (xii). Works such as María Rosa Gálvez de Cabrera's *La familia a la moda* (1804), Rafael Liern y Cerach's *Doña Juana Tenorio* (1876), and Juaquina García Balmaseda's *Donde las dan las toman* (1868) speak to issues of, among others, self-definition and gender relations. Lorca also assumes this posture by presenting Mariana as a

dissident voice in pursuit of liberty. However, he denies her full protagonism when he ascribes her intentions to love and neglects to foreground the importance of her political convictions. In fact, Lorca himself confesses in a 1927 interview that he sees her as a lyrical character who lends herself to a poetic representation rather than a political or revolutionary portrayal. He states, "Nadie había dicho nada de esta figura del siglo diecinueve. Nadie había reparado en ella. Era obligación mía exaltarla. Y sentía ese imperativo. Porque ella es una figura esencialmente lírica. Sin odas. Sin milicianos. Sin lápidas de CONSTITUCIÓN" (Ayala 885).

By depicting Mariana as a martyr for love instead of for political ideology, Lorca not only bypasses an opportunity to write from a position of dissent but in addition, as Francisco L. Cabello points out, surprises theater goers of his time since they had expected to see a play which highlighted the atrocities of Fernando VII's absolute rule (278). As theatre critic Enrique Díez-Canedo notes in his review of the premiere:

No estarán conformes con el Poeta los
que aman a una Mariana de carne y hueso
sacrificada en aras de un sentimiento
por el que tantos dieron y habrán de dar
aún la vida. De todas las conquistas

del hombre, ninguna tan penosa, tan
inestable [sic] como la de la libertad.
Y he aquí que un poeta nos hace de la
mujer en quien la incorporábamos más
cumplidamente una heroína de amor. (132)

Lorca does demonstrate the fratricide between the two opposing factions and even places Mariana Pineda as the play's heroine of the Liberals. However, by presenting her as a sentimental figure rather than the strong woman who actively furthers the cause of the constitutionalist movement against the government of Fernando VII, he neglects to recognize her as a voice of liberty. Instead, Lorca portrays her as a woman who sacrifices herself solely for the love of another man, "Yo bordé la bandera por él. Yo he conspirado para vivir y amar su pensamiento propio. Más que a mis propios hijos y a mí misma le quise. ¿Amas la Libertad más que a tu Marianita? ¡Pues yo seré la misma Libertad que tú adoras!" (Estampa III, esc viii).

This relegates her to a position of inferiority and denies her agency. In other words, because Mariana does not sacrifice her life for her ideology, she cannot be an effective voice for the Liberal movement, much less for the collective female voice supporting the same cause. Instead, knowing that her lover has abandoned her so that he can be free, she believes that her death will create a

way that he can continue to love her. With her sacrifice, Mariana maintains that she will become the incarnation of freedom, and her free lover will always be able to love her in his memory. Though she expresses that her intentions embody Liberty, clearly her actions are motivated by this displaced love. “¡Yo soy la Libertad porque el amor lo quiso! ¿Pedro? La libertad por la cual me dejaste. ¡Yo soy la Libertad, herida por los hombres! ¡Amor, amor, amor, y eternas soledades!” (Estampa III, esc. última)

Torrente Ballester comments on Lorca's work and how by not portraying Mariana Pineda as a political victim, Lorca misses the point:

Mariana Pineda es el resultado de un Entusiasmo sentido, no por el dramatismo de las luchas entre *negros y liberales*, sino por una hermosa y patética figura de mujer a quien su desenvoltura llevó a meterse en libros de caballerías y a bordar sentimentales banderas para el amado, como las damas de otro tiempo. La historia del siglo XIX es algo más que episodios sentimentales; pero aun a través de algunos de ellos es posible calar hondo en la entraña de la vida española. García Lorca, forzoso es reconocerlo, no se propuso jamás esa tarea. (383)

By neglecting to offer a complex and contested interpretation of womanness, Lorca avoids developing further any previous intentions to splinter female-coded

characteristics of womanhood. Though his Mariana holds the text (a sign of literacy indicating power), these texts are "libros de caballerías." This only serves to reinforce the emotive nature of Lorca's Mariana. Ultimately she dies for her lover, symbolizing her collaboration with the cult of domesticity of the time which "insisted on woman's role of helpmate, conduit for her husband's desires, and sacrificial lamb to his aspirations" (Gies 115).

Mariana Pineda Revisited

Fifty years later Martín Recuerda chooses to dramatize a version of Mariana Pineda that illustrates the importance of her participation in the Liberal cause, while at the same time he gives agency to a woman who before had been denied recognition not only as a political figure, but as a woman of strength and conviction. Though set during the period of unrest under Fernando VII, it can be argued that the Spanish civil war (1936-1939) is the context of *Las arrecogías del beaterio de Santa María Egipcíaca*. Martín Recuerda utilizes the historical setting of Mariana Pineda to two ends; first to shed light on the political atmosphere of 1800s Spain under Fernando VII and his absolute rule. Secondly, his play serves to help

understand the time when it was written—1970, as undoubtedly his project criticizes the Francoist dictatorship.⁶

As the latter part of the title indicates, the play epitomizes a festival. Martín Recuerda uses dance and song to establish a connection between the actors and the audience. While spectators walk in the theatre to find their seats, participants in the play sing and dance as they hand out flowers to the audience. Just as the line between actors and spectators is blurred, so is the barrier between house and stage. In so doing, 1830s Spain fuses with 1970s Spain. Martín Recuerda explains his intentions:

Todo fue creado y recreado envuelto
en un aire de fiesta española, donde
la alegría se une a la tragedia y lo
lírico a lo dramático con una fidelidad
semántica inseparable. Nada distancia.
Creo que todo funde. Me gustaría que
esa fusión adquiriera, a la hora del
verdadero misterio escénico, la
atmósfera de un gran fresco con temblor
y resonancias de lidia de plaza de toros,
entre músicas, danzas, canciones,
violencia, silencios, esperanzas,
pasiones y terrores. (Halsey 305-306)

As the play proceeds, Mariana and the *arrecogías* sing loudly, encouraging the audience to clap along; in other words to participate in the rebellion. Suddenly bars are dropped and the entire theater becomes part of the

beaterio. The spectators themselves are now prisoners. This coupled with the epilogue incites viewers to examine critically their present day prison—the dictatorship. The actress who plays Mariana performs the epilogue to explain that if Fernando VII had granted amnesty only a few months earlier, Mariana and many others who died for the cause would have been spared (Halsey 313). The words of Mariana serve to interpret the past when she addresses the police chief, Pedrosa:

El gobierno liberal de España, que
desgraciadamente se tiene que ir
formando en el extranjero, regirá
con amor, con bondad, con humanidad,
y con comprensión. ¿En qué nos
diferenciaríamos entonces los que
juramos y somos fieles a la Constitución
del doce de aquellos cuyos poderes son
la violencia y la sangre, el callar a
la fuerza, el sometimiento injusto? (195)

With these words, Martín Recuerda recodes the gender construct of the day by portraying a Mariana who is rational rather than emotive. Additionally, he inverts the patriarchal pattern when he foregrounds her political motivations and depicts her as an integral figure of the Liberal faction. Undermining this parochial understanding of gendered behavior consequently affords her agency by contesting the inherited roles of women.

Reconstructing a Voice of Liberty

Though Martín Recuerda's work enlightens present day Spain and how liberty can be jeopardized, I contend that more importantly Martín Recuerda's interpretation of Mariana Pineda serves to uncover lost female voices, a project not often undertaken at this time. Here also his work diverges drastically from Lorca's. Whereas in Lorca's representation, just as the title would indicate, the action revolves around this central figure, in Martín Recuerda's rendition, again as the title implies, Mariana, although integral to the storyline, is in fact another *arrecogía*. Though Martín Recuerda presents Mariana as a strong revolutionary who sacrifices all—her body, her love, and her life for her ideology—in contrast to Lorca's work, she is not alone. Martín Recuerda creates other incarcerated women who tell their stories and in so doing he creates a place for these women and their narratives in history.

The first half of the play centers on the women as they share why they have been detained. Paula, *La Militara*, suffers because her royalist lover denounced her as a mason. Rosa, *La del Policía*, murdered her husband because he sympathized with the royals. Chirrina, *La de la*

Cuesta, was caught fighting with the rebels. Finally, Martín Recuerda includes Eva, *La Tejedora*, whose lover flees to English territory to find freedom. Though these women endure confinement together for supporting the same cause, they verbally attack each other, finding no solace in sharing a similar predicament.

This is seen most drastically in their initial stance against Mariana. Even before she appears in the play, the viewer has a predisposed negative posture toward her because of the words of the other *arrecogías*. They describe her as arrogant, pretentious, and authoritarian. They gossip of how she commissioned the flag to be embroidered and how she had sexual relations with powerful men in Granada. Initially, Mariana herself, a noblewoman, believes she is different from the others. She knows that she belongs to a higher class and indicates to the other women that they are beneath her. Because of this, the other *arrecogías* feel resentment toward her and inevitably tension results. For instance, as Mariana denies embroidering the flag to the women they grow intolerant of her. Mariana declares she does not know why she has been detained, negating the opportunity to unite herself with the other women. Paula, "*La Militar*" says, "Estás

mintiendo. Aquí ha llegado la hora de decirnos la verdad y ser como somos, porque no sabemos quién morirá mañana, si tú o yo . . ." (173). Rosa "*La del Policía*" also calls upon Mariana to tell the truth, "¿Has venido a mentir a la hora de la muerte? Las fuerzas de la guardia se refuerzan y es por ti. Por ti. Casimiro Brodett viene a salvarte. Y a la hora de la salvación, serás tú la salvada y nadie se acordará de las demás" (173). These biting words prove that not only a clear division between men and women exists, but also between the *arrecogías* and Mariana. Mariana is alone; however, not for long. When she observes that the others in the *beaterio* are strong women who are just as dedicated to the cause, Mariana realizes that she can be part of something larger than herself. To do this, though, she must win the women over. She eschews her position in society and finds common ground with her companions. She convinces the *arrecogías* that she is one of them—a strong woman, a mother, and a supporter of the Liberals who participated in activities that put herself and her honor in danger.

The turning point comes when the hated police chief Pedrosa comes to the *beaterio* and offers Mariana sanctuary should she denounce those whom she assisted. She refuses.

Furthermore, she declares to Pedrosa in front of the women in the convent that she is one of them. Now the women realize that Mariana is not an enemy. Indeed, this dialogue proves that the enemies are the Church and State.

Women United

Individuality versus solidarity remains a theme throughout the work. Eventually, the prisoners find refuge in uniting forces and Mariana serves to engender this solidarity. She declares that those who will come to save her, will save the others as well. With this, Mariana becomes the leader of the *arrecogías* and they accept her as one of their own. Ultimately, Mariana unites a group of women who, in the beginning, find no common ground. She becomes an example to the other women and this encourages them to fight against injustice alongside her. Because of her example and her actions, Mariana creates solidarity among the women in their pursuit for liberty.

When Mariana aligns herself with the other women in the convent it becomes clear that her motivation is collective. She is not a woman who intends to save only herself. Her actions prove that the other women there are just as important to the cause as she is. The women

understand this and stand with her because she has convinced them that their deaths, without a public trial, will make them martyrs for the cause of liberty and justice. The solidarity of the inmates becomes palpable when the other *arrecogías* demand to die with Mariana. Indeed, the individual drama of Mariana becomes the collective drama of all the prisoners.

By declaring in front of the *arrecogías* that she is one of them, Mariana underscores and exemplifies the importance of solidarity. She has worked alone for the cause, using her body for the freedom of others. Now she calls the other women to action and they stand in complete alliance because they understand that for them, the Church and the State are the enemy, not their fellow *arrecogías*. They also comprehend that the Church and the State are one in this convent prison. As Pedrosa states, "Nada importan las víctimas, sólo importa mantener unida la fe, bajo el mandato del rey, Nuestro Señor, quien sabe velar día y noche por sostenerla" (192). But the imprisoned women cannot support a Church that is an accomplice in the murder of the innocent. Indeed, they stand in opposition to the Church by refusing to go to confession or communion. They criticize the Catholic nuns who do nothing while the

prisoners suffer under the unfair laws of the State.
Furthermore, they expose the nuns who display no charity
towards the victims.

There is only one nun, Sor Encarnación, who
personifies charity and eventually unites with the
prisoners. The daughter of a guerrilla, Sor Encarnación
understands the plight of the women she guards. She cannot
ignore the fact that these women are denied a trial before
they are put to death. To show her compassion, she
volunteers to read Mariana's death sentence. Eventually
she jettisons her habit to unite with the imprisoned women,
explaining to Mariana that with this action she will find
salvation. Sor Encarnación, along with twenty other women,
barricade themselves inside the church to fast as an act of
defiance.

Solidarity is reflected outside the convent as well.
The initial music of the play serves to inform the audience
of the executions of the innocent. Ironically, the songs
are performed by Lolilla and her seamstresses who declare
political indifference:

Siguen los pronunciamientos
y los generales en Gibraltar;
sigan los regimientos
tan descontentos,
que nos da igual.

Que no quiero al realista
ni al que es servil
sólo quiero agua del río
y un suspiro para dormir. (141)

They compare themselves to flying doves who know nothing about the politics happening in Granada, however their description of what the *manolas* know and do not know indicates otherwise:

Las manolas de Bibarrambla
no saben qué pasa
en España entera,
no saben quién es Pedrosa,
¡vaya una cosa!
ni Calomarde, ne el rey Fernando,
y tan tranquilas,
van a los toros,
siguen su baile
mientras el pueblo se está matando.
(142)

Indeed, their words are just a ruse. Lolilla and her seamstresses, in fact, understand very well the political turmoil in which they find themselves and have in reality chosen a faction with which to align. As Lolilla dances with her seamstresses, she slyly brandishes a banner with the words, "No estáis solas, arrecogías" (143). Doing this contradicts their lyrics and confirms their support of the Liberals. Lolilla then stealthily throws the cloth over the convent wall. With her actions, she hopes to encourage

the prisoners to remain strong in their endeavors knowing that there are supporters on the outside as well:

porque la gente,
también muy valiente,
cuando grita "olé",
no es por el torero
que tiene salero
al torear,
sino a algo que pasa,
que no está en la plaza,
pero la gente ve,
y al decir "olé",
parece que quieren matar.
¿Qué será? (144)

Their efforts are not in vain, as the flag indeed engenders solidarity among Mariana and the other women.

Though the other women's stories are works of fiction, Martín Recuerda interlaces these imaginative versions with the historical figure whose character is the most developed. Mariana's strength and political commitment first materialize when she responds to Pedrosa and his suggestion that the convent offers "el camino de la corrección" (195). Fully aware that the convent is enmeshed with the government, Mariana asks Pedrosa how an absolutist and dictatorial government without virtue can offer this "camino de la corrección" as he proposes (195). For Mariana, her actions to further liberty and love for humankind do not need a "camino de la corrección." In

fact, they are more important than her own life and reputation. When Pedrosa leaves, she instructs her fellow *arrecogías* to tear their clothing into pieces to use a bandage for the bloody hands of another inmate who has been tortured by Pedrosa's men. Mariana clarifies the importance of doing this:

¡Escucharme bien! Si han de colgarnos
En las Explanadas del Triunfo por
arrecogías y no porque luchamos por
unas ideas, como intentan hacer creer,
que nos vean las ropas así, y se diga:
"ahí las tenéis, ahorcadas con las
ropas jironadas por las manos de tantos
hombres como las tuvieron." Sí. De
tantos hombres como hemos querido y
queremos. Los que luchan escondidos,
los de Ronda y Gibraltar, pero nuestros
pedazos de ropa Fueron para remediar
un dolor. (201)

With this action, Mariana illustrates her deep political commitment and challenges the others to follow suit. By using her body, effectively the only weapon she has, she defies a defining concept of Spain—Honor. She has jeopardized her reputation by exchanging her body for information. According to the archaic Code of Honor, only a man can now avenge her.⁷ However Mariana does not need a man to rescue her or her honor. By not disclosing the names of her co-conspirators, she retains her honor because her commitment to the cause is where her honor lies, not

with her body. It gives her pride and honor to speak and act for a cause that threatens her personally but will help construct a just nation. By tearing her clothes she does not hide her acts of prostitution, but instead publicizes them while embracing what the manipulated material symbolizes—her integral participation in the movement that saved many lives.

A Reversal of Roles

Mariana remains loyal to the cause and to herself, choosing death over the pardon offered by Pedrosa should she give up the names of those who helped her. However this cannot be said of her lover, Captain Casimiro Brodett, who functions in direct opposition to Mariana. Casimiro and his men plan to rescue the detained women, but are caught during the attempt. Badly wounded, Casimiro is brought to Mariana. When she realizes that he has come with the intention to run away with her instead of freeing her, so that they can continue to further the cause together, Mariana accuses him of being a coward. Here Martín Recuerda's play also bifurcates from Lorca's work. On the one hand, Lorca's Mariana is a romantic figure who devotes herself to love and does not condemn her lover for

leaving her to fend for herself in a compromising situation. On the other hand, in this piece, though Mariana's lover, Casimiro, is ready to abandon the cause to be with her, she condemns him for attempting to rescue her only so they can escape together:

¿Es que un liberal sabe luchar
solamente por el débil amor humano
de una mujer? [. . .] ¿Acaso tu
deseo de venganza, tu deseo de
llegar a las puertas de Granada a
la hora de mi condena, era sólo
por salvar a una mujer? ¿El amor
humano puede estar por encima de
la libertad de todo un pueblo? . . .
¿Y un hombre no perdona a la mujer
que quiso, sea como haya sido ésta?
Pero qué ideas del honor tan
cobardes, que destrozan toda la
libertad de pensamiento. ¿Qué importa
la honra de una mujer, ni los medios
de que se vale, cuando se sacrifica
por salvar de la muerte a muchos que
humillaron, que traicionaron como a
tí y a mí, frustrando para siempre
nuestra vida? (269-270)

Though Casimiro indicates an intention to respond, Martín Recuerda has silenced him so he cannot plead his case. Since his tongue has been badly burned by those who captured him, he can only communicate through grunts. Like women in many instances, now it is Casimiro, the *man* who has no voice. This enables Mariana to defiantly confess her past actions and in effect rescue her own voice. She

reminds Casimiro that it was she who preferred to remain his lover when the king required him to denounce his liberal affiliation as a condition of marrying her. Because of this decision she was forced to leave Burgos. She informs Casimiro that to console herself during their separation, she turned to helping others in the only capacity she could. She opened her house as a place of safe haven and traded her body for items that would help those whose lives were in danger. Even though her actions brought her shame and pain, she continued to do this because she believed in the cause. She challenges Casimiro by asking what kind of cowardly concept of honor he has. "A cambio de mi cuerpo salvé a muchos hombres! [. . .] Y no maldigo lo que hice delante del gran amor de mi vida" (56). By taking Casimiro's voice, Martín Recuerda in turn grants Mariana the opportunity to give herself agency. As a result, through her we hear not only the female perspective, but also the voice of the cause of the Liberals, a role typically relegated to the male figure.

Another departure from traditional roles emerges when Mariana holds to her convictions while Casimiro is prepared to denounce his for the love of a woman. By reversing the traditional male/female roles, Martín Recuerda in fact

demystifies the role of the woman. This is seen earlier in the drama, when Mariana expresses what a man would say about embroidering:

No soy aficionado a border. No he visto jamás una prenda revolucionaria tan cuidada como ésta. Creo que para la revolución no hace falta más que hombres y armas. Cualquiera trapo sirve de bandera. Qué modo de perder el tiempo bordando esta tela ¿no cree su Ilustrísima? (192)

Though Federico García Lorca brings to the fore the revolutionary actions of Mariana Pineda, he neglects to give agency to this historical figure who fought for freedom. Instead he presents her as a sentimental image motivated by love rather than by political convictions. A half a century later, José Martín Recuerda re-writes Mariana Pineda highlighting the revolutionary aspect of this historic figure. What is more, in his version, the woman speaks for herself and a cause when traditionally this role was entrusted to the man. Martín Recuerda effectively dramatizes Mariana as a martyr and in turn her story is given voice in history. Indeed, her voice is used to rewrite history.⁸

Cría Cuervos

The film *Cría cuervos* (1975), written and directed by Carlos Saura, threatens the status quo of Franco's regime in 1970s Spain through the exploration of the taboo topics of sex, religion, and politics. The work also challenges traditional authority and the values of middle class Spanish society by giving thematic and discursive centrality to female characters, which in turn gives them subjectivity for roles other than those perceived by society. This subverts the norms of Francoist discourse as the desired woman, according to the regime, is one who dedicates herself to marrying and to raising children while effectively running the domestic realm without employment outside the home. Saura's film works to undermine the Francoist rhetoric of what a woman should be by portraying women who either function in opposition to this ideal or fail at their attempt to embody the expected roles.

Film critic Marvin D'Luge explains Saura's efforts when he states, "This is clearly a period of intense experimentation for Saura, particularly in terms of the use of cinematic point of view to help formulate a more aggressive questioning of historical consciousness as well as female subjectivity" (127). By commingling the past and

present, fantasy and memory, Saura demystifies the role of the woman and revises history while masterfully critiquing the oppressive situation of middle-class women under the severe patriarchy of the time. "Saura suggests that not only is our present determined by our past, but our past is reshaped by the present. The mediator is the individual consciousness" (Kinder "Carlos Saura" 20).

The film tells the story of Ana as an adult, a figure projected into 1995, remembering the night 20 years earlier when her widowed father dies while having sexual relations with his friend's wife Amelia. Distressed, Amelia flees the house only after making eye contact with Ana but not exchanging words. The child enters into the bedroom of her father, takes a glass from a nearby table and carefully washes it because she believes (incorrectly) that she has killed him by poisoning his milk with non-lethal bicarbonate of soda which her mother told her was poison. Aunt Paulina and Ana's grandmother move in with Ana and her sisters to take care of them. Complying with the wishes of her brother-in-law, Aunt Paulina cares for the girls and in effect proves to be as authoritarian as Ana's father. The setting is summer vacation of 1975 when all five women live together for the first time.

Children of Franco

Saura, and by extension his character Ana, belong to what Marsha Kinder refers to as "children of Franco." According to Kinder, these young people are "emotionally and politically stunted children who were no longer young; who, because of the imposed role as 'silent witness' to the tragic war that had divided country, family, and self, had never been innocent; and who [. . .] were obsessed with the past and might never take responsibility for changing the future" (Children 58). However, because Saura creates a work that diverges so drastically from Francoist discourse, it can in fact be considered his attempt to change the future. In my analysis of the film I examine the major female figures in young Ana's life to show how they outwardly attempt to conform to Francoist ideals but fail; or how by conforming, they become ineffective. Either way, these women represent to young Ana figures who occupy a position she strives to transcend. By centering his film on women instead of men, Saura grants female figures a place in history by recognizing their voices and giving them subjectivity.

Cría cuervos is aware of the national and historical context in which it has been filmed, therefore one can

perceive the metaphoric roles the characters take on to represent the political landscape of the time. For instance, Ana's strict father, Anselmo, who appears mostly in military uniform, symbolizes Franco and his authoritarian rule. Accordingly, Anselmo's death directly correlates to that of the imminent demise of the *Generalísimo*. If his wife, oppressed by the controlling hand of her spouse, represents the futile efforts of the Republicans, then it stands to reason that Ana's desire to kill him signifies the hunger on the part of the second generation to be rid of the repressive political surroundings in which they live. Her inability to carry out her patricidal intentions also reflects this generation's lack of formal opposition to the regime.

The Women in Ana's Life

Ana and the women who surround her have been shaped by the ideals as presented by the organization of *La Sección Femenina de Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Sindicalista*, better known as *La Sección Femenina* (SF). Founded in June of 1934, the SF encouraged women of all ages to contribute to society by exemplifying what it referred to as its primary

undertaking, the education and training of women. The SF contended that women were to be concerned only with matrimony, maternity, and domesticity. These ideals promoted by the SF subjugated women to man's every whim and subordinated women to perform appropriate roles as predetermined by this section of the *Falange*. "From the moment of its establishment, the activities assigned to SF members were based on highly conservative perceptions of the appropriate division of gender roles" (Ofer 664). For example, even though trade schools were set up in order for women to learn to support themselves, they were professions acceptably performed by women, such as hairdressing, cosmetology, dressmaking, and child care.

In *Cría cuervos*, Ana's mother, María, is a naïve figure who struggles to fit into the bourgeois maternal and spousal roles expected of her. She gives up the opportunity to be a pianist in exchange for married life, or what adult Ana refers to as the refuge of a life without difficulties. Indeed Ana attributes her mother's decision to leave a promising career behind to her weak nature and fear of not measuring up to expectations. "Ahora, sin embargo, también pienso que, en el fondo, mi madre tuvo siempre miedo de no ser tan maravillosa intérprete como le

aseguraban sus amistades. Y prefirió la comodidad de una vida organizada y sin complicaciones, al riesgo de una responsabilidad que no podía compartir." María marries Anselmo, a career military man who pays little attention to her and even less to their children. In turn, instead of dedicating herself to rearing her children, María concentrates more on her husband's absence from the household and his extramarital escapades with women. In short, María proves to be less than the perfect mother and wife as Francoist ideology would demand. Ironically, Francoist discourse gives subjectivity to the mother, but in practice, the mother has no power. Perhaps for that reason, the mother is absent from this movie, replaced by a surrogate mother who cannot fill the role.

María's inability to fulfill the aspirations of the official discourse comes to the fore when others comment on her lack of mothering prowess. For example, while Aunt Paulina cannot believe that her sister would neglect to teach the girls how to maintain a clean home and exercise proper table manners, Rosa, the housekeeper, tells young Ana that she is just as clumsy with a needle as her mother was. Rosa also informs Ana that her mother was unable to breastfeed her because she was too "debilucha." Rosa does

not respect María's manner of running the house and even implies that her death in part is due to her inability to protect her home, her husband, and her children.

Young Ana finds comfort in the memories of her mother and continually evokes her presence. However, her mother also represents a painful representation of betrayal, illness, and death which serve to frighten young Ana. She recalls a scene from her childhood when she observes her mother waiting for her father to come home. He arrives during the early hours of the morning, most likely from a late night tryst. When María confronts him, she shouts at him, explaining that she needs help and that she cannot bear her circumstances as sole caregiver to the children and betrayed wife any longer. Anselmo, indifferent to her supplications, says he does not understand what she needs from him. To that, María declares that she wants to die and that she is sick. She explains that he could help her if only he would talk to her instead of ignoring her. As Gámez Fuentes observes, "Obviamente las soluciones que María apunta para librarse de su 'enfermedad' denuncian el carácter de demanda sintomática que posee. Su enfermedad está originada en la frustración de su papel como esposa y madre y su cuerpo se resiste a la anulación de su

subjetividad en esa ilusoria posición de sujeto [del discurso oficial]" (158).

María falls terminally ill and she is released from the hospital so that she can die at home. Ana enters her room and their eyes meet. María writhes in pain, holding her pubic region from which she is bleeding profusely. In her pain, she screams as if to warn Ana, "Todo es mentira. No hay nada. Me han engañado." Clutching her groin problematizes precisely the oppression that has been forced upon her. Her shrieks of pain expose her realization that she has been trapped in a constructed social identity in which she can not survive. María symbolizes Spain. Once beautiful, proud, talented, and poised, under the tyrant of Franco she becomes frail, weak, resigned, and finally dead.

Young Ana must reconcile the loving images of her mother with the frightening memories of her subordination to Anselmo and her agonizing death, both of which represent imprisonment and oppression to Ana. By evoking these memories, she confronts the emotional burdens left behind by her mother, intends to understand them and eventually revises them so that she will not become the same weak figure she perceived her mother to be. Ana does not want to become her mother; however, she realizes that this will

prove to be a process from which she must intentionally diverge.

From the beginning, the movie shows that Ana closely identifies with her mother, but also that she struggles to find independence from her. During the opening sequence of the film, the camera pans various photographs of Ana with her mother when she was a baby. Then Rosa, the housekeeper, tells Ana that when she was born, she had to be fetched with forceps because she did not want to leave her mother's womb. Later, Rosa insists that Ana is looking like her mother more and more each day. These illustrations of a close bond are underscored by the use of the same actress, Geraldine Chaplin, playing both adult Ana and Ana's mother, a visual technique that reinforces Ana's identification with her mother. However, Ana's dissidence toward authority, a characteristic her mother does not display or at least cannot perform well, is blatant early in the film. First, when Ana assumes she killed her father to rid the household of the oppressive figure whom she believes slowly destroyed her mother's life. Second, when Aunt Paulina discusses with the girls the guidelines expected of them at the viewing of their father just after his death. Dressed in his full military uniform, a clear

allusion to Franco and his soon to be defunct regime, Ana refuses to kiss him as her Aunt Paulina had instructed.

Aunt Paulina most exemplifies the Francoist institution of *la Sección Femenina*. She appears to be ready to implement the purpose of women according to official rhetoric. Here, the ideal woman assists man individually and collectively to create a perfect social unit. To do this, she must be a dedicated mother and submissive wife. Aunt Paulina takes over the authoritarian role that Anselmo's death leaves vacant and intends to restore order in the house, an order that she perceives to have been lacking. Taking her new duty seriously, she treats the children as her military subjects. She trains the children in appropriate etiquette at the dinner table and compels them to work with her to return the house, now in shambles, to its former glory. "¿Cuento con vuestra colaboración?" she asserts more than asks. Older sister Irene complies, but Ana does not consent. Here Ana manifests again her struggle for independence from a feminine figure she does not want to become. Aunt Paulina understands Ana's silence to mean submission and having quashed another act of defiance by Ana, Aunt Paulina insists "Ya veo que acabaremos llevándonos bien."

Though Aunt Paulina attempts to occupy the place offered to her by the regime, she fails. She is unhappy with the role she must to play. Her sister's and brother-in-law's early demise forces her into a role that she is not prepared to undertake. She is a sexually charged woman as noted by her appearance in expensive clothes and classic makeup, and her affair with a married military man. She tries to deny herself by throwing herself into the household chores and caring for the children, but to no avail. She is a frustrated woman trying to occupy the position expected of her, but serves only to reinforce to young Ana the example of a woman she does not want to be and the threat that endangers her yearning to be free.

Ana, much like her mother, finds this freedom in death and echoes the words of her mother when she screams to Aunt Paulina, "Yo quiero morir." However, realizing that it is her Aunt who now binds her freedom, she turns her words to her and says, "Yo quiero que tú mueras." Finally, after her aunt slaps her, Ana knows what she needs to do be set free; she decides to poison her aunt in the same way she believes she killed her father.

Rosa, the housekeeper, represents yet another figure that does not encapsulate the Francoist ideal. Though

hired to take charge of the household daily duties and the children, she cannot live up to the expectations of Aunt Paulina. This is indicated by Aunt Paulina's observations on the constant disarray of the house and her terse words towards Rosa after the maid has readied the girls for the funeral, "Están por lo menos presentables."

Ana enjoys spending time with Rosa for she exemplifies the closest likeness to a mother figure for Ana. Rosa returns the sentiment and treats Ana as somewhat of a confidant when she assumes the duty of narrator of the family's history. Having witnessed the volatile relationship between Anselmo and María, Rosa recounts to the young child her version of what she saw in an attempt to warn Ana about men and the role they will eventually play in her life. Rosa explains that Ana's father had been a skirt chaser and that often he had pursued her. Instead of displaying distain for this behavior, Rosa enjoys her superior's advances. When the film cuts to a scene in which Anselmo caresses Rosa's breast through a window pane, she smiles with pleasure showing satisfaction that she can still seduce a handsome, robust man.

On a symbolic level, Rosa's large breasts signify that this mother of four is able to nourish her family as

only a successful mother can. However, Rosa also considers her breasts an important part of womanhood and sexuality, not only a source from which to feed. When Ana demands that Rosa show her her bare chest, Rosa feigns modesty, then puts her breasts on display. Though she has raised a family of her own as well as María's three girls, and although she cooks and cleans attempting to keep the house in order, it is only from the outside that she exemplifies the Francoist ideal of motherhood. Her sexual tendencies, however latent, prove that suppressing sexuality will not annihilate sexual desire in all cases.

Ana's grandmother, a mute woman limited to a wheelchair, echoes the stifling setting of the house. Just as she cannot escape her chair or her voiceless position in society, the children cannot escape their home and the claustrophobic environment created by the authoritarian figures in their lives (Anselmo and Aunt Paulina) and the weak responses to these characters by their mother and grandmother. For instance, when Aunt Paulina chides the children for their lack of manners, the grandmother's face shows disdain toward her strong words, but she cannot defend the children. She is a mere spectator to the happenings around her. Though the pact of oblivion was

yet to be agreed upon, Saura in effect presents a character that is a harbinger of this agreement. As previously stated, when Franco came to power, he compelled the Spanish people to remain quiet about the civil war and its after effects. Although Franco died in 1975, many Spanish citizens still did not talk of the past. The silence obliged by Franco carried on even after his death. This resulted in an endemic amount of forgetting which stunted society's growth toward reconciliation. The mute grandmother represents the residual silence of the 1980s and 90s in Spain.

She also represents women confined to their role of mother, wife, and homemaker with no escape. She wants to transcend this futile existence, as seen by her acquiescence to Ana's offer to help her die. However, when Ana comes back with the poison, the grandmother changes her mind. Consequently, she will remain in the only role she knows, that of silent observer.

A Child's Perspective

Ana's grandmother, aunt, and mother submit or succumb to their predetermined roles. However young Ana resists her place in a social structure that strips her of a voice.

Ana the child does not want to conform to the social identity a phallogentric social system has constructed for her. Her older sister Irene, on the other hand, shows by collecting pictures of beautiful women from magazines that she will conform to the role that the social structure of the time expects of her. The youngest sister, Maite, assists Irene in the creation of her scrapbook of beauty as perceived by a male dominated culture, striving to find the type of pictures her older sister is looking for. Irene accepts some and denies others. This indicates that Irene is collaborating with the Francoist ideology by training her sister's eye so that she too will become a paradigm of official discourse.

If Irene represents a generation of women who comply with discourse of the Sección Femenina (the past), and Ana exemplifies the generation struggling to break free (the present), then it stands to reason that Maite symbolizes the generation of the future which either previous generation can influence or even train as we have seen in the aforementioned example of the scrapbook. However, Ana also has the opportunity to "shape the future" (her sister). Throughout the movie Irene embraces a position of superiority because she is the eldest, yet Ana does not

easily comply with her position in this genetic hierarchy. Hence, she takes the opportunity to train her youngest sister, as seen when the sisters interact in a scene where they dance together. After Irene and Ana dance as a couple, Ana goes to dance with her youngest sister. Because she is older, Ana assumes the lead just as Irene has done. However little Maite is not aware of the predetermined arrangement and awkwardly reaches for the lead. Ana instructs her little sister on the proper positioning to follow in this dance. This guidance implies that social order, in this case a woman's subservient role, is not an innate biological imperative, but rather a trained role. Maite, the innocent little sister, has not yet been indoctrinated as to who leads and who follows.

If Saura presents Ana's generation as the one to break from the prevalent patriarchal values, it is Maite's generation as shown by Saura that will continue the effort. Ana insists to Rosa that her father left her his pistol. Though Rosa does not believe her, Irene concurs and explains that her father left her (Irene) his rifle. Maite, sitting by the most powerful weapon of them all, the cannon, states that her father left her the flag. As previously stated, Irene represents the ideal woman as

outlined by the SF. The rifle she inherits, though far more powerful than Ana's pistol, is wielded from afar thus implying that it does not engage in the ugliness of close up (intimate) power struggles. Ana's pistol is to be used at close range. Pointing it at Aunt Paulina shows Ana's intent to confront her problem; however, the pistol is not loaded, which symbolizes this generation's impotence. Maite, who represents the possibility for a different future, shows that this change need not be brought about by guns (or the cannon which she sits beside) but instead by honorable methods such as questioning, reasoning, and action as the flag she inherits implies. In the end, if Ana cannot transcend the imposed patriarchal values, her younger sister's generation has the chance.

Breaking Free

Nine-year-old Ana attempts to cope with the death of her parents and the repression she sees and experiences. In response to her environment, young Ana resolves to free herself from her claustrophobic surroundings by attempting to kill her father, her aunt and even envisioning her own suicide. Nonetheless, true to the imaginative nature of a child, even her suicide is romanticized. After pushing her

grandmother around in her wheelchair in their enclosed backyard, Ana pictures herself on top of the building across the street. She watches herself jump off the building's roof. However, instead of crashing into the street below, she floats, as Rob Stone asserts, "to earth like a feather" (100). The next scene shows Ana leaving her grandmother's side to find the supposed poison she left in a secure place in the empty swimming pool. Ana proceeds to taste the poison—knowing that, as her mother told her, only the smallest amount can kill an elephant. She spits the poison out quickly. Stone avers that Ana's attempts on her life signify her desire for liberation from oppression. However I contend that by juxtaposing these two scenes, the first in which the grandmother appears, Ana not only desires freedom from the stifling repression in which she finds herself, but also attempts to break free from emptiness of the female positions her grandmother carried out and her mother was unprepared to assume.

Another example of young Ana's intent to transcend imposed boundaries surfaces when she and her sisters reenact an argument between their parents where Ana portrays her mother, with whom she closely identifies. According to D'Lugo, "it is out of such models of the past

that inevitably the child will learn the forms of behavior for the future" (132). I agree that this can be argued for Irene, however not for Ana. Irene interprets the role of their father and repeats almost verbatim the cutting words her father used in past arguments. This proves that she understands and accepts the way in which society permits a husband to behave. However, as Ana interprets the role of her mother, she diverges from the words her mother used in previous arguments. She stands up for herself and confronts him about his extramarital affairs. What is more, she has changed her name to Amelia, her father's married lover. Choosing the name of someone who functions outside of Francoist discourse coupled with inserting her own efforts to defend herself illustrate an effort to revise her mother's role in the marriage. As a consequence, Ana now practices her own freeing discourse, which will liberate her from the bourgeois reality in which her mother resided. Loneliness and isolation, a constant in her childhood, will not be built into the texture of her adult life because, unlike her mother, Ana will affect change with her choices and actions.

Memories From the Future

Though the narrative of the film initially appears to be a construction from a child's perspective, this is not really the case. As previously mentioned, adult Ana narrates the film some 20 years later. In 1995, adult Ana addresses the camera/spectator and tells of this specific summer of 1975. The purpose of remembering appears to be Ana's attempt to understand her relationship with her mother as a young child. She has a perceptual distance from her memories, and appears to be able to dissociate herself from her childhood. Now she views the past from a distanced position intending to reconcile various misunderstood experiences from her childhood. She observes herself as a spectator to her own life. Why did she want to kill her father? Not even she is clear as to why:

¿Por qué quería matar a mi padre?
Es ésa una pregunta que me he hecho
cientos de veces. Y las repuestas
que se me ocurren ahora, ahora con
la perspectiva que dan los veinte
años que han pasado desde entonces,
son demasiado fáciles y no me
satisfacen. Lo único que sí recuerdo
perfectamente es que entonces me
parecía el culpable de toda la
tristeza que había embargado a mi
madre los últimos años de su vida.
Yo estaba convencida de que él,
y sólo él, había provocado su
enfermedad y su muerte.

Ana narrates from what Saura could only assume would be a liberated post-Dictatorship Spain. Though after Franco's death moral examinations and opinions would be postponed in favor of reconciliation, and memory would be substituted with forgetting, the fact that Ana addresses the camera/audience as she confesses her past shows her intent to remember—something that Francoist Spain discouraged. Saura creates a strong female character that breaks the future silence that would permeate Spain for so long.

Just before the film comes to a close, Ana again tries to control her environment by attempting to kill Aunt Paulina the same way she did her father. The next morning when Aunt Paulina enters their bedroom to wish them well on their first day of school, Ana, shocked to see that the poison did not work, realizes that she in fact has no control over her aunt's destiny, nor did she over her father's. This realization frees her from the emotional tether to her mother. We assume she will not be conjuring her presence anymore when Irene tells her that she had a dream about their parents and Ana informs her "Mamá y papá están muertos." With these words, Ana shows that her

character has grown, that she "has been able at last to shed the myths of desired power and control that had been the mark of her earlier destructive fantasies" (D'Lugo 136).

The film ends with the girls running off to join other girls on their way to school. Finally Ana escapes from her circumscribed world symbolic of Franco's repressive order. However, D'Lugo argues that she breaks from one repressive environment only to enter into another—school—"presumably another confining institution that will seek to impose a social identity on her . . ." (137). Although I agree, I also argue that young Ana as well as adult Ana have illustrated a will to oppose the imposed forces of repression enough for us to conclude that both young Ana and adult Ana will continue to be voices of dissent. As Hardcastle notes, "What we see in these final images is an understanding from a historical perspective that liberation can occur in spite of the legacy of the institutions of oppression" (399).

Although motherhood surfaces as the only role that defines a female as a woman during the Francoist repression, Ana has seen through the different women in her life that she must transcend this limiting position.

Francoist rhetoric supplied a rigid discourse on women's identities as mothers; however, the women in her life who try to comply inevitably fail. *Cría cuervos* exposes the aspects of its female characters who have a difficult time finding a way to express themselves apart from the maternal role. Even though the family proves to be the agency of repressive education where children are to learn their roles within an oppressive social order, Ana appears to understand that her role is to subvert the social order of her time.

However, the question remains, why? What is it about Ana that triggers her unique perspective on things? Ana appears to be the only character in the movie that not only sees the blatant and ubiquitous hypocrisy, but also confronts it. She does not kiss her father's corpse because even at this age, she cannot respect him. She has observed his mistreatment of her mother which leads her to defy her aunt's wishes at the funeral. Her aunt, also a duplicitous character, refuses to believe Ana when she tells her that Amelia was in bed with her father when he died. Aunt Paulina instructs her to stop telling lies, informing her that they can ruin lives; however Ana catches Aunt Paulina in a compromising position with Nicolás,

Amelia's husband. Ana learns this summer that she cannot trust her father, her aunt, or her mute grandmother. Each of them fails her in his or her way. As a consequence, she learns to trust herself, and to become a champion of her own voice. The film embodies this effort to recognize her own voice. By concertedly remembering and interpreting her past, though twenty years later, Ana confronts the double standards with which she comes into contact and proves it is never too late.

Conclusion: Voices From the Past Now Heard

During the Francoist repression, women's subjectivity was rigorously limited by the hegemonic rhetoric of the regime. However, Franco could never seize complete social and cultural control over Spanish society as evidenced by various dissenting voices such as the two I have presented in this chapter. Attempting to demarginalize the Spanish experience, Martín Recuerda and Saura offer a different perspective on history which revisits the futile efforts of the regime to control women's position in society. Thus, the Spanish audience is invited to read their own regressive cultural experience into the actions of the female protagonists presented in these works. This is

particularly true with María in *Cría cuervos*. Subjugated by her husband and the role she is expected to carry out, eventually she succumbs to the repression that suffocates her.

Mariana and Ana, on the other hand, break free from the cultural patterns and paternalistic vigilance that constantly attempt to transform them into the ideal woman. Mariana eschews the typical position afforded her and embraces the roles she creates for herself as lover, liberator, and leader. Martín Recuerda offers a re-reading of her story to create a place in history for her ignored (or previously misinterpreted) voice. Ana's voice also receives a place in history as she chooses to remember during a time when Spanish society was just beginning to investigate memories as portholes to a revised reality of the past. What is more, both women speak for themselves. They take narrative control and assert agency, which at that time opposed Francoist discourse on women's position in society. Though this chapter has focused on Mariana's and Ana's stories as presented by male authors, the next two chapters will examine the intent of female authors to accord subjectivity to female figures in contemporary Spanish works.

Chapter 2

According Agency to Female Voices Through Memory and Postmemory

In this chapter I examine one female documentarian and one female novelist to show how women protagonists “remember” (whether through memory or postmemory) the civil war and early postwar Spain. Through their works, these creators seek to reclaim a space for women in Spain’s history and thus recognize the voices of the unheard. Furthermore, their work plays a role in questioning and therefore revising the Official History as it was appropriated for nearly four decades by the Francoist regime. In other words, the projects of these women artists have begun to change the past. Here I will study the novel *La voz dormida* (2002) by Dulce Chacón and the documentary *Muerte en El Valle* (2005) by C.M. Hardt.

Memory vs. History

Memory and history were often used interchangeably in the past, but it is commonly acknowledged today that the two concepts require different modes of understanding.⁹ History, though in important ways related to memory,

traditionally has been controlled by the hegemonic class. Most often, these historians revise the past for political or financial gain. Consequently, they create a narrow presentation of the past. Memory, on the other hand, represents a version of the past that is unique to an individual or a collective group. Today the popular trend to express what one remembers in opposition to History splinters what was once the cohesive nature of historical time. In other words, because of the way in which memory is organized, it subverts how the past connects itself to the present and future through apparent uncomplicated linearity. Though memory and history are not synonymous, they exhibit points of overlap where one depends on the other. Pierre Nora in "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*" discusses the relation between memory and history. As he describes memory, Nora declares that it "remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived" (8). However, history he argues, "is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer" (8).

Whereas memory encompasses a process that draws from the past, though linked to the present, history entails an intellectual and secular representation of the past which demands analysis and criticism. Apparent only to the group to which it pertains, memory is in fact innately binary-multiple while at the same time specific. In other words, memory is considered individual, while at the same time collective or plural. This collective memory, often passed down from generation to generation, connotes an existence of the past in the present. Conversely, history concerns everyone while at the same time no one, as it pertains to universal authority; it is a polemic and unfinished reconstruction of "what is no longer" (Nora 8-9). History can be uncovered only through investigating the past with the help of official records and documentation. Examination of the past then requires narration and organization, which implies a form of memory and therefore subjectivity. As Nora further discusses this relation he introduces the term "*lieu de mémoire*," which refers to "any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any

community . . .” (xvii). He asserts that the classification of these “lieux” varies widely.

For example, what first comes to mind might be a place (a cemetery) or a date (an anniversary). But *lieux de mémoire* can also refer to more intricate concepts such as lineage. In addition, they can be symbolic, for example a national cemetery. According to Nora, these classifications are endless. However, regarding texts, only those based on a “revision of memory” can be considered *lieux de mémoire*. Revision of memory in the context of this dissertation refers to present-day attempts to understand and interpret the horrors of the Spanish civil war and dictatorship. When put into narrative form, these reformulations of recollections create a revision of the collective memory of Spain’s past which the framework of the socio-political context of the transition served to facilitate. Therefore, it can be said that novels that strive to represent the recuperation of historic memory can be considered *lieux de mémoire* themselves, because such works are spaces in which memory and history cohabitate.

I will draw upon the distinction that Nora makes between memory and history by arguing in this project that *La voz dormida* and *Muerte en El Valle* are works that

exemplify *lieux de mémoire*. Though Nora explains this concept by using an autobiographical text, I contend that a fictive text based on the testimonies of others can, indeed, be considered a *lieu de mémoire* as well.

La voz dormida, a novel based on a collection of testimonies that the author collected from men and women who participated in the social revolution to defend the government of the Second Spanish Republic, exemplifies the juxtaposition between individual and collective memory. The narrative's plot line describes each protagonist's memory (individual) while conveying that their circumstances are linked to those who have experienced similar circumstances (collective) either inside or outside the text. *La voz dormida* has emblematic implications because it recounts various crimes against humanity. Thus, the personal experiences of the characters in these texts, together with the collective value of their experiences, work in conjunction to inform readers about the past.

Even though Chacón's novel is founded on the experiences of numerous survivors of the Spanish civil war, we must be cautious when considering her project as a historical resource. Because testimony results from memory which is subjective by nature, the truth of the text may be

difficult to substantiate. In other words, the text is authentic, but parts of it may not be empirically true. Moreover, when considering traumatic memory, recollections often integrate the imprecise with the authentic. As Dominick LaCapra observes, traumatic memory "may involve distortion, disguise, and other permutations relating to processes of imaginative transformation and narrative shaping perhaps as well as repression, denial, dissociation, and foreclosure" (*Writing* 211).

However, as Cristina Dupláa points out, should the authenticity of a text come into play as one remembers/reconstructs the past, it can be referred to as "memoria creadora." Dupláa utilizes Nora's terminology to introduce this concept. She refers to *lieux de mémoire* as places, "donde cohabitan narrativas autobiográficas que deben enfrentarse a la 'desviación' propia de cualquier esfuerzo recordatorio. A esa 'desviación,' en relación al propósito de fiabilidad con el pasado real, lo podemos denominar 'memoria creadora'" (35). To clarify, memory and history compete in the textual space within the limitations that they both contain regarding the "veracity" of the message. "La memoria acepta estas limitaciones—según Nora de manera inconsciente—porque reconoce la vulnerabilidad

del recuerdo individual y del grupo en cuestión, pero la historia se resiste más porque su estudio se basa, precisamente, en la distancia entre el investigador/a y el documento archivado, presumiblemente no contagiado" (35).

We can use Dupláa's notion of "memoria creadora" to better understand Chacón's project. At the end of her work Chacón acknowledges those who contributed their memories of what they experienced. Not only do these participants reconstruct their past as they narrate their memories, but Chacón participates in this process as well by changing various names and combining numerous experiences to represent a single protagonist. In this way, Chacón reclaims the past for those who were punished and/or ignored by the Franco regime in order to construct a narrative that embodies a history for those whose voices were suppressed.

Mourning vs. Melancholia

Following Freud's argument that language serves as a substitute for action, it stands to reason that works that intend to re-write history are in fact entities that exemplify the use of language as a substitution or even an impetus for action. As the artist creates her project, she

is able to "work through" the trauma of those who have been affected by the Spanish civil war. It is through these novels and filmic texts that those who were at one time not permitted to grieve are now able to recognize their past, mourn their loss, and come to terms with that which has been deferred for many years.

According to Freud in his essay "Mourning and Melancholia," mourning "is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, and ideal, and so on" (243). He goes on to explain the work of mourning as "Reality-testing [that] has shown that the loved object no longer exists, and it proceeds to demand that all libido shall be withdrawn from its attachments to that object" (244). Melancholia, on the other hand, is quite distinct from mourning. Though there are points of overlap, melancholia is a more intricate and difficult process. "The melancholic displays something else besides which is lacking mourning—an extraordinary diminution in his self-regard, an impoverishment of his ego on a grand scale. In mourning it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself" (246).

Using Freud's approach to psychoanalysis as a foundation, Dominick LaCapra presents two forms of remembering trauma: "acting out" and "working through." LaCapra describes working through as a desirable process that entails choosing to distance oneself from a traumatic past, though not avoiding it, while at the same time making a distinction between the past, present and future. This does not mean that one should live entirely in the present, nor does it call for glossing over the suffering of the past. "It means coming to terms with the trauma, including its details, and critically engaging the tendency to act out the past and even to recognize why it may be necessary and even in certain respects desirable or at least compelling" (*Writing* 144).

Acting out, though distinct, does not function in opposition to working through. Instead, these processes interact. Whereas acting out entails a compulsion to repeat the past and to prevent closure, working through focuses on approaching the past with critical distance. Neither of these processes leads to harmonization or a cure. Indeed, acting out inherently avoids closure of any kind, while working through maintains that coming to terms with the past may incur a permanent blemish in the present.

"In any case certain wounds, both personal and historical, cannot simply heal without leaving scars or residues in the present; there may even be a sense in which they have to remain as open wounds even if one strives to counteract their tendency to swallow all of existence and incapacitate one as an agent in the present" (*Writing* 144).

Both the novel *La voz dormida* and the filmic text *Muerte en El Valle* are projects that represent the process of working through and how it interacts with acting out. Both works return to the past to confront a crisis, contemplate it and then attempt to transform the artists' (as well as the receivers') understanding of the predicament. In the case of *Muerte en El Valle*, the process of returning to the past to work through requires a visit of more than one time. Each time the protagonist/director returns to Spain (the past) she confronts different aspects of the crisis, which requires her to work through it yet again. Here we see clearly how working through and acting out embody distinctions but not binary oppositions.¹⁰

It may be impossible to fully transcend acting out, especially with respect to an event as catastrophic as the Spanish civil war. However, the therapeutic process of

working through represents a means that leads to reconciliation. Though it can be argued that a general reconciliation has already taken place in Spain, and that now we see efforts to contest the past, I contend that there still exists a lack of resolution and understanding regarding female voices. For this reason, the works of Chacón and Hardt, among others, contest the past so that their projects will engender reconciliation specifically for women. Speaking and writing about memory, as synonymous with reconciliation, according to Vicenç Navarro in his article "Reconciliación sí, olvido no," can vindicate a past in which the long dictatorship impeded a formal, rational study for so long (*Duplúa Memoria sí* 10).

Postmemory

Today it is clear that the civil war and its consequences not only affected those who survived, but their families as well. But because of historical distance, these second and third generations are troubled in a different way. Whereas many of the survivors would prefer not to speak about their past, numerous children and grandchildren of survivors show a desire to break the silence and investigate the various fragments of their

"postmemory."¹¹ In her book *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*, Marianne Hirsch explains the difference between memory and postmemory. She explains that "memory" refers to that which a survivor of a tragedy has and "postmemory" to what the children and grandchildren of the survivor experience. Hirsch proposes the term postmemory to mean:

. . . a very powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation . . . Postmemory characterizes the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated (22).

Therefore, postmemory differentiates itself from memory by a generational distance and "from history by deep personal connection" (*Family Frames* 22). Hirsch introduced the term postmemory to define how the children of Holocaust survivors view the past, but she clarifies that the term is appropriate for second and third generations of survivors of most cultural or collective tragic events. For that reason, I argue that the notion of postmemory is useful in

examining works that pertain to the offspring of those who survived the Spanish civil war and Franco's dictatorship.

Photography According to Barthes

A component of Hirsch's postmemory is based on Roland Barthes' interpretation of photography. Barthes maintains that photography is closely related to the real:

I call "photographic referent" not the *optionally* real thing to which an image or a sign refers but the *necessarily* real thing which has been placed before the lens, without which there would be no photograph . . . The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here; the duration of the transmission is insignificant; the photograph of the missing being, as Sontag says, will touch me like the delayed rays of a star. A sort of umbilical cord links the body of the photographed thing to my gaze: light, though impalpable, is here a carnal medium. A skin I share with anyone who has been photographed. (76-77, 80-81).

We can employ this theory when the protagonists in the works to be analyzed contemplate photographs of their family members. Though they either are not acquainted with the person in the photograph, or know them but are unaware of their whereabouts at the time, they are still connected to the referent. Indeed, as we can infer from Barthes, the

photograph can stand in place of the person in the picture. Acting as a surrogate, the photograph engages the viewer while he or she responds by creating a narrative that can explain the unexplained. In the case of *La voz dormida*, Felipe (a guerrilla) keeps a photograph of his imprisoned wife on his person at all times. When he needs strength, he pulls out the photograph and talks to it as if it were his wife. In the documentary *Muerte en El Valle*, the protagonist shows the viewers a photograph of the grandfather she never met. As she speaks to the viewer, we see that the picture represents more than just a copy of his likeness in a soldier's uniform. It also signifies that which is never talked about—his participation in the war and his death. What is more, we as viewers can now create our own narrative, using not only the information supplied by the protagonist but also the photograph.

Postmemory is a narrative built by suturing personal memories with the memories of others where the result may or may not be an accurate account of what transpired in the past. Postmemory is inherently personal and not meant to be used as a veridical representation of the past; further as presented by Hirsch, it is a flexible notion in that it is not mediated "through recollection but through an

imaginative investment and creation" (*Family Frames* 22).

As a result, the protagonists in the works presented invoke the power of postmemory to construct a past comprised of the narratives of others that they have imagined and created. In effect, the works themselves exemplify this. They are the protagonists' postmemory presented in narrative form.

Hirsch also refers to "the familial look," a concept that helps to understand the works by Chacón and Hardt. For example, in both the novel and the documentary various protagonists contemplate photographs of members of their families, a process that involves the actual photographs just as much as the observer of those photographs:

The familial look, then, is not the look of a subject looking at an object, but a mutual look of a subject looking at an object who is a subject looking (back) at an object. Within the family, as I look I am always also looked at, seen scrutinized, surveyed, monitored. Familial subjectivity is constructed relationally, and in these relations I am always both self and other(ed), both speaking and looking subject and spoken and looked at object: I am subjected and objectified (*Family Frames* 9).

This means that both "objects" are functioning at the same time to subjectify and objectify the other. In other words, as the protagonists interpret the photographs, they

speak not only for the observer, but also for the referent.

Roland Barthes points to the reciprocity of this relationship in his terms *studium* and *punctum*:

The first, obviously, is an extent, it has the extension of a field, which I perceive quite familiarly as a consequence of my knowledge, my culture; this field can be more or less stylized, more or less successful, depending on the photographers skill or luck, but it always refers to a classical body of information . . . Thousands of photographs exist in this field . . . It is by the *studium* that I am interested in so many photographs, whether I receive them as political testimony or enjoy them as good historical scenes: for it is culturally . . . that I participate in the figures, the faces, the gestures, the settings, the actions . . . The second element will break or punctuate) the *studium*. This time it is not I who seek it out (as I invest in the field of the *studium* with my sovereign consciousness), it is this element which rises from the scene, shoots out like an arrow, and pierces me . . . A photograph's *punctum* is that accident that which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me) (26-27).

Barthes underscores a feature of the *punctum* which he refers to as the "power of expansion." This facet of the *punctum* connotes the personal response of each individual viewer. For example, when Barthes observes a photograph of

a blind gypsy violinist being lead by a boy, what "stings" or "bruises" Barthes is the recognition, "with my whole body, [of] the straggling villages I passed through on my long-ago travels in Hungary and Romania" (45). According to Victor Burgin's re-reading of *Camera Lucida*, "it is the private nature of the experience which defines the *punctum*" (78). Therefore, we can apply this notion to the protagonists of the works studied as they consider the photographs in front of them. First, the *studium* is the general context of the pictures and what initially draws their attention. Then, it is the *punctum* that drives the protagonists to interpret more than what is shown in the scope of the photograph. As Barthes explains it, the *studium* is of the order of *liking*, not of loving . . . [the *studium* provides the photograph] with *functions*, which are, for the Photographer, so many alibis. These functions are: to inform, to represent, to surprise, to cause to signify, to provoke desire. And I, the *Spectator*, I recognize them with more or less pleasure: I invest them with my *studium* (which is never my delight or pain)" (28). Barthes goes on to clarify, "It is not possible to posit a rule of connection between the *studium* and the *punctum* (when it

happens to be there). It is a matter of a co-presence, that is all one can say . . .” (42).

When the *punctum* pricks the protagonists, they create a back story or narrative to accompany the images in the photographs. Because the photographs juxtapose words with pictures, they can be regarded as “visual narratives.” Here text and image come together, “intricately entangled in a narrative web, [that] work in collaboration to tell a complicated story of loss and longing . . .” (Hirsch *Family Frames* 4).

Investigating Heritage to Understand the Present

This sort of investigation into the past is not a new concept. Just as Hirsch considers these explorations into traumatic events important to understand one’s past, so does African American writer Alice Walker in her “womanist” theory. In her essay, “In Search of our Mothers’ Gardens,” Walker encourages women to give voice to those who have been “hidden from history” to redeem those who have been excluded in history. Similarly, we see that Spanish women with ties to the defeated faction are tracing a history that is not visible in Spanish culture. Therefore, I argue that Walker’s womanist theory provides a useful framework

to understand the condition of women in Spain during the dictatorship.

Mary Nash devotes her studies to Spanish women's history as recognized by her works that have laid the groundwork in this area. She describes poignantly the role of Spanish women during postwar times and offers a perspective that merits citing at length:

Under Franco, politics, culture, and the economy were exclusively male domains. Women's voices were silenced during the years of the dictatorship. The regime fostered historical amnesia regarding women's past and their capacity for social change. The new generations of Spanish women born and educated under the dictatorship lost the benefit of the experience of their foremothers. For over thirty-five years they were educated and socialized in the gender codes of the feminine ideal of the Francoist woman and in ignorance of the democratic experience of the past. However, women's genealogy in the fight against fascism and 'male civilization' was not totally lost. In the early seventies, the burgeoning feminist movement, women activists in the political opposition to Franco, and historians in women's history managed to reconstruct the lost link and recuperate women's visibility and role in war and revolution in the 1930s. The discovery of their foremothers' commitment to democracy and women's

rights shaped the awareness of the new generations of Spanish women and inspired them to seek an active role in establishing democracy, freedom, and women's liberation (*Defying* 185).

Walker alludes to the importance of heritage, and though she concentrates on the role of African American women in American society, we can draw on her theory to better understand the role of Spanish women and their quest to recognize ignored female voices from the past. In her essay, she explores origin, history, and text and applies it to African American women. But she also includes other women as well, which in turn helps us to understand Spanish women and their quest to find the equivalent of their "mothers' gardens." She refers to this theory as "womanist" as opposed to "feminist" because it "has a connection to the established feminist movement in the United States, [while identifying] African American feminists and feminists of color without referring to their color while simultaneously liberating them from a group that has an attachment to oppressors" (Bates 37). To apply her theory, Walker revisits the historical past to understand the present.

Alice Walker's womanist theory utilized as a means to recover the voices of those hidden in history, has created

a foundation for other African American critics. For example, African American critic-theorist Barbara Smith resonates with Walker's theory in her essay "Toward a Black feminist Criticism." She states that Walker "discloses how the political, economic and social restrictions of slavery and racism have historically stunted the creative lives of Black women" (Smith 2). I argue that the Francoist repression confined Spanish women to a life of domesticity and restricted their capacity for creative output.

In this same article, Smith takes the analysis one step further by adding a component of Lesbian theory. She states that certain works, whether intentionally or not, can raise both lesbian and feminist questions regarding women's self-sufficiency as well as their influence on each others' lives. After hearing Bertha Harris at a Modern Language Association convention propose that "if in a woman writer's work a sentence refuses to do what it is supposed to do, if there are strong images of women, and if there is a refusal to be linear, the result is innately lesbian literature," she decided to apply this model to African American women's writings (8). The result was clear. Many of the novels written by African American women were lesbian according to Harris' model, "not because the women

are 'lovers,' but because they are the central figures, are positively portrayed and have pivotal relationships with one another" (8). In this project I argue that a lesbian reading of Dulce Chacón's *La voz dormida* assists in uncovering aspects of history that the Regime did not recognize, primarily the dissenting female voice in History.

La voz dormida: A Lesbian Reading of a "Cuentimonio"

La voz dormida (2002) by Dulce Chacón exemplifies the intention to recover the voices of Spanish women who were imprisoned during the early period of the Franco regime and whose stories were never documented. As a foundation for her work, Chacón interviewed numerous Spanish women who fought against fascism and supported the Republic, then combined their experiences to create five female protagonists who give voice to those who have been ignored. My study will focus on three different characterizations of her work. First, I argue that *La voz dormida* appropriately exemplifies a "cuentimonio" as delineated by Amy Kaminsky; second, that the work can be read as a lesbian novel as defined by Bertha Harris; and finally, that it epitomizes a *lieu de mémoire* as outlined by Pierre Nora.

Because Chacón bases her work on the testimony of others to create storylines, and the plot takes place during recent Spanish history, we can refer to her work as a "cuentimonio." Though Kaminsky introduced the term to refer to certain Latin American novels, narratives of other origins that connote an amalgamation of the historic novel with fictionalized experiences can also be classified as such. As the combination of the two words implies, the "cuentimonio," because it is based on the testimonies of those who lived through a historic period, implies a fictionalized narration of the memories of others. A cuentimonio, therefore, "cannot quite be called either fiction or nonfiction" (Kaminsky 53). As a consequence, it illustrates a re-writing of the past and resurrects a collective memory which offers a new vision of the civil war and postwar diametrically opposed to that of the official History of the Regime.

"History of the Regime" or "History" refers to the monological discourse about the past that Franco imposed while in power. With the intention to justify his government, Franco enforced a censorship to exert his authority over history. This in turn caused a version of history that prevented many perspectives from surfacing.

It is not that certain facts were denied. As David K. Herzberger explains, "To a large degree, Francoist historiography does not aim to dispute the knowledge collectively possessed about the past of Spain (the so-called facts of history), but rather seeks to establish a normative set of strategies that define a particular *concept* of history (*Narrating* 16)." Herzberger goes on to say that this causes two results. First, because Francoist historians control time and narration, history continually materializes as myth. Second, he states that "historians of the Regime draw forth meaning in history that stands resolutely as the equal of truth, hence historiography assumes the secondary but no less important function of disallowing dissent" (*Narrating* 16-17). Chacón subverts many Spanish myths of the Francoist historians, such as the role of the woman, by authoring *La voz dormida*.

I contend that one can employ a lesbian reading of Chacón's *cuentimonio*. This is not to say that the relationships between the women are homosexual, in fact they are quite the opposite. However, these women are bonded by a unique experience which leads them to lean on each other for survival. As the protagonists learn to depend on one another, they begin to consider the other as

family. As previously stated, this type of relationship forms the foundation for a lesbian reading as defined by Bertha Harris. Indeed, *La voz dormida* exemplifies the criteria of a lesbian narrative through its fragmented style, its strong female characters, and its critical stance toward heterosexual relationships.

The *cuentimonio* can also be viewed as a *lieu de mémoire*. As presented by Pierre Nora, this concept can only be applied to works that illustrate a "revision of memory," complemented by a will to remember. Based on the testimonies of others, the *cuentimonio* typifies a resolve to mindfully consider the past. At the end of this *cuentimonio*, Chacón thanks those who contributed their personal memories to create her text of collective memory. Therefore we can infer that, in fact, there exists not only a determination to reflect on the past, but also a will to revise history through the telling of stories while giving a voice to those who at that time could not speak.

La voz dormida tells of the horrors of prison life during post civil war Spain while showing the difficulties faced by those who were not imprisoned as they clandestinely further the cause of the Republican Party. Though various male characters are presented in the text,

the novel focuses on women and their personal stories of how they survive the difficult times of early postwar Spain. The novel opens with the foreshadowing comment, "La mujer que iba a morir se llamaba Hortensia" (11). She is pregnant and incarcerated in the Ventas prison in Madrid during the early 1940s. Though the civil war has just ended, the Republicans continue to fight for their cause. However, many have been detained, tortured, and sent to prison for being affiliated with the "Reds." *La voz dormida* focuses on women who fought for the cause and have been imprisoned. As they await their sentence, which for many is execution, they begin to form profound relationships among themselves while depending on one another for support and survival. Hortensia, arrested for attempting to supply food to the guerrillas, encourages the other inmates to remain strong, though she knows she will soon be put to death. She emerges as a leader in her ward and garners the respect of her cellmates, whom she regards as her sisters—Tomasita, Reme, Elvira and Sole. Eventually she is condemned to death, but the court postpones the execution until almost two months after the birth of her child. Sole, a midwife who assists in the birth, succeeds

in persuading the doctor to arrange for the child to be raised by Pepita, Hortensia's sister.

Pepita, though originally from Córdoba, now resides in Madrid to be closer to her sister and brother-in-law, a guerrilla hiding in the mountains. She lives in Doña Celia's pensión and works as a maid for Don Fernando and his wife. She wishes she could return to a time and a place when things were simpler. Her childhood home, Córdoba, represents this. Pepita does not consider herself to be politically motivated. In fact, she is disenchanted with the Republican Party because she believes that it only brings her pain. Those whom she has loved, including her father, sister, brother-in-law and fiancé, have either met an untimely death, imprisonment or both. Alone and "on the outside," she leans on Doña Celia, the woman who rents a room to her. Eventually, just as the women prisoners become family, Pepita and Doña Celia become family as well.

Time vs. *Durée*

Chacón uses a fragmented style of writing to tell the personal stories that Hortensia, Tomasa, Reme and Elvira bring with them to the prison. This nonlinear style is characterized mainly by two literary techniques: flashbacks

and the juxtaposition of time and space. We can apply the Bergsonian idea of *durée* to explain the use of time and memory in the novel. The concept can be described as "that essential instant in time that allows us to live a thousand times longer than we are presently living with the clock" (Manteiga 121). According to Bergson, time is measurable and homogenous since it marks our existence in space. However *durée* centers on the sensations that the body in space experiences. Consequently, *durée* cannot be measured and has no correlation with space. Using these concepts as his foundation, Bergson concluded that there are two kinds of memory, one that is characterized by time and the other characterized by *durée* (Manteiga 121). In Chacón's novel, time is represented by the twenty years that the protagonists spend in Madrid, while *durée* comes to the fore during their flashbacks.

Marcel Proust's concept of *involuntary memory* also plays an important temporal role in *La voz dormida*. Though Proust, contrary to Bergson, believed that real time "lives within us and is not imposed upon us by space" he also maintained that the "true past is hidden somewhere beyond the reach of the intellect and can only be recalled through sensory perceptions" (Manteiga 121). Proustian time is

evident in Chacón's novel when the protagonists experience voluntary and involuntary flashbacks as they contemplate the different objects they have on their person or in front of them.¹² The objects are the impetus for the memories through which the protagonists attempt to create a personal as well as historical narrative. Because of their efforts, coupled with their desire to make sense of their past, present and future, these memories produce order and stability during a time and in a place where there is none, while at the same time indicating integral past events that explain how each individual is imprisoned.

The character Elvira illustrates how Chacón utilizes fragmentation to introduce each character's past. The girl's various flashbacks narrate her personal history in such a way that the reader is drawn in and left anticipating the next flashback until the story eventually comes to completion. We see this when Elvira falls ill. Because she is the youngest of the group, the others are very protective of her. The women nurse her back to health as best as they can without many resources. At one point, Tomasa asks if she is cold. Elvira says no, but indicates that she feels hungry. The hunger pains cause Elvira to recall how she and her mother waited for a boat to help

them escape Spain, which in turn imparts to the reader her past, "Pero tiene hambre. Tiene tanta hambre como en el Puerto de Alicante, cuando esperaba un barco que nunca llegó, y a su madre se le acabaron las joyas y ya no tenía nada para cambiar por chocolate a la guardia italiana que los vigilaba . . ." (37).

To emphasize the fragmented technique, this flashback is cut short by the women in her cell when they begin to sing. This brings the storyline back to the narrative present so that prison life and the relations between the women can be discussed. Elvira's past then continues in a later chapter when she gives her mother's dress to Tomasa because she does not have a clean one. Here we see how much Elvira loves Tomasa, for she parts with one of her most precious belongings, one that helps her to remember her deceased mother. As she touches the cloth she recalls the last time she saw her mother wearing it and how she sacrificed so that Elvira would not go hungry:

La última vez que vio hermosa a
su madre fue con ese vestido. Estaban
las dos en Alicante, en el puerto,
esperando un barco que nunca llegó . . .
Se había engalanado para el viaje
con su mejor vestido recién planchado . . .
y un sombrero de media luna a juego . . .
Elvira no había vuelto a acordarse de
aquel sombrero; ella se lo había probado

muchas veces . . . [Elvira] tragó con
avidez un trozo de chocolate que su madre
acababa de cambiar por su sombrero (63-64).

Again, the memory ends abruptly, this time as Tomasa thanks Elvira for the considerate gift. Here the concept of *dureé* is clear. As Elvira hands Tomasa the article of clothing, she flashes back to the aforementioned point in time.

Though the recollection appears long-lasting, we know this not to be the case because Tomasa takes the dress, and as she thanks her, draws her back to the narrative present.

This interruption breaks the storyline requiring yet another flashback to clarify how Elvira is detained and imprisoned. Indeed, only later we find out that Elvira and her mother are arrested in the port of Alicante as they wait for a boat that never arrives. Though her mother dies, Elvira is tortured as the civil guard questions her about her involvement with the Republican Party. During a weekly visit she tells her grandfather that she sustained the torture without giving up any names. Throughout the first part of the novel, Chacón maintains continuity by utilizing fragmentation to divulge each prisoner's past so that we get to know the characters one by one on an intimate level.

Another aspect of a lesbian reading can be seen in the strong images of women. In this text, all five protagonists are positive representations of women. They withstand torture, punishment, and reprehensible living conditions while at the same time sustaining an attitude of hope that they have not been imprisoned in vain. They continue to support the Republican cause by secretly convening in the laundry room and sharing the food from their care packages with those prisoners who receive nothing. By maintaining a united front, though their temperaments are different, they are an example of solidarity and group identity.

This is not to say that the women are content to be where they are. It is quite the opposite. Some would prefer to give up. For example, at one time Tomasa does not understand why Hortensia encourages her fellow inmates to survive. Survival, according to Hortensia, is their only task. When Tomasa asks why they need to survive, Hortensia responds, "Para contar la historia, Tomasa" (136). However Tomasa concerns herself more at this point with the degradation they have experienced and asks, "¿Y la dignidad? ¿Alguien va a contar cómo perdimos la dignidad?" (136). But Hortensia clarifies that they have not lost

their dignity. Tomasa retorts, "No, sólo hemos perdido la guerra, ¿verdad? Eso es lo que creéis todas, que hemos perdido la guerra" (136). Says Hortensia, "No habremos perdido hasta que estemos muertas, pero no se lo vamos a poner tan fácil. Locuras, las precisas, ni una más. Resistir es vencer" (136). And that is what each of the women does in her own way. Each of them resists the status quo of their day and their actions serve to form a just nation, though decades later. Four characters (three central and one secondary) serve to illustrate this point: Doña Celia and Pepita as women who have to survive outside the prison walls and Hortensia and Tomasa who must survive inside.

Women on the Outside

The characters Pepita and Doña Celia mirror the strength and close-knit relationships of the imprisoned women. Through them we see that those outside the penal complex need to be strong to survive as well. Doña Celia, like Pepita, lives life alone. Her husband, a Republican supporter, is incarcerated in Burgos and she can afford to travel to see him only once a year. She has a daughter who died for the cause, but she does not know the details of

her death nor her final resting place. Because of this, she puts her own life at risk as she sneaks into the cemetery on a regular basis to clean the faces and shut the eyes of those who have been executed so they can be buried with dignity. She takes scissors with her so she can cut a small piece of the deceased's clothing to take to the families waiting at the entrance of the cemetery who are not allowed to enter. She gives them the snippet of cloth and informs them that their loved one was buried with her face clean and her eyes shut. This act not only brings comfort to the families of the victims, but also to Doña Celia, as she was not afforded this courtesy.

Though Pepita is not aware of what Doña Celia does when she goes to the cemetery, she finds out the day that Doña Celia brings her a piece of cloth from the dress that Pepita made for her sister. This act bonds the two women. Throughout the novel we see that they lean on each other for support—they travel to Burgos together once a year, they listen to each other when they feel they cannot go on, and they both raise Hortensia's daughter, Pepita, as her surrogate mother and Doña Celia, her grandmother.

This scrap of cloth cut from Hortensia's dress also serves another function. As Tabea Alexa Linhard states,

"This keepsake, both reminder and remainder, is undoubtedly part of what Marianne Hirsch has called 'postmemory,' the memory of children of survivors" (249). Though Pepita keeps the material in a box, eventually she is tempted to give it to Hortensia's daughter, Tensi, to discourage her from becoming politically involved and "to erase the 'post' from Tensi's memory . . ." (Linhard 249). Pepita does not show Tensi the scrap from her mother's dress, however Tensi has other items in her possession that contribute to her postmemory—little blue notebooks that her mother wrote while imprisoned with messages to her daughter that encourage her to live life to the fullest, always remaining true to herself. Hortensia's words convince Tensi to continue the fight for justice. Therefore, "Tensi represents the hope that new generations will literally carry on the torch of political activism" (Linhard 249).

Pepita, unlike Doña Celia, reflects how strength and weakness can coexist in one character. She fights with herself to be strong, but considers herself weak, as strength does not come naturally. Her courage comes gradually, but, ironically, she never recognizes it herself. As she lives her life, she emerges as a strong and pivotal character, but she sees herself as doing only

what is necessary to survive. For example, whereas Pepita considers her sister Hortensia to be courageous and wise, she compares herself to her mother who died during childbirth, saying that had her mother been strong she would have survived. Hortensia and their father, Pepita believes, are strong because they chose to fight for their ideology. But not only does Pepita not profess an ideology, she actively resists having one because she does not want to lose anyone else to ideas. When her sister is captured and later tortured, Pepita admires her strength and the narrator indicates that Pepita knows she would have broken under the interrogation, "Pero Pepa no resistiría ni una sola patada. Ella no. Si a ella la cogen, los cogen a todos. Ella es igual que su madre, que no soportó un invierno detrás de un parto prematuro, el suyo. Menuda, indefensa, débil y rubia, como sin hacer, como su madre" (28).

However while she tells herself she is weak, contradictorily her actions show her strength; for at this very moment, we find her delivering a message from her guerrilla brother-in-law to her sister at the prison. True to her binary temperament, this act of courage is coupled with fright, "Aún se pregunta Pepa cómo ha reunido el valor

suficiente para enviarle un mensaje a Hortensia. Y sigue estando nerviosa, a pesar de que hace horas que regresó del penal" (27). Though initially helping terrifies her, unbeknownst to her, the covert activities become second nature as she grows more courageous each day assisted by Doña Celia: "Pepita aún no sabe que perderá su temor. Y será doña Celia quien la ayude a perderlo" (252). Her actions of courage start out small, then grow until she exemplifies a magnanimous sister, fiancée, and friend.

Pepita visits Hortensia on a regular basis. She works seven days a week so she can earn enough money to supply Hortensia with food and clothing in the prison. Eventually, Hortensia receives her sentence and is put to death after she gives birth to her daughter. Pepita finds the courage to take her niece home and to care for her. She follows her sister's requests by reading to her niece out of the blue notebooks she has kept since entering prison. She reads them to her niece until finally she can read them on her own.

As a devoted fiancée, Pepita never gives up on Paulino or the belief that one day they will finally marry. Paulino, the love of her life, is sent to the prison in Burgos after being captured. She visits him once a year

and writes to him every week. During the yearly visits he gives her propaganda to pass on to the Socorro Rojo meetings that she attends. Here we see that she attends these gatherings not out of loyalty to an ideology, but out of a loyalty directed to the honor of her sister, as the woman who leads these meetings was a former member of her sister's prison family. She does this for nineteen years until finally the authorities release her boyfriend.

Additionally, Pepita, a proven hard worker, supports not only herself but also her niece after Hortensia's death. This was a common situation in Spain at the time, as many women had to survive without men during the war. With the death of their loved ones, fathers, husbands, and sons, women needed to play yet another role, that of provider as well as nurturer. "Death, disappearance, or enlistment caused the absence of male breadwinners and women broke new ground by taking initiatives and overcoming traditional gender restrictions on their activities" during the war (Nash *Defying* 141). After the war, the hardship continues for Pepita because she must care for her niece while her fiancé is incarcerated. To support herself, she starts to embroider material for a lady who owns a nearby store. When the owner realizes that Pepita is affiliated

with communists, she does not ask her to do more work. This does not deter Pepita. Instead, she places fliers around town and starts her own profitable business.

Finally, one of her last acts of strength is seen when her niece is old enough to decide if she wants to join the Party. Pepita does not want her to become affiliated. As a matter of fact, she has spent the last eighteen years of her life trying to shield her niece from the activities of the Party. But her sister's voice resounds from the little blue notebooks that she kept while in prison, "Lucha, hija mía, lucha siempre, como lucha tu madre, como lucha tu padre, que es nuestro deber, aunque nos cueste la vida" (398). Pepita knows that she cannot convince her, so she does one of the hardest things she has ever done, she lets her go—but with a warning, since she does not want to lose yet another loved one. "Ya eres mayor, Tensi, ya eres mayor para meterte donde quieras aunque yo no quiera que te metas, pero júrame que tendrás cuidado, júrame por la memoria de tu madre que tendrás mucho cuidado" (398). Her niece replies, "Por las dos madres que tengo te lo juro, tendré muchísimo cuidado, tú no te preocupes por eso" (398).

Women on the Inside

Inside the prison, Hortensia and Tomasa show their strength in many ways. Both are dedicated to the cause no matter what the repercussions, both stay true to their individual ideologies, and both will do what is necessary to survive. They differ only in the way they go about this. Hortensia believes that in order to survive, she must share her story with others. She must document her life so that others know what has happened, so that her official version is made known, so that her existence and her death will count for something. That is why she writes in the blue notebooks. She tells her story so that her daughter will come to know her, even if only through the words she pens, and so that she will continue to share her mother's story even after she dies. Though Hortensia's name will not be part of the Official History, it will be part of a revised history because of her effort to write in the blue notebooks:

En el libro de inscripción de
defunciones del cementerio del
Este, anotaron el nombre y dos
apellidos de diecisiete ajusticiados.
Dieciséis hombres y una mujer.
Una sola: Isabel Gómez Sánchez.
Hortensia no figura en la lista.
El nombre de Hortensia Rodríguez
García no consta en el registro de

fusilados del día seis de marzo
de mil novecientos cuarenta y uno.
Pero cuentan que aquella madrugada,
Hortensia miró de frente al piquete,
como todos.

—¡Viva la República! (244).

Hortensia's name may not be officially documented in the annals of History, but there is a metaphorical recognition in this *cuentimonio* of all the women who died for the cause that were not acknowledged.

For Hortensia, giving up control of her personal narrative so that others might internalize it and circulate it is an act of courage that she considers integral to survival. Initially, for Tomasa, the opposite is true. She believes that control is of the utmost importance for survival. To do this, she does not cry and she does not tell her story, "Llorar es perder el control. Y a Tomasa no le gusta perderlo" (51). She believes that by remaining quiet about her past, she maintains control of her narrative. Ironically, because she does not talk about her past, the women discuss with each other the rumors they have heard that pertain to why she was arrested. However, by not telling her story in an effort to keep it her own, she loses it to others who then imagine it.

She decides to hold back her story when her family is killed by Falangists who leave her barely alive. She is told that she will live so that she can tell others what happened. As an act of resistance, she withholds her narrative—one that others seek to control. But after being in solitary confinement for over a month and on the brink of death, she decides that silence and tears do not represent weakness. In fact, she realizes that she needs to tell the story so that she can continue to live, “Llora. Y cuenta a gritos su historia, para no morir” (236). She starts to narrate her story as she lets the tears flow because “Es hora de que Tomasa cuente su historia” (237). It does not matter that she is alone and that the only person who can hear her is a guard that she wants nothing to do with. Even though the guard attempts to silence her so they will not add more time in solitary confinement as a punishment for being so loud, Tomasa knows that to stay alive she must tell her story. As she narrates the horrific memories of the events that she and her family experienced, she is able to purge her sorrows so that she can remain sane during a time and in a place that do not make sense:

Como un vómito saldrán las palabras

que ha callado hasta este momento.
Como un vómito de dolor y rabia.
Tiempo silenciado y sórdido que escapa
de sus labios desgarrando el aire,
y desgarrándola por dentro. Contará su
historia. A gritos la contará para no
sucumbir a la locura. Para sobrevivir.
Para sobrevivir . . . Grita. Para que
despierte la voz . . . Palabras que
estuvieron siempre ahí, al lado, dispuestas.
La voz dormida al lado de la boca (237-238).

Even though she has been spared so that she can tell others her story, this is not what occurs, "Vivirás para contarle, le habían dicho los falangistas que empujaron el cadáver de su marido al agua. Vivirás para contarle, le dijeron, ignorando que sería al contrario. Lo contaría, para sobrevivir" (240). Because of this cathartic experience, she realizes that the only way to survive this place that continually attempts to break her spirit is to tell her story and to remember those that she loves, who are now no longer living, who have died for a cause, so that she can and will survive to tell others her story.

The last aspect of the lesbian reading in this text is the negative stance taken toward heterosexual relationships. Unlike the female bonds depicted, the male/female relations are manipulative. For example, Pepita's brother-in-law Felipe and her boyfriend Paulino insist on putting her in danger when she clearly is not

politically motivated and does not want to be involved. Though she does what they ask, she does it out of her love for them and for her sister, not because her ideology demands it of her. Eventually, she decides that she will not help them anymore, “-Yo no pienso acostumbrarme a nada. Después de esta noche, que se olvide de mis penas y no cuente más conmigo, que esto no nos va a traer más que desgracias, desgracias, únicamente, y yo ya he tenido muchas . . . a mí el Partido lo único que me ha traído han sido desgracias” (104). But Felipe and Paulino insist. Here the male characters manipulate and use her for the advancement of the political cause.

Another critical stance toward heterosexual relationships is represented by the marriage of Doña Amparo and Don Fernando, Pepita's employers. Don Fernando was a surgeon when he married his wife. After seeing so much blood shed during the civil war, he left that position to be an accountant. Doña Amparo cannot accept this and tells him he has brought shame to the family:

-¿Cómo voy a entenderlo? Yo me casé con un cirujano, eso es lo que entiendo yo, con un cirujano, y si dejas de ser cirujano, ya te puedes ir a Rusia con tus amigos los comunistas, porque te vas a arrepentir. A mí no me haces pasar por la vergüenza de explicarle a nadie que

has dejado de ser médico porque te da asco la sangre. Y no pienso decirle a nadie que ahora quieres ser un simple empleado de pacotilla. Ni hablar, yo no pienso hacer el ridículo de esa forma, ¿te enteras?, y no voy a consentir que Lo hagas tú (98).

She locks herself into the upstairs room and only comes out for her necessary daily activities, all the while not uttering a word to her husband. She has told him that until he again becomes a doctor, she will only communicate with him through notes that state a need and she will accompany him to mass each Sunday in order to maintain appearances.

Though later Don Fernando does return to his old profession, it is only to save his reputation—he had performed emergency surgery on Felipe in Pepita's presence and was afraid that she would break during the interrogation and denounce him as a co-conspirator in the postwar efforts by the guerrillas. By agreeing to work as a doctor with his father, a conservative employed by the Ministry of the Interior, he avoids any negative repercussions while freeing Pepita from the interrogation. Eventually, even though both he and his wife want to break their silence, they are too stubborn and refuse to compromise. Only when Don Fernando concedes his self-

respect is he able to "rescue" his wife from her tower so that she can return to him as his wife indoors and out.

Though the former observation appears to be a negative way to recover a voice from the past, the role women were supposed to play during the dictatorship was one of submission. Spanish women were to be *la perfecta casada* or *ángeles del hogar*. This meant that women were to be unassuming adornments to a home, whose only task was to dote on their husbands and children or parents, while at the same time managing household chores. Women were to take this role seriously as dictated by the propaganda of Franco and the Catholic Church. ". . . the vital importance of the woman's homemaking role in the upkeep and development of the family was constantly stressed in the numerous pamphlets and books published precisely to counsel women on this decisive task. Thus, mothers, wives and daughters were paradoxically attributed the dual role of ethereal 'angels' and vital agents in the correct functioning of the family" (Nash *Defying* 11).

Doña Amparo's character, though callous, shows a resistance to this role imposed upon women during the Franco regime. She not only stands up to her husband, she actually states her demands of him. She refuses to submit

to him while creating her own rules that he must follow instead of vice versa. Though she is an adornment on his arm every Sunday on their way to church, behind closed doors, it is she who is in control and not Don Fernando. Clearly Doña Amparo is no "angel."

On the other hand, the relationships between the female prisoners are presented in a positive light. It is the relationships these women have made in prison that can be considered the basis of their survival. "It is vital to an understanding of women's friendships that we consider them in the cultural context in which they exist" (Rind 2). Given that these women are in prison under gruesome conditions and because they are all Republican sympathizers, they have bonded with one another so they can endure the situation, for survival is their only objective. In addition, by listening to their respective stories and allowing each to purge her silence, the women eventually become so close that they refer to themselves as family, sisters, thus providing the mutual strength they need to carry on. These friendships become empowering—e.g., Tomasa finally breaking her silence, Hortensia emerging as the leader of her ward, to name two. Consequently, these friendships create a different model of family.

Two of the characters, Reme and Tomasa, display this evolution well. Though initially Reme receives the brunt of Tomasa's abrasive personality, later we see that it is because Tomasa has gone through so much loss that she is afraid to love anyone else. Additionally, she does not want to be considered weak so she does not cry or tell her story as the others do. They are patient with her, though, understanding that Tomasa is not ready to tell her story. Reme does not give up on her, even though she knows Tomasa does not respect her.

This lack of respect is due to three things. Reme cries, shares her story with others, and chooses to sew uniforms for the Nationalists so that her sentence will be commuted. Tomasa considers Reme's actions an affront to those that sacrificed their lives for the cause. As Tomasa sees it, Reme is weak: by crying and telling her personal narrative she implies that her story is over:

[Reme] es una derrotista, que sólo sabe contar los muertos. Ella sólo sabe llorarlos. Y cuenta su historia, su pequeña historia, siempre que puede, como si su historia acabara aquí. Pero no acaba aquí. Desde luego que no, y Tomasa no piensa contar la suya hasta que todo esto haya acabado. Y será lejos de este lugar. Observa a Reme. Y Reme se incorpora con mansedumbre a la fila ignorando su desdén (33).

But soon she sees that Reme loves her unconditionally and her heart eventually softens. Later she realizes that Reme only sews the garments so that she can pilfer supplies to create Falangist uniforms to aid in the escape of Sole, a prisoner who is part of their familial nucleus. Eventually, Reme is released, but she writes on a regular basis to Tomasa, who has never received a letter, and sends her a care package once a week. She addresses her letters to her as sister, and Tomasa tells everyone that the articles are in fact from her sister. Again she has family. When Tomasa is finally released, she goes to live with Reme and her husband. Because of the relations between these women, we see who they are: strong women whose only goal is survival, one that they feel they can attain only because of their relationships with each other.

Muerte en El Valle: A Documentary of Postmemory

In the documentary *Muerte en El Valle*, the protagonist/director intends to "make history right" by researching the mystery surrounding her grandfather's death. Official documentation indicates that he died of natural causes, but his family knows that he was executed by Franco's civil guard ten years after the Spanish civil

war near their hometown of El Valle. Because her family never speaks of this incident, C.M. Hardt, the protagonist as well as director of the film, travels from her hometown of New York to El Valle, Spain in order to investigate the Official History of her grandfather's death while urging those involved to remember the event and to speak out about it "so everyone will know what really happened to him." As she records the memories of her relatives and the townspeople, she weaves their narratives together with information found in documents she has discovered. Her investigation eventually clarifies many of the fragments that comprise what I will refer to as her postmemory, also known as second and third generation memory. As I have previously discussed, postmemory refers to what children and grandchildren of the victim of a tragic event remember. In this case, it is what C.M. Hardt "remembers" about the death of her grandfather, Francisco, though she was not alive at the time. Eventually it becomes clear that her documentary evolves from an investigation intending to change how History literally was written to a project emphasizing the *process* of her personal quest to encourage people, especially her great-grandmother and grandmother, to tell their stories and to remember the incident and her

grandfather. As a result, this process highlights Hardt's objective not only to rescue the voices of her great-grandmother and grandmother, but also her own.

Due to the personal content of the film, coupled with the fact that Hardt positioned herself as the narrative center of the documentary,¹³ there is a lack of professional distance from her work. This causes several fissures in the storyline. Though the spectator knows that her grandfather was assassinated by the civil guard for housing left-wing guerrillas after a family member betrayed him, Hardt does not clarify various aspects of the investigation. For example, the spectator is not privy to why her grandparents protect members of the resistance or their political affiliations. As she investigates the past, her main concern is to find what she refers to as "the truth,"¹⁴ which she believes will correct the discrepancies in History as it pertains to El Valle. However, instead of focusing on the people involved, she makes the documentary about herself, her feelings and her needs. Instead of searching for "the truth," she ends up searching for "her truth," or what she wants to be the truth, one that speaks to her postmemory. As a consequence, the incident is never fully clarified, but

during her investigation several of the gaps of her postmemory are filled in.

As previously mentioned, postmemory refers to a specific form of memory that is "authoritative" because of its attachment to its object. This attachment is not mediated through recall but through a creative process that utilizes the imagination and creativity of the individual. What is more, those who have a postmemory have grown up in an environment where the narratives of others from previous generations have dominated, deferred, and, in some cases, eclipsed their own stories due to the traumatic events the former generations have experienced, but cannot understand, explain, or recreate (Hirsch *Family Frames* 22).

Hardt's formative years were dominated by the narratives of others. Her grandmother babysat her as a child and told her of the past: for example, the air raids during the civil war, the difficulties of life after the fighting, how she and Hardt's grandfather met, and how she survived as a single parent after he died. The manner of his death, however, was only discussed once—when Hardt was a teenager. Because of this, Hardt's understanding of the event is built from what she gleaned from overhearing conversations of her family during reunions, pictures of

her family, the stories her grandmother would tell her, and the aforementioned conversation when she was a teen.

Hardt's Quest

Hardt's documentary mirrors her personal narrative; they both contain gaps that she obsessively seeks to fill. During the production of the filmic text, she fills these holes with the bits of information that she collects during her exploration into the past. As she narrates what she discovers, at times her commentary is not true to reality because her collection of data is based on remembered events which she has interpreted. However, because her text illustrates the *process* of her investigation the spectator can follow Hardt and allow for changes in her progressive body of research as she learns more. For example, at the beginning of the documentary, Hardt tells the viewer what her grandmother shared with her that one time when she was a teenager: "She told me he'd been murdered by Franco's police, that he'd been executed, even though his death certificate said he died of a brain hemorrhage." This is what Hardt believed, around which she built her postmemory. But after she delves into the past, she finds the actual document and sees that the alleged

cause of death was actually a lung hemorrhage. Here she is able to reconstruct a fragment of her postmemory to align it with "the truth." However, as she continues to investigate, she locates the official autopsy report which states the cause of death as a hemorrhage caused by ten gun shots. This unyielding pursuit is characteristic of postmemory. As Hirsch says, "Postmemory—often obsessive and relentless—need not be absent or evacuated: it is as full and as empty, certainly as constructed, as memory itself" (*Family Frames* 23).

As we consider the flexibility of postmemory it is possible to see how Hardt comes to understand her family's past and that of the town of El Valle. By combining the fragments of their recuperated memory with her personal narrative, she reclaims a part of history for herself. For example, as she ponders the portraits of her grandparents, she recalls the stories that her grandmother told her as a child of how they met and what their life was like back then. During this sequence, she narrates to us with a voiceover, and includes iconic authentication such as pictures from newspapers and No-Do clips¹⁵ that she feels complement her grandmother's past. Here she creates a filmic frame that, though perhaps not a veridical

representation of her grandparents' past, in fact reflects her postmemory.

Hardt continues to construct her postmemory through the making of the documentary even though many of her relatives resist. Her uncle Pablo adamantly declines to help. He states that their family's story is not unique and that remembering such hurtful past events only engenders resentment on the part of the current generation. This is why, typical of many during the transition to democracy in Spain, he agrees with the "official" position that it is better that the controversial topics of the civil war not be taught in schools. Though Hardt respects her uncle's opinion, she cannot agree with it.

Silence

Abuelita Lucrecia, Hardt's 97 year-old great-grandmother, would also be an excellent source of information. Officials called upon her to identify Francisco's body. But she not only refuses to speak about the past, she refuses to remember it. Even when Hardt persists, Abuelita Lucrecia denies knowledge of the incident. "How did [my grandfather] die?" asks Hardt. Lucrecia responds, "I didn't see, how would I know?" Hardt

insists, "The death certificate says it was a hemorrhage to the lung, was it?" Lucrecia responds, "Yes, it must be, I don't know." Hardt continues, "So he died of natural causes?" Tired and annoyed, Lucrecia replies, "Oh good God, leave me alone!" Later Hardt continues questioning her:

-Who betrayed the family?
-I don't know.
-Why did the civil guard come?
-I don't know.
-You know a lot!
-I don't know anything. I don't know anything dear.
-Don't die with the secret!

Shortly thereafter, Lucrecia does die without sharing her memories, and Hardt wonders what secrets her great-grandmother is taking with her to her grave.

Lucrecia's posture illustrates the position imposed by the Franco regime: forced amnesia. For so long it was unsafe to talk about such incidents, though later, when it was not dangerous, she continued to be silent. Despite the fact that Hardt unremittingly encourages her great-grandmother to speak and to remember, she cannot "force" her to remember. In the end, Lucrecia's voice is one that is recognized, but not rescued. In other words, the film acknowledges her participation and existence in the past,

but only through the voices of others, for she never speaks to the incident herself.

Telling

Since Hardt's uncle and her great-grandmother refuse to speak, she pursues her grandmother who explains that she does *not* want to remember. She says her husband's death is a memory she would rather not have. "I'm remembering now because you are making me. If it weren't for you . . ."

However she chooses to remember. As she does, she tells Hardt of her suspicions that cousins Rosario and Donato (her husband) were the ones who betrayed them to the civil guard because they were staunch Franco supporters.

Because Donato died and Rosario moved away, Hardt decides to ask the townspeople if they remember anything or if they know who betrayed her family. Some say they don't remember; Donato's sister says it could not have been him, others corroborate the rumor that it was Rosario and Donato and still others say that it was her own grandmother's fault. Hardt investigates all the comments, even the red herring that her grandmother was the reason Francisco was arrested. Hardt decides that the three main people she

needs to speak with to clarify the rumors are her grandmother, her grandmother's cousin Rosario and her grandfather's killer himself.

Hardt begins with her grandmother. Hardt asks her why she would put her family in danger by protecting the guerrillas. She tells her grandmother that in fact some townspeople find her at fault and think that *she* should have been arrested and killed instead of her husband since he was at work all day and she was home with the guerrillas. But her grandmother insists that she didn't know who they were. She states that it was her duty as a well-mannered wife to take care of the men that her husband brought home by offering them food and a place to stay. She admits as she contemplates the situation that she probably would not have helped if she had known the peril in which she put her family. Though her grandmother would prefer not to remember, she chooses to participate in the documentary which constitutes a forum for her to confront her past and talk about it.

When Hardt is told that Rosario is back in Spain for awhile, she and her grandmother decide to meet with Rosario to hear her version of the past. The importance of this meeting is twofold. For Hardt, it is a chance finally to

find out the truth. For her grandmother, it is the opportunity to face the woman she blames for turning her husband in to the authorities.

After forty years, they see each other for the first time and talk about the incident. Hardt's grandmother discloses that she has always blamed Rosario, who insists that it was neither she nor her husband who informed the civil guard. But Hardt's grandmother, having gathered the courage to remember, speak and now confront, demands that Rosario tell the truth, "Help her out with the documentary and tell the truth!" she insists. But Rosario stays firm. This to Hardt is another blockade in her quest for "the truth." But the powerful exchange between the two women helps both Hardt and her grandmother realize that everyone has his or her own story which is comprised of his or her own version of the truth. Here, Hardt admits that even she has her own adaptation. As a consequence Hardt recognizes that her grandmother's story involves blaming someone for forty years who is perhaps innocent. She poignantly says to her grandmother, "You needed someone to blame, so you blamed Rosario." Her grandmother retorts, "Why did she run if she was innocent?" Clearly Hardt's grandmother is

frustrated by Rosario's unyielding denial of her accusations.

Whereas Lucrecia exerts power over her narrative by not sharing it, Hardt's grandmother not only tells her story, she in effect gives up control of its destiny by allowing her granddaughter to tell and edit it in filmic form. By doing this she allows Hardt to rescue her voice (her version of history) from a past that stifled and oppressed its existence. Because of the grandmother's strength to remember and to tell, those who see the film can now process for themselves the different dimensions of the stories presented, edit them, and continue to narrate them to others. Just as Hardt wanted, the story will go on, many will know her version of what happened, and they will construct their own truth from the ideas presented in the text.

Confronting the Past

As her search continues, Hardt realizes that memories, rumors, and the few official documents she has found are not adequate to discern what happened to her grandfather. By chance, she discovers the names of the two men involved in the shooting of her grandfather. Only one is still

living and she feels the only way to access the past is to talk to him. She musters up the courage to meet with him. "I needed to speak with him face to face. I needed the truth." She shows the man a picture of her grandfather and asks if his face looks familiar. He responds no. When she explains that the photograph is of her grandfather and how he died, her interlocutor says that her grandfather had tried to attack him, and then he attempted to escape, so he had to shoot him. This statement parrots the official police report. But her grandmother later argues to Hardt that it would have been impossible for him to escape. While she was imprisoned, she looked out the window as they took her husband away and saw that he had been tortured. Again, her version of history, her voice, is rescued in Hardt's project. As a result, Hardt's film is not only her personal forum to share her truth, but also that of her grandmother.

In this sense, we can consider this work a *lieu de mémoire* as defined by Nora, who explains, as previously stated, that only works that illustrate a "revision of memory" can be categorized as *lieux de mémoire*. Also, he notes that there needs to be a will to remember. We see this in the protagonist/director C.M. Hardt and later in

her grandmother. Though her uncle and great-grandmother will not to remember, and her grandfather cannot remember, Hardt and her grandmother express the desire not only to remember but also to revise History—an integral component in the creation of a *lieu de mémoire*.

Cooperation vs. Dissension

In relation to Spain's past, Lucrecia chooses to cooperate with the role that History has assigned women. She implies through her actions to her children and grandchildren that remembering the past and sharing it with others is not acceptable. Also, she wears only black as was required of widows at the time of her husband's death, while constantly working in the kitchen and around the house without saying a word. In fact, she does not speak unless spoken to. Indeed Lucrecia models the traditional tenets of domesticity that the Franco regime encouraged: that the role of the woman entails marriage, motherhood, and being the guardian of the home and educator of her children, all the while tending to her husband's needs and submitting to his wishes— "la casada perfecta" and "ángel del hogar."

Hardt's grandmother, on the other hand, chooses to rebel against this role by collaborating with her granddaughter because being "la casada perfecta" only brought about pain and a lack of vision for the future. To clarify, forty years ago, when she capitulated to her husband's request to take care of strangers in her home, she was arrested. Then, she was not allowed to talk about his death because the government mandated silence. However, with the help of her granddaughter she finds that the role she played all her life will not bring about change. She realizes that she must resist the position assigned to her by History by means of narrating her story, which in effect will rewrite History.

Although Hardt's personal memory does not encompass the civil war itself, her postmemory does. Therefore, I assert that because postmemory is an imagined and created narrative, it goes hand-in-hand with Dupláa's argument of *lieux de mémoire* when she clarifies that "memoria creadora," though perhaps not a representation of reality, still exemplifies a truth. Hardt revisits the past through documents and interviews and narrates her story. She recognizes the role that women had to play, but also realizes that this role does not apply to her and should

not have to apply to her grandmother. By encouraging her to remember and by telling her grandmother's story, she is also able to tell the story of her postmemory. As a result, her project rescues her grandmother's voice while allowing Hardt to be heard as well.

During the course of her research, Hardt comes across a back issue of the underground Communist newspaper *Mundo Obrero*. Her grandfather's death is recorded in an article explaining that he was shot by the civil guard. The piece says that they took him to a field and exacted the "Law of Escape," a common practice at the time. With this knowledge in hand, Hardt makes a second attempt to speak with her grandfather's executioner to clarify details. He refuses to talk to her, however, and slams the door in her face.

With all the disparate information she has gathered, coupled with no one claiming responsibility, Hardt realizes that she will never uncover "the truth." Though this was her initial intention, she discovers that her project exemplifies something else, perhaps even more important: a platform from which her family's story can be told and her grandfather remembered. "I had come in search for answers. My grandfather's death was still a mystery, but I would

haunt his killer's dreams. My grandfather would never be forgotten."

Hardt's intention in making *Muerte en El Valle* is to find the truth about her grandfather's death. However, the documentary becomes less a search for the truth and more a documentary about the process in which she learns about history and the inaccessibility of historical truth. As she records her findings, she encounters contradictory versions of the same incident, a resistance to remember and a fear to speak out. Though eventually she discovers that the narrative she hoped to tell is impossible to present, the story she captures serves to document her journey and to tell her family's story so that they might occupy a place in history.

Conclusion

The works analyzed in this chapter attempt to revise History, though clearly in different ways. *La voz dormida* focuses on the strength of imprisoned Republican women who remain true to their ideologies while conveying how women struggled and survived during a time that did not recognize their sacrifices. By conjoining the memories of numerous voices that experienced the civil war and postwar times

into five protagonists, Chacón blends fact with fiction intentionally to represent a different version of the past not previously documented. *Muerte en El Valle*, on the other hand, focuses on the perspective of a member of the so-called third generation and her attempt to understand and clarify the past. Her forensic investigation results in a simulacrum of a trial as shown by the confrontation with her grandfather's assassin. Different from the novel studied, this filmic text rescues voices from the past then links them to a female voice of the present.

However, the two works share an attempt to revise History to include female voices. Though Chacón bases her novel on memory and Hardt's foundation is postmemory, both of the texts demonstrate a will to remember. The two projects contrast individual and collective memories of women to reflect certain complexities during postwar times and thus function as *lieux de mémoire*. Finally these works are a successful attempt to seize a part of history that women have been denied. By juxtaposing these two narratives, this chapter shows that these works, though distinct in nature, represent a porthole to the past to help us better understand the past as well as the present.

Chapter 3

Narrating History and Women's Position in Society Through Memory and Postmemory in Josefina Aldecoa's Trilogy: *Historia de una maestra*, *Mujeres de negro* and *La fuerza del destino*

Historia de una maestra (1990) is the first-person narrative of Gabriela López Pardo who recounts the events of her life as a young teacher in pre-civil war Spain. She tells of her marriage to fellow Republican teacher, Ezekiel, her excitement in welcoming her daughter, Juana, into the world on the same day as the birth of the Second Republic, and how her dreams of education for all in Spain are destroyed with the death of her husband and the ensuing civil war. In the second novel of her trilogy, *Mujeres de negro* (1994), Juana serves as narrator and recounts their life in Mexico with Gabriela's second husband, Octavio, a wealthy landowner.

In the final novel, *La fuerza del destino* (1997), Gabriela assumes the narrative thread once again, as she ponders the past, confronts her constant state of isolation, and anticipates her death. In sum, the trilogy details Gabriela's early life in Spain, turns to her self-

imposed exile in Mexico, her return to Spain after Franco dies, and finally her death in 1982.

In this chapter, I analyze the role that Gabriela chooses, juxtaposed with roles society requires of her, and I point out the use of memory and postmemory to question certain myths of recent Spanish history. First, I locate the trilogy among "books of memory" as opposed to the early "testimonial" novels. Then I observe how gender constricts the main character to certain positions in society and how she functions to subvert these roles, however passively. Finally, I evaluate the protagonist's effort to recall and narrate her suppressed memory of traumatic events, the way this effort conflates with her daughter's effort to narrate her own postmemory, and the way Aldecoa embeds these narratives within the trilogy.

History and Fiction

Gabriela is a fictional character who lives during much of the twentieth century. Throughout the trilogy, the narrative refers to important historical events such as the birth of the Second Republic, the Spanish civil war, and the death of Franco. These events at once affect the protagonist and her family and call them to take action for

social change. The trilogy relates dates and places that are real, but significantly, Aldecoa attempts to augment the historical by drawing upon elements of the past either purposefully ignored by historians or not considered important enough to document. Indeed, the title of the first novel in the trilogy emphasizes this point: *Historia de una maestra*—where *Historia* can be interpreted both as “history” and as “story.”

The trilogy does not set out to discount what has been recorded as historical fact, but to the contrary, to draw upon history for two critical purposes: first, to use historical references to pinpoint certain events for the reader to find his or her bearings; second, to revise what might be perceived as the given history of this period by adding a female perspective that until recently has been overlooked within Spanish historiography as well as fiction. As a consequence, the narrator debunks various myths and in so doing reorients, reconstructs, and refocuses Spanish history away from traditional ways of exploring it. This proves a difficult task, for as David K. Herzberger notes,

History always resists narration, but
the very precariousness of all
narrative endeavors is both the source

of historical vitality and the catalyst
for historical explorations. . . .
Writing the past thus becomes a two
fold endeavor: it is a way to write and
to act against the grain, as well as a
means to develop narrations that allow
(and even compel) the opening of
history to divergence. (*Narrating* 2)

Constantly weaving fiction with what is recognized as
historical fact, the trilogy eventually creates another
reality of Spain's past, just as the title of the first
novel implies. For example, Gabriela, though a fictional
character, is based on the stories passed down to Aldecoa
from her mother who was a teacher during the Republic.
Gabriela's character then interacts with historical events
such as the forming of the Second Republic and Franco
coming to power. This, in turn, generates another
perspective. However, it is not a single viewpoint, for
there does not exist one version of any history, but rather
multiple points of view, each of which merits recognition.
As Herzberger avers, "There is no single truth that lies at
the end of narration, only other truths repositioned within
the narrative process" (*Narrating* 5).

Aldecoa, a writer of fiction, narrates the past from a
perspective generally ignored by historiographers of the
Regime—a female giving agency to other females. Though

official historiographers must redact the past in order to prove their power over history, Aldecoa, as a novelist, in her own way seeks to exercise authority over the past. She accesses historiography with the intention to undermine and challenge the historiographers' purported facts—facts that have been recorded and manipulated by the hegemonic history industry.¹⁶ Herzberger points out that “while historiographers of the Regime seek to squeeze history into a tightly constructed and monologically defined set of narrative strategies, writers of fictions are able to controvert these strategies and assert dissonance through a normative set of principles of their own” (*Narrating 2*). However, this is not an innovation of Aldecoa; previous attempts by other novelists have succeeded in subverting official narrative strategies related to history, although generally with different purposes.¹⁷

Beyond Testimony and Memory

Aldecoa's trilogy harkens back to the testimonial novels of the 1950s and 60s and the “books of memory” of the 1970s. In testimonial writing, a narrator speaking in first person bears witness to a series of events and recounts his or her participation in these events.

Evaluating this confessional discourse, which is most often conveyed in monologue form, the implied reader must decide whether the role played by the protagonist in society materializes as something to support or oppose. In his article "The Testimony Novel and the Novel of Memory," Gonzalo Sobejano suggests that in these novels,

Time appears as a past sealed off from the present, over which the subject broods, yielding a retrospective view more linear than simultaneous. A past relived, framed by a broad evocative context, resounds within the consciousness of the main character, who chooses to recount several meaningful personal experiences. (176)

Initially the Aldecoa trilogy parallels the model of the testimonial novel; Gabriela is a protagonist with an uncertain future who endures the pain of a period of inner exile as she endeavors to attain an authentic self.¹⁸ To a certain extent, her character lives through different struggles characterized by the testimonial novel, such as hollowness, guilt, and agony.

However, Gabriela's accounts of her ordeals do not have the poignant violence and absolute despair, sometimes referred to as *tremendismo*, of these earlier novels. This bifurcation from the testimonial novel can be attributed to the differences in the historical climate during which the

novels of testimony and the trilogy were written.¹⁹ The testimonial "boom" extended from the end of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) through the Second World War (1939-1945) and the ensuing dictatorship (1939-1975). The testimonials describe this period's suffocating atmosphere and the debilitating famine of Autarchic Spain which, according to Sobejano, is "a time of repression, of the politics of purge, of isolation and misery" (176).

Aldecoa, by contrast, writes many years after the dictatorship. The period of disenchantment passes and the period of transition (1975-1982) shifts into full-blown social democracy in 1982.²⁰ Because of this temporal distance from the Francoist repression Aldecoa is not compelled to disseminate her ideas through the filter of political and economic existentialist themes. Instead, Aldecoa can present a strong character that does not become paralyzed by indecision or get lost in a sticky web of memory and violence. Gabriela chooses her destiny without blaming others, all the while narrating what she remembers and how she navigates the vicissitudes of life, which only prove to make her stronger.

Aldecoa's trilogy also bifurcates from the books of memory developed during the years of transition which

sprang out of the tradition of testimonial novels. Whereas memoirs and testimony do not always take the form of a narrative, books of memory are memories written as a novel. This new modality narrates Spain's painful history through the use of memory, with the intention of processing the author's personal experience during these difficult times. Sobejano suggests that whereas "testimonial writing captures a reality that the author has witnessed directly, a book of memories represents, in writing, what the author recalls having experienced. The difference is instructive" (184). Though I agree, I would qualify his assertion insisting that in both cases it is a matter of separation from the event.

In line with the novels of memory, the Aldecoa trilogy, grounding itself in historical facts, is the telling of a story. This story weaves together various facts of twentieth century Spanish History, while the author imaginatively reinterprets these facts. Novels of memory, including this trilogy, find themselves somewhere in between a recounting of history (historiography) and the telling of history (fiction). Indeed, these novels bridge the gap between history and fiction. Herzberger observes that "history . . . reports on events that have occurred in

real life and pursues the truth of the past through the objectifying sanctions of human knowledge. Fiction, on the other hand, relates imaginary events through the oxymoronic paradigm inherent in all storytelling of 'it was and it was not'" (*Narrating* 3-4).

Though more analogous with books of memory than with novels of testimony, Aldecoa's trilogy diverges from early examples of memory books for the same reason: historical climate. Published in the 1990s, Aldecoa writes with the luxury of historical distance from the events recounted in the trilogy. Consequently, she has had more time to ponder and investigate the events of the past and as a result perhaps has a clearer understanding of the past and its implications regarding the meaning of existence. As Sobejano points out, early books of memory,

appear within an historical climate characterized by obstructed beginnings and a transitional period of opportunity. As society manages to evade revolutionary change, transition itself becomes channeled into democratic reform. This climate gives rise to novels organized around remembering. Remembering often takes place through dialogue and finds expression in the self-reflexive act of writing, producing metafiction as well as incursions into a world of fantasy. (185)

Realist Style

Unlike the memory masterpiece, *El cuarto de atrás*, published in 1978 by Carmen Martín Gaité, Aldecoa's trilogy does not pursue the fantastic and metafictional styles of writing. Indeed, as Herzberger claims in his article, "A Life Worth Living: Narrating Self and Identity in Josefina Aldecoa's Trilogy:"

Even though the character Gabriela knows she is telling a story, the novels cannot be classified as a metafictional work. Instead, the texts turn outward to the world rather than inward to their own construction. And rather than undermine their mimetic adequacy, as often occurs in contemporary fiction, the novels develop as if story and life were commingled to produce metonymic sufficiency. In its essence, then, the trilogy gives to the past a specific signifying function that is firmly intended and steadfastly unvexed by the dissociative vagueness of memory or the inefficacy of narration. (138)

Still, if we consider novels of memory to boast two tendencies defined as modernist and realist, the trilogy clearly rejects the former, while embracing the latter. The presence of an interlocutor serves to illustrate this point. Essential to novels of memory, the interlocutor in modernist examples can be a shadowy figure or a dual expression of the self. An example that encompasses both

types of interlocutors can be found in Carmen Martín Gaité's novel *El cuarto de atrás* (1975). Here, the interlocutor presents himself in many forms: interviewer, collaborator, and the devil among others. However this nebulous figure, referred to as the "man dressed in black," represents the protagonist's unconscious. Hence, it can be argued that she converses with herself. In Aldecoa's trilogy, by contrast, the interlocutor presents itself in a less complicated light: Gabriela converses with either her daughter, her dog, or herself. In each case, dialogue materializes as the intended mode of communication, whether or not the interlocutor can respond verbally, or even if the conversation unfolds without a witness. As a result, the reader does not get lost in the intricacies of the novel, but instead is allowed to follow the linear narrative presented as dialogue.

Woman in a Box

The topics of dialogue in the trilogy are the restrictions society has placed on women, creating an imbalance or hierarchy of men and women during years of repression and silence before, throughout, and after the dictatorship. A conversation unfolds as an informative

exchange delivered through memory (and postmemory) by participants who, aware of the past and the future, intend to change the social climate of their time in their own way. These tensions between individual and society (here, primarily between woman and society) materialize in different ways but mainly come to the fore as a rejection of imposed societal roles and a reforming of the familial unit. Ultimately, this dialogue proves to be a yearning for communication between the generations and yearning for authenticity during a time when social codes harshly ruled women's conduct.

For nearly all of her life, Gabriela remained trapped in a time and body that does not easily permit her to transcend the boundaries of gender. Indeed, she functions within the framework imposed upon her, yet attempts to subvert the traditional roles expected of her. The Roman Catholic Church and political conservatism at the time aspire to shape her morals and principles by dissuading women in general from working outside the domestic arena, promoting instead the nineteenth century ideal, *ángel del hogar*²¹.

Gabriela chooses to teach even after she marries, appearing to effectively cross the boundary between the

domestic realm and the social sphere in which she finds herself. It could be argued, though, that Gabriela complies with the wishes of the Church and State since the novels present the schools in which she teaches as a mirror of the home and because "the profession of teaching retains women in a primarily nurturing role . . ." (Leggott 120). This is seen not only in her classroom, but also when the women of the small towns in which she teaches solicit advice. "Sus consultas eran variadas, no siempre de medicina. La mayor parte pude resolverlas con sentido común y buena voluntad" (HM 37). Because of her compassion for the women of the town and her instinctual desire to nurture, to some extent she conforms to the following archaic thought of the time, as described by Mary Nash:

The value of man is active, that of a woman is passive. . . . Man is reflexive, analytical; woman imaginative. The first is characterized principally by reason, consciousness, the second by sentiment, affection. The first is exceptionally apt for public life, for a life of relationships, for social commerce; the second is, by essence, *the angel of the hearth*. (Constructing 29-30)

However, I will argue that Gabriela strives to be revolutionary within the confines of the socially-imposed

boundaries expected of her as a teacher, wife and later as a mother.

According to Nash, the mere fact that Gabriela is defined biologically as a woman illustrates biological essentialism.²² This was the main feature informing the construction of gender difference and the transformation of the concept of femininity in early twentieth century Spain. Consequently, biological essentialism became a key aspect in the construction of women's "shared cultural identity and their collective definition of identity politics and a woman's agenda" (*Constructing* 26). Nash observes that biosocial thought formed gender identity and the representation of women in Spanish culture into a "cultural myth that justified gender hierarchies, discriminatory values, and gendered social roles . . . based on the subordination of women and social asymmetry between the sexes" (*Constructing* 26).

Gabriela must constantly confront three obstacles: inequality among the sexes, political conservatism, and religious conservatism, always striving to peacefully debunk the cultural myth that binds her and Spanish women to a lesser position in society. As a young teacher in a small town, she finds herself in conflict with the

conservative mayor and village priest who conspire to malign her revolutionary teaching strategies that directly oppose their conservative ideals. "Muchas modernidades trae usted para este pueblo" (HM 28) says the priest just after she declines to kiss his hand. Disturbed by her impertinence, the priest insists that catechism should reign supreme in the classroom and that children should be tamed with spankings: "Los chicos son como animales pero hay que domarles. Y cuando no respondan, palo . . ." (HM 43). The village priest's comments support the assertion that "in the same way that women in their maternal role [were] enjoined to promote the conventional ideology endorsed by the state, so teachers before the advent of the Republic [were] expected to maintain the *status quo*, promoting church-sanctioned values" (Leggott 120). Nevertheless, Gabriela cannot comply. Her father's views of religion influence her belief that the Church should not dictate a classroom's curriculum or discipline. Her father would say, "Dios no existe como lo ven los que creen en Él. Si hay una forma de divinidad está en todo lo que nos rodea: el mar y el monte y el hombre son Dios . . . Es muy difícil aceptar la incongruencia de la vida . . . Por eso

debes entender que haya gente que necesita religiones para dar respuesta a sus temores" (HM 29-30).

Gabriela will not use her position to further the use of religion as a crutch. Nor will she tame the students as the priest suggests because she knows that treating the children without respect and love will only cause fear and distrust while continuing the ignorance with which she is confronted. Fear and distrust represent the very things she strives to eradicate because they engender an environment which stifles learning. Without learning and growth, her agenda of social change cannot come about, since it is based on the destruction of imposed hierarchies.

Gabriela's narrative underscores the fact that during the 1930s, one third of Spanish women were illiterate (Carbayo-Abengózar 111). Since the women of the town constantly turn to her for advice, Gabriela decides to provide a forum where women can seek advice while at the same time she can promote literacy. She notifies the mayor that she will offer afternoon classes to the women of the town. However, the mayor, who is only concerned that the people remain ignorant and not interrupt the *status quo* of his municipality, replies, "Y qué tienen que aprender las

mujeres—dijo—. Tarea les sobra con atender las casas y los animales” (HM 38). Clearly, this small town represents a microcosm of early twentieth century Spanish thought, which held that cultural identity for women is not built on a strong career path, but instead on the satisfaction of complying with the prescribed roles of mothers and housewives.

Gabriela recognizes that the woman’s role in the family economy is important. Therefore she teaches her students the art of embroidering but not to acquiesce to the supplications of the women in the town, “‘Enseñe a las niñas,’ me decían, ‘que esto les va a valer más que las letras’” (HM 45). Gabriela does not subscribe to the traditional gender discourse on domesticity which asserted that household duties were women’s exclusive terrain. Rather, she will teach the domestic arts to both boys and girls because she believes that men and women should be able to navigate these domestic duties as well as duties of any other realm. Hence, she will teach embroidering, but with the condition that her students understand why: “Las letras y los números y las lecciones que hacemos son más importantes, pero también tenéis que saber estas cosas” (HM 45).

The town folk do not appreciate Gabriela's intention to teach boys what they consider tasks only women should perform. They accuse her of attempting to make the boys into girls, "para que pierdan la fuerza y no trabajen en cosas de hombres . . ." Indeed the townsfolk see the sex/gender system in the archaic mode of female/feminine and male/masculine.²³ Though Gabriela recognizes biological differences between the sexes, she does not rely on those distinctions to mandate women's role in the patriarchal society in which they live. Eventually, the boys begin to disappear from these extra classes and she takes this opportunity to teach the girls the differences she sees between the sexes: ". . . el hombre y la mujer no son diferentes por la inteligencia ni la habilidad, sino por la fisiología . . . La fuerza física es una cosa, les expliqué. Pero hay otra fuerza que es la que nos hace discurrir y resolver situaciones difíciles" (HM 46). Hence, Gabriela rejects the notion that the body's biological make up assigns certain masculine and feminine gender identities and behaviors because she understands that seeing gender through this lens empowers men and disempowers women. The society in which she lives expects cultural constructions to dictate normality, i.e.: men work

outside the home and women care for the home. However, Gabriela teaches her students that their gender identities should not be culturally connected to their biological sex.

Though she does not completely surrender to the rules with which society wishes her to comply, other characters do. For example, the novel juxtaposes Gabriela's strong nature with that of her two good friends from school, Remedios and Rosa. Whereas Gabriela anxiously awaits a teaching position so that she can do her part to foment social change, Remedios and Rosa look to marry. Indeed, Remedios fails her teaching courses not only once but twice. However, she does not worry—quite the contrary: “estaba alegre porque de todos modos iba a casarse . . .” (*HM* 14). She clings to the cultural identity and tradition to which she has become accustomed and to the myth of marriage as proffered by a society shaped by the conservative Catholic Church. She comments, “Qué más da si antes o después lo tenía que dejar . . .” (*HM* 14)

Unlike Remedios, Rosa has passed her courses and looks forward to teaching. However, she will only accept a teaching position if convenient. Again, marriage surfaces as the main objective: “‘Yo, si no me dan un pueblo cerca de casa, no voy,’ solía decir [Rosa]. ‘Prefiero quedarme y

esperar . . .' 'Esperar ¿a qué?' le decía yo" (HM 17).

Though Gabriela asks, she already knows how Rosa will answer: "Nos interesa encontrar un novio conveniente . . ." (18). Rosa has the luxury of waiting. She can depend on her wealthy father to provide her with financial security until she marries, unlike Gabriela, who must depend on herself. As a result, Rosa and Remedios conform to the reality at the time: women's cultural identity encompassed good mothering and housewifery while excluding other social or professional enterprises. They conform to the notion that women are inferior to men, a common trope at this time as seen in Pompeyo Gener's comment published in the major newspaper, *La Vanguardia*, in 1889:

In herself, a woman, unlike a man, is not a complete being; she is only the instrument of reproduction, destined to perpetuate the species; while man is charged with making it progress, he is the generator of intelligence, at the same time creator . . . of the social world. (Nash *Constructing* 27)

Gabriela, on the other hand, seeks to undermine this cultural identity and myth of women's position throughout her life. In *Historia de una maestra*, at the age of 19 she begins by rejecting the popular and "safe" track of marriage after school, electing to embrace teaching as a

means to fulfill her dreams while at the same time enriching the lives of others. Indeed, she constantly refers to teaching as her career, never indicating that she would abandon it for a husband and children. This could account for some of the negative treatment she receives as an unwed teacher. As Nash notes, "By establishing a cultural identity as mothers and wives the discourse of domesticity legitimated a negative attitude towards women's right to employment in the labor market, even among the working classes" (Nash *Constructing* 28).

It is not Gabriela's mother who encourages her to work, but her father. Indeed, since her mother exemplifies the *ángel del hogar* ideal, Gabriela instead materializes as a product of her father's upbringing. Though her mother's influence later becomes the driving force behind her principles on child rearing, it is her father who fosters the liberal ideals she intends to pass on to her students. Gabriela's father, a hard worker who is very well-read, has a passion for learning and instills this in his daughter. The novel implies that the most important aspect of education is the ability to decide for oneself one's own system of beliefs after research and careful consideration in order to avoid becoming a mindless conformist. Her

father's character serves to embody this point. Reading coupled perhaps with having served in two wars surface as the reasons for which Gabriela's father embraces liberal thoughts and principles, ideals he strives to inspire in his daughter. " . . . valoro su pasión por el saber, el ansia por alcanzar fines nobles que proyectó en mí" (HM 29). Gabriela remembers his words clearly, words that shape her character. "Mi padre tenía la cabeza muy clara y me había educado con libertad, pero también con prudencia . . . Yo todo lo que soy, o por lo menos lo que era entonces, so lo debo a mi padre . . . [E]l mensaje de mi padre [era] 'Respetar a los demás, respetar y tratar de comprender a los otros'" (HM 29-30).

Gabriela also breaks with the traditional and the safe by accepting positions in remote towns, one specifically lost in the mountains with heavy snow storms. "A nadie le interesa enterrarse en la nieve. Así que para allá me fui con interés, con ilusión" (HM 21). This *ilusión* is immediately tested when the guide who comes to pick her up warns, "Señora maestra, le advierto que la van a recibir a palos . . ." But Gabriela remains strong: she will not let him break her will. She convinces herself, "[No] voy a llorar. Nadie me va a recibir a palos. Tengo todos mis

papeles en regla" (HM 22). Her strength demonstrates that, contrary to many other women, she was not raised to be an adornment in any home, be it her father's or future husband's. Pilar de Sanjuán, an early twentieth century educator, affirms this expectation of most women when she proposes:

Women, especially, are destined by Providence to live secluded in the modest home, perfuming it with the essence of their ignored virtue, making it beautiful with their simple grace; so that those who have received from Heaven manly values, privileged talent and other gifts, have been the most wretched of their sex. (Nash *Constructing* 29)

Though commentaries such as this seem ubiquitous, because of her father's influence, the household in which Gabriela grows up somewhat challenges the familiar tropes confining women at home and excluding outside work. Indeed Gabriela's character reflects the words of Concepción Arenal (1820-1893) whose essays found in *La emancipación de la mujer en España* offer a different perspective on the role of the Spanish woman in society. Arenal asserts that education fosters self-esteem or what she refers to as *personalidad* while at the same time shaping women to be good wives and mothers:

Lo primero que necesita la mujer es afirmar su personalidad, independiente

de su estado, y persuadirse de que, soltera, casada o viuda, tiene deberes que cumplir, derechos que reclamar, dignidad que no depende de nadie, un trabajo que realizar e idea de que la vida es una cosa seria, grave, y que si la toma como juego, ella será indefectiblemente juguete. Dadme una mujer que tenga estas condiciones, y os daré una buena esposa y una buena madre, que no lo será sin ellas. (67)

Gabriela the Teacher

The novel implies that two schools of thought exist in regards to teaching, and juxtaposes "formative education" with "formal" or school education. On the one hand, formative education refers to the lessons that parents give their children during the first influential years of life, for example, the principles, morals, and code of conduct that are passed down from generation to generation. Gabriel's formative education from both her parents informs her principles and moral character. Due to this influence in her life, she chooses to be a loving mother and at the same time a career-oriented woman who uses her profession to shape the lives of others. On the other hand formal education connotes the life skills and knowledge that prescribed schooling supplies. Though integral to the process of life, teaching in this context

cannot substitute for formative education; it should only serve as a supplement to the education that happens in the home. Hence, as in the case of Gabriela, formative and formal educations conflate to sculpt and fortify the character of a child so that she can become an asset to society, just as her father has done with her. According to Gabriela, "No puede existir dedicación más hermosa que ésta. Compartir con los niños lo que yo sabía, despertar en ellos el deseo de averiguar por su cuenta las causas de los fenómenos, las razones de los hechos históricos" (*HM* 40).

Gabriela illustrates how these ideas of formative and formal education collaborate to produce a self-reliant, free thinker who contributes to the betterment of society. However, she finds in the rural areas where she teaches that this is not the case. Instead, formative education dovetails with formal education to prolong ignorance and a cultural identity shaped by male hegemony. Gabriela's father challenges her to commit to her role in social change and to debunk the myths that have shaped Spanish society. Her father insists, "Son estrechos de mente e ignorantes, no lo olvides. Trata de que sus hijos se conviertan en algo diferente" (*HM* 31). With these words,

she understands that her role as a teacher is to dispel the prevailing superstitions and dependence on myth, tradition, and the gender-informed hierarchy that society has inculcated in its young people through both formative and formal education.

Gabriela's decision to teach in Guinea, once again, foregrounds these very issues of the hierarchy of gender. While she sees an opportunity to contribute to social change, those around her attempt to sabotage her decision, insisting that only a male teacher should take a position so far away. She ponders the complaints of her friends and family, musing that if she were a man, no one would discourage her choice:

Todos dijeran que estaba loca cuando la elegí. Yo tenía veinticuatro años y afán de aventuras. Si fuera hombre . . . pensaba. Un hombre es libre. Pero yo era mujer y estaba atada por mi juventud, por mis padres, por la falta de dinero, por la época . . . Miré los mapas y el punto más lejano de la tierra al que podía llevarme mi carrera . . . (HM 54)

Again, breaking with the norms of society, attempting to balance society's hierarchy at the time, this single lady ignores the advice of others and travels alone to the foreign colony.

Teaching "los Negros"

The novel alludes to the social structure in Guinea as defined by the juxtaposition of "los blancos," who represent the civilized world, and "los negros," or the uncivilized. The white inhabitants come from Imperialist nations in an effort to take advantage of the riches of Guinea. Additionally, they exploit the natives and their lack of formal education while refusing to respect the indigenous people's firsthand knowledge of the land. Gabriela, in contrast, knows that she can learn from the natives. Initially she chooses to live in an authentic cabana instead of a posh colonial style home with more amenities. She listens to her students as they teach her their language and ways of living. However, her close relationship with the natives does not endear her to the white residents of Guinea. Even though she is white, she is an educated woman who stands up for the blacks and questions the white men about their prejudiced attitudes toward the natives. Her conduct is not well received and they ostracize her from their circle.

As a consequence, she spends most of her time with Emile, a black doctor educated in France who shares her passion for educating the poor, black children. This

rupture from the norm does not settle well with the white men of the town, especially the administrator of her school. "Me pareció que mi presencia allí le disgustaba aunque era él quien la había propiciado" (*HM* 63). Gabriela finds herself isolated, consoled only by the presence of Emile. Though the whites do not accept her as an equal she accepts their posture as evidence of their own ignorance. However, when she meets Emile's mother, she realizes how devastating the presence of the colonialists is when his mother, displeased with Emile for bringing Gabriela to their home, stares at them with reproaching eyes. Emile explains, "Mi madre no cree en los blancos. Desconfía de ellos" (*HM* 65). Gabriela contemplates his words and their significance: "Nunca antes me había detenido a analizar el significado de la palabra racismo, pero no tardaría mucho tiempo en comprender que la reacción de la madre de mi amigo no era un hecho aislado y caprichoso sino la consecuencia de una realidad ampliamente extendida" (*HM* 65).

Eventually, Gabriela falls in love with Emile. However, this is a relationship destined to failure because whites cannot be with blacks. In fact, the administrator, so displeased with her close friendship with Emile,

attempts to rape her, saying, "Si eres buena para el negro también lo serás para mí . . ." (HM 67). With these words he implies that she has now become an object of diminished value because she associates with Emile.

Not to be deterred, Gabriela stands by her principles and remains an advocate for the blacks when other whites warn her of the dangers of associating with this lesser race. She responds, "Yo trabajo con negros-le dije-y puedo asegurarle que son gente pacífica y no he tenido ocasión de advertir en ellos la menor hostilidad hacia los blancos" (HM 77). Though her intentions are honest, they are in vain. "Hay una prohibición que marcan las leyes," says one, "Ni solo blanco casará con negro, ni mucho menos tendrá una blanca relación con un negro . . ." (HM 77).

Just as in the previous small town in which she worked, Gabriela falls ill and must return home, leaving her work unfinished in both places, which mirrors the interruption of the Second Republic's agenda by the Civil War. Perhaps her failure in these two places can be attributed to her lack of friendships with women. In Guinea, Gabriela immediately notices that few white women inhabit the small city in which she lives. As a result, she never forges friendships with either black women or

white, only with Emile. In the previous town, her closest friend is an older man, Don Wenceslao. Clearly, neither of these men can fill the void in Gabriela's life that women eventually do. Though she shares with them some of her life's woes, she cannot turn to them for strength because society does not permit it. In the case of Don Wenceslao, social stratification places Gabriela and him in two different spheres which disallows informal contact. What is more, because he is a man, cultural norms of the day indicate they cannot be alone together, therefore a close bond never forms. In the case of Emile, Gabriela violates societal expectations and spends time alone with him, but because of their cultural differences, he does not completely understand her. Consequently, Don Wenceslao and Emile do not represent a source from which she can draw strength.

Gabriela as Wife and Mother

Upon returning to Spain, Gabriela marries a fellow teacher whom she esteems. Though not passionately in love with Ezekiel, she marries him knowing that they will work together to educate the young for a better future. By continuing to teach and remain true to her ideology,

Gabriela subverts a prominent tenet of the notion of the
"angel del hogar":

Se unía un vago discurso sobre el
poder redentor de la mujer respecto
a su esposo, basado en la supuesta
bondad natural de ésta, lo que le
adjudicaba la tarea de proteger y
regenerar el alma del hombre, expuesto
a los peligros depredadores del
capitalismo salvaje: 'A man's wife,
it was thought, could, by staying at
home—a place unblemished by sin and
unsullied by labor—protect her husband's
soul from permanent damage; the very
intensity of her purity and devotion
would regenerate, as it were its
war-scarred tissue and thus keep his
personal virtue protected from the moral
pitfalls inherent in the world of commerce.'
(Dijkstra 8)

However, because Gabriela and Ezekiel's ideology
stands in direct opposition to such an antiquated school of
thought, neither sees it as feasible that she would quit
her career, much less become the source of salvation for
her husband.

Another important aspect of social identity related to
marriage is motherhood. Clearly, Gabriela does not conform
to the prominent ideals of the day as wife, nor does she
succumb to the norms society expects of her as a mother
either. Though the cultural identity of the time maintains
that motherhood is part of the expected progression of life

and that it will come naturally, Gabriela views her role as a parent equal to being trapped, though voluntarily (*HM* 115), starting with her pregnancy:

Me sentía invadida . . . Era una
invasión pacífica y puramente física.
Rara vez me encontraba pensando en
aquel hijo del que todos hablaban.
Mentiría si dijera que sentía otra cosa
que la transformación de mi cuerpo . .
. ni el sentimiento maternal
anticipado, ni la ilusión de la nueva
vida, ni de imaginarme cómo iba a ser
aquel niño que se acercaba, me ocupaban
el tiempo. (*HM* 101-102)

Though patriarchal society teaches its members that women have a maternal instinct and must rear children in order to satisfy this need, Gabriela's character proves that not all women embrace this notion. According to libertarian feminist Ann Oakley, maternal instinct does not exist. In fact, she avers that having a biological child is not a desire that women naturally experience. What is more, she maintains that neither during nor after pregnancy do there exist hormonally charged impulses that "irresistibly draw the mother to her child in the tropistic fashion of the moth drawn to the flame" (201). Later, as a mother, Gabriela continually refers to motherhood as a prison sentence she must carry out. "Ser madre es una Gloria y una condena al mismo tiempo . . ." (*HM* 179).

Gabriela is a complicated person who is capable of being more than one thing at a time, in contrast to societal expectations. However, the encoded role of *ángel del hogar* is one she cannot perform. Nash describes this woman in the following words: "As a mother she is the life and sweetness of the family, as a wife the vale of tears of her husband, as a daughter, an angel who keeps watch and prays for the lovingness and peace of the home" (*Constructing* 28). Clearly, an *ángel del hogar* would never refer to herself as Gabriela does when she says she is "una prisionera" (*HM* 115) to the needs of a baby who takes her away from her dream to educate and serve the marginalized.

The Dream

Concomitantly, this dream is also the intention of the Second Republic (1931-1936). With the advent of this new government, Gabriela chooses to embrace the changes because she knows that with the Republic she can teach unfettered by the overreaching tentacles of the Church. She is excited by the fact that the highest priority of the leaders of the Second Republic is in fact education. Stanley Payne explains that "to them a progressive Republic depended on enlightenment as imparted and guaranteed by

secular public schools" (86). Gabriela knows that her position as a teacher is integral to the social agenda of the new regime, commenting that "la República iba a hacer de la enseñanza el corazón de su reforma" (HM 129).

Marcelino Domingo, the Minister of Education in 1932, states the pedagogical mission of the Second Republic in this way:

Escuela primaria para todos; enseñanza secundaria y universitaria, no para los ricos, sino para los capaces, sean ricos o pobres. Una cultura postescolar para quienes no reciban la enseñanza superior, y una preparación suficiente para todos los empleos de la agricultura, la industria y el comercio. Este plan colocará a cada español en su puesto, y desde cada puesto, por la capacidad de quien esté en él, se realizará una obra. El español, en cultivo su espíritu, será lo que puede y debe ser, y por la ascensión espiritual del español, ascenderá históricamente España, llegando, por fin, a ser lo que aún no ha sido y lo que, entrañablemente, es. España, por primera vez, será ella. (Domingo 25)

Gabriela eagerly approves the ideals of the new government. "Revolución era una palabra que yo veneraba. Revolución significaba cambio profundo, agitación definitiva, volverlo todo al revés" (HM 213). Clearly she is a revolutionary who wants radical change. However, she realizes that these changes will affect her personally,

since teachers are selected as the pawns of the Republic, dangerously positioned to carry out the reforms. Says Gabriela, "se esperaba que fueran los maestros quienes dieran la primera batalla" (*HM* 120). This is not a task she eagerly undertakes because Gabriela does not view herself as politically motivated: "Si yo quisiera explicar lo que era entonces para mí la política, no sabría. Yo creía en la cultura, en la educación, en la justicia. Amaba mi profesión y me entregaba a ella con afán. ¿Todo esto era política?" (*HM* 110). Gabriela would prefer change without violence and without the need for her to become involved. However, the new regime, by expecting teachers to execute the reforms, forces her to take a political stance in her struggles with the clergy.

Despite the fact that Gabriela does not know how to describe herself in political terms, she does know without a doubt that she is a pacifist. She cannot condone violence as a means to stimulate social change. "No es posible la violencia. Nunca la violencia" (*HM* 203). She stands firm, and this causes strife in her home, for when the Second Republic comes under attack, her husband chooses to fight for his ideology. Gabriela on the other hand, continues her work as a teacher, believing that education,

not violence, is the key to long term change. "Educar para la convivencia. Educar para adquirir conciencia de la justicia. Educar en la igualdad para que no se pierda un solo talento por falta de oportunidades . . ." (HM 205).

Ezekiel cannot concur, and he refers to her pacifist tendency as naiveté: "Romanticicismo, un gran romanticismo (HM 205). Though her hopes for a violence-free revolution may be naïve, Ezekiel's methods leave her a single mother who loses her job after the war when many Republican instructors are relieved of their positions under Franco's dictatorship. Before her husband's execution, which officially redefines her family unit, Gabriela observes how her husband's participation in the cause has created distance between them. Almost a harbinger of Ezekiel's death, this distance prepares her for what is to come: "Evoco aquel verano y veo el pequeño grupo que formábamos las tres, mi madre, mi hija y yo unidas en una plácida armonía, voluntariamente aisladas de los insistentes presagios de nuestros hombres " (HM 210).

The Family Unit Redefined

Now a single mother, Gabriela has yet another opportunity to overcome traditional gender restrictions.

As we have seen, gender construction in Spanish culture was grounded in difference rather than equality. However, due to the new circumstances in which she finds herself, Gabriela's gender becomes blurred, almost equalized. This is the case of many widows after the war. Instead of the Father/Mother/Child triangle, the familial nucleus shifts. As a consequence, gender can no longer be recognized as biologically female as much as society may wish. Instead, gender classification defies traditional characterization. In other words, today gender is widely accepted as "performative," meaning a role that "can be taken on or changed at will." Nevertheless, studies have shown that in the past individuals, "'did gender' and conformed to or challenged gender roles" (Wiesner-Hanks 607). Gabriela's gender proves to be performative because of the multiple roles she must now play: mother, father, caretaker (in Gabriela's case, of her mother), head of the household, and wage earner.

Women Friends

Gabriela's case is not unique. Other women left alone by their loved ones through death, disappearance, or enlistment, also had to contend with the shattering of

their family's nucleus. As a result, women found solace in each other, no matter what their ideology. Gabriela's Nationalist neighbor muses, "Nosotras las mujeres siempre pagando los platos rotos de todo . . ." (*HM* 228). Gabriela chooses to lean for support on the women who surround her. These bonds grow so strong that later she ponders the importance that these women have had in her life, proving yet again that her nuclear family unit is comprised of women whom she has come to love as family: "Antonia me recuerda a otras muchas mujeres que han vivido a mi lado a lo largo del tiempo, que me han ayudado y han sido para mí mujeres-hermanas, mujeres-madres. Cuántas me vienen a la cabeza" (*FD* 159).

At the end of Gabriela's life, as she grows old and feeble, she contemplates her decrepit state and the women who have been at her side. She maintains that if these strong women of her past were still with her, she would not be so incapacitated. "Remedios, Marcelina, venid, Regina, Antonia, si no me hubierais abandonado, yo no estaría así, como me veis" (*FD* 218). Indeed, after considering the significance of those important to her, men and women alike, she asserts that what she lacks at this moment in her life is the presence of a woman, not a man. "Me falta

una mujer. No la encuentro" (FD 218), she says, which foregrounds the value of the emotional strength her female companions have offered rather than the ideological or brute strength of the men in her life.

Juxtaposing the men and women who surround Gabriela throughout her life facilitates a better understanding of why she comes to the conclusion that in her final hours of need a woman is what she requires. As we have seen, her women confidants stay true; however, the men who supposedly love her most, with the exception of her father, abandon or betray her in some way. Both her husbands, Ezekiel and Octavio, make choices with outcomes that could disempower her. However, strengthened by the women around her, Gabriela survives. For example, Ezekiel becomes so involved with the happenings of the State that, consequently, he shirks his duties as husband and father. Then, while supporting the cause, he betrays Gabriela when he falls in love with another woman as politically motivated as he. Finally, he is separated permanently from his wife and child when he is put to death for his participation in the cause. Though more passion exists for Gabriela with Octavio than with her first husband,

eventually Octavio becomes enamored of another woman and he also betrays Gabriela.

All the while, Gabriela leans on the women around her. Regina baby-sits Juana while Gabriela and Ezekiel work. "Nunca olvidaré lo que supuso para mí aquella ayuda. No quiso mi dinero, que era escaso, pero todo el dinero del mundo no habría sido suficiente para pagar la amorosa atención que dedicaba a mi hija" (*HM* 122). Marcelina is her constant companion during Ezekiel's absences from their home and after his death. Her mother materializes as a source of strength during her adult years. "Mi madre, sólo una sombra durante mi infancia y luego, en los años duros, mi apoyo, mi sosiego" (*FD* 70). Remedios, the housekeeper in Mexico, helps to raise Juana and accompanies Gabriela through the pain of Octavio's affair. Antonia, her final companion, attends to her during her final years when she loses her mind. All these women represent a bond of sisterhood that empowers Gabriela. With women surrounding her, she can survive.

Function (and Dysfunction) of Memory

As Gabriela remembers and recounts her life, she illustrates the two ways memory functions in the trilogy:

first as an attempt to recover the past in order to understand the present, and second, to rewrite the past in order to present an alternative (and perhaps more accurate) account of history which differs from the ubiquitous works presenting the androcentric perspective.

However, as Gabriela confesses to her daughter, and by extension the reader, because of the fragmented and unpredictable nature of personal memory, telling her story is no easy task: "La memoria selecciona. Archiva la versión de los hechos que hemos dado por buena y rechaza otras versiones posibles pero inquietantes" (HM 18).

Gabriela likens personal memory to a jigsaw puzzle in which she often puts pieces together that do not match, and she admits that she cannot avoid the possibility of manipulation and fabrication: "Me pregunto si reconstruyo de verdad los sucesos, si registro de modo fiable las sensaciones; es decir, si recuerdo o fabulo" (HM 59). The creative process of coupling a reconstruction of the past with the interpretation of the recollections, can at once contaminate the veracity of an official historical recounting, but it can enrich the unfolding of a personal narrative. Indeed Gabriela refuses to tell her story as a chronological, linear narrative because she understands

that memory cannot be captured in this way: "No me pidas que te cuente mi vida desde el principio y luego, todo seguido año tras año. No hay vida que se recuerde así . . ." (HM 13).

Memory of Trauma

The complicated nature of organizing and telling the past surfaces as a symptom of the larger issue: Gabriela does not want to reveal the details of her past because, like many who endure traumatic times, she would prefer to leave the past in the past and take concerted steps to forget. As the housekeeper explains to her daughter Juana, "Tu madre no quiere cocinar a la española porque no quiere recordar" (MN 116). Intentional forgetting and deliberate silence are common among those who suffer traumatic events because these happenings are so devastating and overwhelming to the victim that they resist narration. As Dori Laub explains:

The speakers about trauma on some level prefer silence so as to protect themselves from the fear of being listened to—and of listening to themselves. That while silence is defeat, it serves them both as a sanctuary and a place of bondage. Silence is for them a fated exile, yet also a home, a destination, and a

binding oath. To *not* return from this
silence is rule rather than exception."
(58)

As stated in chapter two, Dominick LaCapra discusses the notions of acting out and working through based on Freud's essay, "Mourning and Melancholia," where Freud describes the function of melancholia as a prerequisite to mourning but also as a state of mind that might thwart the process of mourning should it become extreme or an "object of fixation" (213). However, should the event be ignored, denial and avoidance become the primary symptoms of a person or people who resist the regenerative processes of coming to terms with a traumatic event. This appears to be the case of post-dictatorship Spain. Though the Franco regime imposed silence, making the process of working through impossible, later the pact of oblivion impeded any cathartic processing of the past.²⁴

In Aldecoa's trilogy, when Franco comes to power, Gabriela relocates to Mexico where she can freely engage in the process of working through. Instead, she chooses to avoid the past, to purposefully forget her former life in Spain instead of taking the necessary steps to come to terms with the losses she has suffered.

Juana's Postmemories

Although Gabriela intentionally puts her past to the side, she does not want her daughter to lose her Spanish roots, thus she associates with other exiles and sends her daughter to a private school run by Spanish teachers. However this works in opposition to Gabriela's stance on forgetting because it creates a desire in Juana to learn more about her past as a young child and the culture they left behind. Commenting on her secondary education Juana says,

Tenía unos profesores excelentes. El trabajo era estimulante, muy bien programado y perfectamente desarrollado. Pero lo que más me impresionó, lo que me hizo sentirme turbada y me alteró por dentro fue el verme sumergida de pronto en un ambiente en el que se hablaba el español de mi infancia. . . . Al regresar al lenguaje, regresé al país y al deseo de conocerlo algún día (MN 114-115).

Eventually she will return to Spain to continue her studies. However, first she must compel her mother to remember and to tell of her past so that it will not be forgotten: "A veces tenía miedo de perder el pasado. Por eso le pedía a mi madre que me hablara de las cosas que yo

recordaba y temía olvidar y de las que nunca había sabido” (MN 80).

Gabriela only tells her story at the behest of her daughter, who knows that in order to comprehend her own life she must first understand her mother's. Though Gabriela would prefer not to evoke the painful memories of her past, she agrees to journey together with her daughter so that Juana may make sense of the fragments of personal memory in relation to her mother's traumatic experiences. Though Gabriela concedes, she makes it clear that her daughter must share the process: “Si tú te encargas de buscar explicaciones a tantas cosas que para mí están oscuras, entonces lo intentamos” (HM 13).²⁵

In *Mujeres de negro*, Juana, now armed with her mother's story, seeks to find her own. By investigating her past and committing it to paper, Juana intends to better understand her present situation. However, like her mother, she confesses that her account of the past could be inaccurate: “La memoria no actúa como un fichero organizado a partir de datos objetivos” (MN 19). Though Juana aligns herself with her mother's stance on memory, what concerns her more is investigating her postmemory, admitting that some of her memories may not be events she has witnessed,

but instead are a compilation of the stories of others who have shared her past. In turn, Juana has constructed a narrative from these conversations and has assimilated them into her personal memory, demonstrating Hirsch's concept of postmemory. Juana tells the readers, "En realidad me resulta difícil separar lo recordado de lo imaginado. Confundo las fechas en la nebulosa de la infancia. Y así, quizás evoco instantes que viví demasiado niña y niego haber presenciado hechos de los que fui testigo con edad suficiente para dar testimonio de ellos" (MN 15).

Juana takes the discourse her mother offers in *Historia de una maestra* and intercalates it with her own by taking control of the narrative voice in *Mujeres de negro*, which then materializes as a narrative of her postmemory. Initially, Juana's quest for knowledge allows her to learn of the father she barely knew. Experiencing the typical silence related to postmemory, Juana does not hear her mother speak of him. When she broaches the subject with her grandmother, "la abuela" limits her comments only to why he was killed, "Tu padre era un hombre y noble, por eso lo mataron" (MN 14).

Also contributing to Juana's postmemory is the folded program her mother keeps hidden. This printed program

documents Ezekiel's participation in a conference sponsored by the *Partido Socialista*. Equipped with the few memories of her father and the small number of comments she has heard, she pictures her father as the male protector she never experienced as a small child. Loyal to this imagined representation of him, at a young age she refuses to attend a "*manifestación*" to denounce Republican partisans, saying to her friend that these are the same men that killed her father. In addition, she attributes her mother's constant state of sadness, her mother's relational distance from her, and their isolated existence to the absence of a father figure.

Though Juana desires more information about the father she never knew, what emerges most significantly in the process is the way she comes to understand her mother and how this understanding will affect the way she chooses to live her life. Indeed Juana's character serves to foreground Gabriela's character by showing Gabriela through the eyes of her daughter, so that in *La fuerza del destino* (the final novel of the trilogy) Gabriela can confront Juana's version of the past.

Initially Juana sees her mother as a strong but also as an intensely negative being. Narrating her childhood

memories, Juana describes her mother as silent, rigid and pessimistic, all of which, Juana feels, has created a suffocating environment in which to grow up: "Mi madre apenas salía de un mundo nebuloso, impenetrable para mí" (MN 19). Juana frequently contrasts her mother's qualities with her own, hoping that by recognizing them she will be able to escape the grave conditions to which her mother's temperament conduces. However she feels that her mother will never change and that her only way not to be affected by her solemn nature is to leave the negative surroundings in which she finds herself:

Me di cuenta de que mi madre nunca más encontraría una ocasión para cambiar. No podía sucederle nada bueno, brillante, imprevisto que la ayudara a ser feliz. Vivía insatisfecha y herida. Y era incapaz de capturar algunos de esos momentos que llegan y pasan furtivamente y nos dejan pequeñas luces, chispas luminosas que nos señalan el camino a seguir. (MN 181)

Juana refuses to live like this and eventually makes a concerted effort to change her future. The only way she will escape her mother's perpetual melancholy is to leave Mexico. She returns to Spain to study, and as her life unfolds in Madrid, she is able to shape her life according to her own choices. Initially she takes her father's

ideological posture toward affairs of state by joining the university resistance movement in Madrid. Yet she chooses to keep her political activities secret from her mother. The resistance movement, implemented by the younger generation differently than by the previous one, reflects the dissimilarities in ideology between Juana and her mother as well. Gabriela makes it clear to her daughter that a career is what facilitates survival for a woman:

Elige algo que pueda ser para ti el cimientito de tu existencia. Algo a lo que te puedas agarrar en los momentos malos, algo que nadie pueda quitarte. Las personas, los afectos pasan, pero tu profesión está ahí. Es como tu esqueleto que soporta tu cuerpo y te permite andar y moverte de un lado a otro, un delicado mecanismo que regula el equilibrio de tu vida. (MN 73)

Juana admits that in her mother's case that is correct. However, she feels that her case is different. Though she studies in order to have a career, she does not view education as the panacea that her mother does. She takes part in social change by being an activist in governmental affairs, trusting that social democracy is the answer. This conversation about education versus reform at the legislative level will remain ongoing between the two of them, Gabriela insisting that, first and foremost,

education defuses ignorance. Nevertheless, the novel agrees with Juana and Ezekiel.

Now having geographical distance from her mother, Juana comes to recognize the impact of living as a single mother in nationalist Spain. Now she understands the rationale behind her mother's negative stance toward life:

La muerte de mi padre y el abuelo, la
derrota, la hostilidad de los
vencedores, el aislamiento y la
escasez, la muerte de la abuela . . .
Mi madre no ha tenido mucha suerte. Y
luego está su terrible pesimismo.
Aunque ese pesimismo le va a servir
ahora de consuelo. A ella le da miedo
la felicidad. Siempre que ocurre algo
bueno se siente en falta. Cree que es
una aberración ser feliz, algo que no
se espera de la condición humana. Por
eso hay que pagar un precio enorme por
los momentos felices. (MN 177, 194)

Whereas Gabriela chooses to embrace her pessimism instead of working through the trauma that afflicts her, Juana elects to investigate her past. She wants to recognize what she needs to work through so she can take steps to overcome the pain of her past. She observes at an early age her mother's refusal to discuss the past and the impact this decision has had on their family: "En nuestra casa no se lloraba nunca" (MN 35). Because of Gabriela's resistance to facing her past, she does not equip her

daughter with the proper tools to confront the distresses in life. Therefore Juana's childhood is filled with pain and confusion.

Juana comes to the conclusion that children need assistance to help them navigate their pain: "Pero la infancia puede también ser dolorosa, porque si sobreviene la tragedia, el niño no tiene defensas racionales, no levanta, como los adultos, el escudo de las soluciones posibles, de las compensaciones que equilibren el dolor sufrido" (*MN* 26). LaCapra refers to this guide as an "empathic witness" and explains that mourning can only be effective when it takes place in a supportive social context (*Representing* 214). On her own, Juana identifies the importance of working through with a secondary witness when in Spain she turns to her close friend to purge the details of how her secret love affair abruptly ended: "Yo hablaba y hablaba. . . . Era la medicina que necesitaba. Era mi terapia" (*MN* 194). However, this friendship is not enough. Now Juana voluntarily chooses to face her mother and put an end to the secrets of her love life. Though afraid of her mother's indignant reaction, she reaches out to her in a letter telling her of the pain she currently endures, knowing that facing her mother is a part of the

mourning process: "Estaba segura de que esa carta ejercería una función de limpieza y equilibrio y me liberaría de la necesidad de fabular que todavía a veces me asaltaba" (*MN* 199). It is her mother who stresses the importance of writing. She tells Juana, "Escribe para recordar . . . y para conjurar los fantasmas" (*MN* 20). By coupling "recordar" with "conjurar los fantasmas," Gabriela alludes to the importance of exorcising ghosts, not to dispel them, but as Derrida says, one should "grant them the right . . . to a hospitable memory . . . out of a concern for justice" (175). Juana knows she is beginning the cathartic process of working through. She states, "Voy a empezar a curarme" (*MN* 197). Juana's letter and her intention to begin a cleansing process reflect a primary purpose of the trilogy as a whole: to compel other victims also to confront their past.

Gabriela returns her daughter's letter with one of her own in which she shows her support and love. She does not want Juana to feel pain but knows she has no control over her daughter's choices, only her own: "La respuesta de mi madre no se hizo esperar. Era una carta rebosante de amor y comprensión" (*MN* 199). Gabriela's reaction implies that Juana does not know her mother as well as she thinks. At

the end of *Mujeres de negro*, Juana sums up her life-long view of her mother:

Recuerdo a mi madre siempre de negro,
negro sobre negro. Primero fue
España. Y luego México, que no es
alegre. Parece alegre por el color.
Pero mi madre se dio cuenta
enseguida, comprendió que la naturaleza,
el fondo del pueblo mexicano es en
blanco y negro. Captó esa ausencia
de color en lo más profundo de lo
mexicano. El color, allí, arropa lo
externo, es lo externo. Pero por
dentro el negro lo invade todo. . . .
El negro es la nada, el vacío, el no
ser. El blanco es la fría luz de la
conciencia, la percepción de lo que
está bien, la verdad en estado puro
e inalcanzable. Sin embargo, el color
es una agresión, es la confusión, el
exceso, el derroche. Me parece que
mi madre siente la vida en blanco y
negro. (MN 194)

Gabriela's Voice

Much of Juana's view of her mother is put under scrutiny when Gabriela responds in *La fuerza del destino*. By returning to Gabriela's narrative voice, the trilogy foregrounds the maternal perspective again, and as a consequence it gives agency to a voice that generally has been overlooked. According to Marianne Hirsch, failure to inscribe the mother's standpoint ostracizes her and results in half-truths. Hirsch points out that "to speak for the

mother . . . is at once to give voice to her discourse and to silence and marginalize her" (Hirsch *Mother* 16). By countering Juana's accusations set forth in *Mujeres de negro*, Gabriela, in *La fuerza del destino*, provides herself with agency; in effect, she rescues her own voice. This time, she remembers and tells without Juana's prompting. She gives up control of her personal narrative, and accordingly her story and her voice can be recognized and become part of the past.

Though the dialogue between the novels appears at odds, the contradictory postures of the narrators only serve to enrich the reading, because each storyteller, as she relates her personal memory, expresses authority over her own version. For example, Juana sums up her negative perception of her mother when she declares, "Para mi madre la austeridad era una mística: una actitud ante la vida, una forma de conducta" (MN 24). However, Gabriela now responds to this observation by espousing that "la verdadera Gabriela es la de México, Juana, debería decirle a mi hija, que siempre me ha tenido por austera, sacrificada, dura. Juana, no me conoces. Es difícil ser en cada momento como realmente somos" (FD 104).

This last comment demonstrates not only the binary nature of Gabriela's character, but also how she has evolved. When referring to the true Gabriela of Mexico, she alludes to the happy woman passionately in love with her husband, a man with whom she shared her body and soul even before taking their wedding vows. As Gabriela examines her past choices, she knows that she is not the prude that her daughter sees her as, "ella siempre ha creído que yo soy puritana, estrecha de mente en todo lo moral. Y no es así" (FD 25). This is best seen in her stance toward marriage; her premarital relations with Octavio substantiate an opposition to Juana's perception of their relationship. Juana sees her mother's marriage to Octavio as an opportunity for escape, not as the loving relationship that it is. However, Gabriela has evolved to get to this point. She entered into her first marriage because she knew it would not impede her in her life's work. Though not fulfilled in this marriage, she remains faithful until her husband's death. Only later, when she re-evaluates many of the decisions she has made in life does she admit that perhaps if Emile, the man for whom she first felt passion, had re-entered her life, she might have left her husband. She affirms that she sees herself in

various ways (the faithful wife and the passionate lover) when she says, "Yo lucho entre las dos Gabrielas que hay en mí, la que tu crees que soy y la que yo, en el fondo, quiero ser y he sido a veces" (*FD* 105).

Recognizing the existence of these multiple Gabrielas is pivotal, for this recognition finally leads her out of the state of melancholia, or acting out, and into the healing process of mourning (working through). Whereas Juana processes and eventually works through her pain, Gabriela initially stays within the realm of melancholia, which LaCapra observes to be "an isolating experience allowing for specular inter-subjectivity that validates the self in its desperate isolation" (*Representing* 214). Gabriela clings to the past obsessively while contemplating her decisions which have led her to where she currently resides both on a physical and psychological level.

For much of the book, the past has taken over the present, which is now for Gabriela a "living death," as Freud would say. "El futuro," Gabriela says, "no me pertenece. Sólo el pasado es mío. Es pasado y este presente fugaz" (*FD* 126). This state of living death initially impedes the process of coming to terms with trauma; however, at the same time, it proves to be a useful

state in which one can acutely assess one's traumatic circumstances. LaCapra affirms that "in the best of cases," this state "may allow for insights that bear witness to questionable conditions and have broader critical potential" (*Representing* 214). This appears to be the case with Gabriela. While in her state of melancholia she examines her past, her relationships, the history of Spain, and her decision to return to her homeland after more than three decades of self-imposed exile.

Gabriela begins to suffer from dementia, and her memories become more and more disjointed. However, Aldecoa's choice to employ a fragmented approach only lends to the veracity of Gabriela's discourse, because "fragmentation is a primary quality of traumatic memories" (Sturken 107). Due to this fragmentation, she contemplates her decision to return to Spain multiple times. Once in Madrid, she constantly vacillates between the thoughts that she should have stayed in Mexico and that she should have returned to Madrid. However neither place represents what she refers to as the "núcleo de su vida" because neither Mexico nor Spain has a need for her now. For her, life's purpose has been in serving others, either as a teacher, a wife, or a mother. Nonetheless, now that she is of an

advanced age she does not have the capacity to serve. This causes her to wonder if she has returned to Spain too late or maybe even too early, too late to have a purpose (teach) and too early to die.

Initially Gabriela's main goal was to outlive Franco so she could return to the land of her birth. His death was long awaited, of course, and now she must ponder whether it was worth returning to such a lonely life, one where she is not needed. She admits that if Octavio were alive, she would still be in Mexico. "Si Octavio no hubiera muerto, yo nunca me habría movido de la Hacienda. Los que vivimos juntos fueron unos años gloriosos" (FD 44).

However, his death breaks her connection with Mexico. Her daughter and grandson, effectively her only reasons for living, now reside in Spain and so she must go to them.

Through the cathartic process of introspection, Gabriela accepts her decision to remain in Madrid. She feels that being close to her family is reason enough to be at peace with her decision to have moved there: "¿Hubieras vivido estos años sin Miguel y sin Juana? Volví cuando tenía que volver. . . . No me arrepiento . . ." (FD 221). In essence, she chooses to live a longer, albeit lonely life, even though this choice demands that she face and work

through the changes in her life that Franco's presence affected.

Effectively, Gabriela lays the past to rest by remembering it, by acknowledging the past as just that, and by telling her story. According to Marita Sturken (108), when one gives her memories representational form, she can assimilate them into her personal narrative. "Recovered memory exposes contemporary confusion and ambivalence about family relationships, sexuality, and gender power relations. It reveals the profoundly disabling aspects of a culture of victimhood in contemporary identity politics and popular psychology" (Sturken 103). Since narrative integration plays a pivotal role in remembering a traumatic event, Sturken maintains that "this concept of healing thus heavily privileges narrative form." (108). By sharing her past, Gabriela creates a narrative that sheds light on her personal past as well as the past of Spain while at the same time accepting her decisions that surface as the building blocks of who she has become.

Responsibilities of the Witness

Though by the end of the trilogy Gabriela has worked through her trauma in the manner outlined by psychoanalyst Dori Laub, Gabriela's acceptance of her past could not have occurred had she not put into words her story for someone else to hear. Laub explains that though historical traumatic events may be well referenced and documented, the trauma as an event has not been witnessed until it is not only *told* but also *listened to*: "The listener, therefore, is a party to the creation of knowledge *de novo*. The testimony to the trauma thus includes its hearer" (57). Laub's "hearer" corresponds to LaCapra's concept of the secondary witness, one who listens with "empathic unsettlement" to another's traumatic past (*Trauma, Absence* 723). "Empathic unsettlement" describes the emotional response that LaCapra suggests is most appropriate when receiving another's account of a traumatic event. LaCapra recognizes that appropriate empathetic unsettlement does not mean that the witness identifies with the traumatized subject, because historical trauma is "specific and not everyone is subject to it or entitled to the subject-position associated with it" (*Trauma, Absence* 723).

"Empathic unsettlement" separates empathy from identification.

I assert that Juana initiates the role of the secondary witness in *Historia de una maestra* and that later, in *La fuerza del destino*, the reader takes on this position. Indeed, I insist that with this privilege come responsibilities. The first is to listen, for it is the duty of the hearer of trauma to be a witness to the trauma witness, as well as to witness her or his own responses. As Laub points out, "It is only in this way, through his simultaneous awareness of the continuous flow of those inner hazards both in the trauma witness and in himself, that he can become the enabler of the testimony—the one who triggers its initiation, as well as the guardian of its process and of its momentum" (58). Second, the witness (reader) has a duty to remember, just as Gabriela has done, and as she eventually encourages others to do: "Háblale de mí para no olvidarme" (FD 221).

Eventually Gabriela embraces her destiny instead of being haunted by it. However, leaving the past where it belongs does not mean that she must ignore her participation in it. The past did not just happen to

Gabriela. Indeed, she concedes that her choices shaped her destiny, because that is how destiny functions:

El destino depende de uno mismo, de la manera de ser y también de las circunstancias, desde luego. Pero sobre todo de uno mismo. Parece que las vidas se van desarrollando regidas por la casualidad y no es así. El destino es como una cadena de actitudes, de hechos que llevan a una consecuencia final. Parece casual pero es el resultado de un plan, de un programa inconsciente en parte y en parte elaborado. Por eso, nadie escapa a su destino, porque nadie escapa a su carácter. (FD 102)

What is more, she urges the reader to accept responsibility for his or her own life's decisions, because these individual choices create a historical destiny which eventually forms the past. "El destino histórico depende de todos nosotros, es el reflejo de la conducta colectiva" (FD 161). This call to action only confirms what was noted previously—that the reader has multiple roles: interlocutor and empathic witness.

By engaging in this healing process and working through what she ignored for so long, Gabriela, upon finishing the narration of her life, can accept the next stage of her life—her death. Knowing that her death is imminent, she does not show fear but rather acceptance of

what is to pass: "Mi historia va cerrando, me queda morir, fin del capítulo" (FD 215). After becoming accustomed to sharing so much of her life with others, Gabriela has also grown accustomed to talking and listening to herself. This is what she will miss the most, dialoguing with herself--her whole self--the one who has integrated the memories so long forgotten: "Morir es despedirse de uno mismo. Eso es lo peor de morir. Dejar de hablar consigo mismo" (FD 215).

Gabriela accepts that death is nothingness while rejecting the idea that it is another form of exile. Looking back on her life, Gabriela equates her existence in exile with emptiness: "Retrocedo en el tiempo a aquellos años nuestros, aquella España que viví cuando era joven, antes de que el exilio me convirtiera en un fantasma" (FD 13). Indeed, Gabriela prefers death over her current conditions of loneliness and futility: "Creemos que la muerte es una especie de destierro hacia algún lugar lejano desde el cual sufrimos la tortura del recuerdo de los seres queridos, de los lugares que hemos amado. No queremos aceptar que la muerte es la desaparición total" (FD 216).

Conclusion: Telling the Truth

In this chapter, I have described Josefina Aldecoa's trilogy, *Historia de una maestra*, *Mujeres de negro* and *La fuerza del destino*. A descendant of the Spanish novels of testimony and memory, this trilogy sets forth the story of Gabriela, a woman who lived through the years of repression before, during, and after the years of the Franco dictatorship. In the first novel, Gabriela tells her own story. In the second, her daughter, Juana, relates her own understanding of her mother's life, which she only knows partially. Gabriela again takes up her own life story in the last novel.

The realistic, first-person accounts cite well-known historical events while relating Gabriela's traumatic experiences during these hazardous, violent times. Gabriela's story, while fiction, and also because it is fiction, offers a history that is different, more gender-inclusive, and perhaps more accurate than the androcentric versions generally offered as the official story of the past. This Aldecoa trilogy materializes as a re-reading of recent Spanish history, creating an alternative version of the past which questions the idea of an objective historiographical account. Since history has only served to

deny her agency, it is no wonder Gabriela admits that history as she knows it does not offer solace: "Tengo miedo a la historia" (FD 114). However because of her participation in Spain's past, Gabriela can offer a narrative that changes history. Through this reading of past events her story will result in a discourse that differs from what has generally been accepted as truth: She tells us, "He vivido parte de esta historia" (FD 147).

In Gabriela's account of her teaching career and marriage choices, she emphasizes her decisions to subvert social gender boundaries and reject imposed societal roles. In her narratives, she tells of reforming the family unit and of yearning for authenticity and effectiveness in social change during a time when social codes ruled and greatly restricted a woman's conduct and located her sole sphere of influence in the home. As she recounts her past, Gabriela feels trapped in her own limitation, however she transcends multiple boundaries. It is this nonconformist behavior throughout life that makes her unique.

The Aldecoa trilogy acknowledges the selective nature of personal memory. Gabriela's and Juana's memories are fragmented, selective, and not chronologically told. They show the characteristics of personal memory and postmemory

which have been described by psychology scholars. Gabriela recovers the past to understand the present, although strongly tempted to leave the devastating events of the past in the past and take concerted steps to forget. At first, she, like many other trauma sufferers, chooses to repress and act out the memories, but then in response to her daughter's need, she tells her experiences to Juana and to the readers/witnesses, and by doing so, she works through the memories, acknowledging the suffering of the past and the way it affects the present. In the last novel, Gabriela reclaims her own voice and the authority of her own memories, however fragmented. In writing her story and thereby having it witnessed by Juana and by the readers, Gabriela makes peace with her life's course and with the circumstances of her old age. Gabriela's memories are fragmented and selective, but still she processes through her trauma by writing of it—by telling it to empathic witnesses, the readers. In this way, she creates a narrative of truth that facilitates healing.

Chapter 4

Contemporary Representations of Voices Lost

Since traditional patriarchal thought often inflates biological differences between males and females in order to strip women of dominant (masculine) roles, it consequently forces them to occupy the subordinate (feminine) space. However, the works in this chapter present a reversal of roles which allows female characters to assume dominant positions. Lidia Falcón's play *Las mujeres caminaron con el fuego del siglo* (1994) follows two women as they remember and tell of their repressive past and their attempts to combat the various mechanisms that bind them to positions of inferiority. Guillermo Del Toro's film *El laberinto del fauno* (2006) combines the worlds of fantasy and reality to depict a child's metaphoric escape from her reality—fascist Spain of 1944. By questioning various systems of repression in these works, this chapter explores a range of female characters to demonstrate that certain women subvert the accepted rhetoric of the day by functioning outside the prescribed norms, while others yield to them. This results in an emblematic re-reading of women's place in Spanish culture during a time when women's voices were suppressed.

Implications of Trauma

Trauma theory again informs this chapter as a way to engage historical events and their consequences. Though in the preceding chapters I have utilized Dominick LaCapra's theory as a lens through which to understand various works, Cathy Caruth (also reading Freud) in her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* presents compelling insights on trauma theory as well and should not be overlooked. For Caruth, "[trauma] is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available. This truth, in its delayed appearance and its belated address, cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and our language" (4). She argues that when individuals experience trauma they cannot fully comprehend the situation at the time. Only later, after a period of latency (Freud's word) can one put the event into words, because trauma naturally resists narration.²⁶ She clarifies: "the impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located" (8). Therefore this delayed reaction to trauma shapes historical narrative because, as she argues, "we can

understand that a rethinking of reference is aimed not at eliminating history but at resituating it in our understanding, that is, at precisely permitting *history* to arise where *immediate understanding* may not" (11). Caruth understands latency's connection to history as what causes a crucial link to other histories (18). In other words, "history, like trauma, is never simply one's own . . . history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other's traumas" (24). What principally concerns Caruth is how voice is "released *through the wound*" (2), or in other words how trauma becomes narration.

This chapter analyzes *Fuego del siglo* and *El laberinto* through the prism of trauma theory because it is precisely through trauma and repression that these works interpret personal and social histories. Furthermore, they have shaped contemporary modes of understanding Spanish history. They both embody retrospective reconstructions of the effects of the civil war, and thus both affirm Caruth's observation that a traumatic event is incomprehensible when it occurs. Both employ a fragmented style while investigating their connection to the traumatic history of the Spanish dictatorship. Ultimately these works redeem

women, history, and pain through various themes, one of which is solidarity.

Solidarity and Community

Sociologist Kai Erikson studies the social consequences of traumatic events. In his essay "Notes on Trauma and Community," he elucidates the effects of catastrophic events and how they aid in creating traumatized communities. Erikson defines collective trauma as:

A blow to the basic tissues of Social life that damages the bonds Attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality. The collective trauma works its way slowly and even insidiously into the awareness of those who suffer from it, so it does not have the quality of suddenness normally associated with "trauma." But it is a form of shock all the same, a gradual realization that the community no longer exists as an effective source of support and that an important part of the self has disappeared. . . . "I" continue to exist, though damaged and maybe even permanently changed. "You" continue to exist, though distant and hard to relate to. But "we" no longer exist as a connected pair or as linked cells in a larger communal body. (187)

This chapter draws upon his understanding of community to illustrate the bonds between the women in *Las mujeres caminan con el fuego del siglo* and the maquis (freedom fighters) in *El laberinto del fauno*.

In *El laberinto*, the maquis continue the fighting of the Republicans from the civil war, though five years after the Nationalists officially declare victory. In 1936, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the Esquerra Party and the Republican Union Party united to become known as the Popular Front, or Republicans. Though initially members of separate organizations, they shared a common trauma—their government was overthrown by the Nationalists. The new regime persecuted and repressed the Republicans, causing traumatic consequences. In *El laberinto*, the maquis, Mercedes, and Dr. Ferreiro represent an assimilation of differences (class, ideology, and gender) which correlates to the amalgamation of parties. Their participation in the resistance, whether latent or obvious, leads to community. According to Erikson, "trauma shared can serve as a source of communality in the same way that common languages and common backgrounds can . . . estrangement becomes the basis for communality, as if persons without homes or citizenship or any other niche in

the larger order of things were invited to gather in a quarter set aside for the disenfranchised, a ghetto for the unattached" (186). This commonality leads to solidarity, which eventually produces agency. The climax of the film shows the maquis exercising their subjectivity over Captain Vidal when they strip him of his honor, just as he previously denied them theirs.

Montserrat and Patro, two of the female protagonists of *Fuego del siglo*, seek to narrate their painful past, or as Caruth would say, to allow their "wounds to cry out." Both these characters lived through the civil war and subsequent dictatorship and have been shaped by the pact of oblivion. Now, ready to remember (fifty years after the proclamation of the Second Republic) they each tell their individual stories. On a basic level, their narratives intersect because the two women grew up together—Montserrat as the daughter of a bourgeois factory owner and Patro as their family's servant. More importantly, these women share common traumas (fall of the Republic, the repression of the dictatorship, and domestic violence). Nonetheless, because they belong to distinct social classes, initially they believe their causes to be separate. As they tell their stories, they also listen to each other, which

creates mutual appreciation for the other's plight. As Caruth states " . . . we can also read the address of the voice here, not as the story of the individual in relation to the events of his own past, but as the story of the way in which one's own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another, the way in which trauma may lead, therefore, to the encounter with another, through the very possibility and surprise of listening to another's wound" (8).

Ultimately, the characters understand that the force of women's solidarity is stronger than individual efforts for survival and in the end, despite their differences, they create community. "For some survivors, at least, this sense of difference can become a kind of calling, a status, where people are drawn to others similarly marked" (Erikson 186). The women realize that they traveled on similar paths of female socialization and that each is a victim of marriage as a societal tool of oppression, which causes them to carry similar pain, although from different perspectives. In the end, their mutual narration and listening becomes the mortar that binds them.

For the Republicans in both works, solidarity and community provide true liberation from the oppressive forces that subjugate them. "It is the *community* that

offers a cushion for pain, the *community* that offers a context for intimacy, the *community* that serves as the repository for binding traditions. And when the community is profoundly affected, one can speak of a damaged social organism in almost the same way that one would speak of a damaged body . . . The point to be made here is not that calamity serves to strengthen the bonds linking people together—it does not, most of the time—but that the shared experience becomes almost like a common culture, a source of kinship” (Erikson 188, 190). These bonds of kinship between the women of *Fuego del siglo* and the maquis in *El laberinto* become the buttress for their subjectivity.

Las mujeres caminaron con el fuego del siglo

Lidia Falcón’s *Fuego del siglo* merges past and present by engaging history through memory in an attempt to understand the various injustices against women in Spain’s recent past. Falcón attempts to rectify these injustices by offering a re-reading of women’s position in Spanish history in which she strips male figures of their previously honored place in history in order to grant dominant positioning to females. In a reversal of roles, only women act in this play, and the male presence is

reduced to the violent memories they left behind, narrated by the female characters. In this section of the chapter, first the importance of history and its role in this work will be discussed. Then, the polemics of social stratification and their effects on women will be explored along with marriage as a system of repression. Finally, postmemory and the cathartic effects of narrating trauma will be discussed and how these provide the past with meaning, and the women characters with subjectivity.

History and Memory Collide

Fuego del siglo references historical events from the 20th Century, such as "la Semana Trágica" (the 1909 uprisings of the working classes of Barcelona), the declaration of the Second Republic (1931) and the civil war (1936-1939), as a setting to foreground Falcón's revised history. Her version of the past destroys the traditional understanding of the myth of the ideal woman and her position in society. Because history and memory collide to create a new understanding of the past we can draw a parallel from the function of history in novels of memory, as explained by David K. Herzberger. "[History]," he states, "is offered both as a consequence of memory and as

the originator of memory; it gives meaning to the narrative and shapes that meaning. Above all, however, history occupies the narration in a way that subverts the structured tautness of mythic discourse and advances in its place the contingencies of time and meaning" (*Narrating* 37). Therefore, the fragmented accounts of history given in *Fuego del siglo* at once subvert the monolithic representation offered previously by Franco's historiographers and recognize a female presence that had long been disregarded. Contrary to what Francoist rhetoric would imply, *Fuego del siglo* asserts that women are not passive bystanders of history; instead, they are active participants attempting to transcend the boundaries of social structure and cultural repression. As such, they produce their own space in history.

Falcón frames her version of history with other filmic revisions. She instructs in the annotations that various film clips and photographs should be shown throughout the play, two of which are *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta* (the 1980 film directed by Antonio Drove based on the 1975 book written by Eduardo Mendoza by the same name, in which the protagonist remembers the turmoil of Barcelona in 1918) and *La ciutat cremada* (the 1976 film directed by Antoni Ribas

which follows the members of a family in Barcelona as they experience the tumultuous years from 1899 to 1909). This intertextual use of visual narratives emphasizes the violence and horror of the past and evokes sympathy in the spectator. Furthermore, they corroborate Falcón's cultural configuration and understanding of the past and how she wishes to transmit this understanding to her viewers. For example, when the protagonists discuss the Tragic Week of 1909, the notes explain the importance of the visual background. Montserrat's voice in off remembers as the film rolls:

Yo no recuerdo más que, que
mi padre y nosotros, los niños
y las criadas, estuvimos encerrados
en casa una semana. Yo sólo tenía
9 años. Se oyeron en la calle,
gritos, gemidos, disparos, bombas
durante siete días. Después se
hizo el silencio. Era tanto que
daba más miedo que los ruidos.
Una tarde vimos pasar por el Paseo
de Gracia, silencioso, sucio, un
carro que atravesó la calle del
Consell de Cent cargado de
cadáveres . . . Todos llevaban la
blusa azul de los obreros . . .
*(Al principio del parlamento aparecen
en la pantalla del fondo de la
escena las imágenes de la película
"La ciutat cremada" donde se ven
Escenas de la lucha en las calles
y el carro con los cadáveres) (17).*

Just as the film aims to relay the events of the Tragic Week, Falcón attempts to approximate the same happenings, however she employs a female voice narrating her perspective of the violent episode.

Oppressive Forces

Falcón juxtaposes the characters of Montserrat (a bourgeois) and Patro (a proletarian) to illustrate the repression of women no matter their social status. Though the play takes place in spring of 1981, the characters plunge themselves into history (by donning clothes indicative of different temporal locations in early twentieth century Spain and doffing their white wigs) to narrate their memories of the past. While young Montserrat deems education and a career as the paths to agency, young Patro considers marriage the answer that will free her from her life of servitude. Her sung discourse emphasizes the harsh conditions in which she must work:

Para el día empezar
y con el señor cumplir
la cocina hay que fregar
y el desayuno subir.
Doce horas en la cocina
fogones, cazuelas y agua fría,
platos sucios, escobas y grasa
y trabaja, trabaja, trabaja . . .
y yo siempre en la cocina

de una grande casa rica . . .
y siempre lo que hago
es lo mismo que debo. (13)

The repetition of Patro's words, "trabaja, trabaja, trabaja" heightens their emotional impact and brings the images of her proletariat milieu to the fore for contemplation as she implies that wealth would free her from the chains of poverty. Patro also suggests that Montserrat's riches liberate her from a life of hard work. However, offended by Patro's continual references to her as a "señorita," Montserrat defends herself with her perspective on life as a bourgeois woman. Montserrat announces in song that she has no freedom because her existence and money are tied to her father:

Mi padre manda, mi madre pare
mi padre grita, mi madre llora
mi padre es rico, mi madre reza . . .
Mi padre es rico, sus hijos no.
Todo lo que comen, todo lo que beben.
Todo lo que tienen
a él se lo deben, a él se lo deben ...
Todo lo que tengo
a mi padre lo debo
todo lo que hago
a él se lo cedo. (15)

Falcón intercalates the refrains of the proletariat and the bourgeois women protesting their individual circumstances. Though their dissenting postures appear to be distinct, their discourses in fact both point to effects of female

socialization. The interpolation serves to unify the two narratives.

In the same manner, each then sings her answer to this repression. Ironically, one's repression is the other's liberation:

Patro.—Por eso yo quería casarme.
Montserrat.—Por eso yo quería estudiar.
Patro—Por eso yo no quería trabajar.
Montserrat—Por eso yo no quería casarme.
Patro—Por eso yo no quería trabajar.
Montserrat—Por eso yo quería estudiar. (16)

Though Montserrat attempts to transcend the social boundaries that suffocate her, she suffers at the hands of the men in her life: first her father (the personification of the State's cultural repression), then her husband. Her father, unsupportive of her intellectual pursuits, quashes her efforts to receive an education. However, initially Montserrat counters his power plays. When he refuses to pay the matriculation fees, she must ironically turn to Patro for a loan of ten "duros." Since the dominant gender discourse of the time informed appropriate areas of study for women, her father only permits her to take socially acceptable courses (teaching, nursing, drawing and painting). Still, her father makes it impossible for her to study. Thus she fails her courses and must drop out.

She does not reenroll because she does not want to beg Patro for another loan, the first of which she never repaid. Indeed, Montserrat's family institution, informed by strict gender roles, embodies a microcosm of the domineering patriarchal culture of the time. Thus Montserrat's character cannot be allowed to succeed, for in the play she reflects the collective of female voices Falcón is attempting to recognize. In essence, Montserrat needs to fail so that later her memories might elucidate the polemics of the plight of women in order to create a space for them in a male dominated/written history.

In order to escape the stifling environment in which she resides, Montserrat marries. Nevertheless, matrimony proves also to be a smothering institution. Now free from her father, it is her husband who subjugates her. "Decidí casarme para quitarme el pelmazo de mi padre de encima, con lo que perdí un pelmazo viejo, y gané un pesado joven" (28). She performs the roles of wife and mother as is expected: she pleases her husband in bed, bears him children, and keeps his house in order (28). Still, her husband beats her. According to Montserrat's discourse, domestic violence is a prerogative men have that they learn from their fathers, who beat them until they are 18 years

of age. This transmission of violence from generation to generation turns them into men who know how to rule their homes (18). Indeed, Montserrat likens husbands to executioners when she says, "El verdugo tiene el orgullo de apalear a la víctima" (19).

Montserrat is not alone. She and Patro share the memories of the women in their lives (mothers and sisters) who were beaten by their husbands. Patro admits, "Bofetadas recibimos todas, que mi Antonio cuando llegaba bebío, o cuando le habían despedido o cuando huía porque la policía o la patrona o el sindicato o bueno . . . pues por tó y por ná siempre caía una bofetada u otra . . . Ya se sabe, es cosa de hombres dar bofetadas . . ." (22). With these words, Patro paradoxically connects her experience, and by extension herself, with Montserrat. Ironically, Patro continually argues that her life as a servant to the rich is far different than Montserrat's. On the one hand they are indeed different, mainly due to class positioning. Montserrat is a sophisticated, middle class woman shaped by economic privilege. This affords her opportunities not available to Patro, her lower class contemporary. While Patro is illiterate, Montserrat champions women's rights by publishing articles in feminist magazines. Whereas Patro

receives payment by the middle class family for whom she performs domestic duties, Montserrat is expected to execute the same chores for her family without compensation. On the other hand, they suffer similar circumstances. As Montserrat continually explains to Patro, they endure comparable constraints prescribed by the authoritarian patriarchal norms even though they occupy separate social spheres. Just as Montserrat resents the restrictions of her bourgeois environment, Patro expresses frustration at the life of domestic servitude imposed upon her by the gendered culture of social behavior.

Furthermore, Montserrat insists that this shared cultural identity is something against which they must rebel. Patro's daughter, Amparo, understands this. During the civil war, she chooses to fight alongside men on the front lines. According to the annotations, photographs of militia women taken during the civil war should be projected on the screen while Amparo, dressed in blue overalls with a red handkerchief tied around her neck, shouts "¡Me voy a luchar / En el frente está mi lugar!" (32). In these photographs women are seen as something other than wives and mothers who are ready to fulfill a duty that privileges the male subject position. These

visual images are an attempt to reshape a society's understanding of gender; as Mary Nash observes, "Gender identities are, to a large extent, consolidated and disseminated through images of women" (26). In an effort to thwart gender as understood by what the Francoist regime would consider appropriate, Falcón utilizes these photographs of women to reverse the understanding of female roles.

On the one hand, *Fuego del siglo* proposes that women can transcend the masculinist nature of war which precludes their active involvement on the front lines. Amparo's character and the female images on the screen represent the gendering of warfare by recognizing the efforts of the women who fought for the Republic yet were never identified or officially recorded as participants. On the other hand, the work also asserts that patriarchal culture cannot allow women to splinter the cultural boundaries imposed by the political system. Though Amparo fights alongside Republican soldiers in the combat zone, allowing her to play a role equal to men, eventually she is relegated to a position far from the battlefield, and deemed more appropriate for women, such as sewing uniforms, tending to injured soldiers, and caring for their children. The play

emphasizes this point when Amparo's character leaves the front lines to join the other two characters. Their chorus details the prevailing limitations on participation:

Volved,olved,olved
mujeres al hogar
que en las fábricas
hay mucho que trabajar
que los heridos tienen
que descansar,
y en los talleres
hay mucho que coser
y los niños
tienen que comer.
Volved,olved,olved
Mujeres al hogar. (36-37)

In this refrain, the women repeat "volved" three times, which mirrors Patro's "trabajar, trabajar, trabajar" from the beginning of the play.²⁷ Here Falcón employs parallelism (repetition of a grammatical pattern) to heighten the spectator's awareness of the roles imposed on repressed women. Whereas in the beginning of the play Montserrat and Patro's contrasting lyrics illuminate their individual postures on female liberation, now they sing in unison indicating their united front on how they view the stifling of women's position.

Bridging the Divide between Memory and Postmemory

Montserrat and Patro remember the violent events they lived through since the turn of the century, events that proved to be politically defining moments in Spain. The consequences of these events indeed marked their lives and shaped their personal narratives as they relate to the past. Esther, Patro's great-granddaughter, is encumbered by the recollections of various traumatic events experienced by previous generations in her family. Thus Esther invites Montserrat and Patro to give narrative form to the memories of their past. Compelling Montserrat and Patro to tell their story enables Esther to confront the pain of her postmemory. Though Esther did not experience firsthand the civil war, the dictatorship, or the other repressive conditions and violent events that the matriarchs in her family did, she is nonetheless affected by these through inherited memory. As Marianne Hirsch explains, "the work of postmemory defines the familial inheritance and transmission of cultural trauma" (9). Listening to Montserrat and Patro's stories, coupled with sharing her personal past, allows for trauma to become narrated, or as Caruth would say, permits her "wound to cry out" (4). Esther discusses the prevailing silence imposed

by her father that she experienced while growing up. When Montserrat asks her what she knows about the civil war, Esther responds, "Bueno, algo cuenta mi bisa y mi abuela. Pero mi padre no las deja hablar. Dice que está harto de cuentos de Guerra, que las viejas sólo hablan de fantasmas. Y ellas se callan cuando está mi padre. Hablan entre ellas en susurros . . . y se ocultan de mi padre. Mi madre obedece, no quiere saber del pasado, dice . . . sobre todo cuando mi padre grita" (31). In an attempt to erase history, Esther's father burns incriminating pictures of her grandmother dressed as a "miliciana" and holding a firearm. Though those photographs do not survive, the women do, although they cannot escape the mark of trauma. According to Caruth, "it is not only the moment of the event, but of the passing out of it that is traumatic, . . . survival itself, in other words, can be a crisis" (Caruth 9). To confront this crisis, Montserrat and Patro speak. They tell of a past lost until now. As Montserrat narrates her memories, she realizes that she never repaid Patro for the ten "duros" she borrowed. Indicative of the belated effect of trauma, this memory had been lost for fifty years. Montserrat muses, "No la había vuelto a ver y ni siquiera le devolví nunca los diez duros. *Se queda*

pensativa recordando aquel detalle que no había recordado en todos aquellos años . . ." (27). Recovering this memory points to the curative effects of giving voice to the wound.

A New Hope

Esther's character represents the younger generation's ambivalent attitude and ignorance regarding the past. The date is April 14, 1981, and Montserrat and Patro prepare to celebrate the fifty-year anniversary of the Declaration of the Second Republic, yet Esther cannot appreciate the implications of the advances of the Second Republic because she is not concerned with the past. "Bueno, yo no sé cuándo hacía la revolución, pero desde que yo la conozco [a Patro] en mi casa no se habla de nada parecido, sino de que las niñas vuelvan pronto a casa y de que freguemos y que barramos, eso sí que lo sé" (11). The importance of the Second Republic comes to the fore when Esther explains that she is pregnant and the father of her baby has left her. In 1981, abortion is not legal however, in 1936 Spain it was. Montserrat strives to evoke passion in Esther to champion women's rights by explaining how important the Second Republic was for women's independence. The new

constitution proclaimed equality between men and women, allowing them both to participate in the political realm by running for office and holding public positions. In 1932, the "Cortes constituyentes" approved women's suffrage and legalized divorce (Falcón *Mujer* 183-184). Also, measures were taken in Catalonia to adopt a system of family planning and legalize abortion. Due to three decades of repression, women in 1981 have fewer rights than in 1931. Now Montserrat passes the torch of political activism to Esther. "¿Y tú qué estás haciendo para arreglarlo, eh? Porque yo me he pasado la vida defendiendo los derechos de la mujer. Creo que ya tengo bastante a mi edad. Ahora te toca a ti . . . Que sería bueno que te preocuparas por la lucha feminista y trabajaras en todas esas cosas que están mal . . ." (26).

Esther rejects Montserrat's proposal. She resents what she considers powerless rhetoric. "Las viejas siempre están discutiendo lo mismo. Que si la lucha, que si la guerra, que si la postguerra y que si la post-postguerra. ¡Menudo rollo! A pesar de que hace seis años que reventó Franco . . . Ahora todo es muy diferente. Ahora todo es libertad y manifestaciones y partidos políticos . . . Y mítines y elecciones. ¡Si no paran! En seis años cinco

elecciones. ¿Hay quién dé más? Y total, un aburrimiento” (51). With Esther’s words, Falcón criticizes the young generation and its indifference toward the past and apathy toward stimulating change in the future. The repetition of “hablar, hablar, hablar” serves to emphasize this point:

Mitin por la mañana.
Asamblea por la tarde
Manifestación por la noche
y hablar, hablar, hablar. (52)

The recurrence of this syntactic element places Esther’s discourse within the realm of dissent, similar to Montserrat and Patro, though Esther rejects useless words and empty promises:

Los socialistas prometen
lo que no piensan cumplir
y los tontos del país
votamos, para que todos
se puedan reír
y burlar, burlar, burlar. (53)

Esther considers Montserrat’s efforts to promote social change a failure because Esther now travels the same path to female socialization. Though she desires a career in performing arts, her mother insists that she become a secretary even though there are more secretaries than jobs.

Although Esther never admits that she will become a feminist, her investigation into the past and its transgenerational transmission of trauma leads her to

recognize her role in reshaping Spanish culture. This is underscored by her character performing dual roles. The same actress who plays Esther also portrays Amparo. This tactic enables Esther's character literally to commingle the past with the present, exemplifying that the future and the past are connected. The spectator can believe that there is hope for the future of Spanish women because Esther first shows an intention to remember the difficulties of those who have gone before; second, she admits that the pain of her foremothers touches her life in the present and, finally, she chooses to act. With the help of Montserrat and Patro, Esther will now consider abortion, a solution not previously entertained due to the culturally imposed feminine passivity that marks her character. Montserrat's parting words indicate that she will continue to encourage Esther to stand up for women's rights. "Me parece que antes de morirme todavía haré feministas a estas dos" (58).

The three women exit the stage together to visit a family planning clinic. Although each woman has expressed her individual point of view regarding what oppresses her, they find commonality in this oppression. The group exit confirms that what liberates them is their solidarity in

challenging and subverting the androcentric ideology that has permeated their lives. By privileging women's position in this play, Falcón inscribes their voices into a male hegemonic history and thus subverts the patriarchal power structure.

El laberinto del fauno

Guillermo Del Toro's 2006 film *El laberinto del fauno* also elucidates the polemics of cultural repression during the Francoist dictatorship as a means to stifle women's voices and desires. By juxtaposing the authoritative masculine figure of the Nationalist Captain with three feminine figures, two of which refuse to comply with the suggested Francoist rhetoric coding the role that women should play, Del Toro's film offers a re-reading of official history. This new version recognizes different positions for women, which consequently grants them a place in history. To do this, Del Toro intertwines official discourse from the dictatorship with the anatomy of fairytales to create a new understanding of the past.

Drawing on the narrative structure of fairytales, *El laberinto* opens with a voice in off locating the narrative

in a distant realm. "Cuentan que hace mucho, mucho tiempo . . ." The familiar tone of these words immediately alert the spectator to the fairytale framework from which this story will be told. However, the next scene serves to juxtapose fantasy with reality when we see the young protagonist Ofelia and her pregnant mother traveling in 1944 Spain from the city to a military outpost in the northern countryside. In this remote area, Ofelia will live with her mother and her stepfather, the brutal Captain Vidal, whose assignment is to stamp out maquis uprisings and maintain bourgeois and fascist ideals. This initial journey mirrors the one Ofelia takes into her world of fantasy, where she encounters mythical creatures, either nefarious or ambiguous in nature, who facilitate her desire to escape the violent reality of post-civil war Spain in which she resides. By countering fantasy with reality, the film invites the viewer to participate, to choose the mode in which the film is to be interpreted.

The most prominent figure to lead Ofelia on her journey is a devious faun that lives in an old stone labyrinth. In their first meeting, the faun informs Ofelia of her royal heritage by explaining that she is the lost Princess Moanna who must reclaim her rightful throne in her

father's magical kingdom by completing a series of tasks. In an effort to escape the ruthless reality of war and despair in which she resides, Ofelia accepts the challenge. The film follows Ofelia as she embarks on an adventure to rebirth and redemption, though these can only be found through self-sacrifice.

In their first meeting, the faun presents Ofelia with a magical book which details her tasks. First, she must retrieve a key from a toad that lives in a tree located in the nearby forest. According to the *Libro de encrucijadas*, this tree once thrived, but now, "Debajo de sus raíces ha anidado un enorme sapo que no lo deja sanar." Ofelia crawls through the dark and dirty space, plucking off the large bugs that dwell within the dying tree. She encounters the gigantic toad and shows no fear—even when his extremely large tongue licks her face. In fact, she notifies the toad that she is Princess Moanna and tells him he should be ashamed of himself. "¿No te da vergüenza estar aquí abajo comiéndote los bichitos y engordando mientras el árbol se muere?" Her condemnation of the toad is reminiscent of Franco and his regime killing what was once a beautiful country until his occupation.

The scene in which she approaches the dying tree makes various visual references to fairytales. For example, in many Brothers Grimm tales, such as *Hansel and Gretel* and *Little Red Riding Hood*, innocent children wander in dark forests toward danger. Similarities with the 1865 classic *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll also are evident, as seen by the dress and shoes Ofelia dons which resemble the light blue jumper and black slippers that Alice wears. Additionally, the path Ofelia forges on her hands and knees inside the lifeless tree to find the toad corresponds to the rabbit hole that Alice enters. Even the toad is found in many western European traditional fairytales (Hartland 51-53). Del Toro calls upon the viewers' prior knowledge of these stories to signify that Ofelia is entering a "wonderland" of her own, albeit much darker and scarier.

The World of Cosmic Horror

This darker and scarier "wonderland" of sorts that Del Toro depicts finds its roots in another genre. Del Toro not only draws from fairytales, but also from supernatural horror to frame and advance the plot. Jacob Hodgen in his article, "Embracing the Horror: Tracing the Ideology of

Guillermo Del Toro's *Pan's Labyrinth*," outlines the various authors that Del Toro claims have influenced his works, including supernatural horror writer Arthur Machen, whose brand of horror is often referred to as cosmic horror. Cosmic horror, though difficult to define, can be understood as:

A certain atmosphere of breathless
And unexplainable dread of outer,
unknown forces must be present; and
there must be a hint, expressed with
a seriousness and portentousness
becoming its subject, of the most
terrible conception of the human
brain—a malign and particular suspension
or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature
which are our only safeguard against
the assaults of chaos and the daemons
of unplumbed space (Lovecraft 15).

As Hodgen traces the correlations between *El laberinto* and various works of cosmic horror, he observes that Del Toro, though heavily influenced by these works, also diverges from the basic structure of cosmic horror in numerous ways. Hodgen rightfully avers that in so doing, Del Toro creates a new genre. "By laying claim to the heritage of horror literature that he does, any reading of Del Toro's film must be reconciled with the fact that *Pan's Labyrinth*, while it can be seen to be making stylistic and thematic moves to access the symbols of these previous horror

writers, departs from these traditions to create an entirely new model" (17). As a consequence, he utilizes this new model to present the demarcation of limits of womanhood and the transcending of these boundaries.

One notable departure that Hodgen discusses pertains to the somewhat hopeful ending of *El laberinto*. Whereas works of cosmic horror always culminate in dreary, desperate endings with no exit, *El laberinto* concludes that perhaps all mankind is not lost. Though arguably the violence found in the world of reality in *El laberinto* discourages the viewer from trusting humanity, "Del Toro is simultaneously appealing to a very human sense of nostalgia through Ophelia to create a sense of hope . . . [he] introduces a possibility for a glimpse of humanism to peek through the clouds of entropy and confusion" (24-25). By drawing on the horror genre and utilizing violence to set the scene, Del Toro does not gloss over the violent history of the civil war. Instead, he recognizes the horrors of Spain's traumatic past, which leads to the healing effects of trauma. Indeed, by refusing to emulate the exact structure of cosmic horror, Del Toro reconfigures this subgenre. Similarly, he reconfigures official history by offering a Republican triumph and a re-reading of female

figures that function in direct opposition to the Francoist notion of the ideal woman. Consequently, he recognizes these Republican perspectives (male and female alike) and assigns a place for them in history.

Like Mother Unlike Daughter

Del Toro follows this binary structure when depicting characters as well. By juxtaposing Carmen (Ofelia's mother) with Mercedes (Vidal's servant) and Ofelia, the film affirms that women who stand up to the stifling, authoritative figures in their lives ultimately survive. However, those who comply with the repressive forces, such as Carmen, eventually succumb to them. Widowed at a young age, Carmen is a single mother who remarries because, as she tells Ofelia, "Estuvimos solas tanto tiempo." Carmen performs the role of wife and mother faithfully to the model of the *ángel del hogar*. Just as this precept indicates, Carmen desires to please her husband, complying with his wishes even if they are not in her best interest. For example, when Carmen moves to the countryside to be at her husband's side, she puts her life in danger. According to the doctor, Carmen should not have made the long journey at such a late stage in her pregnancy. Upon her arrival,

the Captain insists that she use a wheelchair. Though she informs the Captain that she is not that incapacitated, he rebuts, "Anda, hazlo por mí." Naturally, she obeys. The film shows Carmen continually giving in to her husband's desires. Though she understands her role, it does not come easy to her and she warns Ofelia that "Algún día entenderás que para mí (este matrimonio) tampoco ha sido fácil." When Carmen tells Ofelia that one day she will have to learn that the world is "un lugar cruel," they create a space in history for women who lived up to the Francoist ideal of womanness, yet were not satisfied with their position. Ultimately, she cannot reconcile the woman she wants to be with the woman she is expected to be. In fact, even her death embodies the Captain's wishes as he tells the doctor to save his baby and not his wife. After her death, the camera pans to the empty wheelchair linking her demise to the moment that she relinquished her own will to submit to her husband's.

The dichotomy between Carmen's weak character and Ofelia's strength comes to the fore in two instances. First, when Carmen insists that Ofelia refer to her stepfather as "Padre" not because he deserves the nomenclature, but, as she explains, because he has been so

good to them. True to her submissive character, Carmen knows that this will please him, and Carmen wishes for her daughter to please him as well. Nevertheless, the request offends Ofelia who, unlike her mother, stands up to the Captain and what he represents. She not only refuses to call him "Padre," but also denies him as a father figure.

Second, Carmen instructs Ofelia to cease reading fairytales. She explains, "Cuentos de hadas. Ya eres muy mayor para llenarte la cabeza con tantas zarandajas." Even though she knows her mother's posture, she continues to read them. Eventually her mother becomes exasperated with her, saying "Ofelia, la magia no existe para ti ni para mí ni para nadie." However, this only causes Ofelia to enter deeper into the realm of fantasy because this space proves to be a positive alternative to the world of reality. In reality, her mother is sick, her stepfather is malevolent and neither of them can see, much less understand, her world of fantasy. She chooses to seek out her lost kingdom because in this realm the possibility exists of something better, or at least less cruel. Although Ofelia encounters strange, even horrific creatures during her journey, with the exception of the Pale Man, these figures are not evil, unlike her stepfather Captain Vidal.

Fascism Personified

The Captain controls his military post with brutality and violence. He functions under the precept that following orders trumps voluntary decision making. Hence, he is indelibly associated with Francoism and incarnates fascism. It is no coincidence that he dresses in full military uniform every day, a clear allusion to Franco and his dictatorship. Indeed his words echo those of Franco when he says, "Yo estoy aquí porque quiero que mi hijo nazca en una España limpia y nueva. Porque esta gente parte de una idea equivocada que todos somos iguales. Pero hay una gran diferencia que la guerra terminó, y ganamos nosotros y si para que nos enteremos todos hay que matar a esos hijos de puta, pues los matamos, y ya está."

Capitan Vidal utilizes fear as a tool to control those around him. As a custom, he explains the torture tactics he will utilize to extract information from his captured victims before he actually performs the ritual. This rhetoric of persecution not only affirms to his victims that he holds absolute power, but also serves as a reminder to his Nationalist soldiers present exactly who wields the control. What is more, his discourse illustrates his belief that violence for violence's sake is an acceptable

method of interrogation if it means control for the Nationalists. Captain Vidal's cruel nature is revealed to the viewer when he is shown brutally beating a rabbit hunter to death with a bottle. The hunter and his father are suspected of aiding the maquis in the area. After executing them, the captain sees the rabbits in the hunter's pouch. Captain Vidal, without remorse for his mistake, blames his soldiers, "A ver si aprenden a registrar a esta gentuza antes de venir a molestarme."

Whereas the Republican soldiers he captures hope to live to further their cause, Captain Vidal's approach to life embodies a search for an honorable death. He leads the charge of soldiers into battle encouraging them to put their life on the line just as he does. "Venga Serrano, sin miedo que es la única forma decente de morir." The story of Captain Vidal's father comes into play here. At a dinner party hosted by Captain Vidal, one of the guests shares a story that he heard about the captain's father. "Los hombres de la tropa decían que cuando el General Vidal murió en el campo de batalla estrelló su reloj contra el suelo para que constara la hora exacta de su muerte. Para que su hijo supiera cómo muere un valiente." Captain Vidal denies that the story is true; however, the viewer is

granted privileged information and presumes it to be factual, because invariably the Captain carries a functioning pocket watch with a broken facing. Captain Vidal constantly refers to it seemingly for the time; however, the broken crystal serves as a constant reminder that he cannot live up to the honor that his father (the previous owner) symbolizes.

This leads to self-loathing. Though Captain Vidal maintains his body and clothes in perfect condition, affirming to others his authority, alone in his private quarters while shaving, he turns to the mirror and feigns slashing his neck. The camera pans to the watch which rests next to the Captain suggesting that the myth of his father constantly represses him. Perhaps his gaze in the mirror implies that it is he who is the aberrant force which should be stamped out and not the maquis. In any case, his quest for honor evades him. When captured by the Republicans he recites his father's very same words, hoping that his son will carry on his legacy just as has attempted to do. He says, "Decidle a mi hijo, decidle a que hora murió su padre. Decidle que yo . . ." This will not be the case because Mercedes, a Republican sympathizer, cuts him off by saying, "No. Ni siquiera sabrá tu nombre".

Indeed, the Captain does not die honorably as he had hoped. Instead, the maquis kill him after he shoots Ofelia in a cowardly manner and leaves her to die. The Republicans strip him of his last attempts at honor in two ways: they choose the time of his death, and they deny him his legacy. In effect, the maquis break the continuity between Vidal and his son just as he fractured the link between his father and him by denying his father's narrative and by repairing the watch.

The Watch: A Bearer of Memory

The pocket watch takes on a life of its own in the film. It serves a symbolic function as it is a bearer of memory which serves to enrich Captain Vidal's postmemory of his father. Mona Körte explains the significance of objects as bearers of memory. She states, "The object not only presents a connection to childhood experience, but it also forms a link to the parents, later becoming a support for memory and still later, with greater distance from events, functioning as a bridge to memory or a bracket for an event" (110). Thus, it stands to reason that the watch symbolizes a tangible connection between Captain Vidal and his father and the possible linkage between the Captain and

his son because it is an extension of his father's self. Connecting the Captain to his father's death, the heirloom represents an attachment to his absent father and serves as a conduit of memory which evokes sentiments of honor and familial history. However, Captain Vidal cannot live up to this honor. The watch, intended to serve as a surrogate gravestone, instead becomes a functioning timepiece because Captain Vidal repairs the purposely broken time mechanism. In essence, Captain Vidal attempts to change history by repairing the watch that his father had intended as a marker indicating the exact time of his death. Though Captain Vidal repairs the inner workings of the watch, he does not replace the shattered crystal face. This glaring imperfection reminds him of his inability to live up to the myth of his father, though he intently strives to do so. Since the watch embodies a central object in his personal narrative he intends for the watch to serve as a surrogate father for his son, just as it has been for him. Anticipating that this material proof of his existence will be a substitution for his absence, Captain Vidal expects to continue the myth of honor by re-breaking the watch at the time of his own death.

Though the watch could serve as an aid to mourning, it will not be so in the case of Captain Vidal because he has first manipulated the object and therefore the meaning attached to it, and then denied the narrative which accompanies it. These actions signify the Captain's attempt to rewrite the past, which correlates with an effort not to *reshape* the memory but to *eliminate* it. Körte explains that if one protects and cares for the object, he remains loyal to it (112). In Captain Vidal's case, tampering with the watch implies a lack of allegiance to the object and by extension the memory tied to it. Körte observes that "Remembering means renewing in the present the affect that is tied to the image or object; [and] as such these mementos become aids to mourning" (112). Still Vidal chooses to deny not to remember. Therefore the heirloom cannot serve as an agent to mourning and in fact exacerbates his trauma because it represents a past that he fails to embody. By rejecting the memory of his father, Vidal disallows a construction of a coherent narrative which causes an inability to dominate the past through conscious recall. Instead, he reenacts the traumatic event by continually looking at the pocket watch. Consequently, he is deprived of personhood and will never reconcile with

his past. As Cathy Caruth explains, traumatized people "carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess" (5). Though the Captain's character is imbued with history and constructed by it, he cannot come to terms with it. Just as postmemory would indicate, the trauma surfaces as Captain Vidal's attempt to inherit his father's experience as his own (through the pocket watch), causing a blurring of identities between himself and his father.

Mercedes and Ofelia: Females with a Voice

Captain Vidal's attempt at an authoritative masculine presence is subverted by Mercedes's feminine existence. Through the sinister Captain's gaze, women abide by the gender models as codified by Spanish culture. However, Mercedes refuses to be a victim of this female socialization. Del Toro's film grants Mercedes her own gaze, which allows her to scrutinize the political milieu in which she resides in order to rebel against it. Accordingly, she calls upon her talents in the domestic sphere to position herself in the Captain's personal quarters where he details his plans to his subordinates.

He speaks freely in front of Mercedes allowing her to acquire information because he believes her presence is of no consequence. This is to his detriment because Mercedes passes this information to the maquis. By living alongside the Captain and performing covert operative duties, she breaches the boundary between Nationalists and Republicans. This mirrors how she effectively fractures the gender code which confines women to the home and disallows them access to the front lines. However, Mercedes does not see herself in this light. She views herself as a coward because she equates her role in the resistance as complicit with the Francoist rhetoric of the essence of a woman. She tells her brother, "Sí lo soy, una cobarde, una mierda. Todo el día metida ahí al lado de ese hijo de puta lavando su ropa, haciéndole la cama, dándole de comer . . ." Her brother disagrees with her. He understands that it is precisely because Mercedes exploits her domestic abilities that she can position herself to be more effective in the cause than can the men.

Eventually, she makes a false move, but her capture now affords her marginalized voice the opportunity to speak. She declares, "Pude estar cerca porque yo era invisible para usted." Captain Vidal, still unaware of her

potential, begins his discourse on torture. Mercedes, armed only with words and a paring knife, slashes his mouth and asserts that she is not weak. "¡Yo no soy un viejo! ¡ni un hombre herido, hijo de puta! ¡No serás el primer cerdo que degüello!" Ironically, it is a woman with a domestic tool that brings down the captain's command. What is more, by cutting his mouth, she effectively mutilates the weapon that endows him with authority, his mouth and by extension his words. Captain Vidal's confidence in men only to fight in combat allows Mercedes to be an effective individual in furthering the cause. Consequently the Captain, through his ignorance, endows her character with subjectivity. Indeed, Mercedes's character rejects the accepted gendered roles while offering a divergent response to female socialization.

Ofelia's character, though in the realm of fantasy, mirrors Mercedes's character. Both females undertake dangerous tasks that they believe will eventually lead them to a better place. Whereas Mercedes participates in the maquis' endeavors with the hope that her efforts might help to form a just nation, Ofelia searches for her long lost "reino subterráneo donde no existe la mentira ni el dolor," a kingdom that stands in direct opposition to fascist

Spain. Given that the film follows her journey, it grants Ofelia discursive centrality, a literary tactic not common in contemporary cinema. Susan Martin-Márquez observes that "narrative cinema is structured on two gender-specific components which reinforce the patriarchal division between active and passive roles: spectacle (the woman is displayed for the viewer) and narration (the man acts, thereby propelling the plot forward)" (13). Del Toro deviates from this structure because Ofelia, a female and a child, performs this role.

Her second task sends her to meet the chilling Pale Man, a faceless creature who when provoked devours children. Ofelia must go to a banquet hall where she will find three doors, behind one of which she will locate what she is looking for. The faun suggests to her that the fairies will guide her on this next journey. He warns her that during this mission, she should not eat anything she sees, an injunction found common in fairytales. As Ofelia enters the banquet hall, she sees the Pale Man seated at the head of the large dining table with his disembodied eye balls lying on a plate in front of him. This image (as well as the image of the enormous toad earlier) would typically cause fear in most, but Ofelia has no one to

shape her fears. On the one hand, Ofelia approaches her fantasy world with the innocence of a child and without alarm. Proving this, she approaches the motionless Pale Man and picks up the plate with his eyes to better observe them. On the other hand, the world of reality terrifies her, starting with her sadistic stepfather. Even though her mother encourages her to recognize the Captain as a good man, Ofelia can sense his evil nature. For this reason, Ofelia traverses between the enclosed space of the mill and the expansive dark forest, transcending literally and metaphorically the place of paternal authority.

This second task is important for two reasons. One, she starts to trust her own instincts, and two, she begins to make her own decisions, which surfaces as a central theme to the movie and eventually defines her as a person. Though the fairies instruct her to open the middle door, she chooses the first, which in fact houses the dagger that she must retrieve and surrender to the faun. Here her instincts lead her correctly and the decision she makes proves fruitful. However, Ofelia is not infallible; furthermore, she is still a child with childlike tendencies. When the fairies discourage her from eating food from the table, she shoos them away. She succumbs to

temptation and eats two forbidden grapes. According to Fairytale expert Edwin Sidney Hartland, eating from the table binds her to the realm of fantasy. He states that, ". . . to partake of food in the land of spirits, whether they are human, dead, or fairies, is to proclaim one's union with them and to renounce the fellowship of mortals."

(48) This is exactly what Ofelia seeks, a permanent home in the realm of fantasy with her father the king.

Indulging in the fruit awakens the faceless man who then puts his eyes into holes in his hands so he can see and pursue Ofelia, ostensibly to devour her as he has done to many before as indicated by the pile of children's shoes found next to the dining table. Reminiscent of a deformed stigmata, the markings connect the Pale Man to the Catholic Church. Ofelia narrowly escapes, but the same cannot be said for two of the fairies.

The film cuts back and forth from Ofelia's magical adventures to the stark reality of her new home. In one scene the captain hosts a lavish dinner party for a few friends. Here Captain Vidal sits at the head of the dinner table filled with food. This scene echoes the scene with the Pale Man at the head of the table, suggesting that underneath the captain's picture-perfect exterior he is

just as ugly and dangerous as the Pale Man. At the table, Captain Vidal hands out food vouchers that will enable recipients to receive a single loaf of bread. His guests, members of the bourgeois class, do not hesitate to take the ticket. Though one of the guests inquires whether the ration will be enough, the priest who is present assures the rest that this modicum of food will certainly be sufficient. If Captain Vidal symbolizes Franco and the clergy member the Church, then it stands to reason that this scene illustrates the formidable linkage between Franco's dictatorship and the Catholic Church, a connection solidified by sharing a meal. As Hartland elucidates:

Almost all over the earth the rite of hospitality has been held to confer obligations on its recipient, and to unite him by special ties to the giver. And even where the notion of Hospitality does not enter, to join in a common meal has often been held to symbolize, if not to constitute, union of a very sacred kind. The formation of blood relationship, or brotherhood, and formal adoption into a tribe or family (ceremonies well known in the lower culture), are usually, if not always, cemented in this way (47).

Therefore, the bourgeois dinner guests, the priest, and the doctor present are all complicit with Franco's regime.

Republican Solidarity

Del Toro does not limit agency to women. The doctor who attends the dinner party described in the preceding paragraph shows growth of character, which grants him subjectivity. Initially Dr. Ferreiro quietly assists the resistance while acting as Captain Vidal's personal physician. He secretly tends to the wounded Republican soldiers all the while hoping they will retreat because he feels that their endeavors are in vain. He discourages the maquis from proceeding because he knows the captain has more sophisticated weapons and will not relent. Still, the soldiers remain loyal to their convictions, believing if they will not prevail, "Por lo menos se lo pondremos difícil a ese cabrón." The doctor again shows weakness when he attempts to dissuade the freedom fighters explaining that "¿y? ¿Qué va a pasar? Le matais a él y vendrá otro igual y luego otro y otro más. Lo tenéis muy jodido." Nonetheless, the maquis find hope in a newspaper article stating "Tropas norteamericanas, británicas y canadienses han desembarcado en una pequeña playa al norte de Francia. Más de 150,000 soldados bajo el mando de General Dwight D. Eisenhower" The passion of the maquis conflates with the sadistic nature of Captain Vidal

to convince the doctor that remaining silent undermines his honor. Though at first he is unable to stand up to the captain, eventually he grows weary of observing firsthand the effects of the captain's regime. Ultimately he acts on his convictions by euthanizing a tortured soldier. When Captain Vidal inquires why, the doctor responds, "Es lo único que podía hacer." The captain does not accept this answer, "No. Hubiera podido obedecerme . . . Pues hubiera sido mejor para usted, eso lo sabe. No lo entiendo ¿Por qué no me obedeció?" Dr. Ferreiro explains, "Obedecer por obedecer, sin pensarlo, eso sólo lo hace gentes como usted, Capitán" thus proving that decisions define one's character. Dr. Ferreiro becomes a martyr for the cause, by exercising his free will. His death creates a space for him in the community of the maquis and his actions prove that solidarity provides an exit.

This solidarity points to a humanocentric ending to the film. When the Republican forces join together, they overcome the Nationalist regime. Historiographers of the regime would lead one to believe that the Republican forces were defeated at the end of the civil war. By presenting the story of the maquis, Del Toro recognizes a different version of official history. Essentially, Del Toro's film

de-victimizes Mercedes and the maquis alike by recognizing their efforts and affording them a battle won, though a war lost.

Ofelia's Death a Humanocentric Ending

As we have seen, Ofelia straddles the worlds of reality and fantasy. While the maquis attempt to take control of the mill, the faun approaches Ofelia one last time. He instructs her to bring her baby brother to the labyrinth. Upon her arrival the faun tells her he needs to shed the blood of an innocent so they can enter the kingdom. He says, "Un pinchazo tan solo." Now, Ofelia must make a choice: participate in the sacrifice of her brother or exert her freewill. She proclaims to the faun that she will not surrender her brother to him even after the faun clarifies that she will lose all rights to her kingdom. "Sí, lo sacrifico. Sí, lo reniego," she declares. While she argues with the faun, the captain finds her, intending to retrieve his son. The camera shows Ofelia's conversation with the faun from the Captain's perspective. Consequently, Ofelia's interlocutor is not present in the scene. However, this does not indicate that the faun does not exist. As Mercedes implies earlier in

the film, the faun is not visible to adults because they are too old to believe in fairytales.²⁸

Whether or not the faun exists in the realm of reality is of no consequence. What is of utmost importance here is Ofelia's choice to protect her brother. She defies the faun after he enjoins her to obey him, "¿Prometéis obedecerme? ¿Haréis todo lo que yo os diga? ¿sin cuestionarlo?" Her decision to save her brother costs her her life. However, through her death, she finds redemption and rebirth. Though her physical body dies in the world of reality, she becomes immortal because her death embodies a sacrifice and this sacrifice allows her to enter into (or in other words be reborn into) her magical world of fantasy. Upon entering the king's golden palace, she sees her throne. Looking down at her feet, she notices she wears new red shoes, a nod to Victor Fleming's 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*, indicating that she is finally home. Her royal father welcomes her into his kingdom saying, "Habéis derramado vuestra sangre antes de la de un inocente. Esta era la última prueba, la más importante." She then sees the faun who assures her, "Y habéis elegido bien, Alteza."

Although the film ends with Ofelia's mortal death, her choice to sacrifice herself over her brother parallels Dr.

Ferreiro's death. Both characters prefer death to a life without honor. Their altruistic decisions help to restore faith in humanity. Ultimately, their self-sacrifices save the lives of others, offering hope for the redemption of mankind.

Conclusion

Lidia Falcón's *Las mujeres caminaron con el fuego del siglo* (1994) and Guillermo del Toro's *El laberinto del fauno* (2006) interrogate previous discursive treatment of women by presenting them as participants in history. This hegemonic positioning of women in Spanish society destroys the traditional myth of the ideal woman. By interrogating cultural power structures, Falcón and Del Toro fracture established patterns of identity and disinter a tradition of female subjugation. In effect, these works give the women ignored in official history the eulogy they were denied. Whereas Francoist discourse erases them from history and memory, these works, by celebrating unity, solidarity and wholeness, uncover their lost voices and in the process revise history by adding the female perspective.

Conclusion

Memory in post-Franco Spain has been both contentious and divisive. In the early years of democracy, many Spaniards were reluctant to speak about and question their history. They did not want to jeopardize a fledgling democratic government and the process of reconciliation. Today, however, we see a swell of popular interest in the Spanish civil war and postwar period, primarily from younger generations of Spaniards who are encouraging victims to speak about their painful past. The pact of oblivion not to permit the past to impede reconciliation indeed kept tensions largely beneath the surface for many years. But inevitably these tensions could not be held at bay—both because of personal desire and the historical need to explore the past and understand its story.²⁹

In recent years, efforts to explore the past have intensified in historiography, fiction, and film. This dissertation has analyzed works that exemplify an understanding of Spain's past from a point of view different from that which dominated during the Franco years. The fragmented style of the plays, films and novels discussed in this dissertation illustrates a perspective that at once incorporates historical distance and allows

for an approach not repressed by a "double censorship."³⁰

In other words, the authors during the dictatorship were censored by the State, but because they knew this, they also imposed a self-censorship by carefully scrutinizing their own discourse to avoid negative repercussions.

Clearly, Spanish authors today are able to write unfettered by concerns over government censorship, yet as many critics have pointed out, the project of recovering the past has yet to be fully realized. Indeed, as Michael Richards and Chris Elaham have suggested, "A widely held view among people participating in these acts of recuperation is that there remains unfinished business to do with the war and its human effects" (Richards 17). While this investigation took place largely in the 1990s, there are two primary areas of temporal exploration that have yet to receive full scrutiny. My dissertation focuses on the intersection of these two issues: first, memories by women characters and second, the massive efforts by many Spanish citizens to claim parts of history for themselves through memory and postmemory.

I have concentrated on investigating works that engage in the present memory boom while according agency to suppressed female voices from the past. However, in an

effort to construct a foundation upon which to understand these contemporary works, in chapter one I analyzed two works from the early to mid 1970s (*Las arrecogías del beaterio de Santa María Egipcíaca* (1970) by José Martín Recuerda and the film *Cría cuervos* (1975), written and directed by Carlos Saura, and showed that others who came before, albeit few, also attempted to overcome the legacy of Francoism. Through the exploration of both strong and weak female characters, I asserted that these works unhinge the prevailing patriarchal culture in an effort to debunk the myth of what was generally perceived as the proper role of women in Spanish society. More specifically, I juxtaposed the historical figure of Mariana Pineda as presented by Federico García Lorca in his 1925 play by the same name, with the Mariana Pineda of Martín Recuerda's piece of 1970. By highlighting the differences between the two representations, I showed that Martín Recuerda's Mariana embodies a subversive entity who does not dutifully sacrifice her own desires as the ideal Francoist woman would have done. Instead, she restructures the gender constructs of Spanish culture by challenging the paths to female socialization and performing gender roles ascribed to the other sex. By eschewing various female-coded

characteristics she emerges as a courageous leader more dedicated to the cause than to her lover. She is rational rather than emotive, making it impossible to trope her as an "ángel del hogar."

Though neither work paints Mariana as an exemplary Spanish woman as dictated by Francoist family centered values, Lorca's Mariana loses narrative authority because her character does not open an alternative interpretive space. Hers is primarily a love story that emphasizes the emotional excesses indicative of the sensitive nature of woman as defined by society's gender politics. Her words ultimately reinforce the patriarchal presumption that while men think, women only feel.

As I also discussed in chapter one, *Cría cuervos* provides ground for a discussion of women's agency within the context of the Francoist repression. This film subverts hegemonic postwar cinema's presentation of women as mere adornments to male leads. Instead, as I argued, *Cría cuervos* provides more complex and contested interpretations of womanhood which ultimately allow female characters full protagonism. The women of the film suffer various difficulties while attempting to conform to the ideal of Spanish womanness as promulgated by the regime.

María cannot function within the suffocating boundaries of her husband's authoritarian rule and this eventually leads to her demise. Aunt Paulina attempts to fill the role left vacant by her sister's death. However, she fails as a surrogate mother even though Francoist ideology alludes to motherhood as a natural role for women to undertake. Ana observes the women in her life and understands that in order to survive she must challenge the patriarchal ideology which marks her upbringing. By choosing to evoke the past and narrate her memories, Ana proves she is capable of discerning what roles she desires to shun and which ones she will embrace.

Narrativizing memory and postmemory in an effort to work through the trauma of Spain's violent and repressive past becomes the focus of chapters two through four. These chapters explore the relationship between memory and history and show how the former shapes our views of the latter. I argue that even though memory shapes history, Francoist historiographers discarded collective memory, opting to narrate history subjectively according to Franco's vision of a pure Spain based on the glories of the past. I claim that the works studied in these chapters illustrate intent to evoke a past different from that laid

out by the Francoist repressive apparatus. The authors and directors of the works studied engage the past through the memory of others to revise official history. I analyze the novels and the filmic texts through the prism of trauma theory to understand how the repressive aftermath of the civil war affected the protagonists of the works. Basing my studies primarily on Dominick LaCapra's understanding of trauma and his notions of acting out and working through, I show that these works employ both modes to cope with Spain's traumatic past.

In her article "Memory and Modernity in Democratic Spain: The Difficulty of Coming to Terms with the Spanish Civil War," Jo Labanyi questions whether trauma theory "provides an adequate model for understanding the belated appearance of these memories, arguing that the reason is more likely to be a previous lack of willing interlocutors" (89). She explains that one must be weary of the tendency of trauma theory to highlight "the internal psychic mechanisms that are responsible for blocking recall of the traumatic event, deflecting attention from political explanations" (109). As I point out, however, politicians created the pact of oblivion to force Spanish citizens to forget intentionally (or at least to be silent about) the

past.³¹ For this reason, it is difficult to unpack Spain's traumatic past through Cathy Caruth's model of trauma theory, since she claims that "belatedness" of understanding a traumatic event is inherent in trauma. In other words, in the unique case of Spain, the belatedness is due to an imposed silence not an organic incapability to recall events: " . . . in testimonies that have appeared in Spain since the late 1990s, there is no evidence of any traumatic blocking of memory . . . What we do find is hesitation about whether or not to talk about the repression and of course a delay of around sixty years in bringing these memories into the public domain" (Labanyi 109). Consequently, I employ Caruth's studies on trauma theory only in chapter four as they relate to the characters of Montserrat and Captain Vidal. However, the other women analyzed (such as Lucrecia, Gabriela, and Juana) in chapters two and three speak to what Labanyi has observed: that the "habits of silence induced by decades of repression and a lack of willing interlocutors" better explain the Spanish case of forgetting (109).

Ultimately, what comes to the fore in my study is how narrativizing the past from female perspectives not only revises events enshrined in official history but also

creates a space for women that was previously denied or ignored. I focus on how the works discussed in my dissertation uncover and recognize female voices which historically have been relegated to marginality by a carefully structured rhetorical hierarchy. I stress that there exist countless female voices and perspectives, but that this plurality confirms how the diversity of women's experiences intersects with that of the individual experience to highlight the collective nature of their memories of traumatic events. In other words, listening to and narrating individual memories dovetails in the collective female experience. I do not contend that only women have the right or the talent to disinter buried voices, and for that reason I include works written by males. However I observe that past efforts have focused on the male perspective in revising the past, which resonates with a patriarchal dominated society. I therefore focus on women and their efforts to reconstruct official history in an attempt to bring balance to what I perceive to be a male dominated field.

Endnotes

¹ Contributing to the current memory boom are books written from a Nationalist perspective. As Jo Labanyi observes, these accounts are penned by "popular historical writers and not by academic historians" (96). Pío Moa, César Vidal, Francisco Olaya Morales, José María Zavala, and Daniel Arasa are what Labanyi refers to as right-wing historical revisionists who argue that "First, . . . the civil war was provoked by the Republic (this argument, presented as new, was in fact the standard version of the war promoted by the Franco dictatorship). Second, they argue that there has been a cover-up of Republican crimes by the left-wing historians who, since 1975, have set out to document the previously silenced Francoist repression" (96-97).

² Indeed, since 1977 all the winners have been male with the exception of two: Carme Riera in 1995 for her novel *Dins el darer blau* and Carmen Martín Gaité in 1978 for *El cuarto de atrás*.

³ Franco's regime imprisoned Falcón for six months in 1972 for distributing propaganda denouncing fascism. In 1976 she was detained for nine months after being falsely accused of collaborating with the ETA (Portela 121).

⁴ According to Akiko Tsuchiya, "Spain's transition to democracy led to a so-called boom in women's narrative, with the emergence of a new group of women writers who began to publish at that time: among them are Rosa Montero, Lourdes Ortiz, Soledad Puértolas, Marina Mayoral, Cristina Fernández Cubas, Carme Riera, and Esther Tusquets." These women, along with Carmen Martín Gaité, Ana María Moix, and Montserrat Roig, "started to write more self-consciously experimental works in the late 1970s, thus departing from the predominantly neorealist aesthetic of their own and other women's works in the earlier decades of the post-war period . . . [whose] literary techniques and preoccupations . . . generally constitute a break from the previous

generation of writers" (212). For a detailed discussion see Tsuchiya's article "Women and Fiction in Post-Franco Spain" in *The Cambridge Companion to the Spanish Novel*.

⁵ "History of the Regime" or "Official History" refers to the monological discourse about the past that Franco imposed while in power. With the intention to justify his government, Franco enforced a censorship to exert his authority over history. This in turn caused a version of history that prevented many perspectives from surfacing.

⁶ Turning to the past to dramatize symbols and events of the nation during decisive moments which correspond with the dramatist's own time is not unique to M. Recuerda. For example, various civil wars of past centuries provided the context not only for *Las arrecogías* . . . but for other works as well. M. Recuerda himself used this technique for two other plays: *El engaño* and *El carnaval de un reino*. Of course he is not the only dramatist to do this. See, for example, Antonio Buero Vallejo's *El tragaluz*, *El sueño de la razón* and *En la ardiente oscuridad* as well as Ana Diosdado's *Los comuneros*.

⁷ For an informative discussion of the Spanish code of honor see Scott K. Taylor's book *Honor and Violence in Golden Age Spain*. Here he explains that " . . . the honor of men was dependent on the behavior of the women in their lives: their daughters, their sisters and especially wives. Second, the honor of women, and therefore men, depended entirely on sexual behavior. The faintest suspicion of sexual infidelity, or the bad behavior of another man toward a woman threatened her honor. Men had to control the sexuality of their wives and women kin in order to preserve their own male honor, so adultery was the most serious threat to both male and female honor. Third, the only appropriate response to dishonorable behavior was violence. Men could protect or restore their honor only through murderous revenge" (2-3).

⁸ Today Spain recognizes the efforts of Mariana Pineda and her rightful place in history. In the *Congreso de los Diputados*, officials have placed her name on the list paying homage to Spanish heroes who have fought for justice. What is more, in 2006 the European Union

Government named the entrance to the European Parliament after her in order to recognize on a grander scale the importance of her efforts to further equal rights and liberty.

⁹For a pertinent discussion on memory and its relation to history, see Pierre Nora's article "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire." *Representations* 26, Spring 1989, 7-25.

¹⁰For an alternative approach to trauma see Cathy Caruth's book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. In this work Caruth underscores the cyclical nature of trauma and suggests that a traumatic event is often not recognized as such until the victim has experienced it in a belated manner, often over a period of time (91-92).

¹¹Hirsch realizes that the term "post" is polemic. "I propose the term "postmemory" with some hesitation, conscious that the prefix "post" could imply that we are beyond memory and therefore perhaps, as Nora fears, purely in history" (22). As she employs the term, it refers only to the generational distance.

¹²This technique is not unique to Chacón's novel. It has been used by many other authors including Juan Goytisolo in *Señas de identidad* and Juan Benet in *Volverás a Región*. What I believe to be distinctive in Chacón's text is how she unfolds the protagonists' personal narratives in the future tense.

¹³At first glance it seems that *Muerte en El Valle* should not be considered a documentary. Due to the fact that C.M. Hardt is both protagonist and director, her approach to making this film is clearly slanted. Since the term "documentary" implies an obligation on the part of the documentarian to avoid deliberate misrepresentations while objectively representing reality, it is hard to classify her work as such. However, if we analyze her project as a documentary about her search to find out "the truth" surrounding her grandfather's death, I propose that *Muerte en El Valle* can be considered just that: a documentary of

her quest for answers which eventually clarifies various gaps in C.M. Hardt's postmemory.

¹⁴I recognize that word "truth" is controversial. Used in this project I mean to connote that which is generally accepted as and in accordance with a fact or reality and not fidelity to a standard as Franco expected of his citizens.

¹⁵ "No-Do" is the abbreviated term for "Noticiarios y Documentales" which refers to the government controlled news clips shown in the cinema before a film during the Franco dictatorship.

¹⁶ Because these facts have been interpreted as they are recorded, it must be recognized that a reading of historical documents in order to record history is a construction. Therefore, we should be cautious when utilizing these resources as a means to search for "truth" or "reality."

¹⁷ For works that exemplify this intent, see Camilo José Cela's *La familia de Pascual Duarte* and Juan Benet's *Volverás a Región*.

¹⁸ Inner exile refers to the state of mind of certain individuals who are not forced to leave their homeland but are affected adversely by their choice to stay.

¹⁹ According to Sobejano, "historical climate" refers to "general, collective trends in thinking, feeling, and action that arise when people share a common set of experience bounded within a given time and place and marked, at beginning and end, by significant changes and events" (174).

²⁰ After Franco's death in 1975 the Spanish people awaited drastic political changes. However "faced with uncertainty, people suffered *desencanto*, a pervasive kind of 'disenchantment,' . . . a logical consequence of four decades of dictatorship" (Sobejano 183).

²¹ The concept of *ángel del hogar* presents a model of women whose definition centers on various essential traits:

maternity as a woman's supreme and exclusive function, submission and obedience to her husband as seen in the virtues of silence and chastity (Cruz-Cámara 9). Not just a familiar trope referring to the dominant cultural representation of Spanish women, but actually defined in 1877 as "'an angel of love, consolation to our afflictions, defender of our merits, patient sufferer of our faults, faithful guardian of our secrets, and jealous depository of our honor,' she was also evoked as mother, spouse, or daughter" (Nash *Constructing* 28)

²² Biological essentialism refers to the idea that men and women are intrinsically different due to some internal essence. Biological essentialists argue that men and women are distinct from one another and that they are opposites. They claim that gender differences aren't really differences in gender but that they reflect a biologically based difference that is consistent across cultures. Furthermore, biological essentialists stipulate that there is no variation in the expression of biologically essential characteristics (DeLamater 11).

²³ According to radical-libertarian feminist Gayle Rubin, the sex/gender system is a "set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity" (159). Rubin, Gayle. "The Traffic in Women." *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter. New York Monthly Review Press, 1975.

²⁴ The pact of oblivion refers to the tacit agreement between politicians and intellectuals to remain quiet about the Civil War and its consequences in order not to jeopardize the fledgling democratic government. For a discussion of this concept, see Joan Ramón Resina's *Disremembering the Dictatorship: The Politics of Memory in the Spanish Transition to Democracy*."

²⁵ This hesitant conversation, between generations where one has experienced trauma and remained silent, illustrates Marianne Hirsch's "postmemory" as presented in chapter two. It also affirms Walter Benjamin's claim that "memory creates the chain of tradition which passes a happening on from generation to generation" (98).

²⁶ Latency refers to the period during which the effects of the experience are not apparent, according to Caruth, reading Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*.

²⁷ This repetition of three verbs is repeated throughout the play, always intending one, to keep the rhythm of the music and, two, to emphasize a point. Montserrat also utilizes this syntactic pattern when she states, "Y parimos, parimos, parimos" (40).

²⁸ By the end of the film, the viewer has been given the tools to find the fantasy kingdom over which Ofelia rules.

²⁹ A general movement in this direction emerged in the late 1960s before the death of Franco. For example Luís Martín Santos's *Tiempo de silencio*, Juan Goytisolo's *Señas de identidad* and Juan Marsé's *Si te dicen que caí* exemplify works written during a precarious time that intentionally, though cryptically, attempt to revise the History that Franco outlined. Following the Franco regime, this effort both stymied and stimulated reconciliation, as suggested above.

³⁰ For an interesting discussion see Paul Ilie's book *Literature and Inner Exile: Authoritarian Spain, 1939-1975*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1980.

³¹ Labanyi attributes the institutionalizing of the term "pact of oblivion" to the historian Paloma Aguilar Fernández in her 1996 work *Memoria y olvido de la Guerra civil española*. The 1977 amnesty law which pardoned the actions of those committing political crimes (Nationalists and Republicans alike) during the civil war and dictatorship preserves the pact of oblivion of the transition (Labanyi 93).

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