RUDE AWAKENINGS:

THE CHILD IN TRAUMA NARRATIVES OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of Cornell University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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May 2013

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Cornell University 2013

This project argues that the engagement with childhood and the notion of awakening seen in Spanish novels from the 1950s grant access into the difficulties of narrating wartime trauma as it has been conceptualized in modern psychoanalysis. Through close readings of novels by Juan Goytisolo (*Duelo en El Paraíso*), Manuel Lamana (*Los inocentes*), and Ana María Matute *(Primera memoria*), I demonstrate that scenes of awakening symbolize the move toward adulthood undergone by child characters on the brink of adolescence. Furthermore, I contend that the notion of awakening simultaneously acts as a textual metaphor for the process by which survivors of traumas such as the Spanish Civil War seemingly begin to psychologically experience them only in their aftermath. That is, trauma victims can be said to have metaphorically slumbered through the original event, "awakening" to its painful consequences belatedly. My analysis—supplemented by Freudian theory and its literary applications by critics such as Cathy Caruth and Ross Chambers—explores both the enunciative and receptive limitations of trauma narration as it is presented in these novels: on the one hand, the difficulty survivors have in speaking of a violent event; and on the other, the reluctance of would-be listeners to bear witness to a painful testimony. Moreover, I maintain that the narrative structures of these particular texts re-enact the phenomenon of trauma for the readers, awakening us via literature to the potentially traumatic nature of historical violence.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Emily Eaton was born and raised in western New York. She loved reading from an early age, and developed a particular passion for the Spanish language and its literatures in high school. She completed her B.A. in Hispanic Studies at Vassar College before beginning her doctoral studies in Cornell University's Department of Romance Studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge the invaluable guidance provided by my Special Committee members, Patricia Keller, María Antonia Garcés, and Walter Cohen, whose mentorship made this project possible. I am equally grateful to the Department of Romance Studies staff, whose friendliness and knowledge of administrative policies seem to know no bounds. Finally, I thank my loved ones. The unwavering support offered by my friends, my partner, my brother, and above all, my parents, gave me the strength and confidence to complete this project.

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INTRODUCTION

FIRST ENCOUNTERS: CHILDREN, TRAUMA, & *LA GENERACIÓN DEL MEDIO SIGLO*

In his commentary on *Dos infancias y la guerra*, a memoir written by Jacint and Joan Reventós about their childhood during the Spanish Civil War, poet Jaime Gil de Biedma describes the contradictory experience of children during that conflict: "Nos correspondió el irónico destino de vivir inocentemente la Guerra y de sentirnos luego, durante los interminables años de nuestra juventud, vicariamente beligerantes en ella, dicho en contradictoria y escueta paradoja: que la hemos vivido sin participar en ella y hemos participado en ella sin vivirla (289)" ["As our ironic fate would have it, we lived innocently through the war and felt it later, during the interminable years of our vicariously belligerent youth; our paradox, simply put, was that we experienced the war without participating in it and we participated in it without experiencing it"[1]]. Gil de Biedma's *escueta paradoja* offers a succinct introduction to the topics explored in this project. In a country at war with itself, children occupy what is perhaps a unique position: they may witness violent acts—despite the protective efforts of family members, churches, and government agencies—and yet are shielded from the causes of conflict, often possessing little or no knowledge of the complicated political and ideological issues at hand. Like adults, children undergo the loss of friends and family members, either through death or displacement, and yet are even less empowered to protect their loved ones or ease others' suffering, as their parents may do by participating in combat or charitable organizations. Children, no doubt, are victims of war: they experience its effects, painfully and directly, even though their active participation in it is not permitted, and even though they may be physically far removed from the battlefield.[2] We

[1] Throughout this project, any translations that appear with no page reference are my own. Others' translations, or altered translations, are documented accordingly in parenthetical notations and footnotes, and their sources listed in the Works Cited.

[2] Of course, these observations do not apply to wars involving child soldiers.

can speculate that children, upon gaining knowledge with adulthood, may begin to understand the causes of a war that they literally survived without really living through, but Gil de Biedma's quote indicates that, for some, the contradictory nature of their childhood experience remains a paradox.

This project looks at three Spanish novels from the 1950s that prominently feature child characters against the historical backdrop of the Civil War from two decades prior (1936-1939). Gil de Biedma's *escueta paradoja* surfaces in the experiences of these fictional children, based in part on those of their authors, who lived through the war at a young age. Because Juan Goytisolo's *Duelo en El Paraíso* (1955), Manuel Lamana's *Los inocentes* (1959), and Ana María Matute's *Primera memoria* (1959) tell stories of wartime violence that causes considerable psychological harm to the characters that witness it, I read these novels as narratives of trauma and use the relevant psychoanalytical theory to supplement my close readings of the texts. My analysis demonstrates that even as these texts are fictional accounts *about* traumatic events, they reenact for the reader, via narrative structure and engagement with themes of childhood, the process of trauma itself as a belated psychological encounter with an initially unknowable, and thus difficultly narrated, tragedy. The trauma enacted by these narratives, in turn, mirrors the struggles of survivors, regardless of age. That is, the child's paradoxical engagement with war in these texts—experiencing it and yet not, knowing of it with limited comprehension—literalizes the psychological phenomenon of trauma as it has been traditionally conceptualized. I thus propose that the use of children in literature of this kind can permit a representation of trauma whereby readers witness the psychological effects of an unspeakable violence that resists *being told* and *being heard* as a straightforward narrative.

***The Child in* La generación del medio siglo**

The considerable number of novels about children during the Spanish Civil War or the post-war period may be seen as a more focused category within a broader preoccupation with the child seen in Iberian literature, beginning in the late 1940s and strongly asserting itself in the 1950s. It is noteworthy that some of the most famous twentieth-century Spanish authors who began to gain fame at that time published a number of novels whose plots centered on children. The tendency was perhaps first seen in Miguel Delibes, whose novels *La sombra del ciprés es alargada* (1948) and *El camino* (1950) revolve around young boys. In 1951, Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio published *Industrias y andanzas de Alfanhuí*, a fantastical novel that, though more difficultly related to the primarily realist narratives for which the author would eventually become known, centers on a child protagonist. Meanwhile, Ana María Matute established in her early works a nearly exclusive focus on child or adolescent protagonists and coming-of-age themes. Her novel *Fiesta del Noroeste* (1952) and her short story anthology *Los niños tontos* (1956) are emblematic of this tendency which continued to characterize her literary production throughout her career. And though Juan Goytisolo eventually became more famous for his more experimental fiction, which began in 1966 with the publication of *Señas de identidad*, two of his earlier works were centered on child characters: *Duelo en El Paraíso* (1955) and *Fiestas* (1958).

This trend, from the late 1940s onward, is particularly visible because the child is all but absent from Spanish literature before the war. Though *picaresque* novels from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may begin with the main character as a child—*El Lazarillo de Tormes* is one of the earliest Spanish texts to make more than a passing reference to the childhood of its protagonist—childhood is not the primary focus of those texts. At that point in Western European literature, there was nothing particularly remarkable about the absence of children in

the Spanish novel; they were hardly abundant in the literary traditions of other countries. However, a distinction appeared in the eighteenth century, as the *Bildungsroman* emerged as a literary genre and gained considerable popularity in other Western European countries and the U.S. While the young Jane Eyre, Philip "Pip" Pirrip, and Tom Sawyer were engaging readers of Bronte, Dickens, and Twain, no comparable emphasis on themes of childhood or the passage to adulthood existed in the Spanish novel.[3] Although Galdós, in the late nineteenth century, was one of the first modern Spanish novelists to offer lengthier and more carefully rendered portraits of the child in his well-known novel *Miau* (1888) and in the more obscure *La de Bringas* (1884), these are not coming of age narratives that trace the journey from childhood to maturity; children appear as minor characters, and the focus of these texts remains squarely on adults.

Given the lack of a *Bildungsroman* tradition in Spain and the near absence of prominent child characters through many centuries of Spanish narrative, it is not surprising that the seeming explosion of childhood themes in the 1950s attracted critical attention. Indeed, in 1958, French literary critic and translator Maurice Edgar Coindreau identified the emphasis on children and childhood as one of the primary defining characteristics of what he considered the newly revitalized Spanish novel. In his "Homenaje a los jóvenes novelistas españoles" ["Homage to the young Spanish novelists"], published in the literary journal *Cuadernos*, Coindreau presents this emphasis on childhood as a novelty and yet predicts—rightfully so, as it would turn out—that it was not merely a passing phase:

> El tema de la infancia seguirá siendo, sin ninguna duda, una de las aportaciones más preciosas de los jóvenes novelistas españoles a la literatura de su país. A

[3] For more reading on the genre's conventions, see Jerome Buckley's *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding*. One of the few texts to consider a broader definition of the *Bildingsroman* as it may apply to Spanish literature is María de los Ángeles Rodríguez Fontela's *La novela de autoformación: una aproximación teórica e histórica al 'Bildungsroman' desde la narrativa española.*

> excepción de los pequeños pícaros descendientes de Lazarillo, el niño no tenía en España, hasta estos últimos años, un lugar muy destacado en el campo de la ficción…Así, pues, no se exagera al decir que la atención que se presta al niño en nuestros días es un fenómeno nuevo. (47)

> There is no doubt that the theme of childhood will continue to be one of the most valuable contributions of young Spanish novelists to their country's literature. With the exception of the pint-sized *pícaros* descended from Lazarillo, until recent years the child has not much occupied Spanish fiction…Thus, the attention paid to the child these days is, without exaggeration, a new phenomenon.[4]

Coindreau goes on to discuss the abundance of children in the works of two distinct generations of Spanish authors, whom he separates according to the age at which they experienced the Spanish Civil War from 1936-1939. The first generation, to which Coindreau refers as the *generación de la guerra*, included figures such as Camilo José Cela (b.1916) and Miguel Delibes (b.1920) who were adults, or nearly so, when the war began. The second generation was comprised of the "jóvenes novelistas" who were children during the war and are now as famous as their literary predecessors: Ana María Matute (b. 1925), Jesús Fernández Santos (b. 1926), Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio (b. 1927), and Juan Goytisolo (b. 1931). Today, this generation is alternately known as the *generación del 50* or the *generación del medio siglo*.

Though themes of childhood appear in the works of Delibes, whom Coindreau situates as a member of the earlier *generación de la guerra*,[5] the exploration of childhood themes against the historical background of the war, as a specific focus within the broader literary trend towards

[4] All translations of critical texts are my own.
[5]Delibes was sixteen when the war began, and thus bridges the generational gap between those authors who were children and those who were adults when the war began.

child characters, began with the *generación del medio siglo* and was perhaps inaugurated by Goytisolo's 1955 novel *Duelo en El Paraíso*. Written in 1958, Coindreau's article, which briefly mentions Goytisolo's text, actually precedes the vast majority of narratives that feature the war/child pairing: in 1958, Jesús Fernández Santos realeased *Cabeza rapada*, an anthology of short fiction featuring several stories about children during the war; and the following year, Ana María Matute and Manuel Lamana published their respective novels *Primera memoria* and *Los inocentes*. The 1960s and 1970s brought several autobiographical accounts of the war: most notable are Luis de Castresana's *El otro árbol de Guernica*, from 1967, which uses a literary alter-ego to narrate the author's experience as a child exiled in Belgium during the war; Juan Gomis's *Testigo de poca edad*, from 1968, which is presented as a non-fictional literary memoir; Joan and Jacint Reventós's *Dos infancias y una guerra*, originally published in Catalan in 1974 as *Dos infants i la Guerra: records de 1936-1939*.

Since these authors lived through the conflict at a very young age, it is logical that they would choose to narrate novels about the war from the perspective of children, and expected in the case of memoirs. It seems significant then, that Coindreau—writing *before* the publication of these texts, when the only trend visible was a more general focus on children, not necessarily on children specifically linked to the Civil War—offers a biographical explanation for the newfound presence of the child in literature. He implies that this generation's almost overwhelming interest in children—in fact, he calls them "*obsesionados*…por el pequeño mundo de los niños" (46, emphasis mine) ["*obsessed*…with the miniature world of children"] —is related to their having witnessed the onset of the Civil War at a tender young age. Though he never explicitly states that young characters populate the literature in question because of the authors' supposed wartime traumas during childhood, the claim is implicit in his assertion that

> el alma del novelista se forma en su infancia…toda su obra no es sino el reflejo de esta infancia. Por consiguiente, cuanto más atormentada y dramática sea ésta, tanto mayores serán las probabilidades de que el niño tenga dones de novelista al llegar la época de su madurez…Hoy empiezan a escribir en España los que durante la guerra civil eran todavía unos niños. Tienen entre veinticinco y treinta y cinco años. Es posible que la mayor parte de ellos se acuerde sólo vagamente de los horrores que presenció. Pero lo que ha pasado a ser un recuerdo borroso en su conciencia puede haber conservado toda su precisión en la subconciencia. (44-
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> [novelists' souls are formed during childhood…which all their work reflects. Consequently, the more tormented and dramatic the childhood, the more probable it is that the child will become a gifted novelist upon reaching maturity…Today, those who were children during the Spanish Civil War are beginning to write. They are between twenty-five and thirty-five years of age. It's possible that the majority of them only vaguely remember the horrors they witnessed. But what's become a hazy memory in their consciousness may remain precise in their subconsciousness.]

Coindreau's hasty assertions suggest that authors such as Goytisolo and Matute owe their artistic talents to childhood tragedy. This is, of course, a tempting conclusion to make when a critically acclaimed author has lived through a potentially traumatic event like war, and even more tempting when the author has written moving and sensitive portrayals of that event. And though it's entirely possible that Coindreau's conclusions are true for the authors in question, the logic whereby he reaches these claims is unsound and unsupported by evidence. The fact that there

are many gifted writers who *did not* have a "tormented and dramatic childhood"—and that there are even more children who are victims of violence and yet do not grow up to be famous authors—makes it difficult to lend credence to such sweeping claims. They are, at best, speculations, and even as such they would be more convincing coming from a clinical psychoanalyst rather than a literary critic. In fact, I quote Coindreau's questionably reasoned claims in part to illustrate the risks posed by the theoretical framework used in the current project, which I address at a later point in this chapter.

I have also quoted Coindreau in order to highlight a critical tradition in which a biographical and psychoanalytically-inclined lens has been used to explain this generation's tendency to include child characters. Indeed, most critics of the twentieth-century Spanish novel, in observing this literary trend—upon which very few comment in depth—offer brief explanations similar to Coindreau's, if less dramatically worded. For example, writing in the early 1970s, Hipólito Esteban Soler presents his assertions more cautiously and with terminology that is more palatable to the modern literary critic, and yet his explanation does not substantially differ from Coindreau. He also claims that the authors' wartime traumas as children are responsible for their preoccupation with childhood themes:

> A los de la generación que comenzó a destacarse hacia 1954 les sorprendió la guerra, suceso histórico decisivo, siendo niños y, además, les sorprendió una durísima posguerra en la que espabilaron cruelmente…Este hecho les confirió personalidad singular, diferente a la de los que hicieron aquélla o sufrieron ésta siendo mozalbetes o adultos. El suceso, que traumatizó a todos, marcó quizás con indelebles huellas a un grupo, el neorrealista, que…cultivaría el tema de la infancia. (310)

> [The generation that began to gain prominence around 1954 were jolted by the war, a decisive historical event, as children, and then again by a harrowing post-war that cruelly shook them awake ….This lent them a singular personality, distinct from that of those who waged the former or suffered the latter as youths or adults. The event, while traumatic for everyone, perhaps left permanent marks on one particular group: the neorealists, who…would cultivate the theme of childhood.]

So too does Gonzalo Sobejano suggest that the focus of the *generación del medio siglo* on children "halla sobra explicación en el hecho de que estos escritores padecieron, por causa de la guerra, la infancia anormal, prematuramente reflexiva" (273) ["is well explained by the fact that these writers underwent an abnormal childhood, prematurely reflective, because of the war."] For his part, José Luis Ponce de León distances himself more from the psychoanalytical angle and limits his observation to biographical issues:

> Cuando los niños y adolescentes del año 1936 crecieron, en España o en el exilio, el recuerdo de la guerra se unió a un conocimiento vivo de la historia adquirido más tarde, y sobre esta doble base construyeron algunos sus novelas de la guerra civil en las que se desarrolla, de un modo más o menos autobiográfico, una vida infantil que tiene por telón de fondo la lucha fratricida de los mayores. (78)

> [When the children and adolescents of 1936 grew up in Spain or in exile, their memory of the war was combined with a living knowledge of history acquired later, and upon this dual foundation they erected novels of the civil war that

> feature, more or less autobiographically, the world of children against the backdrop of their elders' fratricidal struggle.]

These critics overlap considerably in their approach to the novels written by the *generación del medio siglo*, and yet I have included the lengthy quotes of each precisely to illustrate the considerable lack of methodological variety used when studying these texts collectively and the tendency to oversimplify the psychoanalytical issues at stake. To be fair, I must point out that the above authors do not undertake close readings of these indvidual texts; their objectives are to highlight general trends in Spanish narrative at various points throughout the twentieth century. But the ready-made biographical explanation for the child/war trend—while certainly necessary and welcome, at least when stated more cautiously as in Ponce de León above—has perhaps caused the critics to neglect the richness of the way that children and war are represented in these novels.

It is important to point out that the emphasis on biographical explanations for the presence of children in the novels of this generation has also been sustained by comments made by the authors themselves. Matute echoes Coindreau's sentiment that the formation of an author takes place in childhood: "puedo hablarles a ustedes de las causas, de los motivos por los cuales yo escribo…Para ello no tengo más remedio que volver los ojos a la infancia y la adolescencia" (*El autor enjuicia su obra*, 141) ["I can talk to you about the causes, the reasons why I write…to do so I must look back to childhood and adolescence"]. Furthermore, Matute points to the Civil War as the formative event in her childhood and her development as a writer: "La guerra civil española, no solo fue un impacto decisivo para mi vida de escritora, sino que, me atrevo a suponer, para la mayoría de los escritores españoles de mi generación" (143). ["The Spanish Civil War had a crucial impact not only on me as a writer, but also on, I daresay, the majority of

Spanish writers in my generation."] Finally, she brings these two ideas together to assert that having experienced the war at a young age is precisely the reason why the members of her generation have focused so extensively on the child in literature: "Vivimos la guerra a una edad en que las cosas impresionan de una forma bastante perdurable, y tal vez por eso mi generación—que era niña durante una guerra—incorporó, creo que por primera vez, al niño como sujeto literario—no como figura secundaria—a la novela española" (qtd. in Sanz Villanueva 191). ["We lived through the war at an age when things make a very lasting impression, and perhaps that's why my generation, children during the war, incorporated—for the first time, I believe—the child as a literary subject, not a secondary figure, in the Spanish novel"]. For his part, Goytisolo has emphasized similar sentiments in typically poetic fashion: "Many of those who are now writing novels were only children during the Civil War. With the eyes of children they saw, calmly, atrocious things. They forgot them. But there was a moment in their lives, as they grew up, in which they suddenly remembered them again. And they remembered them more and more, as their bones grew harder and their blood richer".[6] If the authors themselves thus point to their experience as children during the war as the origin of this newfound emphasis on the child in literature it perhaps comes as no surprise that critics have not often seen the need to further probe the relationship between children and war that characterizes the novels of this generation.

However, a broader look at some of the literature in question does suggest that the newfound focus on children starting in the 1940s and 1950s is not limited to those authors who experienced the outbreak of war during childhood but rather extends to the previous generation.

[6] I have taken the English translation of Goytisolo's quote from Kessel Schwartz's introduction to *Fiestas* (Dell, 1964). Schwartz attributes the quote to an unnamed "American magazine" (8). However, Gonzalo Navajas offers the quote in French, presumably the original language, attributing it to a 1963 letter that Goytisolo wrote to the American scholar John B. Rust (Navajas 49).

As both Eduardo Godoy Gallardo and Phyllis Zatlin Boring have pointed out, childhood and war both feature prominently—to be sure, not simultaneously—in Ramón Sender's nine-volume *Crónica del alba* (1942-1966), though the author was in his thirties when war broke out. Interestingly, both critics, two of the few who have taken up the question of childhood in the post-Civil-War novel in a more sustained way, refer to biographical questions to explain the emphasis on children in authors, like Sender, from the *pre-war* generation. Boring claims that that while the war generation focuses on children because of their childhood experience, the authors of the pre-war generation do so because, for many of them living in exile in the years after the war, memories of childhood may be all that they have left of their native country ("The World of Childhood…" 467).

Eduardo Godoy Gallardo takes a similar approach in *La infancia en la narrativa española de posguerra*, the only full-length work written on the subject to date. He divides the authors he studies into three groups: exiled writers like Sender and Arturo Barea, the war generation as represented by Delibes, and *la generación del medio siglo*, which includes Goytisolo, Castresana, and Lamana. As does Boring in her article, Godoy differentiates between each group's motives for the inclusion of children in their work. He argues that the world of childhood is presented in these authors "desde dos ángulos: *la pérdida del paraíso y la recuperación del paraíso*" (24, italics in the original) ["from two angles: *the loss of paradise, and the recuperation of paradise*"]. The third group identified by Godoy, our *generación del medio siglo*, tends more towards the former perspective. Having experienced the war as children, this generation represents childhood itself as a stage of lost innocence; according to Godoy, their texts present an "infancia [que] se ha vivido deformadamente o, en otras palabras, no se ha vivido" (24) ["childhood [that] has been experienced distortedly or, in other words, it

hasn't been experienced at all"]. In contrast, for those authors already past childhood when the war broke out, that stage of life remains intact in their memories as an age of innocence—thus, the representation of childhood in their novels can be read as an attempt to recuperate or recreate a lost paradise.

In this way, even while arguing that we cannot limit the study of children in post-Civil-War literature to texts by authors who experienced the conflict during childhood, critics such as Boring and Godoy still emphasize a biographical approach to the texts. I do not object to this approach but rather to its near exclusivity in the critical tradition. If the biographical perspective remains the *only* one applied collectively to this particular group of texts, we are most certainly doing them an injustice. My analyses thus take as a starting point not the authors' experiences as children during the Spanish Civil War but the texts themselves. In my close readings of the three novels, I do not attempt to seek a different explanation for *why* their authors have paired children characters with the war; for the *generación del medio siglo*, at least, I accept the biographical explanation as more than plausible. Rather, I will tease out the various effects of this pairing within the text itself. In this way, my work is more reader- or text-centered than the existing criticism has been. Via these close readings, my careful attention to language and narrative structure will move us beyond some of the typical readings of childhood themes in literature—such as the loss or recuperation of innocence, surely important questions but not the only ones—to investigate the relationship that child characters have with traumatic experience and its narration.

The increasing popularity of trauma studies amongst psychoanalysts, literary scholars and historians in recent decades has generated new theoretical frameworks that, while unavailable to earlier critics, prove especially relevant to the texts in this project. As we can see from the

previously quoted critical observations, already from the outset trauma was a tempting avenue of inquiry for the study of this generation's literature. However, the nuances of these texts and the complexities of trauma theory—as well as the risks posed by its use in literary analysis—require a much more in-depth consideration than the brief reference offered, for example, by Hípolito Esteban Soler. One of the main inclinations seen in the descriptions by Soler and Coindreau is to interpret the texts of the *generación del medio siglo* as proof of their authors' traumas, an attractive conclusion for texts that present violent historical events witnessed by the writer, and even more attractive when the authors themselves describe their experience of those events in terms consistent with the psychoanalytical conceptualization of trauma. But such a determination tends to be speculative, since we must assume a certain distance between author and narrative voice in texts presented as fiction, even those with clear autobiographical influence. Moreover, whether or not these authors were indeed traumatized by their exposure to war as children is a conclusion that can be made only by the writers themselves and trained clinicians engaging in long-term care with them. Throughout this project, I thus strive to be sensitive to what *I cannot* know and to what I cannot classify as truth—factual or psychical—for the authors, the real-life witnesses of violence.

Thus, though the texts here studied at times bear striking similarities to the experiences of their authors—which will be referenced throughout to complement textual analysis and maintain sensitivity to the very real histories that inform these texts—my goal is not to argue that these novels can be read as narratives of their authors' traumas. Rather, I contend that literary narratives that describe violent historical events, such as the Spanish Civil War, can offer the sensitive reader insight into the experience of trauma survivors as conceptualized in psychoanalytic theory. These narratives in particular do so by performing, via child characters

and narrative structure, the psychical phenomenon characteristic of trauma. Likewise, an understanding of trauma theory permits a more nuanced reading of accounts of traumatic events, whether fictional or otherwise.

Before presenting the trauma theory necessary to understand this dynamic, I would like to acknowledge some additional risks posed by the language and mode of analysis used in this project. Referring to a "performance of trauma" by literary texts is not meant to trivialize or aestheticize the very real and tremendously painful experience of trauma as suffered by survivors of violent events such as those seen in war. This risk is, of course, inherent in the analysis of literary narratives based on tragic historical circumstances, and a desire to respect the experiences of these authors as children is perhaps why critics have so overwhelmingly limited their observations about these texts to biographical questions. I wish to make clear from the outset that I do not use "performance" to mean an act staged for entertainment. Rather, I use it in the sense of J.L. Austin's performative language applied here to literature: even as accounts of traumatic events are offered *in* these texts, with difficulty by their respective narrative voices, trauma itself is enacted *by* the texts—their temporally disjointed structures, the limitations of the characters' knowledge and experience—within a fictional framework, such that the reader bears witness to the creation of knowledge as traumatized characters struggle to comprehend the violence around them.

Because J.L. Austin conceptualizes performative language as an alternative to constative, which comprises statements that are either true or false, the concept of performance is particularly useful for a project that could make only limited claims about the relative "truth" of the narratives in question. Truth itself is a particularly unstable category when it comes to trauma: as psychoanalyst Dori Laub has concluded from his treatment of Holocaust survivors, a

victim's memory of a traumatic event may contain significant differences from the historically verifiable occurrence; what is true for the survivor may not be what actually happened to them. As such, I will not attempt to determine whether the events in these narratives actually happened to the authors as children or whether *their* psychical experiences are performed by the text. For the most part, I shall limit myself to analyzing the reenactment of trauma through the characters and the performance if trauma via language and narrative structure.

The Child & Trauma Theory

Godoy's observation about the distortion of childhood experience in the texts of the *generación del medio siglo*—"la infancia se ha vivido deformadamente o, en otras palabras, no se ha vivido" (24) ["childhood has been experienced distortedly or, in other words, it hasn't been experienced at all"]—recalls Jaime Gil de Biedma's *escueta paradoja* that the very young live through the war yet do not really experience it, "feeling it" only later. This sentiment has been echoed by critics who work on the texts at hand and apparently struggle with the fact that these authors have written about historical events to which they were exposed only indirectly. For example, speaking of the mid-century writers, Corrales Egea writes that "Los autores de esa promoción no tuvieron una experiencia suficiente de [la Guerra Civil]: los más viejos de la generación tenían en el momento del conflicto entre diez y once años; mientras que los más jóvenes carecen por así decir de recuerdos y experiencias directos" (72) ["The authors of that generation did not have sufficient experience of [the Civil War]: the oldest ones were ten and eleven at the time of the conflict, while the youngest lack memories and direct experiences"]. Building on this idea of "insufficient experience," Corrales Egea concludes that in Goytisolo's *Duelo en El Paraíso*

> la guerra no es—ni podía ser—el tema central, ya que el autor, de la misma edad a la sazón que la de sus personajes, no había sido sujeto protagonista en la misma. Pero la lucha echa su sombra sobre las páginas del libro, influencia en el cotidiano vivir de los niños, aunque la guerra, en sí, sea asunto que concierne a los mayores…El problema resulta ajeno, poco comprensible para la mentalidad infantil, ocupada principalmente por los juegos. (73)
>
> [The war is not—nor could it have been—the central theme, since the author was the same age as his protagonists during the war and thus did not play a role in it. But the conflict casts its shadow throughout the book, shaping the daily lives of the children, even if the war itself concerns their elders…The problem {of the war} is alien, incomprehensible, to the children, who are principally occupied by games.]

I am inclined to agree with Corrales Egea that the principal topic of the text is not the Civil War itself: as we shall see in the next chapter, I see the main topic as the difficulty of narrating wartime traumas, their reenactment of civil war via the death of a child, and the ultimate restoration of narration in tragedy's aftermath. But Corrales Egea's conclusion that the novel *cannot* have the Civil War as its central topic because Goytisolo was not a "sujeto protagonista" in the conflict seems exaggerated and poorly worded, given that an author's direct experience of an event is not a prerequisite for its fictionalization.[7] What Corrales Egea's poorly reasoned argument suggests, however, is the extent to which "experience" is often seen as a necessary precondition for narration—a logic that leaves children during the Civil War, fictional or

[7] To take another author as an example from the countless possibilities, it would be absurd to suggest that the 1985 novel *Luna de lobos* cannot really be about *yaquis* in the immediate post-war years simply because Julio Llamazares was born in 1955.

otherwise, incapacitated as narrators. But as we shall see, the child characters in the texts I study, particularly in *Duelo en El Paraíso*, are in fact the ones with the greatest narrative capacities and the characters via whom the experience of trauma is performed.

Once again, the problem seems to be the excessive fixation, in critics like Corrales Egea, on the authors' experience, or non-experience, of the war. Few have considered what this lack of experience means for child narrators or characters, whether they are the creations of authors who lived through the war as children, or of authors from another generation altogether. Though Sanz Villanueva speaks of *Duelo*'s "mayor verdad literaria al haber ceñido el autor una experiencia de la que él no tuvo conocimiento pleno y consciente—la guerra civil—al mundo de los niños" (401-402) ["greater literary truth, since the author connects to the world of children an experience—the civil war—of which he lacked direct, conscious knowledge"], he does not explore how a *lack* of experience and knowledge could yield this "greater literary truth" for a narrative of trauma. Furthermore, in addition to emphasizing the child's non-experience of war, some critics have posited that the child is unable to even comprehend bellicose conflict. For instance, José Luis Ponce de León begins his analysis of *Duelo* with the following observation: "La guerra fue para los niños algo incomprensible y lejano, aun en los casos en los que les tocaba de cerca por afectar directamente a sus formas de vida" (78) ["For children, the war was a remote and incomprehensible thing, even for those whose lives were directly affected by it"].

These observations about *Duelo en El Paraíso* bring to light some important aspects about the way Western society understands the cultural roles of children: apart from the anatomical and physiological differences between children and adults, what distinguishes one from the other is the former's comparatively limited claim to agency, knowledge, and experience. This is certainly the case for the child characters studied in this project, all of whom

are deprived of agency to some extent, struggle to understand "adult" matters like war and sex, and contend with adults who dismiss their concerns as the result of inexperience and naivety. And yet, as we shall see, the very same characteristics that marginalize children become, at times, a source of relative empowerment for the characters, granting them a certain discursive freedom within which they are forgiven for speaking the unspeakable. Moreover, the assumptions that inform our understanding of children as lacking agency, knowledge, and experience, are precisely what enable the child characters in these texts to perform trauma, which is itself understood as a state of limited knowledge and non-experience.

Although Jaime Gil de Biedma's description of wartime pertains just to children and thus engages with the questions outlined above, it bears striking similarities to the way that trauma, as experienced by adult survivors, is traditionally understood. According to Gil de Biedma, the children survive the war, but only begin to "feel it" at a much later date; though physically present, they paradoxically do not experience it. This is precisely how psychoanalysis has conceptualized trauma: as the survivor's belated psychological response to an event already witnessed or a bodily harm already suffered. In clinical terms, this is now known as *post-traumatic stress disorder*, which can manifest in people who have experienced an unusually and unexpectedly violent event for which they were psychologically unprepared. This lengthier clinical nomenclature, with its initial prefix, points to one of trauma's primary characteristics, and, indeed, its conceptual difficulty as an essentially retrospective phenomenon: in this study, trauma does not refer to the violent event itself, though the word is increasingly used in that way,[8] or even to the victim's simultaneous experience of it, but instead to the survivor's belated psychological encounters with it. Such encounters often consist of troubling dreams,

[8] Kai Erikson offers a careful clarification of the various meanings accorded to the word trauma. See "Notes on Trauma and Community" in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, Ed. Cathy Caruth, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, 184-185.

hallucinations, and uncanny repetitions of past violence in waking life. In modern pathology, these symptoms—together with a wide range of otherwise unexplainable physical ailments from headaches to gastrointestinal irritation—often result in a diagnosis of PTSD for victims of very different types of violence, whether localized as in the case of rape, or collectively shared as in the large-scale destruction of a natural disaster such as an earthquake. However, the quintessential example of trauma, whose modern conceptualization is rooted in nineteenth and early-twentieth-century reports of "war neurosis," is the veteran who continues to suffer psychologically though the threat of combat has passed.

Literary accounts of various trauma-like symptoms in soldiers seem to be as old as war itself. As an example Scott Macdonald Frame (128) points us to *De rerum natura* [*On the Nature of Things*] the six-book work written by the Roman poet Lucretius in the first century B.C. In Book IV's description of dreams, Lucretius offers the following verses about sleep disruption in combatants:

> Again, the minds of mortals which perform
> With mighty motions mighty enterprises,
> Often in sleep will do and dare the same
> In manner like. Kings take the towns by storm,
> Succumb to capture, battle on the field,
> Raise a wild cry as if their throats were cut
> Even then and there.

Lucretius's words powerfully depict the way that the original traumatic event can be repeatedly relived by the victim-survivor who has had a close brush with death. It is this apparent return of the traumatic event in dreams that occupied Freud centuries later in *Beyond the Pleasure*

Principle (1920), one of the primary texts on which modern psychoanalytical theories of trauma have been founded. What Freud finds particularly baffling is that these violent nightmares, unwelcome intrusions disturbing the sleep of war veterans and accident survivors alike, do not appear to correspond to his theory of wish fulfillment in dreams:

> The fulfilment of wishes is, as we know, brought about in a hallucinatory manner by dreams, and under the dominance of the pleasure principle this has become their function. But it is not in the service of that principle that the dreams of patients suffering from traumatic neuroses lead them back with such regularity to the situation in which the trauma occurred. We may assume, rather, that dreams are here helping to carry out another task, which must be accomplished before the dominance of the pleasure principle can even begin. These dreams are endeavouring to master the stimulus retrospectively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause of the traumatic neurosis. (31)

The *retrospective* nature of this phenomenon, emphasized here by Freud, has since become one of the primary defining characteristics of trauma. He continues to develop this concept in *Moses and Monotheism*, where he offers the hypothetical example of a man who has survived a train crash "apparently uninjured" only to develop, weeks afterward, symptoms of traumatic neurosis (66).

From Freud onwards, then, the traumatic event has thus been conceptualized as one whose happening "precludes its registration," in the words of Dori Laub (57). As the theory goes, despite their physical presence at, and even participation in, a catastrophe like war, survivors such as the children in Gil de Biedma's *escueta paradoja* do not psychically inscribe knowledge of the traumatic event as they do other, non-violent experiences. Thus, traumatic

dreams and repetition compulsions—the tendency of victims to unwittingly expose themselves to circumstances whereby the catastrophe is symbolically reenacted, often in tragic ways—become the means by which the psyche attempts to make sense of incomprehensible violence. If we apply this theory of trauma to Lucretius's soldiers, who in slumber, "raise a wild cry as if their throats were cut/Even then and there," we see that though the physical threat of death has passed—they are no longer on the battlefield—it is subsequently relived in another space during dreams as if it were an experience both real and primary.

In recent decades, trauma theories have been increasingly applied to, and continue to develop from, narrative studies within a theoretical framework of psychoanalysis. In the humanities, Holocaust memoirs by writers such as Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel have been particularly influential as we attempt to understand how trauma affects notions of selfhood and—most notably in the work of Dominick LaCapra[9]—the construction of historical narratives. Dori Laub's invaluable contributions to the field arose from his own experiences as a child survivor of the Holocaust, his psychoanalytical treatment of Holocaust survivors as an adult, and also from references to literary memoirs and cinematic texts.[10] In fact, Laub's work crystallizes the close relationship between trauma and narrative; according to his theory, the construction of the latter is a means by which a survivor of trauma can begin to escape the "ceaseless repetitions and reenactments" of the violent event:

> To undo this entrapment in a fate that cannot be known, cannot be told, but can only be repeated, a therapeutic process—a process of constructing a narrative, of reconstructing a history and essentially, of *re-externalizing the event*—has to be

[9] See, for example, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Cornell University Press, 1994) and *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

[10] See "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening" in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, Ed. Shoshana Feldman and Dori Laub (Routledge, 1992).

> set in motion. This re-externalization of the event can occur and take effect only when one can articulate it and *transmit* the story… (69, italics in the original)

Here Laub gets to the core of trauma's conceptual difficulty and, indeed, the near paradoxical nature of its potential undoing: the act of narrating that which is still unknown, and only begins to be known as the survivor offers forth a testimony. This tense dynamic between *not knowing* and *knowing* surfaces most sharply in Ana María Matute's *Primera memoria*, which I read as the very act of narration through which knowledge of violent past occurrences slowly emerges.

The psychoanalitcal theories that have arisen from Holocaust studies have in turn been used to study literary memoirs of other traumatic occurrences—most often cautiously, with the appropriate acknowledgement that genocide is a uniquely violent event with specific implications that cannot necessarily be generalized to all other experiences of trauma. For example, throughout *Untimely Interventions: AIDS Writing, Testimonial, and the Rhetoric of Haunting* (2004), Ross Chambers refers to Primo Levi's writings on Auschwitz to analyze the AIDS memoirs. It is partly from Levi that Chambers develops the notion of the "wake-up call" or "waking to pain," whereby the victim of a traumatic situation begins to "awaken" to its reality only after it has begun, or even passed entirely, a concept I shall take up at greater length in the coming pages.

Chambers's work is preceded by that of Cathy Caruth, who has made some of the most significant contributions to modern trauma studies. Her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996) has been tremendously useful for my analysis of the texts in this project. Building on notions of trauma offered forth by Freud and Lacan, Caruth emphasizes the temporal nature of trauma, seeing the victim's incomprehensibility of the violent event as a "missed encounter." Due to the sudden and shocking nature of the violence in question, it can

be understood as happening "too soon, too unexpectedly to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor" (4). Having thus "missed" the original event, the survivor only begins to attain knowledge of it belatedly. In this way, the psychological response of trauma in the aftermath of the event is viewed as the victim's *first encounter* with a violence already perpetrated, a threat already presented, witnessed, and perhaps bodily suffered, but as of yet unknown.

Caruth's emphasis on temporality in trauma lends itself especially well to the study of narrative in general—which I see, following Paul Ricoeur,[11] as defiant of chronological models of time—and the particular texts analyzed in this project. If even "the simplest story also escapes the ordinary notion of time conceived of as a series of instants succeeding one another along an abstract line oriented in a single direction" (174), then attempts to narrate traumatic events, which are psychically encountered *after* their occurrence, knock linear chronology entirely out of joint. Such is the case in Juan Goytisolo's *Duelo en El Paraíso*; though the main diegesis is locatable in a specific historical moment at the Civil War's end in 1939, accounts of previous traumas, offered by multiple narrating characters, permeate the text, making it extremely difficult for the reader to re-construct a clear chronological order of events. All the more confusing are the striking similarities between the traumatic deaths of two characters—Abel, whose death opens the main diegesis, and David, whose death of many years before is narrated in the middle of the novel—such that the reader is at times unable to differentiate between the demise of the latter and its uncanny reenactment in the assassination of the former. I contend that this narrative structure, whereby the reader's "first encounter" with a tragic event

[11] See "Narrative Time," *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980): 169-190.

(David's death) is actually the reenactment of it (Abel's death), tragic in its own right, performs the sort of disjointed temporality that characterizes traumatic experience.

So too does the narrative structure of Matute's *Primera memoria* produce a temporality that recalls trauma. In my analysis of her novel, which features a past-tense account related by the protagonist Matia in a temporally unlocatable present, I consider how the narrative voice folds in upon itself, or echoes itself incessantly, such that it is impossible to differentiate between the thoughts of the adult narrator and those of her fourteen-year-old self. Indeed, the very notion of a *primera memoria*, when the memory in question deals with tragedy, begs to be analyzed in terms of trauma theory, according as it does primacy to a *memory* rather than to the event that preceded it. We can thus see Matia's memories of tragedy—her belated psychical encounter with it—as a *first encounter*.

While Manuel Lamana's *Los inocentes* contains the most chronologically direct plot of the three texts studied in this project, the order in which wartime events are narrated to the reader still corresponds to the victim's experience of trauma. *Los inocentes* begins *en media res*, after the Civil War has already started and with the fourteen-year-old protagonist, Luis, already thrust into daily violence and nightly bombardments. This is also the case in both *Duelo en El Paraíso* and *Primera memoria*, where the diegetic levels that deal with the war open after it has already begun. Thus, the structure of these novels literalizes for the reader the experience of trauma undergone by the characters: we miss the onset of the threat—the war's beginning—and encounter it "too late."

When analyzing the film *Hiroshima mon amour*, Caruth conceptualizes trauma as a "late arrival" or "missed encounter," an approach conducive to all three texts. According to Caruth's analysis, traumatic death witnessed by the survivor is an unknowable event, characterized by "an

unbridgeable abyss, an inherent gap of knowing, within the very immediacy of sight, the moment of the other's death" (39). Gil de Biedma's paradox is thus recalled by Caruth's work on *Hiroshima mon amour*, which claims that "the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it; that immediacy, paradoxically, may take the form of belatedness" (91-92). Once again, this experience of trauma is performed by plot element in the novels here studied: all three protagonists—and so too the reader, whose knowledge is limited to theirs—literally miss the moment of death, stumbling upon corpses or hearing the unwelcome news from another source. As such, both character and reader have no knowledge of the violent circumstances that led to tragedy—they uncover them belatedly, or not at all—and trauma as an unknowable event, or an "event without a witness," in Laub's terms, is again literalized.

For his part, Laub posits traumatic experience in the aftermath of tragedy not precisely as a "late arrival" or a "missed encounter" but rather as a response to a painful event that "has no beginning, no ending, no before, no during, and no after…[it] could not and did not proceed through to its completion" (69). This perceived endlessness certainly surfaces in the description offered by Gil de Biedma, who, writing after Franco's death, refers to "los interminables años de nuestra juventud" ["the interminable years of our youth"] that took place during the dictatorship. The fact that the texts studied in this project were written during the post-war period under Franco's regime brings us to an important extra-diegetic reason why they may be approached as performances of trauma: just as the trauma survivor may psychically respond to the previously experienced violence as if it were ongoing, these novels respond to a threat that, in Spain, had literally not passed. Though organized combat officially ended in 1939, and the guerrilla warfare of the *maquis* had dwindled into near non-existence by the early 1950s, the regime itself—its ideological repression, its censorship of cultural production—was still very much present.

Therefore, we must be sensitive to the historical circumstances of publication and Spanish readers who were continuing to experience the Francoist threat not just psychically (we may speculate), but literally. Though the narratives themselves remain the main focus of my analyses, this point—which is particularly important in my reading of *Los inocentes*—emphasizes the extent to which the performance of trauma by these texts is not quite the same for the modern reader as it was for their original audience.

Moreover, the question of censorship brings us to another important factor concerning the role of children in stories about the war: since they are presumed to be inexperienced and unknowledgeable, children are not expected to understand politics or the issues at stake in a military conflict; thus they are perhaps the ideal protagonists for war stories of the Francoist era, when censorship prevented literary dialogue with the liberal discourses to which most Spanish intellectuals of the time adhered. That is, child protagonists allow authors to skirt political issues in a realistic way, whereas an adult protagonist ignorant of the issues at stake would be perhaps unconvincing. This may well have been a factor in the composition of novels such as *Duelo en El Paraíso*, which, according to Sanz Villanueva, "no es una novela de la guerra civil—para nada interesan sus causas— sino de la percepción del conflicto desde una óptica que no es parte interesada ni responsable de él" (401-402) ["is not a novel about the civil war, whose causes are of no concern, but rather the perception of the conflict from a viewpoint that lacks both bias and accountability"].

Returning to trauma theory, I submit one final point that is crucial to my reading of the texts in the project: the notion of the awakening, which Caruth develops within the theoretical framework of trauma following Freud and Lacan. We can readily see that the relationship between sleep and wakefulness lends itself to a representation of trauma: trauma victims can be

said to have metaphorically slumbered through the original event at which they were present, "awakening" to its reality only in its aftermath. That this is an appropriate and accessible metaphor for trauma is made apparent by the fact that the figurative language of "awakening" is used by non-psychoanalysts to discuss the experience of trauma, as in Hipólito Esteban Soler's description: "A los de la generación que comenzó a destacarse…les sorprendió una durísima posguerra en la que espabilaron cruelmente" (310) ["The generation that began to gain prominence around 1954…were jolted by a harrowing post-war that cruelly shook them awake"[12]]. And while the authors' discussion of their own childhood is not the primary concern in this project, Matute's recollection lends further credence to the usefulness of awakening as a metaphor for the way war may be experienced: "Estalló un mundo nuevo. Conocí los bombardeos, la violencia, el terror, el odio y la muerte. El pequeño mundo de mi infancia burguesa, cambió de la noche a la mañana…la vida se me reveló entonces bruscamente, casi sin transición. De la noche a la mañana, el mundo había cambiado" (*El autor enjuicia su obra* 142-43) ["A new world exploded. I came to know air raids, violence, terror, hatred, and death. The little world of my bourgeois childhood changed overnight…life revealed itself to me abruptly, without transition. The world had changed overnight"]. The repetition in close proximity of the phrase "de la noche a la mañana" certainly confirms our reading of the *awakening* as an apt metaphor for the sudden, unexpected nature of extreme violence—Matute's wording implies that she "awakened" violently to a world unrecognizably different—"un mundo nuevo"—from that of night before. If the war is perceived as unexpectedly occurring "overnight," as in Matute's words—"Overnight, we the children had to ask why the nuns from our school were wearing street clothes, why they fled or hid; why our father's factory was no longer our father's…" (qtd.

[12] Used as an intransitive verb as it is here, *espabilar* is difficultly rendered into English. In this usage, the RAE defines it as "salir del sueño," to wake up from sleep, and as a reflexive verb, "sacudirse del sueño," to shake oneself from sleep. I have translated it using the transitive verb *to wake*, which works better in English.

In Diaz 32)—then the awakening indeed represents the stuggle of the survivor, having metaphorically slumbered through the event, to understand its happening.

This metaphor is developed by Caruth, who argues that in Freudian and Lacanian trauma theory "the awakening represents a paradox about the necessity and impossibility of confronting death" in a traumatic event (100). Survivors awaken not only to belated knowledge of the event, but to the knowledge of their own "late arrival," their failure to prevent the death of another. I use this notion of the awakening throughout my analysis of the three novels in this study, each of which feature scenes of literal awakening that can be interpreted as metaphors for the shock of traumatic experience. Furthermore, I contend that not only do these narratives present characters who "awaken to trauma," they also have the power, as performative texts, to awaken *the reader* to knowledge of how trauma is experienced.

The awakening has another representational function in these three novels: because the main child characters range in age from eleven to fourteen, they are engaged in the transition from childhood to adulthood—though they are unmistakably treated as children—and their situation can thus be interpreted as an "awakening" to maturity. Again, the scenes of awakenings within the texts, most notably in *Primera memoria*, lend themselves to this reading, as they are often symbolic of the characters' confusion and attempts to gain knowledge about adult behavior ranging from sexual relations to battlefield violence. In these novels, the disorientation that one feels in the moment of awakening, the passage from slumber to consciousness, represents both the incomprehension experienced upon encountering a traumatic event and the many uncertainties that characterize children's passage to adulthood.

Awakening as a metaphor for trauma is literalized most directly in Juan Goytisolo's 1955 novel *Duelo en El Paraíso*—the subject of my first chapter—whose protagonist is literally

woken by the story's central event. Indeed, the gunshot that kills eleven-year-old Abel awakens the main character, a deserter of the Republican forces who is subsequently unable to explain the child's death to the recently arrived Nationalists. In this way, *Duelo en El Paraíso* makes literal the psychological "not-knowing" or metaphorical slumbering that defines a survivor's relationship to traumatic experience. I argue that the text thus posits the problem of narrating traumatic experience as an enunciative one originating in victims who cannot speak of their violent past because, for all psychological purposes, they have still not experienced it. Abel's assassins—fellow children who have imitated in "play" the adult behavior they have observed, but not understood, thereby creating a repetition in miniature of widespread violence—ultimately emerge as capable narrators of his death, providing us with a story that can be seen as a substitute for the larger narrative of war, which in itself remains necessarily untold by the traumatized adults. I conclude that *Duelo en El Paraíso* presents children—who become both the narrating subject and narrated object of violence—as capable of restoring narration in the aftermath of trauma.

If Goytisolo's novel emphasizes the enunciative difficulties posed by narrating trauma, Manuel Lamana's *Los inocentes* explores receptive limitations. In my second chapter I contend that both the text itself and the circumstances of its 1959 publication with Lamana in exile engage with the inaudibility of trauma: if and when violent events are described, such an account can still go unheard, in part due to the refusal of potential listeners to receive testimony. Even if survivors are able to speak of their experience and, in doing so, *awaken to* the knowledge of a catastrophic event, they may struggle to find an audience willing to be *woken by* their narrative. Again and again, the fourteen-year-old protagonist of *Los inocentes*—who is himself "awakening" to maturity—encounters adults who actively discourage such narration. This

imposition of silence by authority figures in turn breeds self-censorship on the part of the would-be enunciator. In this way, even as the text's plot takes place during the war itself, it speaks to the larger, cultural problems of inaudibility in late 1950s Spain at the time of publication. Yet, I argue that Lamana's text also presents children as having the potential to overcome the difficulties of narrating trauma: because they have not yet been completely conditioned by the normative discursive practices of adults, children step forward as willing listeners to testimonies that the adult shun, and they are permitted improper utterances—the "rude awakenings" referenced in the title of this project—for which the adult would be chastised. But despite its presentation of children's redemptive potential and their distinct discursive practices, *Los inocentes* is by and large a pessimistic text that emphasizes the temporary nature of this redemption—for children grow up—and exhibits self-awareness of its own inaudibility.

My third chapter asserts that the narrative structure of Ana María Matute's *Primera memoria*, also from 1959, enacts for the reader the very mechanism of trauma itself in its retrospective and repetitive essence. The many references to echoes in the text underpin a narrative structure based upon the reverberation of childhood in adulthood, as the adult Matia relates her painful experiences as a fourteen-year-old during the first months of war in 1936 as well as a series of personal traumas endured in years prior. As the only one of the three texts in the first person and with an explicit acknowledgement of the passage of time between narrated past and narrative present, *Primera memoria* lends itself well to my reading of it as an awakening, as the very enunciative act through which a trauma survivor may awaken to partial knowledge of a violent past. This reading is strengthened by many scenes of awakening that frame the text in a nearly symmetrical manner. But because we locate Matia's metaphorical awakening not in the memories she shares of literal awakenings, but in the way she relates them

and the symbolic charge she gives them in the narrative present, the readers witness the very process of bearing testimony to a traumatic event, a process which necessarily takes place in the event's aftermath. That is, while Goytisolo's and Lamana's texts consider the difficulties of narrating trauma—an act with the potential to awaken its narrator, the survivor, to knowledge of the violent event—*Primera memoria* constitutes this very act as it is realized by a fictional character in front of the implicit reader.

Before delving into my analyses of these texts, I would like to conclude my introductory chapter by explaining why I chose these three novels from amongst the many possible narratives and memoirs about children during the Spanish Civil War, any number of which may lend themselves to an investigation similar to the one here undertaken. Because these three texts from the 1950s are some of the first to explore themes of childhood against the historical backdrop of the war—indeed, they are amongst the earliest fictional Spanish narratives to be written about the war—they represent the "first encounter" between literary production in Spain and its recent history of combat, an encounter that, as we have seen, took place when the aftermath of this history was still being lived during Franco's regime. More importantly, and as indicated in previous summaries of my individual arguments, I believe that even as all three texts engage with multiple aspects of trauma—the non-agency, not-knowing, and non-experience presumably common to both children and victims of trauma—each one more emphatically performs a different aspect in particular: *Duelo en El Paraíso* accesses, via the characters' inability to talk about the war, the unspeakability of the traumatic event; *Los inocentes* reveals, through its characters' reluctance to listen to accounts of violence offered by children, the difficulty of hearing testimony even when it can be enunciated; and *Primera memoria* enacts, with its first-person narration of tragedy in its aftermath, the creation of knowledge that begins to take place

when survivors of trauma ultimately speak of their past. Taken collectively, then, these three texts offer a portrayal of trauma more nuanced and sensitive than that provided by any one of them alone.

CHAPTER 1

IF I SHOULD DIE BEFORE YOU WAKE: JUAN GOYTISOLO'S *DUELO EN EL PARAÍSO*

The introductory line of Juan Goytisolo's *Duelo en El Paraíso* reads almost as that stock phrase so beloved by English-language mystery writers worldwide: "Suddenly, a shot rang out!" Indeed, the text's opening announcement that "En la ladera del bosque de alcornoques, el disparo de un arma de fuego no podía augurar nada bueno"[13] (9) ["Down the slope where the cork-trees cluster, the shot of a firearm could only augur ill" (9)] primes the reader for a sort of detective-fiction experience. In fact, the novel does have much in common with that genre[14]—after all, it begins with a murder that the protagonist, Martín Elósegui, attempts to solve as he collects evidence regarding the circumstances of the crime. And yet, it quickly becomes apparent that *Duelo en El Paraíso* is much more than a typical murder mystery. Within the first few pages, a narrative of trauma emerges from the chain of events, the order in which they are related, and the characters' reactions to them. It is not first and foremost a narration of a traumatic event—the war—though, to be sure, the tragedies present in the text are many. Rather, *Duelo en El Paraíso* is a narrative about trauma in that it explores the impossibility of fully experiencing a catastrophic event in its happening and the subsequent challenges posed by attempts at its relation. It posits the problem of narrating traumatic experience as enunciative, as originating in survivors who cannot speak of the war because, for all psychological purposes, they still lack full, conscious knowledge of it.

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[13] Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes in English are from Christine Brooke-Rose's 1958 translation, *Children of Chaos*.

[14] Kessel Schwartz (55) and María del Carmen Porrúa (46) have also observed that the text's structure evokes that of a detective novel.

The first lines of the text, however, deal most simply with the literal ignorance logically experienced by someone who is physically absent from an event: "En la ladera del bosque de alcornoques, el disparo de una arma de fuego no podía augurar nada bueno. Al oírlo, Elósegui despertó de su modorra y se incorporó sobresaltado" (9) [Down the slope where the cork-trees cluster, the shot of a firearm could only augur ill. The sound roused Martín Elósegui from his drowsiness and he sat up, startled (9).] The reader's initial reaction to these lines is likely confusion. Like Elósegui, we do not know for whom this shot was intended nor from whence it came. It is only after the shot itself that Elósegui emerges from his cave and begins to recover evidence, like a detective, of what has occurred. The text thus thrusts the reader into a state of ignorance similar to Elósegui's—our narrative absence from the event mirrors his physical one.

In turn, the literal ignorance that results from these absences speaks to the way theorists have conceptualized the psychological experience of trauma. Let us recall, from the introductory chapter of this project, that Cathy Caruth locates the site of trauma not necessarily in the event itself—for example, a war or the death of a loved one—but in the survivor's subsequent struggles and ultimate inability to ever fully know the event. That is, the violent nature of trauma presents such a shock to victims' psyches that they do not initially have conscious access to knowledge of what has happened. Caruth offers the following explanation of trauma in the introduction to *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*:

> The breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world is not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that…is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor…Trauma is not locatable in the

> simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on. (4, italics in the original)

Building on the notion that the psyche can only begin to consciously access the event in its aftermath, Caruth approaches trauma as a sort of "late arrival," in which the mind is shocked not only by violence itself but more precisely by the inability to recognize the potential threat in a timely fashion—the catastrophe, as it were, is always apprehended "one moment too late" (62). In this way, the engagement of *Duelo en El Paraíso* with detective fiction—the genre which gave us "suddenly, a shot rang out!"—not only imbues the text with suspense, but establishes it as a narrative of trauma. The very chronological structure of the narrative, which opens with a violence already realized and details the protagonist's struggle to gain knowledge of this event, in essence performs the mechanism of trauma for the reader. Along with Elósegui, we arrive too late to the scene of the gunshot, a literal tardiness which recalls the psychological experience of a trauma victim.

If the necessary critical history and plot summary of *Duelo en El Paraíso* have been slow to materialize in these pages, it is because I have wished to respect the initial confusion into which the reader is thrust upon a first reading of the novel; as we have seen, this state of ignorance is fundamental to the text's status as a narrative of trauma. However, I shall now provide my readers with the background details necessary for our analysis. *Duelo en El Paraíso*, published in 1955, is Juan Goytisolo's second novel. As one of his earliest works, it has received considerably less critical attention than his more experimental fiction, which began in 1966 with the publication of *Señas de identidad*, the first book of the Álvaro Mendiola trilogy. Though the literary quality of the novels published by Goytisolo in the 1950s varies, they certainly do not

suffer from aesthetic impoverishment, and *Duelo en El Paraíso* has at times been considered on a par with Goytisolo's later fiction. The author himself has identified this novel as the best of his early texts,[15] and Matilde Albert Robatto deems its lyricism worthy of comparison with that of the much more critically acclaimed *Señas de identidad* (128). Currie Thompson (354) and José Carlos Pérez (40) have both echoed this sentiment, identifying Goytisolo's second novel, given its poetic qualities, as the early work most closely related with his later ones. José María Martínez Cachero—writing in 1973, after the publication of the first two books of the Álvaro Mendiola trilogy—goes so far as to claim that after *Duelo* "Nunca más ha conseguido Goytisolo logro tan rico y seductor" (212) ["Goytisolo has not since written anything as wonderful and seductive"].

Though *Duelo en El Paraíso* receives mention in most general critical works on the postwar novel, such references tend toward the insubstantial, ranging from brief plot summaries to lengthier but still fairly superficial treatments of the book's most prominent themes. Together with Goytisolo's other early works, *Duelo* is usually discussed in terms of its role in the larger trajectory of the author's extensive literary career. While such an approach is doubtlessly necessary within critical inquiry, it perhaps tends to neglect the literary value of the text as it stands alone. Unfortunately, the number of critical articles that undertake close analytical readings of the text remains limited. Some scholars, such as Jo Labanyi, Jeremy Squires, and Currie Thompson, have studied the function of myth in the text, seeing it as anticipatory of Goytisolo's later works. Given the relatively few critics who have conducted a detailed textual

[15] According to an interview conducted with Matilde Albert Robatto in April of 1975 (Albert Robatto 128). However, in a prior interview with Emir Rodríguez Monegal in 1967, Goytisolo also expressed sadness that the book was written at such a young age "De todas las novelas de este período, *Duelo en el Paraíso* es la mejor y la más interesante. Me da gran tristeza haberla escrito a los 23 años porque si la hubiese escrito diez años después hubiese hecho algo completamente diferente; hubiese aprovechado de verdad todas las posibilidades del tema" (qtd. in Martínez Cachero 212) ["Of all my novels from that time, *Duelo en El Paraíso* is the best and the most interesting. It makes me sad to have written it at 23, because if I had written it ten years later I would have done something completely different; I would have really taken advantage of all the subject's possibilities"].

analysis of *Duelo en El Paraíso*, many of the text's nuances have yet to be examined in closer detail, an endeavor undertaken here.

Duelo en El Paraíso takes place in rural Barcelona, near Gerona, during the collapse of the Republican front in 1939. As the text begins, the Republican army has just vacated the locale in anticipation of the arrival of the Nationalist troops. Those remaining in the forested area are few: among them are Martín Elósegui, a deserter of the Republican army; and a group of refugee children who, after many months of corruption by close proximity to violence, have long since implemented their own version of a society at war, complete with military-style interrogations and the summary execution of Abel Sorzano. Soon after discovering the body of eleven-year-old Abel—the recipient of the text's initial gunshot—Elósegui surrenders to the newly arrived Nationalist troops, who question him regarding the whereabouts of the refugee children and their possible motive for executing Abel. Eventually, the children are captured and reveal the events leading up to Abel's death: his letters written to both Republican and Nationalist generals, asking to be admitted to the military forces in spite of his youth; his friendship with Pablo, with whom he conspires to leave the countryside and join the fighting at the front; the betrayal that severs this friendship when Pablo escapes on his own; and the apparent willingness with which the newly betrayed and disillusioned Abel submits himself to execution at the hands of the refugee children. As both the refugee children and Elósegui recall their encounters with Abel, the reader is launched into a series of back stories, a temporal narrative shift which reveals the history not only of the victim in question but that of a host of other characters as well: Dora, Elósegui's lover who is killed along with their unborn child in a Nationalist air raid; Estanislaa, Abel's eccentric great aunt and the matriarch of the El Paraíso estate who has buried two sons in

her lifetime; and *El Gallego*, the vagabond bearing scars from the war of '98 who forms an unlikely friendship with Abel.

All of these characters deal with death in some form or another. Abel's mother dies much like Dora; she is pregnant when she is killed by a bomb in Barcelona. Other deaths are wholly unrelated to the war: Estanislaa's first son dies young, presumably from natural causes, while her older son is killed in a car crash as a young adult. And yet despite the decades separating the various deaths in the text as well as the vastly different circumstances under which they occur, these deaths are connected not only through their uncannily similar details but also by the unspeakability that each death generates. That is, the survivors' response to the deaths of their loved ones is consistent with trauma as conceptualized in psychoanalytic theory: they are initially unable to narrate these events because they have not yet come to know them. In *Duelo en El Paraíso,* this inability is often presented as literal speechlessness. Tongue-tied or entirely silenced in the aftermath of death, the survivors are often no more able to speak than are the victims they mourn.

However, there is one general exception to this rule—throughout the text, both children and child-like adults are presented as being capable of narrating traumatic events, even if this narration is considerably delayed. In fact, the text offers them forth as narrators privileged by virtue of special connections to both storytelling and death. Furthermore, Abel's assassination by fellow children, imitating in "play" the adult behavior they have observed around them, represents a reenactment in miniature of a prior catastrophic event that forms the text's background: the war itself. As such, for the soldiers attempting to reconstruct Abel's death in its aftermath, this occurrence is at once a repetition of the original trauma of war and a new trauma in its own right. In both cases, the atrocities appear to be fundamentally unspeakable. But when

Abel's assassins emerge as capable narrators of his death, they provide us with a story that can be seen as a substitute for the larger narrative of war, which in itself remains necessarily untold by the traumatized, battle-weary adults.

Trauma, Unspeakability & The Language of Silence

As we have seen, the concept of a trauma victim's "late arrival" to knowledge of a catastrophic event is literalized in *Duelo en El Paraíso*, for Elósegui actually arrives to the site of Abel's death "one moment too late." In the brief period of time between the shot that opens the text and Elósegui's discovery of the body, the soldier's ignorance and confusion are emphasized as he struggles to reconcile the shot he hears in the forest with the belief that he is alone: "En todo el valle, lo sabía, no quedaba un alma. Sin embargo, *el disparo había sonado* y, tras él, un rumor de pasos, incomprensible"[16] (12, italics in the original) ["He knew that not a soul remained in the whole valley; nevertheless, he had heard a shot and, after it, a sound of footsteps, incomprehensible" (12)]. This incomprehension is only heightened when Eloségui eventually finds Abel's body:

> El cuerpo estaba allí, a veinte metros escasos de distancia, y le pareció incomprensible no haberlo visto antes…
>
> Sabía que estaba muerto, pero no comprendía aún. Veinticuatro horas antes le había visto lleno de vida…Ahora, por alguna causa que ignoraba, Abel había muerto. Alguien le había asesinado.
>
> «¡Gran Dios, si apenas tiene doce años!» Quería comprender a toda costa. (16-17)

> A body was there, barely twenty yards away, and he couldn't understand why he hadn't seen it before…he knew the child was dead, but still he couldn't explain it. Twenty-four hours before he had seen him full of life…Now, for some reason, Abel was dead—someone had murdered him. 'Good God! He can't have been more than twelve years old!' Martín wanted at all costs to understand. (15-16)

Elósegui's inability to comprehend Abel's death apparently revolves around the gap between having seen him so recently in life, and now finding him dead—he does not understood how he could have missed seeing the body, and he fails to reconcile the living Abel of yesterday with the dead one of today. That is, what Elósegui struggles to understand is not the death itself but how he could have come upon it *too late*; he has seen the child in life and he has seen him in death, but the moment of the child's dying has been missed.

In this sense, Elósegui's discovery of Abel's body recalls Caruth's analysis, in Chapter 2 of *Unclaimed Experience*, of the French film *Hiroshima mon amour*. According to Caruth's reading, the trauma of the female protagonist is not precisely that her German lover dies but that the moment of his death continues to elude her: "Between the 'when' of seeing his dying and the 'when' of his actual death there is an unbridgeable abyss, an inherent gap of knowing, within the very immediacy of sight, the moment of the other's death." (39) While the woman in the film is present when her lover dies yet unable to pinpoint the moment of his expiration, Elosegui's physical absence from the child's assassination, the way in which he does not "know" this death, emphasizes this knowledge gap to an even greater extent. That this gap is unbridgeable, at least initially, is apparent in Elósegui's continued ignorance. Though he is now aware that violence has occurred, he still does not know the reason for the assassination or the identity of the perpetrators: "por alguna causa que ignoraba, Abel había muerto." In this regard, the use of the

present tense in Elósegui's verbalized thoughts is especially interesting, for though Elósegui *knows* Abel to be dead—"sabía que estaba muerto"—he speaks of him as if he were still alive—"«¡Gran Dios, si apenas *tiene* doce años!» Quería comprender a toda costa" (emphasis mine). This can be read as Elósegui's unconscious attempt to resuscitate Abel so as to be able to witness, to *know*, as it were, the moment of his death and its circumstances. This tension between Elósegui's awareness that Abel is dead and his inability to comprehend or accept his death recalls Caruth's assertion that trauma "resists simple comprehension" (6).

In the description of Elósegui's discovery of the body, also important is the repetition of the verb *ver*, to see, which in English and Spanish alike can refer to both comprehension and literal vision. Whereas Elósegui does not literally see the body at first, he fails to comprehend it—continues not to "see" it—even after the viewing. While his initial failure to view the body can be seen as a literalization of a traumatic event, in which an eyewitness misses or "does not see" a tragedy directly observed, his incomprehension in the aftermath of death mirrors the survivor's psychic experience. From this perspective, particularly interesting is Kessel Schwartz's designation of death as the "unforeseen protagonist" (58) in *Duelo en El Paraíso.* This description, written several decades before literary scholars began to take an interest in trauma studies, lends itself particularly well to the theoretical framework of trauma. The "unforeseen" nature of tragic death is precisely what survivors struggle to come to terms with—their late arrival to psychic knowledge of the traumatic event is felt, in Caruth's terms, as a "failure to see in time" (100). In *Duelo*, Abel's death is unforeseen by Elósegui on multiple levels: it is unexpected, glimpsed belatedly, and incomprehensible even after literal viewing.

Since Elóseugi did not see, and continues not to "see," the tragedy upon which he belatedly stumbles—he lacks factual information about what happened, and also struggles with

the ethical implications of the assassination of a child—he is logically unable to adequately narrate to the newly arrived Nationalist troops. Upon Elósegui's announcement that he has found a dead child in the forest, an incredulous sergeant asks, "¿Un niño…muerto?" ["A boy…dead?"] seemingly struggling to reconcile the adjective with the noun it modifies. Elósegui responds to this disbelief: "Sí, asesinado, ejecutado… No sé encontrar el término. Tal vez lo explique el diccionario" (28) ["Yes—murdered, executed…I don't know what the correct term is. Perhaps the dictionary will explain. . . ." (26)].There is no word that can accurately convey what has happened—for Elósegui, Abel's murder, in its logic-defying horror, exists in the realm of the ineffable. During the consequent interrogation by the Nationalist lieutenant, Elósegui is unable to speak coherently: "Hacía veinte minutos que Elósegui estaba allí, intentando responder a las preguntas de modo coherente. Aquella mañana, en virtud de un azar extraño, la empresa resultaba extraordinariamente difícil…Le costaba aferrar sus pensamientos, que se escurrían como gotitas de mercurio entre los dedos apenas trataba de asirlos" (35) ["Martín was there for twenty minutes, trying to answer questions coherently; but, owing to the morning's disturbing incidents the effort seemed exhausting…he could hardly grapple with his thoughts, which ran like mercury between fingers as soon as he tried to catch them" (33)]. Though Eloségui is unable to tell the lieutenant what happened because he does not know why Abel was assassinated, his inability to answer the questions clearly goes beyond mere ignorance: his shock at Abel's death, an incomprehensibly violent event, has left him literally speechless.

Furthermore, it is not only Abel's death that Eloségui is unable to understand—he is similarly uncomprehending in the face of the text's larger trauma, the war itself: "La vecinidad del frente, los fugitivos—¿huir de qué, de quién?—la voladura de los fortines, la noche en blanco, su ocultamiento y su entrega se encadenaban obedeciendo a las reglas de una lógica que

[Elósegui] aún no comprendía" (35) ["The nearness of the front, the fugitives—fleeing from what, from whom?—the blowing up of the forts, the sleepless nights, his hiding and giving himself up…all these facts were linked by the rules of a logic that no one could understand" (33)]. Eloségui's lack of comprehension of both Abel's death and the battlefield violence underscores the connection between the two events, whereby the child's assassination can be read as a repetition of the larger conflict that looms in the background. There are several factors in the text that support this reading of the child's death. First, we have the rather obvious association of Abel's name, which symbolically renders him the victim of a fratricidal murder. Having been killed by his "brothers," Abel reenacts in his death any loss of life in the Civil War, also a symbolically fratricidal conflict. Furthermore, the children's violent game, which is ultimately responsible for Abel's assassination, is explicitly presented as a reenactment of the wartime behavior that they have seen in the adult world, as the children "se entregaban a lo sangriento de sus juegos en medio de lo más duro del combate…absorbiendo los modos de los mayores" (19) [" At the height of the combat, the children gave themselves over to bloody games, assuming the roles of their elders"], eventually forming "un verdadero reino de terror, con sus jefes, lugartenientes, espías, y soplones" (57) ["a real reign of terror, with its chiefs, its deputies, its spies and its tale-bearers" (53)]. In this way, Abel's death is a repetition, on a smaller scale, of any and all deaths caused by the larger conflict.

Moreover, this reenactment in the text once again evokes the theory of trauma. In Chapter 3 of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Sigmund Freud considers how violent happenings—such as those experienced on the battlefield—are repeated for the survivors, not only via nightmares and flashbacks but also in very real events that uncannily reenact the earlier catastrophe. It is through this unwelcome reenactment that the survivor's psyche struggles to

attain full knowledge of the occurrence. For Elósegui, then, Abel's assassination is just such a repetition of the general violence of the war itself, since it reenacts the conflict in miniature. Additionally, the description of Eloségui's reaction after discovering Abel's body is strikingly similar to his prior encounters with death during the war. As Elósegui begins to recount to the Nationalists his interactions with Abel and the narrative thus shifts backwards in time, it appears he was equally uncomprehending upon learning of the death of his lover, Dora. Upon receiving the news of her death from the local schoolteacher, Quintana, Elósegui becomes nearly impenetrable to words: "Aunque Martín le veía mover los labios no percibía ninguna palabra…lo mismo que si le hubiesen sumergido en una campana de vidrio y se hubiese vuelto repentinamente sordo" (55-56) ["Martín could see his lips moving, but he couldn't hear a word…just as if he had been enclosed in a glass bell and had gone stonedeaf" (51)]. This inaudibility—an aspect of trauma I will explore in the following chapter—in which Elósegui is deaf to Quintana's words, constitutes an appropriate counterpart to the muteness he experiences when questioned by the Nationalists. By first revealing Elósegui's reaction to Abel's death, and only then informing the reader by flashback of the earlier events of which the current reaction constitutes a repetition, the structure of *Duelo en El Paraíso* reminds us that trauma is fundamentally a retroactive phenomenon whereby the survivor returns, unwittingly and repeatedly, to a past event via present ones in an effort to comprehend the former.

As the characters are one by one struck figuratively deaf and dumb in the wake of their brushes with death, silence is at times perceived as having communicative potential. The Nationalist sergeant Santos perhaps sees this possibility most clearly: "la guerra le había enseñado el significado del silencio: los había acechantes, tensos, como los que precedían al estallar de las granadas, otros, hechos de espera, jalonados de mil pausas y rumores; algunos, en

fin, apaciguantes, reparadores como el sueño" (116) ["War had taught him to recognize the significance of silences: there were the tense, waiting silences, like those preceding the explosion of hand-grenades; others were made of respite, shafted with a thousand pauses and rumours; some were pacific, and strength-gathering, like sleep" (111)]. In the wake of the destruction of the war, silence has become meaningful in the absence of sound, thereby becoming a possible language of trauma. For Elósegui's part, after discovering Abel's body in the forest, he observes "Todo callaba: animales, árboles, y seres humanos, y aquel silencio se le antojó a Martín más contundente que la pública confesión del crimen, cuyo peso asumía el bosque entero" (18) ["All were still, animals, trees, and men; and this silence oppressed him more than any public confession to the crime, whose guilt lay heavy on every created thing" (17)]. Thus, though the atrocity committed against Abel is unspeakable, the *absence* of speech in fact "speaks" convincingly of this violent experience. Similarly, we can perhaps find more meaning in Elósegui's inability to respond to the Nationalists' questions than we would hypothetically find in coherently narrated answers. Paradoxically, then, silence becomes at once the purest expression of unspeakability but also the only means by which—at this moment in the text, at least—the possibility of narration is somewhat restored at the site of trauma.

Other moments within *Duelo en El Paraíso* suggest that unspeakability is not unique to wartime but is rather more generally related to trauma occasioned by death in any form. Doña Estanislaa is initially unable to speak upon learning of the death of her first son, David, a death which receives prolonged narrative attention and lends itself well to a more extensive analysis. The reader learns of the circumstances of David's death as Estanislaa narrates them for Abel, a narration which takes the reader several decades back to Panama, where Estanislaa and her husband are vacationing with their son during carnival. Estanislaa's husband convinces her to

accompany him to a costume party, despite her desire to stay with David in the hotel. Once at the party, she is overcome with unease: "Un deseo frenético de hablar con el niño le abrasaba la garganta" (143) ["A frantic desire to talk with her son seized her, burning her throat" (136)]. As Estanislaa senses that all is not well with her son, her concern thus manifests itself in an overwhelming desire not merely to *see* her son but to *speak* with him. She seemingly intuits that speech itself would be a better indication of his well-being: after all, the dead cannot speak. And yet it is her very desire to speak that renders her unable to do so, burning her throat and then rendering her speech virtually incomprehensible: "Las palabras se atropellaban en su garganta y resultaba difícil ordenarlas en forma de discurso" (144) ["The words tumbled out incoherently and she found it difficult to order them in some sort of sense" (137)].

Like Elósegui, Estanislaa is incapacitated both as enunciator and as receptor. Not only is she unable speak at times, she is also unable to understand what others say: "En el vestíbulo se oían pasos, susurros, voces sin sentido" (144) ["In the hall there were steps, whispers, voices without meaning" (138)]. With voices reduced to meaningless whispers, Estanislaa does not even appear as a subject capable of listening to them; rather, the narrator's use of the passive voice leaves pending the identity of the receptor(s)—*who* hears the whispers?—just as the refusal to assign ownership to the voices disembodies them, rendering speech a ghostly and subject-less phenomenon that can only point to the death of the young David. Estanislaa looks a silent, wax-like death in the face as she becomes increasingly agitated and the party-goers remove their carnival masks "en silencio" to look at her: "Sus rostros estaban pálidos, como cubiertos de una lamina de cera: la miraban y no decían nada" (145) ["Their faces were pale, as if covered with a film of wax: they looked at her and said nothing" (138)]. The silence of death seems to touch Estanislaa herself, with a sort of rigor mortis setting in as "un frío extraño

inmovilizaba sus labios" (144) ["A strange chill froze her lips" (137)]. Her fears are confirmed as Estanislaa's husband finds her in the crowd to inform her that David is dead: like Elósegui, she literally misses the death of a child. She later recounts the moment to Abel: "'No *podía* comprender…Todo el mundo había perdido la voz y mi lengua era como de goma'" (145, italics in the original) ["I *could* not understand…Everyone had lost his voice and my tongue felt like rubber" [17] (138)]. Here, Estanislaa herself takes on the speechlessness of death, acknowledging that at David's funeral she was "como dormida, muerta" (145). In fact, she re-experiences this in the moment of her re-telling, as the end of her narrative is presented as a symbolic death: "Doña Estanislaa cortó el relato de improviso. Era como si el aliento se le hubiera extinguido entre los labios" (146) ["Doña Estanislaa interrupted her story suddenly. It was as if the breath had been stifled between her lips" (139)]. Again, her "death" coincides with silence in the moment she stops telling her story.

Doña Estanislaa's story also makes clear that a thorough reading of Abel's death is not limited to the reenactment of a single traumatic event for a single character. That is, Abel's death can not only be read as the repetition in miniature of the Civil War for Elósegui; it is also quite obviously the repetition, for Estanislaa, of the deaths of her sons. David's and Abel's deaths are marked by a number of similarities[18]: for example, at David's funeral, a waltz called *Dios nunca muere* is played—the same message found written on a piece of paper clutched in Abel's hand when his body is discovered. In Abel's other hand a flower is found; David too is

[17] I have altered Brooke-Rose's translation. She reads the subject of *no podia* as Estanislaa's husband: "He could not understand." Though the passage is confusing with rapid changes of subject, the last verb before podía is *dije*, with Estanislaa narrating. With no new subject pronoun introduced, we must read *podía* as maintaining the first-person subject rather than shifting to the third.

[18] For a more in-depth treatment of the extensive similarities that characterize the deaths of Abel and Estanislaa's sons David and Romano, see Currie Thompson's article "The Dionysian Myth in Goytisolo's *Duelo en El Paraíso*." Thompson concludes that all three deaths occur in a carnivalesque, nearly theatrical atmosphere. Though Thompson uses the specific content of the deaths' commonalities to launch his analysis of myth in the novel, it is the very fact of their similiarity that concernsmes here, for it allows us to read Abel's death as a site of trauma in which Estanislaa re-encounters the death of her sons.

buried with a flower placed between his fingers. Again, the structure of the text here is important, for the reader learns of Abel's death first, and only much later do we become aware of its status as reenactment of an earlier event.

Of course, we become aware of the trauma of David's death through Estanislaa's narrative, which suggests that despite the moments of unspeakability that she undergoes when she first learns of the event, unlike Elósegui she is eventually able to form a coherent narrative to explain what happened—the very story to which Abel listens and which the reader sees upon the page. The most obvious reason for this is that Estanislaa has had the benefit of many years of retrospect. The death of her son having occurred decades prior to the moment of its narration, Estanislaa has had many years to move past her initial silence, presumably assimilating the experience at least to the extent that she can express the lack of comprehension she was feeling at the moment. And yet, the reader never learns how or why David died, nor do we even know if Estanislaa is aware of the specific circumstances; presumably, no one witnesses David's death, which renders it literally "an event without a witness," the title of a chapter by Dori Laub in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. And while Elósegui does not witness Abel's death any more than Estanislaa does David's, he cannot even put his confusion into words when questioned by the Nationalists. Lacking access to Elósegui's future narrative capacity, we cannot determine if he will eventually be able to describe, as Estanislaa does with the account of her son's death, the incomprehension he experienced upon finding a child's body and actually witnessing wartime violence.

However, in *El Gallego* we have a veteran soldier who does in fact find himself decades removed from his wartime experience of 1898. Though he laments the modern state of warfare and apparently looks upon his stint in Cuba with nostalgia, *El Gallego* is unable to discuss his

experiences with any specificity. In fact, during the two moments when he begins to talk about the War of '98 with Abel, he trails off, as if unable to find the words to continue: "Cuando luchábamos contra los yanquis en Cuba, todo era diferente. Aquello sí que era una guerra…" (197); "Una guerra como la de Cuba no volverá a haberla nunca. Entonces…" (198) ["When we were fighting the Yankees in Cuba, it was very different. Now that was a war…"; "A war like the Cuban War will never happen again. Well…" (184)]. Thus, despite the forty years that have elapsed since 1898, *El Gallego* is still just as unable as Elósegui to speak with coherence about the war. The experience of war, even when remote, continues to be a silent one. The War of '98 remains an unanswered question throughout the text, —*El Gallego* does not respond when a young soldier asks him "¿En qué guerra has ganado esas medallas, abuelito?" (181) ["In what war did you earn those medals, old fellow?"[19]] and though the narrator reports parenthetically that Abel asks questions of *El Gallego* such as the following "«¿Por qué la lucha en Cuba había sido más dura que en España? ¿Qué sensación se experimentaba al recibir un balazo?»" (200) ["'Why was the fighting in Cuba harder than the fighting it Spain? What does it feel like to be hit by a bullet?'" (186)], the reader is unsure of *El Gallego*'s responses or if he even bothered to answer. For the purposes of the text, then, the War of '98 remains a silent topic, and though it may not be unspeakable, it is certainly unsaid. In this way, the shadowy presence of the War of '98 in the background reiterates the importance of the mechanism of trauma in the novel. If we can see Abel's death as a reenactment of the Civil War, the Civil War thus constitutes a textual reenactment of past battlefield traumas in Spanish history.

[19] Translation mine. Curiously, Brooke-Rose omits this line.

Children, Childishness, and Storytelling

Thus far we have explored textual representation of unspeakability and its affects on those who have experienced war, and, more generally, those who have suffered the traumatic death of a loved one. If speechlessness is the response to death—for both the deceased and the survivor—it is also what precedes birth and characterizes the first years of life, when the human being is physiologically incapable of communication via spoken language. Two of the text's Civil War victims will in fact never become speaking subjects: the unborn child of Dora and that of Abel's mother. Given these two in-utero deaths, the deaths of the young Abel and David, and the centrality of child characters to the story, there is clearly a particular relationship not only between death and speechlessness but also between these two terms and both infancy and childhood. As is etymologically suggested by the term *infant*, from the Latin *infans*, "unspeaking," the lack of speech acts as a marker of age for very small children, as Abel observes of the refugees he had seen in Barcelona: "Todos esos niños son huérfanos de guerra y les ponen un número en el traje para que no se confundan de nombre, pues muchos ni siquiera saben hablar" (90) ["All these children are orphaned because of the war, and they are given a number for the journey so that they won't be confused with others, *since many of them can't even talk*" [20] (83)]. If infancy is thus characterized by a lack of speaking agency, then we can interpret Elósegui's inability to comprehensively communicate his experience in the war—indeed, his trauma—as a metaphorical regression to the infantile stage.

Notably distinct from the infant, of course, is the child, who does in fact speak, at times incessantly so. In *Duelo en El Paraíso*, childish adult characters, as well as the children

[20] Brooke-Rose's translation, with the exception of the last clause in italics, which is mine. Curiously, she omits this clause, crucial to my analysis.

themselves, appear with nearly hyper-narrative abilities. Without a doubt the two most childish adults are Estanislaa and her daughter Águeda, and the means by which this childishness is established is their fondness for escapist make-believe and all it encompasses on a narrative level—fantasies, dreams, stories, fairy-tales, etc. Estanislaa lives in a fantasy world in which sex does not exist—when asked by Abel if children are born in the same way as cats, she responds, "yo prefiero continuar creyendo que nos ha traído un angel" (107) ["I prefer to go on believing that an angel brought us…" (103)]—and in which she and her sons appear as extraordinary, nearly magical protagonists.[21] For her part, Águeda spends her days in a fairy-tale existence, weaving "monótonas historias de enamorados" ["tedious love stories" (85)] and inventing love affairs about which she writes to radio shows. She recognizes her childishness when she describes to Abel her reaction to the departure and subsequent death of her brother Romano: "«No me abandones, Romano, quédate en la casa! Sin tu ayuda, siempre seré una niña…» Tenía treinta y dos años y mis vestidos, mis expansiones y mis juegos eran los de una adolescente. Mamá no se había preocupado nunca de mí" (164) ["'Don't abandon me, Romano, stay here in the house! Without your help, I'll always be a little girl…' I was thirty-two years old and my clothes, my gestures, and my games were those of an adolescent. Mama had never cared for me'" (155)]. Thus, whereas Estanislaa's perpetual childhood is presented as a phenomenon of her own making—whether it be sheer willpower or madness that keeps her

[21] Sanz Villanueva has interpreted the novel's emphasis on fantasy and dreams as evidence of textual uncertainty regarding the limits of realism, an uncertainty which is indicative of Goytisolo's narrative immaturity at this early stage in his career: "en esta fase se adviert[en] desproporciones que afectan de forma decisiva la integridad de las novelas: las dos mayores son la incertidumbre sobre los límites y la función de la realidad y la existencia de un mundo vivencial precario, de escasa autenticidad" (387) ["at this stage there are disparities that affect the integrity of his novels: the two most important ones are an uncertainty regarding reality's limits and functions, and the questionable authenticity of a precarious experiential world"]; and, again, "Goytisolo duda en la presentación de la realidad y junto al valor documental de la acción externa aparece un mundo de evasión o de sueños" (403) ["Goytisolo falters in his presentation of reality, and next to the documentary value of external action there appears a world of dreams or escapism"]. I would argue, however, that the precariousness of reality within the text is owing to the characters' childlike modes of behavior, their own tendencies towards fantasizing and dreaming, and not to a greater textual uncertainty. In any event, the critic's valorization of "authentic" life experience over oneiric or make-believe worlds is indicative of the disparagement with which these modes of behavior are viewed.

tethered to a childlike state—Águeda's puerility is imposed upon her by a mother terrified of the sex and violence that presumably accompany the passage into adulthood.

Regardless of their causes, Estanislaa's and Águeda's fantastical tendencies are explicitly connected to each other and to Abel's fixation on the war: "La vida en *El Paraíso* se hacía difícil de soportar si no iba acompañada de evasiones al futuro o al pasado y, al soñar con oficiales y amantes, Águeda no se apartaba de la regla. También doña Estanislaa soñaba con David y Romano, como [Abel] en batallas y trincheras" (103) ["Life in El Paraíso was unbearable unless one escaped into the future or into the past, and Agueda was no exception, with her dreams of officers and lovers. So doña Estanislaa dreamt of David and Romano, just as he himself dreamt of battles and trenches" (94)].[22] Abel's naïve glorification of the war, when compared to the childish fantasies of two grown women, shows his world to be just as make-believe as theirs. However, as a child entering his adolescence, Abel is perhaps expected to struggle between mature and immature modes of behavior; however, the same struggle is seen as grotesque and unnatural for adults, as we can see when the maid Filomena speaks disparagingly of the women's "historias inventadas" (167).

For Abel too is fond of storytelling, as he demonstrates when he offers an embellished account of the refugee children he saw in Barcelona, telling Filomena:

> "Dicen que los envían a Italia en barco. Pero yo creo…que los ahogan durante el viaje…"
>
> "¿Los ahogan?" exclamó Filomena…

[22] Labanyi sees the relationship between these various fantasies as part of a greater discourse that criticizes the bourgeois repression of sexual and violent tendencies. Furthermore, according to her reading "Abel's fantasies are also presented as superior to those of the two women because he mythifies the present, whereas they take refuge in the past and the future" (850). Perhaps it is not a question of superiority but of acceptability—while it is socially acceptable and even expected for a child to embrace fantasy, it is not so for an adult.

> "Sí. Los arrojan al mar…Como se trata de gentes que pueden convertirse en enemigos, les resulta más cómodo eliminarlos. Cuantos más niños sean, más fácil…Los niños pagan siempre." (91)
>
> "They're sent to Italy by boat, so I've heard. But I believe that they drown them at sea…"
>
> "They drown them?" cried Filomena.
>
> "Yes. They toss them overboard…As they are all potential enemies, it's easier to eliminate them. The younger they are, the better… It's always the children who pay the price." (83-84[23])

The dubious historical accuracy of Abel's account may in fact speak to a different sort of truth that characterizes the testimony of trauma survivors. In his article "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening," Dori Laub discusses survivor testimonies that constitute "the breakage of a framework" of historically traumatic events. He contends that while these accounts may contain historically inaccurate or unverifiable facts, they offer a "historical truth" whose very subjectivity speaks to the near-unspeakable nature of traumatic experience.

Laub's primary example concerns a female Holocaust survivor who describes, in an interview for Yale University's Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, having witnessed the explosion of four chimneys during a prisoner rebellion at Auschwitz. Upon watching this interview at an interdisciplinary conference, Laub participated in a "lively debate" regarding the relevance of the woman's testimony to Holocaust studies: "The testimony was not accurate, historians claimed. The number of chimneys was misrepresented. Historically, only one chimney was blown up, not all four. Since the memory of the testifying woman turned out to be,

[23]I have altered Brooke-Rose's translation.

in this way, fallible, one could not accept—nor give credence to—her whole account of the events" (59-60). What Laub in turn suggested to these historians, a position he develops at length for the reader in the remainder of his article, is that survivor testimony should be considered valid regardless of its historical accuracy, and indeed be seen as "a genuine advent, and event in its own right" (62), for it is through the process of providing testimony that the survivor begins to attain a knowledge hitherto precluded by the atrocity of an inconceivably violent occurrence. Indeed, Laub sees in this sort of testimony a powerful potential absent in "accurate" historical narrative:

> She was testifying not simply to empirical historical facts, but to the very secret of survival and of resistance to extermination…She saw four chimneys blowing up in Auschwitz: she saw, in other words, the unimaginable taking place right in front of her own eyes. And she came to testify to the unbelievability, precisely, of what she had eyewitnessed—this bursting open of the very frame of Auschwitz. The historians' testifying to the fact that only one chimney was blown up…does not break the frame. The woman's testimony, on the other hand, is breaking the frame of the concentration camp by and through her very testimony…Because the testifier did not know the number of chimneys that blew up…the historians said that she knew nothing. I thought that she knew more, since she knew about the breakage of the frame, that her very testimony was now reenacting. (62-63)

Laub thus argues that the act of providing testimony constitutes a more powerful sort of knowledge whereby the survivor-testifier breaks the frame of silence that enshrouds traumatic historical events.

Returning to *Duelo en El Paraíso* with Laub's analysis in mind, let us reconsider the testimony provided by Abel. In offering his account, Abel bears witness to the atrocities he has seen, and the relative factual accuracy of the testimonies does not diminish its frame-breaking power. Just like the Holocaust survivor, Abel too testifies to unbelievabilty: his account of orphans being drowned is just as unimaginable as what he actually witnessed, which he recalls as follows:

> Abel había sentido una terrible opresión en la garganta. La escena le parecía irreal, absurda. "De modo que esos niños…" Ahora lo sabía ya. El hombre, su vecino [de al lado] se había encargado de informarle: "¡Al diablo! A reventar todos de hambre." El mundo era un lugar aterrador…Con lágrimas en los ojos había vuelto al andén…y, durante varias noches, los niños refugiados poblaron sus pesadillas de imágenes sangrantes. (90)

> Abel felt choked. The scene seemed unreal, absurd. So that these children…Now he knew. The man next to him had told him, "What the hell? They'll die of hunger!" The world was a frightening place…Tears filled his eyes and he returned to the platform…For many nights the refugee children haunted his nightmares with blood-curdling fantasies. (82-83)

Even as he witnesses the children being herded into trains for transport, Abel is struck by the scene's unbelievability—it seems unreal and absurd that children will surely starve to death as a result of the war. For Abel, then, the fact of what he witnessed is perhaps just as unimaginable as the alternative account he offers: the intentional drowning of the children by their wardens. He has, in this way, testified to an unbelievable occurrence, and his observation that "los niños

pagan siempre" resounds with tragic truthfulness whether we consider the historical veracity of what he witnessed or the alternate version he offers in testimony. It is important to note too that this act of testimony seems to involve a discovery of knowledge, as indicated by the ambiguous tense of the phrase "ahora lo sabía ya." Because the phrase appears in Abel's recollection within a larger past-tense narrative, it is difficult to determine where this knowledge is situated temporally: when he originally witnesses the scene, or when he recollects and describes it for Filomena? The *ahora* is unclear. But in this ambiguity lies the very essence of trauma as a temporally disjointed event where present reenactment, through testimony, collapses on past experience. In either case, the narrative registers Abel's *awareness* of this knowledge only in the original event's aftermath, such that the reader can associate Abel's discovery of knowledge with the act of recollection and testimony.

A similar example of testimony to traumatic experience is offered by *El Arquero*, the leader of the refugee children in the countryside. After killing Abel, some of the refugee children, frightened by the deadly turn of events that their game has taken, express a desire to surrender to the Nationalist troops. *El Arquero* resorts to fear tactics to dissuade them from doing so, telling them: "'Hemos matado a un faccioso y nos castigarán. Nos utilizarán como blanco en los ejercicios de tiro. Si no se deciden a colgarnos de cualquier rama'" (67) ["'We have killed a rebel and they will punish us. They will use us as targets for shooting practice. If they don't decide to hang us from some branch or another'" (62)]. To consolidate his credibility, *El Arquero* turns to an eyewitness account:

> "En Oquendo, donde yo vivía, ejecutaban diariamente en la plaza. Primero ahorcaban a las mujeres, luego a los hombres, y por fin a los niños. Los llevaban a todos en una carreta, atados de pies y manos…Entonces los bajaban de la carreta

> y empezaban a colgarlos de los árboles; a los mayores, de las ramas gruesas, y a los niños de las más delgadas." 68

> "In Oquendo, where I lived, they had daily executions in the square. First they hanged the women, then the men, and last, the children. They were all taken there in a cart, with their hands and feet tied up…then they took them from the cart and started to hang them on the trees, the bigger ones on the thick branches, the smaller ones on the thinner ones." 63

Like Abel, *El Arquero* provides questionably accurate information. While daily executions during the war were certainly widespread, and, children were at times no doubt harmed either accidentally or otherwise, *El Arquero*'s account of the consistent execution of children is factually dubious. And yet, unlike with Abel, the reader does not have access to the original circumstances of execution witnessed by *El Arquero*: in this case, narrative omniscience is limited and no description of *El Arquero's* recollections is shared; the only testimony we read is the one he shares with the other children. There is no reason to doubt that *El Arquero* did in fact witness daily executions in Oquendo, and that they caused psychological damage. It may be that his testimony too, while not factually accurate, offers a different sort of "historical truth": the horror of a civil war in which neighbors kill neighbors in a daily murderous pageant.

Nevertheless, Goytisolo's characters differ from Laub's example of the Holocaust survivor in one key aspect: the former are aware of their accounts' factual inaccuracies. In Laub's example, there is no evidence to suggest that the Holocaust survivor was intentionally misrepresenting the number of chimneys blown up: she remembers four explosions, and that is what she testifies to. Both Abel and *El Arquero*, however, are aware of the exaggeration of their

claims; moreover, this exaggeration seems specifically calculated to elicit a certain response from their audiences—horror, pain—which in turn satisfies the testifier. Abel's derives immense pleasure from the fictionality of his testimony: "Se sentía contento de su inventiva y se puso de pie" (91) ["He felt pleased with his inventiveness and he got up" (84)]. The pleasure that Abel finds in offering this account is obviously not without its sadistic side, given that the maid is greatly pained by what Abel tells her. Whereas both Estanislaa and Águeda resort to stories for escapist purposes, here "inventiveness" appears to give Abel power over the adult, a power that would otherwise be denied to him given the marginal status of the child.

As with Abel, *El Arquero* also experiences pleasure at the manipulative capacity of his story: "Había contado la historia sin respirar y se sintió satisfecho." (68) ["He had told the whole story without stopping for breath and felt satisfied" (63)]. This satisfaction is owing to the power that *El Arquero* is able to establish over the other children: "Se sentía seguro de su fuerza y experimentaba una intensa satisfacción en humillarlos" (69) ["He felt sure of his strength and intensely enjoyed the satisfaction of humiliating them" (64)]. Interestingly, both Abel's and *El Arquero*'s stories involve tremendous violence committed against children, and both tales are used to produce a calculated response in the listener—in the first case, heartache, and in the second, fear. It is through this manipulative narration that they are able to exercise some sort of control within circumstances that have violently deprived them of it and rendered the child an even more powerless subject than in peacetime society.

Given that both Abel and *El Arquero* are consciously inventive, their accounts, though certainly not without testimonial characteristics, are perhaps better approached as stories with a basis in the real-life experience of the war. Both boys could thus be classified as storytellers in Walter Benjamin's sense of the word—the storyteller being distinct from the novelist because

the former "takes what he tells from experience—his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale" (Benjamin 87). This transference of experience is seen quite clearly in the terrified reaction of the refugee children who listen to *El Arquero*: "El relato del cabecilla los había llenado de terror: cuerdas pequeñitas, a la medida, según el diámetro de la garganta" (Goytisolo 69) ["His story had filled them with terror: small ropes, to measure, according to the size of the throat, it was frightful" (63)]. Here, the children are able to actually visualize what *El Arquero* has told them, and they seem to be imagining themselves as the victims in the story. Their terror is such that *El Arquero* too sees the story's war violence written on the children's faces: "En el desencajado semblante de los chiquillos adivinaba los estragos del relato" (68) ["The children's panic-stricken air testified to the panic caused by his tale" (63)]. The lexical choice of "estrago" is essential for the implication that the story is a medium for the transference of experience. The RAE defines "estrago" as a "daño hecho en guerra, como una matanza de gente" ["destruction occasioned by war, as in a mass killing" (translation mine)]. But here it is not the war itself but rather *el relato*, the retelling of the violence, that occasions *los estragos*—for the listeners, the story produces, at least figuratively, the same experience as the war. *El Arquero*, despite never having fought in the war, here emerges as the character most capable of narrating the terror it induces. His ability to effectively transfer the experience of war stands in stark contrast to Elósegui's bungled attempts at narration. It is in his very storytelling that *El Arquero* breaks the unspeakibility that frames a traumatic event.

Benjamin's notion of the storyteller is also useful in considering what the four storytellers thus far discussed have in common, what makes them equally prone to storytelling in spite of the age discrepancy between the two adults, Águeda and Estanislaa; and the two children, Abel and

El Arquero. Benjamin defines storytelling as the art of repeating stories (91), whether from prior experience or from a story previously heard. Thus, storytelling is always a *retelling*, a transference of experience, and this retelling depends upon the openness of he who experiences or listens to what is told: "This process of assimilation, which takes place in depth, requires a state of relaxation which is becoming rarer and rarer. If sleep is the apogee of physical relaxation, boredom is the apogee of mental relaxation. Boredom is the dream bird that hatches the egg of experience" (91).

Boredom as the origin of communicable experience offers an interesting point of entry for considering the characters of *Duelo en el Paraíso* in the role of storytelling, for what all four storytellers have in common is precisely the luxury of boredom. Whereas for Benjamin the boredom produced by the monotony of labor offers "the gift of retelling" to the listener, we can apply his analysis to boredom more generally. In *Duelo en El Paraíso*, the re-tellers are not those who are bored by working, but those bored because they *do not* work: children and members of the bourgeoisie. Both Abel and *El Arquero* exist outside the realm of work, as do Doña Estanislaa and Águeda, by virtue of their upper-middle class status. In other words, they have both the time and the mental energy required to make them open to the reception of experience and the retelling of it.[24] This is perhaps more clear in Abel's case than in any other's, for he constantly complains of his boredom at *El Paraíso*. His interactions with Filomena illustrate several important characteristics about the nature of this boredom. At one point, Abel approaches Filomena in the kitchen, and she addresses him harshly for having interrupted her work:

> —Pues ya puedes irte por donde has llegado. Tengo mucho trabajo y no puedo entretenerme hablando contigo…No me gusta ver a nadie ocioso mientras me

parto la espalda trabajando. Además—añadió como argumento decisivo—, el sitio de los niños no es la cocina.

—Me aburro solo—dijo Abel. Estoy cansado de leer los *Blanco y Negro* y tengo ganas de hablar un rato contigo…

—Vete a la guerra si tanto te aburres. Ya te he dicho que tengo trabajo. (106)

'Well, you can go right back where you came from. I've got a lot of work to do and I can't waste time talking to you…I don't like seeing anyone being idle when I'm working my fingers to the bone. Besides,' she added decisively, "children have no business to be in the kitchen.

'I'm bored all by myself,' said Abel. 'I'm tired of reading *Blanco y Negro* and I feel like talking to you for a while…'

'Go off to the war if you're so bored. I tell you I've got work to do.' (101-102)

First, the above conversation demonstrates the extent to which Abel enjoys the luxury of boredom while Filomena cannot—again, not merely because of her adult obligations, for Estanislaa always welcomes conversation with Abel, but more specifically because of her working class responsibilities.

But perhaps of greater interest in the interaction are the various diversions proposed as a means of escaping boredom. What Abel seeks as a reprieve from the monotony of *El Paraíso* is conversation, communication. We have already seen how the world of make-believe offers relief from this exceedingly boring existence: "Pese a la vecinidad de los soldados de la batería y de los niños refugiados de la escuela, los habitantes de *El Paraíso* vivían al margen de la guerra: doña Estanislaa evocando tiempos mejores y Águeda soñando en algún príncipe de

cuento" (86) ["Despite the presence of the soldiers from the battery and the refugee children in the school, the inhabitants of El Paraíso lived only on the very margin of war, doña Estanislaa remembering better times and Agueda dreaming of some fairy-tale prince" (79). And yet, it is clear that make-believe, mere *daydreaming*, is not enough—in itself, the individual's contemplation of an alternative fantasy existence does not seem to suffice. Rather, the sharing of these fantasies via storytelling, via communication with a listener, offers an escape from boredom. For her fairy-tale romances, Águeda finds a listener in the radio talk show host, and, by extension, the show's entire audience, including Abel. Estanislaa shares the highly fictionalized history of her own life with Abel as well. Thus, Abel is constantly put in the role of receptor, of listener—a role with which he struggles. He expresses his frustration at reading the newspaper—in other words, of fulfilling a purely receptive role in what can only be a one-sided form of communication. Abel seemingly yearns for someone to fulfill the role of *his* receptor. It is worth pointing out that in his appeals to Filomena, Abel refers to his "ganas de hablar contigo" instead of, for example, *ganas de que hablemos*—his hoped-for conversation thus subtly posits him as speaker and her as listener. And though she denies him in this instance, Filomena is clearly one of the few characters willing to serve as a listener for Abel's stories, as we should recall from her pained reaction to his tale of the refugee children drowned by the authorities.

And yet, communication is not the only reprieve from boredom suggested in Abel's conversation with Filomena. She also proposes—sarcastically, of course—that Abel go off to the war; clearly referring back to an earlier conversation between the two. After Filomena questions the child's spoken desire for the war to come to the countryside, Abel responds:

—Porque me aburro...Porque todos los días son iguales y no ocurre nada que valga la pena. En Teruel, en cambio, se lucha continuamente: hay montones y montones de ruinas y cada cinco minutos sale un tren de cadáveres....

Filomena le contemplaba con espanto.

—¿De modo que el aburrirte te parece un motivo suficiente para desear más guerra?

—Sí—dijo Abel—. Aquí todos los días son iguales y nunca pasa nada. (97)

'Because I'm bored…Because every day is like another and nothing worth while happens. In Teruel, on the other hand, there's continuous fighting, and piles and piles of ruins, and every five minutes a train full of corpses goes out…'

Filomena gave him a terrified look.

'So boredom seems to you a sufficient reason to want more war?'

'Yes,' said Abel. 'Here all the days are exactly alike and nothing serious happens. (88-89).

Thus, the war looms as a very large *something* on the border of a place where nothing ever happens. More specifically, Abel's comment about the train of cadavers suggests that this something is perhaps death itself—the ultimate end to the monotony of life.

While both communication and the experience of war appear as alternative avenues of escape from Abel's boring existence, the two are anything but compatible for those actually on the battlefield. As we have seen with Elósegui, the traumatic violence of war leaves participants speechless and renders subsequent narration impossible, for war produces only *incommunicable* experience, or, at best, experience that can only be communicated by silence. It is perhaps

because he has not really experienced the war directly that Abel escapes this incommunicability. In fact, Abel's and *El Arquero*'s accounts of the atrocities committed against children, fictionalized as they may be, are among the very few moments in which characters narrate actual wartime violence. Thus, the only testimonies of the war come from two subjects who, by virtue of being children, have not actually had battlefield experience in the war. And yet it is perhaps *because* they are children and do not have direct access to wartime experience that Abel and *El Arquero* are able to narrate it—had they truly participated in the war as has Elósegui, they would perhaps have found it unspeakable. *Duelo en El Paraíso* thus offers an alternative possibility for storytelling. While Benjamin laments the disappearance of the art due to incommunicable experience, Goytisolo's text presents the lack of experience as a space for the recuperation of storytelling: the traumatic events of war are narrated, transferred to both listening characters and the readers themselves, by someone who was exempt from encountering them directly in the first place: a child.

Children, Animals, & Hyper-communicability

In *Duelo en El Paraíso*, it is the children, then, who emerge as the characters most capable of narration and communication in an otherwise silent world. There is a definite inversion between the roles of children and adults, the latter of whom we would normally assume to be more reliable narrators than the former with their limited knowledge and experience. What marks Abel as different, as un-childlike, is his adult-like speech, "Hablaba con una desenvoltura impropia de un niño de sus años" (83) ["He spoke with an ease of manner unusual in one so young…" (77)], which stands in stark contrast to his appearance: "La ausencia del uniforme del colegio…le hacía menor de lo que era, y acentuaba, por contraste, la sorprendente precocidad de

sus palabras" (85) ["Without his school uniform, he looked younger than before, which accentuated, by way of contrast, the surprising precociousness of his speech" (translation mine)]. *El Gallego* also comments on this contrast, telling Abel, "Me hace gracia tu modo de expresarte. Oyéndote, todo el mundo diría que tienes veinte años más de los que aparentas" (195) ["You have a funny way of expressing yourself. To hear you one would think you were twenty years older than you look" (182)].

Despite his mastery of the spoken word, Abel experiences a degree of isolation owing to an inability to truly connect with adults via verbal communication. Seemingly, though Abel possesses a discursive capacity that marks him as a mature *enunciator*, he is not an effective recipient of adult conversation. This disconnect results in a profound sense of loneliness for the child: "no tenía otra compañía que la de Estanislaa, Filomena, y Águeda; sus preocupaciones eran, las más de las veces, distintas y resultaba extremadamente difícil entablar un diálogo" (93) ["he had no other company but that of doña Estanislaa, Filomena, and Agueda: their interests differed vastly from his and conversation was difficult" (85)]. Thus, while Abel has no problem establishing a mature monologue that stuns his adult listeners, dialogue eludes him, rendering communication a one-sided affair and hindering the formation of meaningful relationships. In fact, Abel finds listening to adult conversation so distasteful that he is physically repulsed by the spaces which it occupies: "La cocina, llena de la insaciable charla de las mujeres, le repugnaba" (94) ["The kitchen was full of the women's tireless talk and it repelled him" (86)].[25] The lack of communication between Abel and the three women is such that children and adults seem to be speaking different languages: Estanislaa, Águeda, and Filomena—"hablaban idiomas

[25] Although gender roles are somewhat beyond the focus of this work, it should be pointed out that it may not just be by virtue of their adulthood that Filomena, Estanislaa, and Águeda do not share a language with Abel—perhaps it is due to the fact that they are more specifically adult *women*. Thus, it would not be surprising that Abel keeps his distance from the kitchen, the space that best represents the traditional domestic sphere as occupied by women.

distintos…impidiéndole [a Abel] vivir la vida propia de sus años" (214) ["Estanislaa, Águeda, and even Filomena, seemed to speak a different language…and prevented him from living the life of his own years" (191-192)]. In this way, Abel perceives the space of the estate as a thoroughly *adult* one characterized by mature discourse in which childhood has no place and there is little possibility for dialogue.

On the other hand, it becomes clear that the type of normative relations governing everyday discourse, such as that between child and adult, are largely abandoned during war time. In fact, Abel specifically points to the war as having furnished him with adult-like modes of expression. His response to Gallego's observation that his mode of expression belies his youth is as follows: "Creo que la guerra nos ha madurado a todos antes de lo debido" (195) ["'I believe the war made us all grow up more quickly than usual'" (182)]. The refugee children are no less affected by this than is Abel, and for them too one of the most obvious marks of this pre-maturation is the way in which they speak: one child who is captured "hablaba con acento duro, de hombre formado" (125) ["His voice was hard, like a grown man's" (119)]. Thus, while for its direct participants, like Elósegui, the war has occasioned a metaphorical return to infancy characterized by speechlessness, it has had the opposite effect for the children exposed to war and yet not directly involved in it, furnishing them with a mature communicative capacity.

The children adopt an adult lexicon as well, as José Corrales Egea has pointed out: "Los protagonistas infantiles remedan bajo la forma de juego y diversión el comportamiento de los mayores, de cuyo vocabulario se apoderan sin comprenderlo exactamente: valor, traición, castigo, ejecución, cerco…" (73) ["The child protagonists imitate, with fun and games, the behavior of the adults, whose vocabulary they appropriate without really understanding it: bravery, betrayal, punishment, execution, siege…"]. Corrales's point that the children use this

vocabulary without really understanding it is an important one; it has also been made by Barry Jordan (95). The refugee children refer to Abel as "un faccioso" throughout the novel, but they appear to be merely repeating terms they have heard on radio propaganda, for there is never any development of a political stance by Abel nor even a perceived political stance that the refugee children project onto him.[26] In fact, Abel shows himself to be utterly unconcerned with the ideologies associated with the warring factions: after his request for admission to the Republican army goes unanswered, he merely writes to the Nationalists instead. Thus, although they have acquired the discursive modes and vocabulary of adults, for the children the rhetoric of wartime consists of largely empty signifiers.

But for all its emptiness, the language used among the children is no less terrifying to adult ears. In the absence of law and order, the refugee children have, as their headmaster Quintana observes, "perdido totalmente el sentido de decoro y se entienden entre ellos por medio del lenguaje más abyecto" (58) ["lost all feeling of decorum and communicate amongst themselves in the vilest of language" (53)]. Quintana's point makes it clear that while the way the children communicate might be largely meaningless to them, it is not so for the adults hearing it, nor will it be so for the reader. Certain lexical items used by the children—such as *faccioso*—whether spoken in conscious or unconscious imitation of adults, though empty signifiers for the enunciator, will have meaning for any reader even casually aware of the issues

[26] While the children do not engage in meaningful political discourse, there is an awareness of the class differences between the refugee children and Abel, who comes from a wealthy family in Barcelona. The leader of the children disparagingly refers to Abel as "el burguesito" (65), the little rich boy. Later, when the Nationalists question the children about the motives behind Abel's assassination, one child responds: "Su familia era propietaria desde hacía mucho años y él tenía dinero en la época en que nosotros pasábamos hambre" (273) ["His family were landowners for many years and he had money when we were starving" (242)].. Critics differ as to the importance accorded to the text's treatment of class. For Sanz Villanueva, "aunque haya—en la mente de los niños—una difusa razón de clase para el asesinato, éste es gratuito y mimético" (403) ["Even if there is—in the children's minds—a vaguely class-related motive for the execution, it's unwarranted and imitative"]. And though neither Jo Labanyi nor Barry Jordan argue that the child characters are well-versed in class warfare, both scholars have interpreted the novel itself as a scathing critique of the bourgeoisie.

at stake during the Spanish Civil War. Furthermore, Quintana's qualification of the children's language as abject, though we know it to be a language very similar to that employed by those directly engaged in waging the war, raises many questions—is it abject in this context because it is used by children ignorant of its true meaning? Or can we interpret Quintana's description as a criticism of war rhetoric in general, placed here in the mouths of children to suggest that it always consists of empty signifiers?

There are, however, other possible interpretations of Quintana's comment. The abject nature of the children's language is perhaps due to the fact that it is simply unrecognizable as a human one. Although at times the children use the same language they have heard used by adults, a language that is comprehensible to the listener, they have also developed other modes of communicating amongst themselves via whistles and shouts. To outside ears, these sounds are just that: sounds, devoid of any meaning. Just before Elósegui finds Abel's body, he is recovering from his scare with the grenade when the children begin to shoot at him: "Al cabo de un segundo, y antes de que tuviese tiempo de comprender lo que pasaba, un silbido muy fuerte, repetido varias veces por el eco, desencadenó una tempestad de voces, clamores, y pasos…Los niños saltaban como colegiales a la salida de las aulas, imitaban aullidos de animales y ensordecían el bosque con sus gritos" (15) ["A second later, and before he had time to understand what was happening, a loud whistle, eerily repeated by echoes, unleashed a storm of voices, shouts, and footsteps…Children leapt out like boys after school, imitating animal cries, deafening their woods with their yells" (14)]. Once again, Elósegui finds himself uncomprehending, not only because of the suddenness of the attack but because he is not privy to the rules of the communicative system that the children have developed amongst themselves.

The adoption of an alternative system of communication, in turn, becomes a vital part of

the animalization of the children. They are no longer quite children, but are rather *compared* to schoolboys leaving the classroom, and they communicate via animalistic noises and shouts. Not only have the children formed an alternative language, but they virtually render impossible both reception and understanding for outsiders—their shouts deafen the forest as their violent acts leave Elósegui uncomprehending. Whereas Elósegui's trauma has left him incapacitated for both enunciation and reception, the children emerge with near hyper-communicative abilities, for not only do they still lay claim to normal human modes of communication—though they do not always understand it—they have also developed "un código secreto de silbidos" and animal sounds, effectively expanding the possibilities for communication amongst themselves.

The children's recourse to alternative modes of communication is thus continually invoked to suggest that they are not altogether human. At times, they appear as animals, as when they move amongst battlefield debris "como peces en el agua, dando gritos y órdenes guturales" (19) ["like fish in water, shouting guttural commands" (17)], or when the first refugee child to be located by the Nationalist troops looks at them "como un animal acorralado"(128) ["like a frightened animal"(122)]. The headmaster of the children's school compares their dormitory to a "guarida de serpientes y leopardos" (57) ["den of serpents and leopards" (53)]. In other moments, the children abandon even the shouts and sounds of animal communication and resort to demonic gesturing: "El niño huía gesticulando lo mismo que un diablo" (14) ["The boy fled gesticulating like a demon" (13)]. The recourse to gesturing is seen as a nearly conscious effort by the children to distance themselves from their own humanity: "Su griterío de hacía unos minutos había sido, tal vez, una forma de combatir el pánico que se instalaba en ellos, y, a gesticular como diablos, lo habían hecho con la esperanza de metamorfosearse en otros seres" (20) ["Their shouting, a moment ago, had been a way of fighting the panic that must have seized

them, and judging by their devilish gesticulations, they seemed to be trying to transform themselves into demons" (19)]. Here, there appears to be a graduated regression in communicative systems: the children become increasingly dehumanized as they move from human language to animalistic noises and finally to diabolical gesturing.

One child in particular is consistently described in animal terms: Pablo Márquez, whose betrayal of Abel ultimately leads the latter to willingly present himself for his own execution. Pablo's animalistic nature manifests itself in his physical appearance, with "dientecillos de lobezno" (248) ["wolfish smile" (220)] and "ojos de felino" (227) that "brillaban con astucia animal" (219) ["cat's eyes" (203) that "sparkled like a wild animal's" (195)]. It is also seen in his movements, as he slides through the forest "como un reptil" (219) ["like a reptile" (196)], climbs trees "lo mismo que un mico" (220) ["like a monkey" (196)], and chews "igual que un ratonzuelo" (248) ["like a rat" (221)]. It should also be noted that in many of these animalistic comparisons, Pablo's childishness and small stature are also emphasized, whether with the diminutive suffixes *–cillo* and *–zuelo*, or with lexical choices: wolf cub (*lobezno*) rather than wolf, or *mico*, a term which is also used colloquially to refer to a child or a small person.[27] His childishness and proximity to the animal world thus appear to be meaningfully connected. But perhaps most importantly, Pablo, like the other children, reverts to animal noises to communicate with his friends: the sound he uses to alert Abel to his presence is described as "el canto del cuclillo" (210) ["the cuckoo's song"].

The emphasis on animal noises is sustained throughout the novel, and not just as a basis of comparison for the language used among children. Animals, most often birds that "aturdían el valle con sus gritos" (118) ["filled the valley with their cries" (113)], are frequently the source of

[27] According to the 22nd edition of the RAE (2001), *mico* is used colloquially "para referirse cariñosamente a los niños" ["to affectionately refer to children"].

the only sounds that break the silence of the forest: "Ni un ruido ni un rumor. Sólo el aleteo de los pájaros en torno a la casa" (92) ["Not a sound or whisper…Only the flutter of birds around the house" (85)]. Furthermore, on many occasions, animal sounds specifically accentuate the lack of noise generated by humans, as when a group of soldiers enters the forest and "el estruendo de la carretera se amortiguaba poco a poco. A sus oídos llegaba de nuevo el grito de los pájaros y el zumbido de la abejas atareadas sobre las flores de los almendros" (73) ["The clamor of the road became more and more muffled…the twittering of the birds was heard once more, and the buzzing of bees busy in the almond flowers" (67)]. In this moment, as the soldiers approach *El Paraíso* to inform its inhabitants of Abel's death, human sound—the noise of the roads—becomes increasingly remote. The lack of human communication, as opposed to highway noise, is even more emphasized in one particular scene when Abel waits for the return of Pablo, who has gone off to the city to supposedly prepare for the boys' enlistment. Slowly, it begins to dawn on Abel that Pablo has fled with their savings and will not return; still, Abel calls out to his friend: "Sentado aún, repitió de nuevo el «¡Pablo, Pablo!» coreado por los chillidos de aves histéricas y el rumor negro del viento al estrellarse sobre los árboles" (255) ["Still sitting, and without hope, he kept on repeating 'Pablo! Pablo!,' accompanied by the cries of hysterical birds and the dark blowing of the wind through the trees" (226)]. In the absence of a human correspondent, the only responses that Abel receives come from the flora and fauna of the forest.

A similar scene that features El *Gallego* also emphasizes the noise of animals in the absence of human communication. After finding an abandoned car next to the road,

> El *Gallego* oprimió la bocina y aguardó a que le contestaran, pero en aquella hondonada crujiente y silenciosa solo se oía el aleteo de los pájaros y el lejano restallar de las granadas.

> —¿Es de alguien el coche?—preguntó y, diluidas a lo largo del torrente, otras voces repitieron sus palabras. Volvió a decir—: ¿Es de alguien?
>
> Pero tampoco obtuvo respuesta (solo los pájaros piaban). (178)

> The 'Galician' pressed the motor horn and waited for a reply, but the quiet and rustling glen answered only with the flutter of birds and the distant burst of grenades. 'Anyone in the car?' he asked, and other voices repeated his words, fading away all along the stream. He asked again: 'Anyone there?' Still there was no reply…only the birds' chirping. (167)

Here, as with Abel's desperate cry to his friend, the vagabond engages in a one-sided conversation in which he is the sole enunciator. Lacking a conversational partner, in response *El Gallego* only receives the echo of his own voice, and, of course, the chirping of the birds. The only audible human noise is that of war—the exploding grenades heard in the distance.

The juxtaposition of chirping, tweeting, and yelling birds with the silent human world tends to present the animals as hyper-communicative, as are the children when compared with traumatized, tongue-tied adults. And as with the diabolically gesticulating children, animal communicability is not limited to auditory signals; for example, in the forest are "luciérnagas que transmitían la noticia de su paso con señales luminosas" (250) ["glow-worms that transmitted the news of their passage in luminous signals" (222)]. Here, we see that even fireflies are capable of transmitting, or transferring, information from one to another—precisely what the traumatized adult humans, such as Elósegui and Estanislaa after the deaths of Abel and David, have been incapable of doing throughout the text. Animals are even able to communicate the agony of death: "Un mochuelo ciego voló sobre sus cabezas batiendo furiosamente las alas y el graznido

siniestro de un cárabo parodió la agonía de un estrangulado" (249) ["A blind red owl flew over their heads, beating its wings furiously, and a horned owl's sinister screech parodied the agony of a strangling man" (221)]. This description suggests that death itself is beyond the capabilities of any *human* language—which is why Elósegui, Estanislaa, and others have so often been struck mute—and can only be approximated by the savage cry of the animal world appropriated by the children. Like them, animals lay claim to heightened communicability, which calls further attention to the unspeakability that characterizes the human encounters among adults throughout the text.

With (adult) humans rendered silent and animals "speaking" throughout, *Duelo en El Paraíso* offers the possibility of being read as a sort of fairy tale or fable; Schwartz has called it "a kind of fable on the death of the Spanish spirit" (59). In a series of essays in the volume *Infancy and History: On the Destruction of Experience*, Giorgio Agamben identifies the inversion of speaking and mute beings as one of the defining characteristics of the genre: "in the fairy tale, while man, spellbound, is struck dumb, nature, spellbound, speaks" (141).[28] The repetition of the word *spellbound* is telling, for enchantment or bewitchment is the only means by which this inversion can take place. And, indeed, references to enchantment abound in *Duelo*'s opening scenes, when Elósegui's incapacity for communication is also emphasized. It is as if the entire forest is under a spell: "Todo era sorprendente y, al mismo tiempo, mágico" (11) ["Everything was unexpected, and, at the same time, magical" (11)]. As this "calma mágica" ["magical calm"] sets in, Elósegui finds himself under the impression "de hallarse en medio de un bosque encantado" (18) ["he was in an enchanted wood" (17)] and "empezaba a creer que el alcornocal estaba embrujado, maldito" (23) ["He was beginning to think that the cork-tree was bewitched, malevolently bewitched" (21)]. And though in these moments the "enchantment"

[28]From Agamben's essay "Fable and History: Considerations on the Nativity Crib."

affects man and nature alike—"todo callaba: animales, árboles y seres humanos" (18) ["All were silent, animals, trees, and men"(17) [29]]—as we have seen, nature will soon recover its voice for the remainder of the text, whereas the adult man will continue to have difficulties doing so.

It begs to be asked, then, from whence this enchantment comes. First, it is essential to acknowledge that, although this section is narrated in the third person omniscient and it is at times difficult to distinguish between the narrator's observations and Elósegui's, the sensation of enchantment is presented fairly consistently as a perception of the character himself. In returning to the aforementioned quotes, we see reference to Elósegui's impressions and the onset of his beliefs as being responsible for these descriptions. Even when the narrator does not explicitly state that it is the characters who sense this enchantment, the connection is implied, as when the Nationalist lieutenant "con la mirada dura de sus ojos miopes, recorrió el jardín ornado de geranios y adelfas. Una atmósfera quieta, mágica, parecía suspender milagrosamente todo el valle por encima de la desolación y de la guerra" (33) ["ran his hard myopic eyes over the decorative geraniums and rose-bay. A calm, magical atmostphere seemed to shield the entire valley from the desolation of war" (31)]. Here, the pairing of the officer's observation of the landscape with the description of its magical atmosphere suggest that this is his, rather than the narrator's, impression. Thus, we could see the forest's enchantment as having its origin in the soldiers themselves. That is not to say that they themselves have cursed the place as might a fairy-tale witch, but rather that it is they who read the bewitchment in or project it upon the landscape.

What purpose, then, does the projection of fairy-tale enchantment serve for these characters? One passage—when Elósegui is being questioned by the Nationalists—is particularly illuminating in this regard. Though fragments of this passage have already been

[29] Translation altered slightly from Brooke-Rose's.

cited, it is worth including it in its entirety here, for it aptly demonstrates the relationship between war, trauma, unspeakability and the recourse to fairy-tale logic:

> Hacía veinte minutos que Elósegui estaba allí, intentando responder a las preguntas de modo coherente. Aquella mañana, en virtud de un azar extraño, la empresa le resultaba extraordinariamente difícil. Le costaba aferrar sus pensamientos, que se escurrían como gotitas de mercurio entre los dedos apenas trataba de asirlos. Desde la muerte de Dora, el mundo había perdido su faz verosímil. La vecindad del frente, los fugitivos—¿huir de qué, de quién?—, la voladura de los fortines, la noche en blanco, su ocultamiento y su entrega se encadenaban obedeciendo a las reglas de una lógica que aún no comprendía. La muerte de Abel, el disparo, la huida de los niños, el mensaje escrito con lápiz y el ramo de amapolas eran otras tantas fórmulas, conjuros y ademanes faunescos por los que un mundo de magia y de crueldad, de poesía y de miseria, acababa de imponerse al ordinario, cubriéndolo con un tapiz de ensueño. (35)

> Martín was there for twenty minutes, trying to answer questions coherently; but owing to the morning's disturbing incidents the effort seemed exhausting. He felt stunned, inert. He could hardly grapple with his thoughts, which ran like mercury between fingers as soon as he tried to catch them. Since Dora's death, the world had lost its true face. The nearness of the front, the fugitives—fleeing from what, from whom?—the blowing up of the forts, the sleepless night, his hiding and giving himself up…all these facts were linked by the rules of a logic which no one could understand. The death of Abel, the shot, the flight of the children, the

> penciled message and the bunch of poppies were just so many more signs, conjurations and wild gestures imposed over the ordinary world by another, made up of magic and cruelty, of poems and miseries, which covered it like a carpet of dreams. (33)

This passage provides, as it were, a useful summary of the processes we have explored thus far. Elósegui, traumatized, shows himself to be incapable of comprehending and narrating these violent events—his thoughts appear as wordless blobs that cannot be pinned down by language so as to be transmitted to the interrogator. This incommunicability is explicitly connected to the war and the death of his lover, experiences which have imbued Elósegui's world with inverisimilitude. To explain the unfamiliar logic of his situation, then, Elósegui resorts to the fairy tale, ultimately concluding that the inexplicable events of the morning in question are the result of "fórmulas, conjuros y ademanes faunescos" ["signs, conjurations and wild gestures"]. Thus, in the face of incomprehensibility and unspeakability, it is the fairy tale, a narrated story associated with childish modes of expression, which presents an alternative mode of understanding and communicating experience. The ultimate textual irony, of course, is that the *adults* turn to fairy tales—Elósegui's sense that enchantment has taken place, Águeda's prince-charming fantasies—whereas the children are able to present accounts of real-world violence.

In turn, Agamben's thoughts on the nature of the fairy tale can be used to support and clarify the process undergone by Elósegui and described above. Basing his ideas on an etymological analysis that dates to antiquity, Agamben suggests a connection between death and the mystery—both are that which have "as yet found no adequate explanation" and thus are experiences that cannot be spoken of—in this respect, they approximate the speechless experience of infancy. He concludes: "This is why it is the fable, something that can only be

narrated, and not the mystery, which must not be spoken of, which contains the truth of infancy as man's source of origin. For in the fairy tale man is freed from the mystery's obligation of silence by transforming it into enchantment: it is not participation in a cult of knowledge which renders him speechless, but bewitchment" (70). In concluding that "la muerte de Abel, el disparo, la huida de los niños… eran otras tantas fórmulas, conjuros y ademanes faunescos" ["The death of Abel, the shot, the flight of the children…were just so many more signs, conjurations and wild gestures"], Elósegui is, in effect, denying the experience of war that is reenacted in the children's violence—an experience in which he participated, but as of yet has no psychical knowledge—instead blaming it on enchantment.

Death, Ghosts, & the Restoration of Narration

In the fairy-tale world of speaking animals and mute adults, children belong to the communicative realm by virtue of their association with the former. The children's recourse to animalistic communication and behavior suggests access to a primitive, magical state of nature that Abel finds seductive. His frustration with life at *El Paraíso* drives him to seek out an alternative existence with the refugee children—an existence of wild abandon in which the children cease to be entirely human and fuse with nature itself. During Abel's first encounter with the group, they are described as follows: "Gran número de niños habían surgido entre las cañas, desnudos como lombrices y con el cuerpo untado de barro. Algunos habían cogido algas verdosas que crecían en el estanque y las habían extendido sobre sus cabezas a modo de peluca. Todos lanzaban gritos de guerra…" (216) ["As if by magic, a large number of boys emerged from the canes, naked as worms and anointed with mud. A few had picked some greenery from the pond and had wigged their heads with it. They all emitted loud war-cries…" (193)]. Again,

the description ends with an emphasis on the forms of communication that have emerged among the children; here, the animalistic war cry. The text establishes an implicit connection between the refugee children, who have abandoned human language, and "primitive" societies. The text also plays with the notion of the child as representative of an earlier stage of human evolution, and thus closer to animals than to human beings, as when young Abel envisions his unborn sibling, "aquel hermano-huevo, que [Abel] imaginaba a un tiempo en forma de pez y de sirena" (110) ["that little brother-egg, whom he imagined at one time to be a fish or a mermaid" (105)]. Just as evolutionary biologists trace human existence back to other forms of life on land and in the sea, so too does the human individual have this possibility in Abel's mind, where the fetus appears as both a fish and as a fantastical fish-human hybrid.

Abel's eternally unborn sibling allows us to return to that special connection that the very young seem to have with death throughout the novel. An oneiric Doña Estanislaa alludes to this connection when, in Abel's dream, she asks him what is perhaps the text's central question: "Oirás decir qué ha sido de los niños que mueren cuando nacen, pero yo te pregunto: ¿qué es de los niños que no mueren, el que fui yo, el que fue Filomena, el que fue Águeda? ¿Dónde está su cadáver, su tumba, el cementerio?" (183) ["'You will have heard what happens to children who die when they are born, but I ask you: what about the children who don't die, like myself and Filomena, and Agueda? Where are their corpses, their tombs, their cemetery?'" (171)]. The very manner in which the question is phrased is revealing, as it posits a difference not between children who die and those who live, but rather children who die and those who do not die. In other words, children do not fall into the categories of the dead and the living, but rather the dead and the undead. The notion of children as not quite living but as merely undead is maintained throughout the novel in descriptions of Abel before his death. Even while Abel is a living,

breathing, and *speaking* child, he is described as a ghost: in one moment, he moves "como un fantasma corridor y avergonzado" (94) ["aimlessly, like an abashed ghost" (86)]; in another, he contemplates "su figura de fantasma" (96) ["his ghost-like figure"[30]] in the mirror. These descriptions cannot be read as mere foreshadowing, given that the reader learns of Abel's death early on in the text and only sees him in life in narrative flashbacks. In this way, the very structure of the narration introduces us to a living Abel *after* he has already died, after we have "seen" his dead body, thereby rendering ghostly any presence he then has in the text's treatment of past events. For the reader, Abel can never be more than a ghost: even in life, he is merely undead.[31]

In turn, Abel's status as a ghost haunting *El Paraíso* demands that we read him in the context of trauma narrative. Throughout her text, Caruth uses the verb "haunt" in order to describe the aftermath of the trauma-producing event: "What returns to haunt the victim…is not only the reality of the violent event but also the reality of the way that its violence has not yet been fully known" (6). We should recall that in ghost lore, the deceased is often thought to return due to unresolved business—that is, the spirit has information that he wants to communicate to the living, though he is quite unable to do so. The living person in ghost lore, then, in this lack of knowledge, is like the survivor of trauma struggling to know the traumatic event, which remains unassimilated in his or her own realm of knowledge. The ghost, in its incessant return after death, can be used to metaphorize the mechanism of trauma, the site of which is in turn presented as a haunted, ghostly place.

[30] I have altered Brooke-Rose's translation, which reads "his pale, fantastic figure" (88) in order to maintain the ghost allusion of the original text.
[31] Jo Labanyi also speaks of Abel's "death-in-life"; however, she reads this condition as the result of his bourgeois background that prevents him from accessing the savage vitality seen in the refugee children.

Turning back to Agamben can perhaps help us clarify the connection between ghosts and the very young, for Abel's ghostliness represents a certain perception of children that is not altogether unfamiliar in many societies.[32] Referring to the anthropological studies of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Agamben maintains that children correspond not to the dead but to ghosts, what we here have been calling more generally the undead. Furthermore, according to Agamben, in contrast to adults, both children and ghosts are associated with instability of meaning: "Within the perspective of signifying function, adults and dead belong to the same order, that of stable signifiers and the continuity between diachrony and synchrony…But children and ghosts, as unstable signifiers, represent the discontinuity and difference between the two worlds" (92-93). Agamben thus concludes that the "ghost" stage between life and death is a necessary one

> to maintain the operation of a signifying function…ghosts and children, belonging neither to the signifiers of diachrony nor to those of synchrony, appear as the signifiers of the same signifiying opposition between the two worlds which constitutes the potential for a social system. *They are, therefore, the signifiers of the signifying function*, without which there would be neither human time nor history. (93, italics in the original)

In other words, by maintaining the possibility of difference, on which all meaning is based in Saussurian thought, children and ghosts come to signify the very possibility of meaning. Thus, in a society where "Los símbolos perdían su valor y no quedaba más que eso: el hombre reducido a sus huesos y su piel, sin nada extraño que lo valorizara" (Goytisolo 11) ["Symbols had lost their value and man alone was left—reduced to skin and bone, with nothing external to prove his value" (11)], where meaning is erased because there is no other to establish it, where

[32] Haunting—or haunted—children abound in horror and suspense films about ghosts, such that the child/ghost trope nearly constitutes a genre unto itself. Most relevant to this project is Guillermo del Toro's *El espinazo del diablo*, but there are countless examples of ghost-story films, from a number of countries, that prominently feature children.

there is only the empty form of skin and bones, perhaps both ghosts and children are in a privileged position to restore this possibility.

When we return to Estanislaa's question, it becomes obvious that she is not limiting the matter to Abel—that is, his condition as undead is not specific to him, but rather extends to children in general. Although the text emphasizes Abel's undead condition via its narrative structure, the implication of Estanislaa's question is that *all* children are undead, regardless of a pending biological death, perhaps because while biological death may be many decades away, the death of the child *as such* is imminent, symbolically contained as it is within the passage to adulthood. That is, even the children who do not literally die experience a death of sorts when their child-selves cease to exist as they transform into adults.[33] For his part, Agamben has observed that "just as ghosts have a corresponding function to that of children, so funeral rites correspond to initiation rites, in their purpose of transforming these unstable signifiers into stable ones" (92). *Duelo en El Paraíso* is, in fact, the story of both Abel's initiation into adulthood and his death—it is at once a *Bildungsroman* and a burial narrative; here, the two processes converge literally rather than metaphorically.[34]

Thus, the novel presents all children as on the verge of a death of sorts—the "un-death" to which Estanislaa refers is merely a death of the symbolic order. Abel himself seems to sense this—such an impact does Estanislaa's question make on him that he will recall it in another moment, changing the language slightly but maintaining the distinction between dead and undead: "Se acordaba de la palabras de doña Estanislaa: 'La gente se preocupa de los niños que

[33] Thompson also interprets the metamorphosis from childhood to adulthood as a symbolic death in the text, but he does so in the context of Dionysian myth.

[34] Though *Duelo en El Paraíso* does not correspond point for point to the *Bildungsroman* as it is traditionally conceived (i.e., with reference to Goethe's genre-defining *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*), Abel's trajectory has much in common with the typical protagonist of the *Bildungsroman*, in which a young orphan must leave home as part of his journey to self-discovery and his passage from childhood to adulthood.

mueren cuando nacen, pero yo te pregunto: ¿qué es de los niños que no mueren? ¿Dónde está su cuerpo, la prueba, la coartada?'" (266) ["Abel remembered doña Estanislaa's words: 'People look after children who die, but I ask you, what about the children who do not die? Where is the body, the proof, the alibi?'" (235)]. The difference in lexical choices between the aunt and her nephew for the second question is especially revealing. Doña Estanislaa presumably understands that the un-death of which she speaks is the symbolic death of the child, and she laments the fact that while literal death is ritualized with a tomb and a cemetery, no such monuments exist for the undead children. However, even as Abel recognizes the gravity of the question, he seems to struggle with the very notion of symbolic death, searching for its tangible proof, for an alibi. Ironically, these same questions will have to be asked in the investigation not of Abel's symbolic death, but of his literal one. And it is only in his literal death that Abel is able to avoid his symbolic one, living forever as a child by virtue of dying young. The dream he has the night before his execution features Estanislaa's deceased sons David and Romano gesturing for him to cross a stream, telling him, "«Vamos, decídete, es fácil, y, una vez que estés con nosotros, serás perpetuamente joven»" (268) ["'Come, make up your mind, it's easy, and once you're with us you'll be perpetually young'" (238)]. Perhaps the seductive promise of eternal youth leads Abel willingly to his own death, as he resigns himself to accompany the refugee children the morning of his execution despite having been warned of their plans.

There is no doubt that Abel suspects the imminence of his death. In one critical moment, Abel considers his impending doom: once again he gazes in the mirror, noting "un tinte verdoso" to his skin that suggests post-mortem putrefaction, as he recalls the following words: "'Abel, mequetrefe, ha llegado el momento de hacer tus funerales.' En algún lado, no sabía donde, había oído esta frase y la repitió en voz alta, con satisfacción" (98) ["'Abel, you little heap of dung, the

time has come for your funeral.' He had heard this phrase somewhere and repeated it aloud; it filled him with pleasure" (90)]. Again, as with the voices heard at the costume party in Panama, these words seem to have no origin, no subject who speaks them—indeed, until Abel himself takes responsibility for them, speaking them aloud, proclaiming ownership of his own demise and thus resisting the de-subjectifying silence brought about by death. His willingness to die could thus possibly be read as an attempt to control the circumstances of his expiration, to assert his own agency and subjectivity—which have consistently been denied to him because of his young age and the war—, as the imminence of his death threatens to take it away. Later, on the morning of his slated execution, the refugee children go to Abel's room and find him already dressed, seated on the bed and seemingly expecting their arrival. Significantly, he washes his face and his hands in front of the boys before accompanying them, as if performing his own purification rites before dying (274).

In light of the potentially purifying nature of death, it is interesting to consider Abel in the role of scapegoat. Both Labanyi (852) and Jordan (96) have done so, reading Abel's resignation to his own death as an acceptance of the role as a scapegoat who must die to purge bourgeois society of its sinful excesses. Given the nature of the current analysis, another possibility arises—that Abel's assumption of this scapegoat responsibility is, within the internal logic of the novel, the only way to break the unspeakability occasioned by the trauma of war and make it a narratable experience. That is, in dying, Abel makes possible a narrative that approximates and reenacts the experience of the war that is unspeakable for characters such as Elósegui.

For, though Elósegui is rendered speechless by his discovery of Abel's body, ultimately, Abel's death is in fact communicated. This communication takes place not only between text

and reader but at the interdiegetic level as well. In the last twenty pages of the novel, the story of Abel's death is eventually revealed by the refugee children: "los chiquillos de la escuela que vagabundeaban por el valle se fueron entregando poco a poco a las patrullas. . .Gracias a sus confesiones, completadas con los informes del professor Quintana, había logrado esclarecerse la historia de aquellos úlitmos días, y con ella los hechos que indujeron a dar muerte al pequeño Abel Sorzano" (264) ["The children who had been wandering about the valley had gradually given themselves up to the pursuing patrols…Their confessions, supplemented by the information from the teacher Quintana, had helped to clarify the story of those last few days, and the events which had led to the murder of Abel Sorzano" (234)]. These confessions, largely narrated by Lieutenant Santos' son, Emilio, who had fallen in with the refugee children, constitute what is perhaps the most clearly narrated and easily digested chunk of the book. We learn of the events leading up to Abel's death in an orderly, chronological, and verisimiliar fashion—the account is not interrupted by the temporal shifts that characterize Elósegui's recollection of his relationship with Abel, nor is it marked by the dreamy digressions that dominate Estanislaa's stories of her two sons.

In the narration of events offered by Emilio, we also see one of the few coherent descriptions of the war itself. Whereas Elósegui's impressions of the fighting are uncomprehending, consisting of a series of sketchy, disconnected images—"La vecinidad del frente, los fugitivos—¿huir de qué, de quién?—, la voladura de los fortines, la noche en blanco" (35) ["The nearness of the front, the fugitives—fleeing from what, from whom? —the blowing up of the forts, the sleepless night" (33)]—once the children are recovered, they offer us a clearly narrated account of the violence, structured grammatical subjects and verbs: "un avión con la bandera roja y gualda voló sobre sus cabezas…provocando un efecto de catastrophe: ráfagas de

viento despeinaron los pinos del sendero y el mar se cubrió de un reguero de baba espumeante. El avión pirueteaba encima de la bahía y el corazón de los niños latió de miedo cuando vieron soltar las bombas: una, dos, tres, cuatro" (271) ["An aeroplane with red and yellow markings flew over their heads [and] had a catastrophic effect: great gusts of winds shook the pines along the path and a sudden river of foam covered the sea. The aeroplane pirouetted over the bay and the children's hearts stood still as they watched it drop its bombs: one, two, three, four" (238-239)]. Thus, it is the *children* who ultimately provide not only a coherent narration of Abel's execution but of the war itself, a narration which has continually escaped those who experience the war more directly. In this way, we could perhaps read Abel's character not as the other children's scapegoat for bourgeois excesses and class division, as others have suggested, but as the *text's* scapegoat for unspeakability. Though he may be unconscious of the nature of his sacrifice, through Abel's death the possibility for narration is finally restored: both readers as well as the characters within the text at last receive an account of Abel's execution and a clearly communicated transference of the experience of war itself. Thus, Abel's death provides *something to tell*: his death becomes a story narrated by children, replacing that which cannot be narrated by the adult characters; in its very tragedy, brutality and meaninglessness—its resistance to comprehension—Abel's death enacts trauma for the reader.

Awakening to Trauma in its Aftermath

Just as this novel opens where its story presumably ends—with the death of a major character—I would like to conclude this chapter by returning to where I began, with the first paragraph of *Duelo en El Paraíso*. Let us recall the specific circumstances by which Elósegui "arrives late" to the knowledge of a traumatic event: "En la ladera del bosque de alcornoques, el

disparo de una arma de fuego no podía augurar nada bueno. Al oírlo, Elósegui despertó de su modorra y se incorporó sobresaltado" (Goytisolo 9) ["Down the slope where the cork-trees cluster, the shot of a firearm could only augur ill. The sound roused Martín Elósegui from his drowsiness and he sat up, startled" (9)]. At the beginning of this chapter, we read Elosegúi's physical absence from the assassination and his initial ignorance of the event as the literalization of the experience of trauma, as a metaphor for the victim's inability to fully know the tragedy. Now, I would like to consider another level to this metaphor: that of slumber and awakenings. For it is not only that Elósegui has missed the assassination in the sense of being absent, but rather that he was half asleep, recovering full consciousness only after the shot sounds. We can see that slumber itself is thus an apt metaphor for the trauma victim's experience of catastrophe—they have "slept through it" in the sense that they lack conscious knowledge of what has happened, only "awakening" to its reality in its aftermath.

This recourse to slumber and awakening as a metaphor for the mechanism of trauma recalls Freud's oft-cited anecdote about a father's dream that his recently deceased son is burning. Freud's original description is as follows:

> A father had been watching day and night beside the sick-bed of his child. After the child had died, he retired to rest in an adjoining room, but left the door ajar so that he could look from his room into the next, where the child's body lay surrounded by tall candles. An old man, who had been installed as a watcher, sat beside the body, murmuring prayers. After sleeping for a few hours the father dreamed that *the child was standing by his bed, clasping his arm and crying reproachfully: "Father, don't you see that I am burning?"* The father woke up and noticed a bright light coming from the adjoining room. Rushing in, he found

> that the old man had fallen asleep, and the sheets and one arm of the beloved body were burnt by a fallen candle. (*Basic Writings* 468)

Freud introduces this dream in chapter 7 of *The Interpretation of Dreams* and considers it from the standpoint of wish fulfillment, suggesting that the father dreams about his son because the former wishes to see the latter alive again. However, this dream has since been used by scholars in the development of theories of trauma: Lacan offers up his own analysis of the dream in his seminar "Tuché and Automaton"—a reading we shall explore in the next chapter of this project—and Cathy Caruth revisits the dream itself as well as both Freud's and Lacan's interpretation of it in the last chapter of *Unclaimed Experience*. Her reading is intimately tied to her approach to trauma as a "late arrival" in which the mind is shocked not only by a threat itself but more precisely by the inability to recognize the threat in a timely fashion—the threat, as it were, is always recognized "one moment too late" (62). In this light, Caruth ultimately concludes that the timing of the father's awakening, which occurs after the boy's bedclothes have already caught fire, can be read as confirmation for the interpretation of trauma as a perpetually missed, not-fully-knowable experience: "*Awakening…is itself the site of trauma*, the trauma of the necessity and impossibility of responding to another's death" (100).

The figure of the father who too late awakens to his son's death, or rather to the repetition of that death as reenacted in the fire, has remarkable parallels with Elósegui's discovery of the dead Abel. For Elósegui is literally woken by the gunshot—a threat unidentified, but already realized—that kills Abel. Like the father who, "waking up in order to see…discovers that he has once again *seen too late* to prevent the burning," Elósegui attempts to understand his "failure to see in time" (Caruth 100), here a failure of both literal vision and comprehension: "El cuerpo estaba allí, a veinte metros escasos de distancia, y le pareció incomprensible no haberlo visto

antes…" (16) ["A body was there, barely twenty yards away, and he couldn't understand why he hadn't seen it before…" (15)]. And if Elósegui recalls the father figure in Freud's anecdote, then Abel is clearly the child whose death yields the incomprehensibility which becomes the site of trauma—or, in this context, the child whose death is the reenactment of the traumatic civil war that cannot be fully known or spoken of. And yet, it is precisely in dying and leaving behind a survivor that both children ultimately restore the possibility of narration. In Caruth's analysis of the dream, the dead child takes on a near redemptive role; she reads his pleas in the father's dream as an exhortation that the father survive and awaken to tell his story: "It is precisely the dead child, the child in its irreducible inaccessibility and otherness, who says to the father: *wake up, leave me, survive; survive to tell the story of my burning*" (Caruth 105). As he does eventually survive to tell the tale of his dream, the father is ultimately able to tell a "story of survival" but also "the story of the dead child" (102), becoming "*the one who can say* what the death of the child is" (106, all italics in the original). That is, in telling the dream, the father is finally able to tell the story of his child's death. In the internal logic of both this anecdote and *Duelo en El Paraíso,* the possibility of narrative is restored via the child. In the first, the story of a child's death is told in the story of the dream; in the second, the story of the civil war is told in the story of a child's death. It is in this sense that Abel can be seen as a scapegoat for unspeakability—his death offers the only story that can be told, within this textual framework, of the Civil War.

As we explore the parallels between the restoration of narrative in the dream and in Goytsolo's novel, it is important to note the primary difference between the storytellers. The dream is told, of course, by the father, and yet in *Duelo en El Paraíso* it is not Elósegui, the father's counterpart, who tells a story. After all, let us recall that throughout the text Elósegui is

portrayed as incapable of speaking through his trauma. The significant departure of *Duelo en El Paraíso* from the dream is that children fulfill the role of both scapegoat whose death provides something to tell, and survivor who is capable of telling it. Like Estanislaa, the father of the Freudian anecdote has perhaps had time to arrive at a point where narration is possible, whereas Elósegui still finds himself in a period of latency in which he suffers the shock of the discovery of Abel's body. But if we consider the real-life storyteller responsible for the whole text, Goytisolo, we do in fact find an adult capable of forming a narrative of trauma centered on the death of a child. Goytisolo too tells a story of survival—his own, and that of Elósegui's—through a story of death—Abel's biological death, which can also be read as the figurative death of the child-Goytisolo, given the parallels between author and character.

If we return to Corrales Egea's conclusion that "la guerra no es—ni podía ser—el tema central" of *Duelo en El Paraíso* (73) ["The war is not—nor could it have been—the central theme" of *Duelo en El Paraíso*"], it would appear that this assertion is, according to the reading offered here, only superficially correct. *Duelo en El Paraíso* is more precisely about the death of a young child, but to the extent that this death functions in the text as a reenactment of other deaths in the Civil War, the novel asserts the impossibility of directly transferring the experience of the conflict via narrative. Instead, we can come to partially know of this experience in a roundabout manner. *Duelo en El Paraíso* thus presents the Spanish Civil War as an historical event of the kind described by Caruth: one that "can only be grasped in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence" (18). The text presents children, because they were quite literally barred from accessing the war directly, as the ideal narrators of this inaccessibility, for their very lack of access literalizes the unknowability inherent to wartime experience.

However, despite the circuitous nature of the story told within, a story that is about the experience of the Civil War apparently because it *does not* tell this story, there is no doubt that *Duelo en El Paraíso* posits the possibility of restoring storytelling and narration in the wake of trauma. If the very first words of the text announce a trauma—a late arrival to a threat already realized—then the very last words of the text leave open the prospect of further narration. The book ends, as it were, with the promise of more stories yet to come. In the novel's final pages, Doña Estanislaa is accompanied by a young soldier, to whom she begins to talk about her two dead sons and Abel. The last two lines of the text are as follows: "Doña Estanislaa se volvió para mirarle: —Mire usted: una vez, hace ya varios años…" (283) ["Doña Estanislaa turned to look at him. 'Listen: once, many years ago…'" (250)]. Whereas earlier the use of an ellipsis marked that which remained unsaid about the War of '98, here the use of the same punctuation clearly indicates narration which exists beyond the scope of the text itself. Though Estanislaa is probably going to repeat one of her "historias inventadas" that the reader has already encountered, we can be sure that the narrative will involve the reenactment of some other trauma, just as Abel's death re-enacted David and Romano's for Estanislaa, and just like Estanislaa's *narration* of the two latter's deaths enacts the former's for the reader. Furthermore, Estanislaa's word choice with "una vez" cannot help but recall the well-known fairy tale opener *érase una vez*. Thus, the final words of *Duelo en El Paraíso*, spoken by a childlike subject and alluding to a narrative genre associated with children, leave pending the possibility for further narration, suggesting that the story of trauma is only beginning to be told by the children of the Civil War.

CHAPTER 2

LONG DISTANCE WAKE-UP CALL: MANUEL LAMANA'S *LOS INOCENTES*

Like *Duelo en El Paraíso,* Manuel Lamana's *Los inocentes* begins with an awakening. But whereas the awakening in the first novel occurs within the initial lines of the text itself, *Los inocentes* features a paratextual awakening in the form of an epigraph before the text proper even begins. The epigraph consists of two lines of verse by poet Eugenio de Nora: "Fuí despertado a tiros de la niñez más pura/por hombres que en España se daban a la muerte"[35] ["I was woken in Spain from childhood most pure/by the gunshots of men devoted to death"]. The most obvious reading of the quote, as Godoy Gallardo has suggested, presents the passage from sleep to wakefulness as the move from childhood to adulthood, a transition set off for the speaker by the outbreak of war.[36] According to Godoy, before the beginning of the text itself, the epigraph establishes "el verdadero nervio motor de la narración: el niño protagonista deja la etapa infantil—caracterizada por la inocencia—y entra a un mundo de experiencias que no le corresponde. Desde ahora, la guerra, la sangre, la desolación, las armas, la muerte, tendrán vigencia en su mundo cotidiano" (138-139) ["the driving force of the narration: the protagonist leaves behind his childhood—characterized by innocence—and enters into a world of experiences that doesn't belong to him. From now on, war, blood, desolation, weapons, and death will shape his everyday life" (translation mine)]. Godoy thus reads the epigraph in light of what he knows to be true for the text proper, conflating the poetic voice of Nora's verses with Luis, the "niño protagonista" of *Los inocentes*.

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[35] The lines come from the poem "Patria," included in Nora's anthology *España, pasión de vida (1945-1950).*

[36] The scholarship on Manuel Lamana is extremely limited, and the bulk of it is concerned with his first novel, *Otros hombres*. Godoy Gallardo is one of the few critics who has written on *Los inocentes* more extensively, devoting an entire chapter to it. Ponce de León offers a much briefer analysis, though the fact that he mentions it at all is noteworthy (84-86). Both critics focus on the text's representation of childhood innocence and its loss.

Nevertheless, coming as it does *before* the text, the epigraph demands an initial reading in which the reader is ignorant of the text to follow. For this reason, though the epigraph can ultimately take on certain meanings in light of the text itself, a close reading of Nora's verses, undertaken independently of any reference to or connection with the text proper, is a worthwhile endeavor. Just as the survivor of trauma is conceptualized as having awoke to a violent event already realized though not yet entirely known, so too is the reader initially "awakened" by the paratext to a text already written though not yet read. I would like an initial reading of the epigraph to thus embrace the spirit of trauma and avoid the presumption of foreknowledge of the text proper that may shade certain interpretations of Nora's verses.

There are perhaps two distinctive qualities that stand out from the epigraph's initial verb phrase "fui despertado"—voice (passive) and tense (past preterit)—both of which allow us to read the speaker's experience as one of trauma. As for the former, Godoy rightfully identifies the use of the passive voice as indicative of a lack of agency. The construction "fui despertado" posits a speaker who participates in the moment of wakefulness only insofar as he is a passive recipient of an action. It is not a speaker who *woke to* but rather one who *was awakened by* something: what we have is not precisely an awakening but a being-awakened, comparable to the victim's lack of agency in trauma. Furthermore, the agents responsible for the speaker's being-awakened are unveiled only in the second line. For the first line, the precise nature of the waking agent remains pending—that is, who or what woke the speaker is initially unknown, as is the nature of the threat for the trauma victim. The moment of the line break suggests that the speaker experienced a period of uncertainty before being able to identify exactly what woke him—the momentary disorientation that occurs when we pass from slumber to wakefulness. More importantly, the line break also creates a similar disorientation for the reader—we too are

initially confused, as the first line forces us to ask "Who/what woke the speaker?" In this way, not only is the line break used to illustrate the trauma undergone by the speaker, it also forces the reader to momentarily experience a literal not-knowing that points to the trauma victim's inability to fully know the traumatic event. That is, the interplay between the structure and content of the verses performs trauma for the reader.

Important too is the shift from the preterit in the first line, "fui despertado", to the imperfect in the second, "hombres…se daban". Such a pairing suggests that the transition from sleep to wakefulness—or, metaphorically speaking, from childhood to maturity—is complete, and that it is retrospectively locatable in a precise moment of time that occurred while another action—"hombres…se daban a la muerte"—was in progress. The open-endedness of the imperfect verb tense furthermore suggests that the threat had not yet ended, that it was continually manifesting itself without a known point of cessation. Though the being-awakened is complete—the awareness, perhaps, that a traumatic event has occurred—the victim's experience of this event has only just begun. Thus, the subject of the poem appears as a non-agent upon whom an awakening is imposed by a violent event already set in motion and not yet ended. Like a trauma victim whose knowledge of the traumatic event is necessarily belated, our sleeper, upon being awakened, becomes aware of a threat already in progress; it is already too late to prevent its happening.

In the text itself, the sleeper in question is fourteen-year-old Luis, the book's protagonist who, upon entering his adolescence, can indeed be seen as waking from childhood. Luis, the son of a Republican bureaucrat, is forced into internal exile with his parents and younger sister after the collapse of the government in Madrid. The two children are relocated first to Cuenca

before eventually meeting up with their parents, doña María and don Luis, in Valencia.[37] Along with family friends Prado and Marín, the family thus attempts to flee the advance of the Nationalist troops and the ever-more widespread violence. In Valencia, Luis is not only confronted with the threats characteristic of a society at war—residential raids, bombings, scarcity of food—but also with the difficulties of relocation—loneliness, unfamiliar neighborhoods, a new school—and, finally, the trials and tribulations of any child on the cusp of adolescence—frustration with parents, sexual uncertainty, and a changing system of values amongst peers. Though the text is narrated from the third person omniscient, the narrative voice and Luis's are closely aligned, with the narrative ending when Luis dies in an air raid.

The text begins *en media res*: Spain is already in the throes of the Civil War. The very structure of the text itself creates a trauma-like experience for the reader. If trauma victims can be thought of as having missed the onset of catastrophe—despite having witnessed the event itself, the victim only begins to "know" the trauma in its aftermath—this "late arrival" is literalized in our experience of reading. The reader enters the text, as it were, when the war has already begun: we learn on the first page that "Las ciudades, levantadas, eran un continuo grito. Los mugidos de los toros se unían a los disparos y la sangre iba regando lugares inverosímiles" (9) ["The cities had risen up in a perpetual scream. The bellows of the bulls blended with the gunshots and blood ran through improbable places"][38]. In this way, the beginning of the text performs for the reader the very process that is described in the epigraph. That is, like the metaphor of the sleeper awakened by a threat already in progress, the text uses the sounds of war—a *grito* of bellowing animals and gunshots—to "wake" the reader to this same threat. And

[37] *Los inocentes*, like *Duelo en El Paraíso*, has clear autobiographical connections with the author's own experience of the war. Lamana, born in 1922, was also fourteen when the war broke out. His father was a high-ranking Rebublican bureaucrat who fled with his family to Valencia (from a 1972 interview with Julio Ardiles Gray, fragments of which are reproduced in *Manuel Lamana* 29-31).

[38] All translations of Lamana's text are my own.

as in Nora's poem, the past imperfect is used to indicate the threat's progressive nature. Thus, the text forces a literal absence of the reader from the beginning of the war, an absence which can be said to create the sense of "late arrival" experienced by a trauma victim who, though physically present at the scene of a traumatic event, continues to lack full knowledge of it and only begins to attain this knowledge belatedly.

Furthermore, if we consider the moment of the text's publication in 1959, the progressive nature of a traumatic event was, of course, literal, for any Spanish reader still suffering under the dictatorship. It was not just that Spaniards traumatized by the Civil War had not yet gained knowledge of it, and would thus have been doomed to repeat the event—perhaps in the form of nightmares or flashbacks—as they struggled to fully comprehend it; in this case, the catastrophe of war would have literally passed, though not psychologically so. Rather, the thirty-five-plus years of dictatorship that followed the Spanish Civil War made for a very real ongoing threat. Though, to be sure, the violence did not continue on the same scale as during the conflict, some cultural critics have seen the war itself as extending into the years of dictatorship. For example, Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi speak of "'a post-war' which, in its social and political institutionalization of a vengeful victory, really constituted the continuation of war by other means" (170).

Thus, at the time of the publication of *Los inocentes*, the horror of the original event, the Civil War, was still quite present for its victims, in the form of the continued domination of government by Franco. If the text begins for Luis with the war already begun and not yet ended, a contemporary Spanish reader's experience of such violence would not have been merely performed by the text's beginning *en media res*, as it is for the modern reader. It would have been an experience of violence still very much in progress in a real-life, day-to-day manner. We

can thus view the text as potentially "waking" the reader not to the catastrophe of the Civil War itself—as the child is awakened in Nora's verses—but to the continued presence of this violence in the form of the dictatorship, to the persistence of a threat even through the moment of the text's reception in 1959.[39] The text would not have merely awakened the reader to the knowledge of the dictatorship—any Spaniard would have obviously been well aware of it—but to the knowledge of the traumatizing nature of the dictatorship, of its roots in the violence of the Civil War, at a time when the Spanish public had fallen increasingly silent with regard to political dissidence, whether out of fear of the regime or in complicity with it.

Indeed, Lamana's book came at the end of a decade marked by political disengagement in Spain. Cazorla Sánchez notes that during the late 1940s and early 1950s most Spaniards eschewed politics altogether, concentrating instead on daily survival during the food shortages. Those who might have become active dissidents perhaps silenced themselves to avoid harsh repression, yielding a culture of forgetfulness:

> By not talking about things and people long gone, about freedoms and hopes dashed in blood, society started to forget. This led people, especially the young, to accept Francoism's version of events. In this way, Spain became a society where amnesia and half-truths connived, and where the very same people who had lost so much because of the dictatorship quite often turned to Franco as the only hope that something would improve…by the early 1950s Spanish society had become mostly Francoist (20).

Thus, when the children exiled to the Soviet Union during the Civil War returned to Spain as adults in 1957, they found "a country where, for most people, Francoism was a fact of life they

[39] It is important to point out that *Los inocentes* was published in exile, as were many major Spanish novels of the era, and thus would not have been openly available to readers in Spain.

simply had to deal with, whatever feelings they harbored. The main strategy for achieving the goal of a normal life was to concentrate on personal and family matters and to avoid politics" (40). In this way, Spaniards in 1959 were in need of the sort of awakening potentially offered by Lamana's text.[40]

As a testimony of a traumatic event, *Los inocentes* has much in common with other testimonial narratives, such as Holocaust memoirs. Consequently, modes of literary analysis that have grown out of Holocaust studies are relevant. To a certain extent, we can approach *Los inocentes* as Ross Chambers approaches Holocaust and AIDs memoirs in *Untimely Interventions: AIDS Writing, Testimonial, and the Rhetoric of Haunting*. His notion of "waking to pain," as well as several other methods of analysis he employs, will prove useful to my discussion of Lamana's text—*Los inocentes* too can be seen as waking readers to a painful trauma. And yet, in the case of *Los inocentes* and other testimonial narratives of the Spanish Civil War, the continued presence of the original threat (the Civil War) in the form of the dictatorship presented unique challenges for those attempting to bear witness. To be sure, while Holocaust survivors and those suffering from AIDS have certainly had to deal with much cultural reluctance to listen to their testimonies and acknowledge their traumas, those writing about the Spanish Civil War faced a culture of silence institutionalized by censorship and repressive tactics that complicated the possibility of testimony—and of "waking" the reader—in different ways

The figurative awakenings of both the child in Nora's verses and the readers themselves are mirrored by more literal awakenings in *Los inocentes*, as Luis is awakened from slumber, on

[40] The 1950s were not entirely devoid of popular opposition—the Barcelona general labor strike of 1951 and student protests in Madrid in 1952 and 1956 are two of the more well-known examples—but it mostly occurred in the form of "partial, sporadic, and limited dissent" (Gurgel and Rees 60), especially in comparison with the more sustained and widespread forms of activism in the 1960s and 1970s.

two occasions, by the sounds of war. And as with the figurative awakenings, Luis is initially unsure of what woke him—the nature of the threat is at first unknown. He recalls the first night raids in Madrid: "El recordó los primeros bombardeos…La primera vez se había despertado y había encendido la luz. No se dió cuenta de lo que pasaba" (12) ["He remembered the first air raid…The first time he'd woken up and turned on the light. He didn't realize what was happening"]. Luis's disorientation is even more pronounced in the second awakening, during a raid in the hotel in Valencia: "Un golpe violento dado a la puerta despertó a Luisito. Amodorrado aún, oyó voces por el pasillo, otros golpes que daban a las demás puertas. Él no comprendía. Iba oyendo, sin salir aún del sueño…Luis se iba despertando del todo. Ahora iba notando que algo raro, algo extraordinario ocurría aunque todavía no sabía exactamente qué" (40) ["A loud banging on the door woke Luis. Drowsily, he heard voices in the hall, other knocks on other doors. He didn't understand. He kept hearing it, still half asleep…He was waking up little by little, realizing that something strange, something out of the ordinary was happening, though he still didn't know exactly what it was"]. Again, the verb tenses used here are revealing. Strangely, the passage first indicates that Luis is awakened by a pounding on the door, with the preterit emphasizing that he is fully awake, before shifting to the imperfect use of *ir* plus the gerund to illustrate the progressive nature of Luis's transition from slumber to wakefulness. Furthermore, the passage moves from the transitive use of the verb *despertar* to a reflexive form: "un golpe…despertó a Luisito…se iba despertando". That is, Luis was awakened before really waking up. [41] Of course, on a literal level, we are all very much familiar

[41]The author's memory of his first air raid speaks again to the autobiographical nature of the novel: "Me acuerdo de mi primer bombardeo. Estaba en mi casa, durmiendo como pasa casi siempre cuando ocurren los bombardeos nocturnes. De pronto vi gente por los pasillos. No entendía muy bien. Me levanté absolutamente zombi. Estaba durmiendo como un tronco y así, compulsivamente, me hicieron bajar al sótano" ["I remember my first air raid. I was at home sleeping, as is almost always the case during night raids. Suddenly I saw people in the hallways. I didn't understand. I got up like a total zombie. I was sleeping like a log and then they urged me down to the basement"] (*Manuel Lamana* 30).

with this state of semi-consciousness that is a waker's limbo. But if we continue to see a being-awakened as a metaphor for the mechanism of trauma, what does it mean to be awakened before truly waking up? What are these two moments of awakening, and why is the first a passive one and the second an active one?

In order to engage with these questions, it may be useful to return to the father's dream of the burning child as related by Freud, or more specifically, to Lacan's interpretation of the dream, set forth in his seminar "Tuché and Automaton." Lacan begins his analysis of this dream with an anecdote of his own, as follows:

> L'autre jour, n'ai-je point été éveillé d'un court sommeil où je cherchais le repos par quelque chose qui frappait à ma porte dès avant que je ne me reveille. C'est qu'avec ces coups presses, j'avais déjà formé un rêve, un rêve qui me manifestait autre chose que ces coups. Et quand je me réveille, ces coups—cette perception—si j'en prend conscience, c'est pour autant qu'autour d'eux, je reconstitute toute ma representation. Je sais que je suis là, à quelle heure je me suis endormi, et ce que je cherchais par ce sommeil. Quand le bruit du coup parvient, non point à ma perception mais à ma conscience, c'est que ma conscience se reconstitute autour de cette représentation—que je sais que je suis sous le coup de réveil, que je suis *knocked*. (56)
>
> The other day, I was awoken from a short nap by knocking at my door just before I actually awoke. With this impatient knocking I had already formed a dream, a dream that manifested to me something other than this knocking. And when I awake, it is in so far as I reconstitute my entire representation around this

> knocking—this perception—that I am aware of it. I know that I am there, at what time I went to sleep, and why I went to sleep. When the knocking occurs, not in my perception but in my consciousness, it is because my consciousness reconstitutes itself around this representation—that I know that I am waking up, that I am *knocked up* (56).

The parallels between Lacan's anecdote and the description of Luis's awakening are striking. Lacan also identifies two moments of awakening—the first a being-awakened, as indicated by the passive construction "I was awoken"—and the second an active one—"I actually awoke." For Lacan, there is first a moment of perception, when the sleeper perceives and is awakened by the knocking, and then there is a conscious recognition—perhaps a moment of reception—of the knocking as such. The second moment is when the subject himself awakes and resituates himself in time and space.

I would like to argue that Luis's traumatic experience of the Civil War in *Los inocentes* is presented as occupying a liminal area—a period of latency, as it were—between these two figurative awakenings. That is, he perceives the onset of the threat—the Civil War—and yet has not fully assimilated this knowledge nor regained agency as a subject. Having been awakened without yet having truly woken up, Luis is unable to situate himself in time and space. *Los inocentes* must be read as the story of the process of being awakened, of the transition between slumber and consciousness, non-agency and agency, childhood and adulthood, between the happening of a traumatic event and the knowledge of it.

But just as Luis himself undergoes this process of being awakened so that he can wake up—a process which remains unfinished, due to his death at the end of the text—the contemporary readers could potentially have been awakened *by* the text itself, awakened *from* the

disengagement and amnesia of Spaniards under the dictatorship in the late 50s, and awakened *to* the continued presence of a traumatic threat long thought past. That is, I would like to propose a reading of *Los inocentes* that posits the text as a performance of the very knocking to which Lacan refers, a sound designed to "knock awake" a Spain sleeping under Franco. The knocking consists of a text that, in narrating the past, refers to a present trauma. It is a knock with the potential to wake readers so that they may regain an awareness of their own time and space—Francoist Spain—and reclaim their agency upon waking up. In this way, it is an untimely knock that sounds from the past to reach into the present. It is also a displaced knock, as it were, a knock from afar—for Lamana published his text in exile in Argentina. And finally, *Los inocentes* is a cry that remained largely unheard.

The Silencing of Trauma

The knock resonates noisily on the very first page of *Los inocentes*, as the initial description of wartime Spain is full of sounds loud enough to wake even the deepest sleeper:

> "No, que no quiero verla. Que no quiero ver la sangre de Ignacio sobre la arena." Durante muchos días Luisito se repitió, transformándolos, los versos de García Lorca. "Que no quiero verla." Se le habían convertido en una muletilla. No los decía, pero no podía separarlos de su mente. Y los toros de Guisando en algún lado bramaban. Dos mil años de paciencia habían estallado de golpe y su furia desbordaba por los campos, por las sierras. Las ciudades, levantadas, eran un continuo grito. Los mugidos de los toros se unían a los disparos y la sangre iba regando lugares inverosímiles. "No, que no quiero verla." Pero allá donde iba oía

> correr la sangre. Lo decían los periódicos, la radio lo repetía. Las comadres de los barrios hablaban de muertos y de combates.[42]

> 'No, I don't want to see it. I don't want to see Ignacio's blood on the sand.' For many days Luisito repeated to himself Garcia Lorca's verses, transforming them. They'd become a mantra. He didn't say them aloud, but he couldn't get them out of his head. And somewhere Guisado's bulls were bellowing. Two thousand years of patience had exploded overnight and fury roamed the countryside, the mountains. The cities had risen up in a perpetual scream. The bellows of the bulls blended with the gunshots and blood ran through improbable places. 'No, I don't want to see it.' But wherever he went, he heard blood spilling. The newspapers said it, the radio repeated it. The neighborhood women spoke of death and combat.

Perhaps what stands out most in this passage is Luis's silence against the background of the roaring noise of the Civil War. He refuses to see the violence of the Civil War, but his refusal is a silent one. That is, even as everyone else speaks of war and death, Luis not only refuses to see the bloodshed, but refuses to talk of his refusal: "se repitió…los versos…pero no los decía." By contrast, with braying animals and gunshots, the cities are "un continuo grito" where even the visual phenomenon of flowing blood is *heard*, in what is a very effective synesthetic phrasing. Though Luis renders himself voluntarily blind and mute, he cannot deafen himself against the thundering sounds of war.

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[42]The poem that Luis quotes is Federico García Lorca's famous "Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías. In addition to the poem's refrain "¡Que no quiero verla!", Lamana's description here also alludes to the following verses "y los toros de Guisando/casi muerte y casi piedra,/mugieron como dos siglos/hartos de pisar la piedra" (140) ["and the bulls of Guisando,/partly death and partly stone,/bellowed like two centuries/sated with treading the earth" (translation by Stephen Spender and J.L. Gili in *The Selected Poems of Federico García Lorca* 141).

It is thus the bellowing of the animals and the noise of the gunshots that "awaken" the reader. Notably, we do not hear the suffering of fellow humans, whose cries are not mentioned. And where humans do speak, we do not hear them. Though we are told that a host of other witnesses—newspapers, the radio, and neighborhood women—offer spoken testimony of the violence, their messages are not relayed to the reader. In this way, *Los inocentes* portrays a culture which, though not deaf to the noises of war, does remain deaf to the testimony of survivors of and witnesses to trauma. As we shall see, this cultural deafness results in a silencing of trauma, for if there is no one willing to listen, survivors will quickly cease speaking. And yet the text itself, as a narrative of the Civil War written by a Spanish author in the fifties, when such narratives were still quite uncommon, constitutes an infraction of this sort of self-censorship that often becomes the norm for survivors of trauma. Furthermore, by introducing us to child characters within the text who transgress upon and question the norm of cultural deafness, *Los inocentes* suggests that the discursive modes of children contain promise for breaking the frame of incommunicability that characterizes trauma.

For as does *Duelo en El Paraíso*, *Los inocentes* also features characters rendered speechless in the wake of trauma. But whereas in the former the speechless characters are by and large adults traumatized by wartime violence, in Lamana's text it is a young child whose silence indicates that a trauma has occurred. The child in question is Inés, a three-year-old girl recovered by Republican soldiers after the bombing of the Málaga countryside. Her parents are presumably dead, and yet she is unable to give an explanation as to what happened to them: "Los soldados que la habían encontrado dijeron que andaba sola por los matorrales. Lloraba y no sabía explicar" (107) ["The soldiers who had found her said that she'd been alone wandering about the brambles. She was crying and couldn't explain anything."]. Having been placed with

a foster family in Valencia, Inés is brought to Luis's home one day to play with his younger sister. Upon arriving, she remains silent before the adults' exhortations that she play with Adela: "los fué mirando lentamente, sin decir nada, sin expresar nada….no decía nada. Ni siquiera lloraba" (109) ["She looked at them one by one without saying anything, without uttering a word…she didn't say a thing. She didn't even cry"]. The diction in the first quote is especially interesting, for it is not simply that Inés "no decía nada", as in the second quote, but rather that "no *sabía* explicar" (emphasis mine). That is, she does not know how to explain what she has seen in the air raid, as if the experience itself remains not entirely known and thus incommunicable.[43]

But perhaps more important than Inés's silence about the tragedy is the way other characters react to it. Before Inés's visit, Doña María supports and even precipitates the silencing of the events, prohibiting her children from speaking to Inés about what she has gone through: "'La pobre ha sufrido mucho, pero no le habléis de eso. Queda terminantemente prohibido. Lo tiene que olvidar'" (108) ["'The poor thing has suffered greatly, but don't speak to her of that. It is strictly prohibited. She must forget'"]. Here, the adult, the figure of authority, takes the position that tragedy must not be spoken of—better to silence it and forget it, so as to be able to move forward. Interestingly, Doña María does not silence Inés directly, by telling her not to speak of her parents' death, but indirectly, by telling her own children not to bring it up. In effect, she preemptively silences the narration of the event by prohibiting its reception. The reaction of Luis's mother thus reveals another level of the difficulty trauma survivors' may have

[43] Once again, it is possible to trace this plot development to an episode from Lamana's own life. Inés seems to be based on a child that Manuel met during the war: "También recuerdo a unos amigos nuestros, muy amigos de mi padre, que prohijaron a una niñita. La habían encontrado vagando por los campos. Tenía cuatro años. Sólo sabía que se llamaba Moncha—Ramona—y nada más…nunca supimos si tenía padres, si tenía hermanos Era muy chiquita y no supo decir nada."["I also remember some friends of ours, very good friends of my father, who adopted a little girl. They'd found her wandering through the countryside. She was four years old. She knew only that her name was Moncha—Ramona—and nothing else…we never knew if she had parents or siblings. She was very young and couldn't tell us anything"] (*Manuel Lamana* 31).

in telling their stories. The narration of a traumatic event is difficult not only because the survivor has no prior knowledge of the event, but also due to the scarcity of listeners in a culture that actively discourages testimony.

The importance of the role of the listener is emphasized in "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening," in which Dori Laub explores the responsibilities and difficulties involved in listening to testimony given by a survivor of trauma. Laub argues that because trauma is not truly witnessed in its occurrence, but in its aftermath, the traumatic event is experienced for the first time in its telling—and its listening:

> The emergence of a narrative which is being listened to—and heard—is, therefore, the process and the place wherein the cognizance, the 'knowing' of the event is given birth to. The listener, therefore, is a party to the creation of knowledge *de novo*…By extension, the listener to trauma comes to be a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event: through his very listening, he comes to partially experience trauma. (57)

Thus, the survivor's willingness or ability to speak of a traumatic event is not in itself sufficient for bearing witness—for there also must be a listener ready and willing to receive this testimony, to share in a creation of knowledge. If listeners are bound to experience a sort of trauma of their own, it perhaps comes as no surprise that few would emerge to offer themselves as volunteers for such a role. Though Luis's mother may present her silencing of Inés's traumatic event as coming from a place of concern for the child—and, of course, doña María may truly believe that she is doing right by Inés—her actions preclude the "knowing" of trauma by either survivor/testifier or listener. That is, if doña María can prevent the event's narration, she can prevent *her own* knowledge and partial experience of the event. It may be that doña María's call

for silence comes not from a place of concern for Inés but from a rejection—whether conscious or not—of the burden of listening, from her own desire to distance herself from trauma. In this way, doña María's refusal to hear Inés's testimony points to the dual difficulty of gaining knowledge of a traumatic event: not only must survivors be ready and able to speak, they must have access to others who are ready and able to listen.

Though Luis is, at the onset of the text, more like his mother in his refusal to see or speak of the war's violence—let us recall that he tries to blind himself to the bloodshed and silence himself with respect to its narration—his attitude is markedly different upon meeting Inés. Unlike doña María, Luis desperately craves some words on Inés's part:

> Luisito quería oírla hablar, quería oírle decir algo, lo que fuese. Algo que justificase su existencia, que diese continuidad a su ser. Si explicaba quiénes eran su padre y su madre de verdad, si contaba cuántos hermanos había tenido y si creía que los tenía aún, si decía cómo era su casa antes de empezar a huir, si decía que había visto a su padre caer muerto, o que su madre a más de dos hijos al mismo tiempo no había podido coger en los brazos y ella se había quedado atrás, demasiado atrás.... (109)

> Luisito wanted to hear her speak, to hear her say something, anything. Something to justify her existence, to give continuity to her being. If she explained who her mother and father really were, if she shared how many siblings she'd had and whether she thought she still had any, if she described what her house had been like before she fled, if she said that she'd seen her father drop dead, or that her

> mother hadn't been able to carry more than two children at once and so she'd been left behind, far behind…

Whereas his mother stresses the importance of silencing Inés's past, Luis longs to hear her testimony, as we see in the use of various verbs that emphasize verbal communication: *hablar*, *decir*, *explicar*, *contar*. For Luis, Inés's narration of her history would justify her existence—for if an individual is the sum of his or her experiences, how can that individual exist if these experiences are denied, if they are not brought to life via narration? By Luis's logic, the victim of trauma is seen as discontinuous, as split, perhaps, between the before and after of the trauma, and it is only by speaking his or her perceived truth of the past that the victim is able to recover a certain continuity of self or subjectivity. As Luis imagines Inés witnessing the death of her parents, he specifically connects the onset of silence with the desubjectification of the little girl: "Ya no dijo nada. ¡Ya no era Inés!" (112) ["Now she said nothing. She was no longer Inés!"]. In Luis's mind, it is only by speaking—and, more specifically, by speaking about her traumatic experience—that Inés will be able to recover her subjectivity.

Nevertheless, Luis does not understand that Inés *cannot* speak because she does not know how to explain what happened—he fails to grasp that the essence of trauma is that the traumatic event is not experienced in its happening; it is not fully known to the victim. He insists upon Inés's knowledge of her own survival: "¡Tenía que saberlo, tenía que saber que no había muerto, tenía que saber que de haber muerto alguien habían sido los demás! ¡Y que lo dijese, que les gritase que estaba viva, gran Dios! Pero Inés miraba sin hablar." (110) ["She must know, she must know that she wasn't dead, she must know that if anyone had died, it was someone else! And let her say it, let her shout that she was alive, dear God! But Inés only looked on without speaking"]. Luis's insistence, though misguided, offers insight into the mechanism of trauma

itself, what Caruth has called "the incomprehensibility of one's own survival" (64). That is, the victim is not able to grasp his own survival in the face of the death of others. And if Inés does not comprehend her own survival, if she effectively does not "know" that she is still alive, as Luis wants her to, then she is consequently unable to express this survival either in words, by telling her story, or even in the act of speaking itself, which would show her to be very much alive, unlike the silent dead. While Luis's logic in this moment seems to be that Inés must know her survival and can thus lay claim to it by speaking of it, the fact that he "quería oírla hablar, quería oírle decir algo, lo que fuese. Algo que justificase su existencia, que diese continuidad a su ser" (109) suggests a very different possibility—that the knowledge of her survival, the justification of her continued existence, will come out of the narration, out of the speech act. And yet without a willing listener, this act cannot take place.

In the absence of a narrative, Luis takes it upon himself to tell the story of the little girl's survival. Like *Duelo en El Paraíso*, which ultimately offers a narration of the events leading up to Abel's death, *Los inocentes* presents an account of the death of Inés's parents—or at least, one silent version of it, for it is in his imagination that Luis weaves a story about Inés witnessing her parents' death in the air raid that she survived:

> Una niña tiene una casa. Una niña tiene unos padres. Una niña se llama de alguna manera además de Inés…De pronto, no tiene nada. De pronto hay que correr. Se abandona todo. Ni casa, ni cueva, ni perro, ni pájaro. Su padre le ha dicho: "Vámonos, Inés". E Inés ha corrido como han corrido todos…Por la carretera pasaban los autos, iban las carretas cargadas de niños, de bultos, de camas. Un hombre con una maleta colgada del cuello. Un niño, cansado,

> lloraba…De pronto, la niña oyó los motores. La gente corrió hacia el campo, se dejó caer en la cuneta. (111)
>
> A little girl has a house. A little girl has parents. A little girl with a name besides Inés…Suddenly, she has nothing. Suddenly, she has to flee. Everything is left behind **:** house, home, bird, and bush. Her father has said, « Let's go, Ines. » And Inés has run as have all the others…Along the road passed cars, carts filled with children, luggage, and beds. A man with a suitcase around his neck. A tired little boy crying…Suddenly, the girl heard the engines. The people ran toward the fields, jumping for cover in the roadside ditch.

Though we cannot know if Luis's imagined version of the events actually accords with experience, this mental narrative tells much of his own anxieties. The shifts in verb tense are especially suggestive. The account begins in the simple present tense ("una niña tiene"), before moving on to the present perfect ("ha corrido"), and finally the past tense, with the imperfect ("pasaban los autos") and the preterite ("la niña oyó"). In this way, as the violence of the scene mounts, the verb tenses present the actions as increasingly remote, as more in the past. It is as if Luis, in both narrating the story and listening to it, wants to distance himself more and more from the events as they approach their bloody outcome. Furthermore, the silent way in which one version of this traumatic event is ultimately narrated—with Luis acting as both narrator and listener—posits the knowledge of the event as arising from a shared experience between the person bearing witness and the person listening; here, it is a shared experience, for the "witness" and listener are one and the same. Though the grammatical particularities of Luis's unspoken narration reveal his fear of sharing this experience, the fact remains that Luis is truly willing to

hear Inés's story, should she choose to tell it,[44] while doña María rejects the role of listener altogether.

Whereas *Duelo en El Paraíso* explored the incommunicability or traumatic experience from the perspective of the teller—that is, by emphasizing the survivor's inability to narrate—*Los inocentes* thus explores the role of potential listeners and the way in which incommunicability can arise on their end too. While Goytisolo's novel focuses on what remains unsaid because it is still unsayable, Lamana's novel emphasizes the unheard. For example, it must be noted that while the reader does receive a narration of what happened to Inés's parents, this narration is merely Luis's imagined version of the events, and as such it is never heard by any character within the text. In this regard, while Luis is the means by which the narrative of death is communicated to the reader—for neither the silent Inés nor her deceased parents are capable of relaying this message—the figures of authority within the novel, such as doña María, refuse this process all together.

[44] Though the reader does not ever "hear" Inés speak via direct dialogue, we know that she does talk again, for Luis overhears her and Adela chatting as they play: "Abrió la puerta del cuarto. Escuchó a las niñas hablar, oyó sus voces menudas" ["He opened the bedroom door. He listened to the girls talking, he heard their little voices"]. Though the text does not elaborate upon the nature of the girls' play, it is nevertheless significant that Inés recovers her voice via playing. That is, the text hints at the possibility of restoring communicability through play in the wake of trauma, as in *Duelo en El Paraíso*, where the war games of the young boys, though ultimately deadly, allow them to act out, to narrate or communicate via their actions, the traumatic experiences they had endured. If trauma consists of an experience not yet entirely known by the victim, then perhaps re-enacting the experience via play constitutes an attempt to gain knowledge. In fact, Luis seems to think that he will learn something about Inés's experience by watching her play: "Después iría a ver a Inés. La quería ver jugar. Saber algo" ["After, he would go see Inés. He wanted to watch her play. To learn something"]. Though it is clearly Luis who wants to "saber algo" the syntactical ambiguity of these series of phrases allows for another interpretation—that Luis wants to see Inés play *and know—La quería ver jugar, saber algo*—that is, that Luis wants to bear witness to Inés's play and to her knowing.

Self-censorship, Children & Generic Transgressions

Inés's arrival is not the moment in the text marked by the silencing of trauma, and it is not the only moment where a child emerges as a willing listener, as desirous that this silence be broken. A similar dynamic occurs during an air raid in Valencia, when the family huddles together in the family room. Doña María again shows herself unwilling to listen to another human being in pain—this time it is Amparo, the family's housekeeper, whose trauma is silenced. Here, it is not Luis but his younger sister Adela who seeks to break off this silence:

> Doña María callaba. Amparo, sentada en un rincón, lloraba silenciosamente.
>
> —¿Por qué lloras, Amparo ?—preguntó Adela al advertirlo.
>
> —Por nada —contestó la mujer suavemente.
>
> —¡Cállate, niña !—ordenó doña María.
>
> —Pero , ¿por qué llora ?—insistió Adela.
>
> —No es nada—repitió Amparo, levantándose y dirigiéndose hacia la puerta—. Me acuerdo de algunas cosas...
>
> Doña María was silent. Amparo, seated in the corner, was crying softly.
>
> "Why are you crying, Amparo ?" asked Adela upon hearing her.
>
> " Hush, child!" commanded doña María.
>
> " But why is she crying?" insisted Adela.
>
> " It's nothing," replied Amparo, standing up and walking toward the door. "I was reminded of something else."

What is perhaps most interesting here is the way that Amparo appears to be silencing herself. She begins the passage crying quietly in the corner, clearly affected by a past trauma that she is

reliving during the air raid. She physically separates herself from the family, as perhaps befits her hired status, and she initially dismisses Adela's question. Doña María does not actually silence Amparo because she does not need to; Amparo has already silenced herself. Presumably having learned not to discuss past pains in polite company—particularly if the company consists of her social superiors, as is the case here—Amparo has become, as has any adult who has mastered the rules of etiquette of a given society, quite capable of self-censorship—so capable that she is able to dismiss Adela's question *suavemente*, smoothly and without hesitation, as if self-censorship were her second nature, despite the fact that she is clearly disturbed. That is, it seems that Amparo does not share her pain not because she doesn't know how to put it into words—in fact, her claim to be remembering some things, followed by the ellipsis that ends the passage, indicate the presence of a pending mental narration never to be heard by characters or the reader—but because she knows that others would not welcome this sharing.

The reactions of the other characters in the passage also seem to point to self-censorship as a matter of social conditioning. The passage begins with a silent doña María. The use of the reflexive verb *callarse* is particularly relevant to our analysis, emphasizing as it does that doña María has silenced herself. Well-trained in appropriate discursive behaviors, she knows when to keep her doubts to herself, as in the early days of the war, when her behavior is described as follows: "Doña María no decía nada. Se callaba, porque habitualmente hablaba poco, pero dudaba" (11) ["Doña María didn't say anything. She kept quiet, because by habit she spoke little, but she remained doubtful"]. Amparo, though unable to control her tears, also knows that an explanation of her pain would be inappropriate, especially given the presence of a figure of authority—her employer. It is the youngest character present in the scene, Adela, who attempts to elicit Amparo's narration. Adela, as a child, has not yet been entirely socially trained, as it

were, and so she does not yet realize that voicing trauma is unacceptable. It is thus Adela, and not Amparo, who is silenced by doña María—and yet, she refuses to be silenced, asking her question a second time.

The literary representation of a child who can break the frame of silence has not gone unnoticed in trauma theory. In the third chapter of Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, Laub refers to the children's story "The Emperor's New Clothes", by Hans Christian Andersen, to demonstrate children's tendency to speak out when convention calls for silence. Though the story has many variants in different cultures worldwide, the common thread is that a king is tricked into believing that he is wearing clothes when he is, in fact, naked. When he is paraded in front of his subjects, they take part in the collective delusion. Laub relates this shared delusion to Nazi Germany, where "those who were lucid enough to warn the Jewish communities about the forthcoming destruction….were dismissed as 'prophets of doom' and labeled traitors or madmen. They were discredited because they were not conforming by staying within the confines of the delusion." In Andersen's version of the story, it is a child, "whose eyes are not veiled by conventionality" who ultimately speaks the truth, crying out that the king wears no clothes at all (Laub 83).[45]

Though Laub's reference to the story is brief, it points to some patterns of discursive behavior that can be useful to my analysis of *Los inocentes*. In Andersen's tale, the child is able to speak the truth precisely because he does not realize that it is inappropriate to do so. That is, this child in particular, and children of a certain age in general, have not yet fully learned the codes of etiquette that govern social relationships and interaction in their given culture—hence,

[45]Andersen's version of the story has a Spanish origin. In the 1862 edition of *Eventyr og Historier*, Andersen cites don Juan Manuel as the original author of the story (Bredsdorff 312). Indeed, an early version of the tale appears in *El Conde Lucanor*, Ejemplo XXXII: "De lo que contesció a un rey con los burladores que fizieron el paño".

while doña María "politely" ignores Amparo's tears, as is called for by convention, Adela asks Amparo what is wrong, repeating the question even after being silenced by her mother. Thus, children are not only likely to break these codes, but in doing so their actions constitute an expected, even acceptable sort of breach of the normal rules of conduct—they are children, after all, not yet entirely schooled in the ways of the world, and as such their deviations, though corrected, deserve forgiveness. Because children are, in some ways, already social outsiders in that they do not fully belong to adult society, they are free to speak the truth with nothing to lose—as are madmen, which is why accusations of insanity lent themselves so readily to the discrediting of those "prophets of doom".[46]

In the passage above, doña María offers an example of the sort of social training that creates the very discursive behaviors that the adult women are here employing. As Adela goes through childhood being silenced whenever she attempts to draw out another's pain, she will learn to become an unwilling listener and an unwilling narrator when trauma is involved—she will learn not to ask what is wrong, and she will certainly learn to not answer if the question is asked of her. If we recall Luis's reaction to meeting Inés, it becomes apparent that he is already much further along in this training than his sister, for though he desperately wants to know what has happened to Inés and her parents, he does not ask her to share her story. And though Inés is very young, she has already witnessed much trauma, and so she perhaps has already learned that willing listeners are scarce. Traumatic experience is thus presented as incommunicable, for even if and when it can be enunciated, it is culturally and socially inaudible. Survivors may remain silent not because they do not know how to describe what has happened, but because they fear that no one will listen.

[46] In Juan Manuel's version of the story, it is "un negro" who eventually speaks the truth (141)—another subject whose marginal status gives him a certain freedom to transgress.

In the context of both the Holocaust and the AIDS epidemic, Ross Chambers has explored how social codes of discursive conduct shape the way that survivors' testimonies demand new generic modes. His analysis can help us to tie together several of the ideas here explored. According to Chambers, genre is that which regulates discursive behavior, telling us what content and forms are appropriate for a given interaction. However, certain events are deemed so atrocious that there is little if any generic regulation for their discussion—that is, the given culture has very limited conventions for when, where, and how such an event can be spoken. Any mention of such an event thus largely constitutes a transgression of discursive norms. Chambers refers to such events—which, like the Holocaust or the AIDS epidemic, can be either individually or collectively traumatic, or both—as holding a cultural status of the obscene (22-27).

As Chambers points out, transgressions of discursive norms—or, in his words, "generic lapses"—occur on a fairly regular basis, and because we have conventions even for infractions, such transgressions are usually ignored or dismissed (27). For example, we could read the child's declaration in "The Emperor's New Clothes" as a generic lapse. Inasmuch as the child's declaration constitutes an infraction upon discursive norms—for he calls attention to the blunder and delusion of the king, which, though recognized by all, should have remained respectfully unspoken—his transgression can be forgiven because he is a child. The rules of social etiquette do not yet apply to him, or, in Chambers's terms, his generic conventions are different from those of the adults in the crowd, though they overlap in the same social space. A generic lapse thus emerges and is easily forgiven, because it is an allowable transgression within social convention.

In *Los inocentes*, it is clear that, as an adolescent, Luis is still struggling to master the rules of etiquette that govern speech interaction. In some ways, he remains very much a child, unsure of what should and should not be said or done in certain situations, and likely to unwittingly commit transgressions of adult discursive behaviors. Luis recalls an incident from Madrid in the early days of the war, when a militiaman buys ice cream cones for the neighborhood children:

> Todos habían aceptado, gozosos, los barquillos del miliciano. Todos menos Luisito, que acababa de merendar y no tenía ganas de comer más, y que además se sentía muy mayor para aceptar barquillos.
>
> El miliciano se había sentido molesto.
>
> —Tú no quieres los barquillos—le dijo—porque soy un miliciano y tú eres un señorito, ¿no es eso ?
>
> Luisito le dijo que no, confuso, y como no supo darle más explicaciones, se fué. (38)

> They had all gleefully accepted the ice cream from the militiaman. All save Luisito, who'd just had a snack and wasn't hungry; besides, he thought himself too grown-up for such treats.
>
> The militiaman had been annoyed.
>
> 'You don't want any ice cream'—he said to Luisito—'because I'm just a militiaman and you're a little gentleman, is that it?'
>
> Luisito denied it, confused, and not knowing how else to explain himself, went on his way.

Upon recalling the incident, Luisito understands why the militiaman was insulted, but in its happening, the boy did not behave as social etiquette demanded. When one proffers a gift, custom dictates that the gift be accepted. Perhaps an initial refusal is made—something along the lines of, "Oh no, you shouldn't have, I can't accept this"—but the gift is ultimately accepted and a message of thanks relayed. Any other course of action risks insult to the giver. Upon uttering that "no" and refusing the ice cream cone, Luis is committing a crime of social etiquette, not realizing that the "right" thing to do would be to accept it and thank the militiaman graciously. Ironically, while Luis thinks he is showing maturity in not accepting the gift—his logic seems to be that ice cream is a childish treat—his refusal demonstrates that he does not yet belong to a "mature" society governed by rules of etiquette. And yet, it is a transgression that can be easily forgiven by the readers because we are privy to certain information, i.e., that his refusal is not due to snobbery but to his ignorance of the very code of conduct of which his behavior constitutes an infraction.

For Chambers, herein lie the difficulties faced by testimonial narrative. The challenge of bearing witness to a traumatic event is twofold: first, because the content of such witnessing is given few forums for expression, having been assigned the cultural status of the obscene; secondly, once it does find a place for expression it must not be dismissed as an unintentional transgression of the sort that Luis commits above. In Chambers's words:

> If, through ignorance or accident, I use my fish fork to eat salad my host(ess) is unlikely to make a federal case of it—her sense of etiquette requires that the lapse be ignored, precisely because it can be regarded as a lapse. So, in order for witnessing's infractions of generic convention to be understood as intentional and hence as constituting a meaningful (if untimely) utterance, one to which it is

> appropriate to attend, it becomes necessary that they fall within the range of a certain metaetiquette that, quite paradoxically, cancels normal politeness rules and stretches the concept of appropriateness in such a way that it becomes able to encompass, without necessarily welcoming, an untimely intervention, as a *purposeful* infringement of what is considered appropriate. Such an infraction, having to do with the obscene, is of a different order from those violations of genre convention that are already, so to speak, "covered" by an extension of those conventions themselves. (28)

Both "The Emperor's New Clothes" and the incident in *Los inocentes* suggest that the sort of transgressions featured are owing to the difference between the generic conventions of adults and those of children. That is, they are not "purposeful infringements;" rather, they arise from ignorance. Children are able to openly speak an unpleasant truth—an obscenity, as it were—whereas adults would not be permitted to do so, or, in a best-case scenario, would have very limited opportunities and modes for its utterance. It follows, then, that children can be used as spokespeople for subject matter that is off-limits for adults. But assigning questionable subject matter to a child's perspective carries with it a certain risk, for the unfortunate paradox of a socially marginal subject—be it a child or a supposed madman—is that their marginal status gives them a certain freedom to transgress but also often guarantees that their transgressions, because allowable, will be merely corrected and/or dismissed. For example, when Adela asks Amparo why she is crying, her transgression is corrected by her mother, and dismissed by Amparo. Adela, of course, does not realize that her question even constitutes a generic lapse. Thus, the purposeful nature of the infringement is all the more important for socially marginal speakers.

Though the plot of *Los inocentes* contains examples of allowable transgressions made by children whose discursive practices are inappropriate given the generic conventions of the adult world, the text itself cannot be overlooked as a mere generic lapse, because we know the adult Lamana to ultimately be the author of the text. We could read the novel as a whole, then, as the sort of "purposeful infringement" that Chambers refers to—the child within the text, Luis, functions as the spokesperson of a traumatic experience—narrating histories of death for the reader—because children can get away with saying what is off-limits to adults. But because the text ultimately stems not from the fictional child Luis but from the real-life adult Lamana, we cannot dismiss the narrative as a childish transgression. In using a child to narrate Civil War incidents during a time when silence was the institutionalized norm, *Los inocentes* constitutes a purposeful violation of socially prescribed discursive practices.

While the incident with the militiaman is an example of a generic lapse typical of a child unfamiliar with social conventions, in other moments Luis shows a growing awareness of the norms of discursive practices and even exhibits self-censorship in his efforts to adhere to them. In other words, he is becoming an adult by adopting the generic conventions of the adult world. Let us recall that Luis does not question Inés about her parents' death, though he desperately wants to do so and even recognizes that her narration would allow her to recover a certain subjective continuity. In another moment, Luis realizes that some matters related to the war can be discussed with his peers, but not with his parents. When he wonders "cómo sería una ciudad sin bombardeos…con todas las luces encendidas" (82) ["what it would be like in a city without air raids…with all the lights on"], Luis poses the question to his friend Fidel but not to his mother and father:

> En su casa esas cosas no se comentaban. Prefería estar en su casa cuando no había nadie con quien hacer comentarios. Si a sus padres les hubiese preguntado: "¿Cómo serán las ciudades con luz?", o no le habrían contestado, o le habrían dicho: "¿Cómo quieres que sean? Pues como una ciudad con luz. Tienes cada pregunta..." Y habrían puesto un punto final a la cuestión. Y si se hubiese atrevido a insistir diciendo: "No me lo puedo imaginar", la contestación más probable habría sido: "Hay muchas cosas que no te puedes imaginar". O tal vez: "Como Madrid antes de la guerra. Recuerda un poco, en vez de estar siempre en las musarañas". Más valía quedarse él solo con sus cosas y seguir "pensando en las musarañas". (83)
>
> They didn't speak of such things at home. He preferred to be there alone and not talk to anyone. If he were to ask his parents, 'What's it like in cities with lights?' they wouldn't have answered him, or maybe they would have said, 'What do you mean what's it like? It's like a city with lights. You with your questions…' And they would have considered the matter settled. And if he had dared to insist, 'Well I can't picture it,' the answer would have probably been, 'There are many things you can't picture.' Or maybe, 'Like Madrid before the war. Think back a bit instead of wandering about with your head in the clouds.' It was better to keep these things to himself with his head in the clouds.

In this way, Luis is learning to abide by generic conventions of the adult world, and he thus chooses to not discuss subjects considered inappropriate, uncomfortable, or unproductive—subjects which would be dismissed by adults as childish nonsense.

Though the reader too may be tempted to dismiss Luis's questions as stupid ones—after all, a city with electricity is likely to be a fairly familiar concept to us—because we know these questions to ultimately come from a different source, Lamana, we must recognize them as a purposeful infringement upon discursive conventions (even though this infringement is never actually realized at the level of plot, because Luis never poses his questions to his parents). Indeed, if we delve a little deeper into Luis's logic, we find that perhaps his questions would be deemed inappropriate because they force us to recognize the way war threatens our very comprehension of the notions of time and space, the correlation between signified and signifier, and the discourse of difference. These sorts of questions would force an uncomfortable generic lapse in a society used to resorting to discourses of nationalism and heroism when discussing war, and as such, Luis's questions belong to the realm of the obscene. As Luis becomes increasingly aware of what constitutes the obscene, he is less and less likely to speak about it. His gradual initiation into adult discursive modes thus demonstrates that it is not only specifically legislated censorship that prevents the obscene from being discussed—as when an authority figure like doña María silences an unwitting transgressor like Adela—but self-censorship, subjects' capacity to know what *not* to say and silence themselves accordingly—as when Amparo refuses to answer Adela's questions. In this way, Lamana's text calls attention to what has become, since the end of the dictatorship, a much-discussed topic among scholars of literature under Franco—the extent to which literary creation was stifled not just by censorship but by self-censorship**.** After all, as Manuel Abellán pointed out five years after Franco's death, "el escritor español ha preferido ceder ante las exigencias, a veces humillantes, de la censura: ha negociado, modificado, suprimido, atendido o no—en suma—los 'sugestivos' consejos de la administración censorial, pero sobre todo se ha autocensurado, consciente, obvia, e incluso,

instintivamente" (67) ["Spanish authors have obeyed the sometimes humiliating demands of censorship: they have negotiated, modified, omitted; in short, they have taken into account the 'suggestions' advised by the censorship administration, but above all they have self-censored consciously, obviously, and even instinctively"]. Furthermore, Luis's growing adherence to adult discursive modes of behavior—to self-censorship, in short—points to the largely pessimistic tone of *Los inocentes*. Though children can potentially break the frame of silence surrounding trauma, these same children inevitably grow up and adopt adult modes of self-censorship.

Agencing & the Burden of Survival

Ross Chambers speaks of the process by which news of death is relayed by third parties, a process of "'agencing' through which messages must pass, or more accurately the agencing that constitutes them, when supposedly direct connections…are unavailable" (x). Agencing, then, involves an intermediary—be it a person or an answering machine—that communicates a message of death, because the deceased is obviously unable to do so. It is therefore a ghostly process by which the dead speak through living agents, through survivors who must shoulder the burden of messages from beyond.

Agencing is a useful frame through which to view the messages of death that arise within Lamana's novel. For example, we could see Luis as the agent who ultimately offers us the narration of the death of Inés's parents. Though he is not an eyewitness to any of the deaths that occur in the text, he still acts as the intermediate agent between the dead and the reader, as the urgency and desperation with which he craves a narration on Inés's part leads him to step in as narrator. Nevertheless, Inés's refusal to speak and doña María's refusal to listen suggest that

agencing is a process frequently avoided on both the enunciative and receptive ends. A closer look at some of the messages of death in the novel reveals the crises.

Agencing plays a major role in the communication of the death of family friends Prado and Marín. After they are killed, the news of their deaths is received via phone call. The telephone, then, becomes the first medium through which the message is passed. In narratives of trauma, the phone call is a common form of agencing. Chambers identifies the painful "wake-up call" as a recurring motif in AIDS memoirs, and connects it to Holocaust survivors' descriptions of wake-up calls by the night watch at Auschwitz, though the latter clearly did not take place by telephone. In *Los inocentes*, however, there is not just a single process of agencing when death is communicated by telephone call, but a double process of agencing, for Luisito himself does not answer the phone but rather hears his father do so:

> Cuando su padre atendió el teléfono, le vió poner una cara de extrema gravedad….de pronto le oyó exclamar:
>
> —¡No puede ser!
>
> Después le oyó preguntar los detalles. Así se fue enterando él, al mismo tiempo. Fascinado, espantado, miraba a su padre. Prados muerto, Marín muerto. (133)

> When his father picked up the phone, Luisito saw his expression turn grave, and suddenly he heard him exclaim:
>
> 'It can't be!'

> After, Luisito heard him asking for details and at the same time he himself learned what had happened. Fascinated, frightened, he looked at his father. Prados dead, Marín dead.

The communication of a death in this instance is presented as an utterly disembodied occurrence—the primary message to don Luis is sent via a remote mode of address in which voices are heard while bodies are absent. The communication is even further removed from both Luisito and the reader because we cannot hear the voice on the other side of the phone line—what we hear is not the message itself, but rather its reception by don Luis. The death itself, as it were, remains unseen and unheard: neither Luisito nor the reader ever initially *hears* that Prados and Marín are dead—the protagonist merely draws this conclusion based on the only side of the conversation that he does hear, but the message of death occupies the silences in between. The nature of this death message speaks to a crucial difference between what Chambers has called "unsayability" and "inaudibility"—it is not only that the atrocities of a traumatic experience are unsayable, but that they remain inaudible; that is, the culture in which witnessing literature is produced is not necessarily willing, able, or prepared to receive this message. Given that the emphasis on incommunicability in *Los inocentes* seems to be more concerned with reception than with enunciation (though, to be sure, the text presents difficulties on both ends), perhaps we can thus read the literal inaudibility of a message of death within the text—the unheard communication that Prados and Marín have been killed—as pointing to the larger cultural inaudibility of the Francoist Spain of 1959, a cultural inaudibility institutionalized by official censorship, self-censorship, and perhaps by an individual reluctance—like that exhibited by doña María—to share in the experience of trauma by hearing its narration.

And yet, as with the death of Inés's parents, despite the difficulties of sharing in the experience of trauma, Luis seems to feel an urgency to know what happened, to have access to a narrative, and he thus once again becomes the final agent who describes the death of Prados and Marín to the reader. A similar narrative strategy is employed, as Luis's imagined version of the events is offered up to the reader as the sole description of what has come to pass. And yet unlike the narration of Inés's parents, which is presented as fact with indicative verbs in the present and past tenses, Luis's imagined version of the two men's death is a hodgepodge of his own conjectures and eyewitness reports. The description moves from the use of the conditional tense, which here shows past conjecture as Luis ponders how the event was likely to have occurred, before shifting to the past tense that represents the "facts" provided by eyewitnesses:

> Prados y Marín habrían sonreído, satisfechos, tras haber dejado Sagunto atrás. Carretera, playa, mar. Pararían en Vinaroz, en Benicarló tal vez, para comer.... Y de pronto el avión. De pronto las ametralladoras. La muerte. El fuego. ¿Estaría muerto Prados antes de volcar el coche? Por teléfono dijeron que el coche se fué hacia la cuneta, con la dirección perdida. Allí dió dos vueltas de campana. Casi en seguida empezó a arder.

> Prados and Marín would have smiled, satisfied, after having left Sagunto behind. Highway, beach, sea. They would have stopped for food in Vinaroz, or perhaps in Benicarló…And suddenly, the plane. Suddenly, the machine guns. Death. Fire. Had Prados died before the car flipped? On the phone they said that the car spun out of control to the curb, where it rolled over twice. It began to burn almost instantly.

Again, though Luis narrates the men's death to himself, as it were, he does not voice it, perhaps knowing—as he does with Inés's history, as he does with his own questions about the war—that he is the only member of a willing audience. While he registers his frustration with this culture of inaudibility, thinking "¡Prados se ha muerto y no tiene importancia! ¡Se había muerto quemado! ¡Que todos lo oigan!" ["Prados is dead and no one cares! He burned to death! Let the whole world know!"], both his desire for everyone to *hear* the news and the news itself remain ironically and tragically unsaid.

Furthermore, Luis's narration demonstrates the limits of knowledge for the survivor, for the agent who lives on to potentially tell of another's death. Though Luisito can guess at the final minutes of Prados and Marín, and eyewitnesses can report on what they saw from afar, the moment of death remains missed by all. The moment of death, in fact, literally remains an unanswered question: "¿Estaría muerto Prados antes de volcar el coche?" [Had Prados died before the car flipped?] As with Elósegui, who arrives too late to the scene of Abel's death in *Duelo en El Paraíso*, the literal absence of Luisito from the car crash speaks to the more abstract absence of all survivors from the death of the other, for we can never truly know this moment, even if it occurs in our physical presence.

Luis's contemplation of the death of Prados and Marín thus leads him toward an understanding of the burden of survival. After receiving the "wake-up call", Luis's father is waiting for the car so that he can go in search of his friends' bodies. Given that Prados usually acts as don Luis's chauffer, Luisito wonders who will bring the car around: "Prados no estaba…habría otro hombre sentado al volante…Pero no era Prados. ¿Cómo iba a estar para ir en busca de su propio cadaver?" (136) ["Prados wasn't around…there would be some other man in the driver's seat…But not Prados. How could Prados search for his own body?"]. Prados

cannot search for his own body—he literally cannot pick up the pieces of his own death, he cannot bear witness to his own demise. It is the survivors who must go in search of the dead—that is, it is the survivors who carry the burden of bearing witness for—on behalf of, and in place of, the deceased.

Luis's thoughts suggest that the burden of survival comes from the gap between what survivors know and what they do not know, cannot know, will never know. Continuing his contemplation of the death of Prados and Marín, Luis is clearly disturbed by all the knowledge he lacks:

> Cuando los campesinos quisieron acercarse al coche, las llamas les hicieron retroceder... No dijeron si alguno de los dos muertos había recibido un balazo antes de volcar el coche. ¿Acaso se podía saber?
>
> Luisito se sentó de nuevo en el sillón. Él no sabía cómo era un hombre quemado completamente. No sabía si el cuerpo se mantiene entero. No sabía si es como la ceniza que queda en la chimenea al consumirse la leña. (138)

> When the peasants tried to approach the car, the flames pushed them back. They didn't say if either of the dead had been shot before the car flipped. Maybe no one knew?
>
> Luisito sat down again in the chair. He didn't know what a man burnt to death was like. He didn't know if the body remained whole. He didn't know if it was like ash left in the fireplace after the wood is all burnt up.

Though survivors have knowledge *of* the death of the other, they can never truly know this death—they cannot know what it was like to experience it. It is as Luis attempts to weave a

narrative of the death of his family's friends that he becomes aware of the limits of his own knowledge, and the difficulty of bearing witness to something that can never fully be known.

Furthermore, survivors are left with the guilt of being able to bear witness—that is, of being alive when others are dead. In the face of so much death, life itself becomes a burden, as Luisito senses when he takes pity upon the living: "se alegraba al ver a un hombre vivo y al mismo tiempo se apiadaba de él" (33) ["He was happy to see a man alive and yet he pitied him at the same time"]. It is precisely this burden—the burden of surviving while others die—that Luisito faces after hearing the news of the death of Prados and Marín, asking himself, "¿Por qué vivía él…? ¿No había habido mil ocasiones de que le mataran? ¿Por qué siempre eran otros los que morían y no él?'" (136) ["Why was he still alive? Hadn't there been a thousand times he could have been killed? Why was it always others who died and not he?"]. Luis intuits that the encounter with death is often a chance one—he is just as likely as anyone else to find himself in the wrong place at the wrong time (which he ultimately will). The attitude that "it could have been me", or, indeed, "it should have been me", is a common one among survivors of massive traumatic experiences. Chambers points out how writers of Holocaust memoirs often identify with the dead or even *as* the dead, while at the same time bearing the burden of survival. This produces a liminal figure that is both haunted by the dead and haunting to the living, a ghost who serves as an intermediary between the dead and the living (xxiii-xxvi).[47] Living in constant proximity to death, those in the process of surviving trauma are neither dead nor alive, but a ghostly in-between, as are the men along the side of the street whom Luisito observes one day from the car window: "Los hombres ya se volvían fantasmas. Se decidían a no ser vivos cuando

[47] We should recall that in Lamana's memory of the first raid, he described himself as a zombie (*Manuel Lamana* 30; see the footnote on page 8 of the present work), a description which suggests that the author himself, as a survivor of the war, identifies with this intermediary status.

aún no habían empezado a ser muertos" (94) ["The men were becoming ghosts. They decided to no longer live, though they had not yet begun to die"].

Liminality, Displacement, & Untimeliness

Trauma survivors thus mediate between the dead and the leaving, thereby finding themselves with a liminal status. As an adolescent, though, Luis already occupies a liminal space in society—perhaps for this reason he is a fitting intermediary in other regards as well. Indeed, liminality is constantly presented as the central axis around which Luis's experiences revolve. He is neither child nor man, and yet both at once, a liminality reflected by his train of thought at the beginning of the text, after having shot a gun for the first time: "Luisito se sentía plenamente hombre. Disparar con un revolver de verdad es algo que no hace un niño…Luisito sonrió. Si su padre supiese que tenía ya un hijo-hombre..." (18-19) [" Luisito felt himself fully a man. Shooting a revolver is something a child would never do. Luisito smiled. If his father only knew that he now had a grown son…"]. Here, the repetition of the diminuitive form of Luis's name, Luisito, is somewhat jarringly juxtaposed with his impression that he is no longer a child. Luis is engaged in a constant vacillation between one world and another—here, childhood and adulthood—that places him partially and simultaneously in both, and yet not fully in either.

Luisito also seems to waver between non-agency and agency, seeing himself as occupying a liminal space between the denial of agency and the expectation of it: "Se le imponían los disparos, pero él tenía que saber qué hacer cuando los oía silbar. Se le imponían los bombardeos, se le imponía la destrucción, se le imponía la aniquilación: él tenía que resolver. Nadie le daba una explicación, nadie le decía que no la tenía. A él le tocaba ver, sentir, y callar"

(79) ["Gunshots were thrust upon him, but *he* had to know what to do when he heard them. Bombings were thrust upon him, destruction was thrust upon him, annihilation was thrust upon him: *he* had to deal with it. No one offered him an explanation, no one told him that they didn't have one. It was his job to see, feel, and shut up"]. Grammatically, Luis vacillates between an object pronoun lacking agency—he is the "le" upon whom the war acts—and a subject pronoun, "él", of whom both knowledge and action are expected. The grammatical turn from object to subject perhaps recalls those two moments of awakening explored at the beginning of this chapter. In the first moment, a being-awakened, the sleeper is awakened *by* something and must struggle to regain agency, to wake him- or herself up. Luis clearly occupies this sleeper's limbo—he has been awakened and forced to acknowledge the threat imposed upon him, but he has yet to wake up and *know* this threat.

The liminal space described above, that between object and subject, non-agent and agent, is notably presented as involving a lack of communication: "Nadie le daba una explicación, nadie le decía que no la tenía. A él le tocaba ver, sentir, y callar". No one offers an explanation nor even comments upon the lack thereof, and silence is expected from he who occupies a liminal place. Thus, we once again see the silencing of trauma. Though Luis is a survivor who is conceivably in a position to narrate a traumatic event, to tell of the deaths of others, though he can potentially act as an agent between the dead and the living, the culture in which he finds himself teaches silence in such a situation—it is a culture unwilling to listen. Inaudibility is yet again presented as a characteristic of a society in the throes of a trauma repeating itself. It is, in fact, imposed upon those subjects attempting to negotiate the liminal status of survivorhood. We see this connection between inaudibility and liminality in one passge in particular, when Luisito—who has, near the end of the text, stopped attending virtually all his classes in

Valencia—sits at the school's entrance, waiting for his peers to leave class: "De las clases le llegaban las voces amortiguadas por paredes y puertas, explicaciones deshechas, reducidas al tono, al ritmo de la frase. Y de la calle, por encima de los tejados y de tarde en tarde, un bocinazo, una voz aguda difuminada por la distancia, por los múltiples ruidos indefinibles, inaudibles casi..." (102) ["From the classrooms he heard voices, muffled by walls and doors, and words come undone, reduced to the tone and rhythm of speech. And occasionally from the street, over the rooftops, a horn honking, a high-pitched voice quieted by the distance, by the many unidentifiable, nearly inaudible, noises"]. Here, Luis is located in the space in between the school and the city. Again, the liminal space is presented as one in which communication is difficult at best—ghostly, and disembodied—as Luis can only barely make out the conversation of the classroom and the noises of the city street, he is excluded from communication with others. The inaudibility that marks Luis's physical position points to a larger cultural reluctance to hear testimony from possible intermediaries, from survivors in liminal positions who can carry messages of death. And when these messages are heard, there are so few forums for their expression that they must come via "una voz aguda difuminada por la distancia"—as does the very text of *Los inocentes* itself, reaching back into Spain from both a temporal and spatial distance.

The temporal and spatial distance that frames the publication of the text (a text written from another continent, twenty years after the events it narrates supposedly occured) and appears within the text in the various descriptions we have thus far seen (temporal gaps during which a missed death occurs, messages relayed from afar via telephone) is, to a certain extent, a byproduct of trauma itself. Let us recall that critics like Chambers and Caruth alike have described trauma as an essentially untimely experience in that it only begins to be known in its

aftermath—that is, we can only experience it retroactively, as the past haunts the present. Thought to be true for trauma more generally, this notion of untimeliness is often applied to Holocaust narratives and is certainly relevant to both *Duelo en El Paraíso* and *Los inocentes*. However, I would like to propose that in the case of the Spanish Civil War and the resultant dictatorship, there is a sort of spatial distance that corresponds to this untimeliness, an out-of-jointedness not just of time but of space. When the Nationalist victory in the Civil War ushered in more than thirty-five years of Franco's rule, it became impossible in Spain to openly bear witness to traumatic occurences, because the history of the war was rewritten in the discourse of myth and heroics so favored by the regime. Thus, narratives of the Civil War not only come with a temporal delay that speaks to the untimely latency of trauma, they come with a spatial distance that speaks to a displacement specific (though perhaps not unique) to Spain. After all, Manuel Lamana was only one of a whole generation of writers to leave Spain during the dictatorship so as to be able to write freely in exile.[48]

And yet, displacement is not just important for considering the novel's publication; it also forms a major theme within the text itself. As a liminal period, adolescence is a dis-place, a space defined by being neither here nor there: Luis is an *hijo-hombre* who occupies neither the place of childhood nor that of adulthood. Luisito's entire existence during the war can in fact be summed up by displacement, for not only does his adolescence relegate him to a displaced position in society, but he is also quite literally displaced as his parents cart him from place to place within Spain. And as with liminal spaces, dis-places consistently appear as spaces in which communication is rendered difficult. For example, as Luis leaves for Valencia, he worries about how to communicate with speakers of Catalan: "era él quien iba a una tierra donde se hablaba de

[48] Some even identify Lamana as the first author in his generation to leave Spain, which he did in 1948 (S. Martín 41).

una manera diferente. Era él quien se desplazaba" (16) ["It was he who went to a land where they spoke differently. It was *his* displacement"]. For Luis, geographical displacement poses not only a threat to communication occasioned by linguistic difference, but also the impossibility of continued contact with friends. Luis imagines his friend Fidel arriving in Cuenca after he has already left: "Tendría gracia que Fidel llegase a Cuenca ahora que él se había ido. Podría ser otro efecto de la guerra: el desplazamiento y la persecución sin fin de dos amigos. Parecido a una carrera de relevos, pero sin establecer contacto, sin ninguna comunicación" (17) ["It would be funny if Fidel were to show up in Cuenca now that he had left. It might be another effect of the war: the unending displacement and pursuit between two friends. Like a relay race, but without contact, without any communication at all"]. Here, Luis perceives war itself in terms of liminality, imagining displacement as the space in between runners in a relay race, a space devoid of human contact and communication.

It might seem ironic that even as the physical displacement of the text's author allows for a communicative act—the bearing witness to trauma that takes place with the publication of *Los inocentes*—within the text, displacement is associated with a *lack* of communication. Here is where issues of enunciation versus reception, or of sayability versus audibility, come into play. As we have seen, whereas *Duelo en El Paraíso* deals with the former, with the difficulties of narrating the traumatic event, *Los inocentes* deals with the latter, with a certain cultural deafness generated by a refusal to listen to the narration. That is, if physical displacement makes possible an enunciation, allowing a survivor to testify to a traumatic event, it does not guarantee that this testimony will be received in the survivor's place of origin, which very well may continue to not hear. And this is exactly what happened in the case of *Los inocentes*, which, to this day, continues to go largely unread by the Spanish public and ignored by critics of Spanish literature.

And yet, in presenting the cultural inaudibility of Francoist Spain, *Los inocentes* seems to be strangely aware of its own inaudible status. After all, as a text largely about a culture that refuses to hear trauma spoken of, about a culture that silences narratives of trauma, the text itself contains some implicit acknowledgment that it may go unheard and unread. The end of the novel is interesting in this regard. As we have already mentioned, the text ends with Luis's death when he is caught out on the streets during an air raid. His death effectively prevents him from completing any of the transitions mentioned in this chapter's introduction—he never reaches adulthood, nor does he come to fully know his trauma. He does not, as it were, reach that second awakening in which agency is regained and the subject recovers boundaries of space and time. He dies suspended in the same moment—the moment of not fully knowing a trauma—in which contemporary Spanish readers would have found themselves. The endpoint further serves to strengthen the connection between Luis's voice and the narrator's, as if the narrator is no longer able to speak because Luis is dead. And yet the wording of the last lines, as Luis spots another man on the street just before they are both presumably killed, suggests a different possibility: "El hombre, tambaleándose, avanzó hacia él. La metralla azotaba a las nubes de polvo. El hombre abrió la boca. Miró espantado a Luisito. Ocupó el espacio. No había nada más que él. Luisito no oyó más" (144) ["The man staggered toward him. The shrapnel was whipping about the clouds of dust. The man opened his mouth. He looked at Luisito, terrified. He consumed the space. Nothing but him. Luisito heard nothing more"]. The final words of the text thus emphasize not Luis's inability to speak but his inability to *hear*—after all, both come with death. The narration stops not because there is no longer anyone to relate it, but because there is no one to listen. Although we may open our mouths as does the man whom Luis sees in his final moments, without someone to listen to us, we may never get a chance to speak.

Thus, while we can read *Los inocentes* as a knock with the potential to wake its contemporary readers from slumber, to wake them up to the reality of a continued trauma, the text itself seems to recognize that this knock will go unanswered because it falls not just on sleeping ears but on deaf ones, whether this deafness results from official censorship or from the self-censorship of a culture reluctant to confront a traumatic reality. However, in recent decades, the Spanish public has shown itself increasingly willing to deal with the traumas of the past and recognize their continued impact on the present, and this growing openness has surfaced in the literary realm as well. January 2005 saw a promising first step toward rescuing Lamana from oblivion, when the Spanish publishing house Viamonte released the first Spanish editions of Lamana's two novels, *Otros hombres* and *Los inocentes* (Aguilar). Unfortunately, neither readers nor critics seem to have taken much note of the re-release, which has gone largely uncommented in both the popular press and academic journals. But given the move away from the silencing of trauma and toward a culture of listening—a move occurring not only in Spain but in other countries worldwide—I would like to propose that Lamana's knock does not have to remain unheard. After all, it was already an untimely knock in the moment of its initial sounding in 1959, reaching from a past twenty years prior, and so there is no reason that its reception cannot be similarly untimely, resounding in the present moment, fifty years since publication. Perhaps now it is finally time to wake up and answer the door.

CHAPTER 3

IN THE WAKE OF CHILDHOOD: ANA MARÍA MATUTE'S *PRIMERA MEMORIA*

As do both *Duelo en El Paraíso* and *Los inocentes*, Ana María Matute's *Primera memoria* uses awakening as a metaphor for the protagonist's struggle to come to terms with traumatic events. Nevertheless, Matute's novel, which won the prestigious Premio Nadal in 1959, bears a number of differences from both *Duelo en El Paraíso* and *Los inocentes*. Three of these differences are as follows: first, the plot in *Primera memoria* takes place not at the front itself but rather on a remote island in the Balearics; second, the child protagonist, Matia, is female rather than male; and third, she tells her own story as an adult, retrospectively, with a first-person narration. Regarded as one of Matute's best novels, *Primera memoria* has received much more critical attention than either *Duelo en El Paraíso* or *Los inocentes*; indeed, it has garnered more than those two combined. Matute's novel was initially read as a coming-of-age story, a female variation on the conventionally male *Bildungsroman*. But with the more recent interest in trauma studies, critics have increasingly utilized that theoretical framework to yield new interpretations of the text. In this chapter, I shall draw on both of these traditions, relying on close textual analysis to demonstrate that Matia regards both her passage to adulthood and the Spanish Civil War as does a trauma victim struggling to come to terms with a tragic past.

My analysis of *Primera memoria* shall consider aspects of narrative structure and the text's use of awakening and the echo as metaphors for the traumatic experience of war. Moreover, I show that key plot elements like parental abandonment and early female adolescence are presented in the text with the same metaphors, suggesting that Matia's relationship to her troubled personal past parallels the psychological struggle of trauma survivors in its retrospective and repetitive character. Finally, I propose that Matia, unlike the characters

Elósegui and Luis studied in previous chapters, does eventually *wake up*; that is, she begins to discover knowledge—and its limitations—of her difficult past through the act of narration that constitutes the novel itself. It is, however, an awakening limited by a culturally indoctrinated sense of shame, an internalized guilt heavily caught up in Matia's female subjectivity. Throughout this analysis, I also examine the interiority/exteriority antithesis that characterizes the text on multiple levels, such that the narrative framing device of inner/outer diegesis corresponds to the psychic processes of internalization/externalization seen in trauma survivors. I pursue this line of inquiry to its outermost boundaries, unfolding Matia's diegetic layers and also considering that which is normally deemed external to, albeit influential on, the text itself: the author's life.

Ana María Matute has received substantial attention in the popular media, where writers and interviewers are quick to indicate the autobiographical nature of her work, as is often the case with authors of the war generation, This emphasis was evident in April 2011, when *El País* featured an homage to Matute in recognition of her upcoming acceptance of the Premio Cervantes. The article's description of Matute as a child could just as easily apply, as we shall see, to Matia: "tímida, rebelde, solitaria, incomprendida, falta del cariño materno" ["timid, rebellious, solitary, misunderstood, deprived of maternal affection"]. The Matia/Matute parallel deepens with the knowledge that the toys and pastimes so loved by the protagonist—a theater set, the beloved doll Gongoró, and an oft-read book of fairy tales—were among Matute's favorites as a child (Mora, "Universo Matute").

This autobiographical focus on Matute in the popular press is likewise pursued by scholars. Reference to the author's specific childhood experiences is so prominent in Janet Diaz's *Ana María Matute* that an explanatory note in her preface reassures the reader that the

"unusually detailed attention to [Matute's] childhood" and other "biographical data are not included simply for their own sake, but when they aid the understanding and evaluation of the literary product." So too does Margaret Jones begin her book of textual analysis, *The Literary World of Ana María Matute*, with a brief biography to highlight parallels between Matute's life and her characters'. Readers particularly interested in a biographical account of Matute would do well to consult Diaz's and Jones' work; in this chapter I refer only to those details of the author's life, and the comments that she has made, that complement my examination of *Primera memoria* as a narrative of trauma.

Both Diaz and Jones acknowledge that their bibliographical approach follows cues from the author herself, who has long maintained, publicly and explicitly, the crucial role of her childhood—in particular the war years—in her formation as a novelist. Matute's frequent remarks regarding her childhood highlight the profound effect that the outbreak of war had on her: "Obviously, the Spanish Civil war was a decisive impact on my life. I was only ten—or perhaps for that very reason—but those three years, first of revolution and afterward of war, marked me deeply" (qtd. in Diaz 28). Such statements have generated a public image of the author associated with intimate disclosure. And yet, as Diaz points out, this image belies the relative lack of autobiographical information available about Matute: "The scholar slowly becomes aware that the apparent wealth of informative articles is repetitive and limited, and that the seemingly communicative author has actually been quite reticent about her personal history, with the exception of a few early years and key experiences obsessively emphasized" (15). The repetitive and "obsessive" return, in Matute's public persona as author, to these key childhood and wartime experiences precisely does legitimize, on the extra-diegetic level, my reading of

Primera memoria as a narrative of trauma—an approach that arises more fundamentally from cues within the text itself, as we shall see.

In *Primera memoria*, the adult Matia narrates the events that took place in her life during the summer and fall of 1936, when she was a fourteen-year-old girl living with her grandmother, aunt, and cousin in Mallorca[49] as the civil war raged on the mainland. Though Matia at times posits the war as a distant conflict from which she is far-removed, not only physically but psychologically—asking, for example, "¿qué cosa será, verdaderamente, la guerra?" (81) ["'What sort of thing is a war, really?'" (68) [50]], a question which speaks not only to her literal non-experience of the war but also to her inability to grasp it as a concept—the violence on the peninsula is nevertheless one of the primary forces that shape Matia's experiences that year.

The events that constitute the main thrust of the narrative begin to unfold when the protagonist and her cousin Borja—a fifteen-year-old bully whom the young Matia regards with a mixture of fear, hatred, pity, and admiration—find a corpse near the cove that has become their hideaway. As does Elósegui in *Duelo en El Paraíso*, Matia misses the moment of the murder, a physical absence that literalizes the trauma victim's psychological response of not-knowing. This is an important point, for the children's traumatic discovery of the corpse becomes, for Matia, a point of convergence between her personal history of loss and Spain's past and present violence: the event constitutes, on the one hand, a tragic reenactment of parental abandonment, and, on the other hand, a localized symptom of a war that is otherwise geographically and psychologically far-removed. The body is that of José Taronjí, a loyalist to the Republic and, as husband to the disreputable Sa Malene, a member of a family long marginalized in Mallorca.

[49] The island is never named, but it is generally assumed to be Mallorca.
[50] Unless otherwise indicated, all *Primera memoria* translations are from: Matute, Ana Maria. *Awakening*. Trans. James Holman Mason. London: Hutchinson, 1963. Print.

Matia and Borja quickly deduce that José has been shot by his distant cousins, the fascist Taronjí brothers, for having Republican sympathies unwelcome in the ultra-Catholic and conservative island community.

Not surprisingly, Matia experiences the discovery of the corpse as a traumatic one, as Scott Macdonald Frame has demonstrated in his study "A Private Portrait of Trauma in Two Novels by Ana María Matute." In reading Matia's memory of her reaction to the corpse, MacDonald refers to symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as defined in the 1990 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV*. But the traumatic nature of the experience is apparent even without this clinical resource: Matia's retrospective description of the event makes clear the extent to which it continues to haunt her in the narrative present: "No recuerdo si tuvimos miedo. Es ahora, quizá, cuando lo siento como un soplo…" (43) ["I cannot remember if we were afraid. It is now perhaps that I feel fear as a breath upon me" (37)]. The rapid shift, in the space of a few words, from present tense (*recuerdo*) to preterit (*tuvimos*) and back to present (*es…siento*) suggests the sort of disjointed temporality that characterizes the victim's condition. Matia actually *experiences* the event—or rather, the emotions evoked by it—in its aftermath, as she relives it in her memory and the narration thereof.

Furthermore, our attention to this scene also allows us to introduce one narrative trope, the echo, which will be of continued importance throughout our analysis. After the two cousins determine that José Taronjí was assassinated, Borja's words echo in Matia's ear: "oí su voz, que decía…*han tenido que matarlo, han tenido que matarlo*" (51) ["I heard his voice saying, 'They had to kill him, they had to kill him'" (44)]. Here, we see how the echo, a sound reflection, is an apt metaphor for the retrospective nature of trauma, in which victims begin to gain knowledge of the original event only in its aftermath as they experience its uncanny repetition. While Matia's

use of the preterit *oír* clearly indicates that she heard these words echoed in the narrated past, by voicing them in the narrative present they still, in fact, resound, for both Matia and the extradiegetic reader.

Though trauma theory has not yet extensively engaged this echo metaphor, it does surface briefly in Dori Laub's "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening," in which the author uses the language of the echo to describe a Holocaust survivor's verbal account of her experiences for Yale University's Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies:

> She was relating her memories as an eyewitness of the Auschwitz uprising…There was a silence in the room, a fixed silence against which the woman's words reverberated loudly, as though carrying along an echo of the jubilant sounds exploding from behind barbed wires, a stampede of people breaking loose, screams, shots, battle cries, explosions…A dazzling, brilliant moment from the past swept through the frozen stillness of the muted, grave-like landscape with dashing meteoric speed, exploding it into a shower of sights and sounds. Yet the meteor from the past kept moving on. The woman fell silent and the tumults of the moment faded...the explosion of vitality and of resistance faded and receded into the distance. (59)

Laub's language here calls our attention to several important characteristics of the use of the echo as a metaphor for trauma, characteristics that I shall consider too in my reading of *Primera memoria*. First, we see here that the echo is not only a metaphor for the victim's experience of trauma as a retrospective, ever-recurring phenomenon, but also for the experience of *listening* to testimony. That is, while the victim was physically present for the "original sound" (the traumatic event) but begins to *hear* it only as an echo in its aftermath, those who listen to

survivor testimony can—and should—hear this echo as they bear witness, in Laub's terms, to the process of bearing witness. As a sound reflection, that is, the echo must have a surface to *reflect off of*, like the "fixed silence against which the woman's words reverberated loudly." Like the proverbial tree falling in the forest, an echo may not truly be "heard" if there is no one there to listen; just as a narrative of trauma will not be received as such without listeners attentive to the way a troubled past reverberates in its survivor's present account.

The echo metaphor also figures similarly in Matute's own account of the civil war's effect on writers during the dictatorship. Though we will not assume the author's experiences to be consistent with her protagonist's, Matute's reference to the echo can help us understand some of it nuances as a metaphor:

> Between aseptic indifference and bought critics who labeled as Existentialist all they did not understand or approve, we turned our eyes back to the war. And this is easily explained since we had watched it with ignorant, open eyes…But the brilliance of what was revealed hurt us, and we were cut off from it, suddenly and brutally. We were surrounded only by echoes, distant rumblings. (qtd in Diaz 40)

Here, the echo, or the "distant rumblings," is again used to appropriately emphasize the ambiguous position of survivors vis-à-vis the traumatic event: they are at once removed from it, at a temporal distance, but continue to experience it. Nevertheless, Laub's and Matute's descriptions point to different audiences for the echo: in the former, a psychoanalyst presents an echo that he hears *along with* the testifier; in the latter, Matute describes her and other survivors' experience of trauma as an echo that only *they* heard, for it was unacknowledged by an indifferent postwar atmosphere. What Matute's description does shares with Laub's, from their different positions as testifier and listener, is the suggestion that the survivor's revisit to a

traumatic past contains the potential for revelation, in Matute's words, or the advent of knowledge, in Laub's: "knowledge in the testimony is…not simply a factual given that is reproduced and replicated by the testifier, but a genuine advent, an advent in its own right" (62). It is a revelation so painfully brilliant that it is aborted almost as soon as it begins.

To be sure, while both accounts result in a quickly frustrated advent of knowledge, Laub's task as a psychoanalyst has been to develop an approach to listening that respects "the subtle balance between what the woman *knew* and what she *did not*, or *could not, know*. It was only at the price of this respect, I felt, this respect of the constraints and of the boundaries of silence, that what the woman *did know*…could come forth and could receive, indeed, a hearing" (61). That is, while a survivor may never gain full knowledge of a traumatic event even when bearing testimony to it, partial knowledge, presumably for testifier and listener alike, is possible if the audience demonstrates a willingness to listen, a sensitivity to silence, and the acknowledgement of the process's limits—a far cry from the indifference encountered by Matute and her peers. For *Primera memoria*, then, I propose a reading approach akin to the listening one that Dori Laub sets forth in his article. The reader must hear the echoes of Matia's traumas along with her, and must realize that Matia is paradoxically hearing the sounds of her past as echoes for the first time: they are memories, indeed, but *first memories*, as a literal translation of the title suggests.

Echoed Histories

Returning to these first memories, then, we shall see that Matia presents her experiences in the summer of 1936 as echoes of Spain's historical legacy of civil strife, as well as echoes of her own troubled past of parental abandonment: national violence and personal loss both resound

in Matia's discovery of José Taronjí's body. Having happened upon the corpse, Matia and Borja then encounter José's son, Manuel, who asks to borrow their boat to transport his father's body. The initial meeting between Matia and Manuel serves as the foundation for their subsequently blossoming friendship as they bond over a shared sense of loneliness; both are marked as outcasts on the islands due to their checkered family histories and their fathers' Republican tendencies. Borja, who becomes increasingly resentful of the evident connection between his cousin and Manuel, ultimately hatches a plot to frame the latter for thievery, blackmailing Matia in the process to prevent her from defending her new friend. Thus, though Matia's day-to-day existence on the island may seem a far cry from the embattled forests and urban bombardments of *Duelo en El Paraíso* and *Los inocentes*, the civil war still exerts considerable influence over the course of events in her young life in 1936. Despite the lack of full-fledged warfare in Mallorca, the bitter divisions between the conservative majority and the marginalized Republican sympathizers dictate relationships on the island and even lead to bloodshed.

And as in *Duelo en El Paraíso*, these warring adult tendencies are echoed in play by the younger generations: Borja's group of friends engages in increasingly violent combat games with a gang of male adolescents led by his sometimes-friend, sometimes-enemy Guiem. As other critics have convincingly shown, Matia's account of these mini-wars intertwines two distinct narratives, one fictional and the other historical. In terms of the former, Patrick Gallagher focuses on the references to *Peter Pan* that permeate Matia's description of her cousin's bloody games, arguing that her use of a children's story "emphasizes the parallels between [the world of adults…and the world of children]. Clearly the boys are imitating their fathers' war, but they are also playing a familiar children's game and narrating it through the framework of a beloved children's story" (71). For our purposes, it is necessary to slightly qualify Gallagher's

conclusions—while the *boys* imitate their fathers' war, *Matia* narrates it within the Peter-Pan framework. Unlike the boys in both *Duelo en El Paraíso* and *Primera memoria*, Matia is excluded, by virtue of her sex, from the playtime reenactment of the civil war. If the actual war belongs to the realm of adults and the play war to the realm of the boys, the *narration* of both wars, with all its references to Peter Pan and the world of fairy tales, is exclusively Matia's. She is therefore responsible for identifying the similarities that exist between the war, its imitation in play, and the fictional world of children's stories.

But Matia's account of her cousin's warfare is permeated by yet another narrative thread that is neither fictional nor entirely contemporary but both factual and historical—the oppression of Spanish Jews. The boys' games are painfully reminiscent of Spain's violently anti-Semitic past, which Matia recognizes having secretly read a book about Jewish history that she and Borja keep hidden with other forbidden treasures. Just as the adult social relationships on Mallorca are still heavily informed by familial religious histories and class distinction, the adolescents ally themselves according to these centuries-old divisions. While Borja's gang consists of upper-class Catholics, the rival group is composed of lower-class *chuetas*, or the converted descendants of Spanish Jews; the two gangs clash on the island's *Plaza de los judíos*. Joseph Schraibman, whose analysis of the text focuses on the role of *chuetas*, argues that these historical references serve to connect the civil war to a legacy of oppression and the self-destruction of Spanish communities. In observing that both José Taronjí and his cousins/murderers are *chuetas*, Schraibman concludes that "A curious parallel is thus established: just as Spaniard is killing Spaniard, one former Jew is killing another former Jew; one Taronjí is killing another Taronjí. And, one might ask at this point, what in Spanish history makes it possible for one brother to kill

another?" (155). Schraibman's repetitive syntax here in fact "echoes" itself and thus lends credence to our reading of this cyclical violence via the echo metaphor.

Moreover, Schraibman's question alludes to a theme that had already concerned Spanish writers and intellectuals a half-century before the publication of *Primera memoria*: namely, the apparent inability of Spaniards—be it genetically or culturally inherited—to feel solidarity and form a sense of community with their countrymen, an inability that results at best in social disconnection, and at worst in the cyclical violence of repeated civil conflict. Indeed, in the first decades of the twentieth century, Pío Baroja's novels present auto-marginalization as a primary characteristic of Spanish culture. For example, the omniscient narrator of *El árbol de la ciencia* presents the fictional town of Alcolea as the supposedly quintessential anti-community of Spain:

> Las costumbres de Alcolea eran españolas puras; es decir, de un absurdo completo.
>
> El pueblo no tenía el menor sentido social; las familias se metían en sus casas, como los trogloditas en su cueva. No había solidaridad; nadie sabía ni podía utilizar la fuerza de la asociación…
>
> Por falta de instinto colectivo el pueblo se había arruinado. (203)

> [The ways of Alcolea were thoroughly Spanish, that is to say, completely absurd.
>
> The people had no inclination to socialize; families kept to their houses like cave dwellers. There was no solidarity; no one appealed to the power of association…
>
> Lacking the instinct toward collectivity, the town had been ruined.]

A similarly anti-Spanish sentiment is increasingly seen in Antonio Machado's work after 1907. According to his poem "Por tierras de España," for instance, "Abunda el hombre malo del campo

y de la aldea,/capaz de insanos vicios y crímenes bestiales/…Los ojos siempre turbios de envidia y de tristeza,/guarda su presa y llora la que el vecino alcanza" (72) ["The towns and country abound with evil men/capable of insane vices and beastly crimes/….Their eyes always clouded with envy and sadness,/clutching their spoils and resenting their neighbors' "].

The Cain-and-Abel allusions increasingly seen in Spanish literature of the early 20th century are another motif with which authors explored the supposedly disloyal and envious Spanish character. As the poetic voice in Machado's "Por tierras de España" notes, "no fue por estos campos el bíblico jardín—:/son tierras para el águila, un trozo de planeta/por donde cruza errante la sombra de Caín," (73) ["these were not lands for biblical gardens/but for buzzards, a shard of earth/where roams the shadow of Cain"] , while the speaker in the poet's earlier work "Recuerdo infantil" remembers from his childhood classroom a picture in which "se representa a Caín/fugitivo, y muerto Abel" (8) ["Cain appears/fleeing, and Abel, dead"]. The most famous example of the Cain and Abel theme in Spanish literature—Miguel de Unamuno's *Abel Sánchez*, published in 1917—is also from this generation. These biblical references to Cain and Abel, to brother betraying brother, seem decidedly prescient when considered several decades later with the outbreak of the Civil War. It is no surprise that they resurface explicitly in novels about the war written by the likes of Goytisolo and Matute. The biblical story is a recurrent theme in the latter's work, appearing eponymously in *Los Abel* and implicitly in plots about fraternal betrayal (*Fiesta al noroeste*) and family conflict (*Los hijos muertos*). Janet Diaz has noted that variations on the Cain and Abel theme appear in every story in *Algunos muchachos* (97) and traces the author's interest in the theme to childhood: Matute remembers that "fascinating prints of Cain and Abel" (qtd. in Diaz 26) adorned the walls of her primary school classroom, much like the poetic voice in Machado's "Recuerdo infantil." Indeed, Matute herself cites fraternal strife as a

major theme in her work, connecting it explicitly to the Civil War: "El odio entre hermanos…es una constante en toda mi obra, llevado hasta la última consecuencia, esto es la guerra civil española. El problema Caín y Abel ha sido y es una constante, aun cuando no constituye el tema central" (*El autor enjuicia su obra* 142) ["Hate between brothers…is a constant in all my work, taken to its extreme, which is the Spanish Civil War. The Cain-and-Abel problem has been and is a constant one, even when it isn't the central theme"].

Though there are no explicit references to Cain and Abel in *Primera memoria*, examples of familial betrayal abound, such that Matute's text echoes the same themes and concerns as those of her literary predecessors. As Schraibman notes, the assassination of José Taronjí is one such murderous instance. But there are numerous other betrayals, albeit non-fatal ones, of one family member by another; Marie-Linda Ortega points out that "ningún personaje escapa de la traición, ni siquiera los niños" (109) ["no character escapes betrayal, not even the children"]. For example, Borja feels betrayed by Matia's blossoming friendship with Manuel, whom he sees as their inferior as per the island's strict social hierarchy. When he learns of that friendship, Borja taunts her, "'Traidora…Te expulsamos de la pandilla. ¡Fuera! ¡Fuera los traidores!'" (153) ["'We're going to chuck you out of the gang; out with traitors, out with them!'" (131)]. Matia in turn feels betrayed by Borja when he participates in excursions from which she is excluded as a female: "traidor, traidor se fue al Naranjal, sabiendo que a mi no me lo permitían" (122) ["The traitor, the traitor, he had gone off to the Naranjal, knowing that I could not go with him" (102)]. Matia sees even her own passage into adulthood as a self-betrayal of sorts: "Y yo estaba a punto de crecer y convertirme en una mujer. O ya lo era, acaso…Era yo, solo yo, la que me traicionaba a cada instante" (148) ["I was on the point of growing up, of becoming a woman. Or maybe I

already was one…It was I, and only I, who betrayed myself every moment"[51]]. And, of course, the ultimate betrayal occurs when Matia doesn't speak up to defend Manuel when he is framed by Borja. She remains silent, "respirando mi traición" (240) ["breathing my betrayal" (205)] as if physically internalizing her shame. This final betrayal may not be just *metaphorically* familial—with the island community or indeed Spain functioning as a family unit—but also perhaps literally: the history of sexual conquests by island patriarch Jorge de San Major means that he could in fact be the biological father of Manuel, Borja, and Matia. Though we can be sure of paternity only in the first case—Manuel reveals his parentage to Matia—Borja's mother engaged in an extramarital affair with Jorge, and so the identity of his father is unclear. Furthermore, as Donna McGiboney has suggested (617), there is subtle evidence in the children's visit to Jorge that he may be Matia's father too, for he treats both her and Manuel with affection while ignoring Borja. Thus, the betrayals amongst the children are fraternal in nature, whether metaphorically or literally.

Set against the backdrop of the civil war, the fraternal betrayals committed on the island can certainly be read as echoes of the battles taking place on the peninsula. However, whereas earlier allusions to the Cain-and-Abel theme—those seen, for example, in Baroja and Machado—were couched in culturally deterministic terms that assigned blame to Spaniards' lack of solidarity, the family dynamics in Matute's text welcome an analysis according to the theoretical framework of trauma. Let us recall, from the psychoanalytical theories set forth in the introduction of this project, that in its aftermath the original traumatic event is uncannily repeated in other areas of the victim's life, not just psychically but in reality, as for the father in Freud's account, who awakes to his son's corpse afire after the child has perished from a fever. Laub refers us to another case, that of Holocaust survivor Martin Gray, the French author whose

[51] Translation mine.

wife and children died in a forest fire decades after his whole family was killed at the Treblinka death camp (65-66). Psychoanalysts interpret these uncanny repetitions not as consistently bad luck but as the result of repetition compulsions whereby the victims of trauma unwittingly bring about reenactments of the prior violence as their psyche attempts to comprehend their past.

The recurring parental loss and abandonment encountered by Matia and her peers in *Primera memoria* are characterized by this kind of uncanny repetition. After her mother's death, Matia is sent to live with her governess, Mauricia, the only maternal figure she remembers. Though Matia recollects living happily with her governness, Mauricia's death—the loss of the surrogate mother—uproots her yet again, this time to her grandmother's house on Mallorca. There are even more iterations of abandonment by the young characters' fathers. Of course, both Matia's and Borja's fathers are fighting at the front—hardly an uncanny repetition given the wartime need for soldiers—but a larger pattern of abandonment defines the father/child relationship in this extended family. As has already been established, Jorge may be the biological father of any or all of the text's three main adolescent characters, and yet he claims no paternity (he does, however, implicitly acknowledge his relationship with Manuel by sending him gifts). Matia's father, meanwhile, abandoned her to Mauricia long before the war started, such that she thinks of him as fictional: "tenía que inventarme un padre" (57) ["I had to invent a father for myself" (49)], thus constructing her knowledge of the paternal figure via a narrative act.

It is in conjunction with this history of paternal loss and abandonment that we must read the children's discovery of José Taronjí's corpse. For Manual, of course, José's death constitutes the loss of his *actual*, though non-biological, father. However, I propose that for Matia and Borja, this event is not only a trauma in its own right—sudden, shocking, and violent as it is—

but also as a traumatic reenactment, an echo, of their own fathers' abandonment and absence. It is telling, for example, that after lending Manual their boat so that he can transport his father's body, Matia and Borja engage in a conversation that quickly turns to their fathers, with Borja lamenting, "Mi padre luchando en el frente…y yo aquí, tan solo" (53) ["'My father's at the front fighting…and here I am quite alone'" (46)]. As Matia reflects on her cousin's comment, she recognizes the connection they share in this regard: "Era la primera vez que le oía aquella frase: *tan solo*…Me pareció que era verdad, que estaba muy solo, que yo también lo estaba" (53) ["This was the first time I had heard him use the phrase 'all alone'…It seemed to me what he said was true, he was very much alone—I also" (46)]; "Tenía que inventarme un padre…Sí, lo sabía. Y comprendí de pronto que lo estuve inventando sin saberlo durante noches y noches, días y días" (57) ["I had to invent a father for myself…Yes, I was sure of it. I realized all at once that I had, without knowing it, been inventing him for nights and nights, for days and days" (49)]. It is thus through an unwanted symbolic reenactment of their more personal losses—the encounter with another dead father, a slain Abel—that the cousins begin to gain knowledge of their own solitude and grapple with the emotions caused by parental abandonment. Upon reliving the loss of her father in the discovery of José Taronjí's corpse, and then narrating it many years later, Matia in fact comes to know—"comprendí de pronto"—both what she did and did not know ("lo sabía; sin saberlo") about the way she has dealt with her father's abandonment.

Though *Primera memoria* bears, via its Cain-and-Abel allusions, similarities to earlier works by the Generation of '98, its primary difference is the extent to which the troubling personal experiences of an individual (Matia) are posited as both a trauma in their own right and as a microcosm of Spain's national legacy of internal violence. The sort of uncanny repetitions that abound in the plot of *Primera memoria* do not appear in the work of earlier writers, who

represent this violence as the result of a biologically or culturally inherited defect in Spaniards. While I do not wish to suggest that Spain's *history* be read as a narrative of trauma, it seems that *Primera memoria*, or more specifically, Matia's narration, indeed presents Spanish history as such with the continual return of fraternal betrayal that echoes in Matia's own relationships, in the acts of violence committed on the island, and in the war on the mainland.

Interiority & Femininity

That the family betrayals in *Primeria memoria* can be read as symbolic of national struggles has led María del Carmen Riddel to observe that the novel "está concebida como un juego de cajas chinas: España, la isla, el pueblo y la casa de la abuela son los espacios que lo integran" (282) ["is conceived as a set of Chinese boxes: Spain, the island, and the grandmother's house are the spaces that comprise it"]. But her Chinese-box simile transcends the family/nation parallels in the text because it draws our attention to the many images of containment and interiority throughout Matia's narration. For example, Borja and Matia keep their stolen goods (cigarettes, liquor, playing cards) in an iron box that is, in turn, kept in the hull of their boat. Even the island's folklore seems to obey this logic of infinitely smaller, and more secret, spaces of containment: as the cousins' tutor, Lauro, notes, "'En las casas de este pueblo, en sus muros y en sus secretas paredes, en todo lugar, hay monedas de oro enterradas" (21) ["'In the village houses, in its walls and secret partitions, everywhere, there are buried gold coins'" (20)]. Meanwhile, Matia visualizes the primary symbol of her childhood—her doll Gongoró—as her own island, a talisman of sorts that shields her against an unwelcoming community and personal abandonment, but a talisman contained within the space of her armoire: "Contra todos ellos y sus duras o indiferentes palabras, contra el mismo Borja y Guiem, y Juan Antonio; contra

la ausencia de mis padres, tenía yo mi isla: aquel rincón de mi armario donde vivía, bajo los pañuelos, los calcetines y el atlas, mi pequeño muñeco negro" (114-115) ["But I had my island, a refuge against all of them, against their harsh, cold words, even against Borja, and Guiem, and Juan Antonio, against my parents' absence; my island, that corner of my wardrobe where lived, under the handkerchiefs, the socks and the atlas, my little black doll (97)].

Even the mechanical aspects of the text emphasize interiority: *Primera memoria* is riddled throughout with an extensive use of parentheses which seem a sort of punctuational container. Some critics have proposed that these parentheses serve to differentiate the thoughts of the adult narrating Matia on the outer level of diegesis from those of the adolescent Matia on the inner level of diegesis. Indeed, several parenthetical comments appearing early in the text seemingly confirm this proposal because Matia uses them to situate herself in the narrative present: "(Aquí estoy ahora…)" (20); "(Tal vez, pienso ahora…)" (35) ["(Here I am now..)" (19); "(Maybe, I think now…)" (32)]. However, there is little consistency in the use of parentheses throughout the text. At times they do in fact indicate a temporal diegetic distinction, but they are also often used to offer additional information, "Sebastián el Cojo [tenía] catorce y ocho meses. (Decía siempre quince)" (38) ["Sebastián, the cripple, fourteen and eight months. (He always said fifteen)" (35)[52]]; descriptive imagery, "(era de pronto como un trueno mudo rodando sobre nosotros)" (43) [(it was abruptly, as though a mute thunder-cap was rolling above us)" (38)]; or accounts of events that preceded the inner level of diegesis.[53] With such inconsistency of function, the parentheses blur rather than maintain the distinction between the two temporalities or levels of diegesis, such that it is nearly impossible to determine—short of

[52] Mason omits these parentheses, which I have introduced to his translation for the purpose of consistency with my examples from the original text.
[53] For example, Matia's account of her encounter with Juan Antonio, analyzed later in this chapter, is entirely enclosed in parentheses.

clear lexical markers like "ahora"—whether the thoughts and feelings mentioned by Matia have arisen in retrospect during the narrative present, or whether she in fact experienced them as an adolescent. Indeed, the narrative framing device does recall a sort of Russian-doll-like structure: the adult Matia, as narrating subject, casts an auto-reflexive gaze upon the psyche of her adolescent self, who becomes, in turn, the narrated *object* contained within.

In considering this structural interiority of the female voice, we may now find it useful to consult the theoretical framework set forth by Kaja Silverman in her text *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema*. Though Silverman's primary focus is cinema rather than literature, the psychoanalytical framework she provides with reference to the female voice is highly relevant to Matute's text. The title of her work alone, *The Acoustic Mirror,* allows us to more deeply examine common Matute motifs already identified in earlier studies. Margaret E.W. Jones, for example, has noted in Matute's works the prevalence of mirrors as a metaphor for self-discovery (63). Also significant is Jones's observation that the adult Matia's internal monologue—contained within the interior space of parentheses—generates a "cinematographic effect of a montage of memory images" (23). It is precisely this filmic effect of the diegetic levels that justifies my recourse to Silverman's work on cinema.

Particularly relevant is Silverman's analysis of "the interiority/exteriority antithesis" of cinematic diegesis. Silverman notes that in classic cinema this antithesis is established when the film's narrative levels "fold[] the female voice into what is overtly indicated as an inner textual space, such as painting, a song-and dance-performance, or a film-within-a-film." Such a technique, moreover, "exploits that ambiguity in the concept of interiority which permits it to designate both a psychic and diegetic condition" (56). Silverman's thoughts on interiority prove helpful throughout my remaining examination of *Primera memoria*—helpful in terms of both

convergence and divergence between theory and literary text. Like the female characters in the films identified by Silverman, Matia's voice is, as we have seen, so tightly contained within an inner textual space that it is nearly impossible to separate psyche from diegesis. But *unlike* classic cinema, where the outer textual space is male-dominated (for example, in movies about male screenwriters directing the performance of a female actress in a film-within-a-film), Matia is responsible for both inner and outer levels of diegsis; she is, as we have seen, both narrating subject and narrating object. That is, while diegetic strategies in classic cinema "fold[] the female voice into…an inner textual space," in *Primera memoria* the female voice *folds itself* into the same interiority.

As for the ambiguity of psyche/diegesis, we can see the same rhetoric of reflexive folding when scholars discuss Matia's psychic response to her circumstances rather than her retrospective narrative rendering of them. For example, María del Carmen Riddel observes the following about the internal narrative's conclusion:

> Matia crece a pesar suyo. Crece y traiciona. La caída de Manuel y ella en la trampa de Borja en el último capítulo de la novela es sintomático [sic] del crecimiento que ha tenido lugar en su vida. Cuando Borja traiciona a Manuel, *Matia no habla*, lo que constituye una aceptación implícita de los valores de su familia y una indicación indirecta de su propia traición. Se repliega entonces sobre sí misma, sobre lo que conoce aunque no aprecia. (283, emphasis mine)

> [Matia grows up in spite of herself. She grows up and commits betrayal. That she and Manuel fall into Borja's trap in the novel's final chapter is symptomatic of the growth that's taken place in her life. When Borja betrays Manuel, *Matia doesn't*

> *speak up*, which constitutes an implicit acceptance of her family's values and an indirect betrayal on her part. She then withdraws into herself, into what she knows without quite realizing it.]

Approaching *Primera memoria* as a "novela femenina de formación," Riddel offers a focus more concerned with the external consequences of Matia's betrayal—her initiation into adult society—than with the interiority of her diegesis. And yet Riddel's diction is unwittingly sensitive to the concerns of our current line of inquiry. Her use of the verb *replegarse* is especially interesting, as it presents the reader with a vision of Matia's psychological withdrawal as a *folding into herself*. Indeed, a breakdown of the verb's distinct morphemes demonstrates the ability of this single word—more so than any of its English counterparts—to convey the processes described by Silverman. The verbal root of the word is *plegar*, to fold—it is the verb used to denote the folding of a sheet of paper. Meanwhile, *replegar* implies a more reflexive action: the folding subject is also the folded object, like a bird retracting, or *folding in*, its wings. Finally, the use of *se* even more strongly delivers this reflexivity, which reaches its final emphatic conclusion with Riddel's prepositional phrase *sobre sí misma*. With the *re*, *se*, and *sobre sí misma*, the reflexive nature of the folding is thrice repeated even as repetition is initially established by the prefix *re*, the morpheme added to indicate that the action has been performed before. We could thus render a morphological translation of *replegarse* as something like a *re-folding into oneself*, or, less literally, a repeated psychological internalization, a response that mirrors the levels of interiority that mark the diegetic space as well as the images of containment that permeate the text.

The diegetic interiority and the images of containment throughout the novel are, moreover, connected to the young Matia's fears of reproduction and female sexuality, such that

she imbues internal spaces with womb-like connotations. For example, she describes her Aunt Emilia's bedroom as follows:

> Había allí algo, que no acertaba a definirme; algo cerrado…Era espeso y obsceno aquel cuarto, como el gran vientre y los pechos de tía Emilia…Y por mi confusa imaginación galopaban ideas extrañas, del tío Álvaro y de ella, debido a algunas conversaciones que escuché…cosas que yo fingía conocer bien, pero que me resultaban aún oscuras y llenas de misterio. (124-125)

> There was something about that bedroom I could not put a name to, something confined, cooped up…This room was thick and obscene, like Aunt Emilia's big belly and breasts…and through the confusion of my thoughts galloped odd ideas, about Uncle Álvaro and her, ideas excited by conversations I had overheard…they were things I pretended to understand perfectly, but which, for me, were still vague and full of mystery. (104-105)

The simile that Matia uses to compare Emilia's bedroom to her reproductive parts—breasts and belly (*vientre* has uterine connotations in Spanish)—unmistakably establishes the room as a womb-like space. That the adolescent Matia resists her passage to womanhood, and to the reproductive abilities that accompany it, is here implied allegorically--and elsewhere in the text more explicitly—by the fact that she is obliged to accompany Emilia to the latter's bedroom even though "aborrecía subir con ella" (124) ["I hated the idea of going up with her" (104)].

Matia also explicitly connects Emilia's body to another space of containment: the well, to which there are repeated references throughout the text. Contained with her aunt in the bedroom, Matia contemplates her while she sleeps, noting that "era como asomarse a un pozo" (128) ["It

was like leaning over the edge of a well" (107)]. By connecting the well to Emilia's body, which is in turn identified with reproduction, Matia extends to the well the same uterine symbolism. Moreover, Matia contemplates the well as a dark, mysterious, and earthy place—"yo solía agachar la cabeza sobre la oscuridad del pozo, hacia el agua. Era como oler el oscuro corazón de la tierra" (107) ["I used to bend over my head into the well's darkness down towards the water. It was as though I smelled the gloomy heart of the earth" (91)]—attributes consistent with the conceptualization of uterine space, and femininity more generally, in Western cultural traditions. Matia's commentary on the well's chain--"Hasta el rodar de la cadena tenía un eco espeluznante" (107) ["Even the chain when it was pulled had a blood-curdling echo" (91)]—subtly alters this sense of containment to one of *imprisonment*. One is reminded, perhaps, of Luce Irigary's reading of Plato's cave allegory in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, in which the author interprets the earthy interior space in Plato's allegory as a womb and the prisoner chained within as an imprisoned fetus.

In Matia's description of the well, more important than the chain, however, is the reference to the "eco espeluznante." We have thus far explored the echo as a metaphor for trauma; we shall now look at specific textual instances of the echo and explore its symbolic relationship to Matia's construction as female subject. Indeed, the echo appears as a repeated trope throughout the text in both narrative structure—as Matia's past, her *primera memoria*, echoes in her present—and direct reference. It is almost always presented as a fearsome phenomenon: the "eco escalofriante" (19) ["feverish echoes" (18) of Matia's whispered conversations with her cousin, the "eco especial" (38) ["peculiar echo" (34)]. made by the boots of the murderous Taronjí brothers, the sea's figurative "ecos errantes repletos de gran miedo"(112-113) ["wandering echos filled with great fear" (95)]. What is it about the echo that

Matia finds so terrifying? I would like to suggest that given the echo's mythological traditions and its association with cavernous, uterine spaces like the well--"los gritos de los cuervos, que repetía el eco, en las cuevas" (143) ["the screeching ravens echoed from the caves" (120)]—the echo points towards Matia's fears and frustrations as an emerging sexual subject denied a forum for self-expression.

To be sure, *Primera memoria* contains no direct reference to the myth of Echo, but the echo is a consistent enough trope—and limited self-expression a consistent enough theme—that the myth is a useful intertextual starting point. Though many critics have analyzed the novel's extensive references to the Little Mermaid—whose voice is robbed from her—and other fairy tales,[54] to my knowledge, none has considered the implications of Echo. Let us recall that according to the Greek myth, Hera robs Echo of her voice, and the latter is henceforth only able to repeat what others have said. Though Echo can speak, she cannot emit any original utterances. Interpreted in this way, the echo symbolizes the inability to speak for oneself.

Returning to *Primera memoria* with the Greek myth in mind, we can see Matia's repeated references to the echo and her discomfort with it as evidence of her frustrations as she negotiates her own figurative voicelessness in a society where she is, as a child and a female, doubly marginalized. Indeed, on several different occasions, the echo is associated with both childhood and femininity. First, Matia describes her late-night conversations with Borja as follows: "Nuestro siseo debía tener un eco escalofriante arriba, en las celdillas del artesonado, *como si nuestra voz fuera robado y transportado por pequeños seres* de viga a viga, de

[54] In "Ana María Matute's *Primera memoria*: A Fairy Tale Gone Awry," Christopher L. Anderson and Lynne Vespe Sheay undertake an extensive analysis of references to "The Little Mermaid" in the novel. Anderson has also written on the role of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Snow Queen" in Matute's book. Other critics who have considered the connection between the novel and various children's stories—most notably, *Peter Pan* and *Alice in Wonderland*—include Marie-Linda Ortega, Peter Gallagher, María Elena Soliño, Suzanne Gross Reed, Margaret E. W. Jones, and Emilie Cannon.

escondrijo en escondrijo" (19) ["Our whispers must have caused feverish echoes, now high, now low, above us in the sunk panels of the coffered ceiling, *as if our voices had been robbed and carried about by little elves*" (18)[55]. In this way, the echo of the two children is explicitly connected with the robbery of their voices, as with Hera in the original myth. And yet, the child Matia has reason to be more apprehensive than Borja, for her sex makes her more likely to be denied a voice; literally, the opportunity to speak her mind. This connection between the echo and femininity is established via the previously cited image of the well: "El pozo tenía una gran cabeza de dragon con la boca abierta, cubierta de musgo. Y había un eco muy profundo cuando caía algo al fondo." (107) ["The well had a big dragon's head with an open mouth and covered with moss. And when something fell to the bottom it gave out a deep, sonorous echo" (90-91)]. The well is, of course, a space of literal echoes, but also a place infused with womb-like symbolism: not only does Matia associate it with Emilia's child-rearing body, but the gaping mouth of the dragon at the well's opening can be likened to the vaginal passage to the uterus. Well, mouth, and vagina alike are all passages to internal spaces, and their function in *Primera memoria* is like that in classic cinema. These images recall what Michelle Montrelay has identified as the "insatiable organ hole" (qtd. in Silverman 63) primarily associated with female sexuality but also, as Silverman maintains, with the female voice: "there is an implied equation of woman's voice with her vagina, each of which is posited as a major port of entry into her subjectivity" (67).

Given the connection between voice and sexuality as "ports of entry" to female subjectivity, it is perhaps not surprising that Matia refers throughout her narrative to that "organ hole" which is the origin of the former: the mouth. Indeed, Matia repeatedly describes the mouths of other people, a near fixation which we can interpret according to a larger allegory of

[55] The translation is Mason's, except for the italicized phrase—omitted by Mason—which is my own.

repressed self-expression and sexual development. As the adult Matia recalls her cousin Borja, she presents his mouth as an implicit symbol of female sexuality: "aún lo veo sonreír hacia un lado, mordiéndose una comisura, los labios encendidos como una mujerzuela; eso parecía a veces, una mujerzuela" (19-20) ["I can still see him, smiling on one side of his mouth and biting on the other, his lips hot like those of a loose woman" (19)]. As the last clause clearly indicates, the purpose of this description is to compare Borja to a promiscuous woman, a comparison based on his feminine lips. Interestingly, however, the description's primary simile more precisely compares the *lips themselves*—not Borja—to a whore: Matia refers to "los labios encendidos como una mujerzuela," not "como *los de* una mujerzuela;" a more literal translation would be "his lips hot like a loose woman." Though the final clause clarifies the meaning of the simile, as reflected in the published translation, the initial omission of the pronoun allows us to read the connection between Borja's lips and a *mujerzuela* as a symbolic vaginal one: the shape of the lips resembles that of the female genitalia, which in turn is the site of a promiscuous woman's supposed sin. This connection permits us to see the mouth as an alternate site of female transgression: uncensored self-expression. The resemblance between the two organs, whether physical or allegorical, is emphasized even more by the Spanish vocabulary than in English—while the latter distinguishes between *lips* and *labia*, the former uses a single term, *labios*, for both.

The ambiguity of mouth/vagina symbols throughout the text suggests that female sexuality and self-expression are potential sources of both marginalization and empowerment. Matia describes the mouths of various characters as befits their social status and personality. For example, her Aunt Emilia appears the perfect lady, never opening her mouth inappropriately: "tía Emilia bostezaba, pero sus bostezos eran de boca cerrada…casi se podía oír el crujido de sus

dientes, fuertemente apretados para que no se le abriera la boca de para en par, como a las mujeres del declive" (11) ["Aunt Emilia yawned the whole time, but she kept her mouth shut...you could almost hear her teeth grate as she pressed them close together so that her mouth might not open wide like those of the women on the Slope" (12-13)]. We can interpret Emilia's closed mouth as evidence of both repressed self-expression and repressed sexuality: unlike the promiscuous, lower-class women of *el declive*—like Sa Malone—Emilia appears to keep both genitalia and mouth appropriately concealed.

By contrast, the relatively empowered and outspoken Borja and doña Praxades share a similarly cruel-looking mouth and toothy smile: "Borja levantaba el labio superior de un modo especial, y los colmillos, largos y agudos, como blanquísimos piñones mondados, le daban un aire feroz" (24) ["He raised his upper lip in a peculiar way so that his long, sharp, very white eye-teeth, like peeled pine-nuts, gave him a fierce air" (23)] ; "La abuela sonreía, enseñando los dientes caninos, cosa poco frecuente, ya que cuando sonreía, solía hacerlo con la boca cerrada. Así, con el labio encogido entre los afilados dientes, tenía el mismo aire de Borja" (65) ["Grandmother smiled, showing her eye-teeth, and this did not often happen when she smiled (which was seldom), and she generally kept her mouth closed. With her lip curled over her pointed teeth, she resembled Borja" (55)]. If we recognize the vaginal symbolism of the mouth and lips, then these images are surely ones of the *vagina dentata.* Because of the extensive mouth/vagina symbolism in the text, we can assume that Matia's comparison of her grandmother's and cousin's toothy grins implies more than just a physical family resemblance. Borja and doña Praxedes are two relatively empowered characters: though Matia's grandmother is a woman, she is a wealthy landowner and thus enjoys considerable power and social status on the island; she does not hesitate to speak her mind to anyone. And though Borja is still an

adolescent, he stands to inherit his grandmother's land and he enjoys relative freedom of movement unlike Matia; he expresses himself freely to everyone but his grandmother. More importantly, these two characters have the most power over Matia, and they are the ones whose cruel words wound her most routinely. Thus, it should not surprise us that Matia describes the source of these words—her relatives' mouths—as a dangerous threat with sharp teeth at the ready.

Interestingly, however, though these utterances hurt Matia, there is also a sense of *self-destruction* associated with the above images: the teeth in the previous descriptions are not biting a foreign object but rather the very lips that cover them—they are a threat to themselves as much as to others. The *vagina dentata* implied by Matia's description represents not potential castration for men, as it does in folklore, but a destructive threat to the female genitalia itself, with Borja's mouth "mordiéndose" akin to an act of vaginal self-consumption. Since Borja's mouth is, in Matia's mind, connected to a *mujerzuela*, we can interpret this description as indicating that Matia views female sexuality—and the power that it commands—as a potentially self-destructive force. More precisely, on the cusp of her adolescence, Matia is being initiated into a society that conditions females to fear their own sexuality and expression as a self-consuming power, resulting in repressive tendencies that appear to originate within the relatively powerless female subject but actually that come from without: we should recall that Matia never fixates on her own mouth but rather on the mouths of her outspoken, authority-wielding relatives. Matia thus enters a hegemonic order; she is unconsciously complicit in perpetuating the cycle of her own repression.

Mouths are not the only symbols of female sexuality that preoccupy Matia throughout her narrative—she comments incessantly on flowers. The blooming, fertile landscape becomes a

metaphor for Matia's own blossoming sexuality. One passage in particular is worth citing because it appears just as Matia sees Manuel up close for the first time: "De pronto, las flores, como el estupor de la tierra, encarnadas y vivas, curvadas como una piel, como un temblor del sol, gritando en medio del silencio. Y había un pozo, entre las pitas, con un sol gris lamiendo la herrumbre de la cadena" (38) ["Suddenly, the flowers, like some stupor of the earth, bright red and brilliant, curved, fleshy, like a quiver of sunlight, crying out in the silence. And there was a well among the agaves where the grey sun licked a rusty iron chain" (35)]. The references here to flesh emphasize the already-common symbolism of flowers as female genitalia. And once again this symbol of female sexuality is connected, in Matia's mind, with self-expression since the flowers appear to cry out in an otherwise silent landscape. The pairing of this description with Matia's initial sighting of Manuel foreshadows the relationship that they will develop—for Manuel becomes the only person with whom Matia feels comfortable expressing herself. Their friendship, though intimate, remains non-sexual, and yet allegorical descriptions like that of the flowers—concluded with a reference to yet another vaginal symbol, the well whose chain is metaphorically licked—imply that Matia feels with Manuel the first stirrings of sexual attraction. But despite her comfort with Manuel during the first conversation they share alone, Matia still seems to regard her sexuality with apprehension. As she finds herself confessing private thoughts and feelings to Manuel, she notices a hollow almond that "Nos mostró su agujero, negro y podrido como una mala boca" (147) ["It showed us its hole, black and rotten like a diseased mouth" (123)]. Here again the *hole*, whether symbolically vaginal or oral, is seen as dark and essentially bad. Matia's imagery again suggests her fear of her growing sexuality and of the self-expression and disclosure in which she engages with Manuel.

As Matia—whether as a fourteen-year-old or an adult narrator—imbues these various images like almonds, mouths and flowers with vaginal symbolism, she appears to be externalizing her own blossoming sexuality, projecting it, perhaps, so that she does not have to deal with its unwanted consequences. After all, her passage into womanhood results in her exclusion from the boyish adventures of Borja and his friends, for her grandmother does not allow her to take excursions with them:

> Entonces, si no estaba Borja—traidor, traidor se fue al Naranjal, sabiendo que a mí no me lo permitían; se fue sabiendo que yo me quedaría allí, fingiendo indiferencia, tragándome la humillación apoyada en el muro, con las piernas cruzadas, mordiendo cualquier cosa para que no se me notasen las ganas de llorar—yo me quedaba entre las garras de la abuela, y con la estúpida tía Emilia, que fumaba en su habitación…esperando, esperando, esperando, con su gran vientre blando, el regreso del feroz tío Álvaro… (122)

> Then, if Borja was not there…(The traitor, the traitor, he had gone off to the Naranjal, knowing that I could not go with him. He had gone off and he knew that I had to stay at home, pretending not to care, swallowing my humiliation as I leant against the wall, my legs crossed and chewing anything that came to hand so that no one should see how near I was to tears.)
>
> If Borja was not in I was caught tight in Grandmother's clutches, and there I was with silly Aunt Emilia, who smoked in her bedroom…waiting, waiting, waiting with her great white belly, for fierce Uncle Álvaro to come back. (102)

In these moments of abandonment, Matia's body language suggests that she is ashamed of her womanhood. She speaks of feeling humiliation as she sits with "las piernas cruzadas," a position considered lady-like, to be sure, because it physically conceals and closes off the female genitalia, as if Matia wants to deny her sexuality. And given the subtle images of the *vagina dentata* that appear throughout the narrative, it is important here that Matia's concealment of her genitalia is paired with a *biting* that serves to similarly conceal her emotions: "mordiendo cualquier cosa para que no se me notasen las ganas de llorar." It is thus with genitalia concealed and emotions repressed that Matia is forcibly inducted into the female society epitomized by her grandmother and aunt. And just as Matia desperately awaits Borja's return, so too does Emilia await her husband's. Moreover, Matia's repeated reference to her aunt's "gran vientre blando" indicates her knowledge as an adult that the role of women in this society is to be fulfilled and *filled* more literally—inseminated—by their male companions. Emilia's days seem empty and meaningless just as her big soft belly is vacant and unused. This description and Matia's ambiguous attitude toward vaginal symbols throughout the text—simultaneously attracting and repelling her, they are at once symbolic of female empowerment and oppression—imply that one source of Matia's anxiety is not female sexuality *per se* but its problematic role in a society that both expects it for reproductive purposes and yet condemns it on moral grounds.

The most overtly sexual encounter recounted by the narrator crystalizes the relationship between vaginal symbols, Matia's blossoming sexuality, and the repressed female voice. The encounter occurs not with Manuel, however, but with Borja's friend Juan Antonio, who engages Matia in conversation about her parents:

> "Tus padres estaban divorciados, ¿verdad?", me preguntó Juan Antonio, sentados ambos en la escalera de piedra, debajo de las madreselvas. "No es verdad". Pero

> él se reía con una malicia que no entendía del todo. Me puso la mano en la rodilla y empezó a acariciarla. La falda se levantó un poco, sólo un poco: vi mi rodilla tostado por el sol, redonda y suave—nunca pensé que pudiera ser tan bonita, hasta aquel momento—y de pronto, no pude resistir su mano sudorosa. Decía: "Tu madre…". No le entendí bien. Estaba obsesionada por su mano, que me repelía como un sapo. ¡Y tenía los labios tan repugnantemente encarnados! Le di un empujón brutal, y fue contra la pared. Las flores, a nuestro lado, exhalaban un gran perfume. (82)[56]

> 'Your father and mother were separated, weren't they?' Juan Antonio asked me as we were both sitting on the stone steps below the honeysuckle. 'No, they weren't,' but he gave a malicious laugh I did not understand at all. He put his hand on my knee and began to stroke it. My skirt went up a little, only a little. I saw my sun-burned knee, round and soft—never until that minute had it occurred to be that it could be so pretty—and suddenly I could not bear his sweaty hand. He said, 'Your mother…' I did not understand very well. I was obsessed by his hand that was as repellent as a toad; and his lips were so disgustingly red. I gave him a brutal shove and he fell against the wall. Beside us the flowers gave off a cloying perfume. (68)

Matia's ambivalence towards Juan Antonio's advances, which simultaneously tempt and repulse her, owes less to her feelings about him than to her growing awareness of, and confusion about,

[56] This passage appears entirely in parentheses, thus disproving the possibility that parentheses serve to differentiate between the narrative temporalities. It also furthers the connection between the orthographic rendering of containment (text within parentheses) and the conceptualization of female sexuality as interior space (contained within the vagina).

her impending sexuality. What the reader witnesses here is a sort of narcissistic sexual awakening: Matia sees her own sexuality reflected in Juan Antonio's attraction to her, understanding for the first time that she is attractive. This recognition of her own beauty—and thus, sexual power—quickly gives way to repulsion. And yet, Matia's reference to Juan Anotnio's "labios tan repugnantemente encarnados," an image that returns us once again to the vaginal symbolism of the mouth, suggests that her own sexuality is the source of this repulsion. She is disturbed not quite by Juan Antonio, but more precisely by what she sees in him: a reflection of herself as sexual being. The use of the adjective *encarnados*, moreover, connects the image of Juan Antonio's lips with the previous one of "las flores…*encarnadas* y vivas, curvadas como una piel" (38, emphasis mine). Finally, Matia concludes her recollection of the sexually charged encounter with Juan Antonio with yet another reference to flowers exhaling perfume as a mouth does breath, thereby implicitly connecting the images by virtue of their shared vaginal symbolism.

In analyzing this passage we must also consider the nature of Matia's response to Juan Antonio, which points to the ambiguities of female sexuality as a source of both power and repression. Though Matia ultimately resists Juan Antonio's advances, she does so not verbally but physically, pushing him away. And while this is certainly an effective form of resistance, it is nevertheless interesting that she does not use her voice. Furthermore, in the beginning of the passage, when Matia *does* verbally respond to Juan Antonio's questions about her parents, her mode of narrating this response is noteworthy. Her comment is in quotes—"No es verdad"—but Matia never actually lays claim to these words (for example, with an explanatory "yo dije"). Of course, there is no mistaking who utters them, but Matia distances herself from her own voice

even while according Juan Antonio full ownership of his words with verbs like *preguntar* and *decir*.

Moreover, this passage also calls our attention to the enduring effects of Matia's family history on her sexual and emotional development. Juan Antonio very obviously attempts to engage her in conversation about her parents, but Matia's recollection is also very suggestive in what remains subtle or altogether unsaid. It is noteworthy that Matia remembers and mentions the species of flower under which this encounter took place: the *madreselvas*. A compound word comprised of *madre* and *selva*, *madreselva* juxtaposes the mother's domestic comfort with the jungle's untamed wild. Recalling the vaginal symbolism of flowers throughout the text, we can here see the ambiguities of female sexuality, both creative (reproductively) and destructive (morally), rendered in a single word. Also important is Juan Antonio's trailed-off comment "Tu madre…". Placed in the mouth of a speaking male subject, the aborted reference to Matia's mother underscores the female's lack of access to self-expression even as it concerns something as intimately female as motherhood. Of course, Matia cannot speak of her mother because she lacks knowledge of her, and her mother cannot speak for herself because she is dead. As we shall see in the reminder of this analysis, the absence of the maternal voice in this text becomes a metaphor for repressed self-expression in Matia's world, even as the plot-driven explanation for this absence—the mother's death—is one of the primary traumas of Matia's life.

The Echoing Cry of the Mother

Since some of Matia's earliest traumas were parental loss, with the death of her mother and subsequent abandonment by her father, it is not surprising that references to the echo appear

explicitly in her memories of her parents and implicitly in the way she narrates these memories. Tellingly, Matia doesn't seem to have any visual recollection of her father; rather, she remembers his voice. The male authority figure is thus associated with speech—Matia's memory is not of a physical presence but rather a disembodied voice heard through the telephone—whereas the young female is unable to speak: "el recuerdo…solo llegaba, acaso, en el eco de su voz: '*Matia, Matia, ¿no me dices nada? Soy papa*…' (La pequeña estación de teléfonos del pueblo, y yo, alzada de puntillas, con el auricular negro temblorosamente acercado a la mejilla, y un nudo en la garganta)" (115) ["the memory…came to me, perhaps, only as the sound of a voice, the echo of his words. "Matia, Matia, haven't you anything to say to me? It's Papa…' (The little telephone booth in the village, and I, on tiptoe, with the black receiver trembling against my cheek, and a lump in my throat)" (97)[57]]. We can of course assume that the echo in Matia's conversation with her father is owing to the undoubtedly weak connection available in a small-town telephone station. But once again it is here essential to consider Matia's syntax—it is not that she remembers the echo of his voice, but that her recollection of him *arrives to her in or as an echo*. The use of the imperfect form of *llegar* is also important in suggesting the repetitive nature of a memory that keeps coming back. Thus, the echo of her father's voice that haunts her is not evidence of *his* inability to express himself, but of the incessant return, to Matia, of his traumatic abandonment. As a child, Matia was literally speechless when confronted with this abandonment—she cannot respond to her father on the phone.

The adult Matia is at least able to narrate this encounter, and yet her account consists of her *repeating*, in written narration, her father's words, which echo to herself in her memory but also to the reader in Matia's narrative rendering of the conversation. Rather than rely on indirect discourse or a mere description of events that took place, she depends on direct quotations of her

[57] I have slightly altered Mason's translation.

father's words and her nursemaid's too, indicated by both italic type and quotation marks: "Sí, solo aquella voz, *'¿No me dices nada?'* Y luego, la otra, de Mauricia, en el correo de la tarde: '*Mira lo que te envía papa…*' "(116) ["Yes, only that voice: 'Haven't you anything to say to me?' And then, the other voice, Mauricia's, when the afternoon post came: 'Look what your papa has sent you…'" (98)]. Thus, as Matia relates how these memories "echo," her relation is literally an echo as she merely repeats other's words for the reader. Even though the adult Matia has obviously found some form of self-expression in the very narration that we absorb, this self-expression is still emerging. Furthermore, in the previously cited quote, Matia's difficulty with original self-expression is apparent not only in her recourse to other people's words but also in the brief fragments of her own voice, represented by normal Roman type. Unlike the complete thoughts spoken by her father and Mauricia, Matia's words are fragmented, rendered incoherent by the very echoes that interrupt them. If we see these "echoes" as symbolic of Matia's traumas—abandonment by her father; the death of the beloved Mauricia, nursemaid and maternal figure—then we can see how their reverberation, their incessant return, has prevented Matia from constituting herself as a subject capable of original self-expression or of narrative flow regarding the past events she relates. In fact, Matia's inability to ever really offer us a coherent account of her father's abandonment or Mauricia's death is what ultimately indicates the traumatic nature of these events: she cannot tell them because she has not yet achieved full knowledge of them, and they thus continue to return in an echoed form that allows for the advent of only partial knowledge. The process of narration she has begun may eventually grant her access to more complete knowledge, but that it does so in fits and starts is evident by the very way that Matia recounts her memories in incoherent form: "Sí, solo aquella voz…Y luego, la otra, de Mauricia, en el correo de la tarde" (16).

While Matia's father, though absent from the text, retains a voice via his daughter's—the narrator's—memory, the same cannot be said for Matia's mother, who divorced her husband and died when Matia was still very young. Matia remembers virtually nothing of her mother, having no memory of spoken words as she does with her father. The small presence that Matia's mother has within the text consists of descriptions offered by other characters, descriptions in which the mother does not speak even through the voice of another. This limited presence certainly explains why scholarship on *Primera memoria* has not extensively considered the role of mother in terms of both Matia's psychological development and the novel's overarching themes. Nevertheless, it is somewhat surprising that Matia's mother's absence, spoken of throughout the text, has not received as much attention as her father's absence: Schraibman identifies "the lost father" as "the key theme" in *Primera memoria* (150), and McGiboney analyzes both real and symbolic fathers. There is, however, somewhat more sustained interest in the role of Matia's mother in studies that approach the novel as a coming-of-age story. Michael D. Thomas cites the deaths of Matia's mother and nursemaid as formative experiences for the young girl, comparing them to tribal rites of initiation in which child is separated from mother (154). Meanwhile, María Elena Soliño considers Matia's rejection of motherhood in light of the novel's many references to fairy tales and children's literature, which have traditionally presented maternal figures in problematic, if not outrightly hateful, ways.

We can gain many insights into both Matia's psychological development and the novel's overarching themes if we reflect on the role of the mother within the current theoretical framework of psychoanalysis more broadly and trauma studies more specifically. Interestingly, though Matia's mother is a non-speaking subject throughout the text, she is not an entirely silent

one: as in the following exchange between Matia and Antonia, Matia's mother retains self-expression of sorts via her daughter:

> [Antonia dijo:] Antes miraba cómo dormías, y me acordaba de tu madre.
>
> Me molestaba que alguien me viera dormir, como si fuera a descubrir mis sueños estando prendida en ellos, tan terriblemente indefensa. Me irritó oírle decir:
>
> —No te pareces a tu madre, pero cuando duermes sí. Cuando duermes, Matia, creo estar viéndola…te he oído gritar—seguía, machacona, con su voz baja y humilde—. Has estado gritando…
>
> —Bueno, ¿y qué? Siempre he gritado por la noche, Mauricia ya lo sabía, y no hacía caso…
>
> —¿Sabes?—continuó ella—. Tu madre también gritaba.
>
> — Mi madre, siempre ese cuento. ¡Mi madre era una desconocida! ¿A qué vienen siempre a hablarme de ella? (70-71)

> [Antonia said:] 'Just now I was watching you as you slept, and you reminded me of your mother.'
>
> It annoyed me to have someone watch me when I was asleep; it was as though they were trying to discover my dreams. I was absorbed in them and dreadfully defenceless. She irritated me when she said:
>
> 'You don't really look like your mother, but you do when you're asleep. Matia, when you're asleep, I can believe I'm looking at her…I heard you cry out,' she went on in a tiresome, low, humble voice. 'You were crying out loud.'

> ‘Well, what of it? I’ve always cried out in my sleep. Mauricia knew all about that and thought nothing of it…’
>
> ‘Do you know something?’ she continued. ‘Your mother too used to cry out in her sleep.’
>
> ‘My mother, always the same story. My mother was unknown. No one knew her. Why is everyone always talking about her?’ (59-60)

In this way, whereas Matia’s memory of her father returns as an echo of a disembodied voice, Matia’s mother is remembered and described—not by Matia but by *others*, the “everyone always talking about her”—in terms of a non-verbal utterance: screams while sleeping. The only sound uttered by the mother within the narrative—and thus two times removed, once by Antonia’s description and again by Matia’s memory of this description—is an unconscious scream. Furthermore, this primal expression emitted by a female sleeper, and the slumber itself, are ultimately what connect mother and daughter; only while asleep does Matia bear physical resemblance to her mother. The unconscious scream can thus be seen as a sort of auditory umbilical cord binding mother and daughter: Matia “echoes” her mother when she cries out at night.

It is useful to consider this unconscious cry in light of Silverman’s work on the maternal voice in *The Acoustic Mirror*, where she explores how psychoanalysis has represented the maternal voice as a womb-like “blanket of sound” or “sonorous envelope” (72)—alternately soothing or threatening, according to the theorist in question—that completely surrounds a fetus or baby. Silverman summarizes her own contribution to this discourse in the following passage:

> By identifying the sonorous envelope trope as a fantasy, I mean to emphasize the trope’s retroactivity rather than its fictiveness—to indicate its status as an after-

> the-fact construction or reading of a situation which is fundamentally irrecoverable, rather than to post it as a simple illusion. In other words, I intend to stress the ways in which the fantasy functions as a bridge between two radically disjunctive moments—an infantile moment, which occurs prior to the inception of subjectivity, and which is consequently "too early" with respect to meaning and desire, and a subsequent moment, firmly rooted within both meaning and desire, but consequently "too late" for fulfillment. The first of those moments, which can be imagined but never experienced, turns upon the imaginary fusion of mother and infant, and hence upon unity and plenitude. (73)

Though Antonia's observations about Matia and her mother project upon them this type of unity, *Primera memoria* presents a slightly different conception of the maternal voice fantasy from that offered by Silverman above. Whereas Silverman sees the fantasy as a bridge between two moments, the first of which is characterized by a supposed unity, Matia's narration posits the maternal voice—the unconscious cry—as the very site of this "imaginary fusion," the bridge between a mother and a daughter who is also denied the opportunity for free self-expression. In this way, Matia's resemblance to and unity with her mother stems from the voice that the former echoes in the unconscious cry previously uttered by the latter.

The passage about Matia's slumber suggests that within *Primera memoria*, the role of sleep and the unconscious scream are certainly ambivalent in terms of their potential for female expression. On the one hand, the non-verbal utterance provides an avenue for the female to express her pain. Perhaps this is why Matia is so resistant to the breaking dawn and the awakening that accompanies it; only while she slumbers does Matia find self-expression. However, this self-expression is understood, by Antonia at least, as an echo of Matia's mother,

as if Matia were, once again, able to repeat only what others have already uttered. In this regard, Matia's anger at the end of the passage—"'Mi madre, siempre ese cuento. ¡Mi madre era una desconocida! ¿A qué vienen siempre a hablarme de ella?'" (71)—is understandable. Matia is becoming a woman in her own right, and does not want to be considered a reverberation of the mother she never met, the mother who is just as much a fiction ("ese cuento") as the father who has abandoned her ("tenía que inventarme un padre" [57]). Furthermore, because the moment of expression occurs unconsciously, while the female is asleep, it renders her particularly vulnerable or, in Matia's words, "indefensa." In this case, she is defenseless not only against the voyeuristic gaze of whoever chooses to watch her, but also against a sort of aural "gaze" of an eavesdropping interloper. Of course, Matia can narrate neither her slumber nor her simultaneously occurring self-expression. We only "hear" Matia's screams through Antonia's words—or, more precisely, through the adult Matia's narration of a childhood memory of an interaction with the servant—a highly circuitous narrative route that has important implications for the reader. In one way, upon absorbing Antonia's words, the reader is forced into the position of the aural voyeur who both eavesdrops and gazes upon a sleeping Matia who in turn does not want to be watched while asleep. The resulting dynamic once again calls our attention to that "inner textual space" where the female voice "is doubly diegeticized, overheard not only by the cinema audience but by a fictional eavesdropper" (Silverman 57). In *Primera memoria*, the reader takes on the role of "cinema audience" and Antonia that of "fictional eavesdropper," together listening in on Matia's unconscious cry.

Nevertheless, because *Primera memoria* features the adult Matia on the outer diegetic level recounting the "inner textual space" of her childhood on another narrative level, it is ultimately Matia herself who relates to the reader the encounter with Antonia and the

unconscious scream. Matia thus establishes her right to decide who hears her and when, which is not the case in Silverman's examples, where, we should recall, female voice is textually inscribed within an internal layer of diegesis whose inclusion in the male-dominated outer narrative is beyond the female subject's control. If Matia's unconscious scream itself speaks to society's denial of self-expression for women, her *narration* of the scream constitutes a re-appropriation of this right, an assertion of subjectivity. Though Matia's mother is doomed to be heard only through an unconscious cry that is subsequently retold and reinterpreted by a series of narrators, Matia is ultimately able to verbally express—by means of narrative tropes like the echo and the maternal voice—her previous frustrations at being denied the opportunity for self-expression.

Echoed Awakenings

The exchange between Matia and Antonia about the former's mother occurs just after Matia awakes from slumber in what is one of four major scenes of awakening in the text. While I have based my analysis of *Primera memoria* on the original Spanish text, the notion of awakening is awarded special prominence in one English-language version of the novel. James Holman Mason's 1963 translation, published in Britain and used in this current study, is aptly and simply titled *Awakening*, even though no reference to the verb *despertar* appears in Matute's original title or subtitles. Though Mason took more liberty with his title than did Elaine Kerrigan with *School of the Sun* (the name of her translation, also from 1963 but published in the U.S., is an English rendering of the original title of *Primera memoria*'s second section), and though his title paratextually foregrounds that which appears only in the text proper of Matute's novel, the

narrative attention given to the notion of awakening in the latter certainly justifies Mason's choice.

As in *Duelo en El Paraíso* and *Los inocentes*, the awakenings in *Primera memoria* can be seen as a metaphor for the experience of trauma, in which the victim awakens to knowledge of a troubled past. But in *Primera memoria* more so than in these other texts, the awakening also constitutes a metaphor for Matia's construction of subjectivity, as she wakens to a growing knowledge of herself as female subject. The awakening that immediately precedes the discussion of Matia's mother is the following: "Antonia estaba junto a la ventana…Me volví despacio para mirarla. Ella me miró también, en silencio, y me incorporé. Me vi en el espejo del armario, partida por la blancura de las sábanas, con el cabello suelto y el sol arrancándole un rojo resplandor" (70) ["Antonia was standing by the window…Slowly I rolled over to look at her. She also stared at me and in silence. I sat up and saw myself in the wardrobe's looking-glass, cut in two by the sheet's whiteness, my hair loose and the sunlight bringing out the red tints in it" (59).. As Matia sees herself in the mirror, this appears to be a moment of self-recognition. In fact, it perhaps recalls Lacan's second moment of awakening, when he becomes conscious of the knocking that woke him, thus waking up: "And when I awake, it is in so far as I reconstitute my entire representation around this knocking—this perception—that I am aware of it. I know that I am there, at what time I went to sleep, and why I went to sleep" (56). Indeed, upon waking, Matia experiences none of the disorientation typical of Luis in *Los inocentes*, and it would seem that her glimpse of herself in the mirror, when read in the context of Lacan's awakening related in "Tuché and Automaton," indicates a certain knowledge of self, an ability to locate herself in time and space.

The interpretation of this description as a moment of self-recognition assumes additional depth if we consider Lacan's mirror stage. Just like the infant in Lacan's initial formulation of the theory, Matia sees herself literally reflected in the mirror. And yet, the fact that Matia lives this moment not as an infant but as an adolescent, and then subsequently recounts it as an adult, is more consistent with the revised theory of the mirror stage as a retroactive experience of loss and fragmentation through which subjectivity is constructed. Indeed, this fragmentation is symbolically rendered in Matia's reflection, where she sees herself "partida," as if her very sense of self were severed through the middle. The violence of this description is furthered by the verb *arrancar* but is lost with Mason's translation: the sun doesn't merely "bring out" Matia's red highlights but seems to wrench them out of her. Indeed, Matia's process of subject formation involves much pain. Because this description occurs immediately prior to the conversation about Matia's mother, "una desconocida," we can conclude that one of the primary losses responsible for Matia's construction of selfhood is separation from the mother, as it is in Lacanian theory. That is, the absence of the mother—here a literal absence due to death rather than normal infant/mother separation—is in fact *necessary* for Matia to awaken to knowledge of selfhood.

Closer textual analysis of both *Primera memoria* and the relevant psychoanalytic theory also reveals additional connections between Silverman's fantasy of the echoing maternal voice, trauma, and the notion of awakening. Silverman explicitly stresses the retroactive aspect of the fantasy as "an after-the-fact construction or reading of a situation which is fundamentally irrecoverable," and the connective function of the fantasy in bridging two moments: "an infantile moment, which occurs prior to the inception of subjectivity, and which is consequently 'too early' with respect to meaning and desire, and a subsequent moment, firmly rooted within both meaning and desire, but consequently 'too late' for fulfillment" (73). That is, in Silverman's

notion of it, the maternal voice is a fantasy precisely because it is first heard when it cannot truly be *heard*: in infancy, before the acquisition of language and the subsequent formation of subjectivity. The main audience for the maternal voice—the child—is thus unable to ascribe any meaning to it. Furthermore, the second "hearing" occurs when the subject conceives of the maternal voice in retrospect. That is, the subjects begin to know the maternal voice only insofar as they "hear" its echo later in life, just as trauma victims arrive "too late" to knowledge of what they have suffered; though present for the "original sound," the trauma victim hears only its echo. For Matia, of course, the original maternal voice—and not just its fantasy—is irrevocable, and she is doomed to hear her mother's voice only upon awakening, when her own nocturnal cries—echoes of her mothers'—are described to her by an eavesdropping other.

The other moments of awakening in the text also lend themselves to interpretation as moments of self-recognition, and their arrangement within the text underscores the structural interiority of the narrative. The four major scenes of awakening in *Primera memoria* are arranged in a symmetrical fashion that complements and reproduces—echoes, in fact—the overarching structure of the text, which is divided into four sections: "El declive," "La escuela del sol," "Las hogueras," and "El gallo blanco."[58] The first and last of these sections each include two descriptions of distinct moments in which Matia awakes from slumber, creating a sort of frame of awakenings on either end of the text. This frame is accentuated by the placement of the first awakening in the novel's initial pages, and the last awakening in its final ones.

What differentiates these moments of *Primera memoria* from similar ones in both *Duelo en El Paraíso* and *Los inocentes* is that Matia's slumber ends each time with a true awakening

[58] Mason's text translates these section titles as "The Slope," "The School of the Sun," "The Bonfires," and "The White Cock."

rather than the being-woken in the latter two novels. That is, whereas Elósegui and Luisito *are awoken by* external stimuli—a gunshot and a bombardment, respectively, the noises of war—Matia simply *wakes up* on four separate occasions. Moreover, because *Primera memoria* is the only text of the three related in the first person, Matia is not only the agent but the *narrator* of her own waking. This agency and narrative authority are evidenced in the uses of the verb *despertar* in the first person active voice, each of which serve to introduce a description of Matia's first moments of wakefulness on four different occasions: "de madrugada me desperté sobresaltada" (14); "Cuando desperté, aún sin abrir los ojos…" (70); "Me desperté boca abajo" (207); "al alba, me desperté" (242) ["Early in the morning I awoke with a start" (15); "As soon as I awoke, and before I had opened my eyes…" (59); "I woke up…face downwards" (177); "I awoke at dawn" (206)]. The use of the first-person active in these descriptions more generally indicates Matia's eventual assumption of agency and subjectivity, capabilities which were limited to her as a female adolescent.

But because Matia empowers herself only through the act of narration that constitutes the text, she does not appear to recognize her newfound agency and subjectivity; rather, it is a subtle transformation apparent in the aforementioned phrases. Indeed, despite the agency implied in Matia's use of the first-person active form of *despertar*, she presents these awakenings as moments not of figurative empowerment but of helplessness in the face of unwanted change brought on by the war and the onset of adolescence. For example, in light of my earlier observations about the mouth as symbolic of both female sexuality and self-expression, it is interesting that Matia remembers having woken up "boca abajo" (207). Though this phrase is best translated as "facedown" or "on my stomach," its literal wording in Spanish emphasizes the stifling of Matia's mouth: as an adolescent she was unable to express herself freely. Of course,

her very narration of this moment constitutes an act of self-expression, creating tension between the symbolic charge ascribed to these "stifled" awakenings in the adult Matia's narration and the transformative, empowering act of narration which is perhaps the true moment of awakening.

The tension between Matia's feelings *upon* these awakenings, versus the meanings that can be ascribed to them via her retrospective narration, is apparent in the scenes themselves as well as in the different ways scholars have interpreted them. The first awakening that Matia describes occurs on her first full day on the island. Having arrived at Mallorca the night before, on this occasion she awakes alone in a hotel room while her grandmother slumbers on in an adjoining one. Michael D. Thomas has read this scene as evidence that

> Matia is, in effect, in a transitional period of her life, ready for initiation; although the narrator states symbolically that, on the island, 'vi amanecer, por vez primera en mi vida,' the protagonist still clutches her little doll, Gorogó [16]. These images both look forward to the hope of adulthood and backward to the loneliness of childhood…Matia sees dawn here both literally and symbolically; she sees the rising sun and feels a positive hope for the future (154).

While I agree with Thomas that Matia's awakenings are indicative of larger transformations taking place—and though his overall interpretation of the novel is more nuanced than his too-brief treatment of this scene suggests—closer attention to this moment in the text reveals not positive hope but terror on Matia's part:

> De madrugada me desperté sobresaltada…habituándome a la penumbra, localicé, uno a uno, los desconchados de la pared, las grandes manchas del techo, y sobre todo, las sombras enzarzadas de la cama, como serpientes, dragones, o misteriosas figuras que apenas me atrevía a mirar...me hundí de nuevo entre las sábanas,

> tapándome la cabeza. No me decidía sacar ni una mano, y así estuve mucho rato, mordiéndome los labios y tratando de ahuyentar las despreciables lágrimas. Me parece que tuve miedo (Matute 14).

> Early in the morning I awoke with a start…as my eyes became accustomed to the gloom, I made out the patches where the wall was peeling, the big stains on the ceiling and, most of all, the jumbled shadows of the bed…snakes, dragons, mysterious shapes I hardly dared to look at…I slithered down between the sheets and drew the bedclothes over my head. I dared not even stretch out my hand. I lay like that for a long while, biting my lips to keep back the tears I was ashamed to shed. I must have been very frightened indeed. (15)

It is in this frightened state that Matia seeks comfort in her memories of childhood, which she remembers not as a lonely time, as Thomas maintains—in fact, her loneliness is associated with the adolescent moment of awakening, subsequent to childhood but before her adult narration—but as one marked by the companionship of her beloved nursemaid, Mauricia:

> Acaso pensé que estaba completamente sola…Procuré trasladar mi pensamiento, hacer correr mi imaginación…llevarla hasta Mauricia y aferrarme a imágenes cotidianas (las manzanas que Mauri colocaba cuidadosamente sobre las maderas…). Y me dije, desolada: 'Estarán ya amarillas y arrugadas, y no he comido ninguna.' (14-15)

> Perhaps I thought I was quite alone…I endeavored to think of something else and let my imagination run…to reach Mauricia and cling to everyday things—the

> apples she set out so carefully on the garret's shelves…And I told myself sadly, 'They'll be yellow and wrinkled now and I haven't eaten one of them.' (15)

In this way, Matia awakes not to a positive hope to the future but to a desperate longing for the past and the overwhelming solitude of the present. These sentiments are highlighted by Matia's descriptions of decay and disrepair—she imagines the apples "amarillas y arrugadas" and notes in the old hotel "los desconchados de la pared, las grandes manchas del techo"—which imply that she envisions maturity not as an age ripe with opportunities, but as a decrepit state of stained purity and lost chances: "no he comido ninguna." Thus, the rising sun at the end of the passage that Thomas cites is an image used ironically to suggest the inevitability of change unwanted and unsought, rather than the sense of hope that the reader might usually associate with dawn.

Another minor moment of awakening (not one of the four principal ones identified previously) immediately follows this one in the hotel room, echoing it. That is, Matia's recollection of her arrival to Mallorca more generally and her grandmother's house more specifically is presented as a series of awakenings, as demonstrated by the transition of the sunrise she watches in the hotel to her first morning in her new home:

> No me dormí y vi amanecer, por vez primera en mi vida, a través de las rendijas de la persiana.
>
> La abuela me llevó al pueblo, a su casa. Qué gran sorpresa cuando desperté con el sol y me fui, descalza, aún con un tibio sueño prendido en los párpados, hacia la ventana...(Días de oro, nunca repetidos...). (16-17)

> I could not sleep and for the first time in my life saw the light of sunrise through the shutters' slats.

> Grandmother took me to her house in the village. What a surprise when I woke at dawn and with a warm dream still clinging to my eyes went to the window…(Golden days, never to recur…). (17)

What initially seems to be a very abrupt transition—as three pages of lengthy description of Matia's first sedentary hours in bed on the island give way to a sentence-long physical displacement to another town entirely—is smoothed over by the continued references to both awakening and the sun, so that this second mini-, echoed awakening functions as an extension of the first. Indeed, the role of the sun remains constant throughout, as it seems to offer promise for the future ("días de oro") but is actually indicative of lost youth ("nunca repetidos").

The description of other moments of awakening seems to confirm this reading of the sun as oppressive:

> Cuando desperté, aún sin abrir los ojos, noté que no estaba sola. Sentía un roce, un murmullo como de alas. Lentamente abrí los párpados, con la cabeza vuelta hacia la pared, inundada de un resplandor amarillo. El sol entraba a franjas por aquellas persianas que me angustiaban, porque no se podían cerrar. (La primera mañana que desperté en aquella habitación, al entrar la luz perlada del alba por las rendijas, me levanté, fui a cerrarlas, y no pude; sentí un gran ahogo, y desde entonces me costó mucho acostumbrarme al amanecer.) (70)

> As soon as I awoke, and before I had opened my eyes, I knew I was not alone. I felt something smoothing my skin and heard a rattling like that of wings. Quite slowly I opened my eyelids. My head was turned towards a wall bathed in yellow radiance. The sunlight was streaming in between the slats of those jalousies I

> found so annoying since they could not be closed. (The first morning I woke up in that room the pearly light of dawn was seeping through the shutters. I got up to close them but I could not. I felt very distressed and from then onwards I found it very difficult to accustom myself to daybreak.) (59)

Here, the sun is clearly presented as an omnipotent and omnipresent force that leaves Matia powerless. It is a source of anguish and suffocation against which she struggles quite literally. Once again, the sun is symbolic not of welcome change but of an enforced transformation that Matia actively resists, for she would rather close her eyes to maturity and continue sleeping.

And yet again Matia refers to another moment of awakening as a sort of quieter, parenthetical echo of the first, with her concluding recollection that "(La primera mañana que desperté en aquella habitación, al entrar la luz perlada del alba por las rendijas, me levanté, fui a cerrarlas, y no pude; sentí un gran ahogo, y desde entonces me costó mucho acostumbrarme al amanecer.) " (70). However, it must be noted that this "echo," though it is textually presented afterwards, actually precedes the first awakening chronologically, establishing the second chronological awakening as the "main event" that casts interpretive light on the first. Seemingly, it is only upon reference to the morning when she "despert[ó]…y not[ó] que no estaba sola" that Matia comes to understand her anguish on "La primera mañana que despert[ó] en aquella habitación." As in trauma, she continues to experience the anguish of an earlier event through its subsequent repetitions, or its metaphorical echoes, but these echoes are precisely what allow her partial knowledge of the "original sound."

The final awakening that concludes the text also relies on a similar structure whereby knowledge is negotiated via an echo of the past in the present. Here, Matia relates what happened after Borja's false confession, when he frames Manuel for his own thievery:

No sé cómo acabó el día. No recuerdo cómo transcurrió la cena, ni de qué habló Borja, ni qué dije yo…

Sólo sé que al alba, me desperté. Que, como el primer día de mi llegada a la isla, la luz gris del amanecer acuchillaba las persianas verdes de mi ventana. Tenía los ojos abiertos. Por primera vez, no había sonado nada…Entonces, supe que en algún momento de la tarde—con la luz muriendo—había vuelto allí, que quedé presa en aquel viento, junto a la verja pintada de verde, cerrada con llave, de Son Major…nadie contestaba, ni hablaba, ni se oía voz alguna…Y de pronto estaba allí el amanecer, como una realidad terrible, abominable. Y yo con los ojos abiertos, como un castigo… (242-243)

I do not know how the day ended. I do not remember what happened at dinner, nor what Borja said, nor what I said…

I know only that I awoke at dawn and that, as on the first day after I got to the island, the pearly grey light of early morning was slashing my window's green shutters. My eyes were wide open and for the first time in my life I had dreamed of nothing…Then I knew that sometime in the evening when the light was fading I had gone back there. I had stopped, enveloped by the wind near the green, locked, wrought-iron gate of Son Major…no one answered, or spoke, nor could any voice be heard…And then, all at once, there was the dawn, like some terrible, horrible reality. And I with my eyes open as a punishment. (206-207)

The temporal shifts in the above passage are confusing; unraveling them will help us understand how Matia relies on the notions of the awakening and the echo to describe her experience of

trauma. The passage begins with Matia, who speaks as an adult in the narrative present, claiming that she does not remember the rest of the day's events. She goes on to relate how she woke up the next day, and how, upon waking, she remembered her visit to Son Major's estate the previous afternoon. Most telling, perhaps, is the use of the verb *saber* throughout, as Matia speaks not quite of whether or not she remembers certain events (as we have done here, for clarity's sake), but of what she knows and what she does not know. And while initially she does not know in the *narrative present* how that long-ago day ended—"No sé cómo acabó el día"—she seemingly (re)discovers this knowledge as she continues her narrative, for after relating the next day's awakening, she can suddenly recount that day's concluding events: "Entonces, supe que en algún momento de la tarde [del día anterior]…"

If we are to take the adult Matia at her initial word that she does not know what happened, it would seem that this knowledge is gained via the narration itself. That is, while the traumatic nature of her own betrayal of Manuel has prevented Matia from literally knowing her own experience, through the act of narration she begins to construct this knowledge in the present. As Matia recalls the next day's awakening, when "sup[o] que en algún momento de la tarde…," her use of the preterit tense of *saber* contradicts the initial claim that she still, in the present, does not know what happened. The question remains: is she coming to know what happened long ago in the very moment of narration, or did she come to know what happened the morning after the betrayal? Matia herself is unable to pinpoint the onset of the construction of this knowledge, which represents and indeed performs the survivor's experience of trauma as a struggle not only between knowing and not knowing, but between identifying what one knows and what one doesn't know. It is in her narration that Matia remembers—or, in fact, learns—what she actually came to know in the past she relates.

Whether Matia constructs her partial knowledge of the betrayal's aftermath in the days immediately following or many years later, in either case this knowledge is created belatedly for both narrator and reader—after the occurrence itself has passed—as is characteristic of the conceptualization of trauma and its subsequent testimony. Furthermore, regardless of the specific belated moment of the onset of this knowledge, in any event it comes via recourse to another instance of the past. That is, if Matia in fact gains knowledge of that day's events in the present of narration, she only does so after beginning to narrate the following morning's awakening, which in turn is specifically related to a prior awakening—that of her first day on the island. Again, we should remember that the connection between the former and latter awakenings is one that occurs to Matia in the present: "Sólo *sé* que al alba, me desperté. Que, como el primer día de mi llegada a la isla, la luz gris del amanecer acuchillaba las persianas verdes de mi ventana" (242, emphasis mine). Having narrated a whole series of awakenings that occurred on the island that summer, Matia now knows of the connection between these disparate moments. Or rather, she constructs such a connection via the narrative itself, as she sets up each awakening as an echo of a prior one. The process of *unlearning* to be silent is, ironically, what allows Matia to negotiate knowledge of her personal traumas. In these final pages, the adult, narrating Matia recalls her younger self as being wide awake the morning after Borja's betrayal: "Tenía los ojos abiertos…Y de pronto estaba allí el amanecer, como una realidad terrible, abominable. Y yo con los ojos abiertos, como un castigo."

In this way, I contend that Matia's act of narration is essentially presented as an awakening, the means by which she begins to attain—through the echoed memories of her adolescence—knowledge of her painful past and Spain's troubled history. Though she does remain silent in this crucial moment of her adolescence, she ultimately gains knowledge upon

asserting her voice as a narrating adult. This conclusion represents a departure from those of other scholars, who focus more on Matia's cultural indoctrination as a voiceless adolescent than on the assertion of her voice when she is an adult. For example, Donna Janine McGiboney interprets Matia's silence according to Lacan's theory of the Symbolic, according to which the human subject associates the biological father with the Symbolic Father, and thus with language. She concludes that "for Matia, aligning the biological father with the Symbolic Father means learning to be silent." McGiboney characterizes Matia's development as one of "negative growth," asserting that "At the novel's end she has resigned herself to a specific set of values after having been exposed to a variety of discourses designed to indoctrinate her. The success of this process is confirmed when Matia betrays her only friend, Manuel Taronjí, by remaining silent when he is punished for a crime she knows he did not commit" (613). However, in my reading of the novel, Matia at last begins to *unlearn* her silence, as evidenced by her relation of the events that is the narrative itself.

What McGiboney and others fail to consider with sufficient attention is the fundamentally retrospective nature of Matia's narrative—what happens at the conclusion of the novel (Matia's betrayal of Manuel) is not the "end" of Matia's psychological development. That critics conflate Matia's behavior *that summer* (as seen in the inner diegesis) with her development *overall* (as implied by her mode of narration) is evident in curious observations like the following by McGiboney: "Despite constant indoctrination, at the novel's beginning Matia retains vestiges of a value system of her own. First of all, although the younger Matia follows her cousin's example in tormenting Lauro, the narrator, an older, resigned Matia, looks back remorsefully for not having actively rejected Borja's discourse of persecution" (615). Such an observation seems to directly contradict McGiboney's conclusion that the process of

indoctrination was a successful one. That remorse is expressed by the *older* Matia indicates that her values did in fact remain intact into adulthood even though she exhibited behavior inconsistent with them in her youth.

Anne Hardcastle's article "The Guilt of the Innocent: Memory, History, and Trauma in Saura's *Cría Cuervos* and Matute's *Primera memoria*" is far more attentive to the importance of retrospection, and as a result offers a more sensitive analysis of Matia's development, one that accounts for the incomplete success of cultural indoctrination. While allowing that Matia's betrayal of Manuel constitutes "a complicitous, cowardly silence" (392), Hardcastle notes that "the adult Matia's reflections on her childhood actions are always colored with the knowledge of her future guilt projected backwards…a temporally divided Matia recognizes that the child has no understanding of the importance of these decisions but cannot help but condemn her betrayal of her own adult ideals" (393). Like Hardcastle, I contend that Matia's feelings of regret shared in the narrative present—"Aquí estoy ahora…el corazón pesándome"—cast doubt on the continued success of indoctrination, especially when we compare Matia to other cultural role models like her grandmother, who possesses an apparently unsympathetic and regret-free character. Thus, although cultural indoctrination has not successfully instilled in Matia her grandmother's values of strict social hierarchy, there is one regard in which the process has had unquestionable success: the internalization of guilt and shame.

The process of internalization brings us back to that interiority that is so essential to both diegesis and psyche, as the adult Matia's narration of her adolescent experiences creates multiple diegetic levels and generates a tremendously introspective gaze. If this "inner textual space" contains a young Matia fearful of her impending sexuality and without a forum in which to voice these fears, then the "outer textual space" features a Matia who has gained some sense of self,

some form of empowerment, through the act of narration. This dynamic is consistent with the interiority/exteriority antithesis as it is traditionally conceived, according to Silverman, in psychoanalytical theory and classic cinematic narrative: "interiority is…identified with discursive impotence, and exteriority (at least by implication) with discursive potency" (75).

The outermost textual space that frames this interiority is, of course, that of Matute herself, whom we ultimately know to be responsible for the novel. The biographical similarities between protagonist and author, to which we referred in this chapter's opening pages, have led some scholars to shift their focus from *Matia* as a trauma victim to *Matute*, an approach that calls for caution, as indicated in the introduction to this project, given the boundaries we must recognize between character and creator. As this chapter reaches its final pages, I will now venture into the realm of biography, despite the apprehensions I registered in the introduction. As we have seen, critics for many decades have located the origins of texts by the *generación del medio siglo* in the traumas likely endured by authors during their wartime childhoods, but we must consider such prior claims to be overstated, given the lack of supporting evidence and absence of qualified opinions from clinical experts. However, as trauma studies have continued to develop and increase in popularity, some literary scholars have begun to address the shortcomings of these earlier assertions by providing sound evidence to support them. Notably, Scott Macdonald Frame has attempted to both respect and productively interrogate the boundaries between Matute's traumatized character and the author herself in his study "A Private Portrait of Trauma in Two Novels by Ana María Matute," which combines a more traditional literary analysis of Matia's psychological development with the results of clinical tests actually administered to Matute, in 1997, regarding her relationship to her civil-war past. Both Macdonald's study of Matia as well as the clinical analysis of Matute were based on the

symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as defined in the 1990 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV*; just as Macdonald concludes in his "fictional traumatography" (129) that Matia's narrative is one of trauma, the clinical collaborators who interpreted the results of Matute's tests identified symptoms of PTSD in support of diagnosis. Citing the results of this study, Macdonald affirms that "there is a body of compelling evidence that suggests Ana María Matute is herself a trauma victim" (135). Thus armed with evidence both literary and clinical, Macdonald ultimately proposes, albeit cautiously, that Matia's narrative of trauma, which is obviously the creation of Matute herself, is the means by which the author has attempted to communicate—and, in doing so, come to terms with—her own troubled past: "was Matia's literary portrait of trauma somehow a vehicle for the author's own codification and sublimation of the events of the Spanish Civil War?" (134).

That Macdonald cautiously voices his conclusion as a question demonstrates that readers and critics are on shaky ground when we shift a psychoanalytical gaze from character to author. The processes to which he alludes are incredibly complex and difficult to identify outside of long-term care of a patient by a qualified clinician. However, it is certainly reasonable to take Matute at her word that she was greatly distressed by the war and to subsequently assume, given her explicitly voiced connection between the war years and her work, that this distress would be echoed in, though not necessarily mimicked by, her characters' own experiences. Studies such as Macdonald's therefore pave the way for future claims about the interplay between an author's trauma and its fictionalization, claims that can be far better substantiated than in generations past.

But there is one fundamental difference between Matute as actual author and Matia as intradiegetic author: the former wrote an actual novel intended for publication and reader reception, whereas the latter engages in internal monologue addressed to no one in particular; the

reader senses that it may be a diary. This distinction is especially meaningful given my analysis of textual interiority. Whereas Matia never seems to escape from her various means of psychological and textual containment, *Matute* does in fact break the frame of interiority, writing a text that has communicated, to several generations of readers both Spanish and international, a young woman's traumatic experience of war. If indeed *Primera memoria* can be approached as a "private portrait of trauma," as Macdonald maintains, it would seem that Matute has taken a crucial step that Matia has not: the attempt to externalize, via communication with others, her experience of trauma.

In this regard, though Matia's portrait of trauma remains private and self-reflective, Matute has publicly offered us a portrait, thereby inviting us to be the reflective surface for her text. And though we may never be entirely sure if *Primera memoria* offers a psychologically accurate portrayal of its author—and if so, to what extent its composition was effective in helping Matute awaken to knowledge of a troubled past—we can at least be sure that the text's tragic beauty will continue to provoke such inquiries, provided that readers are respectful of the testimony taking place, whether by character or author. We must hear the text's echoes, listen to its silences, and provide thoughtful reflection, functioning, in short, as an "acoustic mirror," if we hope to further our understanding of how events like the Spanish Civil War have affected both survivors and the literature they may produce.

As more work is completed within both textual analysis of trauma narratives and clinical studies of their writers, perhaps the most interesting line of questioning for literary scholars to pursue will not be the *similarities* between authors' experience of traumatic events and their characters', but rather their differences. If indeed Matute was traumatized by the war and if *her* trauma, and not just Matia's, is enacted by the text, what is the status of the text's fictionalized

elements? Why is Matia a fourteen-year-old adolescent if Matute was a ten-year-old girl during the Civil War? Could it be that the anxieties thrust upon Matute by the war's outbreak are better represented by adolescence than by childhood proper, given the conceptions we have about the former as a time of doubt and insecurity? Does such a change yield a narrative of trauma that is truer to the author's experience though factually inaccurate? In short, the biographically-inclined traditions that I refer to in the introduction to this project need not be entirely abandoned, just better substantiated and further examined with an eye to recent and future developments in trauma theory.

AFTERWORD

REPEATED ENCOUNTERS

Though this project investigates literary texts, it began at the movies. In winter of 2007, during my first year of graduate studies, I went to the theater to see Guillermo del Toro's film *El fauno del laberinto*, released in the U.S. as *Pan's Labyrinth*. At the time, I was certainly not thinking of my doctoral dissertation, which loomed comfortably enough in my future. I was not even thinking of my fascinating yet brief encounter with del Toro's 2001 picture *El espinazo del diablo [The Devil's Backbone]* which I had seen in an undergraduate seminar a couple of years prior. I simply needed an evening out with friends to decompress from the demanding pace of a PhD program to which I was still adjusting. I do not recall having greatly anticipated the release of *Pan's Labyrinth*, or even knowing much about it beforehand. I probably would have accepted an invitation to any movie that my friends suggested (though I might have vetoed Mel Gibson's *Apocalypto* in protest of the director's drunken anti-Semitic diatribe, still fresh in moviegoers' minds). That *Pan's Labyrinth* takes place in 20th-century Spain—my recently declared area of scholarly focus—was a happy accident, making an evening of schoolwork procrastination even easier to justify.

Though I hadn't intended the outing as primarily intellectual endeavor, there are few things more difficult to deactivate than the inquisitive minds of young scholars intoxicated with ever-expanding knowledge and several post-movie beers. Thus, as my friends and I discussed the film excitedly over drinks after leaving the theater, we made the inevitable connections to our studies. That semester we were taking a seminar called "The Pretext of Guilt in Modern Spanish Narrative," which approached post-civil-war literature with an eye to the conflict's lasting influence on Spanish cultural production. For me, at least, the course was an introduction to

many of the authors, critical approaches, and theorists that have since dominated my work, and that practically begged to be discussed with reference to *Pan's Labyrinth*. That evening, left in the hands of graduate students—equal parts self-conscious and enthusiastic about our growing familiarity with everything from Freudian theory to New Spanish Cinema—del Toro's film was subject to a thorough dissection that, while intriguing, left me with more questions than answers. Why was Guillermo del Toro, a Mexican director best known in the U.S. for comic-book adaptations like *Hellboy* and *Blade II*, so interested in the Spanish Civil War, and why did he twice choose to fictionalize it from the perspective of child protagonists?

In the weeks that followed the full U.S. release of *Pan's Labyrinth* on January 19, 2007, it became clear that I wasn't the only one with questions. It also became clear that, with less than two semesters of graduate studies under my belt, my family and friends already considered me the *de facto* expert an all matters of Spanish history and cultural production. My brother called after seeing the film, and wanted to know more about the *maquis*. Pleased by this unprecedented turnaround—my brilliant older brother was actually consulting *me* on intellectual matters—I directed him, with a gratifying and yet naggingly uncertain sense of authority, toward Julio Llamazares's 1985 novel *Luna de lobos*, which I was thankful to have just read in my seminar. I was more comfortable admitting my relative ignorance when my best friend from college called to inquire about the role of *el fauno* (was it a particularly common or culturally significant figure in Spanish art and literature? I didn't know). But it wasn't until my father saw the film—and admitted to shedding a few tears—that I realized the impact it was having on a wider popular audience. After all, my brother and best friend were involved in humanities graduate studies of their own, and so phone calls about foreign films were not altogether unheard of. But my accountant father and I generally discussed financial planning for my future, or

favorite episodes from our beloved *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, or great moments in baseball history (our equally beloved St. Louis Cardinals had won the 2006 pennant mere months before). What about *Pan's Labyrinth* was speaking to audiences scholarly and popular alike, and eliciting tears from a man who had never been involved in combat and knew virtually nothing of the Spanish Civil War?

The question remained in the back of my mind in the years that followed, as I continued my studies and became increasingly familiar with the literature and film of 20th-century Spain. The more I read, the more I noticed that *The Devil's Backbone* and *Pan's Labyrinth*, though unique and moving films, were not the first texts—not by a long shot—to portray the Spanish Civil War or its aftermath from a child's perspective. In Spanish film, the most famous examples are, of course, Carlos Saura's *La prima Angélica* (1973) and *Cría cuervos* (1975). But as we saw in this projects introduction, the novels from this category appeared even earlier. Moreover, literary examples are not limited to narrative: the 1978 play *Las bicicletas son para el verano* by Fernando Fernán Gómez (1921-2007) focuses on the experiences of Madrid adolescents during the summer of 1936; and various poets of the Generation of 1950 have also written verse about growing up during civil war: Jaime Gil de Biedma (1929-1990), José Angel Valente (1929-2000), and Carlos Barral (1928-1989).[59]

As I began to research the critical tradition that engaged the texts from the *generación del medio siglo*, I became slightly frustrated and unsatisfied with the overwhelmingly biographical approach outlined in my introduction. Not only was this approach often reductive, neglecting the nuances of the literature in question, it very clearly faltered when I considered the numerous

[59] See, for example, Gil de Biedma's "Intento formular mi experiencia de la guerra" (*Moralidades*, 1966), Valente's "Tiempo de guerra" (*La memoria y los signos*, 1960-1965) and Barral's "Las Alarmas" (*Usuras y figuraciones: Poesía 1952-1972*). The representation of childhood during the war in these three poems, among others, is analyzed by Alberto Medina in his article "Nada me pertenece sino aquello que perdí": infancia y guerra en la generación poética del 50," *Letras peninsulares* 11 (Spring 1998): 427-453.

examples of films and novels about children during the civil war that were written by Spaniards born *after* its end: *El espíritu de la colmena* (1973) was the highly acclaimed debut of screenwriter/director Victor Erice, born in 1940; *A un dios desconocido* (1977) was the work of Jaime Chávarri, born in 1943. Of course, these projects were realized via partnerships with Elías Querejeta, producer of the two films, and Ángel Fernández Santos, cowriter of *El espíritu de la colmena*, both of whom were born in 1934. We can thus consider Erice's and Chávarri's work within the larger generational context of these filmmakers who were indeed children during the war. But what about Guillermo del Toro, born in Mexico in 1964, and making films about the children of a foreign civil war more than forty years after its conclusion? Was he merely building on a leitmotif long established by his cinematic predecessors?

Similar questions plague literary production: Manuel Rivas, born in Galicia in 1957, gained fame with his 1995 short story anthology *Que me queres, amor?* [*¿Qué me quieres, amor?*] which features several stories about children during the war. "La lengua de las mariposas" is perhaps the best known, due to the commercial success of the homonymous 1999 film based on three of Riva's stories. Directed by José Luis Cuerda (born 1947), *La lengua de las mariposas*—released in English as *Butterfly*—incorporates plot elements from "Un saxo en la niebla" and "Carmiña" in addition to the titular text. More recently, Almudena Grandes's *El lector de Julio Verne* (2012)—the second part of a planned series of novels collectively called *Episodios de una guerra interminable*—deals with the experiences of a ten-year-old boy growing up during the 1940s postwar. At the presentation of her new novel in Jaen in the spring of 2012, Grandes's comments clearly indicate that the issues of childhood explored by the *generación del medio siglo* are still at play in modern texts such as hers: "*El Lector de Julio Verne* es una novela de terror desde los ojos y la voz de un niño inocente y cómo las circunstancias le obligan a crecer

muy deprisa y dividido entre lo que ve y lo que piensa" (qtd. in Gema Fernández) ["*The Reader of Jules Verne* is a story of terror [told] from the eyes and voice of an innocent child and how circumstances forced him to grow up too quickly, divided between what he sees and what he believes"].

As with del Toro's film, we must question whether Rivas's and Grandes's focus on children during the war is a legacy of the literary greats before him—such as Goytisolo and Matute—or if there is some other reason that contemporary writers continue to be drawn to this perspective. But there's another, even more compelling side to the question. Though we could reasonably argue that the influence of previous generations is why filmmakers and writers alike portray the civil war from a child's point of view, this does not explain the powerful draw that such a representation has for both critics and popular audiences. The earlier filmic and literary texts mentioned above have received considerable scholarly attention and critical acclaim, in addition to reaching wide audiences. Of course, texts that present children as the victims of violence, while doubtlessly disturbing, may have universal appeal—we have all been children, and worldwide there are more people who procreate than not—such that readers and filmgoers may have a particularly empathetic reaction to these texts. Certainly, popular associations of children with innocence make them ideally sentimental characters through which audiences can readily appreciate themes of war's corrupting effects on morality: hence my father's tears upon viewing the death of twelve-year-old Ofelia at the end of *Pan's Labyrinth*.

However, as I hope to have proved with this project, the pairing of the war/child themes has the potential to engage with far more issues than just the loss of innocence, and can appeal to both reader emotions and intellect to such an extent that we cannot necessarily dismiss powerful audience reactions as the result of sentimentality. In conclusion, then, I would like to invite

other scholars to continue the avenues of inquiry presented by this project. The theoretical framework of trauma may well lend itself to close readings of the poetic and filmic texts that share childhood themes with the narratives here studied; it would surely be fascinating to interrogate how these different literary genres and artistic media can make use of their particular formal components to represent traumatic experience. Furthermore, these studies need not, and should not, be limited to mid-century cultural production: the examples that I offered of texts by authors and filmmakers born well after the war's end simply cannot be explained by autobiography, nor can they be contextualized in a post-war Spain where Francoism may have been perceived as an interminable threat and where censorship may have made child characters an attractive option for writers not permitted to freely engage with political discourse.

Thus, while these newer texts, as their predecessors, certainly touch upon our cultural assumptions about the child as an innocent subject who lacks agency, experience, and knowledge—after all, these assumptions have not substantially changed in the last sixty years—the very different circumstances of their production will require adjustments to the modes of analysis and theoretical frameworks used in this project. Such inquiries will provide a better understanding of the extent to which artistic representations of wartime Spain are dependent on genre, medium, and historical knowledge about that time period. Moreover, studies of this sort will surely invite new perspectives and deepen existing dialogues about the trauma narratives of the *generación del medio siglo.*

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