Objects, Memory, and Representation in the Spanish Post War Narrative from 1959-1978

By

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For Mom and Dad.

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Introduction:

The Material of the Past

"Clave del cuento: la reviviscencia de algo que reclama su derecho a no ser olvidado. El que siente esta llamada acuciante, primero quiere revivir aquello – como acontecimiento –, pero después comprenderá que lo que tiene que hacer para salvarlo es reconstruirlo como narración. Es el origen de los libros de memoria."

Carmen Martín Gaite, *El cuento de nunca acabar*

"And so it is with our own past. It is a labour in vain to attempt to recapture it: all the efforts of our intellect must prove futile. The past is hidden somewhere outside the realm, beyond the reach of intellect, in some material object (in the sensation which that material object will give us) of which we have no inkling. And it depends on chance whether or not we come upon this object before we ourselves die."

Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way: Remembrance of Things Past*

Carmen Martín Gaite proposes in her reflection entitled "El rescate de la memoria" that the revitalization of *algo*, something, is the starting point for memory narratives. For Martín Gaite, the act of remembering does not seem to start with the human being, but rather begins when that certain something urgently calls out to be heard and recognized. It is then up to the person who hears the plea to decide how to address it: either record the event in writing or confine it to oblivion by not heeding its call. While writing a novel of memory is certainly not the only way to record the past, Martín Gaite creates a powerful metaphor that touches on an important characteristic that can be attributed especially to memories of the Civil War and dictatorship: the *right* of something to be remembered. This concern for bringing a story from the past to light can be related to Paul Ricoeur's concept of the "duty of memory" to perform justice (88). He states that "The duty of memory is the duty to do justice, through memories, to an other than the self" (Ricoeur 89), thus emphasizing the moral problematic to which the "duty of memory" belongs (Ricoeur 92). Novels of memory that revive a past that may have been forgotten perform justice when they recognize the validity of the story and record it so that others may gain knowledge from it and learn from the past.

Marcel Proust, on the other hand, directly connects memory to material objects and points to the physical sensation or emotional response that these things can provoke as the means by which one can remember. It is by chance that certain memories come to mind; the first bite of madeleine dipped in tea produces a feeling of "all-powerful joy" whose origin Proust's Marcel cannot immediately pinpoint (48). He traces the sensation by reexperiencing the taste and emotion, and suddenly the memory of the town of Combray floods back to him in mental images (Proust 50-51). Proust privileges the spontaneous nature of memory by asserting that for memories to exist they depend upon a chance encounter with a material object. The madeleine is

famous for acting as the bridge between memory and narration since it causes the emotional response in Marcel that urges him to tell his story. This literary trope links the physical sensation caused by the tea to the involuntary memory that surfaces as a result. Proust's iconic representation of the memory-object connection, and Martín Gaite's recognition of the right for any event or object from the past to be remembered demonstrate the reliance human beings have on objects as they use them to relive and recount the past.

The present work analyzes the role materiality plays in three memory narratives published between 1959 and 1978 in Spain: *Primera memoria* by Ana María Matute, *Señas de identidad* by Juan Goytisolo, and *El cuarto de atrás* by Carmen Martín Gaite. Several broad questions guide this project as I explore the use of objects in the memory work these three narrators set out to do. Why is materiality in literary texts important? How are objects represented in the narratives? How active are they in assisting the narrators in memory recreation? How does the present situation of the narrator influence his or her perspective on the past and vice versa? In addition to offering possible answers to these questions, I show how an analysis of the objects used in memory reproduction in these novels offers an innovative perspective on the relationship between human beings and the material world within the historical and cultural contexts of the Spanish Civil War and Post War eras. Not only does materiality in these literary works tell us about the effects of the Franco regime's policies on the cultural production of the time, but it can also shed light on how memory processes were directly impacted. I interpret the emphasis placed on the material world's role in memory reproduction in each of the three novels as a generational characteristic that links the three authors. Although their narratives are very different in both content and structure, the distance from the events of the past necessitates a physical mediator, an object that was present during that past, to be able to

represent the story in narrative form. By using a breadth of methodological perspectives and insights to create a hybrid literary analysis of these canonical texts, this investigation aims to shed new light on how the events of the Spanish Civil War and its long aftermath intersected with the individual practices of memory reproduction, resulting in a dependence upon objects to assist in understanding one's identity. I incorporate the disciplines of memory studies, cultural archeology, and visual studies into this literary analysis in order to identify the complex relationship between objects, memory, and representation that each narrator describes.

My original contribution to the already large body of scholarship accompanying these three novels is the singular focus on materiality that draws attention to its significant role in memory work. This dissertation expands the current critical approaches to these novels by addressing memory studies and the Franco dictatorship through the lens of materiality. First of all, my analyses complement the few existing investigations that briefly acknowledge the presence of objects in these novels.[1] These scholars do not go into further detail about the central role the material world plays in assisting the narrators in their memory work. My work has filled this gap by establishing that these objects are not containers of memory, but rather they work in conjunction with the narrators to access past experiences and spread out the work of memory between human being and object. In the final section, Toward a Conclusion, I explain the significance of shared protagonism between human beings and the material world in these novels. For now, I will situate my contributions within the existing work regarding materiality.

Emma Martinell Gifre is the critic whose work on objects in Carmen Martín Gaite's narratives is the most extensive and highly focused. Out of all the scholarship on these three

[1] Martinell Gifre, Ugarte, and Herzberger are the only scholars whose work touches on the significance of objects in *El cuarto de atrás* and *Señas de identidad*. With regard to *Primera memoria*, there are no more than passing references to objects in Nichols and Steen.

novelists, her book, *El mundo de los objetos en la obra de Carmen Martín Gaite*, is the only one dedicated solely objects. In this book, Martinell Gifre analyzes the narrative techniques used to represent the objects, and she places them into different categories according to common themes that they reference, such as borders, interior spaces, and image and text (28). Although Martinell Gifre acknowledges that "Todos los objetos, desde los más fijos hasta los más viajeros, unen a las personas al discurrir cotidiano, y, con el tiempo, constituyen el rastro de nuestra historia personal," her approach does not take into consideration how memory processes involve the material world, nor does it address the question of representation of the objects and of the memories associated with them (*El mundo de los objetos* 25). Besides a section on image and text in which she briefly discusses photographs, papers, and notebooks that question the line between the two media, there is not a concerted effort to challenge the reader to see how objects can be more than just containers for ideas and memories or inspirational tools for narrative creation.

I take this work a step further by integrating memory studies and material culture studies into my analyses. These critical tools acknowledge the active and evolving nature of memory, and give objects a prominent place in the processes of self-exploration and questioning that the narrators undertake. Objects allow these narrators the opportunity to revisit the past and ponder what these objects did then and continue to do, or not do, in the present. They help access, through their evocative nature, creative childhood perspectives linked to toys and imaginative processes (*Primera memoria*), or they assist in breaking the silence imposed by the Franco regime through first-hand accounts of violence and the inclusion of postmemorial objects (*Señas de identidad*). Objects even help reassess a lifetime of experiences under the regime through playful incorporation of the surrounding material world (*El cuarto de atrás*). My work goes

beyond pointing out the existence of materiality in these three novels to demonstrate *how* and *why* things are central to defining and understanding one's existence.

The narrators in *Primera memoria*, *Señas de identidad*, and *El cuarto de atrás* examine their pasts within distinct present moments ranging from 1959-1978. The time frame chosen for this project is not solely based on the publication dates of Matute's and Martín Gaite's novels. These dates mark significant events in Spain's history that started the country on a new path in each particular instance. Furthermore, the historical background during which these novels were written provides clues about how the writers, and, by extension the narrators they created, were influenced by the social and political events occurring while they composed these works. The first date, 1959, marks the twenty year anniversary of the end of the Spanish Civil War. *Primera memoria* presents a reappraisal of the Civil War, and whether intentional or not, it coincides with the anniversary. 1959 is also the year that the Stabilization Plan was enacted. Despite Franco's initial reservations, he consented to it in order to achieve "retrenchment, deflation, and above all a liberalization that would open the economy to the international market" (Payne, *The Franco Regime* 470-471). Along with this opening up of the country, "A new political rhetoric, free of explicit ideological references, was adopted on the advice of the technocrats . . ." in order to legitimize the regime (Aguilar 37). Spain would continue to prosper over the last fifteen years of the regime, and along with this economic boost it would become more secularized (Payne, *Spain* 225). In *Señas de identidad* there are numerous references to the influx of tourists and the rapid changes taking place during the 1960s. The narrator's open criticism of the regime's hand in these transformations demonstrates a willingness to engage with the politics of the recent past. The second date, 1978, is the year the Spanish Constitution was put into place in Spain as an integral part of the transition to democratic rule. The narrator in *El cuarto de atrás* does not

comment on the political transformation taking place at the time it was being written, but she does reappraise a lifetime of experiences that span the course of the Civil War and dictatorship. These dates mark significant social and political changes in Spain. I will return to them throughout my analyses of each novel.

The historical scope of this investigation takes into consideration the "generational effect," or the influence that significant historical events can have on groups of individuals of a same age (Aguilar 3). Paloma Aguilar points out that "the experiences we have during the early years of life, in which we are most susceptible to all kinds of influences, are those that have the strongest effect on our way of interpreting life and make up the 'perceptive predispositions' with which we approach events" (22). Not only did all three of the authors that form the basis of this analysis experience the war as children, but all three create narrators that rely heavily on objects to retell their stories of the Civil War and Post War.[2] Aguilar explains that

> Not having definitively formed our own character nor having lived sufficiently long for certain events to no longer surprise us, the experiences we have during the early years of life, in which we are most susceptible to all kinds of influences, are those that have the strongest effect on our way of interpreting life and make up the 'perceptive predispositions' with which we approach events. (22)

The "perceptive predisposition" that I notice in these authors as a result of their generational experiences is the narrative gaze all three invent that hones in on objects from the past. Vision and objects are the tools used to represent the lessons this generation learned as a result of their experiences during the Spanish Civil War and subsequent Francoist regime.

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[2] Ana María Matute and Carmen Martín Gaite were both born in 1926, making them old enough to remember the events of the war. Juan Goytisolo was born in 1931 and thus experienced the Civil War as a very small child, but lived his formative years under the dictatorship.

In her book entitled *Hacia una poética de la mirada: Mario Vargas Llosa, Juan Marsé, Elena Garro, Juan Goytisolo*, María Silvina Persina justifies the analysis of the texts by these authors from Spain and Latin America by proposing a reading of how the gaze works in novels with a strong "visual syntax" (13). By "visual syntax" she means the emphasis these authors place on all aspects of visuality: who is seen and and who watches, the play between word and image, and modes of surveillance (Persina 12-13). The characteristics of visuality that Persina describes are also those examined in the present study as they coincide with the narrators' interactions with objects. In *Primera memoria* Matia describes watching her grandmother spy on the townspeople, while Alvaro in *Señas de identidad* includes an entire police surveillance log detailing the actions of his activist friend, and C in *El cuarto de atrás* challenges the distinction between word and image throughout the novel when describing objects in her home. The inherent visuality of these texts stems from the descriptions of the material world, and from the detailed portrayal of how the narrators see others and how they are seen. Thus, the perception of the world around them through visual cues is an essential characteristic of memory reproduction, and at the same time it is the means by which the narrators critically analyze the past, whether in an explicit or implicit manner, and therefore recognize the right these situations have to be remembered. Although the three novels present unique modes of perceiving and recreating past events, the narrative gaze gives each narrator the tools to portray the intersection of personal memories with the social and cultural changes in effect during the Civil War and dictatorship. In the chapter synopses below I will give examples of the narrative gaze in each novel in order to illustrate the emphasis placed on visuality that unites these works.

The texts chosen for this discussion are not meant to represent the experience of the Civil War and dictatorship as a whole, but rather to illustrate how representations of memories and

identities are indelibly marked by the Civil War and dictatorship. When Stuart Hall states, "Far from being grounded in mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our senese of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past" (qtd. in Colmeiro, "A Nation of Ghosts?" 22), he recognizes the process by which an individual represents and constructs his or her past "and how those narratives are retold for the interest of the present (and future)" (qtd. in Colmeiro, "A Nation of Ghosts?" 22). This is where objects can help us better understand the practices of reconstructing the past and one's identities as fluid, not fixed processes. As Andrew Jones demonstrates, citing J.D. Prown, ". . . artefacts, are the only class of historic event that occurred in the past but survive into the present" (3). The result is that physical materials present an "authentic link" to the past and allow for one to reexperience an earlier time in the present moment (A. Jones 3). Despite this "authentic link" to the past, objects, as we shall see in each of the three main chapters of this project, are subject to a process of change that is influenced by the passage of time and the narrators' reevaluation of their past situations from the present moment. The objects provide a connection to the past, but that connection is constantly influenced by new impressions, information, and the threat of forgetting significant details.

Before I continue to lay out my argument and call attention to two of the subthemes of this project, let me pause here briefly to identify Jo Labanyi's article, "Doing Things: Emotion, Affect, and Materiality," as an influential source of ideas to fuel the analysis of these novels. In this article Labanyi reflects on how the recent "affective turn" can help scholars "explore the entanglement of the human and the material" (223). Labanyi urges scholars to "treat cultural texts as forms of cultural practices" (232), and to recognize the influence of material culture on

human being subjectivity. To acknowledge the significant role material things play on a human being's concept of self "means paying attention to feelings, as well as ideas, and viewing feelings, not as properties of the self, but as produced through the interaction between self and world" (Labanyi 223). While this project will not focus solely on the concepts of affect and emotion, it will recognize the feelings these narrators share with regard to their "entanglement" with material things, to use Labanyi's term, as they examine the past and the effects the past has had on their adult identities.

The *practices* of representing memories in these three cultural texts depend upon a close relationship between human being and object, and it is this connection, situated within the historical context of the Spanish Civil War and subsequent dictatorship, that interests me here. Whether an object begs to be acknowledged and remembered (the "something" that Martín Gaite describes in the first epigraph), or an action or situation prompts an involuntary memory associated with an object (as the madeleine dipped in tea does for Marcel), the objects examined in these three novels can help us better understand the complex processes of remembering that inform and influence an individual's concept of self. Graham Harman's concept of "object-oriented ontology" is related to this because it is based on the premise that things are at the center of being (Bogost 5-6). Human beings live alongside the material world, not as superior beings, but as elements sharing existence (Bogost 6). Bogost illustrates this by explaining that "OOO [Object-oriented ontology] contends that nothing has special status, but that everything exists equally – plumbers, cotton, bonobos, DVD players, and sandstone, for example" (6). Everything, no matter what its composition, has the potential to affect everything else. Or, to put it another way, "The incorporeal and corporeal realms are equally capable of having effects on the world" (Bryant et. al., 5). I will explore the effects of materiality on memory processes and selfhood in

order to demonstrate the entanglement that Labanyi observes between the different realms of existence.

It is helpful to begin the discussion of objects and their role in memory reproduction and identity formation in *Primera memoria*, *Señas de identidad*, and *El cuarto de atrás* by providing a brief overview of the relationship between memory and identity. The historian John R. Gillis elaborates on the close relationship between memory and identity in the following way: "The parallel lives of these two terms alert us to the fact that the notion of identity depends on the idea of memory, and vice versa. The core meaning of any individual or group identity, namely, a sense of sameness over time and space, is sustained by remembering; and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity" (3). To be sure, I do not mean to simplify the complex connection between memory and identity in these novels by maintaining that a clear definition of each narrator's selfhood can be achieved through a reading of the memories he or she represents. On the contrary, I, like Michael Rothberg, reject the idea that "a straight line runs from memory to identity" (4) because if it were that easy, the narrators would be able to determine who they are by categorizing past experiences and labeling themselves. As Michael Rothberg affirms, "Our relationship to the past does partially determine who we are in the present, but never straightforwardly and directly, and never without unexpected or even unwanted consequences that bind us to those whom we consider other" (4-5). Objects are an integral part of this search for the self through memory, and it is through their parallel existence with the narrators (either at the time of the narrative act or in the past) that produces the possibility of *understanding* of one's self. Far from arriving at a static definition of who they are, the narrators can enter into a dialogue about what it means to grow up under Franco's regime and who they are as a result to

those experiences. Identity, then, is considered the first subtheme of this project, and will be explored in relation to objects and memory in each of the chapters.

There is a second subtheme related to the intersection of memory and identity in these novels: power. The question these narrators set out to answer when they use objects to do memory work is not simply, "Who am I?" but rather "Who am I because of the Civil War and subsequent dictatorship?" This distinction is very important because it allows me to take into consideration the effects of these socio-historic events on memory work as the narrators perform it. With a Nationalist victory in 1939, Franco established a "rigorous and punitive dictatorship determined to carry out a political and cultural counter-revolution" that would work "to suppress all signs of opposition and firmly establish the dominance of the victors" (Payne, *Spain* 226). Authors had to be creative in order to avoid censorship, and one way to do that was to invent a narrator, as Ana María Matute did in *Primera memoria*, whose memories involved children and the seemingly uncontroversial topic of becoming an adolescent in the midst of the Civil War. However, below the surface of this *bildungsroman*, the adult narrator cleverly inserts descriptions that reveal a more rebellious side because they show Matia's disdain for the grandmother who, "backed by the ever-present pictures of her husband and son in full military dress . . . display[s] the force of Francoist government" (Hardcastle, "The Guilt of the Innocent" 391). *Señas de identidad* was first published in Mexico because of its unsubtle indictment of the Franco regime, and *El cuarto de atrás* was published after Franco's death, thus allowing both of these authors to freely address the cultural oppression of the dictatorship. Through their perspective on the past, which is informed by current opinions and aided by the objects they interact with or describe, the narrators convey their opposition to the oppressive social climate

created in Francoist Spain. The narrators in these novels criticize the use of power to oppress, but they do so subtly through the narrative gaze, as I have mentioned above.

Since each narrator uses objects to access memories, a type of memory work involving the material world that has not been examined in these works before, approaching these texts from archeological, visual, or memorial perspectives can open up new ways of thinking about memory and identity in the cultural products of the period from 1959 to 1978 and beyond. The study of objects specifically can demonstrate how the socio-political context of a dictatorship also affects the relationship between the material world and the intangible memory work that objects elicit. My interest in these very unique works stems from a desire to show how they continue to offer new ways to work with memory in Spanish literary production, even today during the ongoing debate on the recuperation of historical memory in Spain. In the Toward a Conclusion section at the end of this project I will address what the study of objects in contemporary Spanish literature could mean for contemporary cultural production, and I will propose some new lines of thought dealing with memory, objects, and representation. Before that, however, I will define how I use these three terms in the central chapters of this project.

Objects, Memory, and Representation: A Definition of Terms

The narrators in three famous novels by Ana María Matute, Juan Goytisolo, and Carmen Martín Gaite depend upon and engage with objects in order to perform memory work regarding their respective experiences of the Civil War and Post War in Spain. Sometimes in these novels involuntary memories, like the one described in the epigraph from Proust, are triggered, but the majority of the time the narrators perform conscious reappraisals of the past when they interact with the objects around them. A variety of objects such as a childhood doll, family photographs, and inherited pieces of furniture, to name just a few of the objects I examine, assist in the

narrators' attempts to reconnect with the past. Sometimes the objects are present while the narrators retell their stories; they serve as triggers for memories of events associated with them. This is the case with *El cuarto de atrás* when, for example, C sees her reflection in a mirror that in C's youth hung in her grandparent's home, and she narrates childhood experiences that occurred in the presence of the mirror. A similar situation occurs in *Señas de identidad* because Alvaro interacts with documents and photographs as he weaves the story of his past and the experiences of friends, family members, and acquaintances. The objects take on an active role in the process of remembering, beckoning the narrators to acknowledge their presence and narrate what they recall about the past.

On the other hand, some objects are purely the subjects of memory because they no longer exist or because they do not belong to the original owner. This is the case with the majority of the objects Matia describes in *Primera memoria*, as well as with Alvaro's confiscated documentary on emigration in *Señas de identidad*. In *Primera memoria*, Matia recalls purely from memory her grandmother's binoculars and the possessions she and her cousin Borja kept in a secret hiding place. Despite the few papers and records connected with the documentary that he still possesses from the trip to Spain to film the scenes, Alvaro too must reconstruct the major scenes of his documentary from memory. In these cases the objects are recreated from memory, and in their absence the narrators construct a representation of the past that, like the missing object and the hole it leaves in the psyche of the narrators, can never fully recreate the sensations of the original experience. Gaps in memory are inevitable with the passage of time, and these absent "evocative objects," Christopher Bollas's term for the "internal mental representation" called to mind when necessary (86), continue to exist for each of the narrators although only in a mental, less substantial manner. The inevitable gaps that exist in memory and the ghostly

presence these objects continue to have in the lives of the human beings who interacted with them are siginificant characteristics of the memory work done by the narrators because instead of confining the objects to oblivion, they choose to recognize the pivotal role they played in the development of their identities and those of others included in their narratives.

Throughout the three central chapters of this project I will use the term "object" to denote the things described, interacted with, and used in ways that produce cultural meaning for the narrators. Apart from the narrative description of objects that paint a mental picture in the reader's mind, a classical rhetorical trope called *enargeia*, *Primera memoria*, *Señas de identidad*, and *El cuarto de atrás* do not contain any visual images.[3] Nonetheless, this detail does not put a stop to the examination of the overlap between the visual and the verbal and the material and the textual in these works. Rather, it offers a new perspective on thinking materiality within a narration. Mieke Bal's approach to "reading art" is particularly helpful for understanding how both the verbal and the visual elements of reading art are equally important parts of a process in which the two modes benefit from one another:

> Reading an image, I would like to emphasize, is nothing like reducing images to linguistic discourse. Instead of remaining locked within the binary opposition that has, I think profoundly wrongly, been construed around the two media, or modes, I would like to go over those aspects of *reading* that articulate aspects of seeing whose taking into account I consider not only relevant and meaningful, but also *visually* indispensible. (Bal 294)

This is precisely what WJT Mitchell argues for in *Picture Theory* when he extols the virtues of acknowledging and analyzing "the whole ensemble of *relations* between media" instead of perpetuating comparative methods between the arts (89-90). Mitchell's insights into how to

[3] For a definition of enargeia that consits of two categories depending on the degree of involvement of the reader see Krieger 94.

avoid comparison between the visual and the verbal hinge upon "an insistence on literalness and materiality" that will guide my own exploration of the relationship between human beings and the material world (90). I will insist, as Mitchell and Bal have done, on literalness and materiality by employing the term "object" to refer to the material things in these novels. To assist in my approach to "reading objects" I will draw on Bal's theoretical vocabulary periodically throughout the chapters for its succinct appraisal of the visual. Reading the photographs, childhood possessions, furniture, and other objects from the historical context of Post War Spain and the personal social context of the life of each narrator/protagonist opens up "the possibility that images can produce meanings normally denied to the visual" (Bal 304). Not only will this method allow for interdisciplinary ties to be made between literary studies, visual culture studies and cultural archeology, but it also allows the materiality of the objects depicted in these novels to remain a viable source of interpretation within a narrative, just as Bal suggests with regard to the visual in works of art.

Now that I have outlined how I will analyze the two types of objects that appear in these three novels (objects present at the time the narrators perform their memory work and objects that are evoked through verbal representations of how the narrators remember them), I will introduce the terms "personal memory," "postmemory," and "collective memory" and the major theoretical approaches to these concepts that I employ throughout the remaining chapters. These distinct, yet often overlapping, types of memory appear in varying degrees in *Primera memoria*, *Señas de identidad*, and *El cuarto de atrás*. With the exception of the chapter on *Señas de identidad*, in which postmemory is equally as important as personal memory, I will focus mainly on the latter type in order to show the connection between the narrators and the material world around them. Since "collective memory" will form a minor part of my research, I will limit the

overview of the contested term to a brief presentation of some of the major contributions made by historians and Spanish cultural scholars alike.

Paul Connerton defines personal memory as "those acts of remembering that take as their object one's life history" (22). Sometimes personal memory is called "autobiographical memory" in an attempt to reference the fact that the person remembering is also the person who experienced the original event (Halbwachs 52). Since the three novels chosen for this investigation are first-person narratives, the dominant type of remembering that the narrators do involves the personal aspects of their lives. Connerton's definition of personal memory, as well as the idea that there is a "doubling" of the individual doing the remembering (22), will inform my reading of these three novels. As Connerton notes, ". . . our past history is an important source of our conception of ourselves; our self-knowledge, our conception of our own character and potentialities, is to a large extent determined by the way in which we view our own past actions" (22). An examination of personal memory in these three novels reveals the character of the narrators, along with their insecurities, emotional states, and views of the world around them.

Postmemory, the term coined by Marianne Hirsch, indicates memories that are not mediated by recall of personal experiences, but rather by the stories and images transmitted to an individual by another person (Hirsch, *Family Frames* 22; "The Generation" 106-107). Unlike personal and collective memory, postmemory is the only type of memory that appears frequently in only one novel: *Señas de identidad*. This is because in the other two novels there are few examples when C in *El cuarto de atrás* and Matia in *Primera memoria* convey memories transmitted to them by friends or acquaintances. The closest thing to a postmemory in these two novels is in *El cuarto de atrás* when C talks about her mother's home, and the grandfather she never knew (79-80). Although personal memory is always present, the examples of postmemory

in *Señas de identidad* reveal Alvaro's development of what I call an "ethics of postmemory," or a moral concern for giving a voice to those individuals whose memories have not been given a place in Spanish society. Postmemory is an important tool for understanding, within the context of the Civil War and dictatorship, the right of an object or event associated with it to be remembered and thus acknowledged as a legitimate experience of the past. Memories transmitted to others are also part of the final chapter, Toward a Conclusion: Materiality, Memory, and Representation, where I lay out the possibilities for a study involving objects and memory in contemporary Spanish cultural production.

The final term, collective memory, is the most debated of the three relating to memory. Maurice Halbwachs's work, *The Collective Memory*, first addressed this notion by claiming that social frameworks were the only way in which memory could be perceived. This idea is criticized today for its denial of the powers of individual consciousness, as historians Noa Gedi and Egam Yigal point out (36). In their article, "Collective Memory – What is it?" Gedi and Yigal assert that "All 'collective' terms are problematic – and 'collective memory' is no exception – because they are conceived of as having capacities that are in fact actualized only on an individual level, that is, they can only be performed by individuals" (34). For them, "collective memory" is "actually a fabricated version of that same personal memory adjusted to what the individual mind considers, rightly or not, as suitable in a social environment" (47), and they insist that the only legitimate use of the term is in a metaphorical sense, "namely as some property attached to some generalized entity such as 'society'" (43). This is where I will invoke José F. Colmeiro's insights into collective memory in the Spanish context. In *Memoria histórica e identidad cultural: De la posguerra a la posmodernidad*, Colmeiro argues that collective memory, or the practices, rituals, traditions, and myths shared by a group, consists of historical

memory as well (17-18). Collective memory, he writes, "recuerda el oro de Moscú, el "Cara al sol," los Seat 600, *El último cuplé*, la llegada de la minifalda, o la inauguración de un pantano, como hitos comodificados del pasado" (Colmeiro, *Memoria histórica* 18). On the other hand, historical memory is part of collective memory, but it offers a critical perspective of the historical happenings shared as a group, such as the repression by Franco's police, censorship, and the indoctrinating practices of "el nacional-catolicismo" during the dictatorship (Colmeiro, *Memoria histórica* 18). I will use the terms "collective memory" and "historical memory" in my investigation in order to distinguish between milestone moments recognized by Spaniards of the same generation (collective memory), and events from the past that are critically evaluated (historical memory). One example that illustrates the overlapping nature of collective and historical memory according to Colmeiro's definitions is C's recollection of watching Franco's funeral broadcast on television at a bar near her home (*El cuarto* 117). In this situation, collective memory recalls the events of Franco's funeral. Whether the Spaniards watching the funeral ceremonies were in a bar, at the funeral waiting in line to pay respects to the leader, or at home, the death of the dictator and the services to follow represent a milestone moment in Spanish history. Historical memory would be C's interpretation of Franco's death and funeral. When she observes how those around her in the bar began to relax when discussing leadership and Spain's future in the wake of the leader's death, she recognizes the restrictions that would have prohibited this type of behavior while Franco was still alive (*El cuarto* 116-117).

I have addressed the link between the first two terms in the title of this project, objects and memory, and defined how I will use them throughout the remaining chapters, but representation still remains to be defined and contextualized. This is obviously a task too large for an introduction, but I will attempt to lay out what I mean by this term in the context of these

three novels. Representation comes into play explicitly when I analyze the word/image relationship in *El cuarto de atrás*, and it is also evident in the approach I take to reading the images of objects, as I outlined above. Representation is also an underlying theme in all of the chapters as each narrator attempts to convey the experiences he or she had during the Civil War and dictatorship – periods that marked their growth from childhood to adulthood and impacted their sense of identity. The representation of the past hinges upon the narrator's dialogue with objects because without them they would have a more difficult time putting their experiences into words. Nonetheless, their attempts at recreating the past in a narrative are not any easier because of the objects that provide a link to the past. In this project, representation will mean not only the attempt to "organize, construct, and mediate [an] understanding of reality…" (Sturken and Cartwright 13), but it will also acknowledge that memories are interpretations of experiences that are inevitably filled with holes because of the passage of time, a will to forget, blatant omissions, or changes to the original story. Ofelia Ferrán concisely describes how "The recognition that memory is not a process of retrieval but of representation necessarily forces one to acknowledge the role of distortion in all recollective practices" (58). Forgetting and distortion, then, are parts of memory that will be taken into consideration when investigating the representations of objects involved in memory processes.

Finally, representation will include the idea that these narrators, each to different degrees, aim to represent the experiences of other Spaniards silenced by the Franco regime. In her introduction to the essays on documentaries and testimonies in *Unearthing Franco's Legacy: Mass Graves and the Recovery of Historical Memory in Spain*, Anne Hardcastle references Bill Nichols's work, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary* in order to pose some questions about the limits and possibilities inherent in the idea of representation (148-155).

One particular reflection is worth citing at length for its summary of Nichols's definition of representation:

> 'Representation' has become a somewhat suspicious word through its postmodern association with simulacra, performance, and replication of an eternally displaced and inaccessible real world. Nichols does not deny that documentaries are representations of the real world, and yet he argues for a more comprehensive understanding of representation. 'Representation' also refers to the act of standing in for others and acting on their behalf – the basis of representative, democratic government. Furthermore, "to represent" is to place facts before others in the making of a case, 'especially to convey a particular view or impression of the matter. These additional functions of representation are as important, if not more so, in nonfiction texts whose significance resides in appeals to social justice.' (Hardcastle, "El documental" 150)

Despite the fact that Nichols and Hardcastle address the issue of representation in nonfiction documentaries and testimonies specifically, the expanded definition of representation identifies the idea of standing in for an absent person in a narrative in order to bring a previously unknown story to light. This is the social justice aspect that Nichols mentions and that plays an integral role in each of the novels studied here. Although they are works of fiction, each includes autobiographical elements that border on the sort of truth telling done in documentaries and testimonies. Alvaro in *Señas de identidad* provides the most pertinent example of the type of democratic representation meant to make space for the marginalized and silenced stories of Spaniards in the 1950s and 1960s, and Matia and C expose the Franco regime's control over young girls and women.

The Material of the Past in *Primera memoria*, *Señas de identidad*, and *El cuarto de atrás*

In the first chapter on Ana María Matute's *Primera memoria* I show how Matia, the adult narrator that retells the experiences of a brief period of her childhood, focuses on objects from her past that were directly involved in the power dynamics at work both in her family and in the

small island community. Adult Matia recounts the severe changes she underwent early in life that caused her to transition abruptly and without proper warning from the world of childhood to young adulthood. This rocky transition is most evident when she describes a variety of objects that were instrumental in transforming her innocent persective of the world around her into a critical and realistic adult point of view: a set of binoculars her grandmother uses, her doll, Gorogó, and the stolen objects that lead to the loss of her only friend, Manuel.

As Anne Hardcastle suggests, Matia cannot present a true child's perspective because her vantage point from adulthood only allows her to portray an invented representation of the childhood experience (388). Adult Matia continues to identify with her younger self, as I will demonstrate in the analysis of the vocabulary she uses to describe the objects of her childhood. However, it is the separation between adult narrator and young character (Nichols 40) that is key to understanding the main argument of this chapter: Matia embeds her transitional experience from child to adult into the descriptions of objects around her, and, as a result, exposes the direct effects of power on her childhood experience and concept of selfhood as an adult.

Jeremy Bentham's architectural designs for the Panopticon and Michel Foucault's concept of panopticism, derived from Bentham's work, inform my reading of the objects Matia remembers and describes as an adult. Sight is one of the most significant characteristics of the Panopticon (Bentham, Letter 1) and Foucault's panopticism (200-201) because it allows for constant surveillance of the individuals housed within the walls of the structure. While there is no such architectural structure in *Primera memoria*, doña Práxedes, Matia's grandmother, uses her gaze to control her family and the townspeople on the island of Mallorca. This "inspecting gaze," as Foucault calls it in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977* (155), is associated with the binoculars she regularly uses to watch the townspeople. This is

where Matia's narrative gaze enters into the equation as she describes her grandmother's habit by adding in creative metaphors to emphasize doña Práxedes's invasive act; Matia equates the island town and its inhabitants to a theater and her grandmother is the puppet master whose "ojos, como largos tentáculos" are able to reach into the inhabitant's homes and scrutinize every detail of their lives (Matute, *Primera* 55). When Matia includes her opinion in this creative way she subtly undermines the power her grandmother possessed by equating her with childish toys. The result is a narrative gaze that exposes the power structures working against Matia as a child. Visibility remains an essential aspect of the analysis of the remaining objects in this chapter. Matia's doll, Gorogó, and the objects she and Borja steal afford the two children different degrees of power depending on whether or not the objects are seen by others. These objects are also associated with the transition to young adulthood because, when they are no longer hidden from the judgment of adults, they lose their imaginative qualities and usher in a new period of disenchantment for Matia.

In *Primera memoria* Matia's narrative gaze describes familiar objects from her childhood, and the result is an increased familiarity with how personal memory can involve the material world to expose power relations and question one's identity. Individual memory work related to questions of selfhood continues in Juan Goytisolo's *Señas de identidad* when Alvaro Mendiola, a photographer self-exiled in France, returns to Spain in the early 1960s after suffering a serious heart attack. In this chapter I will explore how the interactions Alvaro has with the handful of objects chosen from this heterogeneous novel – the photographs, emigration documentary, and postmemory objects, the Gasparini photographs and a chair and basket that belong to an impoverished Spanish *émigré,* José Bernabeu – attest to the narrator's need to use objects to help access the ghostly presences of individual and collective identity in order to

understand his own place as an individual and a member of Spanish society, however complicated that relationship may be. By engaging memory in diverse ways with each of these objects, Alvaro creates a narrative that offers a series of attempts at dealing with how to represent both individual and collective existence during the Civil War and Post War eras.

Over the course of several days Alvaro recounts his personal and family history with the assistance of the family photo album. Included in his recent personal history is the documentary on emigration that was confiscated by the Civil Guard. I analyze the photographs with the help of Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida*, and Jo Labanyi's work on ghosts in Spanish cultural production (Introduction 2; "History and Hauntology" 65). Although Alvaro includes many personal memories, he does not limit himself to the past he experienced, but also includes the stories of friends and acquaintances whose experiences of poverty and persecution under the Franco regime form a direct contrast to his own origins and bohemian lifestyle in Paris, far from the societal conflicts continuing in Spain. Documents, letters, and his own interactions with the individuals whose memories he retells are the sources Alvaro uses to access the memories belonging to others. Sometimes, as I mentioned in the previous section in which I defined the main terms of this analysis, Alvaro does not possess the objects, and must rely on memory and supporting documents to relay their significance. This is true of both the documentary on emigration and postmemory objects. However, the documentary differs from the Gasparini photos and the chair and basket in one major respect: the photos and the chair and basket were objects belonging to another individual, and therefore the memories associated with them did not come from Alvaro's direct experience, but rather from a transference of memories to him. When Alvaro includes the chair and basket in his remembrances he develops what I will call an "ethics of postmemory." By ethics of postmemory I mean Alvaro's concern for acknowledging the

existence of memories that have been marginalized by the Franco regime and its supporters. This feeling of responsibility for the memories of others prompts Alvaro to represent them alongside his own memories, thus ensuring that they will not be confined to oblivion. I will draw on Marianne Hirsch's definition of postmemory as memories that are not mediated by recall of firsthand personal experiences, and I will argue that even though there is not a generational distance between Alvaro and the people who share their firsthand memories with him, the separation from his homeland creates a divide that can be considered postmemorial because there is a temporal gap between the original events and Alvaro's knowledge of them. The combination of personal memories and postmemories gives Alvaro the tools to develop an ethics of representation that aims to expose the Franco regime's repressive social agenda.

In the third chapter dealing with Carmen Martín Gaite's *El cuarto de atrás*, I propose that Franco's death be interpreted in terms of an opening up to the future that includes the chance to critically engage a polemic collective past and provide innovative, playful modes of representing personal and historical memory. The playfulness that I highlight involves C's interactions with mirrors, furniture, notebooks, and letters – the material evidence of past experiences and the impetus for revisiting and representing original events she experienced throughout her life. I argue that the way that the objects in this novel are represented reveals a playful attitude toward employing memory and oblivion to question identity, and that it is through this playfulness in depicting objects that the narrator is able to challenge the dominant discourses on recent Spanish history and women's roles in society. Drawing on Andrew Jones's work with memory and material culture that I have mentioned elsewhere in this introduction, I show how the things in C's home either help her remember or help her forget. In either case, the "fragility of identity" that Ricoeur explains in *Memory, History, Forgetting* is evident in her memories triggered by

objects because at times she is uncertain about the passage of time, one of the three main causes of the fragility of identity (81). This fragility can cause abuses of memory or abuses of forgetting (Ricoeur 81), both of which are present in *El cuarto de atrás*. These abuses are exposed by C's narrative gaze as she attempts to represent her memories despite the difficulty she has recalling details.

When C sees and interacts with the objects in her home she evokes memories of her childhood, adolescence, and adulthood during the dictatorship. These objects are the triggers for her extensive digressions about past experiences and emotions associated with them, and supply C with the creative spark needed to put her memories into narrative form. This story telling provides an opportunity for C to express an opinion about the restrictions imposed on women under the regime. Since the narrator is in her home throughout the entire story telling process, domestic interiors, and the objects typically included in them, allow C to question the ideologies to which she was exposed. The societal pressure placed on young women to maintain an orderly home and perform the role of submissive wife (Martín Gaite, *Usos* 118) is directly juxtaposed with C's rebellious side and natural tendency to prefer disorder when she sees versions of herself at different ages in a mirror. These past selves criticize her when, in the present moment, they observe her doing domestic chores (Martín Gaite, *El cuarto* 66). This action occurs in an interior monologue, until the moment when C responds to the younger versions of herself by reassuring them that she has not abandoned her impromptu style (Martín Gaite, *El cuarto* 78-79). This is just one example when the narrator directly engages with an object in order to playfully address a historical memory, the social norms dictating women's behavior, from the Franco regime. C confronts the major ideological restraints placed on women during her lifetime by creating a

ludic narrative inspired by objects that ultimately contributes to enhancing historical memory by offering opinions and criticisms of topics that were considered taboo before Franco's death.

In the Toward a Conclusion section I reflect upon what the three texts do as a whole and how they change our approach to memory, materiality, and representation within the context of Spanish literary and cultural studies. As cultural texts affected by the historical events of the period between 1959-1978, these novels represent points on a continuum defined by the increased use of the material world to help portray the past and respond to the restrictions put on the authors by the Franco regime. In this final section I describe this continuum in depth, discuss how memory processes in these novels redefine the connection between human beings and materiality when a thing's objecthood is recognized as an active participant in engaging memory, and highlight the main contributions I have made to the fields of Spanish literary and cultural studies. Finally, I offer some possibilities for future research involving objects, memory, and representation in which I caution against not taking into account generational differences, especially when extending the analysis I put forth here to include contemporary works of fiction far removed from the events they recreate.

Chapter One:

The (Re)vision of Power in Ana María Matute's *Primera memoria*

Matia, the adult narrator and protagonist of Ana María Matute's best-known novel, begins her remembrances with a description of her grandmother: "Mi abuela tenía el pelo blanco, en una ola encrespada sobre la frente, que le daba cierto aire colérico. Llevaba casi siempre un bastoncillo de bambú con puño de oro, que no le hacía ninguna falta, porque era firme como un caballo" (*Primera* 13). Matia looks through old photographs as she relates this description, but she does not restrict her observations to the purely objective portrayal of what she sees before her. Throughout the novel the narrator attaches present opinions and observations to the events she recalls from the time she spent with her grandmother during the Civil War. The "aire colérico" Matia associates with her grandmother's hairstyle and the strength masked in her use of the walking stick are not visual components of the photograph. Instead, these subsequent revisions add another layer of complexity to the photographic image, completing it with the personality traits Matia most frequently associated, and continues to associate with doña Práxedes. The narrator's gaze is one that revises and reassesses past images and experiences in order to expose the true nature of the events of Matia's childhood.

As both María del Carmen Riddel (72) and Marisa Sotelo Vázquez (172) mention in their respective analyses, Matia controls the descriptions of her surroundings throughout *Primera memoria*. As a narrator with perfect hindsight, Matia can share or withhold information as she pleases, making her gaze the principal one as it guides the reader through her experiences as an orphaned child living with doña Práxedes, her cousin Borja, and her aunt Emilia on the island of Mallorca during the first year of the Civil War. An integral part of Matia's voice consists of what Geraldine C. Nichols calls "el tono desmitificador del resto de la narración" (40). Nichols contends that the opening image of the novel establishes this tone by presenting doña Práxedes as the grandmother who is anything but grandmotherly; she is not kind, maternal or sentimental,

but rather the epitome of the "no abuela" (40). Nichols extends her observations regarding the demystifying tone of the entire narrative to include the title because she claims that it establishes "unas expectativas de lectura que el resto del texto defraudará: en lugar de la nostálgica evocación de la infancia que 'primera memoria' insinúa, el lector se encuentra con una historia de traición y engaño" (40). This is not a nostalgic look back at the time during the very beginning of the Civil War; instead it is Matia's attempt to expose the negative aspects of coming of age during a time of social turmoil.

As a feminine version of a *bildungsroman* in which Matia explores the difficult transition from adolescence to young adulthood (Riddel 67-68), knowledge about the lives of the adults around her and a brutal awakening to their motivations naturally forms a major part of the novel. As Anne Hardcastle has noted, *Primera memoria* does not present a true child's perspective, but rather portrays an invented representation of the childhood experience from an adult's point of view (388). Similarly, María del Carmen Riddel has noticed the judgment inherent in Matia's observations and points out that adult Matia's mature vision prevails despite the identification she maintains with her younger counterpart (72-73). Geraldine C. Nichols insists on this separation between adult and adolescent versions of Matia: in her analysis Nichols prefers to distinguish between Matia the adolescent character and Matia the narrator because the thoughts and experiences of the young character are remembered and retained by the narrator, making it difficult to attribute actions to one or the other with total certainty (40). This last approach that separates narrator from character is key to understanding how Matia embeds her transitional experience from child to adult into the vocabulary she uses and the unique concentration she has on certain objects. In this I chapter will analyze Matia's narrative gaze to demonstrate the ways in which her identity has been affected by the power structures put into place during the Civil

War and Post War periods. Objects are the focal point of Matia's critical gaze, and as such they give her the tools to subtly denounce the stunting effects of civil war on a child. Matia's point of view is unique because it offers a revision of past events that combines adult and childhood perspectives in order to show the limbo created for the so-called generation of "niños de la guerra" who lived through the events of the Civil War as children. When she portrays her grandmother and the relationships she has with her doll, Gorogó, and the stolen objects she and her cousin Borja share it is clear that this first-person narrative is a way of coming to terms with a childhood cut short by personal and social trauma.

Throughout the rest of this chapter I will adopt Nichols's distinction between adult narrator and young protagonist. This will allow me to focus on Matia's dominant adult voice as it actively ". . . destila los acontecimientos por su memoria antes de presentarlos" (Riddel 73). Additionally, as Matia recounts the past she displays the ways in which her grandmother and family, the politics of the island, and the Civil War and the subsequent dictatorship affected the child and ultimately produced an adult marked by these early experiences (Hardcastle 387). To assist in the analysis of objects that reveal how Matia was transformed by the changing socio-political landscape in Spain, I will primarily draw on Foucault's ideas about power and his interpretation of Jeremy Bentham's architectural design, the Panopticon, in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. His concept of panopticism supports my argument that Matia embeds her transitional experience from child to adult into her vocabulary because when she focuses on exposing the modes of surveillance on the island she employs a childlike lexicon that undermines the power structures that dominated her youth. Additionally, I will acknowledge some of the recent scholarship that challenges Foucault's reading of the Panopticon in order to present alternate impressions of the connection between Foucault and Bentham.

In the first section of this chapter I will examine Matia's portrayal of her grandmother's gaze as she recreates the commanding presence of doña Práxedes. The investigation of what I will call doña Práxedes's "tentacular vision" will draw on Michel Foucault's concept of panopticism that draws on the Panopticon "as a generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men" (*Discipline and Punish* 205) in order to situate the grandmother's exercise of power on the island within the greater socio-historic context of the Civil War.[4] In the remaining sections, visibility of objects is linked to the different degrees of power they afford Matia and her cousin Borja. Matia's doll Gorogó and the objects she and Borja steal play distinct roles in the relationship between Matia, Borja, and Matia's only friend, Manuel, according to whether they are seen or remain unseen by others. This focused discussion of the visibility of objects fits into the panoptic model outlined in the first section because the objects have a direct role in establishing a hierarchy of power among the adolescents. These objects, when exposed to the sight of others, challenge Matia's sense of self and force her to face an adult world without the knowledge necessary to completely understand it.

The Tentacular Vision of Doña Práxedes

To begin to understand the effects of doña Práxedes's domination over Matia, her family, and the islanders it is necessary to avoid, as Foucault urges, questions of what an individual with power aims to do with it (*Power/Knowledge* 97). It is practically impossible to understand the underlying motivations guiding those with power, and instead, Foucault writes,

> . . . it is a case of studying power at the point where its intention, if it has one, is completely invested in its real and effective practices. What is needed is a study

[4] Matia's characterization of her grandmother's eyes "como largos tentáculos" inspired my term for doña Práxedes's vision (*Primera* 55).

> of power in its external visage, at the point where it is in direct and immediate relationship with that which we can provisionally call its object, its target, its field of application, there – that is to say – where it installs itself and produces its real effects. (*Power/Knowledge* 97)

In *Primera memoria*, the grandmother's power finds its largest target in the islanders. The most commonly recurring memory that adult Matia portrays is of her grandmother's habit of watching the townspeople from her home: "Después de las comidas arrastraba su mecedora hasta la ventana de su gabinete. . . . Y desde allí, con sus viejos prismáticos de teatro incrustados de zafiros falsos, escudriñaba las casas blancas del declive, donde habitaban los colonos . . ." (Matute, *Primera* 13). Although brief, this introduction to doña Práxedes's habit of watching the islanders from her superior vantage point at the top of the *declive*, the "slope" in the town, contains the foundation for the development of her grandmother's gaze throughout the rest of the narrative. The location of the home and the objects Doña Práxedes uses to survey the town are essential to understanding how the matriarch makes those around her the objects of her power.

Her superior physical position above the rest of the islanders allows for a parallel to be drawn between her home and the central tower or Inspector's Lodge in Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon (*Panopticon: Postscript*, Letter 5). Bentham explains that "The essence of it consists, then, in the *centrality* of the inspector's situation, combined with the well-known and most effectual contrivances for *seeing without being seen*" (*Panopticon: Postscript*, Letter 5). The Panopticon as envisioned by Bentham can be used as a metaphor that applies to the surveillance techniques used by Doña Práxedes. Her surveillance of the town and the power dynamics this creates can be compared to the structuring of the prison laid out by Bentham to control inmates, thus demonstrating how the grandmother's actions affect the everyday lives of those around her. For instance, the elevated position of the home provides an optimal vantage point for the

grandmother's daily observation of the town. She performs the role of the inspector in the Panopticon whose unobstructed vision from the central tower cannot be verified by those in the surrounding cells (Bentham, *Panopticon: Postscript*, Letter 5), or homes, as is the case in *Primera memoria*. This arrangement of the town with the grandmother's home at the top of the hill ensures a certain amount of social order through the line of sight afforded her and denied to the townsfolk.

The situation on the island is similar to the Panopticon where an individual is seen but does not see the inspector, and becomes "the object of information, never a subject in communication" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 200). Doña Práxedes ensures order with the constant threat of surveillance that could be occurring from the top of the hill. Her gaze organizes social positions, discovers infractions upon the previously established rules, and ultimately allows doña Práxedes to judge those around her according to what she has seen. However, despite her central role in the establishment of power relations, it is the organization of the island that stems from the matriarch's surveillance that allows her to maintain power. Foucault writes that "Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 202). The "internal mechanisms" of power on the island specifically consist of doña Práxedes's use of different objects that assist in her acquisition of knowledge, and the self-policing practices adopted, consciously or not, by the matriarch's family and the islanders under her control.

The following description of doña Práxedes gives a detailed account of her surveillance techniques, complete with material object to assist in the endeavor:

> Desde la ventana de su gabinete, ella escudriñaba su fila de casitas blancas, cuadradas, donde vivían los colonos. Aquellas casitas, al atardecer, se encendían con luces amarillentas, y eran como peones de un mundo de juguete, y muñecos sus habitantes. Sentada en la mecedora o en el sillón de cuero negro con clavos dorados, la abuela enfilaba sus gemelos de raso amarillento con falsos zafiros, y jugaba a mirar. (Matute, *Primera* 31)

Here adult Matia elaborates on her grandmother's gaze by attributing ownership of the homes and their inhabitants to doña Práxedes through the use of the possessive adjective *su* various times. Matia astutely notes how the grandmother's gaze objectifies the townspeople, stripping them of any intelligence, not to mention free will, when they become dolls in a playworld that respond to doña Práxedes's wishes. While it is possible that Matia's reliance on childhood vocabulary in this description represents an attempt to faithfully recreate the psychological world of her younger self, the effect of portraying the grandmother at play subtly undermines the domineering adult image she so staunchly upheld. By depicting her grandmother in this way, the adult narrator reminds the reader that she is the creator of the narrative. Adult Matia's concentration on the grandmother's gaze demonstrates how "El caciquismo de doña Práxedes es el que determina la posición jerárquica de los individuos dentro de la comunidad . . . " (Riddel 75), but not without the addition of colorful, subjective judgments of doña Práxedes's actions.

To assist in her quest to know all that happens on the island, doña Práxedes enlists the help of a pair of theater binoculars. The "viejos prismáticos de teatro incrustados de zafiros falsos" are a critical tool doña Práxedes uses to extend her gaze and invade the private lives of the islanders (Matute, *Primera* 13). The glasses afford her a better view, literally enlarging the scenes before her to make it possible to discover "new objects of knowledge over all the surfaces on which power is exercised" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 204). Those surfaces include the homes and private spaces within doña Práxedes's view, from which she extracts the knowledge

she needs to continue to exercise power on the island. The maintenance of appearances is essential for Matia's grandmother to continue to be viewed as powerful, and the theater glasses reinforce her high social status. However, adult Matia includes a detail as small as those doña Práxedes is interested in uncovering when gazing out the window: the sapphires on the binoculars are fake. Matia repeatedly draws attention to the fake sapphires in order to signal to the reader that the exterior appearance does not match doña Práxedes's interior intentions. The power her grandmother holds is not based on any form of legitimate rule, but rather it finds its basis in manipulative acts that frighten Matia and the townspeople (with the possible exception of Manuel's family) into believing and following her lead.

Doña Práxedes's lens is focused on exposing the activities that do not conform to her beliefs, making her vision of the world around her entirely subjective and motivated by biased opinions. For example, adult Matia remembers in a parenthetical statement how her grandmother avidly singled out the photographic examples of violence from the Republican side. This allowed her to conveniently omit similar atrocities committed by the Nationalist side that she fully supports:

> En el piso de arriba, en su gabinete, la abuela desgarraba con ansiosas zarpas la faja de los periódicos recién recibidos. El ávido temblor de sus dedos, con los brillantes hacia la palma de la mano. La abuela buscaba y buscaba en los periódicos huellas de la *hidra roja* y de sus desmanes, fotografías de nobles sacerdotes abiertos en canal. (Matute, *Primera* 25)

In this excerpt, Matia conveys the thirst her grandmother has for acquiring evidence against the Republicans fighting in the Civil War. This type of filtering of the news to conform to her beliefs represents a type of vigilance that complements her desire to control the people around her through surveillance. Not only can she watch their every move, but also doña Práxedes can

influence their thinking by seeking out examples of the extreme violence of the Republican side and showing them to her young grandchildren. Doña Práxedes's idea of justice is also distorted because she tries to rationalize the violence inherent in the public shaving of Sa Malene's head, Manuel's mother, by showing Borja and Matia a blurry photograph of men hanging from trees and saying, "Aquí se rapa la cabeza, allí se hace este otro" (Matute, *Primera* 158). Since "Práxedes" means "she who has firm intentions, active, and enterprising" it would be uncharacteristic of her to stray from her original impression of a situation and question why she believes what she does. She is nothing but firm in her objectives, intent on shaping the environment on the island to conform to her one-sided view of the political scene unfolding on the mainland, even if that means manipulating the news she receives in order to use it in her favor.

In addition to the theater glasses that extend doña Práxedes's gaze, Matia describes the rings her grandmother wore, "dos enormes brillantes sucios," that reinforce the omnipresence of her tentacular gaze and its inherent power to dominate the lives of others. While the rings do not physically assist doña Práxedes in her ritual of vigilance, they are introduced in the opening description of the grandmother to represent her duplicitous, dirty nature and, more importantly, serve as a symbolic representation of all-seeing eyes. Matia includes Borja in her remembrances when she says: "Oíamos el crujido de la mecedora en el gabinete de la abuela, la imaginábamos espiando el ir y venir de las mujeres del declive, con el parpadeo de un sol gris en los enormes solitarios de sus dedos" (Matute, *Primera* 14). Matia imagines the rings on her fingers as if they were another set of eyes blinking in the sun that take in all the details of the daily lives of others. When adult Matia draws attention to the rings she shows how power is distributed among people and the objects that represent them, thus reinforcing Foucault's claim that power does not reside

in one person alone, but rather in the distribution of gazes and bodies (*Discipline and Punish* 202). Jeremy Bentham originally highlighted how it was not the Inspector alone whose task it was to monitor the inmates' actions; the inmates, accustomed to being watched, begin to police their own actions thus becoming part of the mechanism of control themselves (*Panopticon; or the Inspection-House*, Letter V). Matia succeeds in conveying how she and the townspeople were subjected to constant vigilance by focusing on the rings as a constant presence that doubled the potential for surveillance on the island.

As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, some recent scholarship challenges Foucault's reading of the Panopticon. I would like to pause here to acknowledge this interpretation and clarify my use of Foucualt's work within the context of *Primera memoria*. In *Beyond Foucault: New Perspectives on Bentham's Panopticon* the 18th century British philosopher's works are not read solely through the foucauldian lens, but rather are rehabilitated in order to restore Bentham's contemporary reputation (xii). Anne Brunon-Ernst argues that "Foucault's reading of the Panopticon projects was fractional and partial," and reflects an inadequate picture of modern methods of surveillance (17). For this reason she makes a distinction between the terms "Panopticon" and "panopticism": the former term refers to Jeremy Bentham's design whereas the latter is strictly associated with Foucault's interpretation of Bentham's texts (19-20). This distinction applies to what I have already stated about Doña Práxedes's tentacular gaze as a way of maintaining power on the island, and I will employ it in the rest of this section as a way to focus my discussion of what I see as a manipulative "panopticism" aimed at separating different members of the island society from one another by engaging each individual in surveillance techniques. While Brunon-Ernst contends that Foucault's panopticism does not address the other ways in which Bentham's panoptic paradigm

can be employed, such as in schools and government (27-28), I find that it is still productive to use panopticism because it is broadly applicable to the situations in which Matia found herself as a child. Bentham's Panopticon is the paradigm from which Foucault draws his conclusions about discipline and the role surveillance plays in the establishment of order, and it will be used as a metaphor for the arrangement of space in the current discussion of *Primera memoria*. After all, the Panopticon in Foucault's opinion "must be understood as a generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men" (*Discipline and Punish* 205). For example, as I have stated above, the layout of the Panopticon as described by Bentham assists in understanding the significance of the position of doña Práxedes's home at the top of the hill on the island. Foucault's insights assist me as I apply the theory behind the Panopticon to the practice of panopticism as it plays out in the everyday life of Matia as a youngster.

A significant point that Foucault highlights in his chapter on panopticism is how visibility is essential for the successful implementation of surveillance and the functioning of power. Besides enlisting objects in her quest for total visibility, doña Práxedes's surveillance is so omnipresent that it induces in her family members and the townspeople ". . . a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 201). This is where panopticism as a social mechanism of control extends beyond any architectural structures or physical boundaries to include the observed human beings who, suspecting that they are being watched, police their own actions and adjust their behavior to conform to the accepted modes of conduct (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 202). When Matia describes as an adult how her grandmother used to watch the town she also includes her own fear of being caught when pushing the boundaries of acceptable behavior. Take, for instance, Matia's

worried remark to Manuel, her new friend and the son of the murdered Republican José Taronjí: "¡Si la abuela me viese! Muchas veces me escapo a esta hora . . ." (Matute, *Primera* 118). Borja also expresses the same worry when he admonishes Matia while waiting for Manuel to return the boat he borrowed from them to transport José Taronjí's body: "¡Ven aquí, no seas estúpida! Te pueden ver, si alguien pasara por arriba, y es mejor que nadie sepa . . ." (Matute, *Primera* 48). Oftentimes the threat of surveillance manifests itself in the children's concerns about being seen by their grandmother, but it also does not stop them from engaging in behaviors that are strictly forbidden by the matriarch. In fact, the two learn to conceal their actions better. For instance, Matia reports how "Nos pegábamos al muro de la casa, hasta desaparecer del campo visual de la abuela, que nos creía dando clase" (Matute, *Primera* 31). The children's transgressions are always affected by the watchful eye of their grandmother because they work to hide all misbehavior and, at the very least, they experience anxiety about being seen by her or those who would inform her of their actions. Even when Matia and Borja get away with smoking, drinking or stealing money from doña Práxedes, their acknowledgement of the mere possibility that the matriarch could find out signifies that she has successfully created a culture of surveillance that involves everyone on the island. Since "Surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 201), it is not surprising that Matia and Borja have their grandmother at the back of their minds when pushing the boundaries of acceptable behavior. The children have incorporated self-policing into their everyday activities, making them accomplices in the exercise of power on the island.

Adult Matia is almost hyper-aware of the vigilance and subsequent self-policing that went on during her stay on the island. This sensitivity to the gaze implies that she understands that, in order for power to be exercised, "it had to be given the instrument of permanent,

exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance, capable of making all visible, as long as it could itself remain invisible" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 214). Adult Matia exposes how self-policing on the island hinges upon the invisible yet all-seeing gaze as it makes visible the everyday practices of all the inhabitants. This results in an invisible force working on a visible one, suppressing any unsanctioned activities and burning into her mind the binary of visible/invisible.

As Riddel notes, the conflicts occurring in all of Spain during the Civil War trickle down to the individual level in *Primera memoria*, affecting each character, albeit in distinct ways (75). The visible/invisible binary assists in understanding how the broader ideological power struggles occurring during the Civil War reach the remote space of the island and directly impact the relations on the island. If we recall from earlier in this section, Doña Práxedes repeatedly searched for newspaper clippings that would work in her favor as she sought to make her grandchildren afraid of the Republican side of the fighting. This selective approach to teaching her grandchildren about the evils of war recreates the visible/invisible binary because it privileges one interpretation of the Civil War while making another version of the events invisible and therefore unknown to the children. The Civil War that Matia describes as ". . . fantasmal, lejana y próxima a un tiempo, quizá más temida por invisible," does not maintain its invisibility on the island, but rather appears in the interactions and relationships Matia portrays during her time there (Matute, *Primera* 15).

The war may seem far off, but the visible signs of its presence on the island are numerous. One example is the game Borja organizes that pits his band of "privileged" children against Guiem's band of more working-class youth, thus mimicking the social divisions working behind the scenes on the island, not to mention replicating through play the bloody conflict unfolding on the mainland (Matute, *Primera* 84-85). Furthermore, Borja's father fights for the

National side while Matia's father joined the Republicans, leaving the two children to fight against one another to resolve or, at the very least, defend the ideological battle of their parents. When Borja confronts Matia and says "¡Con que estás con *ellos*!" he is referring to the Republican side of the war (Matute, *Primera* 51). Matia is unable to respond immediately because she had never been confronted with that question. Her thoughts are jumbled: "La verdad es que yo misma estaba sorprendida de lo que dije. Algo había que me impedía obrar, pensar por mí misma. Obedecer a Borja, desobedecer a la abuela: ésa era mi única preocupación, por entonces. Y las confusas preguntas de siempre, que nadie satisfacía" (Matute, *Primera* 51-52). Matia's affirmative response to Borja's interjection is fueled by her sense of ignorance about the war and a childlike desire to appear just as smart, if not more intelligent than her cousin.[5] She tries to seem as if she understands the contentious nature of the war, but the support she shows for her father's actions is a way to mask the invisible inner conflict she struggles in vain to resolve because of her ignorance of the facts.

Binaries were an essential characteristic of the image the Franco regime sought to perpetuate in order to be seen as the saviors of Catholic Spain; the division of the people into 'good' and 'evil,' 'Spain' and 'Anti-Spain' during the Civil War formed the heart of Francoist ideology and divided the nation and its families according to political association (Richards 7). Binaries are also a key characteristic of Ana María Matute's work. Janet Pérez compiled a list of "paired opposites" that includes good/evil, innocent/perverse, idealist/materialist, to name just a few (98). Accordingly, the visible/invisible binary fits into Matute's narrative repertoire and at the same time assists in the development of the hostile antagonism perpetuated by the Regime.

[5] See the second and third sections of this chapter for further discussion of how the acquisition of knowledge is directly related to the transition into adulthood.

While at first it may seem that Matia is duplicating the regime's binarist thought, young Matia's experience with these binaries allow her to question them as an adult and demonstrate how a resistant value can be attributed to invisibility. Adult Matia narrates how she and Borja worried about being seen by doña Práxedes when escaping from their tutoring sessions, but that did not stop them from smoking cigarettes and visiting their secret hiding place. They hid their actions in order to break the established rules, thus demonstrating how invisible acts can undermine the dominance that doña Práxedes's surveillance represents. As we will see in the following section, The Power of Unseen Objects, invisible objects help Matia defy the power she has been subjected to on the island because they allow her to resist becoming an adult for a little while longer.

Despite Matia's reliance on the invisible to remain a child and secretly break her grandmother's rules, one serious visual marker of dominance suggests that the resistant value of the invisible will not hold up against the power of the visual: the discovery of José Taronjí's dead body. A Republican who is killed by his Nationalist cousins, Matia and Borja see his body and watch on as Manuel, Taronjí's adopted son, attempts to remove it from the beach where it lies (Matute, *Primera* 36-41). The adult narrator never explicitly describes the violence inherent in the man's death; there are only hints of it in a conversation she overhears between some of the people that work for her grandmother (Matute, *Primera* 41-42) and in a vague recollection of ". . . disparos en las afueras, carretera adelante al borde del acantilado, más allá de Son Major. Un grito, acaso, temerosamente oído una tarde, escondidos entre los olivos del declive.)" (Matute, *Primera* 35). What seems to be more significant to adult Matia as she pieces together the events is the hostile climate leading up to this act of violence. The death of José Taronjí is a perfect example of the punishment resulting from the "sin of association with the ideas and

organisations of the Republic" (Richards, *A Time of Silence* 7). Matia describes the invisible presence of hate on the island in the following way:

> El odio, recuerdo bien, alimentaba como una gran raíz el vivir del pueblo, y los hermanos Taronjí clamaban con él de una parte a la otra… Los Taronjí y el marido de Malene tenían el mismo nombre, eran parientes, y sin embargo nadie se aborrecía más que ellos. El odio estallaba en medio del silencio, como el sol, como un ojo congestionado y sangriento a través de la bruma. (Matute, *Primera* 36)

Like a root hidden far beneath the surface of the earth that is able to provide sustenance to the rest of the tree without ever being seen, hate pervaded the town until it became a motive for killing. Unseen but keenly felt even by young people like Matia, it is no surprise that the adult narrator would associate the hatred that existed on the island with vision. Hatred is both similar to the sun and a congested and bloody eye. The second simile conveys the blind judgment that coexists with hatred; the eye is congested, blocked and therefore can only offer a skewed version of reality from which opinions are formed. Hate is also similar to the sun because for Matia the sun is associated with the all-seeing eye: "Siempre, allí en la isla, me pareció siniestro el sol, que pulía las piedras de la plaza y las dejaba brillantes y resbaladizas como huesos o como un marfil maligno y extraño" (Matute, *Primera* 36). The sun, analogous to the grandmother's gaze, exposes all actions and relationships on the island in a sinister, malignant way. The grandmother's surveillance perpetuates the type of hatred that results in the killing of family members.

To further illustrate how the invisible gaze of doña Práxedes makes visible all she sees around her, let us turn to the last and most detailed description of her gaze that adult Matia provides after explaining how Borja and Matia see José Taronjí's dead body on the secluded

beach where they hid their cigarettes and stolen liquor. Adult Matia remembers young Matia's walk back home and her thoughts about what her grandmother would be doing at that moment:

> …seguramente la abuela espiaría desde su gabinete con sus gemelos de teatro. Sentí una sorda irritación contra ella. Allí estaría, como un dios panzudo y descascarillado, como un enorme y glotón muñecazo, moviendo los hilos de *sus marionetas*. Desde su gabinete, las casitas de los colonos con sus mujeres cocinando y sus niños gritones, *eran como un teatro diminuto*. Ella los envolvía en su mirada dura y gris, impávida. *Sus ojos, como largos tentáculos*, entraban en las casas y lamían, barrían, dentro de las habitaciones, debajo de las camas y las mesas. Eran unos ojos que adivinaban, que levantaban los techos blancos y azotaban cosas: intimidad, sueño, fatiga. (Matute, *Primera* 55 emphasis mine)

Imagining that doña Práxedes was spying out the window, young Matia also has the sense that everyone in the island town knew about what happened to José Taronjí: ". . . me dije: 'Éstos lo saben todo lo de José Taronjí.' Había algo que flotaba en el calor… Todos los ruidos me afirmaban en la misma idea, 'Lo saben, lo saben lo de José Taronjí'" (Matute, *Primera* 55). This premonition is accompanied by a dull sense of annoyance that indicates that young Matia was aware of the interconnectedness of the townspeople and understood that news like this would reach her grandmother quickly. Even if she did not fully understand the magnitude of her grandmother's actions, she sensed the presence of constant surveillance.

The town is reduced to a "teatro diminuto" that makes doña Práxedes both puppeteer and audience watching the action she directs it. If the town is condensed into a small space it is almost impossible for anything to escape the grandmother's gaze, making her the all-seeing, all-knowing and all-controlling master. The reduction of the town into a more manageable space of surveillance is indicative of the "panoptic principle" as it functions in modern societies: a small number of people, or even a single individual, are given access to a great multitude of men (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 216-217). The theater simile assists in conveying the

concentration of power in doña Práxedes and how her gaze can reach even the most remote areas of the island. Matia's careful description emphasizes how the home and the outside world of the island are connected through doña Práxedes's watchful gaze. Public and private space are combined in a way that demonstrates on a smaller scale how the Franco regime was able to invade all aspects of existence, making private space and intimate information available to the public.

Matia is acutely aware of the concentration of power in doña Práxedes and the theater simile allows her to compress the space of her dominion in order to illustrate the negative effects of power; human beings are objectified and the grandmother's gaze invades the town, scrutinizing every possible detail of existence. This includes the intimate spaces of human emotions that become so "wrapped" in her gaze that they ultimately submit to her and show their "intimidad, sueño, fatiga." Her eyes are like tentacles, reaching into the homes, licking and sweeping everything into her line of sight. To further emphasize the omnipresence of doña Práxedes's gaze, the theater glasses return yet again to extend the reach of doña Práxedes's vision, giving her all the access she needs to the information around her.

Nonetheless, adult Matia once again uses childhood vocabulary to inject the narrative with underscored protests against the surveillance she portrays. Matia chooses to depict doña Práxedes as a grotesque godlike figure moving the strings of her puppets, the island inhabitants, in order to make them act according to her will. This choice brings her grandmother down to a more humble level, literally removing the outer shell ("un dios panzudo y descascarillado") that hides her true motives for dominating the town. As Margaret E. W. Jones mentions, Matia's focus on the grandmother's eyes and the transformation of doña Práxedes into a horrible creature is a "reaction to her grandmother who, with her aunt Emilia, stands for all the horror of growing

up. Matia projects her own emotions onto the grandmother's person, for the description comes from within the protagonist, validating the expressionistic manner of narration" (115). Adult Matia expresses the adolescent angst she felt toward her grandmother for controlling all aspects of her life. Not only does Matia infantilize doña Práxedes with this description, but she also animalizes her when she turns her into an octopus with tentacles as eyes.[6] The effect these images have is to diminish in the present moment some of the power doña Práxedes had, which allows Matia to assert control over the narration and get to another underlying factor contributing to the negative opinion of her grandmother: the loss of her own cardboard theater.

Matia's insertion of the theater simile is no accident. She herself had a small cardboard theater that was left behind before coming to the island (Matute, *Primera* 18). In fact, since this object formed an important part of Matia's childhood experience, it is possible to see how she could imagine her grandmother taking over that aspect of her life too. Similar to the dull irritation she felt toward doña Práxedes for spying on the town, young Matia experienced the same sense of frustration when she realized she didn't have her theater with her: "Y sentí una rabia sorda contra mí misma. Y contra la abuela, porque nadie me recordó eso, y ya no lo tenía" (Matute, *Primera* 19). Nichols points out that "El bienestar y la autonomía física de Matia quedaron atrás, en el mundo verde junto a su teatro de marionetas. Allí ella era la titiritera, pero en la isla es Práxedes quien mueve todos los hilos . . ." (57). Young Matia loses the theater only to find out that her grandmother possesses an adult version, further emphasizing the power differential between grandmother and granddaughter; her freedom is stolen by doña Práxedes

[6] See Matute, *Primera memoria* 21, 156 and 178 for more examples of the animalization of the grandmother's gaze. The animalization of the grandmother is repeatedly used to dehumanize her and set her apart from the world that Matia understands, making the fantastic world of child's play and invention more lifelike than the adult world of hidden truths and complex realities. See Jones 45 for further discussion of the effects of animalization.

and replaced with strict regulation and surveillance of her daily activities. As a response to the restrictions of her childhood, adult Matia creates an extremely negative image of her grandmother that is both subtle in its relation to the theater that she once possessed, and blatant in its attack of the surveillance doña Práxedes practiced as she "played" with the townspeople as if they were limp marionettes and used her tentacular vision to spy on their every move.

While it is never revealed that doña Práxedes had direct involvement in the killing of José Taronjí, it is obvious that she had a problem with the man. Jorge de Son Major, the liberal recluse that serves as a counterpart to doña Práxedes on the island (Riddel 75), gave José Taronjí land that encroached on her own property on the *declive* (Matute, *Primera* 119). Matia even overhears a conversation between the people that work for her grandmother in which part of the justification for Taronjí's murder is the fact that he read liberal newspapers and never went to church (Matute, *Primera* 42). Matia's suspicions about the townspeople already being aware of the death are probably true because when she enters the home doña Práxedes is not in her usual chair in the office watching the town, but rather in the sitting room downstairs accompanied by Mosén Mayol, the Catholic priest in the town. This change of habit signals to Matia that "Algo había ocurrido" that allowed doña Práxedes to put aside her surveillance for a while now that the Republican man who posed a threat to her rule is dead (Matute, *Primera* 56). The priest's presence in the home when Matia and Borja return, although not uncommon since he was so admired by doña Práxedes, signals unspoken support of the act of violence and creates an alliance between the matriarch and the church.

Borja's father, a Colonel on the Nationalist side, and doña Práxedes's deceased husband also form a part of the alliance between the matriarch and the priest. Matia notes that "Encima de mi abuela y de Mosén Mayol, en su gran cuadro, estaba el abuelo, con su uniforme de algo

importante. . . . Sobre la mesita, en su marco de plata, la fotografía de tío Alvaro" (Matute, *Primera* 57). Matia interrupts the narration to comment on the images in the sitting room:

> (Ellos: el abuelo y tío Álvaro, estaban en la sala casi físicamente: no se podía prescindir de sus ojos, de sus mandíbulas – ancha y fofa, una; aguda y cruel la otra –, siempre que nos reuníamos en aquella estancia. Participaban de nuestras reuniones siempre, se diría, el rostro del padre de Borja, largo, enjuto, con su gran boina de carlista y la cicatriz en la comisura derecha, y todos los demás retratitos de ex príncipes, aspirantes a reyes o ex infantes, dedicados al tío Álvaro.) (Matute, *Primera* 57)

As María del Carmen Riddel notes, "En la novela doña Práxedes es el principio del orden patriarcal y jerárquico. Es la nobleza terrateniente, aliada del ejército y de la iglesia: 'Mosén Mayol, y la abuela reinaban, despreciaban y callaban'. Es el poder prejuicioso y tiránico. Es, en suma, el franquismo y, de acuerdo con eso, acoge los valores que ese franquismo promocionaba" (75-76). The military forces, while not physically present on the island, are always nearby in the form of images that represent their power and reinforce the greater organization of the triumvirate: church, military and Franco. The looks emanating from these images serve as further reminder that the domination doña Práxedes maintains on the isolated island fits into a larger context of repression within Spain as a whole. The "almost physical" presence of these absent members of the family reinforce Hardcastle's observation that ". . . Matia's grandmother – backed by the ever-present pictures of her husband and son in full military dress . . . display[s] the force of Francoist government" within the home (391), thereby solidifying the link between her tentacular vision and the conservative ideals she upholds through her gaze.

With the support of the regime and the influential Catholic Church, doña Práxedes is able to continue her hold on power and even expand it to invade all parts of life. A significant characteristic of doña Práxedes's tentacular vision is the variety of actions that it can perform. In

the long citation describing her tentacular vision, Matia attributes it with the capacity to enter homes, lick, sweep, raise roofs, guess things, and beat things. When the eyes are described as tentacles it signifies that they are able to reach into many spaces and touch things. Nothing is able to escape doña Práxedes's visual reach because on another occasion Matia describes her grandmother negatively as "Hurgando, con sus prismáticos de teatro, en las ventanas de su monstruoso juguete del declive" (Matute, *Primera* 106). If we add the visual rummaging through the homes of the town, we have an extensive list of techniques of surveillance performed on the town, many of which are related to the sense of touch. Adult Matia has internalized the way that young Matia understood the power that her grandmother possessed over the town. If seeing equals touching, as adult Matia seems to convey in her descriptions of the matriarch's gaze, then the effect is a total invasion of privacy that leaves nothing unseen. This metaphorical conception of seeing paves the way for a literal fusion of seeing and touching. Furthermore, the repeated simile is a sign that her gaze is so intrusive that it infringes upon boundaries between the different senses. Blurring the boundaries between sight and touch emphasizes Matia's lack of privacy as a child – she cannot escape from her grandmother –, and it also serves as a point of connection between the physical world of the protagonist's childhood and the grandmother's gaze. It pervades everything and even seems to touch Matia when at its most intense.

The most specific use of the invasive gaze is to monitor Matia's physical appearance in order to indoctrinate her into the strictly regulated world of acceptable female behavior. This consists of tolerating the grandmother's most intrusive practices, those that combine sight and touch in an attempt to ensure Matia's ladylike behavior and appearance. Matia ultimately ends up being the site of doña Práxedes's exertion of power when the latter physically enters Matia's space: "La abuela me miraba los dedos, por si aún estaban manchados de tinta. Acercaba su gran

nariz a mi boca para oler si había fumado" (Matute, *Primera* 93). Another example occurs when doña Práxedes scolds Matia for coming to breakfast looking disheveled and sick the day after the visit to Jorge's home: "Me cogió la cabeza entre sus manos huesudas, y sentí clavarse en mi mejilla derecha su brillante. Usaba una horrible colonia que pretendía ser campestre y resultaba medicinal. Sentí sus ojos en los míos, físicamente, como dos hormigas recorriendo mis niñas, mi córnea dolorida" (Matute, *Primera* 183). In both examples physical touch and a probing gaze combine to assist doña Práxedes in an attempt to discover the secrets Matia has kept from her. The effect of relating seeing to touching is a visceral one.

Ultimately concerned with instilling in Matia the "correcto acatamiento" propagated by the *Sección Femenina* (Galdona Pérez 121), doña Práxedes violates the physical autonomy of her granddaughter with total disregard for her feelings: "Una de las cosas más humillantes de aquel tiempo, recuerdo, era la preocupación constante de mi abuela por mi posible futura belleza. Por una supuesta belleza que debía adquirir, fuese como fuese" (Matute *Primera* 104). Matia cannot avoid viewing the insistence on acceptable physical appearance as a tyrannical act, especially when it borders on abuse: "Sentada en su mecedora, escrutándome con sus redondos ojos de lechuza, me obligaba a andar y a sentarme, me miraba las manos y los ojos. (Me recordaba a los del pueblo, los días del mercado, cuando compraban una mula.) Criticaba el color tostado de mi piel y las pecas que me nacían, por culpa del sol, alrededor de la nariz" (Matute, *Primera* 104-105). When the grandmother scrutinizes Matia's physical appearance she objectifies her granddaughter in an attempt to make her into a commodity worthy of the lofty ideals doña Práxedes upholds: order, beauty and decorum (Matute, *Primera* 104). Essentially what her grandmother is doing is preparing her for a future marriage transaction that will only work, according to doña Práxedes, if the criteria for beauty or money are met. Not only does she

objectify Matia, but in the process she also makes Matia feel like an animal through the critical appraisal of her looks. This obsession with beauty has its roots in the cultural expectations dictating gender-specific roles in society. Carmen Martín Gaite extensively analyzes the rules dictating feminine conduct in *Usos amorosos de la posguerra española*, and, as we will see in the chapter on *El cuarto de atrás*, the narrator also dialogues with these restrictions on female behavior when she describes the experiences she had in the presence of a mirror and sideboard. Doña Práxedes focuses solely on the beauty Matia must obtain when she scrutinizes her appearance, making this the only point of contact she has with her granddaughter (Sotelo Vázquez 174). Her blunt comments about Matia's appearance, "¡Siempre al sol, como un pillete! Dios mío, qué desastre: boca grande, ojos separados . . ." (Matute, *Primera* 105), create an emotional rift between the two family members that makes their interactions more combative than productive.

The emotional separation between the two family members is evident in the disapproving looks of the grandmother and the hatred with which Matia views the woman who is supposed to protect her from harm, not inflict it: "En aquellos momentos la odiaba, no podía evitarlo. Deseaba que se muriese allí mismo, de repente y patas arriba, como los pájaros. Con el bastoncillo de bambú me reseguía la espalda y me golpeaba las rodillas y los hombros. – Algún día me agradecerás todo esto . . . Puedes irte" (Matute, *Primera* 105). María del Carmen Riddel describes the relationship in terms of war: "Para domar a la adolescente es preciso comenzar por hacerle aceptar sus armas de combate para después enseñarla a usarlas" (76). By forcing the weapon of beauty on Matia, doña Práxedes clearly places the maintenance of exterior appearances above the psychological well being of her granddaughter. Earlier in the book, when adult Matia confides that "(Acaso, sólo deseaba que alguien me amara alguna vez. No lo

recuerdo bien.)," she admits to feeling alone despite being surrounded by family members who were supposed to protect her, and most importantly, love her (Matute, *Primera* 73). Matia is doubly marginalized by doña Práxedes: the blunt criticism of her looks physically places her apart from the norm, which in turn removes her from the family unit emotionally.

Matia's description of the extent of her grandmother's power reinforces the sensual nature of memory while at the same time it demonstrates how doña Práxedes's tentacular gaze is linked to the physical imposition of the regime's ideals on Matia's body.[7] As Foucault points out, "A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (*Discipline and Punish* 136), and Matia's youth and history of rebellion make her the perfect candidate for transformation. Indoctrination into the practices of hygiene and beauty requires being subjected to doña Práxedes's invasive methods of bodily discipline. Doña Práxedes exercises power with a physical examination that is a method of disciplining her granddaughter and creating a young lady who conforms to her ideals:

> And the examination is the technique by which power, instead of emitting the signs of its potency, instead of imposing its mark on its subjects, holds them in a mechanism of objectification. In this space of domination, disciplinary power manifests its potency, essentially, by arranging objects. The examination is, as it were, the ceremony of this objectification. (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 187)

Matia feels stuck in this "mechanism of objectification" as she matures and feels the restraints of her grandmother's power molding her into someone she does not want to be. This repeated ceremony of objectification forces Matia to look for relief from her grandmother's demands elsewhere. Doña Práxedes's tentacular vision may go so far as to dictate Matia's physical

[7] Marisa Sotelo Vázquez's reflection on the title of the novel emphasizes the prevalence of the senses in Matia's remembrances: "No se trata de una memoria intelectual, sino de la más primaria, la sensorial y sensual, que envuelve el recuerdo con una luz o un aroma especial…" (175).

appearance, but there are some objects that escape her gaze and allow Matia to have some control over her life during adolescence, such as her doll Gorogó and the stolen money, cigarettes and liquor she and Borja hide from doña Práxedes. These objects remain unseen by doña Práxedes throughout most of the novel, thus escaping her examination and allowing Matia some freedom from disciplinary pressure. At least for a time.

The Power of Unseen Objects

As we just saw with the analysis of doña Práxedes's gaze, her scopic regime is an integral part of the establishment of a central, all-controlling power in the town. This explains why much of what Matia and Borja do in their freetime must be kept out of her line of sight. They understand that if they want to maintain a semblance of control over their own lives they must exercise that control in a space that falls outside of the reach of her gaze. For Matia, hiding her doll Gorogó from doña Práxedes is the one outlet she has to escape this surveillance.[8] Gorogó accompanies Matia to the island when she is taken from the care of her nanny to live on the island of Mallorca.[9] Matia treasures Gorogó because the toy that she "guardaba desde lejana memoria" is the physical link to the time before her stay on the island (Matute, *Primera* 101). Gorogó even played a part in Matia's expulsion from the boarding school that led to her stay with doña Práxedes: "Aquel que me llevé a Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles, que me quiso tirar a

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[8] Gorogó and the *teatro de cartón* left behind on the mainland are objects from the Matute's own childhood. See Sotelo Vázquez 178, Pérez 96 and Argüelles for more autobiographical details. The other two authors in this dissertation, Juan Goytisolo and Carmen Martín Gaite both use "real" objects in their novels, although for different purposes as we shall see.

[9] The autobiographical nature of Gorogó is confirmation that for the author the doll held a special place in her childhood experience. But the doll does not belong to that time in the author's life alone. Gorogó makes a very prominent appearance in Matute's acceptance speech for the Premio Cervantes in 2010. The author says that as a child, "sólo tenía un amigo, mi muñeco Gorogó, que naturalmente más tarde incorporé a una de las novelas con las que me siento más identificada, *Primera memoria*… Gorogó, como entonces, sigue conmigo. Ahora mismo lo llevo en todos mis viajes y le sigo contando lo que no puedo contarle a nadie. Hoy me espera también en el hotel… Gorogó, estás aquí, mi mejor invento. Estás admirado, viejo amigo, en este bien inolvidable."

la basura la Subdirectora, a quien propiné la patada, causa de mi expulsión" (Matute, *Primera* 101). The attachment Matia has to the doll is so intense that she resorts to a physical rebellion against the adult that attempted to take it away. This response may seem rather extreme, especially since adult Matia leaves out the reason for the initial confrontation with the *Subdirectora*, but it helps to explain Matia's reliance on the doll in times of great stress. Her lack of familiarity with the new experiences and new places is alleviated by the presence of the doll that she has had for as long as she can remember. More importantly, however, is what the act of taking away the doll from Matia reveals about the relationship between adults and children. An adult can discipline through restriction of toys or simply force the child out of that stage of development by depriving him or her of the imaginative tools of that period. Matia rebels against authority and shows how much she values this doll as a companion in her changing situations. The result of this experience at the boarding school is that Matia comes to the island conscious of the possibility that adults will try to separate her from her toys, making it imperative that she keep her doll a secret in order to maintain the link to childhood. This is a defense mechanism that allows Matia to exert the only power she has over the situation: hide the doll to try to escape the watchful gaze of adults, and in the process escape the pressures of reality that accumulate as she grows older.

Matia's affective relationship with the doll provides new insight as to why, as an adult, the narrator uses youthful vocabulary and mental images to depict her grandmother and past experiences. For this discussion of the intersection between the material and the emotional I will draw on Christopher Bollas's concept of the "structural integrity" of an object. Bollas argues that the makeup of an object has a direct impact on the self's understanding of the surrounding world (88). "Structural integrity" is the phrase Bollas uses to describe how the appearance and

constitution of an object provide "specific use-potential so that when it is employed it affects us in a manner true to its character" (89). Bollas quotes from some of his previous work and states that "The object world 'is an extraordinary lexicon for the individual, who speaks the self's aesthetic through his precise choices and particular uses of its constituents'" (88-89). The doll is generally used as a plaything and a confidant whose physical composition allows the narrator to remain in a world of imagination as long as Gorogó remains out of sight of Borja and doña Práxedes. When Matia chooses to save her doll and interact with him secretly she develops a youthful lexicon that she will use throughout her transition into young adulthood, and that will serve as a powerful tool when she tells her story as an adult.

There is no better example of the impending invasion of childhood that Matia experiences than the greeting she is given by doña Práxedes: "'Te domaremos' me dijo, apenas llegué a la isla" (Matute, *Primera* 16). Matia is well aware of the aggressive nature of doña Práxedes's attempts to normalize her actions, especially after the humiliating scrutinies of Matia's body that we analyzed in the previous section that were justified as the preparation needed to become a woman. The threat comes from doña Práxedes's mouth, but the plural *nosotros* implies a group effort to bring Matia into line with her beliefs. The knowledge of her grandmother's plans does not stop Matia from resisting this change in a private setting:

> 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. Entre los blancos pañuelos y praderas verdes y mares de papel azul, con ciudades como cabezas de alfiler, vivía escondido a la brutal curiosidad ajena mi pequeño Gorogó. (Matute, *Primera* 100)

It is Matia and Gorogó against *them*, the *ellos* that Matia associates with adulthood, enforcement of rules, and lack of understanding. The constant threat of the imaginary world being invaded by

realities she would prefer to ignore forces Matia to keep Gorogó hidden from others in an armoire. Gorogó resides inside the armoire where Matia keeps her "pequeño bagaje de memorias," as if it were possible to physically store the memories of her recent childhood past in the piece of furniture and keep them safe from the realities she does not wish to face (Matute, *Primera* 101). Here adult Matia portrays young Matia's need to hide Gorogó from children and adults alike in order to show how this technique of isolation and contemplation relates to her own need for self-preservation and safety from harm. Mara S. Steen makes a similar observation when she talks about the children in Matute's short stories: "Para no contagiarse con el mundo de la realidad, vivido por el adulto, se margina física o mentalmente. Este aislamiento supone dejar fuera a los mayores que no lo comprenden" (140). To keep Gorogó from the "brutal curiousity" of others is symbolic of the separation Matia herself wishes to maintain from the world she does not understand. Her isolation from the adult world implies a reliance on the material world of her childhood in order to maintain a balance in her life and find comfort in the safety of her invented fantasies.

Matia's cousin Borja is included in the list of those she must keep from seeing Gorogó because he is associated with the more experienced adult realm, even though he is only one year older than her. This detail is significant because like doña Práxedes's tentacular gaze, his look would contaminate the innocence she wishes to continue to associate with the doll. At the beginning of young Matia's time on the island she is not sure why Borja holds such power over Lauro, the cousins' tutor who has also been involved with Borja sexually (Matute, *Primera* 25). Young Matia even remarks, referring to Borja, that "A mí también me apresó, puede decirse, sin saber cómo" (Matute, *Primera* 25). What she notices but fails to understand completely about Borja's influence becomes part of a strange but highly symbolic dream: ". . . sabía que estuve

soñando que Borja me tenía sujeta con una cadena y me llevaba tras él, como un fantástico titiritero. Me rebelaba y deseaba gritar – como cuando era pequeña, en el campo –, pero Borja me sujetaba fuertemente" (Matute, *Primera* 25-26). Matia is semi-conscious of Borja's power to control her, and by not showing the doll to him she reserves a space for imaginative trips that help to relieve the pain of the injustices she faces during her time on the island.

The doll's safety is paramount to ensuring her own safety in her grandmother's home because instead of the love she was shown by her nanny, "En casa de la abuela, hubo frialdad y promesas de grandes correcciones" (Matute, *Primera* 20). This psychological alienation forces Matia to console herself with her toys and use her imagination and memory to achieve a sense of security with inanimate objects that she does not feel in her daily life.[10] Matia calls the armoire "her island," which implies both isolation and a sense of empowerment because she, like her grandmother, has control over an "island." The scale of Matia's island is obviously much smaller than that of her grandmother's, but when she plays in the armoire she is free to do as she pleases. Thus Matia's attempt to shield Gorogó is an admission that brings to light the pain of feeling caught, as an adolescent, between the worlds of childhood and adulthood, and a reassertion of the validity of those emotions despite the adult world's denial of them.

The other significant characteristic of Matia's description of Gorogó is the fact that she interchanges names for the doll, assigning them different tasks according to her state of mind:

> Aquel que se llamaba unas veces Gorogó – para el que dibujaba diminutas ciudades en las esquinas y márgenes de los libros, inventadas a punta de pluma, con escaleras de caracol, cúpulas afiladas, campanarios, y noches asimétricas –, y que otras veces se llamaba simplemente Negro, y era un desgraciado muchacho

[10] See Díaz for an analysis of alienation in *La trampa*, the third novel of Matute's trilogy *Los mercaderes*. In this novel Matia returns to the island as an adult, and although the time period is different, many of the conclusions Díaz draws about this novel can apply to *Primera memoria*.

> que limpiaba chimeneas en una ciudad remotísima de Andersen. (Matute, *Primera* 101)

Introduced at the beginning of the novel as her "Pequeño Negro de trapo – Gorogó, Deshollinador," adult Matia waits until halfway through the novel to demonstrate how the two distinct imaginary worlds she invents for her doll exemplify the split between imagination and reality (Matute, *Primera* 18). While Gorogó lives in a world of imagination drawn by Matia that seems to expand on the fantastic world created by Hans Christian Andersen in his tale "The Shepherdess and the Chimney Sweep," the same doll when it is called Negro is simply a disgraced chimney sweep confined to a world that Matia recognizes as make-believe, thus removing the enchantment of the tale and replacing it with reality.[11] Nichols provides a brief summary of the Andersen story in which she draws a connection between the name Matia assigns her doll and the chimney sweep character (a statue come to life) that attempts to help the shepherdess (also a statue) escape the shelf where she usually resides (52). When the two finally escape out the chimney, the shepherdess becomes afraid of the great big world she sees outside the home and insists that the chimney sweep help her return to her safe shelf (Nichols 52). Like the shepherdess, the world of adult problems overwhelms Matia from time to time and she turns to her chimney sweep doll for support.[12] However, unlike in a tale where statues come to life and are able to take refuge in a safe, imaginary world, Matia is forced to acknowledge how reality cannot be escaped, even during playtime.

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[11] See Matute, "Entrevista" 238 on the significance of Hans Christian Andersen in Matute's literary career.

[12] "No, no me descubras más cosas, no me digas oscuras cosas de hombres y mujeres, porque no quiero saber nada del mundo que no entiendo. Déjame, déjame, que aún no lo entiendo" (Matute, *Primera* 124).

The "duras o indiferentes palabras" of everyone around her, especially the words *guerra* and *padre* are wrapped up in her playtime with Gorogó and the Atlas, as she attempts to make sense of what these terms really mean and determine where she fits into their definitions:

> La guerra donde mi padre se perdió, naufragó, hundió, con sus ideas malas. La guerra, allí en el mapa, en las zonas aún inconquistadas, lo absorbió como un pantano. Y de él, ¿qué quedaba? (Ah, sí, el pequeño Peter Pan, al Isla de Nunca Jamás, Las desgracias de Sofía… ¿De él? No, no. Él no sabía nada, seguramente de la Isla de Nunca Jamás.) Y el recuerdo – allí, con la cabeza metida en el armario, la cintura doblada, el crujido de las páginas del Atlas en una menuda conversación – sólo llegaba, acaso, en el eco de su voz: '*Matia, Matia, ¿no me dices nada? Soy papá*…' (Matute, *Primera* 101-102)

Since young Matia's memory is insufficient to recreate a comprehensive image of her father, exterior influences filter into her imaginative space and unite the disparate worlds of childhood fantasy and present-day adult realities. The influence of the rhetoric her grandmother uses to describe her father clearly seeps into her description; doña Práxedes is not shy about condemning the actions of her "corrompido padre (*ideas infernales, hechos nefastos*)" and the Republican army she vehemently opposes (Matute, *Primera* 16). The parenthetical statement made by adult Matia is a perfect example of the type of disillusionment that comes from the adult world to corrupt Matia's play space: Never Never Land, where children never grow up, still surfaces in adult Matia's remembrances, but it serves as a lesson that with maturation the belief in a fantasy land such as Peter Pan's can no longer exist. Not even her father, of whom she remembers little, would have understood what Never Never Land meant. These parenthetical statements are a characteristic repeated throughout the novel, and they draw attention to the invasion of adult reasoning on childhood imagination, creating a sort of paratext that contrasts the idealism of youth with the disenchantment of adults (Sotelo Vázquez 175). The armoire may assist Matia in

her attempt to save the few memories she has of her father, but inevitably the space is infiltrated by adult notions as Matia matures.

Although Matia is able to keep her fantasies a secret, hiding Gorogó from adults proves much more difficult in a household governed by the prying eyes of doña Práxedes. Matia succeeds in hiding her doll from Borja and her grandmother, but her aunt Emilia sees her clutching something one day during *siesta* and demands to know what Matia has. When she grabs the doll away from Matia she is surprised at what she finds: "En lugar de burlarse dijo: – ¡Ah, es un muñeco!... Sí, yo también dormía con un muñeco, hasta casi la víspera de casarme" (Matute, *Primera* 110). Matia is met with an unexpected sense of understanding from her aunt, but even this attempt at forging a relationship with her niece falls flat. Matia's adolescent concerns and the relationship with her doll are very different from the perspective Emilia has as an adult who only remembers the comforting purpose of her own doll. Young Matia's response to this unexpected admission is a defensive one that she keeps to herself:

> Levanté la cabeza para mirarla, y vi que sonreía. Se lo quité de las manos y lo volví a poner bajo la almohada, pensando: 'No es eso, ya no duermo abrazada a Gorogó – en realidad no dormí nunca con él, sólo con un oso que se llamaba Celín –. Este es para otras cosas; para viajar y contarle injusticias. No es un muñeco para quererle, estúpida.'
> Pero ella dijo:
> – Siempre me pides cigarrillos, y ahora resulta que aún juegas con muñecos. (Matute, *Primera* 110).

Matia's protectiveness of Gorogó is the result of the fear she has acquired because Borja and her grandmother's hostility toward children's toys and games. She is unable to make a connection with her aunt because of this conditioning and opts instead to keep the doll and her thoughts hidden to defend herself from possible harm. But as we saw with the infiltration of the grandmother's opinions about the war in the secret space of the armoire, Matia's relationship

with Gorogó is also evolving; a combination of youthful attachments ("viajar") and adult thoughts ("contarle injusticias") makes Gorogó an object that straddles both of these worlds as it helps Matia negotiate the complicated transition to adulthood.

Emilia, although lazy and detached from the children's lives, notices the contradictory nature of Matia's actions when she discovers Gorogó. Instead of making fun of Matia or telling doña Práxedes about the doll, Emilia simply points out that her niece is caught between these two realms of existence. The doll links Matia to childhood while the cigarettes represent an attempt to bridge the gap between adolescence and adulthood. Since the doll straddles both the childhood and adult worlds, Gorogó can be considered a "transitional object" whose ties to youth and adulthood endow it with special significance for Matia, especially as she revisits her past. A "transitional object," according to the work of D.W. Winnicott, is the first possession of an infant or young child that links the interior, imaginative world with the outside world of reality (Rudnytsky xii). As D.W. Winnicott explains, "Failure of dependability or loss of object means to the child a loss of the play area, and loss of meaningful symbol" (9-10). Adult Matia includes this scene with Emilia in order to portray the process of loss she undergoes as she transitions from childhood to adulthood, thus losing her childhood play area as we will see in the following section. There exists a constant movement between these worlds as Matia tries to find her place in the world, and Gorogó materializes this struggle for the narrator.

Besides Emilia, who dismisses Matia's experimentation with cigarettes as a phase of childhood, no other adult in the household knows about this activity that she and Borja share. In fact, even the way they manage to get the cigarettes remains a mystery to doña Práxedes and Emilia until the end of the novel. Borja is the thief in charge of the operation of stealing money from their grandmother and aunt to buy the cigarettes and mints to cover up the smell on their

breath. Matia is his accomplice. She plays a more passive role as she stands guard to warn Borja if anyone is coming, and the reward for her assistance is sharing the booty (Matute, *Primera* 103-104). The stolen money has value because the intricate process of stealing it represents a secret rebellion against the rules of doña Práxedes and because it can buy the children what they would normally not be able to obtain. The cigarettes are Matia and Borja's way of feeling more like adults than adolescents, but the way they acquire them is more akin to an adolescent game that keeps them both outside of the realm of adulthood. The game is only exciting as long as it remains secret, and the purchase of cigarettes demonstrates an attempt to approximate the adult experience that ultimately falls short because it hinges upon not being seen by adults. They have been exposed to doña Práxedes's surveillance for so long that they must work within its confines in order to escape it. The money and cigarettes would lose their value if seen by their strict grandmother, and both children would be punished for disobeying her, evidence that they are still adolescents who do not make up their own rules.

Borja steals more than money from the home. Borja's vice, as Matia calls it (Matute, *Primera* 103), includes taking liquor, cards, and even a revolver from their deceased grandfather's quarters that he uses against *ellos* in the war game he runs on the island. Besides being the thief, Borja is in charge of granting access to the stolen items. These objects are locked away in a box hidden in the *Joven Simón*, an abandoned boat far from doña Práxedes's gaze. Borja is the only one with a key to the box and although Matia enjoys the privilege of sharing the treasures and knowing about the hiding place, this is only because Borja allows it (Matute, *Primera* 32-33). In the war game Borja is the person that calls a truce or summons his "troops" to fight (Matute, *Primera* 86). The same control is exercised with the stolen items because he has the power to deny or grant Matia access to them. These objects, like the cigarettes, have value

because they remain unseen by adults and secure Borja's dominion over Matia since he has the power to grant or deny her access to them.

Borja's cunning nature also remains unseen by doña Práxedes. Assisted by his skills of faking sweetness and obedience, Borja astutely convinces his grandmother and aunt that he is an innocent and pure young man on the outside (Matute, *Primera* 15). What the adults see is a constructed image that Borja uses to manipulate them without their knowledge. Matia recognizes this and describes the great confidence both Emilia and doña Práxedes have in Borja and his "supuesta nobleza" that allows him to get away with more than Matia ever could (Matute, *Primera* 103). Only Matia understands that what is hidden behind this façade is the true Borja. Controlling Lauro as he does the war game on the island, Borja "asume un lugar en la estructura de la memoria comparable al que ocupa en el orden social, familiar y sexual: es más importante que su prima" (Nichols 42). As Nichols points out, Borja goes relatively unnoticed by the reader who pays more attention to Matia because of her role as protagonist and narrator (42). I would add that Matia's focus on her grandmother's gaze is another significant factor that contributes to Borja's presence being overlooked. Moreover, this focus on young Matia and doña Práxedes allows the adult narrator to build up to the central example of *desengaño* that destroys any previous expectations about who truly holds power on the island, thereby proving correct Nichols's observation that the novel develops a demystifying tone that constantly destroys previously developed ideas (40). While it may seem that doña Práxedes is the most powerful person on the island because of the focus Matia has on her gaze, it is Borja who slyly manages the relationships between the adolescents on the island, using his status as doña Práxedes's grandson to gain power over his peers. Matia is no exception; at the beginning of the novel she sums up their relationship as one based on strategy, not emotional attachment: "Borja no me

tenía cariño, pero me necesitaba y prefería tenerme dentro de su aro, como tenía a Lauro" (Matute, *Primera* 22). Thus, alongside the power Matia holds over the world of innocence and fantasy, her control pales in comparison to Borja's power to manipulate real-life relationships through knowledge he possesses about less privileged individuals. Matia is able to remain in his good graces as long as she obeys his rules and keeps the secrets she only half understands.

The Power of Seen Objects

When Gorogó was simply a part of Matia's playworld in the armoire she was able to keep her doll and her secrets safe from Borja, creating an island within an island. When she shows the doll to her friend Manuel, the adopted son of murdered Republican, José Taronjí, she leaves the security of her island of imagination and ventures outside to a more hostile environment that will force her to learn the things she has resisted seeing and hearing:

> Y él – nunca lo hubiera imaginado – tenía a Gorogó entre sus manos. En sus manos morenas, con callos nuevos y arañazos (no estaba acostumbrado a la tierra), sostenía a mi pequeño negro. Le daba vueltas entre los dedos, lo miraba, y seguramente no lo entendía –¿qué más daba? –. Me escuchaba serio, callado, con sus grandes ojos brillando en la sombra de los árboles. (Matute, *Primera* 122-123)

For Matia, showing Gorogó to another person is accompanied by a loss of the innocent and comfortably unaware status of a child. The rhetorical question Matia poses to herself reveals a rather surprising dismissal of the significance of the fantasy world to which Gorogó belongs; it is less important to have that world understood by her new friend than the fact that Manuel is listening to her attentively and learning about all the aspects of her life. While the two played with similar toys as children – they both had cardboard theaters – the conversation does not focus on the imaginative aspects of the past, but rather on the emotional ties to people no longer in their lives (Matute, *Primera* 124). Although Matia is still uncomfortable hearing the "dark

things" about men and women that she previously did not know and did not understand, she takes a step toward adulthood by sharing the emotional aspects of her past and listening to Manuel's equally painful story of separation from his biological father, Jorge de Son Major (Matute, *Primera* 124-126).

This journey to adulthood is not free from remorse or fear. Manuel's attachment to Jorge and the difficult decision he made to live with his mother and adopted father, Sa Malene and José Taronjí, directly contrasts with solitary existence Matia remembers even when her parents were still together (Matute, *Primera* 125-127). She feels a sudden jealousy take hold of her because Manuel speaks with such conviction about the father that he loves whereas Matia is unable to say the same thing with certainty: "Pues sólo se me atropellaban tonterías como: 'Pues yo quiero mucho a Gorogó: pues yo quiero mucho a aquella bola de cristal, y quiero mucho, quiero mucho . . .'" (Matute, *Primera* 128-129). Matia faces the fact that her attachments are to inanimate objects and not human beings. The realization that her life is void of the type of unconditional love Manuel has for Jorge leaves Matia feeling alone with her playthings and filled with such pain that she thought it would never end (Matute, *Primera* 129). At this moment when her physical world meets the emotional struggles she has suppressed, Matia becomes a traitor whose allegiance to the fantasies she has constructed wavers. Each time Matia learns something new about herself or the world of adults she leaves behind part of the fantasy land of her childhood and feels as though she is betraying him: "Era yo, yo misma, y nadie más la que traicionaba a Gorogó y a la Isla de Nunca Jamás" (Matute, *Primera* 128). Even her faithful companion and listener, Gorogó, cannot make Matia's life as complete as she claims he did in the past when her parents were never around: "Cuando volvía a casa, nunca estaban ellos. Nunca, ni él, ni ella. ¡Pero no me importaba! Además, tenía a Gorogó" (Matute, *Primera* 122). From the moment

Gorogó is shared with Manuel the doll begins to lose the value he had for Matia when she was younger; he is no longer the toy she can confide in and count on being separate from the adult world of emotions. Instead he becomes a toy that experiences her emotional turmoil as Matia does, losing its innocence along with her as he becomes just a disgraced chimneysweep, her "Pobre Gorogó." The more she learns, the more miserable her doll becomes as she projects her sadness on him.

Oftentimes light is present when Matia learns about what she previously refused to face or simply misunderstood. When Matia approaches Manuel for the first time it is because she feels "una extraña vergüenza" for all the hateful and careless acts committed on the island, many of which are directed at Manuel and his family (Matute, *Primera* 116-117). Matia surprises herself by voicing her disgust of the island and everyone on it to Manuel, the only person she excludes from her judgment. She also recognizes the change she experiences as a shedding of pent up feelings kept hidden for so long: ". . . me pareció que una delgada corteza se rompía, con todo lo que me obligaban a sofocar, Borja con sus burlas, la abuela con sus rígidas costumbres y su pereza y despreocupación de nosotros y tía Emilia con su inutilidad pegajosa (Matute, *Primera* 116-117). What is significant about Matia's admission is that it is accompanied by "un deslumbramiento desconocido," a brief sense of enlightenment that denotes a fresh understanding of the world that was not possible before Matia spoke up. The omnipresence of the sun on the island is significant for its metaphorical value as it helps Matia "see," and therefore know new things. It is also no coincidence that Matia's learning about the adult world truly begins in the section of the novel entitled "La escuela del sol" because it is under the sun where she meets Manuel and continues to be exposed to the visible realities that were previously hidden to her. Since much of what Matia learns from this point on is acquired through sight, and

the light that helps her to see these things is the link between knowledge and seeing. This relationship between light and knowledge is central to Matia's introduction into adulthood, and from this point on will serve as a counterpoint to the relationship between darkness and ignorance, or a refusal to know things about the adult world.

In addition to its metaphorical use in the novel to signal knowledge, light fits into the context of power operations on the island because it is through illumination that subjection can take place (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 154). It plays a key role in the successful panoptic mechanism because light allows movements to be seen more easily, which creates the opposite effect of a dungeon: "Full lighting and the eye of a supervisor capture better than darkness, which ultimately protected. Visibility is a trap" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 200). The island, especially the space outside, is constantly lit and therefore offers itself up for the techniques of surveillance that require full visibility. Matia puts her fantasyland in jeopardy as soon as she removes Gorogó from his hiding place inside the home and makes friends with Manuel, a member of a family scorned by doña Práxedes and the townspeople for their association with liberal politics. Now that the doll, a symbol of her innocence and vulnerability, is visible she opens herself up to new knowledge, meanwhile exposing herself to Borja's curious gaze and the effects his gaze will have on Matia's awareness of the realities around her. These effects are negative since Matia idealizes the childhood world of play for much of the narrative. If doña Práxedes controls what she can see of the island from inside her home, Borja is in charge of the parts of the island out of her line of sight, such as the *plaza de los judíos* where the war game is played and the beach where he keeps his treasures. Matia and Manuel always meet outside (Nichols 64), a detail that implies that there is no relief from the sun that illuminates everything and makes it easier for those who are looking to see what happens on the island. For

example, when Matia describes the scene on the beach with Manuel and his deceased adopted father, the Republican José Taronjí, she pays special attention to the sun: "Se sentía su dominio rojo y furioso contra la arena y el agua" (Matute, *Primera* 41). The sun seems to be working in tandem with the people on the island whose goal it is to rule over the less powerful because it shines on everything and spreads fury much in the same way that the Taronjí brothers spread their hatred.[13] The visibility that the sun provides is the tool that helps to maintain power on the island because it reinforces the constant threat of surveillance.

Matia feels that she has betrayed Gorogó when she does not resist gaining knowledge about the adult world, but Borja feels betrayed for a more sinister and prejudiced adult reason: Matia has made friends with one of the outcasts on the island, an action that prompts him to kick Matia out of his group of friends (Matute, *Primera* 135). Not only that, but Borja, who normally possesses all the information Matia lacks, is humiliated when Matia reveals that Jorge de Son Major is Manuel's real father, not José Taronjí (Matute, *Primera* 146). Incredulous and angry because Borja secretly admires Jorge (Matute, *Primera* 46), he begins to exact his revenge by obliging Matia to learn even more about the adult relationships all around her. The first relationship Borja alludes to is the homosexual one between him and Lauro, Matia and Borja's tutor: "Te voy a abrir los ojos: eres una niña inocente. Pero, puesto que crees saber tanto… Vamos, te contaré algo. Sabes, el Chino . . ." (Matute, *Primera* 149). In this case, it is not something that Matia sees that provides her with the negative information, but what Borja implies in his "telling" of the relationship. Borja possesses the knowledge, and therefore the power to tell or withhold information as it benefits him. In this case, he leverages his knowledge

[13] See M. Jones 117-118. Also, examples of the sun as furious or dominating appear in *Primera memoria* 36, 38, 41, 67, 108, 113, 159, 210.

against Lauro to ensure that he obeys him. The emphasis Matia places on Borja's relationship with Lauro solidifies the link between knowledge and power that she develops throughout the narrative. Borja's experiences and knowledge give him an advantage over his tutor, and by explaining this to Matia he asserts his control over those around him, including his cousin. Matia is at a disadvantage because she does not completely grasp (or does not want to understand) the significance of their relationship, and finds herself forced into recognizing that she cannot avoid exposure to the adult lessons she has sought to avoid.

The clandestine relationship between Emilia and Jorge de Son Major is the next thing Borja reveals, much to the displeasure of Matia who would prefer to "remain in the dark" about it. Borja found letters that Emilia wrote and that were returned unopened: "La maligna luz de la linterna mostraba las primeras frases, los nombres. Aparté los ojos, no quería mirar . . . pero sus delgadas y duras manos de ladrón me obligaron a volver la cabeza hacia los papeles amarillentos, y la dañina lengüecilla de luz iluminaba tristísimas frases de unas tristísmias cartas devueltas…" (Matute, *Primera* 153-154). Borja forces Matia to look at the proof of this prohibited relationship by shining the lantern on the paper. Borja controls the light by using it to subject Matia to the painful knowledge that Borja may be the illegitimate son of Jorge de Son Major (Matute, *Primera* 154). The light that illuminates the words is transformed into a "damaging little tongue" because it shines on the letters; it becomes the "voice" conveying the unwanted information to Matia. Light is associated, then, with exposure to adult themes and contrasts directly with the darkness where she would prefer to remain, closing her eyes to shut out what is most disturbing to her. When Borja uses his knowledge to "open Matia's eyes" and shed light on what she previously did not understand, he establishes himself as the adolescent in control of the relationships around him.

Borja's dominance over Matia is solidified when, at the end of the novel, he witnesses Matia's betrayal. He and Matia shared the secret of the stolen money and other objects hidden on the boat until the point when she shows them and the hiding place to Manuel. When Manuel sees these objects he is taciturn probably because, as Matia only realizes later, they are hidden in the place where his adoptive father was killed (Matute, *Primera* 192-193). Ironically, Manuel will be punished for seeing these objects despite the fact that he is indifferent to them and poses no real threat to Borja. Borja, ever watchful, discovers them next to the boat and approaches them with such a calm demeanor that Matia knows that "me había colocado ya, definitivamente, al otro lado de la barrera" (Matute, *Primera* 193). This statement is key, not only for the suspense it helps to build, but also for what it says about Borja's character in comparison to Manuel's. Borja consistently attempts to polarize all people around him because he cannot "tolerar la indiferencia en los que le rodean" (Nichols 65). Manuel represents the opposite values because he is someone who "rehúye la competitividad, que sólo ha tomado partido una vez en toda su vida, y por caridad; alguien que ha renunciado al dinero, al poder y a la posición social" (Nichols 67). Manuel has refused to be drawn into Borja's games, but now that Matia and Borja's secret has been exposed to someone outside their group, Borja is in a position to manipulate Manuel. He seizes the opportunity to create a situation in which Manuel will be judged as "bad" and Borja will be seen as "good" by doña Práxedes.

By showing Manuel the box and its hiding place Matia releases any claim she had on the secrets they kept together and hands that control over to Borja. When they were hidden these objects were less powerful because they belonged to the realm of childish imitation of adults, but now that Manuel has seen them they lose the enchantment associated with adolescent rebellion, and become powerful tools of revenge in the hands of Borja. The stolen objects are the evidence

Borja uses first to manipulate Matia and Manuel; he lies and says that doña Práxedes found out about the secret hiding place and that she will have the boat searched (Matute, *Primera* 195). Borja is concerned with keeping himself and Matia safe from their grandmother's fury, and he believes that moving the objects to a different location is the only solution. Borja plays on the friendship between his cousin and Manuel when he involves Matia in his appeal for help, but he also knows that Matia is afraid of being discovered by their grandmother in possession of the stolen money and cigarettes. Here, Borja enlists the techniques of surveillance their grandmother frequently uses to scare his cousin into submission and silence. Borja is so cunning that he uses his understanding of the grandmother's powerful gaze to keep Matia from revealing their secret; Borja repeatedly stresses the importance of their grandmother not seeing anything that they have stolen (Matute, *Primera* 194-195). These objects and the lies he concocts about them allow Borja to exercise his power to the fullest extent because he is in control of the narrative explaining the situation; in addition, he controls what Manuel says when he enlists him to take the box to Es Mariné for safekeeping: " – Llévasela a Es Mariné . . . y no le hables de mí, es algo charlatán. Dile: 'guárdamela, ya vendré a por ella'" (Matute, *Primera* 195). Borja keeps himself safe and invisible in the operation by putting words into Manuel's mouth, an action that makes Borja the master puppeteer that Matia dreamt about at the beginning of her time on the island. These directions confirm Borja's domination through the use of both sight and words because he is now controlling what others see and say. Manuel, although hostile toward Borja, does not disobey him. He at least half believes Borja's story and falls into the trap that will lead to his downfall.

Matia is also trapped. She is speechless and confused when Borja asks for Manuel's help, and finds herself unable to speak up to question him. After the turn of events between the three adolescents she is forced into silence by Borja's claim that other have witnessed her "perverse

behavior" (Matute, *Primera* 201-202). Borja uses everything Matia has ever said about visiting Jorge de Son Major to threaten her with being sent to a reform school for having two lovers (Matute, *Primera* 202). Borja's threats and surprising knowledge of what goes on in correctional institutions for children make Matia believe that she will be "seen" and judged for something that is not true. Even though Matia knows that what he claims to have seen is not true, she is too innocent to speak up against him. Part of this fear must come from knowing that doña Práxedes is more forgiving of Borja than she is of Matia. Again, sight proves to be a tool to maintain power, only this time Borja is the one whose gaze, together with his knowledge of other people's weaknesses combine to manipulate the situation to his advantage.

Doña Práxedes may not hold all the power on the island because on this occasion she does not possess all the information that Borja does, but the power she has to judge and hand down punishment is critical for Borja to win this battle against Matia and Manuel. Mosén Mayol is present when Borja decides to confess, and he keeps Matia from escaping this tense situation. Doña Práxedes is backed by her faithful servant, Mosén Mayol, and some other familiar objects: "Borja avanzó hasta la abuela y se arrodilló. Yo veía sólo la cara de la abuela, sus redondos ojos de lechuza rodeados de un círculo oscuro, y su boca que masticaba algo. El anillo brillaba en su mano como un ojo perverso que sobreviviría a nuestra podredumbre" (Matute, *Primera* 206-207). The omnipresence of the grandmother's gaze is duplicated by the large and imposing rings she constantly wears and, as Mara S. Steen observes, "La abuela es un ser detestable que llevaba un anillo de ojo perverso que la representa" (139). However, the ring/eye is perverse not only for the action it duplicates and the woman it represents, but also for the potential it has to outlive human beings and continue ad infinitum the habit of watching.

Another important aspect of this scene is that Matia stands in a place where she is unable to see Borja's face. She has a clear view of her grandmother as doña Práxedes listens to Borja's confession. This position gives Matia the chance to see another object that doña Práxedes frequently used to maintain power: ". . . en la diestra los destronados gemelos de teatro, acostumbrados, ya, a buen seguro, a muchas farsas" (Matute, *Primera* 207). The return of the "dethroned" theater glasses during Borja's confession implies that doña Práxedes has lost her position as most powerful, at least on this occasion. They may be dethroned, but the theater glasses are also accustomed to farses, as if they were capable of witnessing lies without the help of a human being. If this is a projection of Matia's knowledge of the truth, it is a subtle one that fits perfectly with the previous descriptions she has provided of the theater glasses. Matia also notices that Borja does not stand up when doña Práxedes commands it. He remains seated at her level in a minor show of disobedience that nonetheless demonstrates his confidence in succeeding in fooling his grandmother with this farse. Borja admits to stealing the money, but he says that he was forced to do it by Manuel. Matia flees the room before Borja is able to say Manuel's name. She never speaks up. She is too afraid to be present when Borja lies and hear what will inevitably happen to Manuel. Even after someone is sent to get the box and Manuel is put before doña Práxedes, Matia remains silent and stands behind the curtain to the room, too afraid and too much a coward to allow Manuel to see her give in to Borja's will. The stolen items take on an even greater value once doña Práxedes is fed this story. They become more than symbols of rebellion. They are now associated with the adult world of severe punishment and the triumph of one powerful person over a weak one.

The day after Borja tells his concocted story to their grandmother Matia awakens to light that "acuchillaba las persianas verdes de [su] ventana" (Matute, *Primera* 210). Her introduction

into the adult world was as violent as the light, the harbinger of painful knowledge. Matia is entirely aware of the adult reality to which she now belongs after betraying Manuel: "Y de pronto estaba allí el amanecer, como una realidad terrible, abominable. Y yo con los ojos abiertos, como un castigo" (Matute, *Primera* 211). Her punishment for not standing up for Manuel is to face the cruel truth of her cowardice and of the unfair punishment handed down to her innocent friend. Nothing remains in tact after Borja's exhibition of cold and calculating power; not Gorogó who is nowhere to be found, and definitely not the fabricated fictions that are the fairytales of she used to believe in: "Eran horribles los cuentos. Además, había perdido a Gorogó – no sabía dónde estaba, bajo qué montón de pañuelos o calcetines. Ya estaba la maleta cerrada, con sus correas abrochadas, sin Gorogó" (Matute, *Primera* 211). The loss of this object seems insurmountable after the emotional toll the destruction of her friendship with Manuel exacted on Matia. If the doll is lost then so is her childhood and brief friendship she had with Manuel. And yet, if all is lost then why tell the story? While young Matia was left to face the adult world without the tools she had depended on as a child, adult Matia makes up for this by retelling her story and portraying the injustices inherent in growing up.

Concluding Remarks

The "opening of Matia's eyes" represents an imposition of Borja's will on his cousin, as he forces her to see the negative characteristics of adulthood. In Nieves Alonso's opinion the transition to adulthood can be characterized by an overwhelming feeling of "desengaño" that creates only one polar duality: the dichotomy between the innocence and illusion of adolescence and the destruction of naïve beliefs in adulthood (102, 109). While it is true that this duality exists in the text, it is certainly not the only one, nor is the relationship Matia depicts between the two life stages that simple. The adult narrator has been affected, in both good ways and bad, by

the experiences she had as an adolescent and by the relationships she had with the material world during that time. Rather than shy away from the past, the adult narrator uses all the tools available to her, whether they are opinions formed years after the events, juvenile vocabulary that describes the actions of adults, or a variety of objects from her childhood, to illustrate the complicated nature of childhood and adulthood alike. This complex combination of materiality, remembrances, and current opinions problematizes the split that Nieves Alonso identifies between the two worlds of existence. Adult Matia recalls her childhood past, but she also dialogues with it in a way that questions the strict divisions between childhood, adolescence, and adulthood that Margaret E. W. Jones uses for the basis of her book, *The Literary World of Ana María Matute* (3). M. Jones concludes the chapter on childhood with a reflection on the fatalistic outlook on life that accompanies the end of this period of innocence: "Childhood must end, with death or with maturity. The loss of childhood is irrevocable; the character must begin life anew, completely cut off from his former state (55). She goes on to write that ". . . the slow process of disillusionment has erased from their souls the imagination and innocence of a lost paradise" (M. Jones 56).

Contrary to M. Jones's perspective, Emilie Cannon sees parallels between the adult and adolescent worlds: ". . . Matia and Borja's rite of passage to adulthood is cynically symbolic in that it sums up what both worlds have in common: dishonesty, self-interest, and treachery" (41). For Cannon, the two life stages share characteristics that make it difficult to separate them decisively. Although there is no denying the pessimistic outlook on life that pervades Matute's literary creations (M. Jones 55, 120) and the process of disillusionment that Matia faces in *Primera memoria,* I would argue that adult Matia's narrative gaze offers an opportunity to revisit

and revise the past not along strict binary divisions, but with a concern for showing how power circulates and is spread out in the form of a chain (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 98).

The grandmother's gaze is one of the main focal points of adult Matia's narrative. However, the theater glasses, rings, and even the people that work for her to maintain power are examples of how "Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power" (Foucault *Power/Knowledge* 98). Borja fools doña Práxedes when he blames Manuel for crimes he did not commit, and in the process shows how he can exercise power alongside his grandmother. In fact, Borja needs doña Práxedes's influence on the island to be able to exercise power to the fullest extent; Borja may have used the stolen objects to dominate Manuel and retain his pride, but his efforts would have been futile if doña Práxedes had not believed him. Where does Matia fit into this distribution of power? As a child she was mostly on the receiving end of the power spectrum because Borja controlled her access to the cigarettes and other stolen things, while doña Práxedes dictated her behavior when under her watchful eye. However, as an adult Matia has more control.

Take, for instance, adult Matia's use of childhood vocabulary to describe the grandmother "at play" while watching the town. The matriarch's gaze is playfully distorted as adult Matia revisits the situations she witnessed and was unable to openly criticize as a child. There are also the objects from her past that hold a special place in the narrative as physical markers of power or lack thereof. Adult Matia carves out a space for her doll and for the stolen objects that demonstrate her cowardice and Borja's cunning deception and reveal a desire to show the entire situation, no matter how good or bad the details make her look. It is as if she finds liberation in being able to put into words the power struggles that changed her life and

introduced her to the complicated relationship between adolescence and adulthood. Binaries, like adolescent/adult, visible/invisible, and good/bad help an adolescent recognize differences among individuals, but as an adult looking back on these impressions they can be used to display a subtle use of imagination that contradicts the notion that this creative tool has been erased from the grown adult's repertoire.

Dichotomies also exist in order to be challenged at every turn. When Matia learns about Manuel's fear of "being on the other side of the divide" that exists between him and his family and doña Práxedes and her cronies, she is met with a sudden sensation of insecurity about the strict social divides she thought she understood (Matute, *Primera* 127). Is she bad and Manuel good? Is Borja only a bad person? Adult Matia puts these questions to the test when she takes control of the narrative and writes the story of her past as she remembers it. When Matia surveys the photograph of her grandmother at the beginning of the novel, she makes a profound statement about who exerts power over whom, at least within the context of the narrative space she creates. Her gaze controls the direction of the narration in order to emphasize the injustices that permeate the worlds of adolescence and adulthood.

Injustice exists on many levels in this novel, but the unfairness of having your value denied as a young woman, forced to act according to rules that negate the creativity of childhood and adolescence should not be overlooked. Matute's response to this is to create a narrator whose narrative gaze incorporates the undervalued characteristics of Matia's adolescence, such as the naïve but ultimately creative vocabulary of a child, to criticize those who held most of the power in the past. Matia gains power through her narrative, but it is not a form of power that is meant to subjugate others, Instead it is meant to expose injustices where before they were unseen. Matute, herself, identifies injustice as one of the major themes running throughout her literary career:

> Entonces llegó la etapa aquella del realismo social, y yo estaba escribiendo *Primera memoria*... Sin embargo, había realmente un problema social allí también. Es que está en todo lo que yo he escrito, hasta de niña, el primer cuento, cuando tenía cinco años, del niño y el duende. Allí hay un problema, no social digamos – todos los problemas son sociales – sino de injusticia. Una de las cosas que más me han dolido y dañado desde niña es la injusticia. Y la injusticia está siempre en todos mis libros. Sale por allí como una herida incurable. Entonces creo que me inspiro en la injusticia, la angustia de vivir en un mundo donde se da valor a unas cosas que son falsas y se desprecian otras que son auténticas. (Matute, "Entrevista" 241)

The social problem of injustice that Matute refers to as an inspiration in her writing gives the author an opportunity to expose the false things in life and give value to the authentic ones. This novel portrays, through the help of materiality, imagination, and memory, the power structures imposed by an authoritarian regime during the Civil War. These structures, as embodied in doña Práxedes's and Borja's actions in *Primera memoria*, are the misleading aspects of the narrator's childhood. Ultimately, Matia creates a narrative that outlines her process of introduction into the adult world of negative knowledge, but she does so by affirming the positive, authentic quality of the rhetoric associated with childhood that she takes up again as an adult. Since her transition to adolescence occurred simultaneously with the Civil War, the use of childhood themes and vocabulary represents an attempt to subvert the power structures forced upon her during that period. Furthermore, in the author's and narrator's present, the subtle reaffirmation of the value of childhood and all of its characteristics represents a veiled critique of the regime's unrelenting control over all aspects of society. Despite the injustices inflicted on Matia during the Franco regime, *Primera memoria* is an example of how a critical (re)vision of the past through the lens of childhood and the material world can help confirm the authenticity and value of those experiences.

Chapter Two:

The Objects of a Ghostly Past: Tracing the Influence of Materiality on Ethical Representation in *Señas de identidad*

While Matia's reevaluation of the past in *Primera memoria* involves remembering the objects from her childhood, the narrator in *Señas de identidad*, Alvaro Mendiola, interacts with a variety of objects in the present moment that allow him to reframe his remembrances through the lens of hindsight. The more personal perspective Matia recreated to show how power affected her everyday life expands in *Señas de identidad* when Alvaro traces his "signs of identity" beginning with his privileged childhood in an upper-class family and ending with his recent experiences as a photographer and frustrated documentary film maker living in exile in France for the previous ten years. Alvaro recounts memories from his inherited family home in Spain while he recovers from the serious heart attack that brought him back to his native land in the early 1960s. With the help of his wife Dolores to fill in gaps in his memory, Alvaro begins with personal and family histories, and then increases the scope of his remembrances to include the stories of disenfranchised Spaniards whose only recourse to survival is to emigrate to France in the 1950s. Also assisting him in the retelling of individual and collective struggles are documents inserted into the narrative. These include police surveillance records that track the movements of Alvaro's friends working to bring down the Franco regime and random papers collected on Alvaro's trips, to name just a few. These individual and collective struggles are retold as Alvaro spends his time searching through family photo albums and folders containing unused interviews and information for his failed documentary on emigration in Spain.

In the following quote Alvaro identifies the significance of interacting with documents and objects in order to rescue an array of memories from oblivion. He also presents an intriguing complication of the relationship between individual and collective identity:

> Merced a los documentos y pruebas atesorados en las carpetas podías desempolvar de tu memoria sucesos e incidentes que tiempo atrás hubieras dado por perdidos y que rescatados del olvido por medio de aquéllos permitían iluminar

> no sólo tu biografía, sino también facetas oscuras y reveladoras de la vida en España (juntamente personales y colectivos, públicos y privados, conjugando de modo armonioso la búsqueda interior y el testimonio objetivo, la comprensión íntima de ti mismo y el desenvolvimiento de la conciencia civil en los Reinos Taifas) pero, a raíz de tu voluntaria expatriación a París y tu existencia errabunda por Europa, la comunión anterior se había desvanecido y, extirpado tú del solar ingrato . . . tu aventura propia y la de tu patria habían tomado rumbos divergentes . . . (Goytisolo 166)

Despite Alvaro's assertion of the "harmonious combination" of individual and collective memory and identity, it is ironic and noteworthy that this statement about uniting diverse memories is made parenthetically and thus separated from the rest of the paragraph. While Alvaro's role as the individual who compiles the documents in an attempt to know himself and raise civic awareness affirms sociologist Maurice Halbwachs's statement that "it is individuals as group members who remember" (48), it is equally possible to see the narrator's doubtfulness about being able to situate himself within the collective Spanish experience. The parenthetical statement prepares the reader for the collapse of what could have been harmony between the collective and the individual, and it provides a perfect segue into the remainder of the paragraph in which the tone changes drastically; the subjective appraisal of his existence and that of his country through the use of the second person *tú* clash with the desired "testimonio objetivo" and can only lead to a break with his origins (Spires 55). Alvaro's goal may be to merge his individual memories with those of the collective body of memory, but the divide he perceives between himself as a self-exiled man of upper-class origins and his compatriots suffering injustices under the Franco regime places him at both a physical and mental distance from the collective struggle (Spires 70) and ultimately inhibits "communion" with both familial and national origins. The rift between the personal and the collective becomes a fertile space of interrogation and contemplation for Alvaro. Guilt motivates him to expose the disparity between

his stable economic social position and the experiences of others less fortunate than him. While he may not be able to reconcile this disparity for his own peace of mind, he attempts to use his feelings of guilt and complicity constructively by being honest about his past and making space in this narrative for the memories and experiences of those marginalized by the Franco regime.

Alvaro is acutely aware of the divide between him and his homeland, and recognizes this by contrasting his life with his friends' lives of political struggle from within Spain: "por un lado ibas tú, rotos los vínculos que te ligaron antaño a la tribu, borracho y atónito de tu nueva e increíble libertad; por otro aquélla, con el grupo de tus amigos que persistían en el noble empeño de transformarla pagando con su cuerpo el precio que por indiferencia o cobardía habías rehusado pagar tú . . ." (Goytisolo 166-167). Objects help to bridge this gap by assisting in Alvaro's process of remembering because they help to illustrate the ways in which memory and identity are intertwined throughout the novel. Gillis explains that "Memories help us make sense of the world we live in; and "memory work" is, like any other kind of physical or mental labor, embedded in complex class, gender, and power relations that determine what is remembered (or forgotten), by whom, and for what end" (3). It is precisely Alvaro's memory work involving objects, and the contested and controversial collective Spanish identity of the Post War period he portrays and exposes that interests me here. In this chapter I will explore how the interactions Alvaro has with the handful of objects chosen for this interdisciplinary study – the photographs, emigration documentary, and the postmemory objects, the Gasparini photographs, and a chair and basket that belong to an impoverished Spanish *émigré,* José Bernabeu – attest to his need to use materiality to help access the ghostly presences of individual and collective identity in order to understand his own place as an individual and a member of Spanish society, however complicated that relationship may be. By engaging memory in diverse ways with each of these

objects, Alvaro responds to the personal need to begin to shed his guilt, and the collective need to remember, recognize, engage, and ultimately live with the cultural repression of the Franco regime.

In the first section of this chapter I will focus on the visual elements of the family photographs that Alvaro describes in order to show how he seeks to distance himself from his family history and identify that past as one of the sources of his guilty conscience. In the second section, also on photographs, Alvaro begins to address a moral necessity to acknowledge the struggles of those outside of his upper-class origins, thereby expanding the memory bank to include the narratives of others and beginning an "ethics of postmemory" that I will explain in depth in the final section on postmemory objects. The third section on the emigration documentary will further develop the idea of the specter because this is the only object that does not physically exist. This absence will allow me to interpret the documentary as a cultural product whose existence is archived in Alvaro's mind, thus making it a "true memory" that he must narrate and represent without the help of the physical reel of film. The final section will deal with what I will call postmemory objects, the Gasparini photos and the chair and basket belonging to José Bernabeu. While these objects do not belong to Alvaro, they have significant cultural value for their owner. I will draw on Marianne Hirsch's definition of postmemory as memories that are not mediated by recall of firsthand personal experiences, and I will argue that even though there is not a generational distance between Alvaro and the people who share their firsthand memories with him, the separation from his homeland creates a divide that can be considered postmemorial because there is a temporal gap between the original events and Alvaro's knowledge of them. By doing what Jo Labanyi calls "engaging the ghosts of the past," albeit a recent past, Alvaro's actions offer a unique model for beginning the process of

reconciliation *during* the Franco dictatorship that stresses ethical representation of objects that hold significance for both the absent people who experienced those situations and the narrator recreating them.

Alvaro Mendiola's Family Photo Album

Mieke Bal's essay "Reading Art?" explores the intersection of visual art and reading by taking each visual element of an image as a sign capable of producing meaning (290-291). First, she answers the question of how images are read for meaning by clearly outlining her approach:

> . . . I will make a case for a concept of *reading* images that is neither predicated upon a linguistic invasion of visuality, nor exactly identical to what art history has construed as its proper domain . . . The method or . . . procedure has in common with ordinary reading that the outcome is *meaning*, that it functions by way of discrete visible elements called *signs* to which meanings are attributed; that such attributions of meaning, or *interpretations*, are regulated by rules, named *codes*; and that the subject or agent of this attribution, the reader or viewer, is a decisive element in the process. Furthermore . . . each act of reading happens within a sociohistorical context or framework, called *frames*, which limit the possible meanings. (290)

According to Bal, meaning is the ultimate outcome of reading, both in the traditional textual sense and in the linguistically informed reading of images. Memory studies scholar Marianne Hirsch also recognizes the significance of close readings of images, both for what they reveal about the culture in which they were produced, as well as for the psychological or emotional clues they offer into the visual process. In her book *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory,* she emphasizes the familial gaze within photographs while acknowledging the significance of recognizing the social context in which these gazes occur:

> Close readings of commonplace visual images, such as family pictures and other domestic objects, as well as particular scenes of looking and particular photo sessions within a family's history can illuminate the workings of the familial gaze and familial looks. Such readings can also reveal the particular social and cultural screens that mediate these looks, inflecting the familial gaze with racial, ethnic,

> class and sexual difference. In this book I use such close readings to build a supple theoretical vocabulary that can help us understand the psychological layers of this visual process. (Hirsch, *Family Frames* 117)

Like Bal's "frames" that limit the possible meanings of a visual image, Hirsch's social and cultural "screens" take into consideration the context within which the act of reading, or seeing, occurs. With *Señas de identidad* it is imperative to adopt this same methodology because the objects Alvaro chooses to include in his recounting of the past are inseparable from the social context in which they were created. In fact, if either the social context or the visual elements were excluded from this analysis, the objects would lose their complexity as narrative devices intimately involved in what Elizabeth Jelin calls the "labors of memory" (5). These objects, whose role as mediators hinges upon a possible transformation of the world through the creation of a productive relationship between the individual and society (Jelin 5), also sustain the narrative construction that results from an emotional charge identified in the present and associated with the original event, or in this case, the object from the past (Jelin 16). This is especially true with the family photo album because Alvaro repeatedly inserts his own opinions and reactions to the images in an attempt to separate himself from the characteristics he disdains.

To narrate the intersection between past and present requires a piecing together of the events. These distinct aspects of the narrative correspond to what Bal calls "syntax" when reading a visual image. In order to justify the use of the linguistic term "syntax," Bal must first distinguish it from the traditional art history term "composition": "Syntax refers to the structural relationship between elements, and so does 'composition;' but the elements connected by syntax are considered signs, and processed as such" (303). The distinction between syntax and composition does not reject the individual visual characteristics of an image, but rather interprets

them in a way that allows for the establishment of a socially and culturally informed meaning of the image. Likewise, Bal does not put the linguistic portion of the visual analysis on a pedestal, but rather considers both the verbal and the visual elements of reading art as equally important parts of a process in which the two modes benefit from one another:

> Reading an image, I would like to emphasize, is nothing like reducing images to linguistic discourse. Instead of remaining locked within the binary opposition that has, I think profoundly wrongly, been construed around the two media, or modes, I would like to go over those aspects of *reading* that articulate aspects of seeing whose taking into account I consider not only relevant and meaningful, but also *visually* indispensible. (Bal 294)

This is precisely what WJT Mitchell argues for in *Picture Theory* when he extols the virtues of acknowledging and analyzing "the whole ensemble of *relations* between media" instead of perpetuating comparative methods between the arts (89-90). Apart from the narrative description of objects that paint a mental picture in the reader's mind, a classical rhetorical trope called *enargeia*, the novel does not contain any visual images.[14] Nonetheless, this detail does not put a stop to the examination of the overlapping between the visual and the verbal and the material and the textual in *Señas de identidad*, but rather offers a new perspective on thinking about materiality within a narration. In her article "Doing Things: Emotion, Affect, and Materiality," Jo Labanyi encourages "thinking beyond, or outside of, representation" in order to better understand how the human and the material worlds become entangled through social practices (223). One such social practice is the examination of the family photo album that, in Alvaro's case, is not a nostalgic revisiting of the past but rather a confrontation with a constructed reality that reveals a desire to separate himself from his family origins.

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[14] For a definition of *enargeia* that consists of two categories depending on the degree of involvement of the reader see Krieger 94.

Alvaro has consulted the photo album for various reasons throughout the years: "Algunos años atrás . . . habías examinado el álbum familiar no con el propósito actual de recuperar el tiempo perdido y hacer el balance de tus existencias . . . , sino con la esperanza un tanto ilusoria de adivinar por medio de él las coordinadas inciertas y problemáticas de tu singular porvenir . . ." (Goytisolo 58). The first search through the album was aimed at finding the source of his rebellious nature, an anomaly in his family that he was convinced could not appear out of nowhere (Goytisolo 58). The object was previously a tool that Alvaro hoped would give him the capacity to map out his future and understand where he may be headed. In the present moment, however, the examination of the images in the photo album is directed toward a revisiting of the past. His gaze is focused on the past not to relive nostalgically the scenes of his family's history, but rather to develop a sense of pessimism, stagnation and defeat:

> [B]uscar entre los estantes de la maciza biblioteca el álbum de retratos que tal vez te permitiera recobrar la perdida clave de tu niñez y tu juventud. De nuevo podías volver al jardín y acomodarte con aquél en la mesa de mármol, aspirando el aroma antiguo y mohoso de sus páginas; observar con aplacado sosiego el paisaje insomne, el cielo y mar maleables, el sol enrojecido y moribundo: inmovilizados en fotos desvaídas y amarillentas los espectros familiares posaban una y otra vez para ti, como en concertadas y tediosas repeticiones de una escena fallida y tu breve y ya lejana historia renacía con ellos, eslabón de una ininterrumpida cadena de mediocridad y conformismo –aventura y rapiña antes–, fruto inconsciente y culpable de sus vidas taciturnas y ociosas, de su existencia menguada, calamitosa e inútil. (Goytisolo 18)

This opening description of the photo album offers a number of clues about how Alvaro approaches the images he chooses to revisit, and for this reason I will call it the "framing description" for the analysis of family photo album in this section. As the "link" in the uninterrupted conformism of the Mendiola family, Alvaro seems to have given up on the possibility for "recovery of the lost key" because he has perpetuated the non-rebellious nature of

his ancestors through inactivity. The guilt Alvaro feels for being born into a family of conformists helps to confirm Linda Gould Levine's characterization of the narrator as "un joven abrumado por la culpabilidad, torturado por una inseguridad ontológica, aterrado por la muerte y acuciado por el deseo del escape" (15). Nonetheless, this attitude is significant because it is through Alvaro's negative outlook on life that he interprets the family photographs, much like a lens puts into focus the second before it is taken. The guilt associated with the opportunities he was given simply because of his birth into an upper-class family provides the frame from which Alvaro views the images. As Marianne Hirsch notes, "photographs locate themselves precisely in the space of contradiction between the myth of the ideal family and the lived reality of family life" (*Family Frames* 8), thereby assisting in the discovery of the artifice of the act of photography by presenting an image discordant with the actual nature of (most) family relationships. Alvaro's acknowledgment that his life "no podía ser otra cosa (lo supiste luego) que un lento y difícil camino de ruptura y desposesión" (Goytisolo 58) comes retrospectively as an indicator of the struggles he has faced with social class and the process of breaking familial bonds. This statement also helps to see how his appraisal of the photographs represents the first attempt at a break with the past.

Adjectives in the "framing description" such as *desvaídas, amarillentas, menguada, calamitosa,* and *inútil* lead one to believe that the outcome of this "digging up" of the past will be as fruitless as the lives of Alvaro and his family. While it is true that Alvaro seeks to recuperate "the lost key" to his childhood, thereby signaling a desire to engage with the past, the previous description does anything but point toward a positive future stemming from a critical engagement with the past. However, the pessimism evident in the above quote belies an underlying glimmer of hope. As Spanish literary critic Cristina Moreiras Menor has observed

> Pensar el presente sin atender a su pasado, sin hacerse cargo de sus muertos, es mantener un pensamiento acomodaticio, sustentando en verdades falsas y parciales, y sin futuro; el intelectual debe integrar en su crítica las historias pasadas, sobre todo las que han quedado en el afuera del relato histórico, en la creencia de que son éstas las que abren la posibilidad de un pensamiento éticamente responsable. (150)

By incorporating the images that make him uncomfortable, the dead that haunt his family photo album, Alvaro avoids facile reflections on the past and meanwhile maintains a level of personal ethical responsibility with regard to the past he depicts. While Alvaro's perspective regarding his family is less than positive, the fact that he engages that history indicates a need to live with the traces of that history, as Jo Labanyi writes ("History and Hauntology" 66), and not deny the existence of his "espectros familiares." Alvaro chooses to use the symbol of family cohesion, the photo album, as a tool to expose the realities underneath the constructed images of unity and exorcise the ghosts that continue to surface as he recalls the past. This introduction to the reappraisal of the pictures that is to come is similar to the reevaluation of family dynamics and hidden problems that occurs in Jaime Chavarri's 1976 film, *El desencanto*. The film opens with family pictures that subtly allude to the absence of the father, Leopoldo Panero, the Francoist poet who died in 1962, and is the topic of conversation for the remaining family members during much of the film. While Alvaro's situation differs greatly from that of the Panero family (Alvaro is an only child and does not recount his past with family members, but rather with friends and his wife), the acts of unearthing the past in both cases have in common that they avail themselves of objects, images and personal stories that emphasize the gap between the idealized family under the Franco regime and the bitter realities hidden beneath this façade (Kinder 200, 202). Both works interrogate the past as past, not as a topic of obsessive meditation that makes the past a "living death" (Labanyi, "History and Hauntology" 65).

The use of the term "specter" within a novel that places at center stage the photographic image is no coincidence. Roland Barthes likens the process of having one's picture taken to becoming a specter, because it is at the moment that the photograph is taken that the subject becomes an object (14). Susan Sontag, in a similar vein, calls photographs "memento mori" and states that "To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or thing's) mortality, vulnerability, mutability. Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time's relentless melt" (15). Marianne Hirsch also avails herself of the concept of death and ghosts when she describes the referent in a photograph as "both present (implied in the photograph) and absent (it has been there but is not here now). The referent haunts the picture like a ghost: it is a revenant, a return of the lost and dead other" (*Family Frames* 5). Photography, then, is the ideal medium from which Alvaro can access the ghosts of his past because a photograph is a physical object whose materiality recreates the absent, spectral, immaterial objects or people from the past. Furthermore, within the specific context of the cultural analysis of Post War and Post-Franco Spain, Alvaro's "espectros familiares" represent the dominant narratives of the victors, not the ghosts and specters typically used to describe the marginalized aspects of culture that are primarily "consumed by 'history's losers'" (Labanyi, Introduction 2).[15] Alvaro's family history has not been "rendered ghostly" by the State's official discourse (Labanyi, Introduction 2; Labanyi, "History and Hauntology" 65), but his perception of the family as ghosts indicates that its influence on him has remained present despite corporeal absence. He must exorcise the specters in order to demonstrate that his origins do not determine

[15] See Labanyi "History and Hauntology" and Introduction, as well as Colmeiro for more discussion of the existence of ghosts in the cultural production from the late Post War and Post-Franco periods. The topic of specters and their relationship to materiality in *Señas de identidad* will return in the section on Alvaro's emigration documentary.

his concept of history as one-sided. By going back to his family specters Alvaro uses his own gaze in the present moment to reevaluate the past these ghosts set before him; his subjective responses to the images help him introduce his feelings of guilt, as well as begin the process of breaking free from the familial ties that have restrained him through the years.

The whirlwind description of photographs from before Alvaro's birth, the majority of which were taken in Cuba and depict the wealth and status of the paternal side of the family, helps to establish Alvaro's upper-class origins. Alvaro's great-grandfather was a plantation owner wealthy enough to own slaves and have the Mendiola name inscribed on the train used during the sugarcane harvest (Goytisolo 18-19). This detail is the most disturbing for Alvaro and he voices his opinion when he describes a photograph of his great-grandparents in a way that highlights how his male ancestor built a fortune based on cruelty and exploitation of others. Alvaro projects his disgust for the practice of slavery that started with his great-grandfather onto the description of his gaze: "El hidalgo pobre de la provincia asturiana, astuto traficante, especulador y negrero, de mirada cruel y altiva, delgados labios y torcido bigote en forma de manubrio parecía barruntar la falibilidad e insignificancia de los vástagos que, muerto él, iban a regentar su imperio . . ." (Goytisolo 19). In addition to stressing his abhorrence for slavery, Alvaro uses this photograph to begin to develop the idea of decline in his family. The narrator scours the photograph and finds that his great-grandfather's appearance and gaze point to the steady deterioration of the family. The "falibilidad e insignificancia" of the great-grandfather's descendants directly contrasts with the wealth and privilege the family has enjoyed over the years.

Another more recent photograph conveys the same idea. A photograph of Alvaro's father and aunts and uncles reveals "rostros familiares – de viejos conservados en tarros de alcohol,

pensaba Alvaro – que el fotógrafo anónimo había captado con la refinada maldad de un Goya ante la real progenie de Carlos IV y María Luisa; degenerada raza de futuras solteronas agriadas y – exceptuando el padre de Alvaro – parasitarios caballeros tan inútiles como decorativos" (Goytisolo 20). For Alvaro, the faces he sees in the album are preserved specimens of an inert past that, with hindsight, help Alvaro trace the decline of his family. Alvaro's projection of the "refinada maldad" of the Goya paintings on his own family album reveals the constructed nature of both the nuclear family and the photo albums used to portray a certain set of ideals to one set of viewers, and an ironic, more cynical version of that reality to another set of viewers. Hirsch points out that, while family photography can have the effect of confirming the set of family roles that allow for broad-based identification with these roles, it can also

> . . . support the antidemocratic aspects of photography, drawing borders around a circumscribed group and strengthening its power to include and thus also to exclude. It is not simply a question of class: box cameras have been available to working-class families throughout much of this century . . . It is that representational conventions consolidate family and group identity – with its dreams, fantasies, and aspirations – whatever the particular group might be. (*Family Frames* 47)

Alvaro's hindsight undoes the careful organization and representation of the family by exposing the inevitable decline of the Mendiolas. The album is constructed around pride in origins, but Alvaro, with his opposing perspective, relishes destroying that image and exposing the inevitable movement toward oblivion that the pictures represent for him in the present:

> Un sentimiento oscuro, de íntima y gozosa profanación, acompañaba el lento desfilar de aquellas páginas evocadoras de un pasado desaparecido y muerto, fantasmagórica ronda de personajes identificables sólo gracias a la inscripción piadosa de un nombre y una fecha que los salvaba así –¿por cuánto tiempo? – del irrevocable y definitivo olvido . . . (Goytisolo 21)

Alvaro savors the opportunity to display his true feelings about the Mendiola family and states that "el rencor póstumo contra la necia estirpe y su presuntuosa respetabilidad se alimentaba con el pasto de aquella tranquila y silenciosa hecatombe" (Goytisolo 21). The family photo album, like the family home in Cuba pointing back to his origins, inspires and fuels his disgust because it displays an image that is entirely fake. It covers up the injustices that his family has committed (slavery in Cuba, for example) with an air of respectability. This is the sort of "antidemocratic" aspect of photography that Alvaro works against when he describes his predecessors disdainfully. Despite Alvaro's description of the family's past as dead and disappeared, he acknowledges its existence and the complicated relationship he has with the family history. This allows Alvaro to make the past visible in the present moment, and admit that he has conflicting emotions about forming part of the Mendiola clan. In fact, since Alvaro is the last remaining Mendiola, he feels pulled in opposite directions by his family history:

> Por una ironía feroz del destino dependía de él –¿quién le impedía borrar los pies con una goma, rasgar caprichosamente las páginas? – que el recuerdo mismo de su existencia se perdiese igualmente y el bien y el mal remotos que en vida hubiese hecho – afligidos comparsas disfrazados del album – se disolviesen en la nada de la que sin necesidad alguna habían surgido y a la que razonable y justicieramente habían vuelto. (Goytisolo 21-22)

The desire to forget his ancestors by destroying the physical object that confirms their existence is tempting, but despite its appeal, Alvaro remembers his predecessors and uses their images to continue to separate himself from the family unit.

One particular image from Alvaro's photo album provides an example of what Hirsch calls "the mutuality of confirming looks that construct a set of familial roles and hierarchies" (*Family Frames* 47). In a picture taken shortly after the death of Alvaro's mother in 1944, Alvaro describes the various gazes of his family members. Curiously enough, Alvaro does not describe

his aunt Mercedes's gaze, but rather focuses on a history that forms an aura around the woman's physical presence: ". . . la nariz aguileña y labios rencorosos de la piadosísima tía Mercedes, abandonada por el novio al pie del altar y, desde entonces, enconada enemiga de los hombres y los placeres de la carne" (Goytisolo 36-37). Alvaro's description of his aunt focuses on the facial features that complement her temperament, but avoids any reference to her eyes. This missing detail combined with the emphasis placed on the story of Mercedes's amorous misfortunes places Alvaro's gaze before that of his aunt's, and reveals a hierarchical relationship both within and beyond the frame of the photograph. Alvaro's power as the reader of the image allows him to supplant his aunt's gaze (because she must have one even if he chooses not to represent it) for her defining personal history, thereby taking away any power she may have exerted over him during her lifetime. On the other hand, Alvaro's uncle Cesar has a "mirada aguanosa . . . velada por sus gafas de incontables dioptrías" that belies his acquiescent personality, and is also directly associated with a story of personal failure (Goytisolo 37). His two daughters of marrying age at the time of the photograph end up spinsters, and his son is "predestined" to become a priest. The lack of success in both relative's lives points to Alvaro's obsession with failure. The emphasis put on achieving success in the description of this photograph can only come from societal pressures dictating the norms of what professions are considered rewarding and worthy of praise.

Alvaro's uncle Eulogio is the final person described in the photograph, and he is the only individual with an authoritative gaze: "en un ángulo de la fotografía y dominando a los demás con su aspecto de deidad ausente e inaccesible, el tío Eulogio, que apoyaba una mano sobre el hombre de Alvaro y observaba severamente el objetivo con sus ojos negrísimos, inspirados, brillantes" (Goytisolo 37). The position Eulogio holds within the frame of the photograph allows him to see everyone else from a place of relative separation from the group. His dominance is

also noted in Alvaro's retelling of the relationship he had with this uncle, the most influential member of his immediate family, and the most involved in Alvaro's life. Eulogio's travels to Cuba and separation from the family for long periods of time set him apart from his brothers and sisters spatially, and he did not subscribe to the same political and ideological ideals – during World War II Eulogio never believed that the Nazis would triumph over the Allies (Goytisolo 38).

Alvaro's close relationship with Eulogio comes to an end when his uncle's health fails. His newfound admiration for Jerónimo, the migrant worker hired by the family during the harvest, begins to fill that gap: "Meses y meses Álvaro había acogido como agua de mayo sus explicaciones y charlas científicas hasta que, a raíz del veraneo primero y su absorbente pasión por Jerónimo después, los maravillosos encuentros se espaciaron" (Goytisolo 42). Alvaro's exposure to an entirely unknown way of life when he befriends Jerónimo provides evidence of the clash between what he was taught to believe by his uncle and what he has experienced and intuits emotionally or intellectually to be true. The way in which Alvaro describes the photo with Jerónimo illustrates the admiration he had for this man of a lower social class than himself: "La foto había sido tomada por el primo Jorge con la Leica de último modelo . . . y Jerónimo figuraba en ella tal cual dieciocho años después lo recordabas: felina la mirada, negras las cejas, taimados los labios, esbelto y robusto el cuerpo bajo las ropas miserables que lo cubrían" (Goytisolo 45). The fact that Alvaro can recall a mental image of the man that, according to him, is exactly the same as the photograph might have to do with the sudden disappearance of Jerónimo and his unknown ending. Alvaro is able to keep this model image intact because he possesses no other information that could change or influence his narrative of their brief relationship. Moreover, the strong image of the man in the photograph conveys action and movement, characteristics that

Alvaro as a grown man of relative inaction continues to admire. Jerónimo is the first person that enters Alvaro's life and makes him question the beliefs he has been taught by his family. When his aunt voices her suspicion that Jerónimo could be a *maqui*, a member of the Spanish guerrillas fighting against Franco after the Civil War, Alvaro is suddenly thrown into a world of doubt: "La incertidumbre te ganaba – la desconfianza en tu mundo y sus valores celebrados – (Goytisolo 48). The friendship that the two strike up during the time of Jerónimo's employment working in the family's vineyards and his sudden disappearance open Alvaro's eyes to the true nature of the results of the Civil War:

> Te decías entonces que bien mezquina y sorda era tu patria si, como a veces te inclinabas a creer, su rica ofrenda había sido inútil. Pero no, delirabas, el final no podía ser ése y – aguardando el país tiempos mejores – debían comprender y hacer comprender a los demás que Jerónimo o como se llamase quien tu sensibilidad moral despertara con su conducta limpia había muerto por todos y cada uno de vosotros, como sabías – con qué dolor, dios mío, y qué vergüenza – que había muerto, igualmente, por ti. (Goytisolo 52)

The awakening of Alvaro's sense of morality as a result of Jerónimo's "conducta limpia" allows him to see that despite what he has been taught about the *Republicanos*, there exists an inherent human element to this group of people that cannot be ignored. Alvaro remembers the time when Jerónimo showed him a photo of his wife and child – a symbol of this man's sacrifices, as well as of the everyday concerns anyone, on either side of the war, would have. As an adult recalling his interactions with Jerónimo he recognizes their significance and chooses to describe the picture with Jerónimo in order to make visible the "ghost" of his friend, or the "victims of history and in particular subaltern groups, whose stories – those of the losers – are excluded from the dominant narratives of the victors . . ." (Labanyi, Introduction 1-2). By including Jerónimo's story, even though Alvaro does not know how it ends, he makes space for the marginalized

because in this first instance of an eye-opening interaction Alvaro responds both emotionally and (as an adult) intellectually to the challenges of acting with scruples.

Much of Hirsch's readings of the photographs included in her book focus on the subjective and emotive responses she has experienced when interacting with a variety of family photos, especially those of her mother. Roland Barthes too emphasizes the importance of emotion or affect with regard to his readings of photography in his seminal work, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. His emotional reactions to the Winter Garden photo of his mother are paramount to his understanding of the power of this artistic medium, not in terms of an intellectual capacity but rather in terms of feeling or affect. According to Barthes, affect is the one irreducible power in his phenomenology of Photography (20-21). That is, by refusing to reduce the significance of affect in his appraisal of photographs, he must submit the Photograph *to* that concept in an attempt to retain the initial emotional response to the work (21). For Barthes, "the anticipated essence of the Photograph could not . . . be separated from the "pathos" of which, from the first glance, it consists" (21). This mode of perceiving the relationship between Photography and human being places at center stage the emotional reaction to an object, not the cognitive or interpretive aspect of "looking" at and engaging with it. Alvaro's picture of his aunt and uncles does not relate the "pathos" of the experience of looking as much as his description of the distance between him and his mother upon her death. His mother's death at a young age, along with her modesty and Alvaro's shyness impeded any real relationship from forming between the two people who should have been closest. This "pesar retrospectivo," as Alvaro calls it, is most clearly felt when seeing the image of his mother: "Ahora (alejado tú de ella en el tiempo y en el recuerdo) era demasiado tarde. Salvo en momentos excepcionales (y cada vez más raros) su imagen (ojos azules y claros, frente amplia, nariz recta inmovilizados en

alguna fotografía) había desertado de tu memoria para siempre" (Goytisolo 90). The exceptional moments when Alvaro is able to see a true connection with his mother in an image directly relates to the Winter Garden photograph of Roland Barthes's mother because they both need to *recognize* their mothers in an image (67-71). In Alvaro's case the bond with his mother was not fully formed, but this does not stop him from missing that connection and searching for it in the few images where a glimmer of her essence could appear and connect their gazes like a sort of "umbilical cord" (Barthes 81). Furthermore, it is significant that besides a mention of his mother's facial features appearing in "alguna fotografía" there is no picture of Alvaro's mother described in the novel. This absence highlights Alvaro's sense of loneliness and separation from the family as a child orphaned at a young age, but it also points to desire to keep for himself the image of his mother that he recognizes and that attests to his and her existence.

The last aspect of the family photo album that is significant for comprehending the constructed nature of this object is the fact that "La familia materna no figuraba en el álbum. En virtud de un estricto criterio selectivo alguien había eliminado de sus páginas aquella otra estirpe burguesa más cultivada y sensible que la de los Mendiola, igualmente injustificable que ésta por la caducidad e insignificancia de sus frutos" (Goytisolo 52). This observation exposes the artifice behind grouping together images meant to represent what a family means and what ideas it aims to project. The pictures of the maternal side of Alvaro's family were considered by someone to be a dispensable detail, either because they did not contribute to the hetergeneous display of values or simply because they were images belonging to another family. By drawing attention to the "estricto criterio selectivo" that determined the organization of the album, Alvaro's critical gaze reveals how the pictures it contains were selected *in order to* distort reality and project a highly manipulated image of heterogeneity. The result of Alvaro's perspective is a sort of airing

out the of the family's evils through an unveiling of what was previously made to be invisible through both the framing of the individual photographs and the construction of the entire album. The maternal side of the family is yet another ghost brought back from the dead by means of Alvaro's critical perspective of the photo album.

Other Photographs

As we have seen in the previous section, the family photo album is a tool used by Alvaro in the present moment for reflection on the past, a critical process that layers the two distinct time periods and affords Alvaro the opportunity to provide his own perspective on the images within it. Many scholars have noted the palimpsestic nature of literary creation and have successfully linked the trope to memory processes, such as those that Alvaro narrates.[16] Ofelia Ferrán points to the layers of a palimpsest as a repeated metaphor in memory narratives because the process of reading what hides behind or below the words parallels the process of memory retrieval (57). Another critic, Abigail Lee Six, approaches the notion of "literature as palimpsest" from a different perspective, suggesting that Goytisolo's appropriation and repetition of medieval and Golden Age literary texts is one of the traits of his fiction that makes him a postmodern writer ("Breaking Rules" 55). Finally, memory studies scholar Andreas Huyssen, in his influential book *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*, recognizes the significance of the trope for discussions about the configurations of urban spaces and emphasizes that the use of this inherently literary device does not have to convert the city into a text (7). Huyssen stresses the importance of respecting the materiality of the different media of memory in his analyses (7), and it is his refusal to reduce spaces to words that inspires this analysis of

[16] See Dillon 4 for a discussion of the difference between "palimpsestic and palimpsestuous."

photographs (recreated through writing, to be sure) from a perspective that acknowledges their inherent visual characteristics.

Barthes's reflections on the "photographic referent" help to understand how the past depicted in the photos is layered over by the impressions it makes on Alvaro in the present. For Barthes, the essence of Photography is the "*necessarily* real thing which has been placed before the lens," or the "*That-has-been*" that points to the referent, and as a result layers the present moment over the past image captured in the photo (76-77). An example of Barthes's "*That-has-been*" can be observed when Alvaro comes across what I will call the "intruder photograph" in his family album (Goytisolo 62). This photo depicts an unknown man lying face down on a sidewalk surrounded by curious onlookers, and it intrudes on the familial space of the album in two significant ways. First, since this photo was clipped from a newspaper and placed by someone in the album, its mass-distribution and consumption resists the traditional concept of a "family photo album" in which the homogeneity of the privately created and consumed album is temporarily undone. Secondly, the "intruder photo" draws attention to the constructed nature of a photo album that is based on uniformity and the representation of similarities within the nuclear family. Marianne Hirsch has noted how the structure and content of a family album stresses "chronology, continuity and repetition within and across generations" (*Family Frames* 214). The "intruder photo" infringes upon the "boundaries of difference" that are constantly asserted during the construction of the album, and that exclude representations of otherness (Hirsch, *Family Frames* 47). For this reason, Alvaro's initial reaction of surprise, "¿Quién diablos había metido aquella fotografía en el álbum?" (Goytisolo 62) can be read as his resistance to the breaking of the accepted structural components of a family album. Nonetheless, this exclamation is followed by a brief description that attempts to understand the photograph: "Era un simple recorte, sin pie

ni explicación algunos, como si su elocuencia misma le dispensara de la necesidad del comentario" (Goytisolo 62). The lack of an explanatory caption to orient Alvaro allows for a reading of the "visual syntax" of the image (Bal 303). Alvaro's choice of words is compelling in its contradiction; while the "eloquence" of the clipping lies in its visual components, this does not exempt it from the interpretation and commentary that follow:

> No era la primera vez que veías un documento del género y, por obligaciones del oficio, tú mismo captaste varios mientras trabajaste en la France Presse como fotógrafo, pero algo había ahora que no conociste entonces y, de modo oscuro, te ligaba a la imagen anodina traspapelada en las páginas del álbum: una inquietud difusa respecto a tu personal destino y algo así como un entrañable y dolido impulso de solidaridad. (Goytisolo 62)

Described as "Una estampa típica de nuestro tiempo sin distinción de grados ni latitudes, cotidianamente divulgada por unos y otros en sus periódicos y revistas, cines y televisores," the photograph is recognizable in its depiction of the violence that came to be a daily part of life during the war (Goytisolo 62). The repetition of images in the various forms of media led to a desensitization to the depiction of violence that allows the narrator to describe the scene as "anodina" and "traspapelada." Although the photograph is also familiar to Alvaro because of his line of work, the two adjectives he uses to describe the image reveal that he has been "pricked" by this photograph, that the unidentifiable past in the photo contains what Barthes has described as the "punctum" (26-27). The bland or insubstantial character of the photo is more important than Alvaro may want the reader to believe, because it is precisely this banal image that leads him to associate it with his recent health problems. This creates a layering of time periods in one image as Alvaro recalls the recent heart attack in Paris and imagines what happened to the unidentified body from the old clipping.

Furthermore, the superposition of one violent act on top of another reinforces the palimpsest as memory metaphor. Benjamin R. Fraser states that "To juxtapose is to present the hidden history together with the affirmed history. It is to emphasize the doubling and the selective reduction of the hermeneutic act" (162). The affirmed history in Alvaro's photo album is that of his family's allegiance to the Nationalist cause, but with the introduction of the "intruder photo" Alvaro inserts the hidden history haunting his own version of the family narrative. By depicting this photograph Alvaro places at center stage the violence concealed in his personal history. He is at once a member of the family and an outsider reviewing the photo album in order to distinguish himself from the group and demonstrate his "dolido impulso de solidaridad" with the marginalized and silenced members of society (Goytisolo 62). The combination of violence and banality in the photograph attests to the punctum's power to expand to other experiences, as Barthes maintains (45). The clipping has the capacity to elicit memories in Alvaro and tie together two distinct situations. The unnamed and unknowable violence of the "intruder photo" provides an excellent example of what Barthes believes to be an inherent violence in any photography: "on each occasion *it fills the sight by force*, and because in it nothing can be refused or transformed" (91). When the newspaper image suddenly enters Alvaro's sight by force, it presents him with new knowledge about his own destiny that cannot be refused or transformed; just as the referent in the picture cannot be denied or explained away, he too cannot escape the possibility of one day becoming his own referent of death.

The next set of examples include photographs taken by other people as Alvaro observes them during a work assignment in Venice, Italy and while visiting the former prison at the top of Montjüic in Barcelona. Alvaro's work as a photographer and the emphasis he places on visual perception throughout the novel aim to expose the constructed and consumer-driven nature of the

activities of the tourists. Alvaro's astute eye takes note of the photographic obsessions of tourists in Venice, and his point of view is ultimately what allows him to judge the tourists for their acts of consumption that hide the true beauty they aim to capture and take home with them in photographs: "fijando para el álbum familiar de recuerdos la imagen torpe del niño rodeado de palomas o de la esposa gorda perfilada frente a los relieves de la Loggetta . . . como si el verdadero objeto del viaje de unos y otros fuesen las tarjetas postales y los álbumes de familia y no el admirable panorama de San Marcos . . ." (Goytisolo 370). Alvaro focuses on the tourists' practice of making an object out of the landscape before them, commodifying the land by photographing it and placing it into an album. This cynicism recalls Susan Sontag's statement that "Travel becomes a strategy for accumulating photographs," and the act of photographing strange lands allows for a comfortable separation from that which a tourist does not or may not want to truly understand (9-10). He does not mask his disdain for these practices of accumulation and describes the habit as a sickness when he says that the tourists were ". . . poseídos de una ansia enfermiza de dejar constancia de su paso por aquellos parajes . . ." (Goytisolo 370). Additionally, Alvaro's negative opinion exposes how tourists are less concerned with the history of a place than recording their presence there. The cost of this type of superficial engagement with one's surroundings is a sanitization of both landscape and history that do the opposite of what Alvaro hoped to achieve with his documentary. Instead of engaging with the sights around them, tourists possess an uncritical gaze that perpetuates oblivion of significant historical and social events.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the last chapter of *Señas de identidad*. The tourists visiting Montjüic are comfortably unaware of the historical significance of this site in Barcelona. Enthralled by the landscape, they exemplify the tourist's separation from that which they do not

or may not want to undesrstand: the violent past associated with the former prison at Montjüic. The array of tourists that Alvaro observes are blinded to Montjüic's recent history in part by their obsession with photography, but mostly because of their unquestioning absorption of the narrative created by the Franco regime that presents a sanitized version of the city's history. To magnify this separation, the narrator juxtaposes the language of a government pamphlet outlining the history of the city with snippets of conversations in foreign languages and Alvaro's reflections on what he sees happening around him. The memory of recent civil upheaval, as Fraser has noted with specific reference to the landscape of Montjüic, is replaced with a narrative that "necessarily obfuscates class history through easily commodified visual splendor" (155). Herzberger also points out that ". . . because the pamphlet is framed within the narrative by the persistent alienation that informs Alvaro's memory, it reveals how narration is used by the government to abridge culture and rid it of its complexity and richness. The official discourse of the Regime . . . is now exposed in the whole of its sterility as antithetical to truth" (*Narrating the Past* 81-82). By performing a seemingly benign action of snapping photographs and admiring the landscape, the tourists become an active part of the sterilization of the truth, whether they are aware of this fact or not.

Not only does Alvaro recognize the false nature of the tourist photo destined to become yet another accumulated object void of true significance, but he points to the "blind" ways of seeing that these tourists practice and that the Franco regime has ultimately encouraged in order to marginalize the history and memories of an entire sector of Spanish society. Fraser's study of the tourist gaze in *Señas de identidad* is predicated on the assumption that this specific gaze is a collective activity that "proves to be less about the memory of the past and more about

contemporary power struggles" (153).[17] The tourists in Spain are less concerned with the historical past than they are with the consumption of the landscapes and spaces they see before them. When the official discourse of the regime exalts "el ardor del sol el garboso pisar de las mujeres el emboque de los vinos la emoción viril de la corrida la belleza del paisaje el bajo índice de los precios . . ." it erases all the regional, political, and economic differences that still characterize the country at the time of the tourist boom (Goytisolo 384). This leveling of the cultural playing field that is intended to attract foreigners and generate capital is also inevitably read and absorbed by the citizens of Spain, thus it represents one of the many "abuses of forgetting" subtly imposed on the collective body (Ricoeur 80). What Alvaro denounces in his critique of the tourist gaze is not solely the consumer-driven practices of a special sector of society with the means to travel, but the well-concealed political efforts to eliminate any trace of subversive memory from public view. The concerted effort by a governing power to manipulate the memory or knowledge of diversity, whether it is social, economic or political, comes about when ideology is inserted "between the demand for identity and the public expressions of memory" (Ricoeur 82). Ultimately, Alvaro uses the tourist gaze to highlight the absence of certain memories in the public sphere, specifically those memories belonging to the "losing side" of the Civil War.

Documentary on Emigration

"No se te olvide nunca" (Goytisolo 113). This is the command Alvaro makes to himself that opens Chapter Three and acts as a personal reminder never to forget that his father was assassinated by *Republicanos* near the town of Yeste, the same town where he filmed many of the scenes he had planned to use in his documentary. He appeals to his memory to save this

[17] See Afinoguénova for a study of tourism in Goytisolo's early essays and travelogues.

knowledge from oblivion and he even includes the words inscribed on the tombstone marking the site of his father's death as visual reminders of the loss that the physical tombstone commemorates: "R.I.P / Aquí fueron asesi / nados por la cana / lla roja de Yeste / cinco caballeros / españoles / un recuerdo y una o / ración por sus almas" (Goytisolo 113). Alvaro's act of remembering is directly linked to the objects he uses as mental sign posts guiding his journey to the past. Unlike the tombstone that physically marks the place of his father's death and could be revisited if desired, the documentary on emigration differs from the other objects in this study because it exists only in Alvaro's memory. Alvaro no longer possesses the film, and therefore the documentary is only accessible to him through the use of his memory of the events he filmed and the examination of the folder containing documents and pictures he uses to trigger his memories of the production process that occurred during his first trip back to Spain in August of 1958 (Goytisolo 114-115). In addition to this personal goal to remember his father, Alvaro also attempts to represent collective experience when he recreates the scenes he filmed for the documentary and physically engages with the documents he still possesses and that he intended to include in it. The parallel stories of the *encierro* and festival in Yeste captured in the documentary and retold by Alvaro, the reconstruction of the violence and killings in the same town before and during the Civil War through the use of newspapers from 1936, and the fact that Yeste is the site of Alvaro's father's death attest to the need to combine personal and collective stories of grief and violence to demonstrate how the two forms of remembering are inseparable when dealing with questions of national and cultural identity. Because of the breadth of time periods and events covered in this chapter of the novel, I will limit my analysis of the emigration documentary (with a few brief exceptions) to the present moment of narration (1963) and the events from the visit to Yeste in 1958.

The documentary film that is now in the hands of the Franco regime is itself a ghostly reminder of the project that Alvaro never managed to finish (Goytisolo 156). However, because he does still have some of the documents he had hoped to include in it, the entire concept of the documentary straddles the divide between spectrality and materiality making it truly a ghostly presence. To further complicate matters, there are ghosts within the unused materials for the documentary that Alvaro exhumes, creating layer upon layer of haunting presences. The tombstone that Alvaro recalls from his first and only trip back to Spain since the start of his self-exile includes the appeal to those who come upon the marker to remember and pray for those killed. However, one important thing is missing from Alvaro's reappraisal of the object: his father's name. Alvaro only mentions the fact that his father's name and the names of the other four men killed that day are inscribed on the cross (Goytisolo 114). This absence reveals a personal desire to keep his father's identity to himself, much like Roland Barthes's exclusion of the Winter Garden photograph of his mother from *Camera Lucida*. On a larger scale, however, the absence of his father's name allows for a collective presence to emerge: that of the many deaths that occurred in the area after his father's. When Alvaro leaves his father's name out of the narrative he acknowledges the existence of other equally tragic endings:

> Los ejecutores de tu padre se pudrían igualmente en la fosa común del cementerio del pueblo y ninguna lápida solicitaba para ellos un recuerdo ni una oración. Evocados unos y olvidados otros, fusilados del verano del 36 y de la primavera del 39 eran todos, juntamente, verdugos y víctimas, eslabones de la cadena represiva iniciada meses antes de la guerra a raíz de la matanza acaecida en Yeste en pleno gobierno del Frente Popular. (Goytisolo 115)

These unmarked graves and the stories that have gone untold are the ghosts that Alvaro wishes to disinter in an attempt to represent the marginalized stories of Spain's recent history. His way of approaching this memory work is to remember the experiences of creating the documentary on

emigration and face the multitude of ghostly presences linked to this failed project. Even though Alvaro is unable to show the film and project the images he recorded, this does not mean that as an object it is any less present. The documentary provides an opportunity to better understand the relationship between materiality and spectrality that was explored in the photography section above because "ghosts, while they require remembrance in human consciousness, have an objective existence as the embodiment of the past in the present" (Labanyi, "History and Hauntology" 78).

The relationship between materiality and spectrality with regard to the documentary can be illustrated by analyzing Alvaro's process of remembering: "Los hechos se yuxtaponían en el recuerdo como estratos geológicos dislocados por un cataclismo brusco y, tumbado en el diván de la galleria . . . examinaste la amalgama de papeles y documentos de la carpeta –periódicos antiguos, fotografías, programas – en una última y desesperada tentativa de descubrir las coordenadas de tu extraviada identidad" (Goytisolo 115). By likening his memory to geological layers Alvaro stresses the physicality of the relationship he has with the past, and explains how the memories he is about to share have come to the surface because they were "dislocated" abruptly. He emphasizes the significant role objects play in filling in the blanks of his memory and at the same time objectifies his own cultural identity by claiming that it is lost, *extraviada*. This perception of identity as a thing exemplifies the problem Gillis recognizes: "That identities and memories change over time tends to be obscured by the fact that we too often refer to both [memory and identity] as if they had the status of material object – memory as something to be retrieved; identity as something that can be lost as well as found" (Gillis 3). Alvaro's identity is not lost. One may only note the variety of times that Alvaro describes the evolution of his self-consciousness and his multiple and ever-changing affiliations with distinct social groups during

the Post War.[18] Nor is his identity a "thing" that can later be found, as Gillis points out, but rather it is as subjective a representation or construction of reality as memories are in all their transformative capacity (3). An identity is as difficult to pin down as a vague memory from years ago. This conception of identity as a thing that could be lost hints at a perceived materiality that in turn is linked to the objects that help Alvaro retrieve his memories. He may perceive his identity as lost, but the process of remembering and reconstructing the documentary demonstrates that both his cultural identity and the portion of collective Spanish history he portrays truly exist in the form of ghosts, one step removed from physical existence but no less present.

The cataclysm that Alvaro refers to in the quote above deserves more attention because it references a break with the past through violence. His process of remembering is defined by the juxtaposition of different time periods and events, but all of them have to do with violence and destruction that results in damage and ruins. The dissolution of Alvaro's family unit with the execution of his father (Goytisolo 114-115), the mutilation of the earth to build the reservoir (Goytisolo 126-128), the deaths of the workers in Yeste (151-152), the brutal killing of the young bull (Goytisolo 152-154), and the gratuitous assasination of Alvaro's uncle Lucas are the events recalled to demonstrate how ghosts arise from the ruins of violence. Ofelia Ferrán discusses the continual return of ruins in a way that parallels the return of ghosts:

> . . . the recurring images of fragmentary objects rescued from the past, especially the various forms of ruins that appear over and over again, reflect the necessarily

[18] The rebellious period of Alvaro's life during his friendship with Sergio (Goytisolo 67-112), and the desire to help his friends' cause in the strikes and uprisings in Spain by using his connections in France (Goytisolo, 219-228) attest to his support of minority causes and align him with a more contentious social identity. However, this identification with a socially marginalized group fluctuates and is questioned by Alvaro consistently. For example, the narrator does not hesitate to demarcate the period of his association with fellow countrymen when he says that "Su exaltada fraternidad había durado tiempo exacto del rodaje inacabado de la película" (Goytisolo 251).

> fragmentary nature of what is found beneath the dominant versions of history. These images of fragmentation also reflect the fact that previously repressed aspects of the past can only be effectively recovered in similarly fragmentary narratives that reject any totalizing closure and wholeness. (57)

The non-linear approach to telling these stories that comprise what would have been Alvaro's documentary puts on display a set of ruins that when merged together as they are in Chapter Three retell the personal and collective ghost stories Alvaro is familiar with. The stories are broken up, creating suspense through narrative fragmentation. This breaking apart of each story into sections so that they can be intertwined and juxtaposed with similar but unique personal and collective histories is the textual equivalent of Alvaro's "estratos geológicos" (Goytisolo 115), layering memory upon memory in order to evade the sanitized approach to remembering the past that the regime has perpetuated.

The images of layers of earth and ruins all have to do with physical places, sites such as Yeste where in different times the transfer of memory would not have been monitored and regulated by governments or regimes, but rather by the local cultural practices. As Pierre Nora has observed, memory is embodied "in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists" because memory itself has been torn or damaged (7). *Lieux de mémoire* exist in part because of the damage done to memory and because real environments of memory or, *milieux de mémoire*, no longer exist (Nora 7). Examples of *milieux de mémoire* include peasant culture in which members transmitted memories within family or group units (Nora 7). In Spain during the Franco regime "historical continuity," or a contintuation of the glories of Spanish history with the policies of the dictatorship, is stressed over the *milieux de mémoire* in order to maintain control over members of society whose political beliefs did not line up with those of the dictatorship. In fact, as Paloma Aguilar has noted, the legitimization of the regime was entirely

bound up in a policy of marginalizing the losing side and justifying the war (33).[19] There was a definite focus on political socialization that privileged the memory of the winning side and "perpetuated a partisan memory of war" (Aguilar 49), thus eliminating the possibility for broad-based social transfer of memory. Historian and Spanish film critic Jorge Nieto describes one facet of the process of political socialization enacted by the regime: "A través del noticiario de obligada exhibición, el régimen se sirvió del cinematógrafo para reconducir el recuerdo de la guerra en una dirección u otra, a la vez que fue pantalla en la que proyectar la supuesta efectividad en el ejercicio político y económico" (16). Alvaro's film would direct memory toward the spaces of the lives made invisible by the regime, and therefore provide a countermemory to that of the "official memories" advocated by the regime. In lieu of the actual film, Alvaro creates a narrative that juxtaposes diverse memories and historical events in order to escape the totalitizing efforts of the regime that aim to eliminate the transfer of memories that would create active *milieux de mémoire*.

Alvaro sees his own fragmented identity with a "visión cruel y lúcida de tu doble experiencia de español y de emigrado, con treinta y dos años a cuesta de escamoteada (no vivida) historia civil" (Goytisolo 140). What he judges as "unlived" national history manifests itself in the way he describes himself. In the sections in Chapter Three when Alvaro describes his 1958 visit to Yeste he uses the terms "forastero" and "viajero" to refer to himself as an outsider in the country of his birth (Goytisolo 113, 119). Alvaro is an unnamed ghost in his own country who is drawn toward his homeland and simultaneously repulsed by it, constantly searching for where he fits since he is both Spaniard and foreigner at once. Just as a ghost brings the past to the present moment, Alvaro's memory work makes him question his identity constantly. By distancing

[19] See Aguilar 35-49 for a study of the two forms of legitimacy invoked by the Franco regime to maintain power.

himself from the people he aims to capture on film and with whom he shares a common language, Alvaro sends a mixed message of rejection of his origins and passive involvement in the tradition. For example, shortly before the running of the bulls occurs, Alvaro says that "Una misma comunión ante el peligro los une a todos y únicamente te excluye a ti, el extranjero que los observa y filma" (Goytisolo 148). The camera framing Alvaro's perspective is the object that separates him from the scene being filmed, thus setting up his "visión cruel y lúcida" of the violence of the bull killing that is the event's culmination. While Alvaro is not capturing on film the pain of a human being, he does document the agonizing process of killing the bull and provides what Abigail Lee Six describes as a scene of "sordid aggression, far from lofty symbolism or even vivid local colour" (*Juan Goytisolo: The Case for Chaos* 68). His disdain for the cruelty shown by the people of this town comes through in the presentation of the animality of the human beings, not the bull, as Six affirms (*Juan Goytisolo: The Case for Chaos* 69). The camera turns out to be an instrument of mercy when it runs out of film, thus sparing the young bull an eternal death caught on film as it observes in its last moments of life the "espeso caldo humano con ojos sanguinolentos" (Goytisolo 154). Despite referring to the recreation of the violent killings in Yeste in 1939 when Alvaro says, "pues no es profesión, sino tormento y castigo vivir, ver, anotar, retratar cuanto sucede en tu patria" (Goytisolo 144), the statement applies just as well to the emotional toll *seeing* and *recounting* has on the narrator during the bull killing. And yet, it is his profession, his chosen job to look at and record what he considers injustices significant enough to merit recording and presenting to an audience. This is where his memory comes into play even more prominently because instead of falling back on a video of the events he must recall them.

It is surprising that Alvaro is capable of recalling in such detail the scenes of violence he recorded years ago. The fluidity and precision of his memories, the flowing from one violent story occurring in or near Yeste to another mimics the composition of a documentary film. One brief section begins with a command: "Rescata esta imagen del olvido: la asamblea acecha la bocacalle en silencio y dos hombres apuntan por un zaguán con una bandera roja" (Goytisolo 149). The memory Alvaro presents here offers a different perspective on the action described in the previous section – the running of the bulls – because he found intriguing the image of the bright red flag contrasted with the white walls of the buildings. This image proves special not only for its aesthetic qualities, but also because it triggers Alvaro's memory of images of the Civil War and the emotions associated with them:

> Tú asistías, alucinado, a su despliegue insólito al cabo de tantos años sidos y no vividos, vacíos y probados de su sustancia con la misma emoción con que en la cinemateca presenciaste los documentales de Ivens y Karmen sobre la guerra civil: la defensa de Madrid, la lucha en el Jarama, los acordes conmovedores de *La Santa Espina*. Los dos hombres caminaban con la bandera entre los aplausos de la multitud y la sangre te zumbaba en las sienes. Cegado por el sol denso y obsceno, borracho y delirante, habías saludado la milagrosa irrupción del símbolo con lágrimas en los ojos, perdido todo dominio sobre ti mismo, murmurando, con qué amor dios mío, qué dulzura: pueblo, o pueblo mío recobrado . . . (Goytisolo 149-150)

The scenes from documentaries caused the same eruption of emotion as the flag passing before him in the ceremony in Yeste, and this linking of cinematographic memory with lived experiences helps to explain how Alvaro's recollections of the documentary-making process become intertwined with films that influenced his passion for cinema.

Alvaro's uncharacteristic patriotic outpouring of emotion and personal reflection on the Post War years ("tantos años sidos y no vividos") while filming what would have been a scene for his documentary provide an intriguing parallel with Basilio Martín Patino's intentions when

he made *Canciones para después de una guerra*: "la película pretendía reflejar una posguerra que no había vivido, que me habían ocultado y sobre la cual tenía una sensación de fraude, de engaño. Fue una forma de liberarme frente a una serie de mentiras que no admitía" (Patino quoted in Nieto 236). For Alvaro, the filming of the beginning of the festivities in Yeste brings back all of the emotions for a country he thought he had lost when he went into exile and was separated from the daily life of his homeland. However, this display of feelings does not allow him to cover up the brutality of what he is about to see when the *novillo* is killed. On the contrary, this love for his country seems to oblige Alvaro to describe the animality of the townspeople in contrast to the prolonged suffering of the bull in order to extract the nostalgia from this tradition. This type of ironic reversal of the ingrained beliefs of the Spanish people is also evident in the composition of *Canciones para después de una guerra* when it juxtaposes popular songs with discordant images. Jorge Nieto writes: "Si bien *Canciones para después de una guerra* vaga por la gran mayoría de los lugares comunes de la memoria cotidiana, no permite la fácil nostalgia a la que podía haber llevado la música. El desentono, la contradicción, y un sinfín de juegos entre la banda sonora y la imagen empujan por la vía de la ambigüedad a la ironía" (232). When Alvaro reverses the characteristic roles of animal and human being he provides an alternate version of the well-known tradition by simply framing the scene through his perspective, much in the same way that Patino constructs his film according to how he experienced the Post War.

At the end of the chapter Alvaro attempts to close the circle of his narrative that reconstructs the documentary by describing the Civil War in a similarly circular fashion: "Aplastado, barrido, conjurado mil veces, el fantasma renacía siempre con etiquetas aleatorias y, con él, el empeño tenaz de suprimirlo, de bajar un peldaño más en la escala de la barbarie . . ."

(Goytisolo 162). This description of the war as a phantom highlights the fluctuation between remembering and forgetting the events of those three years, and also demonstrates the violence that arises in order to suppress memories that go against the official version of history. Alvaro does not shy away from the reality of this brutal cycle. Instead he acknowledges it in his cyclical rendering of the distinct forms of violence that occurred near Yeste during the Civil War and after. Shocked by the continual fighting and hostility of both the winners and the losers of the war (Goytisolo 162), Alvaro ensures that these struggles are documented, if not in his film, then in his narrative.

Postmemory Objects

Up until this point, the objects analyzed for their role in triggering Alvaro's memories have been associated with the family unit or with the narrator's personal experiences as a photographer and frustrated filmmaker. Now we will analyze memories of a different kind – those that were transmitted to Alvaro and that he includes in the narrative with the help of what I will call postmemory objects. Integral to the concept of postmemory objects is Marianne Hirsch's definition of postmemory, or memories not mediated by recall of personal experiences, but rather by the stories and images transmitted to him by another person (*Family Frames* 22; "The Generation" 106-107). Alvaro's inclusion of the Gasparini photographs and José Bernabeu's chair and basket seems to answer Marianne Hirsch's intriguing question, "Is postmemory limited to the intimate embodied space of the family, or can it extend to more distant, adoptive witnesses?" ("The Generation" 107) because it affirms the existence of a set of experiences that are different from his and entirely in opposition to the Franco regime's projected national image. Alvaro is the "adoptive witness" who feels compelled to share these stories, thus expanding the concept of postmemory to include the experiences transmitted to him by

acquaintances. Alvaro challenges the scope of memory by appropriating these memories not for personal gain (in fact, Bernabeu's chair and basket serve to expose Alvaro's own selfish goals as we will see shortly), but rather for the purpose of exposing how collective memory practices enforced by the regime undermined and harmed individual memory practices.

The first postmemory objects – the Gasparini photographs – are a good example of the regime's techniques of silencing the opposition, while at the same time they represent Alvaro's first attempt to rescue the memories associated with these experiences in order to confirm their existence and give them validity. Alvaro includes the story of an Italian reporter visiting Spain named señor Gasparini, whose photographs depict poverty-stricken Spaniards living in the slums of Barcelona. The only detail that loosely links Gasparini with Alvaro is the fact that he is a friend of Antonio, one of Alvaro's leftist friends.[20] Other than this connection, there is no indication as to how Alvaro came upon Gasparini's story. This is what happens: Two police officers visit Gasparini in his hotel room shortly before his return to Italy (Goytisolo 310). The visit is outwardly cordial – one of the officers even says that they could not let Gasparini return to Italy without having the pleasure of meeting him (Goytisolo 312). However, when the police officers begin to search through Gasparini's luggage and photographs without a search warrant, and ask him about his acquaintance with Antonio and Enrique, another leftist friend of Alvaro's who opposes the dictatorship, the invasion of privacy sends a very clear message as to the amount of power given to the regime's police. Alvaro's inclusion of this scene emphasizes the

[20] Antonio's whose leftist political opinions land him in jail for eighteen months (Goytisolo 169). Chapter Four documents Antonio's "insile" in his small hometown in southern Spain after being released from prison. His struggles are juxtaposed with fragments from police records documenting his movements around the town and his associations with other leftists. The police in Gasparini's hotel room attempt to connect him to Antonio and implicate him performing actions against the state.

importance the Franco regime placed on maintaining constant vigilance over those suspected of plotting against them, even visitors to the country like Gasparini.

The focus on Gasparini's photography in this section in Chapter Five (the only time this character appears) calls attention to the political uses and abuses of photography during the Franco dictatorship. The officer who does most of the talking comments on the photographs Gasparini has taken only after disguising his humility by calling himself "un simple aficionado español": "Yo creo que no ha captado usted bien la realidad de nuestro país . . . ¿Por qué se empeña usted en retratar niños tristes y chozas en ruina? ¿Cree usted de verdad que eso es España? No; a usted le han guiado mal" (Goytisolo 315). When the officer puts into question the existence of the photographic referent, he denies the validity of the recorded image, or the "that-has-been" to use Barthes's phrase, which speaks to the moment that is captured by the camera and that must be denied by the officers in the face of photographic "evidence" of those events. The absurdity of the rejection of the misery depicted in the photos lies in the fact that the officer's "reading" of the pictures is entirely based on the projection of an image of economic progress that necessarily ignores the societal struggles that do not adhere to that constructed reality. Obviously, the officer's cursory reading of the images does not aim to acknowledge each individual visual aspect of the photos, but rather it is meant to teach a lesson based on acceptable visual images that recreate Spain in a positive, "European" way. For example, when the bald officer says that journalists ". . . en lugar de referir lo que ven con sus propios ojos, se encierran en la habitación del hotel y escriben una sarta de embustes y disparates" (Goytisolo 311), he is ironically depicting what he is about to do – ignore the scene before him and replace it with another deemed more acceptable. Instead of *seeing* the poverty in Spain the officer opts for "convincing Gasparini of his error" by driving him around Barcelona to take "better" photos

despite the fact that Gasparini's plane is scheduled to depart in less than three hours. The bald officer says

> Me apenaría muchísimo que se fuera sin haber comprendido una serie de cosas elementales. Nuestro país es muy bello y la gente vive tranquila y feliz. Le mostraré los cafés del Ensanche, el monumento de la Victoria, las escuelas de formación profesional . . . Allí verá usted una realidad que desconoce: hombres y mujeres alegres, niños que ríen . . . Esas fotografías que ha hecho usted son artísticamente pobres. Hay demasiado claroscuro, resultan monótonas. Por eso, si usted no se ofende, las haré desaparecer . . . no quisiera que en su país lo juzgasen mal, señor Gasparini . . . Si la luz nos acompaña un poco, podremos tomar otras mejores. (Goytisolo 315-316)

First, the officer's statement about the beauty of the country and the people that live tranquil, happy lives directly contradicts the images caught on film by Gasparini, and subsequently portrays the regime's adherence to a set of ideals that aim to erase all images of difference. The sites and monuments the officer lists represent different things to different sectors of society. The Victory monument, for example, commemorates Franco's triumph in 1939. Since it is linked to the Nationalist side of the Civil War, the monument marginalizes those individuals who, like Gasparini, oppose the regime. The substitutes suggested to the Italian visitor could never be *lieux des memóire* for the entire Spanish population at that time in the 1960s because they are not imbued with a symbolic aura that unifies the members of that culture (Nora 19).

The officer does not stop there. The aesthetic criticism of Gasparini's pictures reveals at least a marginal understanding of photographic principles that contradicts his earlier statement about only dabbling in the practice. What he sees (or purports to see) in the photographs is a direct result of his political affiliation and is the frame from which he views the pictures; that which does not conform to the Francoist ideals must automatically be called, in the most candy-coated form, "artísticamente pobre." Despite the passive-aggressive nature of the officer's

comments up until this point, the reality of the extent of his power becomes chillingly apparent when he says, after ingratiating himself to Gasparini, that he will "make the pictures disappear." The forced forgetting implied in the destruction of the photographs is shocking, but "making something disappear" within the context of a surprise interrogation suggests an even more disturbing possibility: the police could easily make Gasparini disappear during their ride through the city. The *paseo*, or practice of "taking someone for a walk" that was common practice during the Franco regime, oftentimes meant the disappearance and death of the kidnapped individual. This is not an unlikely hypothesis, especially since this brief scene is the only time when Gasparini appears in the novel, therefore intimating that his story ends with his car ride through Barcelona.

Whether or not the officers' intention was to make Gasparini disappear, the motive behind driving him around the city in search of "better pictures" is directly related to tourism and the external appearance of Spain put forth for the rest of the world to behold. The bald officer in the Gasparini section sums up the official perspective on tourism in this way: "El turismo es nuestra mejor propaganda, créame. Usted mismo habrá podido apreciar la paz social, el orden público . . ." (Goytisolo 311). The maintenance of an orderly and progressive image to boost tourism in Spain allows the regime to manipulate the foreigners' perspective without their knowledge and impose on its inhabitants a single mode of seeing the country.

This manipulation is most evident in the official discourse that opens Chapter Seven and exalts the progress made by the regime to better the lives of the Spanish people. For example, when attempting to acknowledge the possible existence of poverty in the country, the discourse of the regime states that ". . . si los inevitables focos de miseria subsisten se trata por lo general de casos aislados a los que la innata generosidad racial del español pone remedio . . ." (Goytisolo

384). David K. Herzberger recommends that the language of the regime and the press it controls be first accepted for what it is and then rejected for what it does; "the world invented and propagated by the press is formulary and reductive, its purpose is to obliterate perceptions that are spontaneous and complex. For Goytisolo, language functions as an instrument of the writer's refusal to accept life as it is. Hence his attack against Spanish reality begins by laying bare the automotized language that controls and shapes that reality" ("Language and Referentiality" 615).[21] By "laying bare the automotized language" of the press Goytisolo opens up the opportunity for an equally vehement attack on the practices of tourists that cover up the realities surrounding them. Futhermore, he exposes the artifice behind the regime's public positions on poverty by juxtaposing a third-person, objective account of repression of dissenting points of view with the skewed language of the press.

When Alvaro includes postmemory objects in the narrative he does so to make space for marginalized stories of oppression because he wonders who else will take up this call for justice:

> Pero si la prensa exhibía diario los índices y gráficos de un despegue obtenido, entre otras razones, merced a la dura disciplina militar impuesta a la clase obrera y al mantenimiento de las arcaicas e inhumanas relaciones de producción en el sector agrario, ¿quién evocaba, en cambio, la existencia de aquellos que, a costa de su sangre, sudor y lágrimas, habían sido sus verdaderos artífices y sus víctimas, igualmente anónimos? La triste humanidad callada que había aguantado sobre sus hombros el peso de la necesaria acumulación, ¿quién se acordaba de ella? (Goytisolo 387)

The press may represent one reality, but Alvaro recognizes the existence of another sector of society that suffered during the Civil War and in its aftermath, only to be consciously ignored by the regime. Instead of allowing another individual's voice to go unheard, Alvaro rereads the transcripts of testimonies and expands the scope of his remembrances:

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[21] Much has been written about Goytisolo's use of language. See Burunat, Epps, Durán, and Stecher.

> Transcritas durante los preparativos del rodaje del fallido documental, las biografías de los emigrados –primera ola de un mar en movimiento perpetuo– se erguían en medio del panorama campestre tranquilo y placentero como una grave e imperecedera acusación, todo el lento aprendizaje en el dolor, la vergüenza y la astucia, la injusticia y la humillación de estos años cifrados en páginas escuetas y breves, rigurosas y estrictas, que ningún progreso, ningún bienestar, ninguna modernización –y era una certeza consoladora para ti– conseguirían nunca borrar. (Goytisolo 387-388)

The "comforting certainty" in the fact that no progress within the country would be able to erase the wrongdoings of the regime provides a direct contrast to the self-aggrandizing official rhetoric boasting of "el privilegio de un orden bienhechor" during the so-called "Twenty-five Years of Peace" (Goytisolo 382). Chapter Seven opens with the regime's propagandistic appraisal of the current state of Spain, and it is in this chapter that José Bernabeu's personal testimony and the second set of postmemory objects appear in order to contradict the official version of events.

By opening this chapter with the official discourse of the Franco regime and juxtaposing it with that of José Bernabeu's testimony, Alvaro highlights the deceptive nature of the regime's rhetoric. This is especially evident when Bernabeu's chair and basket serve as physical reminders of a violent regime and embody how writers (Goytisolo specifically, in this case) "duel with preconceptions of what literature can address and install certain motifs of violence in this *literatura comprometida* that suggest connections between individuals and the collective" (Mooney 116). José Bernabeu's testimony is one of the texts incorporated for its opposition to the image of a unified Spain portrayed by official propaganda, but it is also significant because it demonstrates how the use of another individual's memories can lead to an "ethics of postmemory" that draws awareness to social injustices and revitalizes memories that the regime marginalized.

Before beginning the examination of the role the chair and basket play in Bernabeu's testimony, it is important to note the autobiographical element that ties his account of the past to a real experience. The source of the testimony is not Goytisolo's imagination, but rather comes from a diary dictated in 1954 by an illiterate Catalan worker to his son, José Bartomens (Gould Levine 267, footnote 90). The worker's son, who completed his military service in the same regiment as Goytisolo, trusted his father's diary to Goytisolo, whose only modification of the original text consisted of the correction of grammatical errors (Gould Levine 267, footnote 90).[22] Moreover, as Linda Gould Levine points out, testimonies from Spanish emigrants that Juan Goytisolo collected and published under the pseudonym Ramón Vives add to the autobiographical details included in Alvaro's unfinished documentary (34-35). "Testimonios de trabajadores emigrados" was published in the French publication, *Tribuna socialista*, and gives snapshots of the hardships emigrants faced on their way to France. As Vives (Goytisolo) points out, ". . . no han venido casi jamás a Francia directamente, sino después de una estancia más o menos larga en Cataluña o Valencia, primeras etapas de abastecimiento y reposo, en su viaje huyendo de la miseria" (14).

The personal histories recounted in "Testimonio de trabajadores emigrados" date from 1955-1956 and are contemporaneous with that of José Bernabeu's testimony in the novel. Both the fictionalized account in *Señas de identidad* and the real confessions published in *Tribuna socialista* in 1961 expose the social injustices suffered by this sector of society to a wide audience unfamiliar with but eager for knowledge of this type. A day worker, whose name is

[22] The diary, along with the other original sources used in the composition of *Señas de identidad*, can be found in the author's Archives at Boston University and provide a physical presence external to that of the novel, but that testify to the "reality" represented in the novel (Gould Levine 71).

shortened to Juan E. for his personal safety, expresses his desire to be heard in the following way:

> Me gustaría saber de letras para contar esas cosas en un libro. Entonces explicaría a todo el mundo que los españoles somos tratados en nuestro propio país como animales y que la mayor parte de las gentes que se creen muy santas y muy buenas no tienen ninguna consideración con los pobres. Diría que, para vivir como una persona he necesitado salir de mi país y muchas otras cosas más. (Vives 19)

The constant rejection he experienced within his own country allows him to be honest about the distance that separated the social classes, but it also highlights the fact that in order for these stories to be exposed to a receptive public they must be collected and published by someone who belongs to a more privileged social group and who finds value in them as examples of alternative memories that oppose the official story of emigration in Spain. The only way for these personal memories to be recorded is through an adoptive witness, Alvaro, who recognizes their social value and includes them as postmemories in his narrative. According to Jorge Nieto, memory becomes a space of dispute when certain remembrances are denied legitimacy, as is the case with the regime's blindness surrounding the plight of poor Spaniards, and it becomes even more problematized when efforts, such as Alvaro's, are made to revitalize that which was previously marginalized (22). Michael Ugarte has also noted Goytisolo's adherence to the original text of the testimony and believes that "The integration of unaltered texts throughout *Señas* is reminiscent of the textual interpolations found in the travelogues. The presence of these texts is a further manifestation of Goytisolo's abandonment of the realism of [his previous novels] *Juegos*, *Duelo*, and *El pasado efímero*. The attempt to reflect social reality is rejected in favor of a transcription of that reality" (65). Thus, Alvaro's inclusion of Bernabeu's diary reflects an "ethics of postmemory" that stresses accuracy and faithfulness to the original story. The concern

for justice that Alvaro has expressed is further emphasized when he does not insert his own voice into the narratives that accompany these objects, but rather breaks them up in order to juxtapose the distinct versions of reality that highlight the differences between his experiences in France and those of Bernabeu. An integral part of this concept of an "ethics of postmemory" is Alvaro's conscious appraisal of his actions and opportunities. When he juxtaposes his "privilegiada e injusta condición" (Goytisolo 406) with the poverty of Bernabeu, it is not to make himself appear any better, but instead it helps the reader grasp the severity of the differences between social classes in Spain during the Post War.

The second set of postmemory objects further emphasizes the cruelty of the Franco regime while highlighting Alvaro's concern for accurately representing the memories of others. Whereas the Gasparini photos never receive any commentary from Alvaro, leaving the reader to interpret their significance, Alvaro juxtaposes his own experiences of guilt and complicity in exile with the day-to-day struggles of the impoverished Spaniard, José Bernabeu. Bernabeu served on the Republican side of the Civil War, and because of this political affiliation he is persecuted by the Franco regime during the Post War. He is also one of the many Spanish émigrés who hope to find more economic opportunity outside of Spain, but his role in the novel is minor because it is only through Alvaro's inclusion of his autobiographical testimony that the reader begins to understand who he is.

The testimony of Bernabeu's persecution following the war is mediated by the chair and basket that have accompanied him and his family during these difficult times. In fact, they are the first things he mentions in his testimony: "Esta silla y el cesto de mimbre que hay encima de ella valen para mí más que todos los amigos del mundo y han sido más fieles que ellos pues cuando este cesto pasaba las rejas de la cárcel siempre llevaba dentro algo de comida y esta silla

es la misma en la que me hicieron sentar los falangistas antes de meterme en la cárcel" (Goytisolo 388). The two objects are personified throughout Bernabeu's testimony, a characteristic that allows him to demonstrate how these objects have more human characteristics than his fellow Spaniards. In the first section of the diary, Bernabeu says that "el cesto de mimbre . . . me llevaba la miseria que podía y cada día me alegraba cuando me venía a ver" and that "es una vergüenza dicen esta silla y este cesto que os echaran de la casa aprovechando que estaba yo en la cárcel . . ." (Goytisolo 388). The thoughts and actions attributed to the objects reveal the emotional distress that political persecution has caused him; objects are the only sources of sympathy and compassion, not people. Not only do the chair and basket perform a role of friendly ally where there was no one else, but they *know* that what Bernabeu attests to in his diary is the "verdad verdadera pues ellos *recuerdan* los golpes que me dieron con la fusta y el poco pan que mi mujer recogía por las calles" (Goytisolo 389, emphasis mine). By imbuing these objects with memory, Bernabeu positions them in a privileged space, making them witnesses to a situation where no one, not even the perpetrators of the violence committed against him in prison, would acknowledge his humanity and suffering. These two objects have become Bernabeu's outlets for emotional catharsis when no one else would listen, making them more human than anyone else around him.

The fact that Bernabeu is imprisoned as a suspected *rojo* does not stop him from denouncing the non-action of supposedly likeminded Spaniards either: "esta silla y este cesto no tienen que agradecer nada a nadie pues muchos republicanos de antes andaban por la calle y el cesto no recibía de ellos ni un miserable céntimo" (Goytisolo 388). The lack of charity from Republicans and Falangists alike makes Bernabeu's testimony even more significant for its contributions to better understanding the extreme isolation of a sector of Spanish society under

the dictatorship. Persecuted by some and ignored by many others, Bernabeu does not avoid the ugly truths that he has experienced because he no longer has anything left to lose.

The brutal honesty with which Bernabeu recreates his past is directly contrasted with the embarrassing truths that Alvaro intertwines with the testimony when he talks of his time in Paris. Not only did he not study cinema as he had intended, but he ends up being "un desterrado voluntario que duerme . . . , fuma . . . , come . . . , bebe . . . , va al cine" (Goytisolo 389). When these remembrances are placed alongside Bernabeu's they reveal Alvaro's privileged existence as a self-exiled Spaniard, but they also allow him to describe the first time he notices the stark differences between cultures that the exiles experience upon arrival in Paris:

> españoles contratados sin duda por alguna empresa fabril parisiense y, conforme examinabas el rostro perdido y como ahogado de tus paisanos ante el espectáculo para ellos insólito de la silenciosa y disciplinada multitud, tan distinta de la cáotica y vocinglera muchedumbre española, experimentaste una acongojada sensación de estupor y lamentaste no haber traído la cámara de 16 mm. (Goytisolo 390)

The scene he witnesses while waiting for his friend Antonio in the train station is one that, on a certain level, is familiar to Alvaro because he too has entered this modernized country for the first time and noticed the distinct ways in which the people act compared to Spaniards. This recognition of similarities is more evident when Alvaro calls the group of Spaniards "tus paisanos," an identification with the Spanish people that only occurs, curiously, when he is in Paris and not when he visits Spain. If we recall, Alvaro calls himself "viajero" and "forastero" when he visits Spain to film the documentary.

The sense of brotherhood is not complete, however, because yet again Alvaro introduces the camera to lament not being able to document the scene before him; more importantly, the camera serves as a tool to separate himself from the scene he would like to capture. It is this

event, the arrival of Spaniards in Paris, that prompts him to make the emigration documentary and that ". . . se impuso de pronto en tu conciencia como una empresa no sólo apasionante sino (por la rebeldía que implicaba contra tu destino común de español heredero de la situación creada como resultado de la guerra civil) estrictamente necesaria" (Goytisolo 391). The impetuous call to action that this encounter with exiles created for Alvaro contains both a personal passion for film and a personal necessity to document the omnipresent effects of the Civil War. Alvaro set out to achieve these goals in an uncharacteristic frenzy of activity and, as he relates his experiences in southern Spain, it becomes more and more apparent that the reality of the situations he is exposed to are emotionally overwhelming. Oftentimes the conversations he has with the poor on his trips throughout the country make him realize the enormous disparity between his reality and those of his interviewees:

> A salvo tú de la necesidad, gracias al destino aleatorio que te brindara nacer en una cuna rica, les oías hablar por espacio de unas horas de su vida, familia, trabajo, privaciones, esperanzas con un interés apasionado que tus interlocutores tomaban cándidamente por hermandad pura y que tú sólo sabías en tu trasfondo, aunque al momento no lo reconocieras, dictado por el mezquino propósito de llevar a cabo tu ansiado documental sobre la emigración. (Goytisolo 405)

Not only does he admit to selfishly fulfilling his own desire to create the documentary, but he does so knowing that by divulging his true feelings he undermines the original moral and social responsibility he felt toward this marginalized group of people.

Only after Bernabeu relates the seemingly endless series of hardships he and his family experienced as they made their way toward France in search of economic opportunities denied them in Spain does the chair show up again as a witness to the injustice done to him as well as to "la España legal" (Goytisolo 407). The chair continues to possess the ability to speak, and its condemnation of the Spanish political system is much more biting than in the first section: "esta

silla ama a todos los niños y niñas que han quedado desamparados por vosotros esta silla dice que aquí se han sentado los verdaderos catalanes y los verdaderos de la España legal que hemos sufrido miserias y cárceles mientras vosotros estáis disfrutando y nos tratáis como esclavos" (Goytisolo 407). The chair becomes a sort of collective throne in order to reverse the power dynamic and show how the persecuted sector of society clamors for recognition of their suffering. The chair hears all that is said around it and becomes most sad when listening to "las sinverguencierías de la borjesía y de los dirigentes de Falange Española" who have summer vacation plans and know exactly where their next meal is coming from (Goytisolo 407). The chair becomes a symbol of the working class people that have suffered at the hands of the upper-class and the Falangists. It also represents the dream of being able to reverse roles and punish those who have caused so much misery and social inequality. To solidify the association of the chair with working-class rights Bernabeu baptizes it with the names "Companys" and "Libertad," the first refering to the executed leader of Catalonia, Lluís Companys, and the latter repeating Bernabeu's calls for freedom of the working-class from discrimination and repression (Goytisolo 407). The chair unites Bernabeu's personal desires for justice and freedom to the goals of the collective group of leftist, working-class Spaniards, and demonstrates how an object can symbolize both past and future struggles for equality.

In direct contrast to the passionate personification of the chair lies Alvaro's own cowardly non-action. While filming the documentary and collecting testimonies from workers eager to share their stories and be heard, Alvaro realizes that

> Al despedirte de ellos . . . te infundían un sentimiento ambiguo de cinismo y de culpa. Tenías conciencia de que al ofrecer tu amistad los embaucabas y te embaucabas lamentablemente a ti pues, disipada la atmósfera fugaz creada por su presencia, los olvidarías en seguida y no volverías a verlos más. Lo que para ti era

> un mero y ocasional encuentro para ellos constituía tal vez un acontecimiento importante. (Goytisolo 405-406)

This realization adds a dimension of honesty to the novel that captures the complexity of the relationship Alvaro maintains with his fellow Spaniards. While he originally set out to listen to and help these people in their struggles, he is willing to admit that his upbringing in a different class and his desire to escape from his past make him unable and unwilling to perform the types of "socially responsible" actions he had once promised (Goytisolo 406). Despite wanting to break with the past, José Bernabeu's story was the one that continued to haunt him all the way up until the present moment when Alvaro rereads his testimony. In fact, out of all the letters and cards that Alvaro received from Spanish émigrés that he met while living in France, Bernabeu's testimony is the only one that Alvaro saved from being burned, thus demonstrating its haunting nature for the narrator (Goytisolo 406). Alvaro has the most information about Bernabeu because his son would visit him in his apartment in Paris to update him from time to time. Even though Alvaro tries not to envision the boy, "el rostro del muchacho se aferraba a tu memoria obstinado y pugnaz, como un reproche mudo" (Goytisolo 409), it is here in the present moment that Alvaro faces the results of his non-action. The tenacity with which Bernabeu clings to his beliefs and continues to believe in the possibility of justice stands in direct contrast to Alvaro's guilt when he abandons his documentary, and in the process leaves the workers he met during his travels to fend for themselves, to look for justice elsewhere.

The intertwined narratives of Alvaro and José Bernabeu create a space of conflict that, instead of negating the memories and experiences of one or the other, allows different realities experienced during the Post War to coexist. This is an integral part of the ethics of postmemory that Alvaro develops, but is not the defining factor. In addition to revitalizing the marginalized

stories silenced by the regime, Alvaro's memory work necessarily includes his personal struggles as he comes to terms with his own attitudes and opinions surrounding the memories of his experiences and the postmemories he has acquired. The Gasparini photos and the Bernabeu testimony intended for use in the documentary are postmemory objects that work as tools for Alvaro to represent his relationship to the past, which haunts him. The central role these objects play in Alvaro's memory work in *Señas de identidad* can be seen as an early attempt to represent the relationship between materiality and spectrality before the boom in memory production of the Post-Franco period.

Toward a Conclusion

Has Alvaro's struggle to determine who he is become clearer after analyzing his interactions with the photographs, documentary and the postmemory objects? I believe that the answer is a multifaceted one that requires rethinking how human beings reconstruct and narrate their lives in conjunction with the objects around them. Each of the objects and the interactions Alvaro has with them offer intriguing and innovative ways to think about the ties between identity, memory, and material culture in Spanish literature. While it is true that the narrator controls which documents, memories, and objects are included in the novel, the objects he scours for meaning are not simple "containers" of meaning relegated to supporting actor status. Rather, the relationship between Alvaro and these objects challenges the traditional separation between past and present, material and immaterial, and, as I argue, exemplifies a new approach in the study of memory and materiality based on what has been termed the "affective turn" in the reading of literary texts (Labanyi "Doing Things" 230).

According to Jo Labanyi, "the affective turn can make us attentive to 'what texts do' – and what texts do is communicate all manner of things. So affect takes us back to meaning, but

to forms of meaning that are not restricted to the cognitive" ("Doing Things" 230). Materiality in Labanyi's concept of "doing things" references bodily processes, such as thinking and feeling, and the engagement with the material world outside, thus spreading out agency between the material world and human beings – not privileging one over the other ("Doing Things" 223). Just as Barthes was unable to give up affect and expressive language in exchange for a scientific, and therefore cognitive approach to Photography (8), so too is Alvaro unable to detach his emotions from the objects he engages throughout the novel and think about them as entirely independent from the social, cultural, and historical meanings attached to them. Thus, the material world and the emotional, psychological processes that accompany memory work are linked to the phantoms of Alvaro's personal and collective history. The most omnipresent emotion that Alvaro encounters in his exploration of the past is guilt. Sometimes the guilt is more akin to shame and directed at himself for his political inaction or failure to achieve a goal, as is the case with the documentary. Other times guilt is shown in the feelings of complicity he experiences because of simply being born into a well-to-do family with beliefs that differ greatly from his as an adult. Instead of hiding this emotion and consigning the past to oblivion, Alvaro faces his shame and his personal and collective past by giving "those who have not been allowed to leave a trace" their due recognition (Derrida quoted in Labanyi, "History and Hauntology" 66).

The photographs, emigration documentary, and postmemory objects are the physical tools that Alvaro uses to represent his relationship to the past that haunts him, and the central role these objects play in Alvaro's memory work in *Señas de identidad* can be seen as an early attempt to represent the relationship between materiality and spectrality before the boom in memory production of the Post-Franco period. The question of "What Does One Do with the Ghosts of the Past?" is almost always asked of the cultural production of Spain's transition to

democracy, or the Post-Franco era (Labanyi, "History and Hauntology" 65).[23] *Señas de identidad*, however, lies squarely outside of this temporal framework and yet it clearly addresses the need to recognize and live with the past during the time of cultural repression under Franco (Labanyi, "History and Hauntology" 66). This novel answers the question of what to do with the ghosts of the past by affirming the effectiveness of objects in assisting in the ethical representation of individual and collective memory practices.

[23] The works by Labanyi and Colmeiro included in this chapter all deal with the cultural production of the Post-Franco era.

Chapter Three:

Materiality in *El cuarto de atrás*: Identity, Playful Remembrance, and Forgetting

"No hay escritura inocente. Escribir siempre es artificial, revela una manipulación. La palabra no sirve para traernos la cosa, sino para sustituirla. En cada palabra está implícita la ausencia de la cosa que enuncia; la cosa misma queda vedada al tacto."

Carmen Martín Gaite, *El cuento de nunca acabar*

The epigraph to this chapter, a brief reflection entitled “El artificio,” reveals a disconnect between the written word and the topic or object it is meant to describe and recount. However hard a writer may try to convey the meaning of a past formative experience or the details of a cherished object, the verbal representation will never *be* the experience or the thing itself. Martín Gaite refers to *la cosa*, “the thing,” that is inevitably absent in the words used to portray it, and enlists the sense of touch to illustrate her main point about the inevitable separation between the word and a physical object. Nonetheless, by including the corporeal aspect of the relationship one has with an object, Martín Gaite references how “embodied engagement” with the physical world, to use Andrew Jones’s phrase, is an essential characteristic of her narratives (10). Interactions between mind, body, and world bring back memories and provide opportunities for the narrator in *El cuarto de atrás* to creatively and playfully represent her engagment with the material world around her.

Memory work, much like writing about an object or event from the past, is not innocent. The act of remembering works much in the same way as writing because it attempts to bring back the lived experience of the past, but ultimately is always marked by gaps and influences from the present moment. Memory work recreates a past that is layered with imagination, oblivion, and present-day impressions because these influences are essentially inseparable from the remembered experience. In *El cuarto de atrás* we are faced with a problem of representation of memories in the *content* of the novel that finds its parallel in the *form* in which these remembrances are told: the word/image relationship developed throughout the novel.

El cuarto de atrás demonstrates the intricate weaving of words and images in order to recreate memories from the narrator’s past that are recalled by means of interactions with household objects and personal possessions. In this chapter I will focus on the objects that C

describes throughout the novel – mirrors, a sideboard, letters, notes, and a notebook – because they exemplify the union between mental processes of remembering and forgetting and physical connections with the material world. For instance, at the beginning of the novel C describes the physicality of her relationship to both objects and the past they help to recreate when she affirms that "Ha empezado el vaivén, ya no puedo saber si estoy acostada en esta cama o en aquélla; creo, más bien, que paso de una a otra" (*El cuarto* 14). Swinging from one space to another, the reader experiences C's remembrances as they emerge through associations with her surroundings, and accompanies the narrator on a journey guided by descriptions of familiar objects that blur the line between word and image. By investigating the ekphrastic techniques the narrator uses to portray objects and her relationship to them, it is possible to see how C's identity as a woman who grew up under the Franco dictatorship is put into question once the leader dies. Playfulness in the representation of her surroundings and memories is key to questioning the past and beginning to come to terms with it. I argue that the way that the objects in this novel are represented reveals a playful attitude toward employing memory and oblivion to question identity, and that it is through this playfulness in depicting objects that the narrator is able to challenge the dominant discourses on recent Spanish history and women's roles in society.

For the analysis of this final novel I will use the imagetext problematic as outlined by WJT Mitchell in order to analyze the objects represented in *El cuarto de atrás* with respect to the personal ties they have to the narrator. These objects are mediators between past and present that help C playfully represent their roles in her life. They also help her negotiate the temporal separation from the original events, and put into question the social restraints placed upon women during the Franco regime. Objects give C the creative tools to engage with her life path and explore how it was affected by the ideologies prevalent during her lifetime. To discuss the

intersection between material culture in this novel and C's identity in the wake of Franco's death, I will draw on Paul Ricoeur's concept of the "fragility of identity." Ricoeur defines the fragility of identity as "identity's purely presumptive, alleged, reputed character," and points to the problem inherent in answering the question "*Who* am I?" in terms of "What?" because these answers give the illustion that there exists ". . . the recipe of the identity proclaimed and reclaimed" (81). Memory is used to understand and question identity throughout this novel. As John R. Gillis reminds us, it is important to remember that memories and identities are not fixed things, but rather representations or constructions of reality (3). Ricoeur's concept of "fragility of identity" will assist in analyzing the different objects in C's life because these things, along with the memories associated with them, allow her to address all the representations of her identity throughout the years. In fact, C's exploration of her fragile identity leads to the discovery of playful narrative techniques that demonstrate her uniqueness and give her a better understanding of how she fits into the new social organization now that Franco is dead.

With the death of the dictator on November 23, 1975 comes the end of severe ideological restraint on the country as a whole, as well as the individual self-censuring mechanism meant to ensure personal safety during the Post War years of strict rule. Louise Ciallella calls Franco's death "the most uncanny event" in the novel and analyzes the novel using Freud's concept of the uncanny and the simultaneously mourning and estranging of Franco's imposed belief systems (149). Another critic, José F. Colmeiro, emphasizes the importance of Franco's death as a possibility for an unearthing of a censured individual and collective past ("Memoria histórica" 154). Both of these critical analyses underscore the ideological governing power Franco exerted over his people in order to manipulate their memory, an act that ideologizes memory "through the resources of the variations offered by the work of narrative configuration" (Ricoeur 85).

Franco's death allows C to explore how her identity was affected by Franco's ideological premises in order to explore the newfound possibilities inherent in the narrative representation of memory. Ideology, Ricoeur says, serves as the guardian of identity in that it offers "a symbolic response to the causes affecting the fragility of this identity," or, in other words, ideology can serve as a shield held up to ward off threats made to the integrity of one's personal or social identity (83). However, this positive upholding of identity through ideology, or the performace of cultural norms that Ricoeur calls "symbolically mediated acts," ceases to exist the moment ideology takes on its second function as a tool for the justification of power (83). From that moment on ideology serves the goal of performing abuses of memory by controlling the way in which individuals view both their own past as well as the collective history uniting them. For C, Franco's death marks the moment when her identity becomes problematized since she is no longer pressured to behave according to the laws of the constructed narrative imposed by the Fascist leader. Ciallella maintains that "C experiences both an individual and collective mourning of the ideals which governed her identity, both through the regime's controls and through oppositional figures. In *El cuarto*, C's reaction is to both miss and to estrange the ideals imposed by Franco's fatherland, and as such constitutes a species of mourning" (165). This interpretation of the novel, as well as Teresa Vilarós's analysis of the transition to democracy as one marked by trauma, "desencanto," and the loss of the Franco as the father figure (221), both place more emphasis on the concepts of loss and mourning as a result of Franco's death and less on the creative possibilities this event could afford the artists of the time.

As an alternative perspective to these valid analyses, I propose that the death of Franco in *El cuarto de atrás* be interpreted in terms of an opening up to the future that includes critically engaging a polemic past in order to better understand the role of memory in narrative

representation of one's identity. This opportunity to review the past without fear of censorship is evident when C describes the conversations occurring in the bar while watching thousands of *madrileños* wait in line to see Franco's body:

> La opinión de muchos era la de que por una persona que había regido durante tan largo tiempo los destinos de la patria era lo menos que se podía hacer, otros se lo discutían, pero era una polémica libre y relajada, parecía como si las palabras "regir," "destino" y "patria" se quitasen el uniforme oficial y apareciesen en cueros sobre una mesa de disección para dejarse hacer la autopsia. (*El cuarto* 117)

Words, like the deceased dictator himself, undergo the same process of scrutiny by the Spanish people, but now form part of a "free and relaxed polemic" that allows for the analysis of terms and situations previously off limits during the rule of the regime. *El cuarto de atrás* examines the Post War ideologies ingrained in the narrator during her development under the Franco regime by incorporating them into her own narrative, one that outlines her interactions with the material world both during and after the Civil War, and that explores the narrative possibilities this relationship can afford now that the dictator has died. This includes not only *what* can be considered part of a narrative, but also *how* that narrative can be constructed around such a pivotal turning point in personal and collective Spanish history.

Painting in the Sand: The Imagetext as Spatial-Temporal Framework

At the beginning of the novel C imagines that she is drawing lines in the sand and "painting" three things beginning with *c* in Spanish, "una casa, luego un cuarto y luego una cama" (*El cuarto* 12-13). By introducing the imagined act of drawing in the sand at the beginning of the novel C emphasizes that this scene of "picturing" words, or literally constructing an image through the medium of words to illustrate these concepts as the narrator understands them, provides a preview of the "painting" to come with regard to the mirrors,

sideboard, papers, notebooks, and letters that fill the novel with their personal presences in the form of imagetexts. Moreover, it is significant that C labels the "casa, cuarto, cama" series as "cosas," adding to the playful repetition of the letter *c* within the text, as well as emphasizing the importance "things" will play in the development of the novel. Nonetheless, because these three "things" represent vague concepts related to domestic life in general, but more importantly highlight the significance of spaces in which remembrances will occur, I will refer to the "*c* series" as "spaces" and not "things." The reason for this semantic switch is to show how the introduction into C's world consists of a process of visual mapping of the scene that ultimately leads her to focus on the verbal representation of the material world. Let us examine this "painting" scene for the purpose of highlighting its role in providing the spatial-temporal framework guiding the remembrances of and through objects throughout the novel. This scene also introduces the concept of the imagetext that will inform the analysis of materiality in this chapter.

The spatially orienting characteristic of the "*c* series" lies in the fact that the three spaces depicted reflect where the majority of the action of the narration takes place. C's stories recreate the present home, room, and bed in Madrid, but also jump from here to other spaces she inhabited in the past, thereby linking the various homes, rooms, and beds through the portrayal of the passage of time. The "*c* series" sets the scene for the complex spatial-temporal leaps C makes when relating her personal stories, adding to the creation of a fantastic narrative in which there is a clear "ruptura de límites entre tiempo y espacio" (*El cuarto* 19). The subversion of narrative linearity with regard to the representation of time and space in this novel is treated by Freud in the essay "Creative Writers and Daydreaming." His explanation of the relationship between time

and fantasy sheds light on the way that the spaces "painted" in the sand begin to connect the distinct temporal experiences of the narrator:

> Mental work is linked to some current impression, some provoking occasion in the present which has been able to arouse one of the subject's major wishes. From there it harks back to a memory of an earlier experience (usually an infantile one) in which this wish was fulfilled; and it now creates a situation relating to the future which represents a fulfillment of the wish. What it thus creates is a daydream or fantasy, which carries about it traces of its origin from the occasion which provoked it and from the memory. Thus past, present, and future are strung together, as it were, on the thread of the wish that runs through them. (511)

The "major wish" that strings together C's experiences involves employing objects and spaces in order to establish a dialogue between past, present, and future that aids in the exploration of identity. First, as Vilaseca affirmed, C must revisit the past in order to transform her spaces of refuge into more productive and self-reflective places of action. This implies that C must face the realities (and fantasies) that have governed her life since a young age. Second, the reappraisal of the past occurs within the creation of her own narrative in which there are constant commentaries both on the art of representing memories and on the difficulty of uncovering one's identity after years of repression. Beginning with the "*c* series" in which playing is a central theme, C focuses on childhood in order to establish this developmental stage as fundamental to her understanding of selfhood today.

A childlike rhetorical question, "Pinto, pinto, ¿qué pinto?, ¿con qué color y con qué letrita?," establishes the playful tone of the narrative, meanwhile subtly highlighting the narrator's use of the verb "pintar" (*El cuarto* 13). By labeling the technique "painting" C stresses the descriptive nature of the visual representation and puts into practice what the epigraph to this chapter succinctly conveys: "La palabra no sirve para traernos la cosa, sino para sustituirla." It could be said that by providing the physical characteristics of these spaces and emphasizing the

immediacy of visual representation through the label of "painting," C's aim is to nudge the reader toward recognizing that the object will always remain out of reach physically when it is verbally represented. Nonetheless, the use of the verb "pintar" and the evocative language that accompanies the description of the "*c* series" can also hint at the desire to approximate the two forms of expression within the narration. Much of the description of these three spaces refers back to the graphic nature of writing itself; the lines of letters, either straight or curved, are recreated in the contours of the spaces: "es fácil de pintar: un simple rectángulo sin cabecera, las dos líneas un poco curvas de la almohada, la vertical del embozo y el resto del espacio cuajado de tildes de *eñe*, imitando el dibujo de la colcha" (*El cuarto* 13). The varying degree of blurring of the lines between sign and signifer, image and text in C's description brings us to the "imagetext problematic" that Mitchell stresses should not be addressed by simple comparison but rather analyzed for "the whole ensemble of *relations* between media" (*Picture Theory* 89-90). One is led to "picture" these spaces through the description of the shape of letters that exhibit similar characteristics to the scene, thus creating a synthetic work consisting of the symbiosis between word and image.

Mitchell argues that all forms of art combine both text and image through the use of "different codes, discursive conventions, channels, sensory and cognitive modes" (*Picture Theory* 94-95). The use of directions such as "se pintan los barrotes gruesos y paralelos," "se empieza por el ángulo del techo y, arrancando de ahí para abajo, la raya vertical donde se juntan las paredes," are meant to nudge the reader toward envisioning the three places, while they simultaneously mimic the directions one would give to a person learning to correctly form the letters of the alphabet (*El cuarto* 13). These descriptions in *El cuarto de atrás* clearly illustrate how

> the medium of *writing* deconstructs the possibility of a pure image or a pure text, along with the opposition between the "literal" (letters) and the "figurative" (pictures) on which it depends. Writing, in its physical, graphic form, is an inseparable suturing of the visual and the verbal, the "imagetext" incarnate. (*Picture Theory* 95)

Not only does this novel provide multiple examples of the synthetic capabilities of the use of image and text, but it allows for the study of the relations between the two media when used to depict objects, the material culture whose presence during C's formative years plays a central role in the recall process undergone throughout the novel (*Picture Theory* 89).

Ekphrasis, or the verbal representation of the visual, becomes central to the representation of the "*c* series," as well as to the other objects composing this study, because it can help "to expose the social structure of representation as an activity and a relationship of power/knowledge/desire" (Mitchell 180).[24] Specific forms of ekphrasis will be treated in greater depth momentarily, but what is important to note with regard to the representation of the "*c* series" is that ekphrasis is a descriptive tool used to highlight the social constraints placed on the narrator. For instance, it is within the home that the creative process of joining word and visual image occurs, thereby framing the C's work in a private place previously associated with strict gender roles relegating the woman to only menial daily tasks, not creative work such as writing. Alison Ribeiro de Menezes illustrates this paradox in *El cuarto de atrás*: "This novel in particular offers a dialogic view of confined space as both negative – the home as repressive and enclosed – and positive – the back room as a space of freedom and mental liberation" (136). By appropriating the outside world and making it part of her interior, C subverts the traditional gender hierarchy without ever physically leaving her home, ultimately affirming her rebellious

[24] For a complete study of the evolution of the use of ekphrasis through the ages see Krieger. See also: Mitchell, 151-207, Scott, and Bal.

nature through the use of creative channels and presenting the home "as the ideal space for productive reflection and personal self-realization through interpersonal dialogue" (Ribeiro de Menezes 136). She also subverts the norm by integrating playfulness into the home; C creates tension between word and image in her description of the "*c* series" as a way to creatively play with the depiction of the world around her.

According to Stephen Luís Vilaseca, C revisits her past and childhood "in order to change those spaces of intimacy into a transferential space in which dialogue is fomented, and atonement with the past and reconciliation with her own strangeness . . . achieved" (Bachelard quoted in Vilaseca 184). The home of the narrator, or the "space of intimacy" that serves as a refuge from the rest of the world, is made accessible to the reader in order to start a creative exchange between C and the possessions within the home (Vilaseca 183). Starting this dialogue implies opening up to the exterior world and exposing previously guarded vulnerabilities. This is where objects mediate the relationship between interior and exterior, and in the process assist C in her reevaluation of the past:

> C transforms the outside world through the creation of a subjective, interior reality. She goes outside from an inwardness to take from the world what she needs and then returns to her inwardness to transform that which was grasped from the world. What C grasps are *muebles* (furniture) or, literally, 'moveables' that are moved from the outside and housed in the inside. This is the rendering of the outside world *interior*. (Vilaseca 185)

This quote speaks to the significance the interior setting of the novel has on the narrator, as well as how the dialogue between interior and exterior, reader and C develops through the use of furniture and other objects. These objects provide links to C's past, making them both part of the present physical space as well as mental guides to the past spaces they inhabited. Ribeiro de Menezes claims, referring again to Bachelard, that the home in this novel is not a space to be

read literally, but rather poetically; the "house-as-image" is what Bachelard emphasizes in *The Poetics of Space*, and what Martín Gaite draws upon in this novel to develop a literary concept of home that hinges upon the fusion of text and image in the portrayal of the objects within this polifaceted representation of home(s) (137).

The concept of dialogue referred to by both Ribeiro de Menezes and Vilaseca also surfaces in the "*c* series" scene in the form of the relationship C forges with her readers by inviting them into the text as co-creators of imagetexts. The journey through the "*c* series" is ultimately always guided by C, but also envisioned, embellished and completed by the reader: "Ya está todo; no ha quedado muy bien, pero no importa, se completa cerrando los ojos, para eso sí vale tener los ojos cerrados . . ." (*El cuarto* 13). The use of words to create a vivid description capable of being placed "before the reader's (hearer's) inner eye" is called *enargeia* and is characterized by Murray Krieger as a classical rhetorical trope typical in poetry and out of which emerges *ekphrasis*, or the verbal description of anything visible (14, 68). Krieger breaks down *enargeia* into two categories determined by the level of involvement of the reader or hearer. The first instance is one in which the reader is presented a picture that is to be regarded from a distance, such as a museum-goer would look at a famous painting. The second form of *enargeia*, however, integrates the audience by inviting participation with the object being presented, and welcoming a subjective and personal response to the image created through words (Krieger 94). It is this second form that comes into play in *El cuarto de atrás* when C "paints" the "*c* series" and invites additional support and imagination from her audience. By doing this at the beginning of the novel, the distance between the reader and the spaces being represented is minimized, providing an experience through which the reader can identify with the narrator by being brought into her world. Additionally, the "*c* series" will reappear several times throughout the novel in

order to link the spaces of narrative and personal exploration. It is within these spaces that the development of the relationship between C, her readers, and her possessions begins and from which we will begin our journey into the visual and verbal possibilities of this novel.

Mirrors and Other Reflective Objects

C's room in the apartment in Madrid, the second space drawn in the sand, provides the setting for the narrator's first reflections on the fragile characteristics of her identity and the relationship she has with the world she inhabits. A mirror provides the image of the room and its inhabitant:

> Me pongo de pie y se endereza el columpio, se enderezan el techo, las paredes y el marco alargado del espejo, ante el cual me quedo inmóvil, decepcionada. Dentro del azogue, la estancia se me aparece ficticia en su estática realidad, gravita a mis espaldas conforme a plomada y me da miedo, de puro estupefacta, la mirada que me devuelve esa figura excesivamente vertical, con los brazos colgando por los flancos de su pijama azul. Me vuelvo ansiosamente, deseando recobrar por sorpresa la verdad en aquella *dislocación atisbada* hace unos instantes, pero fuera del espejo persiste la normalidad que él reflejaba, y tal vez por eso se evidencia de forma más agobiante el desorden que reina . . . (*El cuarto* 16-17, emphasis mine)

The image of the room turned on its head that suddenly recovers its reality when seen reflected in the mirror brings into play one of the main narrative elements that will dictate the progression of the entire novel: movement between past and present and reality and fantasy as a result of the use of visual cues.

Janet Pérez describes how the mirror provides indirect characterization and presentation of the setting, meanwhile supplying material for psychological analysis of the narrator (50). Another critic, Liesbeth De Bleeker, highlights the possibility for insight into the narrator's psychological characteristics when she points out that this "normal," prototypical mirror surprises C *because* of its reflection of normality; as a result, it produces in the narrator

> exactamente el mismo efecto que los espejos neblinosos y deformantes que son tan usuales en el mundo martíngaitesco, puesto que dentro del azogue, Carmen se ve muy diferente al aspecto que cree ofrecer. Fíjese en que la protagonista no habla de "mi imagen" o "mi reflejo," sino de *esa figura*: el determinante *esa* intensifica el distanciamiento de su reflejo. (29, original emphasis)

This surprise and lack of recognition of the image reflected in the mirror provides an element of destabilization in the presentation of C's identity. This is caused by the fact that she directly faces her image in the mirror but reproduces it as if she were someone else, someone watching this scene from afar and relating what is shown in the mirror. The "dislocación atisbada" represents C's greater level of comfort with the imaginary world. In contrast, she is unfamiliar with her own self image and the normalcy of the scene around her. By distancing herself from her reflection as De Bleeker notes above, C takes on characteristics of the objects she portrays; the narrator is almost an inanimate object in the reflection ("excesivamente vertical, con los brazos colgando por los flancos de su pijama azul"), which causes the reader to pause and consider the effect of this portrayal. Why does she look fake, flat in the reflection? What is her role in this scene as she stands among her cluttered possessions and what does that role say about her relationship with the possessions?

The multiplicity of interpretations leads us as readers and secondary observers to question the mirror scene, or "multistable image" ("What is it? Why is it here?"), but it also makes the primary observer, C, turn to herself and ask the same questions thereby entering into a dialogue with the scene that, in turn, opens up the possibility for identity exploration (*Picture Theory* 45, 48). Mitchell discusses the "destabilizing of identity" as a "transaction between pictures and observers activated by the internal structural effects of multistability: the shifting of figure and ground, the switching of aspects, the display of pictorial paradox and forms of nonsense"

(*Picture Theory* 57). This is exactly what C experiences as she stands up and gazes into the mirror only to find that the room is not turned upside down as she had imagined. C's shifting exterior world mirrors her interior world of exploration of the limits between reality and fantasy, or "pictorial paradox and forms of nonsense," and are ultimately the result of inclusion of the narrator in the picture. Emma Martinell Gifre, in her book *El mundo de los objetos en la obra de Carmen Martín Gaite*, asserts that the mirror "se convierte en un sujeto con el que entra en diálogo el que mira, pues ofrece de uno mismo una imagen que no siempre se identifica con la propia" (*El mundo de los objetos* 24-25). Because C forms a part of the chaos portrayed in the bedroom, she becomes both another object to be represented, as well as the main subject using her voice to convey that representation. The mirror becomes C's sounding board, her necessary interlocutor in the process of making exterior her interior struggles as if this object were a real person.

The ambiguity of this multistable image allows for a complementary interpretation involving a nascent ethical approach to the representation of the interaction between C and her belongings. In his lecture on two very distinct effigies, the Tau-Tau sculptures of the Toraja indigenous group of Sulawesi, Indonesia, and Man Ray's *Object to Be Destroyed*, Kenneth M. George emphasized the ethical, and often unethical nature of the interactions between human beings and these effigies.[25] His claim that "objects act as partners in ethical relations" extends to C's relationship with the mirror in this particular scene and shows how her interaction with the mirror reveals a first tentative attempt at negotiating an ethics of representation concering her

[25] Kenneth M. George, "Two Effigies: Some Ethnographic Notes on Objects and Iconoclash," Center for the Humanities Lecture Series, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University Club, Madison, 3 October 2011.

interaction with familiar objects.[26] C's subject position in this scene provides insight into this negotiation. There exists an acute tension between the flat, detached depiction of the narrator in the mirror and her active development of the narrative through the implementation of her descriptive powers. Not only does this tension reveal C's hesitation to assert herself as the subject of the narration, but it also provides a textual illustration of the struggle to find a new, unimpeded form of representation after the death of Franco. As the subject as well as creator of the mirror scene, C is capable of representing herself accurately, that is, without embellishment in order to show how her physical traits and appearance are not altered when she stands before the mirror. This subject position demonstrates a veiled desire to confront the role of the mirror in women's literature; she does not bow to the challenge to present herself in a more flattering manner, but rather opts for empowerment through what one can only assume to be a faithful description of herself. On the other hand, the fact that C does not recognize the reflected version of herself reveals her position as object in the scene.

C's use of the mirror to represent herself demonstrates a wavering identity that finds its narrative expression in the multiple subject positions she creates in this scene. What C faces in the mirror is her other in a confrontation of old and new belief systems; the multistable mirror image symbolically represents the vacilation between the cultural norms imposed by the Franco regime (the proper lady and wife idealized during the dictatorship) and those of the transition to democracy (loosening of the strict social norms guiding women's actions). It is as if she were caught between these two worlds and uses the narrative and upside-down image in the mirror to

[26] In the previous chapter on *Señas de identidad* I expanded the idea of ethical representations because Alvaro includes the memories and objects that belong to other individuals. Here I mention George's assertion to emphasize C's portrayal of her fragile identity. Rather than hide behind a false representation, C chooses to present her weaknesses.

express the ethical challenge this indeterminate state of being presents. Additionally, this form of limbo brings to the forefront what Ricoeur describes as the second cause of the "fragility of identity": confrontation with others (81). In C's case, the confrontation is an internal one in which she begins to face, with the help of the mirror, the distinct versions of herself that will enter into her story more prominently as the narrative progresses. By presenting herself in a variety of ways she is able to set into motion a continued exploration of the fragility of her identity during a time period also characterized by a preoccupation with how to come to terms with the recent past.[27]

Through the mediation of the mirror one comes to understand how C juxtaposes a seemingly realistic scene with a fantastic one, and in the process creates a space of tension in which alternative possibilities for artistic creation and storytelling are explored. In fact, it isn't more than a couple pages after the mirror is introduced when C (literally) stumbles upon Todorov's *Introduction to Fantastic Literature* and subsequently regains her footing (both literally and figuratively) after allowing herself to digress into a description of the objects surrounding her:

> Esa caterva de objetos cuya historia, inherente a su silueta, resuena apagadamente en el recuerdo y araña estratos insospechados del alma, arrancando fechas, frutos podridos. ¡Qué aglomeración de letreros, de fotografías, de cachivaches, de libros…!; libros que, para enredar más la cosa, guardan dentro fechas, papelitos, telegramas, dibujos, texto sobre texto . . . (*El cuarto* 19, 17)

This "mass of objects" layered one on top of the other in the form of a collage or text within a text, reinforces the symbiotic relationship between objects that C develops throughout the novel.

[27] Cardús i Ros explains the need for a sociological study of the invention of memory during the Transition to democracy in terms of fragility and outlines three characteristics of this tenuous process of identity "manufacturing" (17-28).

For example, the mirror's role changes from faithful recreator of the bedroom to a symbol of ambiguity and fantasy as soon as C mentions the Todorov book. The reader suddenly remembers that the narrator had perceived the room as upside down in the mirror, despite the fact that C just finished a detailed, seemingly realistic description of her bedroom. Therefore the mirror can be interpreted as an object playing multiple roles according to how it interacts with the other objects presented in the novel. The narrator's possessions dialogue with one another, forming an intricate web of relations, causes, and effects that mimics the dialogues C later has with the man in black. The mirror's role in the development of the plot depends upon the connections being made between it and other objects, just as the questions asked by the man in black constantly challenge C into linking ideas in innovative ways. Thus, the psychological characteristics of this novel can be conveyed not only through human interactions, but also by way of the representation of objects and their multiple roles and modes of interconnectedness. Material things interact and connect to create a narrative web that emphasizes the narrator's creativity and playfulness when depicting the events she remembers and her surroundings.

The mirror scene introduces many objects to the narrative, including the "Conferencia de Lutero con el diablo" engraving that hangs in C's bedroom. This reflective device is both a tool for self-observation, as well as an object that dialogues with others and provides a better understanding of C's struggle to comprehend the difference between reality and fiction. C introduces the engraving explicitly, without hiding its multifaceted role in her life: "[H]ace mucho que lo tengo frente a mi cama, y a lo largo de alguna noche en vela, cuando lo real y lo ficticio se confunden, he creído que era un espejito donde se reflejaba, sufriendo una leve transformación, la situación misma que me llevaba a posar sobre él los ojos" (*El cuarto* 18). The interior chaos is exteriorized through the mediation of a reflective device, such as the mirror or

the engraving with its reflective properties, and the imagined scene always undergoes a fleeting transformation as it is reflected and reinterpreted by C. The engraving is another mirror that complicates the plot because as this scene develops and more objects emerge through description and ekphrasis, more layers are added to the image-within-an-image motif. Additionally, the "Conferencia de Lutero con el diablo" engraving has been interpreted as an allusion to the upcoming interview session between C and the man in black, and contributes to the self-reflexive characteristic of the novel.[28]

This engraving holds exceptional power over C, not only because she returns to it time and time again and has it hung in a place of importance, but also because it has a title that can guide her out of a particularly hypnotic image:

> Debajo dice: "Conferencia de Lutero con el diablo," y esta leyenda me ayuda a escapar del sortilegio que la habitación pintada empezaba a ejercer sobre mí, me ha parecido que cobraba relieve y profundidad, que me estaba metiendo en ella, y bajar los ojos al letrero ha sido como salir. . . . Los letreros nos orientan, nos ayudan a escapar de abismos y laberintos, pero queda siempre la nostalgia de la perdición que se cernía. (*El cuarto* 18-19)

Thus we are brought back to the original "*c* series," specifically to "la habitación pintada," by way of digression and linking of objects; the "painted room" was such a powerful image for C that the only way she was able to escape its enchantment was to read the title of the engraving and literally exit the frame of image. We are also reminded of the fact that the word, language, is being used consciously to explore the unconscious workings of C's mind and simultaneously escape from the grip of an image solely constructed through words. What the reader is faced with

[28] For a detailed analysis of *Conferencia de Lutero con el diablo* as a possible explanation as to the identity of the man in black see Glenn 155-157. Much has been writen about the man in black's identity and role in the novel. See Merino and Castillo for more on this theme.

in this descriptive section of the novel is an image within an image that can confound in its complexity, but can also serve as a point of orientation for the narrator.

Words are almost life-saving in this scene, even though there still exists a nostalgia for the recently visited image. This conflict between the desire to delve wholeheartedly into the seductive powers of an image and that opposing sense of security in the text is a perfect example of a "necessary and unavoidable" situation in which, as Mitchell affirms, one should confront the topic of the shifting borders between text and image (*Picture Theory* 88). Here we will heed his words and *not* discuss what differences are perceived between the word and the image, an act that would only reaffirm the comparative method of the visual and verbal arts, but rather we will explore "what difference do the differences (and similarities) make?" (*Picture Theory* 85-87, 91). This exploration will be done within the specific social context of C's reevaluation of the Civil War and the subsequent dictatorship.

What difference do the differences (and similiarities) make with regard to the "Conferencia de Lutero con el diablo" engraving and its corresponding title? The engraving forces both C and the reader to simultaneously negotiate both modes of representation. The words on the engraving hold the power to help C escape convoluted thoughts associated with the image, but are also inseparable from the visual art since they explain the depicted scene. This tie between word and image in the engraving, and I would argue throughout the novel, exemplifies what Mieke Bal calls "visual poetics," or the attempt to overcome the word-image opposition through the rejection of the notions that verbal art is temporal and that characteristics of visual analysis such as vantage point and even color do not (or should not) inform literary analysis (Introduction 178). The caption on the engraving and the painted room from the "*c* series" provide excellent examples of how the concepts of temporality and spatial orientation, believed

to be particular to each art form, can be subtly interchanged to show the flexibility of their conceptual boundaries. First, the caption composed solely of text provides stability in that it is able to guide C out of labryinths that, whether mental or physical, imply profundity and depth. The temporal characteristic of the words does not disappear because there continues to exist a nostalgic trace of the imagined experience in the room that complements the spatial experience. Secondly, while the painted room functions as an imagetext within the novel because of the constant reference to the visual art of painting in the verbal description, it does not have a corresponding visual illustration. And yet it is still capable of taking on spatial characteristics of depth and profundity as if it truly were a painting. C becomes so enthralled by the mental image that it is as if she were truly walking into the room. This perceived depth challenges the notion that words cannot evoke substantial impressions similar to those one may experience while looking at a painting.

The influence of the material world on C's train of thought continues as she leaves her bedroom and goes to the kitchen to prepare tea for her mysterious guest. This change of scenery gives C the chance to juxtapose modern, asceptic kitchens with cozy, less organized ones that invite long conversations, such as her own (*El cuarto* 66). This space is significant not only because it contains two of the last reflective devices that I will analyze in this section, but also because it introduces the rebellious nature of the narrator who has not and does not conform to the societal norms governing women's roles in the home. For instance, C describes the modern kitchens that horrify her because they are spaces where

> . . . nadie se sentaría a conversar, esos ámbitos presididos por el culto a los quita-humos, a los tritura-basuras, a los lavaplatos, por la sonrisa estereotipada del ama de casa, elaborada con esfuerzo y pericia sobre modelos televisivos, esa mujer a quien la propaganda obliga a hacer una meta y un triunfo del mero "organizarse

> bien," incapaz de relación alguna con los utensilios y máquinas continuamente renovados que manejan sus manos sin mácula. (*El cuarto* 66)

The description of the idealized housewife that only maintains a superficial relationship with the machines and kitchen utensils around her is directly influenced by the social norms propagated on television. For C, this is close to a tragedy because she values good conversation and long-lasting connections with the material world, both of which are not attainable in a modern kitchen. Despite her aversion toward new kitchens, C refrains from describing her own. Instead, she uses an image to emphasize her point that without interactions with the material world it is impossible to establish meaningful connections. Shortly we will return to the pressures put on women to "organizarse bien" and appear as model housewives, but for now let us move on to the third object in this section, a painting by Vermeer that illustrates C's passion for establishing connections with the material world:

> Pienso en los interiores de Vermeer de Delft: el encanto del cuadro emana de la simbiosis que el pintor acertó a captar entre la mujer que lee una carta o mira por la ventana y los enseres cotidianos que le sirven de muda compañía, la relación de la figura humana con esos muebles usados que la rodean como un recordatorio de su edad infantil. No hay que tenerle tanto miedo a la huella del tiempo. (*El cuarto* 66)

This quotation highlights the symbiotic relationship between woman and objects that C develops throughout the novel by means of verbal pictures of her past. The painting also provides another interior within an interior, much like the "casa, cuarto, cama" framing series previously analyzed. Vermeer's interiors illustrate the connections C strives to make with the world around her, and by mentioning them here she provides a visual clue for the reader that acts as a metaphor for C's understanding of her own relationship with the objects in her home.

By inserting this painting through ekphrasis C demonstrates how image and text can be much more similar than oftentimes believed, thereby confirming what Mitchell has so eloquently explained:

> [F]rom the *semantic* point of view, from the standpoint of referring, expressing intentions and producing effects in a viewer/listener, there is no essential difference between texts and images and thus no gap between the media to be overcome by any special ekphrastic strategies. Language can stand in for depiction and depiction can stand in for language because communicative, expressive acts, narration, argument, description, exposition and other so-called "speech acts" are not medium-specific, are not "proper" to some medium or other. (*Picture Theory* 160)

The idea that language and visual depiction can function in each other's stead is important for understanding the complexity of the relationships C develops with her possessions. When she refers to "superficies gastadas" and "tonos oscuros" without referencing the physical thing these descriptions accompany, the reader is led to imagine the kitchen and make use of the visual medium of mental pictures (*El cuarto* 66). By first using language to call up an image in the reader's mind and then providing a guiding verbal image as a supplement, the narrator creates a dialogue between word and image that is constantly evolving, just like the dialogue between herself and the man in black. Despite the fact that the narrator refers to the daily objects in the Vermeer interior as "muda compañía," C develops this relationship in her own work of art in a way that moves beyond drawing a distinction between the animate and inanimate world; her interaction with the material world is not one-sided but rather dialogic, just as Andrew Jones asserts when describing remembrance as a mutual exchange between experiencing person and artifact (25-26). The painting serves as a mirror image for the process the narrator undergoes when interacting with her furniture; there is an engagement between person and object that provides "the ground for humans to experience memory" (A. Jones 22). This engagement does

not mean that the objects store or contain memory, but rather it allows the relationship between human, object, and memory to consist of sensory and bodily connections that *evoke* remembrances, not preserve them (A. Jones 22-25, original emphasis). This perspective offers a highly nuanced way of perceiving the world of human/object interactions because it affirms the power inherent in them. The relationships created between humans and the material world are not one-sided, but rather as complex and multifaceted as a dialogue.

Moreover, it is important to note that C chooses to envision paintings that depict a woman's world and its subtleties, thereby reaffirming the centrality these domestic interiors play throughout the novel and the comfort they afford the narrator in the questioning of her personal identity during a turbulent period of Spanish history.[29] Biruté Ciplijauskaité confirms the significance of the mental and domestic interiors in Martín Gaite's novels by affirming that "Si por una parte cada novela es un "viaje al interior," por otra, la literatura sigue sirviendo de espejo. Y es siempre una aventura que permite abarcar más de lo que se vive" (71). Familiar objects, such as mirrors, paintings, and engravings, are the motivating forces behind C's desire to confront the "huella de tiempo" left by her childhood experiences and use the material of her memory in creative catharsis.

Let us return to the idea of the well-organized home run by the smiling housewife that C introduces when she steps into the kitchen. C was exposed to this idealized and highly popular vision of domestic life during her childhood, and it is through the autobiographical and intertextual reference to the notebook containing her ideas for *Usos amorosos de la postguerra*

[29] Much has been written on the topic of interior, private spaces in Martín Gaite's works. See Collins. The recently published book, *Beyond the Back Room: New Perspectives on Carmen Martín Gaite*, Eds. Marian Womack and Jennifer Wood (Peter Lang: Oxford) 2011, includes innovative interpretations of private spaces of creativity, as well as public spaces in the author's works.

española that she begins to open up about her experiences regarding this norm (*El cuarto* 65). This socio-historic work published after *El cuarto de atrás* in 1987, focuses on the doctrines of restriction and rationing that influenced the children of the Civil War and Post War, and explores "hasta qué punto [restriction and rationing] condicionaron los usos amorosos de la gente de mi edad" (*Usos* 14). One chapter, "El arreglo a hurtadillas," is devoted to the maintenance of the domestic environment, including the woman's wardrobe and appearance. In it Martín Gaite describes the conditioning of women to maintain both the interior of the home and their own exterior appearance, while they repressed and dominated their moods and problems in order to prioritize those of her husband (*Usos amorosos* 118). Ironically enough, the mention of this historical project coincides with C's trip to the kitchen to perform her role as hostess to the man in black. The inherited mirror, the final reflective object to be analyzed here, along with the autobiographical reference to *Usos amorosos de la postguerra española*, introduces the obsessive internal fight C maintains between organization of the home and pure, inspirational disorder.

When the narrator looks into the inherited mirror she sees past versions of herself. Both the eight-year-old and eighteen-year-old versions of C stare back at her, thus allowing C to start a dialogue with these past selves in which distinctions in time and space are made evident in order to juxtapose past and present conceptions of social duty. The protective yet playful versions of herself appear from time to time in order to remind C that her present actions of cleaning the tablecloth, decluttering, and preparing tea for her guest contradict her rebellious nature: "Anda que también tú limpiando, vivir para ver" (*El cuarto* 66). These younger versions of C are associated with her grandparents' home in Madrid, a space in which gender roles in society were reinforced regularly in the presence of this mirror, which once hung in that

particular space. Order was of the utmost importance to C's grandmother who did not hesitate to criticize her granddaughter's favorite pastime and the "disorder" it causes in the home: "Esa niña, ¡qué manía de ponerse a leer con la cara pegada al balcón! – se quejaba la abuela –. ¿No ves que dejas la marca de los dedos y de las narices en el cristal? ¡Dios mío, los cristales recién limpios!" (*El cuarto* 77). The reflective glass of the balcony windows becomes smudged and dirty as a result of an activity C's grandmother believes to be reserved for those of the opposite sex. The "dirtying" of the window symbolizes the subversion of the accepted social order of gendered actions; the grandmother's observation of disorderly conduct encompasses the entire domestic space because C both undermines the cleanliness of the home and performs an act considered uncharacteristic of her gender. Despite these forces working upon C to adopt the behaviors deemed acceptable during the period of the Post War, the atavistic apparitions in the mirror attest to C's steadfastness in maintaining personal autonomy because "a lo largo de veinticuatro años no se ha cansado nunca de velar para ponerme en guardia contra las acechanzas de lo doméstico, y siempre sale del mismo sitio, de aquel comedor solemne, del espejo que había sobre la chimenea" (*El cuarto* 67). The reminders from the past seen in the mirror underscore the subversion of the role a mirror plays in a woman's life. The mirror is typically a tool associated with beauty rituals, self-scrutiny, and the act of "getting ready" (*arreglarse*) that Martín Gaite so masterfully describes in *Usos amorosos de la postguerra española*, but here, as Pérez points out, it is reappropriated as an instrument used to show the rebellious nature of C's relationship to the social norms imposed upon her (49). The mirror becomes associated with the exaltation of finding value in disorder: "Hay una razón sólida por la que la autora se resigna o incluso favorece ese amasijo de objetos: el deseo de contribuir a cierta arbitrariedad, de no someterse a

esa norma que atribuye a cada cosa no solo la función sino también el emplazamiento" (Martinell Gifre, *El cuarto de atrás*: Un mundo de objetos 145).

These reassuring presences of C's former selves not only act as reinforcement of decisions made to break the rules of domesticity governing the typical female during the Post War period, but also highlight the complex and multifaceted relationship human beings have with objects as "physical traces of past events" (A. Jones 19). The mirror functions symbolically as a reminder of how faithful she has remained to her rebellion against socially imposed order. It also demarcates the process by which memory of her past is revived and reconstructed through the help of this reflective device. In the case of this mirror, memory recall occurs through "material citation," or the "sensual exchange between person and thing" (A. Jones 61), when C uses the mirror and repeatedly is faced with the past in the reflection. By indexing the past through the use of the sensual experience of vision, C is able to condense time and space into her interactions with the mirror and return periodically to distinct parts of her past. While the first mirror reflects the disorder of the bedroom, the inherited mirror serves as a reliable interlocutor in the discussion of her disapproval of the social norms affecting her.

The narrator's conception of time and space in this section of the novel coincides with the way Andrew Jones describes the processes of "primary" and "secondary" memory. By acknowledging the stretch of twenty-four years that separates herself from having visited her grandparents' home, C exercises primary memory, or the ability to experience past time and be conscious of its separation from the present moment (A. Jones 25). Secondary memory, on the other hand, consists of a two-step process in which the past experience is first retrieved from memory and then revived or reexperienced (A. Jones 25). C executes secondary memory when she evokes her previous experience of the dining room in Madrid and remarks that her younger

selves always appear to her from the same "solemn sideboard and mirror that hung over the chimeney" in a revival of her past life. The mirror is the mediator between C and the space she revisits through memory because "things are o*f* place as well as *in* place" and can be used to evoke a space even from a distance (A. Jones 59). This reexperiencing of a place leads to a revisiting of her disobedient nature that challenged the "leyes del hogar": "La suelo tranquilizar y acabamos riéndonos juntas. – Gracias, mujer, pero no te preocupes, de verdad, que sigo siendo la de siempre, que en esa retórica no caigo" (A. Jones 25; *El cuarto* 67).

These different versions of C in the mirror serve as reminders of how she used to be compared to how she is now. C breaks out of the interior monologue to speak directly to the reflection in the mirror, that is to herself: "No te apures, mujer, que en lo fundamental no he cambiado, aquí sólo se atiende a las faenas precisas y la comida se improvisa sobre la marcha, se ofrece lo que buenamente haya, y siempre como aliciente al servicio de la conversación, sin cumplidos y rápido, lo importante es seguir hablando, con los demás o una sola" (*El cuarto* 78-79). With regard to domestic responsibility, C is essentially as rebellious as she was as a youth although she now makes sure to tend to her guests as best as possible without hindering good conversation. C is no longer concerned with being entirely rebellious by refusing to perform domestic duties. Rather her former selves allow her to see an evolution in her opinions throughout the years that is associated with the mirror. When C speaks to herself in the mirror she verbalizes the relationship she has with the past by summarizing the domestic responsibilities that she feels are in accordance with her own beliefs and not those formerly imposed upon her. The mirror has served as a tool used to trace her steps and confirm what she already knew; her essence has not changed, it has only evolved over time into a more mature version.

The Sideboard

The second section of this chapter concerns a piece of furniture that C cherishes for its ties to the past, and that acts as a stabilizing force in C's memory because it reminds her of personal stories and historical events. As opposed to the multistable images reflected in the mirror, the sideboard grounds C's remembrances in specific spaces and gives her the opportunity to feel more secure about herself as a unique individual because her past is easily accessible when interacting with this piece of furniture. In this section I will investigate how the sideboard helps C counteract the destabilizing effects of the death of Franco and dialogue with the regime's influence on her childhood.

While C is in the kitchen she takes a moment to describe the sideboard as it is seen reflected in the mirror:

> El termo está a mis espaldas, sobre el aparador: un aparador grande con molduras negras, que aparece reflejado en el espejo y ocupa toda la pared de enfrente. Ese viene de la rama materna, por ahí afluye Galicia. Estuvo muchos años en Salamanca en el cuarto de atrás, donde aprendí a jugar y a leer, bajo la presidencia de este antepasado de madera de castaño, tan estable y también tan viajero. (*El cuarto* 79)

The sideboard is the most travelled of the objects C engages in her remembrances, but it is also the most stable because it is firmly linked to different spaces. Purchased in Orense by her maternal grandfather and moved from house to house because of his bohemian desire to not hold a job in one place too long, the sideboard was once the storehouse of playthings for C's mother before being moved to Salamanca where C used it for the same purpose (*El cuarto* 80). The fact that both the mirror and sideboard appear in this description is significant because the material properties of the two objects allow for a juxtaposition of the narrative roles they play. Returning to Andrew Jones, he states that ". . . it is insufficient to focus solely upon material properties; it is

also essential to understand how material culture is enrolled in the performance of remembrance" (49). "The performance of remembrance" with regard to mirrors is one of constant adaptation and transformation. The sideboard does not possess the same reflective qualities as the mirrors, but rather triggers recollections simply by virtue of its constant presence in C's life; the sideboard's history can be tracked as if it were a member of the family. C knows exactly where it came from and what it was used for in each distinct space. For this reason the reflective devices of the last section can be interpreted as tools in the presentation of multistable images meant to destabilize C's identity and present the material necessary for self-examination. The sideboard, on the other hand, has the more active quality of a witness or family member and is linked to the narrator through specific family histories made in its presence.

The sideboard is a unifying object that, because of its placement in the kitchen with the mirror, represents a constant assurance that the personal memories from her past have not disappeared. However, the sideboard is also a witness to the "historical" lessons C was forced to learn as a child, hence it becomes a tool for both personal and historical remembrances:

> Pero desde mucho antes, desde que, sentada en el sofá verde, frente a este aparador, miraba en mi infancia los santos del libro de historia, ni los acontecimientos gloriosos ni los comportamientos ejemplares ma parecían de fiar, me desconcertaban los reyes que promovían guerras, los conquistadores y los héroes, recelaba de su gesto altivo cuando ponían el pie en tierra extraña, defendían fortines o enarbolaban cruces y estandartes; me vuelvo hacia el aparador como si pretendiera ponerlo por testigo. (*El cuarto* 85)

By forming part of the scene in which these lessons were imposed on the narrator, the sideboard plays an integral role in the process called the "materialization of time" (A. Jones 50). This concept hinges upon the idea that "material culture helps to situate people in temporal order," as well as provides ontological security and a way in which to mark their own lifespans within

wider socio-historic temporal markers (A. Jones 50). The rhetoric and imagery of the dictatorship governed C's world before she was even cognizant of these social forces, but the sense that this imposed set of rules and belief systems was somehow incorrect or inaccurate pervaded her childhood and has continued to influence her portrayal of the past. What was considered untrustworthy as a child is now incorporated into a narrative that questions the rhetorical tricks of the Franco regime in order to confirm that C continues to question the messages she receives, and thus has stayed true to her beliefs. The sideboard materializes time, both past and present, because it was in the presence of this piece of furniture that C began to question the stories of kings and heroes in her history books, and it is also present now when she acknowledges these youthful concerns.

As a witness to the past, this piece of furniture, when seen or used, brings up memories in an unsuspecting fashion because it has been involved in an array of activities over a broad period of time. This explains why C relates a variety of anecdotes that are bookended by her sight of the sideboard; when she sees the sideboard C remembers different events, and when she looks at it again she is reminded of where she actually is. This piece of furniture encourages narrative "playing" because it is the starting point for a chain-linking of time through the free association of several imagetexts in this section. Beginning with the sideboard, C uses ekphrasis to provide pictures of her mother's home in Cáceres, the back room of that home, and the glorified life of a housewife as portrayed by Carmen de Icaza's popular literature (*El cuarto* 80, 83). She continues this descriptive section by referencing images in *Y* and *Sección Femenina* that depict the stereotyped actions of those women considered respectful and proper; the image of Isabel la Católica with her "voluntad férrea" and "espíritu de sacrificio" ends the list of influential myths and propaganda techniques that are all united by their capacity to inspire C's desire for freedom

and disorder (*El cuarto* 85). This linking of imagetexts associated with the sideboard and the idea of the stereotypical woman during the Post War emphasizes what A. Jones, citing Chris Gosden, calls a "structure of reference" in which social activities involving material culture are not isolated, but rather always "directed towards the past and oriented towards the future" in a constant mediation of temporality (53). Activities and personal experiences can be linked through the endurance of the material culture associated with them, thus creating a bond between the present moment and the past that can always be traced back to the object for as long as it exists (A. Jones 53). This object is the "structure of reference" for the normalizing social practices disseminated in the women's magazines popular during the dicatatorship, and it continues to reference these practices because C has linked the sideboard to these ideas. The sideboard aids in memory retrieval and recreation, while providing one side of a physical frame between which time is condensed through the telling of stories associated with it: "¡Cuántas habitaciones desembocan en ésta, cuántos locales! Querría hablarle al hombre de negro del vehículo narrativo que suponen los muebles, regalarle todas las imágenes que, en este rato, se me han aparecido entre el aparador y el espejo" (*El cuarto* 85). The sideboard and mirror act as the narrative vehicles necessary for the introduction of all the imagetexts mentioned above.

The first imagetext that C describes after seeing the sideboard is the layout of her mother's childhood home in Cáceres. Initially reluctant to sketch the plan of the house, C recounts how her mother ended up becoming absorbed in the process of evoking this remembered space while her daughter inquired about each and every detail: "hasta que al final, estábamos las dos tan interesadas que nos olvidamos de poner la mesa para comer, y yo le dije que los cuentos bonitos siempre hacen perder la noción del tiempo, y que, gracias a ellos, nos salvamos del agobio de lo práctico, y ese comentario motivó una tertulia muy sabrosa" (*El*

cuarto 80). Looking through that house one sees the sideboard, and by recreating the placement of the piece of furniture C allows herself the narrative space she needs to recreate her mother's past experiences in the form of postmemory, a type of memory distinguished from firsthand witnessing by generational distance (Hirsch 22). C's postmemory links the spaces of her childhood and those of her mother's, and it also connects the concepts of "story" and "drawing" associated with the painted house in the "*c* series." When C's mother drew the house plan it lead to "un cuento bonito" that in turn started a fruitful and thought-provoking conversation, all of which occur in the past and are recreated in the present moment of narration in order to illustrate the material ties that exist between mother and daughter.

The second imagetext linking C with her mother through the mediation of the sideboard is the back room that each of them had in their childhood homes. C includes this imagetext as a way to introduce the description of her own back room in her home in Salamanca, and to use this space as a metaphor for the structure of memory:

> Al comedor aquel también ellos lo llamaban "el cuarto de atrás," así que las dos hemos tenido nuestro cuarto de atrás, me lo imagino también como un desván del cerebro, una especie de recinto secreto lleno de trastos borrosos, separado de las antesalas más limpias y ordenadas de la mente por una cortina que sólo se descorre de vez en cuando; los recuerdos que pueden darnos alguna sorpresa viven agazapados en el cuarto de atrás, siempre salen de allí, y sólo cuando quieren, no sirve hostigarlos. (*El cuarto* 80-81)

Here, C retells her mother's stories for two main reasons: first, she is able to introduce the "cuarto de atrás" her mother had which, coincidentally, also housed the sideboard and performed a similar function when compared to the narrator's version described later on in the novel (*El cuarto* 161-163). These pages will be revisited shortly in this chapter to discuss the importance of the sideboard's presence and its distinct usages during the Civil War and Post War periods. By

learning about her mother's experience with her own back room, C is provided with a mirror image of her own experience, fulfilling the desire to see herself in her mother's eyes and achieving narcissistic satisfaction that is lacking in other novels by Martín Gaite (Welles 202). Secondly, she is able to lay claim to the creativity she expresses as a writer because she has had the fortune to be encouraged as a young woman to pursue her interests and not be forced to conform to the social norms working upon adolescents during the Post War period of C's childhood. C is not defensive of her liberal upbringing and career as a writer, but rather applauds the influences that have made her who she is today, thereby attaching a positive connotation to the term "woman writer." C's mother exalts the benefits of female intelligence in a strikingly positive way when faced with opposing opinions on the subject: "'Hasta coser un botón aprende mejor una persona lista que una tonta' le contestó un día a una señora que había dicho de mí, moviendo la cabeza con reprobación: 'Mujer que sabe latín no puede tener buen fin', y la miré con un agradecimiento eterno" (*El cuarto* 82). Finally, the explanation of the dual significance of the back room as physical space and mental storehouse of memories brings into play the duality of order/disorder that was introduced in the mirror section above. The result of this association between the back room as a space in which disorder is valued over order is insight into C's mode of narrative creation in which stream of consciousness and heterogeneity of influences are the main contributors. The sideboard acts as a solid form of support in pursuing the ideal of creative disorder because it formed part of the space in which C cultivated this desire for freedom and was subsequently exposed to the restrictive effects of imposed order.

It is important to note that the repurposing of the sideboard during the Civil War happens in stages that ultimately circle back to the original purpose of cultivating disorder. The description of the back room in Salamanca attests to the first purpose of the sideboard: "Era muy

grande y en él reinaban el desorden y la libertad, . . . era un reino donde nada estaba prohibido" (*El cuarto* 161). The freedom associated with this space during the years preceding the Civil War are recalled with clarity and nostalgia by the narrator. This nostalgia does not last long because with the Civil War there is a distinct "línea divisoria" between childhood and adolescence that is symbolized in the repurposing of the back room and the sideboard found there (*El cuarto* 162). Whereas before the war C and her sister were able to store in the sideboard whatever objects they could think of, during the war the freedom the children possessed was slowly usurped by their mother:

> Cuando empezaron los acaparamientos de artículos de primera necesidad, mi madre desalojó dos estantes y empezó a meter en ellos paquetes de arroz, jabón y chocolate, que no le cabían en la cocina. Y empezaron los conflictos, primero de ordenación para las cosas diversas que se habían quedado sin guarida, y luego de coacción de libertad, porque en el momento más inoportuno, podía entrar alguien, como Pedro por su casa, y encima protestar si el camino hacia el aparador no estaba lo bastante limpio y expedito. (*El cuarto* 162)

Again, the conflict between order and disorder resurfaces in the form of a reappropriation of the sideboard. Its transformation into a storehouse begins here, and C provides an intriguing insight into the use of objects when she asks for the man in black's opinion: "la función de los objetos viene marcada por el uso, ¿no cree?" (*El cuarto* 162). His affirmative response leads C to conclude that "su esencia de aparador constituyó el primer pretexto invocado para la invasión" of the piece of furniture previously at her disposition (*El cuarto* 162). The original purpose of the sideboard in C's experience is to provide a place to store toys and games. By slowly converting this object and the back room into storehouses meant to conserve resources during the war, C notes that "dejamos de tener cuarto para jugar, porque los atrículos de primera necesidad desplazaron y arrinconaron nuestra infancia, el juego y la subsitencia coexistieron en una

convivencia agria, de olores incompatibles" (*El cuarto* 163). This displacement of a dedicated play space, not to mention the loss of control over the sideboard, provide excellent examples of A. Jones's statement that "Because things help people to orientate themselves within place, the alteration of things in place alters the character of place" (60). The conversion of the sideboard into a pantry marks the beginning of a loss of orientation in the childhood realm of play and fantasy and an abrupt introduction into the world of complex adult explanations and demands for order. *Things*, that is, the sideboard, are altered, thereby changing the character of the space in which the sideboard resides. Earlier in the novel C expresses her angst at the obsession with putting each object in its place: "¿Y por qué no podía ser el sitio de los objetos aquel en que, a cada momento, aparecían?" (*El cuarto* 77). When the back room is taken over during the war C's frustration with "putting things in order" comes to a head and is the source of her current penchant for messiness.

The back room's reappropriation by adults coincides with the coming to power of Franco, and with him his "paralyizing of time" (*El cuarto* 116). He is the motor behind a socially imposed order that gives the narrator the feeling of being suspended in time until the moment of his death when disorder and freedom are restored. C describes Franco as the "el motor tramposo y secreto de ese bloque de tiempo, y el jefe de máquinas, y el revisor, y el fabricante de las cadenas del engranaje, y el tiempo mismo," a series of titles that attests to the dictator's constant involvement in the physical creation of the cultural aspects of Spanish society following the Civil War; he was the supreme power over cultural influences, controlling all that was possible in Spain during his thirty-six years of rule (*El cuarto* 119). The titles C gives to the dictator (conductor, manufacturer, etc.) also reveal the materiality of his creations and the breadth of control he maintained over the Spanish people.

The last image of the sideboard and mirror provides closure for all the action having occurred within their physical or imagined presence throughout the novel: "El recinto comprendido entre el espejo y el aparador se ha convertido en un tablero de juego abandonado, hay miles de agujeros por donde puede haberse metido la cucaracha, pero para ponerse a buscarla hay que tener ganas de jugar, sentir un mínimo de excitación o curiosidad, yo sólo tengo sueño" (*El cuarto* 180-181). Since C has already "played" by engaging in fruitful conversation with the man in black, there is nothing left to uncover or bring out of hiding through the use of the mirror and sideboard. The reference to the space between the two pieces of furniture as "un tablero de juego abandonado" emphasizes the narrative play she and the man in black created through conversation, but it also demarcates the space of reflection and literary creation as one framed by these two objects so closely associated with childhood games and experiences. What occurs here is both a symbolic and physical "putting to bed" of the literary tools that have fueled C's playful creation of the work we are currently reading. One of the last objects to catch C's attention before finally giving in to sleep is the sideboard: "Me siento un rato en el sofá marrón y me quedo mirando el gran aparador cerrado, luego descanso la cabeza entre los brazos, me cuesta trabajo pensar que estuvo en el cuarto de atrás, tal vez no estuvo nunca, estoy cansada" (*El cuarto* 181). The last element of playfulness is introduced by way of the sideboard's association with the stories told throughout the night; the mystery of the man in black's existence is the last detail to be added to the "tablero de juego." By acknowledging the creative possibilities that the sideboard has held for her throughout her lifetime, including the stimulating conversations it has spurred, C makes this object a central part of her memory processes and is able to better understand who she is in relation to her past.

Letters, Loose Papers, and a Notebook

In this third and final section of the chapter the autobiographical characteristics inherent in the representation of letters, notebooks, and loose papers will be analyzed in order to explore the concepts of "ekphrastic hope" and "ekphrastic fear" as described by WJT Mitchell. "Ekphrastic hope" refers to the imaginative possibilites that keep alive the hope that a verbal representation can stand in for a visual representation (*Picture Theory* 152, 156). On the other hand, "ekphrastic fear" operates on the premise that the verbal can never truly replace the visual and that by actually seeing the verbally described scene the entire game would be spoiled (*Picture Theory* 154). These two concepts are intertwined with the metanarrative devices these objects become as C attempts to preserve ideas through the recording of personal anecdotes, literary inspirations, and intertextual references to previous works. Additionally, these three objects are frequently associated with thwarted attempts at remembering and deliberate forgetting, topics that can help shed light on the component of memory frequently pushed aside: the process of forgetting.

A letter that C finds in her sewing box has been kept for so long that the recipient no longer recognizes the handwriting, nor does she remember who wrote it (*El cuarto* 20-23). This letter, lacking a date and therefore a specific temporal link to the past, is explained in depth by C as if she were rewriting it in order to reconnect with a situation she no longer recalls. In fact, C's reading of the letter and seemingly simultaneous description of it parallels the reading done by C's own audience and underscores the intersection of distinct temporal-spatial realities in one single description of a letter, creating a palimpsest of the concept of reading. C's reading of the forgotten letter layers over the time it was written and demonstrates the process of reappraisal of the past as it occurs on different temporal levels. Another important trait of this letter is the topic

itself; despite the almost total anonimity of its author, the letter clearly describes a man seated on a beach lamenting C's absence. The reappearance of a beach is duly noted by C once she suspends her description in order to postulate as to the identity of the man: "Me da pena que se pierda a lo lejos sin conseguir reconocer su figura, ¿será alto?, ¿qué edad tendrá?, la playa es más fácil de imaginar porque todas se parecen un poco, podría ser la misma donde yo me entretenía en hacer dibujos hace un rato . . ." (*El cuarto* 22). Yet again the intertextual reference to the beach and drawing in the sand to create the "*c* series" appears in order to momentarily draw attention to a time not too far in the past with regard to the narration, creating the sensation of two time periods in one image. This layering of time periods also occurs with the hypothetical questions C posits about the man writing the letter. Is the narrator referring to the present moment of narration or the time when the letter was written? In either case, C succeeds in creating a palimpsestic image of a man that layers time, memory, and imagination into the process of reading the letter, consequently affirming the multiplicity of purposes one single object can acquire.

Another significant purpose of the letter as an imagetext is to highlight "ekphrastic hope" and "ekphrastic fear " as integral aspects in the development of an approach to memory retrieval. When C expresses her unfulfilled desire to see the man she demonstrates the imaginative possibilities that keep alive the hope that the verbal will approximate the visual representation. On the other hand, the use of the subjunctive mood in the following quote implies uncertainty, or "ekphrastic fear," as to the possibility of actually seeing the man:

> si el tiempo real y el de los sueños coincidieran, cabría la posibilidad de que se encontrara conmigo un poco más allá, antes de llegar a las últimas rocas, se detendría, me preguntaría que por qué estaba dibujando una casa, un cuarto y una cama y yo le diría: "si quieres que te lo diga, siéntate, porque es largo de contar" y, al contarlas en voz alta, salvaría del olvido todas las cosas que he estado

> recordando y sabe Dios cuantas más, es incalculable lo que puede ramificarse un relato cuando se descubre una luz de atención en otros ojos. (*El cuarto* 22)

All of C's speculations about "what would happen if . . ." are oblique ways of conveying the underlying doubt that the verbal portrayal will not live up to truly seeing the man as he was in the letter, thus conveying the narrator's "ekphrastic fear." However, the contradiction in terms that I highlight here, "*salvaría del olvido* todas las cosas que *he estado recordando*," acknowledges the verbal representation of these memories and thus their safety from being forgotten. Even if the man from the letter does not get the chance to hear C's tale, the remembrances are being recorded in the constantly growing manuscript and therefore have already been saved from oblivion. This brings to the forefront the concept of "ekphrastic hope" as a viable literary device integral in the reproduction of memories that emerge from the narrator's interactions with objects. If it were not for her reading of the letter she would not be in the middle of the process of remembering and recounting her past. Additionally, the mixing of time frames concerning memory retrieval allow for further ramification of the stories being told presently and those yet to be told later in the text; the conditional implies a hypothetical situation contingent upon a reunion with the man in the letter, meanwhile the compound tense, "he estado recordando," hints at an ongoing process of memory retrieval. The two opposing terms, "ekphrastic fear" and "ekphrastic hope," help to demonstrate through figurative language the push and pull between memory reproduction and the loss of memory that pervade the novel. While some degree of forgetting always occurs with the passage of time, the continuation of personal and collective memory attests to the possibility of reviving the past.

C does not hesitate to describe in great detail another section of the letter that exemplifies "ekphrastic hope," as well as the immense literary possibilities this trope contains:

> [H]ay varios renglones sin más contenido que el de mi nombre, escrito entre guiones y en minúscula, con una ondulación que imita las olas del mar, me dejo acunar por las líneas rizadas que me llaman, mientras el rumor de las olas verdaderas se iba llevando el eco de su llamada desde la orilla, lo dice un poco más abajo y literariamente resulta muy expresivo, también puntualiza que el tiempo que ha pasado diciendo mi nombre no lo puede calcular ni le importa porque ya, en adelante, el tiempo no le volverá a valer nunca para nada . . . (*El cuarto* 21)

First, the letters in C's name that approximate the image of waves of the ocean provide an example of the reverse process of writing or drawing undergone with the "*c* series"; whereas previously C employed the forms of letters to help the reader imagine the appearance of the "casa, cuarto, cama" series, here the letters are taking their cue from nature. The image of "las líneas rizadas" that form C's name attests to the expressive capacity of a series of letters because they can evoke other senses; in this case the aural is inseparable from the written word because the man writing to C emphasizes calling her name, not to mention the fact that C seems to be able to hear this spoken word just by reading. This letter also calls on the sense of sight through *enargeia*, or the vivid use of words to reproduce the object before the reader's eye (Krieger 68). Finally, this imagetext reinforces the theme of uncertainty with regard to the passage of time. Just as the man in the letter is unable to gauge how long he has been calling C's name, C is unable to know for sure how long she has been relaying her thoughts to the man in black.

Other letters do not have the same fortunate fate as the previous one because many times C would feel impelled to burn these reminders from the past. Andrew Jones addresses both deliberate forgetting in the form of destruction of objects and the natural process of forgetting details about the past, and maintains that remembering and forgetting are not polarities but rather states of being that are in constant tension (39-40). In *El cuarto de atrás* the narrator acknowledges the tension between remembering and forgetting when she explains that she burnt

old letters because the old papers overwhelmed her (42). From repeatedly reading and handling the letters, C felt that their content became less meaningful, and that they stopped representing what they did upon the first reading (*El cuarto* 42). The narrator alludes to the tension between past and present, remembering and forgetting, by stating that the content of the papers deteriorated or changed drastically as a result of analysis and reflection in the present moment. Burning these materials rids C of the necessity to revisit the past, but also makes it easier to remember the past as originally perceived in that particular moment, without being tainted by new modes of interpretation.

It is, however, impossible to entirely eliminate the process of interpretation in the present, a detail the narrator confirms by saying "me vi disparada a la vejez, condenada al vicio de repasar para siempre cartas sin perfume, con la tinta borrosa de tanto manosearlas y llorar sobre ellas y me entró un furor por destruir papeles como no recuerdo en mi vida . . ." (*El cuarto* 43-44). This idea of loss or absence of meaning in the things of the past assists in the understanding that objects take on new meanings with the passage of time and are not simply imprinted with an enduring memory. Since a constant tension exists between remembering and forgetting, "Artefacts cannot be taken as simple agents of memory and their ability to extend or preserve memory cannot be relied upon" (A. Jones 40). This statement clarifies what can be considered an ever-changing dialogic relationship with objects that does not place the burden of remembering on the object or the person, but rather spreads it out between the two in order to recognize the social practices that generate meaning (A. Jones 40). C's fear of being condemned to the vice of revisiting letters reveals a problematic relationship with the letters of her past and how they could possibly be involved in her future. Burning them breaks the material tie to the past but does not eliminate the memories associated with the letters. The need to forget is expressed in

the destruction of the physical reminder of the past, but this absent object will always remain mentally as a trace of the past.

One such example of a trace from the past are the letters from a Portuguese boy that C burned but still remembers for their poetic declarations of love (*El cuarto* 42). Their absence becomes a fertile ground for revisiting past events. As C describes her time in Portugal and the preparations leading up to the trip, the story of her personal experiences begins to come together. Martín Gaite explains this process of rescuing memory in *El cuento de nunca acabar*: "Clave del cuento: la reviviscencia de algo que reclama su derecho a no ser olvidado. El que siente esta llamada acuciante, primero quiere revivir aquello – como acontecimiento –, pero después comprenderá que lo que tiene que hacer para salvarlo es reconstruirlo como narración. Es el origen de los libros de memorias" (366). Despite the fact that these letters no longer physically exist, C clearly needs to heed the call of this story and make it into a narration that will endure. The interaction between human being and the object-memory is central to reproducing the memory of this particular occurrence. In fact, the destruction of the letters leads back to the revival of memory in written, narrative form, thus providing an example of circularity that attests to the power of an object to endure even after it has ceased to exist. Lastly, the idea that one's personal history can be read in letters (or in the recollection of those letters) leads to the archival concept of the past and the obsession C has with history, both personal and collective. For instance, in *El cuento de nunca acabar*, Martín Gaite associates letters with history archives in order to highlight their central role in preserving memories: "¡Cuánto tienen que ver las cartas con la historia! Los archivos están plagados de cartas, que nos ayudan a componer, fragmentariamente, el rompecabezas de la historia" (*Cuento* 297). The letters from C's Portuguese boyfriend no longer physically exist, and cannot form part of a personal archive.

Nonetheless, the narrator's memory attempts to keep them alive, and the active participation of her mysterious interlocutor in the conversation assists in warding off the oblivion that would result if this story of young love had not been told.

C uses her memory and her imagination to engage with the next object in this section. A castle of papers she imagines surrounding her is an imagetext linked to both personal and collective memories. The castle is constructed of loose papers filled with C's handwriting. Here she describes the different papers and how she mentally envisions their arrangement:

> En la parte de abajo, componiendo el puente levadizo, reconozco algunos papeles de los que guardaba en el baúl de hojalata, fragmentos de mis primeros diarios, poemas y unas cartitas que nos mandábamos de pupitre a pupitre una amiga del instituto y yo, la primera amiga íntima que tuve. Se les nota la vejez en la marca de los dobleces, aunque aparecen estirados y pegados sobre cartulina, formando una especie de *collage* . . . (*El cuarto* 52)

C recognizes her early attempts at writing by the aged appearance of the paper. This physical attribute is a temporal marker of the beginning of her literary career. This castle also acts as a refuge in C's imagination because she hides herself beneath it, afraid to look out because any small movement would cause it to collapse. In her mind's eye C takes refuge in her writing, and attempts to shield herself from the realities around her. The juxtaposition of C's first works of creative writing with the more sophisticated investigations of her adult years appear in this castle/collage after C explains to the man in black that the war and bombings prompted her search for a refuge in writing and remote Spanish history (*El cuarto* 54). This inclusion of a historical reference with the papers and notes created during that time provides examples of the superimpositions of the spatial and the temporal.

It is significant that Martín Gaite herself created collages in her *Cuadernos de todo*, but it is even more important to note her mode of composing a narration. Ester Bautista summarizes

the author's collage technique in the following way: "Notes are taken in a notebook; they are then typed onto another kind of paper; the typed notes are cut up with scissors, then reorganized and classified; the reordered notes are then stuck and organized into yet another notebook" (12). The physicality of this process of cutting and pasting notes in order to create a cohesive text sheds light on why C uses notes to create the castle/collage in her mind. Her interaction with paper during the process of constructing a novel reveals a physical engagement with writing tools that she translates to the "embodied engagement" with material culture that she depicts in her narratives. Martín Gaite's narrations, Bautista highlights, are composed in much the same way as the author's visual medium collages:

> In works such as *Retahílas*, *El cuarto de atrás*, *La reina de las nieves* or *Nubosidad variable* an analogy is created between writing and sewing. Both actions form a fabric, a weaving of stories or threads. The writer creates the structure of her novels with other fabrics or texts. In the same manner, her collages are constructed from multiple temporal or spatial juxtapositions or superimpositions. (24-25)

The multiple temporal and spatial juxtapositions that Bautista mentions are evident in the castle/collage when the adult writer hides beneath the numerous papers that document her life of creativity. C weaves together different periods of her literary career in one image in order to illustrate the fear she experienced during the violence of the Civil War and show how writing became a refuge for her throughout her life.

The castle/collage falls upon mention of the bombardments that took place during the Civil War and the fear C felt at being forced into the cramped shelters. This time, however, the refuge consists of historical facts:

> Encima de los papeles desparramados ha quedado una ficha grande escrita con mi letra de ahora (claro, lo más reciente queda siempre encima), pone, en mayúsculas: "Sitio de Montjuic. – 1706 – Felipe V se bate en retirada," y debajo,

> en letra pequeña, la descripción de aquella catástrofe, recuerdo que la escribí en el archivo de Simancas, una tarde de sol, cuando había empezado a refugiarme en la historia . . . (*El cuarto* 54)

The portrayal of the castle is accompanied by the childhood fear of being trapped in a bomb shelter during the war. This fear is where the intersection between personal and collective memory makes itself clear; in order to be able to live with the imposed concepts of womanhood and social conduct during the Post War, C has constructed a safe-haven of happy childhood memories and historical data from her own research that attempts to avoid direct discussion of the Civil War. All of C's writings have in one way or another provided an escape from societal pressures, such as those modes of conduct being promoted by the *Sección Feminina* during C's adolescence. Nonetheless, seeking refuge both in the present moment and during the three years of civil unrest revolves around this almost unmentionable, yet pivotal, period in Spanish history. The visibility of the Civil War manifests itself in the castle of cards that acts as a weak barrier between C and the history, both personal and collective, threatening to topple down upon her. Alongisde this visible response to the past there exists the invisible, "ghostly" character of marginalized histories, such as C's and countless others belonging to the "losing side" after the end of the Civil War. Jo Labanyi characterizes this "ghostly" type of approach to history as "the return of the past in spectral form" (Introduction 8, "History and Hauntology" 78). The past that was denied a voice under the Franco regime is now resurfacing through the narrator's castle image as a way to express the bottled up emotions surrounding the Civil War. The inclusion of the castle imagetext in *El cuarto de atrás* reveals C's "historical inner opposition to the role imposed upon her" during the dictatorship that now, upon the death of Franco, must be reevaluated in order to solidify C's identity in the new society (Ciallella 151). As Louise

Ciallella points out, the castle image formed a significant part of the propaganda of the *Sección Feminina* after Franco gave the Castle of Mota to the group in order to carry out its purpose of indoctrinating women into the Fascist line of thought (151). Again Ciallella notes that "C's castles are uncanny images of revision of an imposed collective history, or what C calls, 'el machoconeo de aquella propaganda ñoña y optimista de los años cuarenta,' and the revision of this imposed history includes the revision of the narrator's personal identity (151).

The falling of the castle image, or the destruction of her refuge, also references the shock most people experienced upon learning of the death of Franco: "se me vinieron encima los años de su reinado, los sentí como un bloque homogéneo, como una cordillera marrón de las que venían dibujadas en los mapas de geografía física" (*El cuarto* 116). The literal and figurative notions inherent in the statement "se me vinieron encima los años de su reinado," reference the castle imagetext and are further illustrated when C uses the simile of a mountain range on a map to describe the enormity of the timespan between 1939 and Franco's death. The destruction of one refuge in order to create a more secure one in which the past is addressed without being censored, marks a movement influenced by the past and moving productively toward the future. Instead of being blocked by the mountain range of the Post War C finds an opening that leads her back to writing: the notebook with ideas for *Usos amorosos de la posguerra española*. History, with all of its newfound possibilities, can be used again, but this time without the old restrictions C had internalized under the regime. According to Vázquez Montalbán, the "años de falsificación del lenguaje, de la Historia, de la memoria del vencido, de la conciencia, es decir, incluso falsificación del saber acerca de la realidad y nuestra inserción en ella" (21) have come to an end and can be readdressed with emphasis on vocalizing what he has termed "el reinado de la elipsis" (30).

The cultural violence of an imposed history that Vázquez Montalbán alludes to in *Crónica sentimental de España* extends to the realm of deliberate forgetting, as well as to the practice of saving only the memories pertinent to the history being created. This brings us back to the idea of the archive, described by Nora as the archetype of modern memory because "It relies on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image" in order to survive (13). José F. Colmeiro cites this same quote from Nora in order to link the image of Martín Gaite's back room to that of the archive in order to examine how "La memoria perdida se refugia en el archivo, que la substituye como depósito, y pasa a convertirse en una memoria postiza" ("Memoria histórica" 153). The exploration of "memoria postiza" in *El cuarto de atrás* begins with C's habit of writing down information and then forgetting where she put the papers ("los papeles se me extravían siempre") (*El cuarto* 102). However, there are times when C is unable to extract the same meaning from the words written on the paper upon finding them. The act of writing down an idea hinges upon the notion that one will remember the instance being referred to and be able to use this information when necessary in the future.

One important note C made to herself contains a spell from Cervantes's *La gitanilla* used to ward off "los vahídos de la cabeza" (*El cuarto* 89). Ironically enough this note provokes the narrator's dizzying disconcertion with regard to its unexpected appearance next to the typewriter, another object adding to the fantastic character of the novel since it is involved in the mysterious growth of the manuscript of *El cuarto de atrás*. C recites the spell mentally while clinging to the paper as if it could save her from experiencing this great confusion. This paper meant to trigger a previously well-constructed idea simply fails to produce the same enthusiasm in the narrator. She describes this feeling of frustration by stating: "Siempre el mismo afán de apuntar cosas que parecen urgentes, siempre garabateando palabras sueltas en papeles sueltos, en cuadernos, y total

para qué, en cuanto veo mi letra escrita, las cosas a que se refiere el texto se convierten en mariposas disecadas que antes estaban volando al sol" (*El cuarto* 106). These "mariposas disecadas" provide a remarkable image of a collection of something no longer living, hence unable to act as a tool for recollection. In fact, the collection or archive can be considered a space indicative of the tension between remembering and forgetting because as Colmeiro states, "No es casual que cuando un caso está olvidado decimos que está 'archivado'" (152). C's notes reveal how an attempt to preserve the integrity of a memory can, upon accumulation, lose their original meaning and morph into an act of forgetting, a habit void of any significance. The tension between remembering and forgetting the thing written on the paper takes on the same qualities of dream recovery for C because "both creation and dream proceed from the unconscious. The searched-for word or phrase and the dreamt image elude us in the same manner" (Palley 113). Nonetheless, this mania for writing down ideas is comforting to C: "Y sin embargo, no escarmiento, por todas partes me sale al encuentro la huella de esos conatos inútiles, vivo rodeada de papeles sueltos donde he pretendido en vano cazar fantasmas y retener recados importantes, me agarro al lápiz ya por pura inercia, ¿comprende?, sé que es un vicio estúpido, pero me tranquiliza los nervios" (*El cuarto* 106). This act of writing embodies, through the words written on the paper, the tension between remembering and forgetting; the "unuseful attempts" to record a memory or thoughts equate to incorporeal images representative of a "stupid vice" that has a strong hold on C. The habit continues despite the inherent problems in capturing the original sense of the memory because C chooses memory over forgetting. One example of this sudden desire to make note of a date or thought occurs when C, in the middle of a conversation about the children's game "el escondite inglés," remembers the story about her father's car in Burgos (*El cuarto* 96-102). Although C does not recount this story out loud to her

visitor, this mental digression incorporated into the text automatically implies that it cannot be forgotten; it has been made into a narration that will save it from oblivion.

The papers in their accumulated, unreflected-upon state represent a collection of ideas that can only be unarchived once Franco dies and memory can flow freely. This explains why C experiences a great desire to record her thoughts when she sees Franco's funeral on television and mentions the notebook that contains the beginnings of *Usos amorosos de la posguerra española* (*El cuarto* 65). Throughout the development of her personal history C mentions that she is unable to find this particular notebook, and this unnerving, yet suspenseful habit of forgetfulness repeats itself frequently in the novel. When she finds it toward the end of the novel she is ordering papers in her desk drawers: "Yo mis cuadernos los reconozco siempre por la fisonomía exterior: éste es el que buscaba antes, el que empecé la mañana del entierro de Franco" (*El cuarto* 153-154). This particular notebook allows C to share two important personal histories that revolve around refuges: the story of Bergai, the island C and her friend invented as their first refuge, and the description of the back room being transformed into a pantry that we have already analyzed. Not only are these stories in their written versions in the notebook not lost and forgotten, but they are incorporated into the text just as the burned letters were earlier in the novel. The conversation between the man in black and C highlights the role loss or forgetting play in literature:

> – Sí, siempre se idealiza lo que se pierde, pero puede que ahora me defraudasen. Por otra parte, si no se perdiera nada, la literatura no tendría razón de ser. ¿No cree?
> – Claro, lo importante es saber contar la historia de lo que se ha perdido, de Bergai, de las cartas . . . , así vuelven a vivir. (*El cuarto* 168)

A connection can be made here with *Señas de identidad* because both narrators are concerned with bringing back to life the stories that would have been forgotten either because there was no one left to remember them or because of the imposed forgetting sanctioned by the Franco regime. According to Nora, the most fundamental purpose of a *lieux de mémoire* is to stop time and block the work of forgetting (19). The notebook containing the two aforementioned stories manages to preserve memories while at the same time it provides the material necessary for literary creation. The loss of some thing, person or experience is motive for putting pen to paper and materializing what no longer exists or was in danger of being forgotten. This accounting for the forgotten or almost-forgotten that occurs in *El cuarto de atrás* is as much a result of memory restrictions or forced forgetting imposed by the dictator before his death, as it is the fruit of a literary exercise aimed at reproducing memories in an innovative fashion in an attempt to undo abuses of memory. Nora's declaration that, "memory has never known more than two forms of legitimacy: historical and literary," proves to be accurate for this novel because they both inform the manner in which the autobiographical aspects are conveyed (24). The historical material and personal experiences that comprise the autobiographical characteristics of the novel are reconstructed in order to reappropriate the manipulated past that was created under the regime and show how one central event, the death of Franco, can trigger a multiplicity of representations.

Conclusion

One topic only hinted at in this chapter remains to be addressed: the idea of playfulness with regard to memory reproduction and forgetting. All of the objects studied in this chapter can be related in some way to the creation of a lighthearted tone underscoring even the most serious

events in *El cuarto de atrás*. Glenn's analysis of the role *juego* plays in the text provides an insight into the author's concept of literature:

> The narrator's observation that "En el fondo, todo es jugar" describes both Martín Gaite's concept of literature and her most recent literary endeavor. A ludic spirit informs *El cuarto de atrás*. Martín Gaite plays with the language, the structure, the motifs, and the characters of a series of texts, including her own prior texts. Conventions are invoked and then deftly turned inside out; expectations are aroused and then artfully circumvented. (158)

By employing the conventional topics of the Post War and Franco's death in an unconventional form, C is able to turn ideological approaches to these themes on their heads because she offers her own narrative version of the events through the development of a ludic narrative environment. This brings to mind Ricoeur's observation that was referenced at the beginning of the chapter: "Memory can be ideologized through the resources of the variations offered by the work of narrative configuration" (85). I maintain that while this was true under the contolling nature of the Franco regime, *El cuarto de atrás* outlines the undoing of an imposed narrative by dialoguing with the regime's narrative configuration of the past and by doing so with a spirit of childlike creation. C undoes the ideology associated with these events by presenting them in a ludic form that reflects the narrator's personality and perspective, all the while providing an alternative answer to the serious and traumatic narrative approaches to Francoism. This can help to account for the use of objects to subvert the socially imposed norm, such as the mirror that portrays a disheveled C instead of the culturally accepted "put together" woman. The inherent playfulness of using a mirror to cultivate disorder over order can extend to the entire structure of the novel because, as Marica L. Welles comments:

> [T]he structure of *El cuarto de atrás* is itself a playful game of mirrors. . . . So in this book of memories the talking/writing self reconstructs herself as the object of her discourse. In this novel about the writing of a novel, the act of writing and its

> product, the book written, become one, merging in an atemporal mirror image of one another, so reminiscent, of course, of Velazquez' mirror play in *Las meninas*. (202)

The mirror play that Welles refers to emphasizes the visual immediacy of the narrative being written, but can also extend to the play surrounding the depiction of distinct time periods in one single imagetext as has been seen in the analysis of the sideboard and mirror in particular. One example of such a combination of time periods occurs toward the end of the novel during C's telephone conversation with Carola. The return of the "*c* series" highlights the mixing of narrative time and places at center stage the idea of playing with the narrative:

> – ¿Su nombre no empezará, por casualidad, con la letra C?
> – Sí… pero eso, ¿qué tiene que ver?
> Me he sobresaltado, las espirales color malva del empapelado de la pared empiezan a girar, reanudando el jeroglífico, ya estoy arrodillada en la playa, como al principio, pintando sobre la arena, con la C de mi nombre, una casa, un cuarto y una cama, ¡qué extraños retrocesos lleva este discurso!, ¿o es que no habrá avanzado más que en mi imaginación? (*El cuarto* 131)

The reinsertion of the "*c* series" into the scene emphasizes the multiple roles these three spaces maintain throughout the narrative; besides providing a spatial-temporal framework for memory retrieval, they are spaces invoked to question the overarching narrative structure. This is an example of what Glenn mentions in the quote above; not only are literary conventions utilized but they are "artfully circumvented" in order to comment on their usage (158). Whereas at the beginning of the novel the "*c* series" seemed to ground the narrator within familiar settings, albeit of distinct spatial and temporal orders, now it is used to cast doubt on the sequence of events of the entire narrative. By questioning the advancement of the narration up until this late point in the novel C is able to avail herself of the narration's own history and demonstrate how even an intertextual reference can add to the playful nature of a story. Part of this playfulness

consists of the linking of concepts by coincidence, such as the *c* that reminds the C of her "painting in the sand" at the beginning of the narration.

Furthermore, as Ciallella has astutely recognized, images of movement and out of control motion, such as the purple spirals on the wallpaper that begin to swirl, accompany the development of the manuscript whose uncanny existence testifies to C's efforts to put into words her experiences under the Franco regime (152-153). Thus the perceived motion of the wallpaper accompanies the movement between different parts of the narrative much in the same way that the game "el escondite inglés" exemplifies the starting and stopping of time within the narrative:

> Porque es un poco así, el tiempo transcurre a hurtadillas, disimulando, no le vemos andar. Pero de pronto volvemos la cabeza y encontramos imágenes que se han desplazado a nuestras espaldas, fotos fijas, sin referencia de fecha, como las figuras de los niños del escondite inglés, a los que nunca se pillaba en movimiento. Por eso es tan difícil luego ordenar la memoria, entender lo que estaba antes y lo que estaba después. (*El cuarto* 101-102)

By envisioning the ordering of memory as a game in which time both stands still and imperceptibly passes, C is able to offer up a treatment of memory and representation that deviates from the typical treatment of the Spanish past in literature. This deviation consists of creating a haunting atmosphere, but not the type Jo Labanyi has proposed as representative in "History and Hauntology." Rather, the narrator avails herself of literary techniques that contribute to an air of mystery and suspense (I refer to the inclusion of fantastic and mystery novel techniques) surrounding the past, while at the same time do not detract from the playful nature of the literary endeavor. One is not faced with a somber portrayal of the past. Instead, the lighthearted tone of the entire novel is fed by the inclusion of an array of literary approaches to memory.

Disorder comes to reign in this book, just as it did in the back room before it was converted into a pantry. History and memory are intricately woven into a text that outlines the self-discovery of the idea that "disorder can bring forth revelation" (O'Leary 113). These revelations occur within the physical back room as well as within the mental space of the same name, and always involve the objects surrounding the narrator. Each object or piece of furniture aids in the retrieval and representation of memory in a distinct way. The mirrors and reflective devices provided a necessary destabilization of C's identity in order for her to realize how it was that this weakening occurred. The sideboard provides a sense of stability in a constantly shifting environment because it confirms what the narrator truly does know about herself. Finally, the letters, loose papers, and notebook provide C with an opportunity to reappraise the past while taking control of the memories she believes to have lost. These objects with their diverse purposes all lead back to the space of the back room. Andrew Bush affirms that "The *cuarto de atrás* in Salamanca was a storage space for objects expelled from daily use, and so a repository of marked heterogeneity of the material culture of the family" (167). This heterogeneity of material culture illuminates the heterogeneity of the text itself because each object informs the seemingly spontaneous progression of the text, much like the piecing together of a puzzle in which each piece is different but ultimately interlocks to form a whole. As Kenneth M. George has affirmed, the art of understanding where objects fit into the themes of identity and memory reproduction involves "engaging objects as partners in ethical relations." In *El cuarto de atrás* C's ethical aims with regard to the objects she employs in her memory reproduction revolve around the notion that a game is one in which a dialogue occurs between the material world and herself. As with all games, this one too has rules that govern it.

Martín Gaite reflects upon "El juego mudo" in *El cuento de nunca acabar* and comes to the conclusion that in this type of game "Se trataba de una colaboración de buena fe. Como la que debe existir en el diálogo" (337-338). The stories told in *El cuarto de atrás* ultimately create a game ruled by C's interactions with her possessions; instead of avoiding difficult topics in her collaborative game of showing, telling, and reflecting upon the stories, she takes into consideration an array of possible forms of inspiration and treats them as equally important in the process of remembering. Just as group childhood games can be subject to rule changes as long as the players agree to them, so can a novel involving the relationship between humans and objects, history and personal stories be governed by an innovative and imaginative set of rules. *El cuarto de atrás* is a "libro de memoria," but it is constructed in a way that bends the rules previously associated with the game of recreating the Spanish past by threading together playfulness, objects, representation, and memory into one cohesive narrative fabric.

Toward a Conclusion: Materiality, Memory, and Representation

In the three main chapters of this dissertation I have shown how *Primera memoria*, *Señas de identidad*, and *El cuarto de atrás* individually reflect on the relationship between memory, materiality, and representation. Central to these narratives is the reliance on visual cues, such as the narrator's gaze and the use of ekphrastic techniques, to recreate objects that are associated with memories. The materiality in each of the novels forms the link between memory and representation because it allows the narrators to access and therefore reexamine and recreate the past through the help of the physical presence of the object at the time of narration or through the mental trace it has left behind in the form of memories. I will briefly describe the conclusions I have made regarding the unique individual interpretations on memory, materiality, and representation in each of these works. Their commonalities allow me to link them together in my final reflections as I demonstrate how these three novels represent an evolution in narrative strategies that relies heavily on materiality as time passes between the original events and the moment of narration in the present. I will also lay out where this dissertation fits into the existing scholarship on these authors. Finally, I will suggest some ways in which this research can be expanded and taken in different directions.

As we have seen, each novel tackles the question of the role of materiality in memory work in unique ways, weaving in the subthemes of questions of identity and power relations during the periods of the Civil War and all the way through until the end of the dictatorship in 1975. Matia's narrative gaze in *Primera memoria* allows for a constant fluctuation between adult and childhood perspectives that is characterized by the vocabulary she uses when describing the objects of her childhood. This memory narrative affirms the creative possibilities of combining a youthful point of view with objects to revisit and revise the past not along strict binary divisions, but with a concern for exposing how power circulates. Alvaro in *Señas de identidad* enlists the

help of a wide variety of personal and postmemory objects in order to denounce the repression of the Franco regime. Objects are directly tied to the individual and collective struggles experienced under the dictatorship in order to reverse the silencing techniques of the regime and create a physical testament to the social problems of the time. Finally, playfulness informs the narrator's representation of household objects in *El cuarto de atrás* by allowing her to question how her identity was shaped by the dictatorship and the rules it imposed on women's roles in society. Materiality in this novel consists of personal belongings that help trace the experiences of one woman's lifetime in order to create a memory novel that plays with the distinction between remembering and forgetting, subject and object, and reality and fiction.

Despite the diverse treatment of memory, materiality, and representation that these three novels develop, the work done here demonstrates the significance of objects in the narrative from 1959-1978. The examination of materiality contributes to a nuanced understanding of how memory and representation in the narrative of the time were affected by the events of the Civil War and subsequent dictatorship. The prominence of objects in these texts is a creative reaction to the restraints placed on authors under the dictatorship. Up until 1966 when prior censorship formally ended with the liberalizing press law, writers were forced to mask their messages about the state, religion, or general social norms to avoid being censored (Payne, *The Franco Regime* 511).[30] The novels in this investigation span a wide time frame, and thus are influenced by distinct social phenomena such as the Civil War, the slackening of control over the press, the industrialization of Spain, tourism and migration in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and the end of the Franco regime. These historical events pushed authors to look for innovative ways to

[30] Payne points out that despite this formal end to censorship, informal guidelines were put into place to restrict the "voluntary" censorship that still went on after 1966 (511).

expose the regime's repressive tactics, and it is through materiality that Matute, Goytisolo, and Martín Gaite acknowledge the central role objecthood plays in representing the past.

Michael Richards's analysis of social memory in the following quote helps to situate the evolution of the use of objects in these novels into a historical timeline of events:

> Memory has therefore to be a part of social history and the term "social memory" can be applied to the ways in which representations of the past have been articulated, spoken about, constructed, and understood (Fentress and Wickham). Reconstruction of the past takes place within an evolving present. The ways in which memories of the war and repression influenced social behavior in Spain since 1939 is an essential part of postwar history. There is a meaningful relationship, therefore, between the period of instability of the 1930s and 1940s and the migration and development of the 1950s and 1960s, a period, in turn, that relates to the Transition to democracy, and so on. Postwar social change can be charted as a continuum in which the focus is on lived experience and memories – parts of the story make more sense in the context of the whole. ("Grand narratives" 138)

Richards justifies the necessity to return to the past not as a disjointed set of events, but as a series of relationships that help to understand the individual experiences that contribute to a collective understanding of the Civil War and Post War periods. In these three novels written during the latter half of the dictatorship, the representations of the past are constructed around the objects associated with the war and repression. Materiality helps to bridge the gap between the events of the narrators' pasts and the present-moment retelling of those situations. These physical links tell us that memory is a process that undergoes changes as time passes, and as a result it is constantly in construction and subject to modifications that factor in subsequent events, newly formed opinions, and the possibility of forgetting details with the passage of time. These representations are part of the fabric of "social memory" that is constantly being reevaluated and reconstructed in an "evolving present." For instance, in *Primera memoria* more than twenty years separate the narrator from the events she retells, whereas in *Señas de identidad* and *El*

cuarto de atrás the distance varies from several years to several decades, spanning an entire lifetime. This gap between the time of narration and the original experiences is significant because it emphasizes that memory work is a process of reconstruction and assimilation of various experiences that inform and transform one's understanding of the original event. If we take a step back from the individual traits of the novels and think of them collectively as "parts of the story [that] make more sense in the context of the whole," it is possible to see the use of objects in these novels as part of an evolution that responds to social events of the past.

By looking at these canonical novels as part of an evolution or as points on a continuum, as Richards suggests, it is possible to see not only the merit in investigating *how* these narrators remember and construct their individual pasts with the help of objects, but *why* these representations involving objects evolved over the course of the dictatorship. We have seen the *how* in the previous chapters, so let us examine the *why* here. This evolution works toward transparency in the representation of the relationship these narrators have with the range of social events they experienced (or assimilated as postmemories) during the war and dictatorship. The yoking of memory and materiality is not a new phenomena, but it can become more than a narrative strategy when it is analyzed alongside the social changes occurring in Spain from 1959-1978; it can be interpreted as an innovative response to the social repression of the Franco regime. The historical events Richards references, and that I listed above, influenced the way these writers responded to the restrictions placed on their freedom to discuss past experiences. When objects are used to access and recreate memories in these novels, oftentimes it has the effect of counteracting oblivion of important personal experiences. These memories also have a broader, collective resonance because they address the major social issues (subtly or directly) that were taboo topics of discussion under the regime.

The starting point of this evolution is the subtle use of childhood objects to assist in representing memories in *Primera memoria*. These objects allow the narrator to revisit the past from an assumed perspective of innocence that protects Matute from having her work censored. Since Matia is no longer a child, the juxtaposition of adult hindsight with the language of her younger self when describing these objects, allows the narrator to critique the negative influences of the Civil War and its effects on her adolescence and development. Within the span of six years subtlety evolves into blatant condemnation of the regime's propaganda and social control in *Señas de identidad*. If in *Primera memoria* the use of objects to expose the negative effects of the dictatorship is muted, *Señas de identidad* and *El cuarto de atrás* experiment with the possibilities inherent in this literary technique by including postmemory objects and playfulness in order to expand the repertoire of techniques used to discuss the sensitive topics of the Civil War and dictatorship. In *Señas de identidad* the objects act as blatant reminders of the injustices suffered by individuals and larger sectors of society alike. Goytisolo's bold denunciations of the Franco regime are possible in part because of the freedom afforded him while living in self-exile since 1956 and publishing this novel in Mexico. However, experimentation is perhaps the key descriptor of Goytisolo's first novel in the Mendiola trilogy, and this characteristic allows the novelist to push the limits of representation by making objects active contributors to memory work that coexist with the narrators. The objects in *Señas de identidad* fill in the gaps in social memory in order to counteract the techniques of oblivion used by the regime on a regular basis. *El cuarto de atrás* is another example of experimentation that challenges the distinctions between word and image, while at the same time it questions the relationship between remembering and forgetting. By involving the material world of the home in these challenges to representation, the narrator exposes how her personal experiences growing up under the

dictatorship were guided by its restrictive policies. This novel does not denounce the regime's practices, but rather focuses on the personal level of experience and how everyday life was directly affected by it. C does not aim to condemn or expose wrongdoings, but rather engages with the objects in her home as a means of demonstrating the all-encompassing effects of the regime.

Although each narrator uniquely engages materiality to access memories of the Civil War and Post war periods, the emphasis on objects suggests a need to shift subjectivity to include the surrounding world and not only rely on the intellectual human processes of remembering and forgetting. Acknowledging that objects are central actors in the representation of the past subtly diffuses the issue of criticizing the Franco regime openly. Objects are not just playthings or utilitarian devices onto which human beings project their ideas, but rather key players in the development of a narrative strategy that begins by involving objects in a subtle fashion to expose the social problems of the time, and evolves to use objects to directly represent these issues and their immediate effects. Together, these novels trace an evolution in the practice of writing about memory that is characterized by an increased reliance on objects to reconnect with the Post War period. As time passes and the memories of these events become hazy, materiality helps the narrators in each novel connect the present moment to the past and demonstrate that human subjectivity consists of cooperation between human beings and the material world.

While each of these novels relies on objects to mediate the relationship between memory and representation, all three together provide new insights into how to approach memory, materiality, and representation in a key period of Spanish literary and cultural production. I will explain my contributions to the research in these areas, focusing mainly on the subjectivity/objectivity dichotomy. This will lead to some brief remarks about how this research

on memory, representation, and the material in literature can be expanded. In the introduction I addressed the fact that these novels have produced a large body of critical work in their wake. I discussed Emma Martinell Gifre's work and its relation to my own. Despite the lack of critical engagement with the objects Martinell Gifre categorizes in her work, there are moments when she alludes to the power of objects in memory work, such as this one: "Al esconderse en ellos la historia pasada, los objetos son una fuente de evocaciones, sobre todo si no se miran con superficialidad rutinaria" ("*El cuarto de atrás*" 144). Objects can be the source of so many evocations, and the key to this is not looking at them with the customary superficiality that leaves them relegated to the status of insignificant props in our daily lives.

Christopher Bollas focuses on the evocative nature of objects and their role in psychoanalysis in *The Evocative Object World*. He states that the ". . . integrity of an object – the character of its thingness – has an evocative processional potential. Upon use by the self, it may – or may not – put the individual through a complex psychosomatic experience" (Bollas 79). In each of these novels the objects evoke emotions and memories, but they are also significant for their presence, the "thingness" they possess apart from any ideas associated with them. The narrators maintain emotional ties to the past by interacting with and remembering the various objects included in this study, thus providing evidence of the influence that the material world maintains on human subjectivity. The exploration of this "entanglement," to use Jo Labanyi's word, responds in part to the challenge she puts forth in "Doing Things: Emotion, Affect, and Materiality": ". . . to treat cultural texts as forms of cultural practice would, I suggest, be productive. Above all, it would show that cultural texts are 'things that do things': that is, things that have the capacity to affect us" (231-231). While I have not explored the affective side of this relationship in depth, I do acknowledge the influence these objects have on the narrators in order

to show that it is not human subjectivity alone that allows us to define our world. Instead it is a complex web of memories, materials, and emotions that gives these narrators the chance to revisit the past. Jane Bennett, in her book *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, argues that the separation between matter and life encourages human beings to disregard material formations as lacking lively powers. She goes on to state that it is only when the terms "life" and "matter" are reconsidered that vital materiality can take shape (Bennett vii). By vital materiality Bennett means a "cultivated, patient, sensory attentiveness to nonhuman forces operating outside and inside the human body" (xiv). This thesis has set out to pay attention to the nonhuman forces in three Spanish Post War novels. The major historical traumas of the Civil War and its aftermath directly influenced individual memory practices, resulting in the narrators' dependence upon the material world to assist them in their representations of the past.

The combination of "thingness" and evocations allows these objects to exist alongside the narrators in these novels. When analyzed collectively, these novels make the reader aware of how mental faculties are not the only processes that influence one's understanding of the past. The material world shares a part in remembering and forgetting, and these texts illustrate that fact by representing the close connection between human beings and things as the narrators recall the past and dialogue with it. Objects are deeply involved in the processes of revisiting the past, thus asserting that human beings are not the only actors within these texts. In *Alien Phenomenology, or What It's Like to Be a Thing*, Ian Bogost points out how human subjectivity is typically given more credence than objects: "Culture, cuisine, experience, expression, politics, polemic: all existence is drawn through the sieve of humanity, the rich world of things discarded like chaff so thoroughly, so immediately, so efficiently that we don't even notice. How did it come to this, an era in which 'things' means ideas so often, and stuff so seldom?" (3). Instead of

treating objects as ideas, the narrators of these three novels showcase their "thingness" by making them an integral part of plot development and characterization. There is always interaction between the narrators and the objects, which necessarily means that human subjectivity is not removed from the equation. Nonetheless, there is a clear attempt to engage with materiality in ways that are not superficial and that shift from a strictly subject-oriented perspective to a more inclusive vantage point that acknowledges the exchanges that go on between the material world and human beings.

The portrayal of materiality in these novels spreads out subjectivity between human being and object, thus providing a new way to look at memory processes that is not strictly human-centered. I believe that human being/object interactions are necessary for stabilizing narratives of an unstable past. To state this in another way, the memories of those who either experienced the Civil War as children and/or lived through the Post War are fragmented and objects assist in putting the pieces back into some form of order. Additionally, memory is naturally unreliable and characterized by gaps. Materiality can help recognize these gaps, even if they cannot accurately restore or help to revive the original experience. Objects form an integral part of the social and historical aspects of existence, and as such they should be recognized for their central role in the process of recreating memories.

More work can be done with materiality, memory, and representation in contemporary novels of memory that will expand on what I have attempted to do here. *Primera memoria*, *Señas de identidad*, and *El cuarto de atrás* form part of what I have coined an evolution or continuum, but by no means is this list finite. In fact, these works can serve as the basis for further study of how objects work both in other novels of the Post War period and in contemporary texts that were written after the dictatorship ended. Some important factors should

be kept in mind when building on this scholarship. The generational difference needs to be accounted for because it affects the way that authors and their narrators use objects. The generation that lived through the Civil War, as well as the generation that was born during the Post War use objects to relive memories and access the past. Although we have seen some postmemory objects in *Señas de identidad* as a result of the physical distance Alvaro has from what is happening on the political front in Spain in the 1950s and 1960s, the majority of the objects used in these novels are associated with first-hand memories. The new wave of Spanish writers born during the final years of the dictatorship or during the democracy use objects in a different way: they enlist them to preserve a collective past that they did not experience. Postmemory is an important tool in research regarding memory and objects in more contemporary works of fiction because the temporal distance from firsthand experiences necessitates physical intermediaries in order to supplement the knowledge and memories of the past. If this research leads to explorations of the relationship between materiality in Spanish narratives and affect, postmemory, object-oriented ontology, identity, subjectivity, or any combination of these topics, it will have been successful because it fomented further discussion concerning the role of objects in memory processes. After all, if objects are a central part of human existence, do they not deserve to be recognized and remembered for their role in our intellectual endeavors?

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