Playing at Life: Childhood and Play in 20th-Century Spanish Literature and Film

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the representation of children's play in eight literary and cinematic pieces from postwar Spain, ranging from 1955 to 1978. In analyzing these works, I draw on concepts from play theory, an interdisciplinary area of study encompassing research from a variety of fields, ranging from anthropology and sociology to psychology, biology, and even philosophy. As so many of these works have autobiographical components, I chose the novels and films found here focusing on writers who lived through the Spanish Civil War and/or the subsequent decade as children to gain an understanding of the effects of this experience on the child characters in their works. In this study, I explore the interactions between culture, identity, and play, as well as the use of play as a means of dealing with trauma or as a catalyst for memory.

In chapter I, I analyze Juan Goytisolo's novel *Duelo en El Paraíso* and Luis de Castresana's novel *El otro árbol de Guernica*, considering the formation of play communities in each work and the effect of these groups on individual and group identity in a crisis situation. In chapter II, I look at the play space as a function of memory and as a space for opposition to Francoist ideology in Carlos Saura's film *La prima Angélica* and Carmen Martín Gaite's novel *El cuarto de atrás*. Chapter III deals with the concept of child phantasmagoria, the negative distortion of reality, and its relation to childhood trauma in Ana María Moix's novel *Julia*, Víctor Erice's film *El espíritu de la colmena*, and Miguel Delibes' novel *El príncipe destronado*. In chapter IV, I examine role play in Esther Tusquets' novel *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* in light of reversal theory as applied to adult play in order to determine its effects on the narrator's relationship to social norms.

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Introduction

> No sólo repetíamos las canciones y los juegos de nuestros mayores y estábamos condenados a repetir sus vidas: nuestras imaginaciones y nuestras palabras repetían el miedo que fue suyo y que sin premeditación nos transmitieron desde que nacimos, y los golpes de aldabón en forma de argolla sobre las grandes puertas cerradas de la Casa de las Torres resuenan en mi propia conciencia al mismo tiempo que en la memoria infantil de mi madre.
>
> - Antonio Muñoz Molina, *El jinete polaco*

A series of children's voices permeate the novels and films of the Franco era in Spain. Whether they exist as a memory, lurk in the background, or take center stage, they are *there*, claiming their place in the Spanish literary and film canons. As evidence of the past, as a projection of things to come, they force readers and viewers to consider their own past and their own future in the murky backwaters of memory or in the realm of the imagination. They speak their own language, telling stories of a time in life that we may be hard pressed to recall clearly, evoking a state of mind that as adults we have long since left behind. The child character forces us to remember all that is universal about childhood, as well as everything that, as in the quotation from Muñoz Molina above, other generations of children passed down to us, be it joy or trauma. The games of these children, though they may be different in form, are *our* games, those we played with friends or with siblings or those we played in our own quiet corner.

"But," says the child of these works, "*I* am different," forcing us to also consider the time that has passed and our different historical contexts. For despite our similarities, this child is playing a different game, with different stakes. How can we understand these characters? And furthermore, why does it matter? These are the questions that led me to this dissertation topic. Reading novels from the postwar period, and later viewing films from the era, the children's games struck me as a way of communicating with the adult world, a sort of encrypted message from the children we once were. Although written by adults and as such necessarily a reconstruction, these episodes from childhood seemed strikingly genuine and personal. And as I read and watched, I kept asking myself *why* these child characters were so important and what they could reveal about the culture from which they emerged.

My interest in this topic began when reading Juan Goytisolo's *Señas de identidad* (1967) for a course on the postwar Spanish novel, when I was struck by scenes from the main character's childhood, several prominently featuring play, either solitary or in groups. I saw this play as a means of interpreting the experience of war, and wrote a paper discussing the formation of play groups in this novel and Goytisolo's *Duelo en El Paraíso* (1955), which would later form the basis for the first chapter of this dissertation. As I wrote this paper and as I continued my studies in the doctoral program at the University of Virginia, I was left with the impression that I had only scratched the surface of a complex issue that involved the works of not just Goytisolo but also many of the authors from the postwar period.

As I continued with this topic, I began to notice the strong autobiographical tendencies in many works dealing with childhood, not just in Spain but throughout the

world. It was this that led me to wonder about the relationship between the experience of living through war as a child, as many of the prominent writers of the postwar had done, and the depiction of childhood play. Although wary of making sharp distinctions between generations, I noticed differences between children in works by the so-called "niños de la guerra" or "generación de medio siglo" and those of their predecessors, even those writing contemporaneously. The experience of war had a great impact on these writers' work, and among the writers themselves there is a tendency for those who were children during the Civil War to view themselves as fundamentally different from the generations preceding and following. Ana María Matute comments: "La guerra civil española, no sólo fue un impacto decisivo para mi vida de escritora, sino que me atrevo a suponer, para la mayoría de los escritores españoles de mi generación. Fuimos, pues, unos niños fundamentalmente asombrados. Los niños del largo estupor que podría decirse" (qtd. in Godoy 19). Many young writers of the postwar period echo this sentiment, calling themselves "niños de la guerra," as seen in the epigraph which opens José Asenjo Sedano's 1978 novel, *Conversación sobre la guerra:* "Nosotros fuimos los niños de la guerra…" (8). Several collections of testimonies and literary works from this generation have been published, such as Josefina Aldecoa's *Los niños de la guerra* (1983), which contains short texts from ten writers born between 1925 and 1928.

Although collections such as Aldecoa's focus on individuals who had reached, as Aldecoa terms it, "la edad de la infancia consciente" (9) by the outbreak of the war in 1936, I found that many younger novelists, such as Juan Marsé (b. 1933) and Esther Tusquets (b. 1936), and directors, such as Carlos Saura (b. 1932) and Jaime Camino (b. 1936), and even writers born in the early 1940s offered a unique perspective on

childhood, in which the impact of war and its aftermath played a key role. For this reason I decided to extend my study to include not just writers who had experienced the war as children, but also those who lived the horrors of the immediate postwar in their formative years.[1] With the exception of Miguel Delibes (b. 1920) and Ana María Moix (b. 1947), slight outliers in terms of age, though publishing during the same time period, the novelists and playwrights included here were born within a roughly 15-year span, from 1925 (Carmen Martín Gaite and Luis de Castresana) to 1940 (Víctor Erice). When relevant, I have noted generational differences between the writers studied as they pertain to the works analyzed in each chapter.

In addition to this focus on young writers of the postwar, I also decided to set certain parameters in terms of the chronology of this investigation. I chose to focus on the years between the fifties, when many of the children of the Civil War began to publish and produce films, and the late seventies, in order to encompass the early years of the Transition as well as the Franco era. It may be noted that many of these writers continued to publish heavily after this period, and the theme of childhood is equally relevant to many of these later works, but I have elected to leave these for future studies. The writers

[1] Here and throughout the dissertation I extend the term "writers" to both the novelists and the screenwriter-directors whose work I analyze. Though I focus primarily on the directors of the two films, Carlos Saura and Víctor Erice, they were both co-written, *La prima Angélica* by Saura and Rafael Azcona and *El espíritu de la colmena* by Erice and Ángel Fernández Santos. All of these screenwriters fall into the general generational boundaries set forth in this study (Azcona was born in 1926 and Fernández Santos in 1934).

themselves represent a limited sample of the many that could fall into this category, and I have chosen them based on the relevance of themes in their works that could also be applied to many others of this time period.

I have also sought in this dissertation to provide a representative sample of both male and female writers as well as protagonists. To this end, I have included five male writers (Juan Goytisolo, Luis de Castresana, Carlos Saura, Víctor Erice, and Miguel Delibes) and three female (Carmen Martín Gaite, Ana María Moix, and Esther Tusquets). The works themselves are evenly divided between male and female protagonists, with four of the eight featuring a young boy as the main character and four a girl. When choosing these works, my criteria were that the child character must be below the age of fourteen and have a central role in the work. In several of these works, the child character is presented mainly in flashbacks. When considering these novels and films for inclusion, I chose works in which the child's perspective was dominant and/or was reflected in the behavior of the character as an adult, as in the case of Moix's *Julia* (1970) and Tusquets' *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* (1978). The youngest character included, Quico from Delibes' *El príncipe destronado* (1973), is almost four, and in general they range from early childhood to early adolescence. In the case of some of these works, such as *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* and Saura's *La prima Angélica* (1974), the age of the child character is unclear or undefined, but appears to be within the range stipulated in this study. In addition, several of the works span various years, following the child into adolescence and even adulthood.

In examining these works, I wished to focus on the theme of play, seen in the light of play theory. In order to do so, it was necessary to have a working definition of play.

Though seemingly simply, this is in fact a source of contention and debate among play theorists. Many categorizations have been proposed, and in the chapters I will elaborate on some of the systems proposed by various theorists. Speaking generally, I believe that the definition offered by Anthony Pellegrini in his book *The Role of Play in Human Development* encompasses many of the varied theories available. According to Pellegrini, the most basic criteria for play are its emphasis on means over ends and its nonfunctional nature. Essentially, in play the child separates functional behavior from its function or end and introduces variation in this behavior. We can thus distinguish between functional activities (cooking food, for example) and the conversion into play of these activities when the purpose is removed (pretending to cook) (13). A child may also remove a known object from its function, e.g. using a pen to give a shot to a baby doll when playing doctor (17).

As in real life, however, even in fictional works it may be difficult to make these distinctions, especially in those dealing with very young children, who are frequently portrayed as lacking the ability to properly differentiate between fiction and reality, thus turning their "play" into earnest belief. As readers or viewers we are also not always privy to the inner thoughts of the children in these works, or we may only be aware of those of a select few children in the work. Often writers may intentionally leave these distinctions unclear in order to blur the lines between reality and fantasy or to cast doubt on the character of the child. Thus we can say with a fair amount of certainty that Abel, the main character in *Duelo en El Paraíso*, is playing when he acts out scenes of war, but with considerably less certainty in the case of the heavily indoctrinated Basque refugee children when they carry out brutal attacks in imitation of soldiers. We must ask

ourselves if this is merely particularly violent play (forms of which were not entirely uncommon during the war) or a serious act motivated by political pressures. Likewise when Ana, having been told by her sister that Frankenstein's monster is real in *El espíritu de la colmena*, goes in search of him, is it true belief (and thus a goal-oriented endeavor) or a no less potent half-belief that spurs her on? In cases such as these, it is impossible to categorize these actions as "play" or "not play." Thus I have examined what I view as elements of play in these works, adhering as closely as possible to established definitions, but in the knowledge that such distinctions are highly malleable and frequently contested.

Children in Spanish Literature and Film of the Postwar

In the fifties and sixties, particularly in social realist works, the child comes to represent the ideal victim of societies' ills. Writers such as Miguel Delibes, Juan Goytisolo, and Ana María Matute paint a picture of childhood poverty and corruption, whether it be the rural poverty described in novels like Delibes' *Las ratas* (1962) or Matute's *Historias de la Artámila* (1961) or the street urchins in Goytisolo's *Juegos de manos* (1954). In such works we see the influence of Italian Neorealist cinema, which first became known in Spain via film weeks held by the Italian Institute of Culture in the early fifties (Faulkner 11), with its emphasis on children and adolescents in films such as Vittorio De Sica's *Sciuscià* (1946) and Roberto Rossellini's *Germania, anno zero* (1948). These depictions of the squalor of the postwar years carry over into Spanish social realist works, which likewise seek to portray the difficulties of life for young people in a culture of poverty and violence.

The Civil War, viewed by some authors as a manifestation of and by others as the cause of society's ills, is a constant, if often indirect, theme in novels throughout this period. Novels such as Goytisolo's *Duelo en El Paraíso* (1955) underscore the effects of adult violence and political propaganda on children's natures, in sharp contrast with works from abroad such as William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954) or William March's *The Bad Seed* (1954), which attribute to children inherently evil characteristics. Others such as Matute's *Primera memoria* (1959) and Luis de Castresana's *El otro árbol de Guernica* (1967) highlight the importance—and difficulty—of reconciliation between political factions and social classes through the relationships between their child characters.

The novels of this period, and particularly those written by "niños de la guerra" such as Goytisolo and Matute, challenge the notion of childhood as paradisiacal and innocent. One finds a legion of "niños de los otros," as Matute refers to them in *Libro de juegos para los niños de los otros*, children for whom goodness is little more than a fairy tale told to the "real" children imagined by the adults:

> Pero al doblar esa esquina, no hay niños, ni bondad. La bondad que cuentan en la catequesis, es una cosa rara, de lejos, como el cine. Suponen que tenemos, que sabemos, que somos niños de esos que dicen, que somos niños de verdad. […] Nos gusta mucho ver caer los hombres, terraplén abajo, ¡rac, rac, rac, zrzgzrgrzr, zrgzrg! Nos sabemos los ruidos muy bien. (n. pag.)

The ironically termed "niños de verdad" of whom Matute's characters speak in this passage are shown time and time again to be little more than a myth in the harsh reality of

the early decades of the postwar period. Instead children learn to value violence and crime, the only means to survive in a corrupt society.

This image of the era may surprise us if viewed in light of the saccharine Franco-endorsed film productions of the same period, such as Ladislao Vajda's highly successful film, *Marcelino, pan y vino* (1955).[2] During the 1950s, and indeed throughout Franco's regime, films were subject to heavy scrutiny from government censorship committees. A classification scale was set up in 1952 to reward films considered to be of "national interest" and punish those who did not meet the favor of the censors, awarding the former greater amounts of state funds and restricting distribution of the latter (Higginbotham *Spanish Film* 10). This is a period characterized by the "cine religioso," one of the most well-known examples of which is the aforementioned *Marcelino, pan y vino*, as well as patriotic and folkloric films. Though there were some attempts to bring neorealist film to Spain, notably in José Antonio Nieves Conde's *Surcos* (1951), these films met with a great deal of opposition from the censors and were not widely successful (24). The 1960s would bring a series of child stars such as Joselito (José Jiménez Fernández) and Marisol (Josefa Flores González) in popular child-star musicals, a continuation of folkloric trends in the forties and fifties (Wright 10-11). The early sixties also saw a loosening of censorship and the creation of the New Spanish Cinema, whose innovations in independent films, though their audience was limited, would have a great impact on later works (Higginbotham, *Spanish Film* 60-3).

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[2] For a more extensive discussion of children in Spanish films, see Sarah Wright's *The Child in Spanish Cinema*.

Moving into the late sixties and seventies, in narrative the child becomes even more central as a renewed focus on memory brings childhood to the forefront. Writers of this period fragment their protagonist, separating them from their childhood selves and frequently presenting the child and the adult not as parts of the same whole, but as two distinct individuals. They accomplish this effect in various ways. One could mention as just a few examples the shifts between the second and third person in Juan Goytisolo's *Señas de identidad* (1967), the presence of the double in Ana María Moix's *Julia* (1970), or the failure to identify clearly the adult protagonist with the child until late in the novel in Juan Marsé's *Si te dicen que caí* (1973). The child's-eye view also becomes less common in favor of adult reconstructions of the past, and works of this time increasingly problematize the relationship and identification of the adult protagonist with the child he or she once was.

In film these tendencies are less marked, and the focus remains more strongly on the child, but we may note a similar questioning of perception and memory in works such as Carlos Saura's *La prima Angélica* (1974), which, rather than dividing the protagonist as many novelists of the period do, conflates childhood and adulthood, placing the adult actor in the child role and thus blurring the line between present and past. The effect, however, is the same: a sense of artificiality that draws attention to the act of reconstructing one's own history. Works such as Víctor Erice's *El espíritu de la colmena* (1973) also challenge the viewer to change his or her perspective on reality, breaking the barrier between fact and fiction. These new considerations of the past through memory bring child characters to the fore, perhaps to an even greater degree than in narrative. The

haunting face of young Ana Torrent, star of *El espíritu de la colmena* as well as Saura's *Cría cuervos* (1976), becomes an emblem of Spain's enigmatic, elusive past.

Play Theory

In this study, I draw on various elements of play theory. A synthesis of several different academic disciplines ranging from the physical sciences to sociology and anthropology, play theory provides a means of analyzing children and adults' play from a variety of perspectives. Within play theory we find studies dedicated to nearly every aspect of play, from its function in child development to larger issues such as why we play and the role of play in culture and society. The heterogeneous nature of play theory is not without its problems, however, and we may find a great deal of debate in terms of how one should go about studying play, particularly children's play. These differing viewpoints on what can and should be defined as play, already noted above, are nevertheless useful in forming a clearer understanding of how children (and adults) play in Spanish literary and cinematic works.

Current scholarship in play theory tends to follow certain traditional patterns. In the latest edition of his book *The Development of Play*, David Cohen identifies the main traditions in play theory as three. First, he lists the Piagetian tradition, based on the studies of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, whose developmental research in the mid-twentieth century, particularly the seminal work *Play, Dreams and Childhood* (1952), mapped the development of imagination and play in children. This tradition centers primarily on the child's use of objects (Cohen 6). Though many scholars have contested his observations, the stages he proposed remain at the heart of much of the current

literature on play. The second tradition, according to Cohen, is tied to psychoanalysis and has its roots in the work of Sigmund Freud, continuing through the studies of his daughter, Anna Freud, who was instrumental in the development of play therapy. This tradition focuses mainly on the emotional effects of play on the individual (6-7). The third tradition is educational, that is, the possibilities of play to develop cognitive ability, particularly through its use in the classroom. This tradition can be traced back to the rise of play in institutional settings over the course of the nineteenth century, owing greatly to the work of educationalists such as Maria Montessori (7). Though there are certainly other areas covered by play theory, some of which I will discuss later in this dissertation, most incorporate aspects of one or more of these traditions.

Within the various traditions we also find a wide variety of approaches. A helpful approximation to the many and varied viewpoints found in play theory is Brian Sutton-Smith's *The Ambiguity of Play*. In this study, Sutton-Smith analyzes existing theories through a series of rhetorics, to wit:

1) The rhetoric of play as progress
2) The rhetoric of play as fate
3) The rhetoric of play as power
4) The rhetoric of play as identity
5) The rhetoric of play as the imaginary
6) The rhetoric of the self
7) The rhetoric of play as frivolous (9-11).

These rhetorics encompass a wide range of approaches and disciplines, getting to the crux of how scholars view and have viewed play over time. In this dissertation, I draw from

several of these rhetorics in an attempt to provide a balanced view of play in Spanish literary and cinematic works from the postwar period, approaching this topic from a variety of different angles.

The Chapters

I have divided this study into four chapters, each dealing with a specific issue from play theory as applied to Spanish literature and film from the mid-fifties to the late seventies. In each chapter, I examine one to three Spanish works in light of a larger theoretical concept: play and culture, the play space, child phantasmagoria, and role play. I then tie these concepts to the historical context of the works in question in order to form a clearer picture of the figure of the child in the postwar era. In this way, I hope to provide a greater understanding of both literary treatment of the child and, through this, of the worldview of the generation of children-turned-writers of the Civil War and postwar period, which will have a great impact on later writers and filmmakers.

Due to the vastness of the area and disciplines covered by play theory, I do not intend by any means for this to be a fully comprehensive study of play in works of this period, but rather a point of departure for further investigations. I have opted to include a variety of perspectives from several different disciplines to grasp more fully the topic of play in Spanish literature and film as a whole. The Spanish works as well are intended as a representative sample of themes and issues which can be applied to many other cinematic and narrative works from the period both in Spain and abroad. It is my hope to open up discussion about children's play in novels and films, as it is a topic that could be extended far beyond the reaches of this study.

In chapter I of this dissertation I discuss the function of play societies (also known as play groups) in two postwar Spanish novels: Goytisolo's *Duelo en El Paraíso* and Castresana's *El otro árbol de Guernica*. In each of these novels, we find a group of Basque refugee children evacuated during the Civil War, in the case of *Duelo en El Paraíso* to a school within Spain, and in *El otro árbol de Guernica* to France and eventually to Belgium. In my analysis of these works, I consider the effect that culture, particularly that of a country engaged in a civil war, has on identity formation in childhood and adolescence, as well as the role that play societies may have on the establishment of cultural identity. In doing so I incorporate the work of several classic play theorists, such as Johan Huizinga, Roger Caillois, and Erik Erikson, focusing heavily on sociological and psychological aspects of play.

In these works, the children find themselves affected by adult culture, separating themselves along similar lines as the adults (politics, nationality, class, etc.). Sharp divisions between "us" and "them" mark the children's play in both novels, and these are a reflection of reigning attitudes of the time, magnified in the children's games. However, the children are not merely passive receptors of adult viewpoints, and will in fact use these play societies as a means of breaking with the established order and replacing it with their own. The rigid hierarchies of the play groups, which bear much in common with those described by Huizinga in his seminal work *Homo ludens*, serve to create order out of the chaos of war and challenge the status quo, as the children consciously rebel against adult authority backed by the strength of the group. Although the groups are dissolved at the end of the novels, they play an important role in allowing the children to establish a clear identity for themselves.

Chapter II examines the concept of memory as it relates to the play space in Martín Gaite's novel *El cuarto de atrás* and Saura's film *La prima Angélica*. In these works, memory plays a central role, as the main characters seek to rediscover their childhood during the Spanish Civil War. In *El cuarto de atrás*, the narrator, identified only by the first letter of her name, C., recounts events from her youth to a mysterious stranger who appears at her door, in a narrative that blends Martín Gaite's own autobiography with oneiric and fantastic elements. *La prima Angélica* follows Luis as he returns to his relatives' home in Segovia to bury his mother's remains in the family crypt. There he encounters people and places that take him back to his childhood, in a series of flashbacks in which the repetition of actors—most notably that of José Luis López Vásquez, who plays both child and adult Luis—underscores the artificiality of memory.

In this chapter, I analyze the role of play in creating a space for engagement with memory, as well as the function of the play space within the works. I propose the act of play as a metaphor for the act of reconstructing the past that becomes increasingly important for the children of war in the late sixties and seventies, as well as for many other writers of the time, both in Spain and abroad. Reading memory in these works in light of Herzberger's theories on the novel of memory and historiography during the Franco era, I examine the play/memory space created through children's play as a space for acting and speaking out against political and social norms, as a protected space in which the child characters can challenge the authority of the adults, here as elsewhere representative of the imposed order of the Franco regime.

In chapter III, I shift from the positive, productive readings of play to its darker side: child phantasmagoria, the willful, disordered distortion of reality. Here I look at

three different works: Moix's novel *Julia*, Erice's film *El espíritu de la colmena*, and Delibes's novel *El príncipe destronado*. In each of these works, child phantasmagoria plays an essential role, though their approaches to the subject are highly different. In *Julia*, the eponymous main character is haunted by nightmares and other frightful images that she conjures up in an attempt to punish herself for her rape as a young child. *El espíritu de la colmena* presents six-year-old Ana, who mixes fantasy with reality as she goes in search of the spirit of Frankenstein's monster, with which she becomes fascinated following a viewing of James Whale's 1931 film. In *El príncipe destronado*, Quico, nearly four years old, engages in a variety of pretend play with his older brother Juan, whose morbid interests in death and the occult color Quico's imaginative activity. In these three works, phantasmagoria acts as a way of reacting to trauma and in some cases as a means of processing the inherited trauma resulting from the Civil War. The end result of these negative distortions of reality is highly dependent on the existence of an adult support system (or lack thereof) to counteract their effects.

To better understand the workings of child phantasmagoria in these works, I draw from several different areas of play theory. First I wished to explore the imaginative process of very young children, as these works are fairly exceptional in featuring children below the so-called "age of reason" as protagonists.[3] To do so, I first turn to psychological studies on imagination and fantasy play in small children, exploring the lines between fantasy and reality as they develop. As psychology has not studied

[3] While it is true that Moix's *Julia* is told from the perspective of a young adult, the protagonist's childhood trauma ties her to her five- or six-year-old self in such a way that Julia's persona is in a way forever that of Julita, her younger self.

phantasmagoria to as great a depth as the developmental benefits of imaginative play, I then look to child folklorists, particularly the work of Brian Sutton-Smith and Iona and Peter Opie, for further insights concerning the transmission and creation of folkloric superstitions, such as those that are passed from older to younger siblings in *El espíritu de la colmena* and *El príncipe destronado*. I use analysis of this folkloric process to bring to the fore differences between the traumatic effects of phantasmagoria in *Julia* and *El espíritu de la colmena* and the more pacific ending of *El príncipe destronado*.

Chapter IV deals with a single work, Tusquets' *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*. Although the protagonists of this novel are adults, the theme of childhood is a constant over the course of the work, reflected in the many references to children's literature and culture as well as in the blurred lines between children's and adults' play. In this novel, we may see the results of the children's search for a role in society through play observed in previous chapters, and we may note its continued use to resolve identity issues, here mainly those concerned with gender and sexuality. Published in 1978, in the early years of the Transition, this novel was groundbreaking for its portrayal of a relationship between two women after the narrator, an unnamed older college professor recently abandoned by her husband, begins an affair with one of her female students, Clara. Its treatment of this affair has led to a great deal of critical debate over the various possible readings of the text. In this chapter, I examine the two women's role play as it relates to questions of gender and identity in Spanish society in the late seventies, a time when the roles of women were, like the country, in a state of transition.

In analyzing this novel, I draw from reversal theory, a psychological approach which deals with the motivations behind human actions and emotions considered through

the reversals, or shifts, between two extremes. One of the founders of this theory, Michael J. Apter, has applied it specifically to adult play, dividing experiences into two categories: the telic state, which is defined as goal-driven and concerned with ends over means, and the paratelic state (play), in which one places means over ends. Based on this theory, I analyze the creation of the protective play space as outlined by Apter and the use of role play as a therapeutic device that allows the narrator to confront constructively her past emotional trauma—namely her abandonment by her ex-lover, Jorge, which she is able to put into words for the first time in the play sphere—as well as to create new roles for herself in the present. *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* does not lend itself to clear-cut conclusions, but through an analysis of the process of play in the novel, we may come to a better understanding of the complex issues at hand.

Chapter I

Playing War, Playing Peace: Play, Culture, and Identity in *Duelo en El Paraíso* and *El otro árbol de Guernica*

In the many instances of children's play in postwar Spanish literature and film and elsewhere, the creation of a play sphere or an alternate version of reality dominated by a distinct "society" of players is evident. Isolated from the guidance of parents or other adults, as is the case for many of the child protagonists of these works, these societies gain an autonomy which would otherwise be restricted by adult intervention. The children make the rules, and in doing so seem to be given the opportunity to depart from the norms of the adult world in favor of their own interests. Depictions of this type of autonomous, child-led society, whether restricted to the play sphere or enveloping the entire lives of its members, tend towards either the dystopian—children who, when given freedom from the adult world, take on violent characteristics—or the utopian—a renunciation of the warlike tendencies of adults and a return to innocence and peace. Neither of these realities, however, is completely independent of the culture from which they emerge. Whether they represent a continuation of or a breaking with established social mores (those of a world at war, in many of these novels), culture plays an important role in the formation of children's play societies, which are key to establishing childhood identities.

In this chapter, I examine two novels with a common theme—a group of Basque refugee children—in order to establish parallels between the ways in which the identity

of the play society is formed and dissolved in the light of play theory, especially the works of theorists who deal with the intersections between play and culture, such as Johan Huizinga. I will also consider psychological aspects not only of the creation of play groups but also of identity formation in children and adolescents in order to better understand the role that these games play in times of crisis. My goal is to make manifest the connection between culture—and in particular a culture of war—and the child protagonists' play as well as the effect that these have on the children's personal, group, and cultural identity. By doing this, I hope to establish a basis for further discussion of children's play in the postwar Spanish novel, especially those works concerning childhood during the Spanish Civil War.

To highlight some of the commonalities in depictions of childhood during wartime, I have chosen two novels with very different perspectives on a fairly similar situation. In the first, Juan Goytisolo's *Duelo en El Paraíso* (1955),[4] a group of Basque refugee children in a boarding school in Spain during the Spanish Civil War rebel against their caregivers and later against Abel, a twelve-year-old boy from a bourgeois family who lives nearby.[5] The main storyline tells, in a series of flashbacks and accounts from various characters, how Abel comes to El Paraíso to live with his relatives; makes friends

[4] There is some variance in norms for capitalization of this title in critical studies. I have preferred in this chapter to capitalize El Paraíso, as it refers to the name of Abel's family's property, capitalized throughout the work.

[5] Although it is referred to as simply "la escuela," it seems likely that this school was one of the many children's colonies established in Catalonia with refugees from other regions of Spain that were either currently under siege or had fallen to the Nationalist troops.

with Pablo, one of the refugees, who cons him into raising money to go off to war together and then abandons him; and is eventually executed by the Basque children as a spy. We also learn of how the Basque children take over the school, attempt to kill some of the authorities there, flee into the woods, murder Abel, and are in the end captured as the Nationalist army enters the town. This novel won the Premio Índice in 1955 and is widely cited by critics, as well as by Goytisolo himself in a 1968 interview, as the finest of Goytisolo's five novels from this decade (Glenn "*Duelo*" 62). It has been translated into at least eleven languages, including an English translation in 1958, *Children of Chaos*.

In the second novel, Luis de Castresana's *El otro árbol de Guernica* (1967), Santi, a Basque child, leaves the Basque Country together with his sister, Begoña, in an expedition of Basque refugee children that will take them first to France and later to their final destination in Belgium. After it becomes clear that Santi cannot adjust to life with his Belgian host family, he is placed in a boarding school, "El Fleury," where he meets other Spanish children, who, after some difficulties in forming their group, join in national solidarity and, despite a few minor confrontations with those outside their group, present an image of a harmonious play society. Even within the more peaceful environment of Castresana's novel, however, the play group is clearly based on cultural and societal distinctions between the players and outsiders. While in Goytisolo's novel animosity arises out of perceived differences in social class and political affiliations, *El otro árbol de Guernica* abounds with references to the dissimilarities between the Spanish and Belgian children, showing that class and regional distinctions can be overcome only in the presence of the greater division of nationality. Though it has

received little critical attention in recent decades, this novel was a a critical and commercial success in its time, winning the Premio Nacional de Literatura for narrative in 1967 and inspiring a film adaptation directed by Pedro Lazaga in 1969.

In both of these novels, play has a central role: in *Duelo en El Paraíso*, the children—both the children at the school and Abel—frequently engage in imaginative play, typically playing war, while the children in *El otro árbol de Guernica* take part in organized, ritual play, such as playing soccer, dancing, or singing traditional songs. In both works play, organized or not, takes place with little to no intervention from the adults, who in fact at times oppose it. Play and the formation of play groups provide a means of establishing or reinforcing identity for the children, an identity that is closely linked to culture and nationalism. They are also, as I would like to demonstrate in this chapter, aligned with identity formation specifically in the context of civil war and function as a way to dispel identity confusion created by the experience of war.

Though several studies have dealt with the topic of childhood in Goytisolo's works, and specifically in *Duelo en El Paraíso*,[6] they have glanced over the idea of play in this work. Most scholars have focused on the allegorical nature of the novel or its political connotations, seeing the children as emblematic of the common Paradise Lost theme in postwar Spanish literature (Labanyi 845). Critics such as Jo Labanyi have seen the violent acts of the children as symbols of their "fall" and of the corruption of war (and rightly so), but they have not addressed the fact that Goytisolo consistently labels such

[6] See for example Matilde Albert Robatto's "Niños y adolescentes en la narrativa de Juan Goytisolo" and Anna Maria Perna-Hartley's doctoral dissertation, *Los niños y los adolescentes en la obra literaria de Juan Goytisolo*.

actions as "juegos" in the work. Those critics who do mention play in this novel, such as Matilde Albert Robatto, view it as principally mimetic, a manifestation of lost innocence (155). At the other end of the spectrum, studies have viewed Luis de Castresana's *El otro árbol de Guernica*, despite its fictional nature, more as a historical document on the evacuation of Basque children during the war than a work of fiction.[7] Literary critics have written little on this work, play or otherwise. The central role given to play in the children's adaptation to their new environment, however, makes it an ideal candidate for this study. The concept of play in these two works, then, remains largely unexplored, despite its pivotal role in both.

To provide some background for these works, let us examine briefly the historical context at the heart of the two novels, the evacuation of Basque children domestically and abroad during the Spanish Civil War. Faced with heavy bombing and tactics such as blockades that prevented food and supplies from reaching Basque cities, the Basque government organized mass evacuations of its citizens, especially children. Of the nearly 120,000 people evacuated by the Spanish Republican government, all but 13,631 were from this region (Legarreta 50). The government, along with foreign humanitarian groups, organized committees to aid the Basque children as early as the fall of 1936, and official mass evacuations of children to countries such as France began early in 1937 (34-6). Over the course of the war, such organizations sent thousands of unaccompanied Basque

[7] In fact, several histories of Basque children during the war cite Castresana's novel, including Dorothy Legarreta's *The Guernica Generation: Basque Refugee Children of the Spanish Civil War* and Verónica Sierra Blas's *Palabras huérfanas: los niños de la Guerra Civil*.

children to participating countries—including France, Great Britain, Belgium, Denmark, Switzerland, Russia, and Mexico—in conjunction with the Basque government (40-1). Still others travelled via France to Republican colonies in Catalonia, such as the one we find in *Duelo en El Paraíso* (43). Some of these children were placed with adoptive families in the host countries, while others lived in children's colonies, often accompanied by Basque teachers and priests.

In several participating countries, including France and England, caretakers made efforts to preserve a sense of the children's Basque heritage. In her book *The Guernica Generation: Basque Refugee Children of the Spanish Civil War*, Dorothy Legarreta tells that the children identified themselves as "Basque" rather than "Spanish" in their interactions with the host communities (123). Some colonies offered classes in Euskera and taught children Basque folklore, songs, and games (111). In some countries, the children gave recitals of Basque song and dance in order to raise money for their colonies (126). Though organization of these concerts mainly fell to the adults in the colony, unlike the choir in *El otro árbol de Guernica*, we may note the importance of Basque identity for the refugees, a factor that distinguishes them not only from the citizens of their respective host countries, but also from other Spaniards. This characteristic of the Basque refugee children, both in Spain and abroad, will play a role in their behavior in these two novels. For these children, especially those living abroad, culture and identity were strongly intertwined, a fact that can be observed in their play.

Before moving on to discuss the impact of play on culture and identity formation, however, let us first consider these two concepts more in depth. In his seminal work *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, Erik H Erikson defines identity formation as the result of the

individual 1) judging himself in relation to how he feels that others judge him in relation to themselves and their own typologies and 2) judging the manner in which he feels that others judge him in accordance with his own schemata (22-3). According to Erikson, individual identity formation cannot be isolated from the environment in which it takes place; that is, both growth and crisis undergone by society will be reflected in the individual (23). Culture, then, is inseparable from the individual, who even as an infant cannot escape its influence. From initial interactions with its mother, representative of collective society, the infant learns to live and form its own identity in relation to the surrounding culture (105).

Viewed in this way, individual identity is closely tied to group or cultural identity, to such a degree that one must be considered in light of the other. Erikson affirms that historical context highly affects each of these types of identity, especially in times of political upheaval, which can easily lead to identity confusion (25). Indeed, Erikson traces the origins of the term "identity crisis" to the context of soldiers returning from World War II who had lost their sense of ego identity (16-17). Though identity is constantly revised over the course of one's lifetime, such moments of transition may cause it to manifest in more drastic ways to overcome the confusion resulting from trauma. This crisis is particularly marked in adolescents, whose natural identity confusion is augmented by abrupt changes in the environment (17).[8]

[8] Erikson defines "crisis" as "not a threat of catastrophe, but a turning point, a crucial period of increased vulnerability and heightened potential, and therefore, the ontogenetic source of generational strength and maladjustment" (96).

Erikson also posits that in such times of crisis, the individual is apt to think in terms of binaries and to create sharper divisions between groups, a state which he terms a "totality"—a whole that is set apart by an absolute boundary from what surrounds it (80-1).[9] Identity formation is a breaking with someone or something while at the same time a joining together. It is as much about what one is not as it is about what one is, and this separation becomes both more important and more evident in times of crisis. As Erikson demonstrates in *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, this need for clear boundaries may manifest in the form of cultural stereotypes that may paint one group in a positive light and another in a negative one, though these negative aspects may in fact be applied to the individual's own group identity (56-57). This sense of division between "inside" and "outside" is also a characteristic of play, according to many play theorists.

As we will see in *Duelo en El Paraíso* and *El otro árbol de Guernica*, games can act as a mirror for the cultural stereotypes Erikson describes. In order to understand this aspect of play, let us examine the interplay between play and culture. Play theory can help to inform us on the subject of culture and the way in which individuals or groups process it. Let us first consider some of the theory on play and culture, starting with Huizinga's groundbreaking work *Homo Ludens*. Because the limits of what Huizinga deems to be play are considerably wider than those we will encounter in other play theorists and also because this work deals primarily with adult play, rather than that of children, we will lay out here the main characteristics of play according to Huizinga.

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[9] Erikson opposes this concept to "wholeness," also described as a sense of "entireness," but one which is more open and fluid rather than sharply divided from that which is outside it (80-1).

First, play is voluntary; once it ceases to be voluntary, it is no longer play. Second, play represents a departure from "real" life, an act in which the norms governing the outside world no longer apply. Third, play has clearly defined limits both in time and space. Play also has rules which must be followed, which if broken will end the game (7-11).

All of these elements lead to the creation of what Huizinga terms a "play-community," referred to elsewhere as a play society or simply a play group: the players, in their separation from "real" life, act as a unit isolated from the "others" and follow a distinct set of norms that differs from those of society at large, if only for the duration of the game. According to Huizinga:

> A play-community generally tends to become permanent even after the game is over. Of course, not every game of marbles or every bridge-party leads to the founding of a club. But the feeling of being "apart together" in an exceptional situation, of sharing something important, of mutually withdrawing from the rest of the world and rejecting the usual norms, retains its magic beyond the duration of the individual game. (12)

Thus the play community, the seed of an independent culture, must define itself according to its differences from those outside the game. This element of play is further emphasized by the secrecy of the game, a tendency seen both in children's play and in adult ritual (one of the main manifestations of the play-element for Huizinga). In play "This is for *us*, not for the 'others'. What the 'others' do 'outside' is no concern of ours at the moment. Inside the circle of the game the laws and customs of ordinary life no longer count. We are different and do things differently" (12, emphasis original). Though one

may argue this clear division between the play community and outside society, we will find many elements of these distinctions in the works studied in this chapter.[10]

In theories such as Huizinga's, the concept of play as means of reaffirming cultural identity is essential. Brian Sutton-Smith elaborates on this in his chapter on the rhetoric of identity in his classic work *The Ambiguity of Play*. Sutton-Smith affirms, with regards to the use of festivals to assert cultural identity:

> As to ambiguity, we have here one major claim, at least, that festivals are used to proclaim the identity of their originators and to reduce the ambiguity about them that is otherwise present. Ambiguity in this formulation is a primary reason for the rhetoric. Furthermore it is the communalizing orgy of the festival as a play form that itself creates feelings of identity in the participants. So in this case there is an unusual degree of compatibility between rhetoric and play form. Ambiguity creates the rhetoric, the rhetoric creates the festival, and the festival reduces the ambiguity. (110)

Here we see that the interactions between identity and play are by no means one-directional. We may assert, like Huizinga, that the community arises from a sense of unity through play, but, as we see in the quote above from Sutton-Smith, ambiguity and

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[10] In dealing with team sports, as we will see later on, we may observe a series of play communities within one game. In order to play the game, both teams must form part of one play group observing the same rules, but repeated separation into the same teams may result in sub-play communities which nevertheless maintain a strong sense of "us" and "them" between one team and another.

uncertainty related to cultural identity may lead to the use of play forms, such as the festival in this case, to strengthen this identity and reduce ambiguity.

This phenomenon is precisely what we can observe in an analysis of play in Castresana's *El otro árbol de Guernica*. In this novel the Spanish refugee children—primarily from the Basque Country initially, though as the novel progresses a few children from other regions of Spain join them—must confront issues of identity in a new environment. Separated from their families and their homes and placed in another country, they must either take on a new identity or reaffirm the old one in their new surroundings. This is accomplished to a great extent through play and ritual and the subsequent creation of a play community. Through the play community, the children will reduce the ambiguity inherent in their position as refugees in a foreign country by establishing a new definition of themselves, albeit based on elements of their cultural heritage.

When he first arrives in Belgium, Santi, the protagonist, along with many other children, including his sister, Begoña, is placed with a Belgian family that expects him to conform to the norms of his new home. Santi rejects the Belgian identity and clings to any symbols of his Spanish—and Basque in particular—heritage, such as his cap, in contrast to the Belgian clothes his foster family buys him. This rejection culminates with Santi crossing out "Papá y Mamá" on a gift which his foster parents buy him, replacing it with "Monsieur y Madame Dufour." Following this act, Monsieur and Madame Dufour, realizing that Santi cannot adapt to his new identity as their son, send Santi to a boarding school, the "Fleury."

In this we can see that Santi suffers from ambiguity regarding his cultural identity. He sees himself as different from the Belgian children, a difference which manifests in the distinction between the Belgian style of dress and the Basque one. Forced to assume the Belgian identity, Santi fears he will lose his own. When, on top of this, the foster family expects Santi to take on the role of their son, Santi reaffirms his vision of the situation, in which his foster family is "Monsieur and Madame Belfour" and not "Mamá and Papá."[11] This small act of rebellion at the attempted change in his identity is only partially successful, however, since Santi remains a lone representative of Basque and Spanish culture in his new Belgian environment. Though moving to the boarding school alleviates some of the pressure on Santi to change, it is not until the arrival of other Spaniards that he can truly vindicate his Spanish cultural identity.

However, even while he shares the boarding school with only Belgian children, Santi begins to adapt to his new settings through play. The incorporation of Santi into the Belgian children's games is the first indication that he is beginning to adjust. The common game of soccer unites the children, but even so Santi introduces his own variations in the use of a ball made of rags to replace the Belgians' deflated ball:

> Aunque no era lo mismo convivir con niños españoles que con niños belgas […] Santi pronto comenzó a sentirse a sus anchas en el "Fleury" y a intervenir en los juegos y en las preocupaciones de sus compañeros. […] Los niños tenían el balón pinchado y hacía días que no jugaban al fútbol, pero Santi arregló la situación

[11] This episode, based on Castresana's real-life experience as a refugee, is not an isolated instance. Legarreta notes similar cases in Belgium, especially with childless couples, among her interviewees (149).

> haciendo una pelota de trapo que ató fuerte con cintas y cuerdas. Al principio los belgas no querían jugar con la pelota de trapo; Santi les animó y jugaron y no lo pasaron mal. Desde entonces, cuando se pinchaba el balón o lo cogía una celadora y lo guardaba durante unos días como castigo, o lo lanzaban por encima de la tapia, seguían jugando con las pelotas de trapo que hacía Santi. (116)

Ironically, the lack of pressure to conform to his surroundings allows Santi to conform and to become part of the group of Belgian children through their games. This participation in the Belgians' games, however, is not enough to overcome the seemingly insurmountable differences represented by national identity: "Se le hacía difícil, sin embargo, compenetrarse con chicos que ni siquiera sabían que Bilbao era una ciudad" (117). Thus, though he is more at home at the boarding school, Santi waits anxiously for the promised group of fellow Spaniards to arrive.

The group of Basque children's arrival at the boarding school strengthens ties to Spain for Santi. The common bond of national and regional origin links the children and causes them to join together, isolating themselves to a great degree from the Belgian children and administrators. The connections that they have both with their homeland and amongst themselves have their basis in large part on what Huizinga would define as play, both in the form of typical children's games as well as cultural manifestations of play, such as organized sports and dances. We can see in the following quote the large number of reminiscences that relate directly to games, sport, and dance:

> Santi, de pie ante la ventana, miraba el hospital y veía el portal de su casa, la plaza de los Fueros, la Biblioteca Municipal, el quiosco, Lasesarre en tarde de fútbol y los hombres que iban en grupo de taberna en taberna a chiquetear; Javier Aguirre

> Albizu jugaba de nuevo a la trompa y a las canicas en la calle Fica, donde vivía, y en Iturribide; Fermín Martínez caminaba por la calle Tendería e iba a comprar caramelos a Santiaguito; Aurelia estaba otra vez en el Arenal, un domingo por la mañana, con su padre, comiendo barquillos y oyendo el concierto de la Banda Municipal; Menchu, que bailaba muy bien las danzas vascas y cantaba y bailaba la jota de maravilla, se veía a sí misma bailando, con otras niñas del colegio, en la plaza de Orduña; Eugenio estaba bañándose en Las Arenas o sacando la entrada en el cine de cerca del transbordador para ver una película de "Charlot"; Manolín estaba en la escuela con don Segundo, jugando a la mano en los soportales de la iglesia o cogiendo caracoles en las tapias de cementerio; Fermín Careaga estaba estudiando en casa mientras a su lado, su padre, que era delineante, copiaba planos con tinta china en papel cebolla o en papel seda… (133)

The children bring some of these activities to their lives in the boarding school, including games, songs and regional dances, which they perform around the "otro árbol de Guernica" of the title. The common memories of play in the past combine to form a play community in the present, far from these sources of regional identity. The unity of the children in new identity-affirming games and ritual resolves the ambiguities created by the existence of scenes such as the one depicted in the above quote (the transposition of images of the Basque country onto those of the scenes of Belgium before the children).

Basque identity plays a large role in the unity of the children in "Fleury" in *El otro árbol de Guernica*, despite the fact that not all of the children are of Basque origin. The forms of children's play found in the novel reflect many traditional elements of Basque culture. One such type of play is performance of music and dance. Here we can

observe that the songs cited in the novel are not just Spanish or even solely Basque in origin, but are specifically associated with the city of Bilbao. Castresana notes in his book *La verdad sobre "El otro árbol de Guernica*" of his own experience as a refugee:

> Lo mismo en la colonia de Olerón que en la "casa de las dunas" o en el "Fleury" para nosotros desempeñaron un papel bastante importante las canciones bilbaínas, las *bilbainadas* que cantábamos. Eran canciones que habíamos aprendido de chicos, canciones con las que estábamos muy identificados y que formaban parte de nuestro crecimiento, de nuestra idiosincrasia. […] Eran un poco la cachava emocional en que nos apoyábamos, el cordón umbilical a nuestros pueblos y a nuestras casas.[12] (221)

These songs are important not just because they unite and bind, but also because they serve to distinguish the children from the others, representing their "idiosincrasia." This music may make the children more similar to the other Basque children (and perhaps the other Spanish children by extension), but it also highlights their differences from the Belgians.

The Spanish children do not recover these traditional forms of play without effort, however. The children must reconstruct these memories as a group in their play. In this, order and unity are extremely important. When the children are not in agreement or

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[12] Here, as in many other instances in this work, Castresana refers to his own life story using the fictional names from the novel ("la casa de las dunas" and "Fleury"). The highly autobiographical nature of *El otro árbol de Guernica* allows the author a greater identification with its protagonist, to the point that he discusses his childhood experience using the name "Santi."

remember only partially the Basque songs, they collectively establish a definitive version. Initially "todos conocían la música y en cambio se armaban un lío con la letra. Cada cual cantaba a su modo y así no había manera de entenderse" (156). To resolve this issue, three of the boys copy the lyrics to the songs that they know and distribute them amongst the Spanish children. The lyrics of the traditional songs, which we may consider the "rules" of this form of play, do not accept deviation.[13] The children must agree on a single version so that discord will not disrupt their sense of unity. Likewise, they will come to an agreement on what it means to be Basque and later Spanish. We must note, however, that these identities are not inherent, but rather are established through play.

Another example of the establishment of identity through games occurs when the group is divided in a "civil war" between the children from different regions of the Basque Country. Because of an argument over the superiority of each of their respective towns, the Basque children dissolve their group and begin to associate primarily with the Belgians. To resolve this issue, Santi asks Monsieur Bogaerts, his sister Begoña's foster father, to buy him a jersey of the Athletic Bilbao, the soccer team of Bilbao. In the afternoon soccer game, with the Spanish boys divided amongst the two teams, Santi dons the jersey. The Spaniards on the opposing team then decide that they cannot play with the Belgians against the Atleti. As a result, the Spanish boys switch teams, creating a clear

[13] This need for a single definitive version of the songs sung by the chorus is particularly striking if we consider the fact that many of these traditional tunes have more than one variation. In fact, Castresana dedicates a chapter of *La verdad sobre "El otro árbol de Guernica"* to alternate lyrics for songs cited in both the novel and the film version of *El otro árbol de Guernica*.

division between Spanish and Belgian children. The association with the regional soccer team allows the boys to affirm their identity as Basque (rather than *bilbaíno*, *baracaldés*, etc.) and then as Spanish. The choice to expel the last remaining Belgian from their team in favor of one of the younger Spanish boys confirms this identity (157-61). Thus they base their identity not only on a common origin, but also on what they are not (i.e. Belgian). The children reconfigure the play community to reflect the divisions in outside society: Spanish vs. Belgians.

These references to combat (another form of play, according to Huizinga) are by no means accidental. From the very introduction of the novel, Castresana refers to the children's struggle to maintain their cultural heritage as a war:

> Porque mientras los adultos combatían en España por aquello que les separaba, los niños evacuados al extranjero lucharon infantil y tenazmente tratando de mantener vivo e intacto todo aquello que les unía: sus raíces comunes, su pasado casi idéntico, el idioma y el recuerdo de sus casas, de sus pueblos, de su patria. Estos niños y estas niñas combatieron en otra guerra: una pequeña guerra sorda y desconocida, heroica y difícil, que ellos ganaron. (9-10)

Naturally then, once the children overcome the differences between them, they turn the tension of their games from one another (the "civil war" referenced above) to those outside their group, the Belgians. It is interesting to note that they maintain these tensions, as they must for the game to continue, rather than resolving them entirely. In order for the Spanish children to unite, they must transfer their tension onto a new adversary. After the events described above, the children always play soccer divided according to nationality (162).

This conflict and its resolution through soccer firmly establish the play community, with obviously parallels with a desire to unite Spain against a common enemy. Santi repeatedly wishes for an end to *civil* war, though he does not show a great aversion to war against other countries, as we can observe in his prayers: "le pidió al Señor que nunca más la política enfrentase en las trincheras a hermano contra hermano, que nunca más hubiese otra guerra en España, y que si alguna vez la había que no lucharan los españoles entre sí, sino contra gentes de otras naciones" (148). Thus one can apply the unification of the Spanish children through competition against the Belgians to the situation in Spain, in which civil war, competition between two factions within the country, and therefore a form of play, can perhaps be replaced by transference of these tensions onto a common rival in the form of another country.

This reorganization of society (a united Spain against a foreign country, rather than Spain divided in war) on a small scale is characteristic of what Sutton-Smith terms in his article "The Dialectics of Play" as "innovative" use of play; that is, the children use their games as an "agent of social change" in order to project and create an ideal future society (760). According to Sutton-Smith, "transformation" or "reversal" is a key element of children's play, and one that is closely tied to power relations (763). Children do not simply mimic; they dissociate the play action from its original context, introducing a novel situation (762). Sutton-Smith also remarks that people have used games and sports in particular as a form of cultural adaptation on a larger scale, as seen in anthropological studies (760). It should not come as a surprise then that this is the means chosen by Santi in *El otro árbol de Guernica* effectively to re-order the society of the boarding school,

and especially that of the Spanish children, setting a precedent for a united Spanish society as a whole.

In Goytisolo's *Duelo en El Paraíso*, we may also observe the distinction made between those in and outside of the play community, which, as in *El otro árbol de Guernica*, mirrors that of Spanish society during the Civil War. However, here the divisions are more violent and arbitrary, without the possibility of transference of tension in order to alleviate conflict between the Spanish children. Though they are to a great extent isolated from the influence of adults, the children still act out the animosities present in the adult world. As in *El otro árbol de Guernica*, the children base their play community (both who is included and who is excluded) on clues which associate them with certain social and political groups, but these definitions are open to interpretation by those within the play community.

While in *El otro árbol de Guernica* we saw a refusal of adult values (or lack thereof) on the part of Santi in his desires to unite the Spanish children in the school, in *Duelo en El Paraíso* the children quickly adopt the violence that they see around them. We should not confuse this with the message of novels such as William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, published only a year before Goytisolo's novel, or even works such as psychologist Anna Freud's *War and Children*, which maintain that children, when not trained by adults to resist violence or in the absence of parental guidance, will act on inherent violent tendencies; here the violent acts carried out by the children are the direct

result of their observation and imitation of adult acts of violence, as we can see in the following lines:[14]

> Los niños vivían a su manera la atmósfera de fiesta que flotaba en el ambiente y se entregaban a lo sangriento de sus juegos en medio de lo más duro del combate. La carretera dejaba a sus orillas un reguero de muerte: soldados ametrallados por los aviones, presos fusilados al borde del camino, desertores con una bala en la nuca. Los niños se movían entre ellos como peces en el agua, dando gritos y órdenes guturales, *absorbiendo los modos de los mayores*, vistiéndose con los despojos de los muertos y acumulando en sus escondrijos los frutos de sus juegos. (19, emphasis mine)

Elsewhere, Quintana, one of the teachers at the school, comments of the refugee children that "Hace más de tres años que se han acostumbrado a oír estadísticas de muertos, de asesinatos, de casas destruidas y ciudades bombardeadas. La metralla y las balas han sido sus juguetes" (59). Even Abel, though relatively innocent in comparison, has nevertheless grown up in the same environment of death, displaying a fascination with warfare that worries his relatives (100-1).

This representation of a child's life during the war, disconcerting as it may seem to the modern reader, is much in line with testimonies of play during the Civil War. Antonio Rabinad, for example, in his novel-memoir *El niño asombrado*, describes the

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[14] Several studies, such as Elisabeth Rogers' article, "Goytisolo y Golding: la civilización transformada en la barbarie," have mentioned the correlations between Goytisolo's novel and Golding's, based on similarities in their plots. However, it is important to keep in mind the differences between the motivations for the children's violence in these works.

protagonist and his friends making wristbands out of bullets (87). In the online video series *Los niños de la Guerra Civil* for *La Vanguardia,* several men recall playing war by pelting rocks or clods of dirt at one another, to the point of doing each other harm. Another child of the war, Modesto Palencia Largo, says of his childhood games:

> Yo he tenido juegos infantiles jamás repetidos después. Desarmábamos, para coleccionarlos, proyectiles y bombas que habían sido lanzados y quedaron sin explotar por fallo, sin seguro que impidiera su inesperada y probable explosión. Un querido amigo mío quedó mutilado por ese afán coleccionista, otro murió en un cañonazo. (qtd. in Pàmies 85)

The "toys" seen in the quote above from *Duelo en El Paraíso*, then, and certainly the interest and enthusiasm for all things related to the war shown by the children, both those in the school and Abel, are by no means a literary invention. Rather, sources indicate that children—and boys in particular—engaged in what was frequently violent play in imitation of the adults at war.

Even without access to real weapons in the manner seen above, children acted out what they observed in ways that may startle us now, just as it did the adults of the time. General Mola wrote in his journal on August 4th, 1936:

> Me ha chocado el juego que se llevaban unos chiquillos. Dos de ellos iban con escopetas de juguete. Los demás cogían a otro prisionero y lo conducían ante los armados. Éstos le gritaban al preso: "¡Viva España!, ¡Viva España!", y como el preso no contestara (el juego era no contestar), los de los escopetas apuntaban y el pelotón imitaba el fusilamiento. (qtd. in Sierra Blas 45)

Figure 1: *Juego de niños*, 1936. Photo by Agustí Centelles.

Society did not necessarily discourage this type of play, however, and companies marketed many toys of the time, from the toy guns mentioned in the quote above to toy soldiers and even to games of Parcheesi, with children's interest in war in mind (Sierra Blas 46). Magazines of the time included cutout soldiers or paper dolls dressed in uniform, as seen below.

Figure 2: Cutouts (*recortables*) from Nationalist children's magazines during the war. (Lorente Aragón 180, 262)

The encouragement of children's involvement in the war was not all fun and games, however. Participation in youth groups and patriotic displays was training—morally, if not physically—for the children's adult role. In the Nationalist magazine *Flechas*, the message is clear that children will one day replace play guns with the real thing: "Porque sois promesa y canción, ritmo joven, sangre nueva y levantáis al aire vuestros falsos fusiles, con ardor de empresa y presentimiento de cruzada, os saludamos con este salve salido de nuestras entrañas: ¡Salve, flechas!" (qtd. in Pàmies 147). On both sides of the front, in fact, children took part in paramilitary exercises and parades in the streets, bearing the colors and uniforms of their side (Sierra Blas 46-8).

This type of imitation of warfare on the part of children was not without its opponents, of course. A poster created by the Federación Anarquista Ibérica (Fig. 3) warns against toy weapons as well as uniformed children parading in the street, saying,

"El que fomenta el MILITARISMO engendra la GUERRA del futuro. Sólo los hombres deben empuñar las armas para aplastar el monstruo que ha querido humillarnos" (Anonymous). The very existence of admonitions such as this, however, affirms the regularity of this practice.

Figure 3: Poster of the Federación Anarquista Ibérica (FAI), artist unknown.

However, as these two novels, both written by "children of the war," demonstrate, children's assimilation of the acts of war around them is incomplete, as is their understanding of the reasons behind it. We will see in Abel's death in *Duelo en El Paraíso* that they have a clear conception of the difference between "us" and "them," and even of "leales" and "facciosos" (to use Abel's terms), but the actual application of these distinctions is hazy. By the end of the novel, anyone outside of the play community composed of the Basque refugee children is not "de los nuestros," whether they be adults or, like Abel, other children in the area. Despite their use of political language, we should

not believe that the children have a clearly defined political ideology. Indeed, as the narrator states, the children "pasaban de contrabando a través de las líneas de combate, se adornaban con banderas de uno y otro ejército" (20). This is one of the main sources of criticism in the novel: a "war" carried out without a clear understanding of its basis, killing without knowing the victim. Thus the main conflict remains, as in *El otro árbol de Guernica*, between members of the play community and those outside of it, a distinction based on more or less arbitrary definitions set by the former.

This is not to say, however, that the children are unaware of the politics of the time, or that they are unable to distinguish at least on a basic level between one side and the other. On the contrary, the children in *Duelo en El Paraíso*, both Abel and the Basque refugees, have assimilated at least a superficial notion of the differences between the two factions and have a clear sense of which side is "good" and which is "bad." Even under normal circumstances, children are inclined to favor one political group over another, typically influenced by their parents. A study conducted by Fred I. Greenstein in the sixties in the United States, for example, showed that over six out of ten children expressed party preference by fourth grade, though nearly two thirds of them were not able to list any representatives of the major parties (71). We can imagine, then, that the political inclinations of the children of the Civil War, thrust into a conflict between the varying political ideologies of their country, would be even more marked, and evidence supports this theory.

In her observations of Basque refugee children in camps in Great Britain during the war, Helen Grant, for example, noted that "Most had a political awareness uncommon in England even among adults" (qtd. in Legarreta 112). Thus on the drawings collected

by Alfred and Françoise Brauner in 1938 we find statements like, "Los fascistas no saben mas que derramar sangre inocente" (3). This was written by an eleven-year-old in a children's colony in Gerona, not a far cry from the description of the refugee children in *Duelo en El Paraíso*. Extensive surveys conducted by Alfred Brauner of Spanish children from various backgrounds (urban and rural, in children's colonies and living with their parents, etc., though it must be noted that they are mainly Republican) confirm these conclusions. Brauner found that the majority of the children were interested in and fairly well-informed on the subject of the war, giving complex, political answers to the question, "What do you propose so that there will be no more war?" ("Que proposes-tu pour qu'il n'y ait plus de guerre?") (*Ces enfants* 39-42). He attributes differences in the children's responses to teachers' approaches to the subject, with less realistic or more fanciful answers from students whose instructors had made attempts to avoid the centrality of the subject in their classrooms (42).[15]

Also, let us not forget that a great deal of political propaganda was specifically targeted towards children during the war. Though Franco's regime became well known for its political indoctrination in schools in the decades following the Civil War, neither

[15] In this work, Brauner ponders the level of instruction on the war appropriate for children, observing that, on the one hand, children lose interest and are restless when teachers present the topic in an abstract manner, but also worries about the potential politicization of the children on the other extreme, though they may be more engaged (21-22). His anecdotal evidence indicates that the question of political indoctrination was somewhat controversial amongst teachers and school directors of the time.

faction was innocent in this respect.[16] Both sides had magazines and pamphlets intended to rally support for the cause among young readers and indoctrinate them in the political ideologies they espoused. So while the Republican government published pamphlets lionizing the "gloriosos milicianos" fighting against the "barbarie fascista" (qtd. in Pàmies 130-31) and *Pionero Rojo* exalted the worker and the proletariat, Nationalist *Flecha* urged its readers to follow a path that would make them future "soldados de una España grande e Imperial" (qtd. in Pàmies 147). Neither party lacked idealized child heroes who embodied the spirit of their cause, presented to the children as models of patriotism and virtue.

It is no wonder, then, that violence between children of Leftist and Rightist parents was also not uncommon. Dorothy Legarreta tells of conflicts between children in refugee camps abroad, to the extent that in camps in England children had to be separated according to the political affiliation of their parents (111).[17] Nor is this limited to children

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[16] Verónica Sierra Blas comments that the curriculum in Republican schools, in fact, was based heavily around the war and that these schools "[tuvieron] el antifascismo como elemento integrador" (51).

[17] In official evacuations from the Basque Country, parents applied for evacuation for their children through trade unions and political parties, with specific quotas given to each (Legarreta 38). The children were therefore frequently divided and treated differently based on political and/or religious affiliation. In Camp Stoneham in England, the site of the conflict mentioned above, camp staff initially divided the children into three groups: those with parents belonging to the Partido Nacional Vasco (largely Catholics), "Reds" (those with left-wing parents), and a group of older teenage boys.

abroad. In her book, *Los niños de la guerra*, Teresa Pàmies presents the story of an eleven-year-old boy, Jesús Cubel Benedicto, who finds himself pelted with rocks by Republican children, only to retaliate in a similar way (90-1). Stories of children attacked by other children, often violently, while "in enemy territory," so to speak, are not uncommon. Though they may judge based on superficial characteristics, these children do not hesitate to label another child as the enemy and to treat him or her as such.

Politics are a particularly sensitive issue for these children and may turn to violence even in their play. Alfred Brauner notes in his study of children in war, *Ces enfants ont vécu la guerre…*, that the children with whom he worked in Spain during the war were remarkably noncompetitive during games not directly related to current events. However, he notices an abrupt change when the children transform a game of cops and robbers initiated by the staff into a war game:

> L'après midi, je surpris les mêmes équipes poursuivant leur jeu, et je remarquai des brassards, des fanions et des cocardes aux couleurs espagnoles, catalanes, anarchistes, communistes, emportés de la salle de réunion, et aux couleurs

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However, this made for more rivalry and resentment, as some of those in the PNV group were on one hand seen as supporting Franco (though many members of this group were Basque separatists who supported the Republic) and on the other as privileged, as they received more resources and attention from the staff. Legarreta recounts that in this particular case camp officials had to further segregate a small group of children considered to be pro-Franco when a group of Leftist children attacked them with a hammer (111).

> phalangistes, improvisés en papier. Les deux groupes avaient changé de dénomination et s'appelaient maintenant: Républicaines et Fascistes. (34)

Despite the fact that the divisions are pure invention,[18] the existence of the "enemy" stirs up violent impulses. Brauner goes on to say that "Le premier effet de cette transformation fut que le jeu prit des formes de sauvagerie inadmissible. […] Le chef 'républicain' se déchargea sur son adversaire, disant qu'avec des fascistes on ne pouvait jouer, et l'autre déclara simplement que la cruauté était bien dans son rôle" (34). Violence, then, is acceptable to both sides in the context of war, even if that war is only a game between children. If such is the reaction to a paper flag and an enemy decided by a coin toss, we can imagine that any child displaying characteristics associated with the "enemy" would be the victim of cruel retaliation, as indeed we have seen in cases above.

The children in *Duelo en El Paraíso* are no exception to the rule. From the beginning, the distinctions between Abel and the Basque children in the school are evident, and both parties are aware of them. Abel, who knows something about refugee children from his experiences in Barcelona, does not hold the Basque children in high regard, nor does he consider them possible playmates. Reflecting on the games he played in the city, we observe that there Abel "había organizado con otros niños la 'Caza del Espía'; eran casi una docena, entre los diez y doce años, y la captura resultaba emocionante. En cambio, en *El Paraíso* no había ningún niño y los que habitaban la

[18] Brauner later observes that the children choose who will be the "Falangist" by drawing straws or flipping a coin (35).

escuela eran vascos y, para colmo, desplazados" (108).[19] Thus we see that Abel distinguishes himself from the Basque children on the basis of their origin, "vascos," but also on their social status, "desplazados." Though Abel himself is an orphan and has gone to live with relatives in the country, he still views himself as inherently different from the Basque refugees, who have been sent to the boarding school because of the war. For the reader, the similarity between these children's situations is clear, but the divisions are ever-present in the interactions between the two groups. Because of this, Abel's play is primarily solitary; he does not belong to the play group established by the Basque children, though they make him part of their game when they hunt down and "execute" him.

Like Abel, the Basque children see themselves as different from (and superior to) Abel, but for their own reasons. As I have mentioned, the children from the school form a play community based on the bonds between them. Their society is veiled in secrecy, and those outside it represent a threat. They therefore have no reason to accept those they see as outsiders in any capacity but that of victim of their games. Abel, newly arrived from Barcelona and dressed in a way that sets him apart from the rest of the children, instantly

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[19] Significantly, it is this game in particular ("Caza del Espía") which will be played out when the refugee children find Abel spying on them in one of their first direct encounters (225-7). In his fear of reprisal, Abel unconsciously places himself in the role of the enemy, which is then reinforced by other factors. It is also worth noting that there is some ambiguity in Abel's political leanings, as evidenced in the name of this game, in contrast with similar references in Goytisolo's later work *Señas de identidad*, in which the children play "Caza del Espía *Rojo*" (117).

stands out as a potential "enemy," the only position afforded to an outsider in the game of war.[20] The fact that he appears to be of a higher social class (as he also seems to consider himself, judging from his comments on the Basque children, as seen above) marks him as a "faccioso" in the eyes of the children in the school. In this way, Abel takes on the role of the enemy in his own favorite game of "leales y facciosos."

Such classifications, which essentially assign a new identity to one of the children, may also be used to create unity within the group by aligning an individual with the play group rather than those considered outsiders. A prime example of this is André in *El otro árbol de Guernica*, a Belgian child whom the Spanish children "make Spanish." André, isolated from the rest of the Belgians owing to the fact that he is a permanent resident in the boarding school and due to his family situation never receives visitors, allies himself with the Spanish children, who are in the same situation. When the Spanish children threaten to leave the school due to a conflict with Mademoiselle Jacquot, one of their caregivers, Santi tells André that he must stay behind because he is not "de los nuestros" and "no es español" (147). André is upset by this decision, so the

[20] The question of Abel's dress is crucial to the establishment of his "identity" (as interpreted by the other children and the residents of *El Paraíso*). Abel complains that he knows "miles y miles de niños y ninguno lleva chaqueta de flores," to which Filomena, the servant, responds that all the "señoritos" of her village wear them (98). Later, this appearance of being a "señorito" is precisely what will label Abel as a "faccioso." Although Abel openly rejects this new identity given to him by his relatives, in the end all that matters is his appearance.

Spanish boys take a vote and make him Spanish.[21] After this point, André is renamed "Andrés," learns Spanish and is considered to be Spanish by all of the Spanish children. This is an important point to consider, as we see that the children treat even seemingly inalterable characteristics such as national origin as fluid, but maintain the divisions established by the game ("us" vs. "them"). In order for André/Andrés to form part of the play community, the children do not bend the rules of the game (saying, for example, that the community may consist of Spaniards and a Belgian, André) but rather the perception of André (he is Spanish). This is in line with what Huizinga states on the nature of play: that is, that although it may not conform to outside reality (and it frequently does not), the order of the game—based on the divisions between those in and out—is firm.

The divisions between the children, however artificial they may be, serve a clear purpose in their games. Playing alone, Abel finds that his games lose the interest provided by the tension of opposition, a key factor in play according to Huizinga. We note that "Durante las mañanas [Abel] jugaba en la terraza a 'leales y facciosos', […] pero el juego comenzaba ya a cansarle. Era como repartir las cartas solo: podía hacer trampas y favorecer el palo predilecto, pero esto mismo privaba a la partida de emoción"

[21] This scene makes manifest many of the cultural norms replicated by the children in the boarding school, not only for the central role given to the "árbol de Guernica" but also for the fact that the boys pointedly exclude the girls from the vote, noting that "la política era cosa de hombres" and "a las mujeres no las habían dejado nunca deliberar junto al árbol de Guernica" (153). Their actual knowledge of politics is somewhat hazy, however, and they repeat phrases that they have heard without a full understanding of what they mean (154).

(108). The insertion of an unknown factor—that of the player outside of the play community—adds an element of unpredictability that cannot be achieved if all of the players are on the same side, much less in solitary play. Thus we see, as we may also find in the replacement of tensions between Spaniards with those between Spaniards and Belgians in *El otro árbol de Guernica*, that a play society can only attain solidarity within itself if it is pitted against another, for otherwise the only options are 1) to give in to infighting to maintain tensions in the game or 2) to succumb to a lack of tension, which will bring the game to a close.

Apart from its benefits in the realm of play, the establishment of sharp divisions between groups functions as coping mechanism in times of identity crisis, especially among adolescents.[22] Erikson views the tendency of adolescents to be "clannish" and exclusionary as "a necessary defense against a sense of identity loss" (132). Such tendencies also make them particularly susceptible to political indoctrination, according to Erikson, as such propaganda favors a black-and-white view of the world:

> Where historical and technological development, however, severely encroach on deeply rooted or strongly emerging identities […] on a large scale, youth feels endangered, individually and collectively, whereupon it becomes ready to support doctrines offering a total immersion in a synthetic identity (extreme nationalism, racism, or class consciousness) and a collective condemnation of a totally stereotyped enemy of the new identity. (89)

[22] Though both novels consistently refer to their young characters as children ("niños"), as I have for much of this chapter, it may be noted that many of them are at the very least on the verge of adolescence.

This is indeed the process we observe in the play communities in *Duelo en El Paraíso* and to a lesser extent in *El otro árbol de Guernica*, in which the Belgian children, though clearly outsiders, are not enemies per se. Both groups of children and adolescents are placed in a situation where their identity is threatened and react by setting clear boundaries in their play groups. This is for the children a means of safeguarding and confirming identity as well as a manifestation of a need for order within the play community.

Order within the play group is also a means of protection for the children from the vagueness of identity caused by the chaos of a country at war. Though the play society created by the refugee children in *Duelo en El Paraíso* is quite different from that which we saw in *El otro árbol de Guernica*, in it nevertheless a strict order reigns, determining the actions of the children. Quintana, one of the teachers, highlights this order in his description of the situation in the school and the violence of the children. Though he mentions various times that the children do as they please with no regard for authority, it is clear that they have established their own system of authority within their own group: "Aquí, en la escuela, han creado un verdadero reino de terror, con sus jefes, lugartenientes, espías y soplones. […] Sé perfectamente que tienen un código para castigar los 'delitos' y un sistema coactivo para obtener la obediencia" (59). This is far from a disorganized group of discontent schoolchildren. They have united, taking on specific roles and following the precepts set out by those in power within the community.

Though these rules are unknown to those outside the group and the children punish attempts to discover them, there is no doubt as to organization in the play community.[23]

What seems to disturb Quintana most about the refugee children's rebellion against the teachers, in fact, is not the acts of violence and rebellion per se, but that they have established forces that outweigh the teachers' authority or even reverse their systems of power. Quintana also mentions that a child has threatened him with a cane, a clear sign that their roles are reversed in the new division created by the play community (59). When interrogated on their own actions or those of the other children, the refugees remain silent or openly tell lies, disregarding any threat of discipline. The children display signs of mistreatment and beatings, but refuse to betray the solidarity of the group (59-60). In short, Quintana suggests, the children are more afraid of punishment from those within their own hierarchy than from those responsible for the school.

We can attribute this "code" established by the children in their interactions to another of the characteristics of play according to Huizinga, which is that it must follow a series of rules and create order:

> Inside the play-ground an absolute and peculiar order reigns. Here we come across another, very positive feature of play: it creates order, *is* order. Into an imperfect world and into the confusion of life it brings a temporary, a limited perfection. Play demands order absolute and supreme. The least deviation from it "spoils the game", robs it of its character and makes it worthless. (10)

[23] When a guard seeks to discover the meaning of their tattoos, for example, he is mysteriously attacked (60).

Although in the case of *Duelo en El Paraíso* it would be a stretch to view this order in a positive light, it is easily discernible that the unbreakable order of the play community responds to the same stimuli outlined by Huizinga above. Far from their homes in the middle of a war, many of them orphaned, these children, like those in *El otro árbol de Guernica*, may experience confusion, and would certainly see the world in which they have been placed (the school) as imperfect and disordered. In the absence of authority figures with enough power to provide for the children's need for structure, the children create their own order, breaking down the old one in the process. While the war rages on, the children live by their own rules. Quintana openly admits to being unable to control them and to having no recourse to a higher authority until the Nationals reach the town (61). Once the Nationals arrive, however, the play children are quickly captured and split up. A new sort of order takes the place of that created by the children, one whose implications remain to be seen.

Examining these cases in *El otro árbol de Guernica* and *Duelo en El Paraíso*, we can observe an attempt to establish order in a world of chaos, which the characters accomplish through play and especially the creation of play societies, as previously mentioned. In both of these novels, the formation of a new order cannot be realized without a break with the old, namely the authority of the adults. Though in *El otro árbol de Guernica* this confrontation is relatively peaceful, the children still refer to it as a "rebellion," and as such one can view it in much the same light as that of the refugee children in *Duelo en El Paraíso*. In each of these situations, children create a play society in opposition to reigning cultural norms, represented by the adults. Out of a disordered

existence (life in a boarding school during wartime) comes a new set of societal norms and rules which the children create for themselves.

When seen from this perspective, we may underline two key opponents of the play group in these works: on one hand adult authority figures and on the other individuals, mainly children, outside the immediate play community. We have already examined the divisions between the Basque and Belgian children in *El otro árbol de Guernica* and the children of the school and Abel in *Duelo en El Paraíso*, but let us take a moment to look at the no less important opposition of children and adults, a common theme in many novels with child protagonists, and its ramifications for the play society.

Unlike the confrontations between the children, here we have a division between the play group and those outside of the game itself. For even if, for example, the Belgian children play on the opposite team from the Spaniards in their soccer games in *El otro árbol de Guernica*, they are still bound by the same rules. Likewise Abel, though he may be mistaken as to his part in the game, is still playing war, just as the Basque schoolchildren are. The adults, on the other hand, have their own rules and for the most part do not participate directly in the children's play. Although they may involuntarily be drawn into the children's games, as in the case of Elósegui and Quintana in *Duelo en El Paraíso*, the adults remain largely outside of the bounds of the game. Nevertheless, they are crucial to the creation of the play societies in these novels, as they represent outside society and its norms, with which the children must break in order to set the limits for the game.

In the end, the adults are the greatest threat to the game, but also serve to affirm the group's identity in their opposition to it. We have seen in Huizinga the desire for

order leads to the establishment of rules, the deviation from which will end the game (10). In his book *Man, Play and Games*, Roger Caillois elaborates on this, making a distinction between the cheat, who manipulates the game while seeming to respect its rules, and the nihilist, who claims that the rules of the game are absurd. According to Caillois, the cheat does not represent a threat to the game, since he must accept the rules in order to win, whereas the nihilist does threaten to destroy the game's very structure (7). Following this schema, the other children, though they may oppose the members of the play community, cannot destroy the structure of the game, for they implicitly accept its rules. The adults, on the other hand, do possess the power to dissolve the play group in their denial of its rules and precepts. Therefore, in order to maintain the stability of the play community, the children must rebel against the adults, thus imposing the rules of the game on outside society.[24]

In both of the novels studied in this chapter, we find a rebellion which imposes the norms of the play community onto society, as represented by the adult caretakers of the children in the schools. Though the end results are different, the process by which the children assimilate the adults to their own ways follows similar patterns. Initially the adults hold all authority and power, which they then lose when the children band together

[24] This balance of power and the use of games as a means of establishing order is by no account limited to children in the postwar Spanish novel. We also find examples, though more limited in number, of the imposition of play on children to insure their compliance to social norms. In Elena Quiroga's *Tristura* (1960), for example, the young protagonist's guardians repeatedly order her to go play over the course of the novel as a means of controlling her actions.

against them, causing the adults to come around to their point of view. In *El otro árbol de Guernica* we can view this as a positive change, since the adults gain respect and tolerance for the Spanish children, while in *Duelo en El Paraíso* the adults develop an entirely justified fear of the refugee children in the woods.[25] In both cases, however, the children impose their world onto that of the adults, in large part due to the strength of the play community.

Like the games that the children play, the rebellion in *El otro árbol de Guernica* is nothing if not ordered and calculated. After Mademoiselle Jacquot insults the Spanish children and shows preferential treatment for the Belgians, the refugee children organize at the "árbol de Guernica" to form a plan. They decide to leave the boarding school and circulate instructions to pack up their belongings and meet at a given point. When Mademoiselle Tys, a caregiver beloved by the children, intervenes, Santi, the appointed leader of the group, is insistent that they are leaving. Even in the face of the director of the school, Monsieur Fleury, the children, led by Santi, stand firm in their intentions to leave until Monsieur Fleury asks what they want, indicating an openness to negotiation. Mademoiselle Jacquot apologizes, and the director removes her from supervision of the Spanish dormitories. (143-48)

This act on the part of the children is clearly a power play, and this once again has its basis in the formation of the play group. References to Lope de Vega's *Fuenteovejuna* shortly following this episode further reinforce the need for unity in the play community in the face of unjust authority. Having formed a strongly united front, the children, like

[25] We may note that in *Duelo en El Paraíso* this effect is cyclical: the children take on the violence seen in the adults, which they then turn against those in charge of the school.

the townspeople in Lope's play, are able to show their power over one who has authority over them, Mademoiselle Jacquot. Though they still require the intervention of the school director in order to achieve their goals, the children are clearly in control both of the actions of the play community and, through these, of the decisions of the adults.

Though we cannot perhaps say that Santi and the other children are playing in this particular instance, their confrontation with the authorities of the school bears the marks of typical social play. Sutton-Smith notes that "The fundamental novelty in all social play […] is that the children themselves are in control of their own society. […] By 5 to 7 years of age […] their social play, rather than being just a replication of adult activities, begins to be a practice of adult power tactics" ("Dialectics" 763). He goes on to observe that many of children's stories are based on the interplay between the powerful and the powerless: the hero story. By ten years old, according to Sutton-Smith, children have moved from the passive role of "powerless" commonly taken by younger children to the more active "hero" role (763). Thus the children in *El otro árbol de Guernica*, particularly Santi, adopt the role of the hero facing down his foes. Their conflict with Mademoiselle Jacquot is depicted in terms of a fight between good and evil, which, rather than having come to an agreement, Santi views as a victory, albeit a partial one (147-8).

This power and control can be found in unity within the play group, which allows the children to affirm their own identity and not let authority force them into submission. In order for the children in these two novels to "win" over adult authority, they must have some degree of stability in their play community. As we have seen, in *El otro árbol de Guernica* the unity of the group allows the children to impose their will on their adult caregivers, and the same can be said of the children in the school in *Duelo en El Paraíso*.

However, the play community in Castresana's work endures until the moment of separation to return to Spain, while that found in *Duelo en El Paraíso* is in decline by the end of the novel as the soldiers capture the children. Where, then, do these two play groups, so similar in composition and purpose, diverge?

The answer to this question can be found in the types of play and the setting in which they occur. The two authors depict the world of play in ways that are vastly dissimilar. In *Duelo en El Paraíso*, the children's rebellion against the adults represents a descent into violence and chaos, despite the order that the children themselves impose. Their order and logic are those of war. The goal of their games is to destroy. In *El otro árbol de Guernica*, on the other hand, the children, far from adopting the attitudes of the adults at war with one another, continually work for peaceful solutions for their problems and remark on the futility of infighting in the group (though their thoughts on aggression against other groups remain ambivalent, as seen above). Unlike the refugee children in *Duelo*, whose actions exemplify the horrors of war, its violence and its destruction, Santi and the other children can be seen as hope for the future, a departure from the reigning attitudes of division of the adults in Spain.

The places in which the children play in these two novels serve to accentuate these differing worldviews. *El otro árbol de Guernica* is marked by settings which emphasize order and stability. The narrator remarks that "La biblioteca, el 'árbol de Guernica' y el orfeón constituyeron tres grandes nexos entre los chicos españoles del 'Fleury'" (157). A clear sense of order infuses all of these places. One could hardly find a more fitting example of structure and organization than a library, here also one of the few links to Spanish culture available to the children beyond their own recollections. The

famous Tree of Guernika, of which the tree in the title is an imitation, is on one hand a symbol of Basque identity and on the other a representation of government and justice. The choral group, as mentioned above, is also dependent on the unity and order of the voices that comprise it. Thus structure, order, and organization reign supreme in these three play areas, which will then determine the unified and clearly defined identity of the children.[26]

In *Duelo en El Paraíso*, on the other hand, the sense of order established by the children is incomprehensible to adult society. Their actions seem arbitrary and chaotic. In the first scene of the novel, a child throws a hand grenade, fortunately forgetting to remove the pin, at Elósegui, who cannot make sense of this act of violence: "Contempló de nuevo la bomba inofensiva y el lugar por donde el niño se había escapado: la escena era absurda, increíble. Carecía de toda lógica" (15). As we have seen, the children's play in this novel is not without a sense of logic, but it still lacks the structure seen in *El otro árbol*. One can attribute much of this to the different settings for play in *Duelo*, their "playground," so to speak.

While in *El otro árbol* the children could draw on the order and structure of established cultural norms (literature, government, and traditional rituals), the refugee children in *Duelo en El Paraíso* inhabit a world filled with chaos. Order in the adults' world is rapidly dissolving as the Republicans come to realize that they are fighting a losing fight and the arrival of the Nationalist army is imminent. The order represented by

[26] It goes without saying that these three areas (the library of Spanish books, the oak tree which becomes the center of the Spaniards' games, and the choral group formed to rehearse Basque songs) are almost exclusively used by the Spanish children.

the school has fallen apart. The children, once they have established control of the school and a hierarchy amongst themselves, flee into the woods to pursue their violent games. In stark contrast to the "árbol de Guernica" which forms the center of play in *El otro árbol*, the woods are tangled and dangerous, but full of hiding places for the refugees. Once in the woods, however, the children begin to separate and lose not only their physical proximity but also their ideological unity. Orders are disobeyed, and we have the sense that the group will soon adopt an every-man-for-himself mentality.

Another key difference in the establishment of the play group in these two works, which will have serious repercussions for the characters, is the ability of the play community to isolate itself from the political animosities of the adult world that serve to confuse its identity. In *El otro árbol de Guernica*, the Spanish children find themselves in France and Belgium, far from the battlefields where the war is taking place. They can therefore leave politics to the adults, though they align themselves with one of the two sides:

> No sabían muy bien qué se debatía en aquella guerra, ni por qué había estallado, ni por qué habían luchado. La política era como trabajar, como fumar, como mandar o como ir al café o a la taberna: cosa de hombres. Pero Santi y sus compañeros tenían un gran sentido de lealtad a sus parientes y amigos, y vecinos, y paisanos, y hubieran querido que ganaran los de casa. (203)

The novel implies that these children, or at least the vast majority of them, consider themselves Republicans. Despite this, there is no reason for them to view the Nationalists as an immediate threat to their own lives in Belgium or to look for "facciosos" in their midst. Though they likely see the Nationalists as the enemy, the children in Belgium can

draw a clear line between themselves and supporters of Franco, a line clearly marked by their physical removal to a different country. The novel relegates any lack of understanding, such as that seen in the passage above, to mere theoretical musings, and the children do not resolve ambiguity with violence. Here, ambiguity is not a threat. Uncertainty does not create potential enemies, for the enemy cannot reach the children.

This kind of clear boundaries between the play group and those outside of it, in addition to a previously defined motive for unity—the children's common heritage—, makes the task of establishing identity much simpler for the Spanish children in *El otro árbol de Guernica*. For them, it is merely a question of setting boundaries and transporting their old culture to a new setting. The children in *Duelo en El Paraíso*, however, must do this as well as determine who amongst their peers presents a threat. Living in the midst of war, with Franco's troops practically on their doorstep, the Basque children in the school must apply the schemata of the adults as a means of self-preservation. They have been convinced that, despite their young age, they are part of the war, and thus must take the role of winner or loser. It is kill or be killed. These children cannot merely adopt a rival from outside their own cultural group, as those in *El otro árbol* do with the Belgians, but instead must identify a known enemy in their own surroundings. While the Spanish children in Belgium make an "enemy" by pushing the Belgians out of their play group, the Basque children in *Duelo* already have an enemy, whom they must just give a face.

We can relate these difficulties and the blurring of the line between play and non-play which have such disastrous results in *Duelo en El Paraíso* back to differences in the types of play in which the children engage in the two novels. In *El otro árbol de*

Guernica we find highly organized and rule-centered forms of play, such as soccer games, choral singing, and dancing. Some play theorists are even hesitant to refer to these sorts of activities as play due to their rule-based and less voluntary nature (Pellegrini 138), but we may note in the case of *El otro árbol de Guernica* that these acts seem to be more or less spontaneous and are typically initiated by the children with little to no intervention from the adults. In these activities, there is a clear dividing line between what is play and what is not, even though the play group remains intact when not engaged in play. Play areas and groups are clearly defined, with little room for doubt.

In *Duelo en El Paraíso*, however, we are in the messier area of pretend or symbolic play, as it is termed by Jean Piaget. Not only that, but for each of the children, the lines between fantasy and reality are blurred. Anthony D. Pellegrini notes in his book *The Role of Play in Human Development* that pretend play is based on a decontextualization of symbolic actions, in which the players represent reality in a different context (156). A.S. Lillard goes even further, giving as one of the conditions for pretend play that the pretender be aware and intent of their representation of reality (Pellegrini 156). Seen in this light, much of the play in *Duelo en El Paraíso* falls into a gray area. Do the children know that they are playing a role, or are they merely participating in reality as they know it?

In the case of Abel, it seems clear that he is aware, at least in his solitary play, that what he is doing is a game. He plays war, and he can do so with impunity because, compared to the children in the school, he is reasonably detached from it, a fact that he constantly laments to the adults. For the Basque children in the school, however, the situation is much more complicated. Like Abel, they have lived the war, but from a

different perspective. While Abel was playing war with his friends in Barcelona, the children from the school, as we have seen previously "se entregaban a lo sangriento de sus juegos en medio de lo más duro del combate" (19). Their war "games" are intertwined with the war itself. Rather than decontextualizing the actions of the adults, the Basque children merely continue them. They occupy the same space, take on the same roles, and use the same "tools" (their weapons, for example) as the adult soldiers.

This ambiguity may lead us to question whether or not these children are in fact playing or whether they are instead truly taking part in the war. Unlike in *El otro árbol de Guernica*, no clear answers are to be had here. Though Goytisolo himself refers to the children's actions as games or play, categorization of the Basque children's activities in the woods as pretend play, the most likely category, is somewhat problematic. The organization of their group may conform to that of a play community, and the "games" may fall under the broad categories used by Huizinga, who also sees war as a game, but whether these children are pretending is ambiguous given the amount of information presented in the novel. And this is by no means a minor detail.

This overlap between reality and fantasy may explain why the children's efforts at establishing order are less successful in *Duelo en El Paraíso* than in *El otro árbol de Guernica*. As we have seen, the children in these two works, in particular the refugees, seek to create a new kind of order in a world that has been turned upside-down by war. These attempts are based around the creation of play communities which serve to separate them from the world of the adults, which at the time is characterized by disorder. However, while the games in *El otro árbol de Guernica* distance the group from both the adults and their peers, reinforcing their cultural identity, the actions of the Basque

children in *Duelo en El Paraíso*, though they initially have the same effect, in the end lead to the children taking on the identity of the adults engaged in the war rather than establishing a separate identity. Essentially, these children's games, rather than decreasing the ambiguity of their identity, ultimately increase it by lessening the distinction between their own actions and those of the adults.

We see in these two examples, then, the possibilities for the resolution of identity confusion through play: "generational strength and maladjustment," as Erikson states (96). In both novels, the strength of the play group is linked to a sense of order and collective identity, which allows the children to move beyond the chaos around them, picking and choosing the aspects of the adult world that best fit their purposes. In *Duelo en El Paraíso*, however, despite initial success in their dealing with their teachers, the play community is not able to maintain the unity within their group that would allow them to form a clear identity. In short, their attempts to separate themselves as a group from the outside fail. On the other hand, the same issues of defining their play community and its actions do not plague the Spanish children in *El otro árbol de Guernica*, and they are thus more successful in establishing their identities.

Through examples such as these, whether they be successful or not, we may explore the difficulties encountered by the Spanish child of war in forming a clear sense of identity, the loss of which will continue to haunt the country for decades, for the lines drawn between adults in their "games" of war are not soon erased and will challenge each individual to choose his or her role for many years after the fighting has ended. So often seen as examples of a lost paradise, perhaps one could better view these novels as a search for lost identity in a country struggling to define itself first through violent conflict

and later through works such as these, which return to the war to critique the seemingly arbitrary lines drawn between “us” and “them.” These child protagonists, the future of the nation, point towards uncertain outcomes for Spain’s own identity crisis for the authors of the postwar period: would it lead to destruction or a better society for all?

Chapter II

Playing in Space and Time: Memory and Children's Play Spaces in *El cuarto de atrás* and *La prima Angélica*

When examining literary and cinematic works from the decades following the Spanish Civil War, we are confronted with a great number of characters struggling to remember. In a period such as postwar Spain, in which history—namely the version of history told by those in power—formed such an important part of political ideology, it is natural that memory should take a central role. Memory becomes, in a way, a fight against the powers that be to assert one's own voice and to dismantle the idealized myth perpetuated by the Franco regime. Recovery of memory, however, is not a simple process. From the vantage point of the present, the past seems to occupy a space utterly inaccessible from one's own. Spanish writers of the sixties and seventies sought to depict this struggle for memory, both against official discourse and against the natural processes of time, in a new, fragmented narrative that captured the difficulties of returning to the past. In these efforts, they frequently turn to play, and specifically children's play, creating a play space that also functions as a space for memory. In this chapter, I analyze play spaces in two such works, Carlos Saura's film *La prima Angélica* (1974) and Carmen Martín Gaite's novel *El cuarto de atrás* (1978), examining both the use of play to create a space for memory and the function of these play/memory spaces as a challenge to dominant political ideologies.

In works from this period, the protagonists are often adults looking to recapture their childhood self, portrayed as being on a separate plane of existence, as in Juan Goytisolo's *Señas de identidad* (1967) or Ana María Moix's *Julia* (1970). The child and adult selves are typically linked not by continuity in the character, whose manifestation in the present, due to the apparent inaccessibility of the past, is depicted as disconnected from all former selves, but rather through a common space. Frequently, the space inhabited by memory mimics that created in children's play. Indeed, the child's play space in many of these works serves as a catalyst for memory, and this space, along with the material objects associated with it, bridges the gap between the child's world and the adult's recollection of it. *El cuarto de atrás* and *La prima Angélica*, though divided by genre, make manifest the ties between memory, space, and children's play present in various literary and cinematic works of the period. These works may act as a springboard for discussion of some of the problematic aspects of memory in this time period, for, although they remain highly personal works, critics have interpreted them as representative of the mindset of a generation, namely that of the "niños de la guerra," those who were children during the Spanish Civil War. Though I do not wish to suggest that the conclusions of this chapter be applied generally to all that fall in this category, there are marked similarities that may help us to understand some of the conflicts presented by this generation's unique relationship with the war and its aftermath.

The topic of memory, particularly memory tied to the Spanish Civil War, is fundamental to the study of postwar literature and film in Spain, particularly works from the late sixties and seventies. David K. Herzberger, in his book *Narrating the Past: Fiction and Historiography in Postwar Spain*, classifies works from this period as

"novels of memory," distinguishing them from earlier Social Realist novels for their evocation of the past through memory, typically in the form of first-person narration in the present (66). Herzberger, among others, has cited Carmen Martín Gaite, and in particular her novel *El cuarto de atrás*, as emblematic of the treatment of memory in this period. In turn *La prima Angélica* is, as Ángel Quintana has noted, the cinematic echo of these new ways of looking at memory and time in literature (88). Highly controversial at the time of its release for its portrayal of memories of the Civil War, despite winning a prize for best director at Cannes, *La prima Angélica* met with heavy opposition from the right wing in Spain, leading to a fire bomb in the Cine Balmes during one of its showings (Higginbotham *Spanish Film* 14). The concept of memory in both *El cuarto de atrás* and *La prima Angélica* has been the subject of many articles in the decades since their release.[27] However, critics have largely overlooked play in these works, or, in the case of Martín Gaite's novel, have focused mainly on postmodern literary playfulness rather than the many acts of play depicted in the narration. Given the central role of the children's play space in both of these works, it merits further examination. As we shall see later on in this chapter, Martín Gaite was herself very interested in the mechanics of children's

[27] See for example Gwynne Edwards' article, "The Persistence of Memory: Carlos Saura's *La caza* and *La prima Angélica*," Andrés Pérez Simón's "El recuerdo fracturado de la Guerra Civil española: trauma individual y colectiva en *La prima Angéica*," Herbert E. Craig's "Three Proustian Subjects Reconfigured in *El cuarto de atrás* by Carmen Martín Gaite: Recovery of the Past, Sleep and the Novel to be Written," and Marta Villar's "La escritura de la memoria en *El cuarto de atrás*, de Carmen Martín Gaite."

play around the time that she was writing this novel, so a discussion of play as it relates to these works is apt.

Memory is a complicated affair for the protagonists of *La prima Angélica* and *El cuarto de atrás*. In *La prima Angélica*, images from the past meld with the imagination to take on a role in the present. In this film, Luis, a man in his mid-forties now living in Barcelona, returns to Segovia to bury his mother's remains in the family crypt. In these new encounters with his mother's family, from whom he has apparently been estranged since his stay with them during the Civil War, Luis comes into contact with people, places, and objects which take him back to his childhood in the late 1930s. Luis's return to Segovia brings up many suppressed memories from this time, especially those dealing with his cousin Angélica, now married with an adolescent daughter. However, these memories mix with details from the present in such a way that not only does Luis envision his childhood self as an adult, but also the figures of his past (Angélica, her parents, the priest, etc.) as those he meets in the present.

In an interview with Enrique Brasó in 1974, Saura defines the guiding principle for the film as follows:

> While reading Valle-Inclán, I came upon a phrase which became the key to the development of a structuring principle. It said: "Things are not as we see them, but as we remember them." This sentence resonated in me and gave the film its structure. Everything was possible. The possibilities of integrating those two types of images I mentioned above were immense: personal images in the form of war memories and invented images, projections of my consciousness and my dreams. (Willem 17)

We can observe here that memory blends with imagination, not only in Saura's vision for the film, as seen in the above quotation, but also in the interpretation of Luis's interactions with both his present and his past. We may also note that in this interview Saura highlights the basis of the film in his own personal experience, creating a unique admixture of autobiography and fiction, as we can also observe in *El cuarto de atrás*. Indeed, *La prima Angélica* is known as the first of Saura's "autobiographical films," despite its fictional nature (Kinder 62).

In a similar way, *El cuarto de atrás* blends memory with imagination, presenting a disordered view of the past that depends on its recreation by the protagonist, identified only by the first letter of her name, C., in the present. In this work, C. engages in a series of conversations about the past with a mysterious man in black who claims to have come to interview her. The novel is suffused with oneiric or fantastic elements, so that in the end one is left wondering whether all that has happened was a dream. The events recounted in the past, however, despite a lack of chronological order and the occasional confusion of dates, tend to be fairly concrete and specific and mirror those in Martín Gaite's own life, so much so that *El cuarto de atrás* toes the line between autobiography and fiction, leading to some difficulty in determining its genre.[28] Therefore we can see that the complications of memory found in this book are also personal, being as closely

[28] *El cuarto de atrás* is generally classified as autofiction or fictionalized autobiography, a genre that became increasingly popular both in Spain and abroad in the 1970s. In this chapter I refer to the work as a novel, but one must also take into consideration its nonfictional aspects.

related as they are to the recollection of Martín Gaite's own childhood in the war and postwar periods.

In both *La prima Angélica* and *El cuarto de atrás*, the ideal result of the process of remembering is a reconstruction of childhood during or shortly after the Spanish Civil War. Luis returns specifically to the period of the war, roughly between 1936 and 1938, when he goes to stay with his aunt in Segovia, with little to no references to events from the time between the war and the present day (1973).[29] C.'s memories are more widely dispersed, ranging from the time of the Republic up to the death of Franco in 1975, but the majority relate back to the war and immediate postwar period, the time of her childhood and adolescence. The relationships that these characters have with the war is complex; we see a desire to repress memories of the past, but also a need to reconcile with and to express what has happened. They are caught in a cycle of remembering and forgetting that does not allow them either to connect fully with their past or to move on towards their future.

This experience of memory is closely tied to that of space. For both of the protagonists, the childhood space gradually begins to take preference over that of the present. As Saura says of Luis in *La prima Angélica*, "in the course of the film, the past will increasingly impose itself on him, until he is fully dominated by it" (Willem 19).

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[29] The exact period of time that Luis spends as a child in Segovia is not clearly defined in the film. His parents leave him with his relatives in what appears to be the summer of 1936, saying that he will spend a month there. However, he stays and goes to school there, and the latest concrete reference to the date is from 1938. One can surmise that the film covers nearly the entirety of the Civil War period.

This process, however, cannot take place without the influence of childhood spaces, whether it be only through memories of them, as in *El cuarto de atrás* or through their physical presence, as in *La prima Angélica*. Each remembered or half-remembered space sets off a reaction in the adult protagonists which will allow the intromission of childhood memories and perspectives into their adult existence. The act of entering into the childhood space signals an engagement with memory that pushes the character to reconnect with his or her childhood self.

Space and its limitations are relevant not just for narrative or memory, but also for play. As many play theorists have noted, play, and children's play in particular, is marked by its containment in a specific space. Whether it be in a stadium, a playground, a clubhouse, or merely arbitrary bounds set by the players, play is limited by the space in which it occurs, outside of which exists that which is not included in the game. Boundaries, both temporal and spatial, are key to the separation of the game or other act of play and the norms of everyday life. Children in particular display a tendency to create or set a place apart for their play, in the form of playhouses, forts, etc. These structures allow them to isolate their play from the outside world and impede the imposition of outside forces that could disrupt it.

In his book *Children's Special Places: Exploring the Role of Forts, Dens, and Bush Houses in Middle Childhood*, David Sobel conducts a cross-cultural study of such structures (which may be made by or merely claimed by the children who play there), in which he determines that their use is particularly prominent in middle childhood, i.e.

roughly between the ages of five to six and eleven to twelve.[30] According to Sobel, this period is characterized by a desire to explore the environment and to test spatial boundaries. These spaces also provide refuge and calm in a time in which identity is still being established:

> These places are called forts because they serve as retreats from the forces of the world. As the notion of the self starts to mature in middle childhood, children start to perceive how fragile their individuality is in the face of the big world outside. The small, manageable world of the fort, with everything pulled inside, is calm and reassuring. (74)

This sense of identity which springs from an environment that is separate from society as a whole is also a characteristic of play in general, which isolates its participants as a group, thus strengthening the bonds between them as well as their distinctions from the world outside of the play group.[31] For this reason, we may apply Sobel's conclusions on space in middle childhood to a variety of play environments, even in the absence of a specific play structure.

Sobel's assertions are particularly relevant here given the ages of the main characters in *La prima Angélica* and *El cuarto de atrás*. If, as seems reasonable, we can take the life of Martín Gaite as roughly paralleling that of the narrator in *El cuarto de atrás*, she would be between the age of ten and thirteen at the time of the Civil War,

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[30] There is some variance in psychology texts on the precise upper and lower limits of this age range. This stage is part of a progression from early childhood to middle childhood to adolescence.

[31] See for example the discussions on the bounds of the play community in chapter I.

during which many of the childhood episodes take place. In *La prima Angélica*, Luis is somewhere between nine and twelve years old, also placing him in middle childhood, as defined by psychology. [32] We may also note that, despite the stated influence of personal experience in *La prima Angélica*, Saura was only four years old when the Civil War began, but yet still has its main characters return to middle childhood, highlighting the importance of this stage.

Sobel also highlights the ties between these play spaces and structures and the process of memory. In a chapter on adult memories of forts and similar places, Sobel cites studies by Edith Cobb and Louise Chawla on autobiographical writings in which they affirm that there is a tendency for adults to give special meaning to environments experienced in middle childhood (83-86). On the basis of these studies as well as his own interviews, Sobel reaches the conclusion that "special places from childhood live on as 'touchstone memories,' memories that some adults return to time and time again to savor in their mind's eye" (105). He adds that several of the adult testimonies confess to

[32] Luis's age in the past is not entirely clear, though we can say with some degree of certainty that it falls in middle childhood. At one point, Angélica says that he was ten or eleven when he copied a poem for her, and when Angélica's daughter asks if he had been her mother's boyfriend seeing their names inscribed, Luis responds with, "Novios a los doce años..." This second reference would presumably be to his age in 1938, the date of the inscription. Angélica says that she herself was nine years old when the war began, but there would seem to be a difference in their ages. Saura says in an interview that their relationship is between a nine- and an eleven-year-old, but the film covers at least a two-year period, and which of the children is older is not stated (Willem 20).

attempts to recreate these childhood spaces, either through the use of imagination or by searching out places that are physically similar to the child's play sphere (104-6).

Like Sobel's interviewees, the members of the so-called "generación de medio siglo" use the childhood play space in their works as a point of contact with the past and as a vehicle of memory. As such, these spaces act as what Pierre Nora terms "lieux de mémoire," establishing the contemporaneity of the past in memory, as opposed to the more detached history, as defined by Nora. In his article "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," Nora comments on the nature of memory:

> Memory is blind to all but the group it binds—which is to say, as Maurice Halbwachs has said, that there are as many memories as there are groups, that memory is by nature multiple and yet specific; collective, plural, and yet individual. History, on the other hand, belongs to everyone and to no one, whence its claim to universal authority. Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images and objects; history binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things. (9)

This distinction in especially relevant for writers of this generation, who pit the plurality of memory against the established histories of the time. For these writers, memory, especially memory of the childhood experience of the Spanish Civil War, is fraught with difficulties and gaps which cannot easily be filled, but despite its flaws—or perhaps because of them—the depiction of memory in fictional works comes to represent a challenge to the monolithic histories of the Franco regime, as Herzberger explains in *Narrating the Past*.

As a response to an official history which failed to address the individual experience of a significant portion of the population, writers of the sixties and seventies portray memory as extremely malleable and fragmentary, but as a nevertheless vital process to come to terms with the past. Rejecting the unifying myths propagated by the Franco regime, writers of this period come to rely on individual memories, viewing them in light of the evolution of the individual self rather than the nation (Herzberger 67-9). Extrapolating from Herzberger's theories, we may affirm that the space devoted to memory also becomes a space of subversion, in opposition to the well-ordered history supported by the government of the period. For both the psychological reasons detailed above and the natural association of play with rejection of established order, play, encapsulated in the play space, is fundamental in both creating a space that is propitious to memory and reflecting its subversive qualities.[33]

Let us look, then, first at the use of play in the creation of the play/memory space. In Martín Gaite's *El cuarto de atrás* the space for memory is the back room, once the playroom for the narrator and her sister. Just as the child reimagines his or her world through play, the narrator of *El cuarto de atrás* reconstructs her past through memory, connecting it to the physical space of the back room. The playful nature of these recreations of the past is clear from the initial conjuring up of C.'s childhood home:

[33] One might argue that play is commonly based on rules and order, a seeming contradiction to the use of play as a challenge to authority. However, as we saw in chapter I, the order of the play group may indeed be—and frequently is—in opposition to reigning social or political norms.

> Entonces, ¿qué hago?... Pues nada, si he perdido las gafas, me pondré a hacer dibujos sencillos, eso descansa los ojos; me voy a figurar que estoy trazando rayas con un palito en la playa, da mucho gusto porque la arena es dura y el palito afilado, o tal vez sea un caracol puntiagudo, no importa, […]. Pinto, pinto, ¿qué pinto?, ¿con qué color y con qué letrita? Con la C de mi nombre, tres cosas con la C, primero una casa, luego un cuarto y luego una cama. (13)

Through this clearly playful act, the adult narrator recreates the house in which she lived as a child, and specifically her bedroom. Though the details of the space remain highly malleable (both those of the space she currently inhabits and that of her childhood), we can see that the use of play and its connection with space is pivotal to memory.

Through one type of play (drawing) compounded by another (imagining that she is drawing in the sand), the past takes form and superimposes itself on the present. The lines between past and present are blurred through play, and one space (that of the house in the present) becomes another (the drawing based on memories of her childhood house):

> A intervalos predomina la disposición, connatural a mí como una segunda piel, de los muebles cuya presencia podría comprobar tan sólo con alargar el brazo y encender la luz, pero luego, sin transición, aquel dibujo que se insinuaba sobre la arena de la playa viene a quedar encima, y esta cama grande, rodeada de libros y papeles en los que hace un rato buscaba consuelo, se desvanece, desplazada por la del cuarto del balcón. (14)

For the narrator, the imagined room becomes one with the room she is currently occupying. Like the child who imagines a scenario for his or her games, she knows that

this room exists in the imagination and thus cannot be taken in by the senses.[34] However, the space remains viable as a place for memory and for play.

As defined by Nora, memory is necessarily subject to change and reinterpretation, dependent as it is on human interaction (8-9), a concept that was not lost on Spanish postwar writers. Martín Gaite emphasizes this point by following the scene above with recollections of the narrator's imaginative play as a child, in which, inspired by the drawings of Emilio Freixas, she imagined herself as the heroine of a novel by Elisabeth Mulder, in a room by herself waiting for a call on a nonexistent white telephone.[35]

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[34] Though even very young children are able to make a clear distinction between imagined objects and real ones, imagined scenarios may still cause fear and doubt as to the reality of the situation (Cf. Harris et al.). The two works studied here are based around this concept of doubt when facing imaginary or, in these cases, partially remembered situations. Even when circumstances refute the protagonists' mental images (such as when Angélica shows Luis a photograph of her father to prove that Anselmo does not bear any resemblance to him), they do not readily deny them.

[35] In addition to the novels and magazines mentioned in this passage, the white telephone is perhaps a nod to the so-called "white telephone" films of the 1930s—light, escapist, romantic films contrasted by the neorealist trends that followed them.

Figure 4: Illustration from *Lecturas*, Emilio Freixas, 1936.

Thus even the room from C.'s childhood is tinted with imaginative aspects, either as C. fills the gaps in her memory or as childhood imagination mixes with images in her memory. We can view these spaces of memory both as the product of imaginative play (which gives them their importance and allows them to influence the present) and as a space for play in themselves, set off from other spaces through the child's interpretation of them. This use of imaginative play and the establishment of the play space invite the

reader, along with the protagonist, to view the scene from the child's perspective, opening it up to the process of memory.[36]

In addition to personal experiences, pop culture is also vital to the creation of the play/memory space, as we can observe in the references to Freixas and Mulder above. In her article "Memory, Metafiction and Mass Culture: The Popular Text in *El cuarto de atrás*," Stephanie Sieburth argues that elements of popular culture, such as songs and romance novels, permit the narrator to bridge the gap between an unattainable pre-Franco past and the present. For Sieburth, the Republican era is represented in the novel as a period of "games and freedom" without the regulations imposed by Franco (83). After the war, C. is cut off from the liberties of her childhood, which she can only relive and whose memories she can only pass on by means of popular culture, which acts as an outlet for desires for freedom. The physical evidence of her childhood having been destroyed in one way or another, C. retreats into what is now the mental space of the "cuarto de atrás," "'furnished' with the trappings of popular culture" (84).

However, Sieburth's reading of the games in *El cuarto de atrás* as representative of a period of joy and freedom in the Republic, though enlightening in some aspects, fails to take into account the full range of play in the novel and indeed the nature of play itself

[36] Imaginative play also has a great impact on the form of the novel itself. Various scholars have commented on the ludic nature of the structure and narrative of *El cuarto de atrás*. See for example, Kathleen M. Glenn's "*El cuarto de atrás*: Literature as *juego* and the Self-Reflexive Text."

as order-driven.[37] Though the back room may indeed be a free space for the children, unrestrained by adult codes of conduct, the narrator makes mention of various "games for adults," in which the children may or may not participate. In these instances, the evocation of a play space or a game serves to highlight the shift in perspectives between the child and the adult. A return to the play space attempts to place the adult narrator in the child's shoes, to see games where the adult sees only serious matters, and to break down the barriers between remembering adult and remembered child. Play here acts as a function of memory, inviting the protagonist and the reader to take the role of the child.

As the narrator recollects, recreates, and relives her childhood, mentions of children's play and the spaces dedicated to it abound, including in unexpected environments such as the bomb shelter. In these instances the child's view colors the world of the adults. Going to the bomb shelter is a game, albeit a dangerous one, in which those who do not follow the rules (such as the *churrero* and his family) may perish: "¿Ir al refugio?, pues bueno, era un juego más, un juego inventado por los mayores, pero de reglas fáciles: en cuando se oyera la sirena, echar a correr. ¿Por qué?, eso no se sabía, ni se preguntaba, daba igual, todo el mundo obedecía sin más a lo establecido por el juego" (55). Seen as a series of spaces for play, the past becomes at once more immediate and inviting, despite the presence of war, revealing the inconstancy of perception of the past

[37] As we have seen in previous chapters, many play theorists, from Johan Huizinga to Brian Sutton-Smith, have stressed the need to establish order and rules in games, without which the games cease to function. Though the rules of play may go against social norms, a sense of order tends to exist within the game itself.

and forcing the adult narrator to reevaluate and revise her current viewpoints as she observes the world through the eyes of the child she once was.

This new perspective (or old perspective regained) may seem foreign to those who did not grow up in the midst of war, and perhaps even to the child herself forty years later. However, accounts from children of the time show that the narrator of *El cuarto de atrás* is not unique in viewing the bombings during her childhood as a game. Among the testimonies referenced in Teresa Pàmies's *Los niños de la guerra*, we find that of Carles Güell, who recounts as an adult his experience as a seven-year-old child during the war:

> Viví un bombardeo en Córdoba, donde estuvimos unos meses y la compañía de cemento de mi padre tenía una fábrica. Tampoco los bombardeos eran una cosa terrible; yo no he vivido la parte terrible de la guerra. Recuerdo que incluso este hecho era para nosotros como un juego. El bombardeo nos cogió en una explanada. Siempre nos habían dicho que lo primero que había que hacer era echarse a tierra. Y nosotros, ¡plam!, como un juego, nos parecía que estábamos jugando a buenos y malos, a policías y ladrones. (qtd. in Pàmies 86)

The similarity of this situation to that described in *El cuarto de atrás* is striking. In many of the anecdotes revealed by Pàmies, in fact, one encounters an almost nostalgic view of the war on the part of the children of the war. Rather than experiencing these events as inevitably traumatic, the children adapt to them and turn them into games, dismantling and collecting faulty hand grenades and playing in bombed-out buildings. Bombings and violence become so much a part of their normal lives that children cease to regard them with complete fear and manage to enjoy themselves even in what many would consider dire circumstances.

It is this more optimistic outlook that C. evokes in her memories of childhood play. In mentally returning to the spaces dedicated to the games of her youth, C. attempts to return to the "rules" of her life at the time, to her childhood mentality. For this reason, when her interlocutor asks her whether she considered herself to be happier than Carmencita Franco, she rejects her current opinions of life during the Civil War and early postwar period and says, "La verdad es que yo mi infancia y mi adolescencia las recuerdo, a pesar de todo, como una época muy feliz" (63). As she says this, however, C. is conscious of the problematic nature of this statement for an adult who realizes the difficulties of life during the war and postwar period. Try though she may, she cannot completely put aside the adult perspective. Even when mentally transported to the spaces of childhood, the adult protagonist must still view childhood through the lens of accumulated experience. War can no longer be a game, though remembering the rules of this game may help the adult to get closer to the child's perspective.

The distance between the child and adult perspectives when placed in the childhood play/memory space (whether it be mentally, in the case of C. in *El cuarto de atrás*, or physically, in the case of Luis in *La prima Angélica*) is one of the key issues addressed by these two works, though their approaches differ. In both, play spaces continue to have a great influence on the adult protagonists, but where C. wishes to recall and relive her past, to "make the past present," as Sieburth affirms (85), Luis would, at least initially, rather suppress his memories of the war. We suspect that for Luis, childhood is not the "época muy feliz," that it was for C. Despite the few happy moments with Angélica, it is likely that Luis's opinion is more in line with those of Saura, who states in an interview: "Personally I never agreed with the widespread idea that childhood

years are the golden years of one's life […]. On the contrary, it seems to me that one's childhood is lived almost entirely in an in-between world, and unfolds in a world of great fears and great needs of all kinds" (Willem 18).[38] The spaces to which Luis returns are tinged with violence and fear, to a much greater degree than those mentioned in *El cuarto de atrás*. It is, as Saura defines it, a "hostile environment" (19). The spaces visited by Luis are bittersweet, for even in his youth they could not escape the contagion of violence, whereas C.'s take on this characteristic primarily as evidence of innocence lost.

These differing attitudes have a great impact on the characters' approach to memory and its depiction in each work. While Martín Gaite does problematize the act of remembering in *El cuarto de atrás,* the narrator nevertheless shows a great deal of faith in her recollection of past events, lapses in memory aside. Indeed, though the novel casts doubt on C.'s perception of the present, the reader accepts that the past is presented faithfully as it occurred. The work breaks down the barriers between reality and fantasy, but in the end uses the play/memory space created in such circumstances as an access point to a highly realistic vision of childhood. The mysterious man who visits C., a highly fantastic invention, only serves to enhance the clarity of her memory. C. manifests an optimism in regards to both memory and childhood that allows her to access the layer of truth underlying her blurred perceptions of the present.

In *La prima Angélica*, on the other hand, the further that Luis delves into the past, the murkier his memory becomes. The connections established with the past are tenuous

[38] The nightmarish nature of childhood is a common theme in Saura's work from this period, as seen not only in *La prima Angélica* but also in films such as the well-known *Cría cuervos* (1976).

and artificial. In the words of the director, "Events correspond more to the memory which we have of them than to the ways in which we experienced them" (Willem 18). The innovative casting for *La prima Angélica* underscores the artificiality of memory as a means of recreating the past. The choice to use the same actor (José Luis López Vázquez) for both adult and child Luis signals the "flashbacks" in the film as clear manipulations rather than realistic portrayals of Luis's childhood.[39] The substitution of an actress from Luis's "present," Angélica's daughter (María Clara Fernández de Loaysa), for the child Angélica heightens this effect.[40] The viewer observes that Luis takes figures from his

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[39] Saura, in the aforementioned interview with Brasó, states that this method of representing the past (the repetition of actors) avoids the traditional flashback (Willem 17-18). Others have termed them as such, though they are not an accurate representation of a past reality (and in fact consciously distort it). The fact that there is not always a clear distinction between imagination and reality, with elements of both past and present sometimes coexisting in the same scene, only complicates the matter further. If I use the word "flashback" to describe these representations of the past it is simply for lack of a better term for this innovative technique.

[40] This repetition of actors/characters in the film presents certain difficulties in speaking of them, as not only does the screenplay refers to the characters by the same names, but Angélica and her daughter share the same name. In the screenplay ANGÉLICA is used to refer to both Luis's cousin in the present as well as his aunt (Angélica's mother) in the past, ANGÉLICA NIÑA refers to both his cousin as a child and to her daughter in the present, and ANSELMO refers to both Angélica's husband in the present as well as her father in the past, though we discover that her father's name is Miguel. In order to avoid

present and imposes their image on his memory of the past. Likewise, as Luis explores the areas that he frequented as a child during the war, familiar spaces and objects act as building blocks for the reconstruction of his memories. While it is true that these elements of Luis's past have some basis in reality, the film as a whole lends little credence to the act of remembering. In addition, we may note that, as in *El cuarto de atrás*, products of the protagonist's childhood imagination mix with concrete memories. It is sometimes difficult to determine what Luis imagined as a child and what really occurred; the opening scene, for example, a bombing in the cafeteria of a school, may or may not be a product of Luis's imagination. Andrés Pérez Simón attributes the impossibility of distinguishing reality and fantasy in these memories to the difficulty of reconstructing traumatic episodes, which could perhaps account for the differences between this work and *El cuarto de atrás* (170).

This is not to say, of course, that either of these works present memory as a simple process or as an impossibility. Both Luis and C. must overcome periods of voluntary suppression of their own memories in order to come to terms with the past. While Luis simply maintains physical separation from Segovia, the setting for his childhood memories, C. actively destroys remnants of the past: "He quemado tantas cosas, cartas, diarios, poesías. A veces me entra la piromanía, me agobian los papeles viejos. Porque de tanto manosearlos, se vacían de contenido, dejan de ser lo que fueron" (42). C. thus destroys her own roots, consciously condemning herself to forget, as a way

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confusion, here I will use "Angélica" only in reference to Luis's cousin (past and present) and "Anselmo" for her husband, defining other characters by their relationships to these characters ("Angélica's daughter," etc.).

of freeing herself of the burden of the past so as to live in the present.[41] Specifically, C. rejects the distance between herself and the past, to which the papers she burns attest in her inability to view them in the same way as she had in the past.

In spite of the difficulties of engaging with the past, even in *La prima Angélica* it is ultimately seen as a necessity for the children of the war. As E. Haro Tecglen's comments in his introduction to the screenplay for *La prima Angélica*, the members of this generation find themselves especially displaced in the last years of Franco or the early years of the Transition:

> [La imagen del adulto como un niño] es muy representativa de esta búsqueda: desde donde está y desde como es, y sin dejarlo de ser, se incorpora a cómo cree que fue. Personalmente encuentro que la situación real de mi generación [la de los niños de la guerra] […] es exactamente la inversa. Es decir, me veo en la sociedad en que vivo, en la civilización actual —superpuesta a la que fue, o aquella en la que me formé, o nos formamos— como el niño que fui. (17)

Whether they see themselves as children in adults' bodies or vice versa, the children of war are caught between two opposing movements in which they cannot fully take part. On one hand, they were too young to have actively participated in the Civil War, but on the other they must still remember and experience the war and early postwar period, unlike the younger generations in these works, such as Angélica and C.'s daughters.

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[41] This desire to destroy written records of the also appears in Martín Gaite's *Retahílas* (1974), in which one of the main characters, Germán, together with his girlfriend of the time, burns old letters sent to one another.

This vital position between those who fought the war and those who did not experience it forces the children of war to act as intermediaries between the generations, charged with bearing the weight of memory. Both *El cuarto de atrás* and *La prima Angélica* show concern for the transmission of memories to the younger generation as well as reconciliation with the older generation. In *El cuarto de atrás*, C. decides to write a book on the postwar when she considers the distance between her own experiences and those of her daughter (119). Likewise, many of Luis and Angélica's reminiscences on the past are framed in discussions with Angélica's adolescent daughter. The play space is instrumental in joining the various generations. In *La prima Angélica*, Luis returns to his aunt's home, the space of his elders and the scene of his childhood play, engaging his memory of his experiences during the war, but emerges from it into spaces clearly dominated by Angélica's daughter: the plot of land for Angélica and Anselmo's new house and the street where Angélica's daughter plays with her friends. In *El cuarto de atrás* we see a similar pattern of present-past-future, as C. parts from her room in the present to imagine the past, setting off a series of fantastic events laced with memories, and in the end awakes to find her daughter. We may note as well that the back room has strong ties to both C.'s mother and grandfather, which I will elaborate on later in this chapter.

This back and forth between past, present, and future, as well as between reconstruction and destruction of memory, can be seen as a product of the time when these works were created. But while in some cases it may have the positive effect of bringing people together, it can also serve to highlight the distinctions between different political ideologies. Likewise, the division of space, also a struggle between two

opposing forces, can be interpreted as a metaphor for the difficult relationships between those with and without political power. In these works, frequently, this division is between children and adults. The use of a child in opposition to an authoritative father to represent conflicts between Republican and Nationalist forces in the Franco era is extensive. In her 1983 article "The Children of Franco in the New Spanish Cinema," Marsha Kinder highlights several examples of this trend from the 1970s, both before and after the death of Franco, among them *La prima Angélica*.

Nor is this a phenomenon limited to the world of fiction. Play theorist Brian Sutton-Smith, in his seminal work, *The Ambiguity of Play*, reflects on the subversive nature of children's play. In the chapter "Child Power and Identity" Sutton-Smith asserts that children follow their own "hidden transcript," which opposes the "public transcript" that they allow adults to see (116). Though in this chapter Sutton-Smith focuses primarily on verbal manifestations of this hidden transcript in child folklore, we can easily connect it with the secret play spaces observed in *La prima Angélica* and *El cuarto de atrás*, particularly since those in the former are so frequently tied in with the budding sexuality of the characters, a common theme of this type of children's play (122). I will return to this sort of subversive play in later chapters, but for now I would like to highlight the distinction made by Sutton-Smith between "hidden" (associated with children) and "public" (what adults can see or what adults impose), for this will be reflected in the use of space in the children's play in these works. Following this theory, we can divide the

space depicted in these works as pertaining to the world either of the children or of the adults, or in some cases passing from one to another.[42]

Though the settings to which Luis returns are not always playful or even pleasant, many of them clearly belong to the children's world, that inhabited by Luis and Angélica away from the prying eyes of the adults. A frequent motif here is that of play interrupted or the child's space invaded by the adults, often leading to tragic consequences. In a similar way to the back room in *El cuarto de atrás*, the freedom represented by the play space is restricted or destroyed by the imposition of the adults. Returning to Sobel's theories on the creation of play spaces in middle childhood, we can surmise that these interruptions of the natural desires to explore and control space may have a great impact of the formation of individual identity.

In these theories, we note two distinct tendencies in terms of the child's movement, one outwards, seeking to test boundaries, and one inwards, manifested in the establishment of separate play spaces. Both of these movements are impeded through the intervention of the adults in *La prima Angélica* and *El cuarto de atrás*. In the former, the adults set clear limits on the extension and the location of the children's movement in space. In the latter, though the children are initially able to move relatively freely and establish a space for themselves (the back room), the war later imposes boundaries on their play and limits their use of the space. In both of these works, limitation of freedom is seen as part of "growing up," moving into the public, adult world.

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[42] The child/hidden vs. adult/public dichotomy follows similar patterns to the distinction made by Herzberger between memory as represented in novels of memory and myth as seen through Francoist historiography.

These children of war are not the only ones to experience the shock of moving from relative freedom to greater parental control in this era. Pàmies notes that many of the "niños de la guerra," especially those from well-off families, viewed the war as a time of unknown freedom, in which their distracted parents could not exercise the same level of control as before (89). Several of those Pàmies cites refer to the war period as a time of happiness and freedom, much like what we find in *El cuarto de atrás*. Jacint Reventós says of his generation that "Es curioso que muchos hombres de nuestra generación, tanto los que vivían en un lado como en el otro, recuerdan el tiempo de la guerra, en que éramos críos, como una época particularmente feliz, pese a las privaciones y angustias, por la libertad en que nuestras aturdidas familias nos dejaban" (qtd. in Pàmies 89) and Carles Güell states that "En realidad, la guerra fue para mí una etapa de libertad" (qtd. in Pàmies 86). Another, Joan Reventós, marks the end of this freedom as the day that, towards the end of the war, his parents took him to a clandestine Mass (89). The end of the war ushers in a new era for these children, now no longer subject to the violence of combat, but lacking the ability to move as they please, to be in control of their space. The Nationalist victory brings with it the return of rules and restrictions which no one had bothered to enforce in wartime, along with new limitations from Franco's government.

The limitations to the childhood play space in *La prima Angélica* have obvious political overtones if we view the children's relative innocence and freedom in this film as emblematic of a less restricted life during the Republic, as has been suggested for similar themes in *El cuarto de atrás*. In this film, the children's games are continually suppressed by the adults, and what little space the children can carve out for themselves is given clearly defined limits which cannot be crossed. A sort of limited freedom may be

possible within these spaces (just as in *El cuarto de atrás* the back room permitted activities which would otherwise not be allowed), but in general any liberties which the children have are only because they are out of sight of the adults. For this reason, the children's spaces in *La prima Angélica* have a subversive nature which is largely absent in the descriptions of the early games of C. in *El cuarto de atrás*.

One such space in the film is the roof off the attic, a space explored by Luis and Angélica out of sight of Anselmo/Angélica's father. The freedom which they may have there, however, is brought to an end by the adults. This scene begins when the adult Angélica takes Luis to tía Pilar's attic in order to look for his old schoolbooks. While they are in the attic, Luis, in an unaccustomed playful moment, climbs out of the window onto the roof, urging the adult Angélica to follow him. She does, and it is here that the two share a kiss. This moment is interrupted by her father, who calls to Luis to come in.[43] With this interruption by Luis's uncle, the scene passes to Luis's memory, and when Angélica is also called back from the roof, she is a child.

This scene is important both to the film and for the purposes of this chapter, as it makes clear the desires of both the adult Angélica and Luis to recover the past. The screenplay for *La prima Angélica* describes the trip to the attic in terms of play, though the two characters in the scene are adults. They reminisce about their school days, and when Luis feigns seriousness about the misfortunes of smudging ink on a notebook in

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[43] Interestingly, in the screenplay, it is immediately established that it is Angélica's father calling Luis, as he refers to him as "Luisito," placing the scene firmly in the past. However, in the film, he calls to "Luis," creating some ambiguity, especially when Angélica is shown, still an adult.

school, the screenplay notes that Angélica "entra en el juego" (108). Passing through the window onto the roof is likewise play, the recuperation of a childlike act. It is significant that in this scene the adult Angélica participates in Luis's remembrances in an active way. When Luis represents his child self, his actions and expressions reflect those of a child, and here, although she is an adult, Angélica also takes on childlike acts and gestures. The subsequent intervention of Angélica's father (notably appearing to Luis in the form of Angélica's husband) shows that neither adult nor child can have true freedom of movement, a theme which will return in the final sequence of the film, Luis and Angélica's attempted escape from Segovia.

Here we can see Luis and Angélica acting out their "hidden transcript" both as children and as adults. Their play gives way to sensuality when they kiss on the roof, an act which must be hidden when they are children because of their supposed innocence and when they are adults because Angélica is married. This action is not permitted in the public sphere, highlighting the conflict between the "children" (Luis and Angélica) and what they do on their own and the world of the "adults" (Angélica's father/Anselmo). This contrast between hidden/children and public/adult also manifests in the use of space in this scene. Luis and Angélica, already in a relatively secluded spot, the attic, pass to an even more isolated and also forbidden one (either by parents' rules or social norms: one does not go on the roof because it is not normal or because it is dangerous). Angélica's father draws the children back into public space, that of the adults, thereby setting strict limits to the children's space and attempting to eliminate their hidden transcript.

The camera angles and lighting used in this scene accentuate this dichotomy. While in the attic, Angélica and Luis are shot mainly from close range, underscoring the

closed nature of the setting. The interior lighting is dim, drawing attention to the opening to the exterior as a source of light. Luis moves towards the window and is briefly framed in the bright light from outdoors:

Figure 5: Luis pulls Angélica from the closed space of the attic into the open exterior space of the roof.

We may also notice Luis's playful facial expressions in these shots, in sharp contrast to his typical somber look. Once Luis and Angélica are on the roof, the camera cuts to a long shot of the roof, centering Luis and Angélica to increase the sense of space:

Figure 6: Luis and Angélica step onto the roof from the attic.

While they are on the roof, the angle shifts between long shots of the roof as well as the view from it and close-ups of Luis and Angélica. In doing so, it gives a sense of openness as well as intimacy. When Angélica's father calls Luis, the passage through the window is repeated, this time with Luis and Angélica passing through individually. The dark enclosure of the attic presents a stark contrast with the wide angles used to film the scenes on the roof.

When considering this dichotomy, we must note that the repetition of the characters and the dual setting in this film complicates the categorization of "children" and "adults." Though Luis is represented as an adult throughout the film, he consistently takes on the role of a child, even in the present. His return to Segovia places him in a subordinate position both to those who were adults when he was a child (such as tía Pilar) and those who have taken the place of the adults of his childhood (such as Anselmo). Angélica, on the other hand, wavers between adult and child. The repetition of the

mother-daughter pair in past and present is significant; Angélica must be viewed as both mother (adult) and daughter (child).

We can contrast Luis's use of space, for example, with that of Anselmo, and relate this characteristic to the characters' approach to memory. Luis, as we have seen, takes a child's role throughout the film. As such, he must fight for control of space with the domineering Anselmo, who literally pushes him around, physically leading Luis where he wants him to go at several points in the film.

Figure 7: Anselmo leads the obviously uncomfortable Luis to the bathroom to wash his hands. Throughout the film, we may notice Anselmo's physical control over Luis, as he frequently grabs him by the arm or shoulder to move him from place to place. Anselmo's taller physical stature in relation to Luis further underscores his domination of the space he inhabits and their quasi adult-child relationship.

Anselmo, though he shows no signs of cruelty, is obviously in charge. This attitude extends to his concept of the past. Anselmo lives in the moment, caring little about culture and marveling at the fact that there are still people who care about a war that took

place thirty years prior. Anselmo can move freely and publicly; he does not need a hidden transcript because he controls the public one. Anselmo determines the confines of the space. Luis, on the other hand, is closed in and blocked off, seeking out corners and hidden spaces both as a child and as an adult. His past must be recovered and brought to light. Unlike Anselmo, Luis must fight both for his space and for his memory, defending them from adult intervention.

The final scene of the film, in which Luis and Angélica try to run away to Madrid, only to be caught by a group of soldiers, taken back, and, in Luis's case, beaten, is another example of the limitations placed on the children by the "adults." When Luis is punished, he is forced to submit to adult authority. The political implications of this punishment are clear. Angélica's father, a firm supporter of the Nationalist movement, has previously told Luis that "Ahora van a saber lo que es bueno tu padre y los de su ralea" (52) when the Civil War breaks. It is clear throughout the film that there are underlying resentments between Luis's mother's family, with whom he is staying, and Luis's father, who is a Republican. Even several decades after the war has ended, Luis's father refuses to have any contact with his wife's family, and Pilar, Luis's aunt, is unable to find the words to reconcile with him. During his stay in Segovia as a child, Luis receives the brunt of this animosity as tensions grow between Francoist and Republican factions.

The choice of setting for the scene of Luis's attempted escape (as well as the rest of the film) is by no means coincidental. The division of space between Republican and Nationalist forces, already evident in the confrontation between Luis and his uncle, is also shown in the physical control of land by the opposing factions. We see in a prior

scene that Segovia cedes early in the war to the Nationalists. The announcement of the Nationalist victory in the area allows Luis's uncle to seize back control of his own space by throwing open the windows that had previously been closed for protection of the family, known Nationalist sympathizers, while Luis cowers in the corner.

Figure 8: Luis contemplates the rest of the family's celebrations of the Nationalist victory in the region from a corner. His physical separation from his Nationalist relatives in this scene is clear, as he remains in this corner both when they huddle together in the center of the room in fear and as they again dominate the space in celebration.

We may interpret Luis's attempt to return to Madrid, then, as not only a desire to break with his uncle's boundaries, but also those of Nationalist territory, as Madrid was at the time still in the hands of the Republicans. His failure to do so not only subjects him to punishment but also condemns him to remain in Nationalist space as it gradually takes complete control of the country.

The scene of Luis's punishment ends his tale on a tragic note. In it is implicit the insurmountable trauma of the Civil War and the irreconcilability, even thirty-five years after the fact, of the warring factions. The children's liberty to move freely in space,

expressive of the freedoms of the Second Republic, is henceforth limited by the representatives of control and conservatism, in the first generation by Angélica's father and in the second by Anselmo, Angélica's husband, who in the film are played by the same actor. The final image of the film, Angélica's mother brushing Angélica's hair as her father punishes Luis, emphasizes the cycle in which Spain is caught. The daughter (Angélica) becomes the mother, but in the end nothing changes. Fathers are fathers, mothers are mothers, and daughters are daughters, and power remains in the hands of the father, frequent symbol of Franco's hold on Spain.

However, this violent limitation of the children's movements of the children does not affect solely Luis, linked to the Republicans through his father. The rift between the adults in 1936 has consequences for both Luis and Angélica, and by extension all of the children of the war. Upon Luis's return to Segovia, Angélica also tries to rekindle the past by reliving the relationship she had with Luis during the war, but her attempts meet with failure as well. Francoism, in the form of Angélica's father/Anselmo, stands between the "children," who cannot overcome the baggage of thirty-seven years that weighs on their memories and colors their interpretation of their past experiences. Through these characters, *La prima Angélica* portrays a broken relationship with the past that seems to have little hope of repair. Though the spaces the children inhabited still exist, the characters are unable to access the reality of the time or their former ways of seeing the world, for the child's view of these spaces cannot be disentangled from that of the adult. In a way, little has changed—these spaces have been conserved along with attitudes of the time—and yet these children of war are cut off from their own past. They must live the paradox of being on one hand unable to recover their memories and on the

other incapable of escaping them. They are, as E. Haro Tecglen states, stuck in a "tiempo de nadie" (18) from which they can move neither forward or backward.

As we see in these two works, the recovery of, on one hand, the playful nature of youth and, on the other, control of both the physical and mental spaces associated with childhood is instrumental in moving forward for the "hijos de la guerra." In establishing the play/memory space, the characters can accomplish both of these objectives. We have already noted how C., the narrator in *El cuarto de atrás*, begins her recollections of her childhood by imitating the playful act of drawing (or imagining that she is doing so). In this way, she mentally recovers a space that has been taken away from her. The restrictions of the Civil War and postwar period, though they may have physically changed the space in reality (as when the back room, formerly a playroom, becomes a storeroom), have no power over the space in this imaginary recreation. Thus C. can return over and over to the back room, the space she has allotted for memory, even after its destruction has denied her physical access to it. In this way, C. both reconnects with her past and offsets the effects of the war and subsequent dictatorship with her own inner narrative.

Likewise, when Luis wishes to return to his childhood, he turns to play to expunge the limitations set by his uncle and by extension those imposed by the Franco regime. Though many of the spaces revisited by Luis bring back painful or frightening memories, he seeks to counter these by reliving his few happy moments through play. At first Luis wishes to avoid his memories of the war, as he would seem to have done for the twenty years spent away from Segovia, but as the film goes on, he becomes more interested in recovering these moments of his childhood. This desire to reconnect with his

fonder memories—by and large hidden and subversive: the escape to the attic roof, running away with Angélica on his bike—leads Luis to participate in various acts of play as an adult, often tied to his childhood play spaces. As in *El cuarto de atrás*, these playful acts serve to create a space for open engagement with the past and a move towards the future. However, despite initial progress, Luis is ultimately less successful in bringing his projects to fruition, leaving the resolution of the film somewhat ambiguous.

We have already discussed the suggestions of play which lead to Angélica and Luis "taking back" the roof outside of the attic window, but this is not the only example of adults playing in the film. In another key scene, as Luis is about to leave Segovia, he sees Angélica's daughter riding a bicycle and asks if he may ride it. She in turn asks the owner of the bicycle, who agrees, and Luis gives her a ride on the handlebars, just as he had for the child Angélica in 1936. This leads to the flashback to Luis and Angélica running away to Madrid on Luis's bike and Luis's subsequent punishment, the results of which we have seen previously. Though the scene, which leads up to a painful childhood moment, seems to end badly for Luis, we may interpret Luis's adult bike ride as an attempt to reverse the control Angélica's father/Anselmo has over him by engaging in a formerly restricted activity. In doing so, Luis, though still bound by memories of past violence, is able to regain some of the freedom of childhood. The resolution of this scene in the present is left open; the film does not return to 1973 after the flashback to Luis's punishment, leaving us to wonder whether Luis can use this new experience of Segovia to move on or whether he will remain imprisoned by his memories.

One can also consider Luis's reliving these scenes as a means of establishing a healthy distance from the past rather than being confined by it. One instance of the

distancing power of Luis's flashbacks occurs when Luis first attempts to drive out of Segovia. On the road into Segovia with his mother's remains at the beginning of the film, Luis flashes back to driving into the city with his parents. While driving out of Segovia after his first encounter with his relatives, however, Luis witnesses the same scene from his car, seeing both his parents and himself from a distance. It is at this point that Luis makes a conscious decision to confront his past, and he turns the car around and returns not to the hotel, but to tía Pilar's apartment. Here we see that Luis is able to step back and view the scene more objectively, not as a traumatized child, but as an adult, a pivotal moment for Luis in terms of dealing with his memories.

The scene in which Luis, Angélica, Anselmo, and Angélica's daughter go on an excursion to the country also represents a partial vindication of Luis's childhood. At the plot of land, Anselmo only wishes to talk about his building plans, manifesting desires to control and restrict the space. He specifically points out to Luis the confines of this space, making clear where each of the borders of the property will be.

Figure 9: Anselmo shows his control of the space, guiding Luis by the shoulder and pointing out details of his property. In this scene, as in many others, Anselmo is both physically and visually dominant.

These plans show little forethought—Anselmo does not know how he will bring in the water for the projected swimming pool—and the other characters view them mainly as a caprice. Anselmo goes to take a nap in the car, after which Angélica begins to talk to Luis about the problems in their marriage. Their conversation is interrupted by her daughter, who proposes that Luis play Frisbee with her. The scene thus shifts from adult affairs centered on Anselmo (his building projects and his marriage to Angélica) to a children's game centered on Luis and Angélica's daughter. Just as the previously mentioned scene with the bicycle can be seen as a recovery of lost liberties, likewise this scene presents an inversion of the current status quo (the restrictions of the present society under Franco, represented by Anselmo's building projects) in favor of that of the past and projected future (relative freedom for Republicans, represented by Luis's games).

Beyond what we can infer politically from this scene, it also implies a return to a child's state of mind for Luis, not merely the freedoms which may or may not be

associated with it. Several steps are made towards the recovery of childhood in this scene. First, Angélica reveals that she is unhappy in her marriage with Anselmo, thus opening the possibility of the reestablishment of her relationship with Luis when she was a child, which had presumably been cut off after their failed attempt to run away to Madrid. This breaks down one of the barriers to Luis's childhood: Angélica's unavailability (though she of course remains married). Second, Luis engages Angélica's daughter, who throughout the film is associated with Angélica as a child, being played by the same actress, in a game. In this, Luis relives his past in two ways: one, in the interaction with "Angélica" as a child, and two, through his participation in a game.

It is worth noting, however, that this scene takes place entirely in the present, with no evidence of elements of the 1930s, other than the obvious repetition of actors. This is also, as a whole, one of the more positive scenes in the film, perhaps in part because of the fact that it does not shift back to the Civil War, a time of bitter memories for Luis. Here, unlike the final scene with the bicycle, the characters refer back to the past without living in it, adapting the past to the needs of the present. What we may observe in this brief excursion to the country is reconciliation with the past, rather than its reconstruction. Here there is the possibility of breaking with old bonds (as represented by Anselmo) and taking advantage of positive aspects of the past (Angélica and Luis's love for one another) in order to move forward, not backward. The characters make a connection with the events of the Civil War and childhood, but rather than dwelling on the past, they move in new directions that would previously have been impossible.

The choice of games in this scene is also a sign of a potential move towards the future. The Frisbee, of uncertain origins but popularized in the decades following the

Second World War, is a game that is linked to the younger generation in 1973, that of Angélica's daughter, who incites Luis to play.[44] The inclusion of Luis in this game is, then, a sign of engagement in the present for a man who is otherwise caught up in the past. Here we can place some hope on the youth of the day to move past the conflicts of their fathers. Angélica's daughter provides a connection with the past in her embodiment of her mother, but she also reaches towards the future. Also, perhaps most importantly, Angélica's daughter engages with both Luis (who represents the Republicans) and Anselmo, her father (whom we associate with Franco).[45] Unlike her mother, she seems unhindered by her father, as when in this scene she turns on the radio while he is dozing in the car.

[44] At the time when Azcona and Saura were writing the screenplay for the film, the game was also uncommon enough in Spain for "frisbee" to appear in quotation marks and be defined as "uno de esos discos de plástico americanos" (89).

[45] It is worth noting that the film leaves Anselmo's political leanings somewhat ambiguous. In the screenplay he rejects the connection that Luis makes with Angélica's father, saying, "No he llevado camisa azul en mi vida" (57). This line, however, does not appear in the film, nor are there any other explicit references to Anselmo's feelings on politics.

Figure 10: Angélica's daughter tests out her sense of power and her father's hat as her father sleeps in the backseat.

In this younger generation, the film seems to suggest, we may find the solution to the problems that the children of the war cannot escape. The music playing in this scene and others featuring Angélica's daughter, "Change it all," by The Friends Band Co., reinforces this idea with the repeated lyrics, "We're going to change it all."

Would Francos's death in 1975 bring relief for these anxieties, however, and allow the children of the war to reconcile with their past and move forward? In order to answer this, we can compare the relationships the adult protagonists have with space as they develop over the course of the work. We have already examined the concept that childhood, and especially child's play, as representative of a freedom that is then restricted under Franco. In *La prima Angélica*, the action of the film is divided into two periods: the 1936 to 1938 or 1939, when Luis is in his Nationalist family's home, and 1973, when he returns to bury his mother. In both of these periods, Luis is an outsider, both geographically and politically, as his family associates him with his Republican father. Here children's games are few and far between, though they mark pivotal

moments in the film. Angélica's father and Anselmo place strict limits on Luis's activities (though in Anselmo's case this is largely unconscious). Apart from the restrictions on the games of Luis's childhood, we may also note his nightmares as a reflection of the repression of the time, in particular the "monja mortificada," who appears with a padlock through her lips, and the "ojos de Londres," clear references to the imposed silence and continuous vigilance of the time. In the end, Luis cannot truly move or act freely in either time period.

Unlike Luis, C. is able to connect, though in a limited way, the games of her childhood and the happiness they provided with the present, another period of relative freedom. For C., the difficulty is not so much fighting against restrictions to her movements and playful acts as bridging the gap between these periods in order to move forward. Here she accomplishes what Luis cannot. Although faced with many of the same issues regarding memory, C. is able to engage her past in a positive way, and perhaps more importantly to put her experience into words in the form of her manuscript, which will enable her to break with the restrictions of the past. As in *La prima Angélica*, this reconciliation can also be seen in terms of hidden or intimate spaces and public ones. In *El cuarto de atrás*, however, C. will take the hidden transcripts of childhood, which continued to remain a secret under Franco, and find a way to express them freely.

This move from the intimacy of individual memory to the public expression of these memories, even in a jumbled, distorted way, is a key difference in the resolution of these two works. In his article "From Space of Intimacy to Transferential Space: The Structure of Memory and the Reconciliation with Strangeness in *El cuarto de atrás*," Stephen Luis Vilaseca explains this shift in terms of C.'s relationship with space.

According to Vilaseca, in *El cuarto de atrás*, C. refers to a series of closed spaces—the island of Bergai, Cúnigan, the back room, literature, and her sewing basket—which function as "spaces of intimacy" per Bachelard's definitions, spaces to which one may withdraw to be hidden, if not always protected (Vilaseca 182-83). Vilaseca posits that over the course of the novel C. moves to a transferential space, in which what was once private or repressed is made public, by means of her conversations with the man in black (183). He suggests that C. has repressed the spaces of intimacy of her childhood, which she recovers and then makes public through this movement to transferential space (184). In this way, C. is able to reconcile the differences between her past and present selves (her "strangeness," in Vilaseca's terms), mirroring a desire of Spaniards at the time to reconcile with their country's past and in particular the Civil War (191).

Though Vilaseca touches on many of the same issues brought up by this chapter, such as spaces in childhood, memory, and reconciliation with the past, his view is more limited in scope than what we propose here. In focusing on closed spaces, and only on specific closed spaces, Vilaseca overlooks some of the complexities presented by space in *El cuarto de atrás*. What, for example, can we make of C.'s grandmother's house, an exceedingly closed but also a relatively public space? Also, Vilaseca touches on children and their games, seeing them as examples of spaces of intimacy, citing children's affection for hiding places and secret games. However, this only takes in part of children's movement in play, which, as we have seen above, in middle childhood moves both inwards—as Vilaseca mentions in his article—and outwards, expanding their own territory and testing their boundaries. Here I would like to examine not just these spaces of intimacy, clearly important for an understanding of the novel, but also the interplay

between the desire for interiority and its mirror image, the need to expand one's own space.

Both of these movements, inwards and outwards, imply a certain freedom for the individual. Though it may be argued, as critics such as Vilaseca have done, that characters in these works are compelled to seek out spaces of intimacy due to restrictions in their environment, the fact remains that one must defend even hidden spaces so that stronger forces do not overcome them. It becomes then a question of who sets the boundaries for these spaces and whether they can be broken. Who controls the space and what they allow with it becomes a struggle for power both over others and in one's own actions, a battle between the extremes of total freedom and total control, freedom being the ability not only to act as one pleases within a set space, but also to expand one's own boundaries as far as one pleases, and control the act of limiting the reaches of others as well as their actions.

In *El cuarto de atrás*, we find a struggle for control between those who seek the freedom of unrestricted borders and those who wish to establish and maintain boundaries. The concept of escaping or fleeing the confines set by others is a constant throughout the novel and clearly ties into a lack of liberty under Franco. As in *La prima Angélica*, society under Franco is presented as restrictive and controlling in terms of space, here contrasted with relative freedom before and to some extent during the war. Though the lack of chronological progression makes it difficult to distinguish between events from the war and postwar periods,[46] we may still observe a sharp contrast between spaces

[46] C. herself notes that she confuses the war and postwar periods (116).

marked by order and rules and those given to disorder and blurred or broken boundaries. Those who inhabit these spaces also generally fall into one of these two categories.

Perhaps the clearest example of the testing of boundaries in the postwar period is the discussion C. has with the man in black on her mental "fugas," escapes, as C. refers to her tendency to become lost in thought or jump abruptly from one topic to another (107). When the man in black refers to C. as a "fugada nata" (a born escapee), she resists this definition, mentally associating it with the women who ran away with their lovers when she was young. To say that a woman had "escaped" was one of the worst insults that one could imagine in those years, and went against the established role for women under Franco (107-9). We read that

> las locas, las frescas y las ligeras de cascos andaban bordeando la frontera de la transgresión, y el alto se les daba con la fuga. "Ha dado la campanada; se ha fugado." Ahí ya no existían paliativos para la condena, era un baldón que casi no se podía mencionar, una deshonra que se proclamaba gesticulando en voz baja, […] quedarse, conformarse y aguantar era lo bueno; salir, escapar y fugarse era lo malo. (109)

Though the social conditions to which C. refers in the reactions of the other women are hardly unique to the postwar period, the novel presents the negative view of running away rather than conforming as a critique of the dictatorship's influence on the formation of young minds of the time, especially of those of young women through the Sección Femenina. The Sección Femenina and Franco's government represent conformity and

control, whereas these women who break their boundaries are painted as perverse and subversive.[47]

One can apply this same concept of stagnation and of inability to escape to the sense of time under Franco, alleviated only by his death. C. comments to the man in black that "no soy capaz de discernir el paso del tiempo a lo largo de ese período, ni diferenciar la guerra de la posguerra, pensé que Franco había paralizado el tiempo" (116). We may note that Martín Gaite employs the same verb seen above—fugarse—to describe C.'s reaction while watching Franco's burial. When the speaker on television mentions the date, November 23rd, C. says that "me fugué hacia atrás, a los orígenes" (118). With the death of Franco, she is able to overcome the limitations on her movement in space and time, a newfound freedom that is embodied in an act of memory: returning mentally to her youth. When she sees Carmencita Franco on television, she is struck by the image as well as by the idea that the two (C. and Carmencita Franco) have in a way shared a lifetime of experiences—movies, books, and dreams—alien to those belonging to other generations. Contemplating her daughter and her daughter's friend, C. realizes that they cannot understand this feeling: "las veía allí con sus pantalones vaqueros y me parecía imposible explicarles mi repentina emoción a la vista de Carmencita Franco" (119). This

[47] This desire to escape can also clearly be seen in *La prima Angélica*, and on similar terms. As we have seen, Luis tries to run away with Angélica on his bicycle, but one could also also mention scenes such as Luis and Angélica's escape to the attic roof. The connection between running away or escaping and sexual liberty, as we see in *El cuarto de atrás*, is also frequently present.

moment inspires C. to write a book on the postwar period, thus exercising her new right to move freely within her own memory and to express it as she wishes.

We also find this dichotomy between control and freedom of movement in C.'s descriptions of her grandparents and their relation to space, namely in their houses. Rules, cleanliness, and order govern C.'s grandmother's house in Madrid, leading C. to rebel: "Mucho más que en la casa de Salamanca, ni en la de verano en Galicia, fue en esa de Madrid [la casa de la abuela], cuando veníamos en vacaciones de Semana Santa o Navidad, donde se fraguó mi desobediencia a las leyes del hogar y se incubaron mis primeras rebeldías frente al orden y la limpieza" (67). In her grandmother's house, C. lacks the freedom of the back room in Salamanca, where she could act as she pleased without regard for the order and rules of the adult world. In Madrid, C. is kept under the strict control of the adults, both in the house and in the street. She envies those who can move as they please, "la gente que se metía por bocacalles desconocidas" while she must follow her family, and experiences a "sensación de encierro" in society (75).

C.'s play will act as an outlet to some degree for her need for freedom. She imagines a place called Cúnigan, which she has heard mentioned on the radio and is convinced that she can reach if she can only escape the watchful eyes of her parents:

> Evidentemente Cúnigan era un lugar mágico y único, y lo más posible es que de verdad existiera, que se pudiera encontrar, con un poco de suerte, entre el laberinto de calles y letreros que componían el mapa de Madrid: a mí no me importaba carecer de pistas concretas, me bastaba con mis poderes mágicos y únicos, con mi deseo, pero lo grave era la falta de libertad, ese tipo de búsquedas

> hay que emprenderlas en soledad y corriendo ciertos riesgos; si no me dejaban sola, era inútil intentarlo. (70-71)

This disordered search for Cúnigan contrasts C.'s true situation in Madrid, in which she is subject to her parents' carefully organized plans for their trips and the rules of her grandmother's house. Although C. enjoys going to Madrid, she notes that the family follows "un programa de actividades que yo no había prefigurado" (71). She bemoans her lack of freedom and the need to follow an agenda she did not create.

In addition to imagining the roads to Cúnigan, C. also finds subtle ways to use play to challenge her grandmother's control. She reads with her forehead pressed against the glass of the balcony, leaving a mark, and invites the dust to settle in her bed in the morning, where her grandmother and the servants won't find it (77-78). She draws or does crafts when visitors come, reveling in the disorder of her art supplies which defies the cleanliness of the house: "me amparaba en el desorden de los lápices, sacapuntas y tijeras diseminados por la felpa, objetos que se convertían en amigos a través del uso y de la libertad, que recobraban su identidad al dejar de 'estar en su sitio'" (69). Like the pencils, C. finds her identity in disorder, and as an adult we can see that she is living at least part of her childhood dream to "vivir en una buhardilla donde estuvieran los trajes sin colgar y los libros por el suelo, donde nadie persiguiera a los copos de polvo que viajaban en los rayos de luz, donde sólo se comiera cuando apretara el hambre, sin más ceremonias" (78). In adulthood, C. can escape from the order imposed upon her in

childhood, though she occasionally finds that her opinions on this disorder have changed.[48]

The strict control of space exhibited by C.'s grandmother finds its counterpoint in the figure of her grandfather from Galicia, don Javier Gaite. Unlike her grandmother, who is associated with closed spaces, cleanliness, and lack of movement, don Javier is in constant motion, never content within boundaries. C. says of him, "No le gustaba afincarse por largo tiempo en un sitio […]; era profesor de geografía y siempre anduvo solicitando traslados, rodando por institutos de provincias" (80). In his many moves from one place to the next, don Javier tests the limits of his space, just as C. would like to do as a child. We may note as well the profession of C.'s grandfather, literally marking his own boundaries while teaching geography.

In addition to his challenging of boundaries, we also find don Javier linked to the play/memory space. He is present in the "cuarto de atrás" through a piece of furniture, a

[48] For example, C. feels the need to justify a certain amount of cleanliness/order as an adult, an idea that was, as we have seen, abhorrent to her child self. In the kitchen, she is confronted by her younger selves in the mirror (which is itself tied to her grandmother's world, having come from her grandparents' house), who smirk at her when they see she has a rag in her hand (66). She reassures them saying, "Gracias, mujer, pero no te preocupes, de verdad, que sigo siendo la de siempre, que en esa retórica no caigo" (67). We see here that C. desires to remain faithful to the disorder of her childhood identity, in opposition to the order represented on one hand by her grandmother and on the other by the precepts of the Sección Femenina ("esa retórica").

buffet, which he bought and took with him as he moved from house to house.[49] Here we discover as well that this piece of furniture witnessed C.'s mother's play as a child, in her own back room. In these remembrances of her mother's descriptions of her childhood home, we find memory divided into two categories, ordered and disordered, of which the disordered memories can be found in the back room:

> Al comedor aquel también ellos lo llamaban "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. (80-81)

It is in this back room that we would find what Nora refers to as "memory," as opposed to the "history" stored in the "antesala" of the mind, neat and tidy recollections able to be viewed critically and without bias. The back room is the space for the subversive and the unmentionable, for the type of memories that many Spaniards of the time were forced to keep behind mental curtains.

On the whole, in *El cuarto de atrás*, we see a movement from uninhibited use of space in the time prior to the war to order and control following it. This progression is reflected in a gradual shift from childhood, marked by a playful view of life, to growing up, a time in which a graver disposition is expected, especially in times of war and scarcity. C. marks the beginning of the war as the transitional moment between these two periods, with the conversion of the back room as its first manifestation: "Hay como una línea divisoria, que empezó a marcarse en el año treinta y seis, entre la infancia y el

[49] This buffet also links C.'s current home to the back room, as it is in her kitchen.

crecimiento. La amortización del cuarto de atrás y su progresiva transformación en despensa fue uno de los primeros cambios que se produjeron en la parte de acá de aquella raya" (162). With these changes to the back room, its primary function shifts from play to practical matters, the storage of provisions.

This move from play to seriousness is also reflected in C.'s discussions of politics before and after Franco. Here she comments that Franco changed her view of politicians from considering them an amusement for the adults with little effect on her own life in the years before Franco to seeing them (i.e. Franco, politician *par excellence* for most of her life) as a serious matter affecting her freedom. This change is expressed in terms of play versus seriousness, a traditional dichotomy in the study of play, though it has been criticized by some play theorists as reductive or simply inaccurate. This being, however, a novel and not a treatise on play, we may for our purposes accept Martín Gaite's distinctions between play and not-play.

As we have previously mentioned, the period before Franco, and specifically the Second Republic, are depicted as a time of freedom in play. This may also be applied to activities not traditionally considered play, but seen as such by our protagonist. As a child during the Second Republic, C. views politics as a game adults play, similar to children trading cards:

> a mí, hasta los nueve años, la política me parecía un enredo incomprensible y lejano, que no tenía por qué afectarme, un juego para entretenerse las personas mayores. Pero notaba que se divertían con aquel juego; discutían sus incidencias con calor y naturalidad, en voz alta, y no daba la impresión de monótono sino de variado, siempre estaban apareciendo cromos con personajes nuevos, y cada

> jugador proclamaba sus preferencias por uno determinado, igual que los niños podíamos preferir Shirley Temple a Laurel y Hardy, el *Jeromín* al *T.B.O.* o el juego del parchís al de la oca. (113)

The characterization of politics as a game in this passage implies that the adults who play them are free to choose whether or not to participate. Play as a voluntary activity, rather than one imposed by any sort of outside power, is the building block of many definitions of play, as we have seen previously.[50] Before the war, and in particular before Franco's dictatorship, adults and children are free to "play" at politics in a way that they are not in the postwar period.

Martín Gaite explains this change in the "game" of politics by means of a discussion of *estraperlo*, the black market, in the Thirties and Forties. Here the narrator plays on the origins of the word "estraperlo" in the 1935 political scandal caused by a complaint filed by Daniel Strauss regarding the prohibition of a roulette game, Straperlo, an affair that involved many key political figures of the time (Townson). C.'s uncle teaches her an amusing tongue-twister about this issue, which cements her image of politics as play. However, after the war, the word "estraperlo" comes to be associated primarily with the black market, no joking matter: "después de la guerra, el estraperlo, […] nadie lo relacionaba ya con el juego de la ruleta, sino con el mercado negro, se había convertido en algo agobiante y sórdido, no se podía bromear con aquel contrabando" (114). The economic and political conditions of the early postwar period no longer allow for politics to be seen as play.

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[50] See for example, Anthony Pellegrini's definitions of play in *The Role of Play in Human Development*, which emphasize its non-functionality and its free aspects (12-19).

This shift from play to seriousness correlates to the lack of freedom resulting from Franco's government. Under Franco, the government not only takes a more active role in the daily lives of citizens, but also it limits the liberty to choose which political players to support. The Spanish people can no longer "play" at politics because Franco's regime has deprived them of the choices available under the Second Republic. The image of politicians as figures on trading cards seen in the quote above loses its validity in the postwar period with the imposition of Franco as the only available option. Returning to the idea of politics as a card game, C. comments:

> antes de la guerra, cuando oía hablar de Azaña, de Gil Robles, de Lerroux o del rey Alfonso XIII, […] me parecían tan fantásticos como Wilfredo el Velloso o la sota de bastos, personajes de una baraja *con la que se podían hacer libremente toda clase de combinaciones*, no me creía que existieran de verdad ni mandaran en nadie, y mucho menos consideraba que pudieran tener que ver conmigo o me pudieran prohibir algo, ya fuera comer chocolate o contarles a mis amigos de la calle que tenía un tío socialista, *la gente hablaba de lo que le daba la gana, jugaba a lo que le daba la gana*, vamos, es como lo veía yo. (115, emphasis mine)

We may note here the repetition of the lack of choice under Franco in comparison to the Second Republic, a period represented by the figures mentioned at the beginning of the quote. One can interpret this on one hand as a reference to the elimination of the people's power to choose their leaders with the move from a republic to a dictatorship, but also as alluding to both official government censorship and self-censorship (not being able to say that one's uncle was a Socialist, for example), both of which were prevalent in the early postwar period.

This lack of choice in the public sphere leads to heightened levels of secrecy in self-expression, which can again be seen in the children's games. Unable to move outward and expand their territory due to greater prohibitions and limitations on their space in the war and postwar periods, the children in *La prima Angélica* and *El cuarto de atrás* move inward, both physically and mentally, looking for secret spaces to which they may deny access to adults, who in many cases come to represent the forces of Francoism. We have already seen that the adults thwart Luis's attempts to forge a separate space for himself and Angélica in *La prima Angélica*, but let us also examine the creation of imaginary spaces in *El cuarto de atrás*, which will have a great deal more success. Here, in the increasing lack of physical space as the war encroaches on the children's play area, the back room, C. is instead able to fulfill the childhood desire to both expand her space and find refuge in a confined area by means of her imagination, where she can be free of the influence of adult matters.

In "Reflexiones en el parque," a chapter of *El cuento de nunca acabar* dedicated to her observations of children's play in the park with her daughter, Martín Gaite comments that one of the greatest detriments to children playing is intervention from adults, who tell children when and where they should play and also with whom:

> El adulto, con su mandato, pone barreras al juego infantil y es justamente él quien provoca la reacción que luego deplora y bautiza con el nombre de aburrimiento, cuando más justo sería interpretarla como resquemor. El niño siente, sí, resquemor ante el umbral de ese campo que desde fuera le prescriben y definen, y con resquemor mira los rostros igualmente recelosos que se le enfrentan abrumados por el mismo sambenito de "tener que jugar". (108-9)

We may note the spatial language used in this passage to describe the imposition of the adult; he sets barriers, "barreras," and establishes the field of play, on whose threshold, "umbral," the child stands. Martín Gaite refers to these children as "peones en el tablero de juego de los adultos" (108), indicating the children's inability to set their own rules for their games due to adult intervention. Throughout this chapter she advocates for more freedom for children not only to create their own games but also to pass into the world of imagination, "el reino de 'como si'" (113).[51] This is precisely the process we see in *El cuarto de atrás,* though here it does not arise from greater freedom in play, but rather from restrictions on the physical play space.

During the war, there is an important shift in C.'s play space from the back room, the physical space assigned for play for C. and her sister, to the island of Bergai, a mental space created by C. and her friend. As provisions become harder to attain as a result of the war, C.'s parents begin storing supplies in the back room, thus restricting the girls' space and also their freedom of action within that space. Before the war the back room was a place where anything was permitted, where the girls' actions were not subject to any kind of regulation. The provisions stored in the back room on one hand physically occupy space that was previously limited to play, but also, and perhaps more importantly, their presence cedes control of the back room, which had "belonged" to the children, C. and her sister, to the adults, who now begin to set limits for the children's play so that it

[51] Here as in *El cuarto de atrás,* Martín Gaite advocates for play which requires greater imaginative leaps and criticizes realistic and/or overly abundant playthings that do not stimulate the imagination of the child.

does not get in the way of access to the foodstuffs. Eventually this functional aspect of the back room takes over, and the back room is no longer a playroom.[52]

Faced with the loss of this physical space and also many material playthings, which break and are not replaced because of the war, the children must turn to more imaginative play and create a space that will not be affected by the scarcities of war. This plan is suggested to C. by a friend who, having both parents in jail, is much more familiar with want than C. Thus the two girls imagine the island of Bergai as a refuge, which for C. will take the place of the now occupied back room. This imagined island serves to distract C. from the hardships of war or simply of childhood: "Ya no volví a disgustarme por los juguetes que se me rompían y siempre que me negaban algún permiso o me reprendían por algo, me iba a Bergai, incluso soportaba sin molestia el olor a vinagre que iba tomando el cuarto de atrás, todo podía convertirse en otra cosa, dependía de la imaginación" (168). With the invention of Bergai, C. realizes that she does not need a physical refuge as long as she can flee to this island in her mind.

Though the island of Bergai is imaginary and does not occupy any determined area in the real world, it shares many of the characteristics of children's physical play spaces and exemplifies several of the ideals for such places. It is, like many of the forts and dens described by Sobel, an isolated place, on one hand because it is an imaginary island and on the other because it is a secret kept between the two girls, thus denying access to anyone outside their play group. This secrecy, common in children's play, has the important function of protecting this imagined space from the intervention of the

[52] Here we may note again the nature of play as inherently non-functional. When functionality enters the picture in the back room, the game is essentially over.

adults, which, as we have seen, has such disastrous results in *La prima Angélica*. Unlike in Saura's film, where no space can be truly secret because they all form part of a world dominated by the adults, Bergai is safe from destruction because it occupies a mental rather than a physical space, which allows the girls to hide and preserve it. C. recalls that her friend told her that Bergai "existiría siempre, hasta después de que nos muriéramos, y que nadie nos podía quitar nunca aquel refugio porque era secreto" (167-8). The intangibility and secret nature of Bergai allow it to provide refuge when the more public, physical play space, the back room, is invaded by the adults.

The play space, then, acts as a place of opposition for marginalized groups in several different ways. First, the play space functions as a space for memory and thus a space from which the individual can oppose his or her experience to the overarching myths of history under the Franco regime, which sought to give the impression of universality at the exclusion of the "vencidos." The articulation of memories from within the security of the play space allows the protagonist to bridge—with varying degrees of success—past and present in order to advance towards the future. Second, the play space in itself represents an area of freedom that invites the expression of the hidden transcripts of the children of war and that challenges the boundaries established by reigning political ideologies and social norms. These subversive actions serve to undermine the authority of the adults, representative of the Francoist government, and the control that they exert over the child characters. The results of this process are mixed. In *La prima Angélica,* attempts to subvert the order of the "adults" are inconclusive, and the optimistic tones with which the film presents the younger generation (Angélica's daughter) are contrasted with the largely futile search for freedom by the children of the war, Luis and Angélica.

In *El cuarto de atrás*, on the other hand, published three years after Franco's death, the outlook for the children of war is brighter, and the memory space truly acts as a platform from which to bring to light what had for so many years remained hidden, indicating a move towards more open relationship with the past which will continue in later years.

Chapter III

Playing Pretend: Child Phantasmagoria in *Julia*, *El príncipe destronado* and *El espíritu de la colmena*

In previous chapters, I have focused largely on positive aspects of children's imaginative play in postwar Spanish works: play that consoles, is therapeutic, binds groups together and helps overcome difficulties. In *Duelo en El Paraíso* and *El otro árbol de Guernica*, we saw play as a means of creating order out of chaos and rationality out of irrational situations. What happens, however, when play, rather than diminishing fear and confusion, heightens them? What can we say of children who actively seek out the monsters under the bed? What if the children, in the eyes of the adults, are the monsters themselves? These are some of the issues I will address in the works I examine in this chapter: Ana María Moix's novel *Julia* (1970), Miguel Delibes' novel *El príncipe destronado* (1973) and Víctor Erice's film *El espíritu de la colmena* (1973). In each of these works, children's play takes on dark overtones, challenging the concept of childhood as a lost paradise. In them, the children engage with a nightmare world, with varying results. The outcomes of the children's forays into the darker side of play are highly dependent on their relationships with authority—namely their parents—and the latter's ability to comprehend and quell their fears.

In this chapter, I will deal with child phantasmagoria as it presents itself in these three works, following the definition of this approach to play in Brian Sutton-Smith's *The Ambiguity of Play*. Sutton-Smith describes this type of play as "the Imaginary for

children that is oriented toward irrationality as well as rationality," contrasting it with the many theories painting children's play as progress towards ordered and rational thought and behavior (152). We can understand child phantasmagoria as a deliberate distortion of reality, with a preference for the irrational, the perverse, and the violent. Though child psychologists have paid greater attention to the more rational and progressive aspects of children's pretense, often ignoring the darker side of their imaginary play in favor of objective analysis of their techniques, collections of tales told by children show many examples of subversive or violent imagery (157, 161). Adults frequently discourage this type of narration or pretend play in children, seeing it as improper for their age and in stark contrast with their supposed innocence, yet these stories persist out of view of parents and teachers.

The main characters in *Julia, El príncipe destronado,* and *El espíritu de la colmena* engage in precisely this type of child phantasmagoria. In *Julia*, the title character, a victim of rape and family crisis, participates in both involuntary and voluntary fantasies, in which she seeks to counteract her involuntary fears with images of her own creation. She also envisions harm coming to those around her, often at her own hand. In *El príncipe destronado*, the main character, Quico, a nearly four-year-old boy who has recently been "dethroned" with the birth of his younger sister, Cris, spends the majority of the short novel participating in imaginary play. For example, he imagines various uses for an empty tube of toothpaste, which becomes everything from a truck to a gun. The instances of phantasmagoria in this novel are mostly related to religion and death: for example, after being prompted by his brother Juan, he claims to have seen the devil in the heater and later in the shade in his room. In *El espíritu de la colmena*, the

protagonist, six-year-old Ana, sees James Whale's *Frankenstein* and is haunted by fantasies based on the film. Convinced by her sister that she can conjure up Frankenstein's monster, Ana goes searching for him and finds instead a wounded Republican soldier. When she later runs away into the woods, she sees the monster reflected in the water, in a scene reminiscent of one that had intrigued her in the film: that in which the monster drowns the young girl, Maria.

It is worth noting that the main characters (or their childhood selves seen in flashbacks) of the works chosen in this chapter are significantly younger than those we have seen previously, and indeed younger than average for the child protagonist in the postwar Spanish novel. In general, the "children" found as main characters in novels of this period targeted for adults tend to be between around 10-14 for boys and around 15-18 for girls.[53] These are typically coming-of-age stories, marking the passing from childhood to adolescence or adulthood. Though very young actors in starring roles are common in film, the more introspective nature of the novel makes following the perspective of a young child problematic, and few authors choose to do so, in many cases preferring to tell the story from the point of view of the adult looking back on his or her childhood, as we see in *Julia*.[54] *El príncipe destronado* remains a considerably isolated example of the use of the very young child's perspective in the postwar novel.

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[53] There are indeed few examples of prepubescent female protagonists in the postwar Spanish novel, especially in comparison to males, perhaps owing to the tendency for the female bildungsroman to center on a romantic relationship.

[54] Even in film, the presence of an adult narrator or the presentation of childhood through flashbacks is fairly common. In Spanish film of this time period one could mention as an

In these three works, we find a different sort of coming-of-age story, concerning not the gradual progression of the typical *Bildungroman*, but rather the abrupt shift out of childhood marked by a premature break with childhood innocence. In his book *Corruption in Paradise: The Child in Western Literature*, Reinhard Kuhn lists several examples of similar narratives throughout the history of Western literature. He attributes these more decisive breaks with the supposed "paradise" of childhood to the effects of Thanatos (death) or Eros (sex), and specifically to feelings of shame and guilt associated with them (130).[55] The protagonists of the works studied by Kuhn are the victims of trauma, which does not allow them to follow a normal progression from childhood to adulthood. And although for some of them it is possible to ignore or reverse the effects of the early introduction of death or sex in their lives, this experience effectively expels most of these fictional children from their childhood paradise.

In the realm of postwar Spanish literature and film, this transformation of the child links to what David K. Herzberger terms as "apocalypse," by which he implies not just destruction, but also the insight that emerges from this annihilation:

> Part of what I mean by the apocalyptic, however, is defined by Ihab Hassan when he suggests that apocalypse involves a sense of outrage at the void of life as well

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example of this phenomenon Carlos Saura's *Cría cuervos* (1976), in which the main character, Ana, appears as both an adult (played by Geraldine Chaplin) and a child (played by Ana Torrent). Erice originally intended for *El espíritu de la colmena* to have this frame structure as well, but later altered the screenplay.

[55] In this way Kuhn distinguishes between infantile sexual impulses, which are, in his words, "guiltless," and the first conscious experiences of sex and death (133).

> as an expression of the fragmented chaos of human existence. […] [This definition] dramatizes the notion of apocalypse as unfettered destruction amid the nullity of existence. Apocalypse does suggest such meanings, but it also bears the meaning of revelation. And beyond what it reveals, it supposes transformation. (248)

Spanish writers of the sixties and seventies depict a shift from Franco's "post-apocalyptic" historiography, which underlines the certainty of myth, to a more chaotic but ultimately more truthful form of narration: "In large part, the texts of these writers supervene against the sacred truths of orthodoxy that shape the Regime's discourse in post-apocalyptic time. They recoil from the certitude and teleology of myth and offer instead a fragmented discourse that shows history (time) open always to contingency and transformation" (252). This break with linear, univocal history finds an echo in the fates of many of the young protagonists in these works, who, though the destruction of their past lives and the mistrust of authority that so often accompanies it, gain a revelation that the world is more chaotic and dangerous than they had imagined.

The age of the protagonists of the works analyzed in this chapter, however, may leave them ill-equipped to handle this transformation. The use of a younger protagonist serves to underline the sharp break with childhood due to the increased sense of vulnerability of the child, as well as its incapacity to understand fully what is happening. In a way, this plays into the heightened sense of chaos described by Herzberger. The young child's perspective increases the contrast between light and dark, good and evil and also allows for the distortion of the adult world in ways that the older child's point of view cannot, as the young child has not yet fully developed the ability to separate fact

from fiction.[56] In literature, and even more so in film, the wide-eyed innocence of the child gives a different point of view on reality as we know it, challenging the idea of a single, authoritative truth, thus emphasizing the child's power over adult authority (in rejecting adult norms), but also his or her vulnerability. An invitation to view the world from the young child's perspective opens a door to untold marvels but also horrors, grasped for the first time and therefore all the more frightening.

The young child's position at the bottom of the social hierarchy—which may be strategic as well as limiting—is underlined in these works by the fact that the main characters are all younger siblings, if not the youngest (Moix's Julia has two older brothers, Quico in *El príncipe destronado* is the fifth of six children, and Ana in *El espíritu de la colmena* has an older sister), a fact that increases their appearance not only of youth and vulnerability but also of susceptibility to suggestion. To this end, *El príncipe destronado* and *El espíritu de la colmena* present older siblings who are corruptive, if not cruel: Quico's brother Juan displays an obsession with death and killing and seeks to scare him, and Ana's sister, Isabel, in an unsettling scene, is shown strangling a cat and plays tricks on her sister throughout the film. This contrast between older and younger siblings further underlines the supposed innocence of the latter, who have not yet been fully initiated into the cruelty of the adult world. These siblings will also play an important role in this initiation, as we will see later.

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[56] We may note that even very young children are able to tell reality from their own imagination, but they are nevertheless susceptible to fear of what they know to be "pretend" (Harris et al. 122). Writers have exaggerated these effects to play on the blurring of fantasy and reality in their works.

The use of younger protagonists also plunges the reader or viewer into a darker region of the past, nearly cut off from current adult memory. For this reason they are well suited for the role of what Kuhn terms the "enigmatic child": the inscrutable youth whose actions and thoughts are inaccessible to adult characters and readers (20-1). Ana Torrent, the epitome of the enigmatic child in her roles in *El espíritu de la colmena* and *Cría cuervos,* confronts us with the impossible task of interpreting her thoughts from an adult perspective. Her character's incomprehension in *El espíritu de la colmena* is doubled by the fact that we are unable to fully place ourselves in her shoes.[57] While we may better assimilate the point of view of an adolescent passing over to adulthood, the thoughts of these young children, who have not yet reached the so-called "age of reason," remain to a certain extent impenetrable. The world of marvels and monsters depicted in these works, then, must necessarily be a vague reconstruction of childhood memories.[58]

The paucity of early childhood memories in adults is known in psychology as "childhood amnesia," referring to the period before an adult's first memory. Karen Tunstin and Harlene Hayne give the average age for an adult's earliest memory as 3.48 years, based on the mean results of various previous studies (1050). Other studies place the shift from childhood amnesia to clearer recall of events (as opposed to the earliest

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[57] Luis O. Arata cites the impenetrable nature of Ana's imagination, represented in various shots in the film where the viewer observes only her gaze (for example, as she watches the oncoming train and when she looks down the well), as an invitation for the viewer to use his or her own imagination and reconstruct childhood memories (102-3).

[58] Though the same could be said of any childhood narrative, it is particularly true of works featuring very young children.

memory) significantly later, around age six (Bruce et al. 360). The children in these three works, then, whose ages range from just under four years old to six, represent a period in life that for many adults is on the edge of their accessible memory and for which recollection is at best fragmentary. Recreation of this time by an adult is necessarily a process of filling in gaps. Not only is imagination required to give a clear picture of events, but it also colors perception of what little memories one has from the period.

It is fitting, perhaps, that imagination plays such a vital role in recreating this period for the adult, since it is in this period in childhood that pretend play is especially prevalent. Eric D. Smith and Angeline S. Lillard define pretense as "an active transformation of the here and now […] that involves a living agent who is aware that he or she is pretending, a reality that is pretended about, and a mental representation that is projected onto reality" (525). That is, pretend play involves both a consciousness of the fictive nature of the play act and the physical representation of an imagined scenario (the latter of which distinguishes pretense from imagining) (525). Traditionally, many play theorists and child psychologists, among whom we find figures such as the renowned Jean Piaget, viewed pretend or symbolic play as a transitory stage, which the child typically outgrew by around the age of six or seven, at which point it was superseded by games with rules (525). Smith and Lillard challenge this sharp cessation of pretend play in their retrospective study of college students on the last instances of pretense, concluding that it continues until much later, around the end of middle childhood at

eleven or twelve (545).[59] In either case, observations indicate that pretend play peaks in early childhood, and particularly fantasy-based pretend play, which declines in favor of real-life or entertainment themes (542).

We may also note a heightened sense of personal vulnerability in this period. In tests conducted by Harris et al. on young (aged three to seven) children's distinction between fantasy and reality in the context of threatening imaginary images (witches, monsters, etc.), results showed that older test group (mean age 6 years 7 months) were more likely to display fear at images they were asked to conjure up in their heads than the younger test group (mean age 4 years 1 month), despite the fact that both groups made overall accurate judgments on whether these images were real (111).[60] A key factor in this discrepancy was the fact that the younger group more frequently reported faith in their own abilities (for example, to run faster if being chased) than the older group. In fact, nearly half of the younger group mentioned belief in their own powers as a reason why they were not afraid of the imagined situation, while none of the sample of older children did (112). Whether from an increased insecurity in themselves or merely a heightened sense of reality of the dangers the world entails, the perceived vulnerability of

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[59] This timeline also coincides with what we can observe in many of the novels examined elsewhere in this dissertation, which depict instances of pretend play in children in middle childhood.

[60] Ana Torrent, who was seven years old when she filmed *El espíritu de la colmena*, had a similar reaction to the actor in the monster costume in the film. In an interview she mentions that she was afraid of the monster, saying, "Sabes que no es real, pero de alguna forma lo es" (qtd. in Wright 100).

children does not diminish with age, as one might expect, but rather augments as they enter middle childhood.

This sense of vulnerability is in line with Brian Sutton-Smith's observations on the nature of children's storytelling. According to Sutton-Smith, before the age of seven children's stories are chaotic and cyclical, reveling in disasters that are often left unresolved (*Ambiguity* 161). It is only after age seven that stories begin to become more linear and the characters "more reactive to their fate" (164-5). In these new, more linear tales, central characters "do not simply suffer [their fate] like nameless victims, they make some attempt to overcome it" (165). However, even this step towards resolution is incomplete and unsure, and children do not begin to tell stories in which the characters can live "happily ever after," without fear of a return to disaster, until around age eleven (165).[61] These children, then, have not yet reached the point where their narrative counterparts can overcome the difficult situations into which they are placed. They are part of an imaginary chaos that cannot come to a firm resolution.

All of these factors have an impact on how children in early childhood approach play. In this period, we can expect to see a great deal of pretense in children's play, but this pretend play will bring out fearful aspects of the imaginary. Children at this age, despite their awareness that the imagined scenarios are not real, will react with fear and doubt what they perceive with their own senses. A sense of vulnerability in the face of disaster and chaos will characterize their narrations. Negative distortions of reality, so common in play at this age, exaggerate emotional responses to these general feelings of

[61] It should be noted that these narrative patterns are culture-specific, applying primarily to Western civilizations (Sutton-Smith 165).

helplessness in a world that seems to be becoming gradually less amenable to children's existence. Acted out in play, these strong emotions can be tamed and conquered, but only after they are experienced. Coming through these experiences, the child will either be stronger for them, and more ready to face the struggles of reality, or be crippled by them, forced to remain in a state of fear. In either case the child cannot simply lose this newfound consciousness of the dangers of the adult world, but will be forever marked by it.

For these reasons, the characters in the works studied in this chapter are in a state of transition, in which they have become aware of their own weakness as well as the perilous nature of the outside world. Taking into consideration the historical context, one can see parallels between the fearful awakening of consciousness in these children and the progression of the Spanish country. Children, so often used to depict the Spanish people under Franco, must come to an awareness of their situation in the world and their relationship with authority, often through traumatic experiences. In these works, authority figures, namely the children's parents, are inconsistent, and often fail to protect the children from the menaces of the world. They may even themselves come to represent one of the monsters of the adult world for the children.

Sarah Wright, in her book *The Child in Spanish Cinema*, highlights the connection between monster and child in Spanish postwar films, particularly *El espíritu de la colmena*. According to Wright, the images are linked to adult attempts to remember and reconcile with the past: "Through their obsessive recreation over time, the themes of the child and the monster and the monstrous child come to stand in metonymically for the confrontation of the self with the horrors of Spain's recent past" (17). For the children of

the war and the immediate postwar period,[62] these horrifying childhood years nevertheless retain a certain fascination which leads them to recreate their experiences in various forms.

One of the many children of the war, Angelita Gabaldón Huguet (b. 1929), who went into exile in France during the Civil War, where she remained until the age of 18, describes feeling a fascination mingled with terror for the nightmares of a youth spent between one war and the next. Recalling the German occupation of France during World War II, she says:

> A mí los alemanes me dan pánico, lo de los nazis se me ha quedado dentro, y es terrible porque le digo a mi marido que es como un placer morboso, porque tengo que ver siempre las películas de alemanes, es como si me llamaran. Es algo… Siempre busco en las carteleras si ponen alguna película de alemanes. Con el miedo que me daban. Pero a lo mejor es que lo quiero entender bien. (Reverte and Thomás 126).

This need to "entender bien" childhood fears produced by war and its consequences is a common theme in postwar Spanish literature and film as well, though the age of the writers in relation to these experiences will have an effect on their approach.

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[62] Although it may be tempting to draw a clear line between the war and postwar periods, continued social and economic issues in the so-called "Years of Hunger" following the war led to difficult childhoods well after the fighting had ended. Indeed, one can observe in many testimonies of the "children of the war," such as those collected in José M. Reverte and Socorro Thomás's *Hijos de la guerra*, the repeated affirmation that the postwar was harder for these children than the war itself.

The imagining of the past as monstrous and frightening, as described by Wright above, is especially relevant to writers and filmmakers born after or shortly before the end of the Civil War, who begin to come into their own in the late sixties and seventies.[63] In her article "Memory in Ana María Moix's *Julia*," Melissa A. Stewart makes a distinction between examples of what David Herzberger terms the "novel of memory" written by members of the "generación de medio siglo," such as Martín Gaite's *El cuarto de atrás*, in which the protagonists actively seek to engage with the past, seeing this as a desirable goal, and works by the younger generation, in which the main characters passively receive the past, whose onslaught they are powerless to stop (41-2).[64] Speaking about *Julia* in particular, Stewart notes that "At times, pieces of the past are imposed upon the protagonist so as to convert her reflections into an objective look at the functioning of her memory. She is not the remembering subject, but rather, the object

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[63] In this category we might find Ana María Moix (b. 1947), featured in this chapter, as well as perhaps Esther Tusquets (b. 1936), discussed elsewhere, whose works display a similar reticence to rediscover the past, in contrast to older writers from the same period, such as Juan Goytisolo (b. 1931) and Carmen Martín Gaite (b. 1925). However, there is a great deal of overlap between these two trends.

[64] One could perhaps establish a continuum in this sense between writers who came of age before the war, many of whom seek to recreate childhood and the past as an idyllic lost paradise (as for example in Ramón José Sender's *Crónica del alba*); those who were children during the war, who tend to recreate a troubled childhood, though they actively seek to reconnect with it; and the children of the early postwar years, who initially portray their characters as forced to submit to unavoidable trauma.

around whom the memories accumulate" (42). These characters struggle under the weight of inherited trauma, over which they have little control.

In *Julia*, we find the story of an adult, twenty-year-old Julia, who has never been able to escape fully the nightmares of her childhood. Both as a child and as an adult, Julia's imagination torments her, presenting her with fearful images. Despite her age, Julia is mentally trapped in early childhood, haunted by her child self, Julita.[65] In this novel, rather than allowing her to overcome trauma, imagination debilitates the protagonist. As a child, she frequently succumbs to fear, especially that of monsters in her dark bedroom. Unlike most children, however, Julia does not grow out of these fears, but rather acts out her nighttime rituals of terror even as an adult, the only substantial difference being that at the age of twenty she cannot look to the adults as a consoling presence.

Julia's imagination does not affect her only at night, however, nor is it entirely passive. Even during the day the child Julia struggles against the frightful images that appear to her. She often imagines her mother dead, though from her adult perspective she cannot explain how she knew about death before she had seen her first corpse at the age of six:

> No sabía cómo pudo habérsele ocurrido la idea de que Mamá pudiera morir; sin embargo, pensaba a menudo en ello y la veía así: con los párpados caídos y los labios entreabiertos; con los cabellos desparramados sobre la almohada. […] Al

[65] In this chapter, I will use the diminutive "Julita" to refer specifically to Julia's childhood self in adult Julia's mind, a distinction made to some degree in the novel.

> cabo de los años, Julia se preguntaba cómo fue posible, imaginar con tanto detalle a Mamá muerta y metida dentro un féretro. Ella nunca había visto un muerto. (20)

These images of death befalling Julia's mother, the center of her young life, occur in the context of play. The happiest moments of Julia's childhood, when her mother invites her into her bed, tickling and biting her, cease when her mother gets tired of this roughhousing, closes her eyes and lays still. Julia interprets this sudden change in behavior as death, an abrupt end to the "alegría irresistible" of their play (20).[66]

Julia is able to find some solace by using her own imagination against itself. In the opening scene of the novel, for example, Julia is overcome by fear as she imagines what could be on the other side of the covers as she lies in bed:

> Oía el movimiento de sus largas patas; andaban, andaban. Las casas caían, aplastadas por los monstruos. Al pie de su cama, llegaban hasta el techo del dormitorio y crecían, crecían más aún. Era incapaz de detenerlos con la mirada y olvidarlos. Su pesadilla era el fin del mundo, los extraños seres desolaban las ciudades a su paso, con su asqueroso cuerpo moviéndose lenta y pesadamente. (13)

To counteract these images, she tries to conjure up a positive image, that of Eva:

> Eva, Eva. Debía pensar en Eva. Se esforzaba en imaginar que Eva abría la puerta y corría hacia la cama. Ella, Julia, alzaba los brazos hacia Eva, escondía el rostro en su pecho y le contaba lo sucedido. Julia no se atrevía a mirar hacia la puerta

[66] Later Julia will use the image of her mother as dead to punish herself, deliberately ending her own happiness, a habit that dates back to her being sexually assaulted as a child.

> para no ver entrar a uno de aquellos seres repugnantes en lugar de Eva. Cerró los ojos e imaginó la escena a su antojo. (14)

By focusing on the image of Eva that she has consciously invented for herself, Julia can take some degree of control over the situation. Julia is aware that both Eva and the monsters are not real, but still she requires the reassurance of the voluntarily created image of Eva to dispel her fears. In her imagination, Eva assures Julia that the menacing presence in her room will not return and gives her an explanation for it (14).

However, for Julia, the monstrous images are more powerful than that of Eva, since Julia is conscious of the fact that the latter is a mere fiction. Julia, like a child, suspects that the monsters may not be real, but is unsure of the fact. She must try to convince herself that they are not actually present in order to have peace. She must do the opposite for her image of Eva: parting from her certainty that the scene she has imagined is not real, she must convince herself that it is. She is sure of Eva's absence in a way that she cannot be as regards the monstrous unknown presence in the dark. Though in the end both of these images are imaginary, Julia's active imagination proves useless against the power of her fear to instill doubt in her. Like the young child, Julia sees herself as a helpless victim of forces beyond her control and lacks the ability to write a savior into her pretense.

Julia's inability to fight the monsters in her head dates back to her rape by Víctor, a friend of her brother Ernesto, when she was six years old.[67] The child Julita, forever

[67] The paucity of details in Julia's description of this incident, which is clearly some form of sexual assault, has led some critics to hesitate to call it a rape per se. However, in her

trapped in the moments following this incident, tyrannizes Julia, demanding from her continuous sacrifices and pain:

> Era como si Julita existiese con vida propia (una vida que no era la suya) y desde allí, sentada en el portal de la casa […], doblegara la voluntad de Julia para que ésta hiciera, pensara y sintiera cuanto a ella se le antojara. […] Julita se había convertido en un dios martirizador para Julia, un dios que reclamaba continuos sacrificios para calmar su antiguo dolor. (65)

In order to express what Julita felt after being raped, Julia must conjure up images that cause her pain and suffering, images that give her a more immediate reason to express the suppressed emotions she carries inside:

> Y le echaba en cara la extraña sensación experimentada aquella tarde […]. Una sensación que después de aquel día experimentó de nuevo muchas veces: la necesidad de buscar en su interior imágenes, palabras, melodías en boga que provocaran en ella una gran tristeza, la ayudaran a angustiarse, a desesperarse, y le ofrecieran suficiente dolor para llorar para algo. (65-6)

These images will become the adult Julia's monsters, which, though they frighten her, are more easily dealt with than her childhood trauma.

In addition, shortly before her assault, Julia experiences her father's violence towards her mother when he discovers that she is having an affair. When he arrives at the beach house from Barcelona, Julia's father confronts her mother about her relationship with Antonio. Aurelia, the nanny, and Julia's father himself shut Julia and her brother

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unpublished dissertation, Allison Libbey makes a compelling argument for its classification as such (85-6).

Rafael in a bedroom, ostensibly to shield them from the argument between their parents. Here they are forced to imagine what is happening on the other side of the door. The sight of their mother lying unconscious on the bed, glimpsed when they are able to sneak out for a moment before being locked in the bedroom again, convinces Julia and Rafael that she is dead. Though Julia's brother Ernesto later tells them that their mother has simply pretended to pass out to scare their father, the image of her "dead" mother will remain with Julia for years afterwards (67-9).

In these two scenes, that of Julia's assault and the "death" of her mother, presented immediately following one another in the novel, represent the child's first, premature encounter with Eros (sex) and Thanatos (death). According to Kuhn, these two forces mark the premature passage of the child to adulthood, or the "corruption" of the child, in many literary works:

> In most works the childhood world is destroyed by […] the sudden, and often simultaneous, revelation of the mysteries of sex and death. Because Thanatos and Eros have no place in the cosmogony of children and because these two gods cannot be expelled, Eden must be destroyed. The child's sudden awareness of the profound reality of sex and death—so different from an intellectual comprehension of them as concepts—takes the form of a shattering encounter which forever annihilates the prelapsarian world for which, in some cases, the child retains a wistful yearning. (132)

The introduction of Thanatos and Eros banishes the child from his or her childhood paradise into the hell of the adult world. In *Julia*, this abrupt break with childhood

innocence through sex (her rape) and death (the image of her mother dead) metaphorically separates the child, Julita, from Julia, who will pass to adulthood.

The corruption or initiation of Julita leaves her forever trapped in the moments following her rape, but ironically she will "survive" Julia. Over the years, after this traumatic experience, Julia seeks to suppress her memories of these events in two ways: through the use of unpleasant images to block out those of her rape and through the conjuring-up of comforting scenes, as seen above, to counteract the former. Julita, the embodiment of her six-year-old self immediately following her rape, prompts the negative images (Julia's phantasmagoria) as a way of punishing Julia for "abandoning" her in the past. Julia, whose name is associated with more pleasant times in the company of her grandfather don Julio, must combat the pernicious influence of her younger self.[68] Julia's sources of comfort—her aunt, her grandfather, the headmistress, and Eva—are nevertheless unsustainable. All representations of adult authority prove to be unstable. After Eva brushes her off over the phone when Julia calls to explain that her mother plans to stop her from returning to Eva's house, Julia's last positive image falls apart, and she turns to self-destruction to avoid the overwhelming presence of Julita.

However, in this suicide attempt, it is Julia who is destroyed, leaving only Julita. In the end, the light is no match for the monsters in the dark, in the form of childhood trauma. At first, it seems that the act of committing suicide will free Julia from her fears:

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[68] It is don Julio, Julia's grandfather, who first calls the child Julia, insisting on this form rather than the diminutive, "Julita." The five years that Julia spends with don Julio, the most stable authority figure in her life, represent a reprieve from the upheaval of her life with her parents as well as her nightmares.

"No tenía miedo de la oscuridad, a las tinieblas que a menudo la confundían con falsos fantasmas. No temía a la oscuridad ni encontrarse sola en su dormitorio. Todo le daba igual. Únicamente tuvo miedo del acto estúpido, absurdo que acababa de cometer" (212). Julia's suicide also forms part of her voluntary imagination, which fights her unconscious fears: "Muchas veces había imaginado aquel acto, regodeándose en él. […] Incluso parecía más irreal que en sus viejos pensamientos. Por unos instantes dudó: tal vez se había dejado arrastrar por su loca imaginación y en realidad nada iba a sucederle" (212). In this last moment before losing consciousness, Julia is once again unable to distinguish between reality and fantasy, and we may note the repeated references to imagining, mental images, and unreality throughout the description of the suicide attempt and its aftermath.

Despite the brief reprieve from her customary fears, when Julia awakens in the hospital, disquieting images once again prevent her from sleeping: "Deseaba dormir, pero imágenes confusas y reticentes la asaltaban sin cesar sumiéndola en la inquietud. Escenas oscuras, entrecortadas" (214). Rather than continue to struggle, Julia now lets these images take her over and transform her: "Con los ojos cerrados, dejó que las imágenes fueran invadiendo poco a poco su mente. […] Acurrucada contra la almohada, se sentía pequeña, como si su cuerpo hubiera menguado la mitad" (214). It is at this point that Julita takes complete control over Julia, effectively replacing her. Julia mentally returns to the scene of her rape:

> Y entonces, se vio como era, tal como se había sentido siempre. Julita, con el eterno pantalón corto y el jersey azul marino con un ancla dibujada en el pecho. No llegaba hasta ella desde el tiempo, a través de la memoria; Julita surgía de su

> interior, de sí misma. Había permanecido allí desde siempre, agazapada en los misteriosos rincones de su ser, en las ignoradas sombras de su mente, aguardando el momento oportuno de asaltarla para vencerla. (215)

Only then does Julia realize that she has been Julita all along, and that she has never left behind what happened to her as a child. She attributes her fears to Julita, as well as her problems with men.

Julia's failed suicide attempt serves as yet another initiation into an understanding of herself and the adult world, parallel to that which marked the "death" of Julita after her rape. This second death forces Julia to return to her past, now with the certainty that once again Julita has won: "Había intentado matar a Julita, y sólo ella permanecía. […] Julita había vencido y estaba allí, pequeña, sola, con el pantalón corto y un jersey azul marino con un ancla dibujada en el pecho. Habitó durante años un mundo inalterable, inmóvil, sin tiempo. Y desde allí volvería, volvería siempre para recordarle que no murió" (216-7). These reflections following Julia's suicide attempt make it clear that she has not moved past the moment of her initiation and that the images she has created are insufficient to break the cycle of trauma.

The theme of death as initiation into the adult world is a common one in Spanish works of this period. Introduction to death at a young age means that the children often process it through their play, which serves both to increase understanding of it and to give it a folkloric, mythical status, surrounded by childhood rituals. As in *Julia*, death is an underlying theme in many of the children's games in *El espíritu de la colmena*. Apart from the scene in which Ana meets the monster in the woods, implicitly taking the role of Maria in the film, we find Isabel "playing" with death in various scenes, both in solitary

play and in her games with Ana. In *El espíritu de la comena,* as well as in *El príncipe destronado*, older siblings and adults serve to initiate the child into the mysteries of Eros and Thanatos.[69] While Julia has her first taste of sex and death in direct encounters with them, through her rape and the supposed death of her mother, Ana and Quico initially experience them in play with their older siblings. However, although veiled in the guise of play, the introduction to death for Quico and Ana remains troubling for the children, whose lack of understanding causes them to fail to distinguish imaginary deaths and real ones.

Ana's older sister, Isabel, does little to clarify her concept of killing and death. Even at the beginning of the film, Ana has some understanding of these issues, as she asks her sister whether Frankenstein's monster killed Maria while they watch the film and later seeks to uncover the reasons behind the deaths in the film: "¿Por qué el monstruo mata a la niña y por qué le matan luego a él?" Isabel replies that neither Maria nor the monster died because movies do not represent reality: "Porque en el cine todo es mentira. Es un truco." However, she follows this by saying that she has seen the monster alive, and that he is a disembodied spirit—not a ghost—who has appeared to her and who

[69] As in *Julia*, these two concepts are closely linked in these works, though the focus is primarily on death rather than sex. *El espíritu de la colmena,* for example, hints at Isabel's budding sensuality when she paints her lips with blood. In *El príncipe destronado*, Quico's infantile sexuality and fascination with sexual organs is central to the work, but the character himself struggles with these ideas and has not yet developed the consciousness and sense of guilt that Kuhn associates with Eros. For this reason, I will concentrate mainly on the introduction to death in these two works.

will appear to Ana if she calls him. Isabel mixes fiction and reality, confusing the idea of death for Ana, who in the final scene of the film will recall her sister's instructions, heard in a voiceover, for calling the spirit: "Si eres su amiga puedes hablar con él cuando quieras. Cierras los ojos y le llamas: 'Soy Ana. Soy Ana.'" Although Ana closes her eyes, she does not repeat these words, heard only in her sister's voice, as Ana has been completely silent since her first encounter with the Republican fugitive.[70]

In another scene, Ana hears Isabel scream and goes to their bedroom to find her lying on the floor, apparently unconscious, beside a moving rocking chair and a broken potted plant. Ana tries to wake her sister, telling her to stop joking. Ana does not initially seem to react to her sister's "death" with fear, however, and with remarkable coolness checks for a heartbeat.

[70] Several critics, such as Virginia Higginbotham (*Spirit* 27) and Luis O. Arata (104), have attributed the lines, "Soy Ana. Soy Ana," to Ana. However, this sound clip corresponds to an earlier scene in which Isabel explains the nature of the "spirit" to Ana. In neither of these scenes does Ana herself call the spirit out loud.

Figure 11: Ana tries to determine whether Isabel is alive.

When Isabel does not awaken, Ana goes looking for Milagros, the servant, and when she does not find her, returns to the bedroom with some trepidation. Upon reentering, Ana goes to the window rather than to Isabel. As she looks out, Isabel, who has put on her father's beekeeping gloves, sneaks up behind her to scare her, leading the viewer to believe that her prior unconsciousness was just another act to frighten her sister.

Figure 12: Isabel approaches Ana wearing her father's gloves.

This scene marks the degree to which Ana's concept of death is confused. Her impassible reaction to the real possibility that her sister has come to harm is contrasted with her fear of Isabel's imitation of a monster.[71] In the film, fear, like the inherited trauma of the Civil War, is transmitted indirectly. What Ana cannot see, or what she can glimpse only partially, is far more frightening than what the child can experience directly. Left with only clues as to the real sources of fear, Ana fills in the gaps with imagined monsters. Like Maria, her counterpart in Whale's film, Ana does not show fear as she approaches real dangers, such as the Republican soldier hiding in the abandoned structure, who draws his gun on her when he first sees her. However, she is visibly frightened by indications of what she cannot or has not seen: her father's footsteps, Isabel sneaking up on her, the pocket watch in her father's hands and the blood where the soldier was staying, silently implicating her father in the soldier's death. It is these half-seen elements that reveal the silent, menacing presence of authority.

While in *Julia* the protagonist seeks to avoid the monstrous images of past trauma by means of the imagination, in *El espíritu de la colmena* Ana pursues her monster and the secrets that it hides. Fascinated with Frankenstein's monster after seeing the 1931 film, Ana goes in search of it. Her desire to understand the movie *Frankenstein* also arises from what she does not see: the monster killing Maria. When she first watches the film, it is clear that Ana has some difficulty fitting all of the pieces together after she sees

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[71] Isabel's use of what can be assumed to be her father's gloves to startle her sister is significant. Throughout the film, fear of Frankenstein's monster is linked to the girls' father, as when heavy footsteps, revealed after a cut to be their father's, interrupts their discussion of the "spirit" of the monster.

the iconic scene of the monster throwing the child, Maria, into the water, followed by that of Maria's father carrying her drowned corpse through the town.[72] This scene makes a lasting impression on Ana, who repeatedly questions her sister in an attempt not to understand death itself, but to find causes (the act of killing and the motives for it) for the visible effects on the screen (the dead child and monster's death). In this way, and by incorporating the monster into her imaginary world, Ana attempts to reveal the secrets lying below the surface both of the film and of Spanish postwar society.

The use of cinema is fundamental in this process. Wright states that cinema is "instrumental in the articulation of the horrors which now circulate in Ana's mind" (99). Ana, representative of inherited memory, uses the monster to confront her own doubts about the trauma she experiences second-hand. Like many of her generation, Ana is a witness to the effects of war, but lacks a complete knowledge of the causes that correspond to these effects. The same occurs when she first views the movie *Frankenstein*: she realizes that the monster has killed the girl and also that the villagers kill the monster, but she does not have an explanation for either of these acts (98-9). For this reason, despite her fear, Ana must seek out the monster. What she finds in its place

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[72] The drowning scene, easily the most well-known of the movie, as well as the inspiration for Erice's film, was highly controversial when *Frankenstein* was first released. Parts of this scene were cut from the film, as well as a few others deemed to be too violent or blasphemous, when it was re-issued in 1937, before which it was banned in Northern Ireland, Sweden, and Czechoslovakia, as well as regionally banned or censored in the United States and Canada ("Frankenstein").

(in the building where Isabel tells her that she will find the monster) is an answer to the incomprehensible real-life trauma of war: the Republican soldier.

Through the use of cinematic images, Ana attempts to channel the horrors of the world. Lebeau views this use of cinema in *El espíritu de la colmena* as a therapeutic device:

> Cinema, it seems, has touched Ana's mind; its preoccupation of her imaginary life has driven her towards hallucination—or, more precisely, towards refracting the traumas, the enigmas, of the world (the death of the soldier, the loss of her self in the woods) through a protective image borrowed from the screen. The image, in this instance, is that of a Monster, brought to life by the child's capacity to project that image onto the world—be it the world of her village or her mind. (54)

However, the child we find at the end of the film is one who has been severely traumatized by her experiences, as life imitates the horror movie she has viewed at the beginning of the film. Having lost the ability to speak, Ana withdraws into her own mind, where horror has replaced reality. Like young Maria in *Frankenstein,* Ana undergoes a sort of death in her play: the metaphorical death of her childhood.

We may note, as Lebeau has done, that in the classic drowning scene from *Frankenstein* featured in *El espíritu de la colmena*, Maria's death also comes as a result of the monster's "tragic attempt at play, to be like a child: a child, of course, is what the monster has never been" (52). The monster, in his play, shows a lack of comprehension of the world. Ana, on the other hand, by the end of the film is all too aware that innocent play—as evidenced in her encounter with the Republican soldier—can potentially lead to innocent deaths. At the end of the film, as Ana closes her eyes, ostensibly to call the spirit

of the monster, embodied for her in the wounded soldier, one can easily imagine that she is calling the blissful ignorance of the childhood she now seems to have lost. Ana's repetition of her initial summoning of the monster seems to express a desire to reverse the consequences of the first and to return to blissful ignorance.[73] However, we sense that these efforts will be fruitless, as we have seen the soldier's body laid out, significantly in the room used to project the film. The death of the soldier is also the death of Ana's illusions and an awakening to the cruelty of the world around her.

Ana's play with the monster marks her initiation into an adult world filled with death and suffering, compelling her to take a definite stance in the battle between submission to authority—represented by her father—and those outside its influence, who are seen as "monstrous." In his introduction to the screenplay of *El espíritu de la colmena*, Fernando Savater notes that the monster forces Ana to take a side:

> [El monstruo], sobre todo, es un espíritu porque *compromete*. Obliga a tomar partido, a elegir contra él o a su favor; no se le puede conocer impunemente. Así lo entiende Ana, que quiere ser inmediatamente iniciada en los misterios del espíritu; la admirable película de Erice será la crónica impecable de dicha iniciación. Ana está dispuesta, bien dispuesta, a jugarse el todo por el todo, a no ahorrarse ningún riesgo para llegar al espíritu. (16, emphasis original)

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[73] In an interview for *El País*, Erice also remarks on the return to the origin that the child's encounter with the monster supposes. Referring to the drowning scene in *Frankenstein* he states, "En esta película […] no hay nada que no brote de una escena primordial: el encuentro a orillas de un río de una niña con un monstruo, contemplado por una mirada que observa el mundo por vez primera" (qtd. in Latorre 94).

He goes on to underscore that the "deaths" (Maria's and Ana's) caused by the monster are rooted in an awakening of consciousness for the girls, who must "learn to play":

> El espíritu no mata a la niña [Maria]; la mata la intensa emoción de ese juego arrebatado, que es el único que puede jugarse con el espíritu. Ana tardará en descubrir por qué la niña debió morir en el lago y cómo el espíritu la amó hasta el desconsiderado punto de matarla para mejor enseñarla a jugar. A orillas de otras aguas nocturnas, el espíritu la matará a ella también, para permitirla renacer y acabar plenamente su iniciación. (16-7)

The monster initiates the girls into an irrational world, precisely that which we have previously associated with phantasmagoria.

This initiation, undertaken by force in *Julia* and more or less voluntarily in *El espíritu de la colmena* and *El príncipe destronado,* does not involve only the young protagonists. While Julia is "initiated" through her rape, Ana and Quico's siblings play a major role in their introduction into the monstrous and the irrational. The older siblings in both *El espíritu de la colmena* and *El príncipe destronado*, Isabel and Juan, respectively, display a morbid interest in pain and death that their younger siblings do not initially share. In one particularly memorable scene, Isabel picks up the cat, Misiger, and begins to pet it affectionately. When it starts to growl with displeasure, she places her hands around the cat's neck and begins to strangle it. [74]

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[74] This scene, like many others, varies slightly in the final version of the film from its description in the screenplay. In the screenplay, Isabel begins to strangle the cat, then eases her grip in an apparent moment of compassion before tightening her hold: "ISABEL agarra el gato por el cuello. Va apretando poco a poco, como si comprobara el

Figure 13: Isabel plays at strangling the cat, Misiger.

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efecto, los dedos de su mano derecha alrededor de la garganta. El gato se debate. Su cara adquiere una expresión de sofoco. […] ISABEL parece volver en sí de repente. Es de nuevo el personaje que inició el juego de una manera inocente. Acaricia al animal, como consolándole del daño sufrido a manos de ese ser extraño, que ya se ha ido y que nada parece tener que ver con ella. Es como si hubiera necesitado excitar así su propia capacidad de compasión" (96). Only after showing compassion does she strangle the cat again, causing it to defend itself and run away. In the film, on the other hand, we find a gradual progression from gentle teasing and caresses to strangulation. Isabel's line, "¿Qué te pasa?" (not present in the original screenplay), as she tightens her hands around the cat's neck, seems less a show of compassion and more the ironic comment of a torturer delighting in doing harm.

Startled, the cat scratches her and runs away, after which Isabel spreads the blood from her scratched finger on her lips as she looks in a mirror.[75]

Figure 14: Isabel paints her lips with blood.

In another scene, Isabel and the other older children leap over a bonfire as Ana looks on without participating, conjuring up demonic images as Isabel is framed by the flames of the fire.

[75] This gesture, clearly linking the desire for violence with Isabel's budding sexuality, is also not present in the original screenplay (98).

Figure 15: Isabel prepares to jump over the bonfire.

Isabel's acting out of death is also crucial in Ana's initiation into the irrational, which Savater terms "lo sin remedio": "La pantomima de Isabel permite a Ana dar un paso más hacia la guarida del espíritu, cuyo lado pavoroso —reflejo sin paliativos de lo sin remedio— sobrelleva con denuedo" (23). In her play, Isabel reveals aspects of the realm of the spirit that will allow Ana to go further towards understanding. In an interview, Erice highlights the importance of Isabel in determining who Ana will become:

> En cualquier caso, sin Isabel no podría existir esa Ana última. El papel que cumple es, pues, muy importante. Lo patético de Isabel es que no cree en el alfabeto que, casi sin darse cuenta, provoca; para ella es un juego. De ahí que a un cierto nivel sólo sea capaz de simular, de disfrazarse, de representar, de dar un susto. No puede convocar al fantasma. ("Entrevista" 148)

According to Erice, although Isabel herself cannot be initiated, since she does not believe that what she tells and shows Ana is true, she is the key to Ana's initiation. Even more significantly, we note that "para ella es un juego"; Isabel is playing at death, fear, and the irrational (all important elements of phantasmagoria), and her play provides Ana with the means to surpass the world that she knows.

Following this theme, we may note that Ana plays, in a traditional sense, much less than Isabel in the film. While Isabel plays actively, Ana is often a spectator or victim of Isabel's pranks. Ana engages more seriously with what are for Isabel purely playful matters. Virginia Higginbotham underscores the difference between the two girls in their reactions to the sight of blood. When the cat scratches Isabel and makes her bleed, she merely incorporates it into her play, painting her lips as she looks in a toy mirror. Ana on the other hand is deeply disturbed by the sight of the soldier's blood in the farmhouse. Higginbotham reads Ana's reaction to the blood as a sign of her belief in the monster (*Spirit* 29-30). However, considering the results of the aforementioned studies on the effect of imagined frightening images on children, we must take into account the absence of the cause of the blood in this scene. Lacking a clear explanation for the blood, Ana must resort to her imagination, thus amplifying her fear. In contrast, Isabel, viewing her own blood and seeing the immediate cause, has no need to invent alternative explanations which would lead to greater fear.

Like Isabel, Juan, the older brother in *El príncipe destronado*, also displays a fascination with violence and death, which frequently form part of his games. Although Juan remains safely in the realm of the imaginary (unlike Isabel, who flirts with tangible representations of potential danger to herself or others in jumping over the fire and

strangling the cat), he is more fully immersed in the idea of death and killing than any of the characters we have seen thus far. When he is not reading comics about the *Cosaco Verde* killing pirates (24-6) or cowboys fighting Indians (91), he is acting out these standoffs with Quico or imagining himself killing enemies in "la guerra de papá" (78-9). Juan's play mixes elements of the reality of war in Morocco with the fictional stories of his comics to form a seemingly endless repetition of killings, all justified by the fact that those killed are the "bad guys."

Not only does Juan incorporate death into his own games, but he also teaches his siblings, even the baby, Cristina, to play with death and to take pleasure from the act of killing. When Quico gets angry at Juan and declares that he is going to die, Juan immediately launches into a shooting game, which Cristina eagerly imitates:

> Súbitamente Quico arrancó hacia el cuarto de plancha y voceó:
>
> —¡Pues ahora me muero!
>
> —Ta-ta-ta-tá— dijo Juan, simulando apuntarlo con una metralleta mientras su hermano corría, y Cristina le miró a Juan y remedó con extraño entusiasmo:
>
> —Ata-ata-ata.
>
> Y luego sonrió y, al sonreír, se le formaban en la carne prieta de las mejillas unos hoyuelos como los que tenía en los codos. (34)

Thus Cristina learns to view the act of shooting and killing—albeit in play—as pleasurable. Quico, slightly older, has already reached this point, telling Vítora in another scene that he wants a pistol "para matar a todos" (46).

The children do not receive all play deaths with pleasure, however. In a scene that is strikingly similar to that of Isabel's feigned death in *El espíritu de la colmena*, Quico's

older brother Juan also plays dead to scare his younger sibling. After instructing Quico to pretend to shoot him while playing at being part of "la guerra de papá" (79), Juan falls to the floor "dead" and proceeds to recite his death notice:

> Juan se encontraba a gusto allí, soltó la escopeta y cruzó las manos sobre el vientre. Dijo Quico:
>
> —Ya está, Juan, levántate.
>
> Pero Juan no se movía. Puso los ojos en blanco y musitó como una letanía:
>
> —He fallecido en el día de ayer confortado con los Santos Sacramentos y la Bendición de…
>
> —No, Juan —dijo Quico—. ¡Levántate!
>
> Juan prosiguió:
>
> —Mi padre, mi madre y mis hermanos participan tan sensible pérdida y ruegan una oración por el eterno descanso de mi alma. (82)

These ritual words and actions, unrealistic in the mouth of such a young child, disturb Quico, who protests, telling Juan several times to get up. His fear only increases when Juan goes on to mention the devil: "el demonio con el rabo tieso y los cuernos afilados" (82). Juan's "death" and the image of being carried off by the devil—a thought that troubles Quico throughout the novel—affects Quico in a way that his own pretend death had not (80).

In addition to introducing the younger children to concepts of death and the occult, Juan also serves to transform previously comforting images into phantasmagoria. In one such instance, Juan convinces Quico that the blind in their room, to which they referred previously as a guardian angel, the "Ángel de la Guarda," is in fact the devil:

—El Ángel es bonito, ¿eh, Juan?

Juan entornó los párpados para reforzar la imaginación:

—¡Dios!— dijo de pronto—, si no es un ángel; es un demonio, ¿no lo ves?

Quico se apretó contra él:

—No es un demonio, Juan— dijo.

—Sí —agregó Juan—. ¿No le ves las alas y los cuernos y que vuela muy de prisa? (49)

Although Quico is initially reluctant to accept this vision, he eventually lets Juan persuade him that the flapping blind is the devil, who is coming to carry him off to hell. Quico then attempts to tell the adults that he has seen the devil, taking this apparition as fact. In this way Juan, as we saw with Isabel in *El espíritu de la colmena*, passes on an image he has created in the context of a game to a willing believer, Quico. What is imagined for Juan becomes a real source of fear for his younger brother.

We see then that both Isabel and Juan, deeply fascinated by death and the occult, are instrumental in initiating Ana and Quico into the world of child phantasmagoria. It is they who pass on or create child folklore to the younger children. Iona and Peter Opie, who published a number of groundbreaking collections of children's games and folklore in England beginning in the 1950s, state in their book *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren* that prior to the age of 14, young children respect most highly traditions and superstitions received from their peers: "We find, what is understandable, that the younger schoolchildren treat the beliefs and rites of their companions more seriously than those practiced by their parents and grandparents" (209). We can observe this contrast between adult tradition and that of the children in *El espíritu de la colmena* as the camera

cuts to the various religious images in the girls' room as Isabel explains the "spirit" to Ana, underscoring this dual set of beliefs. Children transmit folklore of all kinds, from rhymes to games to superstitions, from one to the other, often with little intervention from adults, over generations. Naturally in the case of siblings, one child passes lore to his or her brothers and sisters, frequently from older to younger.

The stories the older siblings in *El espíritu de la colmena* and *El príncipe destronado* tell the younger ones also follow similar patterns to the initial stages of what the Opies term school lore.[76] John H. McDowell elaborates on this process in his article "The Transmission of Children's Folklore," dividing it into five stages, from the production of the item of folklore by one child and its passing to a second to its transmission to and decoding by a third child uninvolved in its original production (52). According to McDowell, the source for the item of folklore need not be folkloric in itself. Rather, children draw from many different resources, including but not limited to adult

[76] The Opies make a distinction between nursery lore, generally more structured and often passed from parent to child, and school lore, which is in many ways similar, but is passed from child to child: "While a nursery rhyme passes from a mother or other adult to the small child on her knee, the school rhyme circulates simply from child to child […]. By its nature a nursery rhyme is a jingle preserved and propagated not by children but by adults […]. It is a rhyme which is adult approved. The schoolchild's verses are not intended for adult ears" (1). Although the Opies state that this type of lore typically comes from "beyond the influence of the family circle" (1), the examples found in these works are clear examples of what Sutton-Smith terms the children's "hidden transcripts," shared outside of the presence of adults.

folklore seen as accessible to children (such as nursery rhymes, fairy tales, and riddles—what the Opies would refer to as "nursery lore") and popular culture (53). Nor does folklore need to be long-lived to be considered as such. McDowell states that indeed much of children's folklore is "local and transitory" (60), but that it nevertheless fits the description of an item of folklore, which has "features such as provenience from a common store of communicative resources lying outside the official, institutional channels; possessing a formulaic quality […]; and in some way betraying a grounding in the ethos of some finite, operative human community" (53). In the case of Isabel and Juan's stories, the folk group is quite small, but may still be considered as such following Sutton-Smith's definitions, which stipulate that a folk group, a category in which he includes family groups, need only have two or more members ("Introduction" 8).

Like many of the examples of school lore in *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*, the tales the older siblings tell in *El espíritu de la colmena* and *El príncipe destronado* are adapted from a combination of tradition, pop culture, and some of their own imagination.[77] They bear a marked affinity with the lore described by the

[77] The sources for the stories passed from the older to the younger children are not always clear in these works. In the case of Juan in *El príncipe destronado*, they seem to stem mostly from Juan's interpretation of religion, pop culture, and current events, the latter colored heavily by the comics he reads. In the case of Isabel in *El espíritu de la colmena*, the source of her tale of the "spirit" is not well defined in the film. The most direct inspiration behind it is the recent viewing of *Frankenstein*, but the complexity of Isabel's explanation and its ritualistic overtones suggests that she borrows elements of it from already established lore.

Opies in a chapter titled "Half-Belief," a collection of charms and superstitions that, according to the Opies, most children deny believing if questioned generally, affirming that "all superstitions are silly" (209), but which the children nevertheless practice for a variety of reasons. The Opies attribute this "half-belief" to either a failure to be truly convinced that all superstitions are untrue (much as we saw above in the children who experienced fear in the face of imaginary images despite being able to distinguish fantasy from reality) or the attraction of the mysterious: "Other charms, though recognized as being 'probably silly,' are repeated because they also feel that there 'may be something in it.' Others, again, are practiced because it is in the nature of children to be attracted by the mysterious: they appear to have an innate awareness that there is more to the ordering of fate than appears on the surface" (Opie and Opie 210). These superstitions fall into patterns, and we may note that many of them seek to give concrete reasons to what is seen as irrational (e.g., luck or death).

We can observe the increased credence given to peers in a scene from *El príncipe destronado* in which both Juan and the domestic servant, Vito, attempt to teach Quico. While Vito is burning papers in the boiler, Juan tells Quico that the boiler is hell, which Vito partially confirms:

> Las llamas ascendieron, zumbando y caracoleando y Juan dijo:
>
> —El infierno.
>
> Quico le miró, escéptico.
>
> —¿Es eso el infierno?
>
> Salió la bata de flores rojas y verdes y la Vítora le dijo:
>
> —Así, sólo que más grande. Ahí vas a ir tú si te repasas o dices esas cosas. (39)

However, when the fire, fueled by the papers, blazes, Juan claims to have seen the devil, which Vito denies:

> —¡El demonio! —chilló Juan de pronto—. ¿No viste saltar al demonio?
>
> —No— dijo Quico decepcionado.
>
> Los tres niños miraban el fuego como hipnotizados. Las pupilas de Quico estaban empañadas por una sombra de terror. Dijo la Vítora compadecida:
>
> —No era el demonio; era humo. (40)

Quico shows doubt at this statement and, after briefly asking Vito whether it was the cat, el Moro, in the fire, begins to question Juan, not the servant, on the nature of the devil:

> —¿Tiene alas el demonio, Juan?
>
> —Claro.
>
> —¿Y vuela muy de prisa, muy de prisa?
>
> —Claro.
>
> —Y si soy malo, ¿viene el demonio volando y me lleva al infierno?
>
> —Claro.
>
> —¿Y el demonio tiene cuernos?
>
> —Sí.
>
> —¿Y mocha?
>
> Juan levantó los hombros sorprendido.
>
> —Eso no lo sé— confesó. (40-1)

Although Quico's last question stumps Juan, Quico clearly views him as the authority on the matter over Vito, whose additions to the conversation he has largely ignored.

Likewise Ana turns to Isabel for information about the world around her, as we see in her many questions concerning the monster. Unlike Quico, however, who is constantly watched over, Ana's need to confide her doubts in her sister stems from the lack of a constant adult presence in her life. Erice explains this absence as the result of the adults' experience of war, relating it to his own childhood:

> A veces pienso que para quienes en su infancia han vivido a fondo ese vacío que, en tantos aspectos básicos, heredamos los que nacimos inmediatamente después de una guerra civil como la nuestra, los mayores eran con frecuencia eso: un vacío, una ausencia. Estaban —los que estaban—, pero no estaban. […] Pues porque habían muerto, se habían marchado o bien eran unos seres ensimismados desprovistos radicalmente de sus más elementales modos de expresión. ("Entrevista" 144)

This physical and psychological absence creates a haze of mystery around the adults of the early postwar period, a mystery that the children must seek to crack on their own. To do so, they look to each other, as we have seen, as well as to lore, which helps them to provide an explanation for the many secrets kept by the adults. Drawing from the little they hear from the adults, combined with information acquired through other means, such as film, the children create their own image of the world in which they live (Lomillos García 169).[78]

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[78] In his thesis *Una poética de la ausencia:* El espíritu de la colmena *de Víctor Erice*, Miguel Ángel Lomillos García describes film in this era, and particularly in *El espíritu de la colmena*, as a way for children to make sense of the "sphynx" that their parents represented, "uno de esos haces de luz que transportaban al fondo del secreto" (169). He

The presence or absence of adults marks a key difference in the evolution of child phantasmagoria in these works. In *Julia*, the conjuring of frightening images looks to compensate for the absence of Julia's mother in a crucial moment: that of her rape. Julia attempts to punish herself by increasing the distance between herself and her mother by imagining her mother dead. While she does seek consolation in the image of a mother figure, Eva, she is only partially successful, as she cannot convince herself that Eva is really present.[79] In *El espíritu de la colmena*, as noted above, the adult characters are emotionally distant if not actually physically absent, leaving the children largely to fend for themselves. It is telling that the scenes involving Isabel's more subversive play (strangling the cat, playing dead, leaping over the fire) all occur over a short period of time when the girls' father, seemingly the more attentive parent, is away on a trip.

As in *Julia*, Ana conjures up an adult presence—that of the monster, embodied by the Republican soldier—but still remains deeply troubled at the end of the film. Erice had in fact originally intended for the film to be framed by scenes of Ana in the present, still affected by her experiences as a child, but cut these scenes from the script before filming. According to Erice, the initial opening for the film featured the adult Ana traveling by train to her father's burial. On the way she has a nightmare: "Al final de la noche, Ana

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goes on to quote Erice himself as saying, "El cine ha sido nuestra única experiencia genuina" (qtd. In Lomillos García 169).

[79] We may note, as Anny Brooksbank Jones has done, that Julia seeks a substitute mother in older women, especially those in positions of authority (79). These relationships are short-lived, however, and in the end it is Julia's feelings of abandonment by Eva that push her to suicide.

tiene una pesadilla en la que revive la muerte de su padre en un contexto traumático. Sueña que muere a consecuencia del ataque de un enjambre de abejas y en su pesadilla ve a una niñita que contempla la escena con un aire absolutamente indiferente" (qtd. in Latorre 104). She wakes up and sees Frankenstein's monster, following which the scene transitions to that of the children at the movies (104). Although this scene was not included in the final version of the script, we may note the strong similarities between this sequence and Moix's novel.

In *El príncipe destronado*, on the other hand, the children (Quico, Juan, and their baby sister Cris) are rarely out of sight of their adult caregivers, who serve to mold their play, either by contradicting their interpretations of what they see, as we saw above when Vítora asserted that they had not seen the devil in the furnace, or encouraging them. Though the adults' intervention in the children's play is at times ambivalent, they are nevertheless an active presence and as a whole a consoling one. Throughout the novel adults are present to answer Quico's many questions and quell the fears inspired by his vivid imagination. While he often struggles to understand what he hears from the adults and may rely on his brother to clarify some issues, Quico nevertheless manifests a faith in and reliance on adults that is absent in the other two works. This sense of trust in adults to fill the gaps in his knowledge of the world prevents Quico from being fully thrust into the violent fantasy world seen in *Julia* and *El espíritu de la colmena*.

Compared to the main characters of these works, we may find that Delibes' Quico shows much greater promise for a happier future. Though *El príncipe destronado* touches on some of the same themes as we have seen previously, the general tone of the novel is lighter and more hopeful. Unlike the unsettling or ambiguous endings of the other works,

a tender moment, that of Quico's mother holding his hand until he falls asleep, closes Delibes' novel.[80] Belonging as it does to the same period as *Julia* and *El espíritu de la colmena* (it dates in fact to the same year as the latter), *El príncipe destronado* can thus reveal a different side of narrations featuring child phantasmagoria and their function in literature of the time.

It is worth noting that Delibes, born in 1920, is older than the rest of the writers and directors featured in this dissertation by some years, although he was writing contemporaneously. He is significantly older than Moix and Erice, who were both born in the 1940s. The slight age difference between Delibes and writers such as Ana María Matute and Carmen Martín Gaite, born in the mid-1920s, is crucial to understanding these writers' relationship to childhood and the war. The few years separating them allow Delibes to take an active part in the Civil War, rather than remaining a passive witness like so many of the "niños de la guerra." While, like so many of his contemporaries in the postwar period, Delibes had a predilection for child characters—apart from *El príncipe destronado*, we find child protagonists in the well-known *El camino* (1950) as well as several other works—his perspective varies slightly from younger novelists of the time. Critics such as Eduardo Godoy have observed that older postwar writers are more likely

[80] While it is true that the novel ends with the fairly pessimistic comment by Quico's mother that, "Lo malo es luego […], el día que falta Mamá o se dan cuenta de que Mamá siente los mismos temores que tienen ellos. Y lo peor es que eso ya no tiene remedio" (167), the mother's nurturing presence—absent in *Julia* and *El espíritu de la colmena*—is a concession to the possibility of happiness for the child.

to present a more benign view of childhood in comparison to the cruel and at times even murderous children in works by writers such as Matute and Juan Goytisolo.

Nevertheless, Delibes' child characters are not exempt from the issues troubling their contemporaries in the postwar years, and *El príncipe destronado* in particular depicts confused reactions to underlying tensions that are similar to those seen in *El espíritu de la colmena*. Political differences are evident in the conversation between Quico's parents, with Quico's father described as an idealized Francoist soldier and consistently associated with war. Antonio Mercero's 1977 film adaptation of the novel, *La guerra de papá*, further emphasizes this aspect, already presented fairly heavy-handedly in the novel, with scenes adapted to highlight the political message of the work as well as a new, war-related title. In one such scene, adapted from the one mentioned above in which Juan acts out his death, the action is moved from the playroom to their father's office. Rather than the pop gun mentioned in the novel, Juan and Quico play with a pistol they find hidden in their father's desk, greatly increasing the viewer's sense that their war games will eventually lead them to an unfortunate end. Their father's political affiliations, as well as its possible effects on the children, are abundantly clear as Juan waves the gun around in play, framed by a large photo of Franco or Falangist flags, as seen below.

Figure 16: Juan "shoots" Quico with his father's pistol while playing at the "guerra de papá." Note the flags to the right.

Both the film and the novel also contain veiled allusions to Quico's maternal grandfather having been killed by Franco's men. Following an argument, Quico's father says to his mother: "Esto no ocurriría si a tu padre le hubiéramos cerrado la boca a tiempo, en vez de andar con tantas contemplaciones" (70). The children in *El príncipe destronado* are indeed caught in the middle of fights between their parents, but nevertheless the youngest members of the family (Juan, Quico, and Cristina), who form the focal point of the narration, display a blind belief in their parents and authority in general.

This faith in authority manifests in Juan and Quico's games, which typically revolve around a struggle between "good" and "evil," or rather authority and subversion (cowboys and Indians, cops and robbers, their father and the "bad guys" in the war). They accept that good will win, and also that good will win by way of killing those who oppose it. Both Juan and Quico idolize authority figures and want to become one when they are

older. Juan, for example, remarks several times over the course of the novel that he wants to be a soldier: "Yo cuando sea mayor quiero ir a la guerra de Papá y matar más de cien malos" (155). Quico, on the other hand, states that he wants to become a police officer. Both propose to resolve any future issues by killing.

This relationship with authority marks a key difference between *El príncipe destronado* and the other two works studied in this chapter. In both *Julia* and *El espíritu de la colmena*, the young protagonists come to identify with someone who is seen as subversive and who is adversely affected by authority figures. For Julia it is her grandfather, don Julio, a known anarchist, and for Ana the Republican fugitive she finds in place of her monster. Through these dissident characters (through direct teaching in the case of Julia and through the soldier's death for Ana), the children learn to distrust those in control, starting with their own parents. This mistrust causes both of the girls to retreat into silence following their separation from the subversive figure, hiding their thoughts from the adults around them. As a consequence, they are more susceptible to the negative images in their own imagination, as they will not voice their fears. What began as consolation thus becomes a cage, trapping the children in their own phantasmagoria.

In the final scene of *El príncipe destronado*, the contrast between these three works is evident. Viewed in light of the opening of *Julia*, analyzed above, one can observe similarities in the protagonist's reaction to vague shadows in a dark bedroom:

> Quico permaneció unos segundos inmóvil, traspuesto, pero al oír el chasquido [de la puerta] abrió unos ojos terriblemente dilatados y […] divisó el resplandor que se adentraba por el montante y, en la penumbra, la inmovilidad amenazadora del

> Ángel de la Guarda y sus ojos y sus alas y, de improviso, los cuernos y el rabo y, entonces, gritó con todos sus pulmones:
>
> —¡Vito!
>
> Pero nadie acudió y el Demonio empezaba a rebullir y, a su lado, al pie de la cuna, divisó al Moro muerto y tornó a vocear:
>
> —¡¡Vito!! (163)

However, Quico has no need to turn to imaginary adult figures to ease his mind, as he is surrounded by numerous adults who are willing to come to his protection. Instead of Vito, Domi, another domestic servant, comes to check on Quico, but her presence acts as a paliative for his fears all the same: "al amparo de la Domi, el Demonio volvía a ser el Ángel de la Guarda, sin cuernos ni rabo, y el Moro, el orinal verde de plástico" (163). When Domi leaves, frightening images return—this time the doctor, Longinos, with a syringe, and a soldier with a dagger—and again disappear upon Domi's return. Quico begs Domi not to leave, and when she insists on doing so, he calls for his mother, who comes to his room and holds his hand until he falls asleep (166).

We see, then, that although the progression of child phantasmagoria in these three works is quite similar, the end result differs greatly because, in *El príncipe destronado*, Quico is able to voice his fears and then rely on adult intervention to allay them. Similar sources of tension or trauma exist in each of these works, frequently linked to the social situation of the time: political differences, the presence of death, marital strife, etc.[81] In

[81] In each of the works, the parents are at odds, and in all three the mother is implied to be having an affair. This division between the adults in the children's lives is a clear sign of the divided world of postwar Spain.

each of the works the main character undergoes an initiation into a more adult understanding of the horrors of the world and interprets them through supernatural or phantasmagorical images in play. In each case the main character's siblings serve to initiate him or her in dark distortions of reality.[82] However, where child phantasmagoria would normally lead to pleasure—the "gustosa sensación de terror" described in Delibes's work (93)—underlying trauma and the absence of adult consolation, a reflection on the writers' own childhood in the early postwar years, as evidenced in their other writings, allows Julia and Ana's phantasmagoria to take complete control.

Thus we see in these works different potential outcomes for the struggles in Spanish society of the Franco era. In *Julia* and *El espíritu de la colmena*, by no coincidence created by writers who had grown up under Franco's regime, the main characters internalize and silence their personal traumas, finding no appropriately sympathetic ear in authority figures who merely encourage the suppression of their experiences.[83] In the end it is considered to be enough that the protagonists are alive, despite what appear to be severe psychological issues. *El príncipe destronado*, on the other hand, although it also depicts underlying tensions and fears, presents a much more positive outlook for the children of the Franco regime. Inherited trauma is present, but the main character, Quico, is able to voice his fears and control them in collaboration with

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[82] In *Julia*, the participation of Julia's older brothers is less evident, but we may note that it is her brother Rafael who plants the image of their mother dead in Julia's mind.

[83] We may consider, for example, the affirmations of the doctor at the end of *El espíritu de la colmena* that Ana has suffered a shock, but that it will pass, "Se le pasará," and that she will forget, "Poco a poco irá olvidando."

adult authority figures (the domestics and his mother). Though this novel does not imply reconciliation between the two political factions represented by Quico's parents, it does indicate the possibility of overcoming fear and trauma through dialogue between the older and younger generations. This more optimistic image, though somewhat undercut by Quico's mother's final lines, is consistent with an older generation of writers and serves to highlight the sense of alienation and abandonment described by the children of the postwar. By examining these works and the instances of phantasmagoria and child folklore within them, we come to a clearer picture of this unique generation of writers and filmmakers.

Chapter IV

Playing a Part: Role Play in *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*

In previous chapters, we have seen how child characters use play to learn their role in society or to defy it. However, this process is by no means limited to children in the postwar Spanish novel. In the 1970s, we find a proliferation of works with adult protagonists re-examining their childhoods, two of which, *La prima Angélica* and *El cuarto de atrás*, we saw in Chapter II. In these we witnessed adults who had broken with their past and were seeking (voluntarily or not) to recover it. During the same decade, there is an opposite but no less powerful movement to break with the more recent past and its social norms by reinterpreting childhood, such as we may see in Esther Tusquets' *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* (1978). In this novel, the main character uses role play as a therapeutic device to attempt to come to terms with her past and her role in society. In her role play, which takes in elements from, among other things, literature, myth, and film, as well as her own fragmented memories, the protagonist rebels against the identity that was imposed upon her by her bourgeois family and patriarchal society and creates a new role for herself based on these cultural fragments.

While, as we have seen previously, children's play in earlier novels, especially in social realism, is used to construct identity in the face of the fragmentation of cultural identity resulting from the Civil War, in the last years of Franco's rule and the early years of the Transition we may observe the opposite phenomenon: a deliberate fragmentation of identity that breaks with the idea of the monolithic, unified cultural identity espoused

by the Francoist regime. Thus works like Juan Marsé's *Si te dicen que caí* (1973) and Eduardo Mendoza's *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta* (1975) present several versions of the "truth," leaving doubts as to the real sequence of events. In the former, the lines between reality and fiction, as presented in the boys' "aventis," are blurred to the point where one cannot give credibility to any of the stories; they may all be true, or they may all be false. No completely verifiable version of the truth is possible.

Likewise, in Tusquets' *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*, we find a narrative cluttered with cultural references, which are themselves twisted, contorted, and reinvented so as to cast doubt on any possible readings of the text. The plot itself is relatively straightforward and linear: the unnamed first person narrator, having been left by her husband, Julio, returns first to her mother's and then to her grandmother's house, has a brief affair with one of her students, Clara, and in the end breaks it off when Julio returns.[84] Despite this linearity, however—and in some occasions because of it—critics have not been able to come to a clear consensus regarding the interpretation of this work, alternatively reading it as a vindication of new roles for women in Spanish culture and as evidence of the failure of said vindication. The ending of the novel in particular, in which Clara whispers, "…y Wendy creció" (229), to the protagonist as she leaves, has generated much critical debate. Cultural identity, as presented in this novel, seems to leave more questions than answers.

The marked changes in the political climate of Spain coincide with drastic shifts in the perception of gender roles, due in part to these very political changes and in part to

[84] As the narrator/protagonist is nameless, I will refer to her throughout this chapter as simply "the narrator" or "the protagonist."

worldwide feminist movements of the seventies, which increasingly challenged social norms. As a literary trend, fragmented, antifrancoist narratives remain prevalent in so-called feminist literature well into the Eighties, as compared to works written by men, where their use drops off more sharply after Franco's death in 1975, giving way to a more straightforward and forward-looking narration style (Lirot 660). Critics such as Luis F. Costa have suggested that these stylistic differences between men and women correspond to unresolved difficulties for women to establish new social norms and find true independence in Spanish society even after the political scene had shifted (12-13). According to Costa, these variations stem from the fact that, while Spaniards were quick to renounce previously accepted political ideals, they did not necessarily view changing social norms for Spanish women, which were more deeply entrenched in Spanish society, to be as great of an imperative (13).

The inclusion of a lesbian affair in the novel marks yet another struggle against reigning social and political norms in what was still a relatively conservative society following Franco's death. At the time of the publication of Tusquets' debut novel, homosexuality was still punishable by law under the Ley de Peligrosidad y Rehabilitación Social, valid from 1970 to 1979 (Broman 4). In 1978, openly depicting a lesbian relationship in a novel was groundbreaking.[85] Acceptance of homosexuality was

[85] We may compare, for example, the narrator and Clara's relationship in Tusquets' work with those depicted in the earlier *Julia* (1970), by Ana María Moix, which bears many similarities to *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* and is in fact dedicated to Tusquets. Moix, however, only alludes indirectly to a possible lesbian relationship between her characters and does not even remotely approach Tusquets' candor in *El mismo mar*.

far from becoming a reality in the late seventies, particularly for women, and identifying as lesbian carries a stigma in Spanish society even today (4). Various scholars have cited the ambiguous ending of *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* as evidence that the narrator is not able to combat the social norms that prevent her from assuming a lesbian identity beyond the limits of the enclosed world she creates with Clara. Many critics of Tusquets' work have been concerned with the question of whether this novel portrays the triumph of the lesbian relationship over heterosexual norms or rather the ultimate victory of these norms as the narrator leaves Clara and returns to her husband. Whether the narrator is able to take on or reveal a lesbian identity is at the heart of the novel, and the difficulties the main characters face are revelatory of the period in which the work was written.

Thus we find in *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* a series of issues dealing with the protagonist's identity. In the end, there is no one single problem that pushes the narrator to take refuge in the play sphere. On a personal level, current issues with her husband, Julio, interlace with those related to her childhood and family (in particular feelings of inadequacy when compared to her mother), her lasting sense of abandonment following her former lover Jorge's suicide, and questions of sexual identity. These in turn tie into greater social issues: the status of women in society, political oppression under Franco, the corruption of the *haute bourgeoisie*, and so on. It is all of this that the narrator seeks to process—consciously or not—in her twenty-some day flight from her normal life together with Clara. Play will help her to come to terms with this, if only temporarily.

Though up to this point I have discussed primarily children's play, adult play also has its place in Spanish twentieth-century literature, particularly as we move towards Postmodernism. Here the novels themselves become more of a game, inviting the reader

to play along. However, even the subject matter itself of many of these works reflects ludic interests, and these adult games of the postmodern novel are closely tied to the children's games so frequently seen in social realism. These novels represent a blending of games past and present. In works such as *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*, as well as in Martín Gaite's *El cuarto de atrás*, adult play evokes the past in a more benign way, allowing the adult protagonist to come to approach it in a less traumatic way. In comparison to Martín Gaite's work, however, Tusquets takes her protagonists' play one step further, allowing them not only to recall the past, but to relive it under the veil of role play.

In their play, the characters in Tusquets' novels seek to return to the world of childhood, becoming children themselves. As Alejandro Zamora has noted in relation to *El amor es un juego solitario*, Tusquets' novels break down the adult-child dichotomy "para juntar ambos reinos, el ser adulto y el ser niño, en una experiencia de vida" (308). Nowhere is this more evident than in the characters' play. Indeed, throughout the trilogy comprised of *El mismo mar de todos los veranos, El amor es un juego solitario,* and *Varada tras el último naufragio*, the language of childhood is applied to adult games, mainly sexual ones.[86] The characters are called little girls or dolls, implying a reversal of adult roles. Likewise, the images applied to the adult characters are often those from

[86] Many critics, such as Barbara Ichiishi, also include *Para no volver* in this series due to similarities in themes and characters.

children's literature, fairy tales, or myth, all of which are linked to the childhood realm.[87] It is not entirely out of place, then, to think of such games in terms of children's play, despite their sexual nature.

Scholars have examined Tusquets' works, and *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* in particular, from many different points of view, but it is my belief that a close examination of play, particularly role play, in the novel can shed new light on the characters and their interpretation. Though a few critics, such as Kathleen Glenn and Mary Vásquez, have touched on the theme of role play, a central one to the novel, in their articles, they have done so only superficially and within the larger sphere of theatrical representation. While it is true that these two areas overlap, private, exclusive play should not necessarily be viewed in the same light as public spectacle. Indeed, such grand public displays seem to be controlled mainly, if not exclusively, by the two power groups heavily criticized in *El mismo mar*: the male patriarchy and the *haute bourgeoisie*. A closer examination of play in the novel reveals that two groups are "playing"—Catalan high society publically and the protagonist and Clara privately—and that these two types of play are diametrically opposed.

What can be gained, then, by viewing the narrator and Clara's role play in the light of play theory? To start, it allows us to break with the mainly negative perception of this relationship between Clara and the narrator (which is first and foremost a relationship based in the play sphere) tied to its end result: the seemingly definitive split between the

[87] Though here I have chosen to focus on *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*, it should be noted that many of the observations made in this chapter can equally be applied to the other novels in the trilogy, as well as other novels from this era.

two women produced after the narrator's husband Julio returns. Central to the definition of play for many play theorists is the idea that means are more important than ends, as we have seen in previous chapters. Play is not primarily about achieving set goals or producing a certain result; it is the process of playing that matters. Even in the case of more structured games, which present a goal of winning or losing, the worth of the game is not lost if the goal of winning is not achieved (Apter 16).[88] Adult play is no exception to this rule. By shifting the focus away from "good" or "bad" endings, we may better observe the working of the play environment that is so crucial to an understanding of Tusquets' novel. My interests in this chapter, though they will touch on the events leading up to the establishment of the play relationship and its subsequent end, will be focused mainly on the effects of play on the characters within the play sphere, as is the structure of the novel itself.

To further understand the workings of play in this novel, I draw on elements of reversal theory, defined by one of its founders, Michael J. Apter, as "a general theory of human behavior and experience derived from an analysis of the way that people experience their motivation" ("Frequently Asked Questions"). Reversal theory is based on the existence of pairs of opposing motivational states, each related to one of four domains of experience (means-ends, rules, transactions, or relationships) ("Welcome").

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[88] One could argue that such statements are less applicable in the case of professional athletes, for example. The classification of professional sports, which tend to be more goal-driven, as play is a topic of debate in play theory for this reason and others, for instance the lack of spontaneity and less voluntary nature. Some play theorists, such as John H. Kerr, argue that this distinction depends on how one plays the game (51).

This theory has been applied specifically to play, particularly in the context of games and sports, by both Apter and John H. Kerr in several publications over the decades since its introduction in the seventies. Of particular relevance for this study is the book *Adult Play*, edited by Kerr and Apter in 1991, which is relatively exceptional in its emphasis on adult rather than children's play. Though one could apply many of the theories proposed in this book to children's play as well—and in fact the distinctions between play and not play echo those of many play theorists concerned primarily with children—the focus on adult play allows for a range of considerations generally not included in discussions of children's play.

In his article "A Structural Phenomenology of Play," contained in the book *Adult Play*, Apter outlines some of the characteristics of adult play, which mirror to a great extent those of children's play. He starts by establishing the play space, which is as much mental as it is physical: "In play, we seem to create a small and manageable private world which we may, of course, share with others; and this world is one in which, temporarily at least, nothing outside has any significance, and into which the outside world of real problems cannot properly impinge" (14). For Apter, one of the most telling aspects of what he terms the "play-state" or "paratelic state" is the presence of a psychological "*protective frame* which stands between you and the 'real' world and its problems, creating an enchanted zone in which, in the end, you are confident that no harm can come" (15, emphasis original). He goes on to note that "Although this frame is psychological, interestingly it often has a perceptible physical representation: the proscenium arch of the theatre, the railings around the park, the boundary line of the cricket pitch, etc." (15). It is easy to see that Tusquets' protagonist also wishes to create

such a physical and psychological frame when she takes residence first in her childhood home and then in her grandmother's house. These are spaces which the narrator sees as isolated from the conflicts of the outside world and the passage of time, the only places in her world not subject to constant change, and thus comforting and protective.

The existence of this protective frame between the individual and full contact with outside reality does not, however, mean that the individual seeks to avoid stimulation. According to Apter, when one is in the paratelic state, one wishes to arrive at a highly emotional state, or "high arousal" (17). Emotions such as anger or fear, as well as happiness or excitement, when experienced within the paratelic state are pleasurable, whereas in the telic (non-playful) state, such high emotions would produce anxiety (18). As long as the individual maintains the protective frame, he or she is able to process these emotions and take pleasure in them. Indeed, while in the paratelic state, one actively seeks to enter into situations that one would otherwise consider to be dangerous in order to produce excitement. The paratelic state, then, serves as a controlled area in which to experience what would be emotionally unbearable under normal circumstances.

Apter posits that the individual's relationship with danger, be it physical or psychological, can be imagined as a series of concentric circles, as seen below. At the center is the harmful event itself, termed "trauma" in order to distinguish it from the mere risk of harm in the "danger" zone of the graphic. In the danger zone, danger exists, but the individual is confident that he or she has the tools to handle the danger to prevent harm. Apter uses the example of boating to demonstrate these differences. In this situation, drowning is the trauma. In the danger zone or confidence frame, one is aware of the danger of drowning, but is confident that this will not happen (because of confidence

in one's ability to swim, in others coming to one's rescue, etc.). In play, this is the desired frame, the zone of highest arousal.[89] The next ring represents the "safety zone," in which the individual feels at ease not because of confidence, but because the likelihood of danger is minimal. In Apter's boat example, the safety zone would be on the shore, near enough to be empathically aroused by the potential danger of the storm, but in general at a much lower level. The final ring, the "detachment zone" implies a complete separation of the individual from potential danger. Following with Apter's boat analogy, someone watching the scene from a far-off mountain or on television, reading about the sinking boat, being told the story of what happened, etc. is in this frame. Here the individual can safely get pleasure from parapathic fear without any personal risk (23-25).

[89] Apter notes, however, that a shift in the situation in this zone (a leak in the boat, to use his example), may cause the individual to lose confidence and draw him or her out of the paratelic state and into the telic by presenting a more concrete sense of danger. In this case, the individual must establish a new protective frame to reenter the paratelic state (23-24).

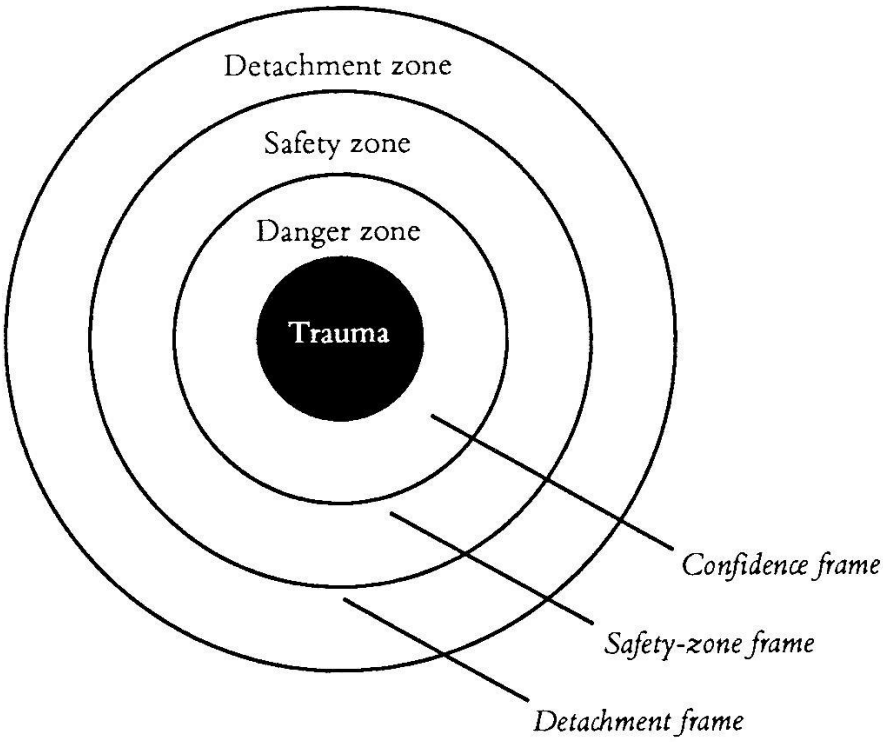

Figure 17: Apter's system of zones and frames (23).

The process found in Apter's work is precisely what one may observe in the narrator's play in *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*. First, the narrator establishes a protective frame by returning to her childhood home. While this is a physical space, it also corresponds to a psychologically protected zone. Indeed, we will see that rather than physical harm, what threatens the protagonist is largely psychological. Having placed herself within this protective frame, the narrator is able to enter into the playful paratelic state, into which she will then draw Clara. At first Clara is almost entirely passive, but over time she as well becomes emotionally involved, and she—even more than the protagonist—insists on maintaining the physical isolation of the play sphere. Once play has been initiated, the narrator will move closer and closer to the "danger zone"

surrounding the trauma of Jorge's suicide, the telling of which will constitute the peak of emotional arousal for the protagonist.

There are parallels between this process and one of the key source texts for *El mismo mar*, J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*. While critics have likened the narrator of *El mismo mar* to both Wendy and Peter Pan,[90] we may also compare her to Mrs. Darling and her relationship to Peter Pan. In Barrie's novelized version of the story, which he adapted from the earlier play version, Mrs. Darling, much like the narrator of *El mismo mar*, is holding back or hiding part of herself from the rest of the world. Early in the novel, we read the following:

> Her romantic mind was like the tiny boxes, one within the other, that come from the puzzling East, however many you discover there is always one more; and her sweet mocking mouth had one kiss on it that Wendy could never get, even though there it was, perfectly conspicuous in the right-hand corner. […] [Mr. Darling] got all of her, except the innermost box and the kiss. He never knew about the box, and in time he gave up trying for the kiss. (1)

The narrator of *Peter Pan* makes frequent references to this unattainable kiss throughout the novel. In the end, it is only Peter Pan who can draw this kiss out of her: "He took Mrs. Darling's kiss with him. The kiss that had been for no one else Peter took quite

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[90] See, for example, María Soliño's "When Wendy Grew Up: The Importance of Peter Pan in Ana María Matute's *Primera memoria* and Esther Tusquets' *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*" and A. Julián Valbuena-Briones' "El experimento narrativo de Esther Tusquets – una incursión estilística en *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*."

easily. Funny. But she seemed satisfied" (146). Likewise, Clara is able to reach a part of the narrator that no one else has been able to touch.

It is Clara, the Peter Pan to the narrator's Wendy, who establishes a protective circle around the main character and her storytelling, cementing the play sphere and restricting access to it for outsiders.[91] The narrator observes that Clara wishes to cut off contact with the outside world:

> sólo ante mi insistencia consiente en hacer por fin una llamada al exterior […], aunque el exterior —todo lo que queda al otro lado de la puerta— no debiera existir, y la voluntad de Clara está convirtiendo paso a paso la vieja mansión de la abuela en el castillo inexpugnable de la Bella del Bosque Encantado, y su deseo hace brotar y crecer alrededor de los muros una selva intrincada y espesa de setos y malezas. (182-3)

Within this barrier, Clara creates the play world she shares with the protagonist. Hesitant to even allow the narrator to talk on the phone with her family to assure them that all is well, Clara forms a cocoon around her, which represents on one hand the borders of the play sphere and on the other the protagonist's possibilities for transformation and rebirth.

This space shared with Clara is in sharp contrast with that of the protagonist's husband, Julio, and her mother. These characters favor constant change and motion towards the future, an aspect of the telic state, and their homes are devoid of any kind of

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[91] Soliño interprets the narrator as Peter Pan and Clara as Wendy, while Valbuena-Briones claims the opposite. Though the narrator does manifest desires to return to her childhood, implying a yearning for eternal youth, the latter argument seems more convincing in terms of parallels with Barrie's novel.

comforting refuge for the narrator, who says of them, "renuncié también a encontrar en esas casas rincones oscuros y cómplices, a establecer secretas alianzas subterráneas, y quizás sea precisamente para lograr esto por lo que Julio y mi madre me condenan a estas casas imposibles" (217). Julio and the protagonist's mother wish to keep her from her private imaginative world, preferring the monotony of life in society. In spite of this, the narrator states that "me permiten conservar mis dos ocultos pozos, dejan que no se venda el piso donde viví de niña con mis padres, y acceden a no cambiar nada de nada en el caserón de la abuela junto al mar: hay que dejar algún postrer refugio a los fantasmas derrotados, una última guarida donde puedan agonizar las fieras heridas de muerte" (217). However, though they grant the protagonist these last refuges, in which she is able to enter the play sphere, they are uneasy about her withdrawal from public life and seek to draw her back into it, towards the future and away from her past.

The desire for corners in which to hide, especially in spaces tied to the protagonist's youth, also serves as a means of temporarily stopping the advances of time or of reversing them to form a link with memory. In his book *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard cites corners as particularly tied to daydreams of the past (138-45). Corners are places of refuge in which the imagination can work freely: "every corner in a house, every inch of secluded space in which we like to hide, or withdraw into ourselves, is a symbol of solitude for the imagination; that is to say, it is the germ of a room, or of a house" (136). In the restricted space of the corner, the mind is protected from the influence of others, and thus has free reign to explore the recesses of the psyche. Therefore the narrator's return to her grandmother's house, full of corners in which to hide, is tied to her inward journey to her childhood self.

Bachelard also notes that "Consciousness of being at peace in one's corner produces a sense of immobility, and this, in turn, radiates immobility. An imaginary room rises up around our bodies, which think that they are well hidden when we take refuge in a corner" (137). This immobility is what the protagonist finds when she returns to her childhood home, to her dark corners. In contrast to the outside world—the world of Julio and the protagonist's mother in *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*—which never ceases to move, in a corner she seems able to stop the movement of both space and time. We read that the narrator "[tiene] todo el tiempo. […] Al término de muchos naufragios, [ha] recobrado el tiempo" (28), and exalts in her freedom from time constraits saying, "Todo el tiempo ante mí: sin hitos, sin compromisos, sin horarios, sin nadie que me espere a ninguna hora en ninguna parte" (29). The narrator stops time, opening herself up to memory, in order to "recontar[se] a [sí] misma […] las interminables, las inagotables viejas historias" (29). The sense of peace that the narrator is lacking in her mother and Julio's brightly illuminated, corner-less space, she is able to find to some extent in this play space, which will deepen in her relationship with Clara. With Clara, the narrator draws further and further into her corner, immobilized in the cocoon Clara creates for her, and also into her past.

By combining the security of the play sphere and the cooperation of Clara, the narrator is able to engage with her past and discover forgotten elements of herself. The communal nature of play has an important part in this process. In *Role Playing and Identity: The Limits of Theatre as Metaphor*, Bruce Wilshire posits that theatre—which implies a community of participants—allows the individual to come to conclusions about him or herself in relation to the rest of the world in a way that is not possible for the

isolated individual. According to Wilshire, one can only discover some tendencies of interaction between people in the physical presence of others (17). Thus one must come out of isolation to shed a light on certain aspects of his or her being. Wilshire comments that theatre magnifies human conditions, drawing attention to them: "Through the analysis of theatre's fictions we can see 'writ large' the theatre-like conditions of the coherence and being of actual selves—large enough to see conditions which would otherwise be easily missed" (4). He further notes that in life

> there is no transcendent or ideal observer—or at least this observer does not communicate at all with us—and we humans stand together, along with other things of nature, facing in one direction only and toward a void. We cannot turn to look directly at each other. Then, for us to put the mirror of theatre up to nature, and up to our common nature, may be the only way (or perhaps the only first way) to see certain features of our own looking faces and selves. Reality, then, would be graspable by us only in and through appearances, some of which would be irreducibly artistic and fictional ones. (5)

Though Wilshire is skeptical of the use of role play outside of a theatre setting, his statements on the effect of theatre can be useful in an analysis of *El mismo mar*, especially given the often blurred lines between private role play and theatre in this as well as other works by Tusquets.

The use of role play as self-reflection is particularly noteworthy when one considers the roles given to Clara in *El mismo mar*. Several critics have noted Clara's

function as a reflection or double of the narrator.[92] Mercedes de Rodríguez even goes so far as to view Clara as merely an interior coping device for the protagonist rather than a separate character (134). In her interactions with the protagonist, Clara takes on the role of the spurned lover, as the narrator views herself, but at the same time plays the part of the nurturing caregiver, embodied by the narrator's childhood nurse, Sofía. This duality allows the protagonist also to take on new roles. With Clara, the narrator is able to realize that she is both Beauty and the Beast, Ariadne abandoned on Naxos and also Theseus.[93] Within the play sphere, the narrator can choose her own role, rather than taking the one given to her by Jorge with his suicide: "esta trampa ridícula, esta ratonera grotesca en que me asfixio y donde han agonizado todas las esperanzas y todos los proyectos de futuro" (208). With Clara, the narrator takes on Jorge's role, abandoning her. Clara, however, is able to rise above this abandonment, representing perhaps a glimmer of hope for the narrator's new identity created in play.

Clara's playing the role of both maternal figure (Sofía) and reflection of the narrator herself allows the narrator to revise her own deep-rooted negative vision of herself, which stems back to her dissimilarity to her mother. Servodidio comments on the difficulty the protagonist has both as a child and as an adult to see herself mirrored in the image of her mother, who she holds up as a standard of beauty and perfection (194).

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[92] See for example Mirella Servodidio's "A Case of Pre-Oedipal and Narrative Fixation: *The Same Sea as Every Summer*."

[93] It is worth noting, however, that although the narrator begins to break with her own image of herself, the dualities present in these pairings are still very much based on traditional male-female power relations.

Citing D.W. Winnicott's theory that the infant views the mother's face as a mirror to his or her own, Servodidio highlights the narrator's perceived inadequacy and therefore her inability to identify with the maternal image, casting herself as "other" (192-4). Similarly, her daughter, Guiomar, who is just as distant as her grandmother both physically and emotionally, fails to reflect the narrator's image (195). Throughout the novel, the protagonist expresses both her desire to be understood by and her frustration with these two characters, from whom she feels isolated.

Unable to identify with her mother or her daughter, according to Servodidio, the protagonist must look elsewhere for a positive mirroring image (195). As a child, she will turn to Sofía, her nanny, for maternal comfort, but Sofía's presence in her life is fleeting due to her expulsion from the family following the revelation of her affair with the narrator's father. It is Clara who will fill this gap. Though the narrator points out that Clara does not physically resemble Sofía when Clara openly imitates the nanny's gesture of waking her up with a glass of cold orangeade, she also notes that Clara has "la misma mirada de Sofía" (164), drawing attention not to the two women's features, but to their gaze, a gaze later revealed to be one of weakness before their lovers, a feeling that the narrator knows well from her relationship with Jorge (167). Thus we find that in spite of differences in appearance (Sofía's beauty contrasts with Clara and the narrator's plain features), the act of looking joins the three women in a common sense of vulnerability and eventual abandonment.

In drawing these parallels between Clara and Sofía, however, the narrator also places herself in the role of her father, the emotionally detached male figure who, despite his apparent indifference to the fate of the women surrounding him, nevertheless

succeeds in determining their actions. In this way, the protagonist reverses, if only temporarily, the systems of power in which she has always been the weaker party, first under her father and then under Jorge. In her affair with Clara, the narrator acts out her relationship with the dominant men in her life in a reversal of roles. Thus we see that Clara, in her role as Sofía, fulfills two distinct but not separate functions: on one hand, Clara acts out the mirroring maternal gaze, permitting the type of correspondence that the narrator has fruitlessly sought out in her mother and her daughter, and on the other, Clara allows the narrator to step out of her usual role and take back control of her own future.

Clara is not the only one whose actions parallel those of Sofía, however. The narrator's reflections on her nanny make it clear that Sofía's story sets patterns that she herself would later follow. Apart from the power relations with men seen above, Sofía and the narrator transform their own past into fictional accounts, adopting separate personas to talk about themselves. The narrator recalls: "[Sofía] me contaba […] fascinantes historias de hombres y mujeres que había conocido y que yo creía casi siempre que era su propia historia sólo que camuflada bajo otros personajes inventados" (165). We can see in these stories, told to the narrator as a child, a precedent for the narration in those that she relates to Clara as well as to the reader. Although the protagonist of *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* favors childhood fairy tales and myth over Sofía's stories of reality, which she felt were "más fascinantes, infinitamente más mágicas y difícilmente asimilables" (165), both women paradoxically use the mask of fiction to reveal aspects of their own lives.

The supposed masking of reality or creation of it through the use of literary sources such as myth, fairy tales, and children's fiction has been a source of debate for

many scholars of Tusquets' works. Rosalía V. Cornejo-Parriego, for example, affirms that the composition of identity in this way is emblematic of the narrator's gender performance, citing sources such as Judith Butler (57). For Paul J. Smith, the lesbian affair in the novel represents "at best an island surrounded by the sea of cultural convention" (qtd. in Cornejo Parriego 59). Glenn maintains that the use of these stories is a form of escapism, by which the narrator avoids dealing with the real issues in her life, and highlights the vacuous nature of the costumes and masks that appear in the text, which disguise the fact that those who wear them "have no true self to hide" (38). For such critics, both the literary allusions and examples of play are nothing more than an illusion, and play's effects, though perhaps momentarily satisfying, in the end are insubstantial.

One of the issues complicating interpretations of Clara and the protagonist's play in the novel is the presence of two separate "games," so to speak. In addition to those played by the two women in private, we have that of the Catalan bourgeoisie, which serves to mask a vacuous social set, all appearance and no substance. This public spectacle in a "pulido universo de cartón piedra" (16), characterized by references to masks and theatre, is in stark contrast to the narrator and Clara's intimate play. Though the narrator initially admits to getting pleasure from what she terms the farces of the adult world, she longs for the sacred play of childhood, where imagination becomes reality:

> He de reconocer que también a mí me gusta representar, me gusta disfrazarme, me gusta sumergirme en esta interminable sucesión de farsas que se inició en la adolescencia: antes de la adolescencia no había farsas, sólo juegos, y los juegos han sido y son siempre sagrados, nacemos y crecemos en el mundo sagrado de los

> juegos —donde todo es real— para desembocar después en esta mascarada de adultos. (99)

As we see here, according to the narrator, the move to adolescence marks an entry into the falsehood and deception of society, where everyone wears a mask and nothing is real. In childhood, on the other hand, one can believe in games and everything is possible. Over the course of the novel, the narrator and Clara will gradually move from the adult world of public spectacle, seen for example in their visit to the theater, bourgeois adult farce *par excellence*, to an intimate imitation of childish games.[94]

It is no coincidence that images of childhood mark Clara's entry into the play sphere in its most clearly delineated form, the narrator's grandmother's house. When Clara first enters this space, she finds the protagonist leafing through books from her childhood and copies of the illustrations in them that she drew as a child (150-1).[95] The narrator does not take much note of Clara until she happens upon an illustration of Wendy and is reminded of Clara's interest in *Peter Pan* (152-3). This prompts the narrator to engage Clara in play. Clara herself becomes an embodiment of childhood, melding with the play space: "la casa, Clara, mi infancia, son de repente una misma cosa" (153). The two women's love-making cements this bond between the narrator, Clara, the

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[94] Clara maintains a certain distance from the "games" of the Catalan bourgeoisie throughout the novel, participating as if against her will in order to please the narrator. In their relationship, Clara possesses a sense of candor that is disquieting to the narrator, as this openness breaks with her concept of the game of love.

[95] The presence of these illustrations is also significant, as they mark the narrator's childhood attempts to assimilate and reinterpret the tales received from the adults.

space, and childhood, a joining highlighted by a reference to Clara (Peter Pan) recovering her shadow (155).[96] Following this, the narrator makes the decision not to take Clara to the master bed that she has so often shared with Julio, but rather to the children's room (156). In this way, Tusquets emphasizes the break between the games of the adult world and the narrator's return to childhood with Clara.

In this we can observe that, despite critical readings to the contrary, the protagonist's relationship with Clara has a revelatory rather than a masking effect, as it brings to the surface the long-hidden realities of the past. The narrator states:

> Únicamente ella, a lo largo y a lo ancho de mis mil años de soledad, ha querido y ha podido romper el aislamiento, adentrarse en mis laberintos oscuros, y merece que yo le entregue —tembloroso, miserable y enfermo— este yo más profundo, y por más profundo más herido, esta realidad última, que yace soterrada y letal por debajo de todas mis apariencias y mis medias verdades, por debajo de todos mis disfraces… (188)

This conclusion leads the narrator to share for the first time the story of Jorge, in an attempt to break out of her state of isolation. Only within the play sphere and the play relationship established with Clara is the narrator able to face this most painful moment of her past.

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[96] We may also link this reference to Wendy's first encounter with Peter Pan, which will lead to her departure for the fantasy world of Neverland, as an indication that the characters have fully entered the (childhood) play sphere.

The revelation of her traumatic past is a pivotal moment for the narrator and one which may lead to psychological growth. In her book, *The Apple of Earthly Love: Female Development in Esther Tusquets' Fiction*, Barbara F. Ichiisi argues:

> The therapeutic "acting out" of her childhood and adolescent selves, and a confrontation with the ghosts of her past, enable her to understand who she is and why her life story has taken the shape it has. The painful process of "coming to terms" with her own past is the necessary prelude to further psychic development. […] With the new enlightenment she has gained, she is now ready to return to the world of experience as a more mature, self-sustaining adult. (42)

While the end of the novel remains somewhat ambiguous, it is clear that, at least within what we may call the play space of this work, progress is made towards voicing previously suppressed memories and thoughts. Psychologically the narrator's short fling with Clara seems to be a step forward towards a more open relationship with the past.

With Clara, the narrator is able to articulate her inner self in ways that had never before been possible, and with words that she had never before pronounced:

> palabras increíbles, tan extrañas, palabras que no he dicho nunca a ningún hombre, que no dije ni siquiera nunca a Jorge, ni siquiera a Guiomar cuando era chiquita […], palabras que ignoraba yo misma que estuvieran en mí, en algún rincón oscuro de mi conciencia, quietas y a la espera de ser un día pronunciadas, […] tantos años ocultas esta voz y estas palabras en un centro intimísimo y secreto. (138)

Clara engages a different side of the protagonist, one that not even Jorge, the narrator's most intimate love relationship up to this point, or Guiomar, her daughter, could access.

In the scene in which these words appear, the narrator and Clara are at the theater, the temple of the Catalan upper class. Despite the public setting, this outing quickly turns to an intimate affair. Though the two women remain in public, their actions isolate them in the eyes of the narrator, who remarks that she is "sola […], aislada aquí con esta niña grande y flaca" (138). Clara's sexual advances draw the narrator out of the bourgeois public spectacle and into a more intimate play sphere, though they do not physically move from the theater. The narrator moves into herself, again making reference to a dark corner, a "rincón oscuro" (138), this time a corner of her consciousness.

The way in which Jorge's story is told is also significant, as it mimics the language of the game, the language of childhood: "Empiezo para Clara la Historia de Jorge como se empiezan casi todos los cuentos —como si así, bajo el disfraz de un cuento, pudiera doler quizás un poco menos: Éranse una vez un rey y una reina…" (189). The use of fairy-tale imagery in this way, and indeed the narrator's relationship with fairy tales in general, recalls children's storytelling strategies and has clear therapeutic benefits.[97] John Pickering and Steve Attridge suggest that the use of metaphor and narrative by children may provide greater insight into underlying issues than more literal forms of narration (418). These more playful and creative stories may also enable the

[97] For example, in fairy tales written by children rather than for them, the young writers show greater compassion for the antagonists than in traditional folktales, focusing on reconciliation of opposing sides rather than a violent demise (Tatar 280). It should be no surprise, then, that the narrator in *El mismo mar*, who views herself as going against the norms even as a child, should both sympathize and identify with the antagonists of these stories.

child to give order to difficulties in his or her own life in a way that would not be possible in a more straightforward recounting of events:

> Perhaps the most useful function of the child's stories is to give shape to that which has fallen into shape-lessness. […] Metaphor creates an arena in which understanding and the process of linking disparities can happen in relative safety and without the child having to formally recognize the limits of his power to order the world as he would like. (427)

Pickering and Attridge, following the theories of Vico, posit that through metaphor, the child is able to access deeper levels of emotional awareness (417). We see then that in echoing the childhood formulas for the fairy tale, the narrator of *El mismo mar*, far from emotionally removing herself from past trauma, employs methods that will further reveal it as well as allow her to process it in a productive way.

This type of fantastical imagery linked to traumatic experiences is also reflective of Tusquets' generation's relation to the war and its aftermath.[98] In her book *The Child in Spanish Cinema,* Sarah Wright discusses the transmission of trauma through fragmented stories of the past to the next generation, which result in images of childhood filled with monsters and ghosts (or minotaurs and angry gods, as we observe in *El mismo mar*). The depiction of this inherited trauma is characteristic of works of the late Franco era and Transition, among which Wright cites Carlos Saura's *Cría cuervos* (1976) and Víctor Erice's *El espíritu de la colmena* (1973) (96-7). In these films, as well as in many novels of the period, the child represents the point of contact with past trauma (in many cases the

[98] Born in 1936, Tusquets was only three years old when the war ended.

trauma of war). The child is recognizant of the traumatic experience, but cannot fully process it because of his or her lack of comprehension.

In her discussions of the "generation of postmemory," Marianne Hirsch highlights a narrative structure similar to what we find in *El mismo mar* and also cites the fundamental role of the family in the transmission of memory (110). She quotes Eva Hoffman as saying, "I took in that first information as a sort of fairy tale deriving not so much from another world as from the center of the cosmos: an enigmatic but real fairy tale. . . . The memories—not memories but emanations—of wartime experiences kept erupting in flashes of imagery; in abrupt but broken refrains" (qtd. in Hirsch 109). One could easily apply these words to the narration in *El mismo mar*, in which fragments of lived experience—some, in the case of the stories about the narrator's grandmother, clearly passed down from other sources—mix with fairy tale and mythical imagery to form an uncertain picture of the protagonist's youth. Born and raised in a conflictive society as well as an often troubled family, the narrator carries both the myths of the traumatic experiences of the war and postwar periods and the fantasies of the freedom of her grandmother's time, and as the carrier of these stories, she passes them on in her play to Clara, emblematic of the next generation.

The alternations in the psychological state of the narrator that accompany the move to the play or paratelic state in Tusquets' novel mirror changes in the narrative structure of the work. Critics have noted the division of the novel into three distinct sections: introduction, body, and conclusion. In her article "The Prison-House (and Beyond): *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*," Geraldine Cleary Nichols highlights the shift between the linear narration in the first and last portions of the novel and the less

rigid structure of the longer middle section, which describes the narrator's affair with Clara. According to Nichols, one can ascribe these differences to a departure from and eventual return to a masculine, goal-oriented, linear writing style, with the middle portion approaching a more feminine cyclical and fluid representation of time and space (373-74). This temporary break with the male novelistic structure marks a rupture with social norms and patriarchal values, inserting "otherness, or difference, within the concept of sameness, identity" (366). The protagonist and Clara have, in short, broken with the identity imposed upon them, if only briefly.

The fact that this break with societal norms is marked by the sea-dry land dichotomy is also significant. Apart from a superficial connection to the story of the Little Mermaid, Broman notes that references to the sea and nature are common in twentieth-century lesbian fiction as a metaphor for oral sex (24). Paola Solorza also remarks in her article "Cuerpo y deseo: intermitencias del (des-)orden en *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* de Esther Tusquets" that such images of fluidity act as a challenge to the solidity of the dominant discourse:

> Esta concepción de lo fluido que se opone al Orden, en tanto deseo *desviado*, es el modo en que Luce Irigaray define el "imaginario femenino", diferenciándolo del imaginario masculino propuesto por el psicoanálisis –discurso mayoritario y dominante–, una teoría de los fluidos opuesta a la racionalidad falogocéntrica identificada siempre con la mecánica de lo sólido, implica también un modo de diversificar y desplazar el deseo. (171)

Though in this quote Solorza deals primarily with a feminine-masculine binary, elsewhere in her article it is clear that it is in fact the women engaged in a homosexual

relationship, occupying the margins of society, who take up this attack on not only masculine but also heterosexual norms (170).

Reading these comments on the structure of *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*, one cannot help but draw parallels with the distinctions between the telic and paratelic state. Viewed in this way, we have an image of a state of "non-play," the telic state, which gives way to play, only to return to the telic state at the end of the novel.[99] Thus we have a long immersion in the paratelic state framed by the buildup and the breakdown of the game and its correlative environment. What Nichols terms as male discourse in the first and third sections of the novel—behavior that is "directed" and "goal oriented" (374)—certainly pertains to the telic state. As Apter observes, "In the telic state the end determines the means, the means being used simply as in the attempt to gain the end. Thus, some need is recognized, or goal chosen, and then a suitable activity is selected which is intended to produce satisfaction of this need or attainment of the goal" (16). This is in contrast with the paratelic state, in which "this relationship [between means and end] is turned on its head. Here the activity comes first and the goal is secondary and chosen in relation to the activity" (16). A linear progression towards a goal, then, would be an indication of presence in the telic state.

On the other hand, the middle section of the novel, marked by the expression of "un amor vacío de programas y de metas" (81), displays many of the characteristics of the paratelic state. Beyond the establishment of the protective barrier described above, the

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[99] While one could argue that the narrator is playing society's "game" in the first and third sections of the novel, the forced nature of her participation in these games, especially in the final section, precludes her entrance into the paratelic state.

play sphere marks a breaking with established norms and the creation of a new reality. As we have seen in previous chapters, one of the key elements of play is breaking with established norms and constructing a new set of rules within the game. In *El mismo mar*, the narrator indicates that Clara attempts not only to block out the outside world, but to present a new version of it:

> mientras Clara anula con su empeño constante y apasionado la realidad exterior —si es que existe una realidad, si existe acaso algo exterior—, mientras mantiene alejado este supuesto mundo ajeno a nosotros y tal vez hostil al otro lado de setos y murallas […], va construyendo entre tanto a base de palabras otra realidad distinta, situada en no se sabe bien qué lugar del espacio y del tiempo. (183-4)

Though Clara's new reality is unsustainable in the outside world, and even within the two women's interior space, this sense of security allows the narrator to confront Jorge's suicide.[100]

This contrast or conflict between the telic and paratelic states also manifests in the literary and cultural references which pepper the novel. The narrator gives great importance, for example, to stories that involve passing from one world to another, such as the ever-important *Peter Pan*. In Barrie's novel version of this work, we can clearly see that Neverland is the child's circular, paratelic counterpoint to the adult's linear, telic

[100] In another veiled reference to *Peter Pan*, Clara, like Peter Pan, seems incapable of understanding the protagonist's need for solid food, showing Clara's incorporation into the fantasy world, while the narrator, like Wendy, remains tied to the outer world and earthly needs (182-3).

world. Barrie first presents Neverland as a sort of mental space for the child, characterized by disorder and movement:

> I don't know whether you have ever seen a map of a person's mind. Doctors sometimes draw maps of other parts of you, and your own map can become intensely interesting, but catch them trying to draw a map of a child's mind, which is not only confused, but keeps going round all the time. There are zigzag lines on it, just like your temperature on a card, and these are probably roads in the island, for the Neverland is always more or less an island. (5)

Like *El mismo mar*'s refuge in the narrator's grandmother's house, Neverland is a space of suspended reality, away from the push of adult (male) linear time. And as in *El mismo mar*, *Peter Pan* opens and closes with Wendy firmly in the telic state, knowing that she must grow up.

Likewise, another of the main literary references for Tusquets' novel, Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid," follows this tripartite structure, moving from one world to another over the course of the tale. In "The Little Mermaid" we find a mirror image of the changing states in *Peter Pan*, since where the setting of the latter passes from the concreteness of life in England, full of concerns about money, the future, jobs, etc., to the fantasy world of Neverland, the little mermaid moves from the fantasy realm of her father's kingdom under the sea to the human world and then back into fantasy at the end when she joins the daughters of the air. Nevertheless, the human world is the stuff of legends for the mermaids, and particularly for the little mermaid:

> Nothing made the princess happier than learning about the human world up above. She made her grandmother tell her everything she knew about ships and

> towns, people and animals. She found it strangely beautiful that flowers up on the land had a fragrance—at the bottom of the sea they had none—and also that the trees in the forest were green and that the fish flying in the trees up there sang so clearly and beautifully that it was delightful to listen to them. (127)

Like the narrator in *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*, the little mermaid will try to escape a seemingly unavoidable fate—turning to sea foam when she dies—by means of a love affair. Her grandmother tells her the conditions required for her to live eternally:

> Only if a human loved you so much that you meant more to him than his father and his mother. If he were to love you with all his heart and soul and had the priest place his right hand in yours with the promise of remaining true here and in all eternity—then his soul would glide into your body and you too would share in human happiness. (140)

Thus the little mermaid enters her fantasy world—dry land—to escape the finality of a mermaid's death.

This story is also relevant to the purpose of the narrator and Clara's role play in the novel, which is on one hand to separate themselves from the "real" world, and on the other to delve into the narrator's past in a way that was not possible outside of the play sphere. Their play, which mirrors the plot of these children's tales, combines this physical and emotional displacement in a process common to the female *Bildungsroman*. Ichiisi posits that the narrator must go on a quest for a connection both with others and with her inner core (38-39). Drawing parallels with "The Little Mermaid," Ichiisi states that "In a world where love is devalued and falsified the women feel split, severed from the emotional core of their being, an inner split which corresponds to a schism in the outer

world between the values represented by women and the prevailing attitudes of a male-dominated world" (38). For the narrator, as for the little mermaid, love seems to provide a means for transcending their current state (37).

This transcendence via alternation of one's physical or psychological self (or the inability to do so) is a common thread in the assorted cultural references in *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*. In addition to the repeated theme of moving from one space to another, the fairy tale and mythological references in the novel have at their heart the idea of transformation. One need only consider the title of Ovid's well-known *Metamorphoses* to see the importance that metamorphosis or transformation has in the area of myth. Although the most frequently referenced mythological tale in the novel, that of Ariadne, does not involve a physical metamorphosis, the fact that the narrator connects her own story with the Classical tradition opens up the possibility of altering one's reality and identity. In Andersen's work, the source for most of the fairy tales included in the novel, transformation is also a recurrent theme. Among Andersen's tales referenced in the novel we may include, apart from "The Little Mermaid," "The Nightingale" and "The Ugly Duckling." In these stories, what was considered ugly is made beautiful in the eyes of those who had rejected it. In "The Nightingale" the real nightingale, despite its plain appearance, proves superior to the more elegant artificial one, while in "The Ugly Duckling" the "duckling" that all the others had mocked turns out to be a swan. Society is forced to reevaluate these characters, transforming their image.

The idea of transformation, however, which breaks down cultural norms, is not acceptable to all, and those who would maintain the integrity of the status quo oppose the successful completion of such metamorphoses, as we see in *El mismo mar*. In his book

Imaginary Social Worlds: A Cultural Approach, John L. Caughey points out the threat that fantasy can pose to the established social order, noting that it goes against the idea of a single, unified reality:

> The paramount reality of everyday life is not as solid as it seems. Because it is fragile and precarious and subject to destruction and collapse, the social order of everyday life needs to be enforced, protected, and maintained. Other realities—including visits to imaginary worlds—constitute potential threats to the stability of the social order and to the peace of mind of individual societal inhabitants. Thus indulgence in fantasy may be taken as a dangerous sign that the individual is no longer appropriately loyal to official, socially sanctioned reality. (29-30)

Because of this, according to Caughey, individuals who build up fantasies are labeled as "crazy," as they seem to oppose cultural norms. Likewise, the protagonist of *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* must abandon the space she has dedicated to her fantasy world, her grandmother's house, for her home with Julio, which is marked by its adherence to societal norms and changes in fashion (216-17).

When Julio takes the protagonist away from her grandmother's house, he pulls her out of the paratelic state as he removes her from the play environment. The narrator characterizes Julio himself throughout the novel as lacking imagination and creativity, a filmmaker producing unrealistic, predictable films. We have taken several steps back from the emotional "danger zone," away from the immediacy of direct contact in role play, away from the sense of vitality of the theatre, to the cold detachment of a movie that does not interest the protagonist. Julio is firmly planted in the telic state. Despite his involvement in film, which would indicate some engagement with the play sphere, Julio

merely acts as a cog in the wheel of the film production process and his creative output consists of repeating what movies in London and New York had already done long before (208). Even his separations from the protagonist, as a result of which she initially returns to her childhood home, form "una chata historia incansablemente repetida que era preciso cortar antes de llegar a la nausea insoportable de su infinito" (16). Julio represents conformity and rationality; like his tendency to constantly alter the décor, he acts out a never-ending series of small changes in an attempt to hide the fact that in the end everything stays the same (216-7).

Passiveness and emptiness mark the narrator's return to her home—Julio's home—after dinner. In contrast with her play space with Clara, the room to which Julio brings the protagonist is "una caja para mariposas muertas, una caja de coleccionista a dimensiones siderales, todo blanco y cristal" (214). The protagonist becomes an actress in one of Julio's films, likening the space to a movie set. As such, she allows him to manipulate her body, but does not react emotionally, as she knows now that she is following a script: "mientras él me lame, me toca, me chupa, me babea, me muerde, yo no siento ya nada —ni por mí ni por Clara—, porque sé que ahora todo se desarrollará inexorable hasta el final" (214). The protagonist becomes an inert plaything: "en esta película que definitivamente no me interesa ni me creo, el hombre coleccionista me manipula, me maneja, me dispone en posturas distintas como una muñeca bien articulada" (214). Just before Julio penetrates her, the protagonist makes a reference to Wendy, saying, "no es posible ni volar, ni caminar sobre el mar, no es posible ni siquiera moverme" (214). Like Wendy, the protagonist has been expelled from the play world forever, no longer able to fly.

The narrator describes this expulsion from the play sphere upon her separation from Clara as a sort of death, drawing parallels between her ability to express emotions (albeit painful ones) in her relationship with Clara and the act of living: "Clara se llevará con ella, espero, lo que queda todavía de mi capacidad de sufrir —aunque me deje la nostalgia— y no me dolerá siquiera ya el haber perdido esta postrera, extemporánea, posibilidad de volver a la vida" (228-29). Although, as we can see in this quote, her decision to leave Clara is voluntary (despite the fact that the narrator views it as inevitable), the impetus for this choice is Julio's return and subsequent removal of the protagonist from the shelter of the play world, which then leads to a realization of her overwhelming suffering, followed by a retreat into passivity. In the end, rather than living the narrator opts to continue on as a "zombie" (228), allowing others to decide her every move. Here we see that the metamorphosis that the narrator undergoes in the play state has not come to its desired end. Rather than emerging from the cocoon that Clara has created for her ready to fly off, the protagonist instead ends up in Julio's display case for dead butterflies, pinned into her role in society and unable to escape. Like Andersen's little mermaid, the protagonist's transformation does not lead to her salvation through love.[101]

A heavily adapted version of some of Andersen's stories printed from the late 1960s to early 1980s in Spain, published with the title *Cuentos de Andersen*, presents a similar version of painful resignation to the status quo. This surprisingly negative

[101] Although Andersen's tale ends on a positive note, as the mermaid is given the chance to win eternity through good works, it is not the prince's love, which she never fully attains, that brings about this ending, but rather the mermaid's own self-sacrifice.

adaptation, sanitized for small children, eliminates all references to death and with them all hope of salvation or happiness for the little mermaid. In this version, as in Andersen's original, after saving the prince from drowning, the mermaid decides to take human form and exchanges her voice for a pair of human legs. As she is not able to speak, the prince marries another. However, rather than ending with the mermaid choosing to sacrifice herself in exchange for the prince's life, thus gaining the possibility of eternal life, here the mermaid returns to the sea, where she regains her voice and is promptly chastised by her sisters for wanting to overstep her boundaries: "No llores más, hermanita […]. Nosotros no podemos conquistar el amor de un ser humano. Debes resignarte" (Sotillos). It ends with the mermaid forever weeping over her fate:[102]

> Volvía a tener su dulce voz, pero no le servía de nada porque, como estaba muy triste, no tenía ganas de cantar.
>
> Algunas noches, la sirena, sentada sobre una roca, contempla los barcos que pasan.
>
> Y llora, llora por un imposible; llora por un bello sueño que jamás pudo alcanzar.

Similarly, at the end of *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*, the protagonist's affair with Clara, as well as the societal changes it represents, is "un bello sueño que jamás pudo alcanzar," at least according to many critics.

Nevertheless, the very presence of fairy tale elements and the existence of roles outside of what society dictates mark a threat to established order. In the protagonist's childhood home, in which her mother attempted to "imponernos —a este piso y a mí—

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[102] Indeed, the verb "llorar" appears more often than any other in this story, and the mermaid is visibly crying in four of the twelve illustrations.

sus ideas del orden, de la luminosidad y de la belleza" (23), countless layers of paint and stucco and numerous changes in the furniture to brighten up the apartment and keep it stylish are in vain:

> A través de las infinitas capas del estuco emergieron tenaces en los techos las guirnaldas de oro, los residuos de colores antiguos, la enramada secreta donde se congregaban las brujas. Siempre […] se resquebrajaba el discreto tono monocolor, se rompía la línea del dibujo elegante y simétrico, y brotaban allí las figuras terribles, desorbitadas y amigas: una cabalgata desenfrenada de corceles y dragones, princesas hechizadas de larguísimas trenzas de oro. (25)

The fairy tale world—the protagonist and Clara's play world—is the menacing presence just under the surface of the spotless perfection of the bourgeois image, one which individuals like the protagonist's mother and Julio can temporarily hide, but not eradicate. The tenacity of these childhood images under "la impoluta capa de reciente pintura" (25) is evidence of the continued possibility of reaching a "mundo de ensueño" (25), despite outside appearances.

It should not be surprising, then, that so many of the folkloric and mythical tales that appear over the course of the novel involve a challenge to authority, and especially to parental authority. Ariadne, for example, defies her parents to help Theseus defeat the Minotaur and escape the labyrinth; Peter Pan, in addition to fleeing from all adult authority to Neverland, fights Captain Hook (who in the play version of the work is traditionally played by the same actor as the father, Mr. Darling); the nightingale refuses to comply with the Emperor's wishes that it be kept in the palace as a plaything. In one way or another, these characters manipulate the status quo—even if it is later restored—

to provide not only momentary relief but also the hope and possibility of change for the future. Likewise, Clara and the narrator's play opens a door to a new way of approaching the world, which, though it may shut behind them, will live on in their memory and color their experiences.

With this we return to the much-debated quote from Peter Pan than opens and closes the novel: " …y Wendy creció." This seemingly simple line encapsulates much of what is at issue in *El mismo mar*. What does Wendy grow up to? What does she leave behind? It is easy to view Barrie's Wendy as a figure who is bogged down by the status quo and her place in society—at no point does she truly abandon the feminine role of wife and mother, even and perhaps especially in Neverland—but although she loses the power to fly and must grow up and enter the adult world, her experience on the island nevertheless changes her, making her different and still somehow tied to Peter Pan's world, even when she can no longer accompany him there. Similarly, the narrator's affair with Clara opens up new possibilities for ways of seeing the world. Through play, she has made a connection with her past and put her experience into words, a step towards overcoming the trauma surrounding her relationship with her mother as well as Jorge's suicide. After having delved into her past with Clara, the narrator may be able to "grow up" and move towards the still uncertain future.

However, we are not privy to the actions of the narrator following her seemingly definitive split with Clara and her world, an act which several critics have interpreted as the narrator's resignation to her assigned social role and failure to escape conformity. As we have seen, Spain still had far to go before accepting non-traditional roles for women, much less accepting a lesbian couple like the one found in *El mismo mar*. Nevertheless,

in the end, we can claim that this novel, despite the narrator's apparent conformity and resignation following Julio's return, does offer a challenge to reigning societal norms. The narrator and Clara's play leads the former to reevaluate both her own past and the social roles resulting from it. Like the country itself in the late seventies and particularly women at the time, the narrator is at a point where she must decide whether to resign herself to the current situation, to take the easy road so as not to make waves, or to continue to fight for progress. I would argue that in the novel, the narrator takes a step, albeit not an entirely decisive one, towards the latter option. Having finally faced the demons of her past through her play, but conscious now that she cannot return to the idealized world of childhood, the narrator, like Spain, must "grow up" and move forward. Guided by the younger generation, in the form of Clara, perhaps she will yet be able to make this step.

Conclusions: The Child of War Yesterday and Today

In setting out on this project, I began by asking myself why children, and by extension the games they play, are so important in literature and film of the postwar period. This is a question that can be carried on past the limits of this study on to the present day. One need only consider the multitude of works from recent decades dealing with children during the thirties and forties: in film, just to name a few, José Luis Cuerda's *La lengua de las mariposas* (1999) and Guillermo Del Toro's *El espinazo del diablo* (2001) and *El laberinto del fauno* (2006); in literature Juan Marsé's *Rabos de lagartija* (2000), Alberto Méndez's *Los girasoles ciegos* (2004), Ana María Matute's *Paraíso inhabitado* (2008), and Almudena Grandes' *El lector de Julio Verne* (2012), among others.[103] If the writers of the postwar sought to give voice to their own childhood experiences, the presence of these more recent works indicates that much still remains to be said. In the present, the children and grandchildren of the "niños de la guerra" work to understand the experience of war, to unearth the stories that remain hidden.

As each new generation continues to rewrite the story of Spain under the Second Republic and the Franco era, they build on the stories told by the children of war, gathering their testimonies as evidence of what has gone before. And as their numbers rapidly diminish—the last five years alone have seen three of the eight writers analyzed

[103] The very title of Grandes' most recent series, "Episodios de una guerra interminable," to which the aforementioned *El lector de Julio Verne* pertains, is a testament to the continued relevance of the Civil War in contemporary literature.

in this dissertation (Miguel Delibes, Esther Tusquets, and Ana María Moix) pass away—these fictional accounts of childhood become ever more important as a means of connecting with the past. Thus the generation that lived the Civil War continues to communicate through their cultural legacy, as a testament to all those whose story was never told. Through their child characters the modern-day reader experiences the past on which the present was built, lives alongside the adult struggling to remember, and in some small way is part of the fight to tell that story.

Viewed as testaments of the past and as individual memories, play fulfills various functions for the child characters and has a variety of psychological benefits, as play theorists have stated time and time again. One can view play in these works as a type of therapy, not far from that carried out by a psychologist or psychoanalyst. Many of these child characters channel their fears and anxieties through play, changing their form to make them more manageable. Play and the security provided by a play group or a private play space may give the child of war much-needed control in a world of chaos. Play may also give these children the tools they need to survive in a new environment and establish a new identity. Play allows these characters to take a step back from their problems, to reassess, and to regroup.

It would be short-sighted, however, to view these works merely as factual documents from days gone by, try though the social realists might to project an image of objective reality. Rather, we must consider the function of play within the work as a whole and its possible significance beyond acting as a simple developmental tool. In many works of the postwar period, and in many of the works featured here, the play sphere serves as a microcosm of society at large, reflecting in particular the divisions

between the different political factions both during and after the war. While it is true that children's play does mimic the reigning political ideologies of the time, as we saw in chapter I, this repetition of adult violence in some works and the pointed rejection of politically based conflict in others stand in for the pressing issues of society under Franco. As such, children's play may act as a warning, as a recommendation, or as a statement on current affairs out of the mouth of babes.

Likewise play may serve as a metaphor for the social and political struggles of those oppressed by the Franco regime. In this sense, play is both a shield and a sword. On one hand, the act of play represents the need of those marginalized by Franco's policies to carve out a safe play for themselves for protection from political persecution as well as from social stigma. Within the protected space of the play sphere, oppressed groups can explore their own identity outside of the control of authority. This is especially relevant to women writers, who notably persisted in using the fragmented, playful discourse of the late Franco years into the Transition, well after male writers had largely abandoned it. From the security of the play space, however, play is turned into a weapon, and the play space itself becomes a place of subversion and of inversion of the norm. As such, play comes to represent a challenge both to the regime and to the status quo.

Play, then, touches on some of the key issues of the postwar period, such as memory, trauma, identity, the fight against political oppression, and gender studies. In this dissertation I have examined the connections between play and these questions, attempting to lay the groundwork for further exploration of the function of children's games in Spanish literature and film. Possible topics for future study could include what Anthony Pellegrini terms "rough-and-tumble play" or play fighting, particularly as it

manifests in writers such as Matute, whose child characters frequently toe the line between play and violence; children's storytelling and imaginative play and their relation to the artistic process; organized sports and games or other rules-based play; and play with objects, both toys expressly manufactured as such (dolls, toys guns, puppet theaters, etc.) and makeshift toys (sticks and stones, rags, even bullets and grenades).

In addition to expanding into other areas of play theory, an ideal continuation of this study would apply it to the many child-centered works of more recent decades, following the evolution of the child protagonist and his or her play over time. In the same vein, a comprehensive study of the child in twentieth century literature would be a valuable addition to the existing criticism. Though several articles and dissertations have dealt with the theme of the child in the work of individual authors, few comprehensive works have been written since Eduardo Godoy's *La infancia en la narrativa española de posguerra, 1939-1978*, published in 1979. In cinema, Sarah Wright has recently published such a book, *The Child in Spanish Cinema*, but to my knowledge there are no recent analogous publications in Spanish literary criticism.[104] The vital role of the child in the twentieth-century novel, a fact well recognized by critics, invites a similar treatment of the topic in literature.

The topic of children's play in Spanish literature and film, as we can see, proves to be fertile ground for further study, both in works from the Franco era and Transition and beyond to the present. This dissertation intends to be a starting place for what

[104] Indeed, in general the child in film has received much more attention in recent criticism than the child in literature, and certainly not for a lack of viable child characters to study.

promises to be a rich area of investigation. It is my hope to be able to continue to work with play theory in the future to be able to provide a deeper understanding of the figure of the child in twentieth-century Spanish works in its many manifestations over time. I believe that this effort will lead to new readings of the child in Spanish literature and film, past and present.

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