Performing Invisibilities:

Conjuring the Ghosts of the Forgotten and Ignored on the Stage

By

Katherine Soll

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Dr. Stuart Day, chairperson

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Dr. Vicky Unruh

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Dr. Margot Versteeg

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Dr. Verónica Garibotto

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Dr. Henry Bial

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The Dissertation Committee for Katherine Soll

certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

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Dr. Stuart Day, chairperson

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Abstract

The dictatorial tendency to define society through absolute binaries often continues into the discourse of remembrance; the work of transition, then, is the struggle to overcome these reductive dichotomies and capture the fuller complexity of the situation, thereby indeed opening up other spaces for understanding and memory. It is this task that will be undertaken by the plays examined here, as they strive to call attention to those other forgotten and ignored spaces beyond the dominant dichotomous tendencies of (post)dictatorial memory narratives. This process will occur through the implementation of various strategies of visibility and invisibility.

The first chapter, "Total Onstage Invisibility," will explore the use and significance of invisible characters through an analysis of Uruguayan playwright Ricardo Prieto's 1977 play, *El huésped vacío* (*The Hollow Guest*) and Spanish playwright Antonio Buero Vallejo's 1979 play, *Jueces en la noche* (*Judges in the Night*). Both plays employ the figure of an invisible wife, married to the representative of governmental power, in order to draw attention to blind spots in societal and historical perception. Through an examination of Freud's concept of the uncanny and Rayner's theories on theatrical ghosting, I will explore how placing a blank space on a stage can force both the audience and characters to rethink their perspectives. This visual field is inverted in the second chapter, "Reverse Visibility," in which I study the re-centering of marginalized voices in Raquel Diana's *Cuentos de hadas* (*Fairy Tales*, Uruguay, 1998) and Marco Antonio de la Parra's *La secreta obscenidad de cada día* (*Everyday Secret Obscenities*, Chile, 1983). By studying the connotations of the terms *public* and *private*, this chapter elucidates the significance of reversing the visual field to privilege marginalized perspectives: domestic women in *Fairy Tales* and forced collaborators in *Everyday Secret Obscenities*. This inversion of visibility creates an inversion of power dynamics and simultaneously calls attention to the constructed nature of

hierarchies of visibility. In the third chapter, invisibility turns inwards, as I examine "The Invisible Self": the internal rupture suffered by post-dictatorial generations as they struggle to define a personal identity in the shadow of a barely-remembered societal trauma, using this frame to interpret Andrea Moro Winslow's *No soy la novia* (*I Am Not the Bride*, Chile, 2003) and Sergi Belbel's *Elsa Schneider* (Spain, 1987). In these plays, the trauma of the dictatorship itself has become invisible; while they do not explicitly address post-dictatorial society, they demonstrate a preoccupation with trauma as inheritance that allows them to be interpreted as symbolic commentaries on transgenerational trauma. Throughout this study I also explore the significance of the gendering of visibility and invisibility through portrayals of wives, mothers, and daughters.

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Table of Contents

As all historians know, the past is a great darkness, and filled with echoes. Voices may reach us from it; but what they say to us is imbued with the obscurity of the matrix out of which they come; and, try as we may, we cannot always decipher them precisely in the clearer light of our own day.

Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*

Introduction

Staging Visibility and Invisibility in Chile, Uruguay, and Spain

What does it mean to perform the invisible? Performance, by its nature, would seem to require visibility, and our instinctive understandings of the terms *visible* and *invisible* tend to focus on visuality as an objective and inherent matter of sight. Yet a closer look at definitions of these terms reveals the more complex nature of visibility. While the first entry in the Oxford English Dictionary for *visible* does highlight the question of sight—"Capable of being seen; that by its nature is an object of sight; perceptible by the sense of sight"—the second definition moves from the matter of literal sight to highlight perception and subjective interpretation: "That may be mentally perceived or observed; clearly or readily evident or perceptible; apparent, manifest, obvious." A third definition underscores the conditional nature of visibility, not as an inherent trait but as a product of circumstance: "That can be seen under certain conditions, at a certain time, or by a particular person." A similar distinction is made for *invisible*, whose second definition likewise emphasizes invisibility as being situated in the eye of the beholder: "Not in sight; not to be seen at a particular place or time, or by a particular person" (*Oxford*). Visibility and invisibility must, on further reflection, be construed as social constructions, reflecting a hierarchy of values, awareness, and expectation.

As human beings we are conditioned to see some things more clearly, whether it is a question of literally noticing details around us or of our ability to see truths and the experiences of others. When discussing the visibility and invisibility of social and cultural phenomena, the dichotomy in question is not whether a phenomenon is exposed or hidden, but rather whether attention has been called to it or steered away from it. As psychologist Ana María Fernández

explains, "*a social invisibility is not what is hidden* in some depth, but rather, paradoxically, it is made of facts, occurrences, processes, mechanisms, produced-reproduced across the entire social and objective surface. […] The invisible is not the hidden, then, but *the dismissed*, the prohibited from being seen" (Fernández 144, emphasis in original).[1] The invisible is thus constructed by society and according to context. Likewise, in Maaike Bleeker's examination of *Visuality in the Theatre*, she emphasizes "the necessity of locating vision within a specific historical and cultural situation" (1). Vision is a socio-historically produced ability, and as such may be manipulated and distorted for ideological ends. Yet there is hope and the potential for growth in the awareness of the constructed nature of visuality: "although we are much less free in what we see than we may think, we are also much freer than we think, because the subjectivity of vision opens up the possibility of change and transformation" (18). The unseen need not remain in the shadows; by drawing attention to it, framing it through theatrical performance, "the blank in space becomes the means by which one sees an invisible reality in terms of the visible" (Rayner 118). In the cases that I will examine here, that invisible reality is the complex, haunted memory of dictatorial trauma and repression in Chile, Uruguay, and Spain. The blurred line between the visible and the invisible is the realm of ghosts and hauntings, which arise from the visible traces of the invisible, lingering perceptibly on the edge of awareness and reminding society that there is more to see.

In my approach to questions of haunting and ghosts, I follow this terminology as defined by sociologist Avery Gordon, whose book *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* explores the ways in which events from the past continue to make themselves felt at

[1] All translations from Spanish are my own.

the societal level. As Gordon explains: "Haunting is an encounter in which you touch the ghost or the ghostly matter of things: the ambiguities, the complexities of power and personhood, the violence and the hope, the looming and receding actualities, the shadows of our selves and our society" (134). Ghosts and hauntings therefore exist on the edge of perception, understanding, and expression, to be understood as ways in which traces of memory and of the past intrude on consciousness and everyday life. They remind us that the forgotten and ignored are never truly absent, but instead act as presences on the fringes of awareness. Such hauntings are particularly urgent in situations of societal trauma, where they signal the existence of unresolved tensions. In these situations, Gordon highlights the importance of telling "ghost stories, stories that not only repair representational mistakes, but also strive to understand the conditions under which a memory was produced in the first place, toward a countermemory for the future" (22). To do this requires an openness to uncomfortable truths, to having your worldview challenged, to seeing society and the self in a new light: "[t]he willingness to follow ghosts, neither to memorialize nor to slay, but to follow where they lead, in the present, head turned backwards and forwards at the same time" (57).

For (post)dictatorial societies, these ghosts are frequently the echoes of complexity and nuance that have been lost in the binary discourse of both the dictatorship and the return to democracy. As Diana Taylor explains in her study of the Argentine dictatorship, *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War"*:

> The plethora of images, positions, and voices, the multiple points of conflict, and the shifting coalitions that compete for predominance in "normal" times vanish and go underground in a police state. […] We're either the persecutors or the

> persecuted in this picture. We profit from the violence or we're undone by it. Can we even dream of opening up any other spaces[?] (Taylor 25)

This dictatorial tendency to define society through absolute binaries continues into the discourse of remembrance; the work of transition, then, is the struggle to overcome these reductive dichotomies and capture the fuller complexity of the situation, thereby indeed opening up other spaces for understanding and memory. It is this task that will be undertaken by the works examined here, as they strive to call attention to those other forgotten and ignored spaces beyond the dominant dichotomous tendencies of (post)dictatorial memory narratives. This process will occur through the implementation of various strategies of visibility and invisibility. In this, theatrical projects perform an inversion of dictatorial repression. As Taylor explains, "The triumph of the atrocity was that it forced people to look away—a gesture that undid their sense of personal and communal cohesion even as it seemed to bracket them from their volatile surroundings" (122). Rebuilding that sense of cohesion, then, requires a reversed process of looking: looking back to confront the ghost.

The theatre is a uniquely suited site for this process of ghostly confrontation. Scholars such as Marvin Carlson and Alice Rayner have studied the intrinsically haunted nature of the theatrical space and process. As Rayner states in *Ghosts: Death's Double and the Phenomena of Theatre*, "theatre, in all of its aspects, uniquely insists on the reality of ghosts [… as] theatre itself is a ghostly place in which the living and the dead come together in a productive encounter" (xii), through the representation of stories, texts, and moments from the past in the living confines of the present. The theatre therefore is able to invest history with a sense of immediacy and living reality not available in other forms of writing and of memorialization. As Linda Hutcheon comments, when reading,

> [w]e can stop reading at any point; we can re-read or skip ahead; we hold the book in our hands and feel, as well as see, how much of the story remains to be read. But with the move to the mode of showing, as in film and stage adaptations, we are caught in an unrelenting, forward-driving story. And we have moved from the imagination to the realm of direct perception—with its mix of both detail and broad focus. (23)

The theatrical experience thereby parallels the experience of life in the requirement that the audience member surrender control to external forces that will carry them on a journey. The second characteristic described by Hutcheon, the concept of immediacy and "direct perception," is in many ways the defining characteristic of theatre as an art form, and the one that makes theatre especially effective in dealing with collective trauma.

Recent studies by Matthew Reason and Penny Bundy, et.al. have used audience interviews to gain a real-world perspective on how live theatre is experienced and have highlighted the importance, as perceived by the audience, of the connection between a live performer and a present audience member.[2] In Reason's study of students attending a production of *Othello*, "the description and valuation of liveness constructed by the young audience members [… brings] together directness, immediacy, responsibility, realness and so forth" (Reason 239), and was viewed by the audience members as the key component of the theatrical experience. Likewise, Bundy and her colleagues, in a more extensive study of audience reactions to a variety of productions, found that spectators pointed out the following characteristics of the

[2] As Bundy, et.al. point out, there is limited research available on the documented experience of liveness by non-scholarly audience members, rather than its theoretical nature, which is explored in depth by performance theorists such as Philip Auslander and Peggy Phelan.

experience of liveness: "the comfort or discomfort of presentness; performer vulnerability, risk and uncertainty; proximity to the live action; perceptions of realness; a sense of relationship with the actors; and intensity of engagement" (18). These senses of realness and intense engagement will in turn allow audience members to connect more deeply and intimately with the stories of the forgotten and marginalized, breaking down the barriers established by dominant narratives of memory. Indeed, this emotional connection was also emphasized by those interviewed, who commented that "[b]eing physically present in the same space as the performers either increased emotional response to the work or heightened spectator awareness of their own emotional response" (21-22), both of which are outcomes that facilitate the conscious processing and questioning of traumatic histories.

Theatre can thereby establish an emotional connection to the traumas endured by others by linking audience and performer in space and in sight. As Taylor points out, "*seeing* also goes beyond us/them boundaries; it establishes a connection, an identification, and at times even a responsibility that one may not want to assume" (19, emphasis in original). The communal aspect of the theatrical experience is thus a key component of healing in a post-dictatorial society. The repressive apparatus focuses on creating a sense of isolation and fear in order to prevent rebellion; the theatrical event combats this tendency by bringing a group together, openly, for a shared experience. It is this sense of a present, living community that Jorge Dubatti defines as *convivio*, "from the Latin *convivium*, feast, reception, and by extension, meeting, encounter of presences" (9), an encounter which "implies close proximity, audibility, and visibility" (14). For Dubatti, "*convivio* is a practice of socialization of present bodies, of communal affectation" (17). The concurrence of presence establishes a sense of community and an affective response in the spectator. This bond in turn can be carried outside of the theatre and

have real-world consequences for both spectator and society: "In this *convivio* the spectator constructs meaning about themselves and knowledge about the world, elaborating a space of 'intimacy' […] that can acquire a restorative social function" (33).

This study will examine works that subvert and play with this expectation of presence by altering the usual structures of visibility and creating partial barriers to that *convivial* connection. These barriers can call attention to our lack of connection and understanding, redirect our present energies in new directions, and reveal the existence of other preexisting and internal barriers impeding awareness and knowledge.

Examinations of the role of memory, ghosts, and trauma in (post)dictatorial theatre have been particularly prolific in the case of Argentina, but less so regarding its neighbors in the Southern Cone, particularly in the context of comparative studies. While I will make use of some theories and concepts established in Argentine memory studies, I will focus instead on the particular cases of Chile, Uruguay, and Spain. In many ways, Spain is an outlier in this group of nations: Franco's dictatorship was the outcome of a brutal civil war, its 36-year extension more than doubles the 17 years of Pinochet's rule in Chile or the 12 (official) years of military rule in Uruguay, and this long duration meant the mechanisms of repression were more institutionalized and less based in systemic terror tactics. Yet, in comparative study, these differences only make the commonalities of artistic expression more illuminating. Furthermore, despite these apparent distinctions, there are also important connections and similarities between the three countries. Since Spain's dictatorship came to an end while the countries of the Southern Cone were still undergoing repressive regimes, its peaceful transition to democracy acted in many ways as a model for Latin American nations to follow. Moreover, the fact that the Spanish transition to

democracy began a mere two years after the fall of democracy in both Chile and Uruguay made Spain a frequent recipient of Southern Cone exiles, just as many Spanish exiles had moved to the Southern Cone throughout the Franco regime, establishing a web of transatlantic movement and connection that continued even after the restoration of democracy.[3]

Ana Ros's comparative study of the post-dictatorship generations of the Southern Cone is particularly useful in understanding the commonalities between Chile and Uruguay, as well as their differences from Argentina. Many of the features of the Chilean and Uruguayan dictatorships that she elaborates are also accurate representations of the Spanish regime. One fundamental difference that Ros articulates regards the primary mechanism of state terror:

> in Argentina—the country with the highest number of *desaparecidos*—state terrorism was more visible than in Chile and Uruguay. […T]he violent fact of the *desaparecidos'* radical absence impelled their relatives to action. In Chile and Uruguay, countries in which torture, sexual abuse, and prolonged detention were the most common forms of repression, the prisoners returned to their families, emotionally broken and eager to put the humiliation behind. Only time would help them realize the need to confront the traumatic experience and denounce it publicly. (202)

Disappearance, while still important, therefore played a less significant role in the operation of state terror. Similarly, in Spain, repression, censorship, and imprisonment were common, but

[3] In the case of playwright Marco Antonio de la Parra, whose work will be studied here, the transatlantic connection is also a personal one: he was the artistic director of the *Proyecto Transatlántico*, a theatrical exchange program between Chile and Spain, and spent two years as a cultural attaché to Spain after the end of the dictatorship (EducarChile).

lacked the added terror of "radical absence" noted by Ros.[4] While none of these countries saw a restoration of democracy through uprisings and the overthrow of the military governments, "[t]he fact that the armed forces remained very influential in Chile and Uruguay made denunciation and prosecution even more difficult than in Argentina, where the armed forces were temporarily discredited after the catastrophic Falklands War" (202); the armed forces retained a similarly powerful position in Spain, and in many cases clearly continued to regard themselves as the appropriate leaders of Spain, as the 1981 coup attempt demonstrated. Moreover, "in Chile and Uruguay, the end of the regime was negotiated between the junta and the future political class," leading to a "prolonged period of impunity" (202), as was also the case in Spain. In both South American contexts, unlike in Argentina, eventual "criminal prosecution was not the direct result of public pressure or political initiatives, but initiated by institutions that mobilized international law" from Spain and other parts of South America, such as Spanish judge Balthasar Garzón's 1998 attempt to put Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet on trial for crimes against humanity (202-03). Events such as this in turn emboldened activists, artists, and politicians to begin the process of memory recuperation and the pursuit of justice.

The role of theatre during and after these dictatorial periods is important to consider as well. For Spain, after the initial exodus of left-wing Spanish artists following the Civil War, the imposition of strict censorship limited the possibilities for dramatic exploration and critique. Larger, commercial theatres tended to play it safe in their choice of theatrical texts, while

[4] More recent parallels have been drawn, however, with the exhumation of mass graves from the Civil War and the links between this form of radical absence and the *desaparecidos*. My investigation will focus more predominantly on memory issues with the dictatorship itself, which have frequently been left to the side in favor of examinations of the Civil War.

experimentation continued in a limited way in independent and university theatres. Debates arose within the theatrical community over the extent to which censorship should be accommodated in artistic creation. Antonio Buero Vallejo was a leading advocate of *posibilismo*—using symbolism and obfuscation to present as much of a critique as possible while still passing the censors, while Alfonso Sastre and others argued for the preservation of artistic integrity, even if it meant their work was less likely to be performed. Exile was another frequent choice (or necessity) for artists such as Fernando Arrabal, who chose to present their critiques from outside of the country, particularly in France and Latin America. The restoration of democracy brought about the end of censorship, but it took time for the theatrical community to regain the vigor and relevance it had lost after over thirty years of constraint.

The theatrical communities of Chile and Uruguay were subjected to much more stringent repression. Elizabeth Lira explains that the various theatrical companies that existed in Chile at the time of the dictatorships were singled out by the regime and their supporters:

> The history of Chilean theater then is one of constant struggle for survival and keeping hope alive, often at the cost of arrest, imprisonment, or expulsion from the country. Such was the case of the Aleph theater group in 1974. Theater companies during dictatorship ran the risk of being shut down without warning, actors and directors received death threats, and were attacked by 'unknown' assailants. (119)

Roger Mirza documents a similarly devastating "wave of repression" targeting the Uruguayan theatrical community, particularly in Montevideo,

> closing theatres, prohibiting authors and barring numerous and important actors, directors, and technicians. Many are imprisoned and tortured, others are

> threatened, and a large number has to choose exile, especially in the years 1972 and 1973. Of the more than twenty theatre groups in the sixties, there will only be six or seven left by the middle of the seventies. (Mirza 45)

In both cases, the theatrical community has enjoyed a post-dictatorial revival, as artists have returned from exile and theatres have reopened.

Further details, contrasts, and commonalities will be explored within the chapters in the context of the specific ignored and forgotten features of historical memory that are confronted by each of the dramatic texts studied. This project will examine two plays each from Spain, Uruguay, and Chile, in different combinations; for each country I will analyze one play by a playwright who rose to prominence during the years of the dictatorship itself (Buero Vallejo, Prieto, de la Parra) and one by a playwright of a later generation, written 10-15 years after the end of the dictatorship (Belbel, Diana, Moro Winslow).[5]

The first chapter, "Total Onstage Invisibility," will explore the implementation and significance of invisible characters through an analysis of Uruguayan playwright Ricardo Prieto's 1977 play, *El huésped vacío* (*The Hollow Guest*) and Spanish playwright Antonio Buero Vallejo's 1979 play, *Jueces en la noche* (*Judges in the Night*). Both plays employ the figure of an invisible wife, married to the representative of governmental power, in order to draw attention to blind spots in societal and historical perception. In the case of *The Hollow Guest*, this blind

[5] For biographical information on all of the playwrights studied and their importance, see Appendix B. While these plays are in many ways representative of these authors, the strategies of visibility employed by these texts are unique to the plays studied and have clearly been chosen consciously and strategically as the best way of communicating the particular preoccupations explored here.

spot is the root causes of the dictatorship, which have been obscured and hidden by confusion and violence. For *Judges in the Night*, the invisible wife represents the ignored segments of society who neither actively supported nor opposed the dictatorship, seeming to escape unscathed from its effects, yet deeply damaged by them nonetheless. Through an examination of Freud's concept of the uncanny and Rayner's theories on theatrical ghosting, I will explore how placing a blank space on a stage can force both the audience and characters to rethink their perspectives.

This visual field is inverted in the second chapter, "Reverse Visibility," in which I study the re-centering of marginalized voices in Raquel Diana's *Cuentos de hadas* (*Fairy Tales*, Uruguay, 1998) and Marco Antonio de la Parra's *La secreta obscenidad de cada día* (*Everyday Secret Obscenities*, Chile, 1983). By studying the connotations of the terms *public* and *private*, this chapter elucidates the significance of reversing the visual field to privilege marginalized perspectives: domestic women in *Fairy Tales* and forced collaborators in *Everyday Secret Obscenities*. This inversion of visibility creates an inversion of power dynamics and simultaneously calls attention to the constructed nature of hierarchies of visibility. Similar strategies are employed by both plays to call attention to censorship and the unsaid. Furthermore, their questioning of the master narratives established by fairy tales and ideologies subverts the authority of the narratives established by the dictatorial regimes; by pointing to the failure of these narratives, they call for the creation of new ones to allow society to productively move forward.

In the third chapter, invisibility turns inwards, as I examine "The Invisible Self": the internal rupture suffered by post-dictatorial generations as they struggle to define a personal identity in the shadow of a barely-remembered societal trauma, using this frame to interpret

Andrea Moro Winslow's *No soy la novia* (*I Am Not the Bride*, Chile, 2003) and Sergi Belbel's *Elsa Schneider* (Spain, 1987). In these plays, the trauma of the dictatorship itself has become invisible; while they do not explicitly address post-dictatorial society, they demonstrate a preoccupation with trauma as inheritance that allows them to be interpreted as symbolic commentaries on transgenerational trauma. In these cases, the secrets and silences of the previous generation are passed on to their daughters, who are then unable to define themselves and lead complete lives, falling victim instead to the fatalistic destructive tendencies that have been forced onto them. The invisible self thereby acts as a commentary on the need for society-wide healing, without which a productive future is impossible.

It is no accident that the majority of these plays use female characters to explore these issues. Not only have women been a driving force in memory transmission and recuperation—with the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo as perhaps the single most iconic group representing the search for truth and justice—but women's history of exclusion from dominant narratives, whether historical or artistic, makes them key components of the forgotten and ignored in their own right and positions them as metonymical symbols for others. Throughout this study I will therefore explore the gendering of visibility and invisibility in these portrayals of wives, mothers, and daughters.

Chapter I

Total Onstage Invisibility:

Ricardo Prieto's *El huésped vacío* and Antonio Buero Vallejo's *Jueces en la noche*

A father excitedly tells his wife and son the good news: their poverty is over. He has found a tenant who will pay astonishingly well to rent a room from them. They will have to make some sacrifices, as the tenant's wife is apparently very delicate, cannot tolerate loud noises, and is highly sensitive to light. Her health and stability must always come first, but it will be worth it not to have to struggle any more. The tenant, Fergodlivio, arrives and presents his wife, Clara, who apparently occupies the blank space next to him. Indeed Clara is never seen or heard by the audience during the play, never definitively established as either real or imaginary, but her needs pervade the house. Gradually she and her husband deprive the family of every material comfort, every freedom, ultimately driving out first the son, then the wife. Her presence is so strong that by the end, we fully believe Fergodlivio when, as he instructs the father to seal himself inside the empty house, he states, "Soon she will ask you to die! And you will not refuse" (Prieto 1007).

Two years later, on the other side of the Atlantic, a spotlight illuminates a single chair, empty except for a viola lying on it. Gradually the lights come up on a violinist and cellist on either side of the chair, and the sounds of a Beethoven string trio fill the air. All three instruments can be heard, despite the apparent lack of a third musician. This incomplete image is a recurring dream repeated throughout the play, as a government official of the recently-ended dictatorship struggles to confront the ghosts and consequences of his actions. The violinist and cellist are identified as men who died in prison or were executed, the victims of the regime. But who is the

third? Who is the victim that he is unable or unwilling to recognize? In the end, it is revealed to be his wife Julia, who, finally understanding the lies and silent complicity that have defined her life, has killed herself.

In an art form traditionally defined by qualities of presence, embodiment, and live interaction, these visual holes are particularly striking. As Diana Taylor explains, the word "theatre" itself is intimately tied to sight, coming "from the Greek *theatron*, to see" (245). Theatre's traditional connection to the visual realm is also closely related to the presence of living artists interacting with an audience. Performance theorist Peggy Phelan refers to this quality as "liveness," and for her it constitutes the single most important quality of a performance: "Performance implicates the real through the presence of living bodies. […] Without a copy, live performance plunges into visibility—in a maniacally charged present—and disappears into memory" (148). In dictatorial or post-dictatorial contexts, these qualities of visual perception and physical presence are generally employed to allow theatrical artists to embody and make visible the forgotten and unseen, the elements of society that have been repressed and destroyed. In this manner, as Alice Rayner explains, the theatre manages to "constitute a kind of living memorial in which the ghosts of history are animated [… creating a space in which] the dead whisper to the living through repetition" (34). Her analysis, as well as similar studies by Marvin Carlson, Joseph Roach, and Taylor, is predicated on this goal of making visible the lost or unseen. How, then, should we understand theatrical invisibility? While Taylor states that "[t]he desire to *see* is nowhere so prominent as it is in the theatre or cinema[: w]e go to the theatre to see, to hear" (135), she also recognizes the toll that living in impossible circumstances can take on our ability to perceive the realities around us. In situations such as these, where "the audience can no longer see, or recognize the atrocity of which they are a part[, since t]heir sense

of perception, whether visual or auditory, has been assaulted" (245), onstage invisibility provides a unique way to step around the traditional dichotomy of seen/unseen, allowing us instead to see that there is something unseen in our presence and begin to consider what that might be.

The invisible wives of the Uruguayan drama *El huésped vacío* or *The Hollow Guest*[6] (1977), by Ricardo Prieto, and the Spanish dream play *Jueces en la noche* or *Judges in the Night* (1979), by Antonio Buero Vallejo, represent two very different unseen groups in dictatorial contexts.[7] Nevertheless, in both cases, the placement of these invisible women within the theatrical frame gives their physical absence a symbolic and discursive presence that forces the audience to ask what it is that they are not seeing, both on the stage and in the world around them. In the wake or presence of traumatic events, perception is frequently flawed. Events are experienced without being consciously registered or processed. Theatre thus assumes the role of creating a new, conscious processing of events, filling in the gaps produced by trauma. As Rayner explains in her study of trauma and absence in theatre,

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[6] Any translation of the Spanish title must necessarily lose some of the ambiguity of the original, since, as Oscar Brando points out, the multiple meanings of "huésped" can refer to either the guest or to the host (944). The only English translation of the title that I have seen (for a Spanish-language production at the IATI Theater in New York City in 2008) was *The Guest and the Void*, which additionally loses the adjectival character of "vacío," creating an undesirable separation between the quality of emptiness and the character. I have therefore chosen to use my own translation of the title.

[7] Relevant plot details are provided throughout; however, the multilayered structure of *Judges* can cause some confusion. For detailed plot synopses of this and all other plays examined, see Appendix A.

> [the] apparent tautology—that the unknown is unknown until it is known—has wide-ranging consequences in its paradoxical demand that the unknowable and the unspeakable be recognized. The inevitable blind spot in consciousness demands to be accounted for, but precisely because it is a blind spot, that account can be done only through the double in the mirror. (114-15)

In many cases, theatre responds to these blind spots with presence and visibility, letting the events that have not been recognized be clearly brought into the light. The danger, however, is that such representations can become static memorials to the past instead of inspiring thought and action in the present. According to Rayner, public memorials such as statues, while technically serving to remind the public of an event, also tend to fade into the background of the daily life around them, allowing society to situate them clearly in the past and forget their relevance to the present: "statues have the intelligibility of realism, like a datum of historical knowledge. Statues tend to become invisible artifacts in the public landscape" (35). A clear, intelligible image thereby can be viewed as an obstacle to thoughtful consideration of either the image itself or of the situations and problems that it portrays. While different theatrical and artistic projects have attempted to avoid this pitfall in a variety of ways, these two plays choose to use gendered invisibility, a controlled degree of opacity, to inspire a more thoughtful reaction. Instead of filling in the blind spot, onstage invisibility recreates it, reflects it, and calls attention to its existence. The audience must then assume the responsibility to look back and discover the details: In whose name and on whose behalf does the repressive power act? How deep into society do the destructive force and guilt of repression extend? What, exactly, are we missing?

Blind Spots in History

In both plays the key to what is missing is inextricably linked to their socio-political contexts: Uruguay in 1977 and Spain in 1979. For Uruguay, this point falls within the early years of a military dictatorship which lasted from 1973 until 1985 (although the decrease in civil liberties and increase in state and military repression began several years earlier in the late 1960s[8]). The Uruguayan dictatorship took many in Latin America by surprise, as the country had long been considered one of the most politically and socially stable in the region, with a history of democratic resolutions to political problems (without military intervention), a high quality of education and health care, and one of the largest middle classes in the continent (Walker; Frega; Weinstein). How, then, could "'the Uruguay of the fat cows,' the 'Switzerland of America,' the 'model country'" suddenly fall to a repressive military regime, becoming the country with the most prisoners per capita in the world (Perelli 96; Walker 38)? The dictatorship dates back to an economic depression that had led in turn to political instability and the imposition of strict neoliberal reforms, removing many protections and assistance programs for the lower classes and leading to further social instability, which was met by government repression of workers and leftist groups (Mirza 29). This consequently brought about the rise of the Tupamaros, a leftist urban guerrilla organization. The government turned to the military to end this crisis, giving them more and more authority and freedom for independent action, while removing many civil liberties and imposing censorship. In many ways, by the late 1960s, Uruguay was already a

[8] The first version of *The Hollow Guest*, titled *La salvación* (*Salvation*) was in fact written in 1971, during this earlier decline towards full authoritarian rule (Brando 945). I have been unable to find any description of how the play evolved from this version to its final form.

military dictatorship in everything but name (Caetano 13).[9] When the military formally took over the government in 1973, they emphasized the need to combat subversive action as one of their leading justifications for suspending democracy, despite the fact that the Tupamaros had been defeated six months earlier (Walker 37).[10] The coup was thus described to civil society as a necessary step in the struggle to reestablish social, political, and economic order. As in many other Latin American countries, in its first years it was frequently presented as a temporary measure, needed to prepare the country for a return to democracy. The extremely repressive conditions created by the dictatorship ranged from military control of schools, highly restrictive censorship, and book-burning, to the widespread detention of citizens (1 in 50 was imprisoned at some point) and the relentless use of torture (Walker; Weschler; Frega; Weinstein; Mirza).[11] The influence of foreign countries was also significant: foreign business and investment interests had met with the military the day before the coup, exhorting them to put an end to strikes, depoliticize the workers, and allow for the privatization of the public sector in exchange for continued investment in the struggling economy (Caetano 17). Moreover, as a government, the

[9] "The Uruguayan coup of 1973 has been called 'the long coup,' as it formally spans from February 9, 1973 to June 27, 1973. The whole process that led to the coup really began in 1968; the governmental repressive measures increased thereafter" (Perelli 111).

[10] The military had announced this victory to Congress themselves, according to the exiled leader of Uruguay's Partido Nacional, Wilson Ferreira Aldunate (Walker 37).

[11] Exile also became a fact of life: out of a population of less than three million, between three and four hundred thousand people fled the country during the dictatorship (Weschler 87). Exile is also a central element of Prieto's play, as two of the three members of the family eventually are forced to leave the house in search of greater freedom elsewhere.

United States supported most right-wing dictatorships due to their regimes' resistance to the spread of communism, only suspending military aid to Uruguay in protest of human rights violations several years into the dictatorship (55). The exact causes and support system of the dictatorship therefore remain extremely complex and difficult to sort through over thirty years after the return of democracy; at the time, as Walker explains, "we Uruguayans were simply dazed for many years, not knowing where the blow came from" (38). *The Hollow Guest* is Prieto's attempt to draw his country out of that daze and make them begin to think critically about the events, beliefs, and influences that led to this situation.[12]

[12] While I examine *The Hollow Guest* here within its original context, I do not wish to thereby exclude its clear relevance to many other times and places. The allegorical nature of the play, along with the lack of explicit references to Uruguay, mean that it could easily speak to any society that has asked itself what it would be willing to give up in exchange for the promise of security and stability. Indeed, Prieto states in the opening stage directions that the play could be set "in any place in the world" (953). Moreover, the play was considered too subversive to be initially performed in Uruguay itself. The first production, in 1977, took place across the Río de la Plata in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This is particularly interesting since Argentina was also in the early stages of a very repressive dictatorship, and most of the play's critiques could just as easily apply to the Argentine situation. Censorship of the theatre, however, was at least somewhat less severe in Argentina than in Uruguay, allowing theatre to play a more active role in the resistance there (such as in the famous case of the Teatro Abierto festivals), while more than two-thirds of Uruguay's theatres were closed and its theatrical artists imprisoned or forced to flee the country (Mirza 45).

Buero Vallejo's *Judges in the Night* responds to a very different set of circumstances in Spain: in 1979, the thirty-six year dictatorship of Francisco Franco was finally over. The regime that began with the conservative nationalist victory in the Civil War in 1939 had ended with the death of its leader in 1975. Franco's repressive regime was characterized by a conservative censorship heavily influenced by the Catholic Church[13] and the often-brutal suppression of students, workers, and any opposition in general, though not usually by the secretive disappearances that characterized most of the Latin American dictatorships of the period (Halsey 133). Franco was succeeded by Juan Carlos I, the prince he had designated to continue his authoritarian rule; Juan Carlos, however, chose to return the power to the people, renouncing dictatorial authority for what would eventually become a constitutional monarchy. The period of the transition, lasting until the constitution was passed in 1983, was marked by economic instability (due in great part to the international oil crisis) and domestic terrorism, as well as a high degree of political uncertainty (Tusell). Since opposition parties had previously been illegal, most dissenters and members of the opposition had no previous experience in government. The transition was therefore led by the more liberal members of the previous regime. While some may certainly have been motivated by a genuine desire for reform, others (like Julia's husband Juan Luis in *Judges*) simply adapted their rhetoric as needed in order to maintain their power and influence (Halsey 151). An amnesty was issued for all dictatorial crimes not involving violence, and even violent ones were rarely prosecuted (Tusell 294). The period was marked by "a desire to forget – to 'make oneself forget' – in order to avoid a repeat of the conflict" (271). It is this desire to leave the past behind without confronting it that Buero Vallejo attempts to combat in

[13] Not only were censorship laws influenced by Roman Catholic ideology, but members of the Catholic clergy served on the government's censorship boards (O'Leary 13-14).

Judges in the Night. The play's portrayal of the collapse of both a family and the fledgling democracy seeks to expose the dangers of forgetting and the necessity of accountability.[14]

In both plays, invisibility calls attention to the issues that society is unwilling or has so far been unable to discuss in dealing with dictatorial or post-dictatorial situations. The majority of artistic and academic analyses of invisibility in these or similar dictatorial contexts focus on the people who were "disappeared," literally made invisible, by the dictatorships. The best-known examples range from plays such as Ariel Dorfman's *La muerte y la doncella* (*Death and the Maiden*), about vengeance and justice after the end of Chile's repressive dictatorship, to Diana Taylor's book *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War,"* which studies the cultural and bodily absences and disappearances created by the military during this period. Unlike this more common trend in (post)dictatorial literature, however, these plays' portrayals of invisibility do not focus on the people that the repressive government sought to make disappear—that is, on the clear victims of the regimes—but rather look beyond to discover what further absences society as a whole has thus far been incapable of seeing and recognizing. Although studying and making visible the horrors suffered by these governments' victims and their families has been a powerful activity for these societies and scholars, nevertheless, the dominance of these studies in post-dictatorial discourse has allowed

[14] In this pursuit, Buero Vallejo was ahead of his time. It was not until the 1990s that Spain experienced a "memory boom," a concerted push from artists, activists, and historians to reclaim and investigate crimes of the Civil War and the dictatorship. For this reason, *Judges* was not very well received, closing after a two month run. Despite its negative reception, Buero Vallejo said that *Judges* "was a very significant piece within my theatre; moreover, I think that it was the play that absolutely needed to be presented at that exact time" (Gazarian-Gautier 50).

other blind spots to flourish, which these plays attempt to confront. In *The Hollow Guest*, the family begins to give up their small pleasures in exchange for the promise of economic stability; but the guest, once invited in, cannot be cast off, and they find themselves losing more and more freedoms, from their small luxuries such as music and books, to their ability to speak in anything more than a whisper, to ultimately their right to live. All of it is taken away in the name of the invisible woman, the unknown motivator and justification behind authoritarian rule in the play, as in Uruguayan society. Similarly, the empty chair in *Judges in the Night* stands alongside the ghostly figures of a student protester who died in prison, his father, and a member of an opposition group, executed for unproven plots against the government: representations of the various known and recognized victims of Franco's reign. The play thus cautions that society cannot move on without identifying the other, invisible victims who have also been tragically and irrevocably affected: here, the invisible wife who has been destroyed by the influence and repression of the regime. Both plays use these figures of invisible women, married to the representatives of power, to address missing pieces in the study and memory of repression.

Invisibility in a Frame

But what is the significance of conjuring these invisible ghosts on the stage? The theatre has always been a space of haunting and for conjuring ghosts, whether they be the vague ghosts of memory or the embodied apparitions of plays such as *Hamlet*. I use the term "ghost" here to refer to those figures, events, and ideas from our past and our memory that have been set aside and forgotten, but intrude once again into our perception, haunting us with shadows and hints that connect the past to the present. The theatrical ghost can be visible or invisible: each technique will establish a different relationship with the audience, aligning the spectator either

with characters who can see the ghost or with those who are uncertain about its existence and nature. The question of visibility, however, is not synonymous with presence: while the invisible ghost is visibly absent, these plays, as we shall see, still manage to evoke a definite ghostly presence on the stage. Since these invisible characters bring forth the forgotten and overlooked shades of society's past and present, the terms "ghosts" and "hauntings" will be used interchangeably to refer to them throughout this study (even though they are most often used to explore ways in which the past is made visible).

Studies of theatrical ghosting from critics such as Marvin Carlson and Alice Rayner emphasize the ghostly nature of the theatre in all its aspects—haunted by the written word, previous productions, or alternate versions of the story, as well as in its function as a repository of historical and cultural memory. These effects unfold not only verbally but visually for their audiences; as Rayner explains, "In theatre, the force [of the uncanny] comes as an affective response in one's captured attention to appearances that both are and are not what they seem to be" (x). The power of visible appearance in theatre also creates a space of possibility for evoking meaning through invisibility and disappearance. Instead of using the restorative power of theatre to revive memory and make events "seen-again,"[15] we may invert Carlson's terminology to explore how the theatre may also make the unseen "unseen-again" within a new framework of

[15] Carlson establishes the "seen-again" as a constituent feature of theatrical performance, as all the various elements of theatre, from events portrayed and texts, to scenery and actors, hearken back to various points in our memory. Elaborating on Herbert Blau's theories, he notes that "one of the universals of performance, both East and West, is its ghostliness, its sense of return, the uncanny but inescapable impression imposed upon its spectators that '*we are seeing what we saw before*'" (Carlson 1, emphasis in original).

awareness. This technique takes advantage of what Rayner terms the theatre as "a space for working out complex relations between remembering or forgetting[,… in the sense that] this remembering involves not *what* has been forgotten but *that* something has been forgotten" (52, emphasis in original).

In order to achieve these effects, both pieces toy with the ambiguities of seeing and not seeing. In *The Hollow Guest*, Clara's very existence is in doubt. She is clearly real to her husband, Fergodlivio, who continues to address her even when other characters are not present (980). Yet none of the other characters can see her, raising the possibility that she is merely a figment of his imagination. The play chooses never to clarify this fact; indeed, her ambiguity reaches into the writing of the text itself: while she is not listed in the cast of characters, stage directions throughout the play directly describe Clara's actions and her interactions with Fergodlivio. Julia in *Judges in the Night* is even more ambiguously situated between visibility and invisibility. The structure of the play alternates between dreams and memories/flashbacks of recent events. Thus, while Julia-as-musician remains invisible throughout the play, Julia-as-memory is a visible figure in Juan Luis's recollections of their marriage. Moreover, his dreams focus on their upcoming anniversary party; in them, he imagines his own, different version of her that appears visibly alongside her invisible self, although the contrasts between this simulacrum and the Julia of his memories make it clear that this is a false representation of her. These different versions finally merge in the last moments of the play, when the Julia that the audience has been able to see all along joins the other musicians on the stand, openly assuming her previously invisible identity as one of his victims.

These invisible presences have far-reaching implications for both the characters that they interact with and the societies that they portray. As I begin a closer reading of these two plays in

order to understand how these invisibilities create meaning, I will first examine the meanings of ghosts and invisibility on the individual and societal levels, proceeding subsequently to the specific constructions of invisibility in a theatrical context. I will start with an examination of Sigmund Freud's theory of the uncanny, which links distortions of the familiar to the quality of helplessness that he attributes to dreams. Invisibility in these plays can be seen to function as a key part of a larger atmosphere of the uncanny, which is employed to provoke a critical examination of those familiar elements which have now become strange.[16] This analysis is then expanded, through Avery Gordon's theories of haunting, to a larger sociological context. Gordon's study of *Ghostly Matters* allows me to link the invisible both to qualities of presence and to structures of power within society. These structures of power are intimately linked to questions of gender; I will therefore proceed to a thorough examination of the significance of framing invisibility through the figures of two wives. In both cases, the invisible woman is married to the chief representative of power, leading to important questions about how repressive governments frame their relationships to the rest of society. Finally, I will return to the significance of the theatre itself in these portrayals, through an examination of the use of objects

[16] While this goal is shared by Bertolt Brecht's theory of estrangement, the techniques used to achieve that effect in these cases are substantially different from those that Brecht advocated. Estrangement here is not divorced from emotional attachment, but rather relies on audience identification with the characters experiencing it; moreover it is frequently provoked by disruptions of an otherwise realistic world, rather than the openly theatrical one proposed by Brecht. These differences are fundamental enough, in my opinion, to make a Brechtian analysis of these plays of lesser relevance than a psychological one.

to create absence and endow it with meaning, combined with an exploration of the implications of the absent body itself.

Strangely Familiar Dreams

The invisibility in these plays contributes to and is framed by a larger atmosphere of the uncanny, with invisibility appearing as a key element alongside helplessness and distortion. These three components work together to create a psychological exploration of a society trying to deal with repression and trauma, forcing the spectator to enter into this uncanny environment and recognize it as their own, leading in turn to the understanding that something is wrong or missing from their perception of the world. A detailed examination of how all of these elements, individually and in combination, forge an overwhelming sense of the uncanny will therefore enable a fuller understanding of how these plays establish a psychological link between characters struggling to understand the invisibilities around them and the spectator, a link that can then be used to make the spectator question and contemplate unseen aspects of society and of themselves.

On the personal and psychological level, the study of haunting and the unexplainable begins with Sigmund Freud's concept of the uncanny. In his 1919 essay of that name, Freud defines the uncanny as "that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar," the idea being that fear and unease are provoked by the loss or distortion of that familiarity (124). The root of his analysis lies in the linguistic comparison of the German word for the uncanny, *unheimlich*, with its antonym, *heimlich*, usually translated as the familiar or homely. Despite being grammatically marked as opposites, Freud's examination of dictionary definitions of the terms reveals a deep-seated ambivalence at the heart of both

concepts, as notions of the familiar (*heimlich*) gradually merge with the idea of the mysterious that is associated with its opposite (*unheimlich*): "Starting from the homely and the domestic, there is a further development towards the notion of something removed from the eyes of strangers, hidden, secret" (133). Thus, the supposedly familiar masks the presence of deeper secrets and mysteries. These mysteries are not truly unknown to us, but rather unrecognized and repressed; as Freud explains, "this uncanny element is actually nothing new or strange, but something that was long familiar to the psyche and was estranged from it only through being repressed" (148). The uncanny is therefore intimately linked to the sudden uncomfortable perception of the aspects or truths of our personal lives and of the world around us that we have chosen to ignore, making it a perfect vehicle for these playwrights as they attempt to uncover the invisible in repressive situations.

Freud links the feeling of the uncanny to what he calls the "helplessness" that we feel in dreams: the lack of control over a world that does not function quite in the way we are accustomed to, producing the sensation that so often accompanies dreams that something is not quite right in an otherwise familiar world (144). It is not surprising, then, that *Judges in the Night* situates Julia's invisibility in the context of the protagonist's dreams, dreams which, although they arise from Juan Luis's own memories and worries, he is unable to fully control. In the first dream sequence, he ultimately recognizes that he is dreaming and attempts to take charge of the dream, telling the musicians, "And I don't want to see you anymore. Disappear!" (Buero Vallejo 44). But this effort is unsuccessful: the musicians simply stay where they are, informing him, "It's not that simple, my friend" (44). In this case, as in the other dream sequences, the dream proceeds regardless of Juan Luis's attempts to change the course of the action: either to prevent his own assassination in the second dream (103) or to stop his wife from leaving him in the last

(164-65). His inability to control what happens in his own mind reveals his fear of losing control of events in the world around him. As Freud explain, an uncomfortable repetition of the inexorable progress of events such as this in turn "forces us to entertain the idea of the fateful and the inescapable, when we should normally speak of 'chance'" (144). Invisibility thus forms part of a larger course of action that, so far, the protagonist (and through him, the audience) has been unable to control. These sensations are extremely relevant to the time period, as Spain's transition to democracy was characterized by great changes happening slowly from *within* the government; Spanish society was redefined without substantial direct input from the population as a whole, especially in the first years of the transition.[17] This disconnect between the population as a whole and the government deciding their fate could certainly inspire feelings of helplessness. Nevertheless, as Diana Taylor points out in her study of Griselda Gambaro's *Information for Foreigners*, evoking this feeling of helplessness can in turn inspire action through the realization that the audience's situation, while similar to the character's, is different in one important way: "we have a capacity for choice and for action that the victim does not have" (130). Unlike Juan Luis, the audience is awake and can choose to take action.

While *The Hollow Guest* does not operate explicitly in the realm of dreams, it does nonetheless evoke the feeling of helplessness that is characteristic of a nightmare. The play begins in the familiar style of the realistic dysfunctional family drama: a mother and son arguing about whether or not he should get a job and whether the father can support them both emotionally and financially. This familiar domestic scenario twists suddenly into that of a

[17] Strikes and protests were important in forcing the government to move faster than it had planned (Carr); nevertheless the absence of a full-scale revolt or overthrow of the government points to the fact that this was in many ways a top-down transformation of the country.

psychological thriller, as the introduction of the guest and his invisible wife takes away their freedoms and destroys their relationships. The first indication of this shift is the arrival of Clara: her invisibility establishes the situation's uncanny quality. This quality is continuously enhanced throughout the play by the family's inability to resist Fergodlivio's commands, a powerlessness motivated by the promise of a financially secure future and the perpetual debate between security and liberty. This helplessness can be seen in the smallest acts, as when Fergodlivio orders the Mother not to go to her room: "Clara and I suggest that you sit in that chair. *(The Mother hesitates. She is distressed.)* Don't consider it. Obey. *(She sits down)*" (Prieto 978). Yet this uncanny lack of control over their own actions also extends to more extreme situations as the nightmare takes its course: when the Mother finally loses her patience and rebels against Fergodlivio's orders, he instructs the Father to punish her or he and Clara (and their money) will leave:

> FERGODLIVIO. *(Strict.)* Punish her.
>
> FATHER. *(In anguish.)* I can't…
>
> FERGODLIVIO. Try it.
>
> FATHER. It's impossible…
>
> FERGODLIVIO. *(Frightening.)* I demand it. *(Pause. The Father fights with the opposite impulses compelling him to obey, on the one hand, and to defy Fergodlivio on the other.)* Obey, Mr. Flores. *(The Father strikes the Mother gently.)* No, no, Mr. Flores.
>
> FATHER. What did I do wrong?
>
> FERGODLIVIO. Hit her harder. *(Silence.)* Come on. *(The Father hits her again.)* Harder, harder. *(The Father hits her violently. The Mother sobs.)* (997)

Unable to re-establish control over his own life, the Father is forced to destroy his most meaningful relationship, fundamentally changing himself in the process by performing a completely uncharacteristic action—as the Mother points out afterwards, he had never hit her before (998). The Father's complete inability to control his life after inviting Fergodlivio and Clara into it turns the play into a nightmare, ending with the final image of him struggling to regain control of himself and his impulses, as Fergodlivio offers him more and more money to seal himself inside his empty house (1010-11). In this nightmare, the progression is irrevocable, yet the horror that it inspires may, as in Juan Luis's case, inspire action to break free of society's own uncanny guest and his wife before they completely take over. The previous example of the Father's change in personality also points to another characteristic of the uncanny nightmare: the distortion of the familiar.

The combination of the homely or familiar with the mysterious and strange that is characteristic of the uncanny can also be seen in the ways that familiar people and places become warped and unrecognizable. The uncanny turns the familiar on its head, proving that "our most haunting experiences of otherness tell us that the alien begins at home" (Haughton xlix). Indeed, both plays are set primarily (*Judges*) or exclusively (*Guest*) in the home, thereby linking the uncanny to the deeply personal. In *Guest*, the Father's previously mentioned punishment of the Mother marks the movement of the uncanny from an outside source to an internal one, a part of the home and of the family that has been made strange and is ultimately lost. The Mother comments on the gradual destruction of her family from within: "He [Fergodlivio] already got Jorge [the son] to leave… You just hit me… You're becoming a different man" (Prieto 999). Yet the true moment in which the invisible power takes over their lives comes later, through the complete internalization of the repressive authority. As Michel Foucault explains in his study of

the effects of surveillance on the imprisoned or dominated person, "He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection" (202-03). In a later moment in the play, when the Mother begins to yell at him for his cowardice, the Father assumes the repressive, punishing role, defending Clara's wishes without the prompting or even the presence of Fergodlivio:

> FATHER. *(Desperate.)* What are you doing? *(He beats her brutally.)* Clara doesn't want to hear any noise! Clara can't stand crying!
>
> *He stops himself suddenly. He is horrified by what he has done.* (Prieto 1002)

His greatest moment of fear and horror is therefore not any of his confrontations with the invisible manifestations of power outside of himself, but rather the discovery of that invisible part of himself that he cannot bear to recognize. Just as Freud recalls that his most powerfully uncanny moment was a failure to recognize himself in the mirror—caught completely off-guard by the sight of "his own self made strange" (Gordon 54)—it is when the Father recognizes Fergodlivio in himself that he is forced to see how truly lost he has become.

The distortions of the familiar in *Judges*, while much subtler, are nonetheless equally significant in their destabilizing effects on both characters and audience. The recurring yet familiar dream scene of the house party where the string trio is playing is an eerily deformed version of Juan Luis's reality; moreover, each repetition of the dream has its own further twists and alterations of the dream world. Each of the three repetitions of the party is slightly different, but in all, the other characters act in an incongruous or altered manner, leaving the dreamer uncertain how to act and unclear about what exactly is real. This instability thereby creates

unease and fear for the dreamer and, by extension, the spectator. From the beginning of the first dream, Juan Luis can feel that something is not right: his attention is constantly brought back to the visible absence of the third musician, leading him to conclude that "not everything is in order" (Buero Vallejo 38). This more obvious flaw in the fabric of the dream in turn leads him to question the rest of it and he is slowly forced to confront the fact that the "reality" of that dream is inaccurate: he is not a doctor, nor is his wife, and they never had children (45). In the later dreams, he must recognize that the people whom his imagination has cast as musicians are in fact figures from his past for whose death he feels in some way responsible. The dream world itself also changes from one iteration to the next: for example, in the first, the musicians are seated on a balcony in the house, yet in a different dream he is forced to acknowledge that there is no balcony in his house (125). Even the distinction between what is a dream and what is a memory or a reality becomes more and more difficult to discern, as one of Juan Luis's dreamed judges—the violinist's father, played by the same actor as his business associate Don Jorge, but wearing different clothes and bathed in a strange, surreal light—begins to infiltrate his memories, staying in the background, unseen by other characters, yet constantly causing a sense of unease and uncertainty in Juan Luis.

These aspects also point to another quality that Freud ascribes to the uncanny: the blurring of boundaries between fiction, dream, and reality; between imagination and the physical world; and even between genres. This combination of blurred boundaries and the unrecognizable familiar results in the uncanny realization that the perceived world does not coincide with our expectations or normal understanding of it: the uncanny is present "when we are faced with the reality of something that we have until now considered imaginary, when a symbol takes on the full function and significance of what it symbolizes, and so forth" (Freud 150). The audience's

attention is thereby called to those points of difference, separation, and distortion, which they must then struggle to understand, asking what exactly makes this situation feel uncanny. All of these attributes combine to create an overwhelming sense of the uncanny and a feeling of urgency, a need on the spectator's part to understand what is going on in the world and re-establish their place in it. This attention is naturally drawn to the most obvious manifestation of the uncanny: the invisible characters of the viola player (Julia) and Clara. By using qualities of helplessness and distortion to make the spectator identify with the confusion that the family in *Guest* and Juan Luis in *Judges* are feeling, the spectator also joins with them as they struggle to understand what these visual blank spots in the theatrical picture of society might mean. How is this picture different from their beliefs about what reality should be? And which is in fact inaccurate: the world's representation on the stage or those very beliefs about the world?

Everyday Invisibility

Though Freud's uncanny is based in individual experience, sociologist Avery Gordon expands this concept to the social realm of collective belief and blindness, asserting that "the social is ultimately what the uncanny is about: being haunted in the *world of common reality*" (54, emphasis in original). Hauntings thus become essential parts of everyday social existence, representing the ways in which the people, ideas, and power structures that lie outside our normal, conscious perception can be brought into our awareness, "acting on and often meddling with taken-for-granted realities" (8). In this manner, she goes on to claim, "[t]he ghost or the apparition is one form by which something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there to our supposedly well-trained eyes, makes itself known or apparent to us, in its own way, of course" (8). For Gordon, this form of experience is not based in empirical knowledge or observation, as

this can allow us to overlook more deeply buried aspects of the world around us, but rather in intuition and recognition. Shadows, fleeting moments in which the invisible intrudes on our peace of mind, remind us that visible and invisible are not necessarily synonymous with presence and absence, evoking Toni Morrison's argument that "'invisible things are not necessarily not-there'" (qtd. in Gordon 17).

This is certainly the attitude taken by these plays in their utilization of invisibility as a central component of contemporary structures of power and victimization. Indeed, Gordon's affirmation that "the power relations that characterize any historically embedded society are never as transparently clear as the names we give them imply" (3) is ironically and literally illustrated in *Guest* with Clara's name—an adjective meaning "clear" and "comprehensible," yet used here to symbolize the mysterious forces, ideals, or people in whose name power is exerted. Despite her name, it is never clear what exactly Clara's role and relation to power is, since we never hear directly from her and instead are only aware of her perspective and influence through her husband Fergodlivio, the visible wielder of power.[18] In the complex web of causes and influences behind the Uruguayan dictatorship, she could represent anything, ranging from foreign influence and business interests, to ideals such as security and economic prosperity, to the nation itself. Her ambiguity is maintained throughout, sometimes seeming to be in control, the instigator of these events, other times appearing to be a victim of Fergodlivio as well. In one scene, a loud noise in the house overwhelms her and she attempts to flee, but Fergodlivio "pursues her, chains her, and shuts her in the bedroom again" (990). Like the other prisoners in

[18] The naming of Fergodlivio is similarly unclear, since this is not a traditional or typical name for the region. His name would therefore sound unnatural to an Uruguayan audience, seeming either foreign or archaic in form.

the house, escape does not seem to be an option for her, leading to the possibility that she represents those citizens or groups who initially desired and helped bring about the coup, only to find themselves severely restricted by it later, as well as the more abstract ideal of the *pueblo* or nation, that was invoked as a justification for state violence. Alternately, she could stand for those values of democracy, order, and security that appear to be so powerful and influential as they are constantly invoked in public discourse, while in reality they have been degraded and chained to restrictive practices as well. This more abstract view of her as something both more and less than human is supported by her dehumanization in several instances throughout the play, such as when Fergodlivio instructs that her drink of water be served in a bowl on the floor (974). Yet her power is undeniable; while the Father initially tries to laugh off her presence as a personal eccentricity of Fergodlivio's, by the end of the play the order to "Claw him, Clara! Bite him!… Exterminate him!" fills him with complete terror (1008). Her exact nature and force thereby remain ambiguous; her purpose is thus not to reveal a single and simple truth, but rather to call attention to the fact that, while the influence *of* power is visible all around us, the influences *on* power remain hidden. As Gordon explains, "even those who haunt our dominant institutions and their systems of value are haunted too by things they sometimes have names for and sometimes do not" (5). *Guest* calls on the audience to search for these secondary hauntings in order to understand and respond to the system of power in all its complexity.

Similarly, in *Judges*, the ghostly presence complicates the overly simple dichotomy of oppressor and oppressed, provoking doubt about the role of the rest of society in this struggle. On the surface, Julia is aligned with the oppressor: her husband Juan Luis has served in the dictatorial government and profited heavily from it, all without ever having to be held accountable for his actions. As his wife, she has lived a wealthy, leisurely life, never questioning

the system from which she benefits.[19] But she is also a victim of the lies that her husband has used to manipulate her and of the passive cynicism that he has fostered in her: when they were both in college, her boyfriend, a student protester named Fermín, was arrested for subversive activity; Juan Luis subsequently hired a police officer to come and arrest Julia as well, telling her that Fermín had betrayed her, so that Juan Luis could then step in and save her. This is the source of the apathy and depression that have characterized her life since then; as she explains to a friend, "Since then I haven't been able to believe in anyone or anything" (Buero Vallejo 84). Fermín subsequently died in prison and forms part of the string trio representing Juan Luis's victims, as the violinist.

The effects of the repressive system cannot be limited to those people tortured or killed by it; the dictatorship has permeated and altered every level of society. While both Julia and Juan Luis state a desire to move forward into a new, democratic present, they remain bound to their pasts. Julia is trapped by her marriage and passivity, which are both founded on the lies of the past; she even admits at one point, "I know I have no future because I only see the past" (91). Juan Luis, on the other hand, cannot truly progress or participate in the new Spanish society due to his inability to fully support that society in more than just words. As Martha Halsey explains, the play "thus suggests that, for the generation of Spaniards represented by Juan Luis and Julia [born around the time of the Civil War, with no real memories of a previous non-dictatorial society], the legacy of Francoism is not easily overcome" (147). Despite the widespread desire to

[19] As her friend Cristina comments, "it's easy for you to disregard politics, but disregarding them is a form of politics, too. I've known a lot of women like that. While they play poker and look down on politics, their husbands create the necessary politics for them to keep playing poker" (Buero Vallejo 54).

forget and move on without accountability or self-reflexivity, this denial is ultimately as destructive as the repression itself, leading Julia to commit suicide and Juan Luis to fail to report to the government a known terrorist, whose subsequent actions will destabilize the fledgling democracy.

Ghosts and the recognition of ghosts are necessary for healing and progress, in what Gordon terms "a particular form of calling up and calling out the forces that make [or have made] things what they are in order to fix a troubling situation" (22). For Buero Vallejo, this resolution begins with remembrance and witnessing, in the sense expressed by Diana Taylor: "the witness is a part of the conflict and has a responsibility in reporting and remembering of events [*sic*]" (25). The ability of any society to move on after trauma is conditioned on its capacity for remembering and dealing with its ghosts. As Gordon explains, the study of hauntings "requires attention to what is not seen, but is nonetheless powerfully real; requires attention to what appears dead, but it nonetheless powerfully alive; requires attention to what appears to be in the past, but is nonetheless powerfully present" (42). The dictatorship is all of these things, continuing to define behavior and perspective both in the halls of power and in everyday life, and will linger on, unresolved, as long as its full effects are ignored. Recollection and accountability are therefore the keys to combating the remaining invisibilities in society, invisibilities which are further enabled and reinforced by their absence from the majority of (post)dictatorial studies.

Marital Discourse and Gendered Invisibility

It is also striking that both of these plays choose to frame their calls for greater understanding of the forces at work in government and for accountability for their effects on

society through the figure of the invisible wife. *Judges in the Night* bears the subtitle "A Secular Mystery in Two Parts" (Buero Vallejo 31), a clear allusion to medieval mystery plays, which were characterized by the use of allegorical characters representing abstract concepts, moral postures, or sectors of society. Each of the characters in *Judges* can easily be interpreted as representative of an important group or viewpoint in Spanish society at the time: the priest, the general, the activist, the international businessman, and, of course, the government official. In this allegorical schema, Julia is particularly significant as she represents everyone else: all the people in society who do not belong to a particular, visible group in power or fighting against it, yet who are caught up in the struggle. *The Hollow Guest*'s Clara is similarly positioned as the unseen wife of the representation of governmental power. Yet, as we have previously seen, her symbolic role is much less clearly defined than Julia's. Whether she represents an ideal, an outside interest group, or society itself, these possibilities are gendered as feminine and conjugally linked to the dictatorship.[20]

[20] Indeed, within the gendered politics of *The Hollow Guest*, the men of the family in the play are also clearly feminized, establishing Fergodlivio, the voice of power, as the only "true" man in this society. The Father is portrayed as weak, having bowed and scraped his way through life and still ended up unable to fully support his family, a failure in his duty as a married man and father. The son, Jorge, while a much stronger character in many ways, the most willing to stand up to Fergodlivio and the first to break free of his control, similarly fails in his relationships as a member of a family, unwilling to compromise his own desires in order to help support the family and criticizing his parents for their failure to achieve a better life. Both men thereby fail the Greek definition of masculine virtue: that a man should be able to master himself in order to then be able to lead and command others (Fernández 154-55). By this measure, only Fergodlivio is

Repressive military governments in both Latin America and Spain have generally been characterized by the promotion of conservative social values and a strict demarcation of "masculine" and "feminine" roles. As Diana Taylor points out in *Disappearing Acts*, the political discourse of domination is frequently marked by the assumption of gendered roles: framing the masculine government in contrast to a feminized general population.[21] While Taylor limits her argument to the examination of the disappeared and their families, her comments on the gendering of the discourse of power and domination are extremely revelatory. Though she herself does not do so, these ideas can and should be applied to a larger view of society as a whole, preventing those who do not fall into the oppressor-disappeared dichotomy from being disappeared themselves by historical memory. Thus, in these periods of internal conflict, "[t]he struggle, as each group aimed to humiliate, humble, and feminize its other, was about gender. It was about claiming the position of power associated with maleness and forcing the other into the 'feminine' position of surrender" (Taylor 34). The populace is therefore inscribed with the characteristics of the so-called "*'feminine nature': fragile, emotional, dependent, instinctively maternal, and sexually passive*" (Fernández 164, emphasis in original). These characteristics in turn provide a justification for domination: the weak feminized population needs the strong male government to look after them, thereby "relocat[ing] the masculinist desire for domination onto the feminized population, claiming that 'she' desires to be dominated; 'she' willingly offers up

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established as a true, ideally masculine character, always in control, both of himself and of those around him.

[21] While Taylor specifically relates her observations to the context of the Argentine Dirty War (1976-1983), both the Uruguayan dictatorship and Franco's rule in Spain were defined by a similar gendering process; thus, her arguments prove useful in the study of these cases as well.

her subjectivity, even her life, to the superior power" (Taylor 6). Moreover the associations inherent in gendered roles create a clear demarcation between the ability of the masculine military to control the public sphere and the secondary, private role to which the feminine population is relegated. In the traditional schema of gender associations, according to Ana María Fernández, "language, power, and money are inscribed as 'natural' components of the public-masculine sphere, while the feminine spheres open out on a private, sentimentalized world, socially signified as subaltern, behind or beneath, lacking the characteristics of productivity, organizational power and cognitive potential of the former" (148). These stereotypes of matrimony, female helplessness, and duty, and the relegation of the female to the private sphere are simultaneously echoed and subverted by these invisible wives, who resist full possession and establish their own possibilities for action.

In many ways, Julia fits the stereotypes of feminine nature espoused by the traditional definition: she is emotionally fragile, sometimes to the point of petulance; she is sick and dependent on "pills and tobacco" to get through the day (Buero Vallejo 52). Sexually she is portrayed as passive to the point of frigidity, as her marriage is physically non-existent and she prefers to keep it that way, while also showing no interest in pursuing any other man (53). After her marriage, she gave up her pursuit of a medical career and has been completely dependent on her husband ever since. The only adjective from the previous description that is missing from her character is "maternal." Julia and Juan Luis's lack of children is an important comment on their marriage and on the society that they represent. The procreative function of matrimony is vital to the continuance of a society, not only in terms of maintaining the population but also as a training ground for future generations. It is a wife and mother's job to "not only put into practice her own conducts of subordination but also to lead her children in an apprenticeship of automatic

behaviors of submission to the father," training subsequent generations in the practice of obedience to the government (Schmukler 206). The lack of children in Julia and Juan Luis's union thus implicitly denies the dictatorship and its holdovers in democratic society a social training ground: their relationship has not produced a future, for the government or for society as a whole.

Moreover the traditional marriage contract and, by extension, the contract between a government and society, is maintained by a differentiated structure of belonging, in which the wife belongs and submits to the husband, but not the reverse. As Fernández explains, "This 'belonging to another,' from which women are positioned, is—until now—the only possibility for sustaining [the traditional] conjugal contract. […] To sum up, the wife belongs to the husband, and the husband belongs to himself" (150, 156). This vision of the wife as property is echoed by Juan Luis; when he tries to explain to Julia why he lied about Fermín's betrayal of her, he expresses it in terms of possession: "You didn't belong to his world, but to mine," and she bitterly responds, "Like a piece of property. That's what you're saying.… And I let myself be bought" (Buero Vallejo 154-55). Nevertheless, this transaction is repeatedly portrayed as incomplete. As both Cristina and the visible musicians comment, Juan Luis's continued desire for Julia is motivated principally by the subconscious understanding that he has never truly possessed her: "You want her as much as when you were courting her because, deep down, you can feel that you have never obtained her. In your love there is no selflessness, only wounded vanity" (121). This problem is further exemplified by the fact that Juan Luis is unwilling to accept the possibility that a separation from him might in fact be beneficial to her, thus proving that his devotion to her is inherently self-serving (120-22); this refusal on his part echoes the refusal of those who were previously in power to relinquish their control over Spanish society,

focusing on preserving their own position instead of forging a stronger society. This fact is symbolically presented during the dream sequences as Juan Luis repeatedly attempts to give Julia her anniversary present. In the final dream, the audience sees the present itself for the first time: the box is empty (164). There is nothing that he can give her to make her life better, nothing more that he can offer. The ultimate failure of their marriage and of his attempts to possess her is summed up by this final moment, when she not only fails to recognize him, but declares, when he insists that he is her husband, "I never had a husband" (164). The ideal and mutually supportive union that he has insisted on throughout the play never truly existed, subverting the fiction of the union between the previous government and the Spanish people, a union which must now be left behind in order for any progress to be achieved.

Her resistance to being fully possessed, coupled with Juan Luis's inability to truly see her as the third musician or another victim of his actions, force the audience to recognize that this marriage is not what it might seem. As much as Juan Luis tries to ignore the failure of his marriage, dreaming of a happy anniversary party to avoid the recognition of his wife's suicide, his idyllic portrayals of their marriage in his dreams always end badly. In the first party sequence, their seemingly perfect marriage is disrupted when he gives her a present: though the audience never sees what this first one is, it leads both her and everyone else in the room to repudiate him, leaving him alone (42-44). In the second, the joyful gathering turns into a murder scene in which she actively supports his assassination: as the assassin prepares to fire, she responds to his pleas of "No, no" with an emphatic "Yes!" (103). And in the final version, as previously mentioned, she does not even recognize him as her husband. Their marriage is repeatedly exposed as a fraud, only capable of leading to destruction. Moreover, her invisibility

as the third musician/victim constantly calls both Juan Luis's and the audience's attention to the fact that something in this vision of society is not correct.

The portrayal of Julia as housewife highlights the importance of the separation of gender roles into public and private spheres, with the housewife relegated exclusively to the domain of the private not only as a realm of action but also as a realm of knowledge. This distinction reflects the public's inability to participate in the discourses of power during and even after the dictatorship, which ordered them to stay home and leave the running of the country to the men of the government. In her study of the naturalization of gender roles, Evangelina Dorola calls attention to the social marginalization of the housewife, whose work and contributions to society go unrecognized and who is excluded from public discourse, to the detriment both of society and of her own ability to understand that society:

> Exclusive dedication to this [domestic] work impedes or complicates, depending on the case, the autonomous participation of women in public spaces, producing that other manifestation of invisible violence that is the social marginality of the housewife [… which] generates a lack of knowledge and/or utilization of the codes and conventions that are employed in the public world, less access to skilled information, and difficulties in comparing personal interpretations of reality and forming an opinion. (196)

This vision of the sheltered housewife who is prevented from acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary to understand the world around her is clearly exemplified in the case of *Judges*, where Julia must constantly interpret the world around her through the visions of the men in her life. In her university days, her boyfriend Fermín decides what she should and should not know and the extent to which she should be involved in the public sphere; even though he is involved in

subversive activities, she says, "he keeps me out of it.[…] I don't have the training, he says. Talking, yes, he does talk to me a lot… about everything" (Buero Vallejo 46). Her role is thus clearly established as listening, not acting or interpreting. Similarly, when she is accused of subversive activity herself, Juan Luis speaks for her and represents her to the authorities, actively silencing her with the command to "[l]et me do the talking" (48). He never truly relinquishes this role, taking charge of her perception of the rest of the world during their marriage and protecting her from the realities that he feels she should not be aware of, such as Fermín's death in prison (67). Only another woman, her friend Cristina, attempts to get her involved in the outside world on her own behalf, presenting her with information and leaving it up to her to decide how to interpret and act on it. But ultimately, without any practice confronting the world on her own, Julia has no talent for independent life; she can only escape male dominance by ending her own life. Nonetheless, Juan Luis, and perhaps the play itself, refuses to accept the possibility that, even after death, she will be able to interpret the world on her own: in Juan Luis's last dream, where he must finally acknowledge the reality of her death, he imagines her reuniting with Fermín, taking her place beside him and accepting his gift of an instrument on which to play his favorite music (165). Within the allegorical structure of the play, therefore, society as a whole is envisioned as always having relied on (or been forced to rely on) the interpretations of those acting in the public sphere, without the necessary tools and knowledge to act on its own behalf. Yet society cannot survive as the sheltered, domestic wife of government; if it is unable to gain meaningful access to the codes of public life, it can only self-destruct. Both the failure of society to recognize this and the urgency that they do so are highlighted by her invisible presence: the only versions that we see of her are partial and distorted, the truth hidden and unseen until it is already too late.

The case of the other invisible wife, Clara in *The Hollow Guest*, focuses more specifically on defining the justifications and structures of domination within the repressive society itself, through the matrimonial bond to the forces in power. The key adjectives used to define Clara are "delicate" and "sick," while her fragility is presented as the motivating factor behind all of Fergodlivio's oppressive actions. Everything in the house must be arranged so that nothing "will disturb her tranquility" (Prieto 975). As in other situations of military repression, the male responsibility to protect the weak wife/nation above all is portrayed as a paramount, irrefutable necessity: "[t]he fight to the death against the enemy 'other' could be legitimated as the struggle to possess or protect the woman" (Taylor 33).[22] Any disobedience on the part of the family to Fergodlivio's orders is described as "a plan of aggression against us" (Prieto 991). Even the shoes that the Father purchases with his newfound wealth must be destroyed because they are "too pointy" and "seem to threaten us" (988). Yet Clara herself is hardly portrayed as helpless; in fact, she is described several times as practically a weapon in her own right. Fergodlivio's threats of violence are not going to be carried out by him, but rather by her: in one scene he warns that the Mother's actions may produce "a huge sound that will make you suffer, my life, driving you to pursue her throughout the house to tear her apart with your claws" (997-98). Clara is ambiguously situated between the fragile, infirm woman or ideal that must be protected from every threat at all costs and the weapon of the state as it pursues absolute domination reaching into every corner of daily life.

[22] "The military men, actors in the drama of national reorganization, raised themselves over the infirm, bloody *Patria* they aimed to protect from the unrecoverable microbes (disguised as fellow Argentines) who threatened to destroy Western Civilization" (Taylor 157).

In a similar sense, Fergodlivio's descriptions of their marriage are idyllic but always acquire a sinister quality from their context in a situation of absolute domination and terror.[23] He speaks several times of the "unity" that should characterize any strong marriage, yet this positive quality is intermingled with violence: it is brought up for the first time as a reason why the Father should beat his wife (997) and again later as Fergodlivio urges Clara to destroy the Father for doubting her existence (1008). Even as he describes their "infinite love," that love must co-exist with hate and imprisonment: "I only love Clara. *(With anguish.)* But sometimes when she wants to escape my chain… when she wants to be more than my chain, more than my hand, more than my blood… I also hate her. *(Brief silence.)* But that almost never happens" (979). The chains are an ambiguous marker of imprisonment simultaneously binding her to him and him to her. Moreover, this explanation establishes the direction of dependence: Clara is more than him, she can live without him, she resists total submission, but he needs her in order to establish his identity. As Taylor notes in the case of the military man in Eduardo Pavlovsky's *Paso de dos*: "Only by controlling She […] can He define himself" (16). This window into his dependence on her subverts the traditional structure of power in which the wife depends on the husband for her value and her identity.[24] Clara resists her imprisonment, trying to be more than the limitations

[23] As previously described in *Judges*, this is a marriage that has failed to produce any children, any future, belying Fergodlivio's claims to absolute perfection. The lack of a future for this dictatorial pair is further emphasized by their effect on those around them: two out of three of the family members leave, and the play closes as Fergodlivio urges the final one towards isolation and death. A productive future is not presented as an option in this society.

[24] Juan Luis of *Judges* similarly lacks self-definition without his wife. Although in more subtle ways, Julia is the space on which Juan Luis defines himself; his dreams focus on their

that he imposes on her, which further calls into question his affirmations of her weakness. The gendering of invisible power as female and therefore frail and subordinate is repeatedly undermined by the assertions of Clara's own power and struggle for an independent existence. The play affirms the presence of underlying motivations and justifications for dominance, defined by the government as one unified, harmonious whole that they must support in order to achieve the perfect familial existence. Yet *Guest* simultaneously subverts the military's protestations of unity and the necessity of violence by allowing those same invisible justifications a separate will of their own, together with their own sources of strength.[25] Such justifications must therefore be examined and broken down more thoroughly to reveal the ruptures and warped interpretations at their core.

Present Objects and Absent Bodies

Having examined the construction and implementation of invisibility throughout the text and the connections that are established with the forgotten and ignored by society and history, the question must arise of how this invisibility can be materially constructed in the context of the theatrical performance. What is the relationship of the absent figure to the tangible objects and

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anniversary party and each end in confusion for him due to her repudiation of him. In his dream-state conversations with his judges, moreover, her true self is invisible, and he feels lost and uncertain, unable to understand his place in the world, as the removal of her visible body unsettles his own sense of self.

[25] Examining a similar assertion of independence in chapter 7 of *Disappearing Acts*, Taylor examines how the Argentine military's idealization of the woman's role in the home and the family was then used against them by the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo (183-222).

people that surround it on the stage? Rayner offers one of few explanations of theatrical absence in her study of "Empty Chairs" which, when combined with her investigation of the signifying possibilities of the body, will reveal the significance of the invisible body as a palpable absence in relation to the physical objects around it.

Rayner's discussion of "Empty Chairs" establishes that material objects can evoke human presence and absence. The concrete objects of everyday life are automatically associated with their practical uses, uses which in turn require the presence of a human agent. Therefore, as an object existing solely for the purpose of being occupied by the body, the empty chair "holds both the memory of a loss and anticipation of return in all the particularity of a person, in character, in quality. […] A chair, in brief, is a multiple object: a material object and an abstracted, inanimate reproduction of a human body; a thing-in-itself and a social signifier" (112-13). While the empty chair can act as a site of memorial and memory, recalling the presence of the person who used to occupy it, it also assists in the initial creation of awareness, acting as "the very vehicle by which an unknowable event, such as death, can be perceived" (114). The chair thereby creates a visible sign of absence, loss, and the uncanny.

This is particularly noticeable in the use of the empty musician's chair in *Judges*, clearly signaling the invisibility or absence of its occupant and causing an uncanny feeling of uneasiness in the dreamer, whose attention is constantly called back to the chair and the need to identify its occupant. As Halsey explains, the presence of the viola and the empty chair are visible signs of Juan Luis's "intuit[ion] that Julia's place is with the two mysterious musicians, that is, with the victims who will judge him" (137). Yet he resists this intuition for as long as possible, instead asking almost every other character in the dream sequences why they are not in their correct place with the other musicians. The chair can thereby be understood as "an awareness of loss,

which is to say a blank space in memory" (Rayner 51), that he is as yet unwilling to acknowledge, but that intrudes into his subconscious nonetheless. As Rayner asserts in her exploration of memory and memorialization (a significant component in Buero Vallejo's search for a way to productively look back on the dictatorship), "[s]ince images are more easily retained than specific words, the first element for remembering things or words is to give them a location in space or association with an object" (54), in this case, the empty chair that evokes Julia's presence without naming it.

The chair as social signifier is inverted in *Guest*: one of the first signs of the uncanny nature of Clara and her husband is that neither uses any furniture. The lack of a material connection to the world and of a visible framework in which to place Clara serves to heighten her ambiguity. While the ghost of *Judges* acquires a concrete, material reference in the form of the chair, Clara has no such material existence. As a physical object, the chair can never be completely abstract; instead it becomes what Rayner refers to as a "readable object," revealing details "of the kind of human that would occupy it, of social position and history, of class, of gender, of quality" (111). Without any readable objects to define her, none of this information can be deduced about Clara and both her existence and humanity can be called into question. Moreover, since she cannot be seen or heard, relating her to a material object would be the only way of establishing an exact location for her—without this spatial connection, Clara can be anywhere and signify anything, creating a panoptic effect of constant vigilance and imbuing the entire house with her presence. The chair is also one of the objects most associated with the operations of power; we refer to occupying the *seat* of power and use the Latin phrase *ex cathedra* (literally "from the chair") to refer to "speaking from a position of authority" (110). The lack of a clear relation to the chair thereby also signifies her indeterminate relation to power

and authority in and of themselves. The empty chair possesses the ability to constitute meaning through its own absence, not merely through the absence of a body to occupy it.[26]

The signifying power of the body itself in turn makes its absence extremely meaningful. As Taylor points out, in politicized contexts ranging from witch trials to concentration camps, "power relations have been written into and onto the human body" (x). The possibility of seeing the effects of these power relations on Clara's body and of using her body to understand her own power is therefore denied the audience; we have only her husband's descriptions of her as sickly and infirm to depend on, not knowing if those descriptions are accurate or in fact mask her actual strength, information which in turn would identify her as either a victim or a tyrant in her own right. But the body's significance extends into many other areas of knowledge as well. Like the theatre itself, Rayner defines the body as "an inhabited space containing and exhibiting its own material and psychic history, ghosted by the continuing disappearance of its own present and presence, on a trajectory to and from nothingness, and encoded by family and cultural histories" (61-62). Clara's invisibility and lack of corporeal form separate her from all of these elements. She is physically disconnected from the markers of her own past and future, existing outside the corporeally delineated passage of time. Without personal or cultural history and without the threat of oblivion that defines humanity, she acquires the force of an eternal abstraction, unable

[26] The relationship of the family to their objects is also significant. Rayner points out that "[t]he departure of objects reciprocally exiles the humans to whom they are attached" (99). From the beginning of the play, the arrival of Clara and Fergodlivio is accompanied by the departure of more and more of the objects belonging to the family. As they lose their material connection to their daily life, they enter a state of internal exile even before their own physical departure, disconnected from the objects that have defined their life and their own senses of identity.

to influence reality except through the mediation of an embodied being (in this case, her husband). This related corporeal presence is necessary in order to allow her to comment on contemporary reality; the lack of physical visibility complicates, without eliminating the possibility of, her societal relevance.[27]

In her investigative shift from the objects that can signify its absence to the discursive framework of the body itself, Rayner explains that the body is "an exterior space that displays, like a hollow vessel or vaulted crypt, the surfaces of its own interiority" (62). But this interiority can only be glimpsed as more than surface through violence: "such a space becomes most evident when it is cut, when its fragmented parts are severed from mundane contexts and show the sites of missing pieces" (62). In the case of *Judges*, the invisible Julia has been completely fragmented, cut away entirely from the world, unable to be recognized by the husband who refuses to acknowledge that he has caused her death. As long as he denies the truth and responsibility of what he has done, she cannot exist in the material world, only as a shadow in his memories, divorced from the new reality of her own death: her entire body has become the fragmented site severed from its own context. Once he finally accepts the fact of her death and his own role in it, she appears and takes her place in the trio. Throughout the play, we have seen

[27] Once again, Clara's invisibility inscribes her in a panoptic system of power, as defined by Bentham and Foucault. According to the latter, "Bentham laid down the principle that power should be visible and unverifiable. Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so" (201). In this case, Fergodlivio is the visible manifestation of power, whereas Clara is the possibly-present, unverifiable branch of power that could always be watching.

Julia in his recollections of the events leading up to her death. But now, by contrast, we are able to recognize that the Julia we have seen in his memories was also a fragmented partial version, "showing the sites of [the] missing pieces" that his manipulation cut from her in life. Finally free of him and of the past, she is restored, described as "smiling," "radiant," full of "a deep love" (Buero Vallejo 164),[28] descriptors that have never applied to her depressed passivity before. The destructive effects of the dictatorship have been written in her body all along, but can only be observed now in comparison. As the figure who has portrayed Julia's manifestations in memory and dreams is merged with the invisible musician and all the connotations that it carries, a visible connection is now drawn between her explicit invisibility as a musician throughout the play and the unnoticed invisibility that has characterized her in his memories the whole time. This parallel in turn permits the play to comment on the existence of invisibilities hidden in plain sight throughout society.

These cases of invisibility are also given larger significance by the (nearly) total absence of physical specificity. The physical presence and individuality of the actor is a vital element of any theatrical performance. As Rayner explains, the embodiment of the character is the key process that transforms the text into the realm of social reality:

> In the space of the difference between events and writing, there is a third party who is called on to do justice to each. That third party, call it reader, interpreter, critic, or actor, mediates between them by a specific act. The subject must become a subject first by interpreting the meaning of the textual demand—the

[28] The stage directions state, "She approaches smiling, her eyes wide in delighted surprise. [...] Her expression is radiant. [...] A deep love, that [her husband] has not known, seems to shine in the eyes of his wife" (164).

> hermeneutic gesture—then by transcribing that meaning into the fleshly forms of social praxis. (56)

In this way, an invisible character is oddly divorced from the traditional processes of theatrical interpretation, due to the absence of a visually specific actor or representing body. These characters can therefore acquire a certain transcendence over the particulars of any individual performance: this unknown entity is bigger than the stage on which it is portrayed and the people who mediate it. Even though a visual version of Julia does finally establish itself at the end of *Judges*, her longstanding invisibility allows the audience to imagine other people, even themselves, as the ones taking their place among the dictatorship's victims as the play draws to a close. In a very different way, Clara's invisibility allows her to be more than any single person: an ideal, a collective entity, even a nation. Yet all of these possibilities, from specific people to abstract values, force the audience to engage with the invisible realities surrounding them as they leave the theatre.

In these plays, invisibility is refigured, not as that which cannot be seen or known, but as that which society has so far chosen to ignore. As Ana María Fernández explains, "*a social invisibility is not what is hidden* in some depth, but rather, paradoxically, it is made of facts, occurrences, processes, mechanisms, produced-reproduced across the entire social and objective surface. […] The invisible is not the hidden, then, but *the dismissed*, the prohibited from being seen" (144, emphasis in original). These plays therefore challenge societal blind spots and provide a framework for seeing invisibility. Since the frame of the stage endows everything within it with signifying possibility, an apparent absence will thereby acquire a new significance as well. The use of allegory permits these visual holes to comment on society's inability to truly

see the holes in its own understanding. These omissions are perhaps understandable given that true sight would destroy the possibility of remaining at a comfortingly removed distance from danger through ignorance; as Taylor emphasizes, "*seeing* also goes beyond us/them boundaries; it establishes a connection, an identification, and at times even a responsibility that one may not want to assume" (19, emphasis in original). The political ramifications of seeing and witnessing are incontrovertible; for Uruguay, investigating and comprehending the causes of the dictatorship would provide a first step in combating it and could help prevent future similar crises, while for Spain, the recognition of the extent to which the dictatorship has permeated and affected entire generations will be vital to establishing a lasting and just democracy. Invisibility pervades the workings of all societies; by calling our attention to these presences-in-absence, *The Hollow Guest* and *Judges in the Night* create the possibility of recognizing the unseen in the power structures of society, calling on all to be aware and truly witness these invisibilities next time, whether it be in an extreme case of repression or in subtler moments of sublimation in everyday life.

This focus on societal blind spots is one of the key differences between these plays and other works examining trauma, repression, and memory in the (post)dictatorial societies of Spain and Latin America. Instead of striving to make visible the people and events that the dictatorship sought to disappear and cover up, these plays use invisibility to draw attention to the overlooked and ignored by society as a whole. Yet total onstage invisibility is not the only techniques that playwrights may use to challenge existing structures of memory and visibility. In the next chapter, I will examine how other dramatists of the Southern Cone have challenged and inverted these structures to reveal further blind spots in societal memory.

Chapter II

Reverse Visibility:

Raquel Diana's *Cuentos de hadas* and Marco Antonio de la Parra's *La secreta obscenidad de cada día*

"Once upon a time." A mother, Blanca, begins to tell her unborn daughter a story—her story. It is the story of a young woman, her stepmother, and her godmother. While from an early age Blanca's understanding of the world has been shaped by the fairy tales she loves, her life has not been one. As her country's government becomes more and more repressive, she gets involved with the resistance and with one of its leaders, leading to her arrest, torture, and rape at the hands of the military officers in charge of discovering his whereabouts. Her story is told through quiet domestic moments—the kitchen conversations of women that no one truly sees. By contrast, the most public and visible events and people of the time remain unseen; the men who shape these women's lives are spoken of and to, but never heard themselves. Years later, as a mother, it is Blanca's turn to take control of the narrative, deciding for herself how to tell the stories that will shape her daughter's future.

On the other side of the Andes, two men sit down on a bench outside an upper-class girls' school. Both are clad in the trench coats and bare legs of exhibitionists, preparing to act as soon as a ceremony at the school finishes. As each tries to get the other to leave, they reveal that both have first been victims of torture by the reigning regime and then co-opted into its service. Their argument over the cause of society's ills finally leads them to introduce themselves as Karl (Marx) and Sigmund (Freud). Both feel lost and marginalized, no longer in control of their words and ideas. They are united by the common need to make up for previous mistakes by taking

action and fighting back against their own irrelevance. Ultimately, as the ceremony lets out, they open their trench coats to reveal not nudity, but firearms, their target being not the girls themselves, but the high-level government officials who are the girls' parents. These officials, like the government agents that Karl and Sigmund describe circling the block, are never seen or heard from, despite being a constant influence on the actions of the play. Instead, the audience sees and hears Karl and Sigmund[29] attempting to reclaim a place in the world and a hope for the future.

Just as the plays in the previous chapter attempted to respond to societal blind spots by circumventing the visual field of theatrical production through the use of invisible characters, these plays also employ specific techniques of onstage visibility and invisibility to respond to issues of perception and partial sight in our understanding of dictatorial situations. Here, Raquel Diana's *Cuentos de hadas* or *Fairy Tales* (Uruguay, 1998) and Marco Antonio de la Parra's *La secreta obscenidad de cada día* or *Everyday Secret Obscenities*[30] (Chile, 1983) offer an

[29] Throughout this chapter, any reference to the actual historical figures and thinkers or to Freudian or Marxist theory will refer to the last names "Freud" and "Marx," while the characters created by de la Parra will be referred to as simply "Sigmund" and "Karl."

[30] The title cannot be translated to English in such a way as to clearly preserve the original double-meaning of the Spanish. The adjectival clause "de cada día" could be translated as "every day" in the sense of "daily" (indeed, as Gilmore points out, it echoes the Spanish version of the phrase "our daily bread" from the Lord's Prayer [7]) or as "everyday" in the sense of "commonplace" or "mundane." These events are therefore described as both daily, repeated actions and everyday, normal occurrences. The one existing English translation of the play, by

alternative method of perception through reverse visibility. Not only do they complete the process of granting theatrical visibility described by Diana Taylor, Joseph Roach, Marvin Carlson, Alice Rayner, and other theatrical scholars, in that they "make visible again, not the invisible or imagined, but that which is clearly *there* but not allowed to be seen" (Taylor 27, emphasis in original), they also make the rest of society invisible. By making certain marginalized social characters visible and turning more prominent and powerful characters invisible, these plays call attention to the arbitrary and hierarchical nature of the visual field of memory. As sociologist Carina Perelli points out, both memory and visibility are socially constructed: "Each epoch has constructed its own social reality, defined its terms of reference, its modalities of socially acceptable discourse, *its areas of visibility and invisibility*, *its memories*, and its stereotypes" (96, emphasis added). Social and historical memory privilege certain perspectives and experiences as more visible and therefore more valuable than others, a hierarchy that is here inverted. If, as Taylor explains, dictatorial power exerts itself through public spectacles in which "a small group of power brokers (in this case the military) engenders and controls a viewing public through the performance of national identity, traditions, and goals" (ix), then the removal of their visibility denies them that power of performance and symbolically negates their attempts to establish a self-justifying narrative. Instead, the power to interpret and comment on events is granted in the first case to marginalized domestic women and in the second to unwilling collaborators and co-opted ideals. Rather than serving as a marker of the previously unseen, as explored in Chapter I, here invisibility acts as the necessary removal of

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Charles Phillip Thomas, removes the phrase altogether, translating the title simply as *Secret Obscenities*.

those hypervisible[31] figures that have blocked audiences from seeing other perspectives. Since, as Avery Gordon explains, "*Visibility is a complex system of permission and prohibition, of presence and absence*" (15, emphasis in original), reverse visibility allows the theatre to give permission to the prohibited and make present the absent, while transferring that prohibition and absence to the previously powerful. The permission granted by visibility is that of belonging to the community, the nation, and its history. Susan Jeffords affirms that "'…it is how citizens *see* themselves and how they *see* those against whom they define themselves that determines national self-perception… the very idea of a nation is itself dependent on this visual realm'" (*Hard Bodies* qtd. in Taylor 91, cuts and emphasis in Taylor). Inverting this visual realm brings these marginalized characters into the nation and symbolically exiles those in power from the national community, creating new definitions of "us" and "them" that run contrary to those proposed by the dictatorships.

It should be noted that the structures of power and visibility being reversed are not perfectly identical in the two plays, due to their focus on different groups and their different positioning in time relative to the dictatorship (de la Parra's play was written during the Chilean

[31] Gordon defines hypervisibility as a kind of extreme visibility that gives the illusion that everything can be seen and understood and nothing is hidden: "Hypervisibility is a kind of obscenity of accuracy that abolishes the distinctions between 'permission and prohibition, presence and absence.' In a culture seemingly ruled by technologies of hypervisibility, we are led to believe not only that everything can be seen, but also that everything is available and accessible for our consumption" (16). The hypervisible figure thus has a blinding effect on society, creating the illusion of total transparency and distracting from the presence of repressed ghosts all around us.

dictatorship, while Diana's was written just over a decade after the Uruguayan dictatorship ended). While *Fairy Tales* makes visible those whom both the government at the time and subsequent socio-historical memory have failed to truly see, *Everyday Secret Obscenities* makes visible those whom society has failed to see and acknowledge, though the repressive apparatus *has* seen and exploited them. In this sense, *Obscenities* reverses the visual field of society as a whole (who can see the hypervisible military spectacle and might, but not the victims walking amongst them), while partially recreating the visual structure of the panopticon: "in order to be exercised, this power had to be given the instrument of permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance, capable of making all visible, as long as it could itself remain invisible. It had to be like a faceless gaze that transformed the whole social body into a field of perception" (Foucault 214).[32]

The inversion of visibility is not restricted to the presence of people but occurs in dialogue as well, as the unseen is linked to the unsaid. The line between said and unsaid or unsayable is at least blurred, if not completely crossed, by dialogue that comments openly on the processes of self-censorship in a repressive society, once again making the masking forces at work transparent so that what lies beneath them can be seen. Self-censorship is a pervasive and lasting legacy of repression; as Lawrence Weschler notes in his study of post-dictatorial Uruguay, "even now, in the wake of the country's return to democracy, the language of indirection continued to hold sway: everything was 'you' or 'one,' hardly ever 'I' or 'me.'

[32] Foucault, citing Bentham, refers to panoptic surveillance as "visible and unverifiable" (201). This function is here split—the instrument of power (the car circling the area and supposedly containing a government agent) is visible to the characters, but unverifiable to the audience, who only have the characters' word that the car exists and that it represents what they say it does.

Cautious, elliptical, hypothetical… deniable. Denied already in the saying" (89). Gordon's affirmation that studying hauntings and invisibility "requires attention to what is not seen, but is nonetheless powerfully real; requires attention to what appears dead, but is nonetheless powerfully alive; requires attention to what appears to be in the past, but is nonetheless powerfully present" (42) can be extended to include attention to what is not said, but is nonetheless powerfully heard throughout society. Reversing these processes of self-censorship and distancing becomes a vital step in exorcising the ghosts of dictatorial repression and rebuilding community and communication.

These techniques inverting the visibility of people and words avoid a simplistic process of purely realistic representation of the unseen. As I explained in the previous chapter, such representations run the risk of becoming "invisible artifacts on the public landscape" like statues, which are seen but generally ignored, inspiring no thought or questioning of established narratives (Rayner 35). Instead, both plays call on the audience to question the narratives presented to them by government and society, both through these strategies of visibility and by demonstrating that society's most visible and well-worn narratives are no longer adequate. The rejection of dictatorial and post-dictatorial narratives is thereby reinforced by the postmodern questioning of master narratives engaged in by both plays. In *Tales*, the master narrative in question is the vision of life and gender expectation created by these fairy tales, while in *Obscenities*, the master narratives are the theories espoused and promulgated by Freud and Marx. In both cases, these prominent master narratives are subverted and revealed as inaccurate or co-opted by the oppressor, a revelation that is accompanied by a call for new narratives to help build a better future. These plays therefore participate in what Nelly Richard has described as "a practice of history unconcerned with the linear restitution of a single history, particularly given

that the substance of history has been irreversibly contaminated by the suspicion weighing on every act presuming to represent a totality of meaning" (6). They reject official versions of history and instead shine a light on the blind spots created by those histories.

Contextualizing the Ignored and Forgotten

Though Raquel Diana's *Fairy Tales* looks to the past, its goal is the betterment of society for the future, to be achieved through a process of coming to terms with ignored or forgotten elements of the past. As Diana states, "My focus is much more directed towards the future. I lived that period, and it left a much greater mark on me than I had supposed. While I was writing the play, I realized that; I had already forgotten things that I thought had been overcome" (Bravo-Elizondo 147). It is this illusion that the past has been overcome that Diana wishes to combat: "We have to live with people that we don't know who they are, what they've done, with this fear of talking about it. It's a sick situation that cannot continue" (151). In this case, as in many of her plays, Diana's examination of Uruguayan society focuses on the role of women. *Tales* is based on both her own experiences as a young, politically active woman during the dictatorship and the experiences of her aunt Elvira and other women she knew; it is dedicated: "for Elvira Diana and for all of us women" (Diana 6) and offers a different view of their role in and capacity for political action.[33]

[33] Blanca's experiences with torture and imprisonment are based on her aunt, while Blanca's experience seeing a student dragged from her high school by her hair is one of Diana's own memories (Bravo-Elizondo). The unseen Colonel is a real figure as well, an official in the regime and distant relative who had played soccer with her grandfather and who her mother believed must have intervened on their behalf multiple times during the dictatorial period (151).

In most examinations of resistance to dictatorial government in the Southern Cone, even when women are portrayed as political actors, they have generally been seen as politicized *by or through men*. One of the reasons that organizations like the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo and other mothers' groups had, and continue to have, such power is that they were seen as non-political actors who were only taking a political/anti-government stance because of their missing (usually male) children. Their resistance embraced the traditional, conservative role that the military wished to confine them to as mothers and homemakers and then protested their inability to fulfill that role without the return of their children (Taylor). These women are therefore *brought into* politics through the actions of men: the men of the military government and, frequently, their politically active male relatives. Women's involvement in politics, however significant, is thus a result of and dependent on male political action.[34] An examination of the detained and/or disappeared in Uruguay shows that not only were men the majority of victims, but women were generally detained either with their husbands/boyfriends/male relatives or because of that connection. In the list of the 37 Uruguayans who disappeared in Argentina, for example, each of the 9 disappeared women was arrested and disappeared in connection with a husband, boyfriend, or father (*Proyecto*). Similarly, Uruguay's *Nunca Más* study shows a more

[34] The Uruguayan drama *Juan Palmieri*, by Antonio Larreta (written early in the repressive period [1971] and first performed in Buenos Aires), is a typical case. The title character's mother worries about her son's increasing involvement in leftist organizations (particularly the Tupamaros) and gradually becomes aware of the social issues he is fighting for through her concern for him and her interactions with other male figures, such as a social activist priest. While the play is a call to action for both men and women, women's involvement remains a secondary result of male-dominated politics.

than 5:1 ratio of male and female political prisoners (Servicio).[35] This inequality is most likely both a reflection of real greater male participation in overtly political action and the resulting military bias that, while not ignoring the possibility of female subversive action altogether, viewed it as a lesser threat than male subversive action.

This de-privileging of women is typical of the conservative perspective of most dictatorial governments, which relegated women to a traditional position in the home and therefore did not see them as having a role in the political conflict of the time. Yet limiting the possibility of female subversion to that of direct political and guerrilla action in the public sphere and thus failing to recognize the possibility of private-sphere female subversion proved to be a costly oversight by military governments. The political outlook of their times consigns Blanca, her stepmother Maruja, and her godmother Carmen to a subordinate position within the private sphere, not only separated from the public sphere of political and social action but also subordinate to male heads of the household. Their conditions of life thereby disappear from social discourse, becoming one of the blind spots in society's self-understanding. As feminist theory has long pointed out,

> the supposedly 'private' realm of civil society as well as the 'public' realm of politics are populated largely by male heads of household (as with Locke) or male

[35] The study surveyed former prisoners and emphasizes that the survey sample was selected so that gender would be strictly proportional to the actual distribution of prisoners (Servicio 324). Out of the total number surveyed (313), only 17.5% (55) were women. Moreover, the primary prison for male detainees, the ironically-named Libertad Prison, held 1400 prisoners at a time, while the primary detention facility for female political prisoners, Punta de Rieles, could only hold about 400 (126).

> wage workers (as with much Marxism), and so on. The truly privatized realm of the family is hidden behind them. *Thus, women 'disappear' theoretically along with the domestic sphere*. (Weintraub 31, emphasis added)

Paradoxically, this ideology limiting women to the domestic sphere actually created a space for a new kind of private "non-political" resistance. In her study of women's roles during the Uruguayan dictatorship, Perelli explains that women who embraced their conservative roles as wives, mothers, and homemakers were actually instrumental in creating "an undercurrent of irrepressible criticism," not by critiquing the regime as a whole, but by criticizing individual policies affecting their children's educations, their ability to feed their families, and other domestic issues (106). As Perelli points out, "There was nothing very political, at least in party political terms; they were set to modify their own situations, not to change the world or overthrow the regime. But, more by the fact that they existed than by what they did, those women's organizations contributed to erode the monologue, the single order of discourse imposed from the top" (107). Moreover, this type of resistance was extremely hard for the military to repress:

> This military ideology, with its paternalistic overtones, could not find fault with what Uruguayan women were doing, because women were doing what they were supposed to do according to the military definition of gender roles: they were acting as mothers, wives, and housewives. Thus, the military could not identify this very peculiar form of dissent as a political threat to be taken into account in the everyday struggle for power. (110)

Tales directly makes visible these possibilities for invisible resistance within the domestic sphere in its portrayal of all three women. These women are able to reclaim control over their lives and stories through personal and private relationships that take on a wider significance.

Likewise, the search for control by a marginalized group is the focus of Marco Antonio de la Parra's *Everyday Secret Obscenities*, which examines the forced co-optation of people, words, and ideas in a repressive society and their attempts to reclaim mastery of their lives. The two main characters are established from the beginning as marginalized characters, not through economic or geographic circumstances, but through their failure to conform to societal norms. They are introduced in the guise of exhibitionists, representatives of conduct considered perverted by society as a whole. This exhibitionism ultimately proves to be a metaphor since, as Jacqueline Bixler points outs, "the secret obscenity that they finally perform is not the anticipated public display of their private parts but a violent act of political terrorism" (291). This act is still an exhibitionist one in that it exposes what society as a whole has preferred to leave hidden: the everyday violence that underpins the repressive society and its effects on those around them.[36] The play's ability to comment on these issues is heightened by the chaotic ambiguity of Karl and Sigmund's performance; besides presenting themselves as the historical figures of Freud and Marx, "these [figures] are transformed into exhibitionists, torturers, torture victims, extremists, detectives, etc., who in turn disguise themselves as street vendors and other

[36] Since the true nature of their actions is not revealed until the final moments of the play, much of the play's meaning must be deciphered in retrospect, leading to dual interpretations on the part of the audience: the interpretation that occurs in the moment of viewing and the one that arises after the final reveal. Throughout, I will therefore address both interpretations: what the audience will understand in the moment and the conclusions that they can come to after the show ends.

characters, in a system of evocations, associations, and allusions that each refer incessantly to the others, ultimately including all of society in their rituals and slang" (Hurtado 804). These are the different marginalized characters and groups, then, that are granted visibility by the play. Although most critical analyses of the play discuss the fact that these characters assume a variety of roles relating to their socio-political context, none have thus far undertaken a detailed examination of the implications of these individual roles.[37] My exploration of the play will therefore focus on this area, particularly in regards to these characters' self-presentation as both victims and participants in the repressive system, as well as historical figures. The play thus makes visible the problematic existence of forced collaborators and then extends these same ambiguities to these characters as historical figures and representatives of leading theoretical ideals.

Those who collaborated under torture do not fit easily into the criminal/victim dichotomy. Neither categorization is comfortable: to describe them as criminals discounts the horrific tortures that they themselves suffered, while to describe them as victims seems somehow disrespectful to other victims of repression who did not collaborate and may in fact have been victims of the collaborators. To that end, "the traitor figure has remained stigmatized, hidden from view, muzzled, a taboo subject for former revolutionaries reticent to admit 'defeat,' as well as for a nation reluctant to face the ethical quagmire of complicity on which the Pinochet dictatorship forged its 'economic miracle'" (Lazzara 1). Society's attitude towards them has

[37] For an analysis of the semiotic layering of references and ambiguity, see Bixler; for a psychoanalytic look at politics and language, see Gilmore; for a study of the play's reversal of surveillance, see Seda; for a study of the use of cultural myths, see Rojas; for a look at the influence of psychoanalytic theory, Nietzsche, and Buddhism on the play, see Vidal.

therefore generally been that it is better not to talk about them at all, "[y]et, traitorous and complicit subjects […] bring into relief the ethical, moral, and political dilemmas of the 'gray zone' and oftentimes encapsulate the breakage of body, voice, and subjectivity that were part and parcel with torture and the denunciation of one's revolutionary comrades" (1). Journalist and activist Gloria Elgueta notes that the figure of the collaborator is often used as a convenient scapegoat for a larger societal problem, calling attention away from the passive collaborators who did nothing to fight the repressive system (165)[38]; as a blind spot, this view places all the blame on the collaborator themselves, ignoring their double condition as perpetrator *and victim*. It reduces the issue to a moral decision on that person's part to surrender and collaborate or not to do so, thereby removing from the equation the issue of the state-sponsored terror practiced on them, as well as ignoring the passive complicity of the rest of society.

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[38] According to Elgueta,

> As Pilar Calveiro has commented about the Argentine dictatorship—and things were no different in Chile—'terror enjoyed a certain degree of social consensus, which showed that our society probably was, and is, much more authoritarian than we are often willing to believe.' However, this type of social *collaboration* is less visible than the figure of the traitor or collaborator who, when considered individually, is often saddled, in the eyes of society, with all responsibility for what happened. In short, the figure of the individual collaborator ends up serving as a sacrificial lamb for individual or collective responsibility. (156)

Likewise, literary scholar Patricia Espinosa notes that "any history that focuses on individuals ends up obscuring all the mechanisms of power and methodologies in the background" (160).

The question of collaboration has therefore been a difficult subject from the beginning of the Chilean dictatorship in 1973 to the present day. The most high-profile discussion of the subject has revolved around the cases of the *delatoras* (female informers) of Villa Grimaldi: Luz Arce Sandoval, Marcia Alejandra Merino Vega (known as "La Flaca Alejandra"), and María Alicia Uribe ("Carola"), women who not only capitulated under torture but eventually went to work for the regime.[39] In the past several years, discussion of these cases and the issues they represent (complicity, betrayal, forgiveness, guilt, and shame, to name only a few) has been renewed by works such as Michael J. Lazzara's new interview of Luz Arce, published in 2008, and the forum he led in conjunction with that book on the issue of collaboration, which in turn was published with the English version of the interview, *Luz Arce and Pinochet's Chile: Testimony in the Aftermath of State Violence*, in 2011. The subject has also been taken up again by the theatre: for example, one of a series of productions commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the coup in 2013, *Mina antipersonal* (*Landmine*), by Claudia Di Girólamo, was based on the story of the *delatoras* and represented an attempt to understand them as victims as well as guilty parties.[40] The myriad of contrasting opinions that appear in these works, from

[39] Luz Arce testified in great detail before the truth commission in 1990 and went on to publish a memoir, *El Infierno* (*The Inferno*), in 1993; La Flaca Alejandra also published an autobiography, *Mi verdad. Más allá del horror. Yo acuso* (*My Truth. Beyond the Horror. I Accuse*), also in 1993; while Carola has maintained her silence throughout.

[40] The play ran three times a week from June 14 to July 20 at the Matucana 100 Cultural Center, and was both well-attended and well-received. It focused on their experience as a double trauma—the combination of their original torture and rape with their subsequent rejection and vilification not only by society but by themselves. This conflict was particularly well-captured in

extreme anger to compassion, clearly establishes collaboration as an unresolved conflict buried under the surface of Chilean society. Indeed, regardless of their opinions of collaboration in general or Arce in particular, Lazzara's varied contributors are united in their assessment that collaboration and its implications represent a blind spot in Chilean history. As Lazzara explains, "collaboration, both in the concentration camp context and in civil society, has been a taboo subject in Chile" (9) to the extent that "any kind of real dialogue in Chile about collaboration [remains] nearly impossible because lines in the sand [are] still so indelibly drawn" (170). This in turn makes de la Parra's decision to explore the subject of collaboration as a gray area thirty years ago in the midst of the dictatorship itself all the more unusual. He thereby exposes the fact that "even those who live in the most dire circumstances possess a complex and oftentimes contradictory humanity and subjectivity that is never adequately glimpsed by viewing them as victims or, on the other hand, as superhuman agents" (Gordon 4) by embracing the ambiguities of the collaborators, instead of taking a black-and-white approach to this difficult and unexamined topic.

These two figures of the domestic woman and the unwilling collaborator, made visible by these theatrical works, act as ghosts haunting society's understanding and memory of these periods. As Gordon explains, "A haunted society is full of ghosts, and the ghost always carries the message […] that the gap between the personal and social, public and private, objective and subjective is misleading in the first place" (98). The ghost thus participates in a series of social dichotomies, with all of their implications. Indeed, when referring to society, "visible" and "invisible" become interchangeable with "public" and "private." A look at the most common

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their physicality and appearance: all three women were dressed in evening wear but with obvious bandages, attempting to move and behave normally but unable to do so because of their injuries.

definitions of "public" and "private" clearly inscribes both terms within the visual field. The Oxford English Dictionary, for example, defines "public" first and foremost as "open to general observation, view, or knowledge; existing, performed, or carried out without concealment, so that all may see or hear" or "easily seen, conspicuous, prominent," while "private" is defined as "[k]ept or removed from public view or knowledge; secret; concealed" (*Oxford*). Before proceeding to a detailed analysis of the dynamics of visibility and invisibility in these plays, it is therefore important to explore thoroughly the meanings of "public" and "private" as they relate to government, society, and gender, as this will then give us a clearer understanding of the wide-ranging implications of reversing the visible and the invisible.

Blurring Dichotomies, Inverting Hierarchies

As theoretical terms, "public" and "private" carry distinct meanings in different fields and at different points in history. In his overview of the terms' history, "The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction," political sociologist Jeff Weintraub outlines several main conceptions of the dichotomy. The earliest, dating back to classical antiquity, links the terms to the ideas of "state" and "non-state," referring to a society in which the "'public' power of the sovereign rules over, and in principle on behalf of, a society of 'private' and politically passive individuals who are bearers of rights granted to them and guaranteed by the sovereign" (11). This primarily political definition has since been transferred to the field of economics, where it continues to be used to define the public sector of governmental economic influence and the private sector of independent business. In terms of societal relations, however, both of these sectors would fall under the contemporary conception of "public," as contrasted with the private domain of domestic life; Weintraub points to the definitions of historian Philippe Ariès to show

that "modern civil society represents not the 'private' realm but the new 'public' realm; the 'private' realm is the realm of personal life, above all of domesticity. 'The progress of the concept of the family followed the progress of private life, of domesticity'" (Weintraub 18). With this shift, "public" and "private" become inextricably linked in modern thought to the contrast between "[w]hat is hidden or withdrawn versus what is open, revealed, or accessible" (5). Sociologist Norbert Elias adds "secret" and "intimate" to this list of synonyms for "private" and further signals that the establishment of a clear dichotomous opposition between these terms has itself become an unquestioned blind spot in society: "'with the advance of civilization the lives of human beings are increasingly split between an intimate and a public sphere, between secret and public behavior. And this split is taken so much for granted, becomes so compulsive a habit, that it is hardly perceived in consciousness'" (qtd. in Weintraub 20).

The understanding that "public" and "private" invoke ideas of exposure and secrecy in turn leads us to examine their place in the establishment of societal norms and rules of behavior. In the sociological study of these terms, the public is designated as the realm of sociability:

> The characteristic virtue of this form of public space, which it both requires and reinforces, is civility—which is a matter of codes and conventions, no less important for being largely implicit. […] This is a space of heterogeneous coexistence, not of inclusive solidarity or of conscious collective action; a space of symbolic display, of the complex blending of practical motives with interaction ritual and personal ties, of physical proximity coexisting with social distance. (23, 25)

The maintenance of the public and private spheres of everyday life is thus conditioned on the separation of attitudes and behaviors into those which can be carried out in the view of all and

those which should only be known to the self and possibly a few intimate acquaintances or family members. In *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt redefines this opposition as that between the private and the social, which are both seen as separate from the political.[41] Within this definition, one of the main functions of the social is to impose norms of behavior:

> Whether a nation consists of equals or non-equals is of no great importance in this respect, for society always demands that its members act as though they were members of one enormous family which has only one opinion and one interest […] S]ociety has conquered the public realm, and […] distinction and difference have become private matters of the individual. (37, 38)

Social conformity is thereby one of the demands of a public existence, relegating dissent and difference to the realm of the private, a distinction that lies at the heart of political scientist James C. Scott's work in this field.

In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, Scott establishes a dichotomy between the public interactions and behavior of the dominant and subordinate and their private actions and statements when unobserved by the other. Interestingly, he does not refer to this contrast as "public vs. private" but rather as "public vs. hidden." The dichotomy is thereby situated in the visual field, with "public" becoming synonymous with "open" or "unconcealed." In Scott's definition, "*Public* here refers to action that is openly avowed to the other party in the power relationship" (2), whereas the hidden transcript (the private) denotes "discourse that takes place 'offstage,' beyond direct observation by powerholders" (4). The public is a realm of performance, where all parties, dominant and subordinate alike, must modify their behavior and

[41] By this definition, the political and the social constitute opposing definitions of "public," which varies in meaning according to the circumstances in which it is used.

discourse to conform to the expectations and restrictions inherent in the power dynamic: the dominant must perform in accordance with the definitions they have used to legitimize their status, while the subordinate "will, out of prudence, fear, and the desire to curry favor, [shape their performance] to appeal to the expectations of the powerful" (2). The hidden (or private) thus becomes a sanctuary where the masks may be dropped and the truth spoken. While, "[i]n the short run, it is in the interest of the subordinate to produce a more or less credible performance, speaking the lines and making the gestures he knows are expected of him" (4), the desire to change the dynamics of power can lead to an eruption of the hidden/private into the public realm, designating the line between public and private as a fluid and contested space.

For Hannah Arendt, the transition from public to private is a vital step in our understanding of what constitutes reality.[42] At its most basic, Arendt establishes the public/private dichotomy as a matter not only of visibility and secrecy—"the distinction between things that should be shown and things that should be hidden"—but also of necessity, in that "[t]he most elementary meaning of the two realms indicates that there are things that need to be hidden and others that need to be displayed publicly if they are to exist at all" (64, 65). This necessity arises from the need for shared experience to constitute objective reality:

> everything that appears in public can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possible publicity. For us, appearance—something that is being seen and heard by others as well as by ourselves—constitutes reality. Compared with the

[42] In her exploration of the public and private realms, Arendt explores a full history of the terms from Greek and Roman times to the present, as well as including an extensive study of their economic meanings. Here I will limit my focus to her examination of these concepts in general terms.

> reality which comes from being seen and heard, even the greatest forces of intimate life—the passions of the heart, the thoughts of the mind, the delights of the senses—lead an uncertain, shadowy kind of existence unless and until they are transformed, deprivatized and deindividualized, as it were, into a shape to fit them for public appearance. (45-46)

The vital role of art is thus to take these subjective, individual experiences and bring them out into the open by giving them an opportunity for shared public consumption. This public appearance is necessary for the survival of knowledge and memory in society, for "a common world can survive the coming and going of the generations only to the extent that it appears in public. It is the publicity of the public realm which can absorb and make shine through the centuries whatever men may want to save from the natural ruin of time" (50). This creates a hierarchical distinction between the objectively more real and lasting public arena and the subjective world of the private, a distinction which is linked for Arendt to the common root shared by "private" and "privation." If only that which has a public existence is truly real, then "[t]o live an entirely private life means above all to be deprived of the reality that comes from being seen and heard by others" (53). This societal view of the private as lesser and deprived of key elements of human life is vital to feminist theory's view of the public/private debate.

Feminist critiques of the public/private distinction have focused on the gendered nature of the two spheres, as the public domain in these political, economic, and social senses has traditionally been dominated by men, while women are confined to the subordinate private sphere. This subordination is rooted in "the institutional separation between 'work' and home. Only the production of exchange-value (disproportionately by men) in the market economy is considered real 'work,' as opposed to the production of use-values and emotional management

(disproportionately by women) in the home" (Weintraub 32). As feminist Carole Pateman explains, this hierarchy is rooted in "the belief that women's natures are such that they are properly subject to men and their proper place is in the private, domestic sphere[, while m]en properly inhabit, and rule within, both spheres" (283). Even as women have increasingly left the home and taken up positions in the public sphere, the stigma associated with the private sphere and with leading a predominantly private existence persists:

> The private or personal and the public or political are held to be separate from and irrelevant to each other; women's everyday experience confirms this separation yet, simultaneously, it denies it and affirms the integral connection between the two spheres. The separation of the private and public is both part of our actual lives and an ideological mystification of liberal-patriarchal reality. (295)

Feminist theory therefore emphasizes the equal value of domestic labor and insists on its relevance to an understanding of politics and society; the famous feminist statement that "the personal is political" can thus be extended to affirm that "the private is political."

Both of the plays that will be studied here take on the ambiguities inherent in these overlapping and, at times, contradictory definitions of the public and private, blurring and reversing the lines between these categories in their theatrical portrayals. The fact of situating this reversal in the context of the theatre is a significant one, as theatre's role in this dichotomy of public and private is by its very nature ambiguous. The theatre itself constitutes a public space; historically, one of the main reasons to go to the theatre was to see and be seen by other members of the community (or the public), with the work being presented onstage of secondary importance. Yet as the dimming of the houselights became common practice, the theatrical audience acquired a degree of public anonymity, simultaneously belonging to a large group, but

unable to see or be seen by that group or (generally) by the performers themselves. Moreover, within this public space, issues are portrayed and discussed that range from the most public—the rise and fall of governments and nations—to the most intimate portrayals of private family life. The already ambiguous line between public and private thus becomes blurred to the point of truly disappearing in the theatrical setting. This setting is thereby uniquely suited to discussion of the overlap and inversion of public and private.

Likewise, dictatorial contexts tend to lead to a blurring of public and private, as the private sphere is increasing penetrated by the panoptic forces of censorship, leading to oppression and self-censorship even within traditionally private spaces. Carina Perelli's description of daily life in Uruguay during the dictatorship highlights the intrusion of the public eye into private life:

> Fear exterminated all social life in the public realm. No one spoke in the streets for fear of being heard. […] One tried not to make new friends, for fear of being held responsible for their unknown pasts. […] The fear of accountability loomed, larger than life, over every single activity in the public realm.
>
> Even the enchanted inner circle of home and family was not entirely free of external pressures. The *allanamientos* [unannounced searches of homes and neighborhoods by military personnel], followed by the fear of more *allanamientos*, provided a glimpse of what the eruption of public control into the private realm could mean. (101-02)

Military control of all ideological activity meant that the home, the sanctuary of the private space, was equally subject to public oversight (though admittedly more difficult to police). The same was true in Chile, as Lira recounts:

> Fear, uncertainty, and insecurity invaded social instances. Mistrust grew. Familiar places became inhospitable, aggressive, and sinister, even for people who had no involvement and no desire to become involved. The dictatorship was a time characterized by the loss of boundaries between private and public worlds. […] Paradoxically, the effects of the [public] persecution had to be lived as the victim's private concern, in the shadow of the watchful eye of the state to prevent the shame and humiliation of political repression from falling upon family members. (116)

This spatial control extended into language itself; as Taylor points out in the context of Argentina, "[b]oundaries collapsed between private and public spaces as the entire 'private' domain became sucked up into the *proceso*. […] The junta co-opted the language and space of domesticity. The Motherland was the 'house' in which the military had to establish order" (102). The military thus attempted to erase the boundary between public and private, extending their sphere of influence to all areas of society.

As this examination shows, the dichotomy of public and private is inscribed with many other binary oppositions: political and domestic, social and intimate, open and hidden, male and female, known and secret, and visible and invisible. The inversion and blurring of the structures of visibility can therefore also be read as inverting and challenging the structures of these other binaries. Each of these definitions and associations will therefore be key to understanding the implications of the techniques of reverse visibility that will be explored here. For those people situated on the traditionally weaker side of these dichotomies, their perspectives and stories take on new importance as they are transferred from the realms of the domestic to the political, from the hidden to the open, and from the secret to the known.

The Reverse Visibility of People

In *Fairy Tales* and *Everyday Secret Obscenities*, the typical hierarchy of visibility is inverted, with the marginalized and ignored taking center stage and the powerful never seen or heard from. If, as performance theorist Peggy Phelan affirms, "performance implicates the real through the presence of living bodies" (148), then those marginalized characters taking embodied, living form on the stage will become more real to their audience. Simultaneously, the powerful forces of government are denied that claim to tangible reality through an embodied presence; by their physical absence, they are not granted the chance to establish their power and reality to the audience. The audience, as real, present human beings, will identify with those present on the stage and become separated from the representatives of power; since seeing "goes beyond us/them boundaries[,] it establishes a connection, an identification, and at times even a responsibility that one may not want to assume" (Taylor 19). Controlling whom the audience does and does not see is thereby a powerful tool for controlling the processes of audience identification. While the plays choose different targets for audience identification, the techniques used are similar. *Tales* examines the dictatorship's effect on the lives of ordinary citizens, specifically lower-class women, whose stories are often overlooked in the dichotomous study of revolutionary victims and their oppressors; *Obscenities*, on the other hand, takes a look at the experience of those who collaborated under torture, a phenomenon that blurs the traditional distinction between victim and perpetrator, while also exposing dominant currents of thought as malleable and ambiguous. Throughout, the visual techniques employed also invoke and subvert the concepts of "public" and "private" as previously explored.

In most conceptions of public visibility and private invisibility, as explained by feminist theory, women have been relegated to the invisible private sphere. For this reason, dictatorial societies have traditionally viewed female political action as less of a threat than male. In the case of Blanca in *Fairy Tales,* however, this hierarchy of gender relations is inverted and this judgment proves misguided. While Blanca is an activist working as a clandestine union organizer when she is captured and tortured by the regime, as a woman she remains a lesser, passive figure for her military captors: her imprisonment and suffering are not a result of her own activity or importance, but rather are due to her romantic involvement with one of the activist leaders. She is only important to those in power as an extension of the man in her life, remaining invisible as an individual. As she herself explains, her imprisonment in and of itself carries no importance to the regime: "They wanted El Negro, I was just the fall guy" (Diana 40). While she is tortured and questioned, she is ultimately released and able to resume political activity because she is not perceived as a threat. As Taylor explains, "The struggle for national identity was waged between two kinds of men (conqueror/indígena; liberal/federalists; military/antimilitary), who fought to define and occupy the 'masculine' position while emasculating and feminizing the 'other.' Women have no space in this contest, except perhaps as the contested space itself" (16). Here, however, both of these kinds of men—the military men who torture her and the antimilitary activist (highly prioritized in their hierarchy of visibility) whom they seek to find—are made invisible to turn attention to Blanca, the so-called contested space on which they exert influence. Instead of appearing as this passive space for male action, Blanca establishes her own identity, using her near-constant presence on stage to contradict her social and political invisibility. She clearly establishes that her social and political action is not limited to her romantic relationship with El Negro, but began before and continues after. Though the focus of the play is primarily on

Blanca's life before her arrest, there are a few references that indicate that after both her release and later the return of democracy, she remains active in labor organizations and the Communist Party (42, 43).

Yet her position outside the visible political spectrum continues after the restoration of democracy. The fact that, though she was captured and tortured, she was then released contributes to her invisibility in the post-dictatorship era. In Uruguay, as in Chile, the truth commission established by the government to look into the atrocities of the dictatorship was initially only concerned with cases resulting in disappearance and death (*Proyecto*).[43] While fairly precise information is available about the number of detained-disappeared in Uruguay, statistics about imprisonment and torture remain both rarer and vaguer. These statistics therefore make visible people such as El Negro, who disappeared and was never found, while hiding the experience of those such as Blanca, who suffered atrocities but lived. With Uruguay's *ley de caducidad* (a blanket amnesty law which "terminated the State's power to prosecute and punish military and police personnel responsible for human rights violations during the period of military rule" [Americas 16]) supported and reaffirmed by popular vote in 1989,[44] the living

[43] A separate, earlier independent study—*Uruguay Nunca Más*, by the Servicio Paz y Justicia—did carry out a much more thorough examination of the situation.

[44] A second plebiscite to overturn the law failed in 2009, though the government increasingly found ways around the law's restrictions to investigate and prosecute human rights violations. One of the dictatorship's leaders, Gregorio Álvarez, for example, was sentenced in 2009 to 25 years in prison for human rights violations ("Justicia"), while Juan María Bordaberry (the democratic leader who turned power over to the military before being ousted himself in 1976) and his minister Juan Carlos Blanco were also sentenced to 30 years each in 2010 for their

victims of the dictatorship remained invisible throughout the 1990s. As Chilean writer-director Marcelo Leonart stated before a performance of his play *Grita* (*Scream*), which also deals with a female survivor of imprisonment and torture, "during the 90s, those people walked like ghosts down the street, and no one wanted to see them." Moreover, Blanca finds that her political and romantic relationship with El Negro has also disappeared from social and political memory. Not only does she never see him again, but she is also denied the necessary status to look: "With the return of the democracy, one discovered many things, for example, that he had a wife and that they had separated during the clandestine period. But she was still the wife. So I couldn't even complain. I am not his anything" (Diana 41). She has no official public claim to information or to his memory, yet the audience witnesses her private stake in these events, endowing them with the legitimacy that society has not granted her. As Arendt explains, "[e]ach time we talk about things that can be experienced only in privacy or intimacy, we bring them out into a sphere where they will assume a kind of reality which, their intensity notwithstanding, they never could have had before" (46). The act of making Blanca visible and letting her perform her emotions and experience brings both she and them out of the shadows and into the realm of public reality.

Blanca's political activism is not the only path of resistance employed by women, nor is it the only one to which the dictatorship and society at large were blind. Indeed, as Perelli

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involvement in murders and human rights violations ("Uruguay's ex-president"; "Uruguay's ex-ruler"). The law was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 2009, but according to Uruguayan law, this action only effects legislation on a case-by-case basis and does not automatically overturn the law as a whole ("Uruguay"). Although an attempt to officially overturn the law in Congress in 2011 failed, other legislation was passed that same year negating its effects (Ley).

explains, "[t]he way Uruguayan women fought the military dictatorship poses unusual problems for a political scientist, because their resistance [frequently] lacked even the consciousness of being resistant" (108), leading to a "kind of collective blindness" about their contribution to undermining the dictatorship (110). By embracing their traditional roles as caretakers, homemakers, wives, and mothers and then criticizing the ways in which governmental policy and action prevented them from fulfilling these roles (whether due to the disappearance of their children or the scarcity of household goods), these women created a private space for dissent within the domestic realm. Though "[t]his female participation was so 'unheroic,' in classical terms, as to be deemed nonpolitical by the more professional actors" (96), it nonetheless had profound implications for breaking military hegemony and proving the government both imperfect and fallible. At the time, "the mainstream pattern [for women] in Uruguay had been either to combine a job or profession with a strong commitment to family life, or to be a homemaker fully dedicated to child rearing" (104). All three women conform to this model, privileging the home and family interactions throughout, yet through the visibility granted by the play to this domestic life—almost all of the play is set in their home[45]—the audience can see that

[45] Taylor describes the importance of the public portrayal of home life in her discussion of Griselda Gambaro's *Information for Foreigners.* Her analysis could easily be applied to *Tales* as well:

> The house as theatrical space, like the junta's appropriation of the domestic, subverts the lines of demarcation between public and private. Systems of terror 'get us where we live,' nullifying the existence of any safe space. The play's use of the house-as-set emphasizes the corrosive and contagious nature of violence that blurs all physical, moral, and judicial frameworks. Scenes of political

the equivalence of "private" and "nonpolitical" is in fact false. Each of the three women in *Tales* participates in making visible different facets of the power of this type of domestic female subversion.

Carmen exemplifies the invisible and undervalued domestic sector as an old, childless woman who works as a natural healer, a profession that is traditionally considered subordinate to and of less value than "real" medicine. This double invisibility (of gender and profession) is challenged in her visit to the home of Colonel Rodríguez. When Blanca is detained, Carmen goes to the home of this leading officer in the regime, recalling that they lived on the same block when he was a child: "Why, I've wiped his nose so many times! Every time he hurt his knee playing soccer, he would ring my doorbell: 'Carmen, Carmen, I got hurt.' And he would cry. I would put disinfectant on his injuries and sing to him" (38). Yet this role as nurse and sanctuary for a child is not enough to grant her visibility and access now. The Colonel does his best to ignore her presence, sending servants to speak to her and pretending not to be home. She is only granted his attention through her repeated insistence on being heard and her refusal to leave the premises, and even then he continues to communicate with her by proxy. Nonetheless, the societal structures of power that privilege his position over hers are inverted in the visual and verbal fields of the play: Carmen is the only character that is seen and heard during the scene, while both the Colonel and his representatives remain invisible and unheard. She also

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> violence are not limited to prisons and torture chambers but are played out on public streets, in private homes, on human bodies. The takeover of the house, which concurrently signifies the nation, the family home, and the body's protective shell, indicates that the three spaces—social, familial, individual—have collapsed into one. (127)

successfully inverts the structures of panoptic power that require that such "power had to be given the instrument of permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance, capable of making all visible, as long as it could itself remain invisible" (Foucault 214). While those in power are indeed invisible to the audience, they cannot hide from Carmen, who demonstrates a level of knowledge about the Colonel's activities that is usually only found on the receiving end of such surveillance. Despite the servant's denials, she knows the Colonel's whereabouts; furthermore, she ends the conversation with a message for him: "Tell him that the itching he's having down there… How do I know? I know everything, child…" (39). Her connection with nature and the healing arts is therefore portrayed as an equally powerful source of knowledge as the regime's surveillance, challenging their control over access to information. Moreover, her connection to him as a caretaker and mother-figure, instead of relegating her to the traditional position of inferiority, seems to give her a deeper understanding of him and privileged access to information about him.

While Carmen openly assumes an attitude of resistance and defiance, the stepmother Maruja represents a more passive approach to the dictatorship. Instead of being politically active, she focuses her attention on her job and family. She therefore is representative of the majority of women at the time, who "were able to continue living in the limbo of the household, more concerned with the cost of living, the quality of their children's formal education, and the strategies for survival than with the change of regime. Even though they could regret the old times, their immediate concerns were not defined by the nature of the legitimacy of those in power" (Perelli 104). She exemplifies the smaller moments of criticism and resistance that Perelli discusses, speaking openly and critically about food shortages and prices and worrying that Blanca is suffering from psychological problems "because of those damn *milicos* that are

making everyone nervous" (Diana 29).[46] With comments like these, she contributes to a discourse of resistance that undermines military authority without directly questioning their legitimacy. While Maruja is to some extent aware of the dangers around her, she also shows a degree of blindness in regards to her proximity to danger. As Perelli notes, these same women were, paradoxically, "less aware and less afraid of the dangers of the outside world and of the consequences of 'deviant' conduct under the rule of fear" (104). When Blanca asks her to lower her voice, Maruja replies, "I'm in my own house, why would I lower my voice" (34). Similarly, when Blanca starts staying out late and not telling Maruja where she is going, Maruja calls Carmen on the telephone to talk about it. Carmen has to rush over to the house and inform her, "I brought tea. And some thread to sew up your mouth. Don't you know that you can't talk on the phone" (33). Carmen has to bring the reality of Blanca's political activism to Maruja's attention. Yet throughout these events, Maruja does not hesitate: she assumes her traditional role as mother and protects her stepdaughter, even if that means breaking the law. When Blanca brings El Negro to their house to hide, Maruja responds, "I'll help you, I'll always help you" (34), and when Blanca is taken Maruja does her part to make sure no incriminating evidence can be found in their house (38).[47] She thereby affirms the private realm as a sanctuary from the public, defying the military's attempts to take over their home as well. Maruja's visibility thus makes visible the private sphere's capacity for subtle but enduring resistance.

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[46] "Milicos" is a slang term for members of the repressive military and/or police force, with pejorative connotations.

[47] While Maruja must be brought into political awareness by those around her, she differs from typical portrayals in that her teachers are the women in her life, rather than the men.

Even Blanca, who participates directly in the political action, also operates in this sphere of domestic resistance through her role as a mother and transmitter of knowledge. Historically, one of the key responsibilities of the mother is the training of children in societal values and behavior: "According to [traditional] maternal values, the mother does not simply put into practice her own behaviors of subordination but also instructs her children in learning the automatic forms of submission to the father, to herself, and to other adults" (Schmukler 206). In the context of the dictatorship, this instruction would theoretically extend to teaching future generations acceptance of and submission to the government, yet Perelli points out that women in fact did the reverse:

> In charge of the children, they nurtured them with tales of the past, rendering alive a country they had not had the chance to know. As the storytellers of traditional societies, they transmitted many values deeply ingrained in the older generations to the new ones; they created a fund of shared concepts, myths, and symbols that helped perpetuate the [democratic, egalitarian] Uruguay of old in the memories of the young. [… T]he very fact that the narratives existed and that many teenagers recall them as important in their personal development seems to indicate that we cannot lightly dismiss them. (Perelli 106)

The framing of the play as a story that Blanca tells her unborn daughter highlights the importance of this role as teacher and transmitter of societal memory. The memory that Blanca chooses to transmit to her daughter is one of resistance both to the dictatorship itself and to a post-dictatorial society eager to simplify and forget the past. Instead of accepting such forgetfulness, Blanca emphasizes the importance of remembering this period and its role in shaping the present: "Once I thought that if the fountain of youth existed I could go look for it, to

see if I could erase all the sad things and start over. But, you know what, honey? It's better to be like this. This is who I am, with my wrinkled face and my wrinkled soul" (Diana 46). She chooses memory as the only path to truly knowing and accepting who she is, and passes this knowledge and identification on to the next generation. She also stresses the need to counteract the generalizations and lies that have flourished from society's desire to come up with easy answers or explanations and move on. To that end, she not only emphasizes the importance of memory as a whole but of transmitting specific memories: "I have to tell you something that is very important because there are a lot of lies going around: I don't know about some people, but El Negro was never in any war, nor did he kill anybody. He was a good man who organized unions and protests and handed out leaflets. Nothing more" (46). By telling her child these stories of who the disappeared really were and what the nature of the conflict actually was, Blanca as a mother and storyteller is able to shape future perception, making visible this key role of women in societal memory.

All of these strategies mark ways in which women, in covert and unacknowledged ways, contributed to a climate of resistance and created opportunities for future change. In a society in which "gender itself constituted grounds for marginalization[, so] women and nonassimilable men were pushed to the side" (Taylor 71), *Tales* places these women center stage. The case of the "nonassimilable men" is given that same prominence in Marco Antonio de la Parra's 1983 play, *Everyday Secret Obscenities*.[48]

[48] While *Obscenities* does not portray women, these men occupy the same space as women in the gendered dichotomy of power; as Taylor describe in terms of the Argentine dictatorship, "The struggle, as each group aimed to humiliate, humble, and feminize its other, was about gender. It was about claiming the position of power associated with maleness and forcing the other into the

Like *Fairy Tales*, *Everyday Secret Obscenities* grants visibility to the marginalized members of society, while relegating those in power to a position of invisibility. As Lazzara explains, "Pinochet's 17-year reign of terror created not only a noxious dynamic of 'winners' and 'losers' but also a vast spectrum of grays—of mutated, destroyed, traitorous, or shamed bodies" (9). These bodies, representatives "of mutilated biographies that have been silenced or have not fit into the Manichean lexicon of official discourse (betrayal and heroism, left and right)" (1), are typically left out of the public conversation and confined to a private, unrecognized existence. Yet here these characters are transferred to the public sphere and given the opportunity to expose society's dirty secrets. By bringing this hidden transcript into the open, they defy the norms imposed by both a repressive society and a repressive government, allowing for a cathartic release of society's frustrations and a new sense of community.

Throughout the play, the representatives of the government remain unseen, while Sigmund and Karl occupy the stage as the sole visible members of society. The privileged position of visibility is thereby granted to two sexually and politically marginalized figures. They are sexually marginalized by "[t]he visual signs—raincoats, bare legs, sunglasses, and a park bench—[that] refer unequivocally to exhibitionism" (Bixler 293). Yet in this case, this visual system is ultimately revealed as lies, hiding rather than exposing reality. The play thereby challenges the validity of the audience's perception and establishes visibility as an inaccurate

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'feminine' position of surrender" (34). The men of *Obscenities* are thus feminized both through their subordination and their marginality as exhibitionists, since the idea "of disease, degeneration, and deviancy [as] associated with the feminine has long been part of the collective imaginary" (x).

gauge of meaning. This ambiguity is extended to their role as politically marginalized victims-turned-collaborators. Both characters admit, however reluctantly, that they gave in to torture:

> KARL. Did you tell everything?
>
> SIGMUND. Why are you asking me that?
>
> KARL. It's difficult to resist Romero. *(Sigmund pretends to walk the dog.)*
>
> SIGMUND. Well, that's what they say… Did you sing?
>
> KARL. Even my deepest secrets… But you haven't answered me yet…
>
> SIGMUND. Well, you said it… It's very difficult to resist Romero… I would say impossible… (de la Parra 566)

In later conversations, they discuss how they were then trained by Romero to participate in repressive activities ranging from following people with audio surveillance to becoming torturers themselves (573). The play shows the terror that Romero and his techniques still inspire—Sigmund jumps when Karl simulates using a cattle prod, saying, "Don't do that to me even in jest" (565)—as well as the guilt that both characters feel for their actions, but does not attempt to minimize or trivialize the real consequences of their actions. It thereby makes visible the generally-undiscussed figure of the collaborator and the impossible complexity of their situation. Those who possess political and repressive power, on the other hand, are never seen. The government officials who are their targets are listed in detail by the characters but do not appear. Likewise, at various moments during the play, they comment on the possible sources of government surveillance around them, from microphones, to employees at the school, to cars circling the block, supposedly driven by their torturer Romero, but none of these elements is ever visible. The audience's only awareness of these possible forces is through the responses that they provoke in the characters: "Although the audience never sees the passing unmarked car nor the

driver thought to be their former mentor and subsequent tormentor, the characters' frantic role playing as street vendors, evangelists, clowns, and the like visually conveys their fear of detection" (Bixler 292). The invisible representatives of power only acquire reality for the audience through Karl and Sigmund's actions and are thus dependent for their existence on them, giving these marginalized characters the power to grant visibility to those who would normally determine the hierarchies of visibility. In this way, Romero, Sigmund, and Karl "are clear examples of an 'upside-down world' in which the tortured turns into the torturer or the watched becomes the watcher," which in turn demonstrates that these positions of power are unstable and vulnerable (Seda 96).[49]

A key component of the play's reversal of visibility is the idea of exhibitionism. At its most basic, exhibitionism represents a defiance of social norms, by making public what these norms designate as private. Regarding the establishment of these norms, Hannah Arendt notes that "society expects from each of its members a certain kind of behavior, imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to 'normalize' its members, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement" (38). Undermining any of these norms thus opens the door to all types of "spontaneous action" that are prohibited by the social and political

[49] The character of Romero in and of itself is a reversal of the structures of power. As Seda points out, Evaristo Romero is a character in a previous de la Parra play, *Lo crudo, lo cocido y lo podrido* (*The Raw, The Cooked, and The Rotten*). Sigmund and Karl clearly show that this is the same character, making a brief reference to the plot of the previous play. *Lo crudo* was famously censored in its first production several years earlier, so the casting of one of its characters as a government official censoring the behavior of others is an ironic role reversal for those audience members who are familiar with the previous play (Seda).

rules of behavior. Even though the play is set in a public space, the use of exhibitionism as a trope brings the realm of the private into that space, eroding the distinction between the two. This is especially true since this introduction of the private into the public is based in the exposure of the body, "a sign that oscillates between the sexual and the political" (Seda 90). Indeed, "from the beginning of history to our own time it has always been the bodily part of human existence that needed to be hidden in privacy" (Arendt 64). Yet exhibitionism exposes the body, the most intimate and private part of society. Moreover, throughout history, "power relations have been written into and onto the human body" (Taylor x); in the case of repressive regimes such as this, this writing is quite literal, as the exposure of the tortured body would also expose the scars of its treatment, a visible mark of repression and subordination. But once again, the play subverts the expectations that it has created, as their final act of exposure does not reveal the nude body in its weakness, vulnerability, and subordination, but rather their firearms, a symbol of violence and domination. As Bixler explains,

> The act of exposure/exposé itself actually occurs on various levels as the men's competition to expose themselves physically to the schoolgirls leads to the verbal exposure of their inner selves—their doubts, desires, fears and regrets—and of their full identities, a disclosure which in turn leads to the final ideological exposé of an entire socio-political system founded on deceit and perversion. (294)[50]

[50] In the program for the original production, de la Parra adds another layer of exposure by referring to the act of writing plays itself as a form of exhibitionism: "'My writings are like dreams, I say more than I understand and in general, I am more naked than in any other place'" (qtd. in Ulibarri Lorenzini 246).

As Sigmund says, when he believes that Karl is a government agent, "Satisfy your perversion, which may be much more immoral and sadistic than mine!" (de la Parra 559). The true perversion or obscenity is not their exhibitionism but the government's abuses. In Karl's words, "We are the consciousness of oppression! The repressed force that desperately attempts to come out by exposing [… o]ur condition as frustrated, hostile, aggressive, and damaged beings!" (571). This final act of exposure can also be seen as exposing their own capacity for resistance and control, despite their circumstances. Each of these overlapping interpretations, however, calls into question the established structures of power and their legitimacy.

Their actions thereby break the public transcript, as defined by Scott, and allow the hidden transcript to be openly expressed. Scott emphasizes that the public and hidden transcripts are not only composed of the words spoken by members of society, but of their actions, which must also conform to expectation, stating that, "[w]ith rare, but significant, exceptions the public performance of the subordinate will, out of prudence, fear, and the desire to curry favor, be shaped to appeal to the expectations of the powerful" (2). The performances that Karl and Sigmund undertake when they think they are being watched are designed to appear harmless and conforming to any powerful observers, yet they also call attention to this behavior as a false performance. Not only can the audience see them purposefully assume these roles, but the roles are frequently openly artificial, as Sigmund pretends to walk a toy dog or Karl throws bread crumbs to imaginary pigeons (de la Parra 566). The public transcript is exposed as artificial, paving the way for a rupture with its restrictions. Such a rupture transmits a powerful message: "[t]he first open statement of a hidden transcript, a declaration that breaches the etiquette of power relations, that breaks an apparently calm surface of silence and consent, carries the force of a symbolic declaration of war" (Scott 8). Sigmund and Karl's attack at the end is thus such a

declaration, a rejection of their subordination and of the repressive system as a whole. Since this rebellion is against a systemic force repressing all of society, they perform a collective fantasy of resistance, bringing out a hidden transcript shared by many. As Scott notes, "An individual who is affronted may develop a personal fantasy of revenge and confrontation, but when the insult is but a variant of affronts suffered systematically by a whole race, class, or strata, then the fantasy can become a collective cultural product" (9). The performance of this collective fantasy therefore holds the potential to provide a cathartic release for the audience, making visible their hidden desires.[51] In this way, the reversal of personal visibility extends both to the individual and their actions, creating a sense of community through the revelation of shared desires.

If, as Diana Taylor states, "[i]ndividual and national subjectivity, forged through mutual looking, reaffirm, produce, and reproduce each other in the scopic field" (30), then social and political visibility is a quality that grants personal affirmation and an identity within the national community. The reversal of the traditional visual field thus bestows subjectivity on previously marginalized groups, while denying a place in the national imaginary to the forces of repression. In both plays, the traditionally private is brought into public view, a process which allows the plays to combat the exclusionary nature of private existence. As Arendt explains, "[t]he privation of privacy lies in the absence of others; as far as they are concerned, private man does not appear, and therefore it is as though he did not exist. Whatever he does remains without significance and consequence to others, and what matters to him is without interest to other

[51] María de la Luz Hurtado emphasizes that the play creates a spirit of complicity between actors and audience, as the audience must work with the performers to discover what is happening. This process in turn creates a sense of community that is vitally necessary under difficult and isolating circumstances (802-03).

people" (54). The reversal of visibility removes this stigma and allows both groups a visible, public existence and a forum in which to discuss the issues that concern them, a process which in turn is aided by the reversal of verbal censorship.

The Reverse Visibility of Words

These same processes reversing the traditional visual field are used to call attention not only to the unseen but to the unsaid. The military's control of both public and private space was a linguistic phenomenon as well, occurring through the processes of self-censorship. In what Perelli refers to as "the reign of the 'just in case'" (102), one did not speak too openly even among friends and family "just in case" someone overheard you or repeated what you said. This creates a panoptic society, whose members internalize the structures of censorship: "He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection" (Foucault 202-03). The result is "a silent, atomized population" (Taylor 98), lacking both a sense of community and opportunities for true communication. In this atmosphere, Scott's public transcript of the discourse allowed by the powerful extends even into private space, while the hidden transcript of true feelings retreats even further from view, such that, "[w]hat goes unsaid, that which is implied and omitted and censured and suggested, acquires the importance of a scream" (Luisa Valenzuela, *Como en la guerra*, qtd. in Gordon 86). As Catherine Boyle notes in the case of Chile, for "theatre practitioners during the dictatorship, theatre-making is about occupying the space designated for silence" (185). The hidden transcript is therefore brought into the open by these plays, which freely comment on the unsaid and the unsayable in

dictatorial society in order to combat the silence and self-censorship imposed by their circumstances.

As James C. Scott notes, "the frontier between the public and the hidden transcripts is a zone of constant struggle between dominant and subordinate—not a solid wall" (14). In *Fairy Tales*, this struggle plays out in the domestic realm, in the battle between conformity to the military's discourse through self-censorship and free expression. From the early moments of the play, censorship and blindness are linked in the double imperative to not see and not say; in a telephone conversation with a school friend, Blanca says, "Don't say 'milicos' on the phone!… Oh, I did it too!… I mean… I didn't say anything… *(whispering)* They say that they listen to all the telephones… But we didn't say anything bad… Of course, of course… No… I didn't see anything… I didn't see anything…" (Diana 16). Percepticide (Taylor's term for forced blinding)[52] and self-censorship are not only linked, but both made visible in these comments. In many instances such as this throughout the play, all three women remark on the processes of censorship at play around them, fighting against silence to make visible the unsaid and the effects of silence on their lives and well-being.

The play establishes a progression from the beginning where the unsaid has a more innocent social quality to later events where it acquires dangerous dimensions. From the start of the play, Blanca uses her asides to the audience and to her daughter to expose the unspoken subtext in her conversations. Whether this is a result of political or social self-censorship, these

[52] "The military spectacles extended the percepticide (or blinding) inflicted literally on its blindfolded victims and metaphorically on the population at large. The population was not allowed to acknowledge the violence taking place around it. People had to deny the reality they saw with their own eyes and participate in self-blinding" (Taylor 72).

comments serve the purpose of calling the audience's attention to what is not being said and the different reasons that some things remain unsaid. Early on, in an argument with Maruja, Blanca's open statements to her stepmother are directly contradicted by the thoughts she reveals in asides to the audience: "I'll tell my dad! *But it was a lie, I wasn't going to tell him anything*" (11); "Do it *I said but I thought you've got me*" (18); "*Whydon'tyougotohell I thought and didn't say*" (18).[53] Here, the contradiction between said and unsaid is a part of everyday social interaction; in the first two cases, she attempts to assert her independence to Maruja, despite it being a bluff, while in the third, she swallows an insult to avoid making the situation any worse. Yet as the dictatorship takes hold, the unsaid acquires a more sinister quality, defined as that which cannot be spoken out of fear. When she describes the man she is involved with, Blanca explains, "He was 'El Negro' to me and to everyone. I knew what his real name was, but I couldn't say it, and it was better not even to remember it" (36-37). Similarly, Carmen explains to Maruja that free speech is no longer an option: "Now you have to be smarter than ever. You have to be aware of everything but you have to not see what you're not supposed to see. Don't ask questions and above all don't talk. Be careful with everything you say and if you have to say something, say it another way, disguising what you mean" (33). This open discussion of censorship and its workings reveals not only the existence and content of the hidden transcript, but how the need for such a transcript changes and evolves in the context of repression.

At the same time that the women of *Tales* acknowledge the need for self-censorship and caution due to their circumstances, they continue to participate in an active fight against silence. Silence is treated as a disease that needs to be overcome for their own well-being. After the death

[53] Throughout the text, Blanca's thoughts and asides are marked by the use of italics.

of Blanca's father, Carmen forces her and Maruja to start talking again, as the only way of moving on from their loss and truly living:

> CARMEN. I talk, yes. I talk and I talk. Because the silence in this house is a hole that it's better for me to fill with my tongue so it doesn't swallow us all up. When sadness turns into silence, it's the worst, because it's like death. […]
>
> BLANCA. Don't talk about that anymore!
>
> CARMEN. Good! At least you're talking! Very good! Don't talk about what?
>
> BLANCA. About death, about death, about death!
>
> CARMEN. That's it! That's it! You have to name it to scare it away. […]
>
> *(Maruja laughs loudly. Carmen and Blanca shout. All three make a lot of noise)* (15)

The fight against silence is thus defined as a life-affirming process that will become even more important as the dictatorship takes control. Even as she exercises caution in her conversations, Blanca breaks the cycle of self-censorship internally. After she witnesses a girl being dragged through the halls of her school by her hair, she is told by Maruja not to say anything. Blanca confesses to the audience that "[a]fter that I was obsessed with talking inside. Talking and talking and talking as Carmen would say. Sometimes to myself, as if I were two people; sometimes to God, especially if I had to ask for something; other times to Tinkerbell from Peter Pan or to Jiminy Cricket" (18). Though this type of speech is internal and hidden, Blanca's acknowledgement of her internal speech brings it into the public transcript for her audience. By making it public, she teaches the audience that talking must replace silence as a strategy for self-preservation. Indeed, when Blanca gets sick, the main symptom is her silence. The emptiness of her marriage and her life translate into complete silence, both external and internal. As Carmen

points out, “What she doesn’t want is to talk. *(as she caresses Blanca’s face)* She doesn’t want to talk to Felipe, or to her neighbors, or to us… And the worst part… she doesn’t even want to talk inside, not with herself, or with God, or with Jiminy Cricket” (30). Self-censorship and silence are thereby presented as illnesses that must be cured with open expression.

This kind of political self-censorship is contrasted with another version of the unsaid: the truths that are too difficult to say, that cannot be admitted either to oneself or to others. This version of the unsaid extends beyond the years of repression and into the maintenance of societal memory after the return of democracy. After Blanca returns from prison, she and Maruja discuss how Maruja has redecorated the house, but Blanca informs the audience of the real reason that the décor has changed: “They came in, they tossed the place, they broke things, they stole. Poor Maruja, it must have been so horrible for her” (39). Their unwillingness to discuss the truth of what has happened is born of a desire to put the trauma behind them. While the characters are spared this conversation, Blanca’s statement to the audience brings these events into the realm of public conversation, thereby acknowledging that, however difficult it may be, these truths must be spoken and recognized. Similarly, Blanca cannot find a way to tell Carmen and Maruja about her experience in prison:

> I don’t know if they believed me. I didn’t want to make them suffer. Besides, how can you tell people about that? A cattle prod doesn’t mean anything. It’s the pain, but how do I tell someone about the pain? No one can imagine what waterboarding is actually like. So, why would I tell them? How they raped me, that I’m not going to say even to myself, not to you, not to anybody. (40)

The play thereby acknowledges and accepts that such conversations are difficult, yet the fact that Blanca does say these things to the audience (despite her statement that she will not) implies both

the recognition that society must find a way to have these conversations as well as the hope that these hard truths are merely unsaid, and not unsayable.[54] As mentioned earlier, Hannah Arendt affirms that this type of public expression is necessary for private, subjective experiences to fully acquire the character of objective reality: "Each time we talk about things that can be experienced only in privacy or intimacy, we bring them out into a sphere where they will assume a kind of reality which, their intensity notwithstanding, they never could have had before" (46). Exposing the unsaid is therefore a necessary step in forming a complete shared memory of these traumatic events, a goal which is shared by the forced collaborators of de la Parra's play.

As in *Fairy Tales, Everyday Secret Obscenities* calls direct attention to the techniques of self-censorship and ambiguous speech. Silence is clearly presented as linked to the structures of domination. Karl and Sigmund's biggest argument is capped by the urge to silence and the refusal to be silenced:

KARL. Be quiet, who do you think you are?

SIGMUND. You're not going to make me be quiet, you hear? (de la Parra 578)

Language is thereby inextricably linked to the workings of power; he who allows himself to be silenced has lost his capacity for resistance. Moreover, language and discussion are presented as the necessary response to difficult times. When Karl asks Sigmund to describe his experiences as a collaborator, Sigmund responds, "Don't you think that, if we're going to become friends, it would be better to put that off, I mean, to treat it as over and done?" Karl's answer is simple:

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[54] Diana acknowledges in an interview that this difficulty is part of her own experience as well, even over a decade after the return to democracy: "I haven't even spoken to my own mother about what has happened to me. And that's what everything's like in this country" (Bravo-Elizondo 151).

"No" (581). Forgetting and remaining silent, no matter what the reason, are not a viable option for creating an inclusive and shared society. The play therefore reveals the unspoken, along with the techniques through which meaning is manipulated and obscured.

Throughout *Obscenities,* the phenomenon of self-censorship is repeatedly exposed and subverted. The characters frequently interrupt themselves, saying enough of a word that the audience can easily deduce what it is, but then changing it to a milder or more euphemistic expression. For example, Sigmund recalls how Romero taught them to extract information "with the least tortu… With the least pain, I mean to say" (581). This technique simultaneously communicates the unsayable word and draws attention to the fact that it must not be said. They also use their performances of innocent normalcy to assume alternate identities who can say different things. In one key moment, in order to tell the truth, they must pretend to be drunk, because only someone without their usual inhibitions, out of their mind in some way, would actually tell the truth about what is going on around them:

> KARL. If the country has gone to shit, it's a supposition, of course, a ridiculous supposition.
>
> SIGMUND. The supposition of someone who's not in their right mind, obviously…
>
> KARL. If the country has gone to shit, do you have to say so or not?
>
> SIGMUND. You have to say so!
>
> KARL. No, no you don't have to say so, careful, shhhh…
>
> SIGMUND. You have to say so, I tell you… Look, I'm going to explain to you what you're going through; it's just that you are lost in the Hamlet-esque

> dilemma of the contemporary Chilean man: to say or not to say?… Well I say that you have to say so… (570)

From the beginning of this conversation, both characters' exaggerated insistence on the purely hypothetical nature of the debate calls attention to the underlying truth. Under the cover of hypothesis and alcohol, Sigmund can then proclaim the vital necessity of stating the truth and not allowing silence to govern contemporary society. Each of these strategies makes visible the ways in which fear creates self-censorship and silence.

On the other hand, the play also affirms the existence of another type of silence, not resulting from censorship but rather from the fact that some words do not have to be said. In these cases, the silence calls attention to a shared understanding, an underlying commonality of experience, that makes these words unnecessary. When discussing their history with the torturer Romero, no details are actually provided; their conversation "says it all without really saying anything" (Bixler 294):

> KARL. Romero taught me…
>
> SIGMUND. What? You too?
>
> KARL. Me too.
>
> SIGMUND. And don't tell me that he also…
>
> KARL. That too.
>
> SIGMUND. And also?
>
> KARL. That too. (de la Parra 573)

The emphasis here, instead of on the particular words spoken, is on the common ground that both share, beyond words. Likewise, in various moments, the characters improvise performances as evangelists, street vendors, and others; in each of these cases, no dialogue is provided in the

script—rather, the actors are meant to improvise overlapping (and therefore, potentially incomprehensible to the audience) lines typical of that particular caricature. Despite the specificity of language in the rest of the play, in these instances linguistic exactitude is unnecessary to communicate these recognizable figures, forming part of their shared experience. The absence of particular language in these moments thereby makes visible their common knowledge and shared experience.

Yet the most important function of language in *Obscenities* is as a disguise, through purposeful misunderstandings and double meanings. As Bixler observes, "The men's 'dialogue' is highly ambiguous due to their inability, reluctance or fear to call anything by its proper name" (293). The entire play is a long process of misdirection, both for the repressors by the characters and for the audience by the playwright. For example, after getting a sneak preview of what is under Sigmund's trench coat, Karl makes a direct comment about Sigmund's weapon:

> KARL. It's just that with that caliber… *(He indicates a small space between his thumb and index finger)*
>
> SIGMUND. *(Jumping up, brusquely)* Don't say that!… *(He whispers, alarmed)* They have long-range microphones… It's even possible that they're watching us. (558-59)

As in the earlier examples, self-censorship and the reason for it are explicitly exposed, but in this case the discussion also serves the purpose of misdirection, both of the audience and potential observers. Likewise, their discussion of the act that they are going to commit remains purposefully unspecific; Sigmund remarks on his impatience to act, for instance, saying, "I imagine that you can understand what it was like to spend the whole summer holding it in, all these damn months of vacation stuck at home, repressing the desire, repressing the passion,

without being able to do it" (556). In retrospect, the audience can understand that he is referring to his inability to attack these ministers in an unguarded location, yet at the moment of enunciation, this interpretation is deliberately avoided. As Laurietz Seda notes, "The double meanings that terms like cannon and caliber convey in the context of exhibitionism contribute to drawing attention away from the political to the sexual" (92). The visual clues provided by the play thereby serve as a distraction from the truth, "a process that Issacharoff has termed 'referential subversion,' wherein 'the verbal may be enhanced, transformed, or even subverted through visual means'" (Bixler 295). Even their names are ultimately presented as a mask used to disguise their true identity:

> SIGMUND. Listen, are you really Karl Marx?
>
> KARL. Why? Aren't you really Sigmund Freud?
>
> SIGMUND. And if I weren't?… Would you still consider me your friend?
>
> KARL. *(Smiles)* Maybe that's not the most important thing right now, don't you think?
>
> SIGMUND. Yes, who's going to care afterwards. (de la Parra 585)

Each of the linguistic codes presented, from description to names themselves, is shown to be potentially misleading and disguised. The purpose of making these processes visible can be seen as either to teach audiences how to avoid detection in their own acts of subversion or to recognize the possibilities for deception in others—as usual, the play remains ambiguous and does not establish a definitive meaning—but in either case, the contradiction of the visible and the verbal emphasizes the potential for linguistic obfuscation.

Just as reversing the visibility of people and power drew attention to their status as socially constructed hierarchies, so too making visible (or audible) the unspoken highlights the

social conditions and considerations that lead to silence. From Blanca's revelatory asides to Sigmund and Karl's double meanings, both plays employ strategies for bringing the hidden transcript into the public sphere, thereby challenging the public transcript established by the government. These military narratives are further called into doubt by the plays' subversion of other ideological narratives.

Old Masters, New Narratives

The challenge presented by these plays to the dominant social and political narratives of the (post)dictatorship is reinforced by their deconstruction of other dominant master narratives: the fairy tales of Diana's play and the Freudian and Marxist dogmas presented in de la Parra's. Both plays participate actively in the questioning of master narratives typical of postmodern work. In his foundational study *The Postmodern Condition*, Jean-Françoise Lyotard emphasizes "the crisis of narratives" as one of the constituent characteristics of the postmodern age (xxiii), stating that "[t]he grand narrative has lost its credibility, regardless of what mode of unification it uses, regardless of whether it is a speculative narrative or a narrative of emancipation" (37). Indeed, this is the attitude taken by both of these plays, in which the old narratives are shown to have lost their credibility, failing both to adequately describe life as it is and to help shape it into something better. These narratives, like the military and social narratives of Uruguay and Chile, must be discarded and replaced if society is to productively move forward.

For the women of *Fairy Tales*, this means discarding their reliance on these tales as a lens through which they interpret the world. The link between Blanca's life and fairy tale expectations is established from the very beginning not only through the title of the play but also through her opening monologue. In this speech, she intertwines the story of Blancanieves's

(Snow White's) birth with her own, switching from one to the other without distinction or clear separation (Diana 7-8). This pattern continues throughout the play as specific fairy tales and fairy tale tropes are intermingled with the stories of her life. Yet each of these moments marking similarity and connection between fairy tales and real life is subsequently subverted by facts of her life that do not fit the fairy tale narrative. In the previous example, for instance, she establishes a clear correlation between her birth and christening and that of Snow White, a connection highlighted by her name, yet in the following scene she remarks that her father named her Blanca "not because of Blancanieves but to honor a black woman who had raised him" (9). The fairy tale connection created moments earlier is thus undone: instead of a princess, white as snow, she is named for a black servant. These subverted parallels continue throughout: when discussing her father's heart attack and death, she tells the story of three princes who are given the chance to find the water of life to save their father from a seemingly fatal illness, but "I didn't even have the chance to go look for it" (13); later she describes feeling lost in the woods like Hansel and Gretel, but not having a brother, stones, or breadcrumbs to help her find her way (15-16). Through all of these examples, fairy tales are presented as her primary model for understanding the world at the same time that this model is shown to be inaccurate and inadequate for helping her deal with her problems.

The separation between the fairy tale model and the real world is particularly evident in the case of the gendered expectations for women established by fairy tales. As Perelli points out, these expectations were shared by Uruguayan society at the time. When she describes the situation of women in dictatorship-era Uruguay, she emphasizes the coexistence of legal gender equality and relatively high female participation in politics and the work force with conservative social values "and the archetypical middle-class dream of 'and then they married and lived

happily ever after'" (97). *Tales* simultaneously affirms the power of this dream in the lives and expectations of women, while juxtaposing it with the reality of their everyday existence. The romantic fairy tale marriage stands in sharp contrast to Blanca's description of her father and Maruja's marriage of convenience: "[Maruja] had married my father because she was already 30 years old and she wasn't going to spend her life waiting for her Prince Charming. And my dad needed someone to help him with his child" (Diana 9). Despite this example, an adolescent Blanca is drawn into the "marvelous possibility of finding my prince" at school, even though she also points out that the reality of her options does not line up with the princes she sees in movies and books (16). Finally, as she finishes school, Blanca has her fairy-tale wedding—which she plans and describes by reciting the final scenes of Snow White (23)—but finds that "happily-ever-after" doesn't follow. Instead her marriage "makes me tired" and sends her into a near-comatose state comparable to Sleeping Beauty (27). As Carmen puts it, "That Felipe isn't enough for her" (30). It is only by leaving her marriage and becoming active in work and politics that Blanca becomes herself again and finds her happiness. The typical fairy-tale norms for a woman's life are therefore insufficient in the real world. Blanca, her stepmother, and her "fairy godmother" Carmen (13) also defy the norms established in fairy tales for relationships between women, which are generally seen as combative and competitive. While Blanca and Maruja's relationship is initially somewhat conflictive, they bond over their shared loss after her father's death and share a relationship of mutual support and care thereafter. They even laugh about how poorly they fit the typical stepmother-stepdaughter relationship of fairy tales:

> BLANCA. *(All three laugh)* Maruja, tell me the truth: you never had a magic mirror like the stepmother in the story, right?
>
> MARUJA. What for? You were never the fairest in the land. (23)

The fairy-tale expectation for their relationship is thus disparaged and mocked. Instead of providing a useful blueprint for their interactions, these master narratives fail to productively contribute to or describe their reality.

Outside the domestic sphere of personal relationships, these fairy tales are linked to the master narratives provided by ideology on both sides of the political spectrum. On the one hand, the military creates a fairy-tale narrative of life under their rule; as Taylor points out in the case of Argentina (though these ideas are equally applicable to Uruguay), strict government censorship was geared towards creating an idealistic master narrative of societal harmony under a benevolent government:

> Cultural content would harmonize with the *proceso*'s mission—there should be no contradictory or disturbing images, nothing against church, family, or state. Divorce, abortion, adultery, wife and child and elder abuse all vanished—in representation if not in life. Images of institutional and generational conflict were to be avoided at all cost. Stories had to have happy endings. […] Argentine life became increasingly terrifying even as Argentine culture was reduced to a world of make-believe and happily-ever-afters. (11-12)

The play here exposes that private terror and creates a cultural product that contradicts this narrative. But it is not only the government's master narratives that are exposed as unrealistic. When Blanca tries to explain communism to Maruja, she defines a communist as "a person who thinks that we can construct a better world, where misery and injustice don't exist, where each person has what they need and lives in peace," to which Maruja replies, "Oh, honey, you and

your fairy tales!" (Diana 35).[55] This ideology is marked by Maruja as being as out-of-touch with reality as the stories that Blanca reads. Blanca herself seems to recognize this fact after the return of democracy when she indicates that she may cease to attend party meetings, as the party has become ineffective and full of internal conflict (43). The play thus proposes ceasing to rely on society's existing master narratives, be they fairy tales or ideological theories. Instead, Blanca proposes her own new narratives to guide future generations.

As I explored earlier, Blanca takes an active part in shaping how the events of her country and life are narrated to subsequent generations. Instead of fairy tales, Blanca seeks to tell what Gorden defines as "ghost stories, stories that not only repair representational mistakes, but also strive to understand the conditions under which a memory was produced in the first place, toward a countermemory for the future" (22). By the end of the play, she rejects the expectations imposed by the fairy-tale narrative, responding to Maruja's comment that someday she will find her prince by saying, "No, Maruja, it doesn't have to be Prince Charming. A man, nothing more" (Diana 42). Her description of her daughter's father in the final monologue likewise focuses on

[55] Blanca's activism is also linked to the fairy tales she tells. The image of the needle is a recurring theme, both from the needle of Sleeping Beauty's spinning wheel and the needle that Snow White's mother pricks her finger with; in both cases, the needle heralds negative events—Sleeping Beauty falls into her hundred-year sleep, while Snow White's mother dies in childbirth—leading Blanca to develop a fear of needles. Nevertheless, needles become an important part of her life: not only does she get a job at a clothing factory, but her position there means that she works for a labor union known as "The Needle." As in the fairy tales, this needle leads to her own trials: her involvement with the union and its organizer is the reason for her imprisonment and torture.

his real qualities, instead of on the perfect ideal that fairy tales require: "Your father is a good and kind man. With as many injuries as I have" (46). For herself, too, she casts aside the fairy tale notion of goodness that privileges youth, innocence, and flawless beauty above all, instead choosing to embrace her "wrinkled face" and "wrinkled soul" and the real identity that these marks of her lived experience represent (46). Throughout this speech, Blanca continues to invoke the old fairy tales, recalling for her unborn daughter the celebrations that accompany the birth of a child in fairy tales, yet she also links her joy over her daughter's birth to these new ideals of real-world goodness, repairing the "representational mistakes" that devalue such experiences. While she repeats her dreams for a better world, using the same words as her earlier definition of a communist, these words are no longer tied to a specific ideology; instead of being presented as the characteristics of the communist, now they are the characteristics of "good people" (46). She thereby establishes the need to discard old narratives in favor of constructing new fairy tales to guide the creation of a better world. These new fairy tales are tied to the concrete reality of private, daily experience, rooted in familial support and love, instead of grand narratives of public life.[56] Ultimately, then, the play does not reject the idea of master narratives in and of themselves, but emphasizes the need for new ones if society is to create a productive future.

Likewise, the rejection of the military's master narrative of social life under their rule is tied to the rejection of broader cultural narratives in *Everyday Secret Obscenities*. As previously shown, the characters made visible by the play are located outside of the governmental narrative of what society should be and how it should behave. Just as this version of events is shown to be false, so too are the great narratives of the modern era. As Lyotard explains, "'[i]dentifying' with

[56] In an interview, Diana states that "[d]ue to the fall of the big explanations, we are left with the small world, the world of small things" (Bravo-Elizondo 148).

the great names, the heroes of contemporary history, is becoming more and more difficult" (14);[57] indeed, audience identification with Karl and Sigmund is ultimately only achieved when they are stripped of their rigid dogmatism and reshaped in a new, more relevant form.

This process begins with the desacralization of these figures and the ideologies they represent through parodic subversion. The play participates in a trend that "Rodrigo Cánovas called […] '*satirical thought*': an uninhibited way of thinking that critiqued 'the cultural order' by putting into practice 'a discourse of reflexivity, attentive to its own programming, and based on self-parody'" (Richard 12). Throughout the text, Marxism and Freudian psychology are divested of their symbolic weight. Karl, for example, refers to his theories as a fiction, saying, "I am a novelist… I've written various novels, unfortunately some people have taken them very seriously" (de la Parra 576). Sigmund, meanwhile, fails to recognize the title of his own book in German (580) and parodically references some of the most common clichés of Freudian theory: "Not that! Don't mention my mother! Never bring up a psychoanalyst's mother!" (578). Karl's reaction on learning Sigmund's identity also subverts the supposed seriousness of his ideas; he responds as a fan, begging Sigmund to "Psychoanalyze me! […] How wonderful! To be psychoanalyzed by Professor Freud himself!" (572). In reality, his interest is much more in

[57] Ironically, Freud himself recognized early struggles with continuing to accept master narratives at face value; though here he refers to religion, the sentiment applies equally to any other master narrative or ideology: "Today we no longer believe in them, having *surmounted* such modes of thought. Yet we do not feel entirely secure in these new convictions; the old ones live on in us, on the look-out for confirmation. Now, as soon as something *happens* in our lives that seems to confirm these old, discarded beliefs, we experience a sense of the uncanny" (154, emphasis in original).

Sigmund as a celebrity than as an expert; he constantly distracts Sigmund from the actual process of psychoanalysis to gossip about the rumors surrounding Sigmund's family life (575). His fame has thus become more important than the actual content and effectiveness of his ideas. The ideas themselves also do not escape subversion. The conflicts between their theories about the root causes of societal evils, instead of taking the form of a rational debate, are reduced to a shouting match with Karl yelling "Social!" and Sigmund countering with "Sexual!" over and over (561). Their disagreements later take the form of simply hurling insults at each other before ultimately devolving into a playground fight "like children" (578). Thus, "[b]y taking both of their discourses to their extremes, the play demonstrates the deformation and absurdities that have arisen from them" (Zegers Nachbauer 152). Both ideologies are portrayed as tired, futile, and even infantile, achieving not merely an effect of irony and amusement "but also an allusion to the crisis of authority of rationalism and Western Enlightenment culture" (Subercaseaux 138). The warping and denigration of these dominant narratives by the play is echoed in their treatment by the government: "The parody occurs on two levels, for while the dramatist 'reincarnates' the historical Freud and Marx as park perverts, the dominant party usurps, re-writes, and in this sense parodies their ideas" (Bixler 301).

Sigmund and Karl's individual collaboration with the forces of repression acts as a demonstration of the appropriation and deformation of their ideas by the dictatorship. The tasks that each of them completed for Romero are intrinsically tied to their ideologies: Sigmund interpreted dreams and used psychoanalytic methods to interrogate prisoners, while Karl deciphered leftist codes, planned staged attacks to be blamed on Marxist organizations, and

interpreted events for the government (581, 582).[58] Both claim to have done what they could to subvert the repressive process by providing false information whenever possible, but acknowledge that "that wasn't enough to save us" (582).[59] In these ways, "the dominant culture has not only expropriated Freudian and Marxist ideologies, but also vitiated, deformed and bent them to fit the perverse desires of the ruling party" (Bixler 302); as Karl bitterly exclaims, "They have even stolen our words!" (de la Parra 583). These discourses have become "a string of clichés, good for any use, in the mouths of revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries, of persecuted and persecutors" (Rojo and Rojo 117). A new approach is therefore needed if they are to achieve any kind of effectiveness and redemption.

Their quest for redemption occurs on both a personal level and on behalf of their narratives. Despite their disagreements, they are united in their desire to make up for their previous actions:

> KARL. You repent.
>
> SIGMUND. And you need to do something in return.

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[58] Similarly, after the return of democracy, Luz Arce testified before Chile's truth commission that one of her responsibilities was "teaching classes on Marxism to military officials" (Lazzara 5).

[59] Again, this technique is consistent with the practices taught to many in the resistance, who would attempt to give outdated or less important information whenever possible. Arce, for example, "insists that she always tried to be a 'good revolutionary' and that her collaboration, in accordance with the manuals that governed leftist militant organizations, only resulted in the capture of 'peripheral' people whose detention would not place the overall party structure in jeopardy" (Lazzara 5).

KARL. Something else.

SIGMUND. Something that redeems you.

KARL. That absolves you. (568)

The need for dialogue and flexibility if they are to achieve this absolution is visually established through the park bench, which acts as "a sign of physical and social stagnation and ideological fixation. The men's unwillingness to budge physically from the bench and thereby concede it to the competitor corresponds to their verbal reluctance to see beyond their respective Freudian and Marxist dogmas and, ideologically, to their social immobility as sexual/political 'marginados'" (Bixler 299). Yet once they actually engage in a real dialogue, instead of the mere interchange of insults, they are able to find a common ground. Despite the differences in their theories, they find themselves united in that both of their belief systems are based on the idea that all people are fundamentally the same or equal and that the history of mankind has been shaped by repression, whether social or individual (579, 581). Once they cease to reject each other automatically and create a space for dialogue and community, they are able not only to act, but to act together. The play thus signals "the responsibility to build dialogue and not dogmatism" (Zegers Nachbauer 153) in the creation of new narrative options to move society forward.

Even though in the final moments of the play, Karl and Sigmund have their doubts about whether their actions will truly achieve anything concrete, they agree that this is the only option left for them if they are to overcome their own irrelevance (585). In sum, "the degeneration of Marxist and Freudian theories into timeworn clichés refers extratextually to the ideological corruption of an entire socio-political system and its myths" (Bixler 300), thus signaling the need for renovation in both areas. In these ways, the subversion of ideological master narratives in

both plays simultaneously acts to subvert the governing myths of the dictatorship, exposing the didactic and dogmatic discourse of an era of ideological extremes as insufficient and dangerous.

Through the combination of this challenge to official and ideological narratives with the dismantling of silence and the reversal of social and political visibility, these plays draw attention to missing pieces in memory. Both works attempt "to revive, like in a psychoanalytic session, some traumatizing ghosts from the past that need to be exorcized; these ghosts are more part of collective than personal memory. At the same time that official, monovalent discourse, with its imposition of a 'politics of forgetting,' is challenged and dismantled, they respond with a 'vindication of memory'" (Rojas 1104).[60] In her study of such ghosts and their hauntings in society, Gordon emphasizes the need for a "willingness to follow ghosts, neither to memorialize nor to slay, but to follow where they lead, in the present, head turned backwards and forwards at the same time" (57). This is certainly the case for *Fairy Tales*, where following the hidden trajectory of female experience and resistance leads to a revalorization of the possibilities for domestic subversion of authority and proposes alternative narratives of both social memory and women's roles for the future. For the men of *Everyday Secret Obscenities*, following the ghost of their own collaboration allows them to come to terms with their own co-optation and marginalization by the regime and to expose the underlying structures of violence that govern power and visibility. As in the cases of onstage invisibility in the previous chapter, reversing the visibility of people and words allows audiences to see beyond the privileged narratives and perspectives in memory and into the blind spots in societal perception. As Nelly Richard

[60] Rojas is specifically referring to *Obscenities*, but his description can equally be applied to *Tales*.

explains, "both the act of recollection (of practicing historical memory) and the act of interpretation (of rehearsing formulas for comprehending reality) imply placing the various events and their narrations in confrontation with one another, in order to open up the story of experience and the experience of the story to discontinuous and multiply crossed readings" (Richard 14), readings that question the existing structures of visibility in society and reveal their constructed and partial nature. Their participation in the construction and deconstruction of societal memories of trauma is a dual process allowing those who live(d) under the regime to understand what happened to and around them, but also looking to the future to teach future generations about the complexities and gray areas of the dictatorial experience.

The focus is ultimately transferred, then, to the next generation and their place in the landscape of memory, raising the important question: how do these periods affect the generations that do not remember them directly? The attempt to understand the full intricacies of societal trauma is further complicated for the post-dictatorship generations by their lack of personal memory of these events. Though they have no memory of the world before the coup, the events surrounding it, and even in some cases of the dictatorial period itself, their lives are constantly affected by the enduring scars and conflicts that remain. In this situation, understanding national and personal identity becomes a difficult process of negotiation. Children like Blanca's daughter are haunted by their parents' ghosts and must struggle to truly see themselves and their place in a world marked by the remnants and shadows of repression. Examining how this invisible self can be revealed and processed is the task that I will undertake in the next chapter.

Chapter III

The Invisible Self:

Andrea Moro Winslow's *No soy la novia* and Sergi Belbel's *Elsa Schneider*

Dressed in a filthy wedding dress, a young woman returns to the crumbling home of her moribund parents to try to understand herself and find a way out of the dress that seems to trap her. On the other side of the stage, their younger selves act out key moments from her childhood and adolescence, as she watches and reflects out loud on her memories. She and the audience observe the inner-household tensions among them all, as a layer of secrets and silences simmers below the surface. The young version of herself grows increasingly isolated, not permitted to leave the house and not wishing to interact with her parents. Finally, the audience understands that the biggest secret binding and destroying them all is that her father is sexually abusing her. When he destroys her favorite doll, her adolescent self finally finds the strength to escape the house, but finds no peace or fulfillment outside of it, unable to build meaningful relationships or find a place for herself in the world. In the end, the play comes full circle as she returns home to confront and uncover the past. Ultimately, this act of rebellion and the understanding that comes with it allow her to finally remove the dress, revealing that she herself has turned into a doll.

Family secrets and impossible expectations also weigh heavily in the separate but parallel stories of Elsa and Romy. Each story is told through stream-of-consciousness solo scenes, where the other characters are visually absent and generally unheard, though pauses are left for them in conversation. Elsa, a 19-year-old on vacation with an aunt at a spa, receives a telegram from her mother explaining that her father will go to debtor's prison unless she can secure a loan from a wealthy, elderly man staying at the spa as well. Faced with the necessity of prostituting herself to

save her family, Elsa suffers a breakdown, finally purposefully overdosing on the barbital that she has been taking as a tranquilizer. Actress Romy Schneider, in turn, must contend with the constant pressure of fame, while suffering a series of bad relationships and family tragedies. Months after her son's death, she too commits suicide by taking a handful of pills. In the epilogue, the two women flank a third who introduces herself as Elsa Schneider.[61] Although we know nothing else about her, her inheritance, by virtue of her name, is to drink a poisoned glass of champagne.

While the previous chapters used techniques of visibility and invisibility to highlight issues with the official discourses of memory surrounding the events of dictatorships themselves, here we shall examine the invisible and lasting effects of dictatorial repression and trauma on the generations born in the later years of Pinochet's reign in Chile and Franco's rule in Spain through a study of Andrea Moro Winslow's *No soy la novia* or *I Am Not the Bride* (Chile, 2003) and Sergi Belbel's *Elsa Schneider* (Spain, 1987).[62] In both cases, the playwrights were born just over a decade before their respective dictatorships ended: Sergi Belbel was born in 1963, twelve years before Spain's transition to democracy, while Andrea Moro Winslow was born in 1979, eleven years before Chile's return to democratic government. Both therefore belong to a generation that is old enough to remember life under dictatorship without remembering the previous democracy or its fall, yet young enough to not have fully understood or been aware of the situation while it was occurring, reaching adolescence during and after the transition to

[61] Any references in this chapter to "Elsa" will designate the protagonist of the first part of the play; the epilogue's "Elsa Schneider" will always be referred to by her full name, for clarity.

[62] Like most of Belbel's plays, *Elsa Schneider* was first written, performed, and published in Catalan, and soon after translated by the author himself into Spanish for publication (1991).

democracy. This generation is distinct from those who were born just before or in the early years of dictatorship, who have no memory of life before the dictatorship, but grew up and reached political and intellectual maturity under the regime, frequently becoming crucial parts of the movement to return to democracy, such as the Chilean generation sometimes referred to as "Pinochet's children" (Ros). The plays studied were in turn each written another twelve or thirteen years after the end of the dictatorship (1987 and 2003, respectively). Despite the removal of censorship, the theatre of the immediate post-dictatorship generations is generally characterized by a move away from explicit politics, with a focus on reconciliation, looking to the future, and artistic exploration; however, as David George notes in Belbel's case, while these plays may not have an explicit or "obvious social or political purpose," they are generally "political in a broader sense" (4). Moreover, the time period for these plays (10-15 years after the initial transition) marked the beginning of a resurgence of memory-based texts confronting the legacies of the Civil War in Spain and of the dictatorships in both countries. While neither text is explicitly presented as a play about post-dictatorial life, both show a similar preoccupation with the identity crises of post-repressive life. In these cases, the trauma of dictatorial repression itself becomes invisible—an allusion interpreted from context instead of a firmly established referent—yet the idea of past repression is always inescapable, defining, and insidious. Through portrayals of familial and gendered violence, we observe the internal fissures that make it difficult for this generation to know and define themselves. It is the self that becomes invisible and unknowable, as that self is shaped by factors outside of its conscious awareness. Here, the next generation must struggle to deal with the sins of their fathers and find their own identity after a barely-remembered trauma.

The idea of transgenerational trauma has been a popular topic of study in psychoanalytic, historical, and sociological fields over the past few decades, lately expanding into the realm of biology as well. A recent study found that mice trained to fear the smell of cherry blossoms genetically passed that specific fear response on to their descendants. Moreover, this "inheritance takes place even if the mice are conceived by in vitro fertilization, and the sensitivity even appears in the second generation (grandchildren)" (Eastman). The experience of dictatorial repression is obviously more complex than the fear of a scent, yet this study demonstrates the possibility of living out emotional and psychological reactions to events that were never experienced firsthand, without necessarily possessing any knowledge or understanding of those events.[63] Trauma thereby becomes an invisible internal presence, influencing the next generations' behavior and response to the world, without the concomitant understanding of that behavior's origins.

This in turn creates an internal rupture between the self as defined by their own lived experience and the unconsciously inherited and internalized legacy of the previous generation's traumatic experiences. As Gabrielle Schwab explains, familial secrets, taboos, and shame

[63] Similar findings have been difficult to evaluate in humans due to the inherent difficulties in isolating a comparable trigger and cause: there is no single response that can be analyzed, and descendants of trauma cannot be similarly isolated from other possible environmental influences. While one study from 2015 claimed to find a similar epigenetic link in the children of Holocaust survivors, leading to a greater instance of stress disorders (Thomson), it is difficult to prove that this link was genetically inherited as opposed to developing independently due to exposure to the traumatic memories of their families (Yasmin). In either case, however, the evidence is strong that trauma's lasting effects are passed down, whether through genetic or environmental factors.

> come back to haunt the children like unknown ghosts of the past and condemn them to become the carriers of another person's or another generation's unconscious. After silenced national or communal trauma, this economy of haunting operates on a collective level as well. After a war, for example, the postwar generation may become the carriers of the war generation's political unconscious. (126)

Since the self is generally "articulated through the interplay of internal and external reality" (Bollas 9), carrying another person or generation's unconscious adds an additional, unknowable element to the self, leading to identity confusion and a sense of disconnect from the self. The complex web of guilt, shame, and trauma is passed on to the next generation, who must struggle against this invisible psychological and historical burden to find a space for their own identity. In both these plays, this struggle is portrayed through the microcosm of the family, as the main characters are unable to forge an independent existence from their parents' histories. The destructive familial inheritance and the resulting struggle for a sense of self are magnified by the fact that these stories are told through female characters, whose ability to define themselves for themselves is further limited by societal expectations for their gender and by exposure to gendered violence. Both plays thereby act as an indictment of familial and societal legacies that do not allow the post-repressive generations to take control of their lives and find a future.

History in/of Transition

In both the cases of Chile and Spain, the transition to democracy was decidedly ambiguous and marked by vast gaps of knowledge and acknowledgment. These dictatorial governments were not definitively overthrown and rejected, but rather took part in a gradual

transition to democracy. Repression in the Southern Cone and Spain was defined primarily as an attack on ideologies that were presented, with some success, as linked to political and economic instability and violence, ideologies that many continued to disagree with after the fall of the dictatorships.[64] Indeed, many people remained devoted followers of Pinochet and Franco even, or perhaps especially, after the fall of their governments, unconvinced that they had really done anything wrong, and focused instead on "savior" narratives based on their economic and modernizing accomplishments.[65] While Franco's dictatorship ended with his death, in Chile, Pinochet remained commander-in-chief of the military, with an automatic appointment as senator-for-life after ten years. Ros's description of Pinochet's supporters is also emblematic of Franco's followers:

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[64] Throughout her examination of memory in the Southern Cone, Ana Ros notes that many early post-dictatorial works attempt to de-politicize the victims, focusing on those who were uninvolved in political struggle or leaving out discussion of activists' politics and beliefs, because only then could society truly see them as "innocent." Portrayals of active left-wing groups such as the Montoneros in Argentina and the Tupamaros in Uruguay are rarer and only recently beginning to appear. While in Chile there were no left-wing guerrilla rebellions leading up to the coup, official narratives have focused more on democracy and human rights, downplaying the political and social beliefs and significance of Allende and his party, which can still be polarizing.

[65] The film *La muerte de Pinochet* (2011) is a perfect illustration of this dichotomy in perception, showing both the loathing and the devotion that Pinochet continues to inspire in wide sectors of the population.

> he also enjoyed significant civilian backing from strategic segments such as the investor class, landowners, and privileged families. In addition, *Pinochetismo* [like *Franquismo*] was not restricted to the upper class; he also had support among members of the lower middle class and the poor, defenders of traditional and religious values who identified with his right-wing politics. (109)

Furthermore, as Jo Labanyi points out, "in both [Chile and Spain], the democratic regimes continued the neoliberal policies of the free-market economy that had previously been instituted under dictatorship [, … which] is predicated on the production of the ever-new and the compulsory obsolescence of the old" (108). This created both a degree of continuity with the previous regimes and an urge to not look back, further exacerbating ambiguity with the silences that characterized the transition periods. In a realm of silence, children may not know if they are related to victims, perpetrators, or neither, especially since there was no specific racial or religious profile in these cases.

The terms of the Chilean transition were dictated in most ways by Pinochet and his regime. The Amnesty Law granted full immunity for crimes committed before 1978, when the worst abuses occurred, and the regime also authored the Constitution, preserving military autonomy and making it more difficult for left-wing parties to gain complete control of government. Despite these obstacles, the incoming Concertación government moved quickly to establish a National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation. But the Commission exclusively documented cases of disappearance and death, did not name perpetrators, and had no prosecutorial aims. As Elizabeth Lira points out, "Transitions to democracy endeavor to address a fundamental strategic objective: to rebuild national unity" (120), a focus that can be antithetical to the pursuit of justice, detailed truth, and prosecution. Thus while the Rettig Report authored by

the Commission was produced immediately after the dictatorship in 1990, it took until 2003 for the first testimonies of torture victims to be widely circulated, with the release of televised interviews.[66] These interviews in turn led to the investigation and publication of the Valech Report in 2004, which detailed over 35,000 cases of torture (Ros 113). The preference for not confronting the more controversial aspects of the recent past included the official treatment of Salvador Allende and the Popular Unity party. While Allende was given a state funeral in 1990, subsequent Concertación governments avoided mentioning him further until finally inaugurating a statue of him in 2000 and adding him to the Museum of National History in 2002 (Collier and Sater 391; Ros 116-17). Likewise, "textbooks for primary and secondary schools started including Allende's government and the dictatorship as late as 2003, in ways that remain problematic. [… Children and teenagers of the early 2000s] in all likelihood have learned little about the 1970s inside or outside the classroom" (Ros 136). The writing and initial performance of *I Am Not the Bride* are therefore still situated in this realm of silence and limited discussion about torture, the full scope of repression, and the origins of the conflict.

The Spanish transition was similarly focused on reconciliation over accountability. The unofficial "pacto del olvido" or "pacto de silencio" ("pact of forgetting/oblivion" or "pact of silence") was "enshrined in the 1977 amnesty law which pardoned all political crimes (including

[66] The Rettig Report documented 2,279 disappearances and deaths, later adding 899 more names for a total of 3,178. Even if this number is adjusted to the more widely accepted estimate of 10,000, it is nevertheless clear that "in Chile, the use of torture was more widespread than the practice of forced disappearance. The traumatic experience of the approximately 100,000 victims of physical and psychological torture and sexual abuse complicates the active transmission of the past" (Ros 107).

those of the Nationalist forces in the war and those of the ensuing dictatorship," but also those of the Republican forces and political opponents of the regime), in an attempt to avoid "seeing their country slip back into a painful past that was still all too vivid in their minds, especially at a time when the newly born democracy was in a process of consolidation" (Labanyi 93; Jerez-Farrán and Amago 2). This pact also allows politicians, particularly on the Right, to avoid discussion of their own roles during the dictatorship. Despite the forty-year distance from the Civil War, its destruction and atrocities were widespread and still remembered,[67] which prompted the focus on attempting to not reopen old wounds, even if they had never truly healed, meaning that Spain "went from a repressive dictatorship on the one hand to the formal restoration of what is today a constitutional democracy, all without 'the self-critical working through of the past' that a process of this kind requires" (Jerez-Farrán and Amago 3-4). The main flood of memory work in Spain began at the end of the 80s, escalating throughout the 90s and especially after 2000, when the literary effort was joined by a drive to excavate "the mass graves containing the bodies of victims of the Francoist repression during and after the war" (Labanyi 95). Prior to the 90s, literary and artistic efforts at representing memories of repression tended to be more indirect, using tropes such as haunting and symbolism to explore "the haunting presence of the violent past in the present, forcing us to confront issues of transgenerational transmission and to recognize that the war's unquiet legacy continues to matter," as does the legacy of the thirty-six year dictatorship that followed (Labanyi 103). Belbel's generation represents the children of the dictatorship, but can also be considered the grandchildren of Spain's Civil War, as their parents

[67] Executions during the Spanish Civil War are estimated at over 150,000 (about one-third by the Republican side and two-thirds by the Nationalists), in addition to a further 50,000 deaths in the decade following the end of the war (Labanyi 94, Casanova 91).

would have had a similar experience growing up in the aftermath of that violent and destructive national trauma. This dual positionality in regards to multiple generations of trauma is reflected in the characters of *Elsa Schneider*: two postwar women who would have been children during their respective German wars. Elsa is based on the Arthur Schnitzler novella *Fräulein Else*, published in 1924, in which the character is nineteen; while Romy Schneider was a real woman, born in 1938, who is at a similar age when her section of the play begins in 1956. The final character, Elsa Schneider, is presented as contemporary, therefore belonging to the same generation as Belbel himself. As seen in the preceding chapter, the invisibility of all characters except these three has the effect of recentering focus from the survivors and perpetrators of the preceding conflicts to privilege the perspective of the subsequent generations.

Transgenerational Trauma

The vast majority of generational post-traumatic studies have examined the Holocaust and its aftermath in Germany. While these studies are undeniably illuminating, it is nevertheless important to point out some key differences in these cases that will affect those studies' applicability. For one, the difference in the nature of these transitions leads to different awareness on the part of later generations. In the German context, the perpetrators were resoundingly defeated, removed from power, and in many cases brought to trial, while both perpetrators and victims were much more clearly identified; as previously discussed, the Spanish and Chilean transitions were much more gradual, fragile, and focused on reconciliation to the extent that the Rettig Report, for example, purposefully did not name the perpetrators discussed. Equally importantly, the ideology of Nazi Germany was widely repudiated, leading to a clearer and deeper sense of societal shame, since victimization was so widespread and horrific; the

demonization of entire races and religions also provided a more black-and-white narrative of innocence than the repression of political opponents. Furthermore, the traumatic effects of the conflict were more all-encompassing for Germany. The far-reaching effects of the war left no family or city untouched, while the dictatorships of the Southern Cone were much more targeted and individual in their repression, leading to extreme impacts on some families and neighborhoods, with little negative impact on many others. The case of Spain bears correlations to both in this sense: the Spanish Civil War parallels the wide-ranging effects of the Second World War in Germany, while the repression of the dictatorship itself, particularly after the first decade, was more focused to the individual and regional levels.[68] All of these differences will affect the applicability and utility of the various theories of transgenerational trauma stemming from Holocaust studies.

One of the most well-known conceptualizations of transgenerational trauma is Marianne Hirsch's concept of *postmemory*, which she defines as "the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right" (103). This relationship to the memories of a previous generation is defined by both a sense of continuity—the notion that memory can be transmitted from one person to another—and rupture—as the experience of this memory will be distinct from having actually lived it. Hirsch identifies this transmission of memory as a key component of the healing process, arguing that "'[p]erhaps it is *only* in subsequent generations that trauma can be witnessed and worked through, by those who were not there to live it but who received its effects, belatedly, through the narratives, actions and symptoms of the previous generation'" (qtd. in Schwab 25). Through the use of this concept

[68] Cataluña, home of Sergi Belbel, was one of the most affected regions during the dictatorship.

of postmemory, Hirsch, Serpente, and others examine the connection to the traumatic past in families where that connection has always been both *personal* and *explicit*. Hirsch focuses particularly on photography and the recounting of familial stories; yet both of these require an active transmission of traumatic memories and a full consciousness of the family's history of trauma, a personal connection which is not always present or openly named in *collective* traumatic memory. My focus here, moreover, will be less on the transmission of specific memories than on the persistence of a sense of fragmentation, rupture, and identity loss that pervades transitional, post-dictatorial society. Hirsch mentions the need to distinguish between "those who grew up in survivor families and for those less proximate members of their generation or relational network who share a legacy of trauma and thus the curiosity, the urgency, the frustrated *need* to know about a traumatic past" (114, emphasis in original), that is, between the literal second generation and the postgeneration as a whole; my focus will be on the latter, as a pervading culture of silence makes many unaware of their exact relationship to the victims, perpetrators, and bystanders of the dictatorships. In doing so, I am not attempting to imply an equivalency between the effects of trauma on victims and their descendants and the effects on perpetrators and their descendants, or between the effects of trauma on those who experienced it directly and those who inherited it. Rather, I wish to posit that such widespread trauma has a deep, though varying, impact on multiple sectors of society and that the ripple effects of that trauma spread far beyond those who experienced it directly.

These psychological ripple effects are explored in the case of the Holocaust in Jürgen Straub and Jörn Rüsen's anthology *Dark Traces of the Past: Psychoanalysis and Historical Thinking*. Citing psychological theorist Annette Streeck-Fischer, Straub explains that "traumatic experiences [are] 'deeply engraved in the bodies, minds, and souls of the victims leading to

changes of character, and "blind spots of the soul," which persist like erratic blocks transferred from generation to generation'" ("Understanding" 104-05). Trauma is therefore transmitted not only through storytelling and other memory practices, but also through attitudes and character traits. Moreover, Straub explains that such transgenerational trauma is not limited to survivors and their children, pointing to research into "distress-inducing conditions of upbringing regarding the children and grandchildren of National Socialist perpetrators (and, in less drastic shapes, the children of so-called spectators and followers, i.e., parents who are still pervaded with the reprehensible toleration of crimes and their constant failure to render assistance)" (104). For psychoanalyst Werner Bohleber, residual guilt and shame impede the independent identity development of the next generation: "the past, for which these parents had not accepted any responsibility, penetrated the lives of the children, depriving them of the psychic space in which they could have developed a personal identity free from the alienating power of their elders' narcissism" (72). Again, he stresses that this transmission occurs not in spite of silence, but *because of* the uncertain silence pervading their lives: "this era, only just past, was to many represented in this silence, in which something absent is nevertheless experienced as massively present" (72). This explanation parallels sociologist Avery Gordon's defining of hauntings, in which "that which appears to be not there is often a seething presence, acting on and often meddling with taken-for-granted realities" (8). The invisible traces of the previous generation's experience thereby haunt the subsequent generations, even in cases where silence prevails.

It is this sense of implicit and unnamed knowledge passed through silence that psychoanalyst Christopher Bollas refers to as the "unthought known." In his book *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known*, Bollas examines the processes through which unspoken awareness is transmitted to the next generation. He explains, "The object can

cast its shadow without a child being able to process this relation through mental representations or language, as, for example, when a parent uses his child to contain projective identifications. While we do know something of the character of the object which affects us, we may not have *thought* it yet" (3, emphasis in original). This idea of "that which is known but not yet thought" or put into language is what Bollas terms "the unthought known" (4), an invisible grey area of understanding that is incorporated into the self without conscious recognition.

Gabrielle Schwab combines these various theoretical fields of study with textual analysis and her own recollections of growing up in postwar Germany in *Haunting Legacies: Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma*. As she contends,

> Violent histories generate psychic deformations passed on from generation to generation across the divide of victims and perpetrators. No one can completely escape the ravages of war or the dehumanizing effects of atrocities, not even those perpetrators who seem to have escaped unscathed or those who frantically rebuild their lives, their cities, and their nations. The damages of violent histories can hibernate in the unconscious, only to be transmitted to the next generation like an undetected disease. (3)

The dehumanizing damage that traumatic histories do to individuals, as well as family and community relationships, cannot simply be cast aside, especially in the absence of full grieving and understanding processes. Instead of working through the enduring effects of violent histories, "the parental generation tends to disavow negative affects such as guilt and shame, only to deposit them into the unconscious or even conscious processes of subject formation in the next generation" (105). Children inherit this damage through residual effects on their parents' behavior, ranging from grief and depression, to difficulty communicating or connecting with

others, to even their body language; trauma can also be inherited outside the family "via an acquired knowledge of atrocities of such proportions that it shakes the foundations of their belief and trust in humanity and a humane world" (186). In these ways, according to Erin McGlothlin, the second generation "'finds itself in a sort of epistemological state of exile, left stranded on the other side of a history it does not know by an event it did not experience, cut off from the essential knowledge of what happened to their parents or what their parents did'" (qtd. in Schwab 24-25). This sense of internal exile and fissure is what I term the *invisible self*, an inner ghost inherited from previous generations that impedes subject formation and personal awareness.

The experiences of the parental generation thereby persist as ghosts haunting subsequent generations and pervading their understanding of the world and of themselves in unknown and potentially unknowable ways. As Gordon explains, "In haunting, organized forces and systemic structures that appear removed from us make their impact felt in everyday life in a way that confounds our analytic separations and confounds the social separations themselves" (19). For Gordon, "perhaps the most appropriate description of how hauntings are transmitted and received" (18) is what Raymond Williams describes as a *structure of feeling*: the ideas, preoccupations, and social consciousness that characterize a society in any given "present," but remain in constant evolution and development. As these structures involve "defining a social experience that is still *in process*," they are generally experienced on an individual level as personal and subjective instead of collective, despite their presence throughout society (Williams 132). In practice, "then, a 'structure of feeling' is a cultural hypothesis, actually derived from attempts to understand such elements and their connections in a generation or period" (132-33). Thus, while the plays studied here are not presented as "post-dictatorial stories," they, along with

other works by these authors,[69] reveal a preoccupation with the effects of familial secrets and silences across generations, identity crises in the second generation, and repressive social structures that are all emblematic of the psychological struggles of post-dictatorship generations. They can certainly be studied without reference to their historical context, but placing them in that context reveals how the concepts of transgenerational trauma and post-dictatorial life haunt these texts, creating a compelling portrait of the crisis of the invisible self.

The Sins of the Father

These dramatic portrayals of transgenerational trauma are based on examinations of familial repression, secrets, and silences, and the destructive resulting identity crises for the next generation. Their depictions gain added force through the family's traditional symbolic role as a microcosm of society. These plays thereby operate on dual levels of signification: as an examination of familial secrets and as a metaphorical study of societal, generational secrets.[70] Both make visible the ways in which one generation's traumatic and violent past pervades the present, even when it remains unsaid or uncommented upon, resulting in the transmission of

[69] Moro Winslow's plays, such as *La escalera*, frequently deal with similar issues of secretive and psychologically destructive familial relationships, warning of "the profound internal fissures that can be generated during [childhood and adolescence] and that can determine the creation of certain holes" in the subject (Casals 12); Belbel's work frequently combines fractured identities, multi-generational storylines, difficulties in communication and connection, and family secrets, as in *Dins la seva memoria* and *Forasters* (Feldman, George).

[70] The significance of the gendering of this generational divide through the specific use of daughters will be discussed later on.

these psychologically destructive tactics to the next generation: the children, within the family and as a generation, must bear the legacy of the sins of their fathers. As sociologist Gabriele Rosenthal explains,

> Silence has been instrumentalized not only in families of former perpetrators, but in victims' families too… We furthermore observe enormous effects rooted in kept-up "family secrets" and mutual reluctance—if not incapability—to speak about the past; a persistent inability to speak and discuss due to the practice of endless reproaching; restricted opinions of change of perspectives; family myths institutionalized in order to cease conflicts, and entire family systems immobilized by the burdens of the past. (qtd. in Straub, "Understanding" 116)

By drawing attention to the existence of these invisible communicative barriers, *I Am Not the Bride* and *Elsa Schneider* make visible the influence that their psychological legacy has on the next generation, and the ways in which that invisible influence impedes their development.

One of the principal strategies that *Bride* uses to achieve this goal is that of literal, physical, and visible manifestations of invisible familial issues. The staging of the play places past and present side-by-side: Alicia Novia and her dying parents in a rotting house in one corner of the stage and the younger Alicia Niña and her experiences occupying the rest of the stage. Past and present are thus overlapping and coexistent, instead of consecutive. Alicia Novia's mud-soaked bridal gown functions as a tangible and visible symbol of the past that she must carry with her, burdening her and preventing her from psychologically moving forward even after she has physically abandoned the house. In the opening lines of the play, she explains: "I've only come back because I can't stand the weight of this dress any more, the mud and the shit won't let me move forward any more, I've been trying for so long […]. I'm here, dirty and buried I have

come to get it off me, to get all of it off of me" (Moro Winslow 18-19). Throughout the play, she tries multiple times to remove the dress, but is unable to do so; it is only at the very end, when she has fully confronted the memory of what happened to her in that house, that she is able to shed the dress.

The result, however, is the revelation of another visible manifestation of trauma: her body has been turned into that of a doll, locked in its childhood trauma. She explains that "I forgive you for it, I forgive everything. / Everything except this" (51). While Alicia herself has matured, grown, and found her way out of the house, her body remains trapped in the past her parents and their actions forced upon her. The audience is thereby able to bear witness to the contrast between her maturity as a narrator and her body's inability to achieve the same maturation: the crisis of the invisible self is brought into sharp, visible relief. The doll as a metaphor for both childhood and isolation appears throughout the play: Alicia Niña is described in the opening stage directions as "*always surrounded by dolls of different types*" (17), dolls which both signify her innocence and highlight her lack of interaction with anyone outside her family (her parents and their maid Rosa). The dolls also play a role in the climax of the play, as the revelation of her childhood trauma is tied to another action: the Father destroys her favorite doll, just as he has also destroyed her innocence. As Alicia Novia reflects, "I didn't understand anything. […] I carried what remained of her, they were pieces of the only thing that had given me hope" (50). Her explanation underscores the sense of confusion and loss that she feels, together with the need to carry the remains of her father's actions with her and the difficulties associated with letting that go.

The family home in *Bride* acts as a further visible signifier of the traumatic legacy, functioning as a physical crypt for traumatic memory. Psychoanalysts "Abraham and Torok

define encryptment as a psychic response to trauma in which an intolerable experience becomes walled in, silenced, and removed from consciousness and the public sphere" (Schwab 84). These processes of psychic encryptment are physically manifested in the play's house. As Alicia's abuse continues, the house begins to rot: "Rats and cockroaches! Rats and cockroaches! Rats and cockroaches are devouring the trash! The house is surrounded!" (Moro Winslow 47). Instead of facing the causes of this decay, the Mother's response is to wall off and isolate the house from the rest of the world:

> MOTHER. I'm not going to listen any more, let those rats rot outside squealing in the filth, close the doors and the blinds, our house will always be clean, impeccable. I'm ordering you not to let them bother me! I don't want to know anything about what happens within or outside of these four walls.
>
> ALICIA NOVIA. And so it was. My mother closed the doors once again, believing that in this way the house would stay clean forever. My father rotted away. (48)

The overlapping staging of past and present allows the audience to see instantly that this is not the case; as the opening stage directions explain: "*[a]ll the elements in this [chronologically present] sector suggest that they were once elegant, beautiful, and now they are old and worn out*" (17). Alicia adopts a similar strategy as her mother at first, finding "the courage to close my doors" and walling herself off from her parents to protect herself from further abuse, yet in so doing she creates her own prison within the family's crypt (48). While this strategy works as a stopgap to prevent further damage, it is only by leaving both that she is able to begin to process what has happened to her.

As this example shows, secrets and silences are presented as a choice on the part of the parents, and in particular the Mother. By making these choices explicit in both language and visual staging elements, the audience can see how "it is the untold secret story hidden behind the rest of the family discourse that has the strongest intergenerational effect" (Bohleber 71). From the beginning, something about the family relationships is clearly off; as the stage directions specify, despite normal and even flirtatious interactions between the parents, the Mother "*will never touch [the Father]. They will never touch each other*" (Moro Winslow 30). This visible physical separation marks an unexplained sense of shame or revulsion hiding behind their relationship, yet it is not put into words. The Mother openly affirms her use of these masking techniques in a dinner scene; when the Father objects to her false claims to be enjoying the meal, she explodes:

> And what do you want me to do? To say that this is crap, that it's terrible, but nevertheless I still have to eat it, that night after night, day after day, I have to eat this shit even though it's rotten, even though it's unbearable and moreover I have to say that it's delicious and smile so that everyone thinks that it's good and so they'll forget the unpleasant taste they're having to swallow. Well no. I will not accept saying that it's bad. This meat, our meat, is the best, it is delicious and you have to swallow it. (35)

In this speech, she verbalizes the underlying tensions and falseness of the play's scenes of domesticity, bringing them into the visible realm briefly, only to then consciously and deliberately relegate them to silence again.[71]

[71] This scene parallels the technique of reversing the visibility of words that was explored in the previous chapter. As seen in those cases, calling attention to the hidden transcript and the acts of

She adopts a similar strategy of secretive silence with her daughter's abuse. She interrupts an early scene of affection between Alicia Niña and the Father just as he asks his daughter for a kiss, urgently calling her to bed instead. At the time it seems like the Mother is needlessly jealous of her daughter and the attention that she receives, with Alicia commenting, "I hated you because you always arrived at the exact moment when all I wanted was to play with him" (29). It is only later, when the Father's abuse is revealed, that her intervention can be recognized as a furtive attempt to protect her. Despite this positive intent, her choice of silence enables the traumatic experience to occur. The Mother never names what is happening, never does anything to put a permanent stop to it, counting instead on being able to stop particular instances. After we see the rape scene, Alicia Novia comments, "That day mama, you didn't come, just like you stopped coming many other days. What happened? Did you give up, did you get intimidated?" (46). The tragic repercussions of her silence are thus clearly demonstrated in her daughter's experiences, and defined for that daughter as something to be kept silent. As in other post-traumatic societies, children "become carriers of a secret ensuing out of a pact of silence, a secret they are nevertheless aware of and take on" (Bohleber 71).

Such secrets and silences are thus passed on to the next generation as a transmission of feelings and unhealthy habits. As Schwab explains,

> Children have a way of knowing. Children have a way of listening to the unspoken. Children also have a way of incorporating their parents' unresolved conflicts, contradictions and shameful secrets. This is why children may fall from

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self-censorship necessitated by her social role as wife and homemaker reveals the operations of social power and forces the audience to question those structures of power and the limitations that they impose.

> the edge of a violent world into a no-man's land of inner uprootedness that leaves them with a feeling they never belong. (100)[72]

Alicia comments on these same characteristics in her observations of her parents' marriage: "words said everything except what was really happening. They lied to each other, they feared each other, I think they even still loved each other, and I was there, they thought I was sleeping, they always thought I was sleeping, but I was listening alert and scared behind the doors to try and understand what I still can't manage to understand" (Moro Winslow 31). Even though her parents believe that they are shielding her from their secrets and shame, she is aware of the discrepancies, and incorporates these contradictions into her sense of self and of the world. The sense of "words [saying] everything except what [is] really happening" is painfully present in the portrayal of her abuse. As a child she is too young to understand what is happening to her, and

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[72] Schwab explains the silent process through which children inherit gaps and feelings by relating her own experience as a child in postwar Germany:

> Yet, even as a child, I picked up on something amiss in these stories. That, more than anything else, left me confused. It was as if the words themselves were emptied of the very feelings invoked in me when I was confronted with the facts of horror. It was not that the stories were devoid of emotions but rather that words and emotions did not quite fit together; words echoed falsely. Children have a sense of this discrepancy but do not understand it. […] Words could be split into what they said and what they did not say. It was as if they carried a secret that cast me out. I had a vague sense of something deadly, of words filled with skeletons. My own words were stolen, and I became withdrawn and taciturn, a girl without words, as I used to think of myself. (43)

even her older self is unable to name the events, relying instead on vague words that cover but cannot hide the reality of her abuse: she refers to “that thing” or “something” that he had in his hands and pressed against her and into her, releasing “a sticky substance” that would then mix with “an intense red” (45). Just as she has inherited this verbalized silence, she has also received the sense of secrets and shame from her parents. After her father assaults her, she hides her trauma from the maid:

> ROSA. What did you lose?
>
> ALICIA NIÑA. Nothing.
>
> ROSA. So why the face?
>
> ALICIA NOVIA. I didn’t want you to ask me anything. (46)

She chooses the same path forward as her parents, learning from them to hide shame behind silence, and suffering the same isolating effects of that silence, as it is internalized and becomes an invisible weight on her identity and sense of self.

This sense that a familial inheritance of secrecy leads to isolation and confusion is also reflected in *Elsa Schneider* by Elsa’s complex relationship with her parents. This relationship is characterized by a mixed sense of responsibility and revulsion, combining the inheritance of shame with the urge to protect them. From the opening scene, her parents are associated with a sense of dread: she wonders, “Will mama’s letter have arrived?… Yes, surely. I fear that it has arrived” (Belbel 89). Even before she knows what that letter will ask her to do, her parents are linked to negative feelings which are then justified for the audience by the letter itself. She inherits the sins of her father in a very concrete sense by being held responsible for saving him from the consequences of his own profligacy. Her mother’s letter informs her that “‘[y]our father’s affairs have entered a very acute phase,’” to which her natural response is “No… no,

papa, I'll save you" (92, 93). Yet as she begins to understand what is truly being asked of her, her response changes to anger and frustration: "Oh, papa, I hate you, how can you ask something like this from me?" (96) The transmission of shame to the next generation is clearly shown: the first letter begs her, "'Don't think badly of us, my dear little daughter'" (91), a recognition of shame on the part of the older generation. As she reflects on what is happening, Elsa both inherits that shame and recognizes it as not rightfully her own: "I would die of shame. Shame? Shame, me? Why, if none of this is my fault?" (93). She experiences an inner disconnect between the emotions that she has inherited and her sense of self. She exemplifies the sense, described by Bohleber when discussing the second generation in post-traumatic societies, that she "provides a space for someone else's wishes, fears, and affects—mental, emotional, and physical aftereffects that do not belong to this generation but are inscribed or overwritten onto their identities. Because of the close parental bond she/he cannot discern these as alien and so maintain mental/emotional autonomy" (70). This disconnection leads her to despair and uncharacteristic actions. As she meets with Von Dorsday, she is horrified by his invasion of her physical space, but comments, "and I let him! I'm letting it happen, yes, what does it matter to me? am I not humiliated enough already?" (Belbel 96). The verbalization of her thoughts allows the audience to witness the corrosive effects of her parents' legacy and the breach between her personal sense of principles and the identity that they have forced her to adopt. Having already betrayed herself in the name of helping her parents, she moves further and further into her inherited shame, until she recognizes that it has completely taken over her sense of self: "Now I know that everything is over. I'm almost dead" (99). Her actual suicide at the end of the act becomes an inescapable consequence of this inner psychological death, brought about by her toxic parental relationships.

Romy's difficult relationships with her parents provide a similarly inevitable blueprint for her future struggles. Her relationship to her stepfather is portrayed as ambiguous, blurring the lines between her personal and professional life as a child actress on the brink of adulthood. About to turn eighteen, she reflects on the possible headlines, and is unsure how to characterize their relationship: "tomorrow she will collect her first salary. From the hands of her mother, from the hands of her… of her… 'daddy'…" (117). This ambiguity in turn leads to confusion of identity and a blurring of the limits between her and them: "Daddy Blatzheim, am I… are we… are you all… are you a millionaire?" (118). Like Elsa, she struggles to define an independent psychic space for herself, which is further complicated by her uncertainty over her place in the world. As time passes, she rejects this early relationship as a negative model for childhood, telling her newborn son: "You'll have what I didn't have, everything that I didn't have. A father, son, a father" (122). Yet the parental influence is inescapable, and she falls into repeating her mother's patterns. Her mother has gone through a string of failed marriages and warns her daughter, "'You don't know what it's like living with an actor, my daughter, I do, I do, I do know, you were very small, the relationship with your father, the… real one, was truly unbearable […]' Shut up already, mama, shut up once and for all!" (120). Despite Romy's determination not to inherit her mother's unhealthy relationships, she too undergoes a serious of marital disappointments, and in her suicide scene reflects on the "[s]hadows… of the men… that have said… that they loved me… and haven't… given me… anything" (129). The second generation is therefore framed as doomed to repeat parental destructive mistakes.

For Elsa Schneider, this means passing on secrecy and tragedy to the next generation. Throughout her epilogue, she is visually framed by the two women who came before her, and comments that it is her duty to introduce both them and her, linked by their names. The link is

also visibly established for the audience by the glass of champagne that she holds, an echo of Elsa's repeated references to the mountain air being "like champagne" and Romy's use of champagne as a symbol of fame and success. Yet their framing of her is also marked by a sense of secrecy; the stage directions explain that "*[b]oth women have their hands behind their backs, as if they're hiding something*" (135), establishing a visual mark of secrecy by the preceding generations that the subsequent one does not understand. Elsa Schneider is perplexed by the fact that the stage lights do not dim after her introduction of them and herself: "come on, the matter's over, the stories have already been told and I've done everything that I was supposed to do" (135). She tries to puzzle it out, but concludes, "It's just that this situation is not normal, it's abnormal, me here in front of all of you like an idiot when now I really don't have absolutely anything to say, nothing to tell you, the stories have already been told, the tragedy belongs in the past" (136). Lacking the full understanding of her own situation and the recognition of her inheritance of Elsa and Romy's trauma, her sense of self is undermined. While she may think that "the tragedy belongs in the past," the legacy of that past belongs to the present, as the tragedy continues with her death as well. For all of these women, the secrets of their parents and predecessors are an inescapable and fatal inheritance. This fatality in turn creates issues of identity confusion: how is it possible to know the self when that self is determined by outside forces and unable to act independently?

The Internal Disconnect

For these subsequent generations, the self is rendered unseen and unknowable, influenced by the external and invisible forces of the traumatic legacy. In post-traumatic societies, this internal conflict is not confined to one specific group; instead, "descendants of victims as well as

descendants of perpetrators struggle with more specific and often debilitating issues of identity formation" (Schwab 35). These issues are the logical consequence of coexisting in their own time and place and in the invisible remains of history. In this way, "[l]iving in two realities, they experience the past as mixed up with the present. The result is a diffusion of identity—at least in part—or the feeling of having a fragmentized identity" (Bohleber 73). For this generation in particular, the confluence of their own personal and confusing transitions during adolescence with national transitions fraught with silence exacerbates the fragmenting of individual identity. As Mitscherlich points out, "If the efforts, normal in adolescence, to form new super-ego and ego-ideals are made additionally difficult and confusing by widespread disruption of existing ideals, […] the results may well be catastrophic" (201). This combination of personal and national upheaval and redefinition can only lead to confusion, especially in the already confusing era of adolescence, while a sense of personal identity is still being developed. With the previously-discussed substitution of the familial for the national, the adolescent protagonists of these plays face this same struggle, trying (and failing) to establish a personal identity separate from their parents.

In both cases, the plays instantly alert the audience to these issues of identity confusion, visibly highlighting the struggle with the invisible self from the beginning, especially through their titles. The declaration *I Am Not the Bride* appears on the surface to be a strong and forceful statement of identity, yet even a cursory glance at the playbill alerts the audience to the fact that the main character is named "Alicia Novia" ("Alicia the Bride") and in the first moments of the play, Alicia Novia enters wearing a wedding dress. This juxtaposition immediately established a sense of identity rupture and conflict for this character. Similarly, the visible state of the wedding dress, a symbol of purity torn and covered in mud, acts as a further visual manifestation of her

internal conflict. Likewise, for the audience in *Elsa Schneider*, the awareness of the title and the cast list of Elsa, Romy Schneider, and Elsa Schneider create a sense of identity confusion and combination from the beginning. Elsa Schneider's "secret" that she has to share with the audience and cannot decide how to say (her name) is in fact already known to them. The secret that she actually shows is therefore her own confusion and identity conflicts.

Moreover, the dramatic style of *Elsa Schneider* provides the audience with a further signifier of the characters' internal struggles. The constant shifting between verbalized thought and dialogue with unheard and unseen scene partners acts as a visible and audible sign of inner identity disruption and conflict, both by interfering with a sense of scenic continuity and by manifesting the contrasts between their confused internal selves and their public performances of identity (a reversal of speech visibility similar to those discussed in chapter II). These public performances are further complicated by the lack of onstage interaction: neither Elsa nor Romy is ever *seen* interacting with other characters (though Elsa's final scene includes the voices of others).[73] As Diana Taylor explains, "Individual and state formation take place, in part, in the visual sphere through a complicated play of looks: looking, being looked at, identification, recognition, mimicry" (30). The invisibility of the other characters in *Elsa Schneider* visually signifies the characters' struggles for individual identity formation by removing part of this equation and makes this process impossible for the audience; we may hear a character's accounts of how others are looking at her, but ultimately lack the necessary tools to locate her in that "complicated play of looks." Our understanding of each character is therefore at once deeply intimate as we hear their thoughts and see only them and detached from a complete picture of

[73] This contrasts with the characters of *Fairy Tales* and *Everyday Secret Obscenities* who are not seen to interact with those in power, but do visibly interact with each other.

their lives, surroundings, and interactions. As Rayner explains in her study of theatrical ghosts, "The body/theater is thus an exterior space that displays, like a hollow vessel or vaulted crypt, the surfaces of its own interiority. But such a space becomes most evident when it is cut, when its fragmented parts are severed from mundane contexts and show the sites of missing pieces" (62). The act of severing these women from their contexts and surroundings thereby reveals to the audience the fragmentation of their identities. Their true and complete selves are therefore just as elusive and invisible for the audience as they are for the characters themselves. The struggle for identity is thus established both through the form of the plays and through their content.

For *Bride*'s Alicia, this struggle is made explicit through confusion over all the most basic and fundamental questions, demonstrating an internal disconnect from herself. Alicia Novia's opening lines immediately signal to the audience her uncertainty and difficulty locating and positioning herself: "Good morning, mama! Good morning, papa! Although maybe I should say, good afternoon! or good night!, I don't know, I don't know" (Moro Winslow 18). This difficulty is also presented retrospectively in her descriptions of her recent past. When she finally got up the courage to leave the house, she explains, "I was completely lost, I didn't know who I was or what I wanted" (18). She has not been given the tools from childhood and adolescence to understand herself and act independently, and therefore describes the decision to leave as being motivated by a need "to search," though for what she does not seem to know (18). As she travels, she notices a terrible stench of shit, but it takes her a while to realize that she herself is the source: "In the moment I didn't know it, I didn't understand it" (19). She thus frames herself for the listening audience as divorced from her own reality. This identity trouble is then revealed as inherited, having its roots in her father's self-loathing and rejection of himself. He is shown

talking to himself in the mirror, unable to reconcile the mental image of the self and the visible one: "Who are you? What's your name? Tell me. Who are you? There's no answer, the cold image of that sweet man, it keeps looking at me, I move, he moves. Tell me who you are! Silence. Tell me, damn it, who you are! Pause, then I shout louder. Who are you, who are you!" (42). This self-interrogation does not achieve any sense of reconciliation between the two contradictory images of himself—cold and sweet, silent and shouting—and he continues to act destructively after the failed attempt, moving directly from this self-confrontation to the rape of his daughter. These actions create the same internal breach in his daughter that plagues him. Alicia's disconnect from herself is further amplified in situations of tension between her parents, such as when the Mother interrupts them playing: "I was confused, too confused. […] What's going on mama? Can't I speak?" (29). The disconnect from the self is thereby signaled through confusion and a loss of language.

For *Elsa Schneider*'s Romy, the inability to articulate her own subjectivity and agency is a primary indicator of her inherited identity crisis. As Schwab elucidates, in cases of trauma, "the breakdown of language forces us to listen to the silence, to acknowledge the gap" (50). In this case, that linguistic deficiency forces Romy to acknowledge a gap in self-awareness and understanding. She finds herself unable to articulate her desires and needs: "Actually I already have, I already have what I wanted, what I had always wanted: something that wasn't… that wasn't… well, anyway" (Belbel 119). In similar fashion, at the end of the next scene she proves incapable of vocalizing her fears: "I'm sick, sick, sick. *(Looks at the audience.)* I was afraid. Afraid of… *(Sudden blackout)*" (121). The use of the sudden blackout here visually underscores for the audience that the causes of this linguistic block are both internal and external. Romy trails off before she can put her fears into words, but the blackout also cuts off her thought process and

precludes her from connecting with herself and finding a way to express that self. After her son's tragic death, she must fight again to voice her own thoughts—"For… ah… I can't… I can't bre… athe" (127)—but then tells the story of what happened before once again losing the ability to construct coherent utterances—"And now… now… no… now… n… now… *(Her breathing is difficult, like when she entered.)*" (128). She is able to put external factual information (the circumstances of her son's death) into words, with very few pauses or ellipses, despite the horror of the boy's accident, but when she must return to talking about herself, language fails her. We can see that the problem, therefore, lies not with language itself or her ability to vocalize difficult situations, but rather with her knowledge of and comfort level with the particular subject matter: her self.

Elsa Schneider is similarly unable to articulate or understand her own purpose. The character's fatalism means that she does not make her own choices and is dependent on others to tell her what to do:

> and I'm in this same place and with this glass of champagne, because in the moments of silence and darkness I also could have imagined some purpose, a function for this mysterious glass here that is already making me nervous, precisely because I don't know what the hell it means… what do you all think?, do you see some meaning in this glass of champagne?, oh!, and it's full, eh?, full of champagne, oh, perhaps it's for me to drink, but no, no one has ordered such a thing. (134)

She is thus presented as utterly disconnected from her own circumstances, unable to explain what exactly she is doing and unwilling to make that determination for herself, even in a situation such as holding a glass of champagne where the next logical step might seem obvious.

This struggle to perform on a basic social level is also illustrated by her difficulty in voicing the purpose that she *is* aware of: telling the audience that her name is Elsa Schneider. It takes her two pages, without any pauses, to get to that most basic of sentences, going through a two page run-on sentence discussion of how she doesn't know what to say, "or better said, that I don't know where I'm going to start, that, that's it, not knowing where to start, where will I start?, perhaps not even I…" (133). She situates the cause of her uncertainty as being a lack of personal understanding: "yes, and what should be the thing I have to try to make you understand? if not even I myself understand myself?" (133).[74] Since her task is naming herself, the inability to understand that self prevents her from effectively performing this task. Even when she thinks she has fulfilled her function, that too is proven wrong. While a blackout kept Romy from managing to give voice to her fears, here it is the lack of an expected blackout that forces Elsa Schneider to confront her own helplessness. After she introduces herself, the scene continues, even though she has nothing more that she is aware of needing to say: "now I don't understand anything about anything, oh, I feel so lost" (136). Her lack of control over her own purpose and destiny removes all possibility of understanding and self-awareness.

For Elsa, the breakdown of language is even more severe and extreme. Her scenes are compelling examples of the haunted language that is inherited by the second generation; in such cases, the speaker is unable to articulate their trauma and carries that unspeakable trauma into

[74] The English phrases "understand myself" and "understand it myself" can sometimes be used interchangeably. The Spanish version here is much less ambiguous: "¿si ni yo misma me entiendo a mí misma?" making it clear that she is referring to being unable to understand her own self as a person or a speaker, and not referring to being unable to understand her situation herself.

language “through ellipsis, indirection and detour, or fragmentation and deformation” (Schwab 54). As Elsa first tries to talk to Von Dorsday about the money, the gaps in speech reveal her silenced shame, while her inner monologue demonstrates a feeling of physical separation from the words she utters: “Mama writes to me… (It’s trembling, my leg is trembling, what am I saying?) …Mama tells me that papa… (I’m stammering, I’m trembling, nerves, what’s happening to me? My legs, my mouth, I’m sweating, Otherwise my ear itches!, Why did he cross his legs?)… my… (Who? Who? How?) father… (What father?) No! No” (Belbel 96). The stress of the situation leads to a total loss of connection to her own identity and, crucially, to her family, a linguistic erasure that points to the unspeakable nature of what she is being asked to do. This type of linguistic haunting ultimately leads to a total loss of linguistic signification, removing the communicative ability of words themselves and divorcing signifier from signified. As Von Dorsday proposes a “condition” for the money, Elsa repeats that word until it loses all meaning, no longer processed as a word, but as a sound, before finally losing even the ability to produce that sound: “One condition? (One condition? one condition!) What?… one con… (condition?)… one… (one…? one con…?) condition…? (condition? one…?) one…? (one condition? what condition?) *(Silence)*” (97-98). If, as most theorists agree, “it is relationships with other people and entry into language that makes infants fully human” (Meehan 8), then the breakdown of both relationships and language that Elsa suffers here points not only to the impossibility of maturity and self-realization but a loss of humanity.

Following this scene, her language expression becomes more and more erratic, as her sense of self is further worn down. Her stream-of-consciousness narration jumps wildly from personal reflections to fragments of the telegram she received from her mother to nonsense: “life starts now and I will be a whore, a whore, a whore such as the world has never seen, and the

address is still Fiala, tralará, tralará, tralará!" (104) and "I'll be a new Elsa, I'll be a new reincarnated Elsa, no other solution stop tralará address is still Fiala, ha, ha, ha! I'm beautiful!" (105). In both of these examples, the phrases from her mother's telegram ("the address is still Fiala," "no other solution stop") are bitterly intermingled with expressions of her frustrated future ("life starts now," "I'll be a new Elsa!"), drawing a direct link for the audience between her linguistic breakdown and the destruction of her sense of self. Her inherited shame is made visible and audible through the deformation and destruction of the normal processes of meaning production. This linguistic disintegration is also on display in the final moments of her life—"… I'm flying… I'm dreaming… I'm sleeping… drea… drea… fl…" (Belbel 113)—tying the death of language to the death of the individual.

Even in moments wherein the characters are able to connect with their individual self, these connections are always denied and invalidated, leading to feelings of isolation. Thus, as is typical in cases of transgenerational trauma, "the child is psychologically hijacked: insofar as someone else's past is projected onto or forced upon the child, so he or she is controlled from the outside, carrying all the attendant feelings of alienations and dislocation within, these identifications cannot be assimilated into the self but are like a 'foreign body'" (Bohleber 73). As a child, Alicia's attempts at asserting an individual and independent self are constantly frustrated, leading to feelings of isolation and the denial of her own identity. In the following conversation with their maid, both Alicia and her mother's feelings are presented as unimportant:

> ALICIA NIÑA. Rosa, Rosa, it seems like my mama is crying.
>
> ROSA. Don't worry, it'll pass soon.
>
> ALICIA NIÑA. I want to go out.
>
> ROSA. Where do you want to go?

ALICIA NIÑA. To the street, out there where those kids are running.

ROSA. Some day. (Moro Winslow 31)

Alicia is thus trained to minimize her own feelings and desires in favor of the mandates of the previous generation, who have determined that she will stay inside regardless. Simultaneously, she is taught that their feelings do not matter either, as the Mother's crying is presented as temporary and unimportant. As she plays with her dolls, she performs a self-aware representation of being forced into games she doesn't want to play and having her discomfort be discounted by another: "Tic-tac, let's go dance together. / Yes-yes, I want to dance too. *She makes the dolls come together slowly; the dance gets more and more intense.* / Tic-tic, I don't like that dance. / No-no this dance is very good, come and take my hands, together, together we'll dance" (43). This game is then repeated for Alicia herself, as the Father enters and asks if she is hungry. In response to her "no," he asserts his own preferences, "Are you sure? Because papa brought something for you, something that you're going to like," and subsequently begins to assault her (44). When she disagrees, protesting that it hurts, he again denies her feelings, "Shhh, shhh, be quiet" (45). Her attempts at asserting an individual identity fail utterly, and instead she is remolded to suit the physical and psychological needs of her parents.

Likewise, Elsa is characterized by a sense of isolation and confusion, lacking meaningful connection that would help her define herself. Since "the self exists fundamentally in relation to others," the lack of such relations impedes the understanding and development of the self (Brison 14). Looking around at the hotel, feeling judged, Elsa remarks, "They don't know anything about me. No one knows anything. *(Pause.)* No one" (Belbel 90). With no one to confide in (her mother having specifically instructed her not to tell her aunt what is going on), her equilibrium collapses. After her conversation with Von Dorsday, she erupts in internal frustration at his

inability to understand and see her: “No, no, no, I can’t say anything, no!! Doesn’t he see that I’m frozen? Don’t you see, pig? Don’t you see that I can’t say anything?” (98). In the absence of outside recognition of her circumstances, she has no recourse for self-expression. Elsa’s inability to communicate meaningfully with anyone in her life includes her closest friend and cousin Paul. As she prepares and worries about her coming tryst, “he comes up to me, he tells me to come in, he’s worried. For me (for me for me for me for me for me for…)” (103). As in the earlier discussion of the breakdown of language, this repetition makes the phrase lose its meaning; with that erasure of significance, his (ultimately futile) concern for her loses its meaning as well, and she is left alone.

For Romy, it is the loneliness of the spotlight that isolates her and erodes her sense of self. Famous from adolescence, public pressure requires a constant performance dictated by others, the creation of a public identity erasing the personal one. On her eighteenth birthday, she reflects on her position as a public face, controlled by her mother and stepfather:

> Thousands of pictures of me everywhere? Yes, and tomorrow a thousand and one reports, journalists, interviews, multitudes… *(She looks at the audience.)* And I will speak. Or better not, I won’t speak; mama, yes, mama will speak, mama will say everything, she loves it, mama will be the one to say that I am so happy, the happiest girl in Europe, and him too, Daddy Blatzheim will also speak, he’ll organize, he’ll direct, he’ll carefully plan out what I have to do. (118)

Her very voice is subordinated to those of her parents, who will express everything that needs to be said for her, leaving no space for any individualized sentiment. Despite her voice being the only one that we can hear, she also verbalizes the control of that voice by others. Every detail of the event is planned, including how she will feel; the pictures in particular require planning, and

she complains about her stepfather "making me practice tomorrow's faces, tomorrow's poses, tomorrow's happiness" (118). There is no room for spontaneity or individuality in the construction of her carefully designed public persona. As such, she feels a fundamental disconnect from her public image and the professional personas that she must slip into as an actor:

> the important thing is that I look like her, like that woman, that woman who has never existed. […] yes, yes, I look too much like myself, lately I look too much like all of them, today's version is called Nadine who-knows-what. Nadine Chevalier is me, me myself. Nadine, woman and object, Nadine the wretched, Nadine the shit actress, the porno film actress, the actress in the mud, in shit… My truth, my truth, my truth!!! […] The important thing is that today my name is… Nadine. (124-25)

The desperate exclamation of "my truth" stands in contrast to the recognition that her truth has no importance to the public and her own identity is lost to accommodate the roles that she takes on. She is forced to wonder if there is really any difference between playing a bad actress and being one, at the same time that she recognizes the temporary nature of each of the identities that she takes on and casts off after "today." She reflects on the intimidating presence of her first and most famous role, "Sissí, buried long ago, why be afraid now?… she's been dead and buried for a long time now, I'm already a woman, I'm already a mother, even a divorcée" (124). She thereby highlights for her listeners not only the separation between her characters and herself, but also the loss of her former self. The person who defined her life during adolescence is dead, buried, and lost, giving way to a new series of public roles to live up to. Romy's mention of these specifically female roles highlights the ways in which personal identity formation in the face of

public pressure is even more problematic for women, as these characters' position as women compounds the invisibility of their true selves.

Doubly Invisible Daughters

Framing the story through female characters creates a parallel to dictatorial framings of the nation. Taylor's discussion of the gendering of the national self in Argentina is equally applicable to Chile and Spain: the framing of the national *Patria* as pure and feminine allowed the military government to assume the masculine role of protector and "[t]he fight to the death against the enemy 'other' could be legitimated as the struggle to possess or protect the woman" (33). Furthermore, "[t]his version of feminine surrender [by the nation] confirms the military's political discourse that relocates the masculinist desire for domination onto the feminized population, claiming that 'she' desires to be dominated; 'she' willingly offers up her subjectivity, even her life, to the superior power" (6), a description that parallels many attempts to justify sexual violence. The gender violence portrayed in these plays can therefore be read not only as a commentary on gender roles and sexual trauma but as a representation of the societal violence and trauma inflicted by the dictatorship and passed on to subsequent generations as their traumatic inheritance.

It is therefore no accident that these identity struggles are presented through the traumatic experiences of daughters, instead of sons. The limiting nature of gender roles has long had an alienating effect on women, hiding and subordinating their personal subjectivities beneath the performance. As Judith Butler argues, gender expressions are performative "in the sense that the essence or identity that they purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means [… creating] the illusion of an interior and

organizing gender core" (173, emphasis in original). The performance of gender roles, then, is separate from and makes invisible the inner self. The roles frequently ascribed to women are further characterized by ideals of self-sacrifice and abnegation, increasing the divide between the performed role and internal desires and needs. Within the family, the subordination of the daughter to her parents and "[t]he subordination of the mother to the necessities of her children or her spouse appear as an instinctive female tendency or as what 'should be'. […] It implies the acceptance of personal invisibility, at the expense of the glorification and sacralization of that role" (Schmukler 205-06). The use of female protagonists thereby adds an additional layer of distance between the character and their full, visible understanding of the self.

In *Bride*, Alicia is constantly framed by others through her relationships (real or potential) to men. This definition is inherent even in her dual classification as a character: Alicia Novia and Alicia Niña. While the label of "Alicia Niña" could be understood simply as a reference to age as "Girl" or "Female child," the contrasting and corresponding term is not "Mujer" ("Woman") or "Adulta" ("Adult") but rather "Alicia Novia" ("Bride"). This label identifies her through her relationships and social circumstances, which leads to the parallel interpretation of "Niña" more specifically as "Daughter." The two versions of Alicia are thus defined by the social roles they complete in relation to men at each stage of their life. Her implied destiny is to pass from one role to the other—from belonging to her parents, and especially her father, to belonging to her husband, part of a tradition which has long positioned women as "belonging to another" (Fernández). Yet Alicia is also constantly in conflict with both of these identities. Her identity as Daughter is betrayed by her parents through the Father's abuse and the Mother's silence, both failing in their most fundamental role of protecting their child. Her identity as Bride is never more than a hypothetical. From the beginning, her image as Bride

is always ironic; she is presented as wearing "a wedding dress, torn and dirty, like her hands and her body. Her whole body is injured and covered with mud" (Moro Winslow 18), and in her opening monologue she emphasizes her attempts to rid herself of it since leaving her parents' house: "And the only thing that I needed was to get this dress off of me" (19). In a later flashback, her mother brings a series of unseen suitors to the house to find her future husband quickly and early, but Alicia has no interest in that possibility: "While you were marrying me off, I played with dolls, yes, nothing of men, or of big parties, like the ones that you wanted for me mama. I played with dolls" (38). The identities prepared for her by society are thus shown to be completely out of sync with her lived reality and desires, revealing the invisibility of her true self to those around her.

Like Alicia, Elsa is also defined by her status as a daughter and the expectations that come with it, while similarly being failed by her parents. While her mother's letters do not specifically ask her to sleep with Von Dorsday for the money, the implication is there: her mother notes that "he has always had a certain weakness for you" and that, while her father could have contacted him himself, "personal contact is best," ending with the injunction not to "think badly of us, my dear little daughter" (Belbel 92). As Elsa herself remarks, they had to have some idea what he would ask of her in exchange for the money: "Von Dorsday, the pig. The pig. And I his whore. Papa, papa, papa, you know men. You know Von Dorsday. You knew that…" (100). Yet her personal desires and wellbeing are expected to be sacrificed to benefit her father. Her dying monologue sums up the various ways in which that call to be the dear and dutiful daughter has deprived her of identity and possibility:

> I'm… I'm so young… I… Ah… I don't hear anything, I don't hear… you. I want to rise… to rise… Ha!, ha, ha ha! No, mama, don't cry, mama. To dance, to

> dance, I want to dance, to get married, to travel, I want to climb…With that young Italian, so handsome… I'll invite him. […] what have you brought me, father? Thirty thousand dolls? Fifty? Fifty thousand dolls for me? Oh, thank you, papa… […] they take my hand, is that you, papa, yes, but why do you take my hand? Papa, papa… It's so nice here inside… I'm your daughter… (112-13)

Here she expresses her disappointed expectations for her life and the denial of the opportunity to choose and act on her sexuality for herself; like all domestically situated women, as Fernández describes, "she is exiled from her erotic body," which is to be disposed of by others (151). She also imagines an alternate scenario in which her father sacrifices and provides for her, with the corrupting money (thirty, later increased to fifty thousand florins) turned into dolls, a symbol of innocence and a gift *for* her instead of a sacrifice *by* her for him. She ends the speech with her final definition of herself as "daughter," both her most important role and the barrier to realizing her own identity.

Alicia's conflict between her identity and her prescribed roles is further exemplified by the constant stream of negative imperatives that surround her. As Alicia Niña plays with her dolls, she acts out a conversation between the dolls and herself that shows the audience the constant stream of orders and expectations that demarcate her existence: "Don't smile that way Alicia! But it's just that they ask me to and I…" (Moro Winslow 25). The impossible expectations set for women are clearly shown here, as the injunction that she smile and be pleasant is contradicted by criticism of how and when she chooses to fulfill that command. Similarly in a later flashback with both Alicias, they recite the litany of commands (all negative, all prohibitions) learned in childhood, moving from specific issues of politeness to general commands limiting all behavior, with the goal of becoming "a lady":

ALICIA NIÑA. Don’t touch your hair.

ALICIA NOVIA. Don’t talk with your mouth full.

ALICIA NIÑA. Don’t push your food with your finger.

ALICIA NOVIA. Don’t make the silverware dance.

ALICIA NIÑA. Don’t say obscenities at the table.

ALICIA NOVIA. Don’t talk about illnesses at the table.

ALICIA NIÑA. Don’t sing.

ALICIA NOVIA. Don’t argue.

ALICIA NIÑA. Don’t shout.

ALICIA NOVIA. Don’t interrupt!

ALICIA NIÑA. Mmmmm, the food is so delicious!

ALICIA NOVIA. Well, aren’t you just a perfect little lady… Your grandmother would be so proud of you; some day, some day you’ll be like her. (26-27)

Her existence is solely defined in the negation of her own impulses and desires, in order to imitate previous generations and adopt their behavior and limitations. The statement that “the food is so delicious” is echoed by her mother in the subsequent scene (examined earlier) where it is shown to be a lie masking her disappointment and despair at her circumstances. Being a “perfect little lady” is thus defined as living at odds with truth and in opposition to an authentic self.

Romy faces similar expectations of public behavior, exacerbated in her case by her position as a public figure, famous and in the spotlight since her adolescence. She is confronted by the same injunction to smile, remarking, “You want me to smile? I’ll smile, yes, I’ll smile” (Belbel 119). In a later scene in which she answers questions from journalists, her responses are

interspersed constantly with the stage direction: "*She smiles. Pause*" (120). The smile is thereby also linked to silence, replacing her words with the mask of passive and silent contentment. Furthermore, the focus in these scenes detailing her interactions with the press is always on her completion of the prescribed gender roles of daughter, wife, and mother:

> and I'm here again, in the role of prodigal daughter, lost daughter, married to Harry Meyen, the playwright, married, my son, and I'm already a mother, your mama, and all of them waiting again, tomorrow, with those weapons under their arms, and those white lights that are so powerful and that little noise: the click and the impertinent click. (122)

The description of cameras as weapons, with their clicks echoing gunfire, frames the completion of these gender roles as an act of survival and self-preservation, instead of as acts of love or self-fulfillment. Her performance of her own life is further emphasized at the end of the scene: "Let everyone come in to see that I am a mother, that I am a married woman […] and also that I am happy, my son, that I am happy, let them get that down too, let them take note and publish it on the front page of the newspapers… *(She falls to the floor, faint.)*" (123). Her actual physical weakness contrasts with the desperate need to be seen as happy and fulfilled by these roles, erasing her own real problems and replacing them with a performed identity, but allowing the audience to see the false nature of that identity.

Ultimately, Romy will rebel against these impossible expectations. She rails against the double standard requiring her to live up to both the ideals of glamour and of motherhood at once: "I, the famous divorcée, separated from her son because of not having a normal life, a normal life, normal, normal, but how do they want me to have one!!" (124). In her suicide scene, she

explains her death as freedom from those prescribed roles that have failed her over and over again:

> Shadows… of the men… that have said… that they loved me… and haven't… given me… anything. Shadows… of the neuroses… that have forced me… to drug myself. Shadows… to keep… the mind… cold… in order to keep… working. *(She opens the bottle. She takes all of the pills.)* […] Tomorrow morning… Tomorrow… Tomorrow morning… the last… the last… clicks. (129)

The causes of her death are framed through the gender expectations that require women to give and sacrifice more in relationships than men, to hide their problems behind a smile, and to make balancing work and home life look easy. The description of these expectations as shadows further situates them in the conflict of visibility, showing them as complicit in the formation of an invisible and hidden self, which they then keep her from accessing. These shadows block her from understanding and fulfilling herself, leading her to surrender finally to the weaponized clicks of public life.

In the end, the particularity of Elsa and Romy's experiences is subsumed into the universality of Elsa Schneider, a character who reveals no personal details about herself, described merely as being "a strange woman of an undefined age" (133). She thereby acts as a cipher for all women who inherit the social, cultural, and psychological legacy of the Elsas and Romys of the world, an "everywoman" expressing the pain "of all women who have suffered under circumstances of exploitation and/or objectification" (Feldman 252). And unlike Elsa and Romy, Elsa Schneider seems to have no motivation for suicide. Not only have we seen nothing about the rest of her life that would explain such a choice, but it is not actually presented as her choice. She comments in an aside, "(and why do I have this glass of champagne?, am I supposed

to make a toast?, to what?, to whom?)" (Belbel 133), demonstrating that the poisoned glass did not originate with her. It is only when she sees the other two women slowly and deliberately re-perform their own suicides "as if they were inviting Elsa Schneider to drink the champagne" that she understands what the glass is (136). Even then, the stage directions emphasize her lack of choice: "something propels her to drink" (136). Her death is thus the logical and inevitable consequence of being "Elsa Schneider": her inheritance as a woman. Despite the tragic fatalism of these events, the seed for change is planted. The first two parts of the play end the same way: the character takes her own life and leaves the stage as the lights fade to a single spot on an empty chair standing in the middle of the stage.[75] Elsa Schneider repeats and echoes the breakdown of language that the others experienced, but dies on stage. After her death, the lights don't go down. "*Suddenly she sits up brusquely, and yells:)* But haven't I already done everything? What a bore! Do you want to turn off the lights already? Haven't I already done everything? Go to hell! Enough already!!" (136-37). As she stands, she knocks over the chair and the final image is the same: a circle of light on an empty chair, but this time the chair has been knocked over and the actress has stormed off in defiance, instead of fading out quietly. So while the cycle repeats, this variation showing rebellion stemming from awareness signals the incremental possibility of change.

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[75] This use of the empty chair parallels Rayner's discussion of empty chairs as objects that "are ghosted by the absent human bodies that have left their impressions on the surfaces" (99). Furthermore, since the deaths of Elsa and Romy occur offstage the chair becomes, in Rayner's parlance, "the very vehicle by which an unknowable event, such as death, can be perceived" (115).

The ending moments of *Bride* offer a similar combination of defiant awareness and tragic repetition. In Alicia Novia's final monologue, she finally achieves the self-awareness that she has been lacking and that has impeded her previous attempts to cast off her filthy wedding dress. She names the roles that she has been forced to play and which she now rejects, and forgives her parents for the position that she has been forced into her whole life:

> I am not the bride.
>
> I am not daddy's little dog.
>
> I am not an object in a display.
>
> I am not anything that you wanted me to be.
>
> And I forgive you for it, I forgive everything, because how couldn't I, if you gave me life, isn't that true?
>
> I love you, I hate you, I adore you, I miss you and then I can't stand you.
>
> And I forgive you for it, I forgive everything.
>
> Everything except this.
>
> *She stops slowly, undoes the dress and lets it fall. Alicia Novia's naked body has no hair, it is a doll.* (Moro Winslow 51)

Her visible transformation into a doll signals that the corrosive effects of her upbringing are permanent. While she has found some degree of liberation and identity, it is too late to provide her with full control over her future. The doll simultaneously signifies a lack of control, an identity as a plaything for others, and a physically sterile and limited existence. Unable to become a mother herself, she will not have the opportunity to pass on the lessons she has learned to the next generation. Like Elsa Schneider, her moment of recognition and rebellion comes too

late to save her, but demonstrates the slow movement towards change for others who may come after her.

As studies of transgenerational trauma, *I Am Not the Bride* and *Elsa Schneider* demonstrate the lasting effects of repressive and traumatic histories through the microcosm of family relations. They elucidate the ways in which the previous, parental generation transmits their psychological damage through secrets, silence, shame, and identity crises. Through these processes of transgenerational trauma,

> the next generation will inherit the psychic substance of the previous generation and display symptoms that do not emerge from their own individual experience but from a parent's, relative's, or community's psychic conflicts, traumata, or secrets. This process is experienced as if an individual were haunted by the ghosts, that is, the unfinished business, of a previous generation. (Schwab 49)

The entire repressive period is thereby constituted in these plays as an invisible part of the self, impeding self-awareness, modifying behavior in frequently destructive ways, and precluding personal and societal development. While calling out the ghost and making it visible is a vital step towards improving the situation, progress for post-dictatorial societies will nevertheless be slow.

Conclusion

The Future of Invisibilities

Theatrical challenges to the dominant discourses surrounding (post)dictatorial memory have made effective and strategic use of invisibility, whether that invisibility is literal in the presentation of invisible characters, an inversion of the traditional hierarchies of visibility, or a manifestation of internal invisible ruptures. These plays offer challenges to traditional understandings of Chilean, Uruguayan, and Spanish history that present the possibility of a deepened and more nuanced understanding of these dictatorships and their enduring legacies. These texts are haunted by the ghosts of unseen political influences, bystanders, collaborators, domestic women, and the post-dictatorial generations, yet these are only some of the forgotten and ignored areas of dictatorial study that can and should be brought into visibility. While it is tempting for society to consign these periods to the past, their effects continue to haunt these countries and others who have suffered similar eras of repression in the past century.

The continued exploration of these periods, their causes, and their repercussions also remains unfortunately vital as, throughout the post-dictatorial world, the combination of distance in time and continuing gaps in memory, understanding, and empathy have led to the continuance and even resurgence of pro-dictatorial discourse. Even as many continue to fight for truth and justice for the crimes of these periods, others have reclaimed them. These cases reveal that, despite the passage of time and the achievements of the movements for truth, justice, and memory, the wounds, discords, and tensions of the dictatorial periods remain, just below the surface. In a few recent examples:

- A group of thirteen people associated with the investigation of human rights violations in Uruguay received a death threat from a group calling themselves the General Pedro Barneix Command (named after a general who killed himself upon learning that he was going to be brought to trial for crimes committed during the dictatorship), promising to pick three names at random from the list to murder for every military suicide after that point ("Organizaciones").
- In a recent survey in Chile, 55% of respondents described the years of dictatorship as bad or very bad, 9% described them as good or very good, with the remaining third of respondents describing it as a mixture of good and bad. Only three-quarters considered Pinochet a dictator (Long).
- When the Spanish Socialist government under José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero passed a law calling for the removal of statues and street names honoring Franco, it "faced bitter opposition from the centre-right Popular party, and from Spain's Roman Catholic Church," who condemned the move as reopening old wounds (Buck). While some statues and street names were replaced, many remain.
- In Argentina, President Mauricio Macri normalized denialist rhetoric by questioning the scope of the disappearances, challenging the widely-accepted statistic of 30,000 *desaparecidos* with the denialist figure of 9,000, while many members of his government have promoted both-sides-ism, calling for greater investigation and condemnation of the leftist guerrillas who killed around 687 people in the lead-up to the dictatorship (Goñi).
- And in Brazil, one of the main contenders for the presidency is a former military captain who has openly praised the dictatorship era and dedicated his vote for President Dilma

> Rousseff's impeachment to one of her torturers from that time, the colonel who led one of the regime's most feared torture units (Watts).

The continuance of public and artistic discussions of memory, truth, and justice therefore remains of paramount importance.

In such discussions, looking at the forgotten and ignored brings nuance, complexity, and humanity into the picture. Societies may grow numb in the face of a repeated litany of atrocity, but, as Ros points out, "when an established narrative is confronted with its contradictions and omissions, adding further voices and helping to reconnect with the past more deeply," the past becomes newly present and engaged (204). This process is in part a natural result of time and the evolution of memory work. Ros points to a typical path taken from transitional and criminal justice to forms of memory that "present the crimes as a problem that concerns us as humans and social beings, regardless of our distance from the events" (201). Black and white narratives may be simpler and more comforting in their clear-cut designations of good and bad, but they are also easier to reject as flawed or partial, especially by those who feel demonized by them or who do not see themselves reflected in that narrative and so are silenced and disconnected from it.

The impulse to confront other ghosts and silences from the past that has guided the plays studied here has only grown since their creation. Visiting Santiago, Chile in the summer of 2013, just before the 40th anniversary of the coup, I was struck by the widespread prevalence of texts and plays not only dealing with memory, but dealing with memory from a variety of new angles. A wide variety of theatrical groups, both professional and student,[76] had chosen to mount

[76] Student theatrical groups, especially at the Universidad de Chile and the Universidad Católica, have historically been the heart of the independent theatre community in Chile, acting as a defining force for theatrical innovation and vitality (Piña, "Dramaturgia").

productions about the dictatorship, which were not only well attended and received, but also highlighted a range of frequently ignored topics. As mentioned in Chapter II, *Mina antipersonal* (*Landmine*), by Claudia Di Girólamo, portrayed the famous *delatoras* of Villa Grimaldi in a sympathetic light as both perpetrators and victims. *Grita* (*Scream*), by Marcelo Leonart, studies the case of a military officer who is charged with torturing a prisoner who he has fallen in love with and tries to protect.[77] *Cienfuegos 39*, by Marcela Orrego, was a work of documentary theatre about clandestine life. *El dolor de Xile* (*Xile's Pain*), by Marco Antonio de la Parra, was a journey through Chilean history from the 1920s to the coup, studying the roots of torture, disappearance, and ideological conflict in Chilean identity. *Acción armada: 42º26'S/73º35'W* (*Armed action: 42º26'S/73º35'W*), by Andrés Kalawski, studied the phenomenon of internal exile, wherein those with leftist sympathies or histories were forced to move to remote areas of the country.

The multiplicity of these offerings demonstrates a will to remember and to make visible the marginalized and ignored stories of these years, beyond the scope of the plays studied here. Examining them and others like them through the various lenses of visibility and invisibility explored here would provide further insight into the framing and subversion of blind spots in societal and historical memory, and the myriad ways in which theatrical productions work to combat them. All participate in a process of conjuring which, as described by Avery Gordon, "is a particular form of calling up and calling out the forces that make things what they are in order to fix and transform a troubling situation" (22). By enacting these conjuring processes in the live *convivio* of the theatre, these works employ live interaction, immediacy, and communal

[77] While the rest of these productions were premieres, *Grita* was written in 2004.

experience to connect present and past, memory and presence, in order to prevent recurrence and work towards a more just future.

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Appendix A: Play Synopses

Jueces en la noche, by Antonio Buero Vallejo (Spain, 1979)

This play alternates between three types of scenes: Juan Luis's dreams of his anniversary party, his conversations with the musicians in an unspecified dream-space, and flashbacks to the events of the previous days and to key events in his life. The first two act as a frame for the flashbacks, which reveal the following story:

Juan Luis is a politician, formerly a minister under the dictatorship and now running for office as a liberal, a decision that, as he freely confesses to his corporate backers, is motivated solely by the desire to retain power. Julia and Juan Luis's marriage has not been a success: while he still desires her, she has no feelings for him and is constantly depressed. She calls on an old friend (a doctor and leftist activist), Cristina, for help. Cristina believes that her depression is caused by a lack of purpose, a lack of involvement in the world, and her unhappiness in her marriage. Julia reveals that she has not been able to believe in anything since she was betrayed by her boyfriend Fermín, who turned her in to the police. We later learn that this never actually happened: Juan Luis hired a corrupt policeman, Ginés, to tell her this lie so that he could come to her rescue. Cristina refuses to believe that Fermín, who has died in prison unbeknownst to Julia, would do that, and promises to investigate. Juan Luis tries to oppose Cristina's involvement in their lives; backed by their priest, he insists that their marriage is indissoluble.

Juan Luis and Julia run into Ginés in a coffee shop. He tells Juan Luis that he is there to propose a business offer, but Juan Luis believes that he is in Madrid in his capacity as *provocateur* to destabilize the fledgling democracy. Ultimately, however, he decides not to report Ginés to the authorities, fearful that Ginés will reveal his own corrupt secrets. His

suspicions are confirmed when a high-ranking general is assassinated, leading to a new coup. Julia, meanwhile, has discovered the truth about Fermín: he never betrayed her—instead she betrayed him through her lack of faith and support. After confronting Juan Luis with this information, she kills herself.

These memories are inserted into the context of his dreams, which in turn reflect his various worries. In each of the three anniversary parties (the beginning of the first act, the end of the first act, and the end of the second act), a string trio plays, although the viola player cannot be seen. Juan Luis must try to figure out who the unseen third musician is. These scenes also reveal a tension between his dreams of a happy married life and the reality of his wife's disdain for him, along with his concern about new acts of violence (in the second, Ginés assassinates him). In his conversations with the musicians, he is forced to reflect on the decisions that he has made and the consequences of the dictatorship under which he served: the Violinist is Fermín, the student protester who died in prison (they are later joined by the ghostly figure of his father), while the Cellist is a member of the opposition whose wrongful execution was supported by Juan Luis. All come together in the final anniversary party, where the third musician is revealed to be Julia; she takes her place beside Fermín, rejecting Juan Luis and the past that he represents.

***El huésped vacío*, by Ricardo Prieto (Uruguay, 1977)**

The play begins in the middle of an argument between the Mother and Jorge: he has asked to borrow money to buy cigarettes, and she is worried that she doesn't have enough to last the week for food. The Father is retired but doesn't earn enough on his pension to support them well, while Jorge refuses to get a job while he's still in college. He is angry at his parents for not fighting harder to have more, but the Mother insists that she is happy—even though they don't

have enough to go out or eat well, she has her little house, with her plants, music, and her family around her. The Father rushes in, excited, telling them that they will finally have all the money they need or want. He has met a foreign-looking rich stranger who invited him out for a drink and asked his advice about finding a room to rent for himself and his wife. The Father told him that he and his wife were looking into renting a room in their humble house and the stranger instantly accepted, paying ninety thousand pesos in cash for the first month on the spot (more than double the forty thousand that the Father receives as his monthly pension). The money will cover room and board, though the guests don't eat breakfast or dinner and only eat vegetables. But problems immediately arise: Jorge will have to move out of his room into the cockroach-ridden attic, selling off his books; the guests don't want to hear any noise, so they will have to stop listening to music and radiodramas; the wife is sick, so they will never leave and must turn all the lights out at 8; and they can no longer have plants, birds, their cat, or drink mate. The Father responds to every objection by reminding them of the money: ninety thousand. As they rush to remove everything, Fergodlivio arrives. He introduces them to his wife, Clara, who no one else (including the audience) can see or hear. The strangeness of the scene grows: Fergodlivio informs them that they have no furniture or other clothes and never sleep, has them serve Clara a bowl of water on the floor, and instructs them to go barefoot at all times, as Clara hates the sound of footsteps.

As the play progresses, the tensions and limitations grow. Fergodlivio treats the family as lesser beings, stupid, blind, and unable to understand him and Clara. He insists that they obey his and Clara's every command: the Mother is not allowed to leave the house, unless they send her on an errand; he banishes Jorge's girlfriend from the house; whenever the Father tries to buy something new with the money, Fergodlivio criticizes it and makes him get rid of it. When the

Father refuses to stand up to him, Jorge finally gets fed up and moves out. When the Mother tries to stand up to Fergodlivio, he instructs the Father to hit her. While he tries to resist, he finally gives in and beats her. When the two of them are alone, she tries to get him to stand up for the family; as their argument gets louder, he repeats Fergodlivio's commands to be silent, to think of Clara, and beats her of his own accord. She, too, moves out.

Now that is it just the Father, Fergodlivio, and Clara in the house, the guests take over even more, insisting that he get rid of all of his belongings; in exchange, they will raise their rent to one hundred thousand pesos. The Father tries to resist, missing his family and his former life. Fergodlivio insists that he take a hammer and nails and entomb himself in the house. The Father refuses, but Fergodlivio raises the price he will pay more and more. As he struggles to resist the allure of the money, the play ends with Fergolivio saying, satisfied, "We'll see" (Prieto 1011).

***Cuentos de hadas*, by Raquel Diana (Uruguay, 1996)**

A pregnant Blanca begins to tell the story of Snow White, mixing it with the story of her own birth, drawing a parallel in the loss of both mothers in childbirth. The next scene returns to Blanca's childhood, when she is twelve years old and arguing with her stepmother, Maruja, who tries to get her to eat the soup that she's prepared. Throughout the play, Blanca interrupts the scenes of her life to narrate and explain further details to the audience in asides. Blanca's father appears offstage, bringing a new television for Maruja that he has spent his whole bonus on. In the following scene, Maruja and Blanca argue again, this time because Blanca keeps borrowing and ruining Maruja's things. Both threaten to go to her father, but neither is ultimately able to do so: they get word that he has had a heart attack at work and passed away. As she tells the

audience and her daughter about this, Blanca compares it to a fairy tale about princes who go on a quest to find a magical cure for their father, something that she never got the chance to do.

After the funeral, Blanca and Maruja are celebrating a miserable Christmas, when they are joined by Carmen, dispensing wisdom, cheer, and sparkling wine. She advises them not to give in to silence and sadness. In another aside, Blanca compares herself to Hansel and Gretel, lost and directionless in the forest. Instead of breadcrumbs or stones, she uses school and talking to her friend Clara on the phone to guide her. Maruja overhears her talking about boys, first kisses, and something that she saw in school but refuses to elaborate on over the phone. With prodding from Maruja, she explains that she saw a girl dragged from the school by her hair by a black-booted man. Maruja tells her not to think about it or mention it again, and Blanca begins a new habit: talking to herself or internally to God or to fairy-tale characters.

Separately, Maruja calls her boyfriend Alfredo to flirt, but is interrupted by Carmen, who brings her the news that he is married. Blanca informs the audience that Maruja goes through a string of various unreliable boyfriends after this, but that the real constant in their lives is Carmen. Blanca, a teenager now, tells Carmen and Maruja that she is dropping out of school to get married and work at a store. Carmen has her doubts, but joins in the fun as Blanca describes her perfect, fairy-tale wedding. But after the wedding, Blanca feels that despite everything she's doing, something is off in her marriage. While Carmen and Maruja try to cheer her up, she becomes more and more depressed, sleeping all the time (like Sleeping Beauty) and not eating or talking. Finally, Maruja gets her to move back home and gradually she starts to feel more like herself.

Blanca goes to work at a clothing factory, and starts lying to Maruja about going to meet labor activists. When Maruja starts to complain to Carmen about Blanca's activities over the

phone, Carmen comes over and explains to her that talking over the phone is dangerous, and she needs to do everything in her power to protect Blanca. One night, Blanca comes home at 2 a.m. and hides a man in her room, explaining to Maruja that he is a union activist known as "El Negro" that the dictatorship is looking for, and whom she has fallen in love with. Maruja doesn't understand their politics, but agrees to help. Blanca explains that she feels like he woke her up, like Sleeping Beauty, even though she doesn't know his real name.

Blanca is taken prisoner by the dictatorship, and Carmen uses her connection as a former neighbor of a military official to find out more. When Blanca finally returns home, she can tell that the house has been ripped up by the military, just as she herself has been tortured and raped, but none of them feel able to talk about it. El Negro has also disappeared and is never found, though she later discovers that he was married.

When democracy returns, life goes on: Maruja finds a new husband and Blanca goes back to work. Carmen passes away, making Blanca promise to take her back to her home in the Sierra de las Ánimas. Blanca finds a new husband as well, and tells this story to her unborn daughter so that she will understand the truth, mixing her own story with fairy tales and hopes for a better future.

***La secreta obscenidad de cada día*, by Marco Antonio de la Parra (Chile, 1988)**

The play occurs in a single scene, set on a bench across the street from a girls' high school on the first day of classes. Sigmund and Karl enter, both dressed as exhibitionists in trench coats and bare legs. They are immediately suspicious of each other and each tries to get the other to explain his appearance, while trying to come up with their own excuses. They finally admit that they are probably there for the same purpose, but each tries to get the other to leave,

talking about how they've been waiting all summer and can't just go to a grade school because those girls are too young to see something like that. Sigmund describes how he needs this, the thrilling moment of exposure, and then panics, thinking that Karl must be one of "them," sent to spy on him. Karl declares Sigmund a *petit bourgeois* and Sigmund diagnoses him as neurotic. Any time a car passes or they think they see someone coming, they freeze or try to act natural, pretending to walk stuffed toy dogs or skip imaginary ropes. One car in particular makes them especially nervous: a station wagon driven by Romero, a former waiter turned torturer. This recognition leads them to identify each other as former victims of torture. They share generally vague stories of their experiences as prisoners and collaborators, mentioning the need to do something to redeem them. The car passes again and they act out routines as street vendors, circus performers, and drunk passersby to confuse anyone who might be watching.

Sigmund identifies himself as Sigmund Freud, to the delight of Karl who is thrilled to meet such a famous figure and begs him to psychoanalyze him, just a little. In their session, Karl reveals his dream of "a spectre that is haunting Europe" and talks about his novels, like Das Kapital. Having now identified him as Karl Marx, they launch into an argument attacking each other's approaches to understanding history and humanity. They finally apologize, deciding they have a great deal in common and declaring their mutual admiration. This newfound closeness leads to a discussion of the work that they did for Romero, such as interpreting dreams and helping infiltrate Marxist groups. Their frustration mounts as they lament how they have been corrupted and coopted by the regime, culminating in the decision to work together to put an end to it. They hear the ceremony at the school ending and declare that their moment has come. They admit to each other that maybe they're not really Freud and Marx, but that it doesn't matter.

Together they count to three and open their coats to reveal firearms, which they point at the audience as the lights go down.

***No soy la novia*, by Andrea Moro Winslow (Chile, 2003)**

The play is presented on a split stage: on one side, Alicia Novia, in her ruined wedding dress, narrates the action, flanked by her mother (who is hooked up to medical equipment) and her dying father, seated on a decrepit sofa; on the other side, her memories of her childhood play out in a luxurious old house occupied by Alicia Niña, the Mother, the Father, and the maid Rosa. Alicia Novia describes how she has returned home after trying and trying to get the filth-soaked wedding dress off and searching for something that she has been unable to find since her doll Filomena was destroyed. Back in her childhood, the Mother tries to recapture her glory days, trying on her old dresses with Rosa, who she then dresses up like a living doll before rushing her off back to work. The Father enters, ignoring the Mother's flirting until he can make his escape while she dances alone. Alicia Niña plays with her dolls alone, having them act out the etiquette lessons that she receives. The Father interrupts, pretending to be a sheep and starting a tickle fight with his delighted daughter. As he asks her to kiss him, the Mother enters and calls Alicia Niña away to bed. As Alicia Novia recalls how she used to get mad at her Mother for this, the Mother tries, unsuccessfully, to seduce the Father. Alicia Novia recalls their inability to communicate.

As Rosa prepares dinner, Alicia Niña wishes that she could go out, but is told not yet. One day. As the family eats, the Mother compliments Rosa on the meal. When the Father points out that the meat is badly cooked and flavorless, she insists that they all have to just enjoy it and the illusion must be maintained. As they fight, Alicia Niña slips away to play with her dolls and

the fight shifts to an argument about her and what she needs. The Mother has Rosa prepare Alicia Niña to meet possible future suitors, even though the strict styling of her hair is painful. Alicia Niña isn't interested in choosing one of them, but her Mother declares that she will just decide for her then.

In separate parts of the stage, the Father stares at himself in the mirror, unable to decide who he is, and Alicia Niña plays with her dolls, making them dance together as one doll protests. The Father interrupts again, this time saying he has something to show her. Alicia Niña's incomprehension of what is happening to her is juxtaposed with Alicia Novia's narration of her childhood rape. She tells about how her mother didn't come that time or ever again; how she didn't know how to talk about what happened; how she stared out the window at other children until she was given a new doll, Filomena, who seemed to make everything better. Rosa informs the Mother that rats and cockroaches have surrounded the house, attracting by Alicia's singing, which is also drawing complaints from the neighbors. The Mother shuts up the house and Alicia shuts herself up in her room. Without access to her, the Father is lost until finally, as the Mother urges him to just do what he needs to do, he steals Filomena and destroys her, keeping only her head for himself. Alicia Novia explains that this was the final straw that led her to flee the house, but that now she finally understands what happened to her and can forgive them for everything except one thing: she removes the wedding dress and reveals that she has been turned into a doll.

***Elsa Schneider*, by Sergi Belbel (Spain, 1987)**

The three parts of the play are told in a stream-of-consciousness monologue style which freely mixes internal thoughts with dialogue spoken to other unseen and unheard characters.

In the first act, we only see Elsa, a 19-year-old in the early twentieth century, on vacation with her aunt and cousin Paul in the mountains. She is enjoying herself, drinking in the champagne-like air and dreaming of love and flirtations, but dreads receiving a letter from her mother that she fears will tell her to come home. Instead the letter tells her that her father is in financial difficulties which require her to ask another guest, the elderly gentleman Von Dorsday, for financial assistance. She is uncomfortable, but obediently goes to Von Dorsday to save her father. He agrees, but on the condition that she come to his room that night. Over several scenes (in the forest, near the hotel, in her own room), Elsa slowly unravels. Her isolation, humiliation, and fear make her dream of her own death. The arrival of a telegram from her mother raising the sum needed is the final straw. She prepares a glass full of barbital and goes down to meet Von Dorsday in the lobby, wearing only an overcoat, which she opens in front of everyone before collapsing. The remainder of the act takes place in total darkness, as we hear the voices of her family, hotel personnel, and Von Dorsday overlapping with Elsa's thoughts. They remove her to her room in a hysterical faint. When she is left alone for a minute, she manages to pull herself together long enough to drink the fatal glass. A single light illuminates an empty chair, and then darkness returns to end the act.

Instead of spanning a single day, the next act covers 1956-1982 in the life of German actress Romy Schneider, but likewise we will only see and hear Romy. The eight scenes begin with the eve of her eighteenth birthday. She is already a famous actress and starting to feel the pressure of public and private expectation. The following scenes follow her struggles to be successful and taken seriously as an actress, her failed relationships, the births of her son David and of her daughter, her ex's suicide, David's tragic accidental death from falling on a fence, and

throughout, her constant war with her public image and the pressure that it entails. Finally, she takes a bottle of pills, and the act closes on the same image of an empty chair.

In the epilogue, Elsa Schneider appears, with a glass of champagne in her hand and the two other actresses in the background. After a long struggle to explain what she is doing there, and to decide for herself what is going on, she introduces herself as Elsa Schneider and presents the other women, who each are holding something behind their back. At this point, she believes her job to be done, but the lights will not lower. As she struggles to understand what is left for her to do, Elsa reveals the glass of water and barbital and Romy the bottle of pills. They each repeat their suicide before retreating into the darkness. Elsa Schneider drinks the champagne and dies. But the lights still won't go out, so she gets up in frustration and storms off, knocking a chair over in the process. The play ends with the image of the toppled chair.

Appendix B: Playwright Biographies

Sergi Belbel (Spain)

Sergi Belbel (1963-) is a leader in the post-dictatorship resurgence of independent Catalonian theatre, working as a playwright, director, translator, and educator. He was the first recipient of the Marqués de Bradomín prize for emerging playwrights for his first play *Calidoscopios y faros de hoy* (1985). Among other awards, he has also won the Premio Nacional Ignasi Iglesias for *Elsa Schneider* (1987) and the Premio Nacional de Literatura Dramática (1996). His theatrical works are characterized by experimentation in language, staging, and form; complex explorations of identity, both national and personal; social and literary satire; and investigations into time, death, sexuality, and violence. He translates most of his plays from Catalan to Spanish himself. His works also have been translated and performed in France, Italy, and Germany. From 2006-2013, he was the Artistic Director of the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya. Important plays include: *Minim.mal Show* (1987), *Carícies* (1991), *Després de la pluja* (1993), *Forasters* (2004), *A la Toscana* (2007), and many more.

Antonio Buero Vallejo (Spain)

Playwright Antonio Buero Vallejo (1916-2000) is considered one of the leading figures of the 20th century Spanish theatre, authoring more than thirty plays. He supported the Republican side during the Civil War and was arrested in 1939 for an attempt to organize an opposition political group, for which he was sentenced to death. After eight months on death row, the sentence was commuted to a prison term and he was released in 1946. Previously he had been a painter, but after this experience he felt that painting was no longer enough and began

writing plays. His first play to be performed was *Historia de una escalera* in 1949, which won the Premio Lope de Vega, followed closely by *Palabras en la arena* (1949) and *En la ardiente oscuridad* (1950). His plays were heralded as the first revivals of serious, socially conscious theatre since the war. Because of strict censorship, his plays could never be blatant in their social and political commentary, but he was still able to make these commentaries through his use of symbolism, allusion, and historical comparison. In many ways, his plays deal more with morals and ethics than politics, not being allied with any specific ideology or party. His main themes include the idea of the artist as the conscience of society; the importance of social awareness, truth, and history; the worth of the individual; the possibility and necessity of change; the examination of violence and torture; personal responsibility; and the demystification of the ruling ideology. He continued to write critical theatre after the death of Franco, with a particular emphasis on accountability, the importance of remembering the past in order to truly move forward, and the necessity of clearly and critically examining society and government. He was named to the Real Academia Española in 1971 and received the Premio Miguel de Cervantes in 1986. Other important works include *Hoy es fiesta* (1956), *Un soñador para el pueblo* (1958), *Las Meninas* (1960), *El concierto de San Ovidio* (1962), *El tragaluz* (1967), and *El sueño de la razón* (1969).

Marco Antonio de la Parra (Chile)

Marco Antonio de la Parra (1952-) is a playwright and author of more than seventy works, as well as a psychiatrist, actor, director, and novelist. He is considered one of the most important authors of the contemporary Chilean stage and is recognized throughout the Spanish-speaking world, as well as beyond, through translations and productions in a variety of

languages. He was the recipient of a Guggenheim fellowship in 2000 and has won a variety of awards in Chile, Latin America, Spain, and the U.S. His texts frequently incorporate themes of ritualization, dark humor, popular culture, national history, the adaptation and critique of classical texts and dominant narratives, and psychological ambiguity. Notable works include: *Lo crudo, lo cocido, lo podrido* (1978), *Infieles* (1988), *King Kong Palace* (1990), *La pequeña historia de Chile* (1994), *El continente negro* (1994), and many more.

Raquel Diana (Uruguay)

Raquel Diana (1960-) is a playwright, actress, and philosophy professor, who has been a member of El Galpón, Montevideo's leading independent theatre, for over 20 years.[78] She has written more than 20 plays since her first in 1997. Among other awards, many of her plays have been finalists for the Premio Florencio, Uruguay's highest theatrical award, as well as for the best Uruguayan play from the International Theatre Institute's Uruguay Center, both awards which *Fairy Tales* won in 1998 ("Autores"). *Tales* premiered that year at El Galpón in a very successful production that ran for over a year. She is one of Uruguay's leading contemporary playwrights, dealing frequently in her work with the role of women in society, national history especially in regards to the dictatorship, and questions of identity in the modern world. Other

[78] El Galpón was one of the most successful independent theatre companies in Montevideo leading up to the dictatorship, and was one of the groups targeted for repression. The company was declared illegal in May of 1976, their theatre, costumes, and extensive library seized, and the members of the company prohibited from engaging in cultural and artistic activity. The majority of the group fled to Mexico, where the company reestablished itself in September of that year, finally returning to Montevideo to resume their theatrical activities in 1984 ("Historia").

important works include: *El fantasma de Canterville* (1997), *Del miedo y sus rácimos* (1998), *Alicia: ¿quién lo soñó?: Episodios de la vida postmoderna* (2000), *Banderas en tu corazón* (2001), and many more.

Andrea Moro Winslow (Chile)

Andrea Moro Winslow (1979-) forms part of the new generation of Chilean playwrights, growing up after the dictatorship. She has studied with the leading authors of the previous generation, such as Marco Antonio de la Parra and Juan Radrigán. *No soy la novia*, which premiered in 2003, was her first play. She has also premiered *La escalera* (2004), a contemporary drama based loosely on the second part of the Oresteia, as well as the monologue *Camino al infierno* (2005) and the experimental drama *Zigoto* (2012). Her work frequently deals with familial drama, the difficulty of human interaction in a corrosive world, and childhood trauma. She also works as an actress and director.

Ricardo Prieto (Uruguay)

Born in Montevideo, Ricardo Prieto (1943-2008) is considered one of Uruguay's most important playwrights. He began his theatrical career as an actor, moving to writing at the end of the 1960s. He was part of a group of playwrights who used symbolism to avoid censorship while still creating politically conscious theatre during the volatile 70s and 80s in Uruguay. His work has been performed and hailed throughout the Spanish-speaking world and has won numerous awards, including the Premio Teatral Tirso de Molina (1979) and the Premio Florencio (nominated 5 times, won 1992). In addition to his work as a playwright, he also published a variety of poetic and narrative works. His work has been frequently translated into French and

won many awards in France. Common themes include a destabilization of the norm leading to the revelation of buried inner forces, the crises of the lower and middle classes, and the destructive power of desperation. Key works include: *Después de la cena* (1980), *El desayuno durante la noche* (1987), *Me moriría si te vas* (1988), *El Danubio Azul* (1989), and others.